

Public Document Pack

9. **Question Time** (Pages 3 - 18)

Answers to Written Questions

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Council Meeting

13 January 2026

Booklet 1

Answers to Written Questions

1.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor G Ridley

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor N Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing

TEXT OF QUESTION:

"Following the unlawful demolition of a heritage asset on Earlsdon Street last year a stop notice was issued by the Council. The developer launched an appeal against this decision with the planning inspectorate. Could the Cabinet Member provide an update on the status of this appeal and tell us what further actions he intends to take to resolve this issue?"

ANSWER:

"The appellants and the local planning authority have exchanged statements and proofs of evidence, and the public consultation period for the appeal has ended. The appeal is currently with the Secretary of State held in abeyance awaiting the allocation of a Planning Inspector to determine the appeal. It is not appropriate to speculate on what further action may be taken until the outcome of the appeal is known."

2.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor G Ridley

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor AS Khan, Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities

TEXT OF QUESTION:

"Several local authorities have been piloting the use of drones to tackle fly-tipping. Will the Cabinet Member consider providing officers with this equipment to tackle fly-tipping in Coventry?"

ANSWER:

The enforcement team have looked into the potential use for drones; this equipment could be of use in rural locations on the periphery of the city- where there is less natural surveillance or locations that are inaccessible, such as private land used as waste dumping sites or industrial estates.

The vast majority of flytipping within Coventry occurs in residential streets or rear alleyways so a drone is unlikely to provide much in the way of evidence. We currently deploy CCTV in hot spot locations on these residential streets that are worst affected and have had some success in identifying culprits that way.

Approximately 90% of flytipping occurs in residential streets so we are currently looking to increase our activity in these areas using our data from reports, this is carried out with a combination of officers on the ground and the use of CCTV.

previously, looking at vehicle 'chop shops' and sites of cannabis farms, so it is certainly something which officers would look into in more detail.

We meet with other councils regularly and look to swap best practice and recently Wolverhampton have purchased a drone and trained 3 officers, so we will be monitoring the effectiveness of their trial. [as well as any other council that is currently trialling such equipment].

[New drone helps council's fight against fly tippers to soar | City Of Wolverhampton Council](#)

3. QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor P Male

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs Regeneration and Climate Change

TEXT OF QUESTION:

"Following the announcement that Coventry Airport will close in June 2026, can the Cabinet Member provide Council with an update as to progress in finding a partner to establish a Giga factory on the airport site?

ANSWER:

"Coventry City Council continues to work with our joint venture partner to attract battery manufacturers to the site. We have held face to face meetings with three major international battery manufacturers over the last few months and follow up from these meetings is continuing. We also continue in dialogue with UK-based firms in the sector. The UK Department for Business and Trade (DBT) and the Office for Investment, as well as the West Midlands Growth Company are supporting us in this work. The cessation of runway operations at the airport, and the power upgrade works which are now well underway will make the site more readily available for development and increase its attractiveness to investors."

4. QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor M Lapsa

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor P Seaman, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

TEXT OF QUESTION:

"Subject: Children and Young People taken abroad against their will.

Can the Cabinet Member for Children's Services please advise:

1. How many reports have been received by the Council in the last three years of children or young people being taken abroad against their wishes, including cases involving suspected forced removal, abandonment, or detention overseas?

2. What safeguarding procedures are in place when the Council becomes aware that a child or young person has been taken out of the UK without consent or is being prevented from returning?"

ANSWER:

1. This level of detail is not held centrally within our children's data recording systems. However, the Local Authority has robust safeguarding procedures in place for situations where a child is identified as being at risk of harm as a result of forced removal or abandonment overseas. In such cases, we work closely with relevant partners and liaise routinely with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and overseas authorities where there are safeguarding concerns for a child. Equally, where a child of foreign nationality is safeguarded through statutory intervention in the UK, including removal from parental care, the Local Authority has a duty to notify the relevant foreign authorities or consular services, in line with legal and safeguarding requirements.
2. We have the following procedure as part of the West Midlands Child Protection procedure manual <https://westmids-coventry.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/children-and-families-moving-across-local-authority-boundaries-or-abroad>

This procedure was last reviewed in June 2025.

5.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor M Lapsa

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor P Seaman, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

TEXT OF QUESTION:

"Subject: Somali girl from Coventry detained in Somalia.

In the context of children and young people being taken abroad against their will, a young Somali girl from Coventry is currently being held in a detention centre in Somalia. It has been reported that she has attempted to escape on three occasions and has approached local police requesting assistance to be taken to the British Embassy.

Given that this young person is from Coventry, can the Cabinet Member clarify:

1. What steps the Council has taken to establish the facts of this case, including liaison with the family, relevant safeguarding partners, and national agencies?
2. What actions, if any, the Council has taken to raise this case with central government, including the Home Office, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, or Members of Parliament?
3. How the Council is using its influence to apply pressure on the UK Government to ensure this young person's safety, welfare, and return to the UK, in line with its safeguarding responsibilities?"

ANSWER:

1. Whilst this young person is now an adult, there has been no referral to Children's Services at any point. Based on a review of the available information, including social media content, it appears the individual left the UK approximately three years ago. As such, this matter falls outside the remit of Coventry Children's Services. Responsibility for any further action would rest with the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the relevant authorities in Somalia, as the Local Authority has no statutory powers or legal jurisdiction to intervene in these circumstances.
2. As above
3. As above

6.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor M Lapsa**TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor AS Khan, Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities****TEXT OF QUESTION:**

“Subject: Sharia Councils and Sharia Courts

Is the Deputy Leader aware of the existence or operation of any Sharia councils, Sharia-based courts, or informal religious arbitration bodies within Coventry?

If such bodies are operating, can the Deputy Cabinet Member clearly set out:

1. What knowledge the Council has of their activities, structure, and scope of decision-making, and whether the Council has conducted any assessments to determine their impact on residents.
2. What concrete safeguards are in place to ensure that no decisions, advice, or pressures arising from such bodies contravene British law, including but not limited to family law, safeguarding legislation, equality law, and human rights protections.
3. How the Council ensures that women, children, and vulnerable adults are not subjected—directly or indirectly—to coercion, intimidation, or discriminatory practices, particularly in matters relating to marriage, divorce, custody, or personal liberty.
4. What mechanisms exist for individuals who feel pressured or harmed by such bodies to safely report concerns, and how the Council responds when such concerns are raised.
5. Whether the Council has engaged with statutory partners, including the police and safeguarding boards, to ensure that no parallel or unregulated systems of justice are operating in Coventry in a way that undermines the rule of law or statutory safeguarding responsibilities.”

ANSWER:

Council Procedure Rule 8.2 - Part 3A states that "A Councillor may put in writing a question concerning any matter relating to Council business. "

This question does not relate to Council business, and it is not appropriate to respond.

7.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor M Lapsa**TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor AS Khan, Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities****TEXT OF QUESTION:**

"Subject: Neighbourhood Enforcement

For each ward, how many incidents have the Neighbourhood Enforcement Teams dealt with in the last two years, broken down by type of incident?

By ward, how many Penalty Notices were issued for these types of incidents and how many Penalty Notices were paid in that time period?

I would be grateful if the information could be presented in a clear table format where possible."

ANSWER:

The two data documents provided and appended to this Booklet include:

1. Summary tables of reported incidents and enforcement actions per ward.
2. Detailed breakdown by enforcement type showing reported cases and actions.
3. Highlighting of FPNs paid/complied.
4. Inclusion of Noise Nuisance data with service requests and prosecutions.

- This data may contain some inaccuracies due to the use of multiple datasets.
- We do not correlate debt collection outcomes to Fixed Penalty Notices sent (FPNs).
- Moving forward this type of information will be published on the Council's website, similar to other service areas in Regulatory Services.
- Noise Nuisance Enforcement: all service requests require formal action, which may include:
 - Advisory letter

- Warning letter
- Abatement notice
- Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure (in cases where an abatement notice is breached)
- Fixed Penalty Notices are not an available legislative tool for noise nuisance.
- Often, noise nuisance is abated using early interventions, in line with our staged approach to enforcement.

8.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor J Gardiner

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor N Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

TEXT OF QUESTION:

“Subject: Social Housing Waiting List

For each of the Homefinder housing bands for the last four years, please could you detail the numbers of claimants needing to be permanently housed?

What proportion of claimants in each housing band category, for the last four years were British citizens?

What were the average wait times to receive the housing type required (e.g. for 1 bed, 2 beds, three bed family home, 4 beds etc) for each housing band for each of the last four years?

How many families are there currently awaiting a permanent three bed family home and what proportion of these are British citizens?”

ANSWER:

“Subject: Social Housing Waiting List

For each of the Homefinder housing bands for the last four years, please could you detail the numbers of claimants needing to be permanently housed?

Please find requested detail in table below:

Year	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Reduced Pref	Total
2021/22 (as at 31st March 2022)	752	880	1788	1071	127	4618
2022/23 (as at 31st March 2023)	1123	1540	2487	1951	368	7469
2023/24 (as at 31st March 2024)	1770	1765	2846	2021	516	8918

2024/25 (as at 31st March 2025)	1623	1825	3337	2694	577	10056
2025/26 (latest date - as at 07/01/2026)	1413	2109	3384	3109	559	10574

What proportion of claimants in each housing band category, for the last four years were British citizens?

**Please note that all 'live' applicants on Coventry Homefinder have been assessed as being eligible for Social housing.*

We are unable to provide a breakdown by band for the last 4 years as we do not collect data in this format. A summary of British Citizenship across all bands is included below for each of the years requested:

Year	Total	Number British Citizen	% British Citizen
2021/22 (as at 31st March 2022)	4618	3569	77%
2022/23 (as at 31st March 2023)	7469	5526	74%
2023/24 (as at 31st March 2024)	8918	6246	70%
2024/25 (as at 31st March 2025)	10056	6756	67%

All claimants will have a legal entitlement for social housing despite not all being British Citizens.

A summary of the current housing register as at 07/01/2026 is also included below to include proportion of British Citizens:

Current register (07/01/2026)	Total	Number British Citizen	% British Citizen
Band 1	1413	890	63%
Band 2	2109	1192	57%
Band 3	3384	2378	70%
Band 4	3109	2228	72%
Reduced pref	559	370	66%
total	10574	7058	67%

**Please note there are 218 households where we do not have this information in a reportable format.*

What were the average wait times to receive the housing type required (e.g. for 1 bed, 2 beds, three bed family home, 4 beds etc) for each housing band for each of the last four years?

Average wait times for those who secured properties for each of the years is included below (in days).

2024/2025	Studio	One bed	Two bed	Three bed	Four bed	Total
Band 1	470	750	556	776	1359	674
Band 2	467	498	881	1292		555

Band 3	393	380	1470			600
Band 4	1274	792	157	692		830
RP		417				417
Total	485	699	566	789	1359	664

2023/2024	Studio	One bed	Two bed	Three bed	Four bed	Five bed	Total
Band 1	350	592	383	583	1157	2044	495
Band 2	451	471	916	756			500
Band 3	219	440	699	2379			649
Band 4		488					488
RP				661			661
Total	368	562	390	635	1157	2044	501

2022/2023	Studio	One bed	Two bed	Three bed	Four bed	Five bed	Six bed	Total
Band 1	273	514	289	446	1407	3851	4197	399
Band 2	298	428	224	556				369
Band 3	248	310	1137	2018				576
Band 4	234	278	214					247
Total	280	485	295	471	1407	3851	4197	398

**Please note we are unable to provide data for 2021/2022 as we do not hold this data.*

How many families are there currently awaiting a permanent three bed family home and what proportion of these are British citizens?"

Detail provided in table below:

	Total requiring 3 bed property	Number British Citizen	% British Citizen
Band 1	369	226	61%
Band 2	138	94	68%
Band 3	1018	745	73%
Band 4	201	138	69%
Reduced pref	49	31	63%
total	1775	1234	70%

9.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor J Gardiner**TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor N Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities****TEXT OF QUESTION:**

“Subject: Temporary Housing

How many single people and families have been housed in temporary housing accommodation for each of the last four years and what proportion of these claimants are British citizens?”

ANSWER:

Detail provided in table below:

*Please note that both British and Non-British households included within the below are eligible to receive homelessness assistance in the UK. Those shown as British have an eligibility status of "British or Irish citizen, habitually resident in UK, Ireland,

Year	Total of single people and families			Single People			Families		
	Number of households placed in TA	number that were British Citizens	% that were British Citizens	Single person households and couples without children	number that were British Citizens	% that were British Citizens	Family households	number that were British Citizens	% that were British Citizens
2021-22	1236	919	74%	685	589	86%	551	330	60%
2022-23	1379	976	71%	685	589	86%	694	387	56%
2023-24	1653	1167	71%	888	745	84%	765	422	55%
2024-25	1373	920	67%	730	612	84%	643	308	48%
2025-26 up to end of Dec 25	1030	708	69%	549	450	82%	481	258	54%

Channel Islands, or Isle of Man.

10.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor J Gardiner

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor K Sandhu, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

TEXT OF QUESTION:

“Subject: SEND Pressure

1. Please could you quantify the demand for SEND provision over the last 4 years, year on year. What proportion of this demand relates to non-British nationals?
2. What proportion of SEN language support relates to supporting children for whom English is a second language and what is the rate of change for this kind of language support over the last four years?”

ANSWER:

1. The Council is legally required to provide for all children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The number of EHCPs maintained by the Local Authority is a key indicator of demand for SEND provision. Over the past four years, the number of EHCPs has grown by approximately 13% each year. As of January this year, 3,929 plans were maintained, compared to 2,714 in 2023. This trend mirrors increases seen across England.

To meet this rising demand, the Local Authority has:

- Expanded support for mainstream schools through a SEND workforce development programme,
- Opened new Enhanced Resource Bases in mainstream schools for children with complex communication and learning needs,
- Worked with local special schools to increase specialist places.

It is important to note that Local Authorities are not required to record children's nationality in SEND records, and this information is not held by the Council. The Council does, however, hold information on ethnicity and gender, in line with DFE expectations.

2. Language support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) addresses specific speech, language, and communication difficulties. This support may include therapy, specialised teaching, and individualised education plans. While the total hours of support provided across all Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are not currently available, the Council does track the primary needs of children with EHCPs as an indicator of demand.

In the 2024/25 academic year, 20.9% of children with EHCPs had speech, language, and communication as their primary need, an increase from 14.6% in 2021/22. Of these children, 36.9% spoke English as an additional language, which is consistent with the proportion of children with EAL in Coventry's wider school-age population.

It is important to note that SEND language support is designed to address underlying communication difficulties, not to provide English language acquisition for learners of English as an additional language.

11.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor G Lewis

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor N Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

TEXT OF QUESTION:

“For Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities on the Subway Project

In July 2024, Unity in Coventry were advised by the Council’s officers that there were “no indications that the project wouldn’t be signed off,” and work subsequently proceeded on that basis, including the award of Prevent funding and extensive community engagement.

However, in March 2025 the project was halted on the grounds of conservation requirements.

Could the Cabinet Member clarify:

- a) Which specific conservation designation, policy, or protection applies to this subway or its tiles, given that the location is neither listed nor within a designated conservation area, and that similar tiled subways elsewhere in the city have been painted?
- b) Why this conservation issue was not identified or communicated at the start of the process, before funding was awarded and public activity commenced?
- c) What concrete steps will the Council take to improve safety for LGBTQ+ residents using this subway between our cities two queer venues.”

ANSWER:

At every stage of discussions the Council has been supportive of the underlying aims of the Unity CIC Subway Project proposal.

- a) There is no specific conservation designation, policy, or protection which directly applies to the subway, or its tiles. The subway is not listed and it does not fall within a designated conservation area. However, the subway is in close proximity to a Grade II* listed building (Whitefriars’ Gate) so the view was taken by the Council’s Conservation Officer, in their capacity as advisor to the Public Art Gateway Group (PAG), that the visual impact of the subway project on the wider setting should be a consideration.

It became clear through development of the proposal that the project, as proposed, would result in permanent changes to the subway tiles, potentially presenting new and ongoing maintenance costs to the Council beyond the funded period of the project. Should the proposer not be successful in securing continued funding for the maintenance or future reinstallation of the mural artwork, responsibility for maintenance of the area would return to the Council. Council Officers therefore advised that, in order to preserve the subway tiles and avoid an increased maintenance liability for the Council beyond the funded period of the project, permanent change to the subway tiles could not be approved.

An alternative methodology for creating and installing the proposed artwork (through use of a vinyl wrap) was proposed to Unity CIC representatives for investigation in December 2025, with a view to enabling the project to proceed without creating permanent changes to the fabric of the subway.

- b) In June 2024 it was communicated to the proposer that, in principle, there was no objection to the proposals with regards the subway structure. However, it was communicated that all work on the structure would require Coventry City Council's approval before it could proceed, including proposals for the materials to be used and application methods, supported by detailed method statements.

The Culture & Creative Economy team met with the proposer in August 2025 to clarify the remaining information needed to support the PAG group's decision-making process and discussed the need for further information relating to (i) the decommissioning process, specifically the plan to paint over the artwork after five years if a renewal project is not feasible (ii) maintenance and monitoring arrangements and details of the materials to be used. The proposer shared the proposed design in August 2025 and the detail of materials were supplied September 2025. These were subsequently considered by the PAG Group, which concluded that the proposal could not be supported in its current form, on the basis that it would permanently alter the glazed tiles and introduce potential long-term maintenance liabilities for the Council.

- c) The Council has indicated support for the aims of the project and for the project to proceed, on condition it does not create permanent changes to the subway which create additional maintenance liabilities for the Council, and providing the visual impact on the heritage setting is duly considered.

All statutory agencies have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all residents and visitors in the City, and we appreciate the specific issues which may pose a threat to the LGBTQ+ community. We are not aware of current issues relating to the geographical area between The Yard and Glamorous, but welcome the initiative to create a positive impact and would welcome further discussion, advice and information regarding concerns or matters that may not have been formally reported. Lighting and CCTV coverage in this area is good, so communities may be reassured that comprehensive surveillance and monitoring of these areas are in place.

12.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor G Lewis

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor J O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change

TEXT OF QUESTION:

“1. Recent data published by Friends of the Earth shows 58% of Coventry homes are rated EPC D or below leaving 85,000 households with avoidably high energy bills, and 19% of households in fuel poverty. Given the significant public benefit of warmer homes could the Cabinet Member outline:

- a) What specific programmes the council is currently encouraging or delivering to improve insulation and energy efficiency, particularly in the private rented sector?
- b) How the council intends to ensure compliance with minimum EPC standards and support households most at risk from cold homes and fuel poverty?

2. The same data published by Friends of the Earth shows 100% of Coventry Neighbourhoods experience air pollution above World Health Organisation guidelines. Could the Cabinet member confirm what steps were being taken across the city to improve air quality?”

ANSWER:

- a) This is a key action in our city's Climate Change Strategy. Over the last three years the Council has secured more than £28m public sector funding and over £41m private sector funds to support improvements in fuel poverty, primarily for people living in social housing. Funding has also supported retrofit of 192 owner-occupier/private rented properties.

More recently, the Council has secured over £4m from WMCA to deliver a retrofit programme targeted in Hillfields, where fuel poverty is over 40%.

- b) The Council has powers under the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEEs) to enforce standards in the Private Rented Sector. MEEs prohibits landlords from letting any properties in the PRS that have an EPC rating of F or G.

The Safer Housing and Communities service also delivers the HMO Licensing Scheme which provides the opportunity for energy efficiency measures to be included on licence conditions for HMOs.

Support is also available for households most at risk from cold homes and fuel poverty, including the [Household Support Fund](#).

- 2. Like all Councils across the country the Council is responsible for monitoring compliance against legal levels of air pollution set by the Government and not guideline values. In all locations except one we are

now within these limits and we expect the final location to fall to within the limit in the next few months.

The Council and partners are working on a range of projects to continue to improve air quality.

- This includes development of an Air Quality Action Plan, to improve transport-related emissions and avoid a congestion zone through giving residents more choice about how they travel.
- Work has been ongoing in public health to improve neighbourhood air quality, with targeted campaigns around NO₂/wood burning stoves.
- Increasing the quality and extent of our city's green space and tree canopy will also contribute to improved air quality. The City's Urban Forestry Strategy has supported planting of over 40,000 trees over the last few years, with an aspiration to plant a tree for every resident by 2032, which will include street trees where appropriate.
- Increasing the amount of clean energy generated across the city and reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

13. QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor G Lewis

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor G Duggins, Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership and Councillor R Brown, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources

TEXT OF QUESTION:

- a) Will the Leader of the Council be making a statement about the review of Coventry's Palantir contract?
- b) What is the timeline for review?
- c) and how will members of the public be consulted?

ANSWER:

- a) The review has commenced and is now being finalised. Accordingly, I am not in a position to make any further statement on the outcome of the review at this time.
- b) The review will be concluded during January 2026 whereupon the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance & Resources will receive a briefing by relevant officers on the outcome of the review and any proposed next steps.
- c) There is no intention for members of the public to be consulted on this matter however, a statement will be made available regarding the outcome of the review in due course.

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