



Lancashire County Council Productivity Plan

July 2024



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

We measure productivity in terms of performance and how resources are deployed to achieve desired outcomes, using a range of indicators in our [Corporate Performance Report](#). We have made significant strides in improving service delivery with a focus on innovation, prevention, and integration to drive efficiencies and productivity. We have also developed new service and workforce dashboards to inform decision making and implemented an improved corporate finance and HR system.

Education and Children's Services

- We continue to see strong performance in reducing demand with continued reductions in the rates of new entrants in to care and rates below northwest and national averages.
- We are focused on expanding care facilities (two new support units opened recently with two more due in 2024), integrating existing services and specialist support, community outreach, and data-led decision making.
- Our new multi-agency Family Hubs provide a universal service where parents, carers, children, and young people can access early help and support. Their impact is measured through a new performance dashboard with footfall and formal attendance already seeing significant increases.
- We have also developed a traded offer for educational psychologists and specialist teaching services, implemented a digitised transport application system, and improved adoption and fostering support.
- We strengthened our Edge of Care Service providing support for children and young people at risk of becoming looked after and expanded our outreach service to 11 locality teams.

Adult Social Care

- Our flagship programme, *Living Better Lives in Lancashire*, is improving practice through promoting independence and strength-based care planning.
- A new Wellbeing and Early Support function helps avoid over-reliance on statutory services.
- We introduced new technology-enabled solutions offering 24-7 personalised online guides, real-time well-being assessments, location tracking, and emergency response.
- We re-commissioned our intermediate care offer around recovery, rehab and reablement and centralised care navigation and brokerage.
- We are reviewing residential provisions and achieved savings from a re-designed homecare provider framework.
- These interventions have improved admissions prevention and hospital discharge, saving labour costs and enhancing efficiency.
- A recent peer review by the Local Government Association highlighted our strong advocacy and co-production offers and our support for unpaid carers.

Growth, Environment and Transport

- We are focused on promoting growth to create local and national wealth, improve health and wellbeing, and widen our tax base. Lancashire has a £22bn major development and infrastructure investment pipeline including the new headquarters of the National Cyber Force and [Eden Project Morecambe](#) (supported by the Levelling Up Fund).
- Other significant developments are being constructed such as the Farington cricket facility and M55 link road and others are planned, including [Lancashire Central](#).
- Our £12.8m Lancashire Economic Recovery and Growth fund programme is unlocking strategic sites and progressing projects alongside other targeted investment funds.
- Plans for converting food waste into electricity at our Farington Waste Recovery Park could save up to £2.5m (and help power the plant) with a further £3.5m saved from reduced processing costs compared with current methods.
- It is anticipated that the new Lancashire Combined County Authority will leverage further opportunities as upper-tier councils in Lancashire come together to promote efficiency, growth, and place-based reforms. We request that government continue to move this forward as a priority.

Our plans for the next two years:

- We have a defined programme of savings and service redesign, building on identified best practice at other local authorities. We are enhancing our established Change Service to increase our internal transformation expertise.
- A new [People Strategy](#) will tackle recruitment and retention challenges and our new "Leading Lancashire" Framework will improve how senior managers focus on our priorities.
- We are exploring commercialisation opportunities and preparing for new procurement regulations.
- A new Lancashire Directory of Adult Care Services, joined up with partners, will eradicate duplication and improve our 24-7 support offer.
- We will review our in-house residential and day services so we provide the right type, quality, and level of services at the best price.
- We will deliver accessible, affordable, and sustainable travel choices and plan reductions in our highways carbon footprint.

Question 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:

Transforming performance means integrating data across the authority to better understand our business. Our new data architecture will synthesise information and improve analysis, using foundation and predictive models to glean fresh insights into service demand, performance, and resource allocation. We have a strategic approach to integrating technology and data management to enhance productivity, including:

- Allocating £3 million over the next three years to support digital transformation initiatives, delivering automated, self-service user experiences, and equipping

our workforce with digital skills. Additional funding of c£2m for digital services is earmarked for 2024/25 to reflect the changing approach to the provision of ICT systems.

- An improved corporate finance and HR system – Oracle Fusion – providing more automation and streamlining common processes.
- Improving performance data dashboards to create a complete picture of financial health and standardised workforce dashboards offering deeper understanding of sickness absence.
- Moving to a "Digital First" stance and supporting staff through our new Digital Skills Academy.
- Our *Single View of the Child* project uses a secure web-based system to summarise integrated information on children in care, supporting joined-up professional practice and service delivery.
- Improving customer contact capabilities through a new cloud-based system.
- Introducing Netcall's "low code/no code" platform to accelerate automation and using AI to extract and interrogate information from traditional data sets.
- Launching Microsoft Co-Pilot in June.
- Improved social care practice, informed by data, and enabling technological innovation through automation and AI are the keys to achieving future savings.

Q3. Your plans to reduce wasteful spend within your organisation and systems

We have a sound record of financial stewardship and a clear plan to increase productivity and efficiency. Our [updated financial strategy](#) details our plans for financial sustainability and the savings we need to make. Strong governance is in place to ensure accountability, manage pressures, and maintain service delivery standards.

- Our Strategic Finance Board reviews expenditure and we use indicator frameworks, contract monitoring, audit, and evaluation plans to track spend.
- Each service reviews cost and income forecasts benchmarked with other county councils. New spending requires detailed business cases.
- Business partners across Finance, HR, IT, Procurement and Contract Management check service spending to identify waste. We are setting up a commissioning board to review all contracts over £1m.
- We evaluate savings proposals through a structured programme to identify best practice, compare unit costs with similar-sized councils, ensure full cost recovery for income-generating services, and review service standards.
- Our strategic property review seeks a reduction in the number of holdings to avoid capital expenditure and reduce revenue costs.
- We host an online Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) e-learning programme accessible to all employees but do not dedicate a single budget to "EDI training". We do not use EDI "champions".
- We are reducing agency spending by 20% over the next fiscal year (£15m in 2023-24) by increasing internal capacity and using more stringent assessments.
- We have let office space to the Lancashire Pensions Service and the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB).
- Sharing HR and IT support (through traded services for schools) yielded annual savings of approximately £1 million.

- An independent financial evaluation of the £202m Better Care Fund and a complementary governance review of the Fund will begin soon.
- The Lancashire Levelling Up Investment Fund is poised for review, reflecting our commitment to funding oversight and strategic governance.
- We eliminated duplicate costs by coordinating external training with neighbouring councils, saving £200,000 annually.

Q4. The barriers preventing progress that the Government can help to reduce or remove.

Ministers have requested that councils set out the "barriers preventing [councils] from going as far as [they] would like to" in improving productivity and services. We set out our asks in respect of this below:

- Multi-Year Settlements to enable local authorities to plan for the longer term.
- Greater freedom to spend ringfenced grants on local priorities.
- End the fragmented culture of bidding for funding.
- Reduce bureaucratic capital bidding processes that bear little relation to evaluation criteria and awards.
- Allow more components to be included in devolution deals without the requirement for a Mayor.
- Review SEND policies, including curriculum and home to school transport, and consider impacts of Ofsted inspections.
- Clarification on social care reforms, including charging, and ensure adequate funding is provided.
- Encourage ICBs to invest in prevention and community health.
- Support DWP to share data to enable more automation in processing blue badges, benefit claimants, court of protection cases, and other applications.
- Resolve the position on unregulated placements and court award cases to enable greater management of the provider market or provide additional funding for greater council-led provision.
- National development of single line of business application systems to secure economies of scale and greater potential for use of AI.
- Information as soon as possible on the potential income, and obligations, for councils from Extended Producer Responsibility (Packaging) and other waste reforms.