

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) held
at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 3 December 2025

Present:

Members: Councillor A Jobbar (Chair)

Councillor J Blundell

Councillor R Lakha

Councillor G Lloyd (substitute for Councillor J Innes)

Councillor J McNicholas

Councillor CE Thomas

Councillor A Tucker

Other Members: Councillor R Brown, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources

Employees:

Human Resources: S Chilton

Finance and Resources: P Helm

Law and Governance: E Jones, C Sinclair

Apologies: Councillor J Innes and P Male

Public Business

21. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

22. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2025 and were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

23. Staff Survey Results 2025

The Board considered a briefing note and a presentation which provided an update on the findings of the recent staff survey for 2025.

The survey had been shared across the Council to understand how colleagues were experiencing their work, their teams, and the organisation as a whole. It was made available in both a digital and paper format to ensure all colleagues could take part, including those without regular digital access. There were some 49 questions to answer covering all aspects of working life.

The survey explored day-to-day experience, including communication, recognition, leadership, wellbeing, inclusion, fairness, and development. Colleagues were also encouraged to share context through free-text comments and word tiles. Strengths

and areas for improvement have been identified by looking at the highest and lowest scoring questions, alongside written feedback and benchmark comparisons.

The survey received 2,359 responses, giving a response rate of 49%, up from 40% (2,178 responses) in 2023.

In summary, the results showed:

- Strong relationships between colleagues and their line managers.
- Most colleagues also understand how their work contributes to wider goals. However, many organisational-level scores had declined since 2023.
- Line Managers are seen as supportive, approachable, and aligned with the organisation's values.
- Most colleagues understand how their work contributes to the Council's wider goals and feel their role makes a difference.
- colleagues share a strong commitment to serving Coventry and feel connected to their immediate teams.
- Colleagues were less confident that feedback leads to visible action, that change is communicated clearly, or that processes are applied consistently.
- Perceptions of fairness - particularly around pay, recognition, and performance management also vary across the organisation.
- Some colleagues were unsure whether feedback lead to action and whether processes were applied consistently.
- Change could also feel unclear or difficult to follow, and staff would value earlier involvement and clearer communication.
- Fairness and perceptions of fairness, particularly in pay and performance management, vary across the organisation and remained a point of concern.
- Frontline colleagues (paper-based surveys) are less likely to feel informed about organisational updates

Communication was the clearest dividing line. Connected colleagues (digital surveys) benefited from regular updates through email and intranet channels, while frontline teams often rely on cascades or informal briefings, which can make organisational decisions feel unclear or distant.

The briefing note indicated that, taken together, the results suggested a workforce that remained committed and purposeful, but increasingly uncertain about whether their feedback makes a difference. There was clearly more work to be done in rebuilding trust through clearer communication, earlier involvement in decisions, and consistent follow-through. These were the key areas for the People Strategy going forward. Questions responses were appended to the briefing note.

The Board questioned Officers and received responses on a number of matters including:

- Strategies for effectively communicating with those employees without regular digital access.
- Ways to incentivise staff to complete surveys.
- Looking at how best to target specific audience group to ensure the widest participation.

RESOLVED that the Board note the overall findings of survey and the suggested areas for improvement as a result of the survey findings.

24. **CIPFA Financial Management Code**

The Board considered a briefing note on the CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code) which provided guidance for good and sustainable financial management in local authorities. By giving due regard to the principles and standards within the code, Local Authorities were able to demonstrate the foundations for strong financial sustainability. Scrutiny Board 1 approved in 2024 that its work programme should include a standing item each year to demonstrate Coventry's compliance with the principles of the FM Code. The CIPFA Financial Management Code - Financial Standards Self-Assessment (November 2025) were appended to the briefing note.

The results of both of these assessments helped to provide a basis of evidence for inclusion of the Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) which was a requirement for inclusion in the approved Statement of Accounts.

The headings of the CIPFA Financial Management Standards in the Code which local authorities should comply with were:

- Responsibilities of the CFO and Leadership Team
- Governance and Financial Management Style
- Long to Medium Term Financial Management
- The Annual Budget
- Stakeholder Engagement and Business Plans
- Monitoring Financial Performance
- External Financial Reporting

In summary, the assessment indicated a relatively strong position such that the Council had satisfied CIPFA's requirement to demonstrate compliance with the Code.

It was proposed that the Council's compliance with the FM Code continued to be reviewed annually and reported to Scrutiny Board in November/December each year as part of the Council's annual process to update its Annual Governance Statement process. It was noted that the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee would be picking up matters in respect of the One Coventry Plan regarding the CIPFA code and possible KPIs.

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

- Cost of services - Childrens Services in particular - and ways to keep the costs down in, what was, a difficult market.
- Comparisons between the City Council and other local authorities.
- Measures to strengthen resilience.

Following consideration of the report and matters raised at the meeting, Councillor Lakha, as Chair of the Audit and Procurement Committee, suggested that

Councillor A Jobbar and Councillor G Lloyd, as Chairs of this Scrutiny Board and the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee respectively be invited to the next Audit and Procurement Committee the City Council's Auditors, Grant Thornton would be in attendance.

RESOLVED that the Board:

- 1) Noted the contents of the assessment of the Council's level of compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code included in Appendix A of the briefing note.**
- 2) Noted that that the Chair, Councillor A Jobbar and the Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee would be invited to attend the Audit and Procurement Committee meeting when the Council's Auditors, Grant Thornton, were present.**

25. Work Programme and Outstanding Issues

The Board noted the Work Programme including an additional meeting on 14 January 2026 for the Board to consider the Budget Report.

There were no outstanding issues.

26. Any other items of Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.20 am)