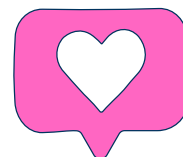


#CovConnects: Learnings from a city- wide device reuse system

Phase One Report
June 2026



Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Phase 1: From Pilot to System _____ | 4 |
| • The problem we are addressing _____ | 4 |
| • How change is already happening _____ | 5 |
| • What we've learnt: The biggest take aways from Phase 1 | 12 |
| Phase 2: From proof of concept to system maturity _____ | 15 |
| • Strengthening the system: What we're testing next _____ | 18 |
| • What will success look like? _____ | 20 |
| • Collaborating for success and inspiring action in other places _____ | 22 |
| Thank you _____ | 24 |

Executive summary

Digital inclusion is often treated as a short-term, standalone intervention. Electronic waste is treated as an environmental problem. Coventry is showing they are, in fact, part of the same system and that the system can be joined up to benefit the city, and its residents, as a whole.

In September 2025, Coventry City Council and Virgin Media O2 strengthened their partnership to scale this approach, working towards a circular model where unwanted devices (such as laptops, phones and tablets) are reused locally to enable Coventry residents to get online, while reducing environmental impact. Devices are embedded into health, education and community settings, ensuring they reach the people who need them most, alongside the support required to use it safely and effectively.

Together, this approach reflects a shared ambition to move beyond short term pilots and

instead embed digital inclusion and device reuse into public services, supply chains and organisational behaviour as **core city infrastructure**.

In Phase 1 (our learning phase), this joined up approach delivered tangible results, with over 6,000 devices distributed through trusted networks. This demonstrated wider impact across access to services, social connection, economic participation and sustainability.

This report shows how Coventry has moved from early action, to system-level change, and how Phase 2 will test what it takes to make digital reuse “business as usual”, establishing the UK’s first localised, self sustaining device reuse city, with learning that can now inform national policy and practice.

Phase 1: From pilot to system

The problem we are addressing

Being online is now a basic part of daily life, from booking health appointments and using public services, to finding work, learning new skills and staying in touch with others.

Yet across the UK, **digital exclusion and electronic waste are growing at the same time.** Millions of people lack reliable access to the internet or a suitable device, while large volumes of working technology are discarded or left unused, despite having years of life left in them.

Research from [The Green Alliance*](#) shows “The greatest challenge to expanding device redistribution is insufficient supply of usable devices, with current efforts meeting only a fifth of demand. Businesses, public sector organisations and individuals are not donating enough high-quality devices to meet the needs of digitally excluded people.” This is the gap our work looks to address.

We believe there is a solution to this gap. This programme responds by taking a **local, joined-up** approach to keep technology in use for longer. This involves taking unused and end-of-life devices and passing them to local people who need them, with the **practical wrap-around support needed to enable safe and effective use.**

In Coventry, **digital exclusion is not evenly distributed.** Local data shows that around 14,000 residents are completely offline, with an estimated 6 in 10 residents relying on smartphones alone and lacking access to laptops or PCs, limiting how fully they can engage with services, education, employment and everyday life.

Digital exclusion in Coventry is closely linked to **wider social and health inequalities.** As a [Marmot City](#), Coventry is committed to tackling the social determinants of health, and digital inclusion is now recognised as an

essential building block that shape residents’ ability to thrive. Older residents, people who are unemployed, living with long-term illness or disability, carers, and some ethnic minority groups are more likely **not only to lack access to devices and connectivity**, but also to have **lower levels of digital skills, lower trust** in digital public services, and **fewer support networks** to help them get online safely. Conversely, social support, stable circumstances and living in less deprived areas are associated with higher digital confidence and inclusion.

Lack of access to a device is rarely the only barrier to digital inclusion. Exclusion is often **complex and intersectional**, shaped by confidence, skills, trust, safety, health, language, life circumstances and the support people have around them. As public services, healthcare and everyday decision-making increasingly move online, digital inclusion also plays an important role in health literacy, online safety and people’s ability to navigate information with confidence.

Digital inclusion also plays an important role in **supporting inclusive economic growth.** Having access to the right devices, reliable connectivity and everyday digital skills helps people take up opportunities, stay in work and move forward in their careers. Over time, this can shape incomes, job security and quality of life. When digital access or confidence is missing, these opportunities are reduced, affecting not only individuals, but the prosperity of the city as a whole.

When people cannot participate digitally, the impact does not disappear- pressure often emerges elsewhere in the system, including health services, adult social care, education and housing. **Strengthening digital inclusion enables better social, environmental and economic outcomes, both for individuals and for public services.**

Through #CovConnects, device reuse is therefore deliberately combined with **trusted delivery routes, practical support and integration into real services and support networks.** This reflects our experience that digital inclusion only reaches people at scale when it is embedded within the services they already rely on, such as education, youth services, adult social care, health and community support, rather than delivered through standalone digital programmes.

The central challenge, therefore, is not whether digital inclusion enables better outcomes but **how it is embedded locally into the system in a way that is resilient, scalable and not dependent on individual roles, short-term funding or isolated projects.**

#CovConnects exists to tackle these challenges together, positioning **digital inclusion as an enabler** of wider city priorities – not a standalone initiative.

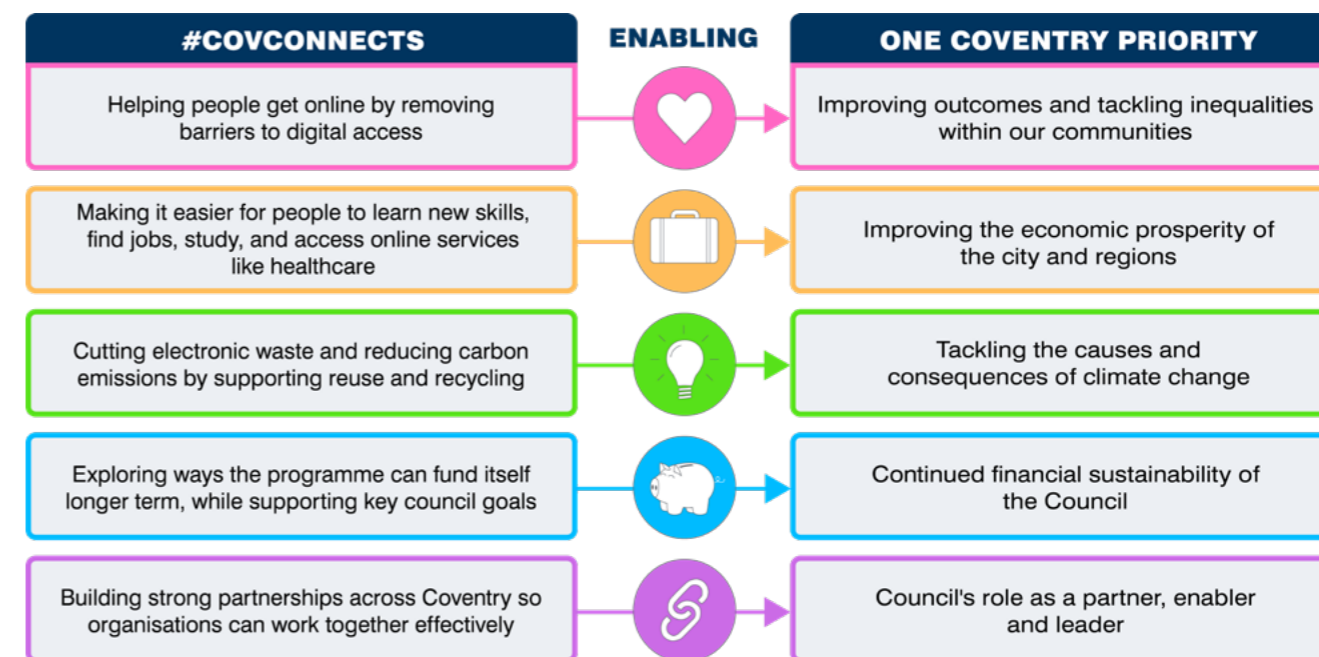


Figure 1: Demonstrates how #CovConnects directly contributes to the [One Coventry Plan 2022 - 2030](#), Coventry City Council.

How change is already happening

#CovConnects, established in 2022, has evolved over time, responding to local need, partner insight and what has been learned through delivery.

In its early stages, the approach was shaped by test-and-learn activity, drawing on principles from the 100% Digital Leeds community-based model for digital inclusion, focusing on person-centred, holistic and co-designed digital inclusion.

At the centre of this work is the **#CovConnects Device Bank**, launched in 2023 as a practical response to local need.



From early action to strategic partnership

#CovConnects Device Bank, launched in 2023, did not begin with a major investment or a fixed model. Instead, it evolved through **early action, local evidence and deliberate learning**, which in turn created the conditions for

larger-scale partnership and investment. What began as a response to immediate local need has grown into a city-wide system, and it is this journey that led to the partnership with **Virgin Media O2**.



Early local action (2023)

The #CovConnects Device Bank launched in summer 2023, initially repurposing end-of-corporate-life Council devices to meet urgent local need. This demonstrated that reuse could be practical, safe and meaningful when delivered through trusted local partners. Ensuring devices are **securely wiped to recognised standards, asset controls, and information governance**

assurance levels where applicable.

Importantly, Coventry City Council also secured significant investment from the NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) Health Inequalities fund to strengthen the coordination and integration of digital inclusion and **digital health participation** work across the city.

Building proof of concept (2023–2024)*

Additional activity, including the West Midlands Combined Authority Connected Services programme and early digital reuse and repair pilots, helped scale the emerging infrastructure and test how digital inclusion and device reuse could enable devices to reach residents across council, NHS and community initiatives and programmes.

Testing at city-wide scale (2024)

The Virgin Media O2 Hubbub Time After Time Fund enabled a one-year city-wide proof-of-concept that focused on how best to integrate and reuse devices from NHS Coventry and Warwickshire ICB, NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust (CWPT) into the #CovConnects Device Bank. This phase strengthened evidence on environmental impact and health outcomes, and showed that digital inclusion and device reuse could operate as **shared infrastructure for the city**, rather than isolated projects across partners.

Time After Time Fund

Funding from the **Virgin Media O2** Hubbub Time after Time Fund in 2024 enabled the #CovConnects Device Bank to:

- Test their model for in-house refurbishment with employed ICT technicians
- Build processes and reporting mechanisms to scale this approach
- Create capacity to develop reporting on the economic, social and environmental benefits of localised device reuse

From proof to partnership (2025)

Building on this learning, Virgin Media O2 entered into an 18-month strategic partnership with Coventry City Council in September 2025, investing in the development of the UK's first sustainable, city-wide digital reuse ecosystem for social and environmental good. This marked a **shift from short-term pilots to system-level ambition**. This continued investment is helping move the programme from proof of concept into a strategic partnership and future scalability.

** During this stage, Connected Services supported the provision of new devices to enable delivery at scale and test system capacity. At the same time, it provided the opportunity to further enhance our device lifecycle management and wiping, enabling early testing of reuse models and helping transition the system towards a longer term reuse-led approach.*

The Device Bank: where digital inclusion and reuse meet

The #CovConnects Device Bank brings together two challenges that are often treated separately: **digital exclusion and electronic waste**.

Devices that are no longer needed by organisations, but still have years of use left, are refurbished, securely prepared and redistributed through trusted local partners, alongside the support people need to use them safely and effectively.

The **Device Bank reuse model** has been supported through strategic investment and device donation from anchor partners, including Virgin Media O2, the NHS and the

University of Warwick, demonstrating how large organisations can contribute to shared local infrastructure through reuse and social value.

This approach keeps value circulating within the city. **Most of a device's carbon footprint is created during manufacture***, which means extending the life of existing devices delivers significantly greater environmental benefit than recycling alone.

The Device Bank prioritises local reuse through local organisations, often described as “From Cov, For Cov” ensuring devices donated by anchor institutions support residents and services within the city wherever possible.

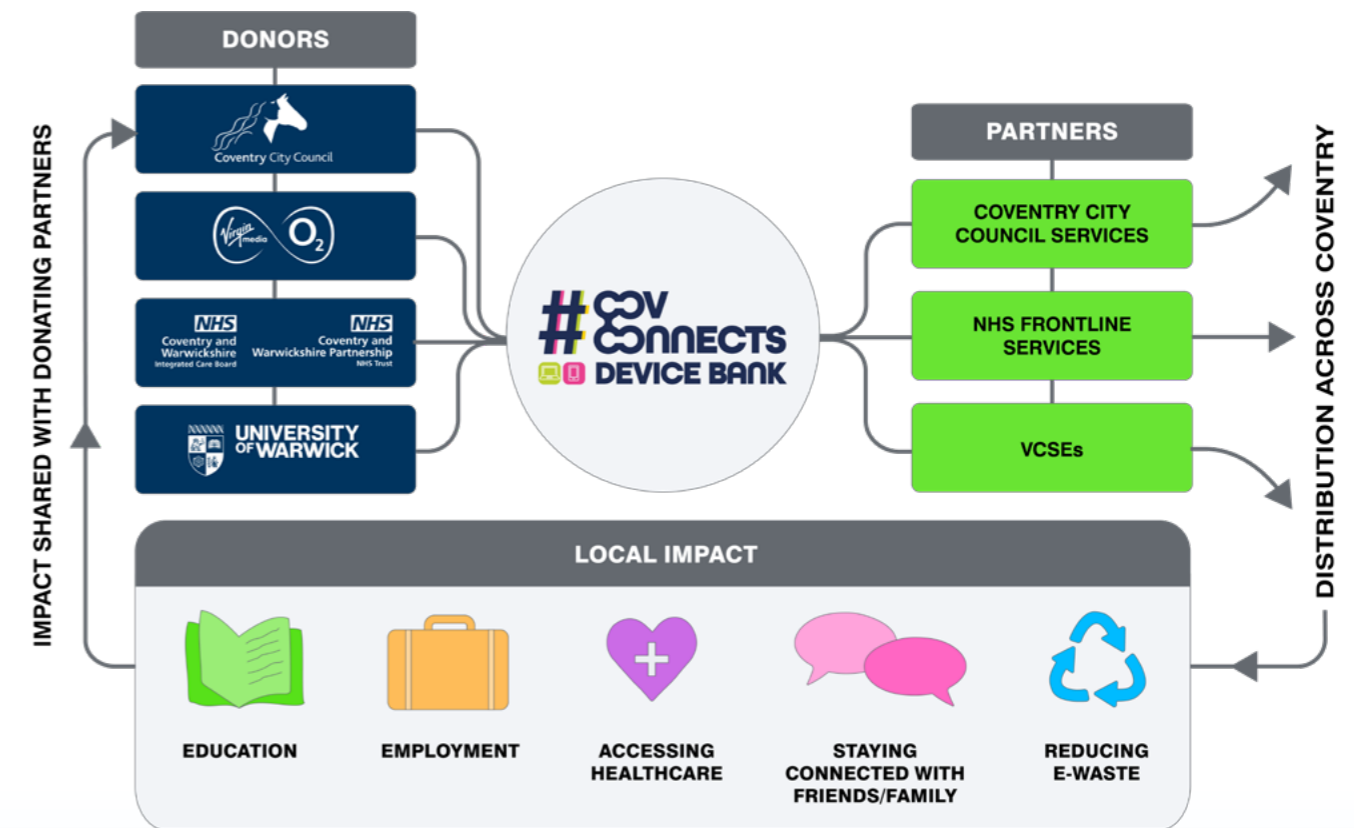


Figure 2: How the #CovConnects Device Bank acts as a vehicle to give devices a second life, creating better outcomes across Coventry communities.

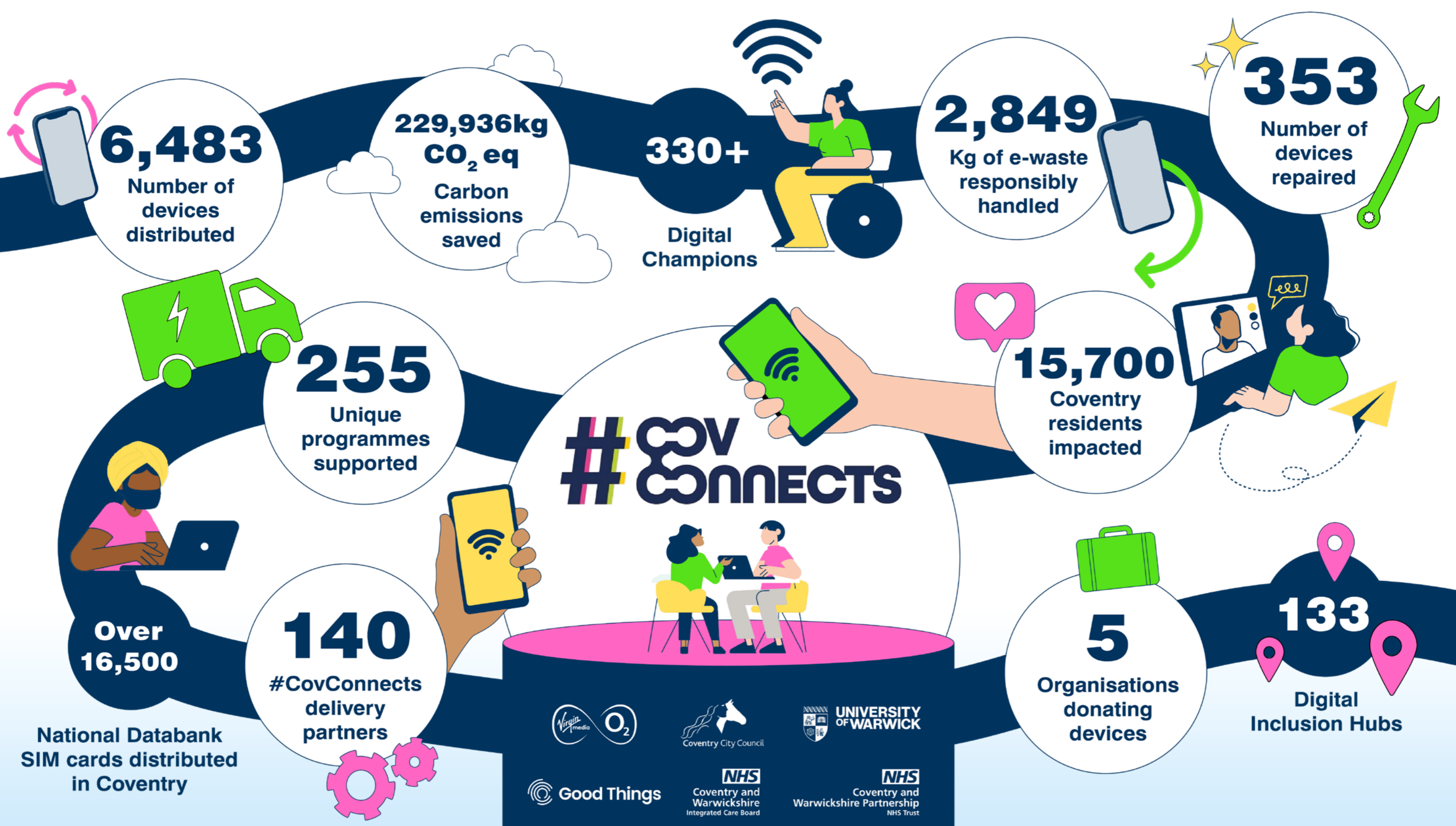


Figure 3: #CovConnects Impact to Date

Reusing devices from the city and beyond has led to:

1 Support for people to get online and participate in everyday life, including access to health appointments, job searching, learning, managing benefits and staying connected with family and support networks, delivered through trusted local organisations and services.

Bell Green Community Association

"I can do emails, I can do shopping online, I can do photos, I can do online banking, well I do quite a lot actually! Now that I've got Parkinson's, I do all my ordering online. I tell everyone in the group, if you want to order anything just come to me!"



Silver Surfers,
Bell Green Community Association, #CovConnects Device Bank partner

2 Digital access being integrated into community and public services with devices embedded across sectors including 130 Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners, 25 council led initiatives (such as Libraries, Education and Skills) and 5 NHS pathways.

Family Nurse Partnership

Through #CovConnects, Family Nurse Partnership nurses can provide donated smartphones and Wi Fi devices to clients in crisis, ensuring they remain connected to vital services.

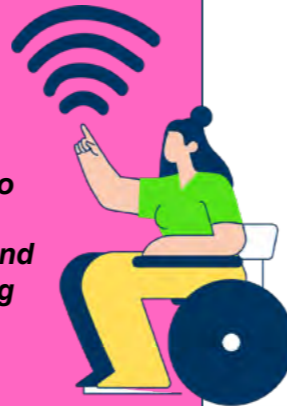
"Quite often we find ourselves with young people who either move around a lot or end up losing phones, breaking phones... or domestic abuse situations. Quite often people end up without phones."

An 18 year old new mother became homeless and was placed in temporary accommodation without internet or a working phone....

"She had been made homeless and had to be found temporary accommodation. She wasn't able to answer calls from the GP. She couldn't do her online banking. Being able to go in with a phone and a Get Box was life changing really."*

Specialist Health Visitor,
Coventry Family Nurse Partnership

*[Digital Lifelines - Jangala](#)



3 Reduced environmental impact, diverting thousands of devices from waste and avoiding new manufacture, extending the life of existing technology and keeping the social, economic and environmental benefits within the city.

4 Created a platform for partnerships, bringing together the Council, NHS, voluntary sector, universities and businesses around a shared, trusted system for digital reuse and inclusion, rather than fragmented or one-off initiatives.

Importantly, the same shared foundation has delivered outcomes across **health, education, employment, sustainability and community wellbeing**, without each organisation needing to design, procure or manage its own digital inclusion solution.

This demonstrates the value of a single, coordinated system for digital reuse and inclusion that enables many services to deliver impact at scale. Crucially, the value of the Device Bank lies not in the volume of devices alone, but in the **distribution networks and partnerships that sit around it.**

While the programme operates at a system level, **its impact is felt in everyday ways:** supporting children's **learning** at home, helping older residents remain **connected** and **independent**, and enabling people facing crisis to **stay in touch with vital services.**

Without integration into public services and trusted community delivery routes, there is a real risk of creating large volumes of refurbished technology without mechanisms to meaningfully distribute it, support people

to use it, or understand its impact. Phase 1 has shown that **distribution and integration matter as much as supply.**

Whilst the council is taking a leading role in coordinating this activity, the biggest challenge we now face is how we make this a **sustainable model** and ensure the **council is the enabler, not the controller**, and is integrated within the wider city.



Spotlight: Warwick Manufacturing Group, University of Warwick - understanding the environmental impact.

The Carbon Accounting Tool, developed by WMG's Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing Group, is designed to measure the carbon impact of repurposing electronic devices. It quantifies both the emissions avoided through reuse and the emissions generated across the repurposing process, providing a net carbon benefit for the scheme.

The tool is designed to support the #CovConnects programme by tracking the environmental value created through repair, refurbishment, and redistribution of electronic devices through the Device Bank. Over 80% of a device's lifetime carbon footprint is generated before first use, making reuse an important carbon saving intervention.

The tool maps the journey of each device through the repurposing system, from donation to end user, capturing key emissions at each stage:

- Collection of devices
- Testing and assessment
- Repairs and parts replacement
- Delivery to recipient organisations
- Recycling route handling for unsuitable devices

This approach follows life cycle assessment (LCA) principles by focusing on the recovery and reuse stage of

electronic devices. It compares the emissions generated through repurposing activities with the embodied carbon associated with manufacturing a functionally equivalent new device. The analysis is based on an attributional LCA framework, while also accounting for the avoided manufacturing emissions that result from extending device lifespans. The avoided-emissions values are based on representative embodied-carbon data for functionally comparable new devices.

Early results show:

- 4049 devices repurposed
- 229, 936 kg CO₂ eq carbon emissions saved
- 2849kg of e-waste responsibly handled

These savings represent the difference between emissions avoided (from not purchasing new devices) and emissions generated by collection, handling, repairs, and recycling processes.

The Carbon Accounting Tool provides a transparent, evidence-based method for demonstrating the environmental value of device repurposing programmes. It highlights the significant carbon benefits of extending device lifespans, supports data driven decision making, and helps justify investment in circular digital inclusion initiatives.

What we've learnt:

The biggest take-aways from Phase 1

Phase 1 has shown that digital reuse and digital inclusion are not standalone projects, but **system-level, city-wide interventions**. Their impact depends less on organisations, and more on how well the wider system around them is designed to support and sustain them.

network of services and support across the city. Digital inclusion efforts integrated into existing services and organisational processes proved far more sustainable and scalable than those driven solely by individual champions alone.

A clear pattern across Phase 1 is that **impact is fragile when it relies on individuals, but resilient when it is embedded in a wider**

Across Phase 1, several system-level learnings have become clear:

1 Shared infrastructure unlocks many outcomes.

A single, trusted Device Bank – with clear governance, standards and reporting – has enabled impact across health, housing, education, employment, sustainability and community wellbeing. When the infrastructure is shared, organisations can focus on outcomes rather than rebuilding processes each time.

2 Partnership works best when ownership is distributed.

The Council's role as an enabler – rather than prescribing how devices must be used – allowed community organisations, public services and partners to apply digital reuse in ways that made sense for their settings. This led to a wider and more meaningful range of outcomes than a single, centrally designed model could have achieved.

3 Integration into public sector delivery is the key route to scale.

Phase 1 has shown that reaching priority cohorts at scale requires digital inclusion to be embedded into education, youth, adult social care and health services. Without this integration, growth risks being limited to those already closest to digital support.



Above: Louise Whitaker - Virgin Media O2, Councillor Richard Brown, Laura Waller - Coventry City Council

4 Digital reuse and digital inclusion reinforce one another at system level.

Reuse creates a reliable, affordable supply of devices that makes digital inclusion viable at scale. Digital inclusion ensures that reused devices lead to real participation in services, not just distribution. Treating these as separate agendas limits impact; treating them as one system unlocks social, environmental and economic value.

5 Visibility and evidence build confidence.

As systems for tracking devices, carbon impact and outcomes developed through Phase 1, confidence grew – among partners, donors and services – that digital reuse could be safe, effective and worth embedding. Evidence did not just measure impact; it enabled better decisions. The shared ambition with Virgin Media O2 and our local partners to **take a long-term view to this deep systemic work** has been highly valuable, alongside the support offered of local institutions, including the University of Warwick and the NHS.

Below: Representatives from Coventry City Council, University of Warwick and NHS Coventry and Warwickshire ICB at parliament, celebrating achievements and sharing best practice as part of the Virgin Media O2 / Hubbub Time after Time Fund



Whilst the Council is taking a leading role in coordinating this activity, **Phase 1 learnings have reinforced that the Council's most valuable role is as an enabler of the system, not the owner or controller of delivery.**

The Council does not – and should not – own every element of digital reuse or digital inclusion. Instead, its role is to convene partners, align incentives, provide shared infrastructure, set standards, and enable activity to happen through existing services and trusted organisations.

This enabling role is essential if digital inclusion is to become embedded within public sector

delivery and resilient to changes in individual roles, organisational structures or funding cycles.

Finally, Phase 1 made clear that **not everything that works should be scaled.** Some approaches delivered strong outcomes in specific contexts; others required too much effort for too little impact. Learning where to stop, adapt or redesign has been just as important as learning what to grow.

These insights now shape how Coventry moves forward.

Our shared ambition: *From Cov, For Cov*

A single digital reuse for good system, shaped locally, delivering many outcomes

Coventry already has a living, breathing digital reuse for social good system – shaped by local partners, for local people. It has not been designed top-down or delivered by a single organisation. Instead, it has grown through

shared purpose, practical collaboration and learning by doing.

This system works because it is built on four simple but powerful principles.

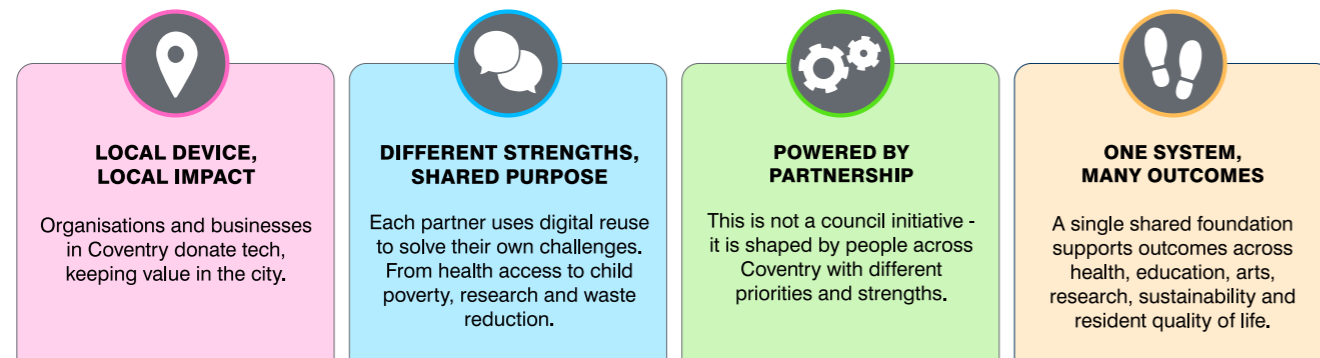


Figure 4: #CovConnects system principles

Phase 1 showed that digital reuse and digital inclusion are not optional extras. When embedded properly, they become core infrastructure for a modern, equitable, **From Cov For Cov** city.

It also showed that impact depends less on scale alone, and more on how the system is designed:

- shared standards reduce duplication
- visibility of impact builds trust
- partnerships create reach and resilience
- and learning helps decide what not to scale

This system context is what makes the next phase possible.



Above: Andy Howard, Resident Services at Coventry City Council - integrating digital inclusion into frontline support for Coventry residents.

Phase 2: From proof of concept to system maturity

A core aim of Phase 2 is to reduce reliance on individual champions by embedding shared standards, pathways and ownership across organisations, ensuring digital inclusion continues to function effectively regardless of changes in roles or personnel.

Phase 2 also places emphasis on **co-creation, shared governance and adaptability**. Rather than locking the system into a fixed model, partners are supported to shape, test and evolve approaches together, meeting their own outcomes while responding to changing needs, contexts and opportunities over time.

This approach acts as an enabler to move #CovConnects from proof-of-concept to an established city-wide model. Rather than expanding activity across the board, Coventry is taking a **test-and-learn approach**, stabilising what exists, deliberately testing what works

best, and embedding only those approaches that demonstrate clear shared value.

This approach helps focus investment where it makes the biggest difference, avoids scaling what doesn't hold up at system level, and ensures digital reuse becomes a **normal, trusted part of how Coventry supports residents and services**.

This approach helps the city:

- focus investment where it makes the biggest difference
- avoid scaling approaches that don't stand up at system level
- make digital reuse a normal, trusted part of how Coventry supports residents, services and partners

We're not starting from scratch

Importantly, Phase 2 recognises that learning must lead to action, not more pilots. Coventry is not beginning this phase with a blank sheet of paper. **Significant activity is already in motion**, with different partners leading different elements of the system and creating momentum that Phase 2 is designed to strengthen, stabilise and embed.

Phase 2 therefore begins from a position of knowledge, focusing on embedding what works into the evolving system of integrated

digital inclusion, continuing the momentum and building evidence.

Each workstream plays a different role, but are designed to **reinforce one another**, ensuring that digital reuse and digital inclusion can move from proof-of-concept into everyday practice.

#CovConnects is already progressing work across four core areas:



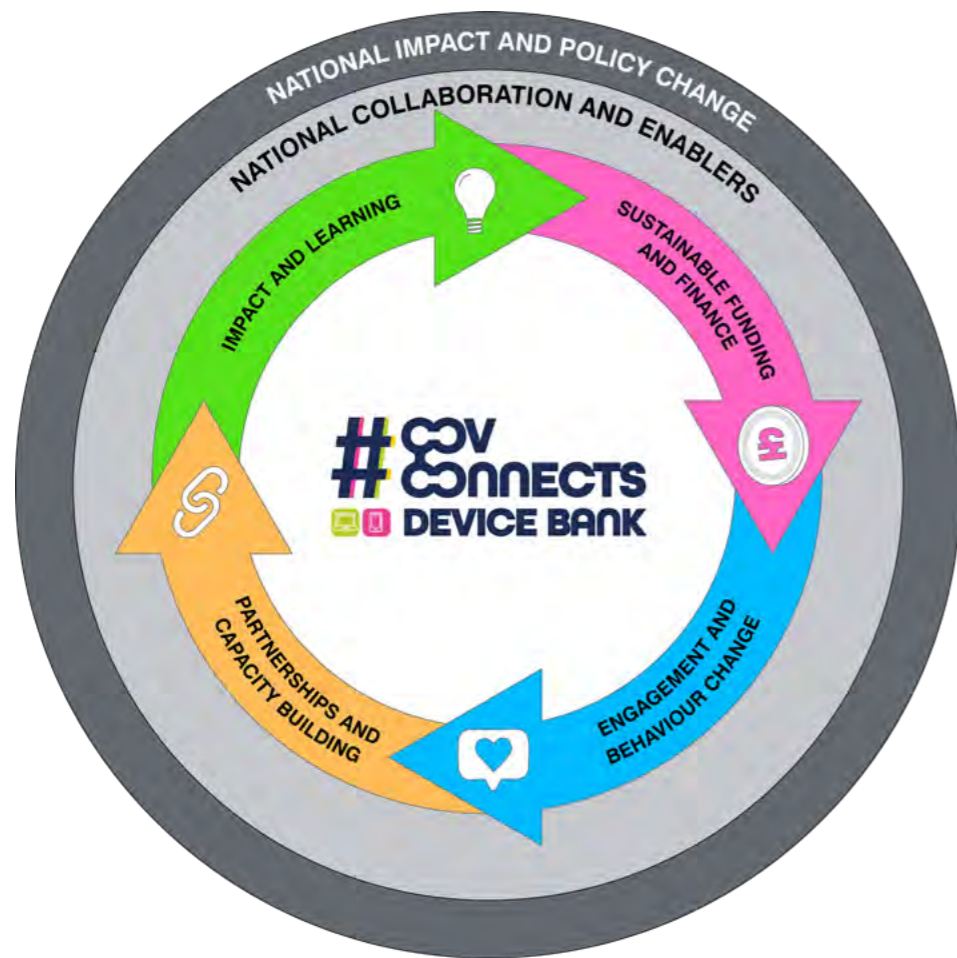


Figure 5: Phase 2 workstreams enabling national learning and partnerships.

1. Sustainable funding and finance

Phase 1 has been underpinned by strategic investment and shared ownership, most notably through **Virgin Media O2's** investment as a core partner. This has been complemented by ongoing device donations from key anchor institutions, including the **NHS** and the **University of Warwick**, alongside wider social value commitments from public and private sector partners.

Together, this has enabled the Device Bank to function as shared city infrastructure while Phase 2 focuses on strengthening long-term sustainability and operating models, with continued support from **Virgin Media O2**.

2. Behaviour change and engagement

Behaviour change activity is already underway to shift how organisations and partners understand, value and act on digital inclusion

and device reuse. The **University of Warwick** has played a key role, bringing behaviour change expertise and supporting new approaches to engagement.

This has been strengthened through partnerships with the arts and cultural sector, including the **Connected Coventry Tech Reuse Arts Fund, supported by Virgin Media O2**. The fund uses creative practice and storytelling to build confidence, shift narratives around reuse, and encourage residents and organisations to donate unused technology. We see arts, culture and science as key to wider cultural engagement with our ambition.

3. Partnership and capacity building

A strong partnership ecosystem is already active across the voluntary and community sector, public services, health partners, universities and business. Devices and connectivity are embedded across council,

NHS and VCSE pathways, demonstrating how distributed ownership enables reach, relevance and scale, without reliance on a single organisation.

4. Impact and learning

Impact and learning sit at the heart of **#CovConnects**, shaping decision-making, investment and how the system evolves – not just reporting activity after the fact. Rather than focusing on outputs such as the number of devices distributed, this workstream prioritises understanding the **outcomes devices and wider support enables**, including improved employability and skills progression, better access to health and care, reduced isolation, and stronger participation in education and everyday life.

This focus on outcomes is what allows digital inclusion and device reuse to function as **system infrastructure**, informing where investment is directed, how services are designed, and how partners engage. Clear evidence of what works, and why, builds confidence among funders, delivery partners and investors, strengthens storytelling and narrative change, and supports the transition from short-term activity to long-term embedded practice.

The **University of Warwick**, including **Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG)**, is already

supporting this through the design of a **carbon calculator**, enabling robust measurement of environmental impact and avoided carbon associated with device reuse. This strengthens understanding of the environmental value created alongside social outcomes.

Through the **Coventry Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC)**, digital inclusion and device reuse are being evaluated as **key enablers of health and wellbeing** – both through their role in addressing wider social conditions, and through their direct impact on access to services, independence and connection.

Alongside this, **#CovConnects** is integrating **shared impact and success measures at a programme level**, enabling learning about longer-term outcomes to feed back into service design, investment decisions and system change. In this way, impact and learning do not sit alongside delivery — they actively **drive how the system strengthens, scales and sustains itself over time**.

As demand for digital devices continues to grow, the challenges of electronic waste, critical materials and carbon impact will only intensify. **Local reuse systems offer a practical, scalable way to extend device life, retain value and inform future policy and investment decisions around sustainable digital inclusion and adoption.**



Above: Ramona McGarry - Digital Inclusion Coordinator at Coventry City Council

Phase 2: Strengthening the system

What we're testing next

Building on what Coventry has learnt so far, Phase 2 focuses less on expanding activity and more on **testing the system conditions needed for digital inclusion and device reuse to endure, adapt and scale over time**, shaping future service design, funding models and investment decisions. The challenges and opportunities observed in Coventry mirror wider national patterns, where digital inclusion is often addressed in isolation rather than as a shared enabler across policy areas. Supported by **Virgin Media O2**, Phase 2 provides an opportunity to test, at city scale, how a more integrated approach can operate in practice, generating learning relevant to both local delivery and national policy conversations. Rather than assuming there is a single "right model", this phase explores what needs to be true for a city wide digital reuse system to function well, across organisations, services and communities- even as needs, partners and contexts change.

Together with Virgin Media O2 and a wide range of partners, Coventry is using Phase 2 to test a small number of **strategic system questions** that will shape future service design, funding models and approaches, locally and beyond.



1 How do we create and share capacity to sustain digital reuse and social good at scale?

We are testing:

- the role of **anchor institutions** (such as health partners, universities and large employers) in sustaining device supply, funding and long-term commitment
- whether parts of the system can become **cost-recoverable and financially self-sustaining**, without undermining access for those most in need
- how shared infrastructure can act as a **catalyst for wider investment**, by clearly demonstrating social, environmental, economic and service-level value, rather than creating pressure on the Council alone

Why this matters: without sustainable funding, shared ownership and clear economic roles, digital inclusion and reuse risks remaining dependent on short-term funding or individual champions, limiting their contribution to long-term economic resilience and inclusive growth.

2 How do we reach the people most excluded - at scale, not just through pilots?

We are exploring how digital inclusion and reuse can be embedded into:

- **education, youth and employability services**, supporting access to learning, skills and routes into work for people most at risk of digital exclusion
- **adult social care and health services** supporting older residents and people managing long-term conditions
- **community and voluntary sector networks** already supporting people facing multiple and intersecting barriers

Why this matters: reaching people at scale is only possible when digital inclusion is built into the services people already rely on.

3 How do we shift organisational and resident behaviour, not just deliver activity?

Phase 2 will continue to test how change happens across organisations, including:

- What makes device donation and reuse become **normal practice**, rather than a one-off or discretionary activity
- How **visibility of local reuse and impact** influences behaviour- testing the hypothesis that when people and organisations can see devices reused locally for social good, they are more likely to donate unused technology
- How storytelling, arts and cultural activity, and behavioural insights **influence participation and confidence** among residents, businesses and partners
- How different organisations and places adopt (or resist) digital reuse and inclusion as shared infrastructure rather than as an optional add-on

Why this matters: system change depends on habits, norms and expectations, not just processes.

4 What system designs enable digital reuse and inclusion to work across different places and contexts?

We know Coventry's model will not be identical everywhere. Phase 2 explores:

- Different delivery and logistics models, including **hub-and-spoke and partner-led approaches**, that can flex to local context while maintaining system coherence.
- How **procurement, contracts and social value requirements** can structurally embed digital reuse and inclusion across organisations, rather than relying on discretionary action.
- What **minimum shared standards** are needed for quality, safety and impact when reusing and donating devices?

Why this matters: replication only works if models are adaptable, not rigid - allowing different places and organisations to adopt the model without compromising quality, safety or impact.

5 How do we measure success in ways that genuinely shape services over time?

Impact and learning will continue to act as the spine of the programme, not as a reporting add-on, but as a way to shape service design and investment over time:

- How does digital inclusion contribute to **outcomes that matter most** - including employability, skills and economic mobility; health, independence and reduced loneliness; and educational opportunity for children and young people over the longer term?
- How **environmental, social, economic and service-level impacts** can be tracked consistently and transparently over time.
- Why does digital inclusion matter to the economic health of the city at all, as well as to individual lives and services?
- How shared success measures can inform service design, investment and behaviour change, so **learning shapes decision making**, not just retrospective reporting.

Why this matters: without shared learning and visible value across outcomes, the system cannot adapt, attract investment or sustain confidence over time.

Together, these tests focus on strengthening how the system works- not simply increasing activity- so digital inclusion and device reuse can become durable, responsive and embedded within how the city operates.

What will success look like?

By the end of 2026, success will be defined not only by how many people or devices are supported, but by how far Coventry has moved towards embedding digital inclusion and digital reuse into the way the city works. Phase 2 reflects a deliberate shift from proving what is possible, to strengthening and embedding what works.



Coventry contributes to national learning and policy

Coventry is actively sharing evidence, models and lessons to help shape how other places approach digital inclusion and device reuse as core system infrastructure, rather than short-term projects.



Showcasing how collaboration shifts systems

Addressing challenges such as digital exclusion and electronic waste requires **radical collaboration across sectors**. Phase 1 has shown that when organisations co-create solutions, rather than working in isolation, outcomes are stronger, more resilient and better aligned to real needs. As the system matures, this partnership model is expected to grow and deepen.

Impact is focused where barriers are greatest

More residents are supported to participate digitally, with growing focus on those facing the highest levels of exclusion, reached through trusted services and organisations.

Reuse is becoming the norm, not the exception

More organisations are adopting device donation and reuse as standard practice, reducing e-waste and retaining social, environmental and economic value locally.

Scale is achieved through integration, not parallel programmes

Priority groups are **increasingly reached at scale** through education, health, adult social care and community services, rather than through standalone digital initiatives, with clearer shared ownership across partners.

A more resilient system, less dependent on individuals

Clearer pathways, shared standards and more embedded practices mean progress is **less reliant on individual roles or short-term funding**, supported by the development of a more sustainable model for digital reuse and digital inclusion at scale.

Digital inclusion is becoming 'business as usual'

Digital access and inclusion are increasingly integrated into service design, commissioning and delivery across the Council and its partners, rather than being treated as a specialist or standalone agenda.

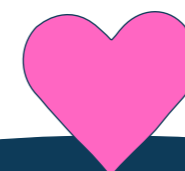


Figure 6: What future success looks like

Collaborating for success and inspiring action in other places

As this report shows, delivering system level change is complex and relies on the sustained contribution of many partners across multiple organisations.

By sharing our approach, we aim to not only reflect on the progress in Coventry, but to support and inspire others to apply our learnings in their own programmes.



For other cities and local authorities

This work demonstrates the opportunity to embed device reuse and digital inclusion within local infrastructure, enabling long-term scalability and sustainability.

Our progress in Coventry has been made possible through strong partnerships with anchor institutions, unlocking resources, expertise and local reach. We encourage others to explore how similar partnerships can be developed to support their own ambitions.

For Businesses

If your organisation has devices that are no longer needed, there is an opportunity to give them a second life locally while generating measurable environmental and social impact.

Through #CovConnects, businesses can contribute devices and receive tailored impact reporting aligned to their sustainability and social value goals.

To find out more or register your interest, visit <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/cov-connects>.

If you are based outside Coventry, consider connecting with a device reuse programme or contacting your local authority to explore opportunities. You may also wish to pledge to the DSIT IT Reuse for Good Charter.

Funders

There is a clear opportunity to invest in programmes that deliver combined environmental, social and economic outcomes. If your organisation is interested in supporting scalable, system-level approaches to digital inclusion and circular economy models, we welcome further discussion.

For Government

#CovConnects is a live place-based circular economy programme for technology, addressing both device reuse and digital inclusion. The programme is proud to feature in the [Circularity guidance for mayoral strategic authorities](#). We are committed to share our learning to support the development of future policy and practice in this space.

Thank you

Authors:

Laura Waller, *Digital Services and Inclusion Lead, Coventry City Council*
Louise Whitaker, *Circular Economy Manager, Virgin Media O2*

Additional special thanks:

To those who have shaped #CovConnects and bring together phase 1 learning and phase 2 direction:

Coventry City Council:

Adrienne Bellingeri
Bret Willers
Catherine Partridge
Charlotte Todd
Chloe Ryder
Connor Williams
Fathema Islam
Jas Sandu
Karen Blanchette
Mathew Hobday
Paul Ward
Ramona McGarry
Rich Greenslade
Tamara Duignan
Valerie De Souza

Virgin Media O2:

Dana Haidan
Rob McCann

Hubbub:

Jess Wiles
Kirstie Brittain
Beth Blomfield

University of Warwick:

Anish Karnani
Deep Sirahi
Gautam Lohan
Jeff Chien-Hao Wang
Ji Li
Ju-sin Huang
Katie Kukla
Lory Barille
Megan Clement
Radhika Khetan
Russ Hall
Stephanie Whitehead
Xuan Vinh Doan
You Wu

Coventry University:

Maureen Meadows

NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Partners:

Eddie Olla
Hannah Watts
Lexi Ireland
Rachel Chapman
Yusuf Bhayat

Coventry and District Credit Union Ltd
Coventry Aimhs Ltd
Coventry and Warwickshire Mind
Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Partnership Trust
Coventry Central Hall
Coventry Citizens Advice Bureau
Coventry Cyrenians
Coventry Empower African Women Group
Coventry Exodus
Coventry Foodbank
Coventry Haven Women's Aid
Coventry Independent Advice Service
Coventry Irish Society
Coventry North, Seventh-Day Adventist Church
Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre
Coventry Central, Seventh Day Adventist Church
Coventry Vision Hub
Coventry City Council services
Coventry Health Determinants Research
Collaboration
Coventry Marmot Partnership
Coventry University
Crisis UK
Coventry Recycling of Waste
CV Life - Culture Coventry Trust
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
Digital Poverty Alliance
Destination Ball Hill
Diamonds Community Learning Project CIC
Dominion Grace Service Ltd
Dudley Lodge
Eden Academy
Empowr-U CIC
Foleshill Womens Training
Fountain of Agape
Fulcrum Recovery Project T/A The Beacon
Ghanaian Nurses Association
Godiva Group Practice, Coventry Navigation 1 PCN
Good Things Foundation
Grapevine
Green Square Accord
Guardian Ballers CIC
Headway Coventry and Warwickshire
Health Exchange
Henley Green Grub Hub
Her Safe Network
Holbrooks Community Association
Holbrooks Community Centre
Hope Community Projects
HOPE Coventry
Hope into Action: Coventry
Hubbub
Inini Initiative
Jangala
Kairos Women Working Together
Ladybug Lodge
Langley Trust
Leeds City Council
Local Government Association
Loveworld Coventry
Ludic Rooms
Maxival Skills Development Centre CIC

Midland Heart Retirement Villages
Migrant Help UK
Mizizi Boys Mentorship
Moat House Community Trust
New Start 4 U
NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust
NHS Coventry and Warwickshire ICB
NIHR PHIRST
Oasis Community Hub
Our Lady of the Assumption RC Church
P3 - People Potential Possibilities
Panahghar
Positive Youth Foundation
RCCG CRA Coventry
Relove Technology
Rethink
Rose Community Centre
Sahara Ltd
Sahil Project
Salvation Army - Axholme House
Settlement Support CIC
Shaw Trust
Shree Mandhata Samaj Community Centre
Sikhs in Academia CIC
Sky Blues in the Community
South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust
Spongate Community Project
Spring Housing Association Ltd
St Basils
St Francis Employability
St John Fisher Church
St Oswald's Church
Step To Community Progress
Steps for Change
Stoke Heath Community Centre
The Betty Ennis Foundation
The Dynamo Project
The Highlife Centre
Underground Lights
University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire
Valley House
Verto Living CIC
Violet Project CIO
Virgin Media O2
Voluntary Action Coventry
Warwick Arts Centre
WATCH Centre Charity (Working Actively To Change Hillfields)
Warwick Manufacturing Group
West Midlands Combined Authority
West Midlands Police
Willenhall Community Forum
Willenhall's Waka Waka Fitness
YMCA Heart Of England

Celebrating partners:

With thanks to the many public services, VCSE organisations, businesses, researchers and people who have shaped #CovConnects. This work reflects a genuinely shared endeavour across Coventry.

46th Coventry Scouts
66th Coventry - Sherbourne Accessible Scout Group
85th Coventry Scout Group
100% Digital Leeds
Action Family Network
Age UK Coventry and Warkwickshire
Alzheimer's Society
Anjuman Ltd
Art Riot Collective
Ashley Community Housing
ACC - Authentic Centre Coventry
Ayriss Recovery Coventry
Bardsley Youth Project
Bell Green Community Association
Bethel New Life Apostolic Church and Community

Centre
BID - Deaf Cultural Centre
British Red Cross
Canley Community Centre
CARAG (Coventry Asylum and Refugee Action Group)
Carers Trust Heart of England
Carriers of Hope
Central England Law Centre
Change Grow Live
Changing The Future CIC
Citizen Housing Group
City of Coventry Scout County
CLM Church
Corpus Christi Catholic Church
Coventry Family Health and Lifestyle Services



#COV
CONNECTS



UNIVERSITY
OF WARWICK

NHS
Coventry and
Warwickshire
Integrated Care Board

NHS
Coventry and
Warwickshire Partnership
NHS Trust