
Council Meeting

3 December 2024

Booklet 1

Answers to Written Questions

1.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor P Male

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

TEXT OF QUESTION:

“Can the Cabinet Member provide details of the likely impact to the City Council of the recently proposed increases to the minimum wage in relation to both its own employees and our service providers?”

ANSWER:

“The increase in National Living Wage which applies to those over 20 to £12.21ph is already less than the bottom point of the pay spine (£12.26ph) so there is no further impact from those staff G1-G10. With regard to employees who receive minimum wage (which in the main relates to Apprentices) the increase would cost circa £350k per annum. With regard to our service providers, we do not have the detail to be able to answer that question.”

2.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor P Male

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

TEXT OF QUESTION:

“Can the Cabinet Member provide details of the likely impact to the City Council of the recently proposed increases to employers National Insurance contributions in relation to both its own employees and our service providers?”

ANSWER:

“The changes to employers National Insurance contributions is expected to cost circa £4.3m excluding schools. The Government have committed to funding the cost to Public Sector organisations so we are not expecting any direct impact from our own employees. With regard to our service providers, we do not have the detail to be able to answer that question.”

3.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor P Male

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

TEXT OF QUESTION:

“Can the Cabinet Member confirm how much the Big Wheel will cost the City Council this year and in future years?”

ANSWER:

“0”

4.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor B Mosterman

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor P Hetheron, Cabinet Member for City Services

TEXT OF QUESTION:

“Can the Cabinet Member provide a schedule with a yearly planning overview of the sweeping of streets & pavements in Coventry for all wards from the last three years?”

It seems that there is no regular sweeping of streets in the city, only when one requests the service is done.

Drains are clogging up and causing floods. With more heavy rainfall we need to cope with the water flood and have all gullies always open to ensure safe streets for all and emergency vehicles to pass through without problems. “

ANSWER:

“Mechanical sweeping is undertaken across the city by 3 different sizes of plant (Large Mechanical Sweeper, Scarab Minor and Johnston). The frequencies vary across the City based on footfall, need and access. This sees some areas such as the City Centre, Foleshill Road receiving daily sweeping, but generally the key frequencies are as follows:

Large Mechanical Sweeping (e.g. Ring-road, arterial routes) – Weekly, Fortnightly, Monthly and 12 weekly for rural roads
Scarab Minor – residential/shopping areas 6 weekly
Johnston – residential/shopping areas 4 weekly

This is complemented by manual cleansing/bin emptying in Parks and Open Spaces and suburban areas, inc. shopping sites. The mobile cleansing teams also collect bags left by volunteers.

Schedules of cleansing can be interrupted by issues out of our control, which includes, vehicles being off-road (breakdown or service), staff absences, weather conditions and access.

Work is currently underway to share schedules on the CCC Website, which is planned to be completed by end of the winter season. This work includes the development of one ‘Master Sheet’ to collect data on how the rounds are performing. Once work is completed, the link can be shared with all Members.”

5.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor G Ridley

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor G Duggins, Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership

TEXT OF QUESTION:

"Can the Leader tell this Chamber what representations he has made to the Home Office regarding the recent siting of asylum seekers at a hotel in Coventry?"

ANSWER:

"Councillor Naeem Akhtar and myself wrote to the Home Secretary on the 18th November."

6.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor E Reeves

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor P Hetherton, Cabinet Member for City Services

TEXT OF QUESTION:

"Given the strength of feeling that has been shown by the protest in support of the keeping the trees on Clifford Bridge Road has the Council seriously considered an off-road option perhaps going via the south end of Bridgeacre Gardens, around the back of the houses and allotments and then on to the roundabout."

ANSWER:

"Please be assured that Council Officers have investigated and assessed alternative routes to Clifford Bridge Road, these include:

- Hipswell Highway / Farren Road
- Sowe Valley (various options)
- Bridgeacre Gardens
- Coombe Park Road.

The option of diverting the route away from Clifford Bridge onto the parallel estate roads of either Bridgeacre Gardens (west of Clifford Bridge Road) or Coombe Park Road / Gainsford Rise (east of Clifford Bridge Road) have been considered. The second option is superficially attractive, as it would also serve the Clifford Bridge Primary School. Either route would be delivered through a Quietway approach, without a dedicated cycleway, due to insufficient space to provide such a facility. The lower traffic levels on the side roads mean that they should be safer for cycling. Either route would be less direct for cyclists than keeping on the main Clifford Bridge Road, and the Coombe Park Road option would require cyclists to cross Clifford Bridge Road twice, at either end. These factors mean that such a route is unlikely to be well used by existing cyclists, who will almost certainly continue to use Clifford Bridge Road. These options will also be unlikely to attract new cyclists.

The section behind the allotments, through the Sowe Valley, would be challenging to deliver to the appropriate standard due to the topography, the

need for lighting, which would urbanise what is currently a rural area of the city, and the removal of trees and bushes to enable the connection back onto Clifford Bridge Road at its roundabout with the B4082. The route would also require significant drainage and would in part be within the River Sowe flood plain, meaning that it would not be available for use all year round. With limited overlooking of the route from housing, natural surveillance would be low level, meaning that some people may not feel safe using the route. It should be noted that this area of Sowe Valley is being safeguarded for potential tree planting.

Active Travel England (ATE) have formally assessed Clifford Bridge Road and alternative routes, the outcome of their assessment was to “Support scheme promoter [Coventry City Council] to proceed” with the option of a segregated cycleway along Clifford Bridge Road. Additionally, discussion with the funding bodies has indicated that whilst they would be open to future funding bids for such a scheme, they would not support the existing funding award for Binley Cycleway being diverted to this scheme.”

7.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor E Reeves

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

TEXT OF QUESTION:

"Given the recent news that Pension credit applications now have such a long backlog that many will not be approved until after the winter, what support is the Council putting in place for those pensioners who may be eligible for pension credit and are worrying about how they will heat their homes this winter made worse by the energy cap rising again on the first of January.

Furthermore, how will any extra support for pensioners effect financial support for others who are struggling with the cost of living."

ANSWER:

"The Household Support Fund will support any household with a need with a voucher to use towards the energy costs. Customer Services has also been working with the Poverty Alliance which is made up of organisations across Coventry who support people in need focussing on the offer of support with energy bills.

Through this work a wide range of support has been identified, through the Alliance we are bringing together the support on offer to share with all front-line services in the city so we can direct those in need to the right organisation for support as well as the offer of the Household Support Fund.

Through the Household Support Fund, we are monitoring spend and expect an increase in applications over the winter"

8.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor S Gray

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

TEXT OF QUESTION:

"Can Planning Committee or planners stipulate that roads in a new estate must be adopted? If not, why not?"

ANSWER:

"No, Planning Committee and Planners cannot stipulate that roads in a new estate must be adopted and neither can the Local Highway Authority. The Local Planning Authority (in consultation with the Local Highway Authority) can stipulate the design of the roads and can impose planning conditions to ensure the design standards are met. However, the developer has to offer the road for adoption.

The process of road adoption is usually through a Section 38 Agreement, a section of the Highways Act that can be used when a developer proposes to construct a new estate road for traffic that may be offered to the Highway Authority for adoption as public highway. The Local Highway Authority (Council) has no power to insist that a developer enters into a s38 Agreement. Housing developers can choose to keep their new roads private and some roads do not meet the Council's standard for adoption."