

## POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Environment and Community (E&C) Panel		
DATE:	6 January 2026		
TITLE:	White Ribbon Accreditation		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Annual progress report		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Cllr Jo Rust		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Charlotte Marriott		
OPEN/EXEMPT	Open	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	No

### **REPORT SUMMARY/COVER PAGE**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:**

In December 2024 Cabinet agreed to commit the council to achieving White Ribbon Accreditation in support of the national campaign to end male violence against women and girls. Full Council voted unanimously in favour of this decision. This report provides an update on the progress we have made towards becoming a White Ribbon accredited organisation.

#### **KEY ISSUES:**

The harm caused to victims and society by violence against women and girls in all its forms – *including but not limited to harassment, stalking, rape, sexual assault, murder, honour-based abuse, coercive control* – is **immeasurable**. While men and boys also suffer from many of these forms of abuse, they disproportionately affect women. **A woman is killed by a man every three days in the UK**. Domestic abuse makes up 18% of all recorded crime in England and Wales. In the year ending March 2022, there were 194,683 sexual offences, of which 70,330 were rape. (source: National Police Chiefs' Council, Violence Against Women and Girls).

There is substantial evidence to support the need to take action to end gender-based violence:

- 70% of women in the UK say they have experienced sexual harassment in public (APPG for UN Women, 2021)
- 3 in 5 women have experienced sexual harassment, bullying or verbal abuse in the workplace (Trade Unions Congress, 2023)
- 15% of women in England have experienced online violence (Professor Olga Jurasz, The Open University, 2024)
- Nearly a quarter of girls in mixed sex schools said they had experiences of unwanted sexual touching in school (EVAW, 2023)
- 1.4 million women experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2023 (ONS, 2023)
- 63% of men agree that men in society aren't doing enough to ensure the safety of women and girls (YouGov, 2021)
- Violence against women and girls is estimated to cost the UK economy £28 billion a year.

The impact of gender-based violence is also felt in the workplace:

- Around 60% of women who have experienced abuse missed at least 3 days of work a month.
- 3 in 4 women have experienced harassment during work trips and more than 1/2 of women have changed their work trip plans because of safety concerns.

White Ribbon Accreditation is a nationally recognised programme to end violence against women and girls, providing organisations with a framework to achieve transformational change in their staff culture, systems, and communities.

The murder of Sarah Everard in 2021 prompted society to start a national conversation about the issue of Violence Against Women and Girls and how best to address this. Together with the #MeToo movement, this brought women's experiences of male violence, abuse and harassment to the forefront of the media and political agendas in the UK.

Since 2021, the White Ribbon campaign has focussed firmly on influencing male behaviour change through male advocacy and awareness-raising. The campaign asks all men to consider and challenge their own behaviours (and the behaviour of others) and attitudes towards women and to take a stand against male violence against women and girls.

**OPTIONS CONSIDERED:**

The Environment and Community Panel is asked to note the content of this report and the progress made to date.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Environment and Community Panel is asked to note the content of the report.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Progress update report to the Environment and Community Panel, requested on an annual basis.

## **REPORT DETAIL**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 In December 2024 Cabinet agreed to commit the council to achieving White Ribbon Accreditation, in support of the national campaign to end male violence towards women and girls. Full Council voted unanimously in favour of this decision.
- 1.2 This report provides an update to the Environment and Community Panel on the progress made towards White Ribbon Accreditation.

### **2. Progress Report**

- 2.1 Following the decision, Officers began working towards achieving accreditation. There were several actions we were required to complete before we could submit our application, these included evidencing senior leadership support, nominating a Lead Contact/strategic lead, establishing a steering group along with agreed Terms of Reference, and establishing a network of White Ribbon Champions and Ambassadors.
- 2.3 A steering group was established, consisting of colleagues from across the council. The steering group is responsible for guiding the development and implementation of our three-year action plan, which sets out the planned actions and activities we will undertake in our work towards ending male violence towards women and girls. The action plan is currently being developed around four key strategic themes:
  - Strategic leadership
  - Engaging men and boys
  - Changing culture
  - Raising awareness
- 2.2 Our application was submitted in August 2025 and approved by the White Ribbon accreditation panel in September 2025.
- 2.3 **The Borough Council is a White Ribbon accredited organisation (September 2025-2028).**

### **3. White Ribbon Day 2025**

- 3.1 White Ribbon Day on Tuesday, 25 November is a national campaign seeking to end male violence against women and girls. Its focus is 16 days of activism and communications activity against gender-based violence, starting on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (25 November) and ending on Human Rights Day (10 December).
- 3.2 For the first time, the council lead a concerted campaign to amplify the national behaviour-change messages with internal and external audiences, highlighting the support available in Norfolk, and encouraging more organisations and individuals to become advocates and to play their part and take a stand against male violence towards women and girls.
- 3.3 Our campaign consisted of internal and external messaging that:
  - Highlighted to staff, councillors and partners that West Norfolk is White Ribbon Accredited, what that means, and how people and organisations can support/get involved

- Called on all people, especially men, to make a collective stand against male violence, abuse and harassment towards women, to lead by example, question abusive attitudes/behaviours and call out sexism and to make the White Ribbon commitment - to never commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence towards women and girls
- Raised public awareness of partnership support available to victims, how to report and where to get help, how to spot the signs of domestic abuse/predatory behaviours

3.4 The council has no dedicated budget for this work, however we have created the following assets using existing resources, to support our campaign:

- Poster and screensaver – promoting staff training and fundraisers
- Special Update from Kate
- Intranet article
- e-signature
- Our News articles for staff
- Members' Bulletin article
- E-shot for all councillors
- Advocacy video with council staff
- Your News articles
- E-shot for partners including parish and town council
- Press release and photo with building signage
- Content for Norfolk schools newsletter on healthy relationships
- Website marketing panel
- Social media header
- Social media graphics
- E-shot header graphic

3.5 We hosted two online training session delivered by White Ribbon - Preventing Violence against Women and Girls, Positive Allyship. These sessions raised awareness of what constitutes violence against women and girls. A total of 61 staff attended these sessions.

3.6 We also engaged in fundraising activities, with all monies (a total of £206) raised going to Leeway, a local domestic abuse charity.

3.7 We asked our local MPs to attend a White Ribbon Day parliamentary reception in Westminster to reinforce the message that preventing violence against women and girls is a shared responsibility across all levels of government.

#### **4. Accreditation Next steps**

4.1 The steering group will further develop our action plan to address the criteria set by White Ribbon UK. A workshop is planned for 9 January where actions will be developed and agreed.

4.2 We will submit our action plan to be reviewed within the first 6 months of accreditation (February 2026) and submit a questionnaire to White Ribbon so they can review our progress, at the end of our first year.

#### **5. Issues for the Panel to Consider**

5.1 The Environment and Community Panel is asked to note the content of this report and the progress that has been made.

## **6. Corporate Priorities**

6.1 White Ribbon Accreditation strengthens our commitment to Support our Communities.

## **7. Financial Implications**

7.1 An initial budget of £3,000 was allocated to the Corporate Policy team to cover accreditation costs (with a remaining amount of £2,406, which is set aside for the accreditation fee for years 2 and 3). All work has been achieved within existing budgets and resources, however, as we develop our action plan there may be additional financial implications associated with those activities.

## **8. Any other Implications/Risks**

8.1 Failure to maintain accreditation would result in reputational damage and fail to uphold our commitment.

8.2 Limited budget and no dedicated resource will likely limit the scope and impact of future activities.

## **9. Equal Opportunity Considerations**

9.1 Positive implication under the protected characteristic of 'sex', for both women and men.

9.2 White Ribbon accreditation supports us to meet our legislative duties under the Equality Act 2010. It demonstrates our proactive approach to preventing discrimination, promoting equality and addressing harassment and discrimination.

## **10. Environmental Considerations**

10.1 None

## **11. Consultation**

11.1 The original decision was presented to the Environment and Community Panel, Cabinet and Full Council. Subsequent discussions have been held with the Corporate Leadership Team and White Ribbon Steering Group.

## **12. Conclusion**

12.1 The Environment and Communities Panel are asked to note this report and the progress made, and to recognise that the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk is a White Ribbon Accredited organisation.

## **13. Background Papers**

- Cabinet report and minutes – 10 December 2024