Coventry City Council

Agenda

Cabinet

Time and Date
2.00 pm on Tuesday, 10th February 2026

Place
Committee Room 3 - Council House, Coventry

Public business

1. **Apologies**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 12)

   (a) To agree the minutes from the meeting of Cabinet on 6th January 2026

   (b) Matters arising

4. **2025/26 Third Quarter Financial Monitoring Report (to December 2025)** (Pages 13 - 40)

   Report of the Director of Finance and Resources

5. **Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme Grant for April 2026 to March 2029** (Pages 41 - 52)

   Report of the Director of Children's and Education Services

6. **Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 - 2029** (Pages 53 - 112)

   Report of the Director of Regeneration and Economy

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
Nil

Julie Newman, Director of Law and Governance, Council House, Coventry
Monday, 2 February 2026

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Michelle Salmon, Governance Services, Email: michelle.salmon@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)

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Michelle Salmon
Governance Services
Email: michelle.salmon@coventry.gov.uk

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 6 January 2026

Present:	
Members:	Councillor A S Khan (Chair) Councillor N Akhtar Councillor L Bigham Councillor R Brown Councillor K Caan Councillor P Hetherton Councillor J O'Boyle Councillor K Sandhu Councillor P Seaman
Non-Voting Deputy Cabinet Members:	Councillor S Agboola Councillor P Akhtar Councillor D Toulson
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):	
Children and Education Services	S Kinsell
Finance and Resources	B Hastie (Director for Finance and Resources), T Pinks
Law and Governance	J Newman (Director for Law and Governance), M Salmon
People and Facilities Management	S Newing (Director for People), A Yarnall
Policy and Communications	N Hart
Regeneration and Economy	R Palmer
Apologies:	Councillor B Christopher Councillor G Duggins Councillor G Hayre Councillor L Kelly Councillor J McNicholas

Public Business

50. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

51. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

52. **Outcomes of the Fair Funding Consultation 2026/27**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children's and Education Services that set out the results of the 2026/27 Fair Funding Consultation and sought approval for recommended changes to the Fair Funding Scheme of Delegation and recommended operation of the 2026/27 Fair Funding Formula.

The Fair Funding Consultation 2026/27: Summary of Responses; De-delegation levels approved for 2025/26; and Fair Funding Consultation 2026/27, were attached as Appendices to the report.

The report indicated that under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Local Authorities (LAs) were required to have schemes of delegation which set out the financial controls and arrangements that would operate between maintained schools and the LA. Any proposed revisions to these schemes and/or the Fair Funding Formula (which impacts all mainstream schools) must be the subject of consultation and required approval by the Schools Forum.

The Department for Education (DfE) introduced its National Funding Formula (NFF) for LAs in 2018/19, whereby mainstream school allocations for LAs were determined under the NFF approach, but LAs retained a level of flexibility over how they chose to distribute that funding amongst their schools. In Coventry the decision since 2018/19 had been to mirror the NFF allocation for schools as far as possible (subject to overall affordability). In the future it was expected that local flexibility would be removed from LAs, and the Council's approach would minimise funding volatility when this occurred.

In a standard funding cycle indicative NFF allocations and operational guides were published in July. Final NFF allocations were issued in December. This year LAs were informed that 2026/27 indicative NFF allocations would not be published in July 2025 and instead would be delayed until November 2025. In recognition of this delay, to support schools and LAs with financial planning the DfE published a policy note in June 2025. In this they confirmed there would not be any significant changes to the operation of the mainstream school NFF in 2026/27 compared to 2025/26.

The Coventry Fair Funding Consultation document was circulated on 7th November 2025 to Head Teachers including Academy Head Teachers/Principals, Chairs of Governing Bodies, relevant Councillors, Trade Unions, Diocesan authorities, the Coventry Governors Association and members of the Schools Forum. The consultation period ended after 2 weeks on 21st November 2025.

Stakeholder groups were briefed throughout the consultation period, these included Primary Finance representative Head Teachers and the Schools Forum. The consultation document also sought to act as an information document to school stakeholders regarding anticipated cost pressures.

The National Funding Formula continued to be in a ‘soft’ phase. This meant that the DFE would run the NFF for each individual school and the total of Coventry schools’ allocations would become the total budget available for schools in Coventry. The LA was still required to go through the usual budget setting process and run the local schools funding formula for maintained schools and academies to distribute the resource. The Council’s expectation was that the DFE would eventually operate a direct NFF, through which it would allocate funding directly to mainstream schools without LA involvement. Timescales for this were unclear. In a recent letter sent to the Secretary of State for Education by the Leader, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and Chair of the Coventry Schools Forum regarding the financial challenges facing schools, it was highlighted that local decision-making flexibility added value and should be maintained.

Mainstream schools were receiving two additional or supplementary grants in 2025/26 over and above their NFF allocations: Schools Budget Support Grant (SBSG) - to support the cost of officers and teachers pay awards in 2025/26, and National Insurance Contributions (NICs) grant - to fund the increase in employer national insurance contributions from April 2025. The DfE had confirmed that from 2026/27 these would be rolled into the NFF meaning they would no longer be received as separate grants. The SBSG would be annualised to reflect the fact that there was only a part year impact of the September 2025 teachers pay award in 2025/26. The annualisation of SBSG would result in additional funding in 2026/27 compared to 2025/26, however it was important to note that schools would have to fund the full year effect of the September 2025 pay award from this. Excluding the rolling in of existing supplementary grants and the annualisation of SBSG, the indicative 2026/27 NFF factor values would increase by ca. 2.1% on average compared to 2025/26. The equivalent figure in 2025/26 was an increase of 0.5%.

The pure NFF (without any protection) delivered less resource for Coventry schools as there were still some schools in Coventry who were on the funding floor and were receiving protection funding. The DFE’s policy note confirmed that for 2026/27 the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) which protected schools against significant year-on-year change in pupil led funding, must be set between -0.5% & 0%. This was the same level as was prescribed in 2025/26. Alongside the MFG, LAs must also include a Minimum per Pupil Levels (MPPLs) protection mechanism in their formula which guaranteed a minimum amount of funding for every pupil. It was not clear what protection arrangements would be in place after 2026/27 although it was not anticipated that the full protection would be immediately removed from 2027/28 as any significant reductions would be likely to have a detrimental impact on school financial sustainability. Any changes would be subject to further DFE announcements.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1) **Approves the recommended operation of the 2026/27 Fair Funding Formula and changes to the Fair Funding Scheme of Delegation, which are summarised in section 2 of the report.**

2) **Delegates authority to the Director of Children's and Education Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, to:**

   a) **make (subject to prior consultation with the Schools Forum) such minor and technical variations to the Fair Funding Scheme of Delegation as is deemed necessary; and**

   b) **make any necessary amendments to the final detail of these recommended changes, in order to comply with the School Finance (England) Regulations once full detail of the schools funding settlement has been published by the Department for Education for 2026/27. Any such changes will be made following discussion with the Schools Forum as appropriate.**

53. **The 2026/27 Council Tax Base Report**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Finance and Resources that established the 2026/27 Council Tax base for tax setting purposes. Appendices to the report provided: Tax Base Calculation for 2026/27 Tax Setting (Coventry); Tax Base Calculation for 2026/27 Tax Setting (Allesley); Tax Base Calculation for 2026/27 Tax Setting (Finham); Tax Base Calculation for 2026/27 Tax Setting (Keresley); and Grant payments to parish councils.

The Council Tax base was the measure of the taxable capacity of an area, for the purpose of calculating an authority's Council Tax. It represented the estimated number of Band D equivalent chargeable dwellings for the year. It also took into account the authority's estimated Council Tax collection rate.

The report did not set the actual level of Council Tax in Coventry; that would be set by Council on the 24 February 2026.

Further to the query relating to the zero dwellings figures under the heading relating to empty properties with a 50% discount in Appendix 1, officers confirmed that the disclosure was required by the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 but as Coventry did not operate a 50% discount for empty properties, the applicable figure was zero. Subsequent to the meeting officers further confirmed that the figures were correct and consistent with previous years.

Members requested that information relating to Coventry's Council Tax collection performance relative to other English billing authorities, be circulated to them. The Briefing note considered at the meeting of the Finance Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) at their meeting on 5th November 2025 on this matter, would be circulated accordingly.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1) **Approves that the Council Tax collection rate for 2026/27 be set at 97.6%**

2) **That, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amounts calculated by the City Council for 2026/27 shall be:**

   a net tax base of 91,413.3 for the whole of the City Council area made up as follows:

Allesley Parish	**498.7**
Finham Parish	**1,587.2**
Keresley Parish	**744.4**
All Other Coventry City Council Wards	**88,583.0**
TOTAL	**91,413.3**

3) **That the following grant payments should be made to parish councils to reflect the impact in 2026/27 of Council Tax reductions on their tax bases.**

Allesley Parish	**£2,183**
Finham Parish	**£2,514**
Keresley Parish	**£1,840**
TOTAL	**£6,537**

54. **Brandon Wood Nature Reserve**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of the Director of Regeneration and Economy, that would also be considered at the meeting of Council on 13th January 2026, which sought approval for the in-principal change of use of Brandon Wood Golf Course to a nature reserve and a registered Biodiversity Net Gain habitat bank. Appendices to the report provided: a Site Plan; a Landscape wide plan; and Proposed Interventions.

Coventry City Council had a unique opportunity to repurpose the former Brandon Wood Golf Course as a nature reserve, creating rich habitats to support wildlife and developing a new visitor destination for people to enjoy. The UK was one of the most nature depleted nations in the world, with one in six species at risk of extinction. The Council made a commitment in the Climate Change Strategy (2024-2030) to take action to support nature recovery, and this site presented a significant opportunity to do this at scale. The former golf course is 64ha, which meant it would be able to support a huge variety of habitats through the creation of wetlands, grassland and shrub. A much bigger opportunity was also unlocked as it would join up a number of parcels of land already being managed for nature covering 356ha in total (see plans in Appendix 1-3 to the report). Together this would create the biggest area of land managed for nature anywhere in the West Midlands, and at 6km from the city centre, it would be the closest nature reserve of this scale to a city centre in England.

The golf course was closed to the public in 2020, and a number of options had been assessed to identify the most appropriate future use of the site. The golf course was managed by Coventry Sports Trust, but the site was prone to regular flooding which limited the accessibility of part of the site. It had now been deemed financially unviable to continue as a golf course. In 2024 Defra introduced a new mechanism whereby new developments were required to offset any biodiversity loss through the purchase of ‘Biodiversity Net Gain’ (BNG) units, which provided a significant new income stream for creating and maintaining areas for nature conservation for 30 years. The business case for the new nature reserve was based on a sustainable finance model whereby up to 304 BNG units were created that would generate income to cover costs of creating and managing the nature reserve, with no Council funding required.

The BNG units were likely to rely on offset from development taking place outside of the city, including Warwickshire, the West Midlands and potentially nationally, rather than Coventry developments. This was due to Council policy which required any Coventry developments deliver BNG within the immediate area or close by and within the city boundary as a default position, contributing to an increase in biodiversity rather than being offset elsewhere. This would help to improve the quality of the city’s green spaces and waterways and help create new urban nature networks and green corridors across the city for local people to enjoy. Brandon Wood Nature Reserve would provide an experience where people could immerse themselves in nature in a wilder landscape. Any surplus income generated through the sale of BNG units at the nature reserve would be allocated to activities that supported biodiversity gain.

Biodiversity Net Gain was still a relatively new market and there was a lot of regional and national variation in unit values, demand and selling of units. Whilst the Local Authority could be confident there was a pipeline of development in the sub-region and wider region that equated to demand for units, there was less certainty in terms of timing of units being required. However, if this land was not provided by public bodies such as local authorities, it was likely private landowners would directly benefit from selling units which we were already seeing in the sub-region. To help mitigate this risk, a new Natural Capital Investment Strategy (NCIS) had been developed by Warwickshire County Council (WCC), which created a new partnership between the County, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) and Coventry City Council to enable planning and managing the BNG and emerging nature markets more strategically through a collaborative approach. This could help unlock funding to support habitat creation and maintenance for BNG sites. Formal approval to join the NCIS partnership was therefore sought as part of this report. The Local Authority was also working with WMCA to explore similar opportunities, to ensure maximising opportunities to grow nature markets and could directly influence and benefit from where investment was delivered. Given the relatively immature state of BNG market at present, it was proposed that delegated authority was given to continue to work up the investment plan, working with NCIS, WMCA and wider markets to provide a clear pipeline of investment and phase delivery on site accordingly. Works could start as early as the second half of 2026, subject to planning and legal agreements.

The project has been developed with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, who already lease a significant area of land for nature surrounding the golf course, including their headquarters next door Brandon Marsh Nature Reserve which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. It is proposed that the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust Group will enter into a property transaction with the Council, bringing their expertise to maintain the site as part of the wider landscape to maximise a range of diverse habitats that support nature alongside creation of a seamless visitor experience so that people can enjoy visits to the new nature reserve and adjacent sites.

Work has been undertaken to look at how to maximise visitor experience to the site and encourage local people to connect with nature. It was proposed to undertake improvements to site infrastructure to enhance the visitor experience which would include upgraded and accessible footpaths, a new car park, benches and wayfinding. The former club house would be demolished, which would help save the Council costs related to security and business rates. There was also a further opportunity to enhance the visitor experience through creation of new outdoor education, training and wellbeing hub on the site, which could be located on the site of the former club house.

This was currently at concept stage but could be a fantastic opportunity that would complement the Council's other outdoor education facilities in the city and Plas Dol Y Moch and provide a significant natural site on the doorstep of the city for learning and skills. It was proposed that this option was developed in conjunction with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and was brought back for a decision following due governance process date once a viable business case is developed. This would reduce the extent of the site where BNG units could be delivered by around a third. However, it would provide a significant boost to visitor experience and an opportunity to share associated infrastructure costs. It was therefore recommended that this option continued to be developed and, subject to a future governance decision within the next 12 months, with a backstop position that if this didn't come forward then this part of the site would be part of the wider nature reserve. The financial modelling that supported this decision set out the potential income that related to this part of the site and demonstrated that the business case for the nature reserve still remained viable if this section wasn't included in the sale of BNG units.

It was suggested that an All Members Seminar on nature reserves would be useful.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends that Council:

1) **Approves the in principal change of use of Brandon Wood Golf Course to a nature reserve and a registered Biodiversity Net Gain habitat bank, including demolition of the former golf club house subject to a formal planning process via Rugby Borough Council to deliver proposed changes to the Site (as shown in Appendix 1 and 3 to the report) and land appropriation within the Council between service areas;**

2) **Delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration and Economic Development, following consultation with the Director of Property Services and Development, the Director of Finance and Resources (s151 Officer), the Director of Law and Governance, and the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change to:**

2a) Enter into the appropriate legal agreements (including but not limited to a property transaction) and to make necessary variations from time to time between the Council and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust Group for up to thirty years for the Site.

2b) Undertake all necessary due diligence including the investment strategy and subsequent phasing of the project and enter into necessary legal agreements (and make necessary variations from time to time) to maximise Biodiversity Net Gain Units for the whole Site up to £8m.

2c) Enter into appropriate legal agreements to enable the Council to join the Nature Capital Investment Strategy partnership with Warwickshire County Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, including acceptance of funding to support delivery of BNG on the Site if this becomes available through the partnership, subject to formal governance processes.

2d) Accept up to £2m in the sale of BNG units to deliver the initial phase of delivery of the Site.

2e) Approve the addition of up to £1.4 million for the purposes of delivering the Project (subject to the financial mitigations set out in the financial implications).

3) Approves that all Biodiversity Net Gain income from the Site is ringfenced and reinvested in biodiversity and enabling activities.

55. **Gas Contract Renewal**

Cabinet considered a report of the Director of People and Facilities Management on the Council's gas requirements and proposed gas contract renewal.

Coventry's Climate Change Strategy (2024-2030) set out the Council's decarbonisation ambitions, which included increasing clean energy supply and increasing the energy efficiency of the estate, alongside helping to facilitate partners to do the same. A significant amount of work had gone into decarbonising the Council's estate over the last decade. Over 40 buildings had been upgraded which included increasing renewable energy generation through installation of solar pv, decarbonisation of heat through installation of heat pumps and connecting a number of the Council's buildings to the district heat network, alongside improving insulation, glazing etc. The Council had also appointed E.ON as its Strategic Energy Partner (SEP) over the next 15 years, to help increase the scale and pace of decarbonisation across the city. One of the first activities the SEP completed was production of the Coventry Energy Plan, which looked at how the city could decarbonise energy infrastructure over the next 15 years. This included moving away from gas and creating more locally produced electricity. At present, the Council were in a transition phase and the purchase of gas was an unavoidable activity that had in recent years had increasing financial implications for the Council. Since 2021 the annual gas spend for both corporate and independent sites had varied between £1.6m and £3.3m per year due to significant global events that had impacted the gas markets. The corporate contract currently covered over 60 Council gas supplies but also supported more than 80 related 3rd party gas supplies including schools and community centres.

The Council's current gas contract was not set to expire until 31 March 2027, but by engaging early, the chosen supplier would have a longer period over which to buy gas ahead of the contract start date. This approach was widely used and was known as "flexible procurement". It involved purchasing blocks of gas over time when the cost was lower which reduced the risk of being subject to shock price increases.

The Council had been using the flexible procurement approach to gas since 2009. This approach had been successful in mitigating the impact on the Council from the unprecedented volatility in the gas market.

The report sets out the Council's gas requirements as well as the anticipated financial implications on Council budgets. It was important to note that the proposed gas contract allowed flexibility to reduce gas demand during the contract period, which was anticipated as energy efficiency improvements were made to more buildings across the city.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1) **Approves the proposal to enter into a Gas Framework up to £6.3million for the supply of gas up to 31 March 2031.**

2) **Delegates authority to the Director of People and Facilities Management, following consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law and Governance, to finalise the legal due diligence and terms and conditions of the Gas Framework and any other legal agreements required to facilitate delivery of the gas supply and its ancillary services.**

3) **Delegates authority to the Head of Energy Services, following consultation with the Director of People and Facilities Management, to oversee the ongoing management of the wholesale purchasing strategy during the term of the contract.**

56. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

57. **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 3.20 pm)

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Coventry City Council

Public report
Cabinet

Cabinet — 10th February 2026
Audit and Procurement Committee — 16th March 2026

Name of Cabinet Member:
Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources - Councillor R Brown

Director Approving Submission of the report:
Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer)

Ward(s) affected: All

Title:
2025/26 Third Quarter Financial Monitoring Report (to December 2025)

Is this a key decision?
No

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to advise Cabinet of the forecast outturn position for revenue and capital expenditure and the Council's treasury management activity as at the end of December 2025. The net revenue forecast position after management action is for spend in 2025/26 of **£1.6m over budget**. Whilst not a wholly comparable position, at the same point in 2024/25, there was a projected overspend of £7.0m.

The Council continues to face budget pressures within Adults Social Care, Property Services & Development, City Services and Regeneration & Economic Development. These financial pressures are being caused by a combination of continued service demand, complexity & market conditions in social care, legacy inflation impacts, and income shortfalls due largely to the economic climate.

The Council's capital spending is projected to be £174m and includes major schemes progressing across the city. The size of the programme and the nature of the projects within it continue to be fundamental to the Council's role within the city. Although prevailing inflation rates look to be stabilising, legacy inflationary pressures continue to affect capital projects. We will continue to monitor this position and ensure projects are delivered within available resources.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is requested to:

1) Approve the Council's third quarter revenue monitoring position.

2) Approve the revised forecast capital outturn position for the year of £174m incorporating: £1.1m net increase in spending relating to approved/technical changes and £11.1m of net programme rescheduling of expenditure to future years.

Audit and Procurement Committee is requested to:

1) Consider the proposals in the report and forward any recommendations to Cabinet.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1 - Revenue Position: Detailed Service breakdown of forecast outturn position
Appendix 2 - Capital Programme: Analysis of Budget/Technical Changes
Appendix 3 - Capital Programme: Analysis of Programme Acceleration/(Rescheduling)
Appendix 4 - Prudential Indicators

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

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

Yes - Audit and Procurement Committee, 16th March 2026

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title:
2025/26 Third Quarter Financial Monitoring Report (to December 2025)

1. Context (or background)

1.1 Cabinet approved the City Council's revenue budget of £296.7m on 25th February 2025 and a Capital Programme of £171.6m. This is the third quarterly monitoring report for 2025/26. The purpose is to advise Cabinet of the forecast outturn position for revenue and capital expenditure, recommending any action required, and to also report on the Council's treasury management activity.

1.2 The current 2025/26 revenue forecast is for net expenditure to be **£1.6m over budget** (after management action). The reported forecast at the same point in 2024/25 was an overspend of £7.0m which reflected pressures relating primarily to social care activity and price. Capital spend in 2025/26 is projected to be £174m.

1.3 Whilst it is not unusual to experience a forecast overspend at this point, it is essential that the Council maintains strict financial discipline to operate within approved budgets.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal.

2.1 This is a budget monitoring report and as such there are no options.

Table1: Revenue Position - The revenue budgets and forecast positions are shown below analysed by service area.

Total Over / (Under) spend at Q2	**Service Area**	**Revised Net Budget**	**Total Forecast Spend**	**Total Over/ (Under) Spend at Q3**	*Swing from Q2 to Q3*
£m		**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	***£m***
2.2	Adult Services and Housing	144.1	147.9	**3.8**	*1.6*
0.4	Childrens and Education	123.1	122.4	**(0.7)**	*(1.1)*
1.5	City Services	38.9	41.1	**2.1**	*0.6*
(4.5)	Contingency & Central Budgets	(44.0)	(52.6)	**(8.6)**	*(4.1)*
0.5	Digital Services	0.5	0.7	**0.2**	*(0.3)*
0.7	Finance and Resources	13.3	14.6	**1.3**	*0.6*
0.0	Legal and Governance Services	11.5	11.7	**0.2**	*0.2*
0.3	People and Organisation Development	2.9	3.2	**0.2**	*(0.1)*
(0.5)	Planning and Performance	7.7	7.4	**(0.3)**	*0.2*
(0.1)	Policy and Communication	0.4	0.4	**(0.0)**	*0.1*
1.9	Property Services and Development	(10.7)	(8.5)	**2.2**	*0.3*
(0.4)	Public Health	(1.3)	(1.8)	**(0.5)**	*(0.1)*
1.3	Regeneration and Economy Development	10.2	12.0	**1.7**	*0.4*
3.3	**Total**	**296.7**	**298.3**	**1.6**	***(1.7)***

2.2 The overspend position has improved by £1.7m since the second quarter report. An explanation of the major forecast variances is provided below. Further details are provided in Appendix 1 to the report.

Directorate

Adult Services & Housing: £3.8m overspend

The forecast overspends of £3.8m, representing 2.5% of the approved budget and an increase of 1% since Quarter 2. This mainly relates to Adult Social Care due to the costs of purchasing packages of care for adults and older people (£6.2m), which is partially offset by increased client fee income (-£1.4m). Growth in costs for packages of care reflects sustained and emerging pressures across several areas. Primary drivers are the higher costs of new packages of care and rising costs of support post-annual review, the higher needs and associated costs of cases in Mental Health, growth in residential & nursing care partly due to pressure from individuals exiting other funding arrangements such as Continuing Healthcare, and pressure in Learning Disabilities with a greater number of cases requiring intensive 1:1 support to manage needs safely within community settings. The service continues to scrutinise all areas of authorisation to ensure value for money while maintaining safe and effective care.

These pressures are being offset at a directorate level by an underspend in Housing and Homelessness (-£1m) which is mainly due to an increase in grant funding for 25/26 although this has been partly eroded by a pressure against the target for delivering additional temporary accommodation provision due to delays in opening some projects.

Property Services and Development: £2.2m overspend

The increase is primarily due to residual holding costs for the City Centre South project, especially void NNDR costs at a forecast of £1.3m. Demolition is progressing, and it’s anticipated that the Valuation Office will remove the properties of the rating list acknowledging the lack of beneficial occupation, leading to a cost reduction over time. Other pressures include the management of the deteriorating commercial property assets such as the market and void levels within the portfolio. Operationally the Commercial property team continues to actively manage its portfolio to mitigate this impact.

City Services: £2.1m overspend

Environmental Services & Environmental: £1.6m overspend

The forecast reports both a decline in mortality rates and the purchase of memorialisation items alongside a shift to cremation services rather than burials impacting our income against budget to a value of circa £0.8m. Further pressures have been realised in our Parks and Open spaces for works on vital tree surveys and reduced activities in parks that also impact on car park income and the Travellers Inclusion work concluding to stay with existing provision has meant some existing targets will not be met due to the commercial viability of new proposals.

Waste Disposal: £0.6m overspend

A proportion of these costs relate to the costs associated with non-recyclable waste being put into recycling bins, leading to contamination charges and reduction in recycling rebates. Other costs within Waste are associated with the costs of transport and management fees at the Civic Amenity sites and the partial non-achievement of Food Waste Savings which is partly offset by additional Garden Waste income and an increase from Fleet services third party services.

Highways 0.1m underspend
This relates to reduced income being forecast against both penalty charge notices and residents parking scheme income at a net cost of £0.4m which is offset by energy price reductions of £0.5m against the Street Lighting scheme

Regeneration and Economic Development £1.7m overspend
The Planning Services division continues to experience financial pressures driven by a decline in planning activities, resulting in lower fee income. Additionally, cultural commercial operations have underperformed against expectations.

Further contributing to the current overspend are higher-than-anticipated costs associated with the repair and replacement of traffic signal assets, which are essential to maintain safe and reliable operation following incidents. Combined with reduced fee income, these factors have placed additional strain on the division's budget.

Finance and Resources £1.3m overspend
The majority of the overspend c£1.6m within this division relates to the Revenue and Benefits service where we are experiencing a number of demand-led pressures including higher transaction fees for receiving card payments, increasing cost of providing support to care leavers and the level of provision made for bad debt. The most significant cost pressure in this area relates to the provision of housing benefit for people in supported accommodation – for which the Council is only partly reimbursed by Government.

Vacancies within other areas of the overall service have brought the divisions overspend down to £1.3m over.

Corporate

Underspends supporting the overspend position are primarily within Contingency and Central Budgets:

Contingency and Central: £8.6m underspend
There is a £6.0m surplus forecast on Asset Management Revenue Account. £3.4m of this relates to increases in expected income from both Coventry & Solihull Waste Disposal Company (CWSDC) and Birmingham Airport dividend income, above that assumed in the base budget. Positive cash balances in December 2025 and higher interest rates contributed to reductions in forecast Interest on Borrowing as well increases in Interest Income on cash balances creating a net underspend on Treasury Management activities of £2.6m

Other favourable variances totalling £5.1m, include contingencies held in lieu of National Insurance impact, inflation on contracts and levies. This is being offset by an adverse variance of £2.5m, which is due to a forecast underachievement of 2025/26 One Coventry Programme and Senior Management savings targets.

2.3 **Capital**

The quarter 3 2025/26 capital outturn forecast is £174m compared with the second quarterly outturn of £184m. Table 3 below updates the budget at quarter 3 to take account of £1.1m of new approved/technical changes and £11.1m of programme rescheduling into future years.

The resources available section of Table 3 explains how the Capital Programme will be funded in 2025/26. It shows 64.2% of the programme is funded by external grant monies, whilst 25.1% is funded from borrowing. The programme also includes funding from capital receipts of £17.3m.

Table 3 – Movement in the Capital Budget

CAPITAL BUDGET 2025/26 MOVEMENT	**Qtr 3 Reporting £m**
Revised Programme (Reported at Q2)	184.0
Approved / Technical Changes (see Appendix 2)	1.1
“Net” (Rescheduling) into future years (See Appendix 3)	(11.1)
Revised Estimated Outturn 2025-26	**174.0**

RESOURCES AVAILABLE:	**Qtr 3 Reporting £m**
Prudential Borrowing (Specific & Gap Funding)	43.7
Grants and Contributions	111.8
Capital Receipts	17.3
Revenue Contributions and Capital Reserve	1.2
Total Resources Available	**174.0**

The inflationary pressures affecting the Council’s revenue budget are also present within capital schemes although the pattern with which this takes affect can be different due to the way in which expenditure is incurred. All existing and future schemes are required to be delivered within existing agreed contractual sums and will continue to be monitored and managed within the available resources.

2.4 Treasury Management

External Context

The first quarter of the year was dominated by the fallout of the US trade tariffs and their impact on financial markets. Equity markets declined sharply which was subsequently followed by bond markets as investors were increasingly concerned about US fiscal policy. The second quarter continued with uncertainty, equity markets made gains and a divergence in US and UK government bond yields started to occur, which had been moving relatively closely together. From late June, amid a UK backdrop of economic uncertainty, concerns around the government’s fiscal position and speculation around the autumn Budget, yields on medium and longer-term gilts pushed higher, including the 30-year which hit its highest level for almost 30 years following the budget announcement on 28th November.

UK consumer price inflation (CPI) increased over the period. At March 2025, CPI was 2.6% but going into the new financial year it rose to its peak in July – September at 3.8%. Since September it has started to fall to 3.2% in November still well above the Bank of England's 2% target. Core inflation was 3.4% in March rose to its peak in July but has since fallen to 3.5% in November.

The UK economy expanded by 0.1% within Q3 2025. The production sector contracted by 0.3%, which was driven largely by a fall in manufacturing, alongside mining and quarrying. Within manufacturing, transport equipment experienced a sharp decline, following a cyberattack that significantly disrupted Jaguar Land Rover's operations in September. Services output rose by 0.2%, providing some offset. This was supported by financial services and insurance activities, although professional and technical services weakened. Construction grew by 0.2%, with repair and maintenance activity underpinning growth, while new work declined. Alongside this, business investment and household consumption was revised upwards, suggesting growth was caused more by the private sector rather than government spending. On an annual basis the UK economy grew by 1.3% up to Qtr. 3 with household consumption and government spending both slowing down.

At the beginning of the financial year the bank base rate was 4.5%, since then there have been 0.25bpts cuts in May (4.25%), August (4.0%) and December (3.75%). The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted 5-4 to cut the Bank Rate by 25bpts in December indicating some internal disagreement among committee members.

Long Term (Capital) Borrowing

The net long-term borrowing requirement for the 2025/26 Capital Programme is £28.8m, considering borrowing set out in Section 2.3 above (total £43.7m), less amounts to be set aside to repay debt, including non PFI related Minimum Revenue Provision (£16.9m). In the current interest rate climate, the Council has no immediate plans to take any further new long-term borrowing although this will continue to be kept under review.

The Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) remains the main source of loan finance for funding local authority capital investment. In August 2021 HM Treasury significantly revised guidance for the PWLB lending facility. Authorities that are purchasing or intending to purchase investment assets primarily for yield will not be able to access the PWLB except to refinance existing loans or externalise internal borrowing. Under the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 approved by Cabinet on 25 February 2025 it was agreed the Council will not purchase investment assets primarily for yield.

Interest rates for local authority borrowing from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) between 1st April and 31 December 2025 have varied within the following ranges:

PWLB Loan Duration (maturity loan)	Minimum 2025/26 to Q3	Maximum 2025/26 to Q3	At the end of Q3
5 year	3.66%	4.02%	3.80%
20 year	4.78%	5.36%	4.95%
50 year	4.53%	5.20%	4.78%

The PWLB allows qualifying authorities, including the City Council, to borrow at 0.2% below the standard rates set out above. This "certainty rate" initiative provides a small reduction in the cost of future borrowing.

Regular monitoring continues to ensure identification of any opportunities to reschedule debt by early repayment of more expensive existing loans replaced with less expensive new loans. The premiums payable on early redemption usually outweighs any potential savings.

During quarter 3, the Council have not had a need to take out any new borrowing although it was anticipated that some short-term money may have been required in December. This did not come to fruition due to the close monitoring of cashflow and timings of funds received. No further capital repayments have been made since repaying £10m of LOBO loans during the first quarter.

Short Term (Temporary) Borrowing and Investments

The Council's Treasury Management Team acts daily to manage the City Council's day-to-day cash-flow, by borrowing or investing for short periods. By holding short term investments, such as money in call accounts, authorities help ensure that they have an adequate source of liquid funds.

Returns provided by the Council's short-term investments yielded an average interest rate of 4.48% in the third quarter. This rate of return reflects low risk investments for short to medium durations with UK banks, Money Market Funds, Certificates of Deposits, other Local Authorities, Registered Providers, and companies in the form of corporate bonds.

Although the level of investments varies from day to day with movements in the Council's cash-flow, investments held by the City Council identified as a snapshot at the reporting stages were: -

	As at 31/03/25 £m	**As at 30/06/25 £m**	**As at 30/09/25 £m**	**As at 31/12/25 £m**
Banks and Building Societies	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Local Authorities	22.5	41.5	10.8	45.0
Money Market Funds	18.7	24.6	39.0	6.8
Corporate Bonds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
HM Treasury	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	**43.7**	**66.1**	**49.8**	**51.8**

External Investments
In addition to the above in-house investments, a mix of Collective Investment Schemes or “pooled funds” is used, where investment is in the form of sterling fund units and not specific individual investments with financial institutions or organisations. The pooled funds are generally AAA rated; are highly liquid, as cash can be withdrawn within two to four days; and have a short average duration. These investments include Certificates of Deposit, Commercial Paper, Corporate Bonds, Floating Rate Notes, Call Account Deposits, Property and Equities. However, they are designed to be held for longer durations allowing any short-term fluctuations in return due to volatility to be smoothed out. To manage risk these investments are spread across several funds (CCLA, Schroders, Ninety-One Investec, Columbia Threadneedle and M&G Investments).

Returns provided by the Council’s pooled funds yielded an average interest rate of 5.08% since the beginning of the financial year. At 30th November 2025 the pooled funds had a capital value of £28.6m (£27.6m at 31st March 2025), against an original investment of £30m (a deficit of £1.4m). All seven pooled funds show a deficit value but returns remain strong. Although the world economy has shown volatility over the last 12 months, the value of the funds is recovering. The property market still hasn’t bottomed out, but the CCLA fund is being actively managed to provide good returns. There remains an expectation that the full value for each pooled fund will be recovered over the medium term - the period over which this type of investment should always be managed. Current accounting rules allow any ‘losses’ to be held on the Council’s balance sheet and not counted as a revenue loss. These investments will continue to be monitored closely.

Prudential Indicators and the Prudential Code
Under the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance authorities are free to borrow, subject to them being able to afford the revenue costs. The framework requires that authorities set and monitor against Prudential Indicators relating to capital, treasury management and revenue issues. These indicators are designed to ensure that borrowing for capital purposes is affordable, sustainable and prudent. The purpose of the indicators is to support decision making and financial management, rather than illustrate comparative performance.

The indicators, together with the relevant figures as at 30 December 2025 are included in **Appendix 4** to the report. This highlights that the City Council's activities are within the amounts set as Performance Indicators for 2025/26. Specific points to note on the ratios are:

- The Upper Limit on Variable Interest Rate Exposures (indicator 9) sets a maximum amount of net borrowing (borrowing less investments) that can be at variable interest rates. At 31 December 2025 the value is -£36.7m (minus) compared to £102.7m within the Treasury Management Strategy, reflecting the fact that the Council has more variable rate investments than variable rate borrowings at the current time.

- The Upper Limit on Fixed Interest Rate Exposures (indicator 9) sets a maximum amount of net borrowing (borrowing less investments) that can be at fixed interest rates. At 31 December 2025 the value is £227.0m compared to £513.6m within the Treasury Management Strategy, reflecting both the level of actual borrowing and that a significant proportion of the Council's investment balance is at a fixed interest rate.

2.5 Commercial Investment Strategy – Loans and Shares

The Council's Commercial Investment Strategy is designed to ensure there are strong risk management arrangements and that the level of commercial investments held in the form of shares, commercial property and loans to external organisations, are proportionate to the size of the Council. In doing this the Strategy includes specific limits for the total cumulative investment through loans and shares. The total combined limit for 2025/26 is £115m, against which there are £86.1m of existing commitments: -

	Limit	Actual 31st December 2025	Committed and Planned 2025/26	Total	Headroom
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Shares	55.0	52.1	0.0	52.1	2.9
Loans	60.0	33.8	0.2	34.0	26.0
	115.0	**85.9**	**0.2**	**86.1**	**28.9**

The committed or planned total of £0.2m is predominantly for the balance of loan facility to Coombe Abbey Park Ltd which may not be taken up, although the Council is committed to provide the loan funds if requested.

The increase in headroom since budget setting is mainly due to the change in accounting treatment relating to the £18m to UKBIC which was previously treated as a loan (and was included in the limit) but is now accounted for as a lease and no longer shown within this table. We would expect the loans limit to be reduced to reflect this change in the next budget setting cycle.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 None

4. Timetable for implementing this decision.

4.1 There is no implementation timetable as this is a financial monitoring report.

5. Comments from the Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) and the Director of Law and Governance

5.1 Financial implications

Revenue

The net quarter 3 forecast is a **£1.6m revenue overspend.** Although not wholly comparable, this is a significant improvement of the position this time last year which was a £7.0m overspend (quarter 3, 2024/25) and is in part a reflection of the decisions made during budget setting to support areas with intractable ongoing issues.

Continuing difficulties in the external markets for adult's social care are well documented around issues including the cost of highly complex cases and higher than planned levels of inflationary increases in placement costs, which have persisted to apply pressure to the budgetary provision included within the Council's budget.

Although the Council had budgeted for significant levels of inflation based on current information, the 2025/26 pay offer accepted earlier in the year, is above the budgeted figure and will need to be managed out of contingency budgets.

Management Action
The difficult position seen in recent years has required the Council to balance its financial outturn position using reserves. This was avoided in 2024/25 and although such a solution would be the Council's backstop position for 2025/26, it is one that the Council should be anxious to avoid. The Council holds limited reserve balances and recognises that such an approach is not sustainable in the medium term. It is therefore imperative to identify and adopt approaches that help the Council to manage its short-term pressures, whilst at the same time supporting the outlook for 2026/27 and medium-term financial pressures.

The Council's Leadership Team have worked proactively together to mitigate the underlying pressures that have been recognised within this forecast by:

- Robust challenge and review of forecasts
- Continuation of Recruitment controls
- Alternative funding opportunities from grants

The above gives sufficient assurance that the Director of Finance and Resources does not currently need to take any extra-ordinary action to respond to the financial position either in respect of 2025/26 or future years.

Capital
The Council's Capital Programme includes a range of strategically important schemes across the city. This continues to be a large and mostly grant funded programme continuing the trend of recent years. The Programme includes major scheme expenditure on secondary schools' expansion, Very Light Rail, disabled facilities grant (DfG), construction of Woodlands School, City Centre South and delivery of the City Centre Cultural Gateway development.

Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising at this stage.

The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget and the monitoring process enables Cabinet to remain aware of issues and understand the actions being taken to maintain a balanced budget.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan
https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan

The Council monitors the quality and level of service provided to the citizens of Coventry and the key objectives of the One Coventry Plan. As far as possible it will try to deliver better value for money and maintain services in line with its corporate priorities balanced against the need to manage with fewer resources.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The need to deliver a stable and balanced financial position in the short and medium term is a key corporate risk for the local authority and is reflected in the corporate risk register. Good financial discipline through budgetary monitoring continues to be paramount in managing this risk and this report is a key part of the process.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

It remains important for the Council to ensure that strict budget management continues to the year-end. Any resources available at year-end will be managed to ensure the Council's financial resilience or used to fund future spending priorities.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

No current policy changes have been proposed but the possibility remains that the Council may need to consider changes to existing services through the year. If this is the case, the Council's equality impact process will be used to evaluate the potential equalities impact of any proposed changes.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) Climate Change and the environment

No impact at this stage although climate change and the environmental impact of the Council's decisions are likely to feature more strongly in the future.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

No impact.

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

Appendix 1

Revenue Position: Detailed Directorate Breakdown of Forecasted Outturn Position

Table 1 below shows budget variations analysed between those that are subject to a centralised forecast variance and those that are managed at service level (termed "Budget Holder Variance" for the purposes of this report). The Centralised budget areas relate to salary costs – the Council applies strict control over recruitment such that managers cannot recruit to vacant posts without first going through rigorous processes. In this sense managers must work within the existing establishment structure and salary budgets are not controlled at this local level. The Centralised salaries and Overheads under-spend of £7.7m shown below is principally the effect of unfilled vacancies, often offset by agency staff costs shown within the budget holder variance.

Table 1

Service Area	Revised Net Budget	Forecast Spend	Centralised Variance	Budget Holder Variance	Total Variance Over / (under)
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Services and Housing	144.1	147.9	(2.2)	5.9	3.8
Childrens and Education	123.1	122.4	(2.2)	1.5	(0.7)
City Services	38.9	41.1	(1.8)	3.9	2.1
Digital Services	0.5	0.7	(0.1)	0.3	0.2
Finance and Resources	13.3	14.6	(0.2)	1.5	1.3
Legal and Governance Services	11.5	11.7	(0.5)	0.7	0.2
People and Organisation Development	2.9	3.2	(0.1)	0.3	0.2
Planning and Performance	7.7	7.4	(0.5)	0.1	(0.3)
Policy and Communication	0.4	0.4	(0.1)	0.1	(0.0)
Property Services and Development	(10.7)	(8.5)	(0.4)	2.6	2.2
Public Health	(1.3)	(1.8)	(0.0)	(0.5)	(0.5)
Regeneration and Economy Development	10.2	12.0	0.3	1.4	1.7
Contingency & Central Budgets	(44.0)	(52.6)	0.0	(8.6)	(8.6)
Total	296.7	298.3	(7.7)	9.4	1.6

Table 2:

Service Area	Reporting Area	Explanation	£m
Adult Social Care	Strategic Commissioning (Adults)	The underspend is due to New Homes for Old Private Finance Initiative additional client fee income above budget £0.8m and reduced transport costs £0.2m.	(1.0)
Adult Social Care	Internally Provided Services	There are salary underspends arising from vacancies of £0.4m off set by overspends against overtime, agency, & casual pay of £0.6m. Contributing to the underspend is an over-achievement of social care fee income of £0.6m.	(0.4)
Adult Social Care	Community Purchasing	We are currently experiencing ongoing and emerging pressures across various areas of care provision. The main factors contributing to the Q3 overspend are similar to those we have encountered in previous quarters.	

		Firstly, the costs of new care packages have significantly impacted our expenditure. During this period, the new care packages we have commissioned have, on average, been more expensive than those that have concluded, leading to increased spending. Secondly, we are facing pressures related to the support packages in mental health. These pressures are tied to the higher needs of individuals supported in the community and those discharged from long-stay hospital or secure units, rather than an increase in the number of people requiring support. Additionally, there has been strain in supported living arrangements for individuals with learning disabilities. An increased number of cases have required intensive one-on-one support to manage needs safely within community settings, resulting in higher costs. We have also seen growth in residential and nursing care beyond anticipated levels for this year. This growth is partly due to individuals exiting other funding arrangements which has a knock-on impact on Adult Social Care (ASC). Lastly, the costs of support post-annual review for individuals are rising. Increases in review performance results in increased costs to ASC. We remain committed to scrutinising all areas of authorisation to ensure value for money while maintaining the highest standards of care and safeguarding. Moreover, we are working with partners around joint funded packages to update tools and processes used across the health and social care system.	6.2
Housing	Housing and Homelessness	The underspend is mainly due to a £1.9m increase in Homeless Prevention Grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to reflect the increased demand on homeless services nationally that is reflected in Coventry. This has been partially offset by delays in projects opening costing £0.8m including Ribbon Court and the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP project) which are both being progressed by external housing providers and the £0.8m continuing increase in temporary Accommodation cost. Staffing and other cost underspends total £0.7m.	(1.0)
TOTAL Adult Services & Housing			**3.8**

Children’s Services	Children's Services Management Team	This underspend is primarily due to the cost of social worker recruitment and retention initiatives being lower than anticipated when the budget was set.	(0.2)
Children’s Services	Corporate Parenting and Sufficiency	There is a £2.8m forecast overspend on homes for children in care. The overall number of children in residential care is lower than our financial planning assumptions, however a greater proportion are currently accommodated in more costly external spot placements which is offsetting the benefit of reduced activity. Alongside this, the level of external financial contributions towards care packages for children with disabilities and complex needs is forecast to be lower than budgeted.	2.6
Children’s Services	Help & Protection	Social work case holding teams are forecast to underspend by £1.1m due to reduced levels of agency staff and overall case numbers. Section 17 budgets are forecasting to underspend by £0.6m due to reduced expenditure on assessments and temporary accommodation. Family Hubs and Early Help are forecasting to underspend by £0.9m due to staffing vacancies and utilisation of grant funding where appropriate. These are being offset in part by a £0.5m overspend against the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) budget due to there being an increased number of families who require support. The remainder is a combination of smaller underspends across other parts of the service.	(2.4)
Children’s Services	Children in Care, Children with Disabilities & Care Leavers	The Care Leavers budget is forecast to underspend by £0.4m, this is in line with last year and is an area of budget which is being reviewed moving forwards. In addition, there are forecast underspends of £0.3m, primarily due to staffing, across the Children in Care and Throughcare services.	(0.9)
Children’s Services	Safeguarding Practice and Workforce	There is an overall pressure of £0.3m primarily linked to safeguarding training income which is forecast to be below the budgeted target and agency costs relating to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) function.	0.2

Education Services	Education Improvement	An underspend of circa £0.3m across historic pension costs and the data team is partly offset by an overspend across Schools Trade Union. Historic pension costs expenditure will continue to reduce over time as there are no new commitments against this. The overspend position on Schools Trade Union is linked to inflation and lower amounts of de-delegated funding.	(0.1)
Ringfenced Funding – Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	SEND & Specialist Services	As is being seen nationally the number of children in Coventry with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) continues to increase. When setting the 2025/26 High Needs budget the Council was forecasting an in-year deficit (or overspend) of £2m. At Q3 budgetary control the forecast in-year deficit has decreased to £1.5m. Expenditure against Special Schools, Mainstream Schools, Other Local Authority Schools (OLA's), Independent Specialist Placements (ISP's), Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) and Further Education is forecast to be £1.0m higher than budgeted. This is being offset by an underspend of £0.3m against Enhanced Resource Provisions (ERP's), due to the reprofiling of opening dates for new settings. There is also a forecast underspend of £0.7m across SEND Support Services, Personal Budgets, and Speech & Language Therapy. The overall position is being supported by a positive import / export adjustment and supplementary grant funding announced by the government to support with the cost of pay awards and national insurance contributions for centrally employed teachers which was unbudgeted.	1.5

Ringfenced Funding – Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	Schools	There is a £0.9m forecast overspend against the Early Years block which is primarily due to clawback of funding received in financial year 2024/25 based on headcount data (the number of children accessing government funded childcare) as of January 2025. This is offset by a forecast £0.1m underspend against the Growth Fund and a forecast £0.1m underspend against the maintained school's maternity de-delegation budget.	0.6
Ringfenced Funding – Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	Education Entitlement & Enrichment Services	This is a combination of several small variances across the service, primarily due to staffing.	(0.1)
Ringfenced Funding – Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	Education Improvement	This is a combination of a small forecast underspend against the de-delegated New Arrivals Fund and staffing underspends across the service.	(0.1)
Ringfenced Funding – Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	Financial Strategy	Technical adjustment to remove total Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) variance from the General Fund position. The overspend will be funded from the DSG reserve.	(1.8)
TOTAL Children's and Education			**(0.7)**
Highways	Parking	This pressure is due to - not achieving Penalty Notice Income (Bus Lane & Parking Enforcement) £592k and - not achieving targets set in relation to Residents parking schemes £140k and Shopmobility £46k. This is partly offset by additional Car Park income of £421k	0.3
Highways	Traffic	This is primarily due to reduced energy costs on the Street Lighting Private Finance Initiatives (PFI).	(0.5)
Transport Policy & Innovation	Transport Policy	This forecast variance is attributed to a combination of factors including higher-than-expected energy costs associated with traffic signal and Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) operation and expenses associated with road traffic collisions which require immediate repairs to make safe and maintain operation of traffic signal assets. In addition, highway fee income associated with	0.3

		external works and development-related activities has been lower than anticipated; all of which have contributed to the overall variance. To address this, alternative funding sources are being actively reviewed, and resources are being reallocated where possible to minimise the overall variance.	
Environmental Services	Street pride & Parks	The forecast outturn is made up of several different elements: Reduced death rates (locally and nationally) and the increase in the cost of living, Cremation, Burial and Memorialisation income is significantly reduced £769k; Parks & Open Spaces - Mandatory Tree Surveys £169k, reduced Car Park income £207k, reduced income from Events & Activities £156k and non-achievement of a savings target relating to Traveller Incursions £150k.	1.6
Environmental Services	Waste & Fleet Services	Waste Disposal pressures account for £435k of this overspend, partly due to contamination costs of 131k, lower than expected recycling rebates £375k and partly due to variations in tonnage/gate fees -71k. This includes an increase in the Civic Amenities (CA) Site Management fee which is mostly due to increased transport costs. Pressures in Domestic Refuse and Recycling: include c£188k relating to increase transport/disposal of nitrous oxide cannisters costs at the Waste Transfer Station (WTS), Collection costs c£352k (which includes non-achievement of a savings target re: Food Waste & the cost of Christmas Collections). These are partly offset by some additional income in Fleet c-£100k; additional Garden Waste income c-£290k and some miscellaneous over/underspends c£8k.	0.5
City Services		Variances below £100k	(0.1)
TOTAL City Services			**2.1**
Finance & Resources	Revenues and Benefits	In addition to pressures related to an increase in the cost of card payment fees incurred when the Council receives payments, an increase in the cost of providing support to care leavers and an	1.6

		increase in the provision for bad debt, uncontrollable increased costs of partially subsidised accommodation have caused further budget pressures within the housing benefits subsidy service.	
Finance & Resources	Financial Management	Ongoing vacancies in the service area are under active recruitment but result in a forecasted underspend.	(0.1)
Finance & Resources		Variances below £100k	(0.2)
TOTAL FINANCE & Resources			**1.3**
Digital and Customer Services	ICT & Digital	The ICT overspend relates to an ongoing pressure arising from under-recovery of schools and academies income from our traded services. Work continues to have plans to try to improve the position, but this remains an area of challenge.	0.2
TOTAL Digital Services			**0.2**
Legal and Governance Services	Legal Services	Legal Services forecasted agency staff costs has reduced from £680k in 24-25 to £336k in 25-26 and is fully funded by vacancy savings. However, the Service has a vacancy savings target of £350k and this is driving the overall adverse forecast variance.	0.2
Legal and Governance Services	Coroner & Register Office	25-26 forecasted one off costs of the extraordinary coroner's enquiry are £295k.	0.1
Legal and Governance Services	Procurement	Prompt payment rebates have increased and are expected to outperform targets in 25-26. Vacancies in the area are being held whilst the service undergoes a structure review to maximise these opportunities.	(0.1)
Legal and Governance Services	Regulatory Services	Service areas have undergone significant restructures in recent months and vacancies are actively being recruited the underspend reflects the timing to fill roles	(0.1)
Legal and Governance Services		Variances below £100k	0.1
TOTAL Legal and Governance Services			**0.2**

People and Organisation Development	HR and Workforce Development Management	During the financial year, the Council invested in an organisational culture change programme for circa 500 staff, to enhance skills and improve performance.	0.1
People and Organisation Development	Employment Services	To implement the payroll restructure vacancies have been held in posts that were at risk. The service will be looking to recruit to the agreed new structure throughout the year which will likely see a reduction in this forecasted underspend.	(0.1)
People and Organisation Development	Employment Policy & Practice	The unfunded Council Job Evaluation team continues to drive the overspend in the People Directorate.	0.1
People and Organisation Development	Facilities & Property Services	Facilities Management have had increases in income & savings targets whilst also receiving a reduction in the maintenance budget therefore currently forecasting an overspend of circa £150K. Management action is taking place to attempt to reduce this further	0.1
TOTAL People and Organisation Development			**0.2**
Planning & Performance	Customer and Business Services	Staffing underspends of £0.7m due to the wider service actively managing vacancies which align to corporate change initiatives while future staffing models are determined. This is offset by increased printing, postage and equipment renewal costs.	(0.5)
Planning & Performance	Libraries, Advice, Health & Information Services	Libraries budget overspend relates principally to under delivery of anticipated income across Public Libraries and the School Library Service. Additionally, we are currently forecasting an unexpected £70k ICT commitment this financial year because of worldwide support for Windows 10 ending. We expect to deliver related underspends on ICT for the next two financial years creating a longer-term balanced budget position. Income Generation and Staff Turnover Savings Targets continues to be monitored with the view to reduce the deficit position.	0.2
TOTAL Planning and Performance			**(0.3)**
Policy & Communication		Variance below £100k	(0.0)
TOTAL Policy and Communication			**(0.0)**

Property Services and Development	Commercial Property and Development	Variance relates to holding costs being charged to the service for example Business Rates and utilities associated with City Centre South properties awaiting demolition (demolition is now underway) and costs and foregone income from vacant commercial properties, including ever increasing costs associated with deteriorating property assets such as Coventry Market and older industrial estates	2.0
Property Services and Development	PSD Management & Support	Variance relates to unachievable income target for this year, but service plan demonstrates an improved position from next year.	0.2
TOTAL Property Services and Development			**2.2**
Public Health	Migration	This represents an underspend on Our Coventry Programme contract and overheads due to utilisation of other grant funding.	(0.5)
TOTAL Public Health			**(0.5)**
Regeneration and Economy Development	Culture, Sports & Events	The forecast deficit of £668k principally arises from a shortfall in commercial income for 2025/26 and higher energy costs than budget. While some smaller positive adjustments have helped mitigate the position, further mitigating actions will be required in Quarter 4.	0.6
Regeneration and Economic Development	Economic Development service (EDS)	EDS (Economic Development service) has generated surplus by maximisation of grant income to the service and earnings from delivery of contract programmes to external partners.	(0.2)
Regeneration and Economic Development	Regeneration & Economy Management Support	The variance predominantly relates to a shortfall against the income target for sponsorship and commercial activity. £100k is now forecast to be achieved by the end of 2025/26 against a target of £375k, leaving a shortfall of £275k. This is a £55k variance from Quarter 2, driven by slippage on two high-value income projects due to dependencies around technical design/approvals and installation programme sequencing. Work continues to progress delivery and bring forward other pipeline opportunities where possible to improve the overall position.	0.3
Transport Policy & Innovation	Transport Policy	This forecast variance is attributed to a combination of factors including higher-than-expected energy costs associated with traffic	0.3

		signal and Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) operation and expenses associated with road traffic collisions which require immediate repairs to make safe and maintain operation of traffic signal assets. In addition, highway fee income associated with external works and development-related activities has been lower than anticipated; all of which have contributed to the overall variance. To address this, alternative funding sources are being actively reviewed, and resources are being reallocated where possible to minimise the overall variance.	
Development Management	Planning Services	The income target for planning application fees, level of development interest is influenced by a range of factors outside of the Council's control. The current forecast is based on actual to date and the overall planning application activity in Coventry remains broadly in line with national trends. Coventry progressing with plan making and engagement with national policy evolution. Anticipated recruitment to several vacant posts is required to continue to meet requirement of legislation.	0.7
TOTAL Regeneration and Economy Development			**1.7**
Contingency & Central Budgets	Revenue AFC	favourable variances totalling £5.1m, include contingencies held in lieu of National Insurance impact, inflation on contracts and levies. This is being offset by an adverse variance of £2.5m, which is due to a forecast underachievement of 2025/26 One Coventry Programme and Senior Management savings targets.	(2.6)
Contingency & Central Budgets	Treasury Management	There is a £6.0m surplus forecast on Asset Management Revenue Account. £3.4m of this relates to increases in expected income from both Coventry & Solihull Waste Disposal Company (CWSDC) and Birmingham Airport dividend income, above that assumed in the base budget. Positive cash balances in December 2025 and higher interest rates contributed to reductions in forecast Interest on Borrowing as well increases in Interest Income on cash balances creating a net underspend on Treasury Management activities of £2.6m	(6.0)

TOTAL Contingency & Central Budgets	**(8.6)**
Total Outturn Variances	**1.6**

Appendix 2

Capital Programme Approved / Technical Changes

SCHEME	EXPLANATION	£m
Highways Maintenance & Investment	The WMCA has been awarded funding to carry out decarbonisation trials as part of the Centre of Excellence for Decarbonising Roads (CEDR). WMCA have awarded £1m to Coventry City Council for trials of asphalt preservation, rejuvenation and resurfacing products at Broad Lane, Willenhall Lane, Jimmy Hill Way and Ring Road Junctions 2-4.	1.0
Miscellaneous	Schemes below £250k reporting threshold	0.1
TOTAL APPROVED / TECHNICAL CHANGES		**1.1**

Appendix 3

Capital Programme: Analysis of Programme Acceleration/(Rescheduling)

SCHEME	EXPLANATION	£m
City Centre Cultural Gateway	A revised cashflow from the contractor identifies £6m of rescheduling into 2026-27, this reflects an amendment to phased payment projections. The programme is still expected to complete during 2026	(6.1)
Vehicle & Plant Replacement	Expenditure to the tune of £1.4m is rescheduled into next financial year due to a delay in the delivery of 7 Refuse vehicles. The vehicles are on order but are not due to be delivered until after March 2026.	(1.4)
Education Programme - Basic Need	Pearl Hyde project has now been split into two phases, prioritising the internal works to create the learning space for reception pupils. This has caused a slight delay to the main works, to ensure the first phase was handed over for the beginning of the academic year. There has also been a delay in obtaining planning consent for Baginton school along with the completion of the tender process to ensure compliance.	(1.4)
Housing Venture	There is no defined plan for joint venture schemes with Citizen this financial year, therefore funding is rescheduled into next year.	(1.0)
Street Lighting - LED Upgrade	A delay in receiving delivery of Street Lighting lanterns from the manufacturer has resulted in fewer lanterns being installed on site than programmed. The delay is due to have an impact until March resulting in £1m rescheduling into next financial year.	(1.0)
ICT	The implementation of the adult social care access system will take place over 2 financial years, this element of rescheduling recognises the spend to be incurred in 2026-27.	(0.4)
Miscellaneous	Schemes below £250k reporting threshold.	0.2
TOTAL RESCHEDULING		**(11.1)**

Appendix 4

Prudential Indicators

Indicator	per Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26	As at 31st December 2026
Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream (Indicator 1), This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet borrowing costs.	14.21%	14.03%
Gross Borrowing should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) at 31st March 2025 plus the estimates of any additional CFR in the next 3 years (Indicator 2), illustrating that, over the medium term, net borrowing (borrowing less investments) will only be for capital purposes. The CFR is defined as the Council's underlying need to borrow, after taking account of other resources available to fund the capital programme and is the amount of capital expenditure that has not yet been financed by capital receipts, capital grants or contributions from revenue.	Estimate / limit of £571.5m	£335.8m Gross borrowing within the limit.
Authorised Limit for External Debt (Indicator 5)*,* This statutory limit sets the maximum level of external borrowing on a gross basis (i.e. excluding investments) for the Council. Borrowing at this level could be afforded in the short term but is not sustainable. The Authorised limit has been set on the estimated debt with sufficient headroom over and above this to allow for unexpected cash movements.	£591.5m	£335.8m is less than the authorised limit.
Operational Boundary for External Debt (Indicator 6*)*, This indicator refers to the means by which the Council manages its external debt to ensure it remains within the statutory Authorised Limit. It differs from the authorised limit as it is based on the most likely scenario in terms of capital spend and financing during the year. It is not a limit and actual borrowing could vary around this boundary for short times during the year.	£571.5m	£335.8m is less than the operational boundary.
Upper Limit on Fixed Rate Interest Rate Exposures (Indicator 9), These indicators allow the Council to manage the extent to which it is exposed to changes in interest rates. The Upper Limit for variable rate exposure has been set to ensure that the Council is not exposed to interest rate rises which could impact negatively on the overall financial position.	£513.6m	£227.0m
Upper Limit on Variable Rate Interest Rate Exposures (Indicator 9*)*, as above highlighting interest rate exposure risk.	£102.7m	-£36.7m

Maturity Structure Limits (Indicator 10*)*, This indicator highlights the existence of any large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replaced at times of uncertainty over interest rates and is designed to protect against excessive exposures to interest rate changes in any one period, thereby managing the effects of refinancing risks. The maturity of borrowing is determined by reference to the earliest date on which the lender can require payment. < 12 months 12 months – 24 months 24 months – 5 years 5 years – 10 years 10 years +	 0% to 50% 0% to 20% 0% to 30% 0% to 30% 40% to 100%	 13% 0% 0% 22% 65%
Investments Longer than 364 Days (Indicator 11), This indicator sets an upper limit for the level of investment that may be fixed for a period greater than 364 days. This limit is set to contain exposure to credit and liquidity risk.	£30m	£0.0m

Coventry City Council

Public report
Cabinet Report

Cabinet 10th February 2026
Council 10th March 2026

Name of Cabinet Member:
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Councillor P Seaman

Director approving submission of the report:
Director of Children's and Education Services

Wards affected:
All

Title: Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme Grant for April 2026 to March 2029

Is this a key decision?

Yes - the proposals involve financial implications in excess of £1m per annum and are likely to have a significant impact on residents or businesses in two or more electoral wards in the City

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Executive summary:

The Council currently operates 8 Family Hubs to deliver place-based integrated offers to families across the city, including the offer from the buildings, through an outreach community model and a new digital offer.

Coventry City Council was selected as one of 75 Local Authorities to join the national Family Hub and Start for Life Programme, covering the period April 2022 to March 2025 (first 1001 days), including financial investment to strengthen its offer to babies, children and families building on its previous achievements. The Programme was then extended for a further year, covering April 2025 to March 2026.

This Programme has already received £6m of grant funding from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Department for Education (DfE) across the 4 years 2022/23 to 2025/26 to deliver the Programme objectives. Coventry was also formally recognized as a trailblazer in this approach, one of only 13 sites across England, and has received many national ministerial and governmental visits and has contributed to national evaluations.

The Programme has been governed by a Family Hub Programme Board, supporting the work of 7 workstreams to ensure that all the national minimum expectation, and most of the "go furthers", of the framework are delivered within the Coventry Family hub offer, in line with the MOU associated with this grant. An annual review report is provided, as well as regular updates, to the Cabinet Members for Children and Young people, the Health and Wellbeing Board, and other forums on request.

Further funding has now been allocated to Coventry for financial years 2026/27 to 2028/29, with a provisional allocation of £6,117,000, subject to the Council meeting the current Programme expectations up to March 2026 and the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding to formalise the agreement to meet the new Programme expectations. Cabinet is requested to accept receipt of the grant into the local authority and associated spend, in order to deliver the Family Hub Offer in line with the Programme Guidance.

Recommendations:

Cabinet recommends that Council:

1) Accept the grant funding and agree planned associated spend for the purposes outlined in this report in respect of the Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme for the financial years 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29.

2) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's and Education Service, following consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources (S151 Officer) and the Director of Law and Governance, to enter into the necessary legal agreements to accept the funding.

3) Delegate the authority to the Director of Children's and Education Service to grant funding to third parties in line with Programme expectations.

4) Continue to agree that future reports on this grant and the Best Start Family Hub Programme are received by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children's Services.

Council is recommended to:

1) Accept the grant funding and agree planned associated spend for the purposes outlined in this report in respect of the Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme for the financial years 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29.

2) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's and Education Service, following consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources (S151 Officer) and the Director of Law and Governance, to enter into the necessary legal agreements to accept the funding.

3) Delegate the authority to the Director of Children's and Education Service to grant funding to third parties in line with Programme expectations.

4) Continue to agree that future reports on this grant and the Best Start Family Hub Programme are received by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children's Services.

List of Appendices included:

None

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

Family Hub and Start for Life Programme Report – Cabinet 18th March 2025

Coventry Family Hub Programme Impact report – March 2025

Giving every child the best start in life
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No - However an item on this matter will be submitted to the Education and Childrens Services Scrutiny Board (2) on 26th March 2026

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

No

Will this report go to Council?

Yes – 24th March 2026

Report title: Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme Grant for April 2026 to March 2029

1. Context and background

1.1. Coventry has pioneered the development and delivery of a Family Hub offer since 2018, and there are currently 8 Family Hubs delivering services to children, young people and their families through place based integrated working by a range of services, with an increasing number of community delivery and a 24/7 digital offer.

1.2. Coventry has been influential in the development of national and regional policy and practice regarding the development and delivery of Family Hubs to deliver early help to children, young people and families through place-based integration of services and working with our communities and residents to ensure that their needs are met, and their strengths and assets are utilised to help others

1.3. Through the Best Start in Life Strategy, HM Government have committed to making sure that every child has the best start in life and recognise that the foundations for lifelong success, health and learning are laid in early childhood. To ensure that every child has the best possible start in life, families must be supported in providing the nurturing care that children need to thrive. This support should be embedded at the heart of our communities and bring together health, education and community services to make it easier for families to access early joined up support.

1.4. As part of our commitments as a Marmot city to target resources to children and their families experiencing inequalities, the Family hub whilst providing universal offer to all children, also provides targeted interventions and services to children in most need, including children living in poverty. All services and groups hosted in the Family hubs are free of charge and a range of services and initiatives take place including all hubs being open as warm spaces with refreshments available for all, access to computers, data banks and access to free travel schemes. We also offer free haircuts during each school holiday, through a collaboration with a local trainer provider, and free clothing rails, food and toiletry pantries, are in each of the hub sites. There are also energy and income advice services within the hubs and drop-in sessions for families to learn how they can increase their income and save money on essentials such as food and heating. Family Hub staff also regularly work within the local Food hubs and social supermarkets promoting the offer and also support families to access their childcare and early years entitlements.

1.5. In July 2025 the Department for Education published "Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life" strategy that brings together early years and family services to improve child development and is backed by a funding investment over a 3-year period. This will see the progression and enhancement of Best Start Family Hubs that will continue to provide a welcoming inclusive environment that will be open to all and will prioritise support for families with babies and young children recognising the critical window for cognitive, physical and emotional development with ambitious targets as part of the governmental pledge that 75% of children aged 5 achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) by 2028.

1.6. As part of the Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme, Coventry has been set ambitious local targets by DfE to increase children's Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the 2027/28 academic year, including:

a) The proportion of children in Coventry City Council achieving a Good Level of Development is at least 72.3%.

b) Disadvantaged children have benefitted at least equally from this improvement; that is, that the proportion of children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieve a Good Level of Development is at least 58.3%

1.7. Best Start Family Hubs and Heathy Babies Programme is jointly funded by the Department for Education and Department for Health and Social Care and Coventry have a 3-year provisional allocation of £6,117,000. There are clear expectations regarding how the funding should be utilised to deliver the required services, although there will be a level of flexibility across the work strands. The only exception to this flexibility is for our capital allocation, which should only be used on capital expenditure.

Table 1: Distribution of funding allocation across the relevant programme strands for financial years 2026/2027, 2027/2028 and 2028/2029

Strand	%	2026 – 27 allocation	2027 – 28 allocation	2028 – 29 allocation
Best Start Family Hubs Delivery grant - programme	22%	£516,000	£421,900	£433,300
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant - capital	5%	£103,200	£105,200	£107,300
Parenting support	19%	£370,100	£374,800	£391,200
Home learning environment support	14%	£279,400	£282,800	£295,300
Perinatal mental health and parent - infant relationships	26%	£526,800	£526,800	£526,800
Infant feeding support	13%	£258,700	£258,700	£258,700
Healthy babies offers and parent and carer panels	1%	£26,600	£26,600	£26,600
Total		**£2,080,800**	**£1,996,900**	**£2,039,200**

N.B The allocation for 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 has been rounded to the nearest 100 pounds. The sum of the allocations across strands may not total the maximum funding allocation due to this rounding.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 That Coventry continues to receive funding from the Department for Education and Department for Health and Social Care to deliver its services in accordance with the Best Start Family Hub and Healthy Babies National Programme enabling the continued universal place based early help offer to children, young people and families.

2.2 The next phase of the programme has nationally been re-branded to Best Start Family Hubs with new naming conventions and requirements. To support a coherent and recognisable national offer all Local Authorities are expected to adopt consistent branding and naming practices for Best Start Family Hubs. This consistency helps families to identify and trust the support provided. As a result, rebranding will be required locally to reflect this new naming.

2.3 By March 2026, Coventry is required to publish its Best Start Local Plan, that will demonstrate how the funding will be used to achieve the programme objectives, and will be aligned to the Neighbourhood Health Plan where improving child development and health outcomes will be a fundamental focus of the provision of the Best Start Family Hub and Healthy Babies service delivery. This will also be in alignment with the development of Family Help within the Families First Partnership Programme**.**

2.4 Under the current Family Hub and Start for Life offer we have 8 Family Hubs. As part of the new Best Start in Life guidance, we are required to increase the number of Best Start Family Hubs. It is our intention to work collaboratively with the Voluntary and Community Service sector, Schools and Health to further expand the Best Start Family hub network. This will increase opportunities for families to access services across a wider range of locations. An example is the new Best Start Hub located at the city of Coventry Health Centre, hosted by Maternity services, UHCW and within the estate of CWPT.

2.5 Coventry commits to continued work with the National Centre for Family Hubs and Best Start for Life Unit to sharing and developing best practice, implementing central government branding requirements, and agrees to continue to take part in the national evaluation of Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme.

2.6 In the current phase of delivery, a Family Hub digital offer has been established through the creation of the single front door to services to support families, www.coventryfamilies.co.uk . It is our intention to develop this further to increase ease of access to a wider range of families and to enhance the range and scope of our digital solutions.

2.7 In order for the programme to be a success it is vital that there is continued Strategic commitment and support from across the partnership and the Family Hub programme board should include Senior executives and leads across the Local Authority, the Integrated Care Board, elected members, and senior strategic leaders within the local services providers that are relevant to the programme including the local health, education, and social care systems, and the Voluntary, Community and Faith based Sector.

2.8 Further work will be developed with business and commercial partners as part of the Child Friend Cov initiative.

2.9 Within the programme guidance there are clear expectations around new requirements to meet the need of children and young people with SEND. In order to meet these needs funding will be allocated to support this area of work, including a new SEND practitioner role.

2.10 In line with the Programme requirements a named accountable officer for Best Start in life needs to be identified. It is recommended that the Operational Lead for Early Help carriers out this function, in close collaboration with Senior Adviser Birth – 5, Early Years Quality Improvement and Standards Lead.

3. **Results of consultation undertaken**

3.1. The establishment of a Parent Carer Panel is a statutory requirement of the programme, and the Coventry Parent Voice Network is now an active network of over 428 parents providing feedback on the Start for Life and Family Hub offer to design, deliver and improve support and services. The Parent Voice Network has thoroughly gathered a comprehensive range of information and data to inform our services and enhance our services for families in Coventry. This process has involved extensive community engagement, structured surveys, and direct collaboration with the Department for Education.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1. The new grant funding period will begin 1st April 2026 following the submission of the Best Start in Life Local plan, due to be submitted in March 2026. Decisions regarding continuation, cessation or new activities funded by the current grant are currently being taken, informed by the evidence of the outcomes and impact of each programme of work. The new programme guide is anticipated to be made available before April 2026, which will inform the commissioning of current and new programmes of work with families.

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

5.1. **Financial Implications**

5.1.1 The existing Family Hub model in Coventry is funded by a combination of core and grant funding, including the Children and Families Grant and contributions from Public Health. From 2026/27, this element of the Children and Families Grant will be consolidated into a new Children, Families and Youth Grant.

5.1.2 This programme would attract additional grant funding of £6,117,000 across three financial years (2026/27 to 2028/29).

5.1.3 The Government expectation is that overall Local Authority spending on evidence-based interventions (EBIs), service delivery and universal family support will increase over the funding period, to reflect that this investment is additional to existing expenditure. The grant determination letter explicitly states that this funding should not substitute or displace existing resource for family services including early intervention and prevention and should be used to expand and deepen existing offers where they are already in place.

5.1.4 Funding beyond the 2026/27 to 2028/29 period will be subject to future Government spending review processes. Local Authorities are recommended to be considering long-term sustainability, including join up with statutory services, as they develop a local offer.

5.1.5 Our expectation is that there will be grant reporting requirements. These will be confirmed once final grant documentation has been received. Payment of funding allocations is subject to meeting the expectations of the programme. The Government reserves the right to withhold or reduce funding if Local Authorities do not meet these expectations.

5.1.6 A full and detailed project budget will be drawn up as part of the delivery plan, against which project spend will be monitored. All required spend will be funded through the grant awarded and no match funding will be required.

5.1.7 Careful consideration will need to be given to the action to be taken at the end of the grant regime, as this is time limited funding. If the grant ceases after the three years, then activity and provision will need to reduce back to levels that can be met within the existing budget envelope. However, the three-year timeframe provides an opportunity to review and measure the impact of changes to service users during the project, and to incorporate best practice into the existing family hubs model when reviewing provision and delivery.

5.2. **Legal Implications**

The work of Family Hubs and the proposals outlined in this report supports the Council's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need. The duty is a general duty to provide a range and level of services to Children in Need in the LAs area and not to a specific child.
Prior to entering into the grant agreement Legal Services will review and provide the necessary advice on the legal agreement/s required to be signed to accept the funding.

6. Other implications

6.1. **How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?**
(https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan)

The Best Start Family Hub and Healthy Babies Programme supports the One Coventry Corporate Plan's vision to improve the quality of life for Coventry people by:

- Improving educational outcomes
- Supporting children and families living in poverty
- Making communities safer
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Protecting our most vulnerable people - Keeping children and adults safe from harm, providing early intervention for families who need it; Enabling people to exercise choice and control in their daily lives; Improving services for people experiencing domestic violence and Preventing homelessness and helping people who do become homeless
- Reducing health inequalities – giving our children the best start in life and helping support people facing multiple and complex needs.

The integration of services to support children, young people and their families is a way of delivering the Council's properties through active communities and empowering citizens and working together with partners across the voluntary, public and private sectors to:

- Enable residents to self-serve by maximizing the use of new technology
- Pool and share resources
- Solve local problems through “in place” co-design and collaboration

A multiagency Family Hub programme is in place and 6 multi-agency priority groups have also been established, who will focus on ensuring access to the Family Hub Offer is targeted to underrepresented groups:

- Families with children with SEND,
- Fathers
- Families from Global Majority,
- Families living in Temporary Accommodation,
- Children not accessing education or Early Years Entitlement,
- Families living in Poverty

6.2. **How is risk being managed?**

The possibility of a failure to identify providers to deliver on each aspect of the funded Programme is minimised as there are already Family Hubs in place with a range of agencies and service providers committed to the programme, and a wider early help partnership offer to draw from.

The risks associated with possible failure to deliver on the key priorities of the Programme and the requirements of the grant are mitigated using expert personnel who are highly experienced in developing and delivering national Programmes, and who will be supported and advised by personnel from the Best Start Family Hubs & Healthy Babies Programme Team DfE and DHSC.

Progress will continue to be monitored through robust governance arrangements with regular reports being received and provided.

6.3. **What is the impact on the organisation?**

Delivering effective prevention and early help for children and their families to secure positive outcomes is a significant priority for many functions of the City Council, including Children’s Services, Safeguarding, Education, Migration, Employment and Skills and Public Health. The work of our Family Hub programme in alignment to the National Programme specification will further improve the delivery of integrated early help and prevention services and enable impact against health inequalities outlined by the Marmot partnership**.**

In order to continue to deliver a successful offer to children and families in line with the Programme expectations it is intended to extend the fixed term contracts for Family hub practitioner posts and to create new roles in order to meet the new requirements.

6.4. **Equalities / EIA?**

An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken in 2018 at the commencement of the Coventry Family Hub Programme. The Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme provides city-wide support to children, young people and families and will enhance the work to reduce inequalities and outcomes for children, young people, and their families in need of early help. Over the next 3 years the Programme will build on the success of the Family Hub and Start for Life Programme and continue to prioritise engagement with vulnerable communities, including children with special educational needs and disabilities, refugee and asylum-seeking families, families experiencing homelessness, working with fathers and supporting families living in poverty.

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

There are no implications

6.6. **Implications for partner organisations?**

A wide range of partner agencies (statutory, commissioned, and voluntary and community sector) take an active role in the Early Help Strategic Partnership (EHSP) and the Family Hub network. The Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies Programme Board, which includes senior officers from Children's Services, Public Health and the Integrated Care Board, provides the governance for this oversight of this work, and a One Coventry approach is taken by this partnership.

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Children's and Education Services

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Contributor/ approver name	Title	Directorate	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Michelle Salmon	Governance Services Officer	Law and Governance	11/01/2026	12/01/2026
Jodie Coote and Sarah Kinsell	Accountants, Financial Management	Finance and Resources	11/01/2026	12/01/2026
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Ewan Dewar	Head of Service Finance	Finance and Resources	12/01/2026	20/01/2026
Julie Newman	Director of Law and Governance	-	13/01/2026	16/01/2026
Sukriti Sen	Director of Children's and Education Services	-	11/01/2026	13/01/2026
Councillor P Seaman	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	-	14/01/2026	16/01/2026

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Coventry City Council

Public report
Cabinet

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee 5 February 2026
Cabinet 10 February 2026

Name of Cabinet Member:
Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities - Councillor N Akhtar

Director approving submission of the report:
Director of Regeneration and Economy

Wards affected:
All

Title:
Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029

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:

Whilst having nationally recognised strengths in creative industries, Coventry does not currently have an adopted creative industries strategy. This has become more pertinent following the publication of the Government's Creative Industries Sector Plan in June 2025, including significant sector investment for 2026-2029. This includes a £25m allocation to West Midlands Combined Authority to drive growth of the creative industries, aligning with the West Midlands Growth Plan which identifies creative industries as a priority sector.

Ahead of the Government sector plan, the Coventry City Council culture and creative economy team commissioned an independent Coventry Creative Industries mapping report in May 2025. The purpose was to provide fresh evidence about size of the sector, as well as to identify key opportunities and challenges. The mapping involved stakeholder consultation through roundtables and focus interviews. A public event was held on 24 June 2025 to share key findings and collect further sector evidence, followed by an All-Members Seminar on 6 October 2025. The report was published on the Council website on 2 October 2025.

The mapping report and its key recommendations have strongly informed the development of the creative industries strategy, which as a key decision is coming to Cabinet for adoption. The strategy will provide a future roadmap for the development of creative industries in Coventry, as well as give us an opportunity to clearly articulate our priorities to potential funders and other stakeholders. The adoption of the strategy is time sensitive given the WMCA funding detail due to be confirmed by the end of March 2026.

The Strategy was developed with stakeholders and partners by the Council's Culture and Creative Economy team. There are no new and direct cost implications for the Council within the Strategy itself. The accompanying delivery plan is based on either existing funding or capacity, but with the ambition to secure further funding in the future, including potentially from the WMCA through alignment with West Midlands Growth Plan.

Recommendations:

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to:

1) Consider the contents of the report and identify any additional recommendations or comments to Cabinet for their consideration.

Cabinet is recommended to:

1) Consider any recommendations or comments from Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
2) Approve the draft Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029 set out in Appendix 1 to the report and the associated strategy delivery plan set out in Appendix 2 to the report.
3) Delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Economy, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, the Director of Finance and Resources, and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities to:
   a) finalise the Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029 and associated strategy delivery plan and thereafter adopt the Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029 and associated strategy delivery plan.
   b) further amend, edit and adapt the Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029 and associated strategy delivery plan over the life of the strategy in response to subsequent review, opportunity and consultation as required.
4) Delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Economy, following consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, the Director of Finance and Resources, and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities to:
   a) Identify potential funding opportunities, submit funding bids and accept funding awards up to a total sum of £2.5 million pounds.
   b) Undertake the necessary due diligence, negotiate the terms and condition of the funding agreement and enter into the necessary agreement to deliver the aims and objectives of the Coventry Cultural Industries Strategy 2026-29.

List of Appendices included:

The following appendices are attached to the report:

Appendix 1 – Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029

Appendix 2 – Coventry Creative Industries Strategy Delivery Plan

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Background papers:

What's next for Coventry's Creative Industries? – report by independent consultant David Furmage, published 2 October 2025 on the Council website

Other useful documents

West Midlands Combined Authority Plan for Growth
Government's Creative Industries Sector Plan, June 2025

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

Yes - Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, 5 February 2026

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

Coventry Culture Works cultural compact Creative Industries Task Group, 14 January 2026

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Coventry Creative Industries Strategy

1. Context (or background)

1.1. With strengths in both creativity and technology, two strong universities and the creative legacy of UK City of Culture 2021, Coventry is well-placed to maximise the potential of its creative industries.

1.2. They represent a significant economic sector, with over 1,290 creative businesses (13% of all businesses), directly employing 7,250 workers. When adding freelancers and creative professionals working in non-creative sectors, the sector footprint is much larger, with approximately 14,500 workers, (9% of city workforce) engaged in creative occupations.

1.3. Combined with Warwickshire, the sub-region boasts over 7,000 creative businesses and 80 game development studios, forming one of the UK's biggest creative clusters.

1.4. Coventry has developed a particular strength in createch, providing a unique opportunity to combine the creative knowhow with innovation across other key sectors, from automotive to advanced manufacturing and healthcare.

1.5. This Strategy sets out a practical plan to turn potential into progress. It responds to national priorities outlined in the UK Government's Creative Industries Sector Plan and aligns with regional ambitions under the West Midlands Growth Plan.

1.6. It also responds to the specific sector challenges and opportunities identified through the mapping report.

1.7. The strategy focuses on five delivery themes:

- Businesses, clusters and networks – providing targeted support to meet the needs of businesses
- Skills and workforce development – delivering targeted skills development opportunities
- Places and spaces – unlocking affordable creative workspaces and exploring opportunities to make existing specialist facilities more accessible
- Tourism and branding – positioning creative industries at the heart of Coventry's visitor economy and storytelling
- Funding and policy – Aligning with regional and national strategies to secure public and private investment

1.8 Through this Strategy, the Council will seek to work collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure that Coventry will have a thriving, financially resilient creative sector, a highly skilled and diverse workforce, and a stronger creative city brand by 2029.

1.9 Although there are no specific funds attached to this activity, the Strategy will be an important tool in both making the case for new funding, also ensuring that we target future funds to maximise the potential benefits.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 **Option 1 (Not recommended).** The Council could choose not to have a Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029, and to instead rely on strategic plans of the WMCA, such as the Plan for Growth.

The risk with this approach is that it would limit the specific, detailed case for investment for Coventry, particularly given wider planned and previous investment in the West Midlands region. The lack of a shared delivery plan and strategy for the city would also make partnership working more challenging, which would impact Coventry's likelihood of securing other types of investment as well. Most funders now want to see how their investment aligns with city strategies and plans. The strategy document is also an important tool in facilitating partnerships between the Council, the universities and the private sector. Without a strategy, there would be no clear means for the Coventry creative industries sector to shape economic planning, major business support and economic development activities at the sub-regional scale.

2.2 **Option 2 (Recommended).** The endorsement of the Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029, which has been developed in response to the Coventry creative industries mapping, as well as aligned to the key opportunities around the Government's Creative Industries Sector Plan.

Development of the Strategy has been informed by in-depth consultation with key creative industry partners, universities and other stakeholders. By building on local strengths and addressing key challenges, the Strategy aims to provide a clear roadmap on how Coventry can grow its creative industries and maximise on the opportunities to align them with our other key industries, including automotive. This also allows the city to diversify the economic base, as well as provide opportunities to create new jobs and improve the diversity of the creative industries workforce and leadership.

2.3 It is recommended that the Cabinet supports Option 2 and endorses the Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1. As part of the development process for this strategy, Coventry City Council has undertaken consultation and other evidence gathering activity including:

- Review of the previous mapping in 2020-2021 and other available data
- Review of the current creative industries within the Council
- Commissioning an independent consultant in May 2025 to deliver a Creative Industries mapping report, providing up to date evidence and data. This included several industry/academic roundtables and focus interviews key experts, with

over 40 people taking part. This was augmented with an analysis of current and recent reports and strategies locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- A public consultation event was held on 24 June 2025 to share key findings from the report and collect further sector evidence, with circa 80 creative industries professionals and stakeholders attending
- Publishing the report on 2 October 2025 on the Council website and holding an All-Member Seminar on Creative Industries, in partnership with University of Warwick and Coventry University on 6 October 2025
- Final sector consultation event on 30 October 2025, attended by approximately 20 sector experts and stakeholders
- Ongoing conversations in 2025-26 with WMCA on their creative industries plans for 2026-2029, including alignment with Coventry's strengths in this area

3.2. A number of key challenges and opportunities were identified, including:
- A lack of affordable creative spaces, venues, and specialised facilities
- Tourism and branding needing a stronger, coordinated city identity
- Business support services for the sector being fragmented and lacking specialist support.
- Short-term funding cycles cause instability, hindering business investment
- Skills shortages and limited career opportunities leading to poor graduate retention.
- Freelance creative work is often uncertain, poorly paid and lacks career progression, with limited business focused support available.
- Current wider challenges pushing businesses into survival mode, limiting planning, innovation and collaboration.

The key opportunities identified included:
- Business Development: specialist support, better funding access, and stronger freelancer networks can boost growth in all creative areas
- Cluster Development: building on the success of Coventry and Warwickshire Exchange (CWX) as a cluster development body
- Skills and Innovation: Can position Coventry as a national leader in createch
- Infrastructure: new projects like the City Centre Cultural Gateway
- Tourism and Branding: relaunching Destination Coventry

3.3. This evidence – and particularly the 2025 Creative Industries Mapping Report – has given us a strong foundation to build our strategic approach on. Whilst the mapping and strategy are primarily focused on economic development, links to culture, tourism and the visitor economy were also considered.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1. The Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029 is a three-year strategy. Progress will be reported annually to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities.

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

5.1. **Financial Implications**

The strategy has been developed internally by the Council's Culture and Creative Economy team, resulting in no direct financial cost for its creation. Delivery activity will be supported through existing budgets and staff capacity. However, the strategy includes an ambition to secure additional external funding in the future, including potential contributions from the WMCA, to expand and enhance delivery. Approval of the acceptance of any external funding will be reported back following the constitutions procedures

5.2. **Legal Implications**

The Council has powers under s145 Local Government Act 1972 and s111 Local Government Act 1972 which support the development and delivery of the Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029. There are no legal impediments to the Cabinet approving this report.

Where the Council secures grant funding, it will need to ensure that the receipt of the grant is compliant with the Uk's subsidy control rules as set out in the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and any regulations and amendments thereto. Legal and Procurement Services will provide the necessary support to ensure that any legal agreement to secure funding protects the Council's interest.

6. Other implications

6.1. **How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?**
(https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan)

6.1.1 The Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029 will help to deliver all five objectives within the One Coventry Plan.

6.1.2 **Increasing the Economic Prosperity of the City and Region.** This Strategy will contribute strongly towards delivering this objective given that its main objective is to support the creative industries to grow and flourish. This includes aims to support new jobs, incubate new businesses, support freelancers, attract investment and support key economic industry sectors through convergence between creativity and technology. In addition, the Strategy presents the opportunity to contribute towards the development of our visitor economy, and future development of the storytelling about Coventry. Alignment with regional and national strategies will improve the chances of securing investment to the city.

6.1.3 **Improving Outcomes and Tackling Inequalities Within our Communities**. A key part of the Strategy is focus on skills development to ensure that the city has a skilled workforce to drive the sector forward. A vital part of this is to ensure that the City can create conditions to increase the diversity of our creative industries workforce, particularly given the young and diverse population of Coventry. This entails looking at the Strategy and its implementation can support people from different communities to access opportunities – and be supported through their learning and career journey. The aims around unlocking new affordable creative workspace and making existing spaces more accessible will support in tackling inequality of opportunities.

6.1.4 **Tackle the Causes and Consequences of Climate Change.** The strategy recognises the importance of climate change, both in terms of making the creative industries more environmentally sustainable – but also in how they can aid behaviour changes through storytelling. A key part of the business support programme is to ensure businesses in this sector will know about opportunities e.g. on environmental grants to make their operations, equipment or buildings more energy efficient.

6.1.5 **Continued Financial Sustainability of the Council.** As a Strategy for the Creative Industries, the activities are aimed at supporting businesses to grow, which would generate income through business rates and tax revenues. Given that the Strategy also aligns with a Government sector plan, there is an opportunity for the Council to use the Strategy to secure more direct delivery or devolved funding.

6.1.6 **Council's Role as a Partner, Leader and Enabler.** The creative industries strategy provides an opportunity for the Council to adopt all these roles. The Council has worked together in partnership with the sector and a wide range of stakeholders to develop the Strategy, aligning with partner needs. The Council has thus operated as an enabler and will continue to broker partnerships or unlock new opportunities. The Council will also be in a key leadership position to advocate for devolved funding and to facilitate and coordinate the actual strategy delivery.

6.2. **How is risk being managed?**

The key risks include:

- Lack of dedicated funding to deliver beyond the actions identified at this point, as well as some funding decisions not being confirmed. However, many of the actions can be contributed without any additional funding – and can support the development of future funding applications. There is a strong track record in securing funding through the Council, with the strategy delivery also involving universities and other partners with significant fundraising experience.
- Sustaining the partnership commitment to deliver the Strategy. The Council already has strong partnerships in place through the consultation process and therefore expects that partner commitment will deepen through the delivery process.
- Uncertainty around the delivery model for the WMCA's Creative Places Growth Fund (CPGF) and how it can support the delivery of the Strategy. Further clarity on the CPGF is expected in the next few months, and it is proposed the Strategy and Delivery Plan can be further amended and tailored to ensure optimal implementation, in line with Recommendation 2. This should not, therefore, present significant risk.

6.3. **What is the impact on the organisation?**

In relation to the whole organisation, we expect the strategy to deliver positive outcomes in supporting local businesses, creating new skills opportunities and contribute the external narrative about the city. The implications of no dedicated funding being attached to the strategy have already been covered in Section 5. In terms of staff impact, the delivery will mainly concern the Culture and Creative Economy Team, where this forms a core part of their roles already. Input will also be required from the Economy team, but this should not have any major staffing implications and will help to align the creative industries strategy with the wider economic frameworks.

6.4. **Equalities / EIA**

6.4.1 As outlined earlier in the report, one of the key aims of the Strategy is to address the lack of diversity across the creative industries workforce. This is particularly pertinent for Coventry given the city's young and diverse population. It is planned that any interventions are designed carefully to provide support for those experiencing disadvantage. The Council will also pay particular attention to how we will reach people from different communities and experiencing different challenges. This involves using locally based community organisations, community leaders and other trusted partners to promote opportunities. Given the lack of data across some parts of the creative industries, the Council will further ensure we can collect and analyse data to ensure that Coventry can contribute to national data. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed.

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

As outlined in the "Tackling the Causes and Consequences of Climate Change" section, the Strategy will look to enhance the opportunity for local businesses to improve their environmental sustainability, as well as play a role impacting behaviour change across the city's communities.

6.6. **Implications for partner organisations?**

The Strategy is very much delivered through a partnership approach to maximise impact and reach, as well as to avoid a duplication of activities. The Council will play a convening role to allow different partners to contribute, as well as providing feedback and challenge as required. Through the consultation process, the Council has developed good sector networks both in Coventry, but also beyond. This also enables knowledge exchange.

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

Coventry Creative Industries Strategy

2026 – 2029

Coventry City Council

coventry.gov.uk

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a potentially transformational moment for Coventry's creative industries. With strengths in both creativity and technology, two strong universities and the creative legacy of UK City of Culture 2021, Coventry is well-placed to maximise the potential of its creative industries and secure significant investment to support this.

Coventry's creative industries represent a significant economic force that extends far beyond traditional creative boundaries. The city hosts 1,290 creative businesses comprising 13% of all local enterprises, directly employing 7,250 creative and cultural workers.

However, the sector's true impact is much larger, with approximately 14,500 workers, (9% of the city workforce) engaged in creative occupations, from designers at Jaguar Land Rover to creative marketing professionals in utility companies. When combined with Warwickshire, the sub-region boasts over 7,000 creative businesses and 80 game development studios, forming one of the UK's most significant creative clusters.

Our mapping work shows that Coventry has particular strengths in:

- Createch (encompassing all creative industries sub-sectors)
- IT, software and computer services (includes the games industry)
- Music, performing and visual arts
- Design
- Advertising and marketing, publishing
- Film, TV, video, radio and photography and other creative content creation

Coventry has developed a particular strength in createch, the fusion of creative skills and emerging technologies to create new products, services and experiences. This provides unique opportunities to combine the creative knowhow with innovation across other key sectors, from automotive to advanced manufacturing & healthcare.

This strategy sets out a practical plan to turn potential into progress, as well as makes the case for why Coventry's Creative Industries should be supported by new investment at regional and national level.

It responds to national priorities outlined in the UK Government's Creative Industries Sector Plan and aligns with regional ambitions under the West Midlands Growth Plan. Our goal is simple: to make Coventry one of the most inclusive and innovative creative cities in the UK - where talent from all backgrounds can start, stay and succeed.

Coventry's creative industries are a driver of economic growth, cultural identity, and technological innovation. They intersect with key sectors such as advanced manufacturing, future mobility, and health, creating spillover benefits for the wider economy. With targeted investment and collaboration, Coventry can lead nationally in createch, immersive technologies, and digital content.

Despite these strengths, the sector faces barriers with a 13.7% decline in creative businesses since 2017, fragmented business support, skills shortages and limited affordable workspace. There is also a need for stronger branding and integration with tourism and city development.

The strategy focuses on five delivery themes:

1) Businesses, clusters & networks – Strengthening Coventry and Warwickshire Exchange (CWX) as a cluster body, expanding business support and securing further investment to provide targeted support to meet the needs of our creative industry businesses
2) Skills & workforce development – Delivering targeted skills development opportunities including training, mentoring, and internships with a focus on diversity and graduate retention
3) Places & spaces – Unlocking affordable creative workspaces and explore opportunities to open up existing specialist facilities.
4) Tourism & branding – Position creative industries at the heart of Coventry's visitor economy and storytelling
5) Funding & policy – Aligning with regional and national strategies to secure public and private investment

Through this strategy we want to work collaboratively with all our stakeholders to ensure that Coventry will have a thriving, financially resilient creative sector, a highly skilled and diverse workforce, and a stronger creative city brand by 2029. Creative industries will contribute to economic growth, innovation, and placemaking, supported by robust partnerships and sustainable investment.

Together, we can unlock Coventry's creative potential, attract new investment and ensure it plays a central role in shaping the future economy.

2. FOREWORD

Cllr Naeem Akhtar – Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities

Coventry has always been a city of makers and doers. From our engineering heritage to Delia Derbyshire and the entrepreneurial spirit of our creative communities, this is a place that brings ideas to life. In recent years we have invested in people and places, from FarGo Village and the Daimler Powerhouse, to the City Centre Cultural Gateway now taking shape. These assets give us a platform to grow jobs, businesses and pride across every neighbourhood.

This strategy sets out a practical plan to turn potential into progress. It is evidence-led and industry-informed. It backs Coventry's strengths in createch, film and TV and design, and it recognises the vital role of our musicians, performers, makers, freelancers and creative businesses. It also proposes clear actions on how we address some of the current barriers and challenges to unlock the full potential of the 14,500 people and 1,290 creative businesses that work in this sector.

Delivery will be a partnership effort. The Council will play its convening role, working closely with the University of Warwick and Coventry University, Createch Frontiers, CWX, the West Midlands Combined Authority and most importantly, with our local businesses and freelancers. Our ambition is simple: to make Coventry one of the most inclusive and innovative creative cities in the UK where talent from all backgrounds can start, stay and succeed.

I commend everyone who has helped us to develop this strategy and invite you to work with us to deliver it. Together we can build a creative economy that creates opportunity, generates investment and enhances the quality of life for everyone who calls Coventry home.

3. INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

The term creative industries was first formally introduced in the UK in 1998 through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Creative Industries Mapping Document. This report defined the sector as:

"Those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property." (DCMS, 1998)

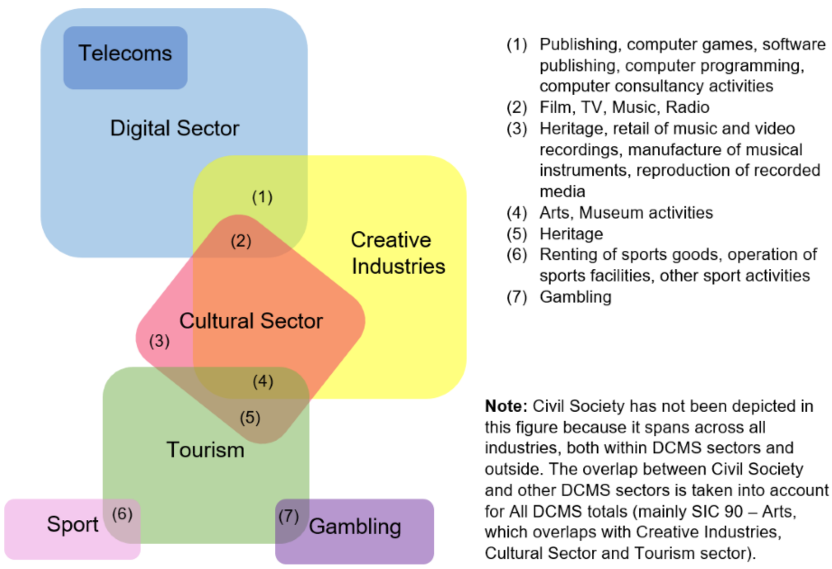
Since then, the concept has evolved through successive strategies, most recently the UK Government's Creative Industries Sector Plan (DCMS, 2025), which sets out a wider plan to drive the growth of these industries, as part of the Modern Industrial Strategy's long-term growth agenda to 2035.

Despite the various strategies and plans, the foundations of creative industries are still recognised to be in the exploitation of intellectual property (IP), individual creativity, and the potential of wealth/job creation.

To ensure that the Coventry Creative Industries Strategy aligns with the national policy and funding landscape, we have adopted the DCMS definition of creative industries sub-sectors, to include:

- Advertising and marketing
- Architecture
- Crafts
- Design and designer fashion
- Film, TV, radio and photography
- Museums, galleries and libraries
- Music, performing and visual arts
- Publishing
- IT, software and computer services (includes video games)

We also recognise that these sub-sectors overlap both with each other, as well as other related sectors as outlined here in the DCMS Venn diagram[1]:



[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-sectors-economic-estimates-methodology/dcms-sector-economic-estimates-methodology

The creative industries contribute **£124 billion in GVA and support 2.4 million jobs** nationwide. By 2035, the UK Government aims to increase annual business investment from £17 billion to £31 billion, positioning the UK as a global leader in film/TV, video games, music, and advertising.[2]

Creative Industries outperform many traditional sectors in both GVA and employment. For example, creative industries are:

- ✓ around 8–9 times bigger than automotive manufacturing, employing more than automotive and mining combined
- ✓ nearly 10 times larger than agriculture, employing five times more people
- ✓ around 8–9 times bigger than automotive manufacturing. They also employ around five times more people than agriculture and vastly more than automotive and mining combined.
- ✓ more than three times that of energy production and utilities [3]

Creative industries are however not just beneficial for their employment and economic impact, but also support:

- **Placemaking & visitor economy** (e.g. music festivals, film tourism, music tourism) and pride of place
- **Health & wellbeing** by providing a wide range of activities for residents to participate in
- Grassroots participation, local venues and public art that enhances **social cohesion** [4]

[2] https://www.coventry.gov.uk/arts-1/%E2%80%99s-next-coventry%E2%80%99s-creative-industries
[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dcms-sectors-economic-estimates
[4] https://www.coventry.gov.uk/arts-1/%E2%80%99s-next-coventry%E2%80%99s-creative-industries

4. STRATEGY CONSULTATION PROCESS

Coventry has not had a creative industries strategy before, although some scoping work was done in 2020-21 and, for example, the Council's Economic Development team has been delivering and informing creative industries related activities as part of the wider economic development activity for the city. In addition, some data existed at regional and sub-regional level (e.g. WMCA, previous LEP reports & plans).

As part of the development process for this strategy, Coventry City Council has undertaken consultation and other evidence gathering activity including:

- Review of the previous mapping done in 2020-2021 and other available data
- Review of the current creative industries related activities undertaken by the Council economy and other teams (e.g. filming requests)
- Commissioning an independent consultant in May 2025 to deliver a creative industries mapping report, to provide up to date evidence & data about creative industries in Coventry. This included several industry and academic roundtables, as well as individual interviews with key experts across different parts of the creative industry, with over 40 people taking part in in-depth consultation. This was augmented with an analysis of current and recent reports and strategies, both locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- A public event was held on 24 June 2025 to share key findings from the report and collect further sector evidence, with the event targeted for Coventry creative industries businesses and freelancers. This event was attended by circa 80 creative industries professionals and stakeholders.
- Publishing the report on 2 October 2025 on the Council website: https://www.coventry.gov.uk/arts-1/%E2%80%99s-next-coventry%E2%80%99s-creative-industries and sharing this with all Elected Members and the public
- An All-Member Seminar on Creative Industries delivered in partnership with the University of Warwick and Coventry University on 6 October 2025
- Final sector consultation event held on 30 October 2025, attended by approximately 20 sector experts and stakeholders
- Ongoing conversations in 2025-26 with the WMCA on their creative industries plans for 2026-2029, including alignment with Coventry's strengths in this area

This evidence – and particularly the 2025 Creative Industries Mapping Report – has given us a strong foundation to build our strategic approach on. The report was primarily focused on economic development of the creative industry sector, although it also considered links to culture, tourism and the visitor economy.

The key findings, together with the recommendations from the independent consultant are summarised in the next chapter. These, together with the feedback from public consultations have strongly informed our overall strategy approach.

5. CREATIVE INDUTRIES IN COVENTRY

To provide some wider context, Coventry has a population of 345,325, making it the 10th largest English city and the second largest in the West Midlands, after Birmingham. It has enjoyed 9% growth in the last decade. Based on assumed levels of future fertility, mortality and migration, and based on the 2021 census data, the population in Coventry is projected to change from 400,523 people in 2025 to 449,021 people in 2040. This is an increase of 12.11% over a 15-year period.

The same data shows that 45% of Coventry's residents identify as part of the global majority (identify with the majority of the world's population who are not from white ethnic groups). Coventry is also a very young city, with 22% of its population aged under 18.

In terms of creativity, Coventry is known for many things such as its music legacy (e.g. Two Tone) and brutalist architecture, with design also being central to Coventry's role in being the birthplace of the British motor car industry. More recently, Coventry hosted the UK City of Culture 2021 and is a leading city in the UK for createch – which is the fusion of creative skills and emerging technologies to create new products, services and experiences. Both the University of Warwick and Coventry University provide creative industries study opportunities & world-class research.

In terms of the **number of creative businesses**, the Creative Industries Mapping Report shows that there are a total of **1,290 creative businesses** – representing 12.9% of all our businesses, including;

- 860 businesses engaged in the production and provision of **digital goods** and services, such as serious games, games and digital publishing
- 1,020 businesses that could be classed as **'core' creative industries businesses,** such as advertising & marketing, architecture, fashion, film/tv/radio and photography
- 355 businesses focusing on the production, preservation, and dissemination of **cultural products**, such as design, crafts, music, and visual arts

In terms of the **number of people working in the creative industries**, Coventry has 7,250 employed creative and cultural workers, representing 4.4% of total the total 165,000 workers in the city. However, this does not represent the full picture as:

- Around 45-50% of creative workers are freelancers, and therefore not included into worker statistics
- In addition, 50-55% of all creative workers are actually employed in other sectors (e.g. designers at Jaguar Land Rover) and therefore not included in the creative industries occupational statistics

This means that the **more likely figure of creative industries employment in Coventry is around 14,500 workers**, nearly 9% of the total workforce in the city.

The mapping data shows us that **Coventry has specific strengths** in:

- ✓ Createch (encompassing all creative industries sub-sectors)
- ✓ IT, software and computer services (includes the games industry)
- ✓ Music, performing and visual arts
- ✓ Design
- ✓ Advertising and marketing, publishing
- ✓ Film, TV, video, radio and photography and other creative content creation

However, given the rapid development of new technologies and more blurred lines between the different sub-sectors, a wider focus may be needed to support a more developed creative industries ecosystem within Coventry – allowing a number of sub-sectors to thrive. This should however be combined with some targeted interventions to address specific gaps or needs, where required.

It is important to ensure that Coventry is connected to wider regional initiatives and plans – but will be empowered to meet the specific needs of its creative ecology, as a key sub-regional emerging cluster. There also needs to a consideration for the long-standing collaboration between Coventry & Warwickshire – given the strengths around clustering and supply chain.

When we consider Coventry & Warwickshire as a **combined creative sector,** its importance becomes even clearer. With over **7,000 creative businesses** and 80 game development studios, the region has an abundance of talent. From design and digital marketing to virtual reality, film, and TV, around **44,000 creative people** are contributing to our economy.

A major part of this activity is the West Midlands Games Cluster, which includes 10% of all UK games companies, employing around 3,500 people, 2,500 of which are based in Leamington Spa. This Games cluster is one of the UK's most significant and diverse, internationally recognised and worth around £224m per year. It includes the disciplines of entertainment games and eSports alongside serious games for training, simulation and education alongside animation, visual effects, immersive experiences and other content creation. [5]

Since the publication of the above data the sector has been hit by cutbacks, with a reduction in the number of businesses and a cut in employment, although the exact scale of these cutbacks is not known. Fortunately, alongside these cuts there are emerging new opportunities, which need to be maximised.

[5] https://www.coventry.gov.uk/arts-1/%E2%80%99s-next-coventry%E2%80%99s-creative-industries

Despite this, Coventry & Warwickshire together form a nationally significant creative cluster.

Given that **createch** is a strength for Coventry and Warwickshire, it is worth exploring the definition and activities covered by createch in more detail.

What is createch?

Essentially it is a newly emerging fusion of all creative sub-sectors, defined in the UK Government's Creative Industries Sector Plan[1] as the 'fusion of creative innovation and cutting-edge technology'. It enables the creation of:

- New products (e.g., immersive games, interactive media, AI-generated art)
- Innovative services (e.g., virtual production for film/TV, AR/VR experiences)
- Unique experiences (e.g., digital fashion shows, interactive museum exhibits)
- New systems and business models (e.g., creative content marketplaces, blockchain for digital rights management)

Examples of use-cases include:

- Films using virtual production and real-time game engines
- AI-powered music composition tools
- Augmented reality in advertising and design
- Virtual reality training for education or performance arts
- Digital platforms for licensing and monetising creative content

Createch embraces all creative sub-sectors, as defined by DCMS:

- Advertising
- Architecture
- Crafts
- Design and designer fashion
- Film, TV, radio, and photography
- Museums, galleries, and libraries
- Music, performing, and visual arts
- Publishing
- Software and computer services (including video games)

Within createch, the focus is on those businesses in these sub-sectors that are actively developing or innovatively using technologies such as:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR)
- Real-time game engines
- Blockchain and distributed ledger technologies
- Advanced digital production tools

Createch activities are especially prominent in:

- Film, TV, and visual effects (e.g. virtual production, digital animation)
- Video games (e.g. immersive and interactive content)
- Advertising and marketing (e.g. personalised, data-driven campaigns)
- Design and fashion (e.g. digital prototyping, virtual clothing)
- Music and performing arts (e.g. AI composition, virtual concerts)
- Museums and cultural heritage (e.g. digitisation, interactive exhibits)

The earlier point about creative industries workers being employed by other sectors also highlights the opportunity for creative industries to contribute to the growth of Coventry's **other key industry sectors** such as:

- **Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering** – including automotive, aerospace, rail, motorsport, engineering, material sciences and metrology
- **Automotive & Future Mobility** – automotive manufacturing, electric and hybrid vehicles, connected and autonomous vehicles (CAV), off-highway vehicles, and future mobility solutions
- **Energy & Low Carbon** – clean energy, low carbon technologies, storage, utilities, and sustainable infrastructure
- **Modern Services** - professional and financial services, legal, accountancy, management, fintech, proftech (high technology) shared services, and outsourcing
- **Health & Life Sciences** - healthcare, pharmaceuticals, medical technology/devices, biotechnology, clinical trials, and health innovation [6]

Coventry is nationally recognised for its innovation and activity across these business clusters and is especially known for advanced manufacturing, future mobility and energy and low carbon. They are especially relevant to developing Coventry's creative sector now because:

✓ Coventry's business strengths align exactly with the UK government's newly published 'Modern Industrial Strategy' and its high-growth sector focus

✓ Coventry's creative industries can benefit all of these sectors, because they are a catalyst for cross-sectoral innovation and growth within all of them

✓ Coventry's creative sector uniquely blends multiple creative sub-sectors with tech such as immersive and games, meaning that it is already a strong createch cluster

The statistics however show a worrying trend, where Coventry's creative industries workforce has been declining faster than in the West Midlands or nationally, as Coventry saw a **13.7% decrease** in its number of creative businesses between 2017-2022. This drop is considerably bigger than the 5.8% decline across the West Midlands and a 4.7% decline in creative businesses UK wide during the same period.[7]

Given the opportunity for creative industries to provide jobs for the future, support our key industry sectors, as well as diversify our economic base, **it is important that we try to address some of the issues facing our creative workforce.**

[6] https://www.coventry.gov.uk/arts-1/%E2%80%99s-next-coventry%E2%80%99s-creative-industries
[7] https://www.coventry.gov.uk/arts-1/%E2%80%99s-next-coventry%E2%80%99s-creative-industries

Our evidence shows that there are a number of **specific barriers and challenges** facing the creative industries businesses and freelancers at the moment, which are outlined in the next two sections.

5.1 The current sector challenges

This section outlines the key challenges identified through the Coventry creative industries mapping report.[8] The list is not exhaustive, and some of these challenges are not specific just to Coventry – but exist both regionally and nationally.

1. Business Challenges	
Uncertainty	Many creative businesses, especially from the cultural sector, are experiencing a period of uncertainty that has led to a 'survival mode mentality', which has negatively impacted their ability to innovate, invest and grow
Business & Freelancer Support	Business support is highly fragmented and lacks dedicated sector specialists with knowledge of sector specific issues such as IP. The same applies for freelancers. There is a shortage of funding to support business growth, both smaller scale loans and grants as well as risk capital from, e.g. angel investors. Available funding is often focused on capital expenditure, whilst creative businesses are people-driven and thus need growth funding to support staffing and capacity rather than equipment or physical assets.
Networking & Partnership Working	Lack of opportunities to effectively network and collaborate. Creative industries are driven by clustering, with different businesses looking to collaborate with complementary or supply chain businesses - but brokerage is needed. Scarcity of substantial anchor tenants to drive significant job creation and supercharge the region's growth. Institutional processes need to be speeded up, e.g., universities need to speed up contracting and other processes.
Skills & Workforce	Shortage of highly skilled workers and specialist/industry-linked training programmes, low graduate retention. Lack of diversity is a major issue across the creative industries, and this should be addressed urgently through inclusive skills opportunities & better careers awareness. Training programmes are often short and do not cater for freelancers, nor make direct links to employers. Significant pressures on universities due to changes in the operating environment. Impacts of AI – and the uncertainty around impacts on future skills requirement and workforce.

8 https://www.coventry.gov.uk/arts-1/%E2%80%99s-next-coventry%E2%80%99s-creative-industries

Places & Spaces	Lack of affordable and accessible workspace, performance/ showcasing/practice, innovation, incubation and collaboration space. Shortage of match funding and investment schemes to de-risk creative projects and the spaces needed to run them in. Lack of large build spaces for film and TV (5,000-15,000 sq.ft)

2. Tourism, Visitor Economy & Branding Challenges	
City of Culture	Coventry's UK City of Culture event in 2021 was highly successful in stimulating significant capital infrastructure build across the city. It was also notable in bringing stakeholders together and improving the perception amongst young people of Coventry as a place to study, work and live. However, the independent City of Culture Trust entering administration also generated some negative perceptions, impacting confidence.
Footfall	Whilst Coventry has had increases in overall tourism visits, there are still challenges around footfall particularly in the city centre.
Branding	Coventry needs a stronger brand and clearer identity to communicate its creative strengths; this includes the need for coherent storytelling around Coventry and the region.
Destination Coventry	Coventry’s Destination Management Organisation, Destination Coventry has recently restructured and launched its new branding and website content, including a focus on attracting major sporting events to the city. Further coordination and progress is still needed though, especially around fashion, music, eSports and digital events.

3. Public Funding, City Development & Government Policy challenges	
Government Funding	Government funding for business support has been very short term, leading to inefficiencies and fragmentation and as a result, sub-optimal publicly funded business support across Coventry & Warwickshire.
Business Growth	Coventry lacks a stable and robust support network to facilitate business growth, which is needed to improve connectivity and visibility between creative and other sectors. To facilitate this there is a need to put greater emphasis on the importance of putting in place dedicated cluster management within Coventry City Council or through other structures (e.g. CWX, universities), to help drive the development of existing and emerging creative clusters across the geography.
Investment	There is a difficulty attracting large companies to Coventry through inward investment due to costly, cumbersome processes and a lack of convenient mechanisms, such as efficient licensing and business planning. A clearer understanding of the levers required to make creative industries inward investment more compelling is required.
WMCA & WMGC	Care must be taken in the way the West Midlands Combined Authority and West Midlands Growth Company action their responsibilities across their sub-regional patch as they could create unintended consequences, mismatches and unfair effects for parts of the wider geographic West

	Midlands outside of their patch. This is especially relevant to Coventry as its economic and business ecosystem is joined so closely to that of Warwickshire.

4. Artificial Intelligence hallenges	
Integration	Artificial Intelligence (AI) adoption among SMEs remains limited and exploratory with few significant productivity gains or market opportunities developed to date. More specialist business support in this area is needed urgently to help businesses, freelancers and not-charitable creative/cultural organisations make informed decisions as they develop their businesses for the future.
Copyright Laws and Policy	There has been a lot of public conversation around the use of AI and copyright in 2025-26, with the creative sector advocating for a 'case-by-case' licencing model rather than an opt-out model, where the onus is on the creative individuals and organisations. The new legislation is still forthcoming as of January 2026. Businesses will need additional support to fully understand the evolution of UK law around AI, and especially the training of AI models, so they can protect their rights with the least amount of cost and complexity.
Artificial Intelligence	Automated AI workflows are a threat to some jobs, for example, aspects of junior roles in web companies. Support is needed to help businesses and workers better understand the challenges coming their way and how they might adapt to overcome them.

5. Screen Production (film, TV, social media) sub-sector challenges	
Spaces	There is a lack of build space (e.g., 5,000–15,000 sq. ft with 5–7 metres height) to support set builds, which is a key requirement for attracting and retaining film and TV productions. Suitable spaces do not have to be dedicated soundproof 'studios', they can be converted warehouses, or even school gyms, used just in the school holidays.
Skills	There is a lack of skills locally for local freelancers to fill Head of department roles on screen productions. Further specialist training is required. Also, there is a lack of specific screen related bootcamps based in Coventry, as most bootcamps available in the region are centred on Birmingham. This makes it harder for Coventry based people to attend, especially if they need to fit the training around their existing work commitments.

6. Theatre sub-sector challenges	
Costs	Rising operational costs; such as energy bills and staffing are contributing to making theatres less sustainable.

Audience	Post-pandemic struggles with audience behaviour, e.g. younger generations are consuming media differently and often find theatre tickets too costly as an entertainment choice for them.
Workforce	There is a precarious employment situation for staff and freelancers which is resulting in, for example, theatres losing talent to the screen sector who offer better pay and conditions.
Funding	There are currently limited sources of public money that can support infrastructure investments in the theatre sector, such as for maintenance or making changes to improve the long-term sustainability of venues.

5.2 The current sector opportunities

This section outlines the key **opportunities** identified through the Coventry creative industries mapping report. Again, the list is not exhaustive, and opportunities may also be wider than just Coventry.

1. Business & Freelancer Support	
Collaboration	Opportunities can be explored to enable more business partnerships; both across Coventry and Warwickshire, the wider Midlands, nationally and internationally.
Business Growth	Opportunities can be leveraged amongst business leaders to increase their skills and capabilities to identify transformational change through 'low hanging fruit', i.e., where a small change or investment from them can make a big difference to their companies' prospects.
Investment	Opportunities exist to attract more business anchor tenants into Coventry through inward investment, such as big brand names, by leveraging Coventry and Warwickshire's strategic advantages around location, low housing costs, and strong sustainability credentials.

2. Networking & Partnership Working	
Industrial Strategy	Using the Industrial Strategy to further cement Coventry & Warwickshire's immersive tech and games cluster to become established as a national centre of excellence for tech and gaming. 'Entertainment Games' versus 'Serious Games' or educational content is now widely dispersed between both geographies.
Createch	Leveraging the CreaTech Frontiers project as a key part of the above, ensuring that Coventry can fully capitalise on the opportunities this brings, this means ensuring that the city can establish an effective creative cluster itself, which is linked to Warwickshire.
Places and Spaces	Establishing a physical space in Coventry City similar to 1 Mill Street in Leamington Spa and linked to it. This could be a temporary meanwhile use space initially. Leverage any potential funding or support coming from WMCA and the government linked to the Modern Industrial Strategy.

	Making better use of the Delia Derbyshire Building at Coventry University as a facility that businesses can engage with on a regular basis, to foster greater collaboration and trust between the creative sector and the University.
Esports	Seizing all available opportunities to build a stronger eSports cluster, leveraging the University of Warwick's position as the top UK university for eSports courses over the last six years. Leveraging existing gaming clusters into healthcare/education applications, e.g., partnership with NHS and the USA market on resilience training using immersive tech.
Technology	Leveraging opportunities for growth in virtual production, immersive technologies and cultural heritage. Feedback from the consultation said that Coventry's unique strengths lie in live performance, motion capture, digital mapping, and projection, rather than broad claims like AI or virtual production. Extending innovation in theatre beyond VR/technology to include creative audio, gaming, and interdisciplinary approaches. Creating new work streams through tech convergence, with opportunities for partnership-level investment and enhanced tech infrastructure to help retain university talent.

3. Skills & Workforce Development	
Industrial Strategy	Explore any new opportunities for skills and workforce development through the Modern Industrial Strategy.
Education	Leverage the opportunity for curriculum modernisation in universities, to offer improved courses in subjects such as AI/immersive tech and content creation, e.g., Coventry University is implementing innovative changes to education delivery which includes six entry points per year and block-style learning.

4. Places and Spaces	
City Centre Cultural Gateway	Ensure the upcoming City Centre Cultural Gateway can become an effective sector hub which helps enable improved creative sector networking, partnership working and the establishment of an effective creative cluster across Coventry that connects to Warwickshire and beyond.
Createch	Look for opportunities to support and partner with Createch Village, a major new development at the University of Warwick. This will transform an area at the heart of the campus into a flagship hub for creative industries, connecting businesses, academia, and communities.
Co-working Spaces	Look for opportunities to establish other co-working spaces or repurpose unused buildings into innovation and creative spaces, with a focus on affordable city centre creative and tech spaces. Develop an equivalent space to 1 Mill Street in Coventry City Centre, as detailed in the previous section. This could be a temporary meanwhile use space initially.

Creative Spaces	Integrate the need and opportunity for more creative spaces and more effective creative networking with developments at FarGo Village in Coventry, such as with more parking, more business units and a safer environment.

5. Tourism, Visitor Economy & Branding	
Destination Coventry	Embracing Destination Coventry, its services and a new approach to the visitor economy, which is now providing an opportunity to make a big difference to visitor numbers. It has moved from a Council run model to a commercial operation, inspired by models from Liverpool, Bristol, and Manchester, with its new board also having members from creative industries.
West Midlands Growth Company	Leverage opportunities emerging from the West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC) and their Destination Development Partnership (DDP) status. Combining this with the relaunched Destination Coventry means there is no better time to maximise the potential for tourism and the visitor economy across the city.
Branding	There is the opportunity for a huge win for Coventry through launching effective new branding using the tools provided by creative industries in creative impactful narratives about the city. This is needed to better attract national investment and larger companies, as well as promoting the city as a great place to live.

6. Public Funding, City Development & Government Policies	
Modern Industrial Strategy	It will be crucial for Coventry City Council and other public sector partners to fully understand all the ways the UK's new Modern Industrial Strategy, launched in June 2025, creates an opportunity for developing the economy and placemaking across the city. It will be important that Coventry City Council works very closely with all stakeholders involved in this strategy roll out, such as WMCA, as well as with other pro-active plans for the city and sub-geography from the universities, Chamber of Commerce and existing clusters and networks. This should include actions that will help position Coventry and Warwickshire as a creative and tech testbed, capitalising on strengths in createch, eSports, immersive experiences, and entertainment and serious games.
Creative Cluster Manager	An important aspect of this could be to Invest in a Creative Cluster manager so that Coventry City Council can play a pro-active and central role in maximising the impact and value of new and existing creative clusters across the city, alongside leveraging opportunities to get more creative spaces of all types for the sector. This role could be employed between the various stakeholders within the cluster, e.g. university led, with some direct co-funding from the Council or the Combined Authority.

7. Artificial Intelligence	
Business Clusters	Identifying ways for Coventry's business clusters to adopt artificial Intelligence early, thus giving Coventry creatives an edge in the market. Specialised business support, such as workshops and knowledge transfer will be required. All creative businesses will need to consider how they will be affected and how best they can respond.
Content Creation	Generative AI tools will democratise a lot of content creation; with smaller, simpler or less demanding tasks being most affected. This will enable anyone to generate a wide range of creative assets without any training, from video and audio clips to coding their own commerce-enabled website. This means that in many scenarios AI will remove the need to contract a creative business or creative worker altogether, which could be seen both as an opportunity (e.g. increasing capacity) but also a challenge. This is also likely to mean that there will be new types of jobs linked to content creation, some of which have not yet been invented. The task is therefore to ensure that we are at the forefront of this change, to ensure that we can better adapt to new circumstances.
Film & TV	With film and TV production, AI tools are being widely used in post-production, pre-production and script writing. AI can assist in tasks like creating pitches and language translation.

8. Screen Production (film, TV, social media)	
Skills and Training	Opportunity to advocate for specific screen related bootcamps and other creative training, to be based in Coventry.
Places and Spaces	To seek out readily available 'build spaces', large enough to build temporary sets for TV & film production companies. These can be re-purposed spaces or, like school gyms, hired exactly as they are during the school holidays. In addition, there is an opportunity to fund new Studio Build spaces (5-7m high with an area of 5,000-15,000 sq. ft), to encourage larger productions to build their sets and shoot in the city on a more regular basis.
Collaboration	Create a more coherent approach to filming in the city, working in partnership with e.g. Production Central.

9. Emerging	
Coventry and Warwickshire Gigapark Investment Zone	The Coventry and Warwickshire Gigapark Investment Zone (CWGIZ), which across its four zones will potentially provide £1.5 billion of investment into the fabric of Coventry and beyond.
Technology	Greater adoption of immersive technology will increase markets over the next few years as will many other products, services and experiences developed through createch.

	Universities will potentially carve out a nationally recognised niche around excellence in working hands-on with creative tech businesses and creatives, including bringing co-creation into universities. AI enabled content creation and data analysis will become more sophisticated, leading to new markets opening up for creative businesses.
Music	Coventry has a significant music sector that could be developed further, including the well regarded and popular Coventry Music Museum. This includes highlighting both Coventry's musical heritage, as well as the current talent pool in the city.
Screen Production (film, TV, social media)	A regional film office was launched in 2025 by the West Midlands Growth Company, WMCA, and Create Central, the industry screen cluster. This should make it easier to bring major film & TV productions to the city and region, by enabling simpler coordination of location, facility and permitting needs. If new production and build spaces can be made available, that will position Coventry well to benefit from the evolving commissioning model that requires regions to demonstrate sufficient infrastructure to support productions. Commissioning is now often on a single-show basis with longer turnaround times, making regional readiness and available facilities more important. There is also an emerging opportunity to put in place facilities to support streamers and influencers, to ensure the city is adapting to a content creation landscape that includes platforms like YouTube, reflecting broader trends in audience consumption and the need to engage with non-traditional, non-linear platforms.

6. THE STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY FOR COVENTRY

This is a potentially transformational moment for Coventry's creative industries. With specific local strengths (e.g. createch), dedicated Government support for creative industries, strong industry collaboration from the University of Warwick & Coventry University, a recognised joint cluster with Warwickshire, and continued placemaking potential post UK City of Culture 2021. Coventry now needs the right targeted actions to deliver lasting economic and social value to the city and the wider region.

6.1 The national context

In June 2025, the UK Government published the **Creative Industries Sector Plan** as part of its Modern Industrial Strategy, which identifies eight high-growth sectors critical to national productivity and innovation. The plan positions creative industries as a driver of economic growth, cultural impact, and technological convergence, linking creativity with advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and digital technologies.

The sector plan recognises **West Midlands as a priority area** with specific focus on createch, film & TV, games industry, music industry, performing arts and design, with Coventry having strengths in most of these. The plan outlines ambition to develop creative clusters, with Coventry & Warwickshire already showing a strong opportunity in this regard.

The sector plan also outlined a number of investment initiatives to support its delivery, including:

- Increased funding towards innovation including a £100 million UKRI investment to support the next wave of R&D creative clusters in new sub-sectors and locations throughout the UK as well as a new Local Innovation Partnerships Fund, giving up to £500 million to regions across the UK and make local leaders part of decision making.
- A £25 million Creative Futures programme expanding the current CoSTAR network across the UK, adding five new R&D labs and two showcase spaces to strengthen commercialisation and tech adoption. The West Midlands has not been successful in creating a successful bid in the past.
- New £75 million screen growth and £30 million video games growth packages, over three years, to develop and showcase UK screen content and support inward investment.
- Up to £30 million over three years for a music growth package to support emerging artists, alongside a new industry-led ticket levy on arena gigs to support the grassroots sector.
- The government allocating £132.5m to increase disadvantaged young people's access to enrichment opportunities, including in arts and culture, aimed at improving wellbeing and employability.
- The government and industry delivering a refreshed UK-wide £9 million creative careers service, working closely with key partners such as the new Jobs and Careers Service.
- Planning reforms enabling faster development of economic infrastructure such as film studios, music arenas and large-scale performing arts venues – as well as improving the implementation of the 'agent of change' principle for live music venues. There are also plans for changes to the licensing system that supports the growth of the creative and hospitality sectors, including live music.
- Unspecified further capital investment for arts and cultural institutions across England
- New Creative Places Growth Fund (CPGF) devolving a total £150 million over three years to six high-potential Mayoral Strategic Authorities, including the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).[9]

This is the first time that the Government has perhaps fully recognised the potential of the creative industries and allocated significant investment to drive its growth as one of the priority sectors in the UK.

It is also worth noting the ambitious plans around **createch,** which is one of the strengths for Coventry. Createch spans all creative sub-sectors (advertising, design, film, music,

[9] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-sector-plan

games, performing arts, etc.) and involves technologies such as AI, AR/VR, real-time game engines, immersive media, and blockchain. It is positioned as a “frontier industry” in the 2025 Creative Industries Sector Plan because of its disruptive growth potential and cross-sector spillover benefits, and it is projected to add £18 billion GVA and 160,000 jobs over the next decade.

Overall, Coventry is well positioned to grow its creative industries sectors and align with the existing Government priorities. This could help to secure more investment from the support package linked to the creative industries sector plan.

6.2 The regional context

The Government announced in September 2025 that WMCA will be receiving £25m from **Creative Places Growth Fund (CPGF),** providing a potential opportunity for Coventry to benefit as part of the WMCA region. The £25 million allocation has been awarded to WMCA over three years to drive growth and innovation in the creative industries across the region. Following consultation with the industry, Local Authorities, and other stakeholders, the funding will flow into the region, following WMCA’s governance processes, from April 2027- March 2029. The CPGF programme is structured on cross-cutting thematic priorities which have been endorsed by stakeholders, consultees and partners, aligning with the national Creative Industries Sector Plan, West Midlands Growth Plan objectives, and local barriers to growth including increasing jobs and productivity. Overall, CPGF will deliver a blended model of region-wide strategic themed interventions designed to accelerate industry wide growth and productivity to maximise economic impact outcomes.

The West Midlands Growth Plan includes creative industries as a priority sector for the region’s economy, and the CPGF funding will therefore be granted to the region via the Economic Growth and Regeneration Pillar of the WMCA 3-year Integrated Settlement. This means the agreed outcomes and objectives of this pillar, **creating high value jobs, improving productivity and unlocking commercial development**, must also be responded to by the CPGP.[10]

There are also changes taking place on how the regional economic development functions are delivered, with a new regional **Economic Development Vehicle (EDV)** currently being planned by the WMCA. This reconfigured EDV aims to bolster support for both international investment and local innovation, including early-stage businesses support, especially those businesses with the highest growth potential.[11]

Local Authorities will have a key role to play in delivering Local Enterprise Support to facilitate the growth and support the long-term competitiveness of wide range of different businesses with potential to include creative freelancers. The Coventry Creative

[10] https://growth.wmca.org.uk/
[11] https://wmgrowth.com/about-us/strategy-and-business-plan/

Industries Strategy should therefore respond to these outcomes to ensure good alignment with the regional priorities.

Coventry is already benefiting from the regional **CreaTech Frontiers programme**. Whilst not exclusive to Coventry, CreaTech Frontiers is a five-year, £7.2 million initiative funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). It is designed to transform the creative industries ecosystem in the West Midlands. The project is led by Birmingham City University (BCU) in collaboration with Coventry University, the University of Birmingham, the University of Warwick, Royal Shakespeare Company and Digital Catapult. The focus of the programme is on:

- Immersive and virtual production technologies
- Gaming and eSports
- Animation and 3D modelling
- Applied artificial intelligence for creative applications
- Digital heritage and live performance
- Integration of generative AI, green production, IP protection, and commercialisation.

Many Coventry-based creative businesses have already benefited from this programme, with a number of future funding calls still being planned.

The other existing initiative is **CWX - Coventry & Warwickshire Exchange.** CWX is the cluster management organisation for the creative & immersive tech sector. Its goal is to support creative industries businesses to access more opportunities – including investment and access to markets. CWX is designed to support innovation and the development of groundbreaking ideas. By fostering collaboration and providing access to support, opportunities, community, and resources, CWX helps unlock the potential of the Coventry & Warwickshire region, positioning it as a leader in the UK's creative economy. Led by the University of Warwick and Coventry University and funded through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), CWX has built capacity with key regional partners: Coventry City Council; Warwickshire County Council; Warwick District Council; WMCA and Invest CW.[12]

This shows that there is **already some investment in place** to support the sector, although for example CWX funding will be coming to an end in 2026, unless a new funding source is identified.

It is important to ensure that Coventry is connected to wider regional initiatives and plans but will be empowered to meet the specific needs of its creative ecology, as a key sub-regional emerging cluster. Consideration will also need to be given to the long-standing collaboration between Coventry & Warwickshire, especially given the strengths around clustering and supply chain – even though this might be challenging from a WMCA geography.

[12] https://www.coventry.gov.uk/arts-1/%E2%80%99s-next-coventry%E2%80%99s-creative-industries

6.3 The city context

There are several changes taking place across Coventry, which link with the creative industries opportunity for the city.

Firstly, a number of strategies are being refreshed or developed in early 2026, including the Coventry Tourism sector action plan, emerging Heritage Strategy, strategic approach to city events, and the refresh of the 2017-27 Coventry Cultural Strategy delivery plan. This provides a unique opportunity to align these plans with the creative industries priorities – and vice versa, with e.g. the cultural strategy refresh already referencing shared priorities.

The Coventry City Centre Cultural Gateway building (former IKEA) is a new flagship project for the city, with potential links with the wider creative industries' aims for the city. City centre regeneration is also taking place through the City Centre South project, which will provide housing & retail, with the aim to revitalise the city centre.

Creative industries can contribute to place narratives in many ways, including linked tourism (film tourism, music tourism), festivals and events, shaping the perceptions of visitors, and making places more interesting to live in.

7. KEY ENABLERS

Based on the recommendations in the Coventry Creative Industries Mapping Report and the Creative Industries Sector Plan, the length of the strategy has been set to **three years**, aligning with the Government delivery timelines. The sector is also characterised by rapid technological innovation, with three years therefore providing a realistic timeline for delivery.

To truly move the dial, we must take a **collaborative 'One Coventry' approach** involving the Council, the universities, creative industries businesses, freelancers, supply chain, tourism bodies, business networks and membership bodies, other key industry sectors, the other parts of the education sector, as well as our residents.

We already have the evidence, partnerships and knowledge to deliver a step change in Coventry which would lead to:

- A stronger sub-regional cluster, significantly contributing to the development of the wider West Midlands creative ecology
- More/new jobs locally, with focus on high productivity jobs and improved student retention of pool of 60,000 students
- Increase in GVA, productivity and innovation – with a focus on cross-sectoral benefits through being a UK leader in createch
- Given our demographic – making a significant contribution towards the development of a more diverse creative industry in the region, including supporting freelance careers and access to the industry

- A stronger Coventry brand as a creative city – building on the UK City of Culture legacy in a positive way

This could be achieved through creating a partnership between sector businesses/organisations, existing sector networks, Universities, Coventry City Council, Destination Coventry, creative industries freelancers, the Chamber of Commerce, other education sector and other relevant partners.

7.1 Securing funding

Whilst there is some existing funding already in place, together with the wider business growth support across Coventry and the wider West Midlands region, additional investment is needed to fully maximise the creative industries opportunity for Coventry. This would include both revenue and capital funding, as well as access to other finance mechanisms such as loans, bonds and equity investment. This is a priority focus across all the delivery strands, with the strategy providing a robust foundation for making the case for Coventry.

The most immediate opportunity for Coventry is the £25m Creative Places Growth Fund, which will be allocated to WMCA to spend over the next three years from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029. The detailed plans for the allocation of this fund are not yet available, but it is expected there will be a number of cross-cutting thematic approaches aligning with the West Midlands Growth Plan objectives in increasing jobs, productivity and unlocking commercial development – complemented by a small number of focused interventions. This funding will be a split between revenue and capital. There may therefore be opportunities to secure direct, double devolved funding pots or alternatively benefit from thematic or focused interventions.

In addition to the WMCA funding opportunity, there are a number of possibilities for Coventry to secure investment and support from other sources. Coventry City Council, the University of Warwick, Coventry University and other stakeholders have a good track record in securing funding, loans or other investment.

Some of the potential sources include:

- UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) – grants and strategic sector investment
- Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) – Creative Clusters, CoSTAR Labs, grants
- UK Export Finance (UKEF) – loans, guarantees
- Creative UK – grants, Creative Growth Finance
- DCMS – grants, programmes
- British Film Institute (BFI) – grants, distribution funding
- Music Export Growth Scheme – match funding grant scheme
- Arts Council England (ACE) – grants for projects linking with arts & culture, capital funds, strategic programme funds

- Innovate UK – grants, loans, equity & investment support, sector specific calls, investor partnerships
- UK Games Fund & Video Games Support – grants, tax relief scheme
- British Business Bank – loans, guarantees
- Angel investors – such as UK Business Angels Association (screen)

The development of a creative industries strategy will help us to be more strategic with our investment plans, as well as increase funder confidence in their investment delivering robust outcomes.

7.2 Embracing diversity

As highlighted by the Coventry Creative Industries Mapping report, as well as national data, creative industries in the UK are not diverse in terms of their workforce or leadership. The Leadership Diversity in Creative & Cultural Industries report by Creative UK (2025) – the first of its kind – highlighted a significant underrepresentation in leadership across gender, ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic backgrounds. It also highlighted the lack of data particularly around leadership roles, and where data exists, it shows that no diverse demographic – other than those identifying as LGBTQ+ - has fair, equal representation in creative and cultural sector leadership.

The key findings include:

- Despite accounting for over 48% of the UK workforce, women occupied just 21% of Director/CEO roles and 30% of managerial roles in the UK games industry
- There are significantly fewer women musicians earning a living through music for over 30 years compared to male musicians – 20% vs 30%
- People from Global Majority heritage make up 15.9% of the currently employed UK workforce yet just over 9.8% of managers and directors were from ethnic minority backgrounds across the entire cultural sector.
- Just 12% of executive or corporate roles in film & TV are held by people of Global Majority heritage, alongside just 9% of senior-level roles. Only 7%, 8% and 11% of senior management in VFX, Animation, and Post-production were from Global Majority backgrounds
- People from an ethnic minority background held only 6% of Director/CEO positions in the games industry and 10% of managerial positions
- Disabled people make up 18% of the UK workforce, but just over 7.7% of managers and directors in the cultural sector identified as disabled
- Just 8% of senior off-screen TV roles are occupied by those with a disability along with just 6.5% of UK based film & TV directors
- Only 4% of Directors/CEOs and 3% of managerial staff identified as having a disability in the video games industry

- Across the wider economy, working class people make up 35% of the workforce. Yet only 17% of UK based film & TV directors are from working class backgrounds
- Only 10% of video game company Directors/CEOs and 12% of Managerial staff were from a working-class background;

Given that Coventry is both a diverse and a young city, it is essential that diversity & inclusion are embedded across key actions and delivery from the start. The delivery plan should include exploring best practice on how to best enable equality of opportunity for disabled people, young people and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage – with a special focus on those experiencing multiple disadvantages across projected characteristics. This should include considerations around access to jobs, supported skills development opportunities, and offering more personalised support such as mentoring, tailored training and other one to one support.

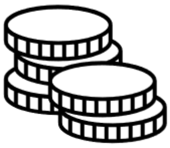
7.3 One Coventry Plan

This strategy will align with the One Coventry Plan, which is Coventry City Council's overarching strategic plan that sets out the city-wide vision and priorities for 2022–2030. It describes how the Council, partners, residents, businesses, and communities will work together to improve Coventry and the lives of people who live, work, and study there. The One Coventry Plan has three main delivery priorities and two enabling priorities.[13]

In terms of **main delivery priorities**, the Coventry Creative Industries Strategy will contribute to all of these, as outlined below.

One Coventry Delivery Priority	Coventry Creative Industries Strategy
Improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within communities 	• Considers how creative industries can contribute to social mobility through e.g. skills development opportunities • Taking action to improve the diversity of the current workforce • Ensuring business development opportunities are shared across the whole city and consider equality, diversity and inclusion in their design • Consider how creative industries can contribute beyond just economic metrics

13 https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan

Improving economic prosperity of the city and region 	• Take a collaborative approach to engage with creative industries businesses and freelancers to ensure they can grow their businesses and economic impact • Exploring possibilities beyond creative industries, especially across our other key industry sectors • Maximising the role that creative industries can play in our visitor economy through sector events, enhancing visitor experience and promoting the city • Alignment with other key strategies
Tackling the causes and consequences of climate change 	• Considers how we can we ensure our creative industries sector is as environmentally sustainable as possible and how we use our existing strengths in this area • What role can creative industries play in raising awareness about climate change and environmental sustainability

The One Coventry Plan also outlines two enabling priorities to support the delivery priorities:

One Coventry Enabling Priority	Coventry Creative Industries Strategy
Ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council 	• Strategy provides a clear plan with identified priorities to unlock future investment and support from key funders • Through business growth, make a positive contribution to the sustainability of the Council through e.g. tax revenue
Strengthening the Council's role as a partner, enabler, and civic leader 	• Building the strategy on the foundations of strong partnership working across the private, public and other sectors • Alignment with the One Coventry Plan

7.4 Cluster development

As noted in the Coventry Creative Industries Mapping Report, **clustering** is one of the key characteristics of the creative industries. A key action would therefore be to ensure that we have a **well-functioning cluster development** body in Coventry (or Coventry & Warwickshire

Some options for how this could be mobilised include:

Option 1:
Using the existing Coventry & Warwickshire Exchange (CWX) as foundation for a cluster development body, with an expanded remit and more representative and diverse governance. This would include a Cluster Manager and some delivery focused roles, with the main focus being on maximising investment for sector support.

Option 2:
Using the existing Createch Frontiers programme as foundation for a cluster development body – although this could be more challenging given the lead organisation and some of the other partners being located in Birmingham and the delivery framework not being primed for this type of strategic approach.

Option 3:
Creating a Creative Economy Development Unit within the Council, which could also include a mixed model with the universities (e.g. secondments, paid roles) which would be guided by a sector and stakeholder governance group. The Unit would then coordinate sector support through different strands of work, including coordinating with existing programmes such as Createch Frontiers.

Option 4:
There could also be a hybrid model where the Creative Economy Development Unit would lead the strategic development of creative industries in the city, as well as delivery of targeted support programmes, whilst CWX would be resourced to deliver the cluster development activity, with a specific focus on createch.

Given the uncertainty around the WMCA funding, it is recommended that Option 1 is adopted as a starting point for year 1, with regular reviews of the viability of the other options, e.g. AHRC Creative Clusters opportunities.

8. THE DESIRED IMPACT

The evidence and the recommendations from the Coventry Creative Industries Mapping report identify a number of suggested key actions across five key themes:

1) Businesses, clusters and networks
2) Skills and workforce development
3) Places and spaces
4) Tourism, visitor economy and branding
5) Public funding, city development and policy

Whilst all the recommendations outlined in the report are relevant in the wider context, it may not be possible to deliver all of these in the space of three years, with the levels of funding secured also impacting delivery. Coventry may therefore have to adopt a phased approach, to secure the 'low hanging fruit' and also build foundations to long-term, systemic change.

The thematic areas are, however, helpful in thinking about the impact we want to see in Coventry in the medium term, at the end of the strategy period – and beyond. Summarising the evidence in report and other feedback, the impact we want to see through the delivery of the Strategy includes:

Thematic area	Desired impact
Businesses, clusters & networks	Coventry has a thriving and financially resilient creative industries sector, with businesses and freelancers being supported and contributing to the city's economy through a well-functioning cluster. The creative industries in Coventry are characterised by a diverse leadership and workforce, with young people particularly staying in the city to be part of the city's creative sector.
Skills & workforce development	Coventry has highly skilled and diverse creative industries workforce, with the leadership of organisations reflecting the diversity of the city. Coventry creative industries benefit from high student retention locally.
Places & Spaces	Creative industries businesses and freelancers in Coventry have the affordable specialist workspace they need to operate efficiently and to deliver a wide range of specialist activities benefiting our economy and people.
Tourism, visitor economy & branding	Coventry's creative industries contribute to the city's visitor economy and are key to promoting the city through storytelling
Public funding, city development & policy	Coventry is taking a strategic approach to creative industries, operating a successful sub-regional cluster and positioning the city as a creative-industrial hub, combining the opportunities and synergies between all priority growth sectors and able to secure investment to maintain a thriving creative sector

The **attached delivery plan** will be based on these desired impacts, outlining the key **objectives and activities** required to deliver them.

9. EVALUATION

The evaluation of the strategy will include a specific evaluation framework and a baseline aligned with each delivery area. This framework is still in development but will track inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts over the delivery period. We will be working closely with the University of Warwick and Coventry University to ensure that the evaluation of the Strategy is closely aligned to and informed by the evaluation processes for CreatTech Frontiers and CWX. Data from other sources will be captured through surveys and sector consultations.

Specific key measures include:

Thematic area	Measures
Businesses, clusters & networks	• Level of investment secured for business support including cluster development • Number of business births and survival rates • Number of businesses supported/scaled up • Number of freelancers supported/scaled up • Number of new cross-sector partnerships • Number of businesses accessing grants and other support to improve environmental sustainability • Number of networking events/year • Level of exports and/or inward investment • Level of other investment secured to support business activities • Location of businesses/freelancers
Skills & workforce development	• Number of new jobs/type of jobs/jobs safeguarded • Number of skills development opportunities (training courses, work placements, internships, CDP, etc.) • Diversity of workforce & leadership of organisations engaging with delivery • Level of other investment secured to support skills development • Level of skills shortages • Shifts in graduate retention for creative industries
Places & Spaces	• Sqm of affordable workspace unlocked • Increases/decreases in creative workspaces and other specialist creative industries spaces
Tourism, visitor economy & branding	• Qualitative impact of creative industries in city promotion and visitor perception

	• Steps taken to develop tourism offer around creative industries (e.g. film and music tourism)
Public funding, city development & policy	• Level of funding secured/won • Level of private capital leveraged • Number of policies being informed by the creative industries strategy aims/level of consultation

APPENDIX 1 – DELIVERY PLAN 2026-2029

See separate attachment

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Coventry City Council

COVENTRY CREATIVE INDUSTRIES STRATEGY 2026 - 2029

APPENDIX 1 – Delivery plan

These delivery priorities have been identified through sector consultation and the Coventry Creative Industries Mapping Document as the ones with the biggest potential impact and realistic resource allocation. It should be noted that some of the delivery will require external funding to be secured, and all the stakeholders should be supporting this process, including high level advocacy.

It should be noted that at the moment the delivery plan is very much focusing on investment and funding already in place to support the creative industries sector, including the CreaTech Frontiers Programme, CCC creative economy budget for 2026, and other initiatives by University of Warwick and Coventry University. The objective is to seek further funding, especially through the £25m Creative Places Growth Fund (CPGF) allocated by the WMCA across 2026 – 2029.

The PPF partnership below refers to an application to Arts Council England Place Partnership Fund programme. This application was submitted on 12 January, with outcome expected by the end of April. This project is a partnership between Coventry University, University of Warwick, Coventry City Council and Culture Coventry, with associate partners including Coventry Cultural Education Partnership and Coventry Culture Works Cultural Compact. If successful, the funding will cover a 3-year extensive skills development programme across visual arts, music and createach.

THEME 1 – Businesses, clusters & networks

The desired long-term impacts	Key objectives for the three years	Key activities /timeline (Years 1-3)	Resources & key delivery partners	KPI's
Coventry has a thriving and financially resilient creative industries sector, with businesses and freelancers being supported, and contributing to the economic prosperity of the city and region	• Addressing current issues around business support • Dedicated support for freelancers and micro businesses with a portfolio career • Access to finance and entry to markets • Business supported with environmental sustainability • Having a strong cluster development body in CWX • Facilitating growth in the six Coventry priority sub-sectors • Securing more investment (e.g. WMCA, Innovate UK, UKRI, DCMS, AHRC) to support overall objectives & activities	• CreaTech Frontiers delivering targeted specialist business support for adoption of new technologies, networking, grants and brokering links with related high-growth industries e.g. electric vehicles. (Y1-Y3) • Council's future Local Enterprise support supporting creative micro-businesses & freelancers (Y1-Y3) • Council's creative economy team to deliver a business booster programme for cultural & creative businesses (Y1) • Securing future funding for CXW as a creative industries cluster development body for Coventry & Warwickshire (Y1) • Dedicated programme of music industry development by Council creative economy team incl. Music Mixer networking events, Coventry Music Network support, export support (Y1-Y3) • Creative Industries mixer, conferences or networking events (Y1-Y3) • Cross-sector industry sprints (Y1-Y3, pending Arts Council PPF investment) • Ensuring environmental sustainability grant & funding opportunities shared with sector businesses (Y1-Y2) • Networking opportunities through CWX and others (Y1-Y3) • Securing further investment (Y1-Y3)	• £7.2m AHRC funding secured for CreaTech Frontiers over 5 years. Regional partnership including University of Warwick & Coventry University • WMCA's £25m Creative Places Growth Fund allocation (detail know April 2026) • Arts Council England Place Partnership Fund bid (outcome know April 2026) with funding towards business skills & music industry networking opportunities • Coventry & Warwickshire Exchange CWX (until May 2026) • CCC's future Local Enterprise support offer, likely to entail giving support for creative micro-businesses and freelancers • CCC and other environmental sustainability grants & advice (e.g. sustainability audits) • New music industry partnership with Leicester • Existing Council creative economy budget for 26/27 • Business Growth West Midlands business support offer • Regional cluster development activity – mechanism still TBC • Coventry Music Network • Culture Works Collective cultural compact	• Level of investment secured for business support including cluster development • Number of business births & survival rates • Number of businesses supported/scaled up • Number of freelancers supported/scaled up • Number of new cross-sector partnership • Number of businesses accessing grants & other support to improve environmental sustainability • Number of networking events/year • Level of exports and/or inward investment • Level of other investment secured

THEME 2 – Skills & workforce development				
The desired long-term impacts	**Key objectives for the three years**	**Key activities /timeline (Years 1-3)**	**Resources & key delivery partners**	**KPI's**
Creative industries are improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within communities, which means that Coventry has a highly skilled and diverse creative industries workforce, with the leadership of organisations reflecting the diversity of the city. Coventry creative industries benefit from high student retention.	• Targeted skills development activities based on industry needs, including training, mentoring, work-placement, apprenticeships and internships – with a specific focus on diversifying the workforce & freelancers • Coordinate a city-wide approach to creative skills development & student retention, including alignment with industry needs, existing skills gaps and the need to address the diversity of the workforce	• CreaTech Frontiers delivering targeted skills support for adoption of new technologies and other creative industries skills (Y1-Y3) • Creative Futures Incubators providing Incubator for Createch SMEs; coaching, mentoring, CPD, workspace for creative startups. • Council's creative economy team to deliver a music industry skills programme (Y1, provided PPF funding secured) • PPF partnership to deliver curator & digital archivist bootcamps (Y2, PPF funding TBC) • PPF partnership to deliver paid work placements/music, visual arts and createach (Y2, PPF funding TBC) • PPF partnership to deliver creative career awareness activity in schools (Y1-Y3, PPF funding TBC) • PPF partnership to deliver a Createch for Artists Programme (Y2-Y3, PPF funding TBC) • Securing further skills investment, including opportunities to support apprenticeships in the creative industries (Y1-Y3) • Deliver a series of meetings with key stakeholders to develop shared and coordinated approached to student retention together with the industry (Y1-Y3)	• £7.2m AHRC funding secured for CreaTech Frontiers over 5 years. Regional partnership including University of Warwick & Coventry University • WMCA's £25m Creative Places Growth Fund allocation (detail know April 2026) • Arts Council England Place Partnership Fund (PPF) bid (outcome know April 2026) with funding towards music industry & visual arts skills development • Coventry & Warwickshire Exchange CWX (until May 2026) • Creative Futures Incubators • CCC Skills support offer, adult education provision & Job Shop • Coventry College delivering creative industries skills programmes • Both University of Warwick and Coventry University running creative industries degree courses • Coventry Cultural Education Partnership • Coventry Music Network • Culture Works Collective cultural compact	• Number of new jobs/type of jobs/jobs safeguarded • Number of skills development opportunities (training courses, work placements, internships, CDP, etc.) • Diversity of workforce & leadership of organisations engaging with delivery • Level of other investment secured to support skills development • Shifts in graduate retention for creative industries • Level of skills shortages

THEME 3 – Places & Spaces

The desired long-term impacts	Key objectives for the three years	Key activities /timeline (Years 1-3)	Resources & key delivery partners	KPI's
Creative industries businesses & freelancers in Coventry have the affordable specialist workspace they need to operate efficiently & to deliver a wide range of specialist activities benefiting our economy & people.	• Maximising the use of existing space in the city, to address issues around affordable creative industries workspace • Explore the opportunity to create specialist creative industries working space in Coventry (e.g. film studio) • Ensure Coventry is a film friendly city and maximise on film tourism & branding opportunities • Improve access to existing specialist spaces, technology and equipment • Improve the environmental sustainability of existing creative industries spaces where possible	• Using available data, coordinate mapping of affordable workspace opportunities in the city (Y2) • Coordinate improved access to existing facilities with relevant stakeholders (e.g. Universities) (Y1-Y2) • Work closely with Production Central regional film office to promote Coventry as a filming destination (Y1-Y3) • Ensuring the creative industries needs are articulated to the CCCG partners (Y1) • Ensuring environmental sustainability grant & funding opportunities shared with relevant spaces (Y1-Y2) • Securing further investment and exploring opportunities for new specialist spaces (Y1-Y3)	• The capital part of WMCA's £25m Creative Places Growth Fund (detail know April 2026) • WMCA Culture and Creative Infrastructure Programme (CCIP) 2025-27 • The new City Centre Cultural Gateway project led by CCC • Arts Council England capital programme (timeline TBC) • Production Central film office • National Lottery Heritage Fund capital programmes • CCC Cultural Infrastructure Mapping report 2024 • WMCA Cultural Infrastructure Map (2022) • WMCA Meanwhile Use Framework consultation (ongoing as of Jan 2026) • Coventry University spaces including Delia Derbyshire building • University of Warwick campus & facilities	• Sqm of affordable workspace unlocked • Increases/decreases in creative workspaces & other specialist creative industries spaces

THEME 4 – Tourism, visitor economy & branding				
The desired long-term impacts	**Key objectives for the three years**	**Key activities /timeline (Years 1-3)**	**Resources & key delivery partners**	**KPI's**
Coventry's creative industries contribute to the city's visitor economy and are key to promoting the city through storytelling, contributing to the economic prosperity of the city and region	• Creative industries are considered as key vehicle for building the city's visitor economy and promoting the city through storytelling • Establish e-Sports as a major events opportunity for Coventry • Develop unique live experiences for Coventry's visitor economy, such as blending arts with digital tech and e-sports, and test pilot projects to create standout immersive events • Explore the options to host major national and international cultural/ creative events and PR campaigns to raise the profile of local creative industries. Strengthen links between culture, heritage, and the visitor economy to create integrated overnight stay and tourism models, leveraging the region's diverse assets.	• Develop a creative industries project pipeline for the city of both capital and revenue projects, embedding into the wider city regeneration plans (Y1) • Explore the opportunities to build a coherent music and film tourism offer (Y2) • Explore the opportunities to develop a major eSports event in Coventry (Y2) • Explore the opportunities to create new immersive experiences (Y2) • Explore the opportunities to host international creative events or conferences in the city (Y1-Y3) • Securing further investment (Y1-Y3)	• Destination Coventry • The new Coventry Tourism Strategy (in development) • Key city visitor attractions • eSports/University of Warwick • WMGC • Coventry Music Network	• Qualitative impact of creative industries in city promotion and visitor perception • Steps taken to develop tourism offer around creative industries (e.g. film and music tourism)

THEME 5 – Public funding, city development & policy

The desired long-term impact	Key objectives for the three years	Key activities /timeline (Years 1-3)	Resources & key delivery partners	KPI's
Coventry is taking a strategic approach to creative industries, operating a successful sub-regional cluster and positioning the city as a creative-industrial hub. This includes maximising the Council's role as a partner, enabler and civic leader The opportunities and synergies between creative industries and other priority growth sectors are fully realised, including securing investment to maintain a thriving creative sector.	• Securing further investment to support creative industries strategy aims • Piloting new ways of bringing creative/tech clusters, universities, public sector and other stakeholders together more effectively – including cross-sectoral working • There is an established creative cluster development body in the city with a Cluster Manager in place • Build a pipeline of creative projects to be ready for new funding and ensure integration with wider city investment plans • Alignment with other key strategies in the city	• Ensure creative industries strategy is considered in the development & delivery of other relevant strategies and city plans (Y1-Y3) • Explore the opportunities to secure funding for a pilot project focusing on cross-sectoral working. (Y1-Y2) • Instigate exploratory work to consider how to support cluster development in the long-term, including for a co-funded cluster development manager/officer (Y1) • Mapping of potential funders across different activity strands to create a shared plan with key partners & stakeholders, allowing us to bid for larger/strategic projects together (Y1-Y3)	• Coventry City Council • University of Warwick • Coventry University • CWX • CreaTech Frontiers • Other Council partners • WMCA • National funding opportunities & programmes	• Level of funding secured/won • Level of private capital leveraged • Number of policies being informed by the creative industries strategy aims/level of consultation • Completion of project pipeline

Equality Impact Assessment

EIA-786112993 - Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029

Details

Title	Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029
Author	Marcus Lynch (Development Manager, Culture and Creative Economy)
Head of Service	Salla Virman (Head of Culture and Creative Economy)
Cabinet Member	Cllr Naeem Akhtar (Housing and Communities)
Director	Andy Williams (Regeneration and Economy)

Context and background

EIA carried out on	New policy or strategy
Background	The EIA relates to the development of a new strategy for Coventry's creative industries, which is intended to strengthen the city's creative sector, and drive economic growth through business support, fundraising, skills and workforce development. The Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026–2029 aims to achieve this through: - Growing Coventry's creative economy by supporting sustainable business growth, innovation and investment across creative industries. - Developing skills and talent pipelines to improve access to creative careers, retain local graduates and build a future ready workforce. - Promoting inclusive and fair participation by reducing barriers for under represented and socio economically disadvantaged groups. - Strengthening infrastructure, partnerships and place making to position Coventry as an attractive, connected and supportive city for creative businesses and practitioners.

Stakeholders	University of Warwick (delivery partner) Coventry University (delivery partner) Createch Frontiers (delivery partner) Coventry & Warwickshire Exchange (delivery partner) West Midlands Combined Authority (delivery partner) Coventry FE Colleges (delivery partners) Coventry Cultural Education Partnership (delivery partner) Destination Coventry (delivery partner) Local businesses and freelancers working in or with the creative industries sector (both partners in skills development and beneficiaries of business support and development) Coventry graduates and young people (beneficiaries of skills development and opportunities for careers in the creative industries)
Responsibility	Salla Virman, Head of Culture and Creative Economy

Consideration of impact

	This strategy does not constitute a cessation of service/support and does not affect any one group or protected characteristic who would be singularly adversely impacted by implementation of the strategy. The strategy does not favour any one group or protected characteristic over another. A commissioned baseline Coventry Creative Industries Mapping report identified that the creative industries in the UK are not diverse in terms of their workforce or leadership, whilst a national Leadership Diversity in Creative & Cultural Industries report by Creative UK (2025) highlighted a significant underrepresentation in leadership across gender, ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic backgrounds. The strategy seeks to address inequity in the local sector by embedding diversity and inclusion across key actions and delivery from the start. Headline findings of national research into the diversity of sector leadership include: • Despite accounting for over 48% of the UK workforce, women occupied just 21% of Director/CEO roles and 30% of managerial roles in the UK games industry • There are significantly fewer women musicians earning a living through music for over 30 years compared to male musicians – 20% vs 30% • People from Global Majority heritage make up 15.9% of the currently employed UK workforce yet just over 9.8% of managers and directors were from ethnic minority backgrounds across the entire cultural sector. • Just 12% of executive or corporate roles in film & TV are held by Global Majority, alongside just 9% of senior-level roles, and only 7%, 8% and 11% of senior management in VFX, Animation, and Post-production were from Global Majority backgrounds • People from an ethnic minority background held only 6% of Director/CEO positions in the games industry and 10% of managerial positions • Disabled people make up 18% of the UK workforce, but just over 7.7% of managers and directors in the cultural sector identified as disabled • Just 8% of senior off-screen TV roles are occupied by those with a disability along with just 6.5% of UK based film & TV directors • Only 4% of Directors/CEOs and 3% of managerial staff identified as having a disability in the video games industry • Across the wider economy, working class people make up 35% of the workforce. Yet only 17% of UK based film & TV directors are from working class backgrounds • Only 10% of video game company Directors/CEOs and 12% of Managerial staff were from a working-class background;
Baseline data and information	

Marmot Principles

4.	Create fair employment and good work
5.	Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities

Protected groups - Impact on Coventry Residents and Visitors

Age 0-18	Positive impact - Children and young people will be impacted positively through future career opportunities in the creative industries, with early engagement to communicate creative career options and pathways
Age 19-64	Positive impact - This group will be positively impacted through skills programmes to fill the skills gaps identified in the creative industries that hinder growth. Younger people will experience opportunities and support through improved talent pipelines, creative careers pathways, and stronger graduate retention, particularly through strategic partnership with Coventry University and the University of Warwick. Working age Freelancers and SMEs in the creative industries will be supported to grow and sustain their businesses, supporting growth in the local economy, increased job opportunities, business survival and graduate retention. Business start ups will be supported to foster entrepreneurs and the future sector leaders.
Age 65+	Positive impact - Older persons will benefit from a more vibrant and sustainable creative industries sector, with increased opportunities for cultural and creative engagement, and activity that supports social inclusion, health and wellbeing

Disability	Positive impact - There is an identified lack of diversity in the Creative Industries workforce and leadership, most notably with respect to gender, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic background. Disabled people are significantly under represented in creative employment nationally, The strategy prioritises targeted skills development activities based on industry needs, including training, mentoring, work-placements and internships, with a specific focus on diversifying the workforce and leadership of the sector. Additionally, the strategy's focus on creative hubs, venues and infrastructure offers opportunities to embed accessibility standards from the outset.
Gender reassignment	Positive impact - There is an identified lack of diversity in the Creative Industries workforce and leadership, most notably with respect to gender, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic background. The strategy prioritises targeted skills development activities based on industry needs, including training, mentoring, work-placements and internships, with a specific focus on diversifying the workforce and leadership of the sector.
Marriage and civil partnership	No impact -
Pregnancy and maternity	No impact -
Race	Positive impact - Coventry is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the UK, and diversity is identified as a defining strength within the city's cultural identity, yet there is an identified lack of diversity in the Creative Industries workforce and leadership, most notably with respect to gender, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic background. The strategy prioritises targeted skills development activities based on industry needs, including training, mentoring, work-placements and internships, with a specific focus on diversifying the workforce and leadership of the sector. This support will provide a platform to develop ethnically diverse creative businesses, and increase representation in leadership, commissioning and programming.
Religion and belief	No impact -

Sex	Positive impact - Women are well represented in entry level creative roles but are under represented at senior and higher paid levels, particularly in technical and digital sub sectors. The strategy prioritises targeted skills development activities based on industry needs, including training, mentoring, work-placements and internships, with a specific focus on diversifying the workforce and leadership of the sector. Interventions to support women into leadership roles in the creative industries may help reduce gender pay and progression gaps locally.
Sexual orientation	Positive impact - There is an identified lack of diversity in the Creative Industries workforce and leadership, most notably with respect to gender, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic background. The strategy prioritises targeted skills development activities based on industry needs, including training, mentoring, work-placements and internships, with a specific focus on diversifying the workforce and leadership of the sector. Opportunities exist to embed inclusive commissioning standards, safe working environments and visible LGBTQ+ representation across funded initiatives.

Additional groups

Care experienced	Positive impact - There is an identified lack of diversity in the Creative Industries workforce and leadership, most notably with respect to gender, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic background. As this group is often associated with deprivation and challenging socio-economic backgrounds, they will be positively impacted by the strategy's priority for targeted skills development activities based on industry needs, including training, mentoring, work-placements and internships, with a specific focus on diversifying the workforce and leadership of the sector.
Armed forces	Positive impact - Opportunities exist for targeted promotion via Veteran's charities and networks of skills development opportunities, and work-placements to pursue careers in the creative industries. Growth and sustainability in the arts, culture, heritage and wider creative industries also presents opportunities for targeted projects and programming that supports creative health and wellbeing initiatives for armed forces personnel.

Socio economic groups	Positive impact - National evidence consistently shows that people from lower socio economic backgrounds are under represented, particularly in higher paid and leadership roles within creative industries, and face additional barriers to entry and progression. The strategy prioritises targeted skills development activities based on industry needs, including training, mentoring, work-placements and internships, with a specific focus on diversifying the workforce and leadership of the sector. The Strategy has the potential to improve access to skills, employment and entrepreneurship by supporting creative careers, local business growth and investment in creative infrastructure. This could help reduce barriers for people who have historically been excluded from the creative sector due to low income, limited networks or insecure employment.

Next steps

Inequality	Action	Owner	Timescale

Monitor and evaluation	The evaluation of the strategy will include a specific evaluation framework and a baseline aligned with each delivery area. This framework is still in development but will track inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts over the delivery period. We will be working closely with University of Warwick and Coventry University to ensure that the evaluation of the strategy is closely aligned and informed by the evaluation processes for CreatTech Frontiers and CWX. Data from other sources will be captured through surveys and sector consultations. A specific KPI focussed on Diversity of Workforce and Leadership will form part of the 'Skills & Workforce Development' evaluation strand.

Impact on Council staff

Will there be an impact?	No

Completion statement

Potential equality impact	Positive impact has been identified for one or more protected groups

Coventry City Council

Agenda Item 6

Briefing note

To: Cabinet

Date: 10th February 2026

Subject: Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 - 2029

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1 Purpose of the Note

1.1 The purpose of this note is for Cabinet to consider the comments made by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee following an item on Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 - 2029 at their meeting on 5th February 2026.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that Cabinet

1) Accept the recommendations in the report.
2) Consider the comments made by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee below.

3 Information and Background

3.1 At their meeting on 5th February 2026, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered an item on Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 – 2029.

3.2 Following an introduction by Strategic Lead of Culture, Sports and Events, Members asked questions and asks that Cabinet consider the following points:

- The strategy strengthens the Council's position to access funding and support a growing sector within Coventry's economy.
- Concerns were raised about reliance on national data, with an expectation that future versions will include a stronger Coventry-specific baseline drawing on local evidence.
- The need for more explicit and detailed KPIs was highlighted, with a commitment for clearer measures to be set out in the delivery plan.
- Few comparable strategies exist at local authority level; most are developed regionally. Coventry is viewed as an early adopter in this space.
- Universities are recognised as key partners, with potential to further strengthen data, analysis and evaluation within the strategy.
- Long-term outcomes will be tracked through a structured monitoring approach built into the delivery plan, enabling assessment of progress over time.

- Assurance that the strategy will continue to evolve, with data and KPIs refined as new guidance and evidence become available.

4 Health Inequalities Impact

4.1 One of the principal objectives of the Strategy is to address the under-representation of diverse groups within the creative industries workforce. This is particularly significant in Coventry, given the city’s young and diverse demographic profile. All proposed interventions will be carefully designed to ensure they provide appropriate support to individuals experiencing disadvantage. The Council will place particular emphasis on engaging effectively with people from a wide range of communities, recognising the differing challenges they may face. This will include working in partnership with locally based community organisations, community leaders, and other trusted stakeholders to promote opportunities.

4.2 In light of the limited availability of data across certain parts of the creative industries sector, the Council will also prioritise strengthening data collection and analysis to ensure Coventry is able to contribute meaningfully to national datasets. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed.

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