

NOTICE OF MOTION – CLLR E NICHOLSON – MALE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 2 December 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor E Nicholson

“That Woking Borough Council notes that violence against women is a serious, prevalent, and preventable issue in our society.

Male violence against women must be ended, once and for all. Simply agreeing with the principle is not enough.

As a responsible authority we have a moral obligation to stand against and work to end male violence against women.

MOTION

Council recognises the importance of White Ribbon and its contribution as part of a global campaign taking action to stop male violence against women and resolves to become an accredited authority.

Council commits to making White Ribbon Day part of the civic calendar with ambassador-led activities involving staff, members and the public.

Council agrees to raise awareness of the White Ribbon Campaign through regular updates and features in internal and external communications and provide opportunity to highlight the work of the Women’s Refuge and the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner.

Council will provide support to staff and members to take the pledge never to commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women and to become ambassadors and champions. Council will work closely with local partnership agencies and organisations involved in tackling male violence against women to work towards making Woking a White Ribbon Borough.

Council commits to hosting annual awareness training for all members.”

Officer Comment

“Tackling domestic abuse and raising awareness is a key priority for the Safer Woking Partnership and has been for many years. As part of this, the Council already acknowledges White Ribbon and has supported the 16 days of activism over the last few years, including work with Woking Football Club in 2019, and we have supported a social media campaign for the White Ribbon 2021.

If the Council is to become an accredited authority there is a cost associated with that and a likely impact on resources to support an appropriate action plan to comply with the accreditation, which needs an allocation for budget and staff time. White Ribbon charge an annual fee on a sliding scale depending on the size of the organisation. Those staff or members who volunteer to be ambassadors (male) or champions (female) will need to understand the expectations for the commitment they need to make and be prepared to be proactive.

It is important that we highlight all the work around domestic abuse services in general, not just refuges, as many women access support in the community. Sadly violence against women and girls

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takes place in both public and private spaces and our approach needs to take account of that. We will also be linking in to the Surrey Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy once it is developed and will produce a local action plan to support that.

Awareness training is offered locally – we have just provided three sessions for staff as part of the White Ribbon campaign. Member training has been provided previously and we can look at providing this annually as appropriate.”

Background Papers: None.

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