



Ethics Committee

Time and Date

11.00 am on Thursday, 8th January, 2026

Place

Diamond Rooms 1 and 2 - Council House

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 8)
 - a) To agree the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 September, 2025
 - b) Any matters arising
4. **Prospective Councillor Information** (Pages 9 - 34)

Report of the Director of Law and Governance
5. **Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman 2024/25** (Pages 35 - 60)

Report of the Chief Executive
6. **Code of Conduct Update** (Pages 61 - 70)

Report of the Director of Law and Governance
7. **Work Programme for the Ethics Committee 2025/26** (Pages 71 - 76)

Report of the Director of Law and Governance
8. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

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

Monday, 22 December, 2025

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

Membership: Councillors N Akhtar, S Atkinson (Independent Person), L Bigham, J Gardiner, P Hetherton, S Nazir (Chair), E M Reeves, R Wills (Independent Person) and P Wiseman (Independent Person)(1 vacancy)

Independent Persons: S Atkinson, R Wills and P Wiseman

Substitute Members: Councillors S Gray, G Lloyd, M Mutton

Public Access

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Suzanne Bennett, Governance Services

Email: suzanne.bennett@coventry.gov.uk

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Ethics Committee held at 11.00 am on Thursday, 25
September 2025

Present:

Members: Councillor S Nazir (Chair)

Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor J Gardiner
Councillor P Hetherton
Councillor E M Reeves

Independent Persons S Atkinson, R Wills, P Wiseman

Employees (by Directorate):

Law and Governance J Newman (Director), S Bennett, G Holmes, S Manhertz
A West

Public Business

8. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

9. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June, 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

Further to Minute 7/25 – “Membership of the Committee”, the Committee were provided with an update in relation to progress on engaging with the Conservative Group by the Independent Persons, with a view to the Group being represented on the Committee.

10. Local Code of Corporate Governance 2025-26

The Ethics Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance, which had also been considered by the Audit and Procurement Committee (their Minute 21/25 refers), which detailed Local Code of Corporate Governance 2025/26.

The Local Code of Corporate Governance sets out the Council’s arrangements for meeting the seven principles of good governance as defined in the CIPFA/Solace Framework ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government’. The Framework recommended that Local Authorities developed and maintained a Local Code of governance as it provided a structure to help individual authorities with their approach to governance.

The Council adopted a Local Code of Corporate Governance in 2017. The Code had recently been reviewed in the light of best practice and updated to reflect the current governance arrangements in place within the Council. An up to date and robust Local Code provided clarity over an authority's governance and supported the legal requirement to undertake an annual review of effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements and produce an Annual Governance Statement.

The CIPFA / Solace Framework defined governance as "the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders were defined and achieved." Coventry City Council had a range of measures in place to ensure that governance in the organisation was managed effectively and worked hard to ensure that those arrangements were robust and met best practice. This was achieved through a range of policies, plans, and procedures such as the Constitution (including codes of conduct for Members and employees), the One Coventry Plan, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and policies on whistle blowing, tackling fraud and corruption, and managing risk.

The Local Code of Corporate Governance, attached as an Appendix to the report, is a refresh of the previous Code with work undertaken with internal stakeholders to ensure it reflected the current position of the organisation and the Authority's One Coventry approach. The Local Code sets out the Council's specific arrangements for putting the principles of good governance into practice. It draws on examples provided in the Framework but also reflects systems and processes which are specific to the Council.

The Committee noted the legal requirement to undertake an annual review that the governance arrangements set out in the Local Code were effective and/or complied with and to produce an Annual Governance Statement, with any identified areas for improvement included in the Annual Governance Statement action plan.

The Committee sought assurances in relation to how comprehensive stakeholder engagement was monitored and checked and how public perception of transparency was measured. It was noted that further information on these issues would be provided to the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Ethics Committee notes the Code of Corporate Governance 2025/26.

11. Local Government Association (LGA) Ending Abuse in Public Life - Council Self-Assessment Tool Kit - Progress September 2025

Further to Minute 26/24, the Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance which provided an update on progress on the Council's self-assessment and action plan based on a tool kit which was designed by the Local Government Association (LGA) as part of their "Debate Not Hate" campaign to aid local Councils in tackling and mitigating the impact and risks of abuse and intimidation that Councillors (Members) may encounter as part of their role. The action plan was appended to the report.

The report indicated that progress to date has included information provided on the Members intranet webpages in a section called “Well-being and Your Safety”, which sign-posts Members to where advice and support can be found. These webpages provide links to all of the LGA materials from the Debate Not Hate campaign, as well as support offered through the Council’s Occupational Health Service. The webpages also provide a link to the “Personal safety guidance for elected Members” document, as well as how to deal with online abuse and how to report harassment and intimidation.

Other actions already complete included linking with the police on Operation Ford to identify a single point of contact and a programme of personal safety workshops which have been delivered by the police for Members. Work is in progress to identify a baseline for Members risk-assessments when undertaking surgeries or home visits. In addition to this, a number of personal safety and awareness raising training sessions have been arranged for Members this municipal year, including one specifically on safety whilst election campaigning, and sessions delivered by the LGA on online abuse and harassment. Thirty-one Members have accessed these safety training sessions.

To further progress this work, it was proposed that the next step should be to provide a Member-led approach to delivering the actions and outcomes identified in the self-assessment. To achieve this was proposed to establish a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group and the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) have agreed in principle to establish the Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED that the Ethics Committee:-

- 1) Notes the work undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) on their Debate Not Hate campaign, including the self-assessment tool.**
- 2) Notes the progress on the Action Plan at Appendix 1.**
- 3) Supports the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) in establishing a Task and Finish Group to provide a Member-led approach to developing the Council’s approach to dealing with abuse and intimidation experienced by Elected Members.**
- 4) Supports the continued work to improve the support offered to Members to mitigate the impact and risk of abuse and intimidation.**

12. Six Monthly Review of Members' Gifts and Hospitality

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance which provided a six-month review of the Members’ Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality Register for the period 1 January to 30 June, 2025.

It was noted that it was intended to undertake a reminder of the processes and procedures for Gifts and Hospitalities for both Members and Officers (Minute 13 below also refers)

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the Members' Gifts and Hospitality Register entries from 1 January to 30 June, 2025.

13. Six Monthly Review of Officers' Gifts and Hospitality

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance which provided a six-month review of Officers' Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality Register for the period 1 January to 30 June, 2025.

It was noted that it was intended to undertake a reminder of the processes and procedures for Gifts and Hospitalities for both Members and Officers (Minute 12 above also refers).

RESOLVED:-

- 1) That the Committee notes the entries of gifts and hospitality received by Officers from 1 January to 30 June 2025.**
- 2) That the Officers' Register be updated to provide more information on the outcomes and any benefits to the Council.**

14. Code of Conduct Update

The Ethics Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance which provided an update on national issues in relation to the ethical behaviour of Elected Members and the local position in Coventry regarding the Code of Conduct.

The Committee also noted the position in relation to the local parish Councils and their Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED that the Ethics Committee:-

- 1) Notes the position with regard to matters concerning local authorities nationally; and**
- 2) Notes the local position relating to the operation of the Council's Code of Conduct and delegates any actions arising from these to the Director of Law and Governance, following consultation with the Chair of the Ethics Committee.**

15. Ethics Committee Work Programme 2025-2026

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance appended to which was the Committee's Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

In response to questions at the meeting, the Committee were provided with an oral update on preparations taking place to provide information for potential candidates standing in the local elections May 2026.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme for 2025/26 be noted and that a report on preparations for candidates standing in the local elections in May 2026 be added to the Work Programme for the meeting of the Committee in January, 2026.

16. **Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business**

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.45am)

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Public report Ethics Committee

Ethics Committee

8 January 2026

Name of Cabinet Member:

Not Applicable

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Law & Governance

Ward(s) affected:

All Wards

Title: Prospective Councillor Information

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive summary:

At their last meeting on 25 September 2025, the Ethics Committee requested further details of what information was going to be available for candidates who were intending to stand in the elections in May 2026, in view of the fact that all 54 seats were up for election and the number of potentially inexperienced candidates. This report provides details of what is proposed to be provided and seeks Ethics Committee's endorsement of the Becoming a Councillor Booklet.

Recommendations:

The Ethics Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Consider the contents of the report and make any recommendations for any additional information which could be provided to assist prospective councillors.
- 2) Endorse the use of the Booklet as a way of providing prospective candidates with information in relation to the role of a Councillor.

List of Appendices included:

The following appendices are attached to the report:

Appendix 1 – Becoming a Councillor Booklet

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

None

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

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

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Prospective Councillor Information

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 At their meeting held on 25 September, the Ethics Committee highlighted the importance of ensuring that prospective new Councillors fully understand the responsibilities and expectations of the role before standing for election. This follows concerns arising from the elections held in 2025 where individuals were elected in other parts of the country without anticipating or understanding the demands of office.
- 1.2 Work is currently being undertaken to ensure that newly elected Councillors in 2026 will be fully supported in their role. This includes reviewing the induction and training offer, particularly in the first few weeks following the election. Officers have also produced a booklet 'Becoming a Councillor' which is available to prospective candidates in the elections (copy attached at Appendix 1). The approach taken has been to ensure that it remains politically neutral and focus' on what the role entails, what support is available and the election process. It is also proposed that this information will be made available on the Council's website.
- 1.3 Every year the Returning Officer holds Candidates and Agents briefings prior to the election which focus on the election timetable, completion of nominations, the count and campaigning. In 2026 there will be an earlier briefing session for candidates which will focus more on the information contained in the Booklet and will provide the opportunity for candidates to ask questions around becoming a Councillor, expectations and duties of that role and the functions of local government.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Option 1 – Support the use of the Prospective Councillor Booklet (Recommended)

The use of the Booklet will ensure that prospective candidates understand the role of Councillors and the expectations and duties associated with that responsibility. This option is an improvement on the information which was previously available for prospective candidates at elections.

- 2.2 Option 2 - Do nothing to prepare prospective candidates for the role of a Councillor (Not recommended)
In view of the elections in Coventry being for all 54 seats, not providing candidates with relevant and important information about the expectations and duties of the role is not recommended.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. All the Leaders of the four Political Groups currently represented on the Council have contributed to the production of the Booklet.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. The Booklet has been made available, and the holding of candidate briefings will take place in February/March 2026.

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

5.1. Financial Implications

There will be limited financial implications, with the costs of printing a small number of hard copies being met from within existing budgets.

5.2. Legal Implications

No legal implications.

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>

Providing the information enables residents to consider representing their local communities as local Councillors and understand what is expected of someone in this role. It contributes to the enabling priority of the Council's role as a partner, enabler and leader.

6.2. How is risk being managed?

No risks.

6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4. Equalities / EIA?

No EIA has been done.

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

None.

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

None.

Report author(s):

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Contributor/approver name	Title	Service Area	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
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Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Officer	Law and Governance	11/12/25	11/12/25
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Ewan Dewar	Head of Service Finance	Finance	11/12/25	12/12/25
Director: Julie Newman	Director of Law & Governance	-	11/12/25	12/12/25
Members:	Cabinet Member - Not Applicable	-		
Councillor S Nazir	Chair of the Ethics Committee	-	12/12/25	12/12/25

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Becoming a Councillor



Thinking of becoming a councillor?

If you are interested in becoming a councillor, then read on...

Being a councillor is all about giving back to your community by bringing your energy, passion, and hard-working attitude. As a Coventry City Councillor you can make a real difference to our city and wider society. For example, you could be representing the views of local people to ensure the community gets the right services, supporting a resident with an issue, or helping to shape the future of the city by driving new ideas.

If you care about your community and are looking for a worthwhile and rewarding way to help, becoming a councillor may be the perfect choice for you.

This booklet will provide you with an outline about what you need to know about becoming a councillor and how to proceed once you have made the decision to stand for election.

“You have a unique opportunity to make a real difference to people’s lives.”

Quotes from people who have undertaken the role

“At Coventry City Council we have 54 seats that are up for election on 7 May 2026. This offers you the perfect opportunity to stand as a representative of your local community and become a councillor (also known as an elected member). Anyone can be a councillor and it’s important for our local democracy that we have people of all ages and from all backgrounds to represent a wide range of local views. It is hard work and you can expect to have to balance the needs of your local area, your residents and voters, community groups, local businesses and the Council on a daily basis.”

“We hope that this document will be helpful for anyone who is thinking of standing for election and is interested in finding out about the role of the councillor. The local election process for Coventry City Council begins in March 2026 when a Notice of Election will be published.”

Cllr George Duggins

Leader of Coventry City Council and the Labour Group





“Councillors come in all shapes and sizes! Some are young, some are older, some have careers while others are retired. What they all have in common is a desire to give something back to their community and make the world a better place. I’ve been a councillor for nearly two decades and it’s been a big part of my life during that time. It can be hard work, and there are lots of competing demands, but it’s been extremely rewarding to have played my part in the governance of the city – both as a Cabinet Member and more recently as Leader of the Opposition. Not everyone will be expected to take on leadership roles, but there are lots of ways councillors make a difference. So, if you’d like to get involved, what’s stopping you?”

Cllr Gary Ridley
Leader of the Conservative Group

“As a councillor you are a representative in the council for all your residents regardless of if they voted for you. It’s different every day, you might join residents campaigning about a local issue, help someone with problems ranging from housing to fly tipping or be in a meeting where you are looking in depth at how a specific service is functioning. It’s a lot to learn when you first start, especially when it comes to what your responsibilities are or how Council meetings work, but you will be offered training on all the basics and there is an amazing team in Members’ Services to help you so don’t be put off standing.”



Cllr Esther Reeves
Leader of the Green and Independent Alliance Group



“Being a Councillor is a surprisingly broad role that can wondrously morph into something beyond what you first thought. It requires a servant’s heart to do well. It is challenging but rewarding too; from seeing physical improvements to your ward and city, to helping individual residents resolve complex problems whilst supporting community groups to flourish to do what only they can. You’ll also play a vital role in making local government accountable to the people, which lies at the core of a properly functioning democracy.”

Cllr Jackie Gardiner
Leader of the Reform UK Group

What do councillors do?

Councillors are elected to represent local residents in an individual geographical unit of the city known as a Ward. The role of a councillor can be varied and it is up to each individual councillor how they work. Councillors have responsibilities to their ward, to the Council and to the community.

Councillors work with local people and partners, such as community groups, businesses and other organisations, to agree and deliver on local priorities. The decisions are implemented by permanent council staff, council officers, who deliver services on a daily basis.

The role of a councillor is to serve and represent everyone in the ward that they are elected to (and not just those who voted for them). Some are also appointed to additional roles in the council, such as being a cabinet member.

It's a varied and highly fulfilling role, and no day is the same.

The role brings people together. Councillors work with a diverse range of people from their community and have officers to support them in their role at the council. Councillors lead the local conversation: you can be part of that to make your area the best place it can be.



Councillors must adhere to the Code of Conduct which sets out the standards and behaviours expected of councillors and elected members. The code of conduct is based on the Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles).

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- ▶ I act with integrity and honesty
- ▶ I act lawfully
- ▶ I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- ▶ I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- ▶ I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- ▶ I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- ▶ I avoid conflicts of interest
- ▶ I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- ▶ I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.



You can find out more about the Councillor Code of Conduct at:

www.local.gov.uk/publications/local-government-association-model-councillor-code-conduct-2020

If you are interested in viewing a Council meeting these are webcast and available on our website coventry.gov.uk/meetings-1/full-council

There are written rules, which govern behaviour and procedures at meetings included in the 'Council Constitution' and these enable councillors to take part effectively.

coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/constitution

Mr Peter Wiseman, OBE, LLB – An Independent Member of the Council's Ethics Committee states:

"A successful local authority is always underpinned by sound governance. They go hand in glove and, if they don't, things can go horribly wrong. The responsibility is shared between Councillors and Officers. The Nolan Principles and the city's Code of Conduct for Councillors are the key to achieving success and avoiding failure. I would hope that they would become so firmly entrenched in the "DNA" of every councillor that, whenever they are conducting Council business, the Nolan Principles and the Code would be applied automatically: i.e. they had become second nature. This is the best way to ensure that outcomes and any decisions reached are robust having passed through respectful debate and scrutiny. I would argue that it is only by councillors adhering to the highest standards of conduct in this way that it is possible to retain the trust and confidence of the public in the City Council. This guidance should go a long way towards achieving this goal."

Becoming a councillor

Why are councillors important?

Councillors play a key part in the city as they:

- ▶ are a voice for the community, representing local people and communities.
- ▶ are champions of those who use local services.
- ▶ help shape future services for the benefit of local people.
- ▶ work in partnership with other organisations such as:
 - police
 - voluntary and community sector
 - other public bodies
 - the private sector
- ▶ play a major role in improving the quality of life for the people within the city of Coventry.

Why become a councillor?

People choose to become councillors for a variety of reasons:

- ▶ you may feel strongly about a particular issue or the wellbeing of your community as a whole and feel you would like the opportunity to influence decision-making on these issues.
- ▶ you may see yourself as a good spokesperson for your community and feel you could represent the views of the people living in your area.
- ▶ you may want to pursue political beliefs.
- ▶ you may have specific skills and

knowledge that you would like to use to benefit your community.

- ▶ you may already be part of a local organisation and feel that becoming a councillor would be a natural progression.

Some see becoming a councillor as an extension of what they are already doing. Maybe you are already active in a political party, trade union, or school governing body, and the next step for you is to become a councillor.

Who can become a councillor?

We need people from all backgrounds and experiences that reflect the communities they serve to put themselves forward for election.

To stand for election, on the day of nomination, you must be:

- ▶ 18 or over,
- ▶ British, or citizen of the Commonwealth, you may also be eligible as a citizen of the European Union, however, the criteria has changed now that the UK has left the European Union. Please check on EU citizens voting and candidacy rights in local elections.
- ▶ registered to vote in the area or have lived, worked or owned property there for at least 12 months before an election.

You cannot stand if you:

- ▶ work for Coventry City Council.
- ▶ you can work for another local authority as long as you are not in a politically restricted post.

- ▶ are the subject of bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order.
- ▶ have served a prison sentence (including suspended sentences) of three months or more within five years prior to the election.
- ▶ have been disqualified under any legislation relating to corrupt or illegal practices.
- ▶ are subject to any relevant notification requirements, or a relevant order, in respect of a sexual offence.

Do I need any skills, experience or special qualifications?

You don't need any experience, educational or special qualifications. Your experience and knowledge gained through being an active member of local groups and organisations, raising a family or being a carer for a family member can equip you with valuable life skills which will be beneficial in your role as a councillor.

It is important that councillors are able to represent the diverse communities that they serve and so a broad range of skills and experiences will be beneficial.

You will receive training and become more experienced and confident once elected. There can be a steep learning curve, but it is worth it for what you can achieve for your community.



There are a number of useful skills which help councillors carry out their role:

- ▶ being a leader in your community
- ▶ knowledge of the area
- ▶ confidence
- ▶ integrity
- ▶ having good communication skills
- ▶ partnership and team working
- ▶ problem solving, questioning and analytical skills
- ▶ being flexible, adaptable and open-minded
- ▶ being organised and having good time management
- ▶ having political understanding.
- ▶ resilience
- ▶ empathy

Further reading

Read more about the role and skills for councillors:

Political Skills Framework

www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/read-revised-version-poli-243.pdf

The 21st Century Councillor

21stcenturypublicservant.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/21st-century-councillor.pdf

Improving Access to Elected Office guidebook for disabled people

www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Improving%20access%20to%20local%20government%20elected%20office%20for%20disable%20people_0.pdf

What support will I get?

As already mentioned, regardless of what skills and attributes you bring with you, it is likely you will have a lot to learn about the workings of local government. This is nothing to worry about as you will be supported through an induction programme and ongoing development plans to ensure that you have the skills and training you need to fulfil your role as a councillor.

Some of the training and development will be compulsory dependent upon your role and other training may be optional. You will receive regular updates and information on available training opportunities, and you can choose the courses which you think will enable you to develop into your role as a councillor.

The Member Services Team provides personal assistance and administrative support to councillors to assist them in carrying out their Council duties including ward casework. We will ensure that reasonable adjustments are also supported, if required, to enable you to undertake your role. The Team does not support party political work.

You will also be provided with IT equipment and office space to support you in your role.

There will be an induction programme once you are elected covering things such as:

- ▶ Directorate marketplace
- ▶ Digital induction (laptop, email set up etc)
- ▶ Code of Conduct
- ▶ Hitting the Ground Running (delivered by the LGA)
- ▶ Data protection and cyber security
- ▶ Council finances and the budget
- ▶ Safeguarding
- ▶ Chamber skills

- ▶ Procedure for meetings
- ▶ Committee training (e.g. Planning, Licensing)
- ▶ The role of Scrutiny

Although it can seem daunting at first, the Council is here to support and help in any way we can. Remember, there is no expectation that you will automatically know how to be a councillor.

Can I have a job and be a councillor?

By law, if you are working, your employer must allow you to take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours to perform your duties as a councillor. The amount of time given will depend on your responsibilities and the effect of your absence on your employer's business. Council meetings are held during the working day, and you will need to attend several meetings in person. Employers can choose to pay you for this time, but they don't have to.

We would encourage you to discuss as soon as possible with your employer before making the commitment to stand for election.

Many employers are supportive and understand the importance, value and mutual benefits of their employees contributing to the community in this way.

There are many benefits to both employee and employer – practical work experience, skills and knowledge which can be transferred into any workplace, and the role can be career-enhancing.

Being a councillor provides:

- ▶ **Practical work experience:** Council work is incredibly varied (as the Council runs over 700 services) and links to all aspects of our life and therefore all types of employment.
- ▶ **New skills:** such as leadership skills, communication skills, reading reports, influencing skills and speaking at meetings or events.
- ▶ **Knowledge:** about the local community, how councils, government and the wider public sector work; as well as topics from culture and biodiversity, mental and physical health, to finance and budgets.
- ▶ **Confidence:** gained through new experiences, challenges and achievements for the local area.

Do I have to belong to a political party or group?

You can either stand as an independent candidate or by joining a group or political party. If you are thinking of standing as a candidate for a particular political party, then you will need to be a member of that party's local organisation.

There is a link at the end of this brochure to the register of political parties.

How much time is involved in being a councillor?

The time commitment will depend on your role within the Council, the number of duties you decide to take on and the demands of your constituents, but the role can be done flexibly around employment, studying, caring, and other voluntary commitments. It could range from a few hours each week to a few hours each day at busier times, but you should attend every committee to which you have been appointed as well as Full Council meetings.

Either way, your time as a councillor will be split between your two key responsibilities: your ward and the Council.



While much of the day-to-day work of a councillor takes place outside of formal meetings, you will be required to attend some Council meetings to:

- ▶ represent community views, needs and ideas
- ▶ help create strategies, policies and plans
- ▶ make decisions and/or review decisions taken.

Ward Duties	Council Duties
Dealing with queries and complaints from residents and working with council officers to resolve complaints	Help form policy
Explaining Council policy and processes	Help develop the council's budget and agree the level of Council Tax
Holding surgeries for local residents	Make or scrutinise decisions
Representing your Ward at meetings (for example where decisions are being made which directly affect your local area, such as Planning Application)	Attendance at Council meetings and reading associated papers
Attending Parish Council meetings within your Ward if applicable	Representing the Council on outside organisations/working groups

What you may want to consider

These are just a few of the considerations you will need to make before you take on the responsibility of being a councillor.

- ▶ You work for the people in your ward, but you work for them in conjunction with the Council and its officers.
- ▶ How your role as a councillor will impact on any family and personal relationships – you will need their support and understanding as you may be spending a lot of your spare time on Council business.
- ▶ You will be a member of at least one committee or be on the Cabinet. Nearly all committee meetings are held in the day.
- ▶ Your meetings/commitments may not be evenly spread out over the cycle so some weeks you may be out at more times than others.
- ▶ If you are elected as a chair, spokesperson or member of the Cabinet, the role can be very demanding as you will take responsibility for making decisions that affect the lives of the people of Coventry.
- ▶ The people you represent will look to you for help in dealing with their problems. You are likely to receive a lot of post, emails and telephone calls, and not every caller will telephone at what you might think is a reasonable hour!
- ▶ Most councillors hold at least one drop-in surgery each month, some hold two or even three surgeries in this period. You may spend some of your time visiting constituents at their homes, or at the Council offices, and you may also have to meet with officers of the Council to help you with any issues.
- ▶ There are approximately 10 Full Council meetings a year which are held on a Tuesday, these are formal meetings that you will be expected to attend. Most meetings start at 2pm and can last up to three hours, and sometimes longer.
- ▶ For most of the meetings you attend there will be agendas and reports that you will need to read beforehand. These can be quite detailed and take time to read and understand.
- ▶ While campaigning, all candidates should refer to and follow the Electoral Commission's guidance. This can be read at electoralcommission.org.uk/

guidance-candidates-and-agents-local-government-elections-england/campaigning. In particular, Candidates should avoid statements that suggest you will not consider evidence or officer advice at the decision-making stage. Do not say “I will vote against X no matter what” or similar wording. Instead, use phrases like: “I have concerns about this proposal, but I will consider all evidence before making a decision.”

Member of a political party?

There will be additional calls on your time to attend political group meetings. Political groups require their members to attend group meetings in advance of Council meetings and possibly training events/seminars organised by the political party.

Will I get paid for my duties?

There is no salary for being a councillor. However, you will be paid an allowance to

reimburse you for the time and expenses incurred whilst on Council business.

Every councillor is entitled to a basic allowance (£16,886 for the year 2025/26) which is paid into a bank account in 12 monthly instalments along with additional re-imbursement to cover all council-related travelling and subsistence when carrying out ‘approved duties’.



£16,886
allowance per year

Some councillors are given an additional allowance to cover any special responsibilities, such as Executive member, scrutiny chair/spokesperson, among others. For example, the chairs of Council committees currently receive £8,431 per year in addition to the basic allowance.

For more information about the members’ allowance scheme please download the Council’s constitution coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/constitution



The city of Coventry

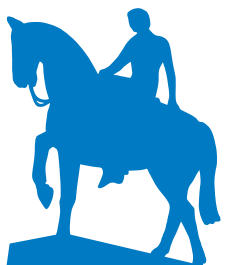
Understanding Coventry the place

Coventry is a lively, multicultural city, which embraces old and new.

Around the modern city centre there are traces of history everywhere – in the old city walls, the timber-framed buildings and the reconstructed medieval Spon Street.

But Coventry has always had an eye on the future and is now firmly focused on regenerating and re-inventing itself to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. With major developments and new projects taking place right across the city, it is an exciting time to be part of the Coventry journey!

Coventry is one of the fastest growing cities in the country



345,300
residents (census 2021)

35
YEARS

median age of 35 compared to the UK average of 40 years

Population growth in the last 10 years

8.9%



6.2%

West Midlands

6.6%

National average

The increase is the 4th highest out of the 36 England metropolitan areas

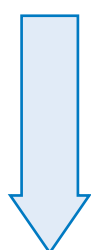
9th largest

metropolitan district in England, up from 11th in 2011.



23%

of Coventry children aged 0-15 live in relative low-income families compared to 19% nationally.



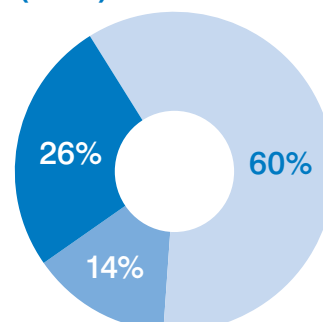
The percentage of Coventry neighbourhoods amongst the 10% most deprived in England **reduced from 18.5% to 14.4%** between 2015 and 2019.

Just under half of Coventry's school-aged children are from a global majority background.



The significant student population in Coventry has contributed to 9.15% of population being aged 20-24 – the 4th highest in England Metropolitan areas and higher than the national average of 6.04%.

0 - 20
20-64
65+



For more information, visit the Facts about Coventry website coventry.gov.uk/facts-coventry

How our Council works

Coventry has had a council from medieval times, which has been reformed on numerous occasions. Since 1974 the council has been a metropolitan council and in 1986 became a unitary authority following the abolition of the West Midlands County Council.

The democratic centre of the Council is at the Council House, Earl Street, Coventry, and is where nearly all democratic meetings take place. The main office for staff is at Friargate close to the railway station, although services operate from buildings across the city such as Whitley Depot, 17 libraries and eight Family Hubs.

The Cabinet

The Leader of the Council appoints a Cabinet selected from the elected councillors. The Cabinet is made up of 10 members, including the Leader of the Council.

The Cabinet makes decisions about Council Services which exceed the financial limits for a Cabinet Member (£1m - £1.5m) or which significantly affect more than one ward.

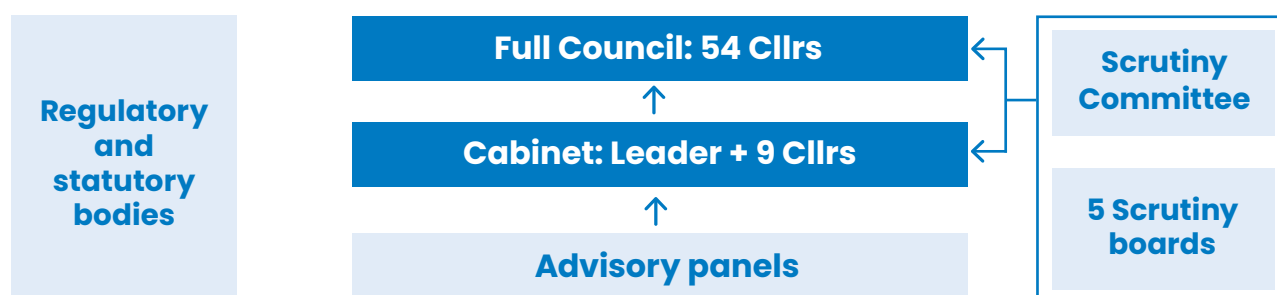
Functions and responsibilities include:

- ▶ maintaining and improving governance
- ▶ financial management
- ▶ recommendations to Council about annual policy priorities and resource allocation
- ▶ annual approval of Council Tax Base and recommendations to the Council about the level of Council Tax.

The Cabinet considers reports from the Scrutiny Committee and all policy and budgetary framework documents.

Scrutiny

Scrutiny is about holding the Executive (Cabinet) to Account, this is at different stages of the decision-making process, including public consultations. Scrutiny is independent of the Cabinet, responsible for setting its own work programmes. Scrutiny supports Cabinet and officers in developing policy and investigating whether planned outcomes are being achieved – e.g. Complaints Policy and Procedures. Scrutiny also reviews performance of Council services to ensure they are achieving customer satisfaction and value for money, monitors Council performance and ensures standards are met – e.g. One Coventry Plan Performance Reports. Scrutiny also looks at the work and impact of external agencies on the community e.g. health service providers, Community Safety Partnership and other partners e.g. CAMHS.



The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee appoints Scrutiny Boards to support this work, there are five boards.

Regulatory Committee

The Regulatory Committees of the Council include Audit and Procurement, Ethics, Licensing and Planning. These Committees all meet regularly and have specific responsibilities as set out in the Constitution.

What does Coventry City Council do?

As a City Council, Coventry City Council (CCC) is responsible for a range of vital

services for people and businesses in the city. We run more than 700 services, many are visible that combine to make a real difference to residents' lives on a daily basis. Some you may only know about if you come into direct contact with them. As a city councillor you will be involved in decision-making, shaping policy and budget setting for these important services.

A lot of Council work is done in an agile way, with a focus on improvement, collaboration, and innovation, and by working with the community and others such as the police and health partners.

Funding for the Council and local services comes from three main sources – government grants, business rates and council tax from residents.

Some of our 700+ services include:



refuse, recycling
and street
cleaning



housing and
regeneration



planning
and building
regulation



elections



transport, roads
and street
lighting



schools,
education and
adult learning



children's and
adults' social
care



environmental
health and
licensing



car parks



community
safety and crime
reduction



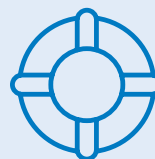
parks and open
spaces



leisure centres
and activities for
all ages



Council Tax and
housing benefit



emergency
response e.g.
flooding, major
incidents



arts, libraries,
museums and
heritage sites

One Coventry Plan 2022–2030

Coventry City Council's 'One Coventry Plan' outlines our vision and priorities for the future.

Our vision is: **One Coventry - working together to improve our city and the lives of those who live, work and study here.**

Our three priorities will focus on:



We will do this through:



We will create:

- ▶ a city with a strong and resilient economy, where inclusive growth is promoted and delivered, businesses are enabled to innovate and grow, and new local jobs are created.
- ▶ a city where our residents get the best possible start in life, experience good health and age well, in a city that embraces diversity, protects the most vulnerable and values its residents and communities.
- ▶ a city that leads the way and invests in the green industrial revolution. Ensuring the future wellbeing of our residents by embedding environmentally-friendly behaviours and exploring opportunities to lessen the pressures caused by climate change.

We will do this by being:

- ▶ a council with a strong and sustainable financial position, with resources

and assets that are aligned with our priorities

- ▶ a council that plays a key role as a civic leader, working in genuine partnership with residents, communities and partners.

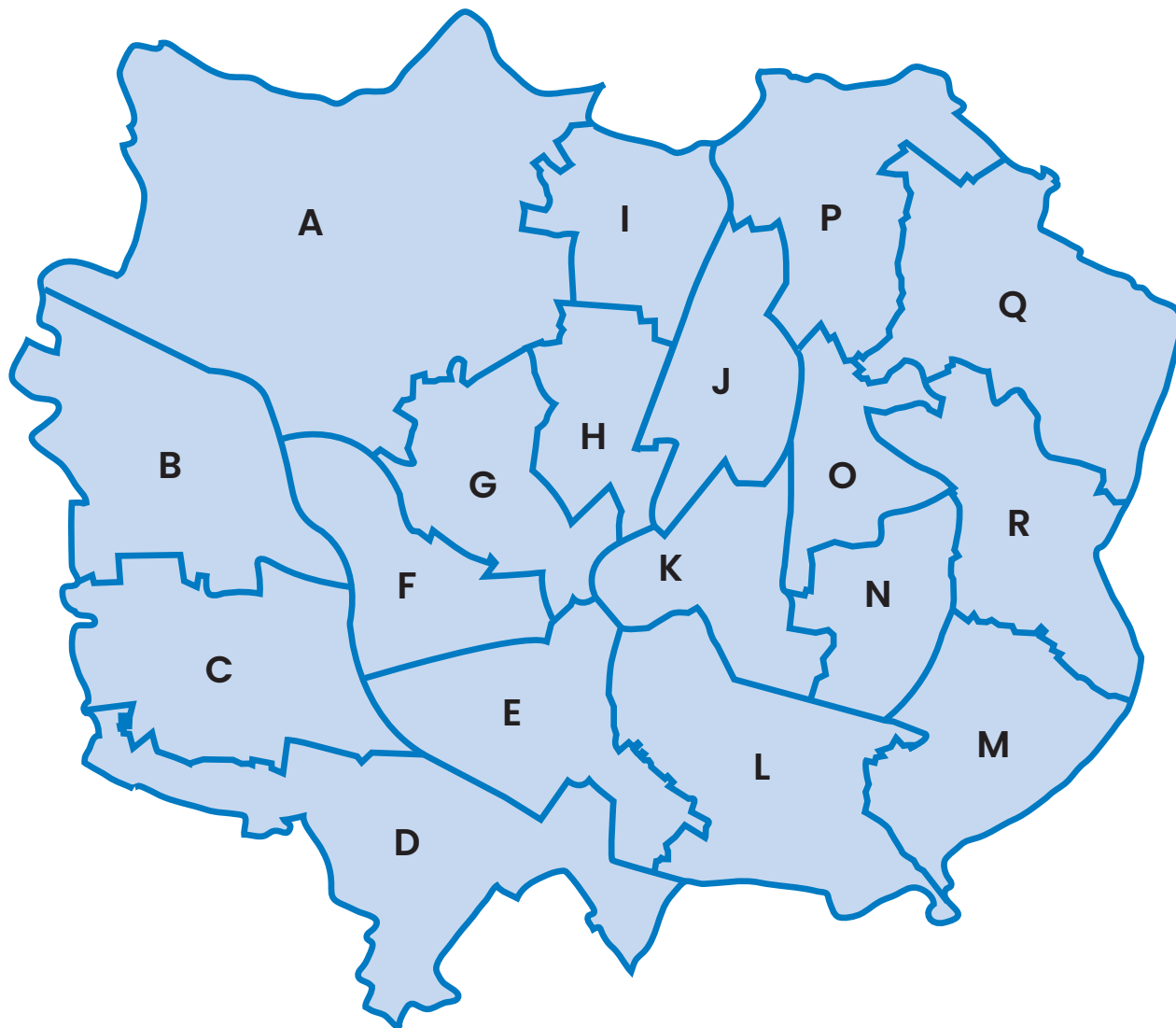
Managing our performance and how we measure our progress

The bi-annual performance report outlines our achievements in relation to our three main priorities and two enabling priorities. It highlights trends and provides performance metrics, supported by qualitative information through case studies, to assess the progress made. Additionally, the report offers contextual insights into our overall performance and compares it with relevant regional and national benchmarks.

The full plan is available to read: coventry.gov.uk/theonecoventryplan

Coventry wards

New ward boundaries come into effect in May 2026 (reflecting final recommendations of Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Electoral Review).



Key	Name	No. of councillors
A	Bablake	3
B	Woodlands	3
C	Tile Hill and Canley	3
D	Wainbody	3
E	Earlsdon	3
F	Whoberley	3
G	Sherbourne	3
H	Radford	3
I	Holbrooks	3

Key	Name	No. of councillors
J	Foleshill	3
K	St Michael's	3
L	Cheylesmore	3
M	Binley and Willenhall	3
N	Lower Stoke	3
O	Upper Stoke	3
P	Longford	3
Q	Henley	3
R	Wyken	3

Elections and how they work

In England and Wales, over 19,000 people represent their communities by serving as councillors on a local authority. Councillors are elected to represent an individual geographical unit of the city known as a ward (district) or division (county). In the city of Coventry, a third of councillors are elected each year, once every four years. However, in some councils all councillors are elected every four years. Elections are held on the first Thursday in May, with the next elections due on 7 May 2026. It is important to note that at the elections in 2026 there will be elections for all councillors due to new ward boundaries being implemented following a review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

If a councillor resigns or dies whilst in office, a by-election is held to elect another person to represent the ward. Councillors elected at a by-election serve the remaining period of the four-year term. However, when a vacancy occurs within six months of the date of when the previous councillor was up for re-election, then the seat is vacant until the next election.

Steps to being elected

To become a councillor, you will need to stand as a candidate in a local election.

Complete a nomination form to have your name included on the ballot paper

Appoint an Election Agent to report your campaign finances after the election

Run your campaign

Canvas electors for votes

Produce election material in accordance with the election rules

Conduct interviews with the press and media

Attend key events

Make an acceptance speech at the election count (hopefully).

Before every election we hold 'Candidate and Agent Briefing Sessions' to provide you with the key information that you will need and give you a step-by-step guide to the nominations process.

There is detailed advice available to candidates and agents on the Electoral Commission's website:

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-local-government-elections-england

Nomination process

The nomination process involves completing a number of different forms. Copies and guidance for completing these forms can be downloaded from the Electoral Commission's website:

www.electoralcommission.org.uk



Forms you will need to complete:

- ▶ Nomination form
- ▶ Candidate's consent to nomination
- ▶ Home address form
- ▶ Certificate of authorisation (if standing for a political party)
- ▶ Request for a party emblem (if standing for a political party)
- ▶ Notification of election agent



The nomination form must be endorsed by the signatures of two registered electors (known as subscribers) from the ward in which you are standing.

If you attend the 'Candidate and Agent Briefing Sessions' you'll be able to obtain a printed copy of the nomination pack, if you require one. The nomination pack will include nomination forms, timetables and guidance notes.

Next steps

If you have made the decision to stand you will need to make sure you are officially nominated. You will need to complete a nomination pack which you can download from the Electoral Commission's website or from the Elections Team by contacting electionbackoffice@coventry.gov.uk or calling 024 7697 5226.



Useful Contacts

If you are interested in other political parties, visit the register of political parties, accessible via the Electoral Commission's website:

www.electoralcommission.org.uk

The Electoral Commission

3 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8YZ

020 7271 0500 (switchboard)

www.electoralcommission.org.uk

Local Government Association (LGA)

Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

020 7664 3000

www.lga.gov.uk

Local Government Information Unit (LGIU)

Third Floor, 251 Pentonville Road, Islington, London N1 9NG

020 7554 2800

www.lgiu.org

Be a Councillor (Local Government Association)

www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor

Contact us

Coventry City Council

Council House, Earl Street, Coventry CV1 5RR

024 7683 3034

coventry.gov.uk



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).

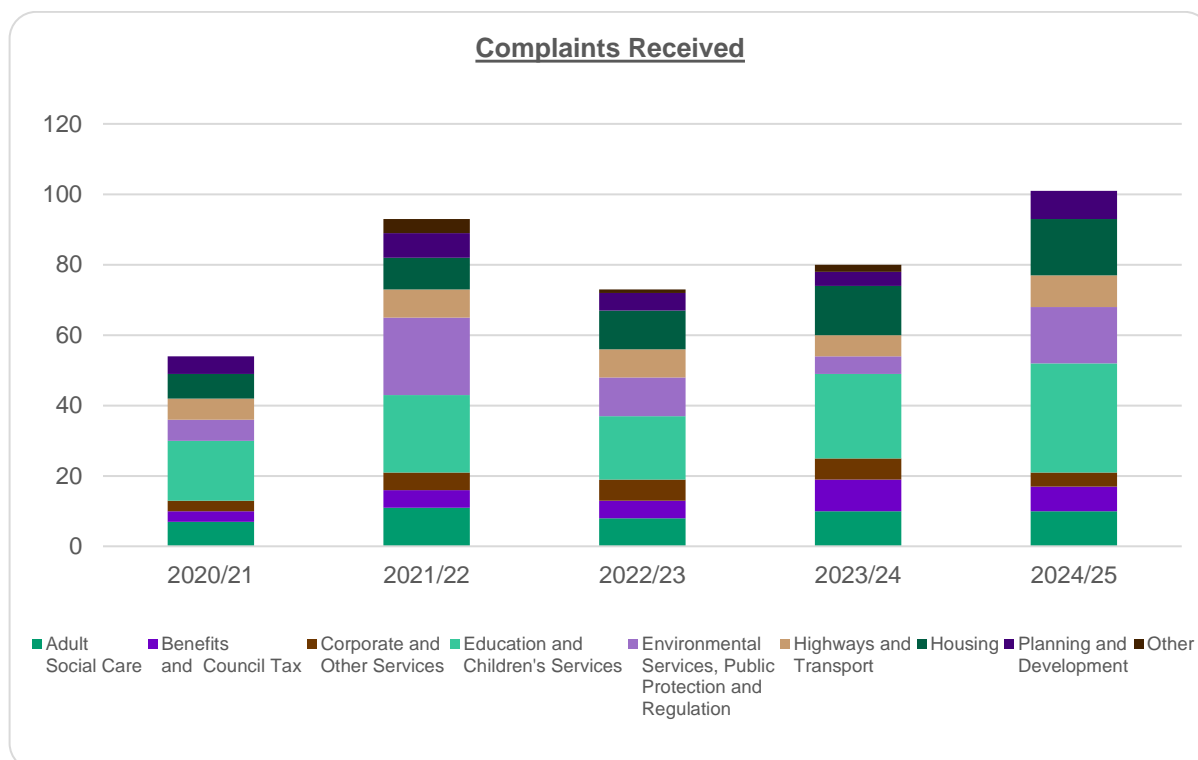
2.3 Figure 1.

Figure 1: Complaints and enquiries received by category

Category (as defined by LGSCO)	Complaints in 2023/24	Complaints in 2024/25	Change in Year
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

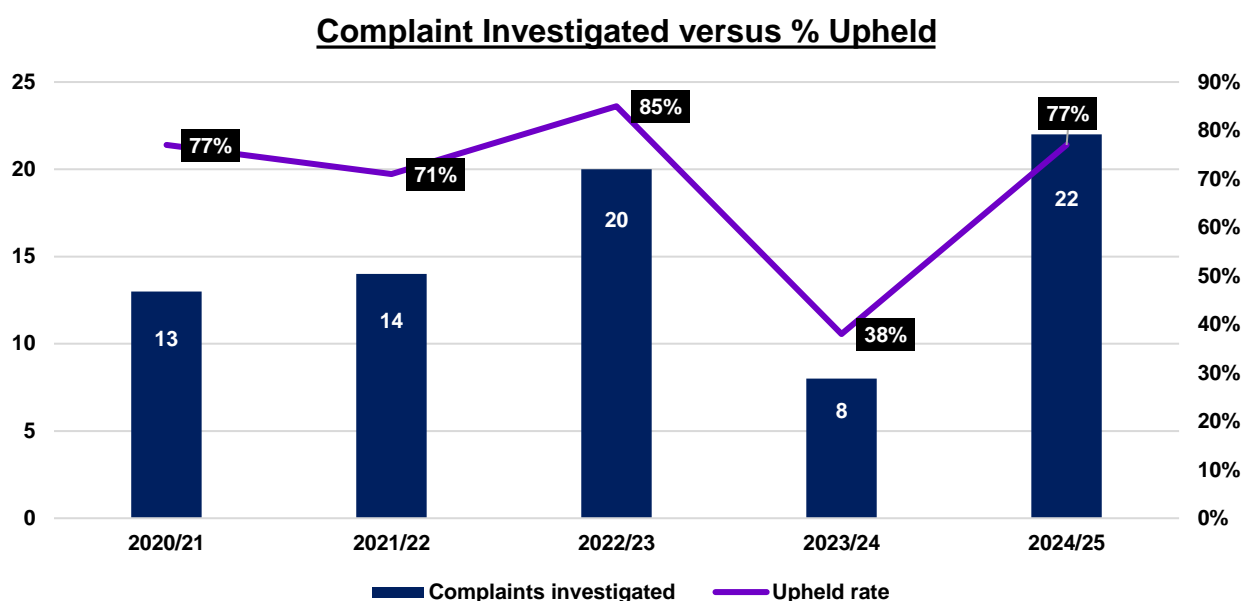
Of 204 complaints investigated across the seven constituent areas of the WMCA, 169 (83%) were upheld and 35 were not upheld. The authority with the highest percentage of complaints upheld in 2024/25 was Solihull (89%), followed closely by Walsall, Wolverhampton and Sandwell on 88%. while the lowest was 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 the 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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Julie Newman	Director of Law and Governance	Law and Governance	22/10/25	23/10/25
Julie Nugent	Chief Executive		22/10/25	27/10/25
Councillor G Duggins	Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership		28/10/25	29/10/25

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

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21 May 2025

By email

Dr Nugent
Chief Executive
Coventry City Council

Dear Dr Nugent

Annual Review letter 2024-25

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2025. The information offers valuable insight about your organisation's approach to complaints, and I know you will consider it as part of your corporate governance processes. We have listened to your feedback, and I am pleased to be able to share your annual statistics earlier in the year to better fit with local reporting cycles. I hope this proves helpful to you.

[Your annual statistics are available here.](#)

In addition, you can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

In a change to our approach, we will write to organisations in July where there is exceptional practice or where we have concerns about an organisation's complaint handling. Not all organisations will get a letter. If you do receive a letter it will be sent in advance of its publication on our website on 16 July 2025, alongside our annual Review of Local Government Complaints.

Supporting complaint and service improvement

In February we published [good practice guides](#) to support councils to adopt our [Complaint Handling Code](#). The guides were developed in consultation with councils that have been piloting the Code and are based on the real-life, front-line experience of people handling complaints day-to-day, including their experience of reporting to senior leaders and elected members. The guides were issued alongside free [training resources](#) organisations can use to make sure front-line staff understand what to do when someone raises a complaint. We will be applying the Code in our casework from April 2026 and we know a large number of councils have already adopted it into their local policies with positive results.

This year we relaunched our popular [complaint handling training](#) programme. The training is now more interactive than ever, providing delegates with an opportunity to consider a complaint from receipt to resolution. Early feedback has been extremely positive with delegates reporting an increase in confidence in handling complaints after completing the training. To find out more contact training@lgo.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Amerdeep Somal
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

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Appendix 2 Decisions in 2024/25 (detailed investigations carried out)

Service Area	Decisions Upheld (17)	Monetary Settlement
17 - Complaints Upheld: Fault and injustice		
Adult Social Care 4 complaints upheld	<p>1. Ms X, a representative for Ms Y, complained that the Council failed to carry out a social care assessment in August 2022 or January 2023 when Ms Y requested care and support as she was struggling to look after herself and her child T due to illness. Ms X said the assessment completed by adult social care in January 2023 was a contact assessment (not a full needs assessment) and did not consider Ms Y's caring responsibilities. As a consequence, Ms Y was without support when she was unwell, and this caused avoidable distress and a decline in her mental health.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written apology • A symbolic payment of £250 to reflect the avoidable distress and to recognise the avoidable uncertainty around entitlement to support caused by the failures set out. • Provide a copy of the practice guidance it is developing around the whole family approach and • Written evidence it has delivered training to staff in the initial contact team around recognising when parents need support. <p>2. Miss X complains on behalf of Miss Y who has died. Miss X says the Council failed to properly support Miss Y in the months before her death. She says the Council failed to carry out a full enquiry into safeguarding concerns. Miss X says the Council started a safeguarding enquiry about her and prevented her from visiting Miss Y in hospital, just before her death.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind relevant staff of the duties in safeguarding adults who have mental capacity to make decisions. <p>3. The complainant, Ms X, complained on behalf of her mother (Mrs Y) and herself. She said the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failed to keep Mrs Y safe in an accommodation with an independent living provider it had commissioned, which resulted in her being groomed and assaulted. • Completed a flawed safeguarding investigation, caused delay in sharing the outcome with her, and did not share some information she asked for; and • Communicated with her poorly, which included not responding to some communication and a social worker making inappropriate comments. 	£250

Service Area	Decisions Upheld (17)	Monetary Settlement
	<p>Ms X also said the independent living provider failed to respond to her complaint when it said it would and did not comply fully with the police investigation. Ms X said, as a result, she and Mrs Y experienced distress and uncertainty, and Mrs Y experienced harm or risk of harm.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologise in writing to Ms X and Ms Y for failure to keep her safe from harm or risk of harm. • Pay Mrs Y a symbolic payment of £250 to acknowledge failure to keep her safe from harm or risk of harm; • Pay Ms X a symbolic payment of £250 to acknowledge the preventable distress and uncertainty she experienced as a result of failure to keep Mrs Y safe from harm or risk of harm, and some delayed communication with her. • 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 adult social care and 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. <p>4. Ms X complained about failings by the Council's Adult Social Care (ASC) service. She said the Council did not respond to her reports of concerning behaviour and violence from her son, Mr Y, made prior to his arrest, and did not provide the family any support. Ms X also complained the Council did not provide an emergency respite placement for Mr Y when he was due to be released from police custody. Mr Y's care provider found him a hotel, but Ms X said the Council left him at risk. Ms X said Mr Y's social worker did not understand the risks of Mr Y living at home. They also did not understand his communication needs and used long words, causing him distress. Ms X said the Council's ASC service let the family down and considers Mr Y's arrest could have been avoided if the Council had acted on her reports.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologise to Mr Y and Ms X for the identified failings. • Pay Mr Y and Ms X £250 each (£500 in total) in recognition of the uncertainty and distress caused by failure to follow up on respite care options and failure to properly consider suitable support when Mr Y's behaviour escalated. 	£500

Service Area	Decisions Upheld (17)	Monetary Settlement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind staff in 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. 	£500
Education Services 3 complaints upheld	<p>1. Ms X complains the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not provide adequate education to her daughter Y and the provision listed in her Education, Health and Care plan when she was out of school. Delayed in issuing a final Education, Health and Care plan following an annual review. <p>Ms X said her daughter has missed out on education and has fallen behind in her education.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologise to Ms X for not providing adequate education to Y or the special educational provision in her EHC plan and for the time taken to produce a final EHC plan following Y's annual review. Pay Ms X £3,600, for the benefit of Y's education, to recognise the loss of education and special education provision to Y between February 2023 and March 2024. This is calculated at being £1,200 a term for three terms. Make an ongoing payment of £400 a month to Ms X. The Council should start this from April 2024 until either Y reintegrates back into school in accordance with her EHC plan, or the Council puts in place what it sees as an appropriate package of education alongside all parts of the special educational provision it is able to deliver while Y is not at school. Pay Ms X £300 to recognise the distress and uncertainty she experienced as a result of the delays in issuing Y's final EHC plan following the annual review. <p>2. Ms X complained the Council failed to provide education for her child Y, who was medically signed off from school since January 2023. Ms X says Y had an Education and Health Care Plan which the Council failed to provide provision for when they were out of school. Ms X also complained the Council delayed in finalising Y's Education and Health Care Plan which delayed her right of appeal.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an apology to Ms X and a pay her £300 for the distress and frustration caused through the Council's delays and handling of this matter. Provide an apology and pay Ms X £2,625 to acknowledge the impact on Y of the lost educational provision from 15 February 2023 until 11 September 2023. 	<p>£3900</p> <p>£2925</p>

Service Area	Decisions Upheld (17)	Monetary Settlement
Children's Services 2 complaints upheld	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. <p>3. Mrs X complained the Council did not put alternative provision in place for her child Y, when Y became too unwell to attend school. Mrs X said this impacted on Y's quality of life and development and caused her and Y's father stress and difficulty.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologise to Mrs X for the frustration and upset she experienced due to the Council's failure to properly consider if it should arrange alternative provision for Y and the delay in issuing Y's EHC Plan. • Pay Mrs X £500 in recognition of her injustice. • 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. <p>1. Ms X complains that in early February 2023 her son, Mr Y's social worker failed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tell her quickly her son was attacked and injured: and • get Mr Y to seek medical advice. <p>Ms X said the Council did not consider her complaint properly. It relied on altered reports and investigated the wrong incident. It then refused to investigate her complaint at stage three of its procedure because it considered her behaviour towards staff unacceptable. Ms X would like the Council to apologise for its failings and support Mr Y as it should have done from the beginning.</p> <p>Ms X also complained in August 2023 s that since September 2022 the Council failed to provide Mr Y with support he was entitled to under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, as well as raising other concerns, which were not investigated.</p>	£500

Service Area	Decisions Upheld (17)	Monetary Settlement
	<p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> apologise to Ms X for failure to tell her quickly of the attack on Mr Y, and the distress and frustration this has caused Ms X. pay Ms X £300 it offered to remedy the distress, frustration and unnecessary time and trouble she experienced; agree a statement of complaint and, if Ms X still wants the Council to consider her complaint, fully investigate the complaint Ms X made to it in August 2023 about the quality of services to Mr Y under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and other matters; and pay an additional £150 to Ms X for the avoidable uncertainty the delay in investigating her complaint from August 2023 has caused her. <p>2. Mrs Y complained about the Council's response to her concerns about Children's Services' engagement with her sister, Ms Z, and her nephews. She was unhappy with the Council's response to her complaint.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council agreed to respond to Mrs Y's complaint at Stage 2. 	£450
Housing 1 complaint upheld	<p>1. Mr X complained that the Council continued to auto-bid for properties advertised on Coventry Homefinder which are unsuitable for his housing needs. As a result, he was not considered for other properties which would have been suitable. He says this caused him stress and had a detrimental impact on his mental health. He would like the Council to apologise and pay a financial remedy.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange for a manager to make a direct written apology to Mr X; Pay £300 as a symbolic payment to recognise the distress caused by its fault. 	£300
Corporate and Other Services 2 Complaints upheld	<p>1. Mr X complains the Council did not remove a flag on display at a community centre, which he reported as inappropriate due to its political nature. He also complains about the Council's handling of his complaint. Mr X says the presence of the flag is discriminatory and the Council's decision not to remove it causes him distress.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p>	

Service Area	Decisions Upheld (17)	Monetary Settlement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within four weeks of this decision the Council has agreed to make a new decision with reference to the relevant government guidance and with full consideration of the services at the community centre. The Council will communicate its decision in writing to Mr X. • Alongside this, within four weeks of this decision the Council has agreed to provide a written apology to Mr X for the inconvenience and frustration caused by its handling of his complaint. <p>2. Ms X complained the Council wrongly declined her Blue Badge application for her son. Ms X said this has affected her and her son, as he needs a Blue Badge so they can get to the car quickly if he is having a seizure.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologise to Ms X and pay Ms X £150 to recognise the uncertainty and missed opportunity caused by the fault in this case. • Demonstrate that it has taken action - including making changes to its 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. 	£150
1 – Complaint Upheld: Fault and No Injustice		
Housing Services 1 Complaints upheld	<p>1. Mr X complains that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Council wrongly refused to include his child as part of his homelessness application. As a result, the Council provided interim and temporary accommodation which was unsuitable as it could not accommodate his child. • that the Council's decision to discharge the main housing duty was incorrect as the permanent accommodation offered was not suitable as it could not accommodate his daughter. <p>Mr X considers the Council's actions have caused him considerable distress and financial hardship.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council will 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. 	
4 Complaints Upheld: no further action – organisation already remedied.		

Service Area	Decisions Upheld (17)	Monetary Settlement
Children Services 3 Upheld	<p>1. Ms X complained about a social worker's judgement and a section 7 report prepared for court action, which she considered was inaccurate and about which the judge was critical. She also complained about the way the Council handled the child in need process and said her child, Y, should have had a child protection plan from 2022. Ms X said the Council's failings meant she incurred additional legal costs and was unable to claim Legal Aid. She also said she was caused distress and uncertainty and was put to avoidable time and trouble pursuing the Council.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council agreed to pay £800. 	£800
	<p>2. Ms X complained about the actions of the Council's children's services. The Council accepted her complaint under the children's statutory complaints procedure but had not completed the stage two investigation within the required timescales.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 65 working days of the final decision, the Council will complete its investigation of Ms X's complaint under the children's statutory complaints procedure. Within one month of the stage two adjudication letter, the Council will pay Ms X a financial remedy for the distress caused by the delay. This should be calculated at £50 per month of delay, from 20 May 2024 to the date Ms X is sent the stage 2 adjudication letter. 	£350
	<p>3. Mr X complained about the actions of a children's social worker. The Council accepted his complaint under the children's statutory complaints procedure but has not completed the stage two investigation within the required timescales.</p> <p>Agreed action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 65 working days of the final decision, the Council will complete its stage two investigation of Mr X's complaint under the children's statutory complaints procedure. Within one month of the stage two adjudication letter, the Council will pay Mr X a financial remedy for the distress caused by the delay. This should be calculated at £50 per month of delay, from 11 May 2024 to the date Mr X is sent the stage 2 adjudication letter. 	£250
Housing Enforcement 1 Upheld	<p>1. Mr X, complained about the way the Council responded after he reported disrepair in his home, which he rents from a private landlord, in late August 2023. He also complained about poor complaints handling. Mr X said this caused him distress and physical health impacts on him and his family.</p>	
Total		£10,875

Service Area	Decisions Not Upheld (5)
Adult Social Care 1 Complaint	The complainant, Ms X, complains the Council failed to deal properly with safeguarding concerns about her adult son.
Housing Services 1 Complaint	Mr X complained about how the Council handled his homelessness application, after he moved to the area following a domestic abuse incident. He said he was unable to manage shared accommodation due to his mental health, and the Council did not consider this when offering interim accommodation.
Bereavement 1 Complaint	<p>Mr X complains the Council did not take appropriate care of a cemetery where he visits his parents' graves. He said it is always untidy, and complained of recent specific examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tree near his parents' graves had an untidy pile of sticks and leaves at its base despite him raising concerns about it. • The Council allowed the grass to grow too long. When the Council cut the grass his parents' headstones were covered in grass cuttings and mud. <p>Mr X says the condition of the cemetery caused him distress and frustration when he visited his parents' graves. He would like the cemetery to look tidier and more respectful for its use</p>
School Appeals 2 Complaints	<p>1. Mrs X complained the appeal panel failed to properly consider her school admission appeal for her child. Mrs X said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were technical difficulties affecting her participation in the appeal. • The panel made prejudicial comments. • The panel did not properly consider her evidence or give the chance to present additional information. • There were discrepancies about the pupil numbers presented. • The panel used inaccurate measurements about the distance Mrs X lived from the school. <p>As a result, her child is attending a school they are unhappy with and does not provide them the support Mrs X wants.</p> <p>2. Mrs X complained the appeal panel failed to properly consider her school admission appeal for her child. Mrs X said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were technical difficulties affecting her participation in the appeal. • The panel made prejudicial comments. • The panel did not properly consider her evidence or give the chance to present additional information. • There were discrepancies about the pupil numbers presented. • The panel used inaccurate measurements about the distance Mrs X lived from the school. <p>As a result, her child is attending a school they are unhappy with and does not provide them the support Mrs X wants.</p>



Public Report Ethics Committee

Ethics Committee

8 January 2026

Name of Cabinet Member:

N/A - Ethics Committee

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Law and Governance

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title: Code of Conduct Update

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary

The report updates the Ethics Committee on any national issues in relation to the ethical behaviour of elected Members and the local position in Coventry with regard to Code of Conduct issues.

Recommendations:-

The Ethics Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the position with regard to matter concerning local authorities nationally;
and
2. Note the local position relating to the operation of the Council's Code of Conduct and to delegate any actions arising from these to the Director of Law and Governance, following consultation with the Chair of Ethics Committee.

List of Appendices included

None

Other useful background papers

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

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

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Code of Conduct Update

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The Council's Ethics Committee has agreed that the Director of Law and Governance will provide a regular update on cases relating to the Members' Code of Conduct on a national basis. This is to facilitate the Ethics Committee's role in assisting the Council with its duties under Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of Members' conduct.

1.2 The National Picture

1.2.1 Consultation results and Government response Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England

On 11 November 2025 the Government posted the outcome and its response to the consultation on Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England. The consultation sought to obtain views on the introduction of a mandatory minimum code of conduct for Councils and enhanced measures on the standards and conduct regime, with the view to creating consistency across local authorities in England when investigating serious code of conduct breaches. The consultation received 2092 responses.

The reforms which the Government seek to implement include:

- Mandatory code of conduct
This will include a behavioural code and will be for all local authorities
- Formal standards committee
There will be a requirement for principal authorities to have a standards committee for complaints and to have oversight of Councillor conduct
- Individual support during investigations
Where there is an investigation, the principal authority must offer support to the complainant and the Councillor
- Appeal
This would be a legislative right of Councillors and complainants which entitles them to a 'right to review' in respect of a decision made by the standards committee
- Power of suspension
For serious breaches of the code of conduct Councillors face a suspension of up to 6 months. Within that allowance could be withheld in the most serious cases. In addition, Councillors could be banned from premises and facilities
For the most serious allegations whereby there is police involvement or where the Member is awaiting sentence they may be suspended on an interim basis of 3 months. In order for this to be extended this would need to be reviewed.

- Disqualification
Where Members have been suspended for the maximum period permitted more than once within 5 years, they could be disqualified.
- National appeals
Upon exercising their 'right to review' Councillors and complainants may lodge an appeal to the national appeals body

The Government expressed its intention to “bring forward the necessary legislation as soon as parliamentary time allows”.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has urged the Government to act quickly on the reform.

The Local Government Association (LGA) in its response acknowledged that majority of Councillors “uphold high standards,” but it identified that the system in its current state is not sufficient for modern local government.

1.2.2 **Audit Wales follow-up review on Wrexham Council**

Wrexham Council has been informed by Audit Wales that the progress it has made on governance issues is not sufficient, with the Council having failed to fully address the recommendations identified in an earlier report

The previous report on the Planning Service, drafted in 2024 revealed “fractured” relationships between Councillors and officers. The follow-up review carried out in 2025 looked at the previously recommended values and behaviours not just in the Planning Service but across the wider Council. Within the report those concerns remained and it was highlighted that when it comes to roles and expectations the Council lacks awareness.

Despite the warning from Audit Wales, the review did recognise that there had been an improvement in relationships in the Planning Committee however, it also noted that there was a lack of trust expressed by Councillors in some officers and their advice.

The Council has a ‘Self-Regulatory Protocol’ (in addition to the Code of Conduct) under which “Members are to avoid personal confrontation in any public forum”, which includes through the media. However, the Auditor for Wales found that this had not been adhered to “with multiple press statements highlighting ongoing tensions. leading to what was described as “unhelpful blame culture”.

The watchdog as part of its conclusions stated that without “constructive values and behaviours, the Council can’t be assured that it has secured value for money.”

Other findings in report were, the limited Member engagement in respect of training and the scope for key materials such as the Member Code of Conduct Handbook and Planning Protocols to be updated.

As part of its follow-up review Audit Wales made three further recommendations concerning the improvement of “relations between Members and officers”, “Member knowledge, awareness and skills” and “strengthening governance arrangements”.

In a statement on the matter Wrexham’s interim Chief Executive :_

“As a Council we’re committed to improving the way Councillors and officers work together. We’re also committed to enhancing Councillor support, skills and knowledge and to ensuring good governance.

“We feel we’ve made some good progress in these areas in recent times, and we’ll continue to work hard in these areas and make sure we take on board the comments and recommendations from Audit Wales.”

1.2.3 Councillor B; Leicestershire County Council

A Leicestershire County Council Councillor was reported to the police after it was alleged that on polling day in May 2025 the Councillor parked an ice-cream van in the street a Leicestershire town with a sign which read "free 4 real Brits".

Leicestershire Police investigated whether the Councillor’s conduct constituted “treating under electoral malpractice.”

The Leader of the Opposition called for the Leader of the Council to suspend Councillor B, due to the serious allegations which they claimed brought the Council into “serious disrepute”.

Leicestershire Police investigated the matter and decided to take no further action over the allegation having not identified any criminal offences to have taken place.

Following the police’s decision, Councillor B as part of his video response online said, "It was a sham from the get-go".

1.2.4 Councillor B; Cheshire West and Chester Council

On 19 August 2025, Councillor B was found to have breached Cheshire West and Chester Council’s Code of Conduct due to his behaviour. Following an interaction with a taxi driver in which he alleged the driver refused to take him based on a protected characteristic, the Councillor made a social media post whereby he explained that the driver “refused to give him a lift” and stated that he is a member of the Licensing

Committee and has “attended hearings about their behaviour”. This led to 2 complaints being made in February 2024 by fellow Councillors.

A further incident is said to have arisen between the Councillor and taxi driver, after which, Councillor B attended the taxi office to complain about it. This conduct formed the basis of a further complaint made against the Councillor in August 2024. The complaint stated that the Councillor said that he would get the driver’s badge, and went on to allege that the Councillor made several phone calls to the driver’s employer making harassing comments.

The complaint alleged that Councillor B made further contact with the driver’s employer by phone to state that he wished to make a complaint, referred to the driver as “obnoxious” and highlighted that he is part of the Licensing Committee which “regulates taxis and private hire provision.”

Councillor B who did not attend the hearing, when responding to the draft report, stated that he felt the investigation was “vexatious”. The Councillor went on to say that in making his complaint to the taxi company which employed the driver in question he “acted in good faith as a private citizen with no influence over any Cheshire West and Chester Council committees.”

The law firm investigating on behalf of the Council described there to be a “history of animosity” and concluded that the Councillor did not treat the driver with respect by misusing his position in a social media post and also breached the Code by “failing to cooperate with the investigation”.

The report did go on to state that Councillor B neither brought his role nor the Council into disrepute.

The Council’s Standards Complaints Panel agreed with a number of the Investigating Officer’s findings but disagreed with the finding that Councillor B had not brought his role into disrepute, with the Decision Notice citing that the Panel were concerned that by referring to his position in the Licensing Committee and stating “I’m not here, to get anyone’s job or to close any business down” implied that as a Councillor he had the power to do so.

The Panel recommended that Councillor B apologise to the driver. Further, West Cheshire and Chester Council’s Monitoring Officer has been instructed to provide training for Councillor B on “the Council’s Acceptable Use Policy”.

The Panel noted that Councillor B is no longer a member of the Licensing Committee but that they would have recommended his removal had he still been a member.

1.2.5 **Councillor M; Staffordshire County Council**

Councillor M has apologised for comments he made on the social media site X, which have been labelled as “disgusting”.

The Councillor for Staffordshire County Council made posts about the police and a statue of a black woman.

In a post dating back to April 2024, the Councillor referred to the police as “politically indoctrinated British hating scum” the post went on to make derogatory remarks towards various groups.

The comments which date back to 2023 and 2024 came to light in recent months however Staffordshire County Council said that action could not be taken as the comments were made before the Councillor commenced his role, with the Code of Conduct applicable to the actions of Councillors.

In light of the comments surfacing the Councillor faced calls to resign.

Councillor M denied being racist or homophobic. The comments posted pre-date Councillor M’s term, and in a statement issued the Councillor said the posts were made “during a difficult time personally” citing both grief and redundancy, and that he does “regret and apologise” for his choice of words.

As a result of this, Horninglow and Eton Parish Council passed a motion that Councillor M is not welcome to attend the Parish Council’s meetings.

1.2.6 **Councillor C; Staffordshire County Council**

In allegations made by the group Hope Not Hate, Councillor C of Staffordshire County Council was accused of making racist posts on X.

The Councillor is accused of posting that “no foreign national or first generation migrant should be allowed to sit in Parliament” said to be in relation to the current Justice Secretary.

Councillor C allegedly described the Mayor of London as “narcissistic” coupled with reference to his ethnic background and allegedly used expletives to tell a black British lawyer to go back to Nigeria.

Another post which the Councillor is alleged to have made appears to make a claim about a demographic within the global majority being “intent on colonising the UK, destroying all that has gone before”.

The Councillor, who had been selected as the Leader of Staffordshire County Council in May 2025 was also accused by a different group of being a ‘top fan’ of a Facebook page which promotes white supremacist views. The term ‘top fan’ on Facebook means to have high levels of engagement with a page on the social media platform.

Following an internal investigation into Councillor's C's "non-disclosure of social media accounts" the Councillor's party membership was revoked. At the time of writing, he remains Leader of the Local Authority.

A new interim Party Leader has also been appointed in the meantime, and a new Leader will be appointed following agreement at the next full Council meeting for Staffordshire.

1.3 The Local Picture

Complaints under the Code of Conduct

- 1.3.1 The Ethics Committee has requested that the Director of Law and Governance reports regularly on any complaints received relating to Members of Coventry City Council.

At the time that this report was written, the Director of Law and Governance has received 3 complaints since those last reported; of the 3 complaints none of them were Member on Member.

Two of these are currently at Stage 2 and the other has been escalated to Stage 1.

- 1.3.2 The Director of Law and Governance will update the Committee on any further complaints received before the meeting and progress on those already received.

All complaints are handled in accordance with the agreed Complaints Protocol. No findings have been made by the Local Government Ombudsman in relation to Members of Coventry City Council.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

The Ethics Committee are recommended to:

1. Note the position with regard to matters concerning local authorities nationally; and
2. Note the local position relating to the operation of Council's Code of Conduct and to delegate any actions arising from these to the Director of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Ethics Committee.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

Not applicable

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

Not applicable

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

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report

5.2 Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. The issues referred to in this report will assist the Council in complying with its obligations under Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011.

6. Other implications

None.

6.1 How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan

Not applicable.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

There is no direct risk to the organisation as a result of the contents of this report.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

No direct impact at this stage.

6.4 Equalities/ EIA

There are no public sector equality duties which are of relevance at this stage.

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

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None at this stage.

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

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Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Richard Shirley	Lead Accountant	Finance	08/12/2025	08/12/2025
Legal: Julie Newman	Director of Law and Governance	Law and Governance	08/12/2025	17/12/2025
Councillor S Nazir	Chair of Ethics Committee		12/12/2025	12/12/2025

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Public report Ethics Committee

Ethics Committee

8 January, 2026

Name of Cabinet Member:

N/A- Ethics Committee

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Law and Governance

Ward(s) affected:

Not applicable

Title:

Work Programme for the Ethics Committee 2025/26

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

This report details the Work Programme for Ethics Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/26. The Committee is asked to consider the Work Programme and make any suggestions for additional or alternative reports.

Recommendations:

The Ethics Committee is recommended to review the Work Programme for 2025/26 attached as Appendix 1 and make any changes or amendments the Committee considers appropriate.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1 - Work Programme

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

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

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Work Programme for the Ethics Committee 2025/26

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The Committee's Terms of Reference are set out in the Council's Constitution and include the consideration of matters which are relevant to the ethical governance of the Council, its Members or employees. This report details a programme of work for the Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/26, designed to assist the Committee to meet its objectives set out in the Terms of Reference, and to ensure that the Council complies with its obligations under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst elected and co-opted Members.
- 1.2 The Committee's Work Programme takes account of the need to promote standards and addresses this in a number of ways. The Work Programme is flexible in terms of suggestions from members of the Ethics Committee as to additional or substitute areas which they would want to consider and receive reports on.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The Work Programme includes regular items on:
 - Code of Conduct/ Monitoring Officer Update
 - Declarations of gifts and hospitality by Members and Officers
 - Annual report to full Council
 - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Report
- 2.2 In addition, the Ethics Committee factor into the Work Programme a number of matters where work is being, or about to be, undertaken across the Council. This includes continuing work on Civility in Public Life and the provision of training for Members.
- 2.3 The Committee is asked to consider whether there are any other matters that they would want to consider during the year.

2.4 Recommendation

The Ethics Committee is recommended to review the Work Programme attached as Appendix 1 and make any changes or amendments the Committee considers appropriate.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

None

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Not applicable

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

5.1 Financial implications

There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

5.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report, as there is no statutory obligation on the Committee to adopt a Work Programme. However, the Council must comply with its obligations under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 and the continuation of a clear programme of work would assist in compliance for the Council as a whole, in its duty to promote high standards of ethical conduct.

6. Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the One Coventry Plan?

Not applicable.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

There is no direct risk to the organisation as a result of the contents of this report.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

If implemented, the Work Programme will facilitate the promotion of high standards amongst elected Members in accordance with the Localism Act.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

There are no public sector equality duties which are of relevance at this stage.

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

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None at this stage

Report author(s):

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Names of approvers for submission: (officers and Members)				
Director : Julie Newman	Director of Law and Governance	Law and Governance	05/12/25	05/12/25
Finance: Richard Shirley	Lead Accountant	Finance	05/12/25	05/12/25
Cllr S Nazir	Chair: Ethics Committee		05/12/25	05/12/25

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Appendix 1

Work Programme for the Ethics Committee - Municipal Year 2025/26

Ethics Committee Meeting and date	Topics
2024/5	
1. 26 June, 2025	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update
	Annual Report of the Committee
	Work Programme 2025/26
	Update on Members Training
2. 25 September 2025	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update
	Officers Gifts and Hospitality - Inspection of Registers for first 6 months of 2025
	Members Gifts and Hospitality -Declarations for first 6 months of 2025
	Local Code of Corporate Governance
	Local Government Association (LGA) Ending Abuse in Public Life – Council Self-Assessment Tool Kit – Progress
	Work Programme 2025/26
3. 8 January, 2026	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update
	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report
	Preparations for Candidates - Municipal Elections 2026
	Work Programme 2025/26
4. 19 March 2026	
	Monitoring Officer/Code of Conduct/ Members Complaints Update.
	Members Gifts and Hospitality - Declarations for last 6 months of 2025
	Officers Gifts and Hospitality - Inspection of Registers for last 6 months of 2025
	Members Training and Development Review 2025-26 – Update
	Work Programme 2026/27