

Leisure and Amenities Committee

Agenda Item 4

Youth Work

1. Background

- 1.1 A recent report produced by the organisation End Child Poverty, highlighted levels of child poverty in wards across the UK. Child poverty estimates tend to be the highest in large cities, particularly London, Birmingham and Greater Manchester:

Table 1 Top 20 parliamentary constituencies* with highest levels of child poverty across the UK – after housing costs

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>% of children in poverty 2017/18</i>	<i>Number in poverty</i>
(UK)	30%	4.1 million
Poplar and Limehouse	58.5%	23,706
Bethnal Green and Bow	55.3%	19,318
East Ham	53.8%	26,130
Birmingham, Hodge Hill	53.5%	23,985

- 1.2 Child poverty means growing up in a household with low income, however this is just the core of a series of complex issues and outcomes, which harm children’s ability to progress well. Research shows that children who grow up in poverty have a greater risk of having poor health, being exposed to crime and failing to reach their full potential. As a result there is often an on-going cycle of inter-generational poverty. The Report gave figures for wards in Swindon, see table below:

Living in Poverty After Housing Costs

Number of children 7581

<u>Ward</u>	<u>% of children</u>
Old Town and Lawn	19%
Shaw and Nine Elms	20%
Dorcan	26%
Ridgeway	24%
Walcot	37%
Freshbrook and Grange Park	28%
Blunsdon	24%
Toothill and Westlea	29%
Parks	40%
Central	32%
Wroughton and Chiseldon	21%
Eastcott	23%

- 1.3 Eighty percent of children living in poverty in Swindon, live in families who are in receipt of out of work benefits such as income support or job seekers allowance rather than in work benefits.
- 1.4 Alongside this economic background, there are parts of the Parish that are more susceptible to anti social behaviour including perceived acts of drug dealing, broken glass, drinking alcohol in public places, litter, arson and vandalism. There are also higher levels of vulnerability visible in the actions and behaviour of some young people. Toothill, Freshbrook and Westlea have seen more occurrences of this than other parts of West Swindon.
- 1.5 In Central Swindon North and Central Swindon South Parishes, they have introduced youth work to attempt to tackle persistent anti social behaviour. A youth worker has been employed to run a range of outreach engagement activities. Outreach is a vital tool to enable conversations to take place with young people who are disconnected from organised local activities.
- 1.6 The primary purpose of the Parish delivering youth work could be to help provide access to informal mentoring and support which young people voluntarily enter into.
- 1.7 If West Swindon Parish Council wished to consider funding youth work, it would need to identify a budget. There is currently £1000 set aside for Youth Development alongside £10,000 set aside for Community Grants. A qualified youth worker salary is in the region of £23,500 per annum, £12.21 per hour plus on costs. In theory a five hour a week post for one year would be approximately £3175 plus on costs plus any equipment or other associated costs.
- 1.8 If minded to fund youth work, the Parish Council would need to consider the following:
 - to allocate a budget amount specifically for youth work/resources
 - to employ a temporary sessional youth worker directly
or
 - to promote youth work as an option for a grant to local organisations
or
 - to seek youth work hours from another organisation
 - where to target the resource
 - lone working/health and safety

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Councillors consider the points detailed in 1.7 and agree a recommendation in relation to youth work

Paula Harrison, Parish Manager