

COVENTRY

A BASELINE OF THE CITY'S INTERNATIONAL PROFILE,
CONNECTIVITY, CAPACITY AND OUTLOOK



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INTRODUCTION

The British Council is the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. The organisation has successfully delivered an international-facing programme in partnership with Hull, UK City of Culture in 2017, and were a key partner for Derry/Londonderry’s UK City of Culture in 2013. They are committed to working collaboratively with Coventry, UK City of Culture 2021, as their strategic international partner for the delivery of the programme leading up to 2021 and as an embedded international partner beyond that timeframe. The British Council plans to work with Coventry as one of the ‘focus cities’ for their Global Cities Strategy and through a “whole-city” approach.

To ensure that the impact of British Council’s work with Coventry is adequately measured, they commissioned this research study which provides a clear quantitative baseline, with some qualitative elements, for future work as the strategic International partner for Coventry City of Culture 2021. The project was delivered by Coventry University and the University of Warwick working with Earthen Lamp.

The research question at the core of the study is as follows:

What is the total impact of a concerted “whole-city” sustained engagement by the British Council with Coventry as a city (on its story, city leadership, institutions and citizens)?

The study attempts to link to the following areas from the wider context of related activities in Coventry in which this work sits:

- These indicators link to a nascent Theory of Change for UK City of Culture 2021, developed in collaboration with the City of Culture Trust, both Universities and the City Council.
- They also link to the core indicators developed by the Coventry City of Culture Research and Evaluation team, and to the British Council’s Results and Evidence Framework.
- The data in this study provides a snapshot of Coventry’s international identity and outlook as a city in the period 2016-17 where possible, but data sources which apply to the previous three years have also been considered.

There is an ambition to repeat the exercise in 2022 to assist with understanding progress against the benchmarks set by the work carried out in 2018. An interim evidence-gathering exercise may also be commissioned at a key point in the paving years, to enable the British Council to identify areas which need further attention.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

There are multiple aims to the study. Overall, the key outcome desired is to help the British Council build a benchmark to inform their future interactions with Coventry. The aims are defined as follows:

- To understand Coventry’s current international connectivity across the education, cultural, society, civic and business fields and the current strength of these connections
- To understand strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities presented by the city’s international cultural relations assets and how they are currently being used to lever economic, cultural and social value for the city
- To establish the city’s international priorities – politically, economically, socially and culturally – and ascertain where the key ambitions in the city are to increase international working and exchange
- To understand the city’s current attractiveness to international investors, visitors, business and academic talent and students
- To know where the city is positioned currently as a key international gateway to the UK – and as a gateway to the world for our UK businesses and communities

The study takes a first step in creating a map of the city’s historical trade, migration and social routes globally and provides some key case studies of international working in the city which could provide models for British Council’s work with Coventry in the future.

METHODOLOGY

The study has been jointly delivered by staff at the University of Warwick and Coventry University working with Earthen Lamp, a strategic cultural consultancy based in Coventry.

The methods used in deriving data for this research have included primary and secondary sources. The team have carried out extensive consultation with staff at relevant departments at Coventry City Council, Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP), Coventry Business Improvement District (BID), the University of Warwick and Coventry University. In addition, primary data has also been collected from staff at regional institutions and city based organisations such as Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Fund, Coventry Cathedral and local schools. Data relating to the creative and cultural sector in Coventry has been collected through a survey with organisations in the city focusing primarily on their current and historic international work profile.

Secondary data for this study has been drawn from a multitude of sources including online published reports and strategy documents held by contributing organisations

A full list of sources used for the study is included in the appendix.

KEY AREAS AND RELATED DATA

The international profile, connectivity, capacity and outlook of the city of Coventry has been summarised through a set of indicators. There are six sections which highlight key areas where the internationalisation of the city are more manifest. There is an ambition to integrate these areas as indicators into the evaluation framework for the cultural development and activities of the city to understand change and progression.

Overall, an attempt has been made in this report to highlight the situation as at the end of December 2017 (i.e. the point at which Coventry was declared the City of Culture for 2021). This has been done to attempt a delineation of the situation before that announcement and the progress of the city’s international profile and ambition after that point. Please note that in some of the indicators it was not possible to restrict the data to that point in time.

A. STRATEGIES

A1. Current international content in city related strategies

Coventry City Council’s core strategy states that the city is “Globally Connected, Locally Committed”¹.

Based on the results of the consultations with key staff at the City Council, much of the city’s global connectedness is linked to its business and commercial relationships with companies abroad. There is a desire to encourage and facilitate international trade as a precursor to investment. The Coventry Jobs and Growth Strategy² highlights the following priorities linked to its international trade ambitions:

- New jobs created
- Investment secured
- Profile and reputation of the city raised

The city’s current 10-Year Cultural Strategy³ has internationalisation at its core with one of the principles being “build Coventry’s reputation as a visitor destination”, which includes an ambition to develop international cultural tourism to the city. The Sports Strategy for the city expresses its international ambition though its aim “To attract high profile sporting events to the city”⁴.

Although the city’s international ambitions are integrated into other strategies produced by the city, Coventry currently lacks a discrete international strategy.

A2. Mapping of all the city’s twinning relationships

Summary of twinned cities

Coventry was the first city in the world to be twinned internationally and currently has 26 formally recognised twin cities across 17 countries and four continents, including 17 cities from 13 countries within Europe⁵. A map is provided in the appendix. The majority of the rest are located in North America and one each in Asia and Australia. The oldest, and still one of its strongest and most active twinning relationships, is with Volgograd in Russia (twinned in 1944). Coventry’s newest, and still meaningfully active is with Jinan in China (twinned in 1983). In 2013/2014 initial negotiations were commenced to establish a twin city in India (initially Jalandhar and latterly Chandigarh)⁶ but this has been on hold since then, whilst the purpose and relevance of any future twin partnership is more strategically reviewed.

An illustration of activities with twinned cities before December 2017

Activities with twin cities still tend more to be symbolic and civic and linked to the city’s priorities of peace and reconciliation. For example, in 2014, to celebrate the original bond of friendship, Volgograd Children’s Orchestra visited Coventry and performed in Coventry Cathedral. In return a delegation from the Coventry Rotary Club visited the Russian city and were hosted by local counterparts.

In 2015 the Chinese company Geely commissioned a £250m taxi plant to be built in the outskirts of Coventry, creating 1000 jobs. This development was directly linked to the twin city relationship with Jinan.

In 2017 Councillor Tony Skipper, as Lord Mayor, travelled to Kiel in Germany to mark 70 years of friendship. Business links continue where there is a real and relevant connection, with the relationship with Jinan being focussed around automotive industry links and developments.

1 Coventry City Council (2016) Coventry Local Plan 2016

2 Coventry City Council (2014) Coventry Jobs and Growth Strategy 2014–2017

3 Coventry City Council (2014) Coventry Sports Strategy 2014–2024

4 Coventry City Council (2014) Coventry Sports Strategy 2014–2024

5 http://www.coventry.gov.uk/homepage/988/coventrys_twin_towns_and_cities?your-area-keyword=&your-area-postcode=CV15RR&your-area-radius=30000 (accessed Sept 2018)

6 <http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=9675&ISATT=1#search=%22Coventry-Punjab%20India%20Twin%20City%20Proposal%202013%22> (accessed August 2018)

A3. Data on key city to city relationships globally, including historical links and associations

Twinned cities cultural links

Culturally, Talking Birds, an Arts Council funded National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) based in Coventry, have worked in Volgograd for many years and developed projects such as the Coventry/Stalingrad (later Volgograd) tablecloths. In 2014 the specially commissioned ‘Twin Story’ was performed in Coventry Cathedral.

Non-twin connected cities cultural links

Coventry Cathedral’s ‘Centre for Reconciliation’ and the ‘Community of the Cross of Nails’ (CCN) have 177 active partner relationships (covering churches, schools and community groups) across 44 different countries. There are a further 110 ‘friends’ (denoted as being less active partners)⁷. In 2016 and 2017 the community welcomed 11 new international partners from Germany, the Netherlands, India,

Canada and the USA , all of whom are actively engaged with the work of the ‘Cross of Nails Community’-team. Each new partnership starts with an international visit from (or with) a Cathedral representative who gifts a ‘Cross of Nails’. Only three CCN cities are also ‘twin cities’, namely Dresden, Kiel and Arnhem. Recent CCN international partnership work includes the support and development of a Community ICT Training Centre in Bujumbura, Burundi, partially-funded by Coventry Cathedral⁸. April 2016 saw the most recent ‘Flightpath of Friendship Reconciliation’ – a bi-annual visit between veterans from the Doncaster Air Gunners and the Luftwaffe Nightfighters, helping to build and strengthen new friendships between these former foes, and to work towards Anglo-German reconciliation.

In 2017 the Coventry Peace Festival supported international community groups⁹ with

- An exhibition of Tibetan Prayer Flags
- A documentary made by The Parents Circle Families Forum (Bereaved Palestinian and Israeli Families)
- Poetry for Peace: Coventry – Cork Twin City Poetry Exchange.

7 <http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/ccn/directory-2/> (accessed July 2018)

8 <http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/ccn/news/establishment-of-a-community-ict-training-centre-in-bujumbura-burundi/> (accessed July 2018)

9 https://positiveimagesfestival.co.uk/sites/positiveimagesfestival.hocext.co.uk/files/2017-09/2017%20Positive%20Images%20Festival%20report_0.pdf (accessed July 2018)

B. VISITORS

B1. Current makeup of international visitors and perceptions of the city

In terms of the tourist attractions, Coventry is recognised internationally for its Cathedral, which is the main draw to the city. The Transport Museum is also a major attraction to the city for international visitors¹⁰.

The Council is currently progressing a strategy to further promote the city’s visitor economy and has published an ‘Emerging Vision for Tourism’ which covers the period 2014-2024¹¹. It states the city’s overarching vision: “By 2024 Coventry will be internationally recognised as a compelling tourism destination of distinction; renowned for the quality and depth of its visitor experience across its diverse cultural, heritage, sports and events offer. Championing a successful and thriving tourism economy, Coventry’s approach will showcase effective and sustainable partnership working that combines to provide a rich and captivating experience, increasing visitor levels, spend and ultimately jobs.”

The tourism strategy identifies six core objectives, namely:

- Perception
- Heritage and Culture
- Conferencing
- Major events
- Sporting city
- Graduates

As of 2012 the data relating to tourism in Coventry indicates that 6.9 million trips were undertaken to Coventry, a third of them being overnight trips. Visitors spent around £344m in the city of which around £63m can be attributed to international visitors¹².

Updated research into international visitors in 2015-2016¹³ carried out by an independent agency found that 9% of visitors to the city came from outside the UK. Of those international visitors, 8% came from China, 8% from India, 7% from Sweden, and 7% from Australia. The average international visitor expenditure per trip was estimated at £161.43. The research also found that for international visitors, Coventry was part of a trip which included places such as Edinburgh, London and York.

B2. Make up of international business visitors

There is no specific data available about international business visitors, however, the City Council actively promotes Coventry as a destination for trade showcasing the city to international businesses. Over the last few years, Coventry and Warwickshire have established a major presence for the four-day event ‘le Marché International de Professionals Immobilier’ (MIPIM).

MIPIM is the world’s leading real estate event for property professionals, bringing together the most influential players in the international property world. The Council’s participation in the event is fully sponsored by the private sector and some of the larger businesses in the city. Coventry has attended the MIPIM property show since 1993 and was one of the first UK cities to capitalise on its potential in this regard. Their continued presence at the show indicates that Coventry and Warwickshire is actively seeking and supporting new property investment in the city and county¹⁴.

Although an impact assessment of Coventry’s participation in MIPIM is yet to be compiled, there is anecdotal evidence that demonstrates a positive impact of the event on international business growth and business visitors.

¹⁰ NGI Solutions (2016) Coventry Tourism Profile Study

¹¹ Coventry City Council (2014) Emerging Vision for Tourism 2014–2024

¹² Coventry City Council (2014) Emerging Vision for Tourism 2014–2024

¹³ NGI Solutions (2016) Coventry Tourism Profile Study

¹⁴ Coventry and Warwickshire Champions (2018) “MIPIM” <https://www.coventry-warwickshire.co.uk/mipim/2018> (accessed September 2018)

C. STUDENTS AND EDUCATION

C1. Current make up of international students for both of the city’s universities and perceptions of the city

The University of Warwick is widely regarded as one of the world's leading international universities, especially in its composition of staff and student bodies and its transnational research and international exchange opportunities available to all staff and students. It is home to 9,000 international students from 192 countries.¹⁵

In 2016 Coventry University ranked fourth highest nationally for international student recruitment. In the academic year 2016/2017 it was home to 10,505 international students from 100 countries, with 7,275 at UG level and 3,230 at PG level¹⁶. This was an increase of 1,100 students overall from 9,405 in the previous year, with 5,970 at UG level and 3,435 at PG level, coming from 103 countries. In 2015/2016 Coventry University's Centre for Global Engagement supported approximately 12,000 students to engage in internationalisation across the globe. They offered a catalogue of programmes and funding to assist students to become global graduates. Opportunities undertaken included language classes, studying or working abroad, international fieldtrips, global research, cultural workshops, Summer Schools, leadership development and work experience in the UK. In 2016/2017 Coventry University provided 4000+ international experiences to students to study or visit abroad¹⁷.

The i-graduate Student Barometer survey measures student decision making factors in relation to application, arrival, learning, engagement, living and support. In the survey period September to December 2017 110,386 international students responded from 129 institutions in 17 countries. Of the top ten factors for international

students that influenced their decision to come to Coventry, “personal safety” and “cost of living were” ranked joint third, with 91% indicating this was a key choice. “Location” was tenth with 83% noting this was a key factor. All three of these factors are directly related to students’ expectations of a lived experience in the city.

46% of international respondents indicated *education agent influences* as the most important factor for their choice, whilst 30% of international respondents indicated “personal recommendations” as the second most important factor. Both the top two factors remain unchanged from 2016. These responses highlight the main external factors that contribute to Coventry attractiveness for international students.

In responding post the Brexit vote of 2016, 95% of international students said they (still) felt welcome as an EU/International student in the city with 97% reported a friendly attitude towards EU/International student in the city, although the least response at 93% reported a friendly attitude towards EU/International student from staff and students at the University itself.

C2. Levels of exchanges supported by education institutions

As of December 2017, there were a total of 6,575 members of staff at the University of Warwick, including both academic and non-academic staff. 5,061 were UK nationals while at least 792 were EEA nationals and 691 were non-EEA nationals. Focussing on research staff, of 818 research-only staff member at the university, 423 (52%) were non-UK nationals¹⁸.

¹⁵ University of Warwick (2018) “Global – Global students” <https://warwick.ac.uk/global/internationalstudy> (accessed August 2018)

¹⁶ Coventry University Internal Student Report 2018

¹⁷ <https://www.coventry.ac.uk/study-at-coventry/centre-for-global-engagement/> (accessed July 2018)

¹⁸ University of Warwick (2018) Research and Impact Services Annual Reporting System (accessed August 2018)

According to the University of Warwick’s International Strategy¹⁹ many areas of international collaboration are planned for the future. Currently the University of Warwick collaborates with key partners in developed and emerging research economies across the world including Australia, China, Brazil, Indonesia, Singapore, India and the USA. For example, the Monash Warwick Alliance goes beyond established practice in both research and education collaboration by:

- Linking research capabilities with joint professorial appointments, securing a significant increase in co-published peer-reviewed articles, and winning research awards of over £50 million from external sources.
- Creating novel learning opportunities including a joint PhD programme, the International Conference of Undergraduate Research involving 400 students annually, and an uncapped student exchange programme.

At the University of Warwick in the 2016/2017 academic year, 629 students from Warwick went on outbound placements via Erasmus+ and other worldwide exchanges. 663 students came to Warwick on these schemes.

Coventry University has a wide range of international world-wide partners engaged in research and commercially developed programmes. Coventry currently has partnerships with 63 universities across 31 countries, creating satellite campuses in places like Azerbaijan and Vietnam. Institutions offer the chance to study for a degree awarded by Coventry University either wholly in their home location, or to study at home initially, and then complete their study at Coventry. Most recently Coventry has committed to opening a private university in Wrocław in Poland.

Some international relationships cross the research/student boundary, and by way of one small example Arab Academy of Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) in Cairo offers three business-based degrees awarded by Coventry and is also a key partner in PACES, a €1 million Erasmus+ research project that Coventry leads with AASTMT supporting 3 other Egyptian universities in the project.

C3. Research and IP generated in the city impacting on the global stage

At the University of Warwick around 17% of all research projects are funded by organisations based outside of the UK, representing around 25% of the research income generated. The main countries funding research in the university outside of the EU is USA.

Both Universities of Warwick and Coventry have offices in Brussels, located close to the European Parliament and the European Commission. Academics and researchers develop networks and generate impact by providing policy briefings to EU policymakers on a wide range of topics including migration, economic policy, cultural policy and equality law. University of Warwick is also building a close research and teaching alliance with a range of European universities including L’Université Paris Seine and Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Recently a delegation from the European Parliament visited Coventry University responsible for drafting an own-initiative report for the European Parliament that will form the roadmap for autonomous transport in Europe over the next 10 to 20 years, serving as a reference for future legislative developments. Coventry University has also launched a joint research centre in the Middle East in collaboration with Emirates Aviation University (EAU). The Dubai-based Research Centre for Digital Innovation and Artificial Intelligence will train its students to specialise in a range of disciplines, including aviation, management, security and smart cities. The venture will see PhD students awarded their degree from both universities. They will be based in Dubai but will also spend time in Coventry and receive support from Coventry University academics.

Coventry University’s 14 research centres currently partner, at a significant formally funded level, with over 62 countries worldwide, often being the project lead as co-ordinators, bringing multinational partners together, with Coventry demonstrating best practice models of working.

Both Coventry and Warwick Universities have strong centres of research excellence, with Coventry having an international reputation for Dance Research through C-DaRE, and Warwick through the Warwick Manufacturing Group.

D. RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES

D1. Cultural and linguistic diversity of the city and how it is supported and nurtured

The population of Coventry in mid-2017 was estimated as 361,000, an increase of 6,900 from mid-2016²⁰.

Based on Coventry Population Estimates 2017, the main cause of population growth in Coventry in this period, as in recent years, was net migration. 6,300 of the net population increase was a direct result of net international immigration: 8,700 people inward and 2,400 outwards. This is partly a result of increases in the number of overseas students studying at local universities. Additionally, a significant proportion of international migration to Coventry was by people aged 22–34.

Coventry is home to a diverse population, with 66.6% of residents classified as White British²¹ compared to 79.8% in England. Other major ethnicities represented in Coventry include Indian (8.8% in Coventry vs. 2.6% in England) and Black African (4.0% vs. 1.8%). 6.9% of the city’s residents were born in other European countries, compared to 5.0% of England’s population.²² While 13% of the usual resident population of the UK were born overseas, the equivalent figure for Coventry is over twice as high at 27%.²³

Of the 392 local authorities across the UK, Coventry welcomed the highest number of Syrian refugees from 2015 Q4 to 2016 Q4 (192 out of 5,454).²⁴ As of 2016 Q2, the city hosted 25 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (out of 60 children under the scheme nationally).²⁵

In Coventry, increasing immigration represents a real trend in recent years and census data shows notable changes in ethnic makeup attributed to asylum seekers, EU-accession and students coming into the city.

The Coventry school population is continuing to become more diverse – in 2017 49% were BAME compared to 38% in 2011. This finding indicates that the overall population of Coventry is likely to become more diverse in the future.

Another indication of the wide range of ethnicities represented in the city is the number of languages used by children in schools—over 100 languages are spoken by Coventry’s school pupils.²⁶ 9% of households in the city do not have any members whose first language is English.²⁷ Among secondary school children, 30.2% of pupils have first languages other than English (vs. 15.7% in England).²⁸

In Coventry the internal migration flows are much larger than international flows²⁹. The internal inflow has increased over time as the Universities (particularly Coventry University) have expanded. However, more internal outflow is seen as more individuals leave than move here every year. Data compiled by the Insight Team at Coventry City Council show net inflow at young ages into Coventry as Universities expand, although a lack of graduate retention means many flow out of the city at older ages.

20 Coventry City Council (2018) Coventry’s Population Estimate 2017

21 This does not include other ethnicities classified in the ONS Census as white such as White Irish, White Gypsy/Irish Traveller and Other White.

22 Office for National Statistics (2011) Census 2011 Aside from the United Kingdom, this group excludes the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

23 Office for National Statistics (2016) Annual Population Survey
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/ukpopulationbycountryofbirthandnationality/august2016>

24 UK Home Office (2016) National Statistics Immigration statistics, October to December 2016 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2016/asylum>

25 Coventry City Council (2016) Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Board on 13.10.2016

26 Coventry City Council (2016) Coventry Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

27 Coventry City Council (2016) Coventry Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

28 See link above for Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics: January 2016 – Local Authority Tables.

29 Insight Team, Coventry City Council

D2. Levels of international education in Coventry schools

Currently Coventry schools engage in fewer international collaborations than was the case a few years ago. This is in part attributed to the cessation of previous British Council funding through the Comenius Programme, and the loss of the school co-ordination hub that previously existed at Elm Bank.

The city has one British Council Ambassador who also runs the Primary Modern Foreign Languages hub. E-twinning projects do involve a wide range of international partners, although primarily as e-relationships and pen-pal projects. A cross-schools International Day is planned for 11th October 2018. Other initiatives reported include a secondary school sponsoring an African school.

D3. Data on exchanges by civil society practitioners and young people in informal education settings

There is some information on organised civil exchanges with twinned cities and activities carried out by local schools managed by the Lord Mayors office. The ‘Coventry Association for International Friendship’ (CAIF) is a unique citizens’ organisation, established in 1961. Its core activity is the organisation of international exchanges between groups of citizens from Coventry and its twin towns and cities. The organisation believes that the development of understanding and friendship through these exchanges is one of the pathways towards a more peaceful world. The Lord Mayor of Coventry is President of CAIF³⁰.

The organisation cites active links with eight twin cities being Graz, Dresden, Kiel, Meschede, Warsaw, Volgograd, Coventry NY State, Coventry Rhode Island, and additionally Vannes in France (not formally a twin city). In 2017 delegations from CAIF visited Vannes, Dresden and Meschede, and hosted church youth workers and school student visitors from Kiel, along with community partners from Vannes and Dresden.

E. TRADE AND INVESTMENT

E1. Data on the international trading patterns of businesses in the city and GVA generated

The Council’s previous strategy for the city directed and prioritised any international activity including the development and support of key international links through formal civic engagement led by the Lord Mayor of Coventry. It is committed that the current priorities of the Council’s international activity should be maintained, and, in view of economic and global change, new international links should be considered and developed to support future growth and jobs in Coventry. It was committed to continuing to recognise the value of community-led international links and initiatives, providing civic support to such activities when appropriate.

The Council’s business support programme ‘Invest in Coventry’ has been actively promoting and profiling international opportunities since September 2017 – recent examples (2018) include support to participate in two Midlands Engine initiatives, one being a Creative and Design Trade Mission and the other being a Business Culture Workshop, both related to Chinese activities and opportunities. These are fully funded places offered to West Midlands Small and Medium sized Enterprises.

E2. Level of Foreign Direct investment and Foreign Capital investment into the city

There is no specific data available on Foreign Capital Investment (FDI) in the city, however, there are case studies to show that there are instances of investment. Initiatives such as the ‘City Deal’ and ‘Coventry and Warwickshire International Trade Hub’ emphasise the importance of exports to the local area, as well as helped the area being ranked in the top 10 areas for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

FDI for Coventry and Warwickshire is measured as one unit and it is not possible to isolate the figures for the city of Coventry. In the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) area there was a total of 47 successful FDI projects during 2015/2016 which led to 3,621 new jobs being created and the safeguarding of a further 1,206 existing jobs. The city of Coventry continues to be one of the top 10 UK cities for FDI according to the 2017 EY Attractiveness Survey, attracting 15 projects in 2016 (up from 11 in 2015).³¹

E3. Level of European investment via structural funds

The Coventry and Warwickshire area has a strong international and national reputation and a long and proven track record of attracting effective inward investment. Coventry and Warwickshire received higher jobs per capita than any other LEP in the West Midlands in 2016/2017 and the region was voted seventh in the Small European Cities of the Future 2016/2017 for business friendliness.³²

In November 2017 a Memorandum of Understanding to develop a Strategic Inward Investment Partnership was signed by the Council, to respond to a changing economic environment and allocate appropriate resources to ensure Coventry City Council is proactive and innovative in attracting inward investment and build stronger international links. Coventry is uniquely positioned at the heart of the United Kingdom and benefits from a vibrant and prosperous economic environment. The central location of Coventry ensures ease of access to local, national and international markets by road, air, rail and sea. The city offers an ideal location in which businesses can benefit from a professional eco-system of innovation, research, development and business support all designed to help local businesses to grow and gain a competitive advantage in the global market. Two world class universities and excellent education, skills and apprenticeship provision contribute to a skilled labour market.

Main investment projects that took place prior to December 2017 include:

- £300m from Red Sun into CADCAM
(created 50 jobs so far, set to create up to 1,000 jobs)
- £100m from Yongtai into Cov Press
(safeguarded 400 jobs, set to create up to 1,000 jobs)
- £250m from Geely into LTC (new plant, set to create 1,000 jobs)

Current trends demonstrate that the automotive industry continues to be the most frequently observed investment sector and most investments in 2016/2017 originated from the USA. However, in recent years, Coventry has also benefited from significant Chinese investments and has experienced success with a cluster of over 20 advanced industrial and technology companies based in the Olofstrom region of Southern Sweden.

31 Business Investment Team, Coventry City Council

32 FDI Magazine, February/March 2018

F. CULTURAL SECTOR

F1. Data on the level of international cultural exchange by practitioners and organisations in the cultural sector in the city

A survey was undertaken by Coventry University to identify creative and cultural organisations in the city and understand their level of international working. The survey received 53 responses from organisations, all of which were located in postcode areas CV1 to CV6.

In response to question around working with international partners, few respondents stated that they had worked with such partners while others plan to work with international partners over the next few years. In summary,

- 7 have worked with international partners in the last few years and have plans to do so again in the next few years (13%)
- 16 have worked with international partners in the last few years (30%)
- 5 have plans to work with such in the next few years and (10%)
- 25 have not worked with international partners, nor have any immediate plans to do so (47%)

Of those respondents who had worked with international partners, this included partnerships of varying strengths and lengths in the twin cities of Belgrade, Warsaw, Cork, Dresden, Volgograd and Sarajevo. Other countries referenced as being hosts to significant partnerships involved Canada, India, Korea, Europe, Spain, Italy, The Netherlands, Brazil, Philippines, Malaysia and China.

F2. Creative industry businesses in the City

In 2017, there were three National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs, organisations that receive regular three/four-year Arts Council England funding) in the city and one Major Partnership Museum (MPM) and arts organisation, Culture Coventry, which delivers the MPM in partnership with Black Country Living Museum.

The NPOs represent 85% of the economic turnover of not-for-profit cultural organisations in the city and 44% of their funding comes from earned income. They remain vulnerable to fluctuations in public investment from national and local sources which provide 56% of their funding.

In 2016 there were 2,500 employee jobs in the sector described as ‘Arts, Entertainment and Recreation’ in Coventry, representing 1.6% of the working age employed in the region. This compares to 10,000 employee jobs in the same category and period for the wider Coventry and Warwickshire region. Nationally, Creative Industry enterprises are most frequently sole traders (estimates at around 75%) or micro-businesses of less than 9 employees.

In relation to the survey undertaken with the sector in the city, of the 53 responses:

- 18 identified as answering as an individual or sole trader (38%)
- 35 identified as answering on behalf of a company or enterprise (66%)
- 22 identified as being a creative business (broadly profit-making) (41%)
- 21 identified as being a creative/cultural organisation (broadly non-profit-making) (40%)
- 2 identified as being both (4%)
- 8 identified as other (15%), although answers indicate that they would add 10% creative business to and 5% to creative organisation)

With regards to the duration of operations of these cultural and creative organisations,

- 21 respondents identified as having been trading for over 10 years (40%)
- 9 as trading between 5 and 10 years (17%)
- 4 as trading between 3 and 5 years (8%)
- 9 as trading between 1 and 3 years (17%)
- 4 as not yet trading, or trading for under 1 year (7%)
- 6 selected ‘other’

F3. Creative businesses/organisations with international partners

Examples of longer standing and/or more ongoing relationships include:

- Those with citizens, companies and organisations in Volgograd, Russia, where partnerships extend beyond cultural/creative organisations or activities and include local government and educational and links resulting additionally in positive national and international news coverage
- Artistic and educational physical theatre-based residencies in Mumbai, India, over several years
- Curatorial relationships over several years leading to arts exhibitions by Indian and Chinese artists in Coventry venues
- Commissioner/producer/collaborator relationships resulting in outdoor based large and small scale productions and co-productions with predominantly but

not limited to Polish, Spanish, French, Irish, and Danish companies respectively, showing work in Coventry, nationally and internationally beyond home countries, over several years and in some instances decades

- Producer/collaborator relationships resulting in theatrical building-based co-productions with Swedish, USA, German, Canadian and Luxembourg companies respectively, showing work in Coventry, nationally and internationally beyond home countries
- Collaborations between a Brazilian soloist and a Coventry music quartet, leading to performances in both countries but complemented with partnerships with academics in each country working together
- An example of less regular or more sporadic worldwide relationships is that of a music venue that regularly books international artists, either through agencies with whom it works, or via the artists directly, and the various performance companies who tour their work to venues and/or festivals.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

These indicators are all identified as sub-indicators of the key indicator on internationalisation which is one of the indicators agreed with DCMS for the UK City of Culture initiative.

Initial investigations into sources of information have led to some indicators being identified as more difficult to establish.

This can be linked but not limited to key factors:

- **Lack of data** – unless it is publicly reported data (e.g. Student numbers, jobs created or resident/community breakdown) data is not comprehensively held on the number and scope of connections with international partners, and/or that information is held individually with key personnel, rather than recorded anywhere centrally. For example, due to the lack of data any structured data it has not been possible to report on some of the original indicators suggested by the British Council say around profile of the city.
- **Lack of definition of data gathering parameters** – whilst there is no clear definition or delineation of what a significant international relationship or partnership is, it is difficult to extrapolate statistically significant, meaningful and measurable data from a diverse range of respondents and divergent range of responses.

- **Lack of data for Coventry alone** – for instance some of the economic data gathered is in relation to results for the LEP area (Coventry and Warwickshire) so this will necessarily skew some results.

- **Short timescale of study** – this scope and scale of this report has necessarily resulted in some headline data being identified. A wider deeper study would undoubtedly uncover other significant and potentially valuable connections and relationships.

- **Commercial sensitivities** – some data is unavailable due to nature of competitive enterprise, or ongoing negotiations and partnership developments.

A key limitation going forward is the lack of any structure to share data about who has existing partnerships where, or who is starting to develop new relationships. Opportunities are undoubtedly missed to deepen existing or burgeoning relationships by the additional of information from other areas. Whilst some of this is now happening, so the City Council is mapping relationships with university outreach endeavours, there is no structure to identify what links are being sought or made.

CONCLUSIONS

COVENTRY’S CURRENT INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

The review shows that although the overall profile of the city is not very high on an international stage, Coventry is well established as a city in specific areas of civic life, trade, education, heritage and culture.

Based on the situation pre-2017, the main areas of international connectivity for the city were as follows:

- Education and academic research and staff
- Research and its applicability to business, especially automotive
- The international links of the diverse population of the city
- Cultural and civic exchanges through the multitude of twinned cities
- International trade and foreign direct investment
- Heritage and religious (i.e. on the theme on peace and reconciliation) exchanges

It is interesting to note that although there are many instances of cultural exchanges these are not currently operating in a sustainable manner or have a high profile within the city, nationally or internationally.

THE CITY’S INTERNATIONAL PRIORITIES

It is clear from the responses gathered and general opinions offered from respondents during this process that Coventry is viewed and experienced as a rapidly growing city, not just in terms of its residential population but also its established and growing positive reputation in many fields, including:

- Educational attainment at University level
- Industry and jobs opportunity and development in the high tech automotive and creative digital associated industries
- Urban/rural lifestyle through its travel links, affordable housing and increasingly welcoming city nightlife

The areas engaged for this study all demonstrated existing international connections but clearly offer the potential for increasing opportunities.

The City of Culture award has highlighted the increasingly young and diverse nature of the city’s population and since the successful award has helped create a climate that demonstrates and supports how these factors are integral to the city’s growth and success. There is a feeling expressed that the city has great ambitions with accompanying significant growth potential.

The city council clearly articulated its strategy to concentrate on those international relationships (existing and new) that offer more obvious, significant, direct and economically developmental links, with any cultural links and aspects being an incidental and fortuitous addition. The two Universities continue to actively pursue stronger international links, through bringing more international students into the city or developing key partnership opportunities through satellite campuses. The wider city region through the LEP, and the development of the ‘Midlands Engine’ has shown it can develop and support key economic international partnerships bringing jobs and wealth into the city. A key priority therefore is to develop a clear way in for all city companies to participate and supplement developing relationships, bringing clear value-added elements to these partnerships, when awareness of those opportunities is transparent.

The cities twinning history, the connections made by groups such as the ‘Community of Cross of Nails’, and the creative and cultural organisations, especially those that already operate at a reputationally high international level, all offer ways to bring this added value and depth to new international connections.

RECOMMENDED INDICATORS

Based on the research undertaken in Coventry the team has derived a list of areas that would be useful to examine to understand the international nature of a city. It is recommended that for future studies these areas are researched in context of the Cities of Culture award:

- International visitor profile of the city
- Online profile of the city and key digital assets for the city
- Ranking on city indices
- International student perception of the city (if applicable)
- International trade aspirations
- Twinning relationships and activities
- Cultural and creative organisation and their international collaborations

APPENDIX

COVENTRY TWINNED CITIES MAPPED



Europe

- Arnhem, Netherlands
- Belgrade, Serbia
- Bologna, Italy
- Caen, France
- Cork, Ireland

- Dresden, Germany
- Dunaujvaros, Hungary
- Galati, Romania
- Graz, Austria
- Kecskemét, Hungary
- Kiel, Germany

- Lidice, Czech Republic
- Ostrava, Czech Republic
- Saint-Etienne, France
- Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Volgograd, Russia
- Warsaw, Poland

North America & Canada

- Cornwall, Canada
- Coventry, Connecticut, USA
- Coventry, New York State, USA
- Coventry, Rhode Island, USA

- Granby, Canada

- Windsor, Ontario

- Kingston, Jamaica

Asia

- Jinan, China

Australia

- Parkes, New South Wales

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INTERVIEWEES

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COVENTRY

A BASELINE OF THE CITY'S INTERNATIONAL PROFILE, CONNECTIVITY, CAPACITY AND OUTLOOK

FURTHER INFORMATION

The British Council is the international partner for Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 and has made a five year commitment to working with the city (2018–2023).

Our approach to engaging with Coventry is informed by our learning from Hull City of Culture 2017 and the British Council's Global Cities Framework.

Our vision for the cities where we work is that they will be:
Prosperous, peaceful and equitable Cities – internationally facing and
internationally known, strengthened through cultural relations with the UK.

We are working with Coventry through a place-based whole-city approach in a multi-disciplinary way across our sectors of Arts, Education and Civil Society to support the city taking a step-change in its international relationships and connectivity through the UK City of Culture programme.

This Baseline report captures the city's international connections in 2017 and will be repeated in 2022 to measure the 'distance travelled' by the city in building new international connections and deepening existing ones.

England and Global Cities team, The British Council