

# **Scrutiny Committee**

**Monday, 10 August 2015**

## **Additional Information**

AGENDA ITEM 4 – MINUTES

RESPONSES TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Contact: Steve Jones (Committee Officer) 01793 463602  
stevejones@swindon.gov.uk      Stuart Figini (Committee Officer) 01793 463612  
sfigini@swindon.gov.uk,

This page is intentionally left blank

<b>STATUS OF RESPONSES TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND MEMBER REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION</b>			
<b>Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2015</b>			
<b>Minute No.</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Status</b>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Leader of the Council: Annual Report</b>		
	Councillor Chris Watts referred to paragraph 3.3 of the report and the data relating to the number of people claiming job seekers allowance. He asked if this could be broken down to detail full-time and part-time jobs, to show "how much of this actually relates to real, full time jobs".	The Leader of the Council has advised that the data are supplied by the National Office of Statistics and that further detail could not be provided. He advised that, using this data, the number of those claiming the Job Seeker's Allowance in Swindon had fallen by 61% between May 2010 and May 2015, from 4827 to 1895. Youth unemployment over the same period fell by 72% from 1150 to 320.	Completed.
	Councillor Watts referred to paragraph 3.7 of the report and anecdotal information he had about intake and retention at the UTC, specifically around the "Churn" rate. He said he works with schools and understands "people have gone in and come straight back out again", for whatever reason, and asked if that was something that might be looked into.	An interim response has been received from the Leader of The Council (03/07/2015) that he had yet to receive the information requested but would reply to the committee as soon as practicable.	On-going Interim response received (03/07/2015)
	Councillor Maureen Penny referred to paragraph 3.7 of the report (support for "clean up days") and asked for more information because she "was being told something completely different". Councillor Penny said that she had enquired about support for such	The Leader of the Council offered to take up this matter with the lead officer and cabinet member. An interim response has been received from the Leader of The Council (03/07/2015) that This matter will be dealt	Completed. Interim response received (03/07/2015)

	<p>projects in her area but the Council had advised it was unable to help.</p>	<p>with over the next few weeks.</p> <p>On 7 August, members were advised as follows by the Council's Head of Localities, Community Involvement and Volunteering :</p> <p>"Whilst not considered a priority for the 15/16 Capacity Building Action Plan approved by Cabinet in March, I'm not aware from a Localities perspective we have ever refused any request for support for clean-up days.</p> <p>On members behalf, we have and continue to offer enabling support to community groups or organisations who wish to take greater responsibility for their local area, whether that is advice about safe practice, insurance, providing and/or signposting to supply of necessary equipment, organising publicity, mobilising volunteers, and/or grant-funding new organisations to help them establish themselves, and linking to service teams where specialist expertise or support is required.</p> <p>The current pilot work with Parishes is identifying new ways of supporting that work, and in some instances Parishes already provide similar support, or have greater potential for doing so through their local connections. In other instances, a partnership approach works – we'll review the most effective ways of supporting this type of</p>	
--	--	--	--

		community action as the pilots progress” .  The officer also agreed to take up with Councillor Penny direct, the particular support issues she had concerns about.	
	Councillor Carol Shelley referred to paragraph 3.28 of the report and domestic abuse as a continuing issue in Swindon. She wanted to know when the “Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy and Action Plan” would go live.	The Leader of the Council has advised that the Strategy and action plan were being updated after a workshop/consultation that was held at the end of May. The Strategy and Action plan are live; the work is still going ahead even though the action plan is still under development.	Completed
	Councillor Carol Shelley commented on her concern that families seeking help from Swindon Women’s Aid were having to be relocated due to a lack of available spaces at the facility. She asked what the Council might do to avoid families having to leave the Swindon area. Councillor Renard wasn’t aware of this as a problem and said he would look into it. Later in the debate, Councillor Shelley clarified that “we” need to know exactly how many families had sought assistance had not been accommodated. Later in the debate, Councillor Shelley clarified that “we” need to know exactly how many families had sought assistance had not been accommodated.	<p>The Leader of the Council wasn’t aware of this as a problem and said he would look into it. He has subsequently advised as follows:</p> <p>“We will sometimes accommodate people outside the borough in an emergency when there is nothing suitable available in Swindon. The safety of the victims comes first. If there is no available space, or when it is not appropriate to place someone in the Refuge, the Housing Team will work to accommodate elsewhere within the borough wherever possible.</p> <p>We have recently started to see more referrals from applicants who do not require the support and work with Swindon Women’s Aid to find solutions within the Borough.</p>	Completed

		Some victims may wish or are advised to relocate because of safety issues and the Housing Officers along with Swindon Women's Aid would then work together to facilitate this."	
	Councillor Donachie asked that data should be provided to members regarding the number of male victims of domestic abuse.	<p>The Leader of the Council has responded as follows:</p> <p>"We do collect data on the number of male victims seeking help and support. Within the last year April 2014-March 2015 20 male victims were discussed at MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and offered support through the IDVA Service (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor). Swindon Women's Aid worked with eight male victims from April 2014 to March 2015.</p> <p>There is a national helpline for male victims; however, we do not get any information from them regarding the numbers that may be supported from Swindon.</p>	Completed
	Members raised the issue of insurance cover on community litter picks and clean up days and asked for clarification as to whether the council's insurance covered the activity if organised by localities officers, and/or attended by a councillor.	The Director of Law and Democratic Services is consulting with the relevant officers on this issue to try and get a definitive response on the matter.	On-going