

# Council chief: We need time to rebuild trust before we discuss Ricoh Arena ownership

Coun Phil Townshend: 'A conciliatory approach is in the best interests of all parties concerned.'

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NEWS



Councillor Phil Townshend

The acting leader of Coventry City Council has not ruled out the Sky Blues owning the Ricoh Arena in the future.

<http://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/council-chief-need-time-rebuild-7651892>

Weeks of secret negotiations have led to the club **agreeing to return to the stadium** on a temporary agreement for up to four years.

While both parties have indicated that could be extended, club officials insist they eventually need to own a stadium.

Speaking after the Telegraph broke **news of the Sky Blues Ricoh Arena return**, Coun Phil Townshend said time was needed for trust to be rebuilt before looking at the potential of the council agreeing a deal for ownership of the Ricoh Arena with the club.

He also refused to say whether the new agreement included a clause which gave the club preference on buying the Ricoh.

He said: "The terms of the agreement between the club and ACL are commercially confidential. I'm optimistic and looking forward to seeing the club back playing there.

"As for the future, I think we should take one day at a time and not get ahead of ourselves and use this period to rebuild trust.

"All parties concerned need to learn to open doors the door for one another as opposed to allowing it to slam in other people's faces.

"There's been too much personal criticism in the past. A conciliatory approach is in the best interests of all parties concerned."

Coun Townshend also said he believed the fans had played a role in **bringing the club back** to Coventry.

He said: "The fans made a difference. They have shown a committed dedication to trying to get the club playing **back at the Ricoh** where they should play.

"They have maintained their campaign throughout and they have kept the issue in the public eye.

"They have been one of the key pressure points in bringing the people involved to the table."

Coun Townshend also said the return of the club was good for the entire city.

"It's difficult to find words to describe how pleased I am," he said.

"Credit must go to all those involved in negotiations which have been difficult at times.

"If the football club is successful, the Ricoh is successful and the city is successful.

"The club will be paying rent, providing jobs and will make the Ricoh a more powerful sporting location."