
Report To: Planning & Environment Committee

Date: 15 September 2025

Contact Officer: Paula Harrison

Subject: Graffiti Policy Review

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Planning & Environment Committee with information to consider for a review of the service standards in the removal of graffiti.

2. DETAIL

- 2.1 Tagging is the most common form of graffiti in West Swindon and single identifiable tags are often the most prolific. Graffiti has become more prevalent in the last few years. The Parish office receives occasional reports of graffiti but it is not a common complaint.
- 2.2 Since its inception, the Parish Council has delivered the same approach to graffiti as that delivered by Swindon Borough Council. This means that offensive graffiti is removed within one working day of being reported, all other graffiti is subject to removal on a low priority basis, dependent on resources. Graffiti on private property is dealt with by Swindon Borough Council.
- 2.3 In practice, this means that the Parish Council team will generally tackle graffiti as a project rather than as and when it appears (if it is not offensive). Improvements the Parish Council has implemented
- a high pressured washer to remove graffiti which is used for suitable surfaces
 - of the 18 subways in the Parish, some have been painted through, 5 subways have completed murals with that number rising to 7 by the end of the year
 - approving the sealing of murals with a protective coating
 - providing spaces for street art (Rivermead)
- 2.4 Subways are a primary target for graffiti. Subways have different levels of porosity and different textured surfaces. Street furniture such as lamp posts, bins and telecoms boxes are also frequently graffitied.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 In reviewing its approach to tackling graffiti, the Parish Council needs to consider
- the methods for the removal of graffiti staff resourcing
 - staff resources
 - the approach applied to existing graffiti versus the approach to new graffiti

Extending removal technique

- 3.2 The Parish Council team have training planned for the use of chemicals alongside a high pressured washer. This should help lift graffiti efficiently particularly on porous surfaces.

Staff resources

- 3.3 Tackling graffiti is one of the responsibilities of the Parish Council. Any approach to

significantly reduce the presence of graffiti, and improve the current response rate to graffiti will have resource implications. Given the scale of the task and the repeat nature of tagging, to have an impact, it will need a member of staff dedicated to graffiti removal for a period of time. This has not been available within the team as the existing staff resource is already covering day to day service provision, however, there is a vacant role within the team that is currently being advertised which may release some resource.

Prioritisation of existing/new graffiti

- 3.4 West Swindon has hundreds of graffiti tags across the Parish. Consideration would need to be given as to the most effective approach to reducing the prevalence of graffiti tags. This could be one neighbourhood at a time or focusing on target points e.g. entrance to subways, street furniture.

4. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Parish Council does not have any budgets allocated specifically to graffiti removal but £5,000 is allocated to street art. Costs of paint and chemicals could also be drawn from the Consumables budget which is set at £15,000 per annum. It would be possible to vire funds from an alternative budget to create a budget for resources to support a different approach to graffiti removal. Alternatively a new budget line could be created in 2026-27.
- 4.2 The primary resource consideration is allocating staff time to tackling the problem at a level that is commensurate with the importance/scale of the issue.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That this Committee considers the information in this report in review of the current approach to graffiti, and instructs the Parish Team accordingly.

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