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London
CANADA

March 19, 2026

Infrastructure & Corporate Services Committee

Re: 2.2 Revised Respectful Workplace Policy (Anti-Harassment/Anti-Discrimination)

Dear Colleagues,

On page 33 of the report, it states that proposed revisions to this policy are the result of input from a lengthy list of sources. I am highlighting for your consideration that the many issues surrounding the May 31, 2024 harassment complaint (filed by the “senior rank of management” against me (an elected official)) were not addressed in the revisions outlined in this report.

As a reminder, my concerns were shared with all of Council via email and then partially placed on the December 17, 2024 Council Agenda. See link below (starting at page 84)

<https://pub-london.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=113384>

And mentioned again in my submission to the August 14, 2025 Strategic Priorities & Policy Committee. See link below (starting on page 41)

<https://pub-london.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=118320>

And again, in my two submissions to the November 14, 2025 Governance Working Group. See link below (starting on page 47 and page 49)

<https://pub-london.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=120186>

They were also part of my August 17, 2025 submission to the Ontario Legislative Assembly Committee on Bill 9: Municipal Accountability Act, 2025 (see attached).

In addition, I have had several email conversations with both the City Manager and the Mayor regarding the ongoing implications of that May 31, 2024 harassment complaint.

Unfortunately, my concerns remain unaddressed.

Sincerely,

Susan Stevenson
Councillor, Ward 4

August 17, 2025

Ontario Legislative Assembly

Committee on Bill 9, Municipal Accountability Act, 2025

Written Submission by London City Councillor

Susan Stevenson

300 Dufferin Ave,

London, Ontario

N6A 5L7

August 17, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

Summary of recommendations:

- **Ensure that legislation protects a Councillor's ability to fulfill their obligation to represent and make decisions on behalf of their constituents**
- **Require confidentiality by both the complainants and the Councillor until investigations are complete, verified and before Council**
- **Where harm to safety and well-being is claimed, the evidence provided should be objective and reasonable in the circumstances**
- **Where harassment involves city staff, a requirement that city leadership take a role in this process (pre and post Integrity Commissioner)**
- **Training of Integrity Commissioners and Councillors should include awareness of the backlash effect and other examples of discrimination**
- **Ensure respect for diversity of opinion is upheld**

I want to thank the Minister for moving forward with this legislation and for supporting a safe, respectful and accountable municipal system: one that limits removal to egregious violations, requires a second level review and investigation by the province and then requires a unanimous vote by municipal council (allowing 30 days to do so). I also want to thank the Minister for acknowledging

that some complaints have been weaponized for political action and used in non-appropriate ways by some councils.

I would like to, respectfully, include that contextual accuracy and acknowledgement of the relevant policy related issues facing individual municipalities matters greatly when complainants are aligned by political party and/or ideological agendas. It is particularly important that efforts by elected officials to acquire important financial or policy details for their constituents, not be twisted or weaponized to later be dismissed as code of conduct violations.

I would also urge the inclusion of text that makes clear that no powers should be given to a quasi-judicial officer that would interfere with the elected official's traditional obligation to represent the interests of their constituents and make decisions on their behalf, including enacting laws and overseeing budgets. This involves various duties such as amending policies, responding to public concerns, and participating in government decision-making. ANYTHING, including ANY POLICY in Bill 9 that interferes with this solemn obligation is completely unacceptable.

I wish to share with this Committee some of my experiences with the current system (as an elected City Councillor in London since October 2022).

In July 2023, complaints were filed with the Integrity Commissioner regarding my retweeting of an article (How to Solve Homelessness). Several of the complainants

(including a city contracted shelter) went public with the complaint, resulting in national news coverage and headlines which included defamatory terminology such as "vile behaviour, "reckless and dangerous", "clear human rights violation", etc. **This complaint was eventually dismissed in December 2023 but the slurs remained public.**

[REDACTED]

Please consider requiring confidentiality by both the complainants and the Councillor until investigations are complete. This would limit reputational damage and the weaponization of complaints prior to the completion of due process and a verified finding.

In September 2023, complaints were again filed with the Integrity Commissioner regarding my social media posts. Despite a required protocol (that the complaint be provided to me with an opportunity to respond prior to any finding being made), the first communication that I received from the Integrity Commissioner was an email stating that "we have made a finding against you". When asked why the protocol was not followed, the Integrity Commissioner replied via email that our protocol was "prescriptive and legalistic" and "simply unworkable". **This abandonment of protocol and**

disregard for due process is currently being investigated by Ombudsman Ontario.

In May 2024, a complaint was filed by the Senior Management of the City of London and notification of a finding made against me was received in October 2024. **This preliminary report was so egregious that I took the time to prepare and submit a response that was 160 pages long.** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I also included relevant evidence in my defense. It is still difficult to comprehend how these allegations were reasonable let alone a recommendation of a 30 day pay sanction.

The final and public report acknowledged that my "words and tone were moderated" and I "sounded respectful" yet "administrative staff experience[d] the Councillor's repeated questions around the issue [of homelessness] as harassment." The report found "a clear pattern in which the Councillor takes the opportunity, even where an issue only relates tangentially to homelessness or shelters, to ask questions in a manner which allows her to repeat her concerns around the encampments issue" and "the questions she poses are often prefaced with lengthy statements by the Councillor reiterating her views." None of these quotes from the final report are objectively harassment. **Councillors should be responsible for their words and behaviour and not the experience of others. Where harm to safety and well-being is claimed, the**

evidence should be objective (based on facts and evidence) and not on a policy disagreement.

Despite a complaint by Senior Management (including the City Manager) and a finding of bullying, harassment and targeting, I have not been included or invited to participate in any internal handling of this situation (not prior to the complaint, during the investigation nor since the conclusion of this complaint). **Where harassment involves city staff, a requirement that city leadership take a role in this process would be beneficial.**

The December 2024, the Integrity Commissioner report stated that "although her words and tone may be moderated and sound respectful, the constant revisiting of the issue amounts to her harping on something that has been well canvassed already". That the term of "**harping**" was used to equate ongoing questions posed on behalf of beleaguered constituents with the nagging behaviour of a woman's speech, was not only sexist but appeared to deliberately minimize the seriousness of the growing crisis facing Londoners. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **Training of**

Integrity Commissioners and Councillors should include awareness of the backlash effect and other examples of discrimination.

Diversity of opinion (reached by evidence received from citizens) has not been respected or upheld in these London, Ontario examples. The elected voices of many residents were diminished and devalued by a taxpayer funded system that disrespected democracy at great financial expense and diminished community trust.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide my experience and concerns. Sincere thanks for taking on the challenge of addressing the serious shortcomings within the current system.

Sincerely, Susan Stevenson

London City Councillor, Ward 4