

Time and Date

2.00 pm on Tuesday, 4 November, 2025

Place

Committee Room 3 - Council House, Coventry

Public Business

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 8)
 - (a) To agree the minutes from the meeting of Cabinet on 30th September 2025
 - (b) Matters arising
4. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

To consider whether to exclude the press and public for the item of private business for the reasons shown in the report.
5. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee One Coventry Plan Deep Dive Recommendations** (Pages 9 - 22)

Report of the Chief Executive
6. **West Midlands Safe Centre** (Pages 23 - 36)

Report of the Director of Children's and Education Services
7. **Outstanding Issues**

There are no outstanding issues
8. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.**

Private Business

9. **West Midlands Safe Centre** (Pages 37 - 158)

Report of the Director of Children's and Education Services

(Listing Officer: A Whitrick – Email: angela.whitrick@coventry.gov.uk)

10. **Any other items of private business which the Chair decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.**

Julie Newman, Director of Law and Governance, Council House, Coventry

Monday, 27 October 2025

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Suzanne Bennett Governance Services, Email: Suzanne.Bennett@coventry.gov.uk

Membership

Cabinet Members:

Councillors N Akhtar, L Bigham, R Brown, K Caan, G Duggins (Chair), P Hetherton, A S Khan (Deputy Chair), J O'Boyle, K Sandhu and P Seaman

Non-voting Deputy Cabinet Members:

Councillors P Akhtar, S Agboola, B Christopher, G Hayre, S Nazir and D Toulson

By invitation:

Councillors J Gardiner, P Male, E Reeves and G Ridley (Non-voting Opposition representatives)

Public Access

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Suzanne Bennett Governance Services,
Email: Suzanne.Bennett@coventry.gov.uk

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm
on Tuesday, 30 September 2025

Present:

Cabinet Members: Councillor A S Khan (Deputy Chair)
Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor R Brown
Councillor P Hetherton
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor P Seaman

**Non-Voting Deputy
Cabinet Members:**

Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor G Hayre
Councillor S Nazir

**Non-Voting Opposition
Members:**

Councillor J Gardiner
Councillor P Male
Councillor E Reeves
Councillor G Ridley

**Other Non-Voting
Members:**

Councillor R Lakha
Councillor G Lloyd

**Employees (by
Directorate):**

Chief Executive

Julie Nugent (Chief Executive)

**Adult Services and
Housing**

P Fahy (Director for Care, Health and Housing)

Finance and Resource

B Hastie (Director for Finance and Resources)

Law and Governance

M Salmon, A West

**Property Services and
Development**

R Moon (Director for Property Services and Development),
C Beswick

**Regeneration and
Economy**

K Mawby, L Lakin

Apologies:

Councillor S Agboola
Councillor K Caan
Councillor B Christopher
Councillor G Duggins
Councillor A Jobbar
Councillor K Sandhu

Public Business

26. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

27. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th August 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

28. Acceptance of Additional £243,953 Grant Allocation from Department for Education (DfE) to Increase the Total Educational Grant to £1.027M

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Regeneration and Economy that sought approval for the acceptance of additional £243,953 grant allocation from the Department for Education (DfE) to increase the total educational grant to £1.027M.

The Adult Education Service (AES) typically received an annual grant from the DfE to deliver educational study programmes. This funding specifically supported 16–19-year-old learners. These learning programmes were designed for an individual learner, aimed at supporting their development and progression in line with their aspirations for sustainable paid work, further or higher education or an apprenticeship. This included learners aged 19–24 with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP).

In July 2025, the AES received written notification from the DfE regarding the Education and Skills Condition of Funding Grant. The DfE intended to award Coventry City Council an additional £243,953 for 16–19-year-old study programmes for the period 1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026.

The DfE also provided grants for Adult Skills provision, Tailored Learning, and Free Courses for Jobs, aligned to strategic priorities through an agreed curriculum plan. This supplementary funding was in addition to the existing 2025/26 academic year grant allocation of £784k, resulting in a total aggregated grant exceeding £1 million for the year.

The DfE had since written an urgent request to Coventry's Adult Education Service to accept and sign for the additional monies by no later than 1st October 2025.

The additional investment would focus on a flexible approach that built capacity to deliver a broad range of 16 to 19 programmes and learning outcomes i.e. essential skills, study programmes, supported internships, and health and well-being, and supporting progression into further learning, apprenticeships and/or work. It would also provide the opportunity to align with other investment e.g. UKSPF, Connect to Work, and Youth Trailblazer, and wider programmes such as Work Well and the development of the Get Britain Working Local Plan.

The report outlined the background and context of the DfE funding focus within Adult Education and sought Cabinet's approval to accept the additional monies, together with delegated authority to enter into future funding agreements with the DfE where necessary and available.

In accordance with the Constitution, Councillor G Lloyd, Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, had been invited to attend the meeting for this item of business to agree the need for urgency such that call-in arrangements would not apply. The reason for urgency and there not being sufficient time to allow for the Call-in period, being the need to meet the DfE requirement for signature to accept the monies on their portal by 1st October 2025. Failure to meet this deadline would result in the DfE not releasing the additional monies awarded to Adult Education.

Councillor G Lloyd agreed the need for urgency and therefore the decision in relation to this matter was not subject to call-in.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1) Approves acceptance and expenditure of the additional grant to Adult Education Service for Education and Skills in the sum of £243,953 for 2025/26.**
- 2) Grants delegated authority to the Director for Regeneration and Economy, following consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources, the Director of Law and Governance and the relevant Cabinet Member(s), to:**
 - i) Accept any additional funding up to the value of £1,500,000 to Adult Education Service for Education and Skills in the event of further grant funding being secured.**
 - ii) Expend any additional funding secured up to the value of £1,500,000 to Adult Education Service for Education and Skills in the event of further grant funding being secured.**
 - iii) Undertake all necessary due diligence in relation to any of the additional funding made available, including the authority to enter into future funding agreements with the DfE, and entry into back-to-back contracts with partners as deemed necessary.**

29. Adult Social Care Performance - Self-Assessment and Annual Report (Local Account) 2024-25

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Care, Health and Housing that had been considered by Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) at their meeting on 17th September 2025 and would also be considered at the meeting of the Council on 14th October 2025, that detailed the Adult Social Care Performance - Self-Assessment and Annual Report (Local Account) 2024/25. A copy of the Adult Social Care Self-Assessment and the Annual Report (Local Account) 2024/25 were attached as an Appendix to the report.

Coventry City Council Adult Social Care produced an Annual Report which covered performance and activity for the previous year along with examples and case studies of where there had been a positive impact to people's lives.

Producing the Annual Report had always been well received by stakeholders as it provided visibility of the key performance, challenges and impact of Adult Social Care in Coventry in the preceding twelve months.

Since the introduction of the Local Authority Assessment Framework by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) the format of the Annual Report had followed each of the four CQC themes for inspection and the quality statements associated with these themes.

As the CQC self-assessment process also required the provision of a range of operational detail, an accompanying Self-Assessment had also been produced to provide this detail. Adult Social Care produced and published its first Self-Assessment in 2024, and both the Annual Report and Self-Assessment were updated annually.

The approach taken to both the Self-Assessment and Annual Report demonstrated an open approach to the successes and challenges, and where there could be further development in order to improve outcomes for people with care and support needs and their unpaid carers, within Coventry. The Self-Assessment also provided the opportunity to present the context within which CQC would be inspecting Adult Social Care in Coventry.

The production of the 2024/25 report had drawn on the pool of feedback and information that was gathered over the year from a range of sources including social care staff, Partnership Boards, Adult Social Care Stakeholder Group, providers, partner organisations, and people who had been in contact with Adult Social Care along with their families and carers.

Cabinet considered a briefing note detailing the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) consideration of the report at their meeting on 17th September 2025 (their minute 3/25 referred). The briefing note was appended to the report and set out the Board's recommendation to Cabinet, that Cabinet accepted the recommendations within the report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1) Accepts the recommendation from the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5).**
- 2) Approves the Adult Social Care Self-Assessment and Annual Report (Local Account) 2024/25.**
- 3) Has no further comments on the content of the Self-Assessment and Annual Report (Local Account) 2024/25 for Council's consideration.**
- 4) Requests that Council receive and note the Adult Social Care Self-Assessment and Annual Report (Local Account) 2024/25.**

30. **Long Leasehold Disposal of Asset at Binley Business Park**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Property Services and Development, that would also be considered by the Council at its meeting on 14th October 2025, that detailed proposals for the long leasehold disposal of an asset at Binley Business Park in Coventry. A plan of the property for disposal was attached as an Appendix to the report.

Binley Business Park was an established business park in the East of Coventry. The Council held the freehold interest of the park with various parts let on short or long-term leases. The Park totalled approximately 45 acres and offered office accommodation set in landscaped grounds in a strategic location.

The report sought approval for the disposal of an office building, Oakfield House, for continued office use on a long leasehold basis to the existing tenant, Coventry Building Society. The disposal was in accordance with best asset management practice and supported a key existing occupier and employer operating within the city.

The Coventry Building Society would pay to the Council the sum of £3 million by way of a lease premium upon the completion of the new long lease. Thereafter the annual rent would be a peppercorn alongside the payment of an estate service charge.

The proposed transaction represented best value for the City in terms of financial value and supporting a local business.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends that Council:

- 1) **Approves the disposal of a new long leasehold interest to the existing tenant Coventry Building Society, for continued office use, at Oakfield House, Binley Business Park, for £3m (three million pounds).**
- 2) **Delegates authority to the Director of Property Services and Development, the Director of Law and Governance, and the Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, to conclude the terms of the transaction and legal documentation for the long leasehold transfer and any associated matters.**

31. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

32. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 2.15 pm)

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Public report Cabinet

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
Cabinet

30 October 2025
4 November 2025

Name of Scrutiny Chair:

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee – Councillor G Lloyd

Director approving submission of the report:

Chief Executive

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee One Coventry Plan Deep Dive Recommendations

Is this a key decision?

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

Executive summary:

Following consideration of a report presented to Scrutiny Coordination Committee on 21st August 2025 and Cabinet on 26th August 2025, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee agreed to undertake a Deep Dive investigation into the performance reported against the key performance indicators (KPI's) in the One Coventry Plan.

There were five sessions in which members of the Committee questioned Cabinet Members and officers responsible for those areas where performance had not met targets.

This report seeks to provide an update on the outcome of the Deep Dive Investigations together with proposed recommendations going forward.

Recommendations:

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Approve the proposed recommendations to Cabinet as detailed below.

- 2) Request that the appropriate Scrutiny Body undertakes the work detailed in Appendix 1 Section 17.
- 3) Ensure that each Scrutiny body reviews performance on the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) related to their remit on an annual basis as part of the One Coventry Plan review process.

Cabinet is recommended to agree:-

- 1) That all One Coventry Plan Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are reviewed as part of the reporting process, by Cabinet and Scrutiny to ensure relevance as the Council goes through service re-design and change.
- 2) That KPI's are measurable and/or can demonstrate service improvements.
- 3) That KPI's reported in the One Coventry Plan are designated as either being national indicators or locally determined.
- 4) That where data isn't available on an annual basis, the frequency of the data is identified and reported accordingly.
- 5) That consideration be given to the potential discord between targets to protect green and blue spaces and targets to build houses, and whether there are any other targets that could potentially be contradictory.
- 6) That all Council Strategies and One Coventry Plan KPI's are cross-referenced and aligned.
- 7) That each Scrutiny body reviews performance on the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) related to their remit on an annual basis as part of the One Coventry Plan review process.
- 8) That recognition is given where performance targets have been achieved, and that this is celebrated.
- 9) That the specific KPI's identified in Appendix 1 Sections 1-16 are reviewed alongside Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee's comments and suggestions.

List of Appendices included:

The following appendices are attached to the report:

Appendix 1 – One Coventry Plan Deep Dives KPI Specific Recommendations

Background papers:

Report titled "One Coventry Plan Annual Performance Report (April 2024 – March 2025)" dated 21st August 2025 (Scrutiny Co-Ordination Committee) and 26th August 2025 (Cabinet)

[04 One Coventry Plan Annual Performance Report April 2024-March 2025.pdf](#)

Other useful documents

[One Coventry Plan Annual Performance Report \(April 2024-March 2025\)](#)

[Appendix](#)
[One Coventry Plan 2022-2030.pdf](#)

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

Yes

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee – 30 October 2025

Has it or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee One Coventry Plan Deep Dive Recommendations

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee regularly receives a report on performance against the indicators in the One Coventry Plan.
- 1.2. At their meeting on 21st August 2025, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered the One Coventry Plan Annual Performance report (April 2024 – March 2025). It was agreed that the Committee would undertake a deep dive of those key performance indicators that had not been met, as well as the indicator on Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 1.3. The Deep Dive sessions involved the relevant Cabinet Members and officers who were questioned about the performance areas in detail.
- 1.4. The Deep Dive consisted of five sessions which considered the following metrics from the One Coventry Plan, where performance targets had not been met. The details of the Deep Dive sessions, including KPI's discussed and recommendations on specific KPI's can be found at Appendix 1.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1. Option 1 – Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee do not to review Council performance.
This option was not considered, as Council performance is a key aspect of the role of Scrutiny in ensuring that the Council is achieving its' strategic objectives.
- 2.2. Option 2 – Maintain status quo
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee has considered the Annual Performance Report on the One Coventry Plan since the current Plan was agreed in 2024 but has also received annual Council Plan performance reports since Scrutiny's inception in 2000. Although Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee has previously made recommendations to Cabinet on performance, scrutinising key performance indicators in detail is not possible at one meeting alone and therefore not recommended.
- 2.3. Option 3 – Endorse the outcome of the Deep Dive of Performance which has identified recommendations for Cabinet (Recommended). This approach was agreed at Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee's meeting on 21st August 2025.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. There has been no specific consultation on these recommendations, although it is recommended that Cabinet Members and Scrutiny Councillors are included in any future review of KPI's.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. There is no specific timetable for implementation, however Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee will require a progress report on recommendations in 12 months' time.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Law and Governance

5.1. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, however governance and delivery of the Council's objectives will have an impact on the Council's overall financial position and external Value for Money assessment.

5.2. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising out of this report at this time. Legal Services will continue to provide the necessary advice and support required as recommendations arising out of the Deep Dive Investigations and sessions (set out in the main body of this report) are being implemented.

The Government's Local Government Transparency Code sets out the minimum data that local authorities should be publishing; the frequency it should be published; and how it should be published. There is no requirement placed on local authorities to publish a report on its performance or any requirement on the Council to publish performance on any indicators or metrics.

Coventry City Council does so as it is committed to providing information that helps the Council work together with neighbours and partners, fulfilling it's One Coventry Plan vision, priorities, values, and ways of working; and sees it as good practice to do so.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

The recommendations in this report have arisen as a result of a review of the indicators contained in the One Coventry Plan.

6.2. How is risk being managed?

There are no direct risk arising from these recommendations; however each service area is responsible for their own risk management.

6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

The impact will be a more effective and streamlined use of performance data to better reflect on the outcomes of the One Coventry Plan.

6.4. Equalities / EIA?

The One Coventry Plan has had a full EIA completed as part of the original report, these recommendations do not affect that assessment. [One Coventry Plan Equality Impact Assessment](#)

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

Tackling the causes and consequences of climate change is one of the three key priorities in the One Coventry Plan 2022-2030. The recommendations in this report do not affect these priorities

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

None – all recommendations to Cabinet affect internal Council services.

Report author(s):

Name: Gennie Holmes

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Service Area:

Law and Governance

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person

Contributor/approver name	Title	Service Area	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Officer	Law and Governance	26/9/25	07/10/25
Tom Robinson	Governance Service Officer	Law and Governance	19/9/25	26/9/25
Sunairah Miraj	Head of Performance Data and Continuous Improvement	Planning and Performance	26/9/25	
Other Members				
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Christopher Whitley		Finance	26/9/25	1/10/25
Legal: Oluremi Aremu	Head of Legal and Procurement Services	Law and Governance	26/09/25	02/10/25
Director: Clare Boden-Hatton on behalf of Julie Nugent		Planning and Performance	26/9/25	15/10/25
Members: Cllr G Lloyd	Chair – Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee	-	26/9/25	14/10/25
Cllr G Duggins	Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership		26/9/25	9/10/25

This report is published on the council's website: www.coventry.gov.uk/meetings

Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee One Coventry Plan Deep Dive Recommendations

Session 1 reviewed the following Key Performance Indicators and produced the subsequent recommendations:

Cabinet Member Portfolio	OCP Priority	Metric
City Services/Policing and Equalities	Reducing Inequalities	Fly-tips reported in the city
City Services	Climate Change	Principal roads (A roads) in a good/acceptable condition
		Unclassified roads in a good/acceptable condition
		Pavements without defects present
		Household waste recycled and composted
		Road casualties by road user type - pedestrian

1 Fly Tips reported in the city:

Recommendation a): Review and propose changes to the fly tipping metric in the One Coventry Plan to include both enforcement actions and the number of fly tips not enforced against, highlighting the gap between them.

- 1.1 Officers highlighted the increase in reported fly-tipping incidents compared to the previous year, in part due to the impact of awareness campaigns such as the 'Wall of Shame' and improved reporting mechanisms. For example, increased investment and funding into surveillance worked alongside the service area being more proactive with businesses to conduct inspections and report incidents. These, in turn, encouraged more residents to report incidents, which led to increased figures. Officers and the Committee subsequently recognised that, as the current indicator focuses on reported figures rather than enforcement action, it cannot accurately reflect performance.

2 Pavements without defects present:

Recommendation b): Change the metric for measuring pavement quality to align with the method used for road condition surveys (DVI), and check if new government indicators on pavements are being introduced; if not, proceed with Coventry-specific metrics.

- 2.1 Alongside their discussion for the metrics and measurements for principal and unclassified roads in a good/acceptable condition, officers highlighted the use of a nationally recognised DVI (Detailed Visual Inspection) method to generate accurate and consistent indicator performance scores. However, when measuring pavement quality, there was a lack of a similar reliable measurement, instead relying on an asset management database. Efforts to transition to similar DVI-based assessments were recognised.

Session 2 reviewed the following Key Performance Indicators and produced the subsequent recommendations:

Cabinet Member Portfolio	OCP Priority	Metric
Public Health, Sport, and Wellbeing	Reducing Inequalities	Overweight or obesity among children in Year 6
		Percentage and (number) of children (aged under 16) living in relative low-income families
Education and Skills	Economic Prosperity	16-17-year-olds not in education, employment, or training (NEET) including not knowns
		Destination of school leavers aged 16+ (% continuing to a sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination)
Children and Young People	Reducing Inequalities	Good level of development at age 5
		First time entrants to youth justice system - rate per 100,000 young people aged 10-17 (& count)
		Children in Care (rate per 10,000 population under 18 & number)

3 Children in Care per 10,000 (rate per 10,000 population under 18 & number)

Recommendation c): Metric should exclude UASC – rationale being separate additional funding – political decision to accept.

- 3.1 As part of the Committee's review into this metric, they began by looking at the historical data for children entering care, noting the reduction since 2017/18 and the positive impact of the Family Valued Model, first introduced in 2021. The model aims to keep families together and only admit the right children into care. Adding to this, officers also mentioned the effectiveness of the Reunification Service, which has successfully returned over 55 young people to their families in the past 3 years, generating cost savings and national recognition. Despite these successes, officers highlighted how the inclusion of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) into this metric was a significant contributing factor to the indicator's underperformance. The committee questioned the appropriateness of their inclusion in the indicator, considering the separate funding streams available for these children.

4 Children in Care NEET:

Recommendation d): That the number of Children in Care who are NEET to be added as a KPI.

- 4.1 It was noted that, as with all education metrics, indicators still show signs of impact from the COVID pandemic. Notably, officers stated, however, how Coventry's 16-17 not in education, employment or training (NEET) figures had outperformed national and regional averages for eight consecutive years whilst maintaining low numbers of young people whose status is unknown. As part of the service area's offer, the Council has expanded support for supported internships, adult education

programmes, and commissioned careers support to improve outcomes, especially for SEND students. However, the Committee recognised the gap in properly measuring care leavers' participation in education, employment or training. Officers welcomed the future inclusion of this metric into the performance indicators, recognising how, whilst participation has improved, care leavers' still lag behind the general population. The Committee and officers continued their discussion of NEETs by highlighting the limited local influence on the nationally funded post-16 offer and the mental health challenges facing young people, especially post-COVID. Additionally, it was noted how, following the closure of Henley College, the Council was working with regional partners to address the vocational training gap and address sufficiency and curriculum breadth in post-16 education.

5 First time entrants to youth justice system - rate per 100,000 young people aged 10-17 (& count):

- 5.1 Recommendation e): To include re-offending rates as well as first-time entry.
- 5.2 Following several years of low rates, officers recognised a rise in first-time entrants to the youth justice system in 2024/25 with the increase being linked to enhanced police investigations, stricter handling of knife and weapon offences, and fewer deferred prosecutions due to policy changes. The Committee discussed the influence of social media on youth crime, highlighting the importance of early intervention and partnership working to prevent radicalisation. To have a better understanding of how and why the rise has occurred, the Committee recommended inviting the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee. Additionally, alternative measures to punitive punishment were recognised, with the role of the Youth Justice Board being emphasised as a way to scrutinise all cases and ensure alternatives to prosecution are considered. Resultantly, the Committee noted that re-offending as well as first-time entry should be included within this metric to provide a fuller picture of the youth justice system.

Session 3 reviewed the following Key Performance Indicators and produced the subsequent recommendations:

Cabinet Member Portfolio	OCP Priority	Metric
Jobs, Regeneration, and Climate Change	Economic Prosperity	Active enterprises number (and rate per 10,000 pop aged 16+) (proxy for new businesses)
	Climate Change	CDP carbon disclosure score
		Biodiversity net gain (measure of habitat creation and conservation)
Housing and Communities	Reducing Inequalities	Homelessness cases prevented and relieved

6 Active enterprises number (and rate per 10,000 pop aged 16+) (proxy for new businesses)

- 6.1 Recommendation f): To review whether this is an appropriate measure and whether there are more relevant measures such as residents moving into work, number of jobs created and new businesses still operating after 12 months.
- 6.2 The Committee discussed the limitations of this metric, recognising it only as a snapshot of economic prosperity without taking into account wider initiatives contributing to business growth in the city. Officers explained the figures, demonstrating that Coventry's active enterprise decline was consistent with national trends. However, the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, Councillor Jim O'Boyle, noted the role of job creation, sectoral breakdowns, and investment impact to better reflect the economic health of the city. As a result, further data on sector-by-sector breakdowns would be an item for further scrutiny at the Business and Economy Scrutiny Board (3), and recommendations would be developed to include more comprehensive economic indicators in the One Coventry Plan.

7 Biodiversity net gain (measure of habitat creation and conservation)

- 7.1 Recommendation g): to identify measures that provide a better picture of the position, maybe using data that is collected through the Nature Towns and Cities Fund. Also to distinguish between contributions from the public and private sector.
- 7.2 Officers explained that the metric is hard to measure, especially considering the difficulties in finding an accurate data set. However, new developments in the city have a statutory requirement to deliver at least a 10% biodiversity net gain, managed through planning and ecology teams, with Coventry recently becoming a responsible body for conservation covenants and supporting neighbouring authorities. Currently, officers estimate that nature conservation is at 11% in the city, with efforts underway to reach the target of 30%. For example, the importance of the £1 million Nature Towns and Cities fund was highlighted to engage residents and support community-led conservation, with officers outlining plans for data mapping, training, and the development of a nature project pipeline to secure further funding and deliver practical outcomes. Overall, it was recognised how data collection for this metric would be transformed by the incoming Climate Change Strategy, with the Committee suggesting further avenues for data exploration and recognising the distinction between contributions from the public and private sector.

8 Access to Green and Blue Spaces

- 8.1 Recommendation h): To include blue space as well as access green space be considered as a metric for the OCP.
- 8.2 Following on from the discussion on biodiversity net gain, the Committee advocated for recognising both green and blue spaces (such as canals) in conservation metrics, with officers agreeing to include these in future reporting and planning.

9 Homelessness cases prevented and relieved

- 9.1 Recommendation i): This metric to be reviewed and a more appropriate measure identified that reflects work done to prevent homelessness. Possibly as a proportion of those at risk supported to stay in their current home or other suitable accommodation. Also to reflect work done with residents presenting as homeless

already into suitable accommodation. This would reflect the re-focus of pro-active and re-active teams within the service.

- 9.2 Officers began by recognising the marginal decrease on last year, noting that the percentage of successful prevention has actually improved and explained the complexities of measuring prevention outcomes, considering it's not a statutory duty for the service area. To improve the figure further, an increased homelessness prevention grant will help to expand resources and focus more on early intervention, aiming to improve prevention rates and address challenges faced by larger families and those presenting late. The Committee suggested further measures within the metric to reflect the positive work being done. For example, benchmarking Coventry's performance to other local authorities and measuring as a proportion of those at risk. In turn, this would reflect the re-focus of pro-active and re-active teams within the service.

Session 4 reviewed the following Key Performance Indicators and produced the subsequent recommendations:

Cabinet Member Portfolio	OCP Priority	Metric
Strategic Finance and Resources	Continued Financial sustainability	Business rates total rateable value (and collection rate)
		Council tax collection rate
		Savings targets met
		Council staff sickness absence (rolling twelve-month period)
City Services	Climate Change	Household waste recycled and composted*

*Carried over from SCRUCO Deep Dive OCP Session #1

10 Business rates total rateable value (and collection rate) and Council tax collection rate

- 10.1 Recommendation j): To include a KPI on like-for-like comparative data on the duration and effectiveness of business rates and council tax collection compared to other councils. Also to report on arrears collection rates as well as in-year.
- 10.2 Following a general discussion on Coventry's financial position, officers explained that whereas the arrears position is better than average when compared to similar authorities, Council tax collection rates are below target – more detailed comparative data would be presented to scrutiny at a future meeting. As expressed by the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources, Councillor R Brown, these insights were presented with the backdrop of continued underfunding compared to national and regional averages, resulting in higher Council tax burdens for residents. He advocated for Council tax equalisation and continued lobbying for fairer funding, with scrutiny encouraged to support these efforts.
- 10.3 Additionally, officers discussed the complexity and volatility of business rates collection, noting that the Council retains only a portion of growth above a baseline and that business failures can significantly impact collection rates. The Council uses statutory measures and collection agents but faces challenges with avoidance

and write-offs. Similarly, the Committee encouraged more comparative data to assess where Coventry stands amongst the national picture of business rates.

11 Council staff sickness absence

- 11.1 Recommendation k): To incorporate more granular absence data including performance by long-term and short-term absence, and by staff working arrangements (home, flexible, fixed, agile).
- 11.2 As outlined by officers, staff absence rates in Coventry have remained around 13 days per year, which is consistent with the public sector average but higher than the national average. The Council is the highest among metropolitan authorities in the region, but long-term absence rates are not unusually high compared to peers. To combat this, a range of interventions have been implemented, including occupational health services, well-being sessions, training for managers, and targeted deep dives into high-absence areas. There is ongoing investment in performance management and cultural change to address absence. The Committee sought more in-depth analysis of absence trends, especially with regard to possible correlations between flexible working arrangements and absence. However, under the current model of categorising staff by work patterns, this detail was hard to ascertain. The Committee further enquired into the data regarding long-term and short-term absence, noting the complexities introduced by factors such as neurodiversity and the need for reasonable adjustments.

12 Positive Practice Indicator for Staff Wellbeing

- 12.1 Recommendation l): To add an indicator to monitor and maintain the gold standard of the Thrive award for staff health and wellbeing in future reporting.
- 12.2 Following on from the discussion on Council Staff Sickness, the Committee recognised the Council and the service area's achievement of the gold standard in the Thrive at Work Workplace Wellbeing Awards. Resultantly, the Committee felt an emphasis should be placed on maintaining high standards and sharing good practices, with suggestions to include indicators for long-term absence and well-being achievements in reporting.

Session 5 included a review of every Key Performance Indicator included within the One Coventry Plan and produced the subsequent recommendations:

The Committee began by drawing attention to the majority of the Key Performance Indicators that had been achieved or even outperformed their targets. It was emphasised that good practice continued to be celebrated, and recognition was given to those relevant service areas.

13 Proportion of neighbourhoods amongst the 10% most deprived in England (measure of deprivation)

- 13.1 Recommendation m): To consider whether there is locally developed KPI that can be reported annually rather than 10 yearly IMD.
- 13.2 During their review, the Committee sought to understand the lack of data relating to Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Officers noted that a year-on-year measure couldn't be taken due to the infrequency of the data. Alternatively, the Committee suggested utilising data to develop a local KPI to be reported on annually.

14 Destination of school leavers aged 18 after reaching the end of 16-18 study

- 14.1 Recommendation n): KPI to be reconsidered if there is no data or target
- 14.2 This metric's lack of data for 2025/25 prompted the Committee to ask for the KPI to be reconsidered if there is no data or target.

15 Households at risk of digital exclusion

- 15.1 Recommendation o): To identify an appropriate target for this indicator.
- 15.2 The Committee further drew attention to the lack of data and target for household digital exclusion, with officers stating that it is an area that is evolving naturally and agreed to work with partners to develop a realistic target, with Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) to monitor progress.

16 Connectivity

- 16.1 Recommendation p): To consider whether data on commercial access to full fibre and/or gigabit internet could be made available to sit alongside the household data.
- 16.2 The Committee also discussed the potential for a KPI on business connectivity, with officers noting data access challenges but agreeing to explore aggregate measures and include 5G coverage in future reviews.

17 Recommendations to Scrutiny

17.1 Hot-Streets Analysis:

- 17.2 Investigate why certain hot streets, such as Ball Hill, remain persistent fly tipping problems despite ongoing efforts (Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)).
- 17.3 Following on from the discussion on increased reporting of fly-tipping, the work being done and the need to recognise enforcement action in the fly-tipping metric, the Committee also drew attention to the hot streets campaign. Specifically, they welcomed a further investigation into why certain areas remain persistent problem areas and the measures in place to tackle this.

17.4 Youth Justice

- 17.5 Arrange a scrutiny session with the police and relevant partners to examine the impact of changes in police approach to knife crime, including the effectiveness of criminalisation versus diversion and early intervention, and invite Simon Foster (PCC) to attend (Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee).
- 17.6 As recognised previously, during the Committee's discussion into first time entrants into the Youth Justice Service, to better understand police investigation and prosecution policies. Plans were made to bring police representatives to a future scrutiny session to discuss decision-making processes, trends in types of offences, and reoffending rates. The need for more detailed data on offence types and outcomes was identified.

17.7 Child Poverty Systemic Approach

- 17.8 Undertake a deeper scrutiny piece of work on the systemic approach to child poverty, ensuring cross-partner collaboration and consideration of generational worklessness and private sector involvement (Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee).

- 17.9 The Committee's previous review of metrics relating to the portfolios of both the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Councillor K Sandhu, and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor P Seaman, led a wider exploration of child poverty and low-income families. Specifically, the Committee examined the high percentage of children living in low-income families in Coventry, the links to migration, employment, and generational poverty, and discussed strategies for targeted intervention and partnership working. Officers highlighted the development of a whole systems approach involving public health, education, housing, and economic partners. The Marmot City framework and the One Coventry programme are seen as vehicles for integrating efforts and addressing systemic issues. Resultantly, Scrutiny was identified as a means to bring together partners, review the effectiveness of current programmes, and consider deeper dives into generational poverty, employment, and health inequalities.
- 17.10 Consider number of jobs created by sector**
- 17.11 Following the review of economic prosperity metrics and active enterprises in the city, the Committee welcomed the recommendation of additional indicators, such as the number of residents entering employment, jobs created, and investment attracted, rather than relying solely on the active enterprises figure to demonstrate economic performance. Additionally, the Committee requested sector-by-sector data and information on business longevity, which was acknowledged as available but not yet collated; officers agreed to raise this as an agenda item for further scrutiny and provide the requested breakdown as part of the item on the Economic Development Strategy at the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
- 17.12 Collection agency performance data on third-party collection agencies, including their success rates**
- 17.13 During the discussion on the complexities of business rates and council tax collection, officers confirmed that collection agents are used and that their performance is monitored monthly. Currently, agents collect around 30% of referred debts, with the data being shared with Scrutiny Board (1) as requested by the Committee.
- 17.14 Ensure that each Scrutiny Board reviews performance on the relevant KPI's on an annual basis as part of the One Coventry Plan review process:**
- 17.15 Considering the recommendations for the KPIs not previously reviewed in the deep dive sessions, the Committee highlighted the importance of Council continuity in ensuring that KPIs align with those in other Council strategies, with a recommendation to cross-reference and harmonise targets. Specifically, the importance of Scrutiny buy-in to future plans was stressed, with a recommendation to have KPIs go to the relevant Scrutiny Boards before being pulled together in the annual report.



Public report

Cabinet

A separate report is submitted in the private part of the agenda in respect of this item, as it contains details of financial information required to be kept private in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The grounds for privacy are that it contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining the exemption under Schedule 12A outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Cabinet

4 November 2025

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Councillor P Seaman

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Children's & Education Services

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

West Midlands Safe Centre

Is this a key decision?

Yes - the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on residents or businesses in two or more electoral wards in the City.

Executive summary:

Secure children's homes care for some of the most vulnerable young people in society with the most complex needs. They are safe settings for children whose liberty is legally restricted, where they can be supported through trauma aware and psychologically informed integrated care, health and educational services.

Children are admitted to secure children's homes through one of two pathways: those subject to criminal proceedings for their offending behaviour, but who are usually managed within the youth justice secure estate; and those subject to public law welfare proceedings who are deemed to pose a significant risk to themselves and or others. The facility being planned here is for the latter, welfare cases only.

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Children placed in secure children's homes are likely to have experienced a number of placements that have broken down, missed a lot of education, have unmet emotional and physical health needs and have suffered a great deal of trauma in their lives.

There is a national shortage of secure placements for these vulnerable children. The West Midlands currently has no dedicated regional provision creating pressure on the existing secure estate.

This report sets out the progress made so far and seeks Cabinet approval to move forward with Coventry City Council being a party to the delivery of the West Midlands Safe Centre project (West Midlands Safe Centre). Further details are set out in the corresponding private element of this report.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended (subject to the completion of all necessary due diligence work and following consideration of the additional confidential information contained in the corresponding private report,) to:

- (1) Endorse the development of the West Midlands Safe Centre as set out in the business case that has been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) and appended at Appendix 1 of the corresponding private report.
- (2) Endorse the proposed legal formation of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) as set out in this report.
- (3) Approve the arrangements for Coventry City Council to join the SPV and be part of a formal partnership for governance of the West Midlands Safe Centre with other West Midlands local authorities.
- (4) Agree that further Cabinet approval would be required for Coventry City Council to continue to participate in the Partnership Agreement at a revised risk / reward share if insufficient local authority members sign up and the share tolerance as set out in the corresponding private report was exceeded.
- (5) Approve in principle the proposed procurement and property arrangements for the operation of the West Midlands Safe Centre.
- (6) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's and Education Services, following consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law & Governance, to undertake the following:
 - a) complete the necessary due diligence required including but not limited to legal and tax due diligence arrangements; and
 - b) thereafter to complete all necessary documents to give effect to the above recommendations. The delegation shall also include the power to do anything necessary, incidental or ancillary for the carrying into effect the recommendations set out in this report.

List of Appendices included:

None

Note: The following appendices are attached in the corresponding private element of this report:

Appendix 1: West Midlands Safe Centre Business Case

Appendix 2: Initial design for West Midlands Safe Centre

Appendix 3: Draft Heads of Terms for SPV

Appendix 4: Clawback Impact per LA Proportional Share

Appendix 5: Regional demand/cost position and 10-year financial model

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

Planning Statement submitted on 2 June 2025:

<http://eplanning.idox.birmingham.gov.uk/publisher/mvc/listDocuments?identifier=Planning&reference=2025/03137/PA>

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

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Report Title: West Midlands Safe Centre

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1. Secure children's homes are safe settings for children whose liberty is restricted, where they can be supported through trauma aware and psychologically informed integrated care, health and educational services.
- 1.2. There is a national shortage of secure placements for these vulnerable children, as highlighted by Ofsted, with 50 children waiting for a secure welfare placement on any given day. A total of 2 Coventry City Council children were placed in secure welfare during the period 2019 – 2025 with a number of other children in unregulated provision due to lack of availability of secure welfare.
- 1.3. The West Midlands currently has no dedicated regional provision, creating pressure on the existing secure estate. Detailed research shows there is a clear need to create more secure children's home provision for the West Midlands. Further details of the need for regional secure welfare provision for children in the West Midlands is set out in the private element of this report.
- 1.4. Children placed in secure children's homes have their liberty restricted by court order under section 25 of the Children Act. The threshold for this is only met when children are assessed to be of significant risk to themselves or others.
- 1.5. In recognition of the national shortage of secure beds the DfE opened up bids to LA's in 2019 to provide funding to develop this resource across the country. The West Midlands currently has no dedicated regional provision, and fourteen (14) Local Authorities came together to enter a bid to develop a West Midlands resource formally called "The Safe Centre".
- 1.6. The proposed West Midlands Safe Centre will be the first regionally owned secure children's home in the country, providing 20 secure welfare beds and high-quality care, health and education to local children. Coventry Council, along with the other represented LA's have been working to a partnership in principle to develop the West Midlands Safe Centre, this regional secure children's home.
- 1.7. The risks involved in running and investing in the West Midlands Safe Centre were deemed too great for any one local authority to bear individually. Subject to approval through each local authority's governance processes and the proposed Partnership Agreement, a separate legal entity in the form of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) will be created for the West Midlands Safe Centre to operate and manage the secure welfare provision on behalf of the 14 local authorities/Children's Trusts.

Benefits

- 1.8. The key benefits of the West Midlands Safe Centre project are set out in the private element of this report, and include:

- Ensuring the most vulnerable children are able to access secure care within the West Midlands and reducing delays in this care being available when they need it
- Significant investment in the West Midlands region, including a range of job opportunities
- Reduced risks of high-cost unregulated provision
- Reduce significant oncosts linked to travel and professionals' time
- Support families to engage in reunification and maintain relationships through family time
- Enable a planned transition back to Coventry through 'mobility' and ongoing outreach support once the child has moved on.

Design and Build

- 1.9. As this is a DfE funded project, a number of gateways have had to be completed.
- 1.10. This design work informed the planning application that was submitted in June 2025. More information about the design is set out in the private element of this report.

Project Governance

- 1.11. Structured governance arrangements are currently in place including a project board. Four Directors of Children's Services represent the region on the project board and report back to all 14 local authorities via the West Midlands Directors of Children's Services Network (WMADCS).
- 1.12. Regular meetings take place with the DfE on all aspects of the project, including focused sessions on the Design and Build workstream to monitor and challenge progress; financial meetings relating to grant spend and budget forecasting; programme review meetings and regular keeping in touch meetings between the Project SRO (Senior Responsible Officer) and DfE Capital Team SRO. In addition, monthly progress reports with risk and issue logs are submitted to the DfE along with a vast range of gateway reporting documents at each stage. The Director for Children's and Education Services and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People are regularly briefed on the project and updated on meetings that have taken place with DfE.
- 1.13. Further details on the project governance arrangements and how it operates are contained within the business case attached at Appendix 1 of the private element of this report.

Corporate and Financial Governance

- 1.14. The West Midlands Safe Centre Project Board and the Directors of Children's Services (WMADCS) group confirmed their preferred SPV criteria as follows:
- Equal ownership in SPV including voting rights and reserved matters.
 - Ability to implement the agreed percentage risk and reward methodology.

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- The ability to commission a service delivery provider.
- Ideally the ability to explore future opportunities to be delivered by the SPV.

1.15. Following a legal options appraisal, a shortlist of options for the SPV was considered:

- Limited Liability Partnership (LLP)
- Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG)
- Charitable company

Operation of the SPV

1.16. The proposed SPV will be responsible for coordinating and managing the requirements of the member local authorities for secure welfare placements ensuring that these are met through the availability and use of the West Midlands Safe Centre. To this end the SPV will commission a service provider for the West Midlands Safe Centre.

1.17. The member local authorities will equally own a share of the SPV and operate the SPV, under terms that will be set out in a Partnership Agreement between the Members.

1.18. The SPV will be established with a two-tier management structure which will include all member local authorities and a delegated Management Board. Certain key strategic and constitutional decisions will be reserved for all member local authorities.

1.19. The SPV will trigger additional financial reporting and audit obligations for each of the member local authorities, including reporting on the performance of the West Midlands Safe Centre through each local authority's existing governance arrangements.

1.20. In addition, the SPV will need its own resources to undertake its day-to-day management and legal obligations. This will include procurement and contract management resource, financial compliance; corporate legal; insurance and Board Management support. The costs of these will be built into the model and will not require any additional investment from the member local authorities.

1.21. A working group has been assembled with finance and legal representatives from all 14 local authorities to work with the project leads on the draft heads of terms and any other associated documents necessary to establish the SPV.

1.22. The current proposed risk / reward share is based on each member local authority/Children's Trust's number of children in care (aged over 10 years and excluding unaccompanied asylum-seeking children). Coventry City Council's proposed share is set out in the private element of this report.

- 1.23. If insufficient local authorities/Trusts sign up to the Partnership Agreement and the share tolerance is likely to exceed the percentage share set out in the private element of this report, Cabinet approval would be required for Coventry City Council's continued participation.
- 1.24. A summary of the governance proposals and the draft Heads of Terms are set out in the private element of this report. These will be converted into the Partnership Agreement and will be legally binding.

Property Arrangements

- 1.25. The Kingsmere Centre in Gravelly Hill, Birmingham, has been identified as the preferred site for the West Midlands Safe Centre. Kingsmere was previously the site of a children's home and most recently was the base for Birmingham's Youth Justice Service.
- 1.26. Responsibility for the full repairs and maintenance will sit with the service delivery provider with the cost charged to the SPV. Provision has been made for a capital maintenance reserve in the financial modelling of the SPV for cyclical replacement of furniture, fittings and equipment.

West Midlands Safe Centre Service Delivery Contract

- 1.27. A Preliminary Market Engagement Notice was issued in June 2025 via 'Find A Tender Service' under the Procurement Act 2023. Suppliers from the West Midlands Regional Placements framework were informed of this notice to increase responses. The purpose was to gain an understanding of the capacity and capability of the market to deliver this service which will inform the procurement strategy.
- 1.28. Further details on the procurement route are set out in the private element of this report.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1. The options considered include the following:

- Do nothing (Not Recommended)

This would not resolve the shortage of secure welfare care for the most vulnerable children in the West Midlands. Local authorities would continue to have to place vulnerable children at a significant distance from their local areas, away from their families and other networks. This option is therefore not recommended.

- Proceed with the project and establish a structured SPV as a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) (Not Recommended)

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This option is not recommended as it is not considered beneficial at the writing of this report but may need to be revisited and if so, will be reported to the West Midlands Safe Centre Project Board for consideration.

- Endorse the recommendations set out in this report (Recommended)

The recommended option is for Coventry City Council to join the SPV and be part of a formal partnership for governance of the West Midlands Safe Centre with other West Midlands local authorities.

The proposed SPV will be incorporated as a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) underpinned by a Partnership Agreement. The purpose of the LLP will be to discharge the local authorities' and the Children's Trusts' sufficiency duty, delivering public services and managing public assets around secure welfare provision for vulnerable children within the West Midlands.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. When the Kingsmere site in Birmingham was identified as the preferred location for the West Midlands Safe Centre, the project team undertook assessments to establish the viability of using the existing buildings as part of the future provision. Due to the stringent security and welfare requirements, the existing building could not be re-used or incorporated into the scheme and achieve the site function. Following this assessment a Heritage Assessment was undertaken on the site which deemed none of the buildings to be architecturally distinguished.
- 3.2. At the pre-notification stage an application was submitted to list the building. The process was delayed for six months while the listing application was considered. Historic England supported the recommendation not to list the building.
- 3.3. Pre-planning consultation took place in March and April 2025 to consult on the design elements of the West Midlands Safe Centre that are included in the planning application and give neighbours the opportunity to ask questions and raise any concerns they may have.
- 3.4. At the pre-planning stage information was shared with a range of stakeholders and partners including councillors, an MP for Birmingham, the Mayor of the West Midlands, senior officers in Birmingham City Council and the other 13 local authorities and the Police, Fire and Health.
- 3.5. The planning statement submitted with the planning application on 2 June 2025 is available on Birmingham Council's Planning Portal and includes full details of the pre-application stage, feedback received and management action taken.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

Governance Milestones

- 4.1. Cabinet approvals are being sought across the region between September and November 2025. The main contract will be signed in May 2026, with the facility expecting to become operational from Autumn 2028.

Project Milestones

- 4.2. The following key milestones need to be met within this current DfE Grant period (April 2025 – April 2026) for RIBA Stage 4. Plans are in place for these to take place within the timeframes stated below:

- Planning Application Submitted (June 2025)
- Cabinet Approvals (September - November 2025). The West Midlands Directors of Children’s Services network will take reports to their Cabinets by November 2025.
- Final Technical Design Completed (December 2025). This will include design of:
 - Healthcare / Education/ Care / Admin & Staff Areas / Support Services (Catering, Laundry, Facilities Management)
 - Interior Design & Room Layouts
 - Landscape Design & External Spaces
 - Security & IT
- DfE Clawback Contract for the main works – to be signed by May 2026.

Legal due diligence and discussions are still ongoing on the early principles of the proposed draft Heads of Terms which the DfE has agreed to issue early to ensure negotiations and full consultation can take place given the more complex nature of a regional arrangement.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Law and Governance

Financial Implications

- 5.1. All financial information relating to these recommendations can be found in the corresponding private report.

Legal Implications

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- 5.2. The Council has a statutory duty (Children Act 1989) to ensure sufficient placements in their area, including secure accommodation for children they look after. The West Midlands Safe Centre will address the significant gap in sufficiency of secure welfare placements in the West Midlands region.
- 5.3. In order to establish a secure children's home, several legal and regulatory frameworks must be followed: These include (but not limited to):
- Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011: gives local authorities relatively broad powers to do anything that individuals may generally do, including to establish legal entities such as a Special Purpose Vehicle for the purposes of supporting with the discharge of their statutory functions.
 - Children Act 1989: which provides the legal basis for placing children in secure accommodation. Coventry City Council will be responsible for arranging the most appropriate provision for children who may be eligible to enter or who may subsequently leave the West Midlands Safe Centre, in accordance with local authorities' sufficiency duty.
 - Care Standards Act 2000: defines what constitutes a children's home and mandates registration with Ofsted
 - Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015: which sets out the operational standards, including staffing, safeguarding and quality of care. Secure homes must meet additional standards due to the restrictions on liberty.
 - Approval by the Secretary of State must be formally given (through the DfE) to operate secure settings. This includes demonstrating the ability to safely restrict liberty and provide therapeutic care.
- 5.4. The participation in and use of SPV's by local authorities for collaborative working between multiple parties is relatively complex, both in terms of initial work to establish optimum and compliant operating models.
- 5.5. Appropriate delegations have been sought in this report which also require consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law & Governance thus ensuring that there is compliance, accountability and strategic oversight at senior officer levels.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

6.2. The three delivery priorities will be achieved through the following:

- **Improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within our communities;** Children who are in need of secure welfare care, will be able to access this locally and have access to onsite education and therapeutic support. Families

will be supported to maintain relationships through regular visits, previously due to distance, this created challenges.

- **Improving the economic prosperity of the city and regions;** The WMSC will create jobs within the construction phase and offer ongoing employment opportunities.
- **Tackling the causes and consequences of climate change:** there will be a significant reduction in travel and a reduction in the emissions linked to this. Please refer to 6.6.

The two enabling priorities will be achieved through the following:

- **Continued financial sustainability of the Council;** As a partner within the SPV, preferential weekly fees are agreed. Costs associated with travel and professionals time, will be reduced. Children will have access to the right support and care at the right time, enabling improved outcomes and less reliance on additional services & resources.
- **Council's role as a partner, enabler and leader:** Coventry City Council will continue to collaborate and work in partnership with other local authorities across the West Midlands, to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. The WMSC will be the first secure home in the county, run collaboratively and in partnership by a collection of local authorities. Officers from the Council have been active members of the development and design of the home and the practice and operating model workstreams.

6.3. How is risk being managed?

The West Midlands Safe Centre Operating Model Business Case sets out the risk assessment and mitigation for the West Midlands Safe Centre project, including the project's risk register.

Three risks have been assessed as the most significant with opening a brand-new secure welfare provision:

- Workforce resilience and capacity
- Demand complexity and matching
- Suspension / amendment of Ofsted registration

6.4. What is the impact on the organisation?

- 6.4.1 Corporate Parenting - All local authorities have Corporate Parenting responsibilities for children in care and care leavers.
- 6.4.2 Our Corporate parenting responsibility will continue for those children placed by us, in the West Midlands Safe Centre.
- 6.4.3 This provision will form part of Coventry City Council's sufficiency duty and will ensure the most vulnerable children from Coventry, who are in need of a secure

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welfare provision, are able to access this closer to home, maintaining their links with family and their wider networks.

- 6.4.4 The secure home will provide education and therapeutic support to children and enable them to transition from this home, back to Coventry (when appropriate) with ongoing outreach support.

6.5 Equalities / EIA?

6.5.1 Public authority decision makers are under a duty to have due regard to:

- a) the need to eliminate discrimination,
- b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not (public sector equality duty - s 149(1) Equality Act 2010). The applicable protected characteristics are disability, gender reassignment; race, religion or belief, sex; sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity.

6.5.2 Decision makers must be consciously thinking about these three aims as part of their decision-making process with rigour and with an open mind. The duty is to have “due regard”, not to achieve a result but to have due regard to the need to achieve these goals. Consideration being given to the potential adverse impacts and the measures needed to minimise any discriminatory effects.

6.5.3 There are no equality implications linked to the recommendations being proposed for approval by Cabinet. This is on the basis that the provision of the West Midlands Safe Centre is to provide capacity within the region which will be used to discharge statutory duty and made available to all those young persons who meet the threshold criteria.

6.6 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

Details of the plans for the site were set out in the planning application. This included an assessment of options considered for reducing CO2 emissions through energy efficiency measures, the efficient supply of heat and the use of on-site renewable energy technologies, having regard to the characteristics of the site and the local environment. On 28 May 2025, following an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request, Birmingham City Council's Planning department advised that the proposed development would not require an EIA under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. A local secure provision for the West Midlands will reduce travel for children as well as families and professionals visiting them.

6.7 Implications for partner organisations?

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The Council will be working with other local authorities to implement the recommendations set out in this report. Depending on the number of local authorities who participate in the project, there could be implications to the risk / reward shares (including the City Council). Should the percentage share exceed the tolerance level further Cabinet approval would be required.

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Sarah Kinsell	Finance Manager	Financial Management	01/10/2025	06/10/2025
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Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Barry Hastie	Director of Finance and Resources	Financial Management	06/10/2025	27/10/2025
Legal: Julie Newman	Director of Law and Governance	Law and Governance	06/10/2025	27/10/2025
Director: Sukriti Sen	Director of Children's & Education Services	-	06/10/2025	27/10/2025

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Members: Cllr. Patricia Seaman	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	-	06/10/2025	09/10/2025
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