

14.4

Council meeting, 27 July 2021

Amendment: Cllr Sara Conway

Ending street harassment of women and girls

Delete all and replace with (additions in bold, no deletions):

The following message was posted on a local online neighbourhood forum recently:

“Respecting our Girls. I know this is a shout out for all females on the planet but this is especially for my teenager daughters. Women and men teach your sons, grandsons, brothers, cousins, uncles, male friends or just any male you know how intimidating, scary and the long lasting the effects your unwanted attentions have on young girls. My 15 year old at the bus stop in school uniform does not want to chat with you, or have u follow her on the bus.... look at her face... she is scared of you. To the 40 year old man at Victoria station who thinks even after my 17 year old daughter tell him he is making her uncomfortable still tries to intimidate her, just STOP. You are scaring her! I don't know if men realise a bit of banter for them is a life changing experience for a young girl. When that girl phones her mum in tears because she doesn't know what to do and is scared. Just try and see how that girl might be feeling, imagine if that was your daughter, sister, cousin, auntie, mother or any female you know and love. This is not a male bashing as I know how amazing and respectful all the men in my life are but it's just a thought for a lazy Sunday afternoon.”

A survey conducted by Plan International UK in 2018 found that:

- **66% of girls aged 14 to 21 had experienced unwanted sexual attention or harassment in a public place**
- **35% of UK girls wearing school uniform have been sexually harassed in public**
- **33% of UK girls who have been sexually harassed felt too embarrassed to tell anyone**

Street harassment stops women and girls from being able to move around freely in public spaces as they change routes and stay away from areas to avoid harassment. It is a form of gender-based violence and a human rights violation.

The Government's updated Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy has now been published, but it stops short of a commitment to make street harassment a crime. Instead, the Government are just 'considering' making street harassment a criminal offence.

As Jess Philips MP said in response: “How are we in a situation where we have better protections for statues than for women?”.

Council believes that street harassment should be a criminal offence and resolves to write to the Government asking them to bring forward legislation on this.

Council asks the relevant Committees to consider what more can be done within their powers to end street harassment of women and girls, **including:**

- **Assessing the range of support**
- **Review of CCTV**
- **Empowerment through a sharing platform and putting local organisations and women at the heart of policy**
- **Behaviour change of perpetrators as part of an inclusive strategy**
- **Sign for help / 'ask for Angela' initiative to raise awareness and build further**
- **More focus on appropriate education at different points**
- **Survey of street safety to develop 'heat map' as in LB Barking & Dagenham**
- **Developing a phone app 'Someone is following me'**
e.g.: <https://safeandthecity.com/>
- **Bus stop cameras/support call point**
- **Solace street code e.g.:**

<https://www.solacewomensaid.org/news/solace-works-mc-saatchi-and-token-man-launch-good-guys-guide>

- **Reporting spaces – actual and online**
- **Create a Travel Together app for walking and public transport**