



Coventry
Coach Friendly City Award
Application 2012

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1 Introduction

Historically within the county of Warwickshire, Coventry is situated 95 miles northwest of central London and 19 miles southeast of Birmingham. Coventry is an ancient city which predates many of the large cities around it including Birmingham and Leicester. It is believed the city grew from a settlement originating in the Bronze Age, but early records show that the Romans settled in Baginton and another formed around a Saxon nunnery, founded in AD 700 by St Osburga.



Coventry Cathedral

The City of Coventry benefits from a rich heritage and has many places of interest, with the spectacular St. Michael's Cathedral being the best-known landmark and visitor attraction. The new Coventry Cathedral was opened in 1962 next to the ruins of the old cathedral and contains the famous tapestry *Christ in Glory* by Graham Sutherland.

Coventry has always had a strong tourism industry based around key attractions such as the stunning Coventry Cathedral and Coventry Transport Museum. The year 2012 is a landmark year for Coventry with a number of major events being held within the City such as the 50th Anniversary of the Consecration of Coventry Cathedral and the Olympic games being held within City of Coventry Stadium.

These major events will attract large numbers of visitors to the City in 2012 and the City Council is keen to both encourage tourism especially through coach travel and ensure adequate coach facilities are provided within the city centre. Accordingly the achievement of the Confederation of Passenger Transport's (CPT) Coach Friendly City Award will be a key milestone in demonstrating both our commitment to coach travel to Coventry but also showcasing our facilities to operators nationally in the aspiration of encouraging greater coach trips to the City, both in 2012 and beyond.



Priory Place



Coventry Transport Museum

2 What Coventry Has To Offer



Medieval Spon Street

In addition to the main tourist attractions, Coventry also offers a rich cultural environment for visitors, with a variety of nightlife venues available.

The Belgrade Theatre is a key destination which attracts large numbers of visitors each year. The Theatre has recently undergone a major redevelopment. With the introduction of an impressive new entrance and downstairs bar, 850 seat air-conditioned main auditorium and a 250-300 seat second auditorium. The main auditorium is host to a fantastic programme of well known touring productions, whilst the creation of the new intimate performance space allows the Belgrade to host some of the most original and ground-breaking touring companies in the country. The theatre also houses a newly established permanent exhibition space run in conjunction with the Herbert Art Gallery.

Other key attractions being the Herbert Art Gallery, St Mary's Guild Hall, the busy retail centres of West Orchards Shopping Centre, Lower Precinct Shopping Centre, Cathedral Lanes Shopping Centre and the vibrant Coventry Indoor Retail Market.



Belgrade Theatre



Herbert Art Gallery

The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum has recently completed a £20 million redevelopment which has transformed the site. With 8 new permanent galleries, temporary exhibitions and events spaces, education spaces, a new History Centre and Herbert Media studios. The collections cover a wide range of material associated with or collected for the people of Coventry, and include collections of Archaeology, Natural History, Social and Industrial History and Visual Arts. In addition the History Centre holds collections of published and original documents.

London 2012 Olympic Games in Coventry

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games provide a once in a lifetime opportunity for Coventry and Warwickshire to be part of the biggest sporting events in the World. These events will bring an unprecedented amount of visitors to the city.

Coventry is immensely proud to have the honour of being an Olympic co-host City after being selected to be the Midlands Venue for Olympic Football. Our vision to be part of London 2012 is to maximise this once in a life time opportunity and provide everyone in Coventry & Warwickshire with their own Olympic experience.

As an Olympic co-host City, 2012 will be a special year for Coventry as we welcome the world to the region and people from across the UK. Arguably, no other sub-region outside London will be the focus of so much Olympic related activity through:



City of Coventry Stadium



Big Screen Live Site at Millennium Place

- Hosting Olympic Football at the Ricoh Arena renamed to the City of Coventry Stadium including 12 matches over 8 days culminating in the Women's bronze medal match
- One of 66 Evening Celebration locations for the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay
- Hosting world-class athletes and providing training camps for visiting teams at the University of Warwick
- Staging community events and screening the 2012 Games live on our London 2012 Live Site, a big screen in Millennium Place and one of 20 screens across the UK
- Showcasing the very best of Coventry's creativity through Godiva Awakes, the West Midlands winner of the Legacy Trusts Artists Taking the Lead Cultural Olympiad project
- Celebrating Shakespeare through the London 2012 World Shakespeare Festival
- Looking and Feeling like an Olympic host City through the London 2012 Look and Feel street dressing programme

3 Our Vision & Strategy

“Our vision is for Coventry to become a world class destination of choice for tourism, business, shopping and entertainment, a city that excels in accommodating, attracting and welcoming coaches, their drivers and their passengers.”

Our strategy to achieve this vision and demonstration of commitment to providing a Coach Friendly City is based on the following objectives:

- Ensuring coach travel strategy links to LTP3
- Providing comprehensive website information
- Production of information leaflets
- Communication & marketing of coach facilities
- Appropriate direction signage for both drivers and coach passengers
- Provision of coach parking facilities in appropriate and desirable locations
- Good driver and passenger facilities
- Ensuring accessibility for all passengers particularly disabled users

The following details how we meet these objectives and our short term plans to improve coach travel facilities within Coventry:

Coherent Tourism Strategy

Coach travel is an important part of the City Council's West Midlands Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3), and this document sets out the key role coach travel has within the West Midlands particularly associated with the tourism trade. The coach industry plays a significant role supporting the economic, cultural and community life across the region. Specifically the LTP3 Policies for Coaches are:

Policy REG4: To help overcome deficiencies in on street set-down and pick-up facilities in the vicinity of the Area's major visitor attractions.

Policy REG5: To identify adequate long-stay coach parking facilities convenient to town and city centres and near major attractors during daytime and evening hours.



Local Transport Plan 3

The plan also sets out the roles and responsibilities for coach operators and also for the City Council along with Centro, the Integrated Transport Authority of the West Midlands, in the provision of facilities for coaches within the City. The City Council is committed to achieving the aims of this plan and has made great steps to meeting the LTP3 Policies as set out within this document. The complete LTP3 Coach travel Strategy is set out within the Appendix to this document.

In addition to the policies within LTP3, we are currently developing a number of local policies including a Car Parking Strategy, a Movement Strategy and an overarching Transport Strategy. These will include policies relating to the provision of coach travel and specifically coach parking. Evidence of this ongoing commitment can be demonstrated within the previous and current funding bids for a new bus transport interchange adjacent to Coventry Station which will focus on improved integration of buses. The intention is to provide significantly increased capacity for buses and an additional access point on to Warwick Road to improve access for bus services. The additional capacity will allow sufficient provision for coaches, including rail replacement and visitor coaches.

In addition for Pool Meadow, which is currently managed and owned by Centro, it is proposed that future enhancements proposed will include provision for a coach services. The emerging Coventry Transport Strategy sets out a series of long term transport policies. This includes a policy which supports the need for appropriate coach facilities in the City Centre.

Furthermore the City Council holds regular meetings with key bus and coach operators, along with Centro to ensure operators are abreast of changes planned within the City but also to offer early involvement and influence on decisions and proposals that may impact on bus and coach travel.

Information for Visiting Coaches

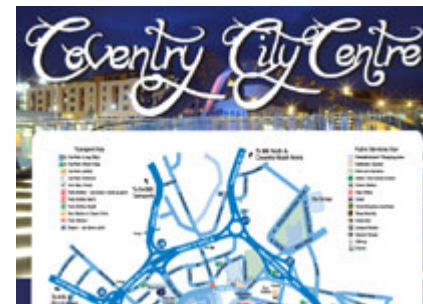


Coventry & Warwickshire Tourism Website

Clear information is provided to visiting coach parties through a variety of readily available sources, with the most effective method of conveying this information to visitors located throughout the Country and further afield is through the use of the Internet. Whereby a dedicated website has been produced for coach drivers visiting Coventry and Warwickshire:

<http://www.visitcoventryandwarwickshire.co.uk/group-travel/coachdriver.aspx>

This website details all the coach pick up /set down points within the city centre, coach parking provision and facilities including details of any charges that may be imposed for these services. In addition a downloadable driver information sheet has been produced depicting a map of the City Centre showing the locations of coach parking facilities, welfare facilities and also the main attractions within the city centre. The website information will also be transposed on to other City Council webpages and information links, to ensure a holistic approach to informing visiting drivers.



Driver Information Sheet

The city centre already benefits from comprehensive direction signage directing visitors to the White Street Coach Park facility located off junction 2 of the Ring Road, along with a number of tourism signs in place directing coaches to key attractors such as Coventry Cathedral. In addition to this we are at present undertaking a signing review of Ring Road Gantry Signs to rationalise and standardise destinations but also to include additional coach park direction signage.

The pedestrian route signage linking the coach park to key attractors is also being improved as part of the improvement works to White Street Coach Park. In addition as part of a wider scheme the City Council are working with Centro to introduce a proposed 'Wayfinding' strategy and scheme to enhance the existing pedestrian direction signs within the city centre.

Special measures for coaches include the provision within Traffic Regulation Orders for coaches to use all the mandatory bus lanes and bus gates within the city, this is to enable coaches to also benefit from quicker, direct and more reliable routes for coaches within the city.

Coach Parking Facilities

The city centre currently affords visiting coaches a number of on street pick up / set down points strategically located in close proximity to key attractors such as the Coventry Transport Museum and Coventry Cathedral. In addition we are shortly to introduce a further seven short term on street coach parking spaces within the city centre to ensure a holistic approach is applied to the provision of coach parking limited waiting facilities within the city centre.

The City Council have carefully considered the coaching parking strategy across the city centre and have implemented a consistent short stay 20minute limited waiting restriction for coach parking on street throughout the city. This is to ensure a steady turnover of vehicles to maximise the use of the on street parking provision and encourage coach drivers to utilise the new designated long stay coach parking facility.

The following tables set out the changes to on street coach parking provision:

Location	Existing	Proposed	Total Spaces
Priory Street	2	2	4
Hales Street	1	0	1
Upper Well Street	1	0	1
Corporation Street	0	1	1
Croft Road	0	1	1
Fairfax Street	0	3	3
	4	7	11

All of the limited waiting spaces within the city centre are purposely located adjacent to wide paved footways, to enable passengers to be safely offloaded on to the footways with particular emphasis given to disabled pedestrians who may require the use of disabled ramps to gain access to / from a coach.

Coach Park Facility

In addition to the on street short stay coach parking provision, dedicated long stay coach parking is to be provided within the current White Street car park. At present the current pay and display car park has provision for up to six coaches for long stay parking. The White Street Coach Park scheme will see the reallocation of the facility to form a dedicated coach park catering for up to twenty four coaches, and also providing drop off car parking provision along with taxi ranking space. The facility will also benefit in the near future from having CCTV cameras fitted to provide additional security for coaches parked.

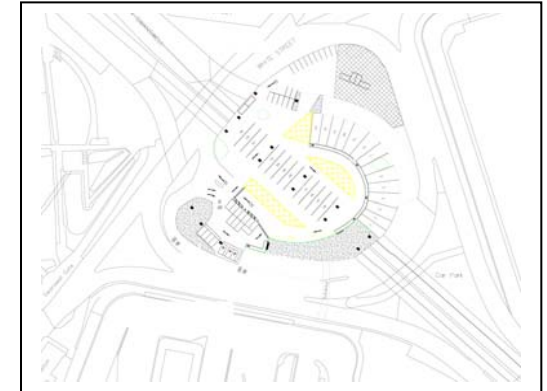
The White Street Coach Park charging strategy is also to be amended to further promote this coach park both as a short term lay over facility and also long stay coach parking. The pricing structure will however remain competitive to encourage the use of this new improved facility.

The coach park facility is located within the heart of the city and in close walking distance to a number of the key tourist attractors and city centre shops. This has the added benefit of reducing the environmental impact by minimising the amount of travel required for coach drivers. One of the major benefits to having a coach park located within the city centre is that coach passengers and coach drivers alike are located in close proximity to the array of local amenities located within the city centre, such as cafes, bars, supermarkets etc all situated within a short walk of the coach park.



Pool Meadow Bus Station

Other facilities for visiting coaches such as coach wash, and chemical toilet drop facilities for coach operators are available by arrangement.



White Street Coach Park Proposals

In addition to the city centre conveniences, agreement has been obtained to the formalised sharing of the facilities within the Network West Midlands (Centro) operated Pool Meadow Bus Station, which is located immediately adjacent to the new White Street Coach Park. Pool Meadow Bus Station offers a number of facilities available to coach travel visitors including secure 24hr access to toilets, vending machines, and an indoor seating area. In addition during daytime hours a café is also available for use. Furthermore Coventry City Council is currently in discussions with Network West Midlands over the provision of a dedicated driver's restroom, which would also be extended to use by coach drivers. The City Council are also in discussions with local traders about offering discounts to visiting coach drivers for food and drink purchases.

Coach Parking facilities at the Ricoh Arena

The 32,000-seater stadium within the Ricoh Arena is the home of the Sky Blues of Coventry City Football Club. The Ricoh Arena offers the Jaguar Exhibition Hall measuring 6,000sq metres and capable of holding 8,000 people for concerts, or a banquet for up to 5,000 people, including the largest column-free conference and banqueting space in the Midlands, 19 Kiosks built around stadium and four serving the Jaguar Exhibition Halls, the 71 Rooms & Silk Suites hotel, Singers Bar & Bistro, a 100-seater restaurant, bar area and coffee lounge with internet access.

The Ricoh Arena boasts more than 2,000 car parking spaces and dedicated secure long stay coach parking for up to 50 coaches. Coach drivers have access to the welfare facilities including a choice bars and restaurants and public toilets. The stadium will be renamed as the City of Coventry Stadium during the Olympic Games Events.



Ricoh Arena Car Parks

4 Implementation Programme

The improvements to coach travel provision set out within this application are seen as an important objective for the City Council, and as such are deemed a priority for implementation by senior officers and local members. Accordingly with the many forthcoming high profile events within the city such as the 50th anniversary of the consecration of Coventry Cathedral, Godiva Awakes, and Olympic Games etc there is a tight programme in place to ensure the proposed changes are implemented sufficiently in advance of these events.

A number of the additional on street coach drop off facilities specified have already been implemented with the remaining to follow shortly. The reinstatement and improvement of White Street Coach Park is programmed to be completed in February 2012, including the additional direction signage. Following completion of the new White Street Coach Park the various websites and information sources will be updated to reflect the improvements. Finally the review of Ring Road Gantry Signs to rationalise and standardise destinations which will also include additional coach park direction signage will be completed later this financial year as part of a wider scheme.

5 Future Aspirations

In addition to the existing coach travel facilities in place and the short term improvements presently being implemented as detailed within this application, Coventry is committed to the ongoing continuation to improve coach travel within the city, with the ultimate aim of further encouraging Coventry as a tourism destination.

Our long term coach travel strategy includes additional policies to those set out within LTP3, whereby we are currently developing a number of local policies including a Car Parking Strategy, a Movement Strategy and an overarching Transport Strategy. These Strategies will include policies relating to the provision of coach travel and specifically coach parking provision.

The City Council will continue to engage at regular intervals with local bus and coach operators on new developments within Coventry, to inform of the proposed changes but also allow operators to comment and influence changes to the Network that may affect their services.

A key aspiration is to achieve even greater integration of White Street Coach Park and Pool Meadow Bus Station to ensure better and increased facilities are made available to drivers and passengers, including the provision of a dedicated driver restroom with separate driver toilets and welfare facilities.

6 Contacts

Further information can be obtained during office hours from Lisa Cornwall in the Traffic and Network Management Team at Coventry City Council, Direct Dial: 024 76 832033 or lisa.cornwall@coventry.gov.uk. For out of hours emergencies our Emergency Services Unit are available 24hours a day Direct Dial: 024 76 832208.

The Pool Meadow Bus Station is operated by Network West Midlands, and Alan Beeson is the Bus Station Manager,

Direct Dial: 0121 214 7890 or alanbeeson@centro.org.uk .



Prepared by Chris Young,
Traffic and Network Management Team,
Coventry City Council,
Much Park Street,
Coventry
CV1 2PY.

024 76 831299

chris.young@coventry.gov.uk