

Agenda Item 8

Council of the Future

Falkirk Council

Title: Council of the Future
Meeting: Executive
Date: 24 August 2021
Submitted By: Director of Corporate and Housing Services

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update on the Council of the Future (COTF) Change Programme.

2. Recommendation

2.1 **It is recommended that the Executive agrees to:**

(1) Note the work underway by the COTF Change Programme in taking forward transformation and efficiency.

3. Background

3.1 On 30 September 2020, the Council's Three-Year Business Plan was approved alongside the Council's [Corporate Plan](#), 2020 – 2022, setting out a new vision and set of priorities for Falkirk Council. This Business Plan builds on the first iteration of the Council's Business Plan, approved in May 2019, and incorporates a refreshed approach to transformation, learning from the COVID-19 pandemic and the work being undertaken as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan and budget process approved by Council.

3.2 The COTF change programme is the core mechanism within the Business Plan to transform the Council and deliver on its priorities.

3.3 It is important to note that unless the Council is focused on delivering a robust and effective transformation programme, with associated service improvements and financial savings, there is a significant risk service improvements will not be made and future financial gaps will need to be met largely or entirely through service budget reductions with consequential impacts for services and communities. To maximise the impact of the COTF projects, and, as previously reported to Council, work was undertaken with an external partner to power-up efforts to deliver sustainable ambitious project plans and benefits for all projects within the COTF change

programme. This work with our external partner has enabled the Council to tap into best practice on programme management and reporting.

- 3.4 This resulted in the 'Powering Our Priorities' action plan, appendix 1, designed to strengthen the COTF change programme in terms of transformation and the financial profiling of projects, including ZBB projects. Project management practices have been tightened up, with project workbooks and proposals developed for each of the priority projects to show a clear trajectory of how the Council will transform over the coming years. Applying this rigour has resulted in a refreshed change programme, and a re-set of the priority projects. These are the large-scale transformation projects that are central to the delivery of the Council's priorities and savings. The change programme is structured around three workstreams, mirroring the Council priorities – Communities, Enterprise and Innovation.
- 3.5 The COTF Governance Framework, appendix 2, continues to drive the progress of the 21 programmes of work / projects within the change programme outlined in appendix 3. Trades Unions will continue to have an important role in key projects and the Programme Management Office (PMO) will continue to support the overall delivery of the Council of the Future change programme.
- 3.6 The Council's priority projects remain unchanged but with project plans re-set. Strategic oversight of these priority projects is provided by the Make it Happen and the Council of the Future Boards:

Workstream	Projects
Communities:	Communities Shaping Falkirk's Future; Closer to Communities – Community Choices; Education – Succeed Today, Excel Tomorrow; Closer to Home; Transformation of Roads, Grounds & Street Cleansing.
Enterprise:	Climate Change; Employability; Investing for Inclusive Growth and Economic Recovery.
Innovation:	Digital Communities; Strategic Property Review, SPR (now called Office Transformation).

Work is ongoing to finalise the re-calibration of the SPR (part of this will focus on Office Transformation) and Succeed Today, Excel Tomorrow, STET. Updates will be reported to Elected Members when this is complete.

4. Considerations

What's been achieved over last 12 months?

- 4.1 A number of case studies have been written on what has been achieved through COTF. These were recently reported to the Scrutiny Committee and include:

Communities Projects

- Closer to Home
Supported accommodation: [Helping care experienced young people put down roots](#)
Procuring for the Future: [Procuring for the future of our children and young people](#)
Family Support: [Helping children & young people remain safely at home](#)
Family learning: [Supporting learning in Carronshore](#)
- Advice Hubs - Support for People: [Partnership helps ease pandemic pressures](#)
- Succeed Today, Excel Tomorrow:
Partnership working: [Working in partnership to improve the school leaver destination profile](#)
ASN partnerships: [Supporting children & young people with Additional Support Needs](#)

Enterprise Project

- Economic Recovery:
Economic Recovery Plan: [Supporting the local economy to come back stronger](#)
Business grants: [Providing a lifeline to local businesses](#)
Business advice: [Helping businesses stay compliant](#)
- Climate Change: [Carbon sequestration takes root](#)

Innovation Projects

- Analogue to Digital - Telecare: [Going digital to save lives](#)
- Council HQ & Arts Centre - HQ: [Creating the HQ & Arts Centre for the future](#)
- Succeed Today, Excel Tomorrow - Digital learning: [Connected Falkirk](#)
- Digital Communities:
Digital exclusion: [Combatting the growing problem of digital exclusion](#)
Digital processes - Education: [Improving systems; reducing bureaucracy](#)

- 4.2 Other recent updates include:

- Opening of the Central Hub August 21.



- Kickstart Scheme – Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils formed a Gateway organisation to ensure small to medium sized businesses benefit from the scheme.
- Bantaskin Primary School has hosted the launch of a major Scottish Government campaign encouraging people in Scotland to work together to tackle the climate emergency.
- Grassland project to boost biodiversity commenced.
- Falkirk Council has become the first local authority in Scotland to go live with an end-to-end digital telecare service. The ground-breaking progress has now been recognised, with the Council and Partnership awarded the Gold Level 1 Digital Telecare Implementation Award by the Digital Telecare for Scottish Local Government Programme.
- Work continues on rolling our Connected Falkirk digital learning rollout with a Wi-Fi upgrade planned in all 58 schools by September 2021 and distribution of devices on a 1L1 basis to P6 to S6 pupils and on a 1:5 basis for P1 to P5 pupils by October 2021.
- Over 3,000 pieces of IT equipment have been distributed across our workforce since January 2020 to ensure effective mobile and flexible working. This includes over 1,300 laptops.
- Work at the Foundry in Larbert is continuing with contractors now expected to start refitting work during late summer, with fitting out taking place in September and employees starting to use the facility, on a phased basis from October.

Current Performance

- 4.3 The COTF Board monitors the overall progress of the Council of the Future change programme. The COTF Board has met six times this year and has been kept up to date with the progress monitoring by email correspondence during the recess period, in lieu of a virtual meeting.

- 4.4 A smart dashboard for performance monitoring is now in use as part of the Powering our Priorities action plan. The dashboard, reported to the COTF Board in August, is in appendix 4.

New Projects/BB/Community Conversations

- 4.5 Work is underway to identify new projects to contribute to the financial challenges facing the Council. A benchmarking exercise is underway to ascertain what other organisations are leading on in terms of transformation and cashable savings. Links with the Improvement Service are being used to support this exercise. In addition, an officer-led workshop is planned for August to take account of emerging ideas.
- 4.6 This is in addition to the rolling programme for ZBB under development for future years. Programme Management resource is now in place and is taking forward the pilot review of Council Transportation and developing the rolling programme for ZBB that will be reported to Elected Members in October.
- 4.7 As these projects and existing projects continue, they will align with the Council's Community Conversations work to involve Communities in the design of service delivery models to meet local needs and to do so in an innovative, entrepreneurial and efficient manner. This is particularly important for future years where there are likely to be greater uncertainties about the finances available to the Council. Working with communities in this way aims to ensure that the Council is responsive to the views of communities, and communities are engaged in the work that the Council is taking forward.

Investment in Transformation

- 4.8 The March 2021 budget approved an investment fund of £1m to support the transformation of Falkirk Council. For 2021/22, the key areas of investment include:

Programme Area	Description	Value
COTF Programme	Finance, HR, Commercial Resource, Communication and Procurement., ZBB (Zero Based Budgeting). Recruitment fees now included in calculations.	400k
Communities: Closer to Home	Project Resource, Self-Directed Support Resource, Learning and Development Resource	130k
Communities: STET	Project Resource	160k
Innovation: Council HQ and Arts	Project Resource	185k
Innovation: Digital	Digital Developer	60k
Enterprise: Climate Change	Energy and Climate Change Team Resource	30k
Total		965k

- 4.9 Council also approved an additional £500k of spend to give priority to Climate Change, Employability and Poverty and Equalities. Consideration will need to be given to any relevant recurring costs associated with this funding in future years and will include a post dedicated to the Digital Communities priority project.
- 4.10 As set out in March's budget, the [Capital Programme](#) allocates resources to deliver the transformation needed to achieve the ambitions set out in our Corporate Plan priorities. It will support the key projects of Climate Change, Digital Transformation, Office Transformation and our Community Assets & Learning Estate, STET, specifically the Connected Falkirk element) and Closer to Communities (Community Choices).
- 4.11 The contribution of COTF to the Council's revenue budget is outlined in the financial projections for 2021/22 approved savings. Based on information received from each Service, overall, savings are on track to be achieved with a few currently classified as amber. This will be monitored during the course of the financial year.

Workstream	Red Savings £'000	Amber Savings £'000	Green Savings £'000	Total Savings £'000
Communities	-	420	1,458	1,878
Enterprise	-	-	372	372
Innovation	-	-	764	764
Business as Usual	-	130	1,893	2,023
Total	-	550	4,487	5,037

Elected Member – Future COTF Progress Updates

4.12 Elected Members are involved in the tracking and reporting of the change programme with the following arrangements in place. Notably, reports on the Council's priority projects will be submitted to Elected Members during the remainder of 2021 for the consideration of potential transformation and savings plans. The full suite of COTF Elected Member reporting arrangements includes:

- Focus remains on the Council's priority Projects.
- The COTF Change Programme and Business Plan reports will go to Council / Executive.
- COTF progress will be monitored through the Council of the Future Board, comprising the Chief Executive, Directors and cross-party Elected Members alongside the Head of People, Transformation and Technology and Change Manager.
- As mentioned, reports will be brought before Elected Members during the year on each of the change programme's priority projects seeking early Elected Member agreement to progress service transformation and, where applicable, delivery of the consequential savings. The next of these reports will focus on Closer to Home in September.
- The priority projects are also communicated at the monthly Council of the Future Elected Member seminars. Since January 2021, six of these seminars have been held with cross-party attendance receiving presentations on some of the key priority projects including Succeed Today, Excel Tomorrow; Climate Change; Employability; Communities Shaping Falkirk's Future, Transformation of Roads, Grounds & Street Cleansing and Closer to Home.
- Scrutiny receives reports on the work being done on the Corporate Plan. The COTF change programme, the priority projects, is reported here in line with what's being delivered against the Council's three priorities.
- The COTF dashboard will soon be available on 'Falkirk Performs', Council webpages designed to support public performance reporting (late Summer 21).

5. Consultation

5.1 Since January 2021, across the Falkirk Council area, a series of 'Community Conversations' have been run in each ward to better understand what's important to people in our communities. The Falkirk Plan, now in draft, has been co-designed with partners in the community based on these conversations and a more formal public consultation which will follow on from that. These conversation and community-led approach is integral to the work of the COTF change programme, evidence of which is profiled in each project workbook.

6. Implications

Financial

- 6.1 The Council's Business Plan with Medium Term Financial Plan sets out how the Council aims to deliver a balanced budget, with associated investment, spend and financial efficiencies.

Resources

- 6.2 Our three Council Priorities supports the Council in taking a strategic approach to resource allocation and decision making and has informed the 2021 investment budget for COTF of £1m.

Legal

- 6.3 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Risk

- 6.4 The Council faces a challenging and uncertain financial landscape. Unless the Council is focused on delivering a robust and effective transformation programme, with associated service improvements and financial savings, there is a significant risk that future financial gaps will need to be met largely or entirely through service budget reductions with consequential impacts for services and communities.
- 6.5 The Council of the Future governance will support the delivery of the Council's Business Plan. The Council of the Future Programme Risk Register reports into various strategic boards within the governance framework and the Audit Committee on a six-monthly basis. The Audit Committee held on 23 August 21 considered the latest iteration of the Risk Register. The highest assessed risk remains the political decision making necessary to progress the transformation programme delivering the changes to service delivery and consequential savings.

Equalities

- 6.6 The Council's Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA) process is integral to each COTF project, evidenced in project workbooks.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 6.7 Climate change and sustainability is a core project within the change programme. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) will support the major initiatives within COTF.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The COTF Change Programme is the core delivery mechanism for Council transformation and delivery on its priorities. Future reports to Elected Members, as outlined in 4.12, will highlight the progress, challenges, risks and issues that may impact on the delivery of the Council's priority projects whilst charting the successes achieved.

Director of Corporate & Housing Services

Author – Rebecca McDonald, Change Manager, Rebecca.McDonald@Falkirk.gov.uk

Date: 11 August 2021

Appendices

Appendix 1 POP Action Plan

Appendix 2 Council of the Future Governance Framework

Appendix 3 Council of the Future Projects

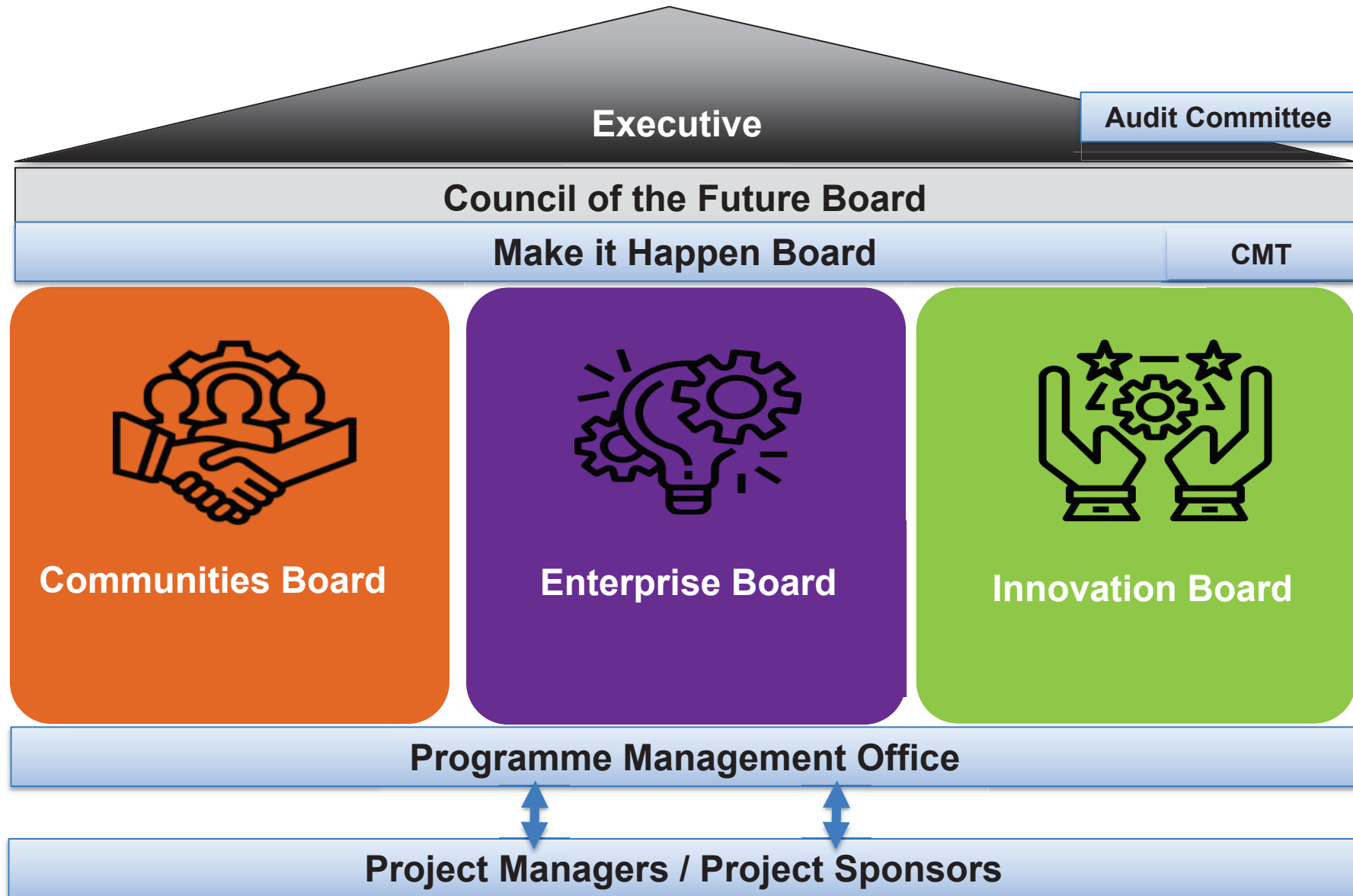
Appendix 4 Council of the Future Dashboard

List of Background Papers:

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

- None

COTF Governance Framework



Project Title (*indicates priority project)	Project Description
Closer to Home*	To keep young people safe at home and in schools and support families. The project aims at transformational approaches to support children and their families with a clear intention to deliver early and preventative approaches, enabling a shift in 'the balance of care'. By this we mean more children are supported and enabled to remain safely at home or with family members if remaining at home is not possible.
Communities Shaping Falkirk's Future (CSFF)*	<p>Empowering communities is a national priority for the Scottish Government. Falkirk Council is working towards meeting its statutory duties in relation to the Community Empowerment Act but needs a more structured approach to getting there at pace.</p> <p>CSFF will support the development, adoption and mainstreaming of an empowering approach to working with communities across the organisation. Implementing this system, process and culture change we will ensure that residents of Falkirk are supported and empowered to actively participate in the definition, design & delivery of their public services (from policy making to live service improvement). It will also enable Falkirk Council to make good on the promise that 'we will ask, listen and act on what our communities tell us'.</p> <p>Adopting this One-council approach will mean that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint working is seen as the default (by council and by community) • There is trust between the council and the community. • All council community engagement is planned, communicated, delivered and evaluated using consistent cross council approaches. • Data resulting from engagement is centrally stored and accessible so that engagement is better informed and there is less duplication and fatigue. • Community bodies looking to work with the council to resolve issues have a simple and transparent way of doing so, guided by internal processes, that guarantees timely results. • Officers understand the importance of great community engagement and are empowered to deliver it. • Falkirk Council area is the Place to Be.
Closer to Communities with Community Choices*	Developing new and creative ways to deliver community learning and working with community groups to make key decision for themselves through the Community Choices Fund
Succeed Today, Excel Tomorrow*	To transform learning & education in Falkirk. A transformational investment in Falkirk's young people, which will involve our community in sector leading practice, securing more positive destinations for our young people and a brighter, more prosperous future Work is underway to finalise the re-calibration of this project to develop property solutions aligning education and community needs in line with the outcomes of, Succeed Today, Excel Tomorrow, Closer to Communities and the Strategic Property Review.
Transformation of Roads & Grounds Maintenance & Street Cleansing *	To be a more efficient, flexible & commercial service
Redesign of Housing Property Services	To improve services for tenants
Advice Hubs and Spokes	To provide support to our most vulnerable people.

	Climate Change*	To increase efforts to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. The project will ensure a One Council approach to address the climate emergency, adapt to a changing climate and de-carbonise where possible. The first phase of the project will embed climate change into all strategies/plans/projects going forward to influence a change in mindset, processes, governance, and decision making within the Council. This will happen in parallel with a number of climate change projects identified with Council Services to reduce emissions and in the consideration of future carbon offsetting.
	Investing for Inclusive Growth & Economic Recovery*	To work with businesses & industry and deliver inclusive growth & economic recovery. To secure Growth Deal and Levelling Up funding to take forward the ambitions of the Falkirk and Grangemouth Investment Zone.
	Employability*	To support vulnerable job seekers.
	Sustainable Travel	Working with industry partners to identify opportunities to promote sustainable travel in Falkirk and enable access to work and Town Centres. Sustainable Travel has also been included within the Investment Zone Growth Deal bid around a green corridor project, which will open up opportunities for active travel links in the area.
	Entrepreneurial Services	The aim is to embed an entrepreneurial mindset, culture, and approach throughout the Council over the lifetime of this plan and beyond.
	Office Transformation* (Was part of SPR)	To rationalise our front and back offices and invest in modern and sustainable buildings which support customer and future service delivery models in line with implementation of the Strategic Property Review.
	Digital Communities*	Helping our Communities to go digital – making sure people across Falkirk can get connected, stay connected and access the services they need.
	Automation	Use automation technology to create smarter processes for use by customers and colleagues.
	Council HQ & Arts Centre	Investing in a modern and sustainable building which provides a new HQ aligned to the Office Transformation project together with transforming culture and arts.
	Fit for the future	Changing our culture to be Responsive, Innovative, Trusted, Ambitious.
	Business Intelligence	Using business intelligence/data tools to do Council business better.
	Rock Solid Technology	Getting our technology right for now & future for citizens and business community.
	Analogue to Digital Telecare	Transition all Telecare (MECS) alarms systems from analogue to digital including warden call systems installed in Housing with care properties.
	CCTV	Upgrade the current public realm CCTV and centralise the monitoring of this to enhance public protection.

Dashboard

PMO Tracker FY21/22

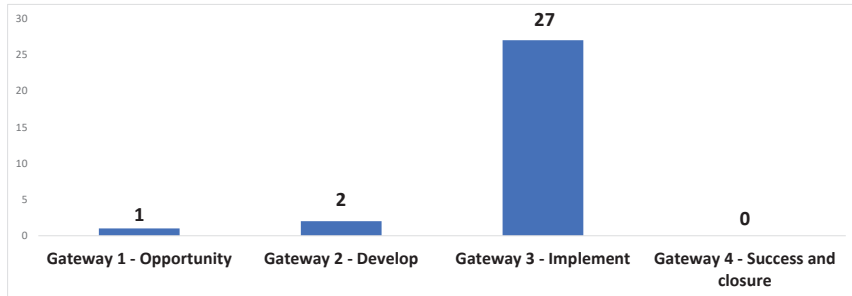
Current Month

Aug-21

Last Updated

11/08/2021

COTF Project Status by Gateway



Comments

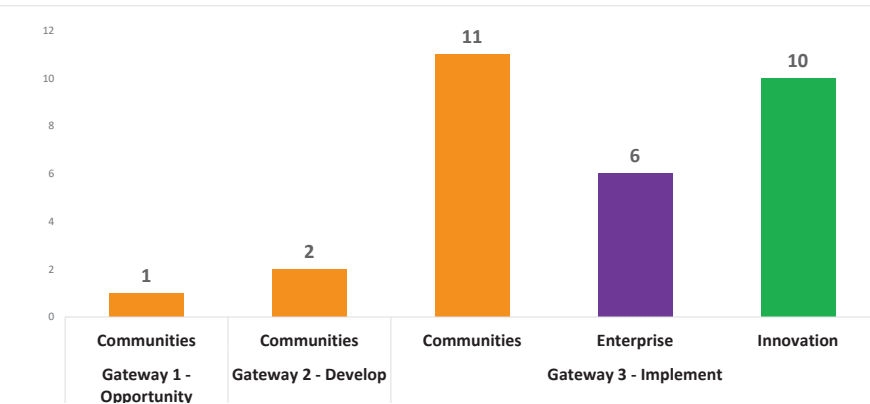
Updates on project movements

G1 - Community Assets & Learning Estate - meeting scheduled Tuesday 10 August

Non-movements

G1 - Community Assets & Learning Estate
G2 - ASN Campus, Supported Accommodation

COTF Project Gateway Status by Workstream



Comments

Updates on project movements

Communities - Community Assets & Learning Estate - meeting scheduled Tuesday 10 August

Non-movements

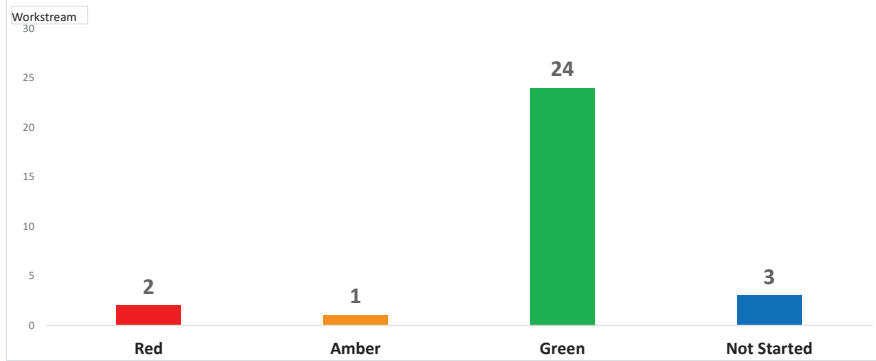
Gateway 1

Communities - Community Assets & Learning Estate

Gateway 2

Communities - ASN Campus, Supported Accommodation

COTF Project RAG Status

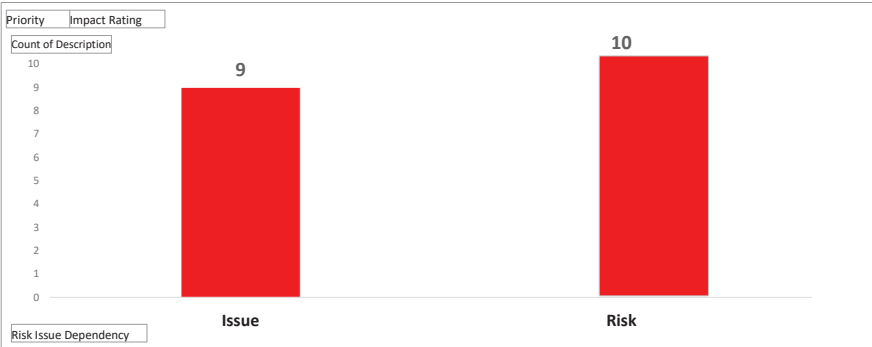


RAG Allocation
Milestone(s) not started Milestone(s) on Track Milestone(s) overdue <= 4 weeks Milestone(s) overdue > 4 weeks

Red & Amber Projects

Project Name	RAG Status
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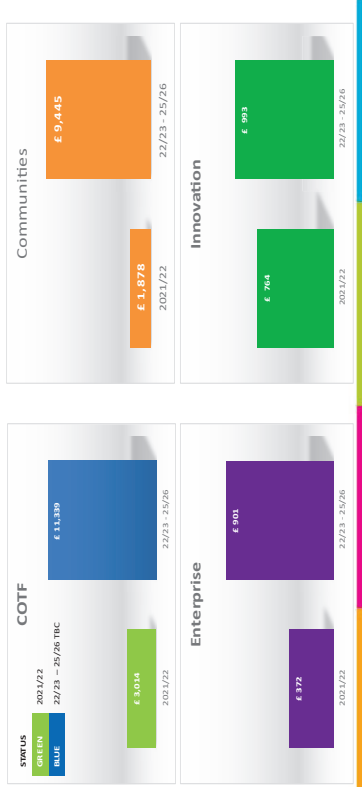
COTF Priority Projects - Red Risks and Issues



Comments

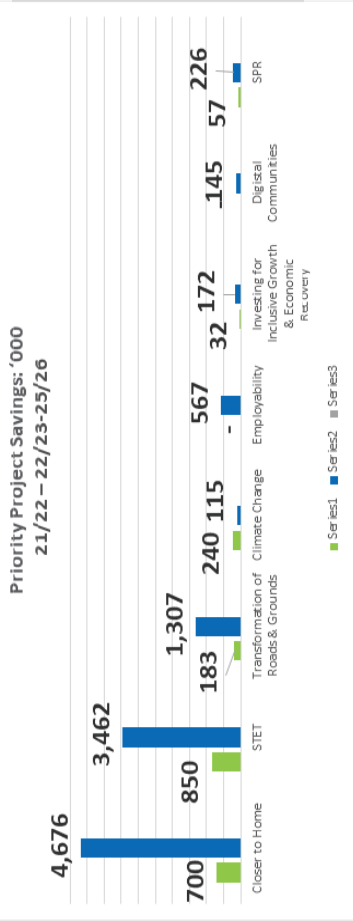
Project Name	Comments
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COTF Finance Dashboard '000



Comments

COTF Priority Project Savings



Comments

Closer to Communities finance to be resolved as split in CEC v's Community Halls