



Project Update Report

Purpose

The Project Update Report aims to provide an overview on progress made during the reporting period, provide the current status of the project, highlight any key issues and risks and give a summary of the actions that are planned for the next reporting period. It is used when the business case for the project is approved until the project is completed.

Three separate RAG statuses are assigned for the progress against plan, project costs and scope/benefits to assess if the project is on track. The definitions are as follows:

RAG scores	Progress against Plan	Cost / saving	Scope / Expected Benefits
Green	On track within tolerable levels as defined at the outset of the project	On track within tolerable levels as defined at the outset of the project	On track to fulfil full scope and expected benefits
Amber	Variance outside of the project tolerance which will not negatively affect the go-live date	Up to 20% over / under the projected cost / saving	One or more benefits may not be realised
Red	Variance outside of the project tolerance which will negatively affect the go-live date	More than 20% over / under the projected cost / saving	Several of the expected benefits may not be realised

Project Name:	Outcomes Based Resourcing / Fit for the Future
Project Overview: <i>A brief summary of the project and what it sets out to achieve</i>	<p>The council's Fit for the Future programme is an offshoot of OBR (Outcomes Based Resourcing). It will provide opportunity to change, improve, modernise and digitise our processes, feeding into the Ambitions of the Council Plan 2024-27.</p> <p>Following input from staff, Members and Trade Unions, a list of projects has been drawn up. There are 15 projects in phase 1. More detail can be found here: https://lancastercc.sharepoint.com/sites/FitfortheFuture</p>
Cabinet Portfolio:	Finance and Resources NB: If your project fits into multiple Portfolios, please list any additional portfolios below.
Project Sponsor:	Mark Davies
Project Lead:	Alex Kinch (report completed by Claire Dubelbeis)
Project Phase:	5. Delivery
Reporting Period:	Quarter 1 2025-2026
Date:	18 July 2025

Summary of progress

Insert one or two lines on the project progress this quarter. This information will be used on the highlight report which is publicly available as part of the Cabinet report agenda pack.

The majority of the phase 1 projects are still progressing and set to deliver the intended benefits. Several new phase 2 projects commenced in June, with others to follow in July and August. Benefits from the phase 2 projects are unlikely to be seen until the 26/27 financial year. The projects sit across all 7 Council services.

Additional Progress Information

A diagram showing the open phase 1 and phase 2 projects is shown below. Please note that some of the phase 2 projects are yet to commence, but will be started during quarter 2:

Fit for the Future Projects						
Environment and Place	Housing and Property	Planning and Climate Change	Sustainable Growth	Governance	Resources	People and Policy
Commencing in Phase 1 – June 24 to March 25						
Catering Review	Assets Review		Re-imagining the Museums	Licensing Digitalisation		HR Recruitment Digitalisation
Fleet Replacement Programme	Customer Services Digitalisation			Procurement Review		Support Services Review
Waste Management Projects (x4)						
Commencing in Phase 2 – April 25 – March 26						
Commercialisation / Income Generation		Digitalisation in Planning and Climate Change	Arts and Culture		AI to Improve Productivity	Community Engagement Review
SALC Review			Markets Review		ICT Systems Review	New Website
Williamson Park					Digital Inclusion	
Bulky Waste Review (see phase 1 waste projects)						
E & P Virtual Assistant						

Key
Commercialisation / Income Generation
Service Delivery
Digital
Service Efficiency

A brief overview of the objectives of the phase 2 projects is shown below. Further information can be found on the intranet pages, here: [FFTF Projects](#)

AI to Improve Productivity (Copilot)

- 150 user trial of Microsoft Copilot to support productivity improvements and service delivery
- Staff training/workshops to ensure the trial has the best chance at success and potential savings are realised
- Evergreen training to support trial users and any future rollout or trials
- Data security/governance training to ensure our data is secure and we are compliant with all UK data regulations
- Introduction of Copilot Chat to other staff to help provide smaller productivity benefits

Arts and Culture Review

The objectives of this project are to assess options for different delivery models and funding of the arts and cultural sector in the District.

Bulky Waste Review

This project is in the process of being scoped and links in with the waste strategy and other existing waste management projects (which are part of phase 1 FFTF).

Community Engagement Review

- Understand existing platforms and processes for engagement
- Establish a consistent and user-friendly approach to resident engagement
- Plan for strategic engagement that delivers Healthy Community outcomes
- Ensure our engagement is as user friendly as possible

Digital Inclusion

- Evaluate Licensing Options: Assess the options for Microsoft user licenses and their associated costs to understand the financial implications and ensure value for money.
- Promote Digital Inclusivity: Address organisational culture issues for employees currently without Active Directory accounts by providing all council employees equal access to the council network, intranet, learning zone, and key communication tools such as Teams.
- Ensure Legislative Compliance: Meet harassment legislative requirements by ensuring employees can raise concerns and access policies and procedures, thereby safeguarding the council from risks associated with future claims or tribunals.

Digitalisation in Planning and Climate Change

- To improve workload/case management across all Development Management (DM) functions, including Planning Applications, Building Control, Planning Enforcement, Planning Appeals and Pre-Application, thus making each of these disciplines more efficient
- Will provide a new and transparent systems approach to meeting performance targets, including national KPIs in terms of decision-making (speed and quality of decision). The new system will enable officers to highlight potential problems in advance, thus reducing errors (applications exceeding time limits which can cause application fee refunds)
- The Mobile Working apps would allow Officers to download cases including maps on phone, take notes, take photos and automatically uploads it to the system. This has the potential to halve current working practices which do involve some duplication (note taking on site then being transcribed electronically later) and allow officers to work more flexibly

- The time-savings arising from these additional modules will deliver internal process efficiencies that will enable Managers to offer a greater depth of customer service
- The improvements in data monitoring/recording would also have an ancillary, positive impact by providing more up-to-date records to assist with Local Plan policy analysis and production.

Env. and Place Virtual Assistant

With the growing adoption of AI technologies—particularly machine learning and virtual assistants—there is a strong opportunity for the authority to realise operational efficiencies. By reducing the volume of routine customer service interactions, this technology can lower resource demand while enhancing service accessibility. This project aims to implement an AI-powered virtual assistant that offers residents a faster, more intuitive way to access information and resolve queries related to environment and place-based services. The goal is to improve user experience, streamline service delivery, and support the authority's broader digital transformation objectives.

Income Generation

- To ensure financial sustainability by assessing and optimising income across key venues and events, ensuring growth and stability in both the short and medium term. To protect the current income streams and grow them where possible
- To safeguard and expand existing income streams by reviewing current operations at The Storey, Ashton Hall, and The Platform, identifying opportunities for enhancement and maximising revenue potential.
- To explore new revenue opportunities with minimal capital investment, focusing on innovative business models, partnerships, and strategies to increase profitability.
- To enhance marketing strategies for income-generating venues and events, ensuring greater visibility and engagement to drive bookings and footfall.
- To improve operational efficiencies across key venues, reducing costs and improving service delivery to maximise profitability and reduce operational barriers to growth.

ICT Systems Review

To fact find and create a repository of information on all the ICT systems we use across the Council so we can then seek to review these and consolidate systems where it makes sense to do so, saving money on a long term basis.

Markets Review

The objectives of this project are to assess options for different delivery models of the markets and to review how they can operate better on a more sustainable footing.

New Website

- Replace the current website Content Management System (CMS) with a modern, secure, and user-friendly platform
- Fully meet WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standards
- Improve content structure, navigation, and search functionality
- Enable integration with online services and third-party platforms

SALC Review

This project is in the process of being scoped

Williamson Park

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- To deliver financial stability in both the short and medium term strategy
- To protect the current income streams and grow them where possible
- Provide a plan to help contribute to the Council's net zero carbon policy
- To invest in our buildings and tourism offer in preparation for Eden North

Progress against plan

Overview of the project progress since the last report, including all project milestones which have been met and products which have been completed.

Hyperlink to plan:			
RAG Score	Green <input type="checkbox"/>	Amber <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Red <input type="checkbox"/>
Explanation if not green:	Several of the phase 1 projects are running slightly behind plan due to other service priorities. Many of the phase 2 projects are also slow to get started. It was hoped phase 2 would commence in April 2025 (at the start of the new financial year), but final decisions on which projects to include and take forward were not made until June 2025.		

Costs

Summary of spend to date, including explanation if not on track.

Forecast spend to date:	£Unknown – as this is logged and monitored at the service/ project level, rather than FFTF programme level		
Actual spend to date:	£ Unknown – as this is logged and monitored at the service/ project level, rather than FFTF programme level		
RAG Score	Green <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Amber <input type="checkbox"/>	Red <input type="checkbox"/>
Explanation if not green:	The benefits plans produced for each project will detail where cost savings should be expected.		

Scope

Is the project still on track to deliver its intended benefits?

RAG Score	Green <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Amber <input type="checkbox"/>	Red <input type="checkbox"/>
Explanation if not green:	Benefits review plans have been updated for phase 1 projects to show: Cashable savings, efficiency savings, improved satisfaction, compliance and reduction in carbon footprint. Benefits review plans, where not already supplied, will be produced for phase 2 projects during the next quarter.		

Key Issues and Risks

*Please include below a summary of the **key** issues and risks highlighted within this reporting period. Please also ensure that all risk updates have been logged in the Grace Risk Management System.*

Key Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many project benefits are not going to be achieved until the end of the financial year 25/26.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Some projects from phase 1 have been pushed back into phase 2 and therefore are unlikely to deliver benefits until 26/27.
Key Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There are 18 open risks identified for the Fit for the Future programme (including those belonging to the wider OBR work). All of these risks are scored as yellow (low risk) or amber (moderate risk). Individual projects, also maintain their own risk registers. To date, 19 additional risks have been identified across the open FFTF projects.

Next Reporting Period

Summary of expected progress, milestones and products to be achieved by the next reporting period.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Further work undertaken to deliver the 12 phase 1 projects, where the projects have not already completed.13 Phase 2 projects to be commenced and benefits review plans produced.Officer / Member groups to be refreshed to include phase 2 projects, membership of each group changing as required.Comms to be issued to staff and Members on the phase 2 projects
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