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Coventry City Council

Agenda

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Time and Date

2.00 pm on Thursday, 5th February, 2026

Place

Diamond Rooms 1 and 2 - Council House

Public Business

1. Apologies and Substitutions

2. Declarations of Interest

3. Minutes (Pages 3 - 6)

- (a) To agree the minutes of the previous meeting
- (b) Matters Arising

4. Review of Statutory Complaints Reports 2024-25 (Pages 7 - 82)

Briefing Note of the Director of Planning and Performance

Councillors L Bigham, G Duggins and P Seaman have been invited to attend the meeting for this item.

5. Community Growing Sites in Coventry (Pages 83 - 86)

Briefing Note of the Director of Regeneration and Economy

Councillors K Caan, P Hetherton, AS Khan and J O'Boyle have been invited to attend the meeting for this item.

6. Coventry Creative Industries Strategy 2026 - 2029 (Pages 87 - 144)

Report of the Director of Regeneration and Economy

Councillor N Akhtar has been invited to attend the meeting for this item.

7. Work Programme 2025-26 and Outstanding Issues (Pages 145 - 152)

Report of the Director of Law and Governance

8. 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, 28 January 2026

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Lara Knight, Governance Services - Telephone: 024 7697 2642 E-mail: lara.knight@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, L Bigham, K Caan, G Duggins, P Hetherton, AS Khan, J O'Boyle, EM Reeves, P Seaman

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Lara Knight, Governance Services - Telephone: 024 7697 2642
E-mail: lara.knight@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, 11 December 2025

Present:

Members: Councillor G Lloyd (Chair)

Councillor J McNicholas (Deputy Chair)

Councillor A Jobbar

Councillor J Lepoidevin

Councillor C Miks

Councillor G Ridley

Councillor R Singh

Other Members
(By Invitation): Councillor P Akhtar
Councillor AS Khan
Councillor EM Reeves

West Midlands Combined Authority: Councillor A Burrow – Chair of WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee
B Dunlop – Senior Member Engagement Officer
D Essex – Governance and Scrutiny Manager
J Hughes – Member Engagement Manager

Employees (by Service Area):

Law and Governance E Jones, L Knight

Apologies: Councillor M Ali
Councillor G Duggins (by invitation)
Councillor L Kelly

Public Business

44. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

45. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record, subject to the inclusion to the text below at the end or Recommendation 2 of Minute 41, headed “Change (Transformation) Programme Update”

‘Should they fail to aid or work in a cross-departmental way, they should not be installed.’

There were no matters arising.

46. **West Midlands Combined Authority - Corporate Update**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received a presentation by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), that provided an update on corporate matters undertaken by the WMCA.

The Presentation included the following:

- The WMCA Vision – “Together we are making the West Midlands the best place to live, work and visit.
- The Values – Collaborative, Driven, Inclusive and Innovative.
- The Mayor’s Office and Mayoral Priorities.
- The Executive Leadership Team.
- Priorities of the Interim Chief Executive – Relationships, Transformation and Delivery.
- The West Midlands Growth Plan.
- The Spatial Development Strategy.
- The Regional Investment Summit.
- The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill / Act.
- What does the WMCA do for Coventry.
- Budget and Business Plan.
- A New Approach: Corporate Planning (subject to WMCA Board approval).
- 2025/26 Financial Year Budget.
- Capital and Revenue Output.
- 2025/26 Annual Business Plan.
- The Integrated Settlement.
- Further IS funding opportunities this year.

The Committee asked questions and received responses in respect of a number of matters, including:

- Electric Vehicle Battery technology.
- Whether WMCA were a key stakeholder in respect of the impact of Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) across the region.
- Thoughts of the WMCA on a tourism levy.
- The role of WMCA Members in the 4 Taskforces and how they interact with the Local Authorities and Districts.
- Roles of the Taskforces in assisting the Mayor to develop Policy.
- Informal and constitutional structures and what these add to the Lord Mayoral function.
- The role of Scrutiny within the WMCA.
- WMCA Survey and whether this is regional or specific to Coventry.
- Proposals within the Growth Plan for 120k new homes and where planning powers sit across the region.
- The Spatial Development Strategy and rights to protect green belt locally.

- Transportation regionally, including the need to ensure transport links to new developments both residential and commercial.
- Comparative data with other authorities within the WMCA.

The Committee agreed the following actions arising from the presentation:

1. That an all Member's Engagement Session (All-Members Seminar) be set up to share information on the WMCA.
2. That additional information be circulated on the Spatial Development Strategy.
3. The link to the recent Member Survey be shared with the Committee.
4. Comparative data be provided to identify how Coventry compares against other authorities, to include Jobs Growth, Homelessness, Skills and Employment, and Educational Achievement.
5. That the Transformation Programme Report be shared with the Committee after its publication in February 2026.
6. The Spatial Development Strategy Review to be circulated when available.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee note the presentation by the West Midlands Combined Authority and request additional information as set out in 1 to 6 above.

47. **West Midlands Combined Authority - Scrutiny Update**

The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee received a presentation by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), that provided an update on scrutiny matters within the WMCA.

The Presentation included the following:

- Scrutiny within the WMCA – Pre-Decision; Post Decision; Policy Development; Mayoral Accountability.
- How Does it differ – Scale, Scope, Guidance.
- Independent Review of Transport Scrutiny and LGA Corporate Peer Challenge.
- The WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
 - The Work Programme – Current and planned work.
- Transport Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
 - The Work Programme – Current and planned work.
- Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee.
 - The Work Programme – Current and planned work.
- Annual Scrutiny Report.
- How to get involved.

The Committee asked questions and received responses in respect of a number of matters, including:

- The impact and implications of AI, particularly in relation to the labour market.
- The independent review of the Transport Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Committee and impact of the recommendations of the independent review not being supported by Birmingham.
- Decontamination of land and transferring costs to developers where taxpayer's money has funded the decontamination.
- Role of scrutiny in the formal decision making of the Mayor.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny and Co-ordination Committee note the presentation by the West Midlands Combined Authority.

48. 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. The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting would take place on 15th January 2026 and would be a joint meeting with members of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) for an item related to Selective Licensing.

RESOLVED that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee notes the Work Programme attached as an appendix to the report.

49. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 4.15 pm)



To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Date: 5th February 2026

Subject: Review of Statutory Complaints Reports 2024-25

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To ensure Scrutiny Co-ordination have oversight of published complaint reports and outcomes for 2024-25 in their capacity as the “Member Responsible for Complaints”
- 1.2 To enable Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee to have oversight of the complaints system and that recommendations arising from complaints that have been investigated, have been progressed. The Committee are not required to consider individual complaints.
- 1.3 To update members on Council compliance with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Complaint Handling Code (the Code) and the launch of the updated corporate Compliments, Comments and Complaints policy and process.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee are recommended to:
 - 1) Review and consider the contents of the Children’s Services, Adult Social Care and LGSCO Complaints reports for 2024-25.
 - 2) Identify any further recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member and support a positive complaint handling culture.

3 Background and Information

- 3.1 The Council is expected to address complaints in accordance with the relevant statutory complaints processes (*The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006*; the *Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009*) and / or the advice and guidance issued by the LGSCO under their powers under section 23(12A) of the 1974 Local Government Act.
- 3.2 Statute requires preparation of an annual report on the operation of the complaints process and the lessons learnt or service improvements arising from them for both Children’s Services (Appendix 1) and Adult Social Care complaints (Appendix 2). These are required to be publicly available, and are published on the Comments, Compliments and Complaints area of the Council’s website.

- 3.3 The LGCSO issues an Annual Review letter each July in respect of those complaints (both statutory and non-statutory / ‘corporate’) which have exhausted the Council’s complaints process and been escalated to, investigated and decided by the Ombudsman. The letter is addressed to the Council’s Chief Executive, Leader, and the Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee “*to encourage effective ownership and oversight of complaint outcomes*”, and a report similar to the statutory Childrens and Adults reports is prepared following receipt of the LGSCO’s letter (Appendix 3).
- 3.4 These reports are each considered in detail at the relevant Cabinet Member meetings and at Ethics Committee, ahead of being brought to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee for overview and review. They are then published on the Council’s website.
- 3.5 In February 2024 the LGSCO issued their ‘Complaint Handing Code’ (‘the Code’) setting out their expectations for complaint handling by local Councils, together with new overview and scrutiny guidance.
- 3.6 The LGSCO Code does not replace any of existing statutory complaint processes referenced above, but is intended to operate alongside / in conjunction with these. The LGSCO will be considering adherence to the Code as part of their complaint investigations from April 2026 onwards.
- 3.7 Under the Code it is expected that from 2026-27, in addition to the statutory reports, all Councils will produce an annual council-wide complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge. This should be reported through the appropriate governance arrangements and published on the complaints section of the Council website, together with the response to the report from the relevant governance arrangement.
- 3.8 The Code stipulates that in order to “*support a positive complaint handling culture*” the Council should assign lead responsibility for complaints in governance arrangements. The Code refers to this role as the “Member Responsible for Complaints”.
- 3.9 It was agreed by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee in January 2025 that, given they already consider the existing statutory complaints reports, they will act as the Council’s “Member Responsible for Complaints” and review and respond to the Council’s overall annual complaints performance and service improvement reports moving forward.

4 Health Inequalities Impact

- 4.1 There are no Health Inequalities impacts directly related to this report.

Appendix A: Children’s Services Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2024-25

Appendix B: Adult Social Services Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2024-25

Appendix C: Complaints to the LGSCO Annual Report 2024-25

Appendix D: Compliments, Comments and Complaints policy 2025

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 Customer and Business Services
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Children's Services Complaints and Representations Annual Report

2024-25



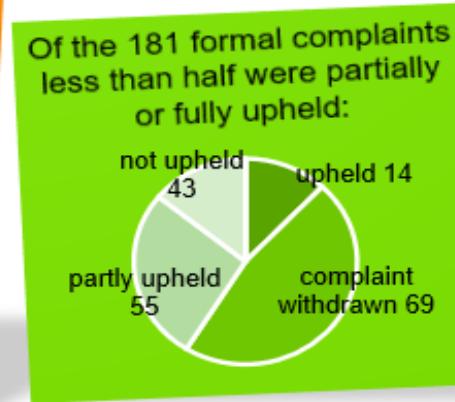
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Children's Services 2024/25 Complaints & Representations key facts & figures

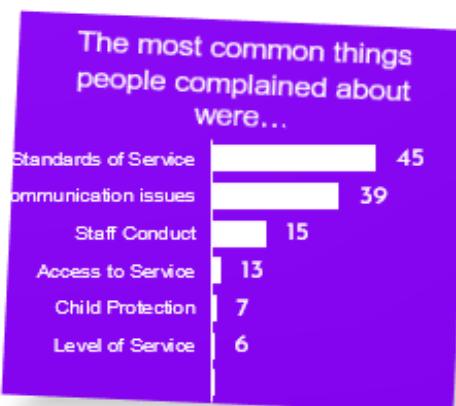



In 2024/25, children's services received **257** complaints (181 were statutory, 6 corporate, and 39 informal). **10** complaints were made by young people; **10** were supported by an advocate.




Children's services complaints can be complex & timescales can be protracted. In 2024/25:

Complaints	Average time taken
Stage 1 152	13 days
Stage 2 21	57 days
Stage 3 8	36 days




In 2024/25 children's social care also received **154** compliments. Compliments were about the standard of practice, partnership working, taking a child-centred approach, and communication.

If a complainant remains unhappy after completing our complaints process, they may take their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). In 2024/25, the LGSCO received **31** complaints about education & children's services, of which they investigated and upheld **5**

Listening to service users' complaints helps services improve by helping managers identify changes that are required. Key learning points from 2024/25 include: improving case recording and clarity of assessment evidence sources, improved frequency of communication, and providing clearer guidance for financial support for kinship carers

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Introduction

Welcome to the 2024-25 complaints and representations annual report. As part of the Council's commitment to openness, quality assurance, service development and listening and learning from service users, this report provides summary information from comments, compliments and complaints received under the statutory procedures in relation to Children's Social Care services provided by or commissioned by Coventry City Council for the year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Children's Social Care services support vulnerable children, young people and families by providing extra help and protection from harm, including residential care, fostering, adoption and support to families, children with disabilities and young people in trouble with the police.

Local Authorities are required by statute to have a system for receiving representations made by or on behalf of children who use the Children's Social Services they provide or commission (*Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006*). This is also underpinned by the statutory guidance on representations contained in *Childrens Social Care - Getting the Best from Complaints*. Representations are defined as comments, compliments and complaints.

The purpose of the comments, compliments and complaints system is to ensure that:

- The views and experiences of people who use our services are heard
- Things that have gone wrong are put right quickly and effectively
- The Council learns from feedback (both positive and negative) so we can develop and improve our services
- We ensure that customers / service users remain at the heart of all we do

Some complaints received do not meet the criteria to be dealt with under the statutory procedure. Where this is the case, these are registered and actioned under the Council's corporate complaints procedure. The arrangements for handling these complaints are different from the statutory process in terms of timescales and the independence of the people who investigate and review the complaints. Full details are available on our website www.coventry.gov.uk/complaints .

Summary

In 2024-25 Children's Social Care services received 257 complaints, up from 252 in 2023-24. 181 of these were **statutory complaints**, compared to 143 in 2023-24. 69 (38%) of these complaints were fully or partially upheld, which was 6 more than in 2023-24, although 6% lower in overall percentage terms.

The main themes of complaints received over this period were as follows:

- Standard of service / work
- Quality of communication / Delays in or no communication

- Delays in receiving services
- Attitude / Rudeness

Number of complaints received

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Stage 1	148	120	152
Stage 2	11	16	21
Stage 3	7	7	8
(Total Stat)	(166)	(143)	(181)
Corporate	16	15	6
Informal	49	70	39
Ombudsman	18	24	31
Total	249	252	257

Children's Services complaints were up by just 5 cases (+2%) on prior year, although the number of statutory complaints increased by 38 cases (+27%) overall, with 32 additional Stage 1 complaints, 5 additional Stage 2's and 1 additional Stage 3 review over the year. There were also 7 more cases (+29%) that were escalated to the Local Government Ombudsman in 2024-25 than in the previous year.

The increase in statutory Stage 1's complaints almost wholly matches the reduction in the number of those that were resolved informally / through local resolution compared with 2023-24, which is indicative of the more resolute approach of complainants who are increasingly requiring formal redress.

Overall Outcomes

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Upheld	8 (5%)	10 (7%)	14 (8%)
Partially Upheld	56 (34%)	53 (37%)	55 (30%)
Not Upheld	43 (26%)	39 (27%)	43 (24%)
Withdrawn	59 (35%)	41 (29%)	69 (38%)
Total	166	143	181

Overall the number of Upheld complaints (14) was 4 more than in 2023-24, but as a percentage of all complaints these were only 1% higher, while the number of Partially Upheld complaints was 2 more than prior year but as a percentage was 7% lower.

Overall the numbers Upheld or Partially Upheld were up by 6 (to 69), but as a percentage of all complaints, outcomes where there was an element of 'fault' were 6% lower (38%) in 2024-25 than in the prior year (44%).

Stage 1:

• Response times

The target to respond at Stage 1 is 10 working days, although the regulations do permit a further 10-day extension in cases where a detailed investigation and response is required.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Average days open	9	12	13
Response <10 days	99 (67%)	57 (48%)	87 (57%)
Response >10 days	49 (33%)	63 (52%)	65 (43%)

The number and percentage of complaints responded to in time / without an extension was much improved in 2024-25, with an additional 30 complaints (+9%) being responded to in time compared with prior year. However, some particularly challenging and drawn-out Stage 1 investigations meant that the overall average response time was still 1 day higher than in 2023-24, and 3 days over the 10-day target.

• Outcomes

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Upheld	8 (5%)	8 (7%)	12 (8%)
Partially Upheld	46 (31%)	37 (31%)	39 (26%)
Not Upheld	43 (29%)	37 (31%)	36 (23%)
Withdrawn	51 (35%)	38 (31%)	65 (43%)
Total	148	120	152

The number of Upheld Stage 1 complaints (12) was 4 more than in 2023-24, but as a percentage of all complaints these were only 1% higher, while the number of Partially Upheld Stage 1 complaints was 2 more than prior year but as a percentage was 5% lower.

Overall the numbers Upheld or Partially Upheld were up by 6 (to 51), but as a percentage of all Stage 1's, outcomes where there was an element of 'fault' were 4% lower (34%) in 2024-25 than in the prior year (38%).

Stage 2: (Independent officer investigation)

• Response times

The local target to respond to an escalated Stage 2 complaint is 25 working days, although the regulations do permit up to 65 working days in more complex or detailed investigations.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Average days open	48	75	57
Response <25 days	0	0	3 (14%)
Response 25 – 65 days	6 (55%)	6 (38%)	8 (38%)
Response >65+ days	5 (45%)	10 (62%)	10 (48%)

At 57 days the average response time was much improved on that of 2023-24, with 52% of Stage 2's (11 out of 21) being responded to in target. This is a 14% improvement on prior year and only 3% below that of 2022-23. Of the 10 Stage 2's that were out of time, these mostly related to some particularly challenging and complex investigations which required a high volume of documentation and records providing to (and analysing by) the independent investigating officer ahead of their making their report.

• Outcomes

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Upheld	0	1 (6%)	2 (10%)
Partially Upheld	8 (73%)	13 (81%)	11 (52%)
Not Upheld	0	0	4 (19%)
Withdrawn	3 (27%)	2 (13%)	4 (19%)
Total	11	16	21

Two Stage 2 complaints were Upheld and a further 11 Partially Upheld in 2024-25, being one less than in 2023-24. As a percentage of all Stage 2's received, outcomes where there was an element of 'fault' were 25% lower (62%) in 2024-25 than in the prior year (87%).

Stage 3: (Panel review)

• Response times

A Stage 3 review panel should be convened within 30 working days of the escalation request being accepted and acknowledged. This requires coordination of the availability of the complainant, three independent officers for the panel (one of whom will Chair), the

Investigating Officer and Independent Person who undertook the Stage 2 investigation, the Strategic Lead who was the adjudicating officer for the Stage 2 investigation, the Operational Lead for the service, and any other persons relevant to the review, when settling on a mutually agreeable date.

Following the review, the panel have up to 5 working days to report their findings. The Council then has up to 15 working days to consider these and issue a response, giving a total of 50 working days to complete a Stage 3 review.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Response issued < 50 days	2	3	4
Response issued > 50 days	0	3	4
Withdrawn	5	1	0

Of the 8 Stage 3 panels held in 2024-25, 50% (4) were completed within time. This is the same percentage and one physical case more than in 2023-24.

• Outcomes

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Upheld	0	1 (14%)	0
Partially Upheld	2 (29%)	3 (43%)	5 (63%)
Not Upheld	0	2 (29%)	3 (37%)
Withdrawn	5 (71%)	1 (14%)	0
Total	7	7	8

Overall the numbers Upheld or Partially Upheld Stage 3's were up by 3 cases (8), which as a percentage of outcomes where there was an element of 'fault' was 7% higher (63%) in 2024-25 than in the prior year (57%).

Reasons for Upheld / Partially Upheld complaints - by team

Where complaints are Upheld or Partially upheld the number of issues / concerns raised will usually total more than the number of complaints themselves, as each complaint may raise several issues or span multiple service areas.

	CEN	CIC	EAS	FOS	SOU	THR	WES	OTH	TOTAL
Stat complaints received	13	37	15	11	21	17	46	21	181
Number Upheld	1	6	1	0	0	1	3	2	14
Number Partially Upheld	2	12	2	5	8	5	16	5	55
Issues / concerns raised									
Standard of service	2	10	2	4	4	4	14	5	45
Quality of communication	2	6	0	3	4	2	5	2	24
Delays in / no communication	0	5	0	1	1	3	3	2	15
Delay in receiving service	0	6	0	0	3	2	3	1	15
Standard of work	1	1	0	1	3	1	5	3	15
Attitude / Rudeness	2	5	1	1	2	0	4	0	15
Access to service	0	5	0	0	1	2	3	2	13
Incorrect information given	1	6	0	1	0	0	1	1	10
Child Protection procedures	1	4	0	0	1	1	0	0	7
Poor quality / level of service	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	6
Abuse from service user / child	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	4
Other matters	3	7	3	5	3	5	13	5	44
Total Issues Upheld or Partially	14	56	6	17	23	21	54	22	213

CEN = Team Central

CIC = Children In Care (previously *Looked After Children*)

EAS = Team East

FOS = Fostering and Adoption

SOU = Team South

THR = Through Care

WES = Team West

OTH = All others

Please see Appendix 1 for a high-level summary of key remedial actions taken or lessons learnt from the Upheld and Partially Upheld complaints above.

Ombudsman investigations

If, after having completed the statutory complaints process, the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) to review their complaint. The Ombudsman looks at individual complaints about councils, all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing local public services. It investigates matters fairly and impartially and is free to use.

In 2024-25, 31 Childrens Social Care complaints were escalated to the Ombudsman, which was 7 more than in 2023-24 (24) and 13 more than in 2022-23 (18). Of these, 5 were investigated and Upheld, up from 2 investigated and Not Upheld in 2023-24. Symbolic remedies totalling £1850 were made in respect of the Ombudsman's findings, as summarised below:

- Failure to advise X of physical attack on her son in a timely manner, and the distress and frustration caused
- Failure to consider complaint in accordance with statutory escalation requirements (x2)
- Delays in child-in-need process and in implementation of child protection plan
- Delays in completing Stage 2 investigation within statutory timescales (x2)

Remedies provided

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Upheld	8	10	14
Partially Upheld	56	53	55
Apology made	n/a	n/a	65
Service provided	n/a	n/a	26
Practice changed	n/a	n/a	25
Financial Remedies	7	10	8

Of the financial remedies made, these were determined as follows:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Number	8	10	12
Council determined	£7467 (7)	£12600 (10)	£5475 (8)
Ombudsman	£500 (1)	£0	£1850 (4)
TOTAL £	£7967	£12600	£7325

Compliments received

A compliment is an unsolicited expression of praise or recognition for a member of staff (or service area) where they have provided excellent customer service or gone above and beyond the expected standard.

Compliments can be received from service users, their family members and from carers, thanking individual members of staff and teams for the ongoing support and quality of care provided. Positive feedback also helps us to recognise good practice and further develop our services to add value to the outcomes for our users.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Compliments	363	188	154
Stage 1 Complaints	148	120	152
Ratio of compliments to complaints	2.5 : 1	1.6 : 1	1 : 1

Compliments - by team

	2023-24	2024-25
Team Central	23	16
Team East	5	10
Team South	11	5
Team West	16	13
Responsive Services / MASH	23	8
Youth Offending	29	52
Through Care	53	30
Edge of Care	13	1
Children In Care / LAC	6	6
Fostering and Adoption	5	5
Children's Disability Team	3	1
Quality Assurance	1	0
Early Learning	0	2
Help & Protection Family Hub	0	3
Other	0	2
TOTAL	188	154

Examples of some of the compliments received during 2024-25 include:

The social worker was absolutely amazing. Not once did I feel judged or that a preconception was made about me. She made me and my children feel very comfortable and followed through with every single thing she said she would do. She is a breath of fresh air and I felt she saw me for the parent I am not the illness I have. I have found dealing with professionals extremely hard but she has shown me that there are people who genuinely care. My children spoke very highly of her after every interaction.

I am so pleased to see that there has been the opportunity given to parents to contribute, this is often not seen. The CPR is also written with sensitivity, understanding of parental history and lived experience which again is nice to see.

I wanted to take a moment to share my appreciation for (Name) and the unwavering professionalism and dedication she consistently shows towards one of our shared clients (Name). Having worked with social workers for many years, I can honestly say that I have never met a social worker as committed to ensuring that service users received person centred care.

I just want to thank you and highlight the good work you are doing to support XXX

You have taken your time to build up a trusting and valued relationship with her over the past few years.

From talking to XXX recently it was clear that she values the emotional support you are providing to her

Finally, whilst it is the PDYM staff's job to offer visitors an all-round exciting and challenging trip... you always go above and beyond.

Your care, understanding, and love for what you do and give, is amazing.

She shared that she has never worked with Coventry Children Services before and has been really impressed with how available and supportive she has found all professionals to be. She wanted to send her thanks.

Appendix 1: Summary of Lessons learnt and / or remedial actions taken

Case Recording and Clarity

- Remind staff of the importance of following case recording procedures and ensuring that information (including emails) are uploaded and properly recorded on to the electronic systems. This should include clear reasons to support decisions and /or actions
- Social workers should evidence their advice and actions, such as sending meeting minutes, in the case records to avoid any confusion or disputes
- Phone calls to the Emergency Duty Team should be recorded on the child's case files and the allocated social worker emailed to acknowledge and / or call them back

Assessments and Reports

- Assessments would benefit from a fuller and more holistic exploration of family dynamics, circumstances and background
- Child and Family assessments should contain details of partner agencies' contributions to them
- Social workers should clearly identify their professional opinions in reports / assessments and ensure these are supported by evidence
- Subjective views, where there is no firm evidence to support them, should be clearly identified as such, rather than presented as factual statements
- Social workers should include parent(s) in the Child & Family assessment
- Child and Family assessments should be redacted for parent(s) and for the court
- Parent(s) should be provided with a copy of the Child and Family assessment before it is shared with professionals and the court

Communication and Timeliness

- Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure that communication with families is clear, timely, and well-documented
- Ensure all assessments and meeting minutes / reports are shared with families in a prompt manner and families kept up to date
- Ensure there is a clear understanding of the expectations of the safety plan provided from the outset.
- Risk assessment timeline to be agreed with both parents. If one party is not working with the deadlines, then this needs to be communicated with the other parent.
- Promote regular contact with parent(s). Emails and messages should be responded to in a timely manner. Increased communication between visits, including updates / improved information sharing, would be beneficial

- Parent(s) should be updated on any significant events in relation to their children in a timely manner
- Managers to review cases where social workers are absent from work unexpectedly or for any length of time. There is a need to improve communication with families when social workers are absent from work.
- Ensure any changes in social worker are promptly communicated to all parties
- Ensure parent(s) receive a copy of the Child and Family assessment at the time of case closure, and closure letters sent out in a timely manner

Consistency

- Continue to stabilise the social work workforce to ensure children and families have consistency in who is working with them, and can build relationships with them
- Ensure any changes in social worker are promptly communicated to all parties

Financial Considerations

- Undertake a full review of support to Kinship Carers, including Special Guardians, following the publication of new practice guidance
- New guidance for special guardians to clarify how they can request additional financial and therapeutic support, including clear eligibility criteria.
- Implementation of an automatic biannual review system to reassess special guardian's financial assistance and additional needs support as children's needs evolve
- Ensure Special Guardians are provided with clear, specific reasons when deductions are made from their allowances. This will help ensure that they are aware that deductions, such as child benefit, are not applied in a blanket manner but are tailored to their individual needs and resources.
- Written guidance to be developed and shared regarding the adoption process, specifically clarifying the implications for finances and fostering payments, to ensure clarity for all parties.

Best Practice

- Reinforce the important roles of parents for children in care, and the duty of ensuring that they are included in decision making
- Consider development of a practice standards document or similar that sets out expectations for social workers for matters such as communication and responding to emails. (Various good examples are available from other local authorities)
- Where the child's (or parent's) first language is not English, consider offering advocacy or an interpreter earlier

- When booking an interpreter, ensure there will be enough time for all matters to be covered, so the parent has sufficient opportunity to contribute to the meetings / visits and their voice is heard
- The frequency of social worker updates should be agreed to help manage parent expectations, along with what will be included (i.e. photos of the children)
- Social workers should consider parent(s) availability when booking Child in Need meetings to ensure that they have an opportunity to attend
- Social workers to ensure they invite both parents and other professionals to Child In Need meetings so that they are kept fully updated or aware (especially when case closing)
- Both parents should be given equal time to present their perspectives in child protection conferences
- When plans for family time are made, dates should be arranged in advance so everyone knows when this is due to take place. The plan should be shared with all relevant parties, including the children

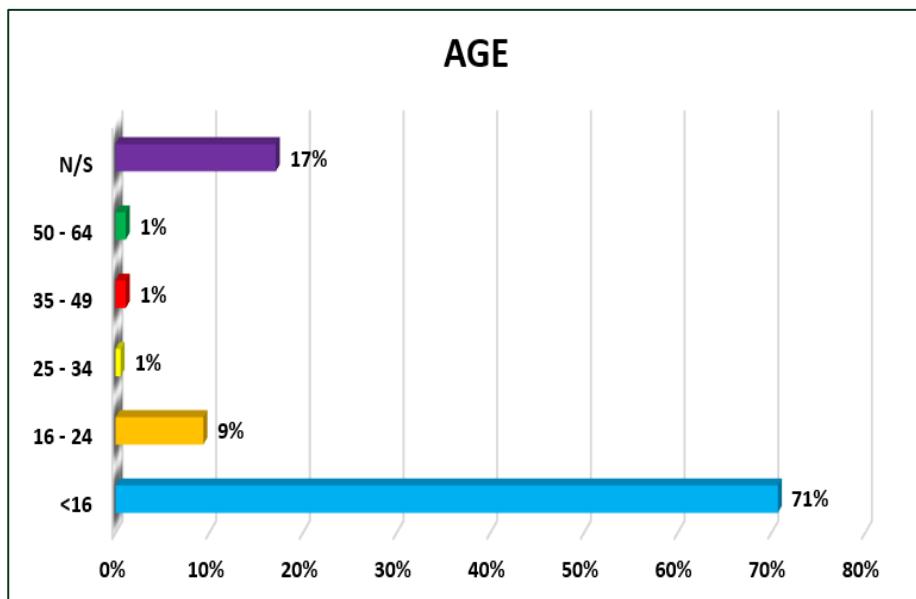
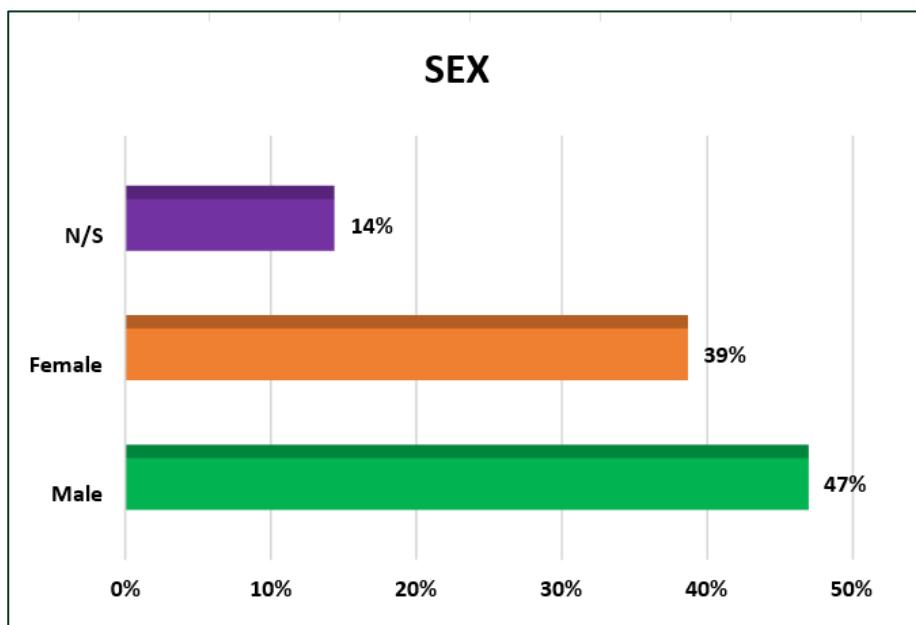
Complaints process monitoring

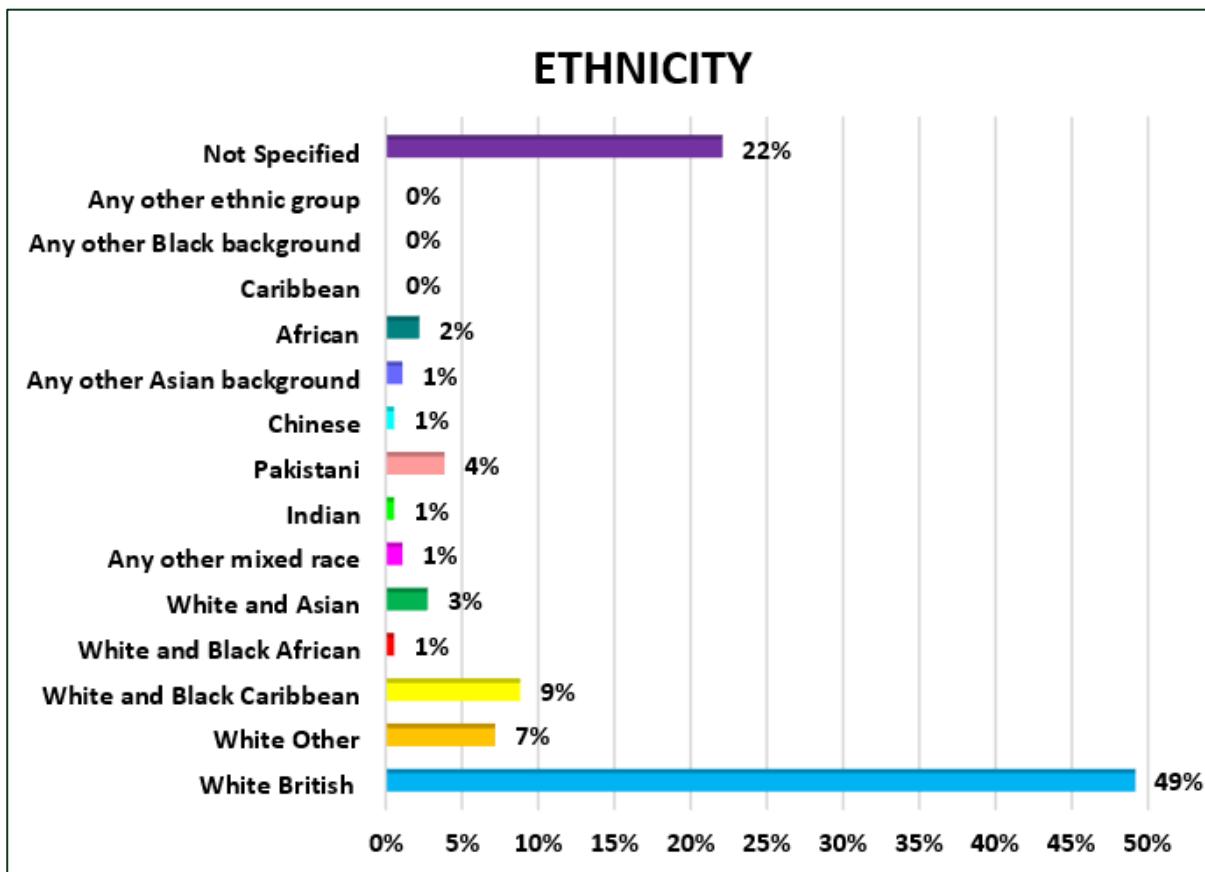
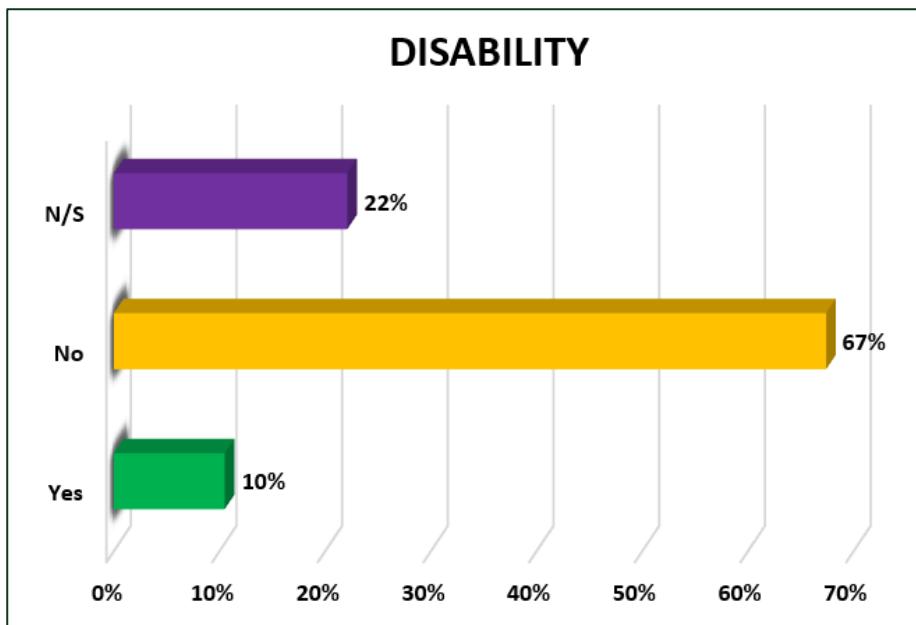
- Service areas to ensure they have appropriate monitoring processes in place to ensure all actions and recommendations captured at Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the statutory complaints process are followed through
- Guidance to be developed to support Investigating Officers to contact / interview key professionals who have left the Local Authority, but also to help manage complainant expectations where staff members are no longer working within the Local Authority

Appendix 2: Equalities and protected data

Collating information regarding complainants' protected characteristics helps us better understand our customer base and ensure our services are equally accessible to all.

This information is indicative and aggregated for reporting purposes only, being sourced from data already held on the Council's systems (including those for Corporate, informal and statutory Stage 1 complaints) rather than being specifically collected as part of the statutory complaints process. Where an individual's data is not held, these are recorded as Not Specified (N/S).





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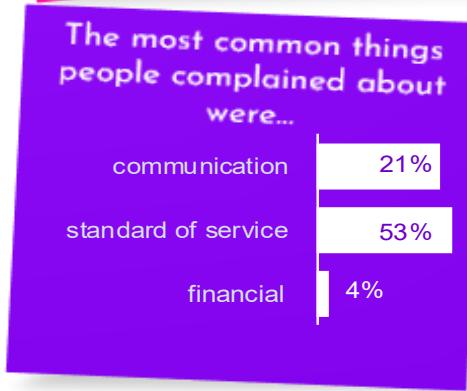
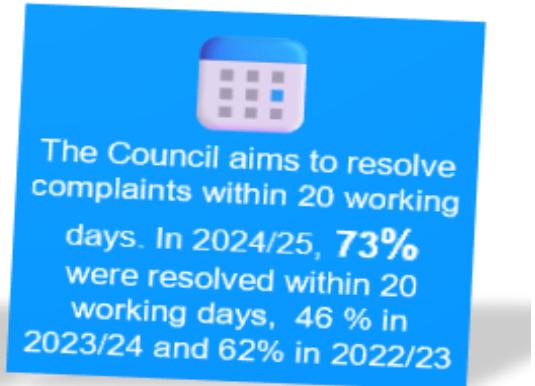
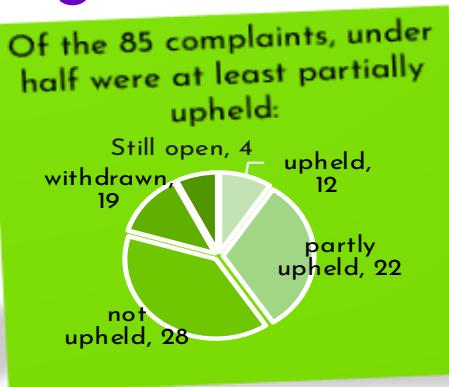
Adult Social Care Complaints and Representations Annual Report

2024-25



Coventry City Council

Adult Social Care 2024/25 Complaints & Representations key facts & figures



If a complainant remains unhappy after completing the Council's complaints process, they may take their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). In 2024/25, the LGSCO received **10** Adult Social Care cases. A total of **4** cases were upheld

Listening to service users' complaints helps services improve by helping Managers identify changes that are required. Key learning points from 2024/25 include: Developing guidance around a "whole family" approach, training to be provided for when informal carers may need additional support, improve communication and meet statutory timeframes.

Comments, Compliments and Complaints about Adult Social Care

You have the right to receive a good level of service. Listening to your views helps Adult Social Care Services to put things right and improve things for the future, so your comments, compliments, complaints and suggestions are important and always welcome. You can contact the Adult Social Care Service Recovery Team by phone to **08085 834 333** or online at www.coventry.gov.uk/form_speakup/ or by email to AdultSocialCareCustomerRelations@coventry.gov.uk.

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Introduction

Welcome to the 2024-25 complaints and representations annual report. As part of the Council's commitment to openness, quality assurance, service development and listening and learning from service users, this report provides summary information from comments, compliments and complaints received under the statutory procedures in relation to Adult Social Care provided by or commissioned by Coventry City Council for the year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Adult Social Care services include assessment and case management, direct service provision or the arrangement of a range of services, including support at home, day opportunities, supported housing, intermediate, residential and nursing care or provision of equipment.

Local Authorities are required to have a system for receiving representations by or on behalf of people in need of Adult Social Care support who have a range of support needs due to a disability or frailty (Local Authority Social Services and National Health Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2009). Representations are defined as comments, compliments and complaints.

The purpose of the comments, compliments and complaints system is to ensure that:

- The views and experiences of people who use our services are heard
- Things that have gone wrong are put right
- The Council learns from both positive and negative feedback to develop and improve our services
- We ensure that customers / service users remain at the heart of all we do

Some complaints received do not meet the criteria to be dealt with under the statutory procedure. Where this is the case, these are registered and actioned under the Council's corporate complaints procedure. The arrangements for handling these complaints are different from the statutory process in terms of timescales and the independence of the people who investigate and review the complaints. Full details are available on our website www.coventry.gov.uk/complaints .

Summary

In 2024-25 Adult Social Care services received 148 complaints, up from 94 in 2023-24. 85 of these were **statutory complaints**, compared to 59 statutory complaints in 2023-24. 42% of these complaints were fully or partially upheld, a reduction from 49% in 2023-24.

The main themes of complaints received over this period were as follows:

- Delays in or no communication
- Quality of communication
- Delays in providing services
- Standard of service / work

Number of complaints received

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Corporate	6	6	11
Informal	14	21	42
Statutory	66	59	85
Ombudsman	7	10	10
Total	93	96	148

Total complaints were up by 52 (+55%) on prior year, of which statutory were up by 26 cases (+44%). However, encouragingly there was a 100% increase in complaints that were resolved informally at point of delivery or through early local resolution (+21 cases) without needing to progress to the formal investigation process, which is a positive trend.

Response times

The local target for a formal response is 20 working days, although the regulations do permit up to 6 months to provide a detailed investigation and response.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Average days open	21	22	17
Response <20 days	41 (62%)	27 (46%)	62 (73%)
Response >20 days	25 (38%)	32 (54%)	23 (27%)

The average response time was 5 days less than in 2023-24, with a 27% improvement in the percentage responded to within 20 days, despite a 44% increase in the number of cases / responses required overall.

Outcomes

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Upheld	10 (15%)	6 (10%)	12 (15%)
Partially Upheld	20 (30%)	23 (39%)	22 (27%)
Not Upheld	15 (23%)	12 (20%)	28 (34%)
Withdrawn	21 (32%)	18 (31%)	19 (23%)
Total	66	59	81*

* This excludes 4 complaints still open at year end.

The number of Upheld complaints (12) was double that of 2023-24, but percentage-wise these were only 5% higher, while the number of Partially Upheld complaints was almost identical year on year but as a percentage was 12% lower.

Overall the numbers Upheld or Partially Upheld were up by 5 (to 34), but as a percentage of all complaints, outcomes where there was an element of 'fault' were 7% lower (42%) in 2024-25 than in the prior year (49%).

Reasons for Upheld / Partially Upheld complaints

Where complaints are Upheld or Partially upheld the number of concerns raised will usually total more than the number of complaints themselves, as each may raise several issues or span multiple service areas.

	AAD	COM	MH	PRI	OLD	OT	CDT	OTH	TOTAL
Stat complaints received	19	6	9	6	19	10	8	8	85
Number Upheld	2	0	1	2	3	2	1	1	12
Number Partially Upheld	5	2	1	0	4	3	3	4	22
Issues / concerns raised									
Delays in / no communication	5	1	1		4	4	3	2	20
Quality of communication	4		1	1	5	3	3	2	19
Delay in providing service	3	1			3	3	3	3	16
Standard of service	2	2		1	4		2	2	13
Access to service	3	1			2	3	1	1	11
Poor quality of care / Level of service	2	2	1		2	1		2	10
Incorrect information given	2				3	3	2		10
Standard of work		1		1	1	5		1	9
Financial assessment / charges	1		1	1	2			2	7
Attitude / Rudeness					1	1	1		3
Other matters	2			1	1	1	1	1	7
Total Issues Upheld or Partially	24	8	4	5	28	24	16	16	125

AAD = All Age Disability (Assessment & Case Management)

COM = Adult Commissioning

MH = Mental Health

PRI = Promoting Independence team

OLD = Older People (Assessment & Case Management)

OT = Occupational Therapy and Enablement / STMSI

CDT = Community Discharge Team

OTH = All others

Please see Appendix 1 for a high-level summary of key remedial actions taken or lessons learnt from the Upheld and Partially Upheld complaints above.

Ombudsman investigations

If, after having completed the statutory complaints process, the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) to review their complaint. The Ombudsman looks at individual complaints about councils, all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing local public services. It investigates matters fairly and impartially and is free to use.

In 2024-25, 10 Adult Social Care complaints were escalated to the Ombudsman, which was same number as in 2023-24. Of these, 4 were Upheld (up 2 from 2023-24) and 2 were still under investigation at period end. Symbolic remedies totalling £1250 (2 x £500; 1 x £250) were made in respect of the Ombudsman's findings, as summarised below:

- Failure to ensure effective co-operation between officers in Children's and Adult's services in line with Section 6 of the Care Act 2014
- Failure to review X's care needs (no consideration of outcomes of review; care plan not changed)
- Failure to complete full safeguarding enquiry
- Failure to keep X safe from harm or risk of harm
- Failure to respond to communications, causing unnecessary distress
- Failure to follow up on respite care needs
- Failure to properly consider what support could be offered when X's behaviour escalated
- Fault over advice given re emergency accommodation

Remedies provided

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Upheld	10	6	12
Partially Upheld	20	23	22
Apology made	n/a	29	33
Service provided	n/a	11	13
Practice changed	n/a	8	15
Financial Remedies	n/a	2	8

Of the financial remedies made, these were determined as follows:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Number		2	8
Council determined		£8986 *	£21022 **
Ombudsman		£750	£1250
TOTAL £		£9736	£22272

* 2023-24 = £8986 credit from financial reassessment

** 2024-25 – includes £17902 charges recalculation and refund

Compliments received

A compliment is an unsolicited expression of praise or recognition for a member of staff (or service area) where they have provided excellent customer service or gone above and beyond the expected standard.

Compliments can be received from service users, their family members and from carers, thanking individual members of staff and teams for the ongoing support and quality of care provided. Positive feedback also helps us to recognise good practice and further develop our services to add value to the outcomes for our users.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Compliments	253	173	185
Stage 1 Complaints	66	59	85
Ratio of compliments to complaints	3.8 : 1	2.9 : 1	2.2 : 1

Examples of some of the compliments received during 2024-25 include:

Home Improvement Officer: I would like to express my gratitude for your help and support in process of getting my bathroom changed into wet room your support was very much appreciated

Staff at Gilbert Richards Centre to All Staff I honestly cannot thank you all enough for the warm welcome, help and care you have shown myself and [Name] over the last 6 weeks! The jobs you are doing are incredible and that reflects on how much love you receive from all the service users. I have thoroughly enjoyed the time here and wish you all the best for the future :)

Many thanks

"(Name) has said he feels his mother has settled in very well in Eric Williams House. The staff are fantastic. The home itself is very vibrant and very clean. There are large areas for them to move around and so pleased to have got my mother into the home which she really likes and along with her friends that she has made, she enjoys her day trips out and all the other activities that are done in the home. "

Compliment to social worker: Firstly, thank you for all your help and please thank your colleague, as well. Patients and families can be quick to complain but lack to give staff recognition and gratitude when they go above and beyond. You both have been brilliant in dealing with my mother who is sometimes not the easiest to deal with

Dear telecare, my wife and I want to thank your care team for giving such a good service on Tuesday, after (Name) had a fall at home. The team arrived 5 – 10 minutes after the alarm was sounded then managed to get (Name) back on her feet very quickly with no harm done. We appreciate the professional skill of the team and the care and reassurance with which they applied it.

All the staff in Lounge 3: We would like to thank you for your care, love and compassion. You're the BEST!

Appendix 1: Summary of Lessons learnt and / or remedial actions taken

Assessments

- Remind staff of the communication standards when completing Care Act assessments and the sensitivity of discussing finances
- Remind staff that eligibility for care and support needs can only be ascertained on completion of a Care Act Assessment, and to be mindful when discussing possible eligibility
- Ensure correct calculations are used (and checked) when assessing contribution towards cost of care, and that financial assessments are completed in a timely manner
- Customers to be kept advised of reasons for any delays in completion of financial assessments
- Service users to be offered a choice of how to receive their assessment, i.e. via email or post etc.
- Social workers to ensure that a copy of assessment / review is sent to the customer in a timely manner
- Ensure service users are aware that housing-with-care provisions are subject to providers own waiting lists and criteria for referral

Communication

- Staff reminded to check communication preferences with individuals
- Staff reminded of the importance of regular communication with individuals / families throughout the process
- Principal Social Worker to develop practice guidance around a “whole family” approach
- Training to be provided to teams regarding referrals to other services as needed, priority decisions, and keeping service users informed of reasons for decisions made
- Staff to make service users aware of case closures to ensure they are agreeable, and to provide them with contact details following closure
- Ensure Lasting Power of Attorney’s and Advocates kept fully informed of decisions regarding service user’s residence and long-term care and support intervention plans

Timeliness

- Staff to ensure that customer concerns are addressed promptly
- Staff to respond to reasonable questions and enquiries without delay, or at least acknowledge receipt and inform individuals of when the Council will respond by.

Charges

- Practitioners to evidence that they have explained the ASC charging policy to charge from Day One of a service and / or provided the customer with written information
- Customers to be made aware of charge for 'housing with care' onsite care provision

Adaptations

- Staff to be provided with training around Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG), to ensure that the self-managed scheme option is shared with service users
- All DFG applicants to be placed on a waiting list and sent a letter with contact details for the Adaptations team
- Approvals process for external repairs or special equipment orders to be reviewed

Safeguarding

- Staff training to be provided to ensure Making Safeguarding Personal processes are followed and that safeguarding concerns are dealt with in line with timescales
- Key boxes should be used when doors are locked
- Carers should inform service users and family why if they do not have full uniform on
- Staff in the adult initial contact team to be trained in recognising when parents may need additional support, such as when suffering from physical or mental impairment or illness
- Staff to take proactive steps to consider suitable support at the earliest opportunity in cases where there are reports of domestic violence, to try to prevent situations escalating

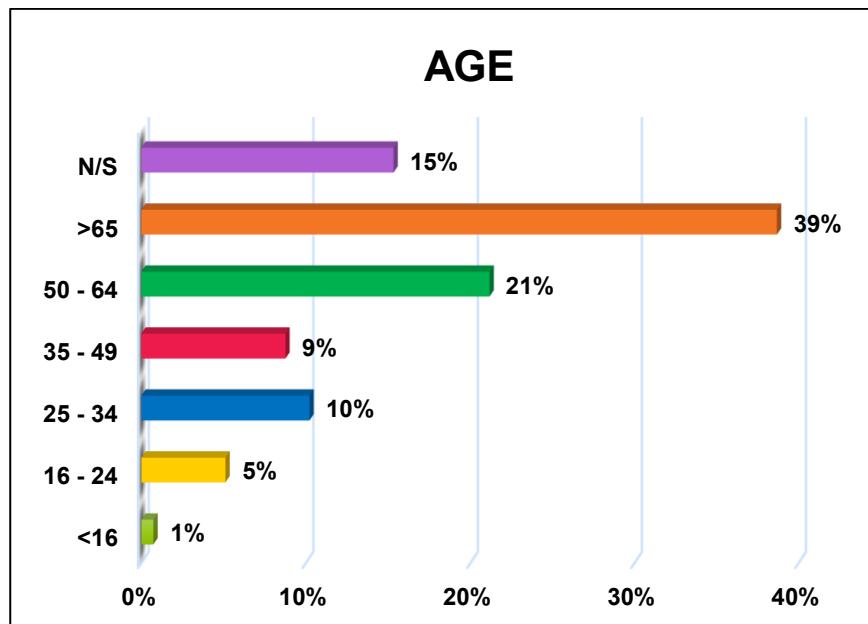
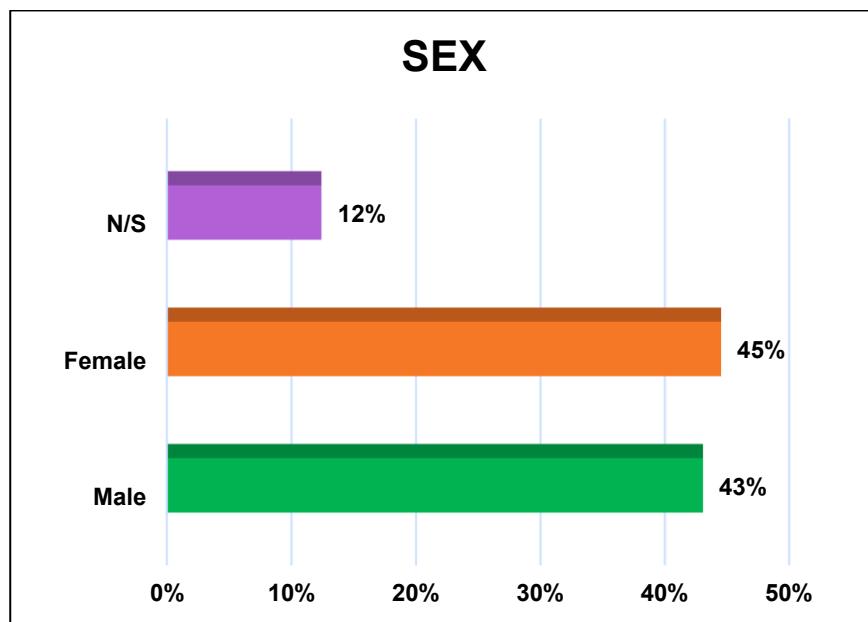
Other

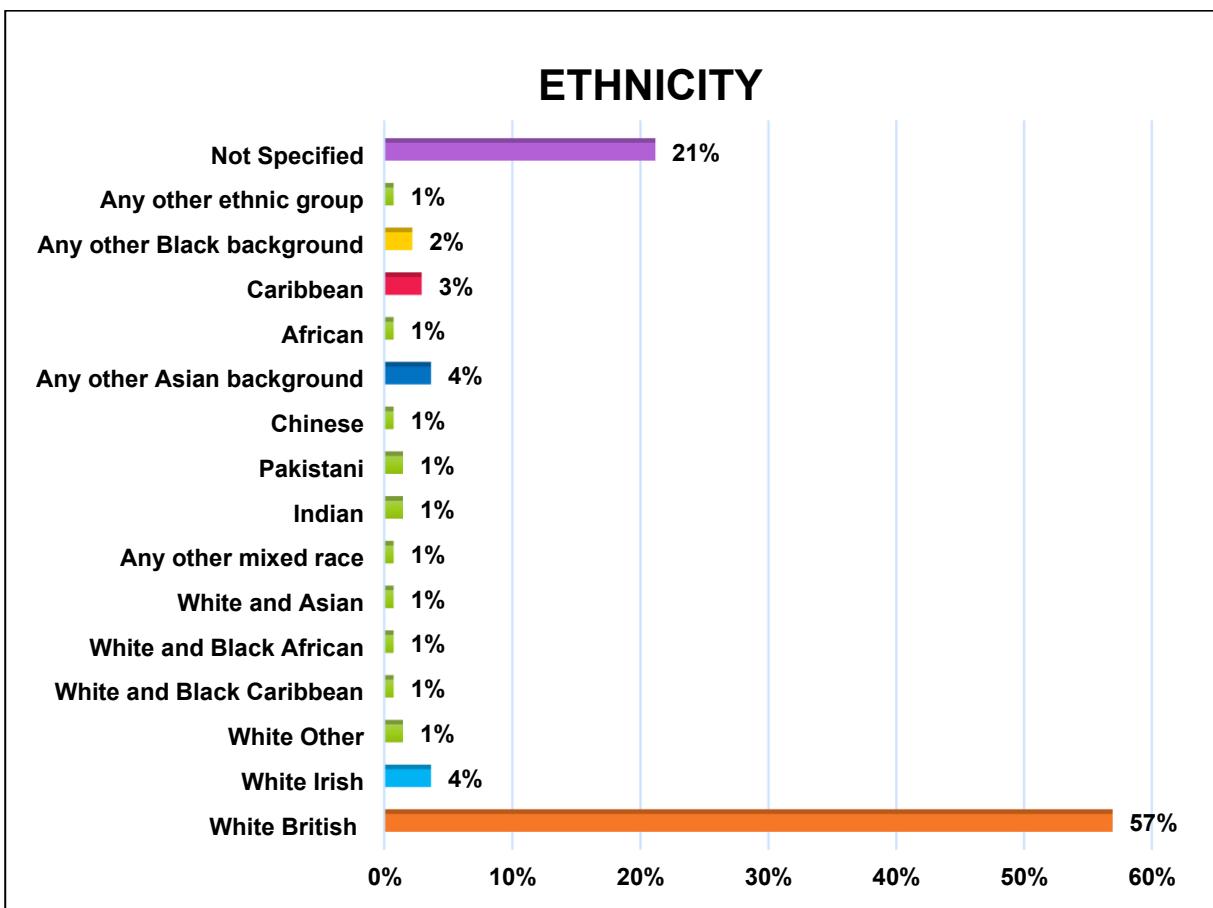
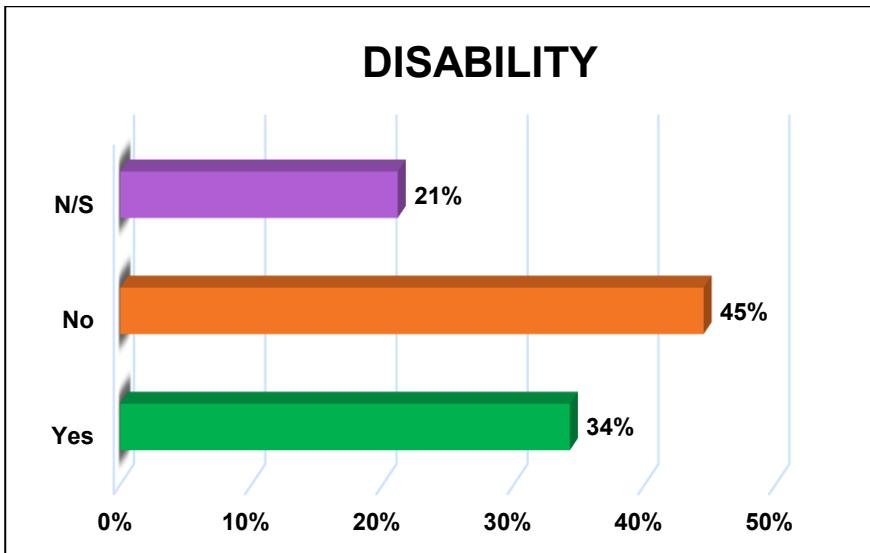
- Proactive signposting of service users to relevant long-term support services
- Telecare low-battery reports to be run on a weekly basis

Appendix 2: Equalities and protected data

Collating information regarding complainants' protected characteristics helps us better understand our customer base and ensure our services are equally accessible to all.

This information is indicative and aggregated for reporting purposes only, being sourced from data already held on the Council's systems (including those for Corporate, informal and statutory Stage 1 complaints) rather than being specifically collected as part of the statutory complaints process. Where an individual's data is not held, these are recorded as Not Specified (N/S).





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Coventry City Council

Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership 12 November 2025

Audit and Procurement Committee 24 November 2025

Ethics Committee 8 January 2026

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership – Councillor G Duggins

Director approving submission of the report:

Chief Executive

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman 2024/25

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive summary:

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) is the final stage for complaints about Councils, all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing local public services. It is a free service that investigates complaints in a fair and independent way and provides a means of redress to individuals for injustice caused by unfair treatment or service failure.

Coventry City Council's complaints policy sets out how individual members of the public can complain to the Council, as well as how the Council will handle their compliments, comments and complaints. The Council also informs individuals of their rights to contact the LGSCO if they are not happy with the Council's decision once they have exhausted the Council's complaints process.

The LGSCO issues an annual letter to the Leader and Chief Executive of every Council, summarising the number and trends of complaints dealt with relating to that Council that year. The latest letter, issued 21 July 2025, covers complaints to the LGSCO relating to Coventry City Council between April 2024 and March 2025 (2024/25).

This report sets out the number, trends and outcomes of complaints to the LGSCO relating to Coventry City Council in 2024/25. It focuses on upheld complaints, service areas with a high number of complaints, compliance with Ombudsman's

recommendations, learning from complaints, comparisons with prior years, and how we compare to other local authorities.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership is recommended to:

1. Consider the Council's performance in relation to complaints to the LGSCO.
2. Note the Council's updated complaints process and guidance.
3. Request the Audit and Procurement Committee to review and be assured that the Council takes appropriate action in response to complaints investigated and where the Council is found to be at fault.

The Audit and Procurement Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider the Council's performance in relation to complaints to the LGSCO.
2. Note the Council's updated complaints process and guidance.
3. Review and be assured that the Council takes appropriate actions in response to complaints investigated and where the Council is found to be at fault.

The Ethics Committee is recommended to:

1. Comment on the findings.
2. Consider the Council's performance in relation to complaints to the LGSCO complaints that were upheld.
3. Note the Council's updated complaints process and guidance.

List of appendices included:

Appendix 1: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2025

Appendix 2: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Investigation Decisions in 2024/25 for Coventry City Council

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

[Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review of Local Government Complaints 2024-25](#)

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 on 24th November 2025 and Ethics Committee on 8th January 2026.

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title:

Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman 2024/25

1 Context (or background)

- 1.1 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) is the final stage for complaints about Councils, all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing local public services. It is a free service that investigates complaints in a fair and independent way and provides a means of redress to individuals for injustice caused by unfair treatment or service failure.
- 1.2 Coventry City Council's complaints policy, published on the Council's website at www.coventry.gov.uk/complaints/, sets out how individual members of the public can complain to the Council, as well as how the Council will handle their compliments, comments and complaints. The Council also informs individuals of their rights to contact the LGSCO if they are not happy with the Council's decision once they have exhausted the Council's complaints process.
- 1.3 The LGSCO issues an annual letter to the Leader and Chief Executive of every Council, summarising the number and trends of complaints dealt with relating to that Council that year. The latest letter, issued 21 July 2025, covers complaints to the LGSCO relating to Coventry City Council between April 2024 and March 2025 (2024/25). The letter can be found in Appendix I.
- 1.4 This report sets out the number, trends and outcomes of complaints to the LGSCO relating to Coventry City Council in 2024/25. This report focuses on upheld complaints, service areas with a high number of complaints, learning from complaints, comparisons with prior years, and how we compare to other local authorities.
- 1.5 The Council has a robust and transparent policy for handling complaints. In addition to this annual report, the Council also produces formal reports on complaints about adult social care and children's social care, to Cabinet Member Adult Services and Cabinet Member Children and Young People respectively.

2 Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Across all Councils, the LGSCO received 20,773 complaints and enquiries in 2024/25, up 2836 (+16%) from 17,937 the previous year. The areas receiving the greatest number of detailed investigations were Children's Services (5,652), Housing (3,621), and Adult Services (2,777).
- 2.2 For Coventry City Council, the LGSCO received 101 complaints and enquiries in 2024/25, which is 21 more (+26%) than the previous year (80).

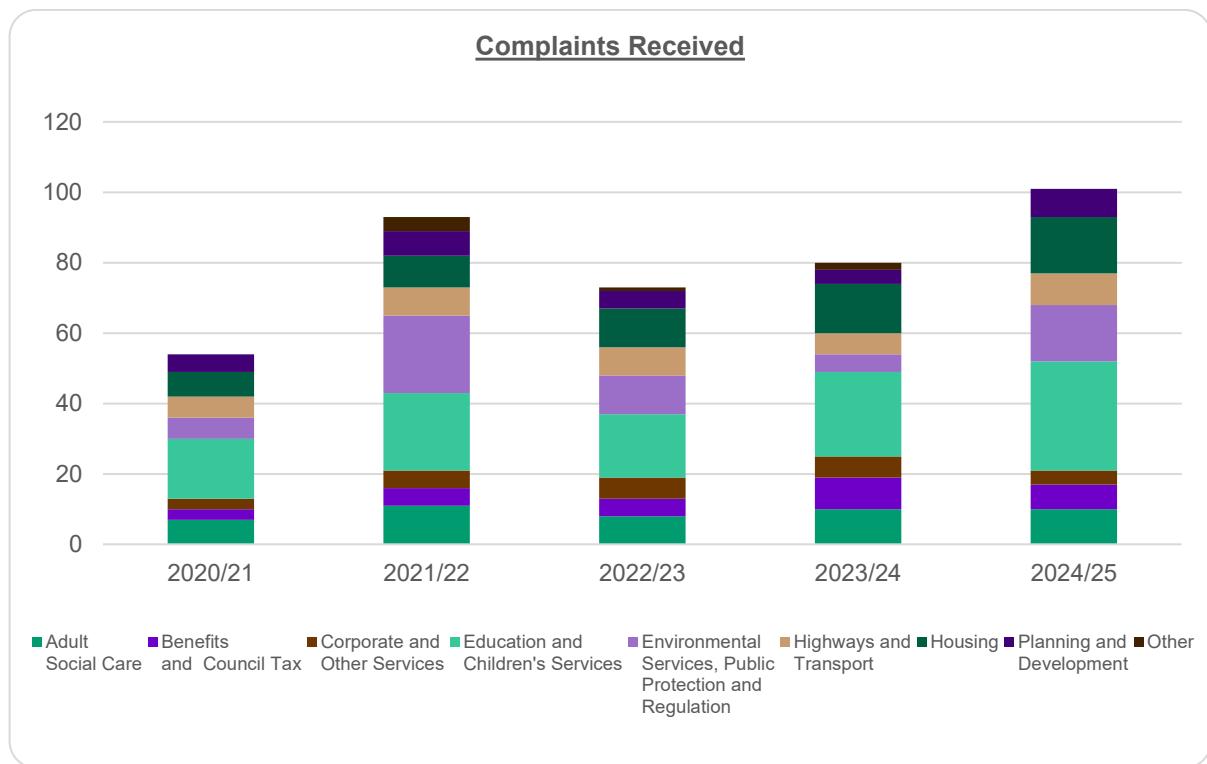
2.3 Figure 1.

Figure 1: Complaints and enquiries received by category

Category (as defined by LGSCO)	Complaints in	Complaints in	Change in Year
	2023/24	2024/25	
Adult care services	10	10	0
Benefits and Council tax	9	7	-2
Corporate & other services	6	4	-2
Children's and Education services	24	31	7
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	5	16	11
Highways & transport	6	9	3
Housing	14	16	2
Planning & development	4	8	4
Other	2	0	2
Total	80	101	21

2.4 Figure 2 sets out how the number of complaints and enquiries received by the LGSCO in last 7 years.

Figure 2: Complaints and enquiries received in last 5 years



2.5 In 2024/25 the LGSCO received 21 more complaints and enquiries relating to Coventry than in 2023/24 (**101** in 2024/25 compared to **80** in 2023/24). The category with the highest number of complaints and enquiries remained Children's and Education Services with 31 (up 29% from 24 in 2023/24), while the service with the greatest percentage increase was Environmental Services, up 320% (up from 5 to 16 in 2024/25). However, there was a decrease (33%) from 6 to 4 complaints in Corporate and Other Services in 2024/25. Benefits and Council Tax also saw a decrease in complaints from 9 to 7 (22%).

2.6 It is not possible to comment on the Council's overall performance based solely upon the number of complaints or enquiries to the LGSCO. Interpretation is challenging in relation to number, as a high number of complaints may indicate that a Council has been effective at signposting people to the LGSCO through their complaints handling process. Equally it could be argued that a high number of complaints may highlight that a Council needs to do more to resolve issues through its own complaints process and so save customers from needing to escalate their complaints to the LGSCO.

2.7 When dealing with an enquiry, the LGSCO can choose to investigate cases where it sees merit in doing so. Following an investigation, the LGSCO can decide if a complaint is:

- **upheld** – where a council has been at fault and this fault may or may not have caused an injustice to the complainant; or where a council has accepted it needs to remedy the complaint before the LGSCO makes a finding on fault; or
- **not upheld** – where, following investigation, the LGSCO decides that a council has not acted with fault.

2.8 In 2024/25 the LGSCO made **101** decisions relating to Coventry City Council, an increase of **32** from the previous year:

- **4 x** incomplete/invalid.
- **0 x** advice given.
- **22 x** ‘referred back’ for local resolution.
- **53 x** closed after initial enquiries; and
- **22 x** complaints investigated, of which **17** were upheld and **5** were not upheld.

2.9 The number of complaints investigated (**22** in 2024/25) was up on 2023/24 (just 8) but on a par with 2022/23 (20).

- The LGSCO upheld 77% of complaints investigated in 2024/25 (17 out of 22). Excepting 2023/24’s unusually low figures (33%, 3 out of 8), 2024/25’s total is the same in absolute case numbers (17) as investigated in 2022/23, while percentage-wise it is slightly lower overall (77% 2024/25 compared to 85% 2022/23). It is also not too dissimilar from the preceding years (71% 2021/22; 77% 2020/21).
- This compares to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) statistical neighbours’ upheld rate of 79%, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) upheld rate of 83% and a national upheld rate of 83% for 2024/25.
- The tables below, set out how Coventry compares to its CIPFA statistical peers (Figure 3) and with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) constituent authorities (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Complaints investigated: Comparison with CIPFA peers 2024/25

Overall, 79% of complaints were upheld among Coventry and its 15 statistically equivalent peers. The authority with the highest percentage of complaints upheld in 2024/25 was Kirklees (94%), followed by Derby (93%), with Medway the lowest (63%). Coventry ranked 10th, with 77% upheld.

Local Authority	Total	Not Upheld	Upheld	% Upheld
Kirklees	17	1	16	94%
Derby	14	1	13	93%
Sandwell	16	2	14	88%
Wolverhampton	8	1	7	88%
Rochdale	13	2	11	85%
Bristol	46	8	38	83%
Salford	11	2	9	82%
Bolton	10	2	8	80%
Blackburn and Darwin	9	2	7	78%
Coventry	22	5	17	77%
Bradford	34	8	26	76%

Leicester	23	6	17	74%
Sheffield	22	6	16	73%
Oldham	11	3	8	73%
Medway	24	9	15	63%

Figure 4: Complaints investigated: Comparison with WMCA constituent authorities 2024/25

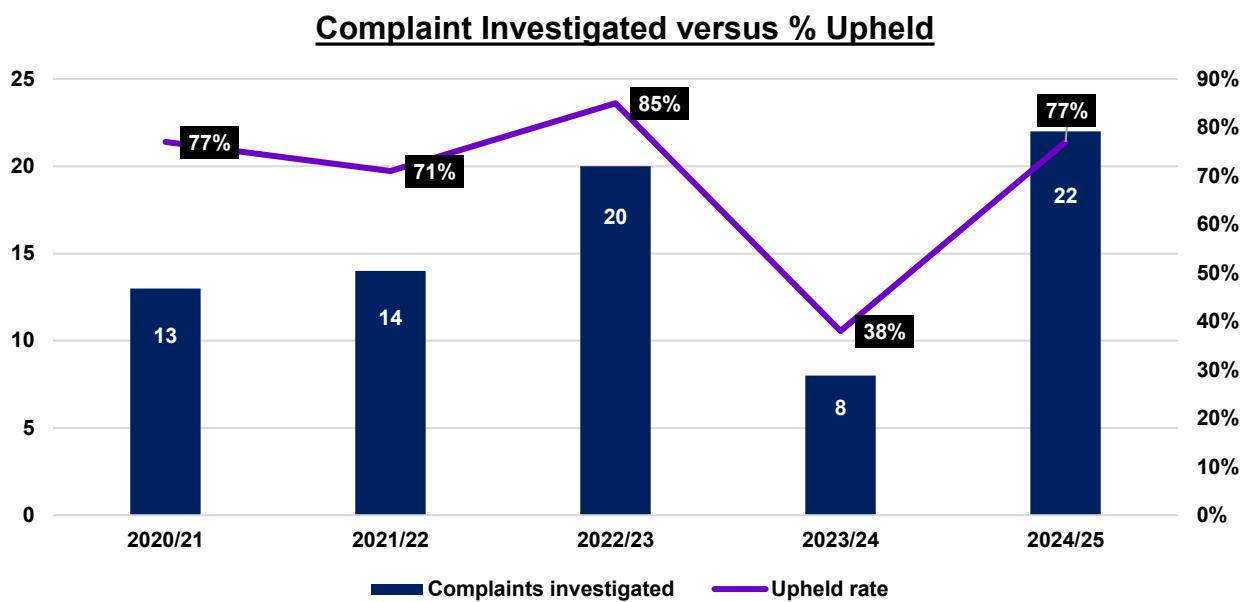
Of 204 complaints investigated across the seven constituent areas of the WMCA, 169 (83%) were upheld and 35 were not upheld. The authority with the highest percentage of complaints upheld in 2024/25 was Solihull (89%), followed closely by Walsall, Wolverhampton and Sandwell on 88%. while the lowest was Coventry had the lowest upheld percentage across the WMCA (77%).

The Ombudsman has made us aware that they are being more selective about the complaints they consider in detail, prioritising where it is in the public interest to investigate. Because the Ombudsman is now less likely to carry out investigations on 'borderline' issues, they are naturally finding a higher proportion of fault overall.

Local Authority	Total	Not Upheld	Upheld	% Upheld
Solihull	18	2	16	89%
Walsall	8	1	7	88%
Birmingham	114	20	94	82%
Wolverhampton	8	1	7	88%
Sandwell	16	2	14	88%
Dudley	18	4	14	78%
Coventry	22	5	17	77%

Figure 5: Complaints investigated, and percentage upheld over the last 5 years

Figure 5 sets out how the number of Coventry's complaints investigated, and the percentage of complaints upheld by the LGSCO for the last 5 years.



2.10 Following an investigation, the LGSCO will typically issue a statement setting out its findings and decision. If the LGSCO decides there was fault or maladministration causing an injustice to the complainant, it will typically recommend that a council take some action to address it. Wherever possible the LGSCO will publish decision statements on its website, except where the content of the report could identify the individual complainant. In some cases, where the LGSCO upholds a complaint, the LGSCO may choose to issue a formal report of maladministration.

2.11 In 2024/25, the Ombudsman reported that the Council agreed to, and carried out, the recommendations made in fourteen cases during the year. Of all cases that required remedies from the Ombudsman, the Council completed 100% of these within the given timescales.

2.12 There were 12 complaints that resulted in some form of financial redress or reimbursement (£10,875)

2.13 The following table, Figure 6, sets out details about the complaints that the LGSCO investigated by service area.

Figure 6: Complaints investigated by service area in 2023/24 compared to 2024/25

Service area	2023/24				2024/25			
	Upheld	Not upheld	% upheld	Response time (days)	Upheld	Not upheld	% upheld	Response time (days)
Adult social care	2	0	100%	22	4	1	80%	30
Bereavement Services				0	0	1	0%	3
Children's services	0	2	0%	33	5	0	100%	16

Education Services	0	0	0%	0	3	0	100%	16
Corporate & Other Services	0	1	0%	9	1	2	0%	7
Highways	1	0	100%	5				
Housing services	0	1	0%	7	3	1	80%	4
Planning	0	1	0%	2				
Regulatory Services				0	1	0	100%	22
Total	3	5	33%	13	17	5	77%	14

2.14 This year saw an increase in the number of detailed investigations completed: 22 in 2024/25 compared to 8 in 2023/24. These related to Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Housing Service, Regulatory Services and Blue Badges.

2.15 The LGSCO typically expects Councils to respond to investigation enquiries within 20 working days. In 2024/25 Coventry averaged 14 working days.

2.16 Satisfactory remedy decisions are complaints where the Ombudsman has decided that while the authority did get things wrong, the authority had offered a satisfactory way to resolve it before the complaint was referred to the Ombudsman. In 2024/25 the LGSCO found that in 12% (2 of 17) of upheld cases Coventry had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman. This compares to 13% in similar authorities nationally.

Figure 7: Satisfactory remedy provided before the complaint reached the Ombudsman comparison with other WMCA constituent authorities

Of 169 complaints upheld in WMCA area the Ombudsman considered that in only 16 cases the authority had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached them (9%).

Local Authority	Upheld cases where the authority had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman		Total Number of complaints upheld
	%	Number	
Coventry	12%	2	17
Dudley	0%	0	14
Birmingham	5%	5	94
Sandwell	14%	2	14
Walsall	14%	1	7
Solihull	25%	4	16
Wolverhampton	29%	2	7

2.17 The LGSCO Annual Review Letter recognises compliance with Ombudsman's recommendations, which is published on the [interactive data map of council performance](#) which shows performance data for all councils in England. In 2024/25

the Ombudsman was satisfied we successfully implemented all their recommendations 100%, which matched the national average. This was based on 14 compliance outcomes - 4 Adult Care Services, 7 Children and Education Services, 2 Housing Service and 1 Corporate and Other Services.

2.18 Following their investigations, the LGSCO recommended some changes be made to the Council's processes and procedures. A summary of the recommendations is set out in the Learning from complaints table (Figure 8). Further details about the outcomes of each of the complaints investigated this year and the actions taken are set out in Appendix 2.

2.19 Figure 8: Learning from complaints

Service Area	Summary of actions agreed
Adult Social Care (ASC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind staff in its ASC service about the importance of taking proactive steps to consider suitable support at the earliest opportunity in cases where there are reports of domestic violence, to try to prevent the situation escalating. Remind relevant staff of the duties in safeguarding adults who have mental capacity to make decisions. Deliver training to staff in the initial contact team around recognising when parents need support. Remind staff responsible for responding to complaints to have regard to the potential injustice identified faults and failures may have had on individuals, or those acting on their behalf, acknowledge this, and consider whether any additional remedy is appropriate on a case-by-case basis. Remind ASC and its safeguarding staff to respond to reasonable questions and enquiries without delay or acknowledge receipt and inform individuals of when the Council can respond. This includes circumstances where the Council may be experiencing an increase in demand which limits its ability to respond as soon as it aims to.
Children Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure staff are aware that once a complaint has entered Stage 1 of the Children's statutory procedure the Council is obliged to ensure that the complaint proceeds to Stages 2 and 3 of the procedure if this is the complainant's wish. The Council must complete Stage 2 investigations within the required timescales of the Children's statutory complaints procedure.
Education Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify what steps the Council needs to take to ensure it has access to information relating to its actions and decision-making around a child's education when a member of staff leaves their role. Provide guidance to staff of its duty to reassess and produce Education and Health Care Plans within the correct timescales. This includes issuing notification letters to parents about the Council's intention to maintain, amend or discontinue Education and Health Care Plans within four weeks of an annual review meeting, and to produce a final Education and Health Care Plan within 12 weeks of an annual review meeting.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training and guidance to staff about the Council's statutory duty to provide educational provision within a child's EHC Plan, including that this duty does not end if a child is not accessing education in a school setting. Provide guidance and training to staff about the Council's responsibility to provide education for children who are missing school, through illness or otherwise, when a child has been absent for 15 cumulative or consecutive days. Produce an action plan to demonstrate how the Council will meet statutory timescales for annual reviews for Education, Health and Care plans. Review its out of school procedures to ensure it meets its duties to secure alternative provision.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council is to draw up procedures or guidance for considering homelessness applications where children might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant when domestic abuse is a factor. This is to ensure officers appropriately consider if there is good reason to seek information from an alleged perpetrator and assess the risks to the applicant of doing so. The Council should also ensure officers appropriately record such decisions.
Corporate and Other Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate that the Council has taken action - including making changes to appeal decision letter templates if needed - to ensure that officers deciding on Blue Badge applications and appeals clearly explain how evidence has been considered, the reasons for their decisions, and how their decisions have been made in line with the guidance.

3 Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 None identified or undertaken.

4 Timetable for implementing this decision.

4.1 The LGSCO Link Officer function is now part of the Council's Customer Service Team. All communication between the local authority and the LGSCO, such as complaints, enquiries, investigations, and remedies, all go via the Ombudsman Liaison Officer.

4.2 The Council's guidance and process for dealing with LGSCO complaints is set out in our Complaint Handling Guidance and the [LGSCO's Complaint Handling Code](#). This includes a requirement that Ombudsman investigations, particularly for upheld complaints, are properly communicated to elected members. Based on this:

- complaints to the LGSCO are formally reported to the Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership and the Audit and Procurement Committee every year (this report). In addition, this report is also considered by the Ethics Committee.
- complaints about Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care, including cases investigated by the LGSCO, are reported through an annual report to the

Cabinet Member Adult Services and Cabinet Member Children and Young People respectively.

- where an investigation has wider implications for Council policy or exposes a more significant finding of maladministration, the Monitoring Officer will consider whether the implications of that investigation should be individually reported to relevant members; and
- should the Council decide not to comply with the LGSCO's final recommendation following an upheld investigation with a finding of maladministration or should the LGSCO issue a formal report (instead of a statement), the Monitoring Officer will report this to members under section 5(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

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

5.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. Financial remedies resulting from any complaints are typically paid out of service budgets. In 2024/25 there was 1 complaint which resulted in some form of financial remedy or reimbursement, totalling £10,875. This is detailed in Appendix 2 and was paid out of the budget of the relevant service areas. There was a case which required the Council to pay £400 a month to the complainant until satisfactory education provision was made, however, this matter was resolved by the Council without payment.

5.2 Legal implications

The statutory functions of the LGSCO are defined in the Local Government Act 1974. These are: to investigate complaints against Councils and some other authorities; to investigate complaints about adult social care providers from people who arrange or fund their own adult social care; and to provide advice and guidance on good administrative practice. The main activity under Part III of the 1974 Act is the investigation of complaints, which it states is limited to complaints from members of the public alleging they have suffered injustice as a result of maladministration and/or service failure.

The LGSCO's jurisdiction under Part III covers all local Councils, police and crime bodies, school admission appeal panels and a range of other bodies providing local services; and under Part IIIA, the LGSCO also investigate complaints from people who allege they have suffered injustice as a result of action by adult social care providers.

There is a duty under section 5(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 for the Council's Monitoring Officer to prepare a formal report to the Council where it appears that the authority, or any part of it, has acted or is likely to act in such a manner as to constitute maladministration or service failure, and where the LGSCO has conducted an investigation in relation to the matter.

6 Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)

The Council Plan sets out the Council's vision and priorities for the city. The vision:

One Coventry – Working together to improve our city and the lives of those who live, work and study here. Effective management and resolution of complaints, as well as learning from complaints, will help ensure that Council services meet the needs of residents and communities and helps build a foundation of trust in order for the Council to have new conversations with residents, communities and partners to enable people to do more for themselves as active and empowered citizens.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

It is important that the Council takes action and learns from the outcome of complaints. Appendix 2 sets out the actions the Council has taken; for example, providing training, instruction and guidance to staff and improving communications between services to help to reduce the likelihood of the same fault happening again.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

The co-ordination and management of complaints to the LGSCO often involves considerable officer time at all levels of seniority. It includes collecting a significant amount of data, preparing and writing formal responses, and chasing to meet timescales set out. It may also require liaison with and external input from partner organisations and commissioned services.

It is therefore preferable (and beneficial) for complaints to be resolved informally at first point of contact wherever possible, or resolved through the Council's internal complaints procedures, adult social care complaints procedures, or children's social care complaints procedures, as appropriate. This would improve satisfaction for residents and communities, as well as save Council time and resources.

6.4 Equalities/EIA

We welcome all feedback and encourage members of the public to let us know if they have anything to say about Council services, whether that be for us to take action to put things right if something has gone wrong, or to let us know when we are doing something well.

The Council is committed to making it easy for everyone to submit compliments, comments or complaints to us, and we offer several different pathways to do so. As well as our [Compliments, Comments and Complaints](#) web page and our online [Speak Up](#) form, we also offer contact by telephone, email, social media, letter or via face-to-face contact. We also advise people that they can ask somebody else to act on their behalf, for instance, a friend or relative or Citizens Advice.

Where necessary and appropriate, translation and interpretation services, correspondence in large print, audiotape, or braille, or the services of an advocate (for instance, Barnardo's) are also available. Should a complainant remain dissatisfied following the conclusion of the Council's complaints process, they are able to refer their complaint to the LGSCO. Both the Council's complaints policy and individual complaint response letters set out the escalation process and make it clear how members of the public can do so.

In February 2024 the LGSCO launched the Complaint Handling Code for councils, setting out a clear process for responding to complaints effectively and fairly. The purpose of the Code is to enable organisations to resolve complaints raised by individuals promptly, and to use the data and learning from complaints to drive service improvements. It will also help to create a positive complaint handling culture amongst staff and individuals.

The LGSCO issued the Code as “advice and guidance” for all local Councils in England under section 23(12A) of the Local Government Act 1974. This means that Councils should consider the Code when developing complaint handling policies and procedures and when responding to complaints. If a Council decides not to follow the Code, the LGSCO expects it to have a good reason for this. Otherwise, it is expected that all Councils should adhere to the Code from April 2026.

The Code only applies to complaints where there is no statutory process in place. This means that some complaints about children’s services, adult social care and public health are not covered by the expectations set out in the Code. The Code does not apply to complaints about the behaviour of locally elected officials.

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

None.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

Investigations by the LGSCO may involve not only services directly provided by Coventry City Council, but also commissioned or outsourced services. In such cases, the Council will liaise with partner organisations and third-party contractors to comment or provide information as part of an investigation.

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Compliments, Comments and Complaints policy & process

March 2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 At Coventry City Council (the Council) we are committed to providing excellent customer service by putting local people and their needs at the heart of all we do. We encourage our customers to be involved in the decisions we make and in the development of the services we deliver.
- 1.2 Your feedback is important to us. Listening to your views helps us learn from your experiences, take action to put things right if something has gone wrong, and understand what we can do differently to improve our services in the future.
- 1.3 Where there are concerns, complaints or service failings we want to address them quickly and effectively, resolving them as early as possible, and seek to achieve a satisfactory outcome for all concerned.
- 1.4 We welcome all suggestions, comments, compliments, and complaints as we strive to continually evolve, improve and provide our services in the most effective and efficient ways.

2. Aims and objectives

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to provide a clear and systematic framework for dealing with compliments, comments or complaints in a fair, consistent and structured manner.
- 2.2 Our objectives are to make sure that:
 - The process is as simple, straightforward and accessible as possible, so that it is easy for you to give us your feedback about our services
 - Wherever possible, every effort is made to resolve complaints informally and at the earliest opportunity
 - Complaints are dealt with quickly, effectively and in a fair and honest way
 - The process is fully understood and consistently followed by all services and staff
 - We keep you informed regarding the progress of your complaint, who is dealing with it, and the expected timescales for response
 - You feel that all relevant information and evidence has been considered, and your complaint thoroughly investigated and responded to, even if the complaint is not upheld
 - We identify learning and opportunities for improvement from upheld complaints, and use these to drive positive changes and improve service delivery

- We meet our duty to promote equality in the way we deliver our services and ensure that there are no discriminatory barriers to accessing and receiving services
- Our processes and procedures are fully aligned with the guidance and good administrative practice set out in the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

3. Compliments and comments

- 3.1 Compliments let us know when we are doing something well. A compliment is an unsolicited expression of praise or recognition for a member of staff (or service area) where they have provided excellent customer service or gone above and beyond the standard expected. If you have been impressed by the way we have provided our services, or if our staff have excelled in their duties, please let us know; we would really like to hear from you.
- 3.2 A comment can be an observation or feedback about our policies and practices, a suggestion for new services, or an idea for improving existing services or performance. A comment can be either positive or negative in nature. We are always looking for ways to improve and welcome any ideas you may have about how we can do this.
- 3.3 All compliments and comments received will be logged and passed on to the relevant service area so that we may recognise outstanding individuals or teams, share good practice, and continue to develop and deliver quality services.

4. What is a complaint?

- 4.1 Complaints tell us when there is dissatisfaction with a service. They give us the opportunity to improve, put things right, and where necessary adjust the way we work.
- 4.2 A complaint is defined as:
'An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the Council, its staff, or those acting on its behalf, directly affecting an individual or group of individuals'
- 4.3 A complaint can be raised by anyone who has been directly affected by the actions or inactions of the Council. However, not every expression of dissatisfaction will be treated as a complaint; some will be treated as a request for us to do something (i.e. a service request).

- 4.4 In many cases we can quickly resolve concerns through normal service delivery processes without a complaint ever needing to be made. If you do encounter any problems, please contact us first so that we may have a chance to try and resolve matters.
- 4.5 The Complaints policy is intended to cover issues such as:
 - Failure to provide a service or to do something we should have done
 - Unreasonable delay in providing a service
 - Failure to provide the expected level or quality of service
 - Failure to correctly follow or apply Council policies or procedures
 - Failure to consider all relevant information in coming to a decision
 - Lack of professionalism from, or inappropriate conduct of, a Council employee or contractor
 - Any perception of malice, bias or unfair discrimination (in particular, discrimination or harassment on the grounds of age, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, or gender).

5. What is a service request?

- 5.1 Initial requests for a service, or the first-time reporting of an issue that requires action to fix, are not considered to be complaints under this policy, but rather a routine request for us to do something (i.e. a service request).
- 5.2 A service request may be defined as:

'An initial request that the Council provides or improves a service, fixes a problem, or reconsiders a decision'
- 5.3 Examples of service requests can include initial requests for removal of fly-tipping, reporting abandoned vehicles, advising us of a missed recycling or waste bin collection, or reporting potholes, graffiti or noise nuisance for the first time.
- 5.4 Dealing with an issue as a service request gives us a chance to try and resolve matters through normal service delivery before a complaint is made. If we consider your concern to be a service request, we will reassign it to the relevant service area so that they may have an opportunity to put things right, and it will not be managed as a complaint in the first instance.
- 5.5 However, if you remain unhappy after the Council has attempted to resolve the issue, you can choose to raise your concern as a formal complaint at that point, should you wish.

6. What else is not a complaint?

- 6.1 As well as service requests, there are certain other matters that we will not accept as a complaint. This is either because they fall outside of the scope of this policy, or because there are other, more suitable processes for dealing with them.
- 6.2 These include matters where a separate appeals procedure exists or a legal remedy is open to you, either through the Council's internal review or appeal processes or by a statutory right of appeal to an independent tribunal or court, such as:
 - Homelessness decisions and housing application assessments
 - Parking appeals / Penalty Charge Notice challenges
 - Council Tax support and Housing Benefit decisions
 - School admission or exclusion appeals, or appeals regarding Special Educational Needs provision
 - Disabled Blue Badge application decisions
 - Planning decisions, including consent, refusals and enforcement decisions (However, we may consider complaints regarding whether proper processes or policies were followed when making such decisions)
 - Regulatory matters, such as Licensing appeals, and appeals against statutory notices such as Noise or Environmental Health notices
 - Matters which are subject to an Insurance claim, including how a claim has been dealt with or the outcome (Decisions on the outcome of an insurance claim are made by the Council's insurer, not the council)
- 6.3 Other matters which are outside the scope of the Council's Complaints policy to address include:
 - Matters of law or central Government policy, e.g. Council Tax legislation
 - Matters where the customer or the Council have already started legal proceedings, such as where details of the Claim Form or Particulars of Claim have been filed at court
 - Matters where there is ongoing action being taken by either the Council or another party and considering the complaint might prejudice such action
 - Matters which are currently subject to an appeal or have already been subject to an appeal and decided by a court or independent tribunal

- Complaints about policies, procedures or budgetary decisions made by the Council, unless you are **directly impacted** by them, or they raise wider public interest issues. (*However, we may consider complaints regarding whether proper processes or policies were followed when making policy decisions*)
- Complaints that have already been investigated at all stages of the Complaints policy and concluded that the Council were not at fault, or which have already been addressed by an Ombudsman ruling
- Complaints relating to matters that occurred more than 12 months before the date of the complaint (unless the Council considers that there are exceptional reasons to accept the complaint)
- Complaints relating to requests for information under Freedom of Information (FOI), Environment Information Regulations (EIR), Environmental Impact Assessments or Data Protection legislation, including data breaches. These should be reported to the Information Commissioner at <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>
- Complaints about schools and colleges. These have their own complaints procedures. Complaints about a school or a member of school staff should usually be addressed to the Head Teacher, or if about the Head Teacher to the Chair of Governors
- Complaints relating to recruitment and selection to a vacancy within Coventry City Council. These should be raised via completion of a [Recruitment and Selection Complaints](#) questionnaire
- Employee complaints about personnel matters including pay, pensions, disciplinary or grievance matters. These are dealt with under the Council's Human Resources policies and procedures
- Complaints about Councillors. If you believe that a Councillor has broken the Council's Code of Conduct you should complete a [Councillor complaint form](#) which will be sent to the Council's Monitoring Officer
- Complaints regarding hate crime incidents not related to Council services or the conduct of Council employees. A hate crime incident is any incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by prejudice against someone's sex, racial heritage, religion, disability or sexual orientation. These should be reported to the Police, or to the Council's Community Safety team via [Hate crime – Coventry City Council](#) or by calling 024 7683 2118
- Unreasonably persistent, habitual or vexatious complaints (see section 18)

6.4 This list is a guide and is not exhaustive. There may be other issues that the Council are unable to investigate because there is a more appropriate body or process. In such circumstance, we will advise you of the appropriate process and procedure.

6.5 Where we decide that there is a valid reason not to accept a matter as a complaint, we will write to you (either by email or letter) to explain why we consider the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and advise you of the exclusion that applies. We will also explain your right to approach the Ombudsman regarding our decision if you choose to.

7. Who can make a complaint?

- 7.1 Anyone who uses our services or is directly affected by the actions or inactions of the Council (or someone acting on our behalf), can complain.
- 7.2 We also accept complaints from people acting on behalf of others. If you would prefer you can ask someone else, such as a relative, friend, carer, advice agency or advocacy worker to help you with your complaint. You can also ask them to represent or accompany you at any meetings with the Council.
- 7.3 Complaints can also be made via your local Councillor, Member of Parliament, or another elected official. Details can be found at www.coventry.gov.uk/councillors-mps-mebs or by calling 024 7683 1039.
- 7.4 Where appropriate, the Council will require your written permission to correspond with a representative or elected official on your behalf. This is to ensure compliance with data protection requirements and gives us reassurance that your wishes are being followed.
- 7.5 All complaints will be managed in the same way and will receive the same standard of service and response, whether you raise a complaint directly with the council yourself or choose to use a third-party representative or an elected official to act on your behalf. Similarly, any correspondence we receive from third parties will be actioned in the same way as if it were received directly from yourself.
- 7.6 Sometimes someone affected may be unable to make a complaint themselves because they are too young, vulnerable, or do not have the mental capacity to consent, and you may want to act as their representative or advocate on their behalf.
- 7.7 If you are complaining on behalf of a child or young person, we must confirm (where possible) that the child or young person is happy for this to happen, and that the complaint submitted reflects their views. The Council must also consider whether such representation is appropriate and whether you are acting in the young person's best interests.

- 7.8 If we decide that a young person is mature enough and able to understand what is involved, we will usually encourage them to complain to us themselves. If the young person feels that they are best placed to make their complaint, we must respect their decision.
- 7.9 Similarly, if someone is acting as a representative on behalf of a vulnerable adult who does not have the capacity to consent, we must be certain that the complaint is being pursued in that adult's best interests. In such cases, the Council will decide how to progress the matter in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- 7.10 Where appropriate, anyone wanting support to complain will be signposted to relevant advocacy services, advice agencies or legal representatives.

8. Anonymous complaints

- 8.1 We value all complaints, including any made anonymously. However, we will usually only consider anonymous complaints if they contain sufficient information to enable us to make further enquiries and do anything with them. If an anonymous complaint does not provide enough information to enable us to take further action, or is repetitive, we may decide not to consider it. This judgement will be made on a case-by-case basis.
- 8.2 Where an anonymous complaint contains serious allegations involving individual or public safety, alleged corruption or other impropriety, these will be immediately referred to a senior manager for consideration.

9. What is the time limit for making a complaint?

- 9.1 It is far easier to find out what happened and to put things right if complaints are received at the time of the incident. As time passes it becomes more difficult to investigate events fairly and fully – people's memories fade, staff who were closely involved may have left the Council, or records may no longer be available.
- 9.2 For these reasons, we will usually only accept complaints made within 12 months of the issue occurring, or you first becoming aware of the issue.
- 9.3 If we decide that a complaint is 'out of time' we will explain why and advise you of your right to take our decision to the Ombudsman.
- 9.4 If you can show that there are exceptional circumstances for the delay in submitting your complaint, we may make a discretionary decision to accept complaints made outside of the 12-month limit.

10. How to make a complaint

- 10.1 We are committed to making it easy for you to submit your compliments, comments or complaints to us, and we offer several different pathways for you to do so.
- 10.2 Wherever possible, we encourage customers to visit our [Compliments, comments and complaints](#) web page and use our online [Speak Up](#) form.
- 10.3 Alternatively, you can contact us:
 - By email: customer.services@coventry.gov.uk
 - By telephone: 08085 834333
 - By social media: including Facebook.com/coventrycc, X @Coventrycc and Instagram @coventrycitycouncil
(we need to be able to identify the person making contact for us to use direct messaging / private messaging to respond confidentially)
 - In writing to: PO Box 7097, Coventry CV6 9SL
 - or in person: by visiting the Customer Service Centre at Central library
- 10.4 When making a complaint, please tell us:
 - What has gone wrong?
 - How has this affected you or others?
 - What would you like us to do or the outcome you are after?
- 10.5 You can raise a complaint with any member of staff, and they will pass the details on to the Service Recovery team.
- 10.6 We will take your preferred communication method and needs into account when contacting you and make any reasonable adjustments necessary to ensure the complaints process is open and accessible to everyone. For example: we can arrange for translation and interpretation services to be made available, if required.
- 10.7 When making a complaint, you may be asked to provide equality monitoring information such as age, disability, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief. Recording this information helps us to make sure that the complaints process is accessible to all sections of the community, so that we do not inadvertently discriminate against any particular group. Giving us this information is optional and will not influence the outcome of your complaint.

11. Withdrawing a complaint

- 11.1 You (or your representative) can withdraw a complaint verbally or in writing at any time. We will acknowledge the withdrawal in writing.
- 11.2 If a complaint is withdrawn it is up to the relevant service to decide if the matter has been satisfactorily concluded or if there are any outstanding issues that they need to continue to investigate or address. If so, these will be followed up in accordance with the service's normal internal procedures, rather than through the complaint handling process.

12. The complaint handling process

- 12.1 We will always attempt to resolve matters informally and at the earliest opportunity wherever possible. Most concerns can usually be promptly resolved through normal service delivery processes, without ever needing to be escalated to a formal complaint.
- 12.2 If matters are unable to be resolved informally, then the pathway the complaint will follow will depend on the subject and nature of the complaint.
- 12.3 The Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code for councils sets out a clear process for responding to and resolving complaints effectively and fairly. Service complaints will be managed through a two-stage process (see sections 13 and 14 below), while social care complaints relating to Children's and Adult Social Care services, including care homes and other care providers, are governed by slightly different procedures and regulations, known as the Statutory complaint procedures (set out in Appendices A and B).
- 12.4 Sometimes a complaint may include some matters which could be dealt with under either the regular or the Statutory complaint handling procedure. In such cases, the whole complaint will be dealt with under the Statutory process, unless the matters complained of can be easily separated and responded to. The Service Recovery team will consider which appears the most appropriate procedure to address the complaint and will communicate this to you, explaining why this is.

13. Stage 1 – Service Investigation

- 13.1 On receipt of a complaint, we will undertake an initial review to check if the concerns raised fall within our definition and policy scope of what can be accepted as a complaint (see sections 4 to 6).

- 13.2 If we consider your contact to be a service request, we will reassign it to the relevant service area so that they may have an opportunity to put things right through routine service delivery, and it will not be managed as a complaint.
- 13.3 If your concern falls within the scope of the Complaints policy, a member of the Resident Experience team (or the service area for Statutory complaints) will contact you by telephone or email to discuss your concerns. Where possible, we will look to resolve the matter informally for you within three working days, without the need for escalation through the formal complaints process.
- 13.4 Where early resolution is not possible or an informal approach is not considered appropriate, or you remain determined that your concern is logged as a formal complaint, then (subject to the exclusions set out in sections 5 and 6) we will accept your concern as a formal complaint.
- 13.5 We will advise you as to how your concern is being dealt with, e.g. either informally, or accepted through the formal complaint handling procedure.
- 13.6 Accepted complaints will be logged and acknowledged by the Service Recovery team within five working days of receipt by the Council (three working days for Statutory complaints) and will be allocated to the relevant service area for investigation and response.
- 13.7 All contact with you will usually be by email if the complaint was made electronically, or if you have not indicated any other preferred method of communication.
- 13.8 The acknowledgement will set out our understanding of your complaint, the outcome you are after, and advise you of the name of the investigating officer and the date the response will be provided. If any aspect of your complaint is unclear, we will ask you for clarification.
- 13.9 A senior officer in the relevant service area will conduct a balanced investigation of the matters raised, and we will issue our response within 10 working days of the date of acknowledgement.
- 13.10 If, during the stage 1 investigation, you raise any additional related complaints and the response has not been issued, we will incorporate these with the original stage 1 complaint. If the stage 1 response has already been issued, or the matters appear unrelated, or it would unreasonably delay the response, we will log these as a new complaint.
- 13.11 Some complaints may be complex and may require longer than 10 working days to investigate. In such cases, we may extend the response date by up to a further 10 working days. If so, we will contact you to explain the

reason(s) for the extension and the new date for response. We will also advise you of your right to take our decision to extend to the Ombudsman.

- 13.12 Where the service being complained about is provided by a third party (e.g. a contractor) on behalf of the Council, they will be required to investigate and respond at stage 1 in accordance with the Council's complaints policy.
- 13.13 On completion of the stage 1 investigation, we will provide you with our response confirming the issues investigated, what decision has been reached (Upheld; Partially Upheld; or Not Upheld) and why. We will also provide details of how to escalate the matter for review at stage 2 if you are still dissatisfied.
- 13.14 A complaint will be **upheld** if our investigation finds that the Council was at fault in all or most of our actions or lack of actions, and that the responsibility for this lies predominantly with ourselves.
- 13.15 A complaint will be **partially upheld** if the Council was at fault in some of our actions, but your actions or those of a third party also contributed to the matter that resulted in the complaint.
- 13.16 A complaint will be **not upheld** if we conclude that the Council was not at fault in our actions, and we acted in accordance with policy and procedures and in good faith.
- 13.17 Should your complaint be upheld, our response will also contain an apology, details of any remedy offered to put things right, and details of any actions still to be taken and when they will be completed.

14. Stage 2 - Investigation Review

- 14.1 We aim to provide a fair and satisfactory resolution to as many complaints as possible at stage 1. However, if you are not satisfied with the outcome or the way your complaint has been handled, you can contact the Service Recovery Team to ask for your complaint to be reviewed at stage 2 of the complaints process.
- 14.2 You will usually have 20 working days from the date of the stage 1 response to request that your complaint is escalated for review at stage 2.
- 14.3 Where we decide to exclude a late escalation request, we will write to you to explain why we consider your request to be out of time and may either open a new complaint at stage 1 and / or advise you of your right to approach the Ombudsman regarding our decision.

- 14.4 In some circumstances we may accept requests to escalate a complaint made after 20 working days but within six months of the stage 1 response. This will usually only be in situations where the complaint had been resolved at stage 1 but the same or similar issues have recurred, or the Council had agreed to take action at stage 1 but there have been delays or where we have not taken the action agreed. Please contact the Service Recovery Team to request an escalation in such cases.
- 14.5 The two-stage complaints process is **not** an appeal process or a means to challenge a decision, but it does provide an opportunity for the Council to consider the adequacy of the stage 1 response, to review whether the decision was taken properly, and to look again at whether:
 - all relevant information was considered in investigating the complaint
 - our procedures have been properly applied in handling the complaint
 - there has been a correct interpretation of Council policy
- 14.6 The Service Recovery team will acknowledge your escalation request within five working days of contact (the day of receipt is day zero) and allocate it to the relevant service area for investigation and response.
- 14.7 All contact with you will usually be by email if the complaint was made electronically, or if you have not indicated any other preferred method of communication.
- 14.8 The stage 2 review will usually be conducted by a senior manager or head of service who was not involved with the stage 1 investigation, and a detailed response issued within 20 working days of acknowledgement.
- 14.9 Some complex complaints may require longer than 20 working days to review. In such cases, we may extend the timescale for response by up to a further 20 working days. If so, we will contact you to explain the reason(s) for the extension and the new date for response. We will also advise you of your right to take our decision to extend to the Ombudsman.
- 14.10 On completion of the review, we will provide you with a full response, confirming the issues investigated, what decision has been reached (Upeld; Partially Upeld; or Not Upeld) and why.
- 14.11 Should your complaint be upheld, our response will also contain an apology, details of any remedy offered to put things right, and details of any actions to be taken and when they will be completed.
- 14.12 Not every complaint can be resolved and not everyone will agree with suggested ways of resolving their concerns. Stage 2 is the Council's final response for service complaints and there are no further internal review

channels available after this. If you have been through all stages of our complaints procedure and are still unhappy, you can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to review your complaint. Our stage 2 response letter will advise how you can do this.

15. Putting things right

- 15.1 Where our investigation identifies that something has gone wrong, we will acknowledge this and set out the actions already taken (or which will be taken) to put things right, and by when. These may include:
 - Apologising
 - Providing an explanation of what went wrong or reasons why
 - Taking action / providing the service if there has been delay
 - Reconsidering or changing a decision
 - Amending a record or adding a correction
 - Providing a symbolic payment or financial remedy
 - Changing policies, procedures or practices
- 15.2 Remedies will vary case by case, dependent on the impact of the failings identified. The aim is to offer a fair and appropriate remedy and, where reasonably possible, to put you back in the same position you would have been in had the service failure not occurred. When deciding on appropriate remedies, we will be guided by the current good practice guidance issued by the Ombudsman.
- 15.3 If you owe the Council any money, for example for Council Tax arrears or Benefit overpayments, and a financial remedy is made, the Council may offset this against any money you owe to us. We will not do this if there is a legitimate dispute about the debt (for example, there is a benefit claim pending), or if the remedy is granted for a specific purpose (for example, to make repairs or to replace damaged possessions).
- 15.4 Where a complaint has been made about staff conduct, we are unable to share any information with you regarding the outcome. If, following investigation of a complaint, the Council determines that individual action is required against an employee, this will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's internal disciplinary policies. Details of any action(s) taken are the personal data of that employee and so cannot be disclosed.

16. Contacting the Ombudsman

- 16.1 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) is a free, independent and impartial service which investigates complaints about most council services, adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing public services.
- 16.2 The Ombudsman is not an appeals body or regulator for Councils. They cannot 'review' decisions made by the Council but can determine whether the correct steps or actions have been taken when making a decision.
- 16.3 The Ombudsman will investigate if a council has acted unfairly or caused injustice by maladministration, such as failing to do something it should have done, doing something it should not have done, or through unreasonable delays in acting.
- 16.4 You have the right to contact the Ombudsman at any stage of a complaint, but the Ombudsman also expects you to have given the Council a chance to deal with your complaint before you contact them. Usually, the Ombudsman will only consider a complaint if it has already been through all stages of the Council's complaint handling process.
- 16.5 Full details of how the Ombudsman deals with complaints can be found on their website www.lgo.org.uk/how-to-complain
- 16.6 The Ombudsman can also be contacted via:
 - Web: www.lgo.org.uk
 - Telephone: 0300 061 0614
 - Post: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

17. Complaint handling performance and service improvement

- 17.1 Complaints data offers a valuable insight into the effectiveness of our day-to-day operations. It can help us identify areas of repeated service failure or highlight gaps in our service provision. We can then use this information to inform key business decisions and drive service improvements.
- 17.2 Similarly, lessons learnt from upheld complaints can help us take steps to prevent future recurrences and identify opportunities for us to make positive changes to improve service delivery.

- 17.3 Analysing complaints data also enables us to review individual services' performance, both in respect of the number and types of complaints being received, but also in terms of how effectively complaints are being handled, the timescales and the outcomes reached.
- 17.4 This data will be collated in the Council's annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report which, together with the Ombudsman's annual letter about the Council's performance, will be reported to Councillors and published on the Council's website, along with the Councillors' response to the findings.
- 17.5 Periodically we may contact a sample of customers who have been through the complaints process to seek their views on the experience. We may also invite them to participate in customer insight working groups or service redesign workshops as we strive to continually evolve and improve.

18. Unreasonably persistent or vexatious complaints

- 18.1 The aim of the Council's Complaints policy is to deal with complaints in a fair, consistent and structured manner, to find out what went wrong and try to put things right for the future.
- 18.2 Most complaints we receive are resolved either informally or through the complaint handling process without difficulty, and we do not normally need to limit the frequency or nature of contact that customers may have with our staff during this time.
- 18.3 However, in a small number of cases, some people may pursue their complaint in a way that is considered unreasonable, either by behaving unacceptably or by being unreasonably persistent in the frequency and nature of their contacts. This can impede investigation of their complaint (or complaints made by others) and can have significant resource issues for the Council and, in some cases, hinder our ability to maintain normal service levels.
- 18.4 Our Unreasonable Complainant Actions policy identifies situations where a customer, either individually or as part of a group, might be considered as acting unreasonably in pursuit of their complaint(s) and sets out how we will manage such behaviour.
- 18.5 The Unreasonable Complainant Actions policy is available at: [Comments, compliments and complaints – Coventry City Council](#)

19. Policy review

19.1 The Compliments, Comments and Complaints policy and process will be reviewed and updated annually, to coincide with publication of the Council's annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report. Minor policy amendments may be made outside of the annual review in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member.

20. Further information and Contacts

20.1 Further information is available from:

- The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman service:
www.lgo.org.uk
- Getting the Best from Complaints: Social Care Complaints and Representations for Children, Young People and Others:
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273895/getting the best from complaints.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273895/getting_the_best_from_complaints.pdf)
- Ombudsman's guide to complaints about Children's Social Care:
www.lgo.org.uk/assets/attach/6015/Children-s-Stat-Complaints-Updated-Nov-23.pdf
- Ombudsman's guide to complaints about Adult Social Care:
www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint/fact-sheets/social-care/social-care-for-adults/complaints-about-adult-social-care-arranged-by-councils
- Advocacy support: www.coventry.gov.uk/care-support/information-advice-advocacy-support/5 and www.voiceability.org/about-advocacy

Appendix A - Children's Social Care statutory complaints

The same core principles outlined in this policy also apply to Children's Social Care complaints, but the statutory process, set down by central Government, means that there are different stages and timescales that we must follow.

The statutory process (governed by The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006) covers children, young people and those who are closely connected with them or representing them.

As with service complaints, we will always attempt to resolve matters informally and at the earliest opportunity wherever possible.

Only complaints relating to specific sections of the Children Act can be investigated under the statutory process, being:

- Part 3 of the Children Act (sections 16 to 30A)
- Part 4 - Sections 31, 33, 34 or 35
- Part 5 - Sections 43 and 44
- Specific sections of Adoption Services regulations
- Specific sections of Special Guardianship Regulations 2005

These will usually include assessments and services relating to:

- Children in need
- Looked after children
- Special Guardianship support
- Post-adoption support

The following tend to be outside the scope of the statutory process:

- Early Help
- Child protection, including Section 47 enquiries and conferences
- Assessments of potential foster carers and adopters
- Foster carer registration
- Section 7 and Section 37 court reports

Usually, we will not be able to investigate a statutory complaint if the same matters are being investigated concurrently through court, criminal or tribunal proceedings. Once the concurrent investigation has been concluded, you have up to one year from the conclusion to resubmit your complaint to the council should you wish.

However, you cannot use the statutory complaints procedure to appeal against a court decision.

The Children's Social Care statutory process has three stages:

20. Stage 1 – Local resolution

- 20.1 This follows the same process as for stage 1 service complaints (see section 13). Where possible, we will look to resolve the matter informally for you within three working days, without the need for escalation through the formal complaints process.
- 20.2 Where early resolution is not possible or an informal approach is not considered appropriate, the Service Recovery team will log and acknowledge Statutory complaints within three working days of receipt by the Council. The complaint will then be allocated to an appropriate senior officer or manager in the relevant service area for investigation and response.
- 20.3 If, following the stage 1 response, you are not satisfied with the outcome or the way your complaint has been managed, and we are unable to informally resolve your outstanding concerns, you can ask for your complaint to be reviewed at stage 2 of the statutory complaints process,

21. Stage 2 – Independent investigation

- 21.1 You have 20 working days from the date of the stage 1 response to request the Service Recovery team escalate your complaint for review at stage 2.
- 21.2 The Service Recovery team will acknowledge your escalation request within three working days (the day of receipt is day zero) and allocate it for independent investigation.
- 21.3 All contact will usually be by email if the complaint was made electronically, or if you have not indicated any other preferred method of communication.
- 21.4 Stage 2 investigations will be conducted by a commissioned Independent Investigating Officer and Independent Investigating Person, who will arrange to take a Statement of Complaint from you.
- 21.5 Once the Investigating Officer has completed their investigation they will prepare a report for the council, setting out their findings and recommendations. A senior manager will act as Adjudicating Officer and prepare a response to the report, setting out what decision has been reached, details of any actions to be taken and when they will be completed.

- 21.6 The aim is to provide a detailed response and adjudication of stage 2 complaints within 25 working days of receipt, but this may be extended to up to 65 working days for complex complaints which require a longer investigation. If so, we will contact you to explain the reason(s) for the extension and the new date for response.
- 21.7 If you are still not satisfied with the outcome or the way your complaint has been managed at stage 2, you can ask for your complaint to go to a Review Panel at stage 3 of the statutory process.
- 21.8 Please note that in some cases we may advise that, following the conclusion of stage 2, if the presenting facts indicate that reasonable, appropriate consideration of the complaint has been undertaken at stage 2 and that further consideration by a Review Panel would not produce a demonstrably different outcome, we may suggest early escalation to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman instead.

22. Stage 3 – Review Panel

- 22.1 If you are still not satisfied with the outcome or the way your complaint has been managed at stage 2, you can ask for your complaint to be considered by an independent Review Panel at stage 3 of the statutory process.
- 22.2 The purpose of the Review Panel is to look at whether your complaint was dealt with adequately at stage 2. It will not reinvestigate the complaint, nor will it consider any substantively new complaints that have not first been considered at stage 2.
- 22.3 You have 20 working days from the date of the stage 2 response to request the Service Recovery team to escalate your complaint for review at stage 3.
- 22.4 The Service Recovery team will acknowledge your request within two working days of receipt (the day of receipt is day zero).
- 22.5 All contact will usually be by email if the complaint was made electronically, or if you have not indicated any other preferred method of communication.
- 22.6 The Independent review Panel will be convened within 30 working days of receipt of your request. You will be advised of the date and location and invited to attend at least 10 working days before the Panel meets.
- 22.7 You may attend the panel hearing to present your case, but you do not have to. You also have the right to be accompanied by another person at the meeting and can ask them to represent you and speak on your behalf if you wish.

- 22.8 The Independent Review Panel will be made up of three commissioned people who are not connected with the Council. The Panel will listen to all parties, consider the adequacy of the stage 2 investigation, and obtain any further information and advice that may help resolve the complaint to all parties' satisfaction. The focus is on achieving resolution by addressing the complaint and desired outcomes.
- 22.9 After the Panel has concluded, it has five working days to report its findings to the Council, which will include recommendations for resolution of the issues and the reasons for them. You will also be sent a copy of the report.
- 22.10 We will consider the Panel's decision and respond to their recommendations within 15 working days of receiving the report, advising you of what action will be taken.
- 22.11 Not every complaint can be resolved and not everyone will agree with suggested ways of resolving their concerns. If you remain dissatisfied after the Council's response, you can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to review your complaint.

Appendix B - Adult Social Care statutory complaints

The same core principles outlined in this policy also apply to Adult Social Care complaints, but the statutory process, set down by central Government, means that there are different stages and timescales that we must follow.

The statutory process is governed by The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

As with service complaints, we will always attempt to resolve matters informally and at the earliest opportunity wherever possible.

Usually, we will not be able to investigate a statutory complaint if the same matters are being investigated concurrently through court, criminal or tribunal proceedings. Once the concurrent investigation has been concluded, you have up to one year from the conclusion to resubmit your complaint to the council should you wish. However, you cannot use the complaints procedure to appeal against a court decision.

If you have a private arrangement with a social care organization or provider, you will need to raise your complaint with them.

There is only one stage to the Adult Social Care statutory complaints process.

23. Stage 1 – Local resolution

- 23.1 Where possible, we will look to resolve the matter informally for you within three working days, without the need for escalation through the formal complaints process.
- 23.2 Where early resolution is not possible or an informal approach is not considered appropriate, the Service Recovery team will log and acknowledge statutory complaints within three working days of receipt by the Council.
- 23.3 A senior officer or manager in Adult Services will conduct an appropriate investigation of the complaint, aiming to resolve it speedily and efficiently, and will keep you informed of progress during the investigation as far as reasonably possible.
- 23.4 All contact will usually be by email if the complaint was made electronically, or if you have not indicated any other preferred method of communication.
- 23.5 We have an internal standard of responding to complaints within 20 working days of receipt, although the regulations permit up to 6 months to provide a detailed response.

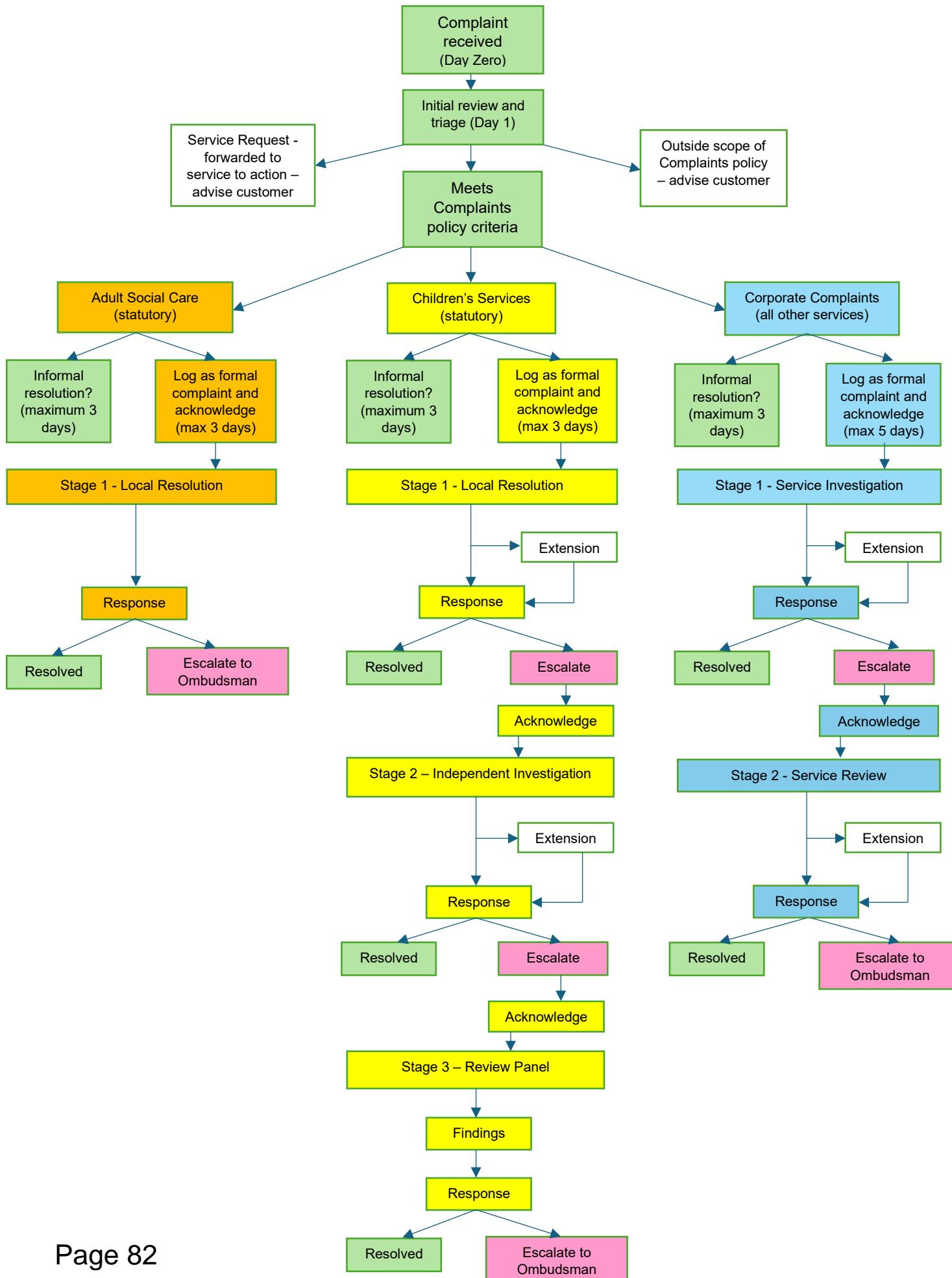
- 23.6 In some complex cases, particularly those involving more than one organization (e.g. health services and social care) we may require longer to conclude our investigation. If the 6-month timeframe cannot be met, we will contact you to explain the reason(s) why and agree an extension and a new date for our response.
- 23.7 Following completion of the investigation, our response will include an explanation of how the complaint has been investigated, what conclusions have been reached and set out details of any remedial actions taken or to be taken and when they will be completed.
- 23.8 Not every complaint can be resolved and not everyone will agree with suggested ways of resolving their concerns. If, after the Council's response, you are not satisfied with the outcome or the way your complaint has been managed, you can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to review your complaint.

Appendix C – Complaint processes and timescales – summary

(Council working days only)

	Adult Social Care complaints	Children's Services complaints	Corporate (all other) complaints
Complaint received	Day zero	Day zero	Day zero
Initial review and triage	Day 1	Day 1	Day 1
Informal resolution?	Up to 3 days (Day 3)	Up to 3 days (Day 3)	Up to 3 days (Day 3)
Log as formal complaint and acknowledge	Up to 3 days (Day 3)	Up to 3 days (Day 3)	Up to 5 days (Day 5)
Stage 1 investigation	Up to 6 months (130 days)	Up to 10 days (Day 13)	Up to 10 days from acknowledgement (Day 15)
Extension (if required)	As agreed with customer	Additional 10 days maximum	Additional 10 days maximum
Issue Stage 1 response	By Day 133 (or as per any extension agreed)	By Day 13 (or Day 23, if extension advised)	By Day 15 (or Day 25, if extension advised)
Stage 2 escalation request	N/A – referral to Ombudsman	No later than 20 days from date of Stage 1 response	No later than 20 days from date of Stage 1 response
Log and acknowledge		Up to 3 days (Day 3)	Up to 5 days (Day 5)
Stage 2 investigation		Up to 25 days (Day 28)	Up to 20 days from acknowledgement (Day 25)
Extension (if required)		Additional 40 days maximum	Additional 20 days maximum
Issue Stage 2 response		By Day 28 (or Day 68, if extension advised)	By Day 25 (or Day 45, if extension advised)
Stage 3 escalation request		No later than 20 days from date of Stage 2 response	N/A – referral to Ombudsman
Log and acknowledge		Up to 2 days (Day 2)	
Convene Review Panel		Up to 30 days (Day 32)	
Panel to report findings		Up to 5 days (Day 37)	
Council to issue response		Up to 15 days (Day 52)	
Escalation request		N/A – referral to Ombudsman	

Appendix D – Complaints process flowchart





To: Scrutiny Coordination Committee

Date: 5 February 2026

Subject: Community Growing Sites in Coventry

1 Purpose of the Note

1.1 Further to a Council motion in December 2025, this note sets out plans to enable Coventry residents and community groups to access Council-owned land that is underutilised for food growing and wildlife gardening. This will be subject to Cabinet Member approval.

2 Recommendations

2.1 It is proposed that Scrutiny Coordination Committee:

- 1) Endorse the proposal to be taken forward to Cabinet Member for formal approval in March 2026.
- 2) Provide feedback to help assist in drafting the policy and guidance.
- 3) Support with engaging communities at a ward level to encourage uptake.

3 Overview

3.1 Coventry's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan set out an ambitious vision for the city which will help to improve the lives of people that live and work here, alongside supporting nature's recovery.

3.2 One of the initiatives within the Strategy is focused on the development of a network of community growing sites across the city for residents to help create and enjoy. The scheme supports residents and community groups to take ownership of their local environment through maintaining and improving the open areas for the benefit of the local community. This report focuses on bringing forward opportunities for residents to utilise Council-owned land which is disused or underutilised for community growing sites, to support food growing and wildlife. This will deliver significant benefits including:

- Health and wellbeing: encouraging physical activity in fresh air, improved wellbeing by spending more time in green space, increasing locally grown fruit and vegetable consumption
- Social cohesion and community: fostering stronger relationships within communities

- Environmental: increasing and enhancing local green spaces and biodiversity, Climate resilience: producing locally grown food for communities to help increase food security;
- Education and skills: providing an opportunity for residents to learn new skills about creating sustainable growing spaces, horticulture, composting and caring for wildlife
- Pride: this will help to engender local pride

3.3 Nationally, there is a campaign for government to adopt the principle of a 'Right to Grow' across the UK due to the benefits for people and wildlife. In Coventry we have already started doing this through 'Coventry Grows', a project which started in 2024 through the city's Climate Change Board to develop a number of pilot community growing sites in some of the city's most green-deprived areas, backed by funding from E.ON through the city's Strategic Energy Partnership. The Council would like to extend this opportunity to communities across the city who are interested in setting up community growing areas in their neighbourhood, through offering Council-owned underused sites, through introducing a new policy and guidance to support this.

3.4 This is a brilliant opportunity to help tackle inequalities in access to green space across the city and provides a new opportunity to bring people and communities together.

3.5 In Coventry we have already started community growing pilots through 'Coventry Grows', a project which started in 2024 through the city's Climate Change Board to develop a number of pilot community growing sites in some of the city's most green-deprived areas, backed by funding from E.ON through the city's Strategic Energy Partnership.

3.6 The pilot projects have seen the first site established in Stoke Heath, with further sites being developed in Hillfields, Foleshill and Tile Hill and 58 community volunteers involved over the last 12 months. The projects have been led by the Council, with support from Grapevine to bring new community growing groups together and Garden Organic to provide training to residents – with gardening novices very much encouraged to get involved. The pilot projects have benefitted from funding to support site set up, tools, equipment and seeds. The Council would like to extend this opportunity to people and communities across the city who are interested in setting up community growing areas in their neighbourhood, through offering Council-owned underused land.

3.7 Proposed planting could be good, wildflowers, native plants or fruit trees. This could include planting areas of mown grass on streets, taking on plots of land for food growing and nature gardens, using Council-owned planters, as well as potentially planting orchards and hedgerows in some of our parks and open spaces, subject to restrictions and covenants. A policy and process will be in place to provide guidance and support communities to ensure what is planted is appropriate for the location, which will include consultation with nearby residents.

3.8 The Council has worked with the Coventry Food Network in securing the national recognition to obtain the status as a 'Sustainable Food Place'. This recognises the City's partnership making healthy and sustainable food a defining characteristic of where people live, which includes building public awareness, active food citizenship

and local good food movement, with healthy food for all. Expanding community growing sites across the city will help to support this and help benefit communities if produce can be distributed via the Food Network and local networks where this is a surplus.

3.9 The Council's Green Skills Strategy identifies nature conservation, and land-based skills including horticulture as areas that need to be strengthened. This initiative will help support this, helping to provide more practical opportunities for residents to develop and maintain growing spaces. Programmes such as Coventry's Nature Towns and Cities Green for All will provide resources to support residents with training and skills from organisations including Garden Organic and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, alongside the opportunity for groups to learn from more experienced gardeners in their areas.

4 The Coventry Growing Sites Policy

4.1 This policy will enable the Council to extend the opportunity to all communities across the city to access disused or underused Council land for community growing and nature gardening. This builds on the Coventry Grows pilot and existing allotment network and creates a significant opportunity to improve the quality and extent of green space across the city for the benefit of people and nature.

4.2 In order to facilitate community growing across the city, a new policy will be introduced where residents will be able to apply to use Council-owned land for community growing sites. The Council will provide guidance in terms of available sites through an online map, alongside growing advice and any requirements to support site set up such as surveys. Community growing sites will be regulated, with a legal agreement between the Council and residents to enable them to use the land for growing. It is proposed that the land will be available for use on a rolling annual basis, this allows for the agreement to be terminated should the land be required for other purposes in the future or if the project comes to an end.

4.3 Whilst plans at this stage will focus on Council-owned land, there is an opportunity to work with other landowners across the city as part of the initiative. This could include partners such as social housing provider Citizen who have expressed an interest, alongside the Canal and River Trust where there is potential land that could be used adjacent to the canal.

4.4 It is proposed that there is dedicated resource allocated to coordinating the community growing sites, who will be able to help simplify the process for communities by coordinating with Council services that will need to be consulted on sites, which includes Parks and Open Spaces, Climate Change & Sustainability, Sports, Education, Ecology, Drainage, Highways, Streetpride, Legal, Property, Insurance and Finance amongst others. The resource can also help to signpost to funding opportunities, provide guidance and help build a community growing network across the city so that groups can learn from each other. The Council will help to support groups by offering a tool library.

5 Delivery Plan

5.1 It is proposed that the Citywide Community Growing policy will be drawn up, agreed and implemented Spring 2026. It will be led by the Climate Change and Sustainability Team, with input from other service areas as appropriate. The

Climate Change and Sustainability Team will oversee delivery, with monitoring arrangements of sites to be agreed.

- 5.2 £100k is sought to support the delivery of the programme, which includes the programme coordinator role and recharge costs to other service areas for their time to support applications, which includes developing legal agreements, checking land ownership documents and undertaking surveys (depending on the number of sites and the uptake from the community). It is envisaged that successful applicants for community growing sites will pay a small fee to support some of these costs – this is in line with other local authorities who are already doing this. There is the potential to introduce reduced fees for GoCV+ members to help make the scheme accessible to all.
- 5.3 It is recognised that the Coventry Grows pilot has also provided funding to cover some of the practical elements of setting up community gardens, including tools, storage, seeds etc, alongside training. It is not proposed that the citywide Community Growing initiative would receive any additional funding for these activities as we don't have budget to support all groups at this time. However, the Council is working to try and secure more sponsorship from the private sector alongside public sector grants and can also work with community organisations to support grant applications to help raise funds to support site activities.
- 5.4 The Nature Towns and Cities Green for All programme, which the Council is leading and secured just under £1m to deliver, will help to support with community engagement, mapping sites and training.

6 Health Inequalities Impact

- 6.1 The Coventry Grows pilot project sites were selected from a long list of potential sites to target green deprived neighbourhoods in Coventry- providing opportunities for residents who have minimal access to green space to adopt green spaces and manage them for their communities. The new policy would also look to encourage and prioritise applications from green deprived areas of Coventry where possible.
- 6.2 Community growing has many health and wellbeing benefits, increasing time spent doing physical activity in green space, as well as increasing access to fresh locally grown fruit and vegetables. Increasing the number and quality of green spaces in urban areas of the city will help to improve air quality for communities as well as working to reduce the urban heat island effect and its impacts, which will disproportionately impact Coventry's more deprived communities.
- 6.3 Participating in a community growing site also helps to foster stronger relationships and cohesion within communities and support residents to learn new skills and knowledge in growing and caring for spaces for wildlife. This can help improve well being and quality of life as well as provide key skills that could help as a route to employment.

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Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
Cabinet

5 February 2026
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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Councillor N Akhtar	Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities	-	19/01/2026	19/01/2026

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

Coventry Creative Industries Strategy

2026 – 2029



Coventry City Council

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Appendix 1 – Delivery Plan 2026 – 2029

Date published: DD/MONTH 2026

Author: Coventry City Council

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)

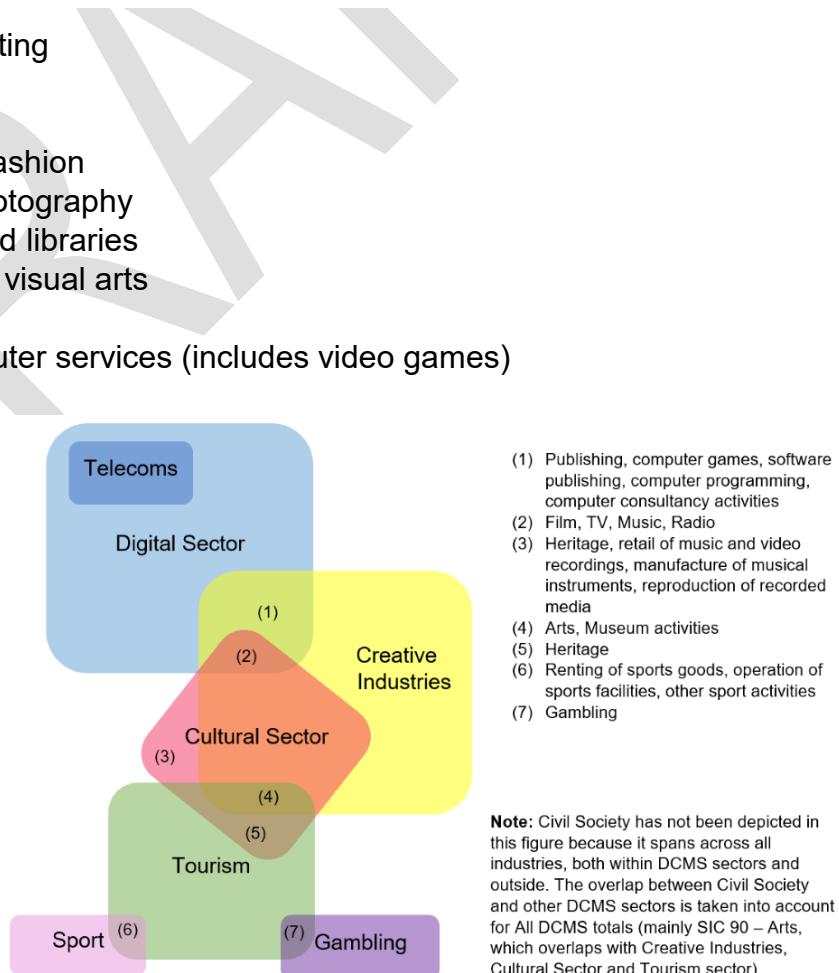
Since then, the concept has evolved through successive strategies, most recently the UK Government’s Creative Industries Sector Plan (DCMS, 2025), which sets out a wider plan to drive the growth of these industries, as part of the Modern Industrial Strategy’s long-term growth agenda to 2035.

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 diagram¹:



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 INDUSTRIES 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 Plan¹ 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	<p>Lack of affordable and accessible workspace, performance/showcasing/practice, innovation, incubation and collaboration space.</p> <p>Shortage of match funding and investment schemes to de-risk creative projects and the spaces needed to run them in.</p> <p>Lack of large build spaces for film and TV (5,000-15,000 sq.ft)</p>
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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.
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4. Artificial Intelligence challenges	
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	<p>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.</p> <p>Leveraging existing gaming clusters into healthcare/education applications, e.g., partnership with NHS and the USA market on resilience training using immersive tech.</p>
Technology	<p>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.</p> <p>Extending innovation in theatre beyond VR/technology to include creative audio, gaming, and interdisciplinary approaches.</p> <p>Creating new work streams through tech convergence, with opportunities for partnership-level investment and enhanced tech infrastructure to help retain university talent.</p>

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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

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.
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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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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.

	<p>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.</p> <p>AI enabled content creation and data analysis will become more sophisticated, leading to new markets opening up for creative businesses.</p>
Music	<p>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.</p>
Screen Production (film, TV, social media)	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

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
<p>Improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within communities</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>

<p>Improving economic prosperity of the city and region</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Tackling the causes and consequences of climate change</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Strengthening the Council's role as a partner, enabler, and civic leader</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sqm of affordable workspace unlocked• Increases/decreases in creative workspaces and other specialist creative industries spaces
Tourism, visitor economy & branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Qualitative impact of creative industries in city promotion and visitor perception

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steps taken to develop tourism offer around creative industries (e.g. film and music tourism)
Public funding, city development & policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of funding secured/won • Level of private capital leveraged • Number of policies being informed by the creative industries strategy aims/level of consultation

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APPENDIX 1 – DELIVERY PLAN 2026-2029

See separate attachment

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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
<p>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.</p> <p>Coventry creative industries benefit from high student retention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination Coventry • The new Coventry Tourism Strategy (in development) • Key city visitor attractions • eSports/University of Warwick • WMGC • Coventry Music Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>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</p> <p>The opportunities and synergies between creative industries and other priority growth sectors are fully realised, including securing investment to maintain a thriving creative sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coventry City Council • University of Warwick • Coventry University • CWX • CreaTech Frontiers • Other Council partners • WMCA • National funding opportunities & programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>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:</p> <p>- Growing Coventry's creative economy by supporting sustainable business growth, innovation and investment across creative industries.</p> <p>- Developing skills and talent pipelines to improve access to creative careers, retain local graduates and build a future ready workforce.</p> <p>- Promoting inclusive and fair participation by reducing barriers for under represented and socio economically disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>- Strengthening infrastructure, partnerships and place making to position Coventry as an attractive, connected and supportive city for creative businesses and practitioners.</p>

	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)
Stakeholders	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:

Baseline data and information

- 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;

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.
Age 65+	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.

	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,
Disability	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	<p>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.</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>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.</p>

Additional groups

Care experienced	<p>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.</p>
Armed forces	<p>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.</p>

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

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

Agenda Item 7

SCRUCO Work Programme 2025-26

Last updated 15 January 2026

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

Selective Licencing (Joint meeting with SB4)

5 February 2026

Complaints Reports
Community Growing Spaces
Creative Industries Strategy (Cabinet Report)

12 March 2026

Shareholder Reports (Shareholders Panel Reports)
One Strategic Plan (Cabinet Report)

9 April 2026

Youth Justice

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
Child Poverty - Systemic Approach
The Coventry Skills and Employment Board

Future items

2026-27

SCRUCO Work Programme 2025-26

PSPO reviews – 2027-28
One Coventry Plan KPI's
Communications Reputation and Insight
Change (Transformation) Programme update

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 Scruco 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	

SCRUCO Work Programme 2025-26

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	Selective Licencing (Joint meeting with SB4)		
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
	Community Growing Spaces	Members requested further information on plans to increase community growing spaces following the OCP deep dive session on Climate Change. Scruco's contribution will be represented in a Cabinet report for March	Rhian Palmer Cllr O'Boyle
	Creative Industries Strategy (Cabinet Report)		Salla Virman Cllr N Akhtar

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
12 March 2026	Shareholder Reports (Shareholders Panel Reports)	Final published accounts of the organisations that the Council are shareholder for.	Cllr Duggins
	One Strategic Plan (Cabinet Report)	Meeting our statutory duty to provide sufficient school places and capital programme. To invite SB2 including co-optees.	Cllr Sandhu Rachael Sugars Chloe Webb Thomas Allen
9 April 2026	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 (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.	Cllr AS Khan PCC Simon Foster S Sen C Heeley
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

SCRUCO Work Programme 2025-26

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	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 though 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 Hetherston Mark Adams
	AI - Progress	A progress update on recommendations made at the meeting on 6 March 2025	Paul Ward Cllr Hetherston/Cllr Brown
	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 A further update on the on the actions taken in relation to the City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order be submitted to the Committee in 6-months' time (May/June 2026) – including alternative routes for e-bike food deliveries	Davina Blackburn

SCRUCO Work Programme 2025-26

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	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. Also to consider progress on identifying KPI's in other strategies/documents such as the CIPFA Code and aligning them.	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
	Change (Transformation) Programme update	An update on progress following the item in November 2025	Cllr Brown C Boden-Hatton

Work Programme Decision Flow Chart

