



Committee: CABINET
Date: TUESDAY, 4 JUNE 2024
Venue: MORECAMBE TOWN HALL
Time: 6.00 P.M.

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies**

2. **Minutes**

To receive as a correct record the minutes of Cabinet held on Tuesday, 16 April 2024 (previously circulated).

3. **Items of Urgent Business Authorised by the Leader**

To consider any such items authorised by the Leader and to consider where in the agenda the item(s) are to be considered.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations by Councillors of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.

Councillors are reminded that, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. (It is a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest either in the Register or at the meeting).

Whilst not a legal requirement, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 and in the interests of clarity and transparency, Councillors should declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the Register, at this point in the meeting.

In accordance with Part B Section 2 of the Code Of Conduct, Councillors are required to declare the existence and nature of any other interests as defined in paragraphs 8(1) or 9(2) of the Code of Conduct.

5. **Public Speaking**

To consider any such requests received in accordance with the approved procedure.

6. **Reports from Overview and Scrutiny**

None.

Reports

7. **Meeting the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty Obligations (Pages 4 - 17)**

(Cabinet Members with Special Responsibility Councillor Parr and Ainscough)

Report of Chief Officer – Planning and Climate Change

8. **Productivity In Local Government - 'Productivity Plan'** (Pages 18 - 28)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Phillip Black)

Report of Chief Executive

9. **Annual Complaints Report** (Pages 29 - 98)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Wood)

Report of Chief Officer – Housing and Property

10. **Strategic Risk Management** (Pages 99 - 119)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Phillip Black)

Report of Chief Executive

11. **Projects and Performance: Q4 2023-24** (Pages 120 - 126)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)

Report of Chief Executive

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

(i) Membership

Councillors Phillip Black (Chair), Caroline Jackson, Joanne Ainscough, Gina Dowding, Tim Hamilton-Cox, Peter Jackson, Jean Parr, Catherine Potter, Nick Wilkinson and Jason Wood

(ii) Queries regarding this Agenda

Please contact Liz Bateson, Democratic Support - email ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk.

(iii) Changes to Membership, substitutions or apologies

Please contact Democratic Support, telephone 582000, or alternatively email democracy@lancaster.gov.uk.

MARK DAVIES,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
TOWN HALL,
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CABINET

Meeting the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty Obligations 4 June 2024

Report of Chief Officer – Planning and Climate Change

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To formally set out the City Council's enhanced statutory responsibilities for biodiversity introduced as part of the Environment Act 2021. The Environment Act introduced a new Biodiversity Duty for all public authorities. The new Duty requires all public authorities who operate in England to consider what they can do to strengthen and enhance biodiversity and report on the delivery of these actions.			
Key Decision	N	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	N/A		
This report is public			

RECOMMENDATION OF COUNCILLOR JEAN PARR AND COUNCILLOR JOANNE AINSCOUGH

That Cabinet;

- (1) Approves the actions set out in 'Meeting the Biodiversity Duty – First Considerations' report to ensure that the City Council can demonstrate that it intends to take appropriate actions to address the enhanced Biodiversity Duty obligations introduced by Environment Act 2021.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Government has set out its commitment to help the environment in a series of plans and legislation to improve and protect nature. Central to this is the 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) published in 2018. The Plan establishes the Government's goal for improving the natural environment within a generation, leaving it in a better state that it currently is.
- 1.2 The legislative driver to deliver these ambitions is provided by the Environment Act 2021. This gained Royal Assent in November 2021 and provides the legal framework for environmental protection in the UK following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. Importantly the Act sets clear statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water, and waste, and includes an important new target to reverse the decline in species abundance by the end of 2030. It sets in law new tools that Natural England and others can use to help meet those targets.

- 1.3 Central to this is a new legal duty for all public authorities (including Councils) to further the 'general biodiversity objective' – that is, to conserve and enhance biodiversity – the Biodiversity Duty.
- 1.4 The original Biodiversity Duty on local authorities is included in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006). Section 40 of the original NERC Act placed a duty on public authorities to have regard:
- “so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of [the public authority’s] functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.*
- 1.5 An extended 'biodiversity duty' was introduced by the Environment Act 2021. The new extended duty for public authorities (including local authorities) came into force on 1 January 2023. Government guidance on complying with the extended biodiversity duty was published on 17th May 2023.
- 1.6 The amended text included under the Environment Act strengthens the biodiversity duty requirement and now requires all public authorities who operate in England to consider what they can do to strengthen and enhance biodiversity, extending the duty of public authorities beyond the original NERC Act which only required local authorities to preserve the natural environment, to a requirement to improve the natural environment.
- 1.7 Under the amended duty the Council as a public body is required to:
- Consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
 - Agree policies and specific objectives; and
 - Act to deliver the identified policies and objectives.
- 1.8 The amended duty also includes additional accountability with the Act requiring public authorities to complete their first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by the 1st January 2024, agreeing policies and objectives shortly after this date. A consideration of other relevant strategies should form part of this work, this includes work on Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). In considering these wider strategies the Council will be required to understand if they are relevant to the organisation, be aware how the strategies affect land that it owns or manages and consider where appropriate how it could contribute to the strategy.
- 1.9 The Act requires public authorities to complete their “*first considerations*” of what actions they intend to take for biodiversity by 1st January 2024, agreeing policies and objectives shortly after this date. A consideration of other relevant strategies should form part of this work, this includes work on Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS).
- 1.10 Authorities are then required to report progress on the delivery of their biodiversity duty and the actions identified as part of their first consideration no later than 12 weeks after the conclusion of the first report period, the first reporting period concludes on the **1st January 2026**. After this date the end of each reporting period must be within 5 years of the end of the previous reporting period. This is a statutory requirement.
- 1.11 This report presents the City Council’s first consideration of what it can do to better conserve and enhance habitats and wildlife in the district. It takes account of existing information and strategies and identifies objectives and actions that the City Council could deliver to ensure that it plays its role in reversing the decline of biodiversity. This is a cross-service report with actions identified for several Council services.

- 1.12 The First Considerations Report also provides a means for reporting on the Council’s progress on addressing its own declared ecological emergency. This was declared in December 2022. The declaration recognised that the ecological crisis should be tackled in partnership with the climate crisis and that actions should be developed at a local level in partnership with the Council’s Climate Action Plan. It is proposed that actions to address the ecological Emergency are included in the first consideration Report.

Environment Act duty takes effect	1 January 2023
First consideration	1 January 2024
Biodiversity Report 1	1 January 2026
Biodiversity Report 2	1 January 2031
Subsequent Biodiversity Reports	Every 5 years from 2031

- 1.13 A draft [Fulfilling the Biodiversity Duty First Considerations](#) website “hub” has been prepared, this is a digital format approach for the Council’s First Considerations “report”. The hub includes a draft Action Plan. For ease of reference the actions in the Action Plan are also presented in Table 1 at the end of this report. The attached report describes the City Council’s first considerations around what it can do to conserve and enhance habitats and wildlife. It takes account of existing information and strategies and identifies objectives and actions that to ensure that the Council plays its role in reversing the decline of biodiversity. It is a cross-service report with actions identified across several Council services.

Resourcing the Implementation of the Biodiversity Duty

- 1.14 The Government has acknowledged that the enhance obligations will place further burdens on public bodies. This includes officer time and potential additional costs to support actions. The Government’s suggestion that local authorities ‘may need to get expert advice’ in order to fulfil their Biodiversity Duty obligations appears to be understated.
- 1.15 The new Duty brings resource demands including the need to undertake additional tasks and importantly the need for specialist professional expertise on ecology and biodiversity to be more consistently available to the authority (currently this is externally procured only when required). Like many local authorities, the City Council has acknowledged the need for more consistently available professional expertise and accordingly an additional post of Biodiversity Officer has been established for financial year 2024/25 onwards. Recruitment for this new post is underway. Should a Biodiversity Officer be successfully recruited, based in the Planning and Climate Change Service, the officer will have an important role to deliver in;
- Developing a strategic approach to meeting the Biodiversity Duty,
 - Developing policy on enhancing biodiversity;
 - Leading on actions to enhance biodiversity;
 - Supporting and advising colleagues on projects and actions on biodiversity; and,
 - Coordinating, recording, and monitoring activity.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 Actions and responsibilities for meeting the Biodiversity Duty will need to be taken by most Council Services, including; Planning & Climate Change, Housing & Property, Environment & Place, Resources and Governance. Operational practices and policies may need to be reviewed to explore if action is needed to ensure that the Council can demonstrate compliance with the Duty.
- 2.2 The 'First Considerations' hub is intended to present the first attempt at a framework for the Council to meet its enhanced responsibilities. Progress on implementing the actions described would mean the Council could likely successfully demonstrate how it was meeting the obligations arising from the 2021 Environment Act and also how it was taking action in support of its own declaration of an Ecological Emergency in January 2023.
- 2.3 Local authorities must first prepare a 'First Considerations' Report and then they have two years before they must report on progress on the actions to which they committed. The Council will need to report on how it is working to fulfilling its legal obligations around January 2026.
- 2.4 The Fulfilling the Biodiversity Duty First Considerations "report" [Web hub] identifies over 60 separate actions to address a series of six broad themes or objectives:
- Objective 1: Improve biodiversity evidence base.
 - Objective 2: Work with key partners to support biodiversity delivery across the district.
 - Objective 3: Deliver measurable increase in biodiversity across the district.
 - Objective 4: Embed Biodiversity in Leadership and Decision Making.
 - Objective 5: Promote Education and Awareness.
 - Objective 6: Promote and support projects that deliver enhancements in Biodiversity.
- 2.5 The Report identifies which Service or team within a service would lead on addressing each of the specific actions. The services with specific identified actions are Planning & Climate Change; Environment & Place (Public Realm); Governance (Procurement and Democratic Services). Initially, officers within the Planning and Climate Change Service will be available to advise other Services of their responsibilities under the Duty.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 The First Considerations Report and Actions were prepared with the benefit of cross-service discussion. Officers advise that it would be appropriate to publish the First Consideration Report on the City Council's website to demonstrate to the community and other stakeholders what action the City Council is committing to in order to meet its obligations.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Cabinet approves the actions set out in 'Meeting the Biodiversity Duty – First Considerations' (Appendix 1 to this report) to ensure that it can demonstrate that it has taken appropriate action to address new Biodiversity Duty obligations introduced by Environment Act 2021.	Option 2: Cabinet does not approve the actions set out in 'Meeting the Biodiversity Duty – First Considerations' (Appendix 1 to this report) to ensure that it can demonstrate that it has taken appropriate action to address new Biodiversity Duty obligations introduced by Environment Act 2021.
Advantages	The Council sets itself a clear set of actions that should enable it to demonstrate that it has acted responsibly and appropriately to address the new Biodiversity Duty introduced by the Environment Act whilst also demonstrating actions to address its own declaration of an Ecological Emergency.	None apparent.
Disadvantages	None apparent.	The Council will not have committed to achieving a clear set of actions that should enable it to demonstrate that it has acted responsibly and appropriately to address the new Biodiversity Duty introduced by the Environment Act whilst also demonstrating actions to address its own declaration of an Ecological Emergency.
Risks	In describing its intentions to address the new obligations and publishing its First Considerations Report the Council will be committing itself to actions that it will need to resource.	The Council may be criticised or censured by government for not preparing a First Consideration Report when the need to do so is clearly set out by the Environment Act 2021.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option and Conclusion

- 5.1 The preferred option is Option 1: Cabinet approves the actions set out in 'Meeting the Biodiversity Duty – First Considerations' (Appendix 1 to this report) to ensure that it can demonstrate that it has taken appropriate action to address new Biodiversity Duty obligations introduced by Environment Act 2021.
- 5.2 In doing so the Council will have sets itself a clear set of actions that should enable it to demonstrate that it has acted responsibly and appropriately to address the new Biodiversity Duty introduced by the Environment Act whilst also demonstrating actions

to address its own declaration of an Ecological Emergency.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Council Plan

The objectives of the report support and complement The Council Plan’s Ambition 1.4 “Respecting Nature” on Ecology & Biodiversity to “increase biodiversity, protect our district’s unique ecology and ensure the habitat provided for wildlife is maintained”.

Planning & Climate Change Service Business Plan 2024-2025

The objectives of the report support and complement the Service Business Plan objective 1.4 on Respecting Nature. This sets Service priorities aligned with the Council Plan that aim to integrate the new Biodiversity Officer role into service to help deliver net gains across the district.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None directly identifiable as a consequence of this report, however the purpose of the report is to advance processes intended to protect and enhance the natural environment for all.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Whilst there are no legal implications directly arising from this report its purpose is to ensure that the Council takes appropriate action to comply with the extended ‘biodiversity duty’ introduced by the Environment Act 2021. Whilst the Government has not described sanctions for public bodies that do not satisfactorily demonstrate how they intend to meet the extended obligations, a failure to evidence its intentions to discharge the duty would likely be a reputational matter for the authority.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report. The City Council has already made a budget decision to resource an additional officer post of Biodiversity Officer to support actions to help deliver the obligations of the enhanced Biodiversity Duty.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources / Information Services / Property / Open Spaces

None directly arising.

SECTION 151 OFFICER’S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER’S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Weblink to:

[Fulfilling the Biodiversity Duty First Considerations](#)

Contact Officer:

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E-mail: mbrophy@lancaster.gov.uk

Ref:

Table 1: Actions: *Fulfilling the Biodiversity Duty First Considerations*

OBJECTIVE 1: Improve biodiversity evidence base			
Action No.	Action required	Lead Service Area (Team)	Timescale
Action 1.1	Work with relevant partners to establish a more robust database of the biodiversity of the district.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	June 2024
Action 1.2	Develop, launch, and maintain interactive mapping to display biodiversity data for the district	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	June 2024
Action 1.3	Develop internal monitoring system to support the delivery of BNG across the district, ensuring its delivery and condition can be monitored over 30 years. Identify mechanism for enforcement where delivery and maintenance are not occurring as agreed.	Planning and Climate Change (Development Management)	January 2024
Action 1.4	Develop Council wide programme to monitor the delivery of actions agreed within this first consideration of the Council's Biodiversity Duty.	All Services	March 2024
Action 6.6	Identify monitoring and enforcement protocol to ensure the delivery of BNG in the planning system.	Planning and Climate Change (Development Management)	March 2024
Action 10.2	Utilise Natural England Functionally Linked Land mapping to identify where land outside designated sites is used for protected species.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	June 2024
Action 11.1	Monitor delivery of the Grassland Management Strategy assessing biodiversity value of the site against baseline studies.	Environment & Place (Public Realm)	On-going
Action 12.2	Review Tree Protection Orders within the District.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	

Action 17.1	Monitor and Report on Delivery of the One Millions Tree project.	Public Realm	
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OBJECTIVE 2: Work with key partners to support biodiversity delivery across the district			
Action No.	Action required	Lead Service Area (Team)	Area Timescale
Action 2.1	Support the County Council in the preparation of the Local Nature Recovery strategy ensuring that local priorities are identified.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 2.2	Actively engage with Lancashire County Council to identify areas of strategic significance in the district for inclusion within the LNRS	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 3.1	Continue to monitor the announcement of any future Protected Site or Species Conservation Strategies that are relevant to Lancaster City Council, or the LNRS.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Actions 4.1 & 10.8	Continue membership on the District Licensing Steering Group representing the City Council and implementing actions emerging from the Steering Group.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 10.9	Explore with Natural England and the Northwest Wildlife Trusts Living Seas Team opportunities for marine net gain.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 10.10	Work closely with Lancashire LNP moving forward.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 10.11	Explore establishing a Lancaster District LNP Steering Group moving forward that includes LNP and other key stakeholders.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 10.12	Help support and facilitate the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Network.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 5.1	Work with the County Council to prepare the Lancashire 2050 strategy ensuring that	Planning and Climate Change	On-going

	biodiversity considerations are prioritised.	(Planning and Housing Strategy)	
Action 12.3	Support Lancashire County Council in their review of ancient tree cover through the preparation of the LNRS	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 12.4	Engage with the county council's treescapes team, to encourage more tree planting in the district.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 16.1	Support National Landscape teams in production of reviewed Management Plans	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 16.2	Consider how the Council can help implement Management Plans taking account of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 16.3	Support National Landscape teams in meeting targets set out in the Environment Act.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going

OBJECTIVE 3: Deliver measurable increase in biodiversity across the district			
Action No.	Action required	Lead Service Area (Team)	Area Timescale
Actions 6.1 & 9.4	Explore the preparation of a local off-site BNG register at either a local or county level	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 6.2	Investigate opportunities for BNG delivery on Council owned land.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Actions 6.3 & 9.2	Explore the potential to deliver BNG above mandatory 10% in the next Local Plan.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 9.1	Prepare and adopt a new Local Plan which includes policies relating to BNG, habitat and species protection and enhancement.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 9.3	Explore the need for the preparation of additional BNG guidance.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 9.5	Implement measures emerging from the Habitat	Planning and Climate Change	On-going

	Regulation Assessment of the Local Plan.	(Planning and Housing Strategy)	
Actions 9.6 & 10.3	Explore the preparation of additional guidance on recreational pressure. This will be prepared in partnership with Natural England and other Morecambe Bay authorities. The potential work programme for this is currently under investigation.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 10.1	Utilise Natural England Habitat Network Mapping data to highlight 'network enhancement zones' and 'network expansion zones' which is based upon the Priority Habitat Index, to extend and enhance the existing GBI network from an ecological perspective.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 10.4	Better consider the ecological value that all green spaces could potentially provide (not just those that are formally designated) – all have an important role to play in providing stepping stones and corridors between these core areas and so this should be a key consideration when designing the layout of development proposals.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 10.5	Map how development allocations fit in with the wider GBI network to demonstrate how development could contribute towards facilitating wildlife corridors or stepping stones for habitat.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 10.6	Quantify losses and gains in biodiversity so that it is possible to monitor any changes effectively.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 10.7	Where appropriate seek opportunities for rewilding to restore habitats and facilitate nature recovery.	Public Realm	On-going
Action 11.2	Identify opportunities for new wildflower meadows across the District	Public Realm	On-going

Action 11.3	Explore opportunities for enhancements to be part of a Council habitat bank for BNG.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
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OBJECTIVE 4: Embed Biodiversity in Leadership and Decision Making			
Action No.	Action required	Lead Service Area (Team)	Timescale
Action 6.8	Promote projects delivered by the Council relating to biodiversity protection and enhancement.	Public Realm	On-going
Action 6.10	Utilise opportunities to link into promotional work being undertaken by the Climate Change Hub to raise awareness of the ecological emergency	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 12.1	The Council to update its Tree Policy in due course.	Public Realm	On-going
Action 13.1	Update the Procurement Strategy to include reference to the Ecological Emergency.	Governance (Procurement)	On-going
Action 13.2	Include actions within the Procurement Strategy which ensure opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of the district are considered. This could be through procuring goods, works and services that are sustainably sourced; and selecting suppliers that use environmentally friendly production methods and materials that are not harmful to the environment or biodiversity.	Governance (Procurement)	On-going
Action 14.1	Include a requirement to consider the impacts of a decision on biodiversity within the reporting structure of the Council.	Governance (Democratic Services)	On-going
Action 15.1	Ensure that opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity are also identified through the future Climate Change Action Plan.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Action 15.2	Officers with biodiversity interests also to attend Climate Change Hub, and officers with climate interests also to attend biodiversity	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going

	hub.		
Action 15.3	Ensure that climate resilience is considered when implementing any planting schemes or nature enhancements.	Public Realm	On-going
OBJECTIVE 5: Promote Education and Awareness			
Action No.	Action required	Lead Service Area (Team)	Timescale
Action 6.4	Develop internal guidance to support BNG delivery in planning decisions.	Planning and Climate Change	On-going
Action 6.5	Develop external guidance to support applicants in delivering BNG when submitting a planning application.	Planning and Housing Strategy	On-going
Actions 7.1 & 8.3	Identify a biodiversity champion in each service	All	On-going
Actions 7.2 & 8.4	Establish a biodiversity hub to exchange ideas and promote best practice across all services of the Council.	All	On-going
Actions 7.3 & 8.2	Ensure Biodiversity continues to be specifically referenced in a Member Portfolio.	Governance (Democratic Services)	On-going
Action 8.1	Increase awareness of the declared Ecological Emergency both internally and externally.	All	On-going
Action 8.2	Ensure Biodiversity continues to be specifically referenced in a Member Portfolio	Governance (Democratic Services)	On-going
Action 8.6	Develop Officer and Member training on the Ecological Emergency	Planning and Climate Change	On-going
Action 8.7	Utilise opportunities to link into promotional work being undertaken by the Climate Change Hub to raise awareness of the ecological emergency	Planning and Climate Change	On-going
Action 15.4	Increase awareness of the biodiversity emergency declaration both internally and externally to the same level of awareness achieved for the climate emergency.	All	On-going
Action 15.5	Increase awareness internally of the predicted impacts of the climate emergency on the environment	Planning and Climate Change	On-going
Actions 8.5	Develop a Biodiversity Story	Planning and	On-going

& 15.6	Board similar to the Climate Change Story Board to enhance awareness of the biodiversity emergency declaration and ensure that future actions and strategies are easily accessible to the public to participate in and monitor	Climate Change	
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OBJECTIVE 6: Promote and support projects that deliver enhancements in Biodiversity			
Action No.	Action required	Lead Service Area (Team)	Timescale
Action 8.8	Promote projects delivered by the Council relating to biodiversity protection and enhancement.	Public Realm	On-going
Action 17.2	Undertake another publicity drive to identify opportunities for further planting as part of the Council's Million Trees project	Public Realm	On-going
Action 17.3	Identify opportunities to work with local schools to identify opportunities for further tree planting as part of the Million Trees project	Public Realm	On-going
Action 17.4	Promote the dual benefits of the Million Trees project in relation to both the climate emergency declaration and the ecological emergency declaration.	Planning and Climate Change (Planning and Housing Strategy)	On-going
Actions 18.2 & 19.2	Investigate BNG opportunities to sell units from new habitat creation.	Public Realm	On-going
Action: 19.1	Investigate opportunities to work with the local community in creating and managing new habitats.	Public Realm	On-going
Action 18.1	Investigate opportunities for further Life for Life projects across the District.	Public Realm	On-going
Action 19.3	Investigate the designation of Hermitage Field as a Local Nature Reserve.	Public Realm	On-going
Action 20.1	Promote the enhancement of biodiversity across the District's allotments through the promotion of wildlife friendly planting, the creation of wildlife corners and exploring approaches to	Public Realm	On-going

	restricting the use of pesticides.		
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CABINET

**Productivity In Local Government
‘Productivity Plan’**

Report of Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
Endorse the councils Productivity Plan, in response to the Productivity in Local Government request, from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC).				
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision		N/A		
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF CLLR PHILLIP BLACK

- (1) That Cabinet delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to finalise and submit the Productivity Plan.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the content of the Council’s Productivity Plan in response to the Productivity in Local Government request, from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
- 1.2 It should be noted that this version is draft and full endorsement is required before the Productivity Plan is submitted by 19th July 2024.
- 1.3 The Government is reviewing productivity across all public services and local government is included in this exercise. The recent Local Government Finance Settlement announced that councils would be asked to produce productivity plans. A letter received 16th April 2024 formally started that process with a submission deadline for plans on the 19th July 2024.
- 1.4 The draft Productivity Plan is based on up-to-date documentation including the recently published Council Plan 2024 – 2027, Medium Term Financial

Strategy and OBR – Fit for the Future programmes. All of which clearly demonstrate productivity via processes and services that have been democratically approved.

- 1.5 No formal template or list of criteria was provided for Productivity Plans. Although plans should be no longer than 4 pages in length.
- 1.6 The plan should reflect on what has already been done in recent years, alongside future plans and methods and metrics that monitor delivery.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 The Productivity Plan is structured to reflect the request from DLUHC. All content is structured under 4 key headings provided by DLUHC:
 - How have you transformed the way you design and deliver services to make better use of resources
 - How you plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources
 - Your plans to reduce wasteful spend within your organisation and systems.
 - The barriers preventing progress that the Government can help reduce or remove.
- 2.2 The Council's Productivity Plan will respond to these key categories with an independent approach with language appropriate to the Council Plan and associated processes that are already delivering productivity.
- 2.3 The final Productivity Plan will be uploaded onto the Council's website and will reinforce details within The Council Plan 2024-2027.
- 2.4 The final Productivity Plan will include metrics and key performance indicators to showcase how progress is monitored. This will again reflect details already in place and in development within the Council Plan 2024-2027.
- 2.5 The Productivity Plan will be reviewed and assessed regularly with the expectation that this will become part of the existing Council Plan review and delivery.
- 2.6 Individual plans will not be rated or scored. Although central government will identify common and re occurring themes as well as good practice for shared learning across the sector.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 Portfolio Holders have worked with Officers to produce the Productivity Plan. The Productivity Plan highlights aspects of the Council Plan where wider consultation has taken place.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Endorse the Productivity Plan for submission.	Option 2: Do not endorse the Productivity Plan for submission.
Advantages	If endorsed, officers will be able to finalise the Productivity Plan and submit of time.	No specific advantages are identified for this option. Although this could enable further re drafting in time for the submission deadline.
Disadvantages	No specific disadvantages are identified for this option.	The Council must submit its productivity plan by the submission date.
Risks	None identified.	None identified.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 The recommended option is to proceed with endorsing the Productivity Plan so that officers can submit the final version (Option 1).

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The report provides details of the reasons for creating the Productivity Plan and outlines the content of the document. Cabinet endorsement will enable officers to submit the Productivity Plan to DLUHC which reflects the Council Plan 2024-2027.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Productivity Plan mirrors current Policy Framework and will contribute to strategic and financial decision-making already set out in the Council Plan 2024-2027.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

No direct impact.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

No legal implications arising directly from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications arising directly from this report.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

No HR implications arising directly from this report.

Information Services:

No ICT implications arising directly from this report.

Property:

No property implications arising directly from this report.

Open Spaces:

No open spaces implications arising directly from this report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A: Lancaster City Council
Productivity Plan

Contact Officer: Mark Davies

Telephone: 01524 582401

E-mail: MDavies@lancaster.gov.uk

Ref: [Click here and type Ref, if applicable]

Productivity Plan: Lancaster City Council

1. How have you transformed the way you design and deliver services to make better use of resources

In recent years there has been a major strategic shift as the council has transformed service design and delivery to utilise resources effectively and to increase productivity. The council has applied an outcomes-based approach to all service re-design and delivery. This approach aligns ambitions and outcomes to the resource available to the council and has established a productive organisational direction. The recently published Council Plan 2024-2027 demonstrates our productive and outcomes-based approach [Council Plan 2024-2027](#). The plan highlights the strategic direction of Lancaster City Council and enables us to work towards clearly defined strategic ambitions. Productivity is clearly targeted towards strategic objectives and outcomes. The plan was established due to effective engagement between council officers and elected members and reflects district priorities and insights.

Transformed Structure

Early 2023, the council’s leadership team was re-structured to reflect this strategic shift and to ensure that there is clarity of responsibility between Chief Officers. Our organisational structure below details Chief Officer responsibilities:



Our flatter leadership structure aligns with refreshed outcomes focused service areas and aligns with cabinet member portfolio areas to ensure there is clear co-ordination across the council. This alignment supports the design and delivery of services to maximise productivity with available resources.

Transformed operating models

The council can increase productivity by working in partnership with stakeholders. The Lancaster District Strategic Partnership is established with a clear term of reference to steer collaborative efforts between stakeholders to realise strategic outcomes. Our approach to partnerships aims to increase productivity where services and projects can be delivered collaboratively. A collective approach to service delivery will evidence value for money between stakeholders, not only the council. Several 'Friends of Groups' demonstrate this partnership approach. Friends of Parks groups play a vital role in protecting and enhancing local parks, woodlands, play areas and green spaces in the area. Working in partnership with the council, they give residents a greater say in what goes on in their local park.

Co – Design and delivery of services

Co-design principles have been applied with strategic partners to contribute to service design and delivery. This is strategically effective utilising expertise at a place level with strategic partners. It is also resource efficient and makes the most of resource at the place level. A tangible example is via the MOU in place with Lancaster University that led to the 'Placemaking with Young People' project. The project was born out of partnership working and connections made through an Insights Hub. The joint project is shortlisted in the Community Involvement and Public Partnership categories at the Local Government Chronicle Award 2024. Working with partners and co-design will be important for more transformative service design and delivery so that we can deliver outcomes stated in the Council Plan.

Transformed People Management

The council is currently delivering year two of a three-year People Plan, which was co-designed by staff and Trade Unions to ensure that our workforce is equipped with the relevant skills and support to deliver our Council Plan. The People Plan contains several activities to ensure a highly engaged and high-performing workforce. Initiatives already delivered in year one includes a leadership development programme, a learning and development strategy, a refresh of the council's values, a new performance management framework, an engagement strategy, a wellbeing strategy, an employee benefits platform, and a policy development review. There is a strong emphasis on co-creating strategies with colleagues and trade unions to ensure that they are relevant to ensuring the future success of the council.

Outcomes Based Resourcing (OBR) and Fit for the Future

The council embarked on its OBR process in 2022/23 with the intention to support the budget-setting process, i.e. to ensure that funds are allocated according to a set of predefined outcomes to ensure that funds are directed toward the council's key ambitions and statutory functions, and not necessarily to areas which contribute less or not at all

against the predetermined objectives. This approach is underpinned by the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). We have developed a transformation programme called 'Fit for the Future', which is designed to ensure the continuation of OBR process and drive further efficiencies, transformation of services and introduce further commercialisation. The process has a clearly defined governance structure that is led by Chief Officers and Portfolio Holders and is developing clearly understood financial targets. Transformation projects within this programme clearly align with the Council Plan.

During the course of 24/25 these will be honed into costed delivery plans. Over the last 2 years the council has demonstrated its ability to respond to the financial challenges facing local government. In 22/23 challenging revenue savings of £3.3 million were delivered.

Measuring Productivity

The council has a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that reflect different service areas. Through quarterly performance reporting, KPIs demonstrate productivity. Alongside this, each service area has a set of performance indicators and is now establishing clear service plans aligned to the new Council Plan. This development ensures that there is a golden thread that runs through the organisation, so that all services are outcomes focused and measured for productivity. Each year our successes will be recorded and added to the annual review of the Council Plan and ambitions. Annual critiques will ensure that organisational productivity is properly assessed.

The council has a set of Strategic Projects, that are reported on quarterly, alongside the KPIs. All Strategic Projects are linked to one or more Ambitions on the Council Plan. Each project has a Benefits Review Plan where outputs, outcomes, benefits, and measures are listed so they can be measured to assess the success of the project.

Importantly, the council measures productivity against other local authorities to ensure continuous improvements. Benchmarking enables the council to recognise good practice across the sector. Insights from sector peers supports planning for improved service delivery. The council is an active member of the APSE Performance Networks.

Improved efficiencies in process due to transformation of services

Due to improved efficiencies in process, there are clear tangible examples that illustrate productive service delivery that makes best use of resources. These are:

- The use of the digital Granicus platform to affect a channel shift.
- The rationalisation of our procurement process to utilise procurement cards and P2P.
- Improved Council Housing repair reporting and response
- The application of a new '**waste route optimisation**' and new recycling bin trials
- Revenue and Benefits use of chatbots to triage enquiries.

2. How you plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources

Data, stakeholders, and community engagement

We recognise that there is an opportunity to use data more effectively to improve service level performance and outcomes. We are currently reviewing how we achieve this by upskilling existing resource, to achieve the triangulation of data sets and avoid silo working across the council. Going forwards the design and delivery of services will make use of data and stakeholder/community insight. This will ensure that services are relevant. Not only this, data and insights can improve the process of service delivery, in turn increasing productivity. In recent years, the People's Jury and Imagination Lancaster demonstrate community and stakeholder engagement that informed service delivery. An example of success in this area includes the Housing service which, in-line with best practice from the Housing Ombudsman, have self-assessed and developed an action plan around Knowledge and Information Management (KIM).

Digital Strategy

A new Digital Strategy is in development to replace the strategy approved in 2019 which was not well adopted due to the council's working arrangements changing significantly since Covid. The new Digital Strategy will allow the council to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service delivery and use of resources. The strategy will broadly focus on:

- Digital customer- how / what are we going to use digital for to improve customer experience and become more efficient?
- Digital workforce- how/what are we going to use digital for to improve staff relations. As well as how do we best use data or service design and decision making.
- Digital place- how do we avoid exclusion and ensure resilience.
- Digital collaboration- sharing data and collaborating with partners for specific outcomes.

Fit for the Future and Digital Transformation

The Fit for the Future programme includes a digital workstream that considers how the council can do things differently by utilising technology and being more efficient, as well as considering areas in which it can generate more income. Digital transformation provides an opportunity to deliver ambitions that demonstrates value for money and improved efficiency. Digital transformation is an opportunity for organisational improvement to be explored in the future. The council will consider the preferences of residents and the wider community when embarking on any aspect of digital transformation and to recognise issues of digital exclusion.

The council has recently digitally transformed the visitor and tourism information service, which will dramatically improve our professional service to all visitors, residents, partners, and businesses by harnessing new technologies and tools of engagement through digital transformation of the city council's and district's visitor information services, tourism, and inward investment.

3. Your plans to reduce 'wasteful spend' (*Government prescribed term*) within your organisation and systems.

Reduced services, increased efficiency, and commercial activity

Our spending is carefully aligned to our annual budgets and Council Plan priorities, and therefore we do not consider any of it 'wasteful'. However, over the last decade we have had to respond to increasing financial pressures resulting from local government funding cuts and have mechanisms in place to ensure we continue to do so effectively.

In recent years the council has used its OBR programme to reduce services and increase efficiency where appropriate and in line with resource availability. There are also plans to become more commercial and income generating.

This has seen;

- consolidating our office space to enable commercial let of office space.
- the development of an asset strategy
- full condition survey of council buildings undertaken and assessed in line with key principles, which supports realistic 10-year building capital / revenue programme.
- seeking to reduce asset base through disposals / community asset transfers (where appropriate)

4. The barriers preventing progress that the Government can help reduce or remove.

Finance and resource

Significant financial challenges are clear barriers to progress. Funding has reduced by approximately 40% over the last decade. The council has experienced a significant reduction in real terms spending power. Alongside the national context of spiking inflation, high energy costs and increases to the National Living Wage, we, like all local authorities, are under financial restraints like never before. Demand for services continue to rise, including the statutory services that our communities rely on. The financial context affects the organisations resource and capacity to deliver mandatory services and ambitious strategic outcomes. Strategic outcomes have national and local importance.

Local government processes for accessing funding are also an issue. An increasingly competitive process when bidding for funding is both a wasteful use of officer time and gives uncertainty for service and project planning.

Devolution and county wide collaboration

In a two-tier area, Lancaster City Council is seen by our communities as 'the council'. Lancaster City Council embraces its community leadership role and works with Lancashire County Council and a wide range of other partners to achieve the outcomes our residents want. However, the new devolution deal and working relationships with county council can cause barriers to productivity. The council could do more on areas of responsibility such as Transport, however this responsibility lies with county council. For example, greater integration with county council on highway matters would increase productivity. Going forward funding streams such as UK Shared Prosperity (UKSPF) Fund will affect productivity. If UKSPF is to be managed by the new devolved county council, there will be uncertainty as to whether funding can be applied locally and within the organisation to increase productivity.

Process and bureaucracy

Local government is by nature process driven and bureaucratic. Whilst there is a recognition of this importance in terms of governance and decision making for public good, a more streamlined process could increase productivity. This is a sector issue and something that government could help review and improve for increased productivity across the sector. A review into process could also increase public sector – private sector synergy and collaborations for productive output. The council aims to develop partnerships with all sectors at a local level. Although bureaucracy and process can cause barriers to this effectiveness. This can be seen with data sharing and strategic alignment in areas such as procurement and recruitment.

Other barriers preventing productivity at a local level where government could support.

Officers and elected members have identified several operational and strategic issues where simplified process and updated policy would improve productivity at a local level. These include:

- Reduce the evidence base for our Local Plan. Less bureaucratic process would simplify the process and improve productive output and progress.
- Enable bin collection frequencies to be determined at local level.
- Make business rates revenue-sharing less of a dark art.
- Increase council tax bands.
- Scrap the voter ID changes.

City | Coast | Countryside

- Require DNOs to enable renewable energy generation.
- Funding for new affordable homes: this would save on funding homelessness and housing benefits.

CABINET

**Annual Complaints Report
4th June 2024**

Report of Chief Officer – Housing and Property

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To provide an update on changes to complaints handling in line with the new joint Code of Practice from the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, including share performance information and required / voluntary self-assessments. Following the report Cabinet are required to publish a statement in relation to complaints.				
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	N/A			
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF Cllr Jason Wood

- (1) That Cabinet notes the proposal set out in this report and approves the principles and approach to complaint handling across the Council.
- (2) That Cabinet provide a publishable statement on the Council’s complaints handling as indicated at 8.2 of the Code.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 As a stock-retained Local Authority the Council must comply with direction from both the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), and also the Housing Ombudsman (HO).
- 1.2 In recent years the HO has developed a more robust approach to complaint handling which housing providers must adhere to. This has included an annual published self-assessment of performance and a more rigorous and high-profile approach to investigating and dealing with complaints. This has resulted in a large increase in determinations issued by the HO, the publication of these outcomes, and clear expectations that housing providers provide evidence of resolution of issues and clear learning.
- 1.3 In September 2023 the HO and LGSCO announced they would be joining forces through a combined Complaints Code. This became effective from 1st April 2024 and effectively aligns corporate complaint handling requirements (as overseen by the LGSO) with many of the outcomes already required of the housing service.

- 1.4 The new Complaints Code¹ is published separately by the HO and LGSCO but the content of each publication is aligned and sets out clear guidance for complaint handling and the expectations around governance and internal management of complaints. Key areas in the code include:
- Universal definitions of a complaint.
 - Providing easy access to the complaints procedure and ensuring residents are aware of it.
 - The structure of the complaint procedure – only two stages necessary, and clear times set out for responses.
 - Ensuring fairness in complaint handling with a resident focussed process.
 - Taking action to put things right and appropriate remedies.
 - Creating a positive complaint handling culture through continuous learning and improvement.
 - Demonstrating learning in annual reports.
 - Annual self-assessment against the code.
- 1.5 The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Code is a statutory code which the housing service, as a registered Provider of Social Housing, are required to comply with. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 empowered the HO to issue the code of practice and placed a duty on the HO to monitor compliance with it. Non-compliance with the Code can result in the HO taking further action with failings potentially leading to the issue of Complaint Handling Failure Orders.
- 1.6 For wider (non-housing) complaints compliance with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Complaints Code is voluntary: the LGSCO has no specific responsibility for monitoring compliance with the Code, though this is expected to become mandatory from 2026. It should be noted that LGSCO does investigate complaints and issue findings and has the power to issue public reports about the actions of individual organisations.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Council seek to comply with both the HO (mandatory) and LGSCO (voluntarily) requirements. For the housing service this will be the continuation of compliance with the existing (now updated) code, and for non-housing services this will be a new requirement.
- 2.2 Compliance with the Complaints Code must be evidenced with an annual, published self-assessment. These self-assessments have now been completed and are seen at Appendix A (HO self-assessment) and Appendix B (voluntary LGSCO self-assessment).
- 2.3 As outlined in Appendix A the Council is compliant with the statutory HO code, while recognising improvement and continuous learning is required. As outlined in Appendix B the Council is not yet fully compliant with the LGSCO Code and it is proposed that a project team be established to work towards full compliance over the next twelve months.

¹ The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/02.-Complaint-Handling-Code-24.pdf>) and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (<https://www.lgo.org.uk/assets/attach/6558/Complaints-Handling-Code-F-form.pdf>) are published separately, but are aligned in terms of their content.

- 2.4 Officers have developed a new council-wide Complaints Policy² which fully aligns with the requirements of the Complaints Code and is published online.
- 2.5 As outlined at Appendix C the housing service have provided an annual report as required by the Code which includes complaints performance and learning from complaints. It is recognised that improved learning and clear actionable outcomes from this are an area of focus for 2024/25.
- 2.6 As referred to in Appendix B the Council has not provided an annual complaints report for 2023/24. As the requirements of the code are voluntary, and the code introduces a number of new requirements around complaint handling, it is proposed an annual report for non-housing related complaints (LGSCO) be produced annually from 2024/25 onwards.
- 2.7 To support delivery of an improved and compliant complaints service across the council the Granicus IT system has been developed (and continues to be developed) to support effective administration and monitoring of complaints.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 Complaint handling performance for our housing service has been shared with the Council Housing Advisory Group in April – comprising members, tenants and partner organisations. Performance was noted.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: That the approach to complaint code compliance as set out in this report be approved	Option 2: That an alternative approach to complaint handling be proposed
Advantages	Reassurance remains in place with regard to housing complaints, and the Council uses the voluntary requirements of the code to improve and standardise complaint handling across the wider Council with a view to compliance within 12 months time, in preparation for the LGSCO mandating this requirement	Unknown
Disadvantages	The Council accepts current non-compliance as a realistic position for non-housing complaints with a view to continuous improvement.	Unknown
Risks	Inconsistency of complaint handling while new processes are bedded in.	Unknown

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 5.1 Option 1: this allows officers to work towards a realistic plan for full compliance across the Council.

² Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy:
<https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/assets/attach/13330/Lancaster-City-Council-Complaints-Policy-April-2024.pdf>

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 Generally, residents who have reached the stage of making a formal complaint against the Council are using this mechanism to show genuine and reasonable dissatisfaction. Effective complaint handling and the adoption of a positive complaints culture offers vital feedback on service delivery and should be treated as an opportunity for improvement.
- 6.2 The joint Complaint Code adopted by the HO and LGCSO provides clarity in this area. It prioritises open, transparent communication with complainants; consistency in responses and response times; accessibility for complainants; and a strong focus on evidenced learning from complaints.
- 6.3 The proposal set out in this report outlines the Council’s commitment to effective complaint handling, confirms in which areas the Council is already compliant, and outlines an ambition for full compliance.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Lancaster City Council, Corporate Plan 2024-2027 – A Co-operative, Kind, and Responsible Council.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

No known implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council needs to have a robust and clear complaints process and it needs to ensure that it follows the process. If the compliant process is robust and clear, then dissatisfaction can be adequately addressed and dealt with. If not, then complainants are likely to progress matters to the LGSCO.

The LGSCO has a wide remit and can cover a number of complaints about different issues such as debt enforcement, housing and council tax benefit claims, housing allocation schemes, planning, anti-social behaviour, council tax and business rates and parking. The LGSCO also has power to order disclosure of information (s29(2) LGA 1974) and has power to recommend remedies which may include putting the complainant back in the position that they would have been in had there been no fault.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. All time spent by officers and associated IT costs regarding complaint handling and reporting of performance can continue to be managed from within existing resources.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

None known.

Information Services:

Limited – Granicus system already purchased and in use. Team Members in Customer Services focus on development of amendments needed.

Property:

None known.

Open Spaces:

None known.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

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Ref: N/A

Self-assessment form

This self-assessment form should be completed by the complaints officer and it must be reviewed and approved by the landlord's governing body at least annually.

Once approved, landlords must publish the self-assessment as part of the annual complaints performance and service improvement report on their website. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.

Landlords are required to complete the self-assessment in full and support all statements with evidence, with additional commentary as necessary.

We recognise that there may be a small number of circumstances where landlords are unable to meet the requirements, for example, if they do not have a website. In these circumstances, we expect landlords to deliver the intentions of the Code in an alternative way, for example by publishing information in a public area so that it is easily accessible.

Section 1: Definition of a complaint

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
1.2	<p>A complaint must be defined as:</p> <p><i>‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.’</i></p>	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	<p>Lancaster City Council’s complaint handling process uses the Housing Ombudsmans (HO) definition of a complaint.</p> <p><i>“an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.”</i></p>
1.3	<p>A resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction landlords must give them the choice to make complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the landlord’s complaints policy.</p>	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	<p>Where the substance of feedback amounts to a complaint it is recorded as a complaint and investigated as such.</p> <p>This is even if the resident has not expressly stated they wish to make a complaint. This is catered for in the Housing Ombudsman definition of a complaint “A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction”</p> <p>Complaints received on behalf of a resident are handled in line</p>

				<p>with the Housing Complaints Policy providing we are satisfied we have valid authority to act.</p> <p>Some contacts such as MP or Councillor enquires are handled as complaints through the formal process if we believe that the constituent's issue is a complaint rather than an enquiry or service request.</p> <p>This is included in our Complaints Policy, and is included within our service-wide in-house training.</p>
1.4	<p>Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This must be set out in their complaints policy. A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but must be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.</p>	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	<p>Our complaints policy outlines the difference between a request for service and a complaint. It also Expressly states, "If this is the first time you are reporting an issue to us, we may decide to treat this as a request for service.</p> <p>Service Requests are currently collated alongside the complaints tracker, however Council Housing is in the process of developing an improved triage process of incoming enquiries and service requests.</p>

1.5	A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident complains.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	Based on the definition of a complaint used by Lancaster city Council. Expressions of dissatisfaction about the response to a service request would be included in this process.
1.6	An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how residents can complain.	Yes	Lancaster City Council – Council Housing’s Customer Care Page Lancaster City Council - Council Housing - Customer Care Webpage Lancaster City Council – Keep Connected Webpage	Our webpage expressly states that: “An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey will not be defined as a complaint. However, wherever possible, the person completing the survey will be contacted by a member of staff to be advised on how they can pursue a complaint should they wish to. In any instance where we ask for feedback about our services, we will also provide details of how residents can raise a complaint.

Section 2: Exclusions

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
2.1	Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If landlords decide not to accept a complaint they must be able to evidence their reasoning. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	<p>As a landlord we do accept, log, investigate and respond to all complaints.</p> <p>Our complaints policy lists the exclusions to this in detail.</p> <p>Complaints tracker for 2024/25 includes exclusion tracker to allow monitoring of exclusions and reasons</p>
2.2	<p>A complaints policy must set out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, and these circumstances must be fair and reasonable to residents. Acceptable exclusions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. • Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. • Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy. 	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	<p>Our complaints policy lists the exclusions to this in detail including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day to day service requests or initial reporting of faults. • Criticisms or disagreement with council policies. • Complaints concerning the level of rent or service charge or the amount of the rent or service charge increase.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints against individual employees which arise from dissatisfaction with a council policy or decision, and where no other basis for the complaint exists.
2.3	Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	<p>Our complaints policy expressly states:</p> <p>“The council will normally only accept complaints made within twelve months of the incident or circumstances that led to the complaint”</p>
2.4	If a landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the landlord to take on the complaint.	Yes	<p>Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy</p> <p>Stage 1 & 2 – Complaint Exclusion Letter Template.</p>	<p>Our complaints policy expressly states:</p> <p>“If the Council decides not to accept a complaint, then an explanation should be provided setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman”.</p> <p>Complaint exclusion letters are part of a suite of template letters. These letters provide clear information and guidance on the</p>

				tenants right to contact the Housing Ombudsman and provides the contact details for the organisation.
2.5	Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	Lancaster City Council – Council Housing’s Customer Care Page Lancaster City Council - Council Housing - Customer Care Webpage	Our customer care page expressly states: “Council Housing will always accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason no to do so. However, when assessing whether to treat a contact as a complaint or not. Each case will be considered on its individual merits and consideration may be given”.

Section 3: Accessibility and Awareness

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
3.1	Landlords must make it easy for residents to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of residents who may need to access the complaints process.	Yes	Lancaster City Council – Council Housing’s Customer Care Page Lancaster City Council - Council Housing - Customer Care Webpage Council Housing – Reasonable Adjustments Policy	Our customer care page expressly states: “Complaints can be made in person, by telephone, by email or in writing. If you prefer to talk to someone in person, a meeting can be arranged and a friend, relative or other representative

				<p>can come with you if you wish.”</p> <p>Lancaster City Council’s Council Housing service has a comprehensive Reasonable Adjustments policy that outlines the organisation’s commitment to adhere to the Equality Act 2010. This policy is a public facing document that can be easily found on the Council Housing webpage.</p>
3.2	Residents must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the landlord.	Yes	<p>Lancaster City Council – Council Housing’s Customer Care Page</p> <p>Lancaster City Council - Council Housing - Customer Care Webpage</p>	<p>Our customer care page expressly states:</p> <p>“Complaints can be made in person, by telephone, by email or in writing. If you prefer to talk to someone in person, a meeting can be arranged and a friend, relative or other representative can come with you if you wish.”</p> <p>Training provided for all staff to recognise and effectively handle complaints.</p>
3.3	High volumes of complaints must not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are	Yes	<p>Lancaster City Council – Council Housing’s Customer Care Page</p> <p>Lancaster City Council - Council Housing - Customer Care Webpage</p>	<p>Our web page outlines that complaints are useful feedback that allows our service to identify areas for improvement.</p>

	potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.			
3.4	Landlords must make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all residents. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the landlord's website.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	Our policy is easily found on our wider council webpage. It clearly defines the two stage complaints process, what occurs at each of these stages and the timeframes involved. We also have regular social media posts and newsletter articles that direct tenants to our complaints policy.
3.5	The policy must explain how the landlord will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	<p>Our policy states that it will be available on the council's main website and the Council Housing specific page.</p> <p>The council will regularly promote the policy and the complaints process through available media channels (social media, newsletters etc.)</p> <p>It goes on to provide information about how to report a concern to the housing ombudsman service.</p> <p>The service's Complaint Policy outlines that the policy and the complaints process will be regularly promoted through available media channels (social</p>

				<p>media, newsletters etc.) This is inclusive of the Ombudsman and the Complaint Handling Code.</p> <p>The policy also provides information about the Ombudsman Service and the Code.</p>
3.6	Landlords must give residents the opportunity to have a representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the landlord.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	The Complaints procedure outlines that; a complaint can be made on behalf of the service user by a councillor, advice worker, solicitor or other third party. However, a third party consent form must be completed.
3.7	Landlords must provide residents with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	The Complaints policy provides clear information on how a resident can access the Ombudsman service. This is also included in our complaint response letters

Section 4: Complaint Handling Staff

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
4.1	Landlords must have a person or team assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). This Code will refer to that person or team as the 'complaints officer'. This role may be in addition to other duties.	Yes		<p>Council Housing has a named Complaints Officer with the required responsibility, and a team of additional officers who act as complaint handlers and complaint administrators. These Officers receive clear guidance and appropriate training to carry out this role.</p> <p>The Complaints Officer for council housing has overall responsibility for this area of work, and acts as liaison with the Housing Ombudsman and reports via the organisations governance structures (Cabinet, Portfolio Holder, additional groups and committees).</p>
4.2	The complaints officer must have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They must also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes		<p>The 'complaints officer' function is undertaken by the Neighbourhoods and Support Services Manager who is a senior manager in the housing team who has access to staff of all levels.</p> <p>Due to their seniority within the organisation, they also have the</p>

				authority and autonomy to resolve disputes.
4.3	Landlords are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff must be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and must be resourced to handle complaints effectively	Yes	Induction Handbook	<p>All front-line staff have received complaint handling training which is refreshed on a biennial basis. In addition to this Complaints Training is part of the induction process for new starters within the service.</p> <p>Learning is recorded on all complaints and a monthly Complaint Learning meeting is held between managers. Learning is published bit externally and to staff internally.</p>

Section 5: The Complaint Handling Process

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
5.1	Landlords must have a single policy in place for dealing with complaints covered by this Code. Residents must not be treated differently if they complain.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	Lancaster City Council has a single complaints policy. This policy covers all service areas within the organisation. Residents will never be treated differently if they choose to raise a complaint as we view this as an opportunity for learning and development.
5.2	The early and local resolution of issues between landlords and residents is key to effective complaint handling. It is not	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	Whilst Lancaster City Council promotes a culture that resolves complaints early, we operate a

	appropriate to have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.			two stage complaints process with no additional named stages.
5.3	A process with more than two stages is not acceptable under any circumstances as this will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the Ombudsman.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	Lancaster City Council operate a two stage complaints process with no additional named stages.
5.4	Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or independent adjudicator) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Yes		Lancaster City Council operate a two stage complaints process with no additional named stages, any complaint response that is handled by a third party remains under the scope of our two stage complaints process and residents are not expected to go through two complaints processes. In any circumstances we would not request a third party to complete a response on our behalf, information would be gained from the third party and included in a response letter from a named Lancaster City Council member of staff.
5.5	Landlords are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Yes		Any complaint response that is handled by a third party remains under the scope of our complaints policy and therefore in line with the Ombudsman Code of practice. In any circumstances we would not

				request a third party to complete a response on our behalf, information would be gained from the third party and included in a response letter from a named Lancaster City Council member of staff.
5.6	When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, landlords must set out their understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. The Code will refer to this as “the complaint definition”. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the resident must be asked for clarification.	Yes	Stage 1 and 2 Acknowledgement Letters	All acknowledgement letters sent out to residents who have raised a complaint, include a full breakdown of the landlords understanding of the complaint, as well as the outcomes/remedies that the resident is seeking. In any cases where this information is not known, staff are advised to contact the resident for further clarification.
5.7	When a complaint is acknowledged at either stage, landlords must be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Yes	Stage 1 and 2 Acknowledgement Letters	In the event that an aspect of the complaint raised is not part of the landlords responsibility and therefore will not be investigated, the acknowledgement letter will clarify this as such and wherever possible signpost the resident to the correct body.
5.8	At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers must: a. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind;	Yes	Council Code of Conduct	The service meets the requirements of provision 5.8 through the following means:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. give the resident a fair chance to set out their position; c. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and d. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. This is covered in our inhouse complaint training carried out biennially. b. As part of our process staff are encouraged to contact the complainant to ensure that they are able to fairly set out their position. c. The Council’s Code of Conduct outlines the expectations around potential conflict of interests and the measures taken to avoid or minimise these situations. d. Responding officers are skilled and experienced members of staff. Who have received adequate training and are able to consider relevant information and evidence carefully.
5.9	Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code, the landlord must agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.	Yes	Lancaster City Council – Guidance on Complaints.	Section 6. timescales outlined that in exceptional circumstances, cases may need additional time to fully investigate and to arrange remedial action.

				In these cases, staff are advised to agree suitable timescales with the complainant and ensure they are regularly updated on progress.
5.10	Landlords must make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Landlords must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.	Yes	Council Housing Reasonable Adjustment Policy	Council Housing has a comprehensive reasonable adjustments policy that outlines our commitment to ensuring our service is accessible to all.
5.11	Landlords must not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless it has valid reasons to do so. Landlords must clearly set out these reasons, and they must comply with the provisions set out in section 2 of this Code.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	We will never refuse to escalate a complaint without a valid reason to do so. in cases where we would refuse to escalate a complaint to the second stage of our process, we would provide the complainant with a letter that clearly sets out the reasons for refusal in line with Section 2 of the Ombudsman code.
5.12	A full record must be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This must include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the resident, correspondence with other parties,	Yes	Granicus record keeping	Lancaster City Council use Granicus to record all cases. Using this platform a full record of the complaint can be kept, including actions and outcomes. All details of the complaint itself,

	and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.			<p>including the date received, the complaint definition and outcomes being sought.</p> <p>It also allows the service to record the correspondence with the tenants such as letters, emails etc.</p> <p>As this is a new IT system a record is kept on a tracker to ensure excellent record keeping during this transitional period.</p>
5.13	Landlords must have processes in place to ensure a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Landlords must ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	<p>Our policy outlines that we will put things right when they have gone wrong, that we will inform complainants of the actions it will take or intends to take to put things right.</p> <p>This is not stage dependent and appropriate remedies will be taken at either stage of the complaint.</p>
5.14	Landlords must have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from residents and/or their representatives. Landlords must be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and must keep restrictions under regular review.	Yes	<p>Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy</p> <p>Council Housing – Unacceptable Behaviour Policy</p>	Covered in Section 10 of the Policy Document.

5.15	Any restrictions placed on contact due to unacceptable behaviour must be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy Council Housing – Unacceptable Behaviour Policy	<p>Our Complaints policy states in Section 10:</p> <p>“The council welcomes comments but will not tolerate deceitful, abusive, offensive, threatening or other forms of unacceptable behaviour from complainants and will take appropriate and proportionate action should such circumstances arise.”</p> <p>The Council Housing service also has an Unacceptable behaviour policy that outlines what actions can be taken if a resident displays behaviour that is unacceptable to staff including verbal abuse, threats of violence etc. Actions can include limiting contact, however the policy states that this will always be a proportionate response.</p>
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Section 6: Complaints Stages

Stage 1

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.1	Landlords must have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. Landlords must consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the resident.	Yes	Lancaster City Council – Guidance on Complaints.	<p>Our complaint handling process makes every effort to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity, having due regard to the complexity of the case and any urgent issues are dealt with in a timely manner.</p> <p>We hold a weekly complaints huddle meeting that reviews current complaints, and explores how these cases can be resolved quickly and which require further investigation.</p> <p>Staff are advised to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity, even if this means arranging actions before the complaint response is provided.</p> <p>When the complaint handler picks up a case complaint wher possible contact should be made with the complainant immediately to assess any</p>

				<p>complexity or vulnerability with the case, and clarify points where appropriate.</p> <p>Complex cases are passed to the complaint manager to assess appropriate case handler to carry out investigation across multiple teams</p>
6.2	<p>Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the complaint being received.</p>	Yes	Lancaster City Council - Complaints Policy	<p>All timescales are set out in Section 6. Which clearly states:</p> <p>The officer assigned to investigate and address the complaint must establish contact with the complainant to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issue/s. It also adds that complaints should be acknowledged and logged at Stage 1 of the complaints procedure within 5 working days of the complaint being received</p>
6.3	<p>Landlords must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.</p>	Yes	Lancaster City Council - Complaints Policy	<p>Section 6 of the complaints policy for Lancaster City Council outlines 'The Officer responding to the complaint must issue a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being received'.</p>

6.4	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Lancaster City Council - Complaints Policy Stage 1 Extension Letter (10 days) Template	Lancaster City Council's complaints policy states: Should an extension to the response timescale be required, the Officer responding to the complaint will inform the complainant of the expected timescale for response, the reasoning for the delay will be clearly explained and the contact details for the relevant ombudsman service. The length of the extension is at the discretion of the council but will not exceed 10 working days without good reason. the council has a Stage 1 Extension Letter Template that meets the criteria set out in this provision.
6.5	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Stage 1 Extension Letter (10 days) Template	If a complaint requires an extension. The staff member responding to the complaint will also provide the complainant with the Housing Ombudsman details. Response letters to complainants also include details with how a resident can

				<p>contact the Housing Ombudsman.</p> <p>The service also has a extension letter for Stage 1 complaints that provides the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman.</p>
6.6	<p>A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.</p>	Yes	Lancaster City Council – Guidance on Complaints.	<p>The complaint response is sent to the resident when the answer to complaint is known.</p> <p>If there should be any outstanding actions, these will be listed within the written response with target/arranged dates.</p> <p>Outstanding actions are tracked within the system until they are completed.</p>
6.7	<p>Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.</p>	Yes	Lancaster City Council – Guidance on Complaints.	<p>Lancaster City Council has adopted the Ombudsman’s best practice letter template for all complaint responses.</p> <p>Because of this our complaints responses do address all points raised and provide clear reasons for the decisions made.</p>
6.8	<p>Where residents raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not</p>	Yes	Lancaster City Council – Guidance on Complaints.	<p>Our staff guidance document states the following regarding additional complaints:</p>

	been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.			“If the allegations are not closely linked to the matters under investigation the complainant should be told that these will need to be pursued as a new complaint. All additional allegations should be responded to within 5 working days”.
6.9	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response. 	Yes	Response Letter Template.	Lancaster City Council uses a letter template for all responses. In this template all items A) to G) are included.

Stage 2

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
6.10	If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response.	Yes	Response Letter Template	Letters to stage one complainants outline that if the resident is dissatisfied with the response provided, then they should contact the organisation

				and the complaint will be reviewed at Stage 2.
6.11	Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Yes	Lancaster City Council - Complaints Policy	All timescales are set out in Section 6. Which clearly states: “Requests for stage 2 should be acknowledged and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received”.
6.12	Residents must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Landlords are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	Lancaster City Council – Guidance on Complaints.	Residents are not required to provide reasoning for their request of an escalation to stage 2 of our complaint handling procedure. Where necessary complaint handlers will seek additional information as to why the resident was not satisfied with the stage 1 response. However this is to improve our understanding and not a prerequisite of a stage 2 consideration.
6.13	The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	The Council’s complaint policy outlines that a stage 2 complaint will be considered by a Chief Officer (ordinarily outside of the service area being complained about), in the event the

				complaint is about a Chief Officer it will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team.
6.14	Landlords must issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	The standards for stage 2 complaints are detailed within the complaints policy. The standard for responding to a stage 2 complaint is 20 working days.
6.15	Landlords must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the resident of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the resident.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy Stage 2 Extension Letter (20 days) Template	Lancaster City Council's complaint policy outlines all guidance on extensions at stage two. It highlights that although extensions are at the discretion of the landlord, they cannot exceed 20 working days without good reason. The service also has a extension letter for Stage 2 complaints. Which meets the requirements of this provision.
6.16	When an organisation informs a resident about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman.	Yes	Extension Letter Templates	All letters sent to residents as part of our complaint handling procedure include details of how to contact the housing ombudsman. This includes any written correspondence relating to timescale extensions. The service also has a extension letter for Stage 2 complaints.

				Which meets the requirements of this provision.
6.17	A complaint response must be provided to the resident when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	<p>The complaint response is sent to the resident when the answer to complaint is known.</p> <p>If there should be any outstanding actions, these will be listed within the written response with target/arranged dates.</p> <p>Outstanding actions are tracked within the system until they are completed.</p>
6.18	Landlords must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	<p>Lancaster City Council has adopted the Ombudsman's best practice letter template for all complaint responses.</p> <p>Because of this our complaints responses do address all points raised and provide clear reasons for the decisions made.</p>
6.19	Landlords must confirm the following in writing to the resident at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the complaint stage; b. the complaint definition; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; 	Yes	Response Letter Templates	Lancaster City Council uses a letter template for all responses. In this template all items A) to G) are included.

	<p>f. details of any outstanding actions; and</p> <p>g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.</p>			
6.20	Stage 2 is the landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.	Yes	Stage 2 Response letter Template.	Lancaster City Council operates a two stage complaints process, as such any stage 2 response sent to a resident is the final response.

Section 7: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
7.1	<p>Where something has gone wrong a landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising; • Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; • Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; • Taking action if there has been delay; • Reconsidering or changing a decision; • Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; • Providing a financial remedy; • Changing policies, procedures or practices. 	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	<p>Our complaints procedure is in place to effectively resolve disputes, by identifying what has gone wrong and the intended actions to put things right.</p> <p>Our complaints response letters includes opportunity for responding officers to outline how the council plans to put things right. This can include all options includes in the code requirement 7.1</p>

7.2	Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Policy	Lancaster City Council always try to ensure the remedies offered reflect the impact on the resident. We also wherever possible try to ascertain what outcome the resident is seeking as part of the complaints process.
7.3	The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.	Yes	Response Letter Templates	<p>Response letters sent to the resident will always clearly set out what actions will be taken as part of the remedy, wherever known this will include the timescales of said actions and the officer who will be carrying these out.</p> <p>In cases where appropriate outstanding actions, appointments, repairs will be made in agreement with the resident. All remedies will be processed through to completion and note of these can be recorded on the councils complaints tracker (Granicus).</p>
7.4	Landlords must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Yes		We are committed to handling complaints in the best possible manner. We refer to the Ombudsman's guidance when deciding upon remedies for our complaint cases.

				<p>In instances where the ombudsman contacts Council Housing directly to issue guidance on particular cases, we will always take account of the guidance offered to us.</p> <p>A compensation policy is in development to be published in 2024-25 to support this.</p>
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Section 8: Putting things right

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
8.1	<p>Landlords must produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance. This must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept; c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code by the Ombudsman; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints; e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord. 	Yes	Annual Complaints Report 2023-24	<p>Lancaster City Council's Council Housing Team have produced an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny.</p> <p>The report includes this annual self assessment as an addendum ensuring that the complaintspolicy remains in line with its requirements. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis of our performance is included, including the types and nature of complaints received.</p> <p>It also includes learning from the previous years complaints and service improvements to be focused upon in the coming 12 months</p> <p>The report includes findings of non-compliance and investigations carried out by the Housing Ombudsman. At the time of writing – the severe</p>

				maladministration finding has not yet been published by the Housing Ombudsman therefore we are unable to provide a link to this document.
8.2	The annual complaints performance and service improvement report must be reported to the landlord's governing body (or equivalent) and published on the section of its website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report must be published alongside this.	Yes	Council Website	Report scheduled at 4 th June 2024 Cabinet. Documents relating to this and the Council's response will be published on our complaints section of our website.
8.3	Landlords must also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Yes	Self-Assessment 2024	Although Lancaster City Council is not currently undertaking any mergers, restructures, or changes in procedures. We are committed to doing so in the event of such.
8.4	Landlords may be asked to review and update the self-assessment following an Ombudsman investigation.	Yes		Lancaster City Council's Council Housing Service is committed to carrying out a review and update of our self-assessment should we be requested to do so by the Ombudsman.
8.5	If a landlord is unable to comply with the Code due to exceptional circumstances, such as a cyber incident, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to residents who may be affected, and publish this on their website Landlords must provide a timescale for returning to compliance with the Code.	Yes		Should such an incident/situation occur and as a landlord we were unable to comply with the Code. Council Housing would be committed to informing the Ombudsman and the affected complainants and publish this on our website with

				the appropriate timescales for the resuming of the service.
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Section 9: Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

Code provision	Code requirement	Comply: Yes / No	Evidence	Commentary / explanation
9.1	Landlords must look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Guidance	Lancaster City Council is committed to learning from residents' complaints and looking beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint. We hold regular review of the complaints we have received to identify service failures and use this learning to consider whether service improvements need to be made as a result.
9.2	A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which landlords resolve disputes. Landlords must use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	Lancaster City Council Complaints Guidance	Lancaster City Council's Council Housing Service recognises the positive impact complaints have on future service delivery, which is supported through the investigation and learning process. Our regular complaint learning sessions use complaints as a source of important intelligence to identify wider issues in the service and helps us to implement positive changes in our service delivery where necessary.

9.3	Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive complaint handling culture. Landlords must report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Yes	Quarterly Learning and Service Improvement Report.	<p>Staff and residents will receive a quarterly learning and improvement report that outlines the wider learning and related service improvements.</p> <p>The Council Housing Advisory Group (Councillors, Tenants, Community Partners) will also receive this report as part of a quarterly meeting.</p> <p>The Cabinet (as part of the council governance) will receive this learning and service improvement report on a quarterly basis also.</p> <p>This reporting process will commence in Q1 of the 2024-25 financial year.</p>
9.4	Landlords must appoint a suitably senior lead person as accountable for their complaint handling. This person must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes		<p>The Neighbourhoods & Support Services Manager has accountability for complaints handling.</p> <p>In conjunction with the Policy and Performance Officer this role also assesses any themes or trends to identify potential system issues.</p>
9.5	In addition to this a member of the governing body (or equivalent) must be appointed to	Yes		An elected member of the

	have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC').			Cabinet has been appointed to have overall responsibility for complaints for the organisation.
9.6	The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord's complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes		The MRC receives regular updates of the landlords performance in relation to complaints. It is the MRCs responsibility to convey this information to the wider elected council. The Lead Member sits on the Council Housing Advisory Group.
9.7	As a minimum, the MRC and the governing body (or equivalent) must receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance; b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; c. regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and d. annual complaints performance and service improvement report. 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quaterly Complaints Reports • Complaint Cabinet Reports • Annual Complaint Performance and Service Improvement Report 	Lancaster City Council's Council Housings Complaints Report 2023-24 will incorporate all the required elements of Provision 9.7 and will be published both on the Committee pages of the Council's website and on the Complaints pages. This self-assessment will be updated to reflect this measure on publication of the Annual Complaints Report.
9.8	Landlords must have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:	Yes	Service Improvement Plan TSM Action Plan	Our organisation works collaboratively with other services.

	<p>a. have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;</p> <p>b. take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and</p> <p>c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.</p>			<p>One of our core values is 'being accountable', as so we take responsibility for failures as a collective, rather than promoting a blame culture.</p> <p>We are committed to acting within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set out by the Ombudsman.</p>
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2023/24 Self-assessment against the requirements of the Complaint Handling Code

N.B: Yellow highlight indicates further consideration and action to be taken.

Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
1: Definition of a service request and complaint	Required Action:	To recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint, and these are defined in our policies and procedures.
1.1 Effective complaint handling enables individuals to be heard and understood. The starting point for this is a shared understanding of what constitutes a service request and what constitutes a complaint. In most cases organisations should be able to put things right through normal service delivery processes.	Yes	The council recognises that there is a difference between a service request and a complaint. We adhere to the Local Government Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman definition of a complaint. Therefore, we consider a complaint to be: “An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals.” Therefore, a tenant or resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such.
1.2 A service request may be defined as: ‘a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision.’	Yes	A service request is a request from a customer to the council requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but they will be recorded, monitored, and reviewed regularly.
1.3 This provides organisations with opportunities to resolve matters to an individual’s satisfaction before they become a complaint.	Yes	A complaint is raised when a customer expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request. The council will not stop its efforts to address the service request even if a complaint is raised.



Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
1.4 A complaint may be defined as: ‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals.’	Yes	This definition has been adopted within the council’s complaints policy.
1.5 An individual should not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative should still be handled in line with the organisation’s complaints policy.	Yes	The council recognises within its complaints policy that a tenant or resident does not have to use the word ‘complaint’ for it to be treated as such. Any individual or organisation that uses or receives a council service and feels disadvantaged, or they are about to be disadvantaged, through the actions of the council may make a complaint. A complaint can be made on behalf of the service user or other third party.
1.6 Organisations should recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint. This should be set out in their complaints policy.	Yes	The council recognises that there is a difference between a service request and a complaint. We adhere to the Local Government Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman definition of a Complaint and is outlined in the council’s complaint policy.
1.7 Service requests are not complaints but may contain expressions of dissatisfaction. Organisations should have the opportunity to deal with a service request before a complaint is made. A complaint may be raised when the individual expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. An organisation should not stop its efforts to address the service request if the individual complains.	Yes	Service requests are not complaints, but they will be recorded, monitored, and reviewed regularly. A complaint is raised when a customer expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if handling the service request remains ongoing. The council will not stop its efforts to address the service request if the customer complains.
1.8 Service requests should be recorded, monitored, and reviewed regularly.	No	This currently sits outside the policy, however, service requests should be recorded, monitored, and reviewed by individual Services. This is not consistent across all services.
2: Exclusions	Required Action:	Complaints policy sets out circumstances where they would not be considered a complaint. These are reasonable and do not deny individuals access to redress.

Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
2.1 An organisation should accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If the organisation decides not to accept a complaint, it should be able to evidence its reasoning. Each complaint should be considered on its own merits.	Yes	If the Council decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation will be provided to the resident, setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.
2.2 Organisations should accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring, or the individual becoming aware of the issue. Organisations should consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.	Yes	The council will normally only accept complaints made within twelve months of the incident or circumstances that led to the complaint. However, discretion to accept complaints made outside this time may be applied.
2.3 A complaints policy should set out the circumstances in which a matter might not be considered or escalated. Organisations should ensure that these are reasonable and should not deny individuals access to redress.	Yes	Complaints will be accepted unless there is a valid reason not to do so. Within the council's complaints policy, there a list of the reason why a complaint may not be investigated.
2.4 If an organisation decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation should be provided to the individual setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.	Yes	If the Council decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation will be provided to the resident, setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. Templated letters have been created to assist this process.
2.5 Organisations should not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they should consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Yes	If the Council decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation will be provided.
3: Accessibility and awareness	Required Action:	To provide different channels through which individuals can make complaints. These are accessible and can make reasonable adjustments where necessary

Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
<p>3.1 Organisations should make it easy for individuals to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Organisations must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of individuals who may need to access the complaints process.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The council is committed to working within the Equality Framework for Local Government and will make facilities available to assist customers in making a complaint including translation facilities, home visits and information being made available in other formats as necessary. Complaints can be made in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and digitally. All information relating to the council's complaint policy and procedures is available digitally or printed copies can be requested and collected from Town Halls or posted.</p>
<p>3.2 Individuals should be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff should be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the organisation.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>This is currently a work in progress. There is full training and workshops planned with line managers and staff to educate and develop this understanding. It is recommended that all staff have an annual refresher course which forms part of the council's online Learning Zone. If a complaint cannot be resolved at the point of service delivery the Service concerned will deal with it as a formal complaint.</p>
<p>3.3 High volumes of complaints should not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that individuals are unable to complain.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The council has a clear and accessible path to its complaints policy and procedures; however, little is done to promote this widely. The council will see a natural increase in the level of complaints following the adoption of the new government complaints policy and the completion of staff training by end of 24/25 Q2. It is recommended that the council explores further ways to promote to residents and tenants regarding the complaints policy. One suggestion is to include this with the annual council tax letters. The council will regularly promote the policy and the complaints process through available media channels (social media, newsletters etc.)</p>




Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
3.4 Organisations should make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format for all individuals. This should detail the process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy should also be published on the organisation's website.	Yes	The council is committed to working within the Equality Framework for Local Government and will make facilities available to assist customers in making a complaint including translation facilities, home visits and information being made available in other formats as necessary. The council has a clear and accessible path to its complaints policy and procedures.
3.5 The policy should explain how the organisation will publicise details of the complaints policy, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code.	Yes	The policy explains how the council will publicise details of its complaints procedures, including information about the Ombudsman and this Code. It states - This policy will be available on the council's main website and the Council Housing specific page. The council will regularly promote the policy and the complaints process through available print and media channels (social media, newsletters etc.).
3.6 Organisations should give individuals the opportunity to have a suitable representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the organisation.	Yes	A complaint can be made on behalf of the service user by a councillor, advice worker, solicitor or other third party. A third-party consent form should be signed and returned to the council prior to commencing any investigation. Elected members are encouraged to use the complaints procedure on behalf of their constituents. Complaints raised by elected members are subject to the same requirements for consent. Complaints received anonymously will be considered by the Service concerned, any investigation being proportionate to the potential outcome.
3.7 Organisations should provide individuals with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service and how the individual can engage with the Ombudsman about their complaint.	Yes	This covered in all templated letters. The complainant will be advised of any further steps which they may take if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the review of their complaint. In that they may refer their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman.

Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
3.8 Where an organisation asks for feedback about its services through a survey, it should provide details of how individuals can complain so they can pursue any dissatisfaction if they so wish.	No	This is currently not common practise, however, steps to include as described will be considered where appropriate.
4: Complaint handling resources	Required Action:	To have designated, sufficient resource assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling. Complaints are viewed as a core service and resourced accordingly.
4.1 Organisations should have designated, sufficient resource assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the relevant Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent).	No	Our Customer Service team are equipped at handling complaints and assigning to relevant services where appropriate. Our Governance team liaise and send reports directly to the relevant Ombudsman. However, it is recommended that each service has an overall officer responsible for the overseeing and ensuring the correct handling of complaints within that service.
4.2 Anyone responding to a complaint should have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They should also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Yes	This is standard practice within the council but will need monitoring to ensure all elements are met.
4.3 Organisations are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff should be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and resourced accordingly	No	This is work in progress. There is currently a training programme covering these important elements of complaint handling. It is recommended that all staff have an annual refresher course which forms part of the council's online Learning Zone and that line managers cover this area of work within their annual conversations with direct reports.
5: The complaint handling process	Required Action:	To have a single policy for dealing with complaints covered by the Code and individuals are given the option of raising a complaint where they express dissatisfaction that meets the definition of the complaint in our policy.




Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
5.1 Organisations should have a single policy for dealing with complaints covered by the Code.	Yes	 Lancaster City Council Complaints
5.2 The early and local resolution of issues between organisations and individuals is key to effective complaint handling. Organisations should not have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Yes	All frontline staff are empowered to resolve problems at the point of service delivery without recourse to the formal complaints' procedure. However, if this is escalated to a formal complaint, the council operates a two-stage system for handling complaints. Stage One handles the initial complaint and its response from the council. Whereas Stage Two is for escalating complaints should one feel unhappy with the initial Stage One response.
5.3 When an individual expresses dissatisfaction that could meet the criteria for a complaint as set out in section 1 of the Code, they should be given the opportunity to make a complaint. Organisations should recognise that individuals may be reluctant to raise complaints out of fear it may impact services they receive in future.	Yes	Lancaster City Council will deal with complaints fairly, thoroughly, and sensitively and aim to address any problems raised at the earliest stage possible. Staff will be empowered to try and solve any difficulties reported by customers without recourse to the formal procedure. However, if this cannot be resolved, then the formal complaints procedure will be explained clearly.
5.4 The person responding to the complaint should: a. clarify with the individual any aspects of the complaint they are unclear about; b. deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; c. give the individual a fair chance to set out their position; d. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and e. consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.	Yes	This is formally covered within the policy and the templated letters. There is a guidance on complaints manual provided for all staff.  Guidance on Complaints V.1.01.p


Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
5.5 Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code the organisation should inform the individual of when the response will be provided and the reason(s) for the delay.		Should an extension to the response timescale be required, the Officer responding to the complaint will inform the complainant of the expected timescale for response, the reasoning for the delay will be clearly explained and the contact details for the relevant ombudsman service. The length of the extension is at the discretion of the council but will not exceed 10 working days without good reason. Templated letters are provided.
5.6 Organisations must make reasonable adjustments for individuals where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Organisations should keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments should be kept under active review.	No	The council is committed to working within the Equality Framework for Local Government and will make facilities available to assist customers in making a complaint. However, further consideration to capture information/data if reasonable adjustments for individuals are required, will be necessary within the Granicus CRM system.
5.7 Organisations should not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless there are valid reasons to do so. Organisations should clearly set out these reasons, and they should align with the approach to exclusions set out in section 2 of the Code.	Yes	Complaints will be accepted unless there is a valid reason not to do so. Within the policy is a list of the reason why a complaint may not be investigated. If the Council decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation will be provided to the resident, setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Housing Ombudsman.
5.8 A full record should be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This should include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the individual, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports. This should be retained in line with the organisation's data retention policies.	Yes	This will be held in the Granicus system.

Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
5.9 Organisations should have systems in place to ensure that a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Organisations should ensure that appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation to stage 2 or the Ombudsman.	Yes	This is covered within the policy. The council will not stop its efforts to address the service request if the customer complains.
5.10 Organisations should have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from individuals and/or their representatives. Organisations should be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and should keep an individual's restrictions under regular review.	Yes	The council aims to treat all complainants fairly and will, as far as possible, ensure that the substance of any complaint is addressed. Where the council considers a complainant unreasonably persistent, it will take action to restrict their access to the council's complaints procedure. The council will notify complainants deemed unreasonably persistent of the action it proposes. The council welcomes comments but will not tolerate deceitful, abusive, offensive, threatening, or other forms of unacceptable behaviour.
5.11 Any restrictions placed on an individual's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010	Yes	The council will notify complainants deemed unreasonably persistent of the action it proposes, which may include terminating contact with them, and if required, demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010
6: Complaints stages (Stage 1)	Required Action:	Process stage 1 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code.
6.1 Organisations should have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further consideration. Organisations should consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the individual is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the individual.	Yes	Covered in the policy. The officer assigned to investigate and address the complaint must establish contact with the complainant to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issue/s. The council will also monitor and note any outside SLA.

Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
6.2 Complaints should be acknowledged and logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the complaint being received.	Yes	Covered in the policy. Covered in templated letters.  Stage 1 Acknowledgement L
6.3 Organisations should provide a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Covered in the policy. Covered in templated letters.  Stage 1 Response Letter - General Cou
6.4 Organisations should decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform individuals of the expected timescale for response. Any extension should be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) should be clearly explained to the individual.	Yes	Covered in the policy. Covered in templated letters.  Stage 1 Need more time - General Coun
6.5 When an organisation informs an individual about an extension to these timescales, they should be provided with the details of the relevant Ombudsman.	Yes	Covered in the policy. Covered in templated letters.
6.6 A complaint response should be provided to the individual when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions should still be tracked and actioned promptly, with appropriate updates provided to the individual.	No	Covered in the policy. Covered in templated letters. However, follow up to outstanding actions and their completion will need to be considered as part of Granicus phase 2 update.

Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
<p>6.7 Organisations should address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. Organisations should be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.</p>	Yes	<p>Covered in the policy. Covered in templated letters. Complaints will be seen as an opportunity to resolve the customer’s problem and to learn from feedback. A reply to a complaint should contain: A summary of the complaint and the stage this is at. Steps taken to investigate the complaint. The decision and reasons for it. Reference to whether the council upholds or does not uphold the complaint. An apology where appropriate. Information on any action that is going to be taken to resolve the problem. Details of any service improvements as a result of the complaint.</p>
<p>6.8 At the conclusion of stage 1 organisations should provide details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.</p>	Yes	<p>Covered in the policy. Covered in templated letters. Details of further stages of appeal and contact details for the relevant ombudsman if the complainant remains dissatisfied are included in all correspondence.</p>
<p>6.9 Where individuals raise additional complaints during stage 1, these should be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related, and the stage 1 response has not been provided. Where the stage 1 response has been provided, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being considered, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues should be logged as a new complaint.</p>	Yes	<p>Covered in policy and covered in training.</p>
<p>6.10 Organisations should have systems in place to ensure that a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Individuals should not have to escalate a complaint in order to get an appropriate remedy.</p>	Yes	<p>Covered in policy and covered in training.</p>
<p>6: Complaints stages (Stage 2)</p>	Required Action:	<p>To process stage 2 complaints in line with timescales and processes set out in the Code.</p>
<p>6.11 If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the individual’s satisfaction at stage 1, it should be progressed to stage 2 of the organisation’s procedure. Stage 2 is the organisation’s final response.</p>	Yes	<p>Requests for stage 2 are acknowledged and logged at stage 2. Good practice is to speak to complainant, and address every point raised as part of the original complaint.</p>

Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
6.12 Requests for stage 2 should be acknowledged and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received. Within the acknowledgement, organisations should set out their understanding of any outstanding issues and the outcomes the individual is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the individual should be asked for clarification.	Yes	Requests for stage 2 are acknowledged and logged at stage 2 of the complaint's procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received. Covered in templates.  Stage 2 Acknowledgement L
6.13 Individuals should not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Organisations should make reasonable efforts to understand why an individual remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Yes	Covered in the policy. Covered in templated letters.
6.14 The person considering the complaint at stage 2 should not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Yes	The review is undertaken by a Chief Officer (or their delegated senior officer) which is not the subject of the complaint who will review the adequacy of the stage 1 response, as well as any new and relevant information not previously considered.
6.15 Organisations should issue a final response to the stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.	Yes	Covered in the policy. Covered in templated letters.  Stage 2 Response Letter - General.doc
6.16 Organisations should decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform individuals of the expected timescale for response. Any extension should be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) should be clearly explained to the individual.	Yes	Covered in the policy. Covered in templated letters.  Stage 2 Need more time - General.doc
6.17 When an organisation informs an individual about an extension to these timescales they should be provided with the details of the relevant Ombudsman.	Yes	Covered in the policy. Covered in templated letters. Should an extension to the response timescale be required, the council will inform the complainant of the expected timescale for response, the reasoning for the delay will be clearly explained and the contact details for the relevant ombudsman service.

Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
<p>6.18 Organisations should confirm the following in writing to the individual at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the complaint stage; b. the organisation’s understanding of the complaint; c. the decision on the complaint; d. the reasons for any decisions made; e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right; f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman if the individual remains dissatisfied. 	Yes	<p>This is formally covered within the policy and the templated letters.</p>  <p>Stage 2 Response Letter - General.doc</p>
<p>6.19 Stage 2 should be the organisation’s final response and should involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.</p>	Yes	<p>This is formally covered within the policy and the templated letters.</p>
<p>6.20 A process with more than two stages will make the complaint process unduly long and delay access to the relevant Ombudsman. A process with a single stage means the organisation may lack the ability to check its response before an individual comes to the Ombudsman.</p>	Yes	<p>The council operates a two-stage system for handling complaints. Stage One handles the initial complaint and its response from the council. Whereas Stage Two is for escalating complaints should you feel unhappy with the initial Stage One response.</p>
<p>6.21 Where an organisation’s complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor) or independent adjudicator at any stage, it should form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Individuals should not be expected to go through two complaints processes.</p>	Yes	<p>The council will in most cases manage and operate its own complaint procedures, however, if a third party is involved as part of the investigation process, it would still comply with the council’s policy and procedures and adhere to all timelines.</p>
<p>6.22 Organisations are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.</p>	Yes	<p>As above.</p>
<p>7: Putting things right</p>	<p>Required Action:</p>	<p>When something has gone wrong we take action to put things right.</p>

Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
7.1 Where something has gone wrong an organisation should acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include: > Apologising; > Acknowledging where things have gone wrong; > Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons; > Taking action if there has been delay; > Reconsidering or changing a decision; > Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum; > Providing a financial remedy; > Changing policies, procedures or practices.	Yes	This is covered in the policy. Lancaster City Council will deal with complaints fairly, thoroughly, and sensitively and aim to address any problems raised at the earliest stage possible. These actions will form part of our learning and continued good practice. We will monitor all feedback and report where appropriate. Discretionary guidance for service managers will be formalised in further training.
7.2 Any remedy offered should reflect the impact on the individual as a result of any fault identified.	Yes	Noted. Complaints will be seen as an opportunity to resolve the customer's problem and to learn from feedback and should be responded to in that way.
7.3 The remedy offer should clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the individual where appropriate. Any remedy proposed should be followed through to completion.	No	The remedy offered will clearly be laid out in the response letter. However, following through to completion is not always carried out in every case, but will form part of the Granicus phase 2.
7.4 If a proposed remedy cannot be delivered, the individual should be informed of the reasons for this, provided with details of any alternative remedy and reminded of their right to complain to the Ombudsman,	Yes	Noted. The amendments to remedies offered will clearly be laid out in a follow up response letter.
7.5 Organisations should take account of the good practice guides issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.	No	Noted. This will be included on the council's intranet site and in training notes to all Cos and Service managers. https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/staff-guidance/guidance-on-remedies
8: Performance reporting and self-assessment	Required Action:	To produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge which includes a self-assessment against the Code.

Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
<p>8.1 Organisations should produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. an annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure its complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements. b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the organisation’s complaint handling performance. This should also include a summary of the types of complaints the organisation has refused to accept; c. any findings of non-compliance with this Code; d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints. e. the annual letter about the organisation’s performance from the Ombudsman; and f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the organisation. 	No	The council currently does not produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge but will be fully compliant by April 25. The council will form a Complaints Panel, attended quarterly by a senior officer from each service as well as the Member responsible for complaints.
8.2 The annual complaints performance and service improvement report should be reported through the organisation’s governance arrangements and published on the section of its website relating to complaints. The response to the report from the relevant governance arrangement should be published alongside this.	No	The council currently does not produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge but will be fully compliant by April 25. The report will be issued via the council’s Governance arrangements.
8.3 Organisations should also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	No	Noted. This will be managed via the SLT under such change within the operation or structure.
9: Scrutiny & Oversight	Required Action:	We have appropriate senior leadership and governance oversight of the complaints process and performance.
9.1 Organisations should look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Yes	Our quality assurance document serves as a comprehensive framework that guides our assessment of complaints. Complaints will be sampled at random. This approach allows us to identify good practice, key learning points, implement corrective measures, and improve services. This will be led by the Chief Officer responsible for Customer Services, and reports will be made available to the Senior Leadership Team and Member responsible for complaints.

Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
9.2 A positive complaint handling culture is important to the effectiveness with which organisations resolve disputes. Organisations should use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Yes	The council’s policy aim is to promote a culture of continuous learning and using feedback to continuously improve our services. To ensure a consistent, effective, and timely approach to complaints handling. This forms part of the training and development currently in practice and can be developed.
9.3 Accountability and transparency are also integral to a positive organisational culture. Organisations should report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as citizens’ panels, staff and relevant committees.	No	Working towards this. The council currently does not produce a complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge but will aim to produce and share this with key stakeholders by April 26.
9.4 The organisation should appoint a suitably senior person to oversee its complaint handling performance. This person should assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Yes	This position was put in place April 2024 and will continue to develop this role and responsibilities.
9.5 In addition to this, organisations should assign lead responsibility for complaints in governance arrangements to support a positive complaint handling culture. We refer to this as the ‘Member Responsible for Complaints’ (the Member). This role could be carried out by an individual or committee depending on the governance arrangements in place.	Yes	The council will form a Complaints Panel, attended quarterly by a senior officer from each service as well as the Member responsible for complaints.
9.6 The Member should receive regular information on complaints that provides insight on the organisation’s complaint handling performance. The Member should have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings.	Yes	A quarterly report will be issued to The Member and discussed in the quarterly Complaints panel.
9.7 As a minimum, the Member should receive: a. regular updates on the volume, categories, and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance b. regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; and c. the annual complaints performance and service improvement report.	Yes	As above. The Member will also receive the complaints performance and service improvement report.

Code section	Do we follow the Code: Yes/No	Explanations and Commentary
<p>9.8 Organisations should have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments. > take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and > act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body. 	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The council acknowledges the importance and value of complaints in improving our services. The arrangements for reporting complaints data should assist the council in managing its overall performance. Mechanisms will be put in place for ensuring that any suggestions for service improvements arising from complaint investigations are considered and followed through as appropriate. Complaints will be sampled at random. This approach allows us to identify good practice, key learning points, implement corrective measures, and improve service.</p>

Lancaster City Council | Council Housing

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report

2023-2024

Introduction

At Lancaster City Council, we value feedback from our residents as it helps us identify areas where our services or properties can be improved. Regardless of the complexity of the cases, residents can expect the Housing Team to address their concerns promptly.

While we strive to resolve issues on the spot, there are instances where further investigation is necessary. In such cases, the complaint will be handled according to Stage 1 of our Complaints Policy, ensuring transparency and accountability in our processes. Our Complaints Policy is readily available to view online, outlining what they can expect when they make a complaint to their landlord.

Annually, we conduct a self-assessment of our complaints handling against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint code to ensure compliance, and to drive continuous improvement. To make a complaint or share concerns, residents can reach us via email, phone, in person, or even through our social media channels, although complainants should note that social media inquiries may not be monitored daily.

Annual Self-Assessment

We have conducted an annual self-assessment (May 2024) against the Code of Practice for Complaint Handling, as outlined by the Housing Ombudsman.

This assessment ensures that our complaint handling policy and process remains fully aligned with the provisions set forth by the Code. Through this process, we have reaffirmed our commitment to maintaining high standards of transparency, fairness, and efficiency in addressing complaints from our stakeholders.

Our full self-assessment can be found online at: [Customer care- Lancaster City Council](#).

Performance

Overall:

Council Housing (Including Repairs and Maintenance Service) received 66 complaints during the 2023/24 financial year. This represents a 37.5% increase against the previous year (48). 57 complaints were raised at Stage 1, with 9 of these being escalated to Stage 2 following continued dissatisfaction being expressed (See Fig. 1).

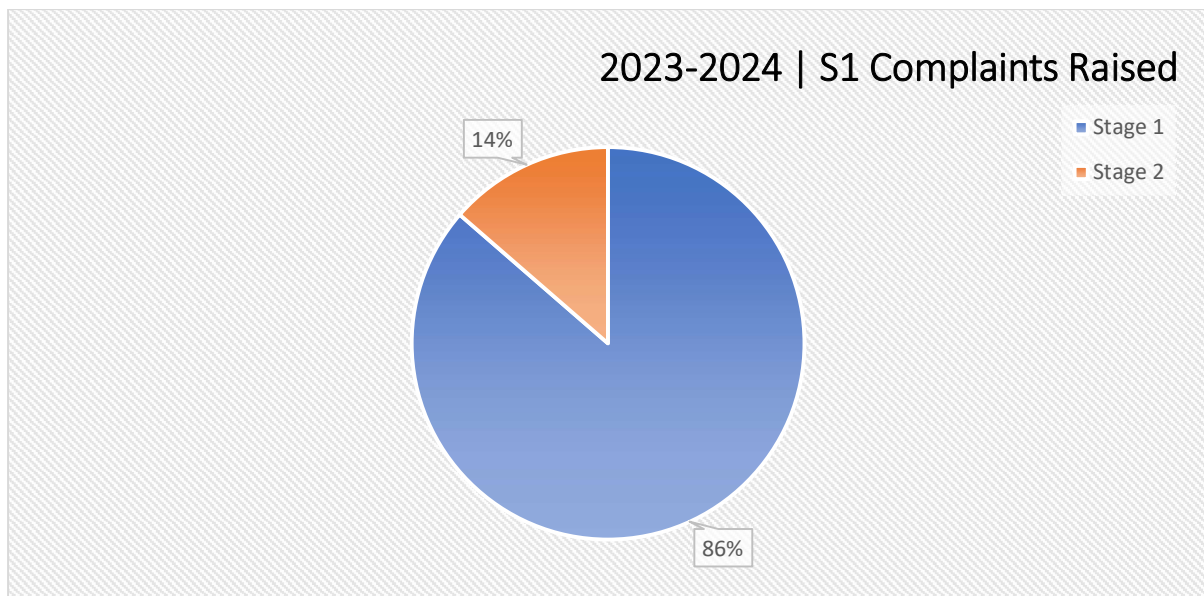


Figure 1. 2023-2024 Complaints Received

The increase in complaints seen year on year can be explained by:

- The increased importance placed on effective complaint handling and the 'tenant voice' being heard and acted on by landlords by both the Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator of Social Housing.
- High profile media coverage of landlord failings within the sector and encouragement (including by the government) that tenants should access landlord complaint processes where appropriate.
- Increased communication by the Housing Service via multiple channels to ensure the complaints process is more widely known and understood.
- Effective and accessible methods for reporting housing complaints.

- Increased staff knowledge through training, ensuring complaints are heard and escalated through the formal process where appropriate.

The Council Housing Service is committed to a positive complaints culture where complaints are welcomed and treated as valuable sources of data and feedback to aid service improvement.

The consistent numbers of complaints being received by the service as shown below provide reassurance of a visible, accessible service being provided:

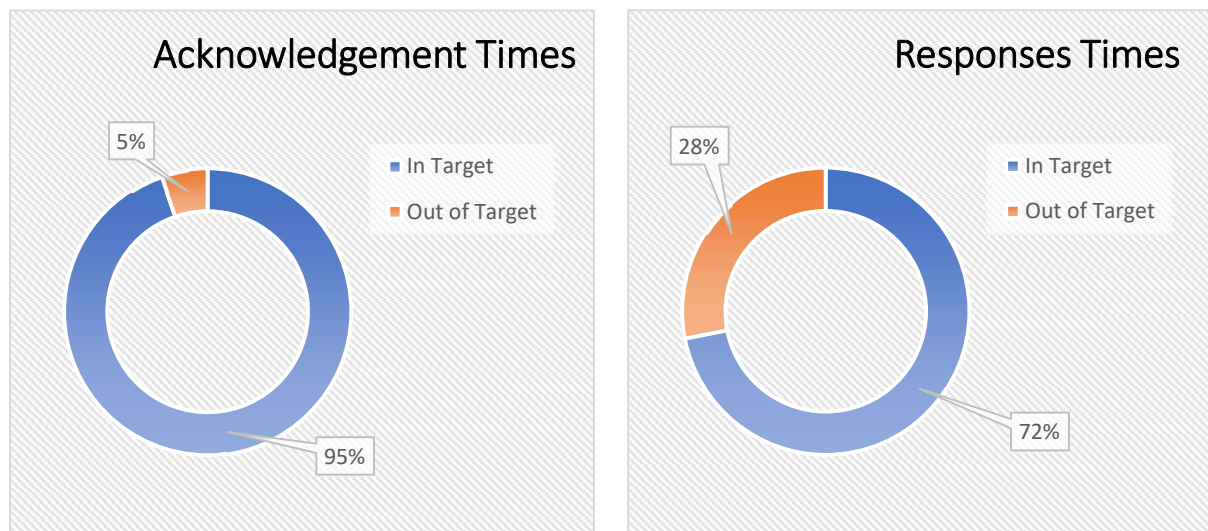
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	14	13	11	27

It is possible that the increase of complaints received in Q4 follows a series of communications sent by the council regarding our complaints process as noted above.

Stage 1:

Of the 57 Stage 1 complaints raised in 2023-24:

- 54 (94.7%) complaints were acknowledged within the timescale of 5 calendar days set out by the Housing Ombudsman.
- 41 (71.9%) Stage 1 complaints were responded to within the Ombudsman timescale of 10 working days.



(Fig 2. A visualisation of Stage 1 acknowledgments and responses provided within the target timescale)

Housing and Estate Management related issues represented the largest proportion of Stage 1 complaints with 52.6% of all incoming complaints (30 complaint cases). Repairs related complaints made up 43.9% (25 complaint cases) with Compliance related complaints making up the remaining 3.5% (2 complaint cases) (See Fig. 3).

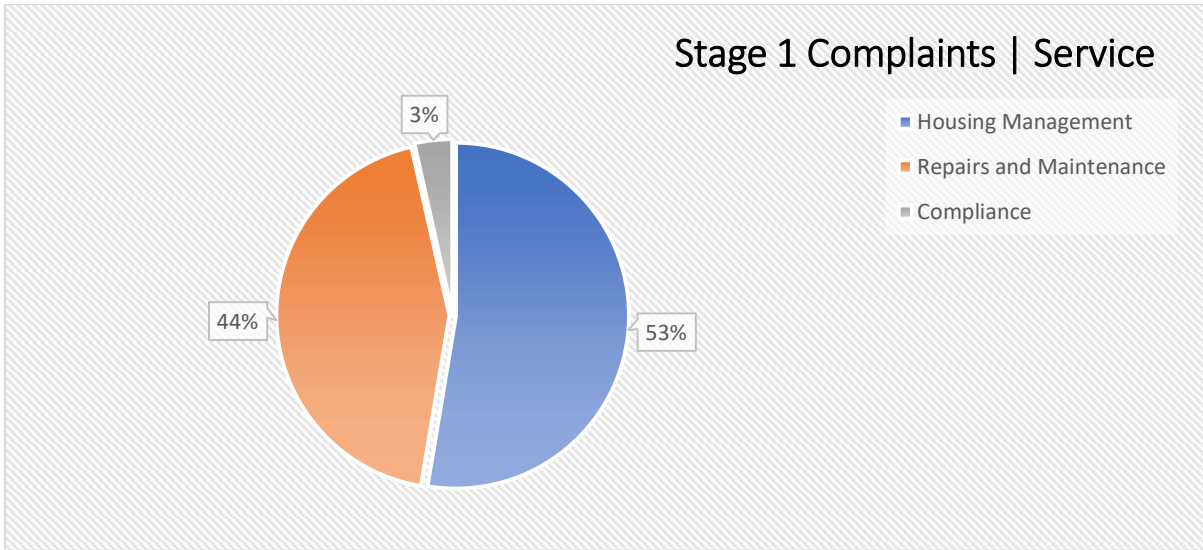
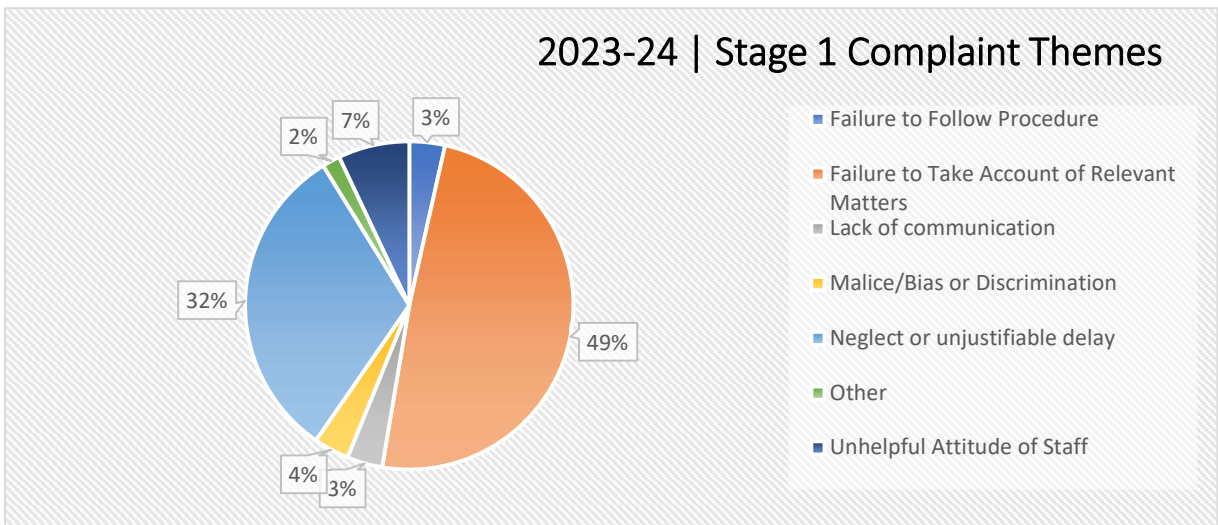


Figure 3. 2023-24 Stage 1 Complaints by Service Area

The most common theme for Stage 1 complaints was ‘Failure to Take Account of Relevant Matters’ with 28 of the 57 stage 1 complaints (49%). A full break down can be seen in the table and chart below (Fig. 4).



Complaint Theme	Number of Cases	% of Cases
Failure to Follow Procedure	2	3.5
Failure to Take Account of Relevant Matters	28	49.1
Lack of communication	2	3.5
Malice/Bias or Discrimination	2	3.5
Neglect or unjustifiable delay	18	31.6
Other	1	1.8
Unhelpful Attitude of Staff	4	7.0

(Fig 4. Stage 1 Complaint Themes)

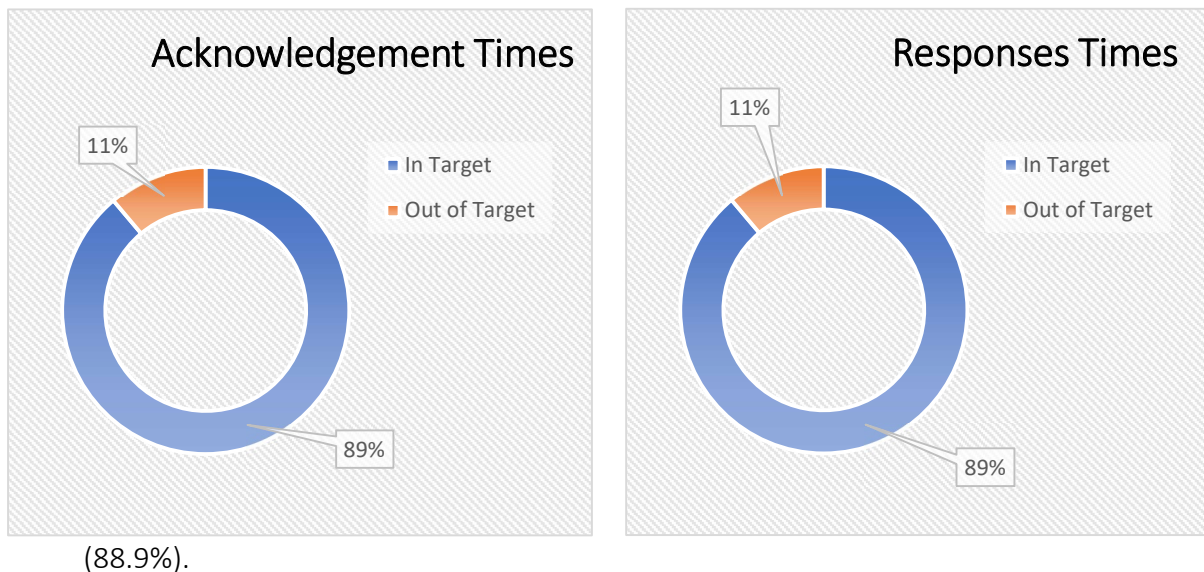
The average response time for a Stage 1 complaint during 2023/24 11.9 working days. Although many cases were responded to within the target time this does not meet the requirements set out by the Housing Ombudsman of 10 working days. In response to performance monitoring in year, processes were tightened up during quarter 3 which saw a significantly improved performance during quarter 4 where average response time was 6.5 working days, with over 90% of stage 1 complaints receiving a response within the 10 day target time.

Finally, 52.6% of Stage 1 complaints were upheld, 31.6% were not upheld and 15.8% were partially upheld. From April 2024, in line with the Complaints Code complaints will no longer be classified as partially upheld but will be either upheld or not upheld.

Stage 2:

Of the 9 Stage 2 complaints raised in the 2023-24 financial year:

- 8 complaints were acknowledged within the timescale of 5 calendar days set out by the Housing Ombudsman (88.9%).
- 8 complaints were responded to within the Ombudsman timescale of 20 working days



(88.9%).

(Fig 5. A visualisation of Stage 2 acknowledgments and responses provided within the target timescale)

Housing and Estate Management related issues represented the largest proportion of Stage 2 complaints with 88.9% of all incoming complaints (8 complaint cases). Repairs related complaints made up 11.1% (1 complaint cases), (See Fig. 6).

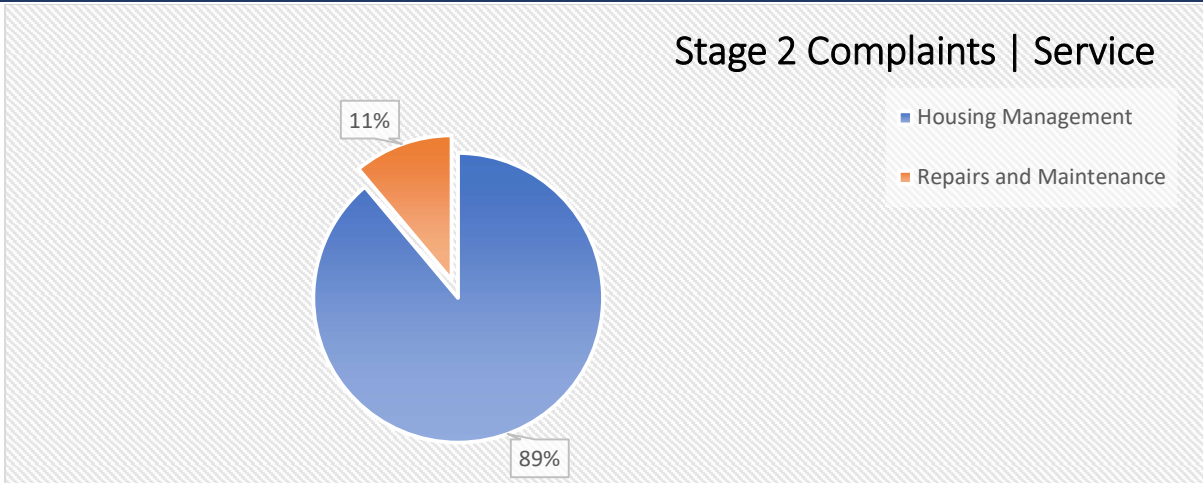
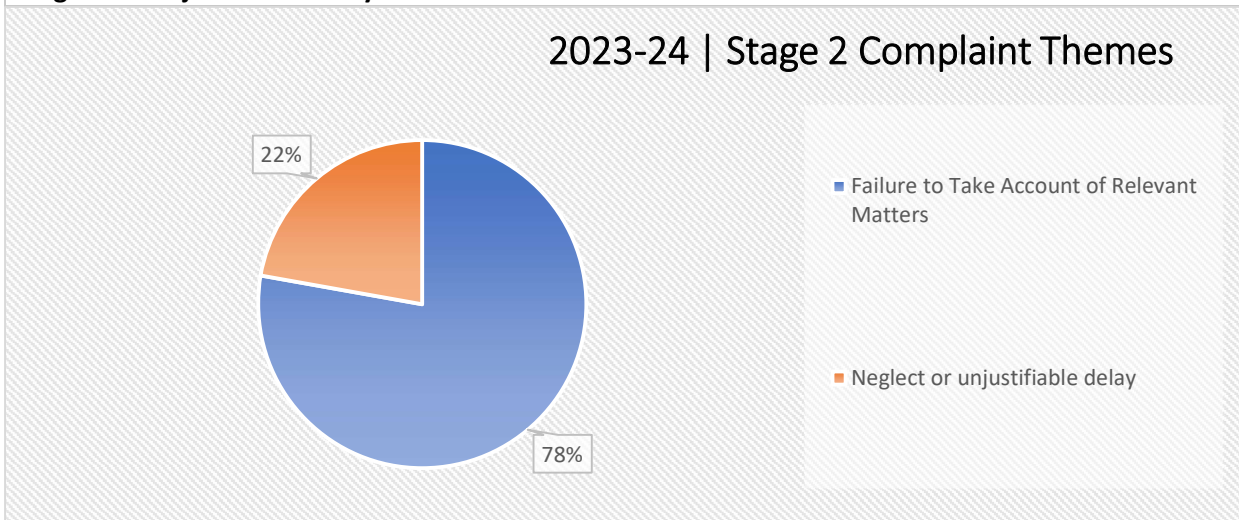


Figure 6. 2023-24 Stage 1 Complaints by Service Area

The most common theme for Stage 2 complaints was ‘Failure to Take Account of Relevant Matters’ with 7 of the 9 Stage 2 complaints (77.7%). A full break down can be seen in the table and chart below (Fig. 7).

Complaint Theme	Number of Cases	% of Cases
Failure to Take Account of Relevant Matters	7	77.7%
Neglect or unjustifiable delay	2	22.3%



(Fig 7. Stage 2 Complaint Themes)

The average response time for a Stage 2 complaint is 20.2 working days, this does not meet the requirements set out by the housing Ombudsman of 20 working days. And although most cases were responded to within the target time. A minority outlier has impacted on the average result in this area.

Finally, 33.3% of Stage 1 complaints were upheld, 44.4% were not upheld and 22.2% were partially upheld. From April 2024, complaints will no longer be classified as partially upheld in keeping with the code set by the Housing Ombudsman.

Complaint Handling Quality

In addition to complaint handling statistics the service introduced quality review during 2023/24 to provide assurance that individual complaint cases are being managed consistently and in line with complaint code requirements.

During quarter 4 weekly complaint review meetings involving all complaint handling officers were implemented, to ensure not only that timely responses are being provided to live cases, but that shared learning and agreed approaches are being considered to what are sometimes complex cases.

In addition, complaint reviews were introduced during quarter 4 for sampling and review of recently archived cases for quality control. These reviews are carried out by senior managers within the service to ensure high level oversight and accountability.

For 2024/25 both weekly reviews and quality sampling will become further embedded, along with a monthly complaint learning panel for all team managers to ensure actionable insights are captured from as many complaints as possible, and progress in response to these actions is reviewed and delivered.

Learning and Service Improvements

As noted above, improving the learning and actionable insights gained from complaints is a priority for 2024/25. These actions will be monitored for delivery and published widely to promote greater transparency and offer further evidence and reassurance to tenants and residents that their 'voice' is being heard in housing service delivery.

The table below details three significant pieces of learning captured during 2023/24, with the actions in progress at time of writing.

Complaint	What we learnt	What we did in response	Year end 2023/24 update
Complaint from leaseholder about repair work outstanding and information provided	Communication was not effective	New leaseholder handbook developed – including single point of contact. In house training provided to staff responsible for leasehold management	Leaseholder handbook awaiting final sign off from residents. Leaseholder forum coming soon

Complaint about rehousing waiting times	Although pressures exist within the local housing market which are not easily resolved, the Council has a greater role to play in providing good quality information	Developed standard information on expected waiting times, numbers on the housing waiting list, and alternative housing options. Published this as infographic	Updated council housing web pages due to go live early May 2024 – this will include full FAQ's on housing waiting list and waiting time information, and infographic information for greater transparency
Multiple repairs complaints in which the complainant was seeking compensation	In line with Housing Ombudsman expectations the Council needs to consider how best to use financial compensation in response to tenant dissatisfaction	Complaints considered case by case with compensation offered where significant disruption, inconvenience or financial loss was incurred by the complainant	Compensation policy in development for launch in May/June 2024 – to set clear expectations and policy framework for compensation decisions

Tenant Satisfaction

In 2023 the Housing Service carried out the first set of annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures. These include satisfaction questions and performance data across the whole housing service, which are standardised across the whole social housing sector, and will be reported in to the Regulator of Social Housing to form part of annual data submissions.

In answer to the question “how satisfied are you with Lancaster City Council’s Housing Service’s complaints handling?” satisfaction came in at 36%. This is below current aspirations for satisfaction in this area and is evidence that the service is not currently meeting the needs of residents.

For context, early indications are that this figure is low across the housing sector and Lancaster are within the reported range of satisfaction, though below where we need to be.

In addition, it is recognised across the housing sector that for Local Authorities (rather than other Registered Providers of Social Housing without the wider the Council remit) this satisfaction figure is to some extent a commentary on the Council as a whole, and not just the housing service.

During 2023/24, in addition to complaints 31 compliments were logged relating to housing management, repairs and maintenance, and lettings.

Exclusions

In the 2023-24 financial year we have not kept an active record of cases that the council has refused to investigate due to it falling under one of the exclusion provisions listed within the council’s Complaints Policy.

From April 2024, in line with the Ombudsman’s revised Complaints Handling Code, Council Housing will be keeping a record of incoming feedback and expressions of dissatisfaction, that do not meet the criteria to be investigated as part of the Complaints process.

We can however provide a summary of Service Requests that were received in this timescale. Some expressions of dissatisfaction will have been excluded from the complaints process in favour of being treated as a service request. Service Requests are expressions of dissatisfaction received where the point of contact is the first time a resident has reported an issue or fault to Council Housing (i.e. a repair).

In the 2023-24 financial year, Council Housing received 57 service requests, all of which were surrounding repair requests a breakdown of which can be found below:

Section	Number of Cases
Adaptations	1
Electrical	1
Ex Contractor	7
General Trades	19
Inspection	27
Unclassified	2

Ombudsman Findings of Non-Compliance

In recent years the Housing Ombudsman Service has developed an increasingly proactive role in monitoring and intervening in housing service delivery through receipt of individual complaint cases and analysis of emerging themes and trends. Their 'spotlight' reports, for example, offer guidance and recommendations for effective service delivery in a range of areas and the Housing Service uses these to inform ongoing service review.

With regard to specific cases, Lancaster City Council was subject to two determinations during 2023/24.

Case 1

For the council's handling of a persistent anti-social behaviour (ASB) case a finding of 'maladministration' was found. Their finding related specifically to the way that the Housing Service had managed the ASB case, including insufficient risk assessments being carried out, a lack of understanding of the impact of the ASB on the victims, and poor communication during the case.

The experience of both the complainant and the housing team of this case was one of the drivers behind creating the new housing specific Community Safety Team and updated policy framework which launched in 2023, the principles of which include improvements in the areas highlighted by the Ombudsman.

The ASB case resolved to the complainant's satisfaction in 2022.

Case 2

For the council's handling of a noise nuisance case in 2022 it was found that the focus on 'enforcement' failed to consider the impact on the complainant, and in particular his specific vulnerabilities and support needs. A finding of 'maladministration' was issued for complaint handling and 'severe maladministration' in relation to the handling of the complainant's vulnerabilities and needs.

Again, as above, the development of the Community Safety team addresses some of the issues raised in this determination. In addition, it has promoted a review of how the service considered vulnerability within service delivery, and a new vulnerability policy is in development at time of writing to establish the principles and activity across the service in this area.

In addition, a review of Knowledge and Information Management practices is underway to provide assurance around case management and use of appropriate information in such cases.

The complainant in this case has since had the situation resolved to his satisfaction.

2024/25 Action Plan

In order to address the key areas where complaint handling required improvement the following action plan has been produced. This plan will be monitored by senior managers within the service to ensure delivery of agreed actions and mid-year update presented to the Council Housing Advisory Group (on which both the Lead Member for Complaints and the Lead Member for Housing and Homelessness sits).

Area for improvement	Action(s)	Lead Officer(s)	Target for completion
Learning from complaints	<p>Monthly complaint learning meetings including all complaint handling officers in the service will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify insights and learning from complaints received in the month Identify learning and insights coming from transactional satisfaction surveys Develop clear actions with timescales Monitor delivery of actions Publish learning and actions carried out 	Neighbourhood and Support Services Manager, Policy and Performance Officer, Complaint learning group.	Monthly, from May 2024
Monitoring of exclusions	<p>The tracking of complaints will be developed to include effective tracking of expressions of dissatisfaction which have been excluded from the complaints process as per the Council's Complaints Policy, including exclusion reason.</p> <p>Refresh of staff training in this area</p>	Policy and Performance Officer	By end of June 2024
Complaint Handling Satisfaction	<p>Create transactional satisfaction survey and agreed process for surveying all complainants. Feed this information into monthly learning.</p>	Policy and Performance Officer, Customer Services Manager	By end of June 2024

Service requests	Improve recording, reporting and monitoring of service requests - expressions of dissatisfaction which do not meet the threshold of a formal complaint	Policy and Performance Officer, Service Managers	By the end of July 2024
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CABINET

**Strategic Risk Management
04 June 2024**

Report of Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
To provide Cabinet with an update on the authority’s progress in updating the Strategic Risk Register.			
Key Decision		Non-Key Decision	X Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision		N/A	
This report is public, with appendix B being exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A the Local Government Act 1972.			

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LEADER

- (1) Cabinet note the updated Strategic Risk Registers for Q3 and Q4 23/24, as shown as appendix A and B (public reports) and appendix C & D (restricted reports).

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Quarterly Strategic Risk Reports for Q3 and Q4 23/24 as updated by Leadership Team to be seen by Cabinet to be noted.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 The attached appendices show the changes to the council’s Strategic Risk Register since the report was previously run on 10th November 2023. Changes are highlighted using red text in the appendices. A summary of the main changes are:
 - The risk description has been updated to include links to the Council Plan 24-27 (previously the links were to Plan 2030).
 - The risk categories have been updated to those from HM Treasury Orange Book, as set in December 2023.
 - Control measures have been updated for individual risks.
 - Action Plan items have been updates for individual risks.
 - Action Plan Owners have been updated where needed.

- Risk reviews have been run either at the end of Q3 or Q4 (in some cases both) and risk review comments added to help highlight the changes which have been made since the previous reports were run.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 No applicable

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

Not applicable

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

5.1 Cabinet to note the Council's Strategic Risks.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Cabinet to note the Council's Strategic Risks.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Council have a Risk Management Policy, which is written to provide guidance on the management of risk. Risk Management is identified in the Council Plan 2024-27.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

No direct impact arising from this report, which provides an updated copy of the authority's Strategic Risk Register.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

No direct legal implications arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No direct financial implications arising from this report.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

No direct HR implications arising from this report.

Information Services:

No direct ICT implications arising from this report.

Property:

No direct property implications arising from this report.

Open Spaces:

No direct open spaces implications arising from this report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has contributed to this report in his role as Chief Officer Resources, including responsibility for Internal Audit.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A: Strategic Risk Report –
09.02.24

Appendix B: Strategic Risk Report –
09.05.24

Appendix C: Strategic Risk Report –
RESTRICTED – 09.02.24

Appendix D: Strategic Risk Report –
RESTRICTED – 09.05.24

Contact Officer: Claire Dubelbeis, Projects
and Performance Manager

Telephone: 01524 582505

E-mail: CDubelbeis@lancaster.gov.uk

Ref: N/A

Strategic Risk register - Risk Map 09.02.24

Impact	Very High (4)	9		6	21
	High (3)	13	2 3 5 7 8	4 11 22	
			10 12 14 19 20		
			23 24		
	Medium (2)		1 15 18	16 17 25	
Low (1)					
		Unlikely (1)	Possible (2)	Likely (3)	Very Likely (4)
		Likelihood			

NOTE 1: All risks have been reviewed in the run up to 9th February 2024.
 NOTE 2: Only risks which are unrestricted are shown.
 NOTE 3: The numbers shown on the risk map relate to those on the next page in the first column, not the Strategic Risk (SR) numbers.

Strategic Risk Register, report created 09.02.24

Red text used to highlight changes since previous report

Risk No.	Risk	Risk Description	Residual Risk Score (impact x likelihood)	Risk Category	Existing Control Measure	Existing Control Measure Description	Target Risk Level (impact x likelihood)	Action Plan Title	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Owners	Action Plan Due Date	Review Date	Review Comment		
1	SR01 Central Government funding is insufficient to provide the current level of service leaving the council unable to deliver the financial resilience initiative and achieve financial stability.	Central Government funding and/or revenues collected are insufficient to provide the current level of service leaving the council unable to deliver the financial resilience initiative and achieve financial stability. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.1 Value for Money	4 (2x2)	Financial	Officer/Member Working Groups	Capital Assurance Group (CAG) and Financial Resilience Group (FRG)	2 (2x1)	Outcomes Based Resourcing	Review of existing budgets to identify areas for realignment/ refocusing or cessation to deliver efficiencies but ensuring that Services remain aligned with the Councils Priorities.	Mark Davies	30/12/2024	22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.		
					Council Strategies	Outcome Based Resourcing (OBR), Investment Strategy, Reserves Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy		Funding the Future Strategy	The Strategy contains 4 Pillars to achieve Financial Stability. 1) Investment to reduce costs; 2) Pursuing efficiencies with vigour; 3) Outcomes based resourcing; and 4) Commercialisation	Paul Thompson	31/03/2024				
					Monthly income monitoring by applicable services	Monthly income monitoring by applicable services		Business Plans for Investments	Develop business plans for investment particularly in relation to decarbonisation and renewable energy generation.	Paul Thompson	31/03/2024			04/12/2023	Significant uncertainties remain around the future of government funding, with current views that it is unlikely to improve in the short or medium term. The Council is developing a series of plans to reduce its forecast deficit via its OBR workstreams
					Quarterly reporting	Formal quarterly reporting to Cabinet and Budget and Performance Panel		Fees and Charges Income Monitoring	Regular monitoring and forecasting by services of all fees and charges. To be undertaken by Heads of Service and Managers.	Paul Thompson	31/03/2024				
					Commercialisation	Development of other alternative service delivery vehicles to deliver efficiencies and/ or operational surpluses which can be reinvested into Council Services.									
2	SR02 The Council fails to meet the 2024/25 funding gap as a result of ineffective delivery of the efficiency programme and failure to deliver on key projects.	The Council fails to meet the 2024/25 funding gap as a result of ineffective delivery of the efficiency programme and failure to deliver on key projects. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.1 Value for Money	6 (3x2)	Financial	Budget and Performance Panel	Budget and Performance Panel	2 (2x1)	Outcomes Based Resourcing	Outcomes-Based Resourcing (OBR) approach focusing on where resources can have maximum impact on strategic priority areas. NOTE: This is also listed as a control measure as the programme is phased so has already delivered some savings with further outcomes and savings to follow.	Mark Davies	31/12/2024	22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.		
					Reserves Policy	Reserves Policy									
					Project Managers	Project Managers - suitably skilled PMs assigned to lead strategic projects									
					Programme Managers	Programme Managers in place for specific programmes									
					Programme Delivery Board	Programme Delivery Board									
					Cabinet	Cabinet									
					Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder									
					Outcomes Based Resourcing for 23/24 financial year	Outcomes Based Resourcing for 23/24 financial year									
					Project Delivery Board	Project Delivery Board - Consisting of Leadership Team to monitor delivery via quarterly reports and provide support and challenge to each project as required.									
					Projects and Performance Manager	Established to provide a central co-ordination point for all the Council's projects and performance. Responsible for co-ordination and monitoring.									
					Delivering Our Priorities Quarterly Monitoring Reports	Delivering Our Priorities Quarterly Monitoring Reports - Monitoring report linking Projects, Performance and Resources presented to Cabinet and Budget & Performance Panel.									
Quarterly Cabinet Meetings	Quarterly Cabinet Meetings - Project and Financial information present to Cabinet/ Portfolio providing an opportunity for review and discussion of performance. As part of the Funding the Future Strategy, the Outcomes Based Resourcing exercise is commencing July 2022 to identify revenue savings for 2023/24 and beyond.														
Outcomes Based Resourcing	Outcomes-Based Resourcing (OBR) approach focusing on where resources can have maximum impact on strategic priority areas.														
3	SR03 The Council fails to recruit and retain competent / key staff resulting in ineffective leadership, increased costs and failure to deliver	The Council fails to recruit and retain competent / key staff resulting in ineffective leadership, increased costs and failure to deliver effective services, projects and council priorities. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.3 Investing in Our Skills and Facilities	6 (3x2)	People	New 3-year People Plan (2023-2026) with key deliverables to mitigate this risk	New 3-year People Plan (2023-2026) with key deliverables to mitigate this risk	6 (3x2)				22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.			
					Annual Appraisal Process	Annual Appraisal Process embedded									

				Pay and Grading Structure	Pay and Grading Structure - The new pay and grading structure and job evaluation process ensures that all posts are objectively evaluated and then placed on a new pay and grading scale. Recent experience suggests that this assisted in attracting applicants with the desired skills and values.							
4	SR04 The use of council assets is not maximised leading to insufficient funding to meet the funding gap and deliver capital projects.	Future capital investment is dependent on capital receipts from the sale and utilisation of council assets. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.5 Innovative Public Service	9 (3x3)	Property, Financial	Use of Council Assets Capital Strategy Group Use of Council Assets Ongoing OBR workstream reviewing assets Use of Council Assets Performance monitoring of leases implemented Use of Council Assets Budget Monitoring Use of Council assets Implemented active asset management inc. financial modelling for stock rationalisation. Use of Council assets Appointed Eckersleys to support the council in asset disposal. Use of Council Assets Stock Condition Surveys for property group underway.	6 (3x2)	Council Assets To progress with disposals of council assets as outlined through 22/23 OBR process. Council Assets Updated Asset Management Plan to be developed to incorporate property performance. Council Assets Climate Strategy for Housing and Property to be developed	Joanne Wilkinson Paul Mackie, Joanne Wilkinson, Dan Wood Paul Mackie, Joanne Wilkinson	29/03/2024 31/10/2024 29/03/2024	22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.	
5	SR05 Council services are disrupted and / or additional services are required and costs are incurred as a result of local and national emergencies	Council services are disrupted and / or additional services are required and costs are incurred as a result of local and national emergencies.	6 (3x2)	Financial	Resourcing the emergency response function The Council continues to adequately resource its emergency planning function, including maintaining its team of out of appropriately trained emergency response officers. District emergency Lancaster District Emergency Plan and LRF (Lancashire Resilience Forum) plans that cover site or incident specific risks, including for example: an incident at Heysham Power Station, or a flooding/weather event. Business Continuity Plans Business Continuity Plans National Emergency (such as a pandemic) LRF plans. Financial Planning Financial Planning - Adequate non earmarked reserves are maintained to allow for the impact of long term emergencies like the pandemic. Business Resilience Business Resilience - The Council continues to invest in resilience measures eg technology to facilitate remote working. Partnerships Partnerships - The Council continues to allocate resource to developing its key partnerships LRF, CSP (Community Safety Partnership) and local resilience partners. County wide emergency (such as widespread loss of power and extreme weather events) The LERP (Lancashire Emergency Response Plan) and plans as required from box 2 and box 3 plans, held in resilience direct.	6 (3x2)	Financial Planning Adequate non earmarked reserves are maintained to allow for the impact of long term emergencies like the pandemic. Community Resilience The Council supports community resilience through CEPGs and FLAG groups etc Adaptation Schemes The Council appraises and potentially invests in schemes and activities that provide adaptation (eg Lune river defence)	Paul Thompson Alex Kinch Paul Blakeley, Jonathan Noad	31/03/2024 31/03/2024 31/03/2024	09/02/2024	Strategic Risk report discussed at Leadership Team on 06/02/24.	
6	SR06 The Council fails to reduce its direct Co2 emissions to 'net zero' by 2030.	In January 2019 the Council declared a 'climate change emergency' and have now sought endorsement of an approach to reduce the Council's direct Co2 emissions to 'net zero' by 2030. Whilst an action plan is in place, costs associated with implementing the actions are considerable and are constantly under review. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 1.1 Carbon Zero	12 (4x3)	Financial	Delivery plan in place Delivery plan in place Peoples Jury Peoples Jury - The Council considers the recommendations of the Peoples Jury and builds recs that can be delivered directly by the Council into its plans	8 (4x2)	Delivery Plan The Council continues to work on the delivery of its action plan. More details can be found on our website: https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/sites/climate-emergency/new-and-updates Local area energy plan Local area energy plan (LAEP) has proceeded through procurement (Energy Systems Catapult, June 2023). This document will provide a high-level, costed roadmap to net zero for the district. The LAEP is a 12-month project that will involve Member, stakeholder and public engagement.	Mark Davies Mark Cassidy	31/03/2024 30/06/2024	22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.	
7	SR07 The Council fails to deliver its key priorities due to the lack of an underpinning strategy setting out expected delivery / outcomes.	On the 29 January 2019, Full Council approved the Council's strategic priorities for the purpose of informing budget decisions for 2020-21 and future years. Link to Council Plan 24-27: Whole document.	6 (3x2)	Strategy	Carbon Zero + More details can be found on our website: https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/sites/climate-emergency/new-and-updates Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) MTFS - in place to set out how the council proposes to manage its financial resources in line with corporate priorities. Programme Management Programme Management - in place to ensure strategy is followed and monitored on a regular basis. Corporate Plan / Plan 2030 Corporate Plan / Plan 2030 - Updated in December 2021 to lay out the councils vision.	4 (2x2)	Local Development Plan Local Development Plan	Mark Davies	30/09/2024	09/02/2024	Strategic Risk report discussed at Leadership Team on 06/02/24.	
8	SR08 The Council fails to deliver its key projects due to the lack of capacity and resources.	The Council has a number of key projects (Canal Quarter, Eden Project Morecambe, OBR, My Mainway, Heysham Gateway, Frontierland etc) all of which have detailed strategies for implementation. In order to deliver these key projects it is essential they are properly prioritised	6 (3x2)	People, Financial	Local Plan Local Plan Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	3 (3x1)	Local Plan Local Plan Funding the Future Strategy Funding the Future Strategy Reserves Adequate reserves are maintained to allow, due	Mark Davies Mark Davies Mark Davies,	31/03/2024 31/03/2024 31/03/2024	06/02/2024	Staffing Capacity Action closed and replaced with People Plan action. Risks which contained a	

	projects it is essential they are properly prioritised and resourced. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.5 Innovative Public Services			Investment Strategy Investment Strategy Capital Programme Capital Programme The Council continues to resource key service teams in Planning, economic development, regeneration, property investment Collaborative Working Partnership Working	Investment Strategy Investment Strategy Capital Programme Capital Programme The Council continues to resource key service teams in Planning, economic development, regeneration, property investment and facilities management. We work in collaboration with other stakeholders. For example, on the Eden Project we are working closely with the County Council. Many of our projects involve working in collaboration with other partners. For example, working with the County Council for the Eden Project Morecambe.			diligence of property investment, regeneration projects and key strategic planning strategies. Capital Programme Ensure capital programme is prioritised to facilitate match funding leverage and maximise the potential to attract external funding. People Plan 3-Year People Plan in place and being delivered, which includes emphasis on upskilling and staff development, as well as initiative to support recruitment and retention.	Paul Thompson Mark Davies, Paul Thompson Alex Kinch	 31/03/2024 31/03/2026		link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.
10	SR10 Changes in Government policy impact on our ability to deliver major projects and programmes that would benefit our communities. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.1 Value for money	6 (3x2)	Strategy	Continued monitoring and horizon scanning of Government policy Clear and focused Council strategy to maximise alignment with Government policy and resourcing Strategic Plans Strategic Plans - Continue to develop Council strategic plans and documentation in light of emerging Government policy	Continued monitoring and horizon scanning of Government policy Clear and focused Council strategy to maximise alignment with Government policy and resourcing Strategic Plans - Continue to develop Council strategic plans and documentation in light of emerging Government policy	6 (3x2)					22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.
11	SR11 International and national issues rapidly impact on the strategic and financial context of the Council and / or partners, businesses and communities. This risk is outside of the control of the Council. It can not be fully mitigated against but should still be recorded on the strategic risk register.	9 (3x3)	Strategy, Financial	Retention of in-house expertise to provide agility and resilience in rapidly-emerging issues Strategic responsiveness through continued risk management review Agility and Resilience Agility and Resilience - Continue to develop agility and resilience across the organisation Strategic risk management approach	Retention of in-house expertise to provide agility and resilience in rapidly-emerging issues Strategic responsiveness through continued risk management review Agility and Resilience - Continue to develop agility and resilience across the organisation Strategic risk management approach	9 (3x3)					09/02/2024	Strategic Risk report discussed at Leadership Team on 06/02/24.
12	SR12 Budgetary proposals are brought forward / agreed that are then challenged, causing delays or changes to implementation. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.5 Innovative Public Service	6 (3x2)	Strategy, Financial	Budget Development Comprehensive, robust and transparent approach to budget development and service delivery.	Comprehensive, robust and transparent approach to budget development and service delivery.	4 (2x2)	OBR	Outcomes-Based Resourcing (OBR) approach to focusing on where resources can have maximum impact on strategic priority areas.	Mark Davies	31/12/2024	22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.
13	SR13 The Council's reputation is damaged through its own actions or actions of others in the District. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 3.4 Community Engagement	3 (3x1)	Strategy, People	Communications Pro-active communications and transparency Strategic Management of Activities Strategic management of all Council activities to ensure continued high reputation Delivery of Services Delivery of Services - Continue to manage and deliver services in a way that supports the authority's reputation as a Co-operative, Kind and Responsible Council. Strategic communication Strategically communicate and engage with residents, partners and stakeholders to ensure actions align with reputation	Pro-active communications and transparency Strategic management of all Council activities to ensure continued high reputation Delivery of Services - Continue to manage and deliver services in a way that supports the authority's reputation as a Co-operative, Kind and Responsible Council. Strategically communicate and engage with residents, partners and stakeholders to ensure actions align with reputation	3 (3x1)					22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.
14	SR14 Major, sudden unforeseen expenditure or income reduction arises, necessitating significant change or reduction to services. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.1 Value for money	6 (3x2)	Operations, Financial	Budget and Performance Panel Budget and Performance Panel Reserves Policy Reserves Policy	Budget and Performance Panel Budget and Performance Panel Reserves Policy Reserves Policy	6 (3x2)	Move to sustainable solutions	Minimise exposure to cost spikes such as energy by moving to sustainable solutions independent of external pressures	Mark Davies, Paul Thompson	31/12/2024	22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.

				Social Housing Regulation	Annual self assessment undertaken against current standards								
				Social Housing Regulation	Member advisory group for continued / wider input into the housing service established.								
22	SR23 Procurement of Health and Safety Consultations and recruitment to new role	H&S Consultations engaged since September '23, audit completed and action plan being implemented. Recruitment to new post of Senior Corporate H&S Manager in Q4. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.3 Investing in Our Skills and Facilities	9 (3x3)	Legal	Health and Safety Checklist for New Starters	Health and Safety Checklist for New Starters	4 (2x2)	Procurement of Health and Safety Consultants	H&S consultants being procured to assess as is and implement changes to address shortfalls and support create of culture of collective ownership of Health and Safety.	Alex Kinch	29/02/2024	06/02/2024	Risk title and description amended at the request of the risk owner.
					Intranet guidance	Intranet guidance							
					Health and Safety Policy	Health and Safety Policy							
					Risk assessments	Risk assessments							
					H&S Training Courses	H&S Training Courses							
					DSE assessments	DSE assessments							
					H&S Committee established	Health and Safety Committee set up. First meeting took place in October 2023, the next meeting is due in December 2023.							
23	SR24 ICT Data Centre	Data Centre is dated and improvements needed to satisfy future demand. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.3 Investing in Our Skills and Facilities	6 (3x2)	Technology	Air conditioning in place to keep the data centre at optimal temperature		2 (2x1)	Full Fibre Project		Nick Goulden	28/06/2024	10/11/2023	Reviewed by individual Chief Officers and discussed at Leadership Team on 7/11/23
					Back up Date Centre at SALC								
					Regular fire safety servicing carried out								
					Water ingress alerts	To alert all ICT senior managers to any water detected in data centre							
24	SR25 LCC Property Portfolio (non housing) does not meet its Health and Safety compliance obligations	The Council fails to effectively manage Property portfolio health and safety / compliance and meet statutory requirements. Risk is not managed and steps are not taken to protect workers and others from harm. A structure is not in place to ensure that compliance is prioritised and a proactive culture does not exist. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.3 Investing in Our Skills and Facilities	6 (3x2)	Property, Financial	Property Group Compliance	Regular reports shared with SLT highlighting current position.	1 (1x1)	Property Group compliance	New Asset Management Strategy to be developed	Paul Mackie, Joanne Wilkinson, Dan Wood	31/10/2024	27/01/2024	Significant progress being seen. Regular reports in place showing positive trend. Stock condition surveys now commenced. Asset OBR group to continue to meet to review property group work / property requirements. Budget included within 24/25 programme for compliance and capital works. Dedicated team established combining expertise from housing alongside property group team.
					Property Group Compliance	Dedicated Team established - combining expertise from Council Housing Compliance Team to monitor and address compliance within the service.							
					Property Group Compliance	Team employs sector expert to support overall approach to health and safety and compliance.							
					Property Group compliance	Establish accurate data recording and position statement through individual workbooks for assets.							
					Property Group Compliance	Full Stock Condition Survey authorised and being completed.							
					Property Group compliance	Budget secured within General Fund for compliance / asset management work.							
					Property Group compliance	OBR - Assets group established							
25	SR26 - Increasing costs of temporary accommodation for the homeless	In 23-24 we are forecasting the Council will be required to contribute an additional £500k towards the cost of B+B accommodation for homeless residents. Increase in costs is linked to increasing homelessness, reduced subsidy recovery from HB and reduced grant availability. Costs of accommodation also increasing and increase in larger families needing to be accommodated for longer. The subsidy can be met from within budgets this year, however this will need to be factored into future budgets moving forward. Funding temporary accommodation for those who need it is a stat requirement. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 3.1 Access to Quality Housing	6 (2x3)	Financial	Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	Budget reviews ongoing with service accountant.	2 (1x2)	Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	Letter to registered provider chief execs to be sent reminding of responsibility around consumer regulation and responsibilities to supporting local authorities around homelessness.	Joanne Wilkinson	29/03/2024	31/01/2024	Continue to see increasing numbers of residents presenting as homeless and requiring B+B accommodation due to lack of alternative accommodation. B+B reduction plan for DLUHC produced, new homelessness strategy approved by Cabinet. To look at more rigorous monitoring of costs and cost of spaces from providers.
					Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	Some access to grant funding to off-set costs (although limited and unpredictable).		Increasing homeless temporary accommodation	To work with finance to develop weekly spend sheets monitoring spend on accommodation	Sharon Parkinson	08/03/2024		
					Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	Bed and breakfast plan developed for DLUHC		Increasing homeless temporary accommodation	To review costs of accommodation with each provider to ensure reaching VFM	Sharon Parkinson	15/03/2024		
					Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	Regular case work management in team of cases in bed and breakfast							
					Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	All B+B placements passed by manager for approval							
					Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	New Homelessness Strategy approved by Cabinet Oct 2024							
26	SR27 - Waste Strategy	Increased revenue cost burden to the authority and failure to deliver in line with milestones set out by government (31st March 2026).		Strategy, Financial								09/02/2024	Strategic Risk report discussed at Leadership Team on 06/02/24.

Strategic Risk Register - Risk Map 09.05.24

Impact	Very High (4)		9 21	6	
	High (3)	13	2 3 5 7 8 10 12 14 19 20 23 24	4 11 22	
	Medium (2)		1 15 18	16 17 25	
	Low (1)				
		Unlikely (1)	Possible (2)	Likely (3)	Very Likely (4)
Likelihood					

NOTE 1: All risks have been reviewed in the run up to 9th May 2024.
 NOTE 2: Only risks which are unrestricted are shown.
 NOTE 3: The numbers shown on the risk map relate to those on the next page in the first column, not the Strategic Risk (SR) numbers.

Strategic Risk Register, report created 09.05.24

Red text used to highlight changes since previous report

Risk No.	Risk	Risk Description	Residual Risk Score (impact x likelihood)	Risk Category	Existing Control Measure	Existing Control Measure Description	Target Risk Level (impact x likelihood)	Action Plan Title	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Owners	Action Plan Due Date	Review Date	Review Comment
1	SR01 Central Government funding is insufficient to provide the current level of service leaving the council unable to deliver the financial resilience initiative and achieve financial stability.	Central Government funding and/or revenues collected are insufficient to provide the current level of service leaving the council unable to deliver the financial resilience initiative and achieve financial stability. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.1 Value for Money	4 (2x2)	Financial	Officer/Member Working Groups	Capital Assurance Group (CAG) and Financial Resilience Group (FRG)	2 (2x1)	Outcomes Based Resourcing	Review of existing budgets to identify areas for realignment/ refocusing or cessation to deliver efficiencies but ensuring that Services remain aligned with the Councils Priorities.	Mark Davies	30/12/2024	26/02/2024	OBR action plan owner changed to Mark Davies
					Council Strategies	Outcome Based Resourcing (OBR), Investment Strategy, Reserves Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy		Funding the Future Strategy	The Strategy contains 4 Pillars to achieve Financial Stability. 1) Investment to reduce costs; 2) Pursuing efficiencies with vigour; 3) Outcomes based resourcing; and 4) Commercialisation	Paul Thompson	31/03/2024		
					Monthly income monitoring by applicable services	Monthly income monitoring by applicable services		Business Plans for Investments	Develop business plans for investment particularly in relation to decarbonisation and renewable energy generation.	Paul Thompson	31/03/2024		
					Quarterly reporting	Formal quarterly reporting to Cabinet and Budget and Performance Panel		Fees and Charges Income Monitoring	Regular monitoring and forecasting by services of all fees and charges. To be undertaken by Heads of Service and Managers.	Paul Thompson	31/03/2024		
					Commercialisation	Development of other alternative service delivery vehicles to deliver efficiencies and/ or operational surpluses which can be reinvested into Council Services.							
2	SR02 The Council fails to meet the 2024/25 funding gap as a result of ineffective delivery of the efficiency programme and failure to deliver on key projects.	The Council fails to meet the 2024/25 funding gap as a result of ineffective delivery of the efficiency programme and failure to deliver on key projects. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.1 Value for Money	6 (3x2)	Financial	Budget and Performance Panel	Budget and Performance Panel	2 (2x1)	Outcomes Based Resourcing	Outcomes-Based Resourcing (OBR) approach focusing on where resources can have maximum impact on strategic priority areas.	Mark Davies	31/12/2024	26/02/2024	OBR action plan owner changed to Mark Davies
					Reserves Policy	Reserves Policy							
					Project Managers	Project Managers - suitably skilled PMs assigned to lead strategic projects					NOTE: This is also listed as a control measure as the programme is phased so has already delivered some savings with further outcomes and savings to follow.		
					Programme Managers	Programme Managers in place for specific programmes							
					Programme Delivery Board	Programme Delivery Board							
					Cabinet	Cabinet							
					Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder							
					Outcomes Based Resourcing for 23/24 financial year	Outcomes Based Resourcing for 23/24 financial year							
					Project Delivery Board	Project Delivery Board - Consisting of Leadership Team to monitor delivery via quarterly reports and provide support and challenge to each project as required.							
					Projects and Performance Manager	Established to provide a central co-ordination point for all the Council's projects and performance. Responsible for co-ordination and monitoring.							
Delivering Our Priorities Quarterly Monitoring Reports	Delivering Our Priorities Quarterly Monitoring Reports - Monitoring report linking Projects, Performance and Resources presented to Cabinet and Budget & Performance Panel.												

				Quarterly Cabinet Meetings	Quarterly Cabinet Meetings - Project and Financial information present to Cabinet/ Portfolio providing an opportunity for review and discussion of performance.								
				Outcomes Based Resourcing	Outcomes-Based Resourcing (OBR) approach focusing on where resources can have maximum impact on strategic priority areas.								
3	SR03 The Council fails to recruit and retain competent / key staff resulting in ineffective leadership, increased costs and failure to deliver	The Council fails to recruit and retain competent / key staff resulting in ineffective leadership, increased costs and failure to deliver effective services, projects and council priorities. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.3 Investing in Our Skills and Facilities	6 (3x2)	People	New 3-year People Plan (2023-2026) with key deliverables to mitigate this risk	New 3-year People Plan (2023-2026) with key deliverables to mitigate this risk	6 (3x2)					22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.
				Annual Appraisal Process	Annual Appraisal Process embedded								
				Pay and Grading Structure	Pay and Grading Structure - The new pay and grading structure and job evaluation process ensures that all posts are objectively evaluated and then placed on a new pay and grading scale. Recent experience suggests that this assisted in attracting applicants with the desired skills and values.								
4	SR04 The use of council assets is not maximised leading to insufficient funding to meet the capital projects.	Future capital investment is dependent on capital receipts from the sale and utilisation of council assets. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.5 Innovative Public Service	9 (3x3)	Property Financial	Use of Council Assets	Capital Strategy Group	6 (3x2)	Council Assets	To progress with disposals of council assets as outlined through 22/23 OBR process.	Joanne Wilkinson	28/06/2024	19/04/2024	Lots of positive background work to put us in a positive position moving forward. Stock condition surveys are well underway to present real information to assist in building condition and future decision making. Gateway report by JLL returned with a paper on the future scheduled for June Cabinet. Asset disposals are being brought forward on an adhoc basis when reasonable offers are being made. The Asset OBR group is meeting regularly. An Officer led energy group has been established which reports into the Assets group.
				Use of Council Assets	Ongoing OBR workstream reviewing assets			Council Assets	Updated Asset Management Plan to be developed to incorporate property performance.	Paul Mackie Joanne Wilkinson Dan Wood	31/10/2024		
				Use of Council Assets	Performance monitoring of leases implemented								
				Use of Council Assets	Budget Monitoring								
				Use of Council assets	Implemented active asset management inc. financial modelling for stock rationalisation.								
				Use of Council assets	Appointed Eckersleys to support the council in asset disposal.								
				Use of Council Assets	Stock Condition Surveys for property group underway.			Council Assets	Climate Strategy for Housing and Property to be developed	Paul Mackie Joanne Wilkinson	28/06/2024		
				Use of Council Assets	Asset Management Strategy in place,								
				Use of Council Assets	Officer energy fit for the future group established - reporting into main Assets group								
5	SR05 Council services are disrupted and / or additional services are required and costs are incurred as a result of local and national emergencies	Council services are disrupted and / or additional services are required and costs are incurred as a result of local and national emergencies.	6 (3x2)	Financial	Resourcing the emergency response function	The Council continues to adequately resource its emergency planning function, including maintaining its team of out of appropriately trained emergency response officers.	6 (3x2)	Financial Planning	Adequate non earmarked reserves are maintained to allow for the impact of long term emergencies like the pandemic.	Paul Thompson	31/03/2024	09/02/2024	Strategic Risk report discussed at Leadership Team on 06/02/24.
				District emergency	Lancaster District Emergency Plan and LRF (Lancashire Resilience			Community Resilience	The Council supports community resilience through CEPGs and FLAG groups etc	Alex Kinch	31/03/2024		

				Forum) plans that cover site or incident specific risks, including for example: an incident at Heysham Power Station, or a flooding/weather event.		Adaptation Schemes	The Council appraises and potentially invests in schemes and activities that provide adaptation (eg Lune river defence)	Paul Blakeley Jonathan Noad	31/03/2024					
				Business Continuity Plans	Business Continuity Plans									
				National Emergency (such as a pandemic)	LRF plans.									
				Financial Planning	Financial Planning - Adequate non earmarked reserves are maintained to allow for the impact of long term emergencies like the pandemic.									
				Business Resilience	Business Resilience - The Council continues to invest in resilience measures eg technology to facilitate remote working.									
				Partnerships	Partnerships - The Council continues to allocate resource to developing its key partnerships LRF, CSP (Community Safety Partnership) and local resilience partners.									
				County wide emergency (such as widespread loss of power and extreme weather events)	The LERP (Lancashire Emergency Response Plan) and plans as required from box 2 and box 3 plans, held in resilience direct.									
6	SR06 The Council fails to reduce its direct Co2 emissions to 'net zero' by 2030.	In January 2019 the Council declared a 'climate change emergency' and have now sought endorsement of an approach to reduce the Council's direct Co2 emissions to 'net zero' by 2030. Whilst an action plan is in place, costs associated with implementing the actions are considerable and are constantly under review. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 1.1 Carbon Zero	12 (4x3)	Financial	Delivery plan in place	Delivery plan in place	8 (4x2)	(i) Local Area Energy Plan and (ii) Council Action Plan (now Climate and Nature Framework)	The Council continues to work on the delivery of its action plan. More details can be found on our website: https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/sites/climate-emergency/new-and-updates	Mark Davies	31/08/2024	29/04/2024	The Council has been successful for Public Sector Decarbonisation funding (Salix) to decarbonise 3 more council buildings - Williamson Park, CityLab and The Storey. Meanwhile its planning application for a solar farm at Burrow Beck awaits a decision. Additionally the LAEP will outturn in Summer 2024. Whilst this will identify the most cost effective pathways for the entire district to reach net zero (i.e. not just council activities), it will have synergies with the Council's own net zero ambitions. Finally, since the last review UKSPF has been secured which will enable the provision of an overarching Climate and Nature Framework.	
					Peoples Jury	Peoples Jury - The Council considers the recommendations of the Peoples Jury and builds recs that can be delivered directly by the Council into its plans								
						Local area energy plan	Local area energy plan (LAEP) has proceeded through procurement (Energy Systems Catapult, June 2023). This document will provide a high-level, costed roadmap to net zero for the district. The LAEP is a 12-month project that will involve Member, stakeholder and public engagement.	Mark Cassidy	30/06/2024					

13/03/2024 The Council continues to make good progress regarding net zero pathways. The Local Area Energy Plan will outturn in Summer, which will identify the most cost-effective pathway for the district to reach net zero. Meanwhile the council's own efforts to ensure that its own activities are net zero are by 2030 are progressing well. The recent news that the Council was successful again in the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund (March 2024) allows the council to implement the next phase of building decarbonisation works.

7	SR07 The Council fails to deliver its key priorities due to the lack of an underpinning strategy setting out expected delivery / outcomes.	On the 29 January 2019, Full Council approved the Council's strategic priorities for the purpose of informing budget decisions for 2020-21 and future years. Link to Council Plan 24-27: Whole document.	6 (3x2)	Strategy	Carbon Zero +	More details can be found on our website: https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/sites/cclimate-emergency/new-and-updates	4 (2x2)	Local Development Plan	Local Development Plan	Mark Davies	30/09/2024	26/02/2024	Suzanne Lodge removed from being risk owner
					Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	MTFS - in place to set out how the council proposes to manage its financial resources in line with corporate priorities.							
					Programme Management	Programme Management - in place to ensure strategy is followed and monitored on a regular basis.							
					Corporate Plan / Plan 2030	Corporate Plan / Plan 2030 - Updated in December 2021 to lay out the councils vision.							
8	SR08 The Council fails to deliver its key projects due to the lack of capacity and resources.	The Council has a number of key projects (Canal Quarter, Eden Project Morecambe, OBR, My Mainway, Heysham Gateway, Frontierland etc) all of which have detailed strategies for implementation. In order to deliver these key projects it is essential they are properly prioritised and resourced. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.5 Innovative Public Services	6 (3x2)	People Financial	Local Plan	Local Plan	3 (3x1)	Local Plan	Local Plan	Mark Davies	31/03/2024	06/02/2024	Staffing Capacity Action closed and replaced with People Plan action.
					Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)		Funding the Future Strategy	Funding the Future Strategy	Mark Davies	31/03/2024		
					Investment Strategy	Investment Strategy		Reserves	Adequate reserves are maintained to allow, due diligence of property investment, regeneration projects and key strategic planning strategies.	Mark Davies Paul Thompson	31/03/2024		
					Capital Programme	Capital Programme		Capital Programme	Ensure capital programme is prioritised to facilitate match funding leverage and maximise the potential to attract external funding.	Mark Davies Paul Thompson	31/03/2024		
					The Council continues to resource key service teams in Planning, economic development, regeneration, property investment	The Council continues to resource key service teams in Planning, economic development, regeneration, property investment and facilities management.		People Plan	3-Year People Plan in place and being delivered, which includes emphasis on upskilling and staff development, as well as initiative to support recruitment and retention.	Alex Kinch	31/03/2026		
					Collaborative Working	We work in collaboration with other stakeholders. For example, on the Eden Project we are working closely with the County Council.							
					Partnership Working	Many of our projects involve working in collaboration with other partners. For example, working with the County Council for the Eden Project Morecambe.							
10	SR10 Changes in Government policy impact on our ability to deliver major projects and programmes that would benefit our	SR10 Changes in Government policy impact on our ability to deliver major projects and programmes that would benefit our	6 (3x2)	Strategy	Continued monitoring and horizon scanning of Government policy	Continued monitoring and horizon scanning of Government policy	6 (3x2)				22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council	

	major projects and programmes that would benefit our communities.	programmes that would benefit our communities. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.1 Value for money			Clear and focused Council strategy to maximise alignment with Government policy and resourcing	Clear and focused Council strategy to maximise alignment with Government policy and resourcing							links to the new Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.
					Strategic Plans	Strategic Plans - Continue to develop Council strategic plans and documentation in light of emerging Government policy							
11	SR11 International and national issues rapidly impact on the strategic and financial context of the Council and / or partners, businesses and communities.	SR11 International and national issues rapidly impact on the strategic and financial context of the Council and / or partners, businesses and communities. This risk is outside of the control of the Council. It can not be fully mitigated against but should still be recorded on the strategic risk register.	9 (3x3)	Strategy Financial	Retention of in-house expertise to provide agility and resilience in rapidly-emerging issues	Retention of in-house expertise to provide agility and resilience in rapidly-emerging issues	9 (3x3)					09/02/2024	Strategic Risk report discussed at Leadership Team on 06/02/24.
					Strategic responsiveness through continued risk management review	Strategic responsiveness through continued risk management review							
					Agility and Resilience	Agility and Resilience - Continue to develop agility and resilience across the organisation							
					Strategic risk management approach	Strategic risk management approach							
12	SR12 Budgetary proposals are brought forward / agreed that are then challenged, causing delays or changes to implementation.	SR12 Budgetary proposals are brought forward / agreed that are then challenged, causing delays or changes to implementation. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.5 Innovative Public Service	6 (3x2)	Strategy Financial	Budget Development	Comprehensive, robust and transparent approach to budget development and service delivery.	4 (2x2)	OBR	Outcomes-Based Resourcing (OBR) approach to focusing on where resources can have maximum impact on strategic priority areas.	Mark Davies	31/12/2024	26/02/2024	OBR action plan owner changed to Mark Davies
13	SR13 The Council's reputation is damaged through its own actions or actions of others in the District	SR13 The Council's reputation is damaged through its own actions or actions of others in the District. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 3.4 Community Engagement	3 (3x1)	Strategy People	Communications	Pro-active communications and transparency	3 (3x1)					22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.
					Strategic Management of Activities	Strategic management of all Council activities to ensure continued high reputation							
					Delivery of Services	Delivery of Services - Continue to manage and deliver services in a way that supports the authority's reputation as a Co-operative, Kind and Responsible Council.							
					Strategic communication	Strategically communicate and engage with residents, partners and stakeholders to ensure actions align with reputation							
14	SR14 Major, sudden unforeseen expenditure or income reduction arises, necessitating significant change or reduction to services.	SR14 Major, sudden unforeseen expenditure or income reduction arises, necessitating significant change or reduction to services. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.1 Value for money	6 (3x2)	Operations Financial	Budget and Performance Panel	Budget and Performance Panel	6 (3x2)	Move to sustainable solutions	Minimise exposure to cost spikes such as energy by moving to sustainable solutions independent of external pressures	Mark Davies Paul Thompson	31/12/2024	22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.
					Reserves Policy	Reserves Policy							
					Continue financial forecasting	Continue financial forecasting and scenario planning e.g. for energy costs							
15	SR15 The Council's infrastructure fails to meet the future needs of the organisation and the residents of the district.	SR15 The Council's infrastructure fails to meet the future needs of the organisation and the residents of the district. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.5 Innovative Public Services; 4.1 Value for money	4 (2x2)	Strategy	Asset Management Plan	Asset Management Plan	2 (1x2)	Asset Management Plan	Conduct a major review of Council infrastructure and assets, taking a future focused approach to asset management.	Mark Davies	27/09/2024	22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.
					Continuous review of assets and infrastructure	Continuous review of assets and infrastructure							
16	SR16 The Council's services fail to adapt to socioeconomic and demographic trends within the district, resulting in failure to meet the needs of local residents and businesses.	SR16 The Council's services fail to adapt to socioeconomic and demographic trends within the district, resulting in failure to meet the needs of local residents and businesses.	6 (2x3)	Strategy	Corporate Plan	Corporate Plan	3 (1x3)					22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.
					Policy Framework	Policy Framework							
					Continuous review of strategy and policy	Continuous review of strategy and policy, and alignment with service delivery.							

	the needs of local residents and businesses.	Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.5 Innovative Public Services		LGA Workshop with Members	These took place in September 2023.								
17	SR17 Negligent or unlawful action by the Council, resulting in financial or other liabilities.	SR17 Negligent or unlawful action by the Council, resulting in financial or other liabilities. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.6 Openness	6 (2x3)	Legal	Corporate Governance	Corporate Governance	6 (2x3)	Training and development	Training and development to ensure staff and members are equipped to follow governance requirements	Luke Gorst	31/03/2024	09/02/2024	Strategic Risk report discussed at Leadership Team on 06/02/24.
					Continuous review of governance processes	Continuous review of governance processes to ensure they are fit for purpose							
					Annual Governance Statement and Code of Corporate Governance	The Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015), as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, require the Council to conduct a review, at least once a year, on the effectiveness of its system of internal control and include an Annual Governance Statement reporting on the review with the Statement of Accounts. The Council has recently reviewed and adopted an amended Code of Corporate Governance (dated April 2022). The Preparation and publication of this Annual Governance Statement is in accordance with the principles set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016) (The Framework).							
18	SR19 Failure of the Canal Quarter programme to deliver regeneration through use of the Council's assets in the area.	SR19 Failure of the Canal Quarter programme to deliver regeneration through use of the Council's assets in the area. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 2.4 Investment and Regeneration	4 (2x2)	Project / Programme	Programme Management	Programme Management	2 (1x2)	Development of a Canal Quarter Masterplan	Development of a Canal Quarter Masterplan that sets out a route to successful regeneration of the area in line with local needs and the Council's priorities	Jonathan Noad	31/03/2024	22/12/2023	Risks which contained a link to "Plan 2030" have now been updated to show links to the new "Council Plan 24-27" which replaces Plan 2030.
19	SR20 Non compliance with Building Safety Executive for LCC owned high-rise buildings	LCC has three high rise buildings which now fall under the Building Safety Act 2022, and require registration with the Building Safety Executive (BSE). There are numerous risks around non-compliance. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 3.1 Access to Quality Housing	6 (3x2)	Property Financial	Registration with BSE for high rise blocks	Fortnightly senior housing management meetings updating on risks and plans around building safety review.	2 (2x1)	Registration with BSE for high rise blocks	Tenant engagement strategy for building safety to be approved.	Paul Mackie Joanne Wilkinson	28/06/2024	20/04/2024	Case files for the 3 x high rise blocks have been pulled together - now waiting for call in. Resident engagement strategy for building safety developed - requires sign-off. Cabinet approved closing down Bridge House - team will now work to enact this which reduces the councils risk somewhat. Awaiting for the BLRF application outcome on options for demolition Bridge House.
					Registration with BSE for high rise blocks	Fire safety works being completed.							
					Registration with BSE for high rise blocks	Fire door audits being undertaken							
					Registration with BSE for high rise blocks	Monthly Compliance Steering Group comprising staff from across the Housing Service meet to discuss issues and tasks that are needed.							
					Registration with BSE for high rise blocks	Tenants Voice group established							
					Registration with BSE for high rise blocks	Registration of blocks with BSE complete							
					Registration with BSE for high rise blocks	On-going and regular campaigns on fire safety undertaken with residents.							
					Registration with BSE for high rise blocks	Cabinet (Feb 24) approved decommissioning Bridge House - Housing team now progressing decision.							
					Registration with BSE of high rise blocks	Building Safety Case files prepared ready for call in.							

20	SR21 Non compliance with Regulator of Social Housing Standards	The Social Housing White Paper and subsequent amendments through to the introduction of the Social Housing Regulation Act have highlighted a significant shift in requirements for social housing providers. This will be the biggest shift in a generation, with changes to standards and expectations. Failure to keep up with changes could result in unlimited fines / DLUHC, Regulator or Ombudsman intervention / bad publicity. However clearly the Regulator has laid out that it is unlikely that Councils will meet the required new standards fully and expect to work with landlords to improve performance against new requirements. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 3.1 Access to Quality Housing	6 (3x2)	Property Financial	Social Housing Regulation	Attendance at benchmarking groups with the Regulator / Ombudsman to stay abreast of updates / developments / best practice / learning	2 (2x1)	Social Housing Regulation	Self-assess against new regulatory standards which have been released and action plan.	Pete Linsley Joanne Wilkinson	28/06/2024	19/04/2024	Reviewed current position. New Regulatory standards have now been published and the Council Housing Team are working through these and updating our self-assessment document. This will help identify current position and any gaps. Regulator has made it very clear that particularly council landlords are unlikely to reach the required standard and expectations of this across the sector are understood.
					Social Housing Regulation	Action planning within the service occurs in preparation for changes							
					Social Housing Regulation	Quarterly reports available for portfolio holder outlining changes in the previous quarter produced.							
					Social Housing Regulation	Service Improvement Plan well established							
					Social Housing Regulation	Annual self assessment undertaken against current standards							
					Social Housing Regulation	Member advisory group for continued / wider input into the housing service established.							
					Social Housing Regulation	Various external audits utilised e.g. TPAS, Resolve, Pennington Choices							
					Social Housing Regulation	Breaches Policy in place							
22	SR23 Procurement of Health and Safety Consultations and recruitment to new role	H&S Consultations engaged since September '23, audit completed and action plan being implemented. Recruitment to new post of Senior Corporate H&S Manager in Q4. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.3 Investing in Our Skills and Facilities	9 (3x3)	Legal	Health and Safety Checklist for New Starters	Health and Safety Checklist for New Starters	4 (2x2)	Procurement of Health and Safety Consultants	H&S consultants being procured to assess as is and implement changes to address shortfalls and support create of culture of collective ownership of Health and Safety.	Alex Kinch	29/02/2024	06/02/2024	Risk title and description amended at the request of the risk owner.
					Intranet guidance	Intranet guidance							
					Health and Safety Policy	Health and Safety Policy							
					Risk assessments	Risk assessments							
					H&S Training Courses	H&S Training Courses							
					DSE assessments	DSE assessments							
					H&S Committee established	Health and Safety Committee set up. First meeting took place in October 2023, the next meeting is due in December 2023.							
23	SR24 ICT Data Centre	Data Centre is dated and improvements needed to satisfy future demand. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.3 Investing in Our Skills and Facilities	6 (3x2)	Technology	Air conditioning in place to keep the data centre at optimal temperature		2 (2x1)	Full Fibre Project		Nick Goulden	28/06/2024	10/11/2023	Reviewed by individual Chief Officers and discussed at Leadership Team on 7/11/23
					Back up Date Centre at SALC								
					Regular fire safety servicing carried out								
					Water ingress alerts	To alert all ICT senior managers to any water detected in data centre							
24	SR25 LCC Property Portfolio (non housing) does not meet its Health and Safety compliance obligations	The Council fails to effectively manage Property portfolio health and safety / compliance and meet statutory requirements. Risk is not managed and steps are not taken to protect workers and others from harm. A structure is not in place to ensure that compliance is prioritised and a proactive culture does not exist. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 4.3	6 (3x2)	Property Financial	Property Group Compliance	Regular reports shared with SLT highlighting current position.	1 (1x1)	Property Group compliance	New Asset Management Strategy to be developed	Paul Mackie Joanne Wilkinson Dan Wood	31/10/2024	20/04/2024	Positive progress being seen in condition surveys being completed, team understanding position better. Team well on way to evidence compliance position - this is reported to Leadership Team, OBR Assets Group and portfolio holders.
					Property Group Compliance	Dedicated Team established - combining expertise from Council Housing Compliance Team to monitor and address compliance within the service.							
					Property Group Compliance	Team employs sector expert to support overall approach to health and safety and compliance.							
					Property Group	Established accurate data							

Investing in Our Skills and Facilities

				Property Group compliance	Established accurate data recording and position statement through individual workbooks for assets.								
				Property Group Compliance	Full Stock Condition Survey authorised and being completed.								
				Property Group compliance	Budget secured within General Fund for compliance / asset management work.								
				Property Group compliance	OBR - Assets group established								
25	SR26 - Increasing costs of temporary accommodation for the homeless	In 23-24 we are forecasting the Council will be required to contribute an additional £500k towards the cost of B+B accommodation for homeless residents. This is expected to continue into 24-25. Increase in costs is linked to increasing homelessness, reduced subsidy recovery from HB and reduced grant availability. Costs of accommodation also increasing and increase in larger families needing to be accommodated for longer. The subsidy can be met from within budgets this year (23-24), however this will need to be factored into future budgets moving forward. Funding temporary accommodation for those who need it is a stat requirement. Link to Council Plan 24-27: 3.1 Access to Quality Housing	6 (2x3)	Financial	Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	Budget reviews ongoing with service accountant.	2 (1x2)	Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	Letter to registered provider chief execs to be sent reminding of responsibility around consumer regulation and responsibilities to supporting local authorities around homelessness.	Joanne Wilkinson	28/06/2024	20/04/2024	Limited change since last review. Costs of B+B continue to be monitored however process requires further work. Planning permission for CAB building providing 4 x additional units achieved at the end of the last quarter. Work will be ongoing now to progress with a tender to fully understand costings. Housing Taskforce meeting regularly to review options about how the private rented sector can support reduction of B+B provision.
				Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	Some access to grant funding to off-set costs (although limited and unpredictable).		Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	To work with finance to develop weekly spend sheets monitoring spend on accommodation	Sharon Parkinson		28/06/2024		
				Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	Bed and breakfast plan developed for DLUHC		Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	To review costs of accommodation with each provider to ensure reaching VFM	Sharon Parkinson		28/06/2024		
				Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	Regular case work management in team of cases in bed and breakfast								
				Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	All B+B placements passed by manager for approval								
				Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	New Homelessness Strategy approved by Cabinet Oct 2024								
				Increasing homeless temporary accommodation costs	Housing Taskforce established - clear focus on how the private rented sector can support reduction in B+B usage.								
26	SR27 - Waste Strategy	Increased revenue cost burden to the authority and failure to deliver in line with milestones set out by government (31st March 2026). Link to Council Plan 24-27: 1.5 Reduced Waste		Strategy Financial								09/02/2024	Strategic Risk report discussed at Leadership Team on 06/02/24.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

CABINET

**Projects and Performance: Q4 2023-24
04 June 2024**

Report of Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To provide members with an update on performance and projects during quarter four of 2023 - 24 (January - March 2024).				
Key Decision	N	Non-Key Decision		Referral from Cabinet Member
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	N/A			
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR HAMILTON-COX

That Cabinet

- (1) Consider the update on performance and projects for Quarter 4 2023/24.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The primary purpose of this report is to present information relating to the council's strategic projects and key performance indicators for the period January – March 2024, which can be found within the appendices.

2.0 PERFORMANCE REPORTING





- 2.1 The highlight report at Appendix A provides a broadly consistent set of information across Q4 2022-23 and Q1 – Q4 2023-24.
- 2.2 The direction of travel indicators are included against each performance measure to show if the KPI has improved, is broadly the same or has worsened. The typical definition of 'broadly the same' is within 3% variation on the comparative quarter. Most indicators compare to the previous quarter, those marked with an asterisk compare to the like quarter from the previous year.
- 2.3 As the report is for Q4, some annual indicators are included.
- 2.4 The direction of travel indicators shows that seven KPIs have improved, eight are broadly the same and four have worsened. The comments in the appendix provide explanation on the direction of travel.

3.0 PROJECT REPORTING




- 3.1 The highlight report at Appendix B shows a short narrative and Red – Amber – Green status updates for three elements of the project, these being Plan, Cost and Scope.

- 3.2 Of the 14 projects where full update reports have been received, five are reporting ‘amber’ (minor) delays with their project plans (progress) and four have reported ‘amber’ (minor) deviations in the cost of the project with one project reporting ‘red’ (major) deviations to the cost of the project. One project has reported ‘amber’ (minor) concerns with the scope, meaning it is anticipated that one or more benefits may not be realised.
- 3.3 The highlight report shows the majority of the council’s Strategic Projects are progressing as planned at the end of Quarter 4 2023-24, some with minor delays.
- 3.4 No projects have completed or closed during this quarter.
- 3.5 One additional project “White Lund Depot” has been added to the report.






<p>RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK</p> <p>Monitoring of strategic projects and key performance indicators provides a link between the Council Plan 24-27 by providing progress updates.</p>	
<p>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</p> <p>None directly identifiable, due to the high-level nature of this report.</p>	
<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>There are no legal implications directly arising.</p>	
<p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>There are no financial implications directly arising.</p>	
<p>OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>Human Resources / Information Services / Property / Open Spaces:</p> <p>There are no further implications directly arising.</p>	
<p>SECTION 151 OFFICER’S COMMENTS</p> <p>The Section 151 officer has been consulted and has no further comments</p>	
<p>MONITORING OFFICER’S COMMENTS</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments</p>	
<p>BACKGROUND PAPERS</p> <p>None.</p>	<p>Contact Officers: Claire Dubelbeis, Projects and Performance Manager Telephone: 01524 582505 E-mail: cdubelbeis@lancaster.gov.uk Ref:</p>

 LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL <i>Promoting City, Coast & Countryside</i>	Corporate Performance updates – 31st March 2024 (Q4)	Status key – Performance (compared to previous reporting period)		
		 The KPI has improved	 The KPI is broadly the same	 The KPI has worsened
The measures marked with a * compare to like quarters of the previous year, and not the previous quarter.				
Priorities Key				
I	An Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy (Economy)	H	Healthy and Happy Communities (Social)	
S	A Sustainable District (Environmental)	R	A Co-operative, Kind and Responsible Council (Governance)	

An Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy (Economy)

Priority	Measure	2022-23	2023-24				Comments and direction of travel
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
I	% of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks or agreed time (National Target 70%)	91.61	88.57	87.14	89.79	82.22	Performance for the quarter is lower than previous quarters but is still higher than the government target. What we have found in the last quarter is that we have determined more applications than we typically would. We would expect for future quarters this to improve. 
I	% of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks or agreed time (National Target 70%)	88.40	95.55	93.27	90.90	87.50	There has been a greater proportion of refused applications this quarter which has pushed this figure down ever so slightly. When we work proactively to try and overcome a reason for refusal, and this takes us over the prescribed 8 weeks, if we still cannot support a proposal it can mean gaining the agreement of time can be more problematic. 
I	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks or agreed time (National Target 60%)	100	100	87.50	100	90.90	Performance is consistent with previous months and includes the determination of a new holiday village in south Lancaster with 100,000 square feet of commercial floorspace and 450 holiday lodges. 

A Sustainable District (Environmental)

Priority	Measure	2022-23	2023-24				Comments and direction of travel
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
S	% of household waste recycled (quarter behind)	38.3	34.7	39.1	39.2	To follow	
S	Kg of residual waste per household (quarter behind)	94.3	84.9	90.8	90.5	To follow	
S	Diesel consumption of council vehicle fleet (ltrs)	113,298	114,907	117,060	116,318	112,381	There is a slight decrease from last quarter, but the figure is broadly the same. 
S	Cost/m2 (£) energy across corporate buildings (quarter behind)*	£12.69	£12.94	£9.16	£9.52	-	Information not currently available due to concerns regarding accuracy and availability of the data with the supplier. This information will be added as soon as feasible.
S	Gas KWH usage in council buildings (quarter behind)*	777,515	824,978	223,109	98,752	663,234	Figures show a reduction in consumption against the same period in the previous year. Further analysis would be required to determine to the cause(s) for this reduction although it is noted that the previous year will have included Palatine Hall which is no longer within the council's operational control. 
S	Electricity KWH usage in council buildings (quarter behind)*	1,000,721	1,188,505	601,585	643,048	-	Information not currently available due to concerns regarding accuracy and availability of the data with the supplier. This information will be added as soon as feasible.
S	Number of parks and cemeteries achieving the Green Flag award (Annual Measure)	<u>2022-23</u> 5	<u>2023-24</u> 5				The KPI has remained the same in comparison to the previous year. 
S	Number of volunteer groups supporting parks and open spaces (Annual Measure)	<u>2022-23</u> 30	<u>2023-24</u> 35				The KPI has improved in comparison to the previous year. 
S	Exposure to air pollution away from roads (nitrogen dioxide per cubic metre) (Annual Measure)	<u>2022-23</u> 12.2	<u>2023-24</u> 9.2				These indicators continue to show improvement in air quality across the district, at both the roadside and away from roads (urban background). The exposure to pollution away from the road decreased by 3%, and exposure at the roadside decreased by 10% between 2022 and 2023. The general decline in nitrogen dioxide concentrations is in line with the national trend and is likely attributed to the use of less polluting vehicles (tighter emission standards) including electric vehicles. 
S	Exposure to pollution at roadside (nitrogen dioxide per cubic metre) (Annual Measure)	<u>2022-23</u> 26.2	<u>2023-24</u> 21.8				


					Road transport continues to be the major contributor for nitrogen dioxide concentrations both locally and nationally.	
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Healthy & Happy Communities (Social)

Priority	Measure	2022-23	2023-24				Comments and direction of travel	
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
H	Number of people statutorily homeless	-	2 [^]	7 [^]	17 [^]	18	Main duty rehousing decisions since the beginning of the year have steadily increased from single to double figures mainly due to the lack of options to prevent homelessness via the private rented sector due to higher rents less availability and a lack of properties available in our own housing stock and social housing generally across the board. This is national issue with a chronic shortage of affordable housing. <i>^ These figures have been amended from previous quarters due to checks within the system and reporting errors, current figures shown are correct.</i>	↓
H	Number of people recorded sleeping as rough (Annual Measure)	<u>2022-23</u> 4	<u>2023-24</u> 4				This is the figure for Quarter 4 as a snapshot monthly figure which we now have to provide on a monthly basis to central government as well as an annual snapshot figure.	→
H	Number of Disabled Facilities Grants completed	75	63	91	93	81	Referrals for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) are received from the County Council, Occupational Therapy (OT) service who have the duty to assess residents to determine their needs for adaptations. Throughout 2023/24 the number of referrals received reduced significantly as a result of the county council focusing on clearing backlogs in other districts. This lack of referrals resulted in a lower than forecasted level of grant approvals and subsequent completions in Q1. However, as a result of an extensive promotional campaign carried out by the Home Improvement Agency to raise awareness of grants and encourage direct referrals the number of completed grants for 2023/24 was 328 and inline with the forecasted number.	→
H	Number of properties improved	63	137	71	66	84	The number of complaints increased in quarter 4 which might be attributable to the cold, damp weather and high energy costs. Housing Standards and Housing Options are working on the Supported Housing Improvement Programme - targeting 60 properties. The team carried out works in default of the owner on two properties to resolve ongoing issues.	↑
I	% of premises scoring 4 or higher on the food hygiene rating scheme	91.1	93	92.5	92.7	92.9	98.7% scored 3 or higher (generally satisfactory)	→
H	Number of admissions to Salt Ayre Leisure Centre*	263,320	227,950	249,184	222,044	249,704	The admission figures are down compared to the previous Q4 data. However, the annual throughput for 2023/2024 has increased by 18,111 in comparison to 2022/2023.	↓
H	Average number of days taken to re-let Council houses (Internal KPI <28 days)	27.92	19.76	18.21	18.48	19.43	Effective management of empty properties, tied in with an efficient and timely allocation and lettings process, has continued to assist in the steady decrease in the Standard Relet time of Council Homes.	→

A Co-operative, Kind and Responsible Council (Governance)

Priority	Measure	2022-23	2023-24				Comments and direction of travel	
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
R	Average number of days' sickness per full-time equivalent (measure revised in Q1 23-24)	-	2.91	2.76	2.92	1.86	The reduction in the average figure may be due to a reduction seen in the number of long-term sickness cases since the previous quarter.	↑
R	% occupancy rates for commercial properties	98.53	98.18	97.38	97.39	97.33	The Occupancy rate remains more or less unchanged from last quarter. The occupation of our commercial properties continues to be at a high level overall.	→
H	Average time taken to process new Housing Benefit claims (days)	16.8	Revised Q1 figure 24.5 (prev 26.51)	26.8	17.54	11.01	The significant improvement is due to starting Quarter 4 in an up-to-date position and little leave taken in Quarter 4 as only 1 week of school holidays.	↑

 <p>LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL Promoting City, Coast & Countryside</p>	<p>Corporate programmes and projects updates – 31st March 2024 (Q4)</p>	<p>Status Key – Projects</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>R</td> <td>Red – The project has experienced some major issues. Plan – the go-live date has slipped, Cost – over or under budget by more than 20%, Scope – several of the expected benefits may not be realised.</td> <td>C</td> <td>Complete or Closed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>Amber – The project has experienced some issues. Plan – has slipped but won't affect go-live date, Cost – over or under budget by less than 20%, Scope – one or more benefits may not be realised.</td> <td>N</td> <td>Not Started</td> </tr> <tr> <td>G</td> <td>Green – The project is on track (within the project tolerance)</td> <td>H</td> <td>On hold</td> </tr> <tr> <td>X</td> <td>No data available / data not requested due to stage</td> <td colspan="2">* Projects in the Concept stage will not usually have updates</td> </tr> </table>			R	Red – The project has experienced some major issues. Plan – the go-live date has slipped, Cost – over or under budget by more than 20%, Scope – several of the expected benefits may not be realised.	C	Complete or Closed	A	Amber – The project has experienced some issues. Plan – has slipped but won't affect go-live date, Cost – over or under budget by less than 20%, Scope – one or more benefits may not be realised.	N	Not Started	G	Green – The project is on track (within the project tolerance)	H	On hold	X	No data available / data not requested due to stage	* Projects in the Concept stage will not usually have updates	
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An Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy (Economy)

Priority	Project Name	Update	Stage	Updated	Status		
					Plan	Cost	Scope
I	Heritage Action Project	Report to follow.	Delivery	-	X	X	X
I S	Canal Quarter Phase 3 (part of Canal Quarter programme)	Draft Lancaster Car Parking strategy approved by Cabinet 6 March and now out for public consultation – enabled release of Nelson Street site and is an important consideration for future release of Canal Quarter land. Appointment of preferred developer agreed for the Nelson Street Sustainable Housing development scheme for Exclusivity agreement moving towards formal developer agreement. Feasibility and site investigation work progressing on the Coopers Field (St Leonardsgate car park site) council led housing scheme. Development scheme for Heron / Works “Canalside” ongoing with developer Maple Grove. 1 Lodge Street refurbishment work progressing under Heritage Action Zone for Lancaster Musician’s Co-op. 113 St Leonardsgate refurbishment completed under Heritage Action Zone.	Delivery	23/04/24	G	G	G
I S	Our Future Coast	Jenny Brown’s Point design committee held and viable designs came forward. Newsletter for the progress made winter 23/24 sent out. Successful training for Habitats regulations assessments attended.	Delivery	17/04/24	G	G	G
I	Fair Work Charter	The charter has not created the traction expected by the launch to the Providers Networks. This is currently being reviewed and re-launched to the anchor network in May 24.	Delivery	08/04/24	A	G	G
I	1 Lodge Street Urgent Structural Repairs	Report to follow.	Delivery	-	X	X	X
I	Centenary House (formerly reported on as Morecambe Co-op Building Renovation)	Successfully hit the Brownfield Land Release Fund deadline for a contractual commitment for the funded works by 31 March 2024. Complex refurbishment is in both the delivery and detailed design stages. The implementation of the Pre-Construction Services Agreement should be a series of investigation and design services that sets the scope of the main works. This is complicated by the need to undertake an enabling works package to facilitate the survey and design work. This package includes asbestos removal, propping of a badly corroded section of the steel superstructure, removal of waste, a soft strip, fire safety improvements, access improvements and lighting.	Delivery	23/04/24	G	G	G
I	Frontierland	Community consultation completed and reported to the Project Board. Procurement route now selected by Project Board. Consultation results published. Development and procurement brief being produced. Commissioned specialist legal advice and support for the procurement process.	Delivery	23/04/24	G	G	G
I	Heysham Gateway	Consultants WSP have been finalising the masterplan for the site as well as outlining several delivery strategies based upon both city council and county council’s land interests and the viability of bringing a complex site forward to delivery stage. A consolidation of all the reports and work is being prepared in order to submit to Capital Assurance Group update as well as a review of the steps / progress made to date in relation to the potential submission of Pre-Planning application and next steps.	Detailed Design	23/04/24	G	G	G
I	Canal Quarter - Coopers Field	Some delays to programme seen, following feedback from Places Matter, subsequently reviewed design criteria and design frozen whilst team assess viability on different options. Approval granted to bring forward demolition of former Macari’s which commenced just before year end – this has supported capitalisation of appropriate funds from Brown Field Land Release Fund.	Detailed Design	26/04/24	A	A	G
I	Eden Project Morecambe	Grant Funding Agreements and MOUs are being worked through by DLUHC, City and Eden. Full Business Case was requested by DLUHC and to be submitted by end of Q1 (postscript submitted 19/04/24). Aim is to have all contracts in place by end of Q1 early Q2. 11 x workstreams now stood up focusing on wider outcomes.	Feasibility	23/04/24	X	X	X
I S	Lune Flood Protection, Caton Road	Moving to design and delivery with initial onsite surveys and investigations being undertaken. Updated project plan has been produced and gateways identified to enable outline design to be produced and ensure that project is still achievable with budget.	Feasibility	22/04/24	G	G	G
I	Williamson Park (Café and Play Development)	This project is currently on hold.	On hold	N/A	H	H	H

A Sustainable District (Environmental)

Priority	Project Name	Update	Stage	Updated	Status		
					Plan	Cost	Scope
S	Burrow Beck Solar Farm (part of Carbon Neutral Programme)	The business case is being reviewed by the council's financial consultants and the final report is expected imminently. A planning application for the project has been submitted and is live on the council's planning portal. Funding for the project has been allocated, but in the council's Development Pool. This means a capital provision has been made, but approval to deliver the project / allocate funds has not yet been obtained. Should finance be satisfied with the final report, the project will need to go to Capital Assurance Group (CAG). If CAG are happy with the project, approval to move funds from the Development Pool into the capital programme will need to be sought by Cabinet. Should cabinet approve the scheme & planning permission be obtained, the first phases of work would be to procure detailed designs and develop a Landscape and Biodiversity Uplift Management Plan in 24/25. Once completed, the second phase would be the procurement and appointment of an EPC contractor to deliver the project in 25/26 and work with the council to discharge any planning conditions.	Feasibility	25/03/24	X	X	X
	Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3c (part of Carbon Neutral Programme)	The Council has successfully been awarded £1.9million of external funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme phase 3c. Following this the project team have been preparing ITT documents for technical services for the first two work packages for the project, the tender is due to go out in April 2024.	Feasibility	23/04/24	X	X	X
S	Roof Mounted Solar Array – Gateway, White Lund (part of Carbon Neutral Programme)	This project is currently on hold.	On hold	N/A	H	H	H

Healthy & Happy Communities (Social)

Priority	Project Name	Update	Stage	Updated	Status		
					Plan	Cost	Scope
H R	Mellishaw Park (part of Homes Programme)	Progress continues, due to delays with Electricity North West resident return date now scheduled for w/c 7th June.	Delivery	26/04/24	A	A	G
S H	My Mainway (part of Homes Programme)	Progress continues. Work has been undertaken to finalise the planning application for the school site – this will be submitted by end of April. Demolition of school mostly completed throughout the quarter. Information for Link submitted to Treasury. Cabinet approved Bridge House being decanted. Costs have increased due to the requirement for continued external project management support and prolongation resulting from changing from a hybrid to a full planning application to achieve overall best value and the align with the LPAs recommendations.	Detailed Design	30/04/24	G	R	G
S H	Extra Care Scheme (part of Homes Programme)	This project is currently on hold.	On hold	N/A	H	H	H
H	LATCo - Housing Companies (part of Funding the Future)	Morehomes for the Bay incorporated and Business Plan approved. Options for schemes being considered but none currently in progress.	On hold	N/A	H	H	H

A Co-operative, Kind and Responsible Council (Governance)

Priority	Project Name	Update	Stage	Updated	Status		
					Plan	Cost	Scope
R	Outcomes Based Resourcing (OBR)	The projects which make up the Fit for the Future phase of the OBR project have been identified, partially scoped and prioritised. Members have been assigned to monitor groups of sub-projects. Some delays have been encountered due to staff capacity and conflicting priorities.	Delivery	19/04/24	A	G	A
I H R	UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)	The UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme is moving into the 3rd and final year after 2 successful years of delivery. The final cohort of projects will be confirmed in the 1st quarter of the financial year 24/25. All projects funded via UKSPF are delivering and reporting a diversity of outputs that will benefit the region and fulfil the council's investment plan for the programme. The Rural England Prosperity Fund is moving into the 2nd and final year for delivery. A new cohort of projects are scheduled in the financial year 24-25. All projects funded under REPF are delivering outcomes and the programme is being successfully managed and monitored.	Delivery	04/04/24	G	A	G
R	High-Capacity Fibre Cable Network Provision (part of Digital Programme)	We have identified the majority of routes now and we are putting in requests to Lancashire County Council to undertake works to facilitate the installation and repair of ducts. Sub-contractors are continuing to install the backbone infrastructure as we get approval to do the work from the County Council. We are continuing to experience delays working with the "Streetworks Department" part of the "Highway Regulation Team" at Lancashire County Council. We are working with them to try and reduce the delays in issuing permits and the associated time that needs to be built in (to the permit request) to allow for the time for the permits to be issued before the work can begin. Conversations are still ongoing with other local organisations to see where we can work together.	Detailed Design	23/04/24	G	G	G
S R	White Lund Depot	First report following decision in 2023 to approve funding for demolishing and reprovisioning office / welfare facilities at White Lund Depot as part of initial masterplan phase. Challenges have been encountered around small section of canteen sitting within the flood zone, therefore delays to planning application have resulted whilst alternative location considered, this will be resolved through Q1. Wernick have been appointed as primary contractor and are working positively with the team to progress plans.	Delivery	26/04/24	A	A	G

		R	5G Strategy (part of Digital Programme)	This project is currently on hold.	On hold	N/A	H	H	H
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