



Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)

Time and Date

10.00 am on Wednesday, 16th July, 2025

Place

Diamond Room 2 - Council House

Public Business

1. **Apologies and Substitutions**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes**
 - (a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2025 (Pages 3 - 8)
 - (b) Matters Arising
4. **Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources - Key Priorities for 2025/26**

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources will outline his key priorities for 2025/26
5. **Reserves Balances 1 April 2025** (Pages 9 - 16)

Briefing note
6. **Procurement Strategy 2025-2030** (Pages 17 - 40)

Briefing note
7. **SME/VCSE Inclusion 2024/25** (Pages 41 - 48)

Briefing note
8. **Work Programme 2025-26 and Outstanding Issues** (Pages 49 - 54)

Report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator
9. **Any other items of Public Business**

Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved

Private Business

Nil

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

Tuesday, 8 July 2025

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Carolyn Sinclair, Governance Services email: carolyn.sinclair@coventry.gov.uk

Membership: Councillors J Blundell, R Brown (By Invitation), P Hetherton (By Invitation), J Innes, A Jobbar (Chair), R Lakha, P Male, K Maton, J McNicholas, CE Thomas and A Tucker

Public Access

Any member of the public who would like to attend the meeting in person is encouraged to contact the officer below in advance of the meeting regarding arrangements for public attendance. A guide to attending public meeting can be found here: <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/publicAttendanceMeetings>

Carolyn Sinclair, Governance Services
email: carolyn.sinclair@coventry.gov.uk

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) held
at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 26 March 2025

Present:

Members:

Councillor A Jobbar (Chair)
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor J Innes
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor G Lewis
Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor D Toulson
Councillor A Tucker

Other Members
(by invitation)

Councillor J O'Boyle

Employees:

Law and Governance	G Holmes, E Jones, A Veness
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People's Services	L Waller
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Property Services and Development	R Moon
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Apologies:

Councillor P Male

Public Business

38. Declarations of Interest

The Chair, Councillor Jobbar, declared a Pecuniary Interest in the matter referred to in Minute 42 below (Home to School Travel Assistance Task and Finish Group). He left the room during consideration of this matter.

39. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 February 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

40. #CovConnects Update

The Board considered a briefing note which provided an update on the #CovConnects Programme, highlighting the progress made in developing the #CovConnects Device Bank moving towards a digital reuse and repair model and social impact measurements.

#CovConnects is Coventry City Council's digital inclusion programme. Launched in October 2022, #CovConnects was a social inclusion programme tackling the digital inequalities experienced by our residents and communities. Its core aim

was to ensure that all Coventry residents should have equal opportunities to access digital skills, tools, technologies, and services. From this approach #CovConnects worked in partnership across sectors to ensure that meaningful, person-centred and holistic digital inclusion initiatives are co-created and embedded to meet our diverse community's needs.

#CovConnects had six key programme principles:

- Outcome based - Prioritising social inclusion not tech.
- Partnership led – Not setting the agenda but responding to it.
- Research focus - Gathering evidence to understand and adapt.
- Efficiency driven - Creating interest and excitement to find funding.
- Unique solutions - Recognising community differences and tailoring a response.
- Scalable core offer - Creating sustainable tech, skills and data offer.

The Briefing Note also summarised details of community connectivity, community skills and support device bank developments, the digital re-use and repair and digital inclusion as a wider determinant of health inequalities.

The Board questioned Officers and received responses on a number of matters relating to the presentation including:

- That device recycling is being considered but has considerable complications, including data security, minimum specification. Consideration is ongoing of recycling chargers and screens.
- That work was being delivered with children and young people through community organisations, as well as a specific programme on digital aspirations which will hopefully be expanded but currently lacks capacity.
- That digital inclusion will never be resolved, issues such as mental health, health and economic disadvantage will always be an issue so by creating an ecosystem of support, this will aid to support people as their lives change.
- That the language used when communicating with communities is important so as not to reduce digital confidence, but to improve well-being and ensure the message is clear that moving to digital means is a personal choice. Assurance was given that staff were being trained to share those key messages.
- That although there are currently 140 digital champions, this work would continue to be scaled to partner organisations such as GP's and NHS trusts.
- That security processes and fear of being scammed were a barrier to digital inclusion, but from a Council perspective it was about ensuring processes are kept as simple as possible. For example, there was no requirement to create a MyAccount to access the Household Support Fund.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board note the information relating to the broader #CovConnects Programme.

41. **Council Office Accommodation**

The Board considered a Briefing Note which provided an update and outlined key findings and recommendations following an occupancy study of Broadgate House, Friargate and the Council House.

Post pandemic, as employees returned to work from offices, it created opportunity for the Council to review the way in which we currently occupy our property portfolio, including office accommodation.

In January 2025, following an occupancy study of Broadgate House, One Friargate and the Council House, Leadership Board in consultation with Members decided on the closure of Broadgate House to deliver an on-going financial saving to the organisation and to further reinforce our One Coventry approach by consolidating staff into Friargate. These findings have led to the following actions:

- Move Children's Services, Education and Housing & Homelessness Team into Friargate and the Council House (House Project and Horizon/Youth Justice Teams).
- Move MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) into Friargate.
- Move the Customer Service Centre and Meet and Greet Team and Children's Conferencing Suite into Central Library, all other Customer Services teams would relocate to Friargate.

A comprehensive occupancy audit programme and findings informed a decision to explore potential rationalisation opportunities and/or a more efficient use of operational properties to achieve financial savings.

Continued monitoring of occupancy further presented an opportunity to:

Phase 1 - 2023/24 Reduce CCC occupancy in Friargate from 6 floors to 4, vacant floors offered up for commercial let, potentially generating additional income.

Phase 2 - 2025 Bring staff together, moving Children's, Education & Housing & Homelessness teams from Broadgate House to Friargate.

Phase 3 - Disposal of BGH once savings realised, to enable re-positioning of this building as a redevelopment opportunity noting and respecting its listed status.

The Cabinet Member for Jobs and Economy spoke about the purpose of the closure is to ensure the Council properly utilises its office buildings to ensure value for money. He reiterated that there had never been any plans to exit the Council House, but that there was potential to build on the heritage aspects alongside St Mary's Guildhall and the Police Museum, already located on the ground floor.

The Board questioned Officers and the Cabinet Member and received responses on a number of matters relating to the presentation including:

- That a wider audit of Council property had been undertaken as part of the One Coventry Services process.
- That the Lady Godiva Clock would remain the responsibility of the Council.
- The impact on letting Friargate 2 if more commercial lettings take place at Friargate 1, and that Friargate 2 is half let currently but will continue to be marketed.
- That the Council House is an important asset to the city but currently has a low occupancy rate.

- That community groups are able to book rooms at the Council House at a rate that covers costs.
- That the closure of Broadgate House is part of a wider modernisation programme with agile working increasing and enabling more inclusive work patterns.
- The savings made from the proposed sale of Broadgate House will cover any refurbishment required by the re-location of teams to the Library and Council House.
- That the wider portfolio of commercial property was always reviewed, but that smaller office units were more difficult to let, and the focus was on larger commercial sites which are more financially viable and contribute to the wider economy of the city.
- That there are limited additional costs of Broadgate House being empty as it is a listed building and exempt from business rates, but the hope is that it would be disposed of quickly.
- Overall, the initiative to move to Friargate has been a success, that has reduced the Council property portfolio, which will mean a reduction in costs.
- Members may want to consider the current use of offices allocated to them as part of a future review.

RESOLVED that the Board note the contents of the Briefing Note and Officer presentation.

42. Review Home-to-school Transport Task & Finish Group

The Board considered a Briefing Note which set out the recommendations from the Review Home-to-school Transport Task & Finish Group. Cllr L Kelly (Chair of the Group) attended the meeting to report on their recommendations. Cllr Kelly highlighted the key learning from the process and reiterated that by undertaking a task and finish review on this subject has aided an increase in capacity for officers encouraging service areas working together on a solution. The group identified that there were other areas of the Council where savings and efficiencies could be identified but there was a lack of capacity for staff to be able to review the work, therefore cross-service collaboration was encouraged.

RESOLVED that the Board:

- 1) Note the progress report on the Home to School Travel arrangements in the municipal year 2025-26 to review the changes and lessons learned ahead of the new procurement round prior to the next academic year.**
- 2) Agree to share the Coventry transport model with the LGA and request information on what other councils are doing to manage transport costs.**
- 3) Recommend that Cabinet Members for Strategic Finance and Resources, Education and Skills and City Services:**
 - a. Replicate the model of working in other areas of the Council business, emphasising the value of bringing in people who don't directly work in the service to support those who do.**

- b. **Continue exploring ways to increase the number of children being moved by the Council's own transport rather than outside bodies and keep the procurement process under review.**
- c. **Investigate the possibility of creating a formula to incentivise parents to transport their children themselves, ensuring fairness and consistency.**

43. Agency Staff and Staff Sickness Task and Finish Group

The Board considered a Briefing Note which summarised the content of the Agency Staff and Staff Sickness Task and Finish Group and set out their recommendations. The following documents were appended to the briefing note.

Appendix A: Scoping Document

Appendix B: Presentation Meeting 1

Appendix C: Absence Data Q3 Oct-Dec 2024

Appendix D: Comparison Data

Cllr Toulson, as Chair of the Task and Finish Group, introduced the item and identified the changing context of the workplace as well as the good practice in some areas to support mental health and well-being. The Board asked questions on a number of matters relating to the presentation including:

- The possibility of an internal pool of agency staff could be considered
- That good practice could be shared across the organisation.

RESOLVED that the Board:

- 1. Agree to receive regular performance reports on staff sickness and agency use.**
- 2. Recommend that the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resource considers a more formal oversight and monitoring of Staff Sickness and agency use.**

44. Work Programme and Outstanding Issues

The Board received a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that detailed issues on the Work Programme for meetings of the Board for 2024/25.

RESOLVED that the Board:

- 1) Notes the issues on the Board's Work Programme for 2024/25.**
- 2) Requested an all-members seminar on AI to be arranged for this municipal year**

45. Any other items of Public Business

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 12.00 pm)

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To: Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board

Date: 16th July 2025

Subject: Reserves Balances 1st April 2025

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) work programme includes an item to review the position in relation to the Council reserve balances. Information has been provided in an Appendix 1 which shows balances held on 1st April 2025 and is consistent with closing balances reported in the Revenue and Capital Outturn Report 2024-25. A brief description has been provided for each balance.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) is recommended to:
1. Consider the contents of the briefing note, and the detailed reserves listing in Appendix 1.
 2. Identify any recommendations for the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources

3 Information and Background

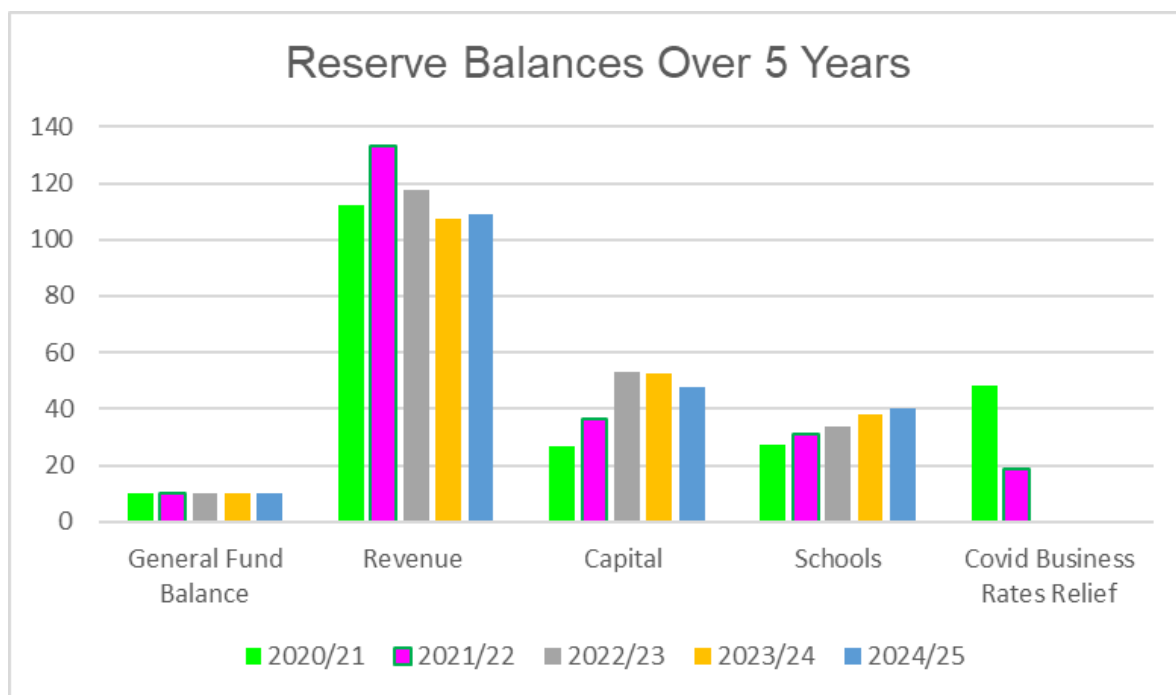
- 3.1 The Council's total level of non-schools revenue reserves stood at £119m at 1st April 2025 and capital reserves were £48m. The Council is also required to account for £40m of reserve balances that belong to the city's schools or are funded from Dedicated Schools Grant and are therefore ring-fenced for schools' usage.
- 3.2 There are several reserve balances that warrant specific mention due to their value.
- **Adult Social Care:** This reserve represents the largest area of balances (£14.7m). These are overwhelmingly funded through ring-fenced grant and health sector resources for the delivery of jointly managed pooled budget arrangements with Health.
 - **Financial Risk Contingency:** This was initially set aside during 2023/24 by resource switching capital receipts. This was to enable some protection from future budget pressures, and we have increased the balance of this by adding the £1.8m underspend from 2024-25 to ensure the Council has greater resilience against financial shocks. The balance of this reserve currently stands at £13.3m.

- The £12.2m **Commercial, Reset & Innovation** reserve is the combination of 3 reserves which were previously approved regarding Funding for the Future. These were Reset & Recovery (£5.4m), Innovation & Development (£4.3m) and Commercial Developments (£2.5m) and are specifically for business case-based investments in support of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and other Council strategic priorities.
 - There is a reserve to manage **Business Rates** volatility under the existing Business Rates Retention which is in place currently. This currently stands at £9.2m and recent significant appeals continue to justify a significant balance being maintained as well as the unknown impact of the government's planned reset in 2025.
 - **Early retirement and Voluntary Redundancy:** This is to fund Early Retirement and Voluntary redundancy costs resulting from programmes to deliver any staffing savings required to balance the budget. The most recent contribution was agreed as part of the 2018/19 Outturn report to Cabinet, with the balance at the April 2025 at £7m. The current financial climate supports the requirement for such reserves.
 - A further £4.1m of reserve are held to manage the cashflow requirements of the financial models for the **Council's 3 Private Finance Initiative schemes**. These reserves will be used (and the balance will fluctuate) over the 25 years plus lifetimes of the schemes. As part of 2016/17 Budget Setting a decision was taken to utilise £1m per annum for the next ten years or so years before then repaying these amounts over the remainder of the schemes' lifetimes.
- 3.3 In addition to these there are a number of service directorate and corporate earmarked reserves shown as 'other' in the reserve tables, and are primarily linked to grant schemes, smoothing reserves and technical items including:
- (£4.0m) **Emergency Covid Resources:** set aside and held to manage medium term Covid legacy issues. This reserve has been called on during both 2022/23 (£6.7m) and 2023/24 (£1.8m) to balance the Council bottom line overspend at year end, which has enabled us to retain the balance within our general fund.
 - (£1.6m) **Friargate Lifecycle:** A property fund to ensure maintenance costs expected to increase in years 5-10 are not a burden on annual budgets.
 - (£1.2m) **Finance Lease Management:** Smoothing reserve for annual technical adjustments required under IFRS16
 - (£1.2m) **Corporate Property Management:** Smoothing reserve for large value repairs and maintenance projects.
 - (£1.2m) **ICT Replacement Programme:** Management of the rolling corporate programme of laptop & PC replacement.
 - (£1.0m) **City of Culture Programme:** A combination of legacy funding and reserves held for future events.
 - (£0.9m) **Mandatory Licencing in Housing:** Ring fenced account for licence fees received in advance for multiple years
- 3.4 Appendix 1 shows all of the reserve balances as at 1st April 2025 and provides a narrative to the purpose and intended uses of these earmarked reserves.

- 3.5 The s151 officer is currently of the view that the existing level of reserves represents a minimum level given the potential financial risks the Council is facing as set out in the budget report. The s151 officer will be approving the use of all non-school revenue reserves to ensure balances are protected as much as is possible.
- 3.6 Capital Reserves relate to balances generated from capital receipts and capital grants to fund future capital projects. The balances can only be used on capital expenditure and reflect the decisions made as part of the Council's Corporate Capital Programme.

4 Historic Reserve Balances

- 4.1 The table below shows the balance of the key reserve categories over the last 5 years.
- 4.2 General fund has remained stable, as we were able to utilise other earmarked reserves to support the adverse outturn positions witnessed during the previous two financial years.
- 4.3 2020/21 and 2021/22 included an extra-ordinary balance of £48m and £19m retrospectively. Government Covid Business Rates reliefs announced previously had the effect of reducing the amount of Business Rates payable in 2021/22 causing a deficit within the Business Rates Collection Fund. Accounting rules meant that the corresponding grant (from Government) could not be applied to the Collection Fund until 2022/23, where the grant was utilised in full.



Tina Pinks
Corporate Finance Manager

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Appendix 1 – Reserves descriptions and opening balance 2025/26

		1st April 2025 £000
Council Revenue Reserves		
General Fund Balance (CORPORATE)	The General Fund is held to manage unforeseen risks to the Council's overall financial position. Any in-year overspend at the whole-Council level would normally be funded by this reserve.	(10,277)
Adult Social Care (DIRECTORATE)	These are overwhelmingly Health resources funded through ringfenced grant and rolled forward through the Better Care Fund pooled budget and Mental Health pooled budget. These pooled budget resources are managed through the Adult Joint Commissioning Group	(14,749)
Financial Risk Contingency (CORPORATE)	Budget set aside during 2023/24 and 2024/25 Outturn to provide resilience against any future financial shocks.	(13,268)
Commercial, Reset & Innovation	<p>The commercial beginnings of this reserve were agreed as part of the 2018/19 Financial Outturn Report to support the Council's commercial development projects.</p> <p>Later further resources were approved to reserve by Council in February 2021 as a fund to sustain the Council's future financial resilience. This could include internal transformation activity and strategic infrastructure in particular where these generate future quantifiable financial benefits.</p>	(12,203)
Business Rates Income Reserve (CORPORATE)	Budgeted contributions set aside as future protection against Business Rates volatility. Recent significant appeals continue to justify a significant balance being maintained as well as the unknown impact of the government's planned reset in 2025.	(9,189)
Early Retirement and Voluntary Redundancy (CORPORATE)	Funding for early retirement and voluntary redundancy established as part of Staffing Reductions Consultation Report (2015) and further contribution agreed as part of the 2018/19 Outturn Report to Cabinet.	(7,242)
Management of Capital (CORPORATE)	Resources earmarked to support approved corporate Capital Programme and transformation projects including Very Light Rail (£3m), City Centre Cultural Gateway (£1.3m) and Woodlands School (£1m).	(6,365)
Public Health (DIRECTORATE)	Public Health Reserves made up a number of ringfenced government grants and balances held on behalf of partners.	(4,556)

Private Finance Initiatives (CORPORATE & DIRECTORATE – for reporting purposes)	Resources earmarked to support the Caludon Castle, New Homes For Old and Street Lighting PFI schemes over a 25-year period subject to the individual decisions to establish each of these schemes. The schemes' financial models show how these reserves will be utilised over time. 2016/17 Budget Setting approved the cash-flowed use of this reserve to support the Council's overall budget at £1m per year to be repaid from within an agreed timeframe.	(4,137)
Refugee Resettlement Programme (DIRECTORATE)	Funding to deliver the specific requirements of the grant conditions for the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and the Resettlement of Vulnerable Children's Scheme.	(3,618)
Air Quality Early Measures (DIRECTORATE)	Grant received for implementation of the air quality action plan.	(2,166)
Homes for Ukraine (DIRECTORATE)	Funding to deliver the specific requirements of the grant conditions for the Home for Ukraine programme	(1,197)
Insurance Fund (DIRECTORATE)	The reserve has traditionally provided financial security for insurance claims arising out of incidents that may have occurred but for which claims have not yet been received. However, in recent years it has been utilised to fund insurance budget pressures including income loss caused by the move of some LEA schools to the Department of Education Risk Protection Arrangement and increased premiums.	(780)
Other Directorate	Other smaller directorate reserves. <i>(approximately 100 individual reserves with an average value of £200k each, with balances ranging from £1.6m to £1k)</i> These include Friargate Lifecycle, Corporate Property Management, ICT Replacement programme, Mandatory Licensing, Electoral Registration, Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC), Rough Sleepers grant, Connect2, Commercial property life-cycle, West Midlands Teaching partnership, Early Years registration, Housing First grant and car parks.	(21,417)
Other Corporate	Smaller reserves & technical adjustments including Finance Lease smoothing reserve to support annual IFRS16 transactions and residual Covid-19 grants.	(8,234)
Total Council Revenue Reserves		(119,398)
<u>Council Capital Reserves</u>		
Useable Capital Receipts Reserve	Receipts generated over recent years formerly set aside for future Capital Programme investments within current and future capital programmes. Current commitments include Woodlands School (£10m); City Centre South (£3.2m); and Public Realm 6, including Palmer Lane (£1.1m).	(15,167)

Capital Grant Unapplied Account	Grant funding received in advance of spend, whereby there are no specific grant conditions to spend in the year. The funding reflects the decisions made as part of the Council's Corporate Capital Programme.	(32,606)
Total Council Capital Reserves		(47,773)
<u>School Reserves</u>		
Schools (specific to individual schools)	Dedicated Schools Grant Reserves owned and controlled by individual schools. Subject to existing legal framework for schools. Reported to Schools Forum.	(23,896)
Schools (related to expenditure retained centrally)	Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve central expenditure reserve. Grant must be used to support the Schools Budget as defined in the School and Early Years Finance Regulations. Usage is reported to and monitored by the Schools Forum.	(16,130)
Total Schools Reserves		(40,026)
Total Reserves		(207,197)

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Coventry City Council

Briefing note

To: Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board

Date: 16 July 2025

Subject: Procurement Strategy 2025 - 2030

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 The purpose of this Briefing Note is to present Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board with the proposed Procurement Strategy 2025 - 2030 and the Action Plan to be delivered by Procurement Services during said term. The note sets out the background and context of the Strategy and the key areas of focus.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board are recommended to:
- a) Consider the Briefing Note, Draft Procurement Strategy (Appendix 1) and Presentation (Appendix 2) and make any comments/recommendations to Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources prior to sign off and launch.

3 Background and Information

- 3.1 The Procurement Strategy 2025-2030 builds on previous strategies following significant legislative changes with the introduction of the Procurement Act 2023 and Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023, the new legislation which governs the way in which public sector procurement activity is undertaken.
- 3.2 The transition arrangements of the new legislation means that the Council will be managing contracts under five (5) sets of legislation for the next 10+ years.
- 3.3 The overarching purpose of the Strategy is to ensure that the Council's procurement activities are undertaken consistently and to the highest standard, setting out the Council's approach to procurement activity through the legislative frameworks and the Council's own internal governance processes.
- 3.4 The Strategy sets out the focus for Procurement Services for the next five (5) years, aligning through the legislation, National Procurement Policy Statement and the Council's OneCov Plan in its areas of focus, whilst mindful of the various individual strategies at directorate and service area level.
- 3.5 The key areas of focus are:
- *Contract Management*

We recognise the need to continue to improve effectiveness in contract and supplier management to ensure the Council maximises opportunities for

additional cost savings and non-financial benefits. Procurement Services is committed to maximising the use of digital tools to provide further improvements to our contract management.

- *Equality, Diversity & Inclusion*

The Council will continually seek to understand the barriers faced by organisations, review our processes and policies to find the right solution and approach, and to provide support to organisations prior to, during and after procurement activity through guidance and training, bespoke Preliminary Market Engagement and other such Meet the Buyer events.

- *Professional Development*

Procurement Services are committed to ensuring that its Category staff are fully qualified procurement professionals. All Category staff are required to be a qualified or working towards becoming a qualified Member of the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply ("MCIPS") and undertaking annual Ethics test as part of mandatory training.

- *Social Value*

The Council will strengthen Social Value commitments against which tenderers bid back during the tender process, aligning the themes, outcomes and measures committed to by its supply chain and embed these commitments into contract and contractual terms.

- *Transparency*

Procurement Services is committed to exceeding the legislative requirements set out in the various regulations, providing an enhanced transparent view of our contracting activity with a keen eye on supporting small and medium enterprises in accessing opportunities with the Council.

3.6 The Strategy outlines 15 key objectives set out by Procurement Services to be achieved during the term of strategy, aligning through the key areas of focus and attributable OneCov values.

3.7 The Action Plan seeks to go over-and-above the legislative requirements of the Procurement Act to support SME inclusion in tender activity.

4 Health Inequalities Impact

4.1 The Procurement Strategy 2025-2030 is - at the time of drafting this Briefing Note - going through the Equalities Impact Assessment process. To note, the proposed support of SMEs in tendering for Council contracts has been noted as having a positive impact on all protected groups and adopted groups.

4.2 Currently, the Council does not capture in its procurement activity data on protected characteristics of SMEs that tender/are successful in tendering for Council contracts.

4.3 Procurement Services issues an annual survey to SMEs within the City of Coventry. Whilst the take up to this survey has not been high, Procurement Services remain committed to issuing this survey to understand the diverse make up of businesses within the city. In addition, through the term of this Strategy, the Procurement Services will seek to understand how diversity data can be captured and reported and seek to implement such capture to better inform how we can support businesses in tendering for Council contracts.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Procurement Strategy 2025-2030 DRAFT

Appendix 2 - SB1 Procurement Strategy 2025-2030 Presentation

Rob Amor
Deputy Head of Procurement
Coventry City Council
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Procurement Strategy

2025 - 2030

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Foreword

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1. Introduction & Background

Introduction

This strategy builds on Coventry City Council's ("the Council") previous procurement strategies, following significant legislative change, and sets out the Council's focus in procurement activity over the next five (5) years.

The overarching purpose of this strategy is to ensure that our procurement activities are undertaken consistently to the highest standard, efficiently and economically against a backdrop of legislation and policy whilst helping achieve the priorities of the One Coventry Plan.

Expenditure through our contractual arrangements help to deliver statutory, essential and discretionary services to the citizens of Coventry. Procurement Services sits at the heart of the organisation to deliver these solutions in a compliant manner, working collaboratively with the service areas across the organisation.

Background

The Council has a revenue spend of approximately £277.5m per annum on bought in goods, services and works (2024/25). In addition, the Council has a variable annual Capital programme which adds significantly to the total annual spend per annum. In 2024/25 the Capital spend was circa £157.5m.

The Council uses a variety of approaches and contract types to deliver this expenditure in an open, fair, transparent and effective way. This includes the use of simple standard contracts for low value / low risk procurements, frameworks, specific industry contract types and partnership arrangements.

Spending this money well through effective procurement is fundamental to achieving organisational success and for supporting prosperity across Coventry and the wider West Midlands region.

The Council's procurement activity contributes to a wide range of socioeconomic benefits including a successful local economy, a thriving voluntary sector, community empowerment, equality, consideration for the environment and value for money.

Hence, whilst making savings is still an important driver for procurement activity, leveraging social value and delivering additional outcomes and sustainability in supply chains, at no extra cost, will be a significant focus of future activity in support of the One Coventry Plan.

2. One Coventry Plan

The refreshed [One Coventry Plan](#) sets out our vision and priorities for the city, based on our commitments to the people of Coventry and the things that residents have told us are most important. It is more focused on the needs and aspirations of our communities than ever before. The Plan builds on the progress that has been made following its last update in 2016, the challenges faced and anticipated, and emerging opportunities.

The priorities and enablers outlined within the Plan align to the priorities within the refreshed National Procurement Strategy and National Procurement Policy Statement and hence create the golden thread between our One Coventry Plan, the objectives and key areas of activity within this strategy and the national context in which we operate.



The vision for Procurement Services is...*'to continue to grow strategic Procurement influence across the Council, contributing to realising our ambitions and objectives within the One Coventry Plan, delivering economic, social and environmental benefits that support the needs of Coventry and its citizens'*.

It is therefore essential that we procure goods, services and works by the most efficient, effective and sustainable means to ensure that the needs of the community are met, within a clear framework of accountability and responsibility.

In doing so, Procurement Services at Coventry City Council will become best in class by adopting excellent procurement practices and techniques.



Delivery of the One Coventry Plan is underpinned by six (6) core values.

- Open and Fair
- Nurture and Develop
- Engage and Empower
- Create and Innovate
- Own and be accountable
- Value and respect

The Action Plan (Appendix A) for this Procurement Strategy aligns all proposed actions to be undertaken by Procurement Services through the core values of the One Coventry Plan, ensuring Procurement Services plays its part in delivering against the ambitious and challenging priorities of the Council.

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3. Our Approach to Procurement

Legislative Framework

The content of this strategy needs to be delivered within a legislative framework that is both significant and complex. The UK's exit from the European Union led to the introduction of the Procurement Act 2023 and Statutory Instruments, forms of secondary legislation. The Act and supplementary Regulations came into force on 24 February 2025 and detail how public procurement must be undertaken.

The Council is also subject to the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023, introduced by the Health Care Act 2022 for the procurement of in-scope health care services and public health services in England.

Furthermore, for contracts entered into prior to the commencement of the Procurement Act 2023, the Council is also subject to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 in relation to the management of contracts for goods, services and associated works, and the Concession Contracts Regulations 2016 in relation to the management of concession contracts. It is acknowledged that the Council will be managing contracts across multiple sets of regulations well beyond the term of this strategy.

Examples of other legislation that impacts upon public procurement include, but are not limited to:

- Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012
- Competition Act 1998
- Localism Act 2011
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Equality Act 2010
- General Data Protection Regulations (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR)

For procurements below the relevant thresholds as set out in the Procurement Act 2023, the Council must follow its own internal Contract Procedure Rules as set out in the Constitution.

Contract Procedure Rules

The Contract Procedure Rules ("CPRs") provide a basis for true and fair competition in contracting activity, by providing clear and auditable procedures, which, if followed, will give confidence that the Council has a procurement regime that is fully accountable and compliant with legislation.

Procurement Services ensures that the CPRs are updated in line with legislative changes and other evidence of best practice, including provisions to support inclusive procurement such as establishment of minimum timescales for below threshold tender and quotation activity.

Furthermore, we ensure compliance with other aspects of the Constitution including Officer schemes of delegation and budgetary control mechanisms.

Governance

The Council has established strong governance arrangements to ensure the appropriate level of scrutiny on procured contracts.

Estimated Total Contract Value	Scrutiny
Below £10,000	Demonstrable best value
£10,000 - £99,999	Request for Quotation
£100,000 - £999,999	Procurement Panel
£1,000,000+	Procurement Board
£1,000,000+ per annum	Cabinet

Governance and approval processes are clearly outlined in the Council's CPRs, establishing additional challenge to procurement activity. Procurement Panel and Procurement Board meetings are held monthly to ensure that any procurement activity in excess of £100,000:

- meets an appropriate need
- aligns to the priorities of the One Coventry Plan
- complies with procurement legislation with an appropriate route to market
- seeks best value
- identifies potential efficiencies
- drives social value commitments
- demonstrates effective contract management

Both Procurement Panel and Procurement Board are made up of a cross-cutting selection of senior officers of the Council.

One Coventry Approach

The Council plays a key role in promoting collaboration across public, private and voluntary and community sectors in the city. Through partnership working and collaboration with neighbouring and wider contracting authorities, the Council can deliver services differently and at greater economies of scale and delivering value for money.

Category Management

Procurement Services maintain a Category Management approach to procurement. By adopting this approach and providing suitable support and challenge, we will:

- Work with service areas to benchmark and review best practice, consider approaches to demand management and/or alternative models of delivery.
- Undertake market research to understand and influence existing and future demand.
- Seek to ensure that all procurement activity and systems support the One Coventry Plan priorities and drive value for money for every pound spent.
- Utilise management information to identify areas of inefficiency, duplication or lack of standardisation.
- Continue to seek savings where possible and appropriate, working with Finance and other colleagues to implement budget reductions or reallocate savings accordingly.

Professional Development

Procurement Services are committed to ensuring that its Category staff are fully qualified procurement professionals. All Category staff are required to be a qualified or working towards becoming a qualified Member of the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply ("MCIPS"). The modern role of a procurement professional is a complex one, demanding a wide range of skills and expertise to succeed.

4. Social Value and Sustainability

Following the publication of the Council's [Social Value and Sustainability Policy](#), there has been a clear strategic case for the need for social value to be embedded and become a core focus in our procurement.

The aim of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 is not to alter the commissioning and procurement processes, but to ensure that as part of these processes, the Council considers the wider impact of the services delivery. It allows the Council for example, to choose a supplier under a tendering process who provides the most advantageous offer e.g., providing consideration for quality and cost, but one which goes beyond the basic contract terms and secures wider benefits for the community.

The Council uses its existing governance arrangements, through both Procurement Panel and Procurement Board, to ensure scrutiny and control of procurement decisions so that the Council achieves social value outcomes, where appropriate.

The opportunities to secure improvements to social, environmental or economic wellbeing will vary from contract to contract. Consideration of Social Value and Sustainability is built into all the stages of the Council's procurement & commissioning process - when reviewing service provision; conducting a needs analysis; consulting stakeholders and/or the marketplace; and specifying the goods, services and/or works to be procured - including building in sustainability and climate change action that aligns to the Council's [Climate Change Strategy](#).

Through the One Coventry approach to engage residents, businesses and organisations, this provides more genuine opportunities to local Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs) and community groups to contract with the Council, delivering supplier diversity, whilst maintaining our focus on the priorities of the One Coventry Plan.

The Council will strengthen Social Value commitments against which tenderers bid back during the tender process, aligning the themes, outcomes and measures committed to by its supply chain and embed these commitments into contract and contractual terms.

The Council will continue to seek the delivery of Social Value outcomes in all contracts above the legislative thresholds, where it can be evidenced that it is relevant to the subject matter of the contract. For contracts that fall below the legislative thresholds, the approach is to maximise these outcomes where possible and practical to do so.

Modern Slavery

The Council and suppliers must both comply with all applicable human rights and employment laws in the jurisdictions in which they work. This includes complying with the provisions of the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) and [PPN 02/23](#) and [PPN 009](#) Tackling Modern Slavery in Government Supply Chains. In addition, suppliers must have robust means of ensuring that the subcontractors in their supply chain also comply.

Ethical Supply Chain

The Council is committed to ensuring an ethical supply chain is in place for its activities. We expect the highest standards of business ethics from suppliers and their agents in the supply of goods, services and works to the Council.

5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is a key component in maximising social, economic, and environmental benefits through or as a direct result of awarding contracts.

The Council is committed to recognising and celebrating diversity and ensuring equal opportunity both as a provider and commissioner of services as a large employer. Furthermore, it is committed to developing a culture that embeds the effective management of equality, diversity and inclusion in its day-to-day practices, policies, procedures and through external relationships.

Since 2023, the Council has sought to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded within all procurement policies, procedures and activities through the issue of an annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion survey.

The information collected helps to improve future sourcing requirements by seeking to understand what local businesses, in particular micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), consider to be the barriers to accessing and tendering for Council contracts.

Understanding these barriers to entry is key to unlocking opportunities for SMEs, and how the Council structures its Contract Procedure Rules to support SME involvement and increase the economic prosperity of the city and wider region.

Following the initial Equality, Diversity and Inclusion survey issued to local businesses in 2023, the Council made inclusive procurement changes to its Contract Procedure Rules to provide greater opportunity to prospective suppliers, including increasing the minimum number of quotations or tenders sought and the establishment of minimum timescales for activity below the legislative thresholds.

The Council will continually seek to understand the barriers faced by organisations, review our processes and policies to find the right solution and approach, and to provide support to organisations prior to, during and after procurement activity through guidance and training.

The promotion and application of equality, diversity and inclusion in procurement activity will help the Council to create a diverse and integrated workforce whilst encouraging external organisations to promote and practice equality and diversity within their own business.

For the Council, promoting equality through procurement can improve competition, value for money, the quality of public services, satisfaction among users and community relations.

6. Contract Management

A significant level of the organisation's budget is spent on external third-party service providers. The reliance and dependency on external market solutions has increased and therefore, the performance of these supply markets is vital to the Council in achieving its strategic aims both in terms of service quality and managing a balanced budget.

Public Sector contracts are increasing in commercial complexity and size. Managing commercial relationships is a vital competence to ensure that quality, service and cost outcomes are met or exceeded.

Contract Management can be considered successful when:

- the arrangements for service delivery continue to be satisfactory to both parties, and the expected business benefits and value for money are being achieved or exceeded;
- the supplier is efficient, co-operative and responsive;
- the organisation understands its obligations under the contract;
- there are no surprises;
- there are no disputes;
- professional and objective discussions over changes and issues are straightforward and easily managed; and
- efficiencies are being realised.

Contract Management should result in contract procedure and process improvements and should ensure that the contracts and therefore the services/goods/works, are delivered to the required standards, provide value for money, enhances service delivery to end users, proactively identifies and manages any risks e.g., which may impact on a supplier's service delivery / fulfilment of the contract requirements, improve and develop contract and supplier performance across the Council etc.

A consistent approach will maximise efficiencies and promote added value across the supply base, appropriately influence supplier activity and decisions, improve value for money over and above cost savings, and ensure the contract is effectively administered, supporting change management where necessary.

Procurement Services have developed a Contract Management Framework to support responsible officers charged with managing contracts within their service area. The Framework draws upon existing good practice, national guidance and tailored to meet Coventry City Council's specific needs.

Furthermore, Procurement Services have developed a central repository for Key Performance Indicator scores across procured contracts to provide oversight of contractual performance and to help inform procurement and contract management decisions through a data-led approach, in addition to the legislative requirements regarding publication of contractual performance.

We recognise the need to continue to improve effectiveness in contract and supplier management to ensure the Council maximises opportunities for additional cost savings and non-financial benefits. Procurement Services is committed to maximising the use of digital tools to provide further improvements to our contract management.

7. Transparency

Transparency is at the heart of the Procurement Act 2023 and other public sector procurement legislation. From the initial planning phase to contract management and eventual termination, the legislation emphasises open communication and integrity through its notice regime.

Transparency is the foundation for building trust, ensuring accountability, offering clear oversight and is key to unlocking better value for money.

Benefits to the Council achieved through increased transparency include:

- **Data-driven decisions:** Access to richer, more detailed information to make smarter, better informed procurement decisions.
- **Collaboration opportunities:** Easier connections with other Local Authorities and suppliers to foster partnership working.
- **Performance management:** Early identification and resolution of poor contract performance.
- **Risk awareness:** Proactive management of commercial risks.
- **Strategic planning:** Enhanced forward planning to streamline procurement processes.

Benefits to suppliers through increased transparency include:

- **Greater accessibility:** Easier access to contracting opportunities, regardless of size or location.
- **Increased visibility:** Greater transparency in how public contracts are awarded and managed.
- **Fair competition:** A level playing field where suppliers have equal chances to succeed.
- **Transparent decisions:** Clear, accountable procurement decisions that foster trust.
- **Seamless communications:** Consistent efficient data sharing between suppliers and the Council.

Procurement Services is committed to exceeding the legislative requirements set out in the various regulations, providing an enhanced transparent view of our contracting activity with a keen eye on supporting small and medium enterprises in accessing opportunities with the Council.

Outside of the requirements set out in the Procurement Act 2023, the Council is also required to adhere to the [Local Government Transparency Code 2015](#). The Council currently ensures that it [publishes](#) all required information as outlined by the Code, and will seek to expand its transparency publications over the term of this strategy by also publishing information recommended by the Code.

Appendix A - Action Plan

#	Objective	How will this be implemented and monitored	OneCov Value	Benefit	Timescale
1	Contract Management	Supplier Code of Conduct Produce new Supplier Code of Conduct setting out the expectations of suppliers contracting with the Council.	Value and respect	Help to create safe, fair, and ethical working conditions by helping Suppliers develop ethical business practices, following applicable laws, safely monitor their supply chain, and follow business operations and fair business practices as expected.	2025
2	Contract Management	Training Provide comprehensive training and guidance to Contract Managers on the use of the Council's e-procurement portal and contract management requirements / best practice.	Nurture and develop	Ensures compliance with the processes embedded within the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and wider public sector legislation requirements.	Ongoing (Periodic & Ad-hoc)
3	Contract Management	Training Produce procurement induction programme and pack for new starters within the Council, supporting compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.	Engage and empower	Provides new starters with insight and overview of public sector procurement policies and processes and highlights the support functionality of Procurement Services in delivering compliant procurement activity.	2026
4	Contract Management	e-procurement Portal Refine data captured on the Council's e-procurement portal and reported on via the Council's Contracts Register and other internal reports.	Create and innovate	Understanding our data is key to enhancing the Council's management of contracts, ensuring not only legislative compliance with regards to the Procurement Act 2023, but provides further data analytic insight in to cross-organisational opportunities.	Ongoing
5	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Contracting and Spend Reports Produce and publish reports highlighting the Council's contracts and spend with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).	Own and be accountable	Demonstrates Council's commitment to contracting with a diverse supply base, identifying ways in which to increase opportunities to improve internal processes to support smaller organisations in bidding for Council contracts.	Annually (April)
6	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Contracting and Spend Reports Produce and publish reports highlighting the Council's contracts and spend with local suppliers (defined as CV1 - CV6).	Own and be accountable	Demonstrates Council's commitment to contracting with a local supply base, identifying ways in which to increase opportunities to improve internal processes to support local organisations in bidding for Council contracts.	Annually (April)
7	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Survey Produce, publish and act upon an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Survey targeting feedback from local suppliers and SMEs.	Engage and empower	Allows the Council to understand the key areas for concern faced by local suppliers and SMEs when bidding for Council opportunities. Understanding these causes can assist the Council in structuring procurement exercises to reduce and / or remove barriers to entry.	Annually (April)
8	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Workforce Diversity Aim to provide a baseline of data to understand workforce diversity monitoring of suppliers contracting with the Council.	Value and respect	Monitoring diversity can help highlight workplace inequality, identify underlying causes and help to remove unfairness and disadvantage. This commitment to social responsibility enhances a company's reputation and aligns with the Council's values.	2026
9	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Meet The Buyer Hold dedicated Meet the Buyer events to educate SMEs on the Council's tendering process(es) and e-procurement portal.	Engage and empower	Demonstrates the Council's commitment to ensuring that all businesses, particularly SMEs, across the city are encouraged to bid for opportunities, supporting the local economy and driving innovation and value for money.	Annually (TBD)
10	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Simplification of Documentation Support SMEs with a revised suite of simplified documentation to be used when conducting below-threshold procurement activity.	Create and innovate	Demonstrates the Council's commitment to ensuring that all businesses, particularly SMEs, are encouraged to bid for opportunities by considering the barriers to entry with regards burdensome documentation disproportionate to the value and complexity of the contract.	2025
11	Professional Development	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply Ensure that all Procurement staff are professionally qualified (MCIPS), maintaining membership and additional training requirements.	Nurture and develop	CIPS qualifications are highly regarded procurement professionals of all levels, as they are accredited by the organisation that promotes and protects the high standards of the sector, with the training and knowledge acquired from these qualifications of the required standard.	Annually
12	Social Value	Themes, Outcomes and Measures Revise the approach to capture of commitment and delivery of social value offers through embedding of a TOMs approach for contracting activity above £100,000.	Create and innovate	The utilisation of the Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) framework for capturing Social Value commitments in tender activity will align with the approach taken in other areas of the Council and provide Suppliers with a clear indication of the Council's priorities.	2025

13	Social Value	Delivery Against Commitment Report Produce an annual report highlighting the delivery against Social Value commitments made in the Council's procurement activity.	Own and be accountable	Monitoring and reporting on the delivery against Social Value commitments will provide actionable data in delivering the Council's Social Value and Sustainability Policy and highlight opportunities for improvement.	2026
14	Transparency	Pipeline of Procurement Activity Produce and publish quarterly pipelines of forthcoming procurement activity over and above the legislative requirements of the Procurement Act 2023.	Open and fair	Supporting Suppliers to achieve economic growth and social equality by providing a larger pipeline of Council activity above and beyond the requirements under the Procurement Act 2023.	2025 (and ongoing Quarterly Reports)
15	Transparency	Key Performance Indicators Publish Key Performance Indicator status (RAG) for Council Contracts on the Contracts Register.	Own and be accountable	Transparency is central to the Procurement Act 2023. By going over and above the legislative requirements of the Act, the Council is demonstrating its commitment to transparency regarding our contractual arrangements for all applicable contracts.	Ongoing (Quarterly Reports)

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Procurement Strategy

2025 - 2030




Introduction

- The Procurement Strategy 2025 - 2030 builds on previous strategies following significant legislative changes with the introduction of the Procurement Act 2023 and Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023.
 - Overarching purpose is to ensure that the Council's procurement activities are undertaken consistently and to the highest standard.
 - Strategy sets out the focus for Procurement Services for the next 5 years, mindful of the various individual strategies at directorate and service area level.
 - Development of an Action Plan that goes over and above legislative requirements to deliver a best-in-class Procurement Services function.
- 

Key Areas of Focus

- The Strategy has 5 clear, key areas of focus that align with legislative priorities and that will help drive delivery of the One Coventry Plan:
 - ***Contract Management*** - recognising the need to continue to improve effectiveness in contract and supplier management to ensure the Council maximises opportunities for additional cost savings and non-financial benefits.
 - ***Equality, Diversity & Inclusion*** - understand the barriers faced by organisations, review our processes and policies to find the right solution and approach, and to provide support to organisations
 - ***Professional Development*** - commitment to ensuring that all Procurement Services staff are fully qualified professionals, including an annual Ethics test as part of mandatory training.
 - ***Social Value*** - strengthening Social Value commitments against which tenderers bid back during the tender process, aligning the themes, outcomes and measures committed to by its supply chain and embed these commitments into contract and contractual terms.
 - ***Transparency*** - exceeding the legislative requirements set out in the various regulations, providing an enhanced transparent view of our contracting activity with a keen eye on supporting SMEs in accessing opportunities with the Council.

Action Plan

- The Strategy outlines 15 objectives set out by Procurement Services that align through the key areas of focus and the attributable OneCov value.
 - Actions seek to go over-and-above the legislative requirements (i.e., pipeline notices are required for contracts >£2m - Procurement Services is seeking to establish a Pipeline publication of contracts well below this value).
 - Continued development of best practice and data-informed decision making through system improvements.
 - Focus on training of Council officers to ensure they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in the Procurement and Contract Management lifecycle.
 - Hold dedicated Meet the Buyer events to support businesses in tendering for Council opportunities and procurement-specific Preliminary Market Engagement to better understand market appetite and awareness.
- 

Next Steps

- The Procurement Strategy received approval from Leadership Board on 03 June 2025.
- Should Scrutiny Board 1 support the proposed Procurement Strategy 2025-2030 and the Action Plan contained within, the next steps needed to be taken in order to implement are:
 - Approval by the Cabinet Member for Finance (Cllr Brown).
 - LAUNCH!

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Coventry City Council

Briefing note

To: Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board

Date: 16 July 2025

Subject: SME / VCSE Inclusion

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To provide Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board with an update following on from a Briefing on 'Procurement Process' that came to the Board on the 12th February 2025. During the meeting, Members requested further information on data on the proportion of contracts during 24/25 financial year being awarded to SME's. This presentation provides an update on the data and highlights the changes taking place to create a baseline of SME (Small and Medium Enterprise) / VCSE (Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprises) inclusion.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board are recommended to:
- 1) Note the details in the presentation (Appendix 1) regarding the topics covered.
 - 2) Make any relevant recommendations to the Cabinet Member.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 Outline information is provided in the appended slides (Appendix 1) and the Board will receive a presentation from Officers at the meeting which will contain more detail and context on these topics.

4 Health Inequalities Impact

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

Appendix 1: SME / VCSE Presentation

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SME / VCSE Inclusion

Contracting & Spend Report 2024/25



Introduction

- Following the inaugural Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Survey issued to businesses within the City of Coventry in 2023, Procurement Services sought to introduce inclusive procurement changes to the Contract Procedure Rules ("CPRs").
 - Changes made to the CPRs included uplifting the minimum number of quotes/tenders sought in an open exercise from 3 to 5, including an uplift - where possible - to the number of local suppliers approached from 2 to 3.
 - Additionally, the changes introduced minimum timescales for procurement exercises below the legislative thresholds, to support smaller organisations in tendering for Council opportunities.
 - The CPR changes came into force in February 2024 following approval at Council in December 2023.
- 

Background and caveats

- With the introduction of the inclusive procurement changes in February 2024 and several e-tendering system changes during the 2023/24 financial year, it is not possible in this report to provide comparator information in the 2024/25 report.
- It is intended therefore, that this report act as a baseline of SME/VCSE inclusion. Comparator information will be shown in subsequent annual reports to highlight successes and drive opportunities for further engagement with local businesses.
- Until 01 May 2025, the Council's Contracts Register only captured contracts above £10,000 (having followed a procurement process). From 01 May 2025, all contracts valued at or above £5,000 are published on the register in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code.
- Until 01 April 2025, the Contracts Register did not capture Contract Award Date. As such, the new contracts awarded are based on the Contract Start Date for the purpose of this report.

Small & Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

594

Contracts held by SMEs as of 31 March 2025 (51.61% of all contracts held).

155

Contracts held by SMEs within CV1-6 postcodes as of 31 March 2025 (13.47% of all contracts held)

269

New contracts awarded to SMEs during the 2024/25 financial year (55.58% of all contracts awarded).

66

New contracts awarded to SMEs within CV1-6 postcodes during the 2024/25 financial year (13.64% of all contracts awarded).

£322.2m

Spent with SMEs during 2024/25 financial year (63.60% of all Council spend).

£113.1m

Spent with SMEs within CV1-6 postcodes during 2024/25 financial year (22.33% of all Council spend).

168

SMEs registered for FreePay with immediate payment terms.

£29.8m

Spent with SMEs registered for FreePay with immediate payment terms (5.87% of all Council spend).

'Contracts' means contracts above £10,000 held on the Contracts Register procured in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules.

Spend figures include spend under contracts not procured via quotation or tender process (i.e., below £10k orders, Purchase Card spend, Grants etc.)

Spend figures shown are direct engagement figures only, and do not include SME/VCSE inclusion in third party supply chains.

Spend figures rounded to nearest £100,000.

'Immediate payment terms' means within 4 days.

Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprises (VCSEs)

65

Contracts held by VCSEs as of 31 March 2025 (5.65% of all contracts held).

26

Contracts held by VCSEs within CV1-6 postcodes as of 31 March 2025 (2.26% of all contracts held).

25

New contracts awarded to VCSEs during the 2024/25 financial year (5.17% of all contracts awarded).

16

New contracts awarded to VCSEs within CV1-6 postcodes during the 2024/25 financial year (3.31% of all contracts awarded).

£35.5m

Spent with VCSEs during 2024/25 financial year (7.01% of all Council spend).

£29.3m

Spent with VCSEs within CV1-6 postcodes during 2024/25 financial year (5.80% of all Council spend).

7

VCSEs registered for FreePay with immediate payment terms.

£1.5m

Spent with VCSEs registered for FreePay with immediate payment terms (0.31% of all Council spend).

'Contracts' means contracts above £10,000 held on the Contracts Register procured in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules.
Spend figures include spend under contracts not procured via quotation or tender process (i.e., below £10k orders, Purchase Card spend, Grants etc.)
Spend figures shown are direct engagement figures only, and do not include SME/VCSE inclusion in third party supply chains.
Spend figures rounded to nearest £100,000.
'Immediate payment terms' means within 4 days.

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To: Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)

Date: 16th July 2025

Subject: Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) Work Programme 2025-26

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To provide Board Members an opportunity to discuss potential items for the work programme 2025-26.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) is recommended to:
 - 1) Consider the draft Work Programme attached at Appendix 1.
 - 2) Identify and agree any additional items for the Work Programme 2025-26.

3 Background and Information

- 3.1 The Work Programme provides a schedule of items for meetings over the coming municipal year. The draft Work Programme for the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) for 2025-26 is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Scrutiny Work Programmes are working documents and will adapt and change over the year to react to Members' requirements. Any item agreed at this meeting does not preclude any future amendments to the Work Programme.

4 Health Inequalities Impact

- 4.1 There is no impact on health inequalities for these recommendations, but Members may want to consider how identified Work Programme items may impact on health inequalities.

Appendix 1: Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) Work Programme 2025-26

Elan Jones
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Please see page 2 onwards for background to items

16 July 25
Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities Reserves Position Procurement Strategy 2025-2030 SME/VCSE Inclusion 2024/25
10 September 25
Home to School Transport – August 2025 Task & Finish Group – Council House Usage Revenue and Capital Outturn 2024/25
5 November 25 10 December 25 11 February 26 25 March 26
Update following Implementation of the Spending, Saving and Council Tax Proposals 25/26
2025/26
Outturn Performance for the Tax year 2024/25 Council Investment Portfolio Procurement Refreshed Strategy Distribution of Government funding Agency Staff and Staff Sickness Diversity and Inclusion, and Community Inclusion

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
16 July 25	Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities	To invite Cllr Brown to identify his priorities for the coming year to identify future items and hold Cabinet Members to account	Cllr Brown
	Reserves Position	Reserves position 23/24 statement – During Q4 (July)	Barry Hastie / Cllr Brown
	Procurement Strategy 2025-2030	The procurement strategy builds on the previous strategy and reflects significant legislative changes.	Cllr Brown / Rob Amor
	SME/VCSE Inclusion 2024/25	First SME and VCSE inclusion report	Cllr Brown / Rob Amor
10 September 25	Home to School Transport – August 2025	progress report on the Home to School Travel arrangements in the municipal year 2025-26 to review the changes and lessons learned ahead of the new procurement round prior to the next academic year.	Rob Amor / Jeanette Essex Cllr Brown
	Task & Finish Group – Council House Usage	Current use of Council House accommodation for members	Cllr O’Boyle
	Revenue and Capital Outturn 2024/25	Update following on from the final revenue and capital outturn position for 2024/25, and reviews treasury management activity and 2024/25 - Following Council in September. An opportunity to look in further detail of the position	Barry Hastie / Cllr Brown
5 November 25			
10 December 25			
11 February 26			

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
25 March 26	Update following Implementation of the Spending, Saving and Council Tax Proposals 25/26	Update report on the outcomes and impacts of implementation, be submitted to the Board in 12 months' time. (March/April 2026)	Barry Hastie / Barri Strain Cllr Brown
2025/26	Outturn Performance for the Tax year 2024/25	Meeting to take place municipal Year 25/26	Barrie Strain / Cllr Brown
	Council Investment Portfolio	Update on risk and returns - Income figures to be provided in future reports relating to companies owned by the Council.	Barry Hastie / Phil Helm / Cllr Brown
	Procurement Refreshed Strategy	Yearly update from Procurement following on from the establishment of the new Procurement Act	Cllr Brown Rob Amor Remi Aremu
	Distribution of Government funding	investigate adding an item on distribution of Government funding which had been identified in the 2024 Autumn Budget.	Phil Helm Cllr Brown
	Agency Staff and Staff Sickness	receive regular performance reports on staff sickness and agency use.	Cllr Brown Susanna Chilton
	Diversity and Inclusion, and Community Inclusion	Identified at Scrucro on the 5 th of June following Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities	Susanna Chilton

Work Programme Decision Flow Chart

