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Agenda

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Time and Date

2.00 pm on Thursday, 11th December, 2025

Place

Diamond Rooms 1 and 2 - Council House

Public Business

1. **Apologies and Substitutions**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 12)
 - a. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2025
 - b. Matters arising
4. **West Midlands Combined Authority - Corporate Update and Scrutiny Update** (Pages 13 - 14)
Report of the Combined Authority.
 - (a) West Midlands Combined Authority - Corporate Update (Pages 15 - 34)
 - (b) West Midlands Combined Authority - Scrutiny Update (Pages 35 - 46)
5. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding issues 2025/2026** (Pages 47 - 52)
6. **Any Other Items of Public Business**
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

Wednesday, 3 December 2025

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Suzanne Bennett, Governance Services - Telephone: 024 7697 2299 E-mail: suzanne.bennett@coventry.gov.uk

Membership: Councillors M Ali, A Jobbar, L Kelly, J Lepoidevin, G Lloyd (Chair), J McNicholas (Deputy Chair), C Miks, G Ridley and R Singh

By invitation Councillors P Akhtar, G Duggins, AS Khan and EM Reeves

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Suzanne Bennett, Governance Services - Telephone: 024 7697 2299
E-mail: suzanne.bennett@coventry.gov.uk

Agenda Item 3

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 20 November 2025

Present:

Members: Councillor G Lloyd (Chair)
Councillor J McNicholas (Deputy Chair)
Councillor A Jobbar
Councillor L Kelly
Councillor R Lakha (Substitute for Councillor M Ali)
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor C Miks
Councillor G Ridley
Councillor R Singh

Other Members: Councillor P Hetherton, Cabinet Member for City Services
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor E Reeves

Others in attendance: Chief Inspector H Godhania, West Midlands Police

Employees (by Directorate):

Digital Services P Ward (Director of Digital Services)
Finance and Resources R Hartopp, B Strain
Law and Governance D Blackburn, G Holmes, L Nagle, M Salmon
Planning and Performance C Boden-Hatton (Director of Planning and Performance)

Apologies: Councillor P Akhtar (by invitation)
Councillor M Ali (Substitute Councillor R Lakha)
Councillor R Brown (by invitation)
Councillor G Duggins (by invitation)
Councillor AS Khan (by invitation)

Public Business

37. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary Interests.

38. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th October 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

Further to minute 27/25 headed 'Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee One Coventry Plan Deep Dive Recommendations', Members noted that the recommendations to Cabinet on the One Coventry Deep Dive KPI's were agreed. The next step was to pick up the recommendations specifically for Scrutiny.

39. **Update on City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received a briefing note of the Director of Law and Governance that provided a progress report on the action taken in relation to the City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) further to the Order being amended on 21st November 2023 to include restrictions to e-bikes and e-scooters in the city centre. An Appendix to the briefing note PSPO set out detailed enforcement results for the period August - October 2025. Councillor AS Khan, Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities, and Councillor P Akhtar, Deputy Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities, had been invited to the meeting for this item but were unable to attend.

Cabinet approved the renewal of the City Centre PSPO on 13th June 2023 (their minute 3/23 referred), and also the submission of a progress report to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to enable them to monitor the impact of the Order. Cabinet, at their meeting on 7th November 2023 (their minute 44/23 referred), considered a report on the amendment of the City Centre PSPO which included the requirement for e-bikes and e-scooter riders to dismount when entering the designated area in the city centre. They noted Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee's concerns regarding enforcement of the amendment in terms of police capacity and priority within the city centre. A briefing note was circulated to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee in August 2024 outlining the actions taken to engage and educate e-bike and e-scooter riders as well as the general public about the Order, and to ensure it could be adequately managed and enforced. Actions proposed, and implemented included an education campaign, signage, training for officers, joint patrols, and larger multi agency operations to bring in regional resources as needed.

Progress on enforcement included:

- A new role of Community Warden in the Community Safety Team, predominantly city centre based and providing availability at weekends and early evening, with primary duties to provide a reassuring presence by engaging, educating and enforcing all aspects of the PSPO's that are live in the city centre.
- A dedicated Police officer acting as a point of contact for partners and to co-ordinate ongoing joint patrols and operations at a local level.
- A City Centre Case management meeting enabling greater joint partnership working, to discuss problematic individuals/issues.
- Joint operations in the city centre with the Police, that had included local agencies as well as regional and national resources, and West Midlands wide Police force resources including traffic support, pursuit riders, drones and similar.
- Engagement with community groups including regular contact with the Disability Equality Action Partnership and attendance at their meetings.
- Elected Members attended multi-agency operations in the city centre.

- Engagement with the Council's Migration Team and key third sector partners to reach out to asylum-seekers to warn about the dangers of being exploited by working illegally for food delivery firms.
- Alongside the Business Improvement District, sought feedback from businesses and stakeholders in the city centre regarding matters affecting them.
- Continued monitoring and renewal of signage around the City Centre - no single case where a Fixed Penalty Notice had been appealed, on the basis that the rider was unaware or hadn't seen signage.

Results on enforcement included:

- 25 Fixed Penalty Notices to e-bike and e-scooter riders in the three months between August-October 2025.
- Current methods of recording enforcement interactions had improved due to a Home Office initiative targeting city centres over the summer, this method would continue as it better expressed the current situation in the city centre.
- In addition to the PSPO powers, due to the modification of e-bikes to increase their speed meaning they were a motor vehicle and require appropriate insurance, policing partners seized 35 illegal e-bikes between August-October 2025.
- Overall, addressing the issue of e-bikes and e-scooters in the city centre through effective engagement, education and enforcement, was improved.
- Pedal cycles were permitted in the restricted areas and although action could be taken against those riding in a reckless manner, the practicalities of getting them to stop remained an issue.

The next steps to improve the City Centre PSO compliance were:

- Continue to use action days with partners in West Midlands Police and the Business Improvement District, to include partners from Immigration Services to check the work status of riders where possible.
- Community Wardens would link with the Council and partner agencies to concentrate on PSPO enforcement in the city centre.

In considering the briefing note, the Committee asked questions and received responses on matters in the following areas:

- Signage had been put in place to assist members of the public with the legal requirements and awareness raising of the PSPO. Work was continuing on improvements to signage and their locations, and further Communications work would also be looked at
- Officers engaged with food delivery organisations and further work would be carried out on this
- Local and regional enforcement operations were in place to maximise effectiveness
- Officers were aware of the exploitation of asylum seekers for deliveries for which discussions with organisations had taken place
- Multi-agency site visits would be arranged, with all Members of the Committee invited to attend to observe
- E-bikes were not illegal. Offences that were illegal included not wearing helmets and e-bikes that exceeded the power limit of 15mph - the Police had seized 50 e-bikes to date

- Bicycles could also be an issue due to speed and unsafe riding
- The PSPO covered some nuisance issues for which general notices could be issued however, Community Wardens dealt with noise issues rather than Enforcement Officers
- The figures suggested a small number of tickets had been issued to date however, it was difficult to compare data from the previous years as the recording system for incidents had evolved over time and each year had varied information recorded
- The resources available, including a re-structured enforcement team, links with the Council's migration team, partnership working with the police, delivery companies, the Home Office and BID, and the potential use of drones.
- Deterrents were essential. Food delivery businesses needed to take more responsibility with harder consequences for offenders who worked for them, but it was important not to stifle the food delivery businesses.
- Food delivery riders were classed as self-employed and therefore were not employees of food delivery businesses
- All Local Authorities were currently looking for revised, more effective, legislation on the use of e-bikes. The Council called for this in a motion at the meeting of the Council on 2nd September 2025
- Current legislation was through the Road Traffic Act which were all applied in a similar way
- Officers to undertake further discussions with partners on alternative routes for e-bike food deliveries, including directing them to designated cycle routes rather than riding through the City Centre's pedestrian areas
- Members were encouraged to report any e-bike 'hotspots' of concern situated outside of the City Centre area, to enable targeting for further investigation
- There had been opposition to a total ban of e-bikes and bicycles in the City Centre due to the environmental benefits of e-bikes and bicycles, over driving
- There was on-going engagement with charities, universities, asylum seekers, and more, regarding the issues with e-bikes and the requirements of the PSPO
- Anti-social behaviour concerns in Lady Herbert Gardens and Millenium Place were looked at on a multi-agency working basis
- Officers were part of a working group for anti-social behaviour matters - the Group's work was continuing and fed into the Community Safety Partnership
- Cycling was recognised as a good form of green travel however, finding the balance between sensible use as a lower carbon alternative to a car with ensuring the safety of pedestrians and riders was essential. The further education of riders regarding safe riding practices and defined routes, was needed

A Radford Ward constituent, supported by Councillor M Mutton, a Radford Ward Councillor, attended the meeting and made a statement on her experience of being injured by an e-bike travelling at over 40mph in the city centre and the outcome of the court case, whereby the judge was frustrated at the lack of powers to give a stronger sentence. The Committee thanked the Radford Ward

Constituent for sharing the details of the e-bike incident and the injuries she had sustained and wished her well in her continued recovery.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- 1) Notes the contents of the Briefing Note and Appendix, and the associated presentation.**
- 2) Has no further recommendations to make for the Cabinet Member or partners organisations.**
- 3) Agrees that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) Task and Finish Group for Active Travel be requested to include consideration of the issues relating to the use of e-bikes and e-scooters and report the outcome of the Group's work on this matter to the Committee.**
- 4) Agrees that officers liaise with the Council's Communications Team regarding the creation of a video message on the dangers of e-bikes and e-scooters and to pursue this being televised on relevant media channels, and the local press also be requested to highlight this issue.**
- 5) Agrees that officers further liaise with the Council's Communications Team in respect of promoting an awareness raising campaign on the potential dangers of e-bikes and e-scooters, their acceptable use, and the requirements of the Public Spaces Protection Order, in partnership with West Midlands Police, local press, national media and other relevant partners, including on the run-up to the Festive period.**
- 6) Agrees that a further update on the actions taken in relation to the City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order be submitted to the Committee in 6-months' time and this be added to the Work Programme accordingly.**

40. Benefit Take Up and Financial Support

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received a briefing note of the Director of Finance and Resources that set out the activities undertaken by the Council to maximise the take up of financial support for Coventry residents. Councillor R Brown, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources had been invited to the meeting for this item but was unable to attend.

The Council was directly responsible for the provision of various forms of financial assistance to residents which included:

- Council Tax Support – means tested support which could reduce council tax payments for working-aged people by 80 per cent and by 100 per cent for people of pension age.
- Discretionary Housing Payments - a Government scheme administered and partly funded by the Council that provided financial assistance to support low-income households with the cost of housing.

- Housing Benefit – a means tested statutory benefit for people of pension age and for people of working age who resided in temporary or supported accommodation.
- Household Support Fund – a Government funded scheme to provide emergency financial support to assist with the costs of utilities, essential household goods and food.
- Community Support Grants – a Council funded programme of assistance to support people with the cost of goods to assist them in setting up a new home.
- Administration of Free school meals.

The Council also provided advice, signposting and various resources to support benefit take-up and income maximisation. Council officers were active members of various multi-agency anti-poverty forums including the Poverty Alliance and the Coventry Inclusion Forum.

In response to the COVID pandemic and the subsequent cost of living crisis, the Council worked collaboratively with third sector partners to establish a single, central online resource for people looking for financial and wellbeing support. The resource covered a range of themes from benefits take-up to help with utility bills, from specialist money advice signposting to credit unions and, clothing and employment. The Council's website included an intuitive and interactive benefits calculator which allowed residents to identify types of support. The Council also employed two Welfare Benefits Advisors who undertook reactive and proactive income maximisation work with customers.

Council tax support:

- Nearly 24,000 Coventry households benefitted from council tax support at an annual cost to the Council of £28million.
- Support was recognised to be one of the most underclaimed benefits: people weren't aware that they could get help with their council tax payments; people didn't prioritise claiming; residents didn't notice any practical consequences if they didn't make council tax payments - people in this circumstance often had a range of debts and council tax liability was not a priority for them.
- Underclaiming of council tax support had become an increasing problem with the migration of housing benefit to Universal Credit for people of working age - people would claim Universal Credit but neglect to or fail to realise they could, claim council tax support.
- The Council had established a proactive approach to awarding council tax support using the minimum level of information to make an award of council tax support even where the customer had not made a formal application, including using information provided by the Department for Work and Pensions.
- The Council used a number of methods to publicise council tax support, including articles in Your Coventry, and literature with annual council tax bills.
- The Council's debt recovery team worked closely with colleagues in the Benefits Teams to identify and refer debtors who may have an entitlement to council tax support.
- Increasing the take-up of the benefit would ultimately increase cost to the Council by way of reduced council tax receipts. However, channelling support to those that needed it most, had wider social benefits for the city and

potentially reduced the risk of more costly interventions for those households in the future.

Wider Income Maximisation:

- The Council used software to profile Coventry's most financially vulnerable residents and proactively target take-up and support. The Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) product assisted in working with third sector partners to identify residents who may not be receiving all of the support to which they were entitled.

Through the LIFT programme, the Council and partners had been able to:

- Proactively award Free School Meals through an opt-out campaign, awarding to households who had otherwise not actively claimed themselves - in 2024/25, this resulted in Free School Meals awards to an additional 752 children and an additional £0.975 million pupil premium for Coventry schools, and in 2025/26, an additional 478 children had been awarded Free School Meals and additional pupil premium income of £0.64 million.
- Identify retrospective eligibility for Severe Disability Premium for 25 households, resulting in additional housing benefit and council tax support entitlement of £93,000 for those households.
- Promote Pension Credit take-up with an additional 79 customers in receipt of Pension Credit as a result. Whilst the Council did not administer pension credit, the Communications Team promoted the take up of a range of benefits and ran a publicity campaign during national Pension Credit Week of Action. As part of this campaign the Council also targeted communication at younger generations who may know or support someone of pension age.
- Partner with Central England Law Centre to get specialist support for people who were subject to the national benefit cap.
- Raise awareness of the Holiday Activities and Food programme by including information about this on Free School Meals letters.
- Raise awareness of the Healthy Start Programme by text messaging 16,000 households in receipt of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support.

As part of the wider digital agenda, work was ongoing to look at opportunities to join up financial support streams across the Council so that customers weren't asked to claim multiple times. The workstream would look at single points of access for customers to access a range of different types of support, could be created. It would also look at how data was used across the organisation to better identify and channel support to the right people.

In considering the briefing note, the Committee asked questions and received responses on matters in the following areas:

- The Education Service be consulted on the impact on schools' budgets in respect of universal free-school meals for infant age children and parents not actively having to register
- Following the Government's initial decision that only those in receipt of Pension Credit could claim the winter fuel allowance, there was promotional campaign both locally and nationally on the issue resulting in many new claimants.
- Claiming DWP pension credit was an issue for some who were uncomfortable with the concept of claiming benefits

- Those that claimed pension credit also made applications for additional Council benefits however, there was no evidence to quantify an increase in other applications following the pension credit campaign
- The Government's recent change meant that many more were eligible the winter fuel allowance, including those not on Pension credit
- A guide for Elected Members on the financial support available to residents and where to sign-post them for assistance, would be useful

Members of the Committee agreed that benefits data on the caseloads for each service provided be circulated to the Committee. They also agreed that a Briefing Note on the impact on schools' budgets in respect of free-school meals for infant age children, be added to the work programme for Education and Skills Scrutiny Board (2).

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- 1) **Notes the actions taken to promote benefit take-up.**
- 2) **Agrees that Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources be requested to agree to the provision of a guide for Elected Members on the financial support available to residents and where to sign-post them for assistance.**

41. Change (Transformation) Programme Update

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received a report of the Director Transformation and Planning that updated Members on the One Council Change Plan for 2025/26, summarising progress since the last Transformation Programme report to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee in November 2024 (minute 45/24 referred). Appendices to the report provided the Transformation Plan 2024/25 Update, and the 2025/26 Change Plan Key Deliverables. Councillor R Brown, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources, had been invited to the meeting for this item but was unable to attend.

The 2024/25 Transformation Plan comprised seven programmes and 23 projects. Eleven projects had been completed or transitioned to business as usual, while twelve continued under the 2025/26 Change Plan. The 2024/25 plan delivered £4.65 million in savings and resulted in: faster service response times through automation in Council Tax billing; improved customer satisfaction, with a 28% reduction in formal complaints following the creation of a centralised service in January 2024; and increased community engagement, such as higher attendance at Rhymetime sessions after relocating Holbrooks Library to the Dementia Partnership Hub.

The 2025/26 Change Plan was developed with input from the Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Network, emphasising organisational resilience, staff engagement, and a strong, inclusive culture. The plan identified eleven priority areas, grouped into four categories:

- Service Redesign: Customer-focused improvements across teams and departments.
- Transformational Change: Fundamental changes to systems, services, and processes.

- Continuous Improvement: Ongoing enhancements to ways of working and organisational structure.
- Enablers: Core tools and systems supporting change.

Programme leadership was distributed, with Directors leading specific programmes to foster shared ownership. Details of the programmes, aims, and officer point of contacts were set out in the briefing note. The Council was focusing on the key areas where it was believed there was the greatest opportunity for impactful change or where change was necessary through reform.

Overseeing and supporting delivery of change - a streamlined Change Board, chaired by the Chief Executive, met weekly to oversee progress, strengthen accountability, and address issues. The Board monitored financial savings and overall delivery, supporting Council-wide savings targets. Regular updates were provided to the Leadership Board, and an internal communications plan ensured staff and residents were informed of changes and impacts.

In considering the briefing note, the Committee asked questions and received responses on matters in the following areas:

- Members recognised the impact on the delivery of services resulting from the budget cuts over a number of years which included the reduction in staffing levels to deliver services, and the difficulty finding further ways to make savings
- Enabling AI was an essential tool for the future to assist with service delivery where appropriate and would result in efficiency and also identified savings
- Discussions with an AI service provider would shortly be concluded and the outcomes would be reported to the Cabinet member for Strategic Finance and Resources
- The Change Plan was an internal programme that would provide an opportunity for impactful change or where change was necessary through reform.
- The outcomes from the Task and Finish Group for Special Educational Needs Transport were an example of how improvements could be made and savings achieved, without impacting service users
- Despite the budget cuts that the Council had encountered, savings had been made and a balanced budget provided whilst full support had been maintained for vulnerable citizens who were the priority for services.
- The regeneration project identified as not being on track, continued to progress and was being monitored by the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) who had included it in their Work Programme for 2026.

The Committee affirmed its view that, as per the organisational procurement processes established to support the constitution, that no technology purchases should be made or installed prior to them being taken through rigorous testing and established governance processes to ensure their effectiveness and value for money. They also agreed that a further progress report be submitted to the Committee in the Municipal Year 2026-27.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee:

- 1) Notes the content of the Briefing Note and presentation providing an overview of the One Council Change Plan 2025/26, including expected benefits, programme details, key priorities, and progress to date.**
- 2) Affirms its view that no technology purchases should be made or installed by the Council prior to them being taken through rigorous testing and thorough purchasing processes to ensure their effectiveness and value for money.**
- 3) Requests that a further progress report be submitted to the Committee in the Municipal Year 2026-27 and this be added to the Work Programme accordingly.**

42. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2025/2026

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance that provided information regarding the Committee's Work Programme and Outstanding Issues for 2025/26.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee notes the Work Programme attached as an Appendix to the report and agrees that the following be added to the Programme:

- a) A further update on the actions taken in relation to the City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order, to be submitted to the Committee in 6-months' time.**
- b) A further progress report on the Change (Transformation) Programme, to be submitted to the Committee in the Municipal Year 2026-27.**

43. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 4.20 pm)



To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Date: 11 December 2025

Subject: WMCA Corporate Update & Scrutiny Update

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To provide the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee with an overview of significant corporate changes and projects for the current financial year as well as an update on the Scrutiny arrangements and work of the WMCA.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Note the Corporate Update Report
 - 2) Note the Scrutiny Update Report and recommend any opportunities for future work.

3 Background and Information

- 3.1 A comprehensive slide deck at Appendix 1, highlights the following:

- Update and changes to the WMCA's Mayoral Team & Executive Board
- Key Corporate Projects/Programmes

- 3.2 Members are requested to consider the information provided, make comments and ask questions of officers on the impact and implications of the work for the Council, as well as identify any further recommendations or actions.

- 3.3 A comprehensive slide deck at Appendix 2, highlights the following:

- Reflections on Scrutiny at a Regional level.
- Membership of WMCA Scrutiny Committees & Work Programmes
- How Coventry can inform the work of WMCA Scrutiny

Appendix 1: WMCA Corporate Update – slides

Appendix 2: WMCA Scrutiny Update - slides

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West Midlands Combined Authority

Corporate Update



**Together we are
making the West
Midlands the best
place to live, work
and visit.**



Our Values



Collaborative

Team focused – working as part of team, managing and leading.

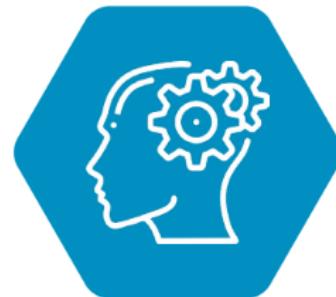
Service driven – customer, resident and partner focused.



Inclusive

One organisation mindset – believe in each others expertise.

Open and honest communication – we do what we say we are going to do.



Driven

Empowered and accountable – taking ownership and leading when needed.

Performance focused – being ambitious and going the extra mile.

Innovative

Forward thinking – embrace change and open to new possibilities.

Problem solving – go for clear and simple whenever possible.

The Mayor



Richard Parker
Mayor of the West Midlands



Cllr Sharon Thompson
Deputy Mayor of the West
Midlands



Jonathan Todd Chief of Staff	Joe Dundas Director – Mayoral Strategy	Roisin Lyons Mayoral Strategy Advisor	Priya Thakur Mayoral Support Manager	George Fraser Policy & Casework Officer	Jas Gill Executive Assistant to the Mayor
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Mayoral Priorities



The Taskforces

To help deliver on these priorities, the Mayor formed four dedicated taskforces of experts across a range of sectors - our very own **council of experts**. They will provide insights, challenge ideas, and help deliver for everyone in the West Midlands.

The role of a Taskforce member will involve:

- **Advise the Mayor** and WMCA board, shaping strategies to drive progress in your specialist area.
- **Bring fresh perspectives** to policy development and help push forward the key priorities that will improve people's lives.
- **Lead short-term projects** to accelerate action and ensure delivery in each priority area.
- **Collaborate with experts** from across the region to support wider engagement and help promote our ambitious agenda.

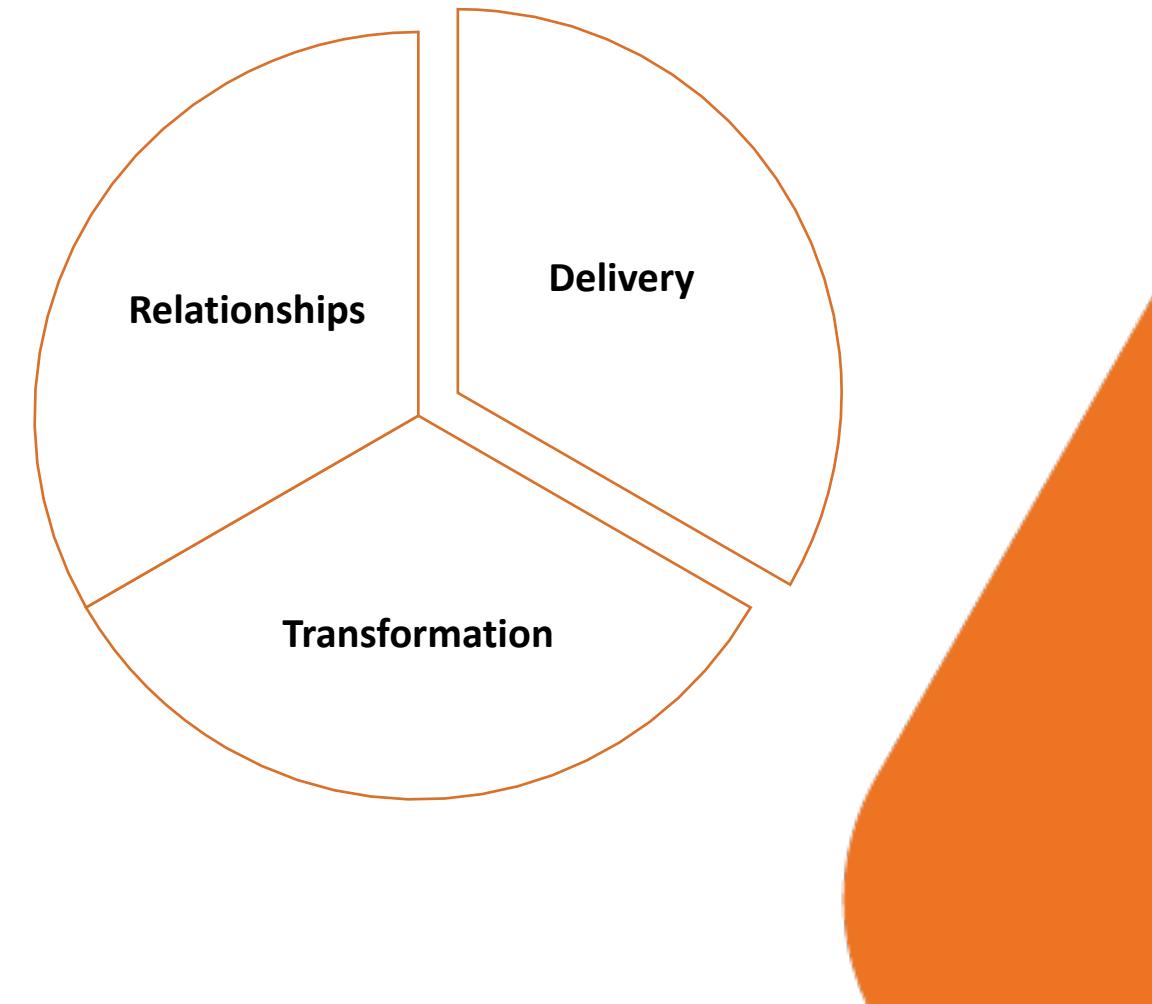
Executive Leadership Team



Priorities of the Interim Chief Executive

Despite the interim arrangements, we can't afford for delivery to stall. For this reason, he has set himself, and the organisation three challenges:

- to have a relentless focus on delivery built on optimistic vision and clear strategy;
- to accelerate and begin implementing the Transformation Programme; and
- to strengthen our relationships with local authorities, government and other regional stakeholders



WM Growth Plan



The West Midlands Growth Plan will drive a new era of prosperity in all parts of the region by creating 100,000 good jobs in fast-growing industries, getting tens of thousands of residents into work, improving public transport, and building 120,000 homes.

There will be more support for business leaders and entrepreneurs and backing for workers in the everyday economy such as teachers, bus drivers, shop workers and carers.

Towns and cities and their high streets will be transformed through a series of major investments including £2.4 billion of improvements to the region's transport network.

Building on the growth driving sectors set out the government's Industrial Strategy, the West Midlands Growth Plan highlights five key industries where the region has a leading edge and significant potential for growth and the creation of skilled, secure, and high-paid jobs that people can build their futures around. They are:

- Advanced engineering, including electric vehicles and battery technology
- Clean tech and energy
- Health and medical tech
- Digital and the creative industries
- Professional and financial services (next generation services)

Spatial Development Strategy

Earlier this year the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board agreed to begin preparing a Spatial Development Strategy that will highlight the best locations to meet future demand for new homes and workplaces.

The strategy will also set out the transport, energy and social infrastructure needed to serve new developments – as well as measures to protect the environment and improve quality of life.

The move is in response to a government requirement that all major regions to produce a Spatial Development Strategy for their part of the country. It is part of the government's ambition to deliver 1.5 million new homes before the next general election.

A West Midlands Spatial Development Strategy would help deliver a fairer distribution of new housing across a wider area, helping those councils struggling to find enough land to meet standalone housing targets set by government. **Under the blueprint, local councils will continue to be responsible for detailed planning policy, site allocations and Green Belt boundaries. They will also continue to decide most planning applications.**

The strategy will help guide the local plans drawn up by councils by identifying what new infrastructure, such as transport, energy, schools and GP surgeries, is needed to support new developments so they can better drive economic growth and build strong communities.

Areas where protection or restoration of the natural environment is required will also be identified, while housing need will be distributed to the most appropriate locations to help promote climate resilience and improve people's health.



Regional Investment Summit



A major UK investment summit will be held in the West Midlands in late October, after the Chancellor and Secretary of State for Business and Trade backed Mayor Richard Parker's plans.

The investment summit, originally planned by the Mayor, has now evolved into a flagship national event showcasing the UK's regional investment strengths, with the West Midlands proudly hosting.

The joint event will be called Regional Investment Summit – West Midlands 2025 and will focus on unlocking investment into the UK's cities, towns and industrial clusters - placing the West Midlands at the heart of the Government's economic strategy.

The event, expected to attract investors and business leaders from around the world, will align with the UK's industrial strategy and highlight the specific investment opportunities in regional economies. A high-profile media campaign will promote the West Midlands as the host region.

English Devolution & Community Empowerment Bill/Act

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill 2024-25 was introduced into the House of Commons on 10 July 2025. Second Reading is scheduled for 2 September 2025.

The bill would standardise the structures of English devolution, with the intention of creating a new tier of 'strategic authorities' covering the whole of England.

The bill sets out standard powers that will be available to 'mayoral strategic authorities'. The bill would reintroduce the supplementary vote system for mayors of mayoral strategic authorities, local authority mayors, and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs).



What could this mean for the WMCA?

- Potential for the WMFRS and OPCC to merge with the WMCA.
 - In 2028 the region would elect a Mayor who held the powers of the Police and Crime Commissioner, under a supplementary vote system.
- General Power of Competence over functional areas.
- Simplified Voting: moving from a 2/3rd requirement to a simple majority.
- Right to formally request new powers or funding changes to deliver against our functions.

What does WMCA do for Coventry?

In the first five years of the West Midlands Investment Zone, £23 million in capital funding has been invested in the Coventry & Warwick Investment Zone

WMCA is investing £113 million into Coventry's City Centre South Regeneration Programme. The single biggest investment we have made in one regeneration scheme

Using CRSTS funding, WMCA has worked with Coventry City Council to install the first road test track to showcase Very Light Rail (VLR) in Coventry City Centre.

Budget & Business Plan

A New Approach: Corporate Planning

Subject to WMCA Board Approval – Expected in October

After listening to feedback from regional colleagues, we are taking steps to overhaul the way in which we plan as an organisation.

With the Growth Plan setting a long-term direction, we will underpin this with a Medium-Term Strategic Plan which will detail how we will move towards achieving the aims of the Growth Plan and allow the organisation to think strategically about the resources needed to do this over the time period.

The Medium-Term Strategic Plan will be supported by a Rolling Annual Plan that will ensure that WMCA maintains annual targets to meet our three-year goals



2025/2026 Financial Year Budget

This year's Budget totals £1.2 billion, and is historic in that it includes, for the first time, an Integrated Settlement marking an unprecedented shift in power, funding and responsibility from Westminster to the West Midlands.

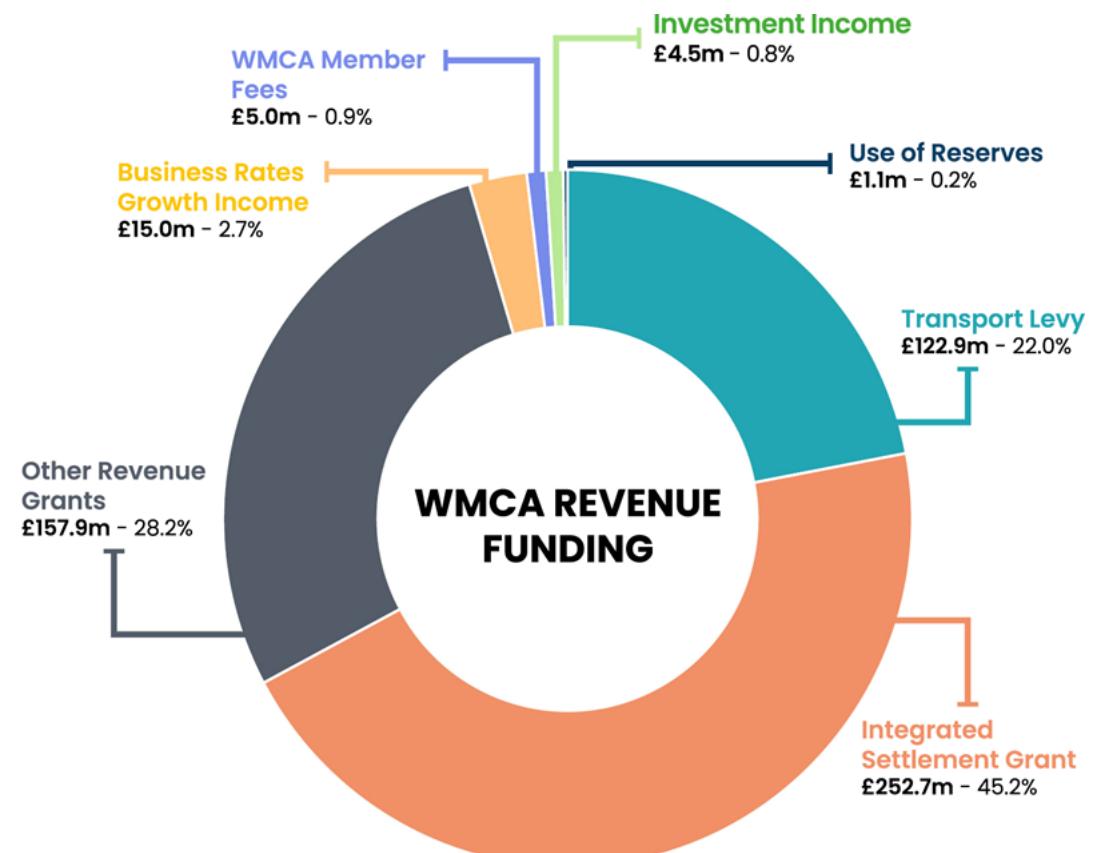
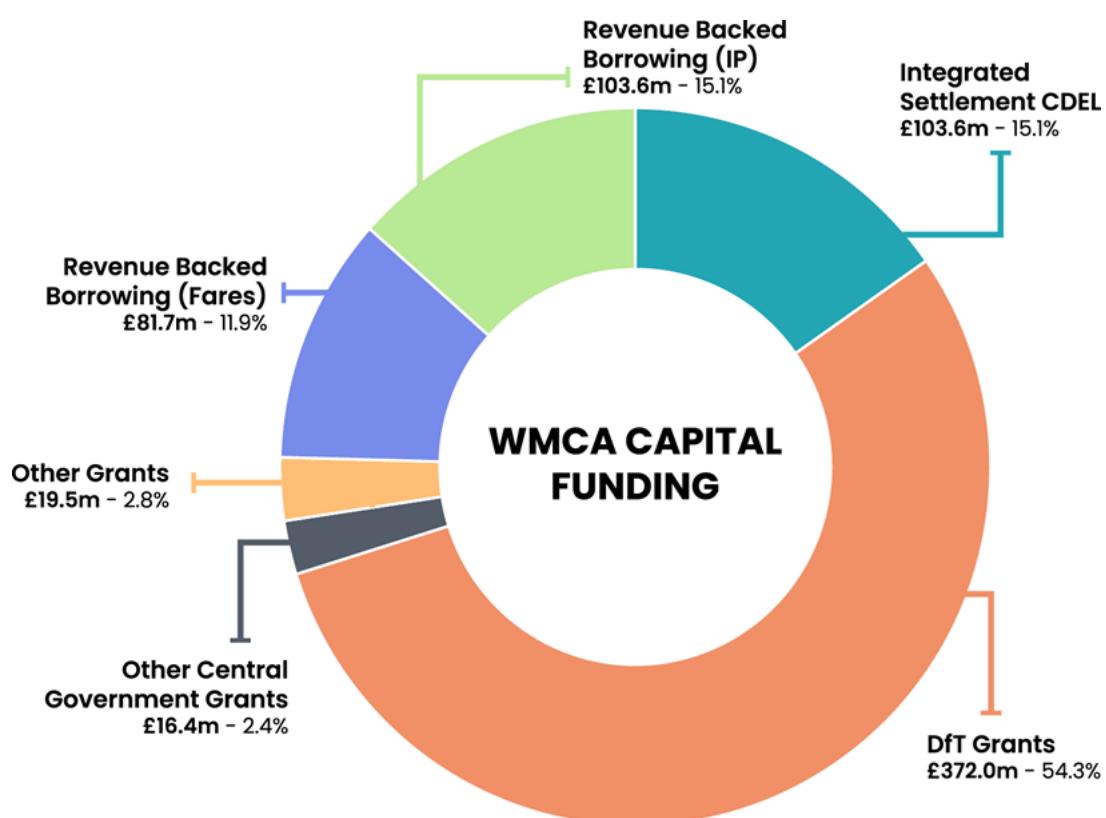
The £389m Settlement will cut bureaucracy and give Richard Parker, Mayor of the West Midlands and local Leaders, greater control, choice and power to focus the money on regional priorities.

Together with additional funds secured from Government and other sources, the WMCA's indicative Capital Budget for 2025/26 will be £684.4m.

This will be used to invest in projects that support the Mayor's four key priorities – Growth for Everyone, Homes for Everyone, Jobs for Everyone and Journeys for Everyone. It will be accompanied by a revenue budget of nearly £559m.



Capital & Revenue Output



2025/2026 Annual Business Plan

This year marks a major shift for WMCA. We have greater responsibility, stronger partnerships, and more control over how we invest in our region than ever before. The opportunity to drive real, lasting change has never been greater - but neither has the expectation.

For the first time, we have the flexibility and power to decide how to make that happen. The Integrated Funding Settlement puts us in control of how investment is allocated, meaning we can take a long-term view rather than being limited by short-term, fragmented funding pots.

Reporting:

Monthly reports flag any KPIs that are under-performing (rated amber or red). These go to the Business Management Panel, where mitigation commentary can be discussed.

Quarterly reports give a full picture of all performance indicators, making sure nothing is overlooked.

Serious performance issues are escalated to the Executive Board, either through directorate leadership meetings or panel reviews.

Our Aims:

1. To promote inclusive economic growth in every corner of the region and stimulate the creation of good jobs.
2. To ensure everyone has the opportunity to benefit across the region, we improve our resilience and tackle long-standing challenges.
3. Connect our communities by delivering transport and unlocking housing and regeneration schemes.
4. To reduce carbon emissions to net zero, enhance the environment and boost climate resilience.
5. To secure new powers and resources from central government, and demonstrate the strength of our regional partnership.
6. To develop our organisation and strengthen our role as a leading regional partner, fully aligned with the WMCA Transformation Programme.

The Integrated Settlement

- The first Integrated Settlement was only for a single year, and we anticipated that we wouldn't see the level of change as we will in future years
- To date, Coventry City Council have been directly paid £4.6 million from the Integrated Settlement
- There have been significant challenges in sustaining activities delivered through its Job Shop, which supports residents with employment, health, wellbeing, money advice, careers, and skills support. Through the Integrated Settlement flexibility in use of capital funding, core services and staffing levels have been maintained for another year

Further IS funding opportunities this year

- WMCA is working with Coventry to develop and deliver programmes around:
 - UKSPF Business Support & Communities funding
 - Funding to Retrofit Homes over the next three years
 - Active Travel Capability Fund
- From 2026/27, WMCA will receive a multi-year integrated settlement. This will maximise the benefits of the funding flexibility it brings opening up more opportunities for the region



**West Midlands
Combined Authority**

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West Midlands
Combined Authority

West Midlands Combined Authority

Scrutiny Update

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West Midlands
Combined Authority



Transport for
West Midlands

Agenda Item 4b

Scrutiny In The WMCA

Both Committees play an active role in ensuring that decisions are effectively scrutinised before they are made so that they are fit for purpose.

Pre Decision Scrutiny

A key role in ensuring that when a decision is made it is implemented properly and any implications are monitored.

Post Decision Scrutiny

Occasionally scrutiny plays a role in developing policies – for example recently they supported the Ring and Ride team in ensuring the service improved value for money whilst meeting the needs of residents.

Policy Development

Twice a year the scrutiny function holds Q&A sessions with the Mayor to ensure that he is held to account.

Mayoral Accountability

How does it differ?

Scale

- By nature, scrutiny at a CA level covers a larger geographical area.
- We are often operating at a much larger system level bringing in multiple partners from different geographical areas.

Scope

- Whereas at a LA level scrutiny can often feel very close to delivery, we often deliver through an extensive range of partners and instead of focussing on direct service delivery we focus on longer term strategies and priorities.

Guidance

- Scrutiny at a Mayoral Combined Authority level is shaped and guided by HM Government's Scrutiny Protocol and the English Devolution and Accountability Framework
- We are required, by law, to have Scrutiny Committees chaired by a Member of an opposing party to the Mayor.

Independent Review of Transport Scrutiny & LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

At the WMCA Board meeting in June, members commissioned an independent review of the WMCA's transport scrutiny arrangements to provide assurance that effective scrutiny arrangements were in place, and to make any recommendations considered necessary to strengthen these existing arrangements. That independent review has now been completed and shared.

Some recommendations suggested have been:

- Maintaining a specific Transport Committee, but with a small name change.
- Recruiting an independent Chair and Councils appoint the relevant Transport Chair from their Authority and another Member with Transport experience.
- Reducing Membership and maintaining a pool of substitute Members.

In November the WMCA undertook a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC), carried out by the LGA. This is a sector-led review commissioned by WMCA to test its strategic direction, governance, partnership working, and delivery readiness at a key moment in its development.

The review covered our scrutiny arrangements, and the Independent Review formed part of our evidence submission.

The initial feedback has been shared with the WMCA and LA Chief Executives, with Leaders due to receive the feedback in January. The review will be published by February 2026, with an action plan to follow by April 2026.

WMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee



The committee consists of 14 members, 10 seats for constituent councils (1 member from each of the seven local authorities, with a further 2 members to be appointed from Birmingham CC, 1 ABCA rep and 4 seats for non-constituent councils). The arrangement for the allocation of Constituent members on the committee mirrors those in place for the Police and Crime Panel.

Work Programme

Current Work

- **Strategic Planning & Regional Development**
 - West Midlands Growth Plan
- **Skills, Employment & Inclusion**
 - Job Rotation Pilot
- **Environment & Natural Capital**
 - Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Local Investment in Natural Capital Programme
- **Housing & Infrastructure**
 - Housing Delivery Performance across the Region
 - Social & Affordable Homes Programme Prospectus

Planned Work

- **Review of the West Midlands Regional Performance**
 - State of the Region Report
- **Skills, Employment and Inclusion**
 - Tackling youth unemployment through trailblazer scheme
 - Review of education and skills outcomes
- **West Midlands Net Zero**
 - Five Year Plan 2026-31, Air Quality Initiatives
- **Integrated Settlement**
 - Delivery Outcomes
- **Mayoral Q&A Sessions**
 - WMCA Policies, Draft Proposed Budget

Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee



The committee consists of 24 members. Constituent Members hold 20 seats which are allocated/appointed on a proportionality basis relating to how much the Authority pays into the Transport Levy. There has been an independent review into the role of Transport Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Committee, commissioned by the WMCA board, to ensure it is as effective as possible. The findings will be reported back to Board for consideration.

Work Programme

Current Work

- **Transport & Connectivity**
 - Key Route Network (KRN) Review
- **Micromobility Schemes**
 - The future of e-scooters and bike hire across the region
- **Transport Spending Review**
 - The government investment plans through to 2029/30
- **Bus Depot Strategy**
 - Acquisition of Bus Depots
- **Performance**
 - Capital & Operational Performance

Planned Work

- WMCA's strategic approach to Park & Ride
- The Spatial Development Strategy and how transport is being considered.
- Local Transport Plan
- Sprint Purchase of Vehicles
- Zero-Emission Bus Regional Areas
- Scrutiny of Bus Franchising

Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee



Work Programme

Current Work

- Financial Monitoring and Treasury Management
 - Oversight of WMCA's financial performance and treasury activity, including end-of-year outturns.
- Internal Audit Oversight
 - Oversight of the Internal Audit Plan, and regular update reports to ensure robust internal controls.
- External Audit Plan 2024/25
 - Review and approval of the external audit approach and scope for the current financial year.
- Assurance Performance Monitoring
 - Updates and monitoring of WMCA assurance activity

Planned Work

- External Audit and Accounts for 2024/25
 - Review of WMCA's annual accounts and findings from the external audit process.
- Governance Annual Review
 - Review of the Annual Governance Statement to ensure effective oversight.
- Internal Audit Planning for 2026/27
 - Approval of the Internal Audit Plan for the next financial year.
- WMCA Business Continuity
 - Continued monitoring of WMCA business continuity work.

Annual Scrutiny Report

This annual report provides an introduction to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Overview & Scrutiny and Audit, Risk and Assurance functions.

It is an essential resource designed to keep the WMCA, local authority councillors, and West Midland's residents well-informed about the purpose and impact of these functions. Additionally, it highlights their key activities, achievements and outcomes resulting from their engagement and investigations.

We have responded to your previous feedback and made the presentation today more about the in-year activity but you are still able to access the Annual Report via our website.

West Midlands Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny and Audit Annual Report

2024/25



How you can get involved...

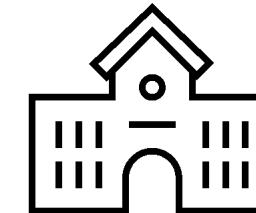
Understand the role you can play: We welcome suggestions for joint sessions, shared work programmes, or coordinated scrutiny reviews.

Reflect on whether you feel there is anything missing from our work programme.

Consider how you work with Members you appoint to the WMCA to hold the WMCA to account.

Each organisation's role is different...

WMCA Scrutiny
scrutinises the Mayor,
WMCA Decisions,
Delivery and WMCA
Officers.



Local Authority scrutinises
LA Decisions, Delivery and
Local Authority Officers

But just as important to help us connect the dots and ensure value for money and effective delivery.

Agenda Item 5

SCRUCO Work Programme 2025-26

Last updated 2 December 2025

Please see page 2 onwards for background to items

5 June 2025

Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities
One Strategic Plan and Education Capital Programme 2024-2028 (Cabinet Report)

3 July 2025

Coventry Protocol for Addressing Adult Modern Slavery (Cabinet Report)
The Re-Commissioning of Housing Related Support Services (Cabinet Report)

21 August 2025

One Coventry Plan Performance Report (Cabinet Report)
Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Review Letter

25 September 2025

Scrutiny Work Programmes
Communications Strategy

30 October 2025

SEP Progress 24-25
Shareholder Committee Performance Reports
One Coventry Plan Performance – Deep Dive Review Recommendations

20 November 2025

Change (Transformation) Programme update
City Centre PSPO progress update
Supporting Benefit Claims

11 December 2025

WMCA Scrutiny Update
WMCA Corporate Update

15 January 2026

5 February 2026

Complaints Reports

12 March 2026

Shareholder Reports – March Shareholders Panel

9 April 2026

2025-26

Domestic Abuse
Climate Change
Offender Management
Regulation 19 Local Plan – representations and findings
WMCA Integrated Settlement
Sherbourne Recycling Plant – possible visit
AI - Progress
Youth Justice
Child Poverty - Systemic Approach
The Coventry Skills and Employment Board

Future items

2026-27

PSPO reviews – 2027-28
One Coventry Plan KPI's
Communications Reputation and Insight

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/Lead Officer
5 June 2025	Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities	To invite Cllr Duggins and Cllr AS Khan to identify their priorities for the coming year, for Scruc to be able to identify future items and hold Cabinet Members to account	Cllr Duggins Cllr AS Khan
	One Strategic Plan and Education Capital Programme 2024-2028 (Cabinet Report)	To consider the Council's plan for school places. To invite members of SB2 included Co-optees. Mapping of in-year migration and home education and impact of forecast data	Cllr Sandhu R Sugars
3 July 2025	Coventry Protocol for Addressing Adult Modern Slavery (Cabinet Report)	A Cabinet Report to agree the protocol for Modern Slavery	Hebe Lawson D Blackburn Cllr AS Khan
	The Re-Commissioning of Housing Related Support Services (Cabinet Report)	A Cabinet Report to agree the requirements for the commissioned housing related support services from 1 st April 2026	Pete Fahy Cllr N Akhtar
21 August 2025	One Coventry Plan Performance Report (Cabinet Report)	To consider the annual performance report and recommend a further deep dive by scrutiny	Clare Boden-Hatton Cllr Duggins
	Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25	To approve the report scheduled for Council in September	Cllr Lloyd
	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Review Letter	To note the letter from the Ombudsman and agree a further item in the Council's response.	Cllr Lloyd
25 September 2025	Scrutiny Work Programmes	An opportunity to have oversight of all scrutiny board work programmes	Scrutiny Team Cllr Lloyd
	Communications Strategy	To consider the refreshed Communications Strategy with the new Director in post – To include Internal comms to promote the One Coventry Priorities.	Carl Holloway Cllr Duggins
30 October 2025	SEP Progress 24-25		Rhain Palmer
	Shareholder Committee Performance Reports	To invite all scrutiny members to the meeting	

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	One Coventry Plan Performance – Deep Dive Review Recommendations	To consider recommendations arising from the deep dive review of performance indicators	Cllr Lloyd G Holmes T Robinson
20 November 2025	Change (Transformation) Programme update	An update on progress following the item in November 2024	Cllr Brown C Boden-Hatton
	City Centre PSPO progress update	To provide information on the impact of the addition of e-bikes and e-scooters to the city centre PSPO in November 2023	Cllr AS Khan Davina Blackburn
	Supporting Benefit Claims	To look at work done to encourage residents to claim all benefits they are entitled to	Barrie Strain/ Cllr Brown
11 December 2025	WMCA Scrutiny Update	To update Committees on the role and work of WMCA's Scrutiny function and to better support coordination and information sharing.	
	WMCA Corporate Update	An overview of key themes/topics that relate to the WMCA	
15 January 2026			
5 February 2026	Complaints Reports	When the Committee consider this issue, appropriate officers from service areas attend the meeting	Adrian LeCras Mandeep Chouhan Cllr Brown
12 March 2026	Shareholder Reports – March Shareholders Panel		
9 April 2026			

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
2025-26	Domestic Abuse	A regular update item on the progress of delivery on the Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy – to include government policy and funding announcement	J Ross Cllr AS Khan Cllr P Akhtar
	Climate Change	To consider what the Council is doing to protect the city from the impact of climate change, including partners involved in the delivery and represented on the Climate Change Board, including Resilience and Adaptation, SEP and flood risk by ward. EV Charging points accessibility.	Cllr O'Boyle Colin Knight Rhian Palmer Bret Willers
	Offender Management	Following an item on Local Policing Update at their meeting 21 st February 24 the committee agreed to consider a further item on Offender Management	Cllr AS Khan Davina Blackburn
	Regulation 19 Local Plan – representations and findings	As agreed at their meeting on 18 th December the committee requested the representations and any findings on the consultation on the Regulation 19 Stage of the review of the Local Plan, to time with any Cabinet and Council report.	Cllr N Akhtar R Back
	WMCA Integrated Settlement	To look in more detail at the work that will be delivered through the integrated settlement from the devolution deal	Cllr Duggins Kim Mawby etc.
	Sherbourne Recycling Plant – possible visit	To scrutinise the delivery of the recycling plant, as majority shareholders.	Cllr Hetherton Mark Adams
	AI - Progress	A progress update on recommendations made at the meeting on 6 March 2025	Paul Ward Cllr Hetherton/Cllr Brown
	Youth Justice	A scrutiny session with the police and relevant partners to examine the impact of changes in police approach to knife crime, including the effectiveness of criminalisation versus diversion and early intervention, and invite Simon Foster	Cllr AS Khan PCC Simon Foster S Sen

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
		(PCC) to attend. As part of the OCP Deep Dive sessions to better understand police investigation and prosecution policies. To bring police representatives session to discuss decision-making processes, trends in types of offences, and reoffending rates. To include more detailed data on offence types and outcomes.	C Heeley
	Child Poverty - Systemic Approach	To undertake a piece of work on the systemic approach to child poverty, ensuring cross-partner collaboration and consideration of generational worklessness and private sector involvement. Recommended as part of the OCP Deep Dive sessions. Links with the Marmot City framework and One Coventry Programme	Cllrs Caan, Sandhu, Seaman S Sen, A Duggal
	The Coventry Skills and Employment Board	Following a meeting with SB3 on the Progress Made Against Coventry Economic Development and Skills Strategies and Coventry & Warwickshire Economic Plan on 26 th November 25	Steve Weir / Cllr Sandhu
Future items 2026-27	PSPO reviews – 2027-28	To be considered by scrutiny as part of the 3-year review	Davina Blackburn
	One Coventry Plan KPI's	To not only review performance in the One Coventry Plan but to delegate KPI's to all scrutiny boards for consideration.	Cabinet C Boden-Hatton
	Communications Reputation and Insight	To provide progress on issues raised at the meeting on 25 September 2025 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardising community engagement across the council • Update on policy and public affairs • Review of the Council's website • Digital Exclusion Policy 	C Holloway C Boden-Hatton Cllr Duggins

Work Programme Decision Flow Chart

