



## Information Governance Team

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23 October 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

### Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Request ID: FOI652167488

Thank you for your request for information relating to Office accommodation for trade union business.

You have requested the following information:

**1. The details of any office accommodation your organisation provides to staff to carry out trade union business. Please include details of:**

**• space measured in square feet**

The Council has three trade unions currently occupying space in council offices; Unison, Neu and GMB. Across the three offices, the total is 3,826.02Sqft

**• how much of this space is contained within entirely separate buildings (i.e. occupied solely by staff carrying out trade union business)**

None.

**• whether a professional valuation of the market rental value of the space has been sought either in-house or externally, and if so, what the valuation of the space was**

Not applicable.

**• any charges the council levy for office space given to trade unions.**

None.

**2. Do you deduct trade union subscriptions for any of your employees via payroll (sometimes known as the check off system)? If so, do you charge a fee to the trade unions concerned for providing this service?**

Yes, we deduct trade union subscriptions via payroll.

Yes. a fee is charged.

**3. With regard to trade union facility time, please provide the total cost of facility time from your pay bill for the financial year 2023/24 and the budget for the current financial year. Please also advise the current number of employees that you fund to be union officials, measured as full time equivalents? (For guidance on definitions please refer to the Government's Transparency Code for local government:**

**<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-transparency-code-2015/local-government-transparency-code-2015>**)

We confirm the requested information is held however it is withheld under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) – Information intended for future publication. Application of Section 22 is subject to the public interest test as outlined below.

The information is considered exempt under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act which states:

*1) Information is exempt information if—*

*(a) the information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not),*

*(b) the information was already held with a view to such publication at the time when the request for information was made, and*

*(c) it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the date referred to in paragraph (a)*

We can confirm that the conditions under (a) and (b) are satisfied. Coventry City Council confirms that the requested information will be published in due course.

With regards to (c), we believe that it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until that time. To publish the requested information now may not reflect the information that will be published on the Council's website. This could be misleading and provide an inaccurate picture. It is therefore the position of the Council to withhold the information.

#### Public Interest Test

##### Arguments in favour of disclosure

- Promote accountability and transparency for the Council's decisions and in its spending of public money.

##### Arguments against disclosure

- The intended publication date will not be too far ahead in the future;
- The requested information is currently incomplete and undergoing quality assurance.

Whilst the Council acknowledges the general public interest in openness and transparency, we believe that information currently held should be exempt from disclosure on the basis that more accurate and complete information will be published in due course.

We conclude that on balance the public interest arguments are in favour of withholding the requested information at this time. The public interest in this information will be met with the publication in due course.

**4. Please advise any estimates for other costs met for those staff on trade union facility time**

**apart from salaries - including travel expenses, office supplies, telephone expenses and energy bills.**

We are advising you as per Section 1(1) of the Act that this information is not held. The Council does not record any estimates.

To assist, we pay for travel expenses if they are undertaking Union duties for us through our normal travel and expenditure policy.

The supply of information in response to a FOI/EIR request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

For information, we publish a variety of information such as: [FOI/EIR Disclosure Log](#), [Publication Scheme](#), [Facts about Coventry](#) and [Open Data](#) that you may find of useful if you are looking for information in the future.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request – email: [infogov@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:infogov@coventry.gov.uk)

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email [icocasework@ico.org.uk](mailto:icocasework@ico.org.uk).

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

**Information Governance**