

THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN URBAN POLES: A PRE-VISIT VIEW OF COVENTRY, UNITED KINGDOM

Cities are widely recognised as playing a fundamental role in the promotion of the knowledge economy, but most research and policy has focussed on large cities with world-class educational and research institutes and advanced clusters of economic activity. There are clear and significant gaps in the knowledge of how smaller sized cities, with different levels and types of knowledge institutions and different levels of economic activity can compete within the knowledge economy. Yet such cities are recognised within European Union policy as a playing a vital role in the implementation of the Lisbon Agenda.

This report has been produced by the URBACT II network RUnUP in advance of a study visit to Coventry in the United Kingdom between the 25th and 26th May 2010. This report highlights the key support features linked to the objectives of RUnUP that will be visited during the Study Visit and the questions that the study visit is seeking to address.

INTRODUCTION TO COVENTRY

Coventry is a city and metropolitan borough in the county of West Midlands in England. Coventry is the 9th largest city in England and the 11th largest in the United Kingdom. It is also the second largest city in the English Midlands, after Birmingham, with a population of 300,848, although Leicester and Nottingham have larger urban areas. The population of Coventry has risen to 309,800 as of 2008. Coventry is situated 95 miles (153 km) northwest of London and 19 miles (30 km) east of Birmingham, and is farthest from the coast of any city in Britain. Although harbouring a population of almost a third of a million inhabitants, Coventry is not amongst the English Core Cities Group due to its proximity to Birmingham.

Coventry was also the world's first 'twin' city when it formed a twinning relationship with the Russian city of Stalingrad (now Volgograd) during World War II. The city is now twinned with Dresden and with 27 other cities around the world. Coventry Cathedral is one of the newer cathedrals in the world, having been built following World War II. Coventry motor companies have contributed significantly to the British motor industry, and it has two universities, the city centre-based Coventry University and the University of Warwick on the southern outskirts



In the 18th and 19th centuries, Coventry became one of the three main UK centres of watch and clock manufacture and ranked alongside Prescot, near Liverpool and Clerkenwell in London. As the industry declined, due mainly to competition from Swiss made clock and watch manufacturers, the skilled pool of workers proved crucial to the setting up of bicycle manufacture and eventually the motorcycle, automobile, machine tool and aircraft industries.

In the late 19th century, Coventry became a major centre of bicycle manufacture, with the industry being pioneered by Rover. By the early 20th century, bicycle manufacture had evolved into motor manufacture, and Coventry became a major centre of the British motor industry. In the postwar years Coventry was largely rebuilt under the general direction of the Gibson Plan, gaining a new pedestrianised shopping precinct (the first of its kind in Europe on such a scale) and in 1962 Sir Basil Spence's much-celebrated new St Michael's Cathedral (incorporating one of the world's largest tapestries) was consecrated. Its pre-fabricated steel spire was lowered into place by helicopter. In 1967, the Eagle Street Mosque opened as Coventry's first mosque. Major expansion to Coventry had taken place previously, in the 1920s and 1930s, to provide housing for the large influx of workers who came to work in the city's booming factories.

Coventry's motor industry boomed during the 1950s and 1960s and Coventry enjoyed a 'golden age'. During this period the disposable income of Coventrians was one of the highest in the country. The 1970s, however, saw a decline in the British motor industry and Coventry suffered badly. By the early 1980s, Coventry had one of the highest unemployment rates in the country.

In recent years, the city has recovered with newer industries locating there, although the motor industry continues to decline. While over 100 different companies have produced motor vehicles in Coventry, car production came to an end in 2006 as the last car rolled off the lines at Peugeot's Ryton plant. Production was transferred to a new plant near Trnava, Slovakia, with the help of EU grant aid to Peugeot: this made Peugeot deeply unpopular in the city. The design headquarters of Jaguar Cars is still in the city at their Whitley plant and although they ceased vehicle assembly at their Browns Lane plant in 2004, they still continue some operations from there. In 2008, only one motor manufacturing plant is operational, that of LTI Ltd, producing the popular TX4 taxi cabs. On 17 March 2010 LTI announced they would no longer be producing bodies and chassis in Coventry, instead producing them in China and shipping them in for assembly in Coventry.

STUDY VISIT KEY QUESTIONS

A visit to Coventry exploring the role of universities and wider development of enterprise and entrepreneurship, in particular the activities of Coventry University inevitably raises a range of critical questions:

- What are the partnership structures that exist to shape economic development policy in Coventry and the strategic direction and approach of the University?
 - How has the successful development of Warwick University and Coventry University impacted upon the community of Coventry?

- What has driven Coventry University to develop its business development capacity and profile?
- What are the core elements of the Coventry University model that enable it to be referenced as an “enterprising university”
- Can the “enterprising university” concepts of Coventry University be replicated elsewhere?
- What are the new developments of Coventry University and how will these support the further development of Coventry and enable its local community to address the issues of the economic crisis?

“Coventry has a long history of working with local and regional stakeholders – government, the business community and local entrepreneurs – and the University is now developing an increasingly international perspective” says Ian Robertson, Chief Executive of the UK National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship. “Under the leadership of its Vice-Chancellor, enterprise has been placed at the strategic heart of the institution. Everyone who works there has a part to play in Coventry’s transformation and it is clearly investing in staff development – as well as taking a completely fresh look at how to support the enterprise needs of the world beyond the University.”

The aim of this document is to explore the activities of Coventry University and their local development partners that support the enhancement of the university role within their community.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership (CSWP)

Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership (CSWP Ltd.) is a partnership for local economic regeneration and economic development and unites all sectors of the area’s economy with the common aim of working together and moving in the same direction in order to support the following core objectives:

- To support economic development and regeneration and development across the sub-region
- Demonstrate project delivery
- Give people a strong voice in their future prosperity
- The partnership includes private, public, education and voluntary agencies working together for the growth of the community.

CSWP ensures that its partners are all working together, and pulling in the same direction in support of the core objectives:

- To represent and promote the economic interests, development and regeneration across the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire sub region.
Enabling private, public, education and voluntary agencies to work together for the growth and prosperity of Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire and the one million people who live here.

- To provide a platform for joint cross-partner policy decisions.
- To deliver a range of funded projects which fulfil CSWP objectives
- To speak out loudly and clearly for the sub-region

The two main vehicles for delivering the vision are the Regeneration Zone and the High Technology Corridor. The Zone, broadly covering Nuneaton, Bedworth and North and East Coventry, aims to redress the economic imbalance that exists in terms of prosperity between the Regeneration Zone and the remainder of the sub-region.

The CSW Corridor is one of three High Technology Corridors in the West Midlands, established to accelerate the modernisation and diversification of the region's economy, stimulate new enterprise and attract new investment. The Corridor has great potential for innovation, capitalising on the presence of the University of Warwick, Warwick Science Park, Coventry University, a host of other research organisations, skills and technical expertise and a rich history of world-class industry. This is also an area of strong, established high-technology transport and ICT businesses supported by significant intellectual resources.

The primary aim of the Corridor is to contribute to diversifying the business base: fostering and supporting enterprise and innovation and helping to create the best environment for businesses to start-up and grow. The CSW Corridor also looks to encourage more technology-based and high value-added businesses by developing the region's science parks and R&D centres, improving collaboration between the West Midlands universities and supporting business investment and growth within the corridor area.

Over £30 million is being invested to develop the CSW Technology Corridor, with £5.8 million of the resource coming from Advantage West Midlands and the rest coming from the EU, partner organisations and the private sector. The longer-term vision is that the CSW area develops a globally significant and self-sustaining cluster of innovative, knowledge-based businesses. The Corridor should embrace both inward investors and indigenous spin-outs. The technological focus will be diverse but there will be particular specialisms across the areas of ICT, motor sport, product engineering and design and medical technologies.

Coventry City Council

The Council's Business, Investment and Enterprise Team are leading the drive to support the City's growth plans by encouraging and supporting business investment. Their innovative Sector Development Strategy is designed to give Coventry based businesses a competitive advantage which they can exploit, focused on developing the following sectors:

- Aerospace
- Automotive (including specialist vehicles and motor-sport)
- Business and professional services
- Digital and Creative Technologies
- Information Communications Technology (ICT)
- Environmental technologies
- Medical technologies
 - Public sector relocation
 - Retail and Leisure

Coventry is the unrivalled heart of the UK's automotive industry. It is the birthplace of the motorcar and has over 100 years of automotive history. It is established as a key location for the development, manufacture, deployment and understanding of low carbon vehicles.

The city is a premier location for entrepreneurs and businesses planning to invest in the industry. Research indicates there are over 1,600 automotive companies operating in the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire sub-region employing some 30,000 highly skilled and knowledgeable staff. This activity generates turnover upwards of £2 billion.

Coventry and Warwickshire is a leading UK region for the design and production of all types of specialist vehicles (low carbon emission, niche, specialist commercial and auto sport). Our key activities and objectives in this area include:

- Delivering a project, the Coventry Low Carbon Fleet Partnership, between Coventry City Council, Coventry University and the University of Warwick to trial the use of low carbon vehicles in our respective fleets.
- Coventry and Birmingham Low Emission Demonstrator (CABLED) project. A demonstrator project placing more than 100 of the latest low carbon vehicles onto the streets of Coventry and Birmingham.
- Maintaining and developing the City's position as an important centre for Low Carbon Vehicle programmes.
- Maintaining and developing a vibrant automotive supply chain in the city.

Motorsport is also important to Coventry and the sub-region. The sub-regional Motorsport and Performance Engineering industry comprises 250 companies and 4,300 full-time employees; some 30 per cent of the West Midland regions motor sport activity is located in the area. The region also benefits from the activities of the local universities where more than 5000 students study a range of transport related fields, including 3D automotive design, automotive engineering design, industrial design, transport design and ergonomics, and automotive journalism. We are working closely with these establishments to ensure a consistent supply of suitably skilled individuals into the regions automotive supply chain

Coventry's ICT sector has been identified as a high growth sector with the potential to achieve further rapid growth and contribute to an already thriving Coventry economy. As technological advances create an ever-changing local to global economic environment and competition toughens, the sector support team at the council can offer solutions that are tailored to meet the needs of investors. The City and surrounding area now boasts circa 1,300 ICT and software companies

employing 40,000 people, and nearly three quarters of these companies have been set up since 1996, growing rapidly on the back of world class skills and ICT infrastructure support.

These 1,300 companies represent a vibrant base of high growth indigenous companies, underwritten by many of the world's leading global ICT and software companies including Oracle, IBM and Sun Microsystems. 90% of ICT and software companies in the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire (CSW) triangle are clustered in key locations, mostly tightly networked to the region's universities, and basing themselves at science parks and innovation centres, such as the world famous University of Warwick Science Park and at Coventry University Technology Park. Research indicates that one third of ICT companies in the West Midlands region are growing at over 20% per annum and over a third are exporting successfully to European markets.

Technologies being developed in the sub-region include wireless communications, CAD/CAM, video games, E-business software, and CRM software. Half of the sub-region's companies are engaged in research and development and one third invest over 16% of their turnover in research and development. A further 10% have patents and almost half are planning short to medium term expansion of their Research and Development activities. Coventry also has a highly skilled employee base, and both Coventry University and the University of Warwick underpin this. The city's student population stands at over 35,000, with 10,000 new graduates each year, including nearly 6,000 ICT and Software students, students that represent a major source of innovation, creativity and knowledge.

The West Midlands is internationally recognised for its expertise in medical and healthcare technologies, delivering economic growth for business and excellence in healthcare. In Coventry alone the most recent Annual Business Inquiry identified over 220 companies active in the medical technologies sector, with a further 435 classified in wider medical activity, accounting for 7% of the city's economic activity. Much is happening within this dynamic sector, some of the most recent developments in the City include:

- The £440 million University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire, one of Europe's largest and most technologically advanced.
- A Medical Research Institute (MRI), located at the University of Warwick. This venture links the research skills of the University's top rated biological scientists, with the clinical skills of doctors at five associated Midlands hospitals.
- Development of a medical technology park. Advantage West Midlands have released 20 acres for the first phase of the Medipark development at the Ansty site in Warwickshire. Infrastructure works started on site in Spring 2007.

Ansty is located adjacent to the new University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire and is conveniently located for the

Midlands motorway network, with direct access to the M6, J2 and M69.

- Health Design and Technology Institute (HDTI). This state-of-the-art facility seeks to explore and pioneer new projects in healthcare, and to accelerate the development of health technologies, pilot improved approaches to community healthcare delivery and provide professional development and training. Managed by Coventry University Enterprises (CUE) Ltd, the HDTI combines the skills and expertise of university staff and over 20 partners from the healthcare, telecommunications and product design industries.

Coventry has long recognised the importance of the medical technologies sector and the part it can play in the key area of innovation and helping individuals and companies expand their business.

Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Founded in 1903, Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce is a BCC accredited Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is a membership based and membership-led organisation which exists to serve the best interests of businesses in Coventry and Warwickshire.

Coventry University

Coventry University has a strong profile of business and community engagement delivered through its strong applied research strategy and delivery activities related to innovation, knowledge transfer and service provision. This is led by the Business Development Group of the University through its Business Development Manager Team who work with the University faculties to develop their applied research activities, the Corporate Partnership Unit supporting the establishment of multi-touch and strategic partnerships with external organisations through the deployment of a partnership development stairway, Coventry University Enterprises through which the University operates its commercial and income generating work and specialist applied research institutes in the fields of; assistive technology and community healthcare; creative enterprise; serious games; and entrepreneurship. This business engagement approach is reflected in the mission statement of the university: *“We are a dynamic, enterprising and creative university committed to providing an excellent education enriched by our focus in applied research”*.

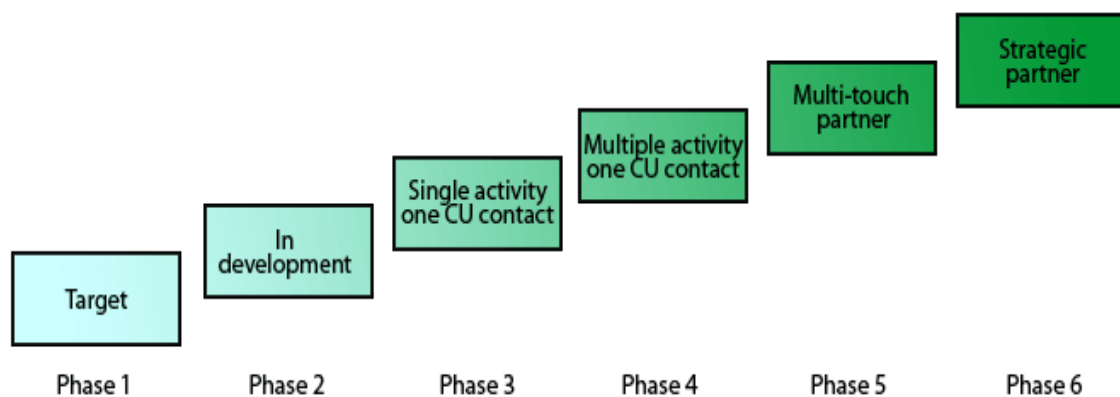
This commitment to business and community engagement has resulted in the University having an infrastructure and resource base that supports in excess of 7500 small and medium-sized enterprises, 500 large companies and 120 start-ups annually with 30 private and 11 public sector strategic level partners. This approach has been recognised nationally with the University being shortlisted for two consecutive years for the Times Higher Entrepreneurial University of the Year, UK Business Incubation Achievement in Business Incubation award winner in 2009 and Midlands Entrepreneurial University of the year for 2010.

Coventry University strongly believes in collaboration between academia and industry. Through such synergies the university helps put into practice the latest cutting edge theories and improve the profitability of business. The Business Development Team has extensive experience in working with companies from all sectors, locally, nationally and internationally, from large international corporations and government bodies to regional organisations and pioneering new SMEs.

The team has worked in many different markets including healthcare, utilities, arts, design, manufacturing, transport and environmental technologies. They have worked on both short and long-term projects, offering a new innovative perspective for products, processes and business strategies. Through commercial partnerships, the university has built up a strong network of clients and has gained a reputation for providing real business solutions, while taking a pioneering and enterprising approach to today's changing business environment.

The University values the partnerships it develops and believes in investing time and effort to strengthen these relationships, turning them into long-term strategic alliances. Just as these alliances influence teaching, so to business solutions are supported by the latest thinking and research from industry-leading names at the University

The University has a number of strategic alliances across different sectors of industry. These partnerships enable the University to develop opportunities and raise its profile, leading to better quality of services delivered to students. The partnerships take many different forms ranging from long-term strategic alliances with larger companies such as BT and Cisco, to smaller project-based collaborations with SMEs. These are not only with commercial organisations but also with public sector bodies and government organisations such as Advantage West Midlands and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).



Coventry University has produced a simple partnership development process and methodology aimed at promoting a culture of knowledge sharing and improved partnership working. The aims of which are to:

- Implement the partnership development framework at all levels of the University
- Formalise the multi-touch and strategic collaborations
- Increase the number of partners at all partnership development phases
- Improve knowledge sharing regarding current and future partnerships
- Improve our current knowledge management systems to increase internal communication
- Work towards a culture of information sharing and improved partnership working

Coventry University has a long and established relationship with industry and has always encouraged academia and industry to collaborate for mutual benefit. The University has worked with companies from all sectors locally, nationally and internationally. In addition it has a vast amount of experience and knowledge of European grants and funding. The University's commercial work has enabled it to build a good network of clients and has gained a reputation for providing 'real business solutions' while taking an innovative and enterprising approach to today's changing business environment.

The University values the commercial knowledge and relationships they build, as this enables the combining of practical business knowledge with theory taught to students. It values the partnerships developed and believes in investing time and effort to strengthen these relationships, turning them into long-term strategic alliances. Coventry University offers business support to small-to-medium enterprises through projects, but also manage projects on behalf of other public sector bodies. They provide consultancy ranging from expert advice, reports, marketing, workshop design and delivery, training and event management.



The support framework developed by Commercial Development Services at Coventry University has four key pillars:

Pre-incubation and Incubation Support

- Support for business start-ups including hot-desking and networking
 - Business mentoring
 - Product design support

Innovation Management

- Development of innovation strategies and foresight
- Identification of business best practice
- Manufacturing measurement expertise and support

Exploitation of Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer

- Identifying and developing intellectual property
- Securing and protecting intellectual property
- Valuation of intellectual assets
- Developing exploitation strategies

International business

- Securing overseas knowledge based partners
- Support in licensing, strategic alliance or joint venture formation
- Foreign direct investment guidance
- Overseas 'soft-landing' facilitation

This work is enhanced through the continual development of 4 applied research institutes:

- Institute of Applied Entrepreneurship
- Institute for Creative Enterprise
- Health Design Technologies Institute
- Serious Games Institute

Coventry University's research is focused on the application and usefulness of our research and knowledge transfer activities. Rather than undertaking research for research sake we look to staff to demonstrate their authority to teach by applying their research to solve interesting problems for the wider community. These statements describe the core principle of the University's 2010 Applied Research Strategy. Coventry University has a long tradition of undertaking applied research and consultancy to meet the needs of local, national and international clients. Founded as an industrial University it originally focused on the needs of major multinational manufacturing companies such as Jaguar, Rolls Royce, Land Rover and Ford.

The University continues this tradition and has been widely recognised for the high quality of its Applied Research and its application in the real-world. However, today the University undertakes applied research activity in practically every subject area. From art to design, health to sports, regeneration to human security, mathematics to engineering and computing to communications, staff are encouraged to apply their knowledge and skills in the external world.

The Institute of Applied Entrepreneurship (IAE) is home to all enterprise and entrepreneurship activities at Coventry University. The IAE offers the region – and its students, graduates and staff – a broad range of entrepreneurial support and services for every level and stage of

business start-up and growth. The vision of the IAE is to become an internationally recognised institute of excellence which promotes an entrepreneurial lifestyle and mindset within the University community and its stakeholders.

To achieve this, the institute focuses on four core business areas:

- education and training
- applied research
- entrepreneurship support
- creating an entrepreneurial culture

These areas combine to provide a unique range of programmes and activities; leading the way in entrepreneurship, enterprise and innovation.

The Institute for Creative Enterprise (ICE) nurtures and develops graduates and arts based businesses into creative enterprises by providing them with the support structure to enable them to flourish in their chosen field. ICE also aims to create new partnerships which lead to new ways of working. ICE provides:

- A building with first class resources for creative businesses
- A space for generating and testing new ideas through postgraduate teaching and research
- A hub to exchange ideas and best practice between new graduates, established practitioners and professional arts organisations
- An access point for business start-ups and support facilities for creative businesses

The Institute for Creative Enterprise (ICE) is an exciting venture which is home to:

- Postgraduate courses in performance, media and digital art
- Applied research activities for performing arts, arts practice, media, communication and cultural studies
- Business support and desk space for new cultural and creative businesses
- Office space for cultural organisations.
- ICE is also a focus for business development support, placements for students, mentoring, information, debate and advice.

The Institute has a teaching space, a performance studio, a screening room, and dedicated desks for new businesses. With a café and Wi-Fi throughout, ICE is a creative hub of the campus. ICE is developing partnerships and collaborations between the new businesses, postgraduate students, academic staff, and the professional cultural organisations based in the Institute.

The Health Design Technologies Institute (HDTI) offers the opportunity for products within the community and consumer healthcare market to be tested and evaluated within the Institute. This offering can be

adapted to suit the needs of the customer and can involve a variety of different evaluation mechanisms. These include the use of a mock-up facility which allows users to view, test and evaluate a product or service in a developed reality setting. Also available is an observed usability laboratory to evaluate single and group interaction with products. By facilitating collaboration between users, companies, healthcare practitioners and designers, these facilities allow the feedback of valuable information to the design and development of the product. These services draw on existing capabilities within the University to manage targeted applied research activity and carry out usability studies.

The Serious Games Institute (SGI) is based on Coventry University's Technology Park. The Serious Games Institute is a global thought leader in smart spaces. They enable and facilitate the growth of serious games, virtual worlds and connected industry specialists by supporting research and development into the use and effects of these products, platforms and technologies. They exhibit and showcase the products and services of their community of companies and academics. SGI provide business support and facilities to encourage, promote and grow businesses in this sector. The Institute provides a close interface between high-level applied academic research at Coventry University and leading edge technology companies in the field of game-based learning. The SGI has a particular focus on 3D collaborative multi-user environments and other games development platforms which can be harnessed for non-entertainment purposes.

Alongside applied research the need to develop the skills and capabilities in companies is clear particularly in a period of economic downturn. Acua Ltd is the corporate trading subsidiary of Coventry University. Established in 2008, Acua has grown from a pioneering University Employer Engagement Project (EEP) into a limited company providing a range of business development and capability improvement programmes. Acua works with organisations to embed higher level skills and qualifications into development programmes currently running or planned. Programmes are accredited by Coventry University. Starting at Certificate level, the qualification route can build through Foundation Degree to full degree and potentially beyond.

Acua has a growing product portfolio, built on a well developed and successful Leadership Capability Programme and generic Foundation Degree. Further innovative developments include a wide range of shorter programmes accredited by Coventry University and supported by the Learning Development Consultant (LDC) infrastructure. The content, design and delivery of all Acua products focuses on the achievement of operational excellence for our clients and their employees. The business model focuses on total integration into the client organisation. By placing our LDCs into the organisation they



become a dedicated people development resource. Successes come within a variety of business applications including both private and public sector. Clients include:

- Caterpillar
- The AA
- Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Partnership Trust
- Solihull Care Trust

Beyond these current offerings Acua plans to develop a range of further higher education qualification solutions, designed to enhance the availability of routes for learners within the workplace

STUDY VISIT INFORMATION

Getting to Coventry: Birmingham International Airport is approximately 20 minutes away from central Coventry. Coventry is on the Main West Coast Line, being serviced by regular train services seven days a week; networking it with other major towns and cities. Regular and frequent trains run to and from London and there is also an extensive timetable of local trains linking to other regional towns.

Birmingham International Airport is one of the best rail-served Airports in the UK with over 250 train departures per day. During the daytime there are 9 trains per hour to Birmingham New Street Station (in Birmingham City Centre) and 7 to Coventry (Trains heading to Coventry, Northampton, London Euston and Bournemouth) including regular local services to intermediate stations. The Airport rail station, Birmingham International, is located only 500 metres from the Airport Passenger Terminals. The rail station is linked to the Passenger Terminals by the free, frequent Air-Rail Link from 0515 to 0200. Air-Rail link runs every two minutes with a journey time of less than 2 minutes. The Air-Rail link can be located on the first floor (departures) of terminal 1 of the airport.

Maps of Coventry: <http://www.visitcoventry.co.uk/downloads/download-maps.asp>

Weather: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/weather/forecast/2199>

Further Information:

<http://www.visitcoventry.co.uk/> ; <http://www.youtube.com/user/CovStudent>