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# **Council Meeting**

17 March 2020

**Booklet 1**

Answers to Written Questions

1.

**QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor G Williams**

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

**TEXT OF QUESTION:**

“The Deputy Leader has recently returned from a trip to Los Angeles on Council business. Can he explain the purpose of this trip, how it will benefit the Council & the residents of Coventry and how much this trip has cost the Coventry taxpayer?”

Answer:

“I attended a conference at the invitation of the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations, the UN body established to improve understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples across cultures and to reduce polarisation at local and global levels.

Recognising that the challenge of creating peaceful cities of belonging is growing more difficult in the context of rising xenophobia, nativism, racism, toxic nationalism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and hate speech, the event provided the opportunity for dialogue under the theme “creating cities of belonging”. Coventry has much to both offer and learn from cities in developing a deeper comprehension of the challenges we all face and looking for collective creative solutions.

The organisations present made the following affirmation:

*Against a trend of growing xenophobia, division, bigotry and nativism, cities and civil society are coming together to uphold constructive dialogue, value our cultural diversity and defend our shared humanity.*

*Cities must go beyond fostering tolerance among diverse communities and strive to create a sense of belonging and of sharing for our residents, whereby all individuals feel valued, heard, and included and their rights are respected.*

*We must ensure that communities can express and maintain their cultural identity, while at the same time maintaining respect of all of its residents.*

*A city’s dedication to creating belonging and sharing must be measured by a city’s expectations, intentions and programs that address well-being, economic empowerment, education, housing, environment and others. Despite resource restraints and other barriers to making our cities welcome places for all, we are determined to lead by example.*

*We all have the political will to make our cities places which ascribe to the UNAOC’s aspiration that we live together as “Many cultures, one humanity.”*

The cost to the City Council was £670. Coventry University made a financial contribution of £1000”.

2.

**QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor G Williams**

**TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor T Khan, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities**

**TEXT OF QUESTION:**

“Would the Cabinet Member tell me how many individuals/families have been housed at the Allesley Hotel and the Beechwood Hotel, Sandpits Lane, for temporary accommodation since the start of the current financial year. Would he also tell me how much the Council have paid to these hotels for providing such accommodation?”

Answer:

“As part of the council’s Housing and Homelessness Strategy, the council has secured a significant increase in temporary accommodation, which has led to (under the housing duty) a significant reduction of homeless families being in bed and breakfast. The number of families currently in B&B under the Housing Act is zero. Although, in emergency this occasionally can be 1 or 2 families, who are then quickly moved on to more suitable accommodation.

That said, under Section 17 of the Children Services Act 1989, on occasions Children Services are required to fund housing for families. This is the case where the council has no statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation (under the housing duty), however, there is a statutory duty to provide support under the Children Act 1989, as under Section 17 there is a duty to support any child considered in need and provide financial assistance which can include accommodation, where this is to support the welfare of a child or young person.

In regard to Section 17, the Council do and have used Beechwood and Allesley Hotel over the past financial year. Children Services currently have 5 families, in which they are supporting under Section 17 with housing needs, of which, there are 2 families that are currently in the Beechwood. We do not retain information regarding which establishments were funded, therefore we cannot provide this information fully.

Children Services and Housing work closely together and prioritise these families to find permanent accommodation as soon as practicably possible”.

3.

**QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor G Williams**

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

**TEXT OF QUESTION:**

“The Cabinet Member is quite rightly trying to improve air quality in and around the city centre. Could he explain how he will improve air quality in Allesley, Coundon and Keresley, as these areas are now blighted by HGVs constantly using residential roads?”

Answer:

“The Council is committed to improving air quality throughout Coventry. We are providing electric chargers to promote the uptake of electric vehicles and we currently have the second highest ratio of chargers per hundred thousand population in the UK. We are also working on a number of cutting edge initiatives such as developing very light rail or the trial of mobility credits which will encourage the scrappage of older diesel cars later this year”