

<b>Item No.</b> 5.2	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 24 March 2021	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Council Assembly
<b>Report title:</b>		Members' Motions: Late Motion	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Proper Constitutional Officer	

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The councillor introducing or “moving” the motion may make a speech directed to the matter under discussion. This may not exceed five minutes<sup>1</sup>. A second councillor will then be asked by the Mayor to “second” the motion. This may not exceed three minutes without the consent of the Mayor.

The meeting will then debate the issue and any amendments on the motion will be dealt with. At the end of the debate the mover of the motion may make a concluding speech, known as a “right of reply”. If an amendment is carried, the mover of the amendment shall hold the right of reply to any subsequent amendments and, if no further amendments are carried, at the conclusion of the debate on the substantive motion.

The Mayor will then ask councillors to vote on the motion (and any amendments).

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION

The constitution allocates responsibility for particular functions to council assembly, including approving the budget and policy framework, and allocates to the cabinet responsibility for developing and implementing the budget and policy framework and overseeing the running of council services on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, any matters that are reserved to the cabinet (i.e. housing, social services, regeneration, environment, education etc.) cannot be decided upon by council assembly without prior reference to the cabinet. While it would be in order for council assembly to discuss an issue, consideration of any of the following should be referred to the cabinet:

- to change or develop a new or existing policy
- to instruct officers to implement new procedures
- to allocate resources.

**Note:** In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 2.10 (7) & (8) (prioritisation and rotation by the political groups) the order in which motions appear in the agenda may not necessarily be the order in which they are considered at the meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Council assembly procedure rule 1.14 (9)

## **6. Emergency Motion – End Male Violence against Women and Girls**

Proposer: Cllr Evelyn Akoto

Secunder: Cllr Maria Linforth-Hall

Council Assembly notes:

1. That the murder of Sarah Everard has launched a wave of anger and protests across the country.
2. Blessing Olusogun's death remains unexplained.
3. Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry were killed after meeting friends in a park.
4. That 118 women have died this year as a result of gendered violence.
5. Reports from the vigil held at Clapham Common show police officers using excessive force against women.

Council Assembly further notes:

6. The detrimental impact that violence against women and girls (VAWG) by men has on individual women, their dependents, their communities and society as a whole.
7. Women from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, deaf and disabled women, and LGBT+ women are even more likely to experience harassment, discrimination and abuse. Women from diverse backgrounds experience abuse differently and male power is used against them differently.
8. Women living in poverty are particularly vulnerable to experiencing violence and face disproportionate challenges in accessing the necessary support to make them safe. Lack of access to secure housing, precarious employment, difficulty accessing social security and poverty work to keep women in abusive situations.
9. There are on average 12 'honour killings' every year in the UK, where women are killed due to the belief that they have brought shame or dishonour upon their family.
10. Street harassment and violence against women and girls is endemic in the UK:
  - a. 80% of women of all ages have been sexually harassed in public, with 90% of these women not reporting it as they don't believe it will make a difference
  - b. 97% of young women have been sexually harassed, with 96% not reporting it due to the same reasons above
  - c. One in two women are sexually harassed in the workplace
  - d. One in three women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime
  - e. One in five women will be raped in their lifetime
  - f. Two women a week are killed by a current or former partner (this rose to three a week during lockdown), and three women a week take their own lives following domestic abuse.

11. Women who report rape have a 3% chance of it ever being heard in court. Most women who survive domestic violence do not receive justice from the criminal justice system.

Council Assembly remembers:

12. All the women in Southwark and across the country who have died as a result of the violence of men, and all the survivors of gender-based and domestic violence.

Council Assembly notes:

13. That Southwark Council has campaigned previously to make misogyny a hate crime, so we welcome the announcement that all police forces in England and Wales are to log incidents motivated by misogyny from this Autumn.
14. Southwark continues to be one of the highest funders of VAWG provision in London, with an investment of more than £900,000 annually.
15. Southwark will expand the number of venues signed up to and will ask existing signatories to recommit to the Women's Safety Charter, and report regularly on the difference it has made - sending a clear message that female harassment will not be tolerated.
16. Southwark goes beyond the existing legal domestic abuse framework by implementing a policy to give automatic 'priority need' status to domestic abuse victims approaching as homeless - this is in advance of the new Domestic Abuse Bill that now requires this of all councils. This policy removes the barrier some victims face accessing emergency housing and the full housing duty.
17. Southwark council recently developed a cross-party 'Open Door' Project in which schools, children's centres and GP centres are able to offer domestic abuse survivors a safe space in which to access support.
18. Southwark has invested in Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA), including an IDVA role co-located within Housing Solutions service.
19. Southwark delivers workshops and works with communities to discuss Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and its effects with survivors.

Council Assembly believes:

20. That male violence against women and girls is part of a broader culture of misogyny in society.
21. Perpetrators of serious violence usually have a history of inflicting abuse and harassment against other women and girls. Tackling violence against women and girls means dismantling this culture.
22. The seeds of violent behaviour are often sown at a young age and if the right interventions are not made in time then the problem continues to perpetuate.
23. It also means tackling other forms of discrimination and the economic system that further enables abuse against women and girls.

24. The Police and Crime Bill currently making its way through parliament will potentially silence the right to protest in a meaningful or impactful way, or for women to be heard on this issue in an impactful way.
25. That a justice system that allows one of the most heinous crimes to be effectively decriminalised is not fit for purpose. Sustained cuts to all elements of the justice system, as well as institutional misogyny, mean that crimes against women and girls that are reported are not effectively investigated by the police. The decision to fail to resource this work is a political choice.

This Council resolves to:

26. Stand in solidarity with protestors who oppose violence against women, and girls.
27. Do all we can as a council and in our communities to champion the rights and entitlements of women and girls and to tackle violence against them. This includes continuing to invest in vital services, listening and responding to women and girls about the action we need, and calling out misogyny and sexism wherever we see and hear it.
28. Call on the Home Secretary for an urgent, transparent and thorough investigation into the operational policing of the vigil for Sarah Everard which took place on 13 March 2021 and for swift action to be taken.
29. Call for increased investment in the whole justice system when it comes to VAWG.
30. To promote the Our Streets Now campaign to make street harassment a crime, and encourage all elected members, and residents to sign their petition.
31. Call on the government to ratify the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combatting VAWG, to ratify the International Labour Organisation's No.190, recognising the right of everyone to work free from gender based violence and harassment and to make street harassment a criminal offence.
32. Call on the Lambeth and Southwark Borough Command Unit to prioritise investigating crimes against women and girls and ask them to ensure that women are treated with the required sensitivity.
33. Work with the Lambeth and Southwark Borough Command Unit on improving women's safety in Southwark.
34. Deliver culturally competent services for VAWG which fully serve our diverse population.
35. Educate men through campaigns and bringing in male "allies".
36. Strengthen Safer Neighbourhood ward panels to have agenda items on hate crime incidents and domestic violence.
37. Work with schools and families to tackle toxic masculinity culture.
38. Continue to work with local, London-wide, and national networks working to end violence against women and girls.

**Note:** If the motion is agreed, any proposals will be submitted to the cabinet for consideration.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Member Motions	Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Virginia Wynn-Jones 020 7525 7222

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Chidilim Agada, Head of Constitutional Services
<b>Report Author</b>	Virginia Wynn-Jones, Principal Constitutional Officer
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