# Budget Planner

## User Manual

Project budgets in SharePoint, from the first rough estimate to the final account.

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# 1. About Budget Planner

Budget Planner is a SharePoint web part for planning and controlling a project budget. A budget matures with the project:

- In **Idea** you give a rough range.
- In **Planning** the people who will do the work estimate their parts, and you consolidate them into a baseline.
- In **Execution** owners report what they spent and what is still to come, so you see buffer or overrun at once.
- At **Closed** you compare the final cost with every earlier estimate and keep the lessons.

Gates separate the phases. A sponsor approves each gate, or you approve it yourself on a quick-start project without a sponsor.

## Who does what

| Role | What they do |
|---|---|
| **Project manager (PM)** | Sets up the project, builds the cost structure, accepts estimates, keeps the forecast current and closes the project. |
| **Cost owner** | Estimates the cost items assigned to them and reports spend (or plan updates) during delivery. |
| **Sponsor** | Approves the gates, forecasts submitted for approval, and re-baselines. |
| **Site owner** | Adds the web part to a page and clicks Update the lists after an upgrade. |

## Where your data lives

Everything is stored in SharePoint lists named BP_… on your site. Budget Planner makes no calls outside Microsoft 365 and collects no telemetry. SharePoint permissions stay as your site owner set them; the app adds its role rules on top.

## About this manual

The screenshots show version 0.8.2 in the app's full-screen mode, with sample projects in pounds sterling. Your screens show your own projects, currency and language.

# 2. Getting started

## The home page

Open the SharePoint page that holds Budget Planner. **My Projects** lists the projects where you are project manager, deputy or sponsor. The pills above the list count projects by phase; click one to filter. Closed and cancelled projects are hidden until you click their pill.

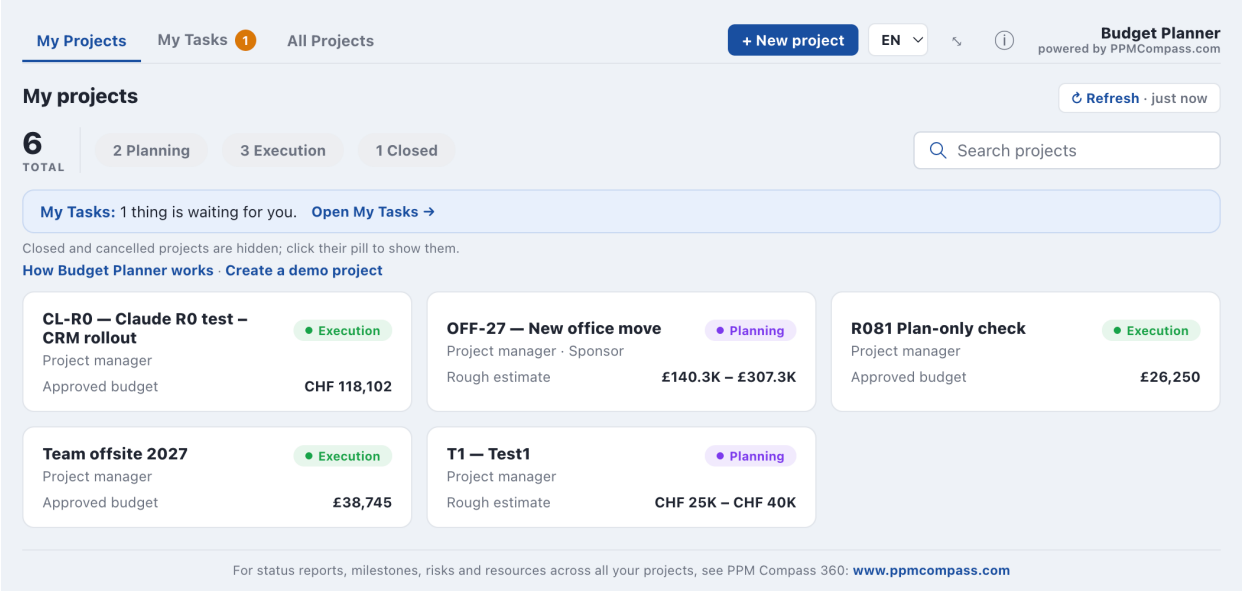



*Figure 1. My Projects, with the My Tasks reminder and the project cards.*

The top bar has three tabs and a few tools:

- **My Projects**, **My Tasks** (the number shows what is waiting for you) and **All Projects**.
- **+ New project**.
- **EN / DE**: the language.
- ⤢ **Full screen**: hides the SharePoint header and navigation so the app uses the whole window. Press Esc or click the button again to leave.
- ⓘ **About**: the version, and where your data lives.

> **Try it first:** under the project cards, **How Budget Planner works** explains the phases, and **Create a demo project** builds a complete sample project you can click through.

## My Tasks: everything waiting for you

**My Tasks** collects, across all projects:

- estimates you were asked to give
- updates that are due
- estimates waiting for your review (as PM)
- decisions waiting for you (as sponsor)

Click a row to open the item or the decision.

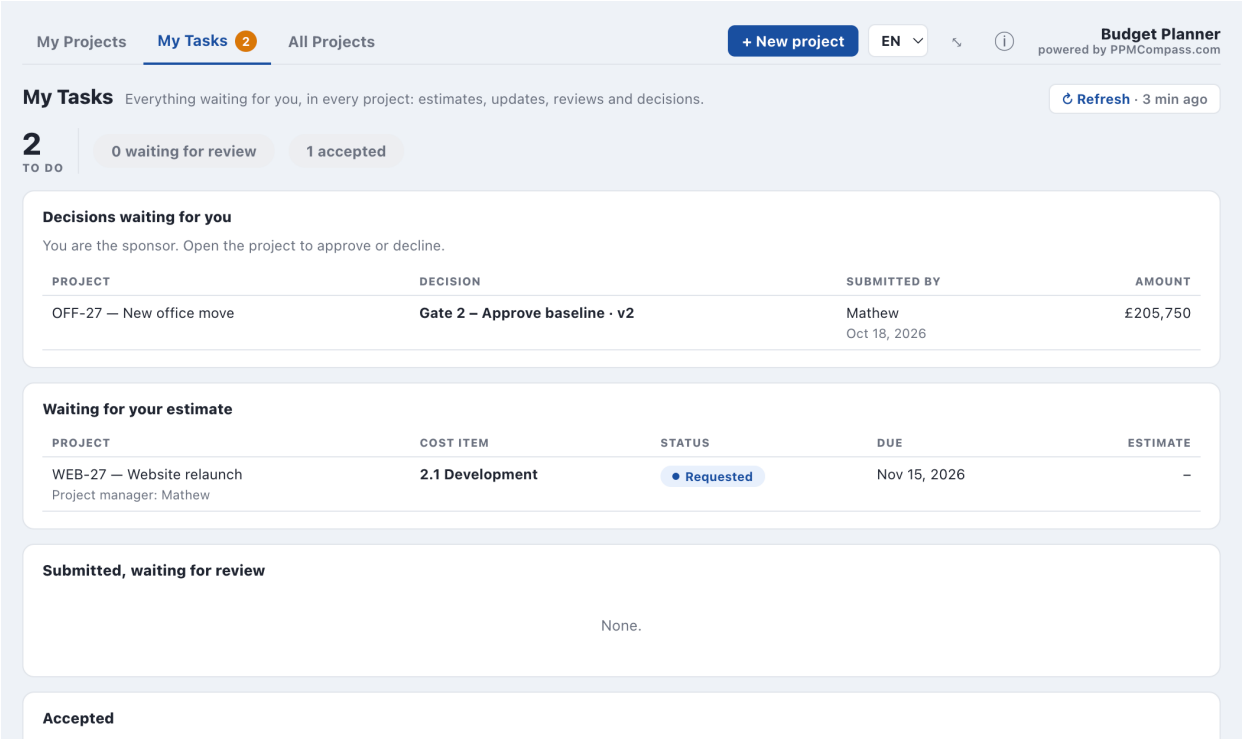



*Figure 2. My Tasks: a decision for the sponsor, an estimate requested from an owner, and an accepted item.*

## Finding your way in a project

Each project shows the phase strip and a blue **Next step** line that always says what to do now; **Go →** takes you there. Only the tabs that matter in the current phase are shown. Everything else is under **More**.

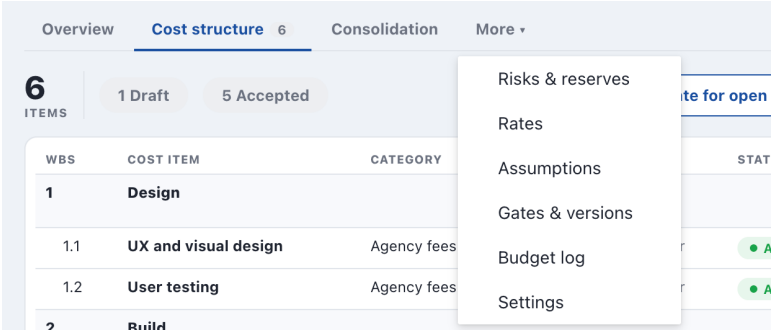



*Figure 3. The More menu holds the less frequent tabs.*

# 3. Creating a project

Click **+ New project**. First choose how you want to work, then fill in the details.

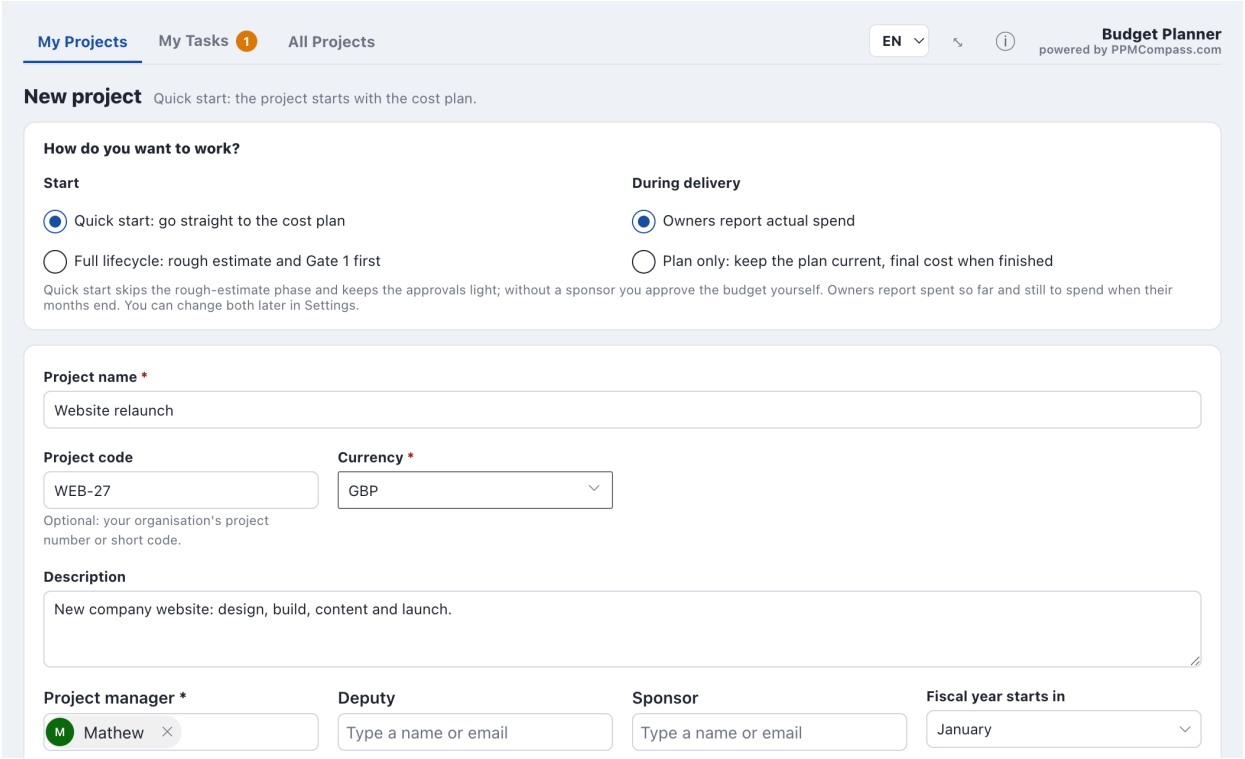



*Figure 4. New project: the two choices at the top, then the project details.*

## Two choices

| Choice | Choose it when | What changes |
|---|---|---|
| **Quick start** (default) | Small or simple projects where you already know the scope. | No Idea phase or Gate 1: you start with the cost plan. Contingency is optional. Without a sponsor you approve the budget and close the project yourself. |
| **Full lifecycle** | Larger projects, or your organisation runs gates. | A rough range first (Gate 1), then the detailed plan (Gate 2), then delivery and close-out (Gate 3). |
| **Owners report actual spend** (default) | You want to see spending as it happens. | Owners report spent so far and still to spend when their months end. |
| **Plan only** | Actuals live in the finance system, or nobody has time to report monthly. | No monthly reporting. When Finance needs a forecast you ask for a plan update. Owners confirm or change their plan, and give the final cost when an item is finished. |

## Project details

- **Project name** and **Currency** are required. The currency cannot be changed once amounts exist.
- **Project code**: optional; your organisation's project number.
- **Project manager**, **Deputy** and **Sponsor**: people from your Microsoft 365 directory. A quick-start project can run without a sponsor; you can add one later.

- **Fiscal year starts in**: used for the fiscal-year totals.
- **Planned start** and **Planned end**: month pickers. Picking the end month first chooses the year after the start.
- **Start from an existing project**: copies its settings, rates and cost structure.

Click **Create project**. The project header shows the chosen modes, for example ⚡ Quick start and 🗒️ Plan only.

## Changing the choices later

Both choices can be changed in **More → Settings → How this project works**.

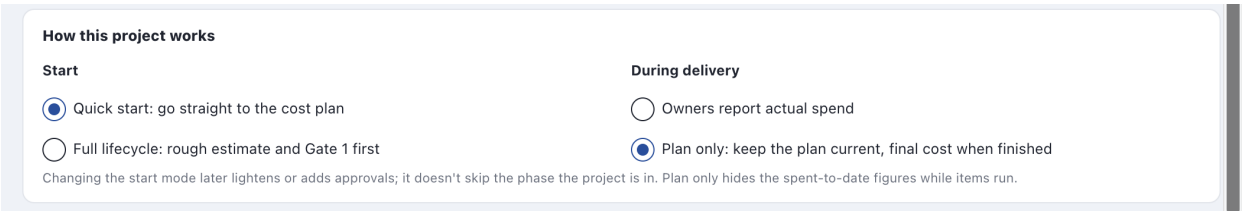



*Figure 5. Settings: how this project works.*

# 4. Planning the budget

## Build the cost structure

On the **Cost structure** tab, break the project into **work packages** (deliverables) and **cost items**. Use **+ Work package** and **+ Cost item**, or paste a list from Excel with **Paste list**.

Each pasted line is *[WBS] Title [Category] [Opex/Capex]*:

- a code like "2" makes a work package; "2.1" makes a cost item in it
- lines without a code go into the package above
- new category names become project categories

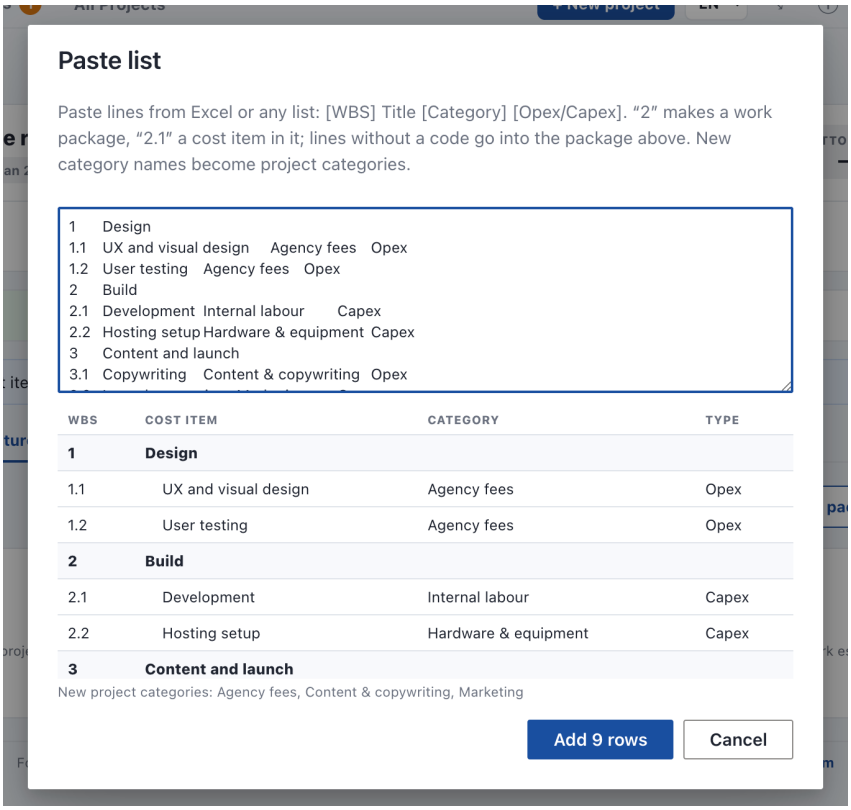



*Figure 6. Paste list: a preview of what will be created, including the new categories.*

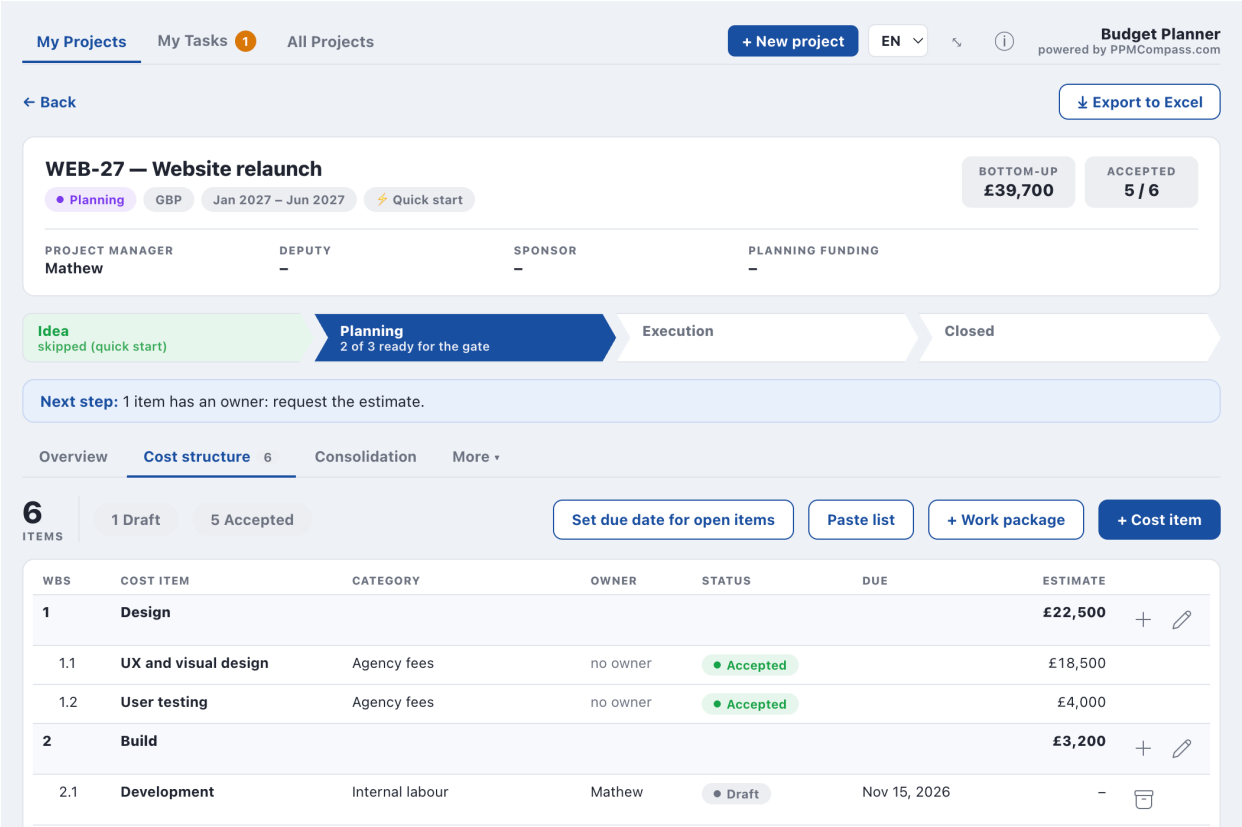



*Figure 7. The project page: header, phase strip, Next step line and the cost structure.*

## Estimate a cost item yourself

Click a cost item to open its panel. Without an owner, you estimate it yourself:

1. Check **From** and **To**: the months in which the money is spent.
2. Pick a **Method**: labour (effort × rate), parametric (quantity × rate), supplier quote / price list, three-point, or lump sum.
3. Enter the figures and choose **How sure are you?** (High, Medium or Low). The range under *This estimate* follows from it.
4. Write the **Basis of estimate**: assumptions, quotes, references. The PM and sponsor will read it.
5. Choose **When the money is spent**: evenly, front- or back-loaded, one payment, or by month / tranches.
6. Click **Save and accept**, or **Save** to keep it as a draft.

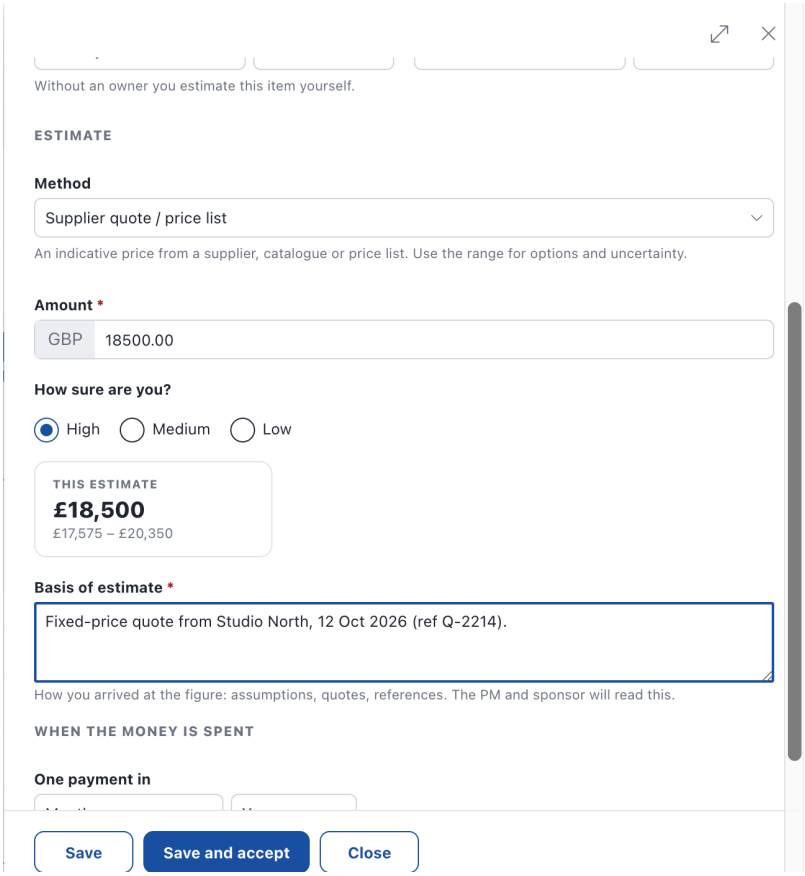



*Figure 8. A supplier quote with high confidence and its basis.*

## Ask owners to estimate

Give an item an **owner** (and a due date) when someone else knows the cost better. The Next step line then says to request the estimate; **Request estimates** sends it to the owners' My Tasks. You can send a reminder email from there.

Labour estimates use day rates. Add them under **More → Rates**; one blended rate is enough for most projects.

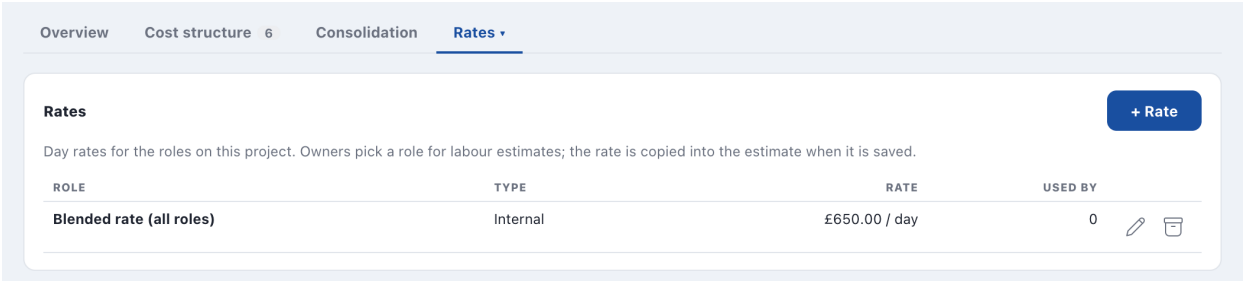



*Figure 9. Rates: one blended day rate for all internal roles.*

The owner opens the item from My Tasks, enters the estimate and phasing, and clicks **Submit**. The PM then reviews it: **Accept**, accept with an adjustment (with a reason), or **Return** with a comment.

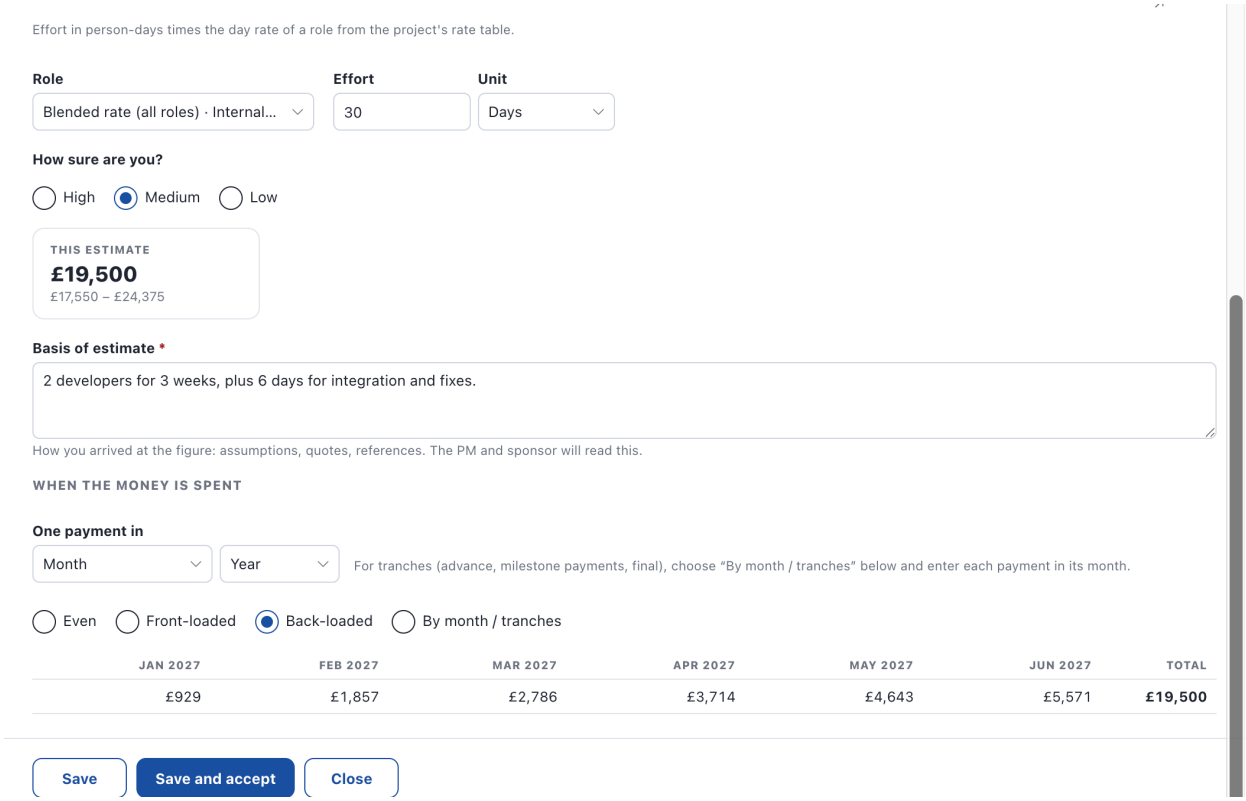



*Figure 10. A labour estimate (30 days at the blended rate) with back-loaded phasing.*

## Check the totals

**Consolidation** shows the bottom-up estimate, its range, Opex/Capex, internal effort, when the money is spent (per month and cumulative), and breakdowns by work package, category and owner.

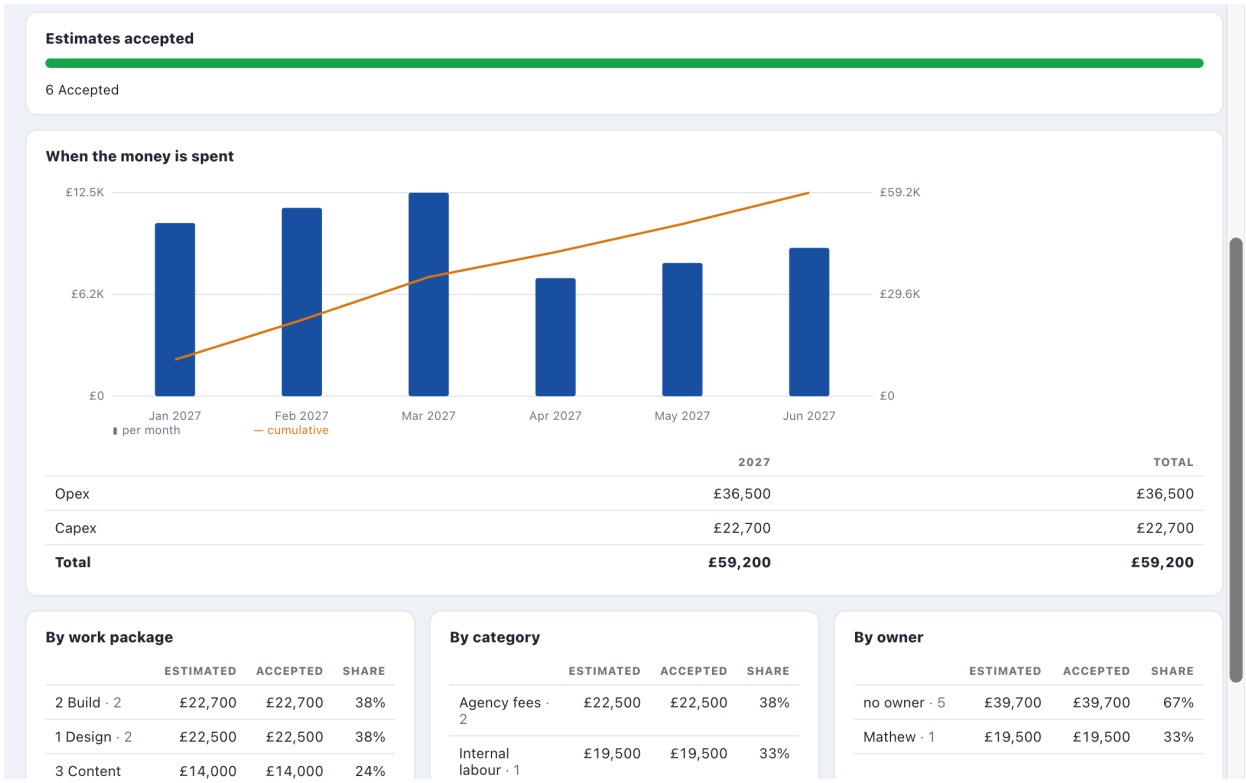



*Figure 11. Consolidation: monthly spend curve and breakdowns.*

## Risks and reserves

Under **Risks & reserves**, list the known risks with probability and cost impact. Their expected value, together with the estimating spread, suggests a **contingency**; you decide the figure and write down why. The **management reserve** (a percentage of the cost baseline) covers what nobody foresaw and is held by the sponsor.

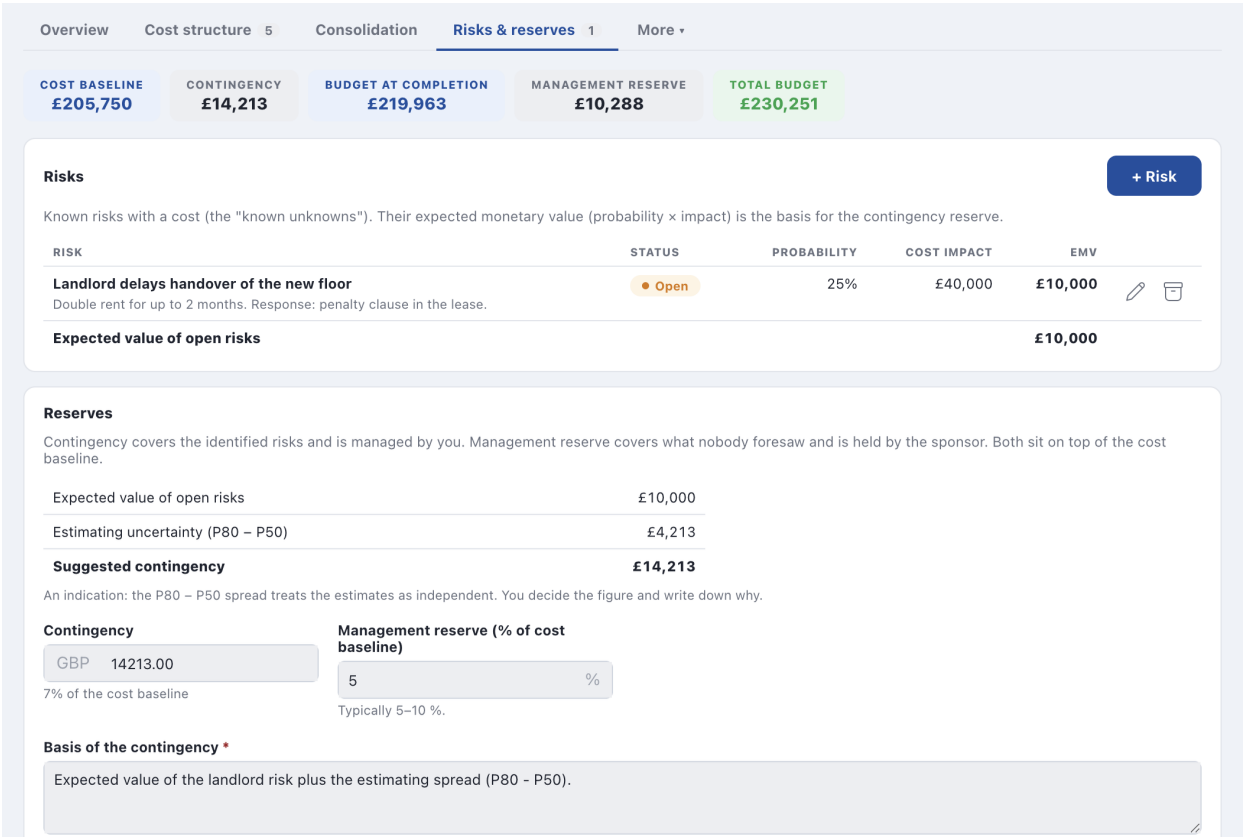



*Figure 12. Risks & reserves: the risk register, the suggested contingency and the management reserve.*

## Approve the budget

When every item is estimated and accepted, the Overview shows the approval card and its checklist.

- **Quick start without a sponsor:** click **Approve budget**. You approve it yourself; the accepted items and their phasing are frozen as the baseline, and the project moves to Execution.
- **With a sponsor:** submit **Gate 2 – Approve baseline** with a note. The sponsor decides (see chapter 7).

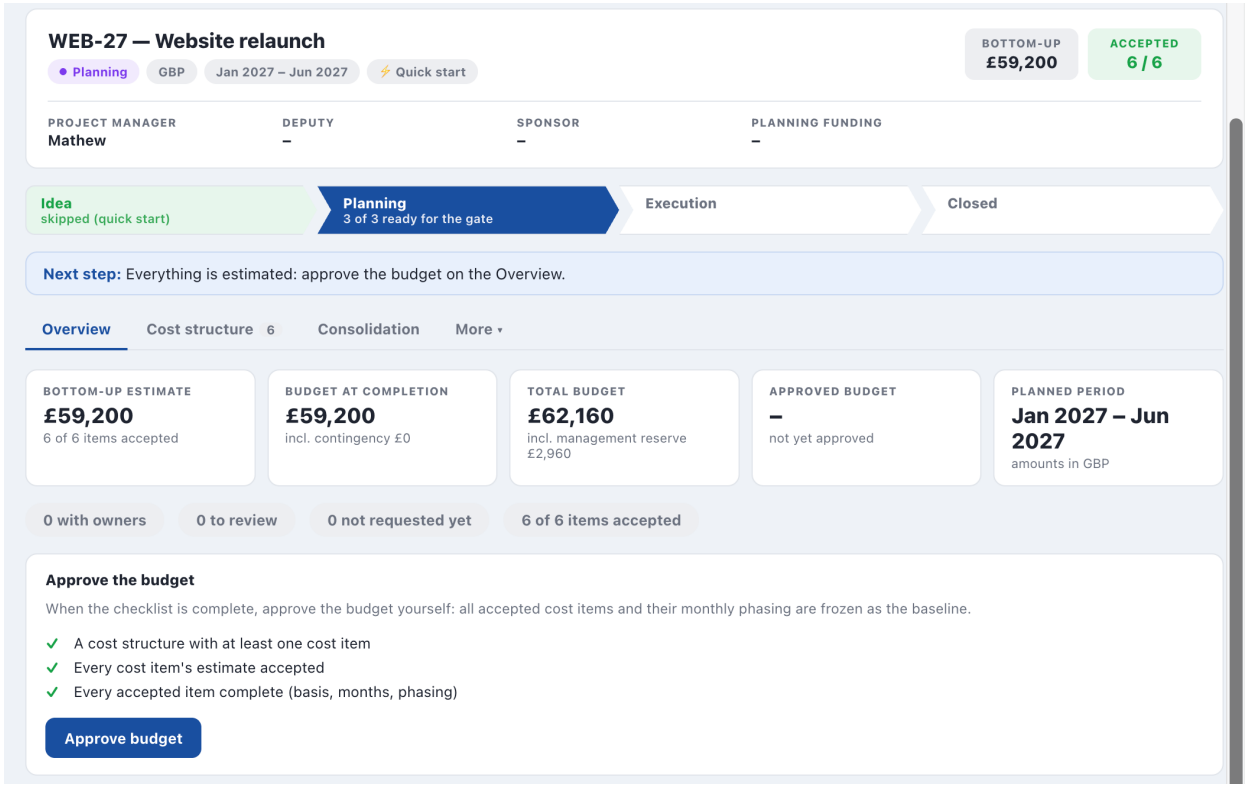



*Figure 13. Overview of a quick-start project, ready to approve the budget.*

# 5. During delivery

## The Forecast tab

**Forecast** compares the cost baseline with the forecast, item by item and by fiscal year. The status is:

- **Green**: the forecast is within the cost baseline.
- **Amber**: over the cost baseline but within the approved budget.
- **Red**: over the approved budget.

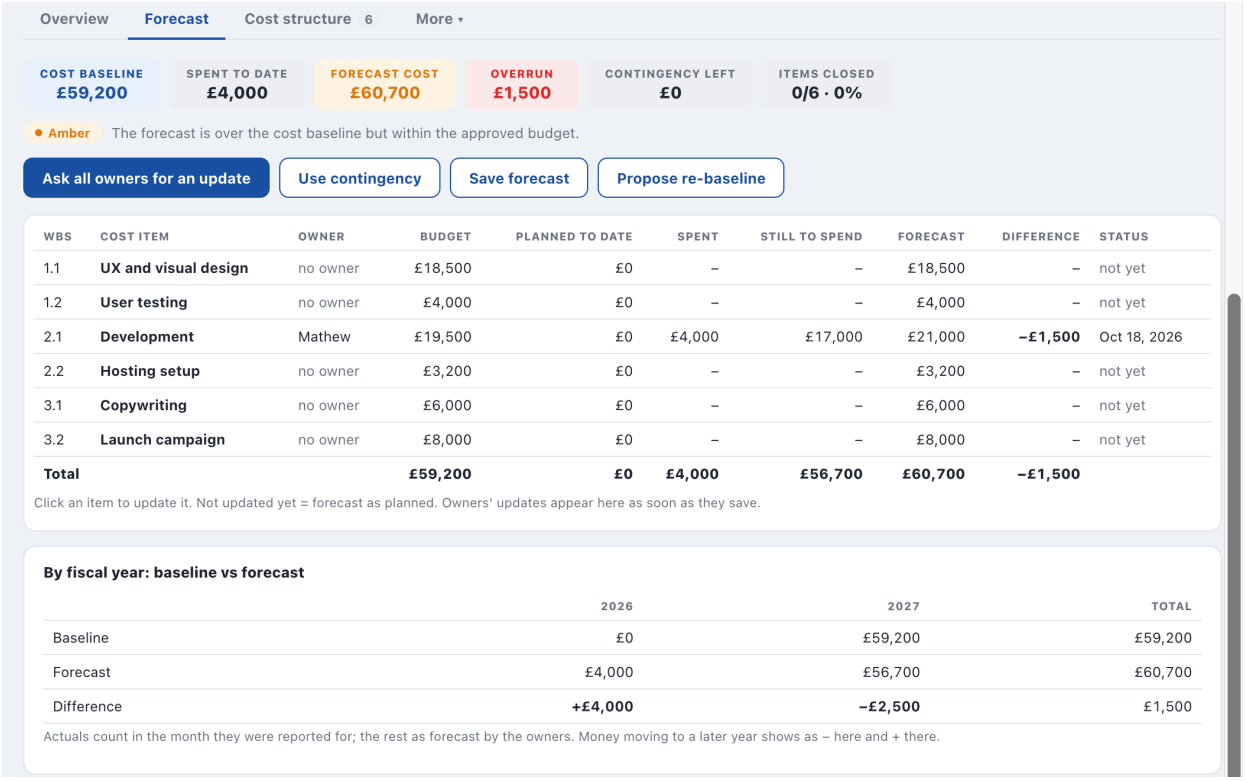



*Figure 14. Forecast: one item is £1,500 over, so the project is amber.*

## Owners report spend

With **Owners report actual spend**, owners get a task in My Tasks when a month with planned spend ends. They open the item and choose a one-click update:

- **On plan**: spent as planned.
- **Delayed – shift**: nothing more spent; the overdue amount moves to this month.
- **Finished – close**: the final cost is the amount spent so far.

Or they type **Spent so far** (the running total) and **Still to spend**. If the item goes over budget, they must say why.

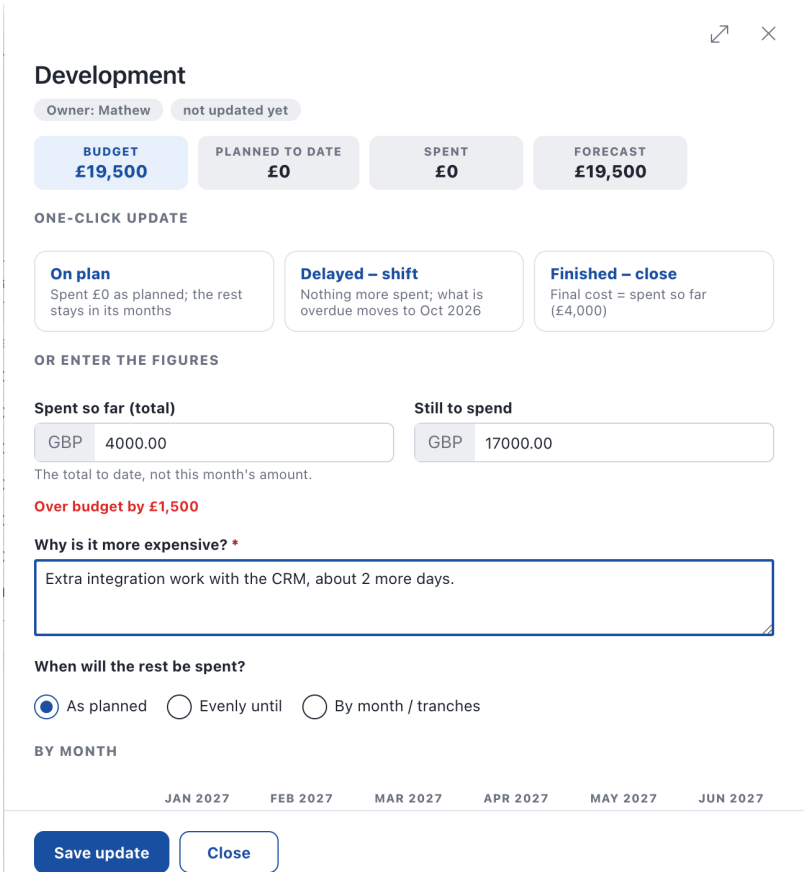



*Figure 15. An update over budget: the reason is required.*

## Plan only

With **Plan only**, nobody reports monthly. When Finance needs a forecast, click **Ask owners for a plan update**. Owners open the item and choose:

- **Plan still right**
- or change the **Expected total cost** and its months, then **Save plan**
- **Finished – close** at the final cost

When an item closes, its final cost is booked over the months of its last plan.

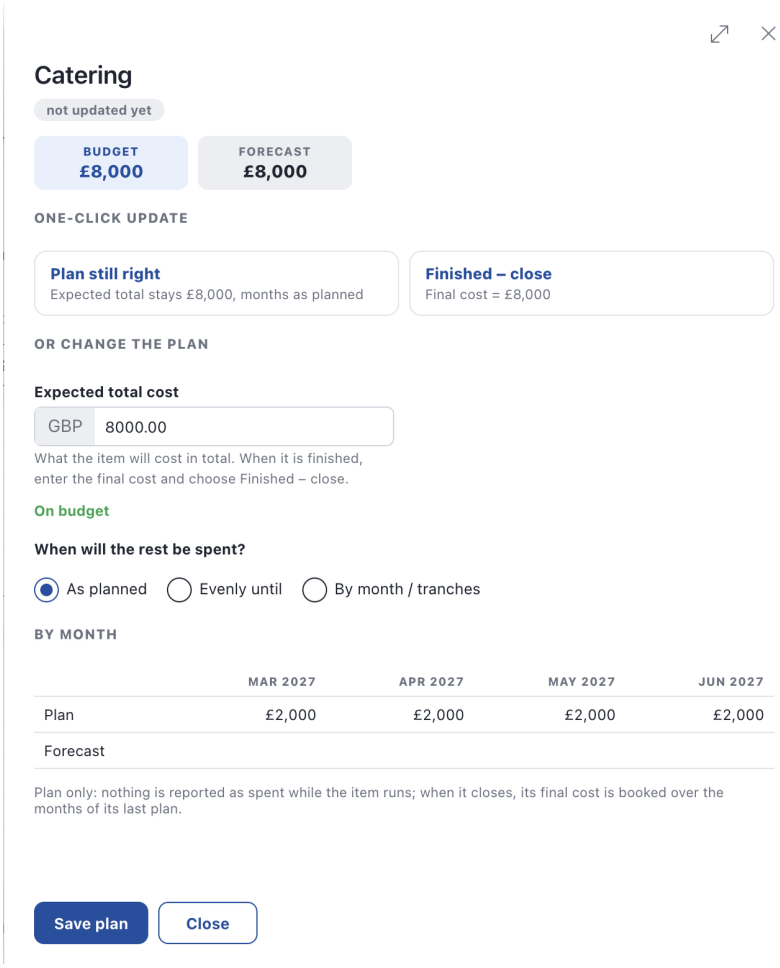



*Figure 16. The plan-only update panel.*

## Acting on the forecast

- **Ask all owners for an update**: a fresh round of updates, for example before a finance review.
- **Save forecast**: stores the current forecast as a version. Tick "submit for approval" if the sponsor should approve it, and use **Send to Finance** from Gates & versions.
- **Use contingency**: moves contingency into an item to cover a cost increase, with a reason.
- **Propose re-baseline**: for a change that contingency cannot cover. The sponsor approves it.

# 6. Full lifecycle: the Idea phase

A full-lifecycle project starts in **Idea**, with a rough order-of-magnitude estimate:

1. On the **Rough estimate** tab, add a few lines (by major deliverable or cost type), each with low, most likely and high. If you leave low or high blank, the project's accuracy band (by default −25 % / +75 %) fills it in.
2. Record at least one assumption under **Assumptions**.
3. Enter the **Funding to run Planning**: what the planning work itself costs.
4. Submit **Gate 1 – Approve to plan** from the Overview. The checklist shows what is missing, with Go to → links.

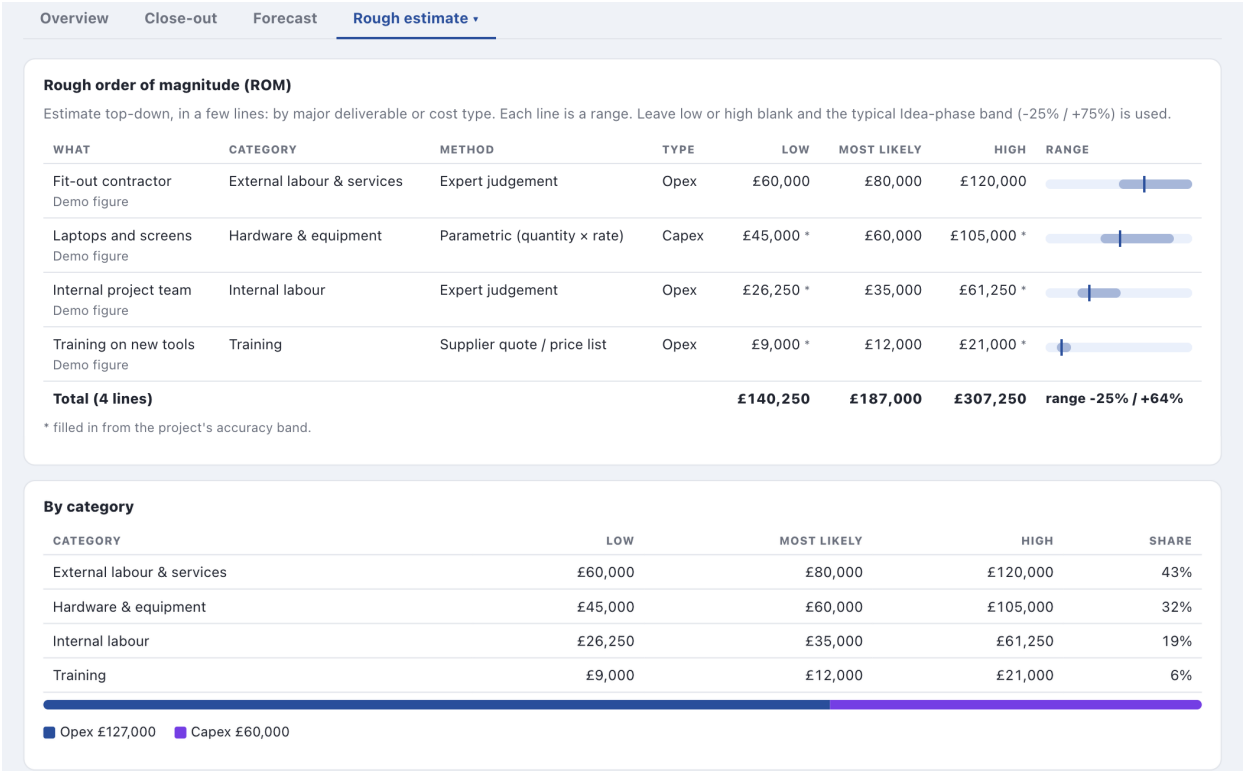



*Figure 17. A rough estimate: four lines with ranges, totals by category, Opex/Capex.*

# 7. Sponsor decisions

As sponsor you find every decision in **My Tasks → Decisions waiting for you**. Clicking a row opens the project on **Gates & versions**. Check the figures and the PM's note (**Show lines** lists every item), then **Approve** or **Don't approve**. A comment is needed to decline.

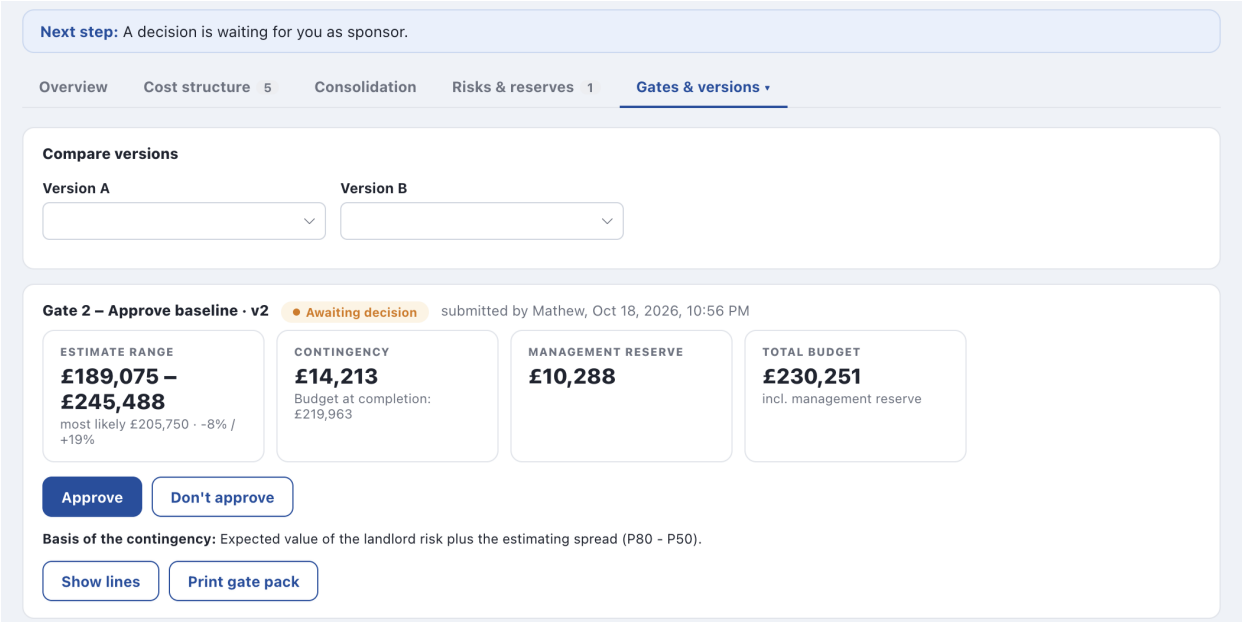



*Figure 18. Gates & versions: Gate 2 waits for the sponsor; Gate 1 was approved earlier.*

What you approve:

- **Gate 1**: funding to plan the project.
- **Gate 2**: the baseline (cost baseline + contingency + management reserve).
- **Forecasts** submitted for approval.
- **Re-baselines**.
- **Gate 3**: the final account.

**Print gate pack** gives a one-page PDF of any version, and **Compare versions** puts two versions side by side.

# 8. Closing the project

When the work is done, owners close their items with **Finished – close**. Then open the **Close-out** tab:

- the final account by item, with the reasons for any difference
- contingency used and released
- how good the estimates were, compared with each gate
- lessons learned for the next project

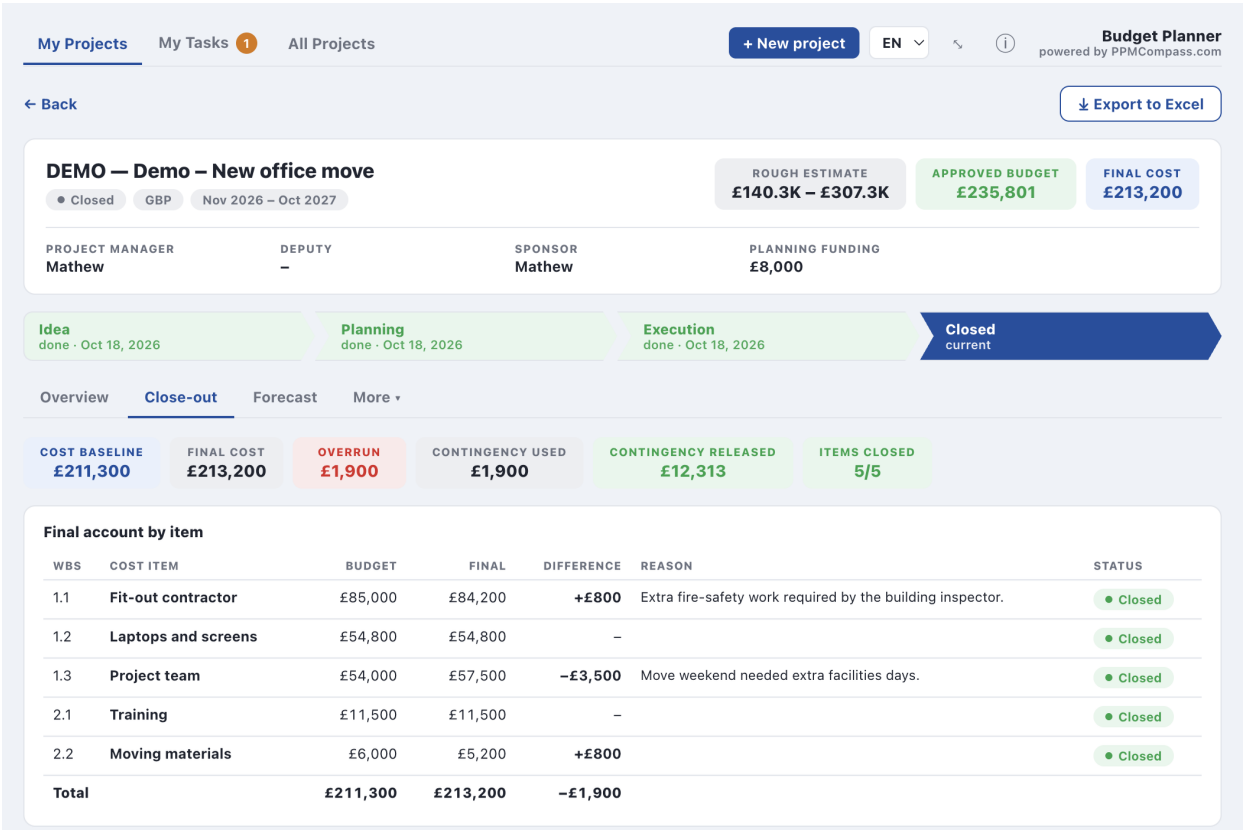



*Figure 19. Close-out: final cost against the baseline, item by item.*

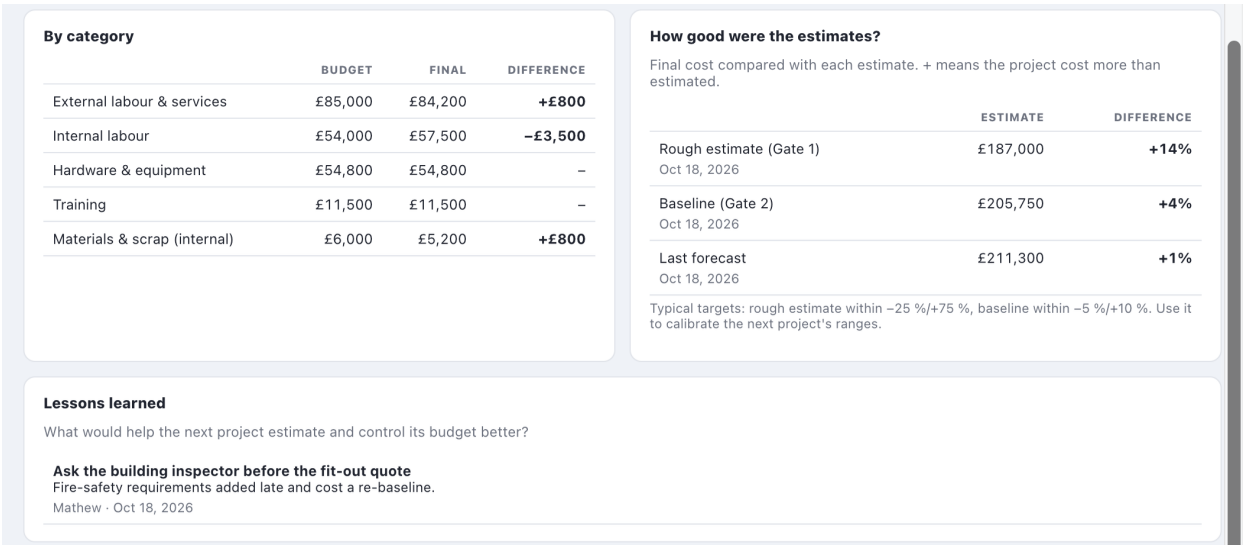



*Figure 20. How good were the estimates, and the lessons learned.*

Submit **Gate 3 – Accept final account** from the Overview; the sponsor accepts it and the project closes and becomes read-only. On a quick-start project without a sponsor, the card reads **Close the project** and you close it yourself, with an optional closing note (required if the final cost is above the baseline).

The **cone of uncertainty** on the Overview shows each gate version as a range; as the project matures, the range should narrow.

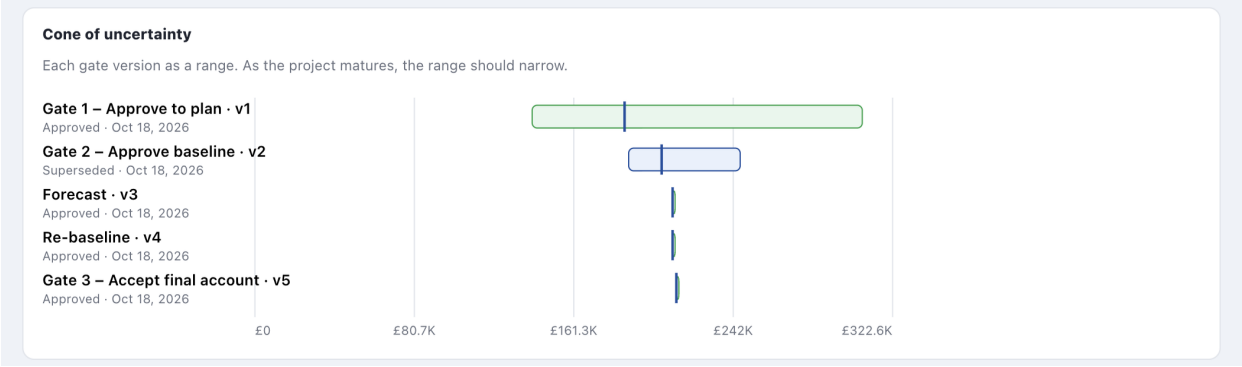



*Figure 21. The cone of uncertainty of a closed project.*

# 9. Quick reference

## Project manager

1. **+ New project**: choose quick start or full lifecycle, and actual spend or plan only.
2. Cost structure: add or paste items; estimate them yourself or give them owners and **Request estimates**.
3. Review submitted estimates: accept, adjust or return.
4. Check Consolidation; set contingency and management reserve.
5. **Approve budget** (quick start, no sponsor) or submit Gate 2.
6. Execution: keep the Forecast current; use contingency or propose a re-baseline when needed.
7. Close-out: check the final account, add lessons, close the project or submit Gate 3.

## Cost owner

1. Open **My Tasks** or the link in the PM's email.
2. Estimate: method, confidence, basis, months and phasing, then **Submit**.
3. During delivery: **On plan**, **Delayed – shift**, **Finished – close**, or type the figures. In plan-only projects: **Plan still right**, **Save plan** or **Finished – close**.

## Sponsor

- My Tasks → **Decisions waiting for you** → Gates & versions → **Approve** or **Don't approve**.

## Tips

- Month fields are pickers; Tab moves through every field.
- Panels have their own full-screen button (⤢) for more room.
- You can paste a row of months from Excel into the by-month phasing.
- Nothing is ever deleted: **Mark obsolete** keeps the history.
- **Export to Excel** on every project gives the full budget for Finance.

## For site owners

After every upgrade, open the Budget Planner page once and click **Update the lists** if the app asks for it. Nothing is deleted or rewritten; new columns are only added.