



Scrutiny Annual Report to Council 2025-26

Introduction by Gavin Lloyd, Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee 2025-26

Over the past year, Coventry's Scrutiny Committees have continued to play an important role in how the Council is run. By asking questions, checking how services are performing, and focusing on what matters for residents, scrutiny has helped improve decisions and supported openness, accountability and ongoing improvement across the Council.

During the year, scrutiny members have looked at a wide range of issues affecting the city. This has included day-to-day council services, financial pressures, partnership working and long-term priorities. Much of this work has taken place during changing and sometimes difficult circumstances and has required members to deal with complex and sensitive issues. The careful debates, evidence-gathering and recommendations show how seriously members take their role on behalf of the communities they represent. I would like to thank the chairs and members of all Scrutiny Boards for the time, commitment and professionalism they have shown throughout the year. Their leadership and cooperative approach has helped keep scrutiny focused, fair and effective, adding real value to the Council's work and to the work of our partners.

I also want to thank our Governance and Scrutiny Officers. Their expertise and behind-the-scenes support makes scrutiny possible. They help members carry out their roles well, keep meetings and work programmes running smoothly, and maintain the high standards expected of Coventry's scrutiny function.

This report highlights some of the important work carried out over the year. It shows the continued commitment of members and officers to making scrutiny effective and meaningful and provides a strong base for the year ahead.

Gavin Lloyd
Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee 2025-26.

Get involved:

- Email the Scrutiny Chairs and Team via scrutiny@coventry.gov.uk
- Find meeting dates and agendas here: [Coventry City Council Meeting Papers](#)
- To engage or input towards Scrutiny's workplans, use the following link: [Coventry City Council - Scrutiny | Let's Talk Coventry](#)

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Scrutiny 2025-26



**Scrutiny
Co-ordination
(SCRUCO)**



Chair: Cllr G Lloyd
Deputy: Cllr J McNicholas

Scrutiny Coordination
Policy and Leadership
Policing and Equalities
Designated Crime and Disorder Board



Cllr A Jobbar

Strategic Finance
Transformation
Digital Strategy
Council Resources
New Ways of
Working



Cllr Kelly

Early Help
Children & Young
People's Social Care
Schools
Adult, Higher &
Further Ed.
Libraries



Cllr R Singh

Business, Enterprise
& Employment
Inward Investment
Transportation & Air
Quality
Tourism & Marketing



Cllr Ali

Public Services
Social Enterprise
Strategy
Community & Third
Sector
Housing and
Homelessness
Arts & Heritage
Planning Policy



Cllr Miks

Health
Adult Social Care
Health Inequalities
Sport & Physical
Activity



Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Over the past 12 months, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee (SCRUCO) has continued to lead and coordinate scrutiny across the Council. It has supported early scrutiny before Cabinet decisions are made, coordinated the work programmes of all Scrutiny Boards, and helped make sure the Council's plans and priorities are open, accountable and focused on residents.

This section summarises SCRUCO's main work, achievements and outcomes over the last municipal year. It focuses in particular on the One Coventry Plan Deep Dive, scrutiny of Cabinet reports before decisions were taken, and the committee's constructive working relationship with Cabinet Members.

Strategic Leadership of Scrutiny

SCRUCO has carried out its coordinating role by:

- Setting and maintaining the overarching scrutiny work programme
- Managing cross-cutting scrutiny issues
- Aligning the activity of the five Scrutiny Boards with the Council's strategic priorities
- Ensuring consistent standards, transparency and accountability across scrutiny

The committee has met regularly throughout the year. Members have also held planning sessions before meetings so they can prepare well, ask clear questions, and work effectively with officers and Cabinet Members.

Pre-Decision Scrutiny and Policy Influence

A key part of SCRUCO's work this year has been looking at Cabinet reports before decisions were made. This early scrutiny helps improve proposals and makes sure risks and impacts are properly considered. Topics included:

- Strategic plans and performance frameworks (for example, the One Strategic Plan and the Education Capital Programme)
- Housing, community safety and regulatory issues (for example, recommissioning housing-related support services)

- Climate change, transport and place-based policies (for example, Community Growing Spaces)

This approach helped the committee make practical recommendations to Cabinet, so proposals could be tested, challenged and improved before they were agreed.

One Coventry Plan Deep Dive

The One Coventry Plan Deep Dive has been one of SCRUCO's main pieces of work this year. It was set up so members could take a closer look at key performance measures, go beyond headline figures, and understand what the data means for residents.

A series of deep dive sessions were held. Members agreed recommendations, which were reported to SCRUCO and then to Cabinet.

Topics included:

- Fly-tipping and environmental enforcement
- Pavement and highway condition metrics
- Children in care and youth justice indicators
- Education, school readiness and post-16 outcomes
- Recycling performance and waste infrastructure

The deep dive work helped members to:

- Challenge the suitability and clarity of existing performance metrics
- Recommend revised or additional indicators
- Highlight where Coventry's performance differed from national trends
- Identify where earlier action, partnership working and service improvements could help

Recommendations and Outcomes

Over the past 12 months, SCRUCO has made recommendations to individual Cabinet Members and to Cabinet as a whole. These recommendations focused on:

- Making performance reports clearer and easier to understand, so scrutiny (and the public) can see what is happening and why (for example, asking for better scheduling and clearer governance information for Shareholder Reports)

- Improving joined-up working between organisations on ongoing issues (for example, fly-tipping)
- Making sure plans reflect the needs of people who may be at greater risk of disadvantage. For example, SCRUCO recommended that the City of Movement Strategy 2026–31 should consider inclusion, access to transport, funding and partner contributions, and how impact will be monitored against One Coventry Plan priorities.
- Enhancing scrutiny follow-up and monitoring of agreed actions.

The committee did not treat recommendations as one-off actions. It followed up progress through update reports and further discussions, helping to keep attention on delivery and improvement.

Engagement with Cabinet and Officers

SCRUCO's work this year has been underpinned by strong and constructive relationships with Cabinet Members and senior officers. The committee has benefited from:

- Regular attendance by Cabinet Members at scrutiny meetings
- Open, respectful and transparent engagement during questioning
- Clear responses to recommendations and requests for further information

SCRUCO would like to thank the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Leader for supporting scrutiny and being open to questions and challenge. Cabinet Members across all portfolios have attended SCRUCO and engaged constructively with members throughout the year.

Conclusion

Over the past 12 months, the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee has shown the value of well-planned scrutiny in Coventry. Through coordination, detailed review of proposals, the One Coventry Plan Deep Dive and constructive work with Cabinet, SCRUCO has helped improve decision-making, accountability and outcomes for residents.

The committee starts the next year with a clear work programme and a strong commitment to continuing high-quality scrutiny for Coventry and its residents.

Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board

Update on Savings Delivery and Policy Investment Decisions in 2025-26

In March 2026, the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board reviewed an update on how budget savings and investment decisions were being delivered in 2025–26. This helped members check whether agreed savings were on track, understand any risks, and look at whether financial decision-making and oversight were strong during a difficult funding period. It also helped the Board see how limited resources were being used to support Council priorities. This work improved transparency and supported ongoing checks on value for money and the Council's financial resilience.

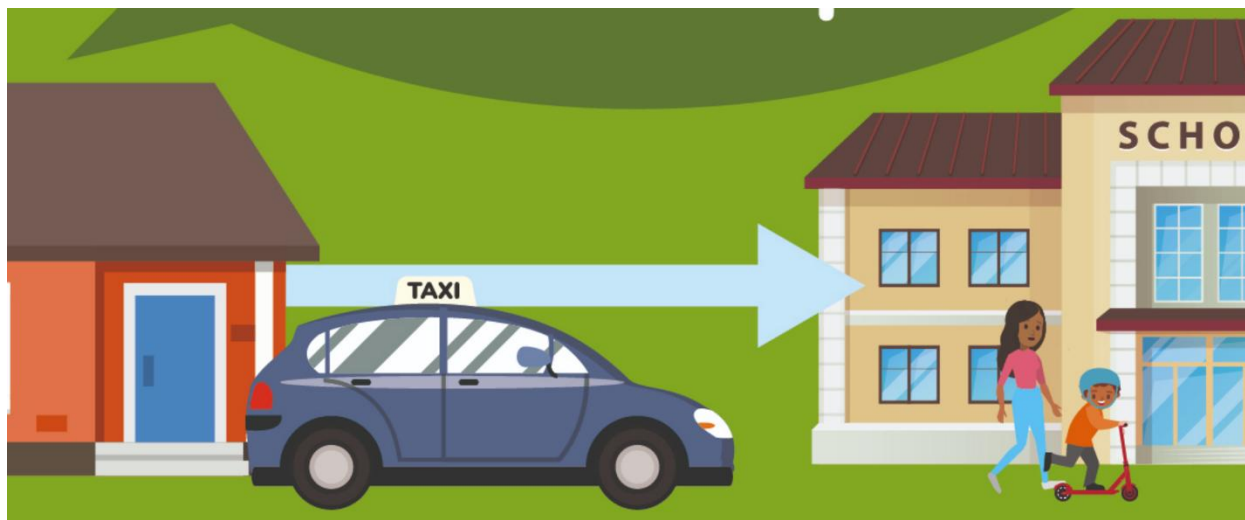
Pre Budget Consultation Report 2026/27



In January 2026, the Board considered the Pre-Budget Consultation Report 2026/27. This set out the main themes and investment priorities to help shape the Council's budget. Cabinet approved the report as the basis for public consultation. It drew on public feedback and performance information and gave Scrutiny an early chance to influence budget proposals before final decisions in February 2026.

The Board reviewed the proposed themes and questioned officers and the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources. Topics included support for disabled people into employment, the Council Tax Support Scheme, cost-of-living pressures, and how any extra funding might be used to rebuild public trust. The Board agreed feedback to feed into the consultation, supporting a budget-setting process that is inclusive, evidence-based and transparent.

Home to School Transport



During 2025–26, the Board received an update on Home to School Transport, following the Task and Finish Group that met in the previous year. The update gave members confidence about how the Group’s findings and recommendations were being put into practice, and whether changes were leading to real improvements in the service and how it is managed.

Members noted that progress had been made since the Task and Finish Group ended, and that more improvements were still underway. This follow-up helped scrutiny keep track of a complex, high-cost statutory service, check that learning had been acted on, and support continued improvement. It also shows how scrutiny can help services improve over time, not just through one-off reviews.

Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Board

Elective Home Education Task and Finish Group

During 2025–26, the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Board set up a Task and Finish Group to look at Elective Home Education (EHE). This was in response to a growing number of children being educated at home in Coventry. The review looked at why families were choosing this option, including issues such as special educational needs, anxiety and difficulties in mainstream schools. The Group focused on how the

Council supports these families while still meeting its safeguarding and legal responsibilities.

Members heard from council officers and from a parent who educates their child at home. They looked closely at how the Council checks children's safety and works with other services such as social care, the police and early help teams. The Group recognised that Coventry has strong and supportive arrangements in place, particularly its safeguarding-led and relationship-based approach. However, members also noted increasing pressure on services, difficulties for older children in accessing qualifications, and concerns about the impact of proposed national changes to home education rules. Following the review, the Group made a number of recommendations. These included promoting Coventry's good practice, raising concerns about the extra demands new legislation could place on families and services, and improving access to education and qualifications for home-educated young people aged 14–16 by working more closely with further education providers. The Group also recommended further scrutiny work to look at post-14 and post-16 options for children who are educated at home.

School Attendance Task and Finish Group

During 2025–26, the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board set up a Task and Finish Group to look in more detail at school attendance across the city. This work was prompted by concerns about persistent and severe absence following the pandemic. The Group aimed to understand local attendance patterns, explore the reasons why some children miss school, and look at how well schools and the Council are working together to support pupils and families to improve attendance.

Members reviewed attendance data for different age groups and pupil cohorts, including children with SEND and other vulnerable groups. They looked at both authorised and unauthorised absence and considered how early help, family support and legal interventions are currently used. The Group recognised that while attendance had improved in some areas, more targeted and coordinated support was needed, particularly to address early signs of poor attendance and issues at key transition points.

As a result of the review, the Group made recommendations to improve how data is used to identify children most at risk of severe persistent absence, so earlier and more effective support can be put in place. They also recommended a stronger focus on early intervention and the use of existing strategies to support families and pupils. To ensure continued oversight, the Board asked to receive a further update within 12 months to monitor progress and the impact of these changes.

Coombe Abbey Park and Outdoor Education

On 22 January 2026, members of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board visited the Coombe Outdoor Education Service, based at Coombe Abbey Park, to see first-hand the Council's in-city outdoor education offer. The visit formed part of the Board's wider consideration of outdoor education and enrichment opportunities for children and young people in Coventry and was included in the Board's 2025–26 work programme.

During the visit, members were shown how the service uses the park and surrounding facilities to deliver a wide range of outdoor learning and practical activities for schools and groups. Members saw how sessions are designed to support learning beyond the classroom, helping children to develop confidence, teamwork, problem-solving skills and positive attitudes to physical activity and the outdoors. The visit highlighted the value of having an accessible outdoor education facility located within the city.

Members also heard about how the service works with schools to complement the curriculum and provide inclusive opportunities for children and young people with varying needs. The visit helped the Board to better understand the role the Coombe Outdoor Education Service plays in supporting children's learning, wellbeing and engagement, and provided useful context for future scrutiny of outdoor education provision and children's enrichment services.

Business, Economy, and Enterprise Scrutiny Board

Site Visit – UK Battery Industrialisation Centre (UKBIC)

On 4 March 2026, members of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board visited the UK Battery Industrialisation Centre (UKBIC). The visit helped members learn more about a major local economic asset. Members toured the site and heard how UKBIC supports battery innovation, helps move ideas from research into production, and supports skills development.

The visit improved members' understanding of how UKBIC supports economic growth, green industries and future jobs. What members learned also helped inform the Board's wider work on inclusive growth, inward investment and innovation, showing the value of learning on site.



Greenpower Park and West Midlands Investment Zone



During 2025–26, the Board received an update on Greenpower Park and the Coventry and Warwick part of the West Midlands Investment Zone, building on a briefing from March 2025. The update

covered progress on redeveloping Coventry Airport as Greenpower Park, a major battery manufacturing and clean energy site delivered through a joint venture between Coventry City Council and the Rigby Group. Members also heard about the Coventry and Warwick Investment Zone, which aims to attract private investment and create jobs in battery and advanced manufacturing through tax incentives, planning tools and skills support.

Scrutiny of this item helped members test the plans and understand the governance, costs and benefits. Members asked about local jobs and skills, transport links,

environmental impacts, power supply, infrastructure delivery, and how the three West Midlands Investment Zones fit together. They also sought assurance on how the programme will be managed and how the site will be protected in the long term. This helped improve transparency and accountability for a complex, high-profile regeneration programme.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Task & Finish Group



During 2025–26, the Board received a progress update on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Task and Finish Group. The group met during the year to support the development of the plan. It looked at the evidence, proposed routes and options, and asked questions to help make sure the plan is clear, realistic and linked to wider Council priorities such as health, climate change and accessible travel.

The group raised issues about how easy the routes are to understand, how the public is involved, and the need for inclusive consultation, including with disabled residents and organisations. Following the update, the Board recommended that: members should be involved at each stage of developing the LCWIP; a further Task and Finish Group should be set up in the next municipal year to keep oversight as the work continues; and the final LCWIP should come to Scrutiny before Cabinet makes a decision. The Board also suggested consulting the Disability Employee Network and the Disability Equality Action Partnership and using public consultation to challenge misinformation.

Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board

CCTV in Taxis Task and Finish Group

The Board agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to look at whether the Council should make CCTV a requirement for licensed taxis. This followed concerns raised after a Coventry taxi driver was jailed for sexually assaulting a woman in the back of his cab in December 2022.

The group looked at a range of issues, including national laws and guidance, the current local policy, crime data, what other councils do, costs for the Council and drivers, and any impact on vulnerable people.

The group met three times, including a session focused on shaping the Council's response to a Government consultation on taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) licensing. Following this work, the Board recommended that the Cabinet Member should: (a) formalise how taxi licence revocations made under delegated powers are reported, so the Licensing Committee is kept informed; and (b) support a formal Council response to the Government's national consultation on taxi licensing, taking account of the Task and Finish Group's findings before the closing date of 1 April 2026. A further meeting then agreed the consultation responses and made additional recommendations. These included taking the issue of mandatory CCTV to the next Taxi Forum to discuss with drivers (highlighting protection for both passengers and drivers) and considering changes to the licensing policy to make CCTV mandatory in licensed taxis.



Disposal of Collection Items

Before a Cabinet Member decision on Culture Coventry Trust's request to dispose of some collection items (in line with policy and Museum Accreditation standards), the Board held an informal workshop. This allowed members to review the detailed list in advance and ask questions about the reasons for disposal. At the public meeting on 29th January 2026, the Board supported the process set out in the briefing note and recommended that the Cabinet Member approve the proposed list, in line with the Trust's policy. The Board also asked that the same approach is used for any future disposal proposals, so members can review the detail and a wider range of views can be considered before decisions are made.



Food Waste

At its meeting on 16 March 2026, the Board received a progress report on introducing food waste collections in the city. Members heard how the extra funding had been allocated and how the changes would be communicated to residents. The Board highlighted the importance of clear, consistent information for households and recommended that the Cabinet Member ensures residents receive straightforward messages about the new service. The Board also asked for food waste collections to be added to the work programme after the rollout, including key performance information (KPIs), so progress can be tracked.

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board

UHCW Performance

In December 2025, the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board reviewed an update on performance at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW), at the Clinical Sciences Building.



This gave members the chance to question the Trust in public and understand what the figures were showing. The update was presented by the Chief Executive and the Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer. It used quarter-two results from the NHS National Oversight Framework (a national system for comparing NHS trusts). It also explained what the framework does and does not show, so members could understand the headlines in context alongside other information, including the Trust's Care Quality Commission rating. The discussion attracted strong interest and took place with media present (including the BBC), which made clear and open explanations especially important. Members discussed where the Trust is doing well and where there are still pressures. This included finances, waiting times, cancer testing and diagnosis, urgent care, how complaints are handled, and major changes such as the move to an Electronic Patient Record. Members also discussed whether the NHS National Oversight Framework gives a fair picture of local performance. In particular, they noted that the scores can be read like a league table, but comparisons are not always like-for-like because specialist hospitals are included alongside general hospitals such as UHCW. The Board agreed that the relevant Cabinet Member should write to the Secretary of State to raise these concerns. Overall, the item showed how scrutiny can question, seek assurance and speak up for local health services.

Emergency Services Partnership Working

In 2025–26, the Board received an update on how emergency services work together across Coventry, including West Midlands Police, West Midlands Fire Service and West Midlands Ambulance Service. The meeting was held at Coventry Fire Station. Representatives from each organisation explained their joint working, and members watched a major incident exercise video, which showed how the services plan and respond together.



This helped members understand how joint working can speed up emergency response, improve safety, and prevent harm through community-based work. Partners also discussed how access to defibrillators can improve survival after a cardiac arrest, and that there are gaps in how many are available in public buildings. The Board noted the update and recommended that the Council should consider installing defibrillators in Council-owned public buildings, especially those that are easy to access and used by many people.



Student Wellbeing – Coventry University and Warwick University

In April 2026, the Board discussed student wellbeing and heard from Coventry University and Warwick University about the support they provide. This included mental health support, disability support, safeguarding and how students can access help. Members looked at how both universities are responding to rising demand and more complex needs, including prevention and early help, joint working with partners, and links with the NHS and public health. The discussion covered access



to support, support for neurodiverse and disabled students, social prescribing, the effects of Covid-related isolation, and the importance of clear communication and consistent academic support.

This item helped members understand how universities can support wellbeing and help prevent ill health, especially in a city with a large student population. The Board did not make formal recommendations, but members asked for future updates to include clearer information about which partners the universities work with. This will help the Board understand how joined-up the support is and what difference it is making.

Healthwatch

Healthwatch Coventry is a co-optee member of the Board and has contributed throughout the year. They have attended meetings, shared their expertise, and supported members during discussions. Healthwatch also presented an update to the Board, including findings from the NHS Survey report and the Housing with Care “Enter and Views” report. Members said this evidence was valuable because it brought direct feedback from patients and local residents, helping build a clearer picture of how services are working in practice. This independent insight supported scrutiny and highlighted areas where further improvement and wider learning may be needed.

