

Coventry Cultural Challenge

Guide for Expression of Interest

Purpose

The Coventry Cultural Challenge will take place in November 2022 and bring together cultural stakeholders, researchers, data scientists, analysts, artists and coders to develop creative and innovative concepts and ideas that 'make life better in Coventry'.

Background

About Coventry UK City of Culture 2021

Coventry's year as UK City of Culture (UK CoC 2021) ran from May 2021 to May 2022. This has left a lasting impact on the city, with interim figures showing that live and online audiences of just over one million experienced more than 700 events.

Coventry adopted a unique approach of putting co-creation at the centre of its programme, valuing local stories and the latent creativity across the city. This deeply rooted way of working, recently presented as 'The Coventry Model', delivered a range of both intimate events and high impact activities to deliver long-lasting social value. Embedding engagement at a hyper-local level, the 'co-creation' approach has seen city communities including faith groups, community centres, libraries, schools, community radio stations, the police, and local arts organisations all helping to shape and design the creative programme.

Monitoring and Evaluating Coventry UK CoC 2021

The core Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team comprises a partnership between the University of Warwick, Coventry University and the Insight Team from Coventry City Council. It works together with, but is independent from, the Coventry City of Culture Trust. The M&E team is supported by a national Technical Reference Group of leading independent experts that is led by DCMS.

This partnership initially established a [Story of Change](#) and Performance Measurement and Evaluation Strategy, and has subsequently collected and analysed UK CoC 2021 data and produced a series of reports to disseminate findings. This has led to new opportunities for research, knowledge exchange and making evidence-led recommendations for embedding legacy and sustainable growth.

Coventry Data

Coventry's year as the UK City of Culture has generated an unprecedented amount of data, including a huge amount of ticketing data, event data, audience perception and sentiment surveys. This has made Coventry into what is perhaps the most data-rich place in the world for cultural data. The intention is for the city to release this dataset as open data.

Alongside this, Coventry has, uniquely amongst local authorities, a Household Survey – conducted every two to three years since 1988 – which asks a representative sample of Coventry residents about their views of their local area, city, behaviour, concerns, and in recent years, their wellbeing. This data, amongst other demographic, housing and environment, economy and prospects, and health and wellbeing data, held by the City through the [Coventry Citywide Intelligence Hub](#), enables cultural data collected through Coventry 2021 to be compared and contrasted with other metrics.

AHRC Place-Based Knowledge Exchange Project

The Coventry Cultural Challenge is part of the *City Change Through Culture: Securing The Place Legacy Of Coventry City Of Culture 2021* project, led by Coventry University. The project has received funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), part of UK Research and Innovation. It is part of the AHRC's wider place programme, which has three main aims:

- build a programme around new knowledge exchange projects and existing investments in place
- demonstrate the effectiveness of arts and humanities research for addressing the needs of different locales
- make the case for further investment.

Coventry Cultural Challenge

The proposal for the Coventry Cultural Challenge is to bring together experts in the cultural stakeholders, researchers, data scientists, analysts, artists and coders to develop creative and innovative concepts and ideas that can 'make life better in Coventry'.

Concepts, ideas, and products that 'make life better in Coventry' are defined in a broad way, in line with the UK CoC 2021 [Story of Change](#). This should encourage and enable participants to define concepts that best fit their area(s) of interest and expertise.

Coventry City Council's datasets, linked with the Challenge's thematic questions, are a likely starting point for teams to identify problems/challenges. In addition to the experience within teams, data analysts from the City Council and cultural stakeholders should be available to offer support and advice during the Challenge weekend.

The Challenge will provide a safe space or 'sandpit' for experimentation. Teams will be invited to frame their ideas and make regular (two-minute) pitches to share their ideas and to identify avenues for collaboration, within a friendly and supportive environment. At the end of the event, each team will make their final pitch to a jury of selected stakeholders.

Aims

The aims of the Coventry Cultural Challenge are to:

- understand/identify how 'cultural activity' can provide an approach/pathway/response to – or at least understanding of – key challenges for Coventry and its citizens
- use previously unreleased open datasets made available by Coventry City Council

The Challenge is about how analysing/using data helps:

- to identify/articulate the problem/challenge
- to understand the role of culture/how culture might play a part as a (partial) 'solution'
- the evidence for how culture might play a part as a (partial) 'solution'
- to stimulate further investigation of the potential/nature of that solution and/or especially in the context of Coventry
- with what possible outcomes for the city and its population (nature, extent, scale, etc.).

Findings could be considered as building a concept argument/narrative for a cultural intervention of some form:

- why/the challenge faced (by the city)
- what might be achieved through cultural activity or understanding
- before returning to the data/evidence (or searching for further information) to test hypotheses.

Who Should Take Part?

The Challenge is designed to host ten teams, each with four or five members. External support for teams can be provided to add further skills and knowledge.

Applications are welcomed from both teams and individuals from different backgrounds including (but not limited to):

- those working within the cultural sector – people leading, working or volunteering within the cultural sector
- those familiar with data – analysts, data scientists, academics, students or people with industry experience
- coders – people with ICT and coding expertise including academics, students or people with industry experience
- creatives/data viz specialists – people with an artistic bent to develop infographic outputs based on analysis.

The event will bring people together who would not ordinarily meet, to share ideas and knowledge, and to spark new ideas.

For teams to show their results at The Reel Store, they would need to create visual images that could convey their messages, although this is not the only output that might be produced.

It would be advantageous for teams to include a range of skillsets to be able to both use the data, shape their ideas and be able to present them in a variety of ways.

Participants would need to bring their own laptops and accessories to use during the Challenge.

Data

The datasets that will be made available to participants (as open data on GitHub ahead of their general public release) include:

- Coventry Household Survey 2018, 2021 and 2022 – including cultural participation variables
- Exit Surveys from City of Culture Events
- Ticketing Data from City of Culture Events
- CACI Paycheck Data (household income at postcode level).

These are primary data that are both real and granular that enable reflection on UK CoC 2021 and other aspects of Coventry life.

Thematic Questions

As a starting point, a series of potential thematic questions have been developed for participants to consider.

Coventry UK City Of Culture 2021 (UK CoC 2021)

- To what extent can conclusions be drawn about UK CoC 2021 participants – the types and residential locations of audiences, size and their attendance profiles?
- To what extent did the attendance levels at UK CoC 2021 events either match or differ from the national or Coventry average?
- To what extent were UK CoC 2021 socio-cultural levels of participation similar to historic patterns in Coventry? Did the inclusion of co-production, overlaid with local distribution of events, dampen the traditional reluctance for people to travel to events?

Poverty And Relative Deprivation

- To what extent does participating in cultural and communal activities help people to cope better with the cost-of-living crisis?
- To what extent can community hubs, offering spaces of collaboration, dialogue and exchange, support low-income families?

Culture And Communities

- To what extent can cultural activities help to strengthen and empower communities?
- To what extent do co-created cultural events, that are based on local history/community, compare with more general cultural events?
- To what extent can intergenerational and/or cross-cultural events share/protect community memory and beliefs, and encourage cohesion?

Community Health

- To what extent does cultural participation support better health – both physical and mental – in Coventry?
- To what extent can cultural participation support better community engagement in the use of public/Coventry City Council/health services?
- To what extent does Covid-19 continue to impact on cultural participation in Coventry?

Green Futures

- To what extent can cultural activities best support the acceleration of sustainable future and climate change-aware behaviours in Coventry?
- To what extent can raising awareness of green spaces encourage people to be more environmentally conscious in relation to water, waste and air pollution?
- To what extent can restoring the links between people and local food production contribute towards the management, rehabilitation and biodiversity of the ecosystem?

The Economy

- To what extent can public sector investment into the growth and recovery of the cultural sector/tourism help to rebalance the UK (and Coventry) economy?
- To what extent can communities and organisations be encouraged to use open cultural data to improve profitability and sustainability, and to satisfy the needs of residents and customers?

Digital Technologies

- To what extent does the continual development of new digital technologies and services affect communities? Can the positives of enhanced networking and communication outweigh the implications for those who are digitally illiterate or who have little access to technologies?
- To what extent is there a need to support organisational decision makers who are not 'tech savvy' and who may not understand the value and potential of their data? Should they be helped to develop digital and security strategies?

Ethics

- To what extent is its ethical use considered when making data openly available?
- To what extent can the ethically unsound use of data be prevented, including when used outside of its original context or for bias/discriminatory purposes?

Cultural Heritage

- To what extent is cultural heritage valued? How significant are its intrinsic, economic and societal benefits?

The Process

To provide the balance of skillsets needed, those interested in joining the Coventry Cultural Challenge are asked to express their interest.

- Do you have a ready-made team of four/five?
- Are you an individual who wants to attend in-person?
- Are you an individual who can provide remote 'phone a friend' support during the weekend?

[EXPRESSION OF INTEREST – TEAMS](#)

[EXPRESSION OF INTEREST – INDIVIDUALS](#)

Participants will be chosen to attend the Challenge based upon their knowledge, experiences and abilities detailed within their form.

Individuals who join in-person will be matched with others ahead of the event to form multi-disciplinary teams. The organising team will be in touch to explain how this process will work.

The closing time and date for expressions of interest is **10 pm on Sunday 2 October 2022**.

Dates

For those invited to participate within the Coventry Cultural Challenge, there are two sets of dates to note:

- An online pre-event will be held from 6 pm until 7.30 pm on Thursday 13 October 2022. This session will introduce the event and participants, and make available the datasets.
- The Challenge will take place between 10 am and 5 pm on both Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 November 2022, and will be held on the Coventry University campus. During both days, tea/coffee and lunch will be provided.

Outputs

In addition to the regular two-minute pitches given throughout the weekend, a panel of independent jury members will evaluate the final Challenge pitches from each team to select those with the best ideas of how to 'make life better in Coventry'.

An output from the Challenge could be for the best ideas to be presented during the [Walking Through Coventry Data](#) event at [The Reel Store](#) on 13 December 2022. To be used at The Reel Store, ideas would need to be fully developed and presented visually, and be ready by 20 November 2022.

Both during and after the event, consideration will be given to how fully developed outputs created within the Challenge can be used. Teams could create blog/social media posts or create short videos, as well as consider longer term options for further refinement and dissemination.

Further Information

Participants will need to bring their own laptops and accessories to use during the Challenge weekend.

Those people who are invited to attend the Coventry Cultural Challenge will be asked to provide further information, such as any dietary requirement. Further information will also be shared that includes details of the venue and the event timetable.

Should you have any questions about the Coventry Cultural Challenge, please contact Tim Hammerton – ab6846@coventry.ac.uk

Acknowledgements

The organising team for the Coventry Cultural Challenge is:

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The Coventry Cultural Challenge is part of the *City Change Through Culture: Securing The Place Legacy Of Coventry City Of Culture 2021* project, and has received funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), part of UK Research and Innovation.

It is also part of the Monitoring and Evaluation team's programme of reflective Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 events.