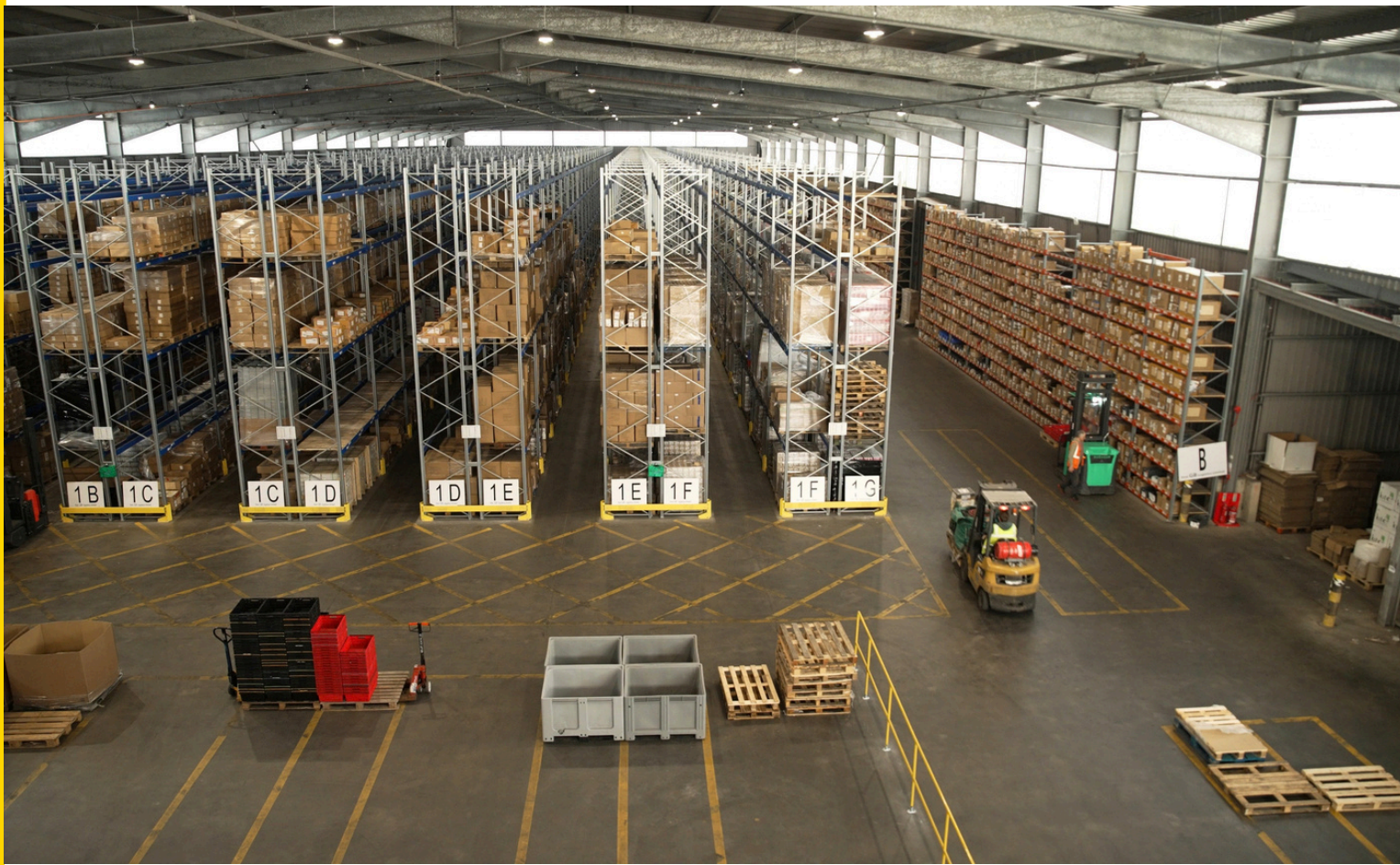


Turnkey Fit-out

Multiple contractors. One warehouse fit-out.
Find out how to keep it all on track.



Planning your warehouse fit-out

A guide to managing the full scope of works, protecting daily operations and agreeing responsibilities before work starts.

Managing multiple contractors means chasing updates, juggling schedules and sorting out problems between suppliers. During a warehouse fit-out, that work can quickly compete with the operation you are already responsible for running.

The project can stretch from warehouse racking and automation to office space, mezzanine floors, fire alarms, fire-rated walls, security systems, warehouse lighting, line-marking, CCTV and Wi-Fi. Each element needs its own specification, but it also needs to work with everything around it.

You might have a supplier for every package and still be the person joining it all together. When a layout or installation date changes, someone has to work out what it affects, agree a revised plan and explain the consequences for the budget.

Before appointing suppliers, establish who will coordinate the whole project. That starts with understanding the complete scope, the connections between systems and what your business needs to keep operating.

Look at the whole fit-out from the start

Start with how the finished building needs to function. Where will goods arrive, be stored, picked and dispatched? How will staff move between the warehouse, offices and welfare areas? What equipment, power and connectivity will those activities require?

CBRE's UK Real Estate Market Outlook 2026 reports that 70% of UK logistics space leased in 2025 was in new units, showing a strong preference for newer premises.

For businesses moving into these buildings, planning the complete fit-out is an essential step towards becoming operational.

Racking, automation, mezzanine floors, offices, fire alarms, fire-rated walls, security systems, warehouse lighting, line-marking, CCTV and Wi-Fi all need to be considered together. Agreeing their layout, power requirements and connections early helps establish the full scope before installation dates and budgets are confirmed.

Whether you are moving into a new unit or refurbishing an existing site, build the scope around every relevant part of the project:

- Warehouse fit-out: pallet racking, shelving, storage systems, packing areas and routes for people, stock and handling equipment.
- Automation: conveyors, automated storage or handling equipment, controls and connections to warehouse software.
- Mezzanine floors: their intended use, loading requirements, access and relationship with the space above and below.
- Office and welfare fit-out: partitions, meeting rooms, reception areas, kitchens, toilets, floor finishes, heating and ventilation.
- Fire protection: fire alarms and detection, fire-rated walls and doors, and any other protection required by the agreed design.
- Security and connectivity: CCTV, access control, intruder alarms, Wi-Fi, data cabling and network infrastructure.
- Building services: electrical distribution, lighting, plumbing and the services needed to support the completed operation.

The aim is to establish what must be designed, supplied, installed and tested, with a named owner for each part.

Give a experienced specialist ownership of the whole schedule

A list of installation dates tells you when contractors expect to arrive. It does not necessarily show what needs to be finished before each team can start.

Office partitions may need to be in place before electrical work can be completed. Automation installation may depend on the racking layout, available power and network connections. A mezzanine can affect the sequence of lighting, fire protection and services beneath it.

Ask for one overall programme that shows these dependencies, including surveys, design decisions, approvals and equipment lead times. It should identify who updates the programme and coordinates the contractors when something changes.

Agree how changes will reach you. You need to understand the effect on cost, completion and daily operations, with a clear decision to make. Otherwise, you risk becoming the person collecting different answers from each supplier.

Before you commit: If one contractor falls behind, who agrees the revised sequence with everyone else?

Plan the work around your operation

An installation team may only need an area for a few days. Your operation still needs somewhere for the stock, equipment and activity displaced during that time.

Mark out the working area and check what it removes from use. An aisle needed for racking installation might also be your main replenishment route. Work on office services could interrupt systems used by the warehouse team. A network change needs planning around the devices and processes that rely on it.

Before installation starts, agree:

- Which storage, picking, dispatch, production and office activities must continue during each stage.
- Where displaced stock, equipment and staff will move.
- How deliveries, contractors and your team will access the site.
- When power, Wi-Fi, security or other services can be interrupted, and what temporary arrangements are needed.
- How each completed area will be tested and handed back before the next phase begins.
- How much time is needed for staff training, stock transfer and restarting normal operations.

The constraints vary by business. Food and beverage teams may need to protect temperature-controlled storage and stock rotation. E-commerce operations need to account for dispatch cut-offs and seasonal volumes. A 3PL may have several clients with different service commitments, while a manufacturer needs reliable access to materials for production.

For a move into a new building, plan backwards from the date it needs to be operational. Installation completion should leave time for commissioning, staff familiarisation and stock transfer.

Before you commit: Can your team explain how orders or materials will move through the site during each stage?

Check what sits between the quotes

Two suppliers can price their own work accurately and still leave something unassigned. A mezzanine quote, for example, needs checking alongside the proposed lighting, fire protection, office accommodation and services for the space above and below it.

The same applies to automation. Confirm who provides the equipment, electrical supply, data connections, software integration and commissioning. Agree who will demonstrate that the complete system works before it is handed over.

Office layouts also affect heating and ventilation, sockets, data points, access control and fire alarm arrangements. Racking layouts need to be considered when planning CCTV views and Wi-Fi coverage. These decisions belong in the overall design, before each supplier finalises its package.

Bring the quotes together against a single list of requirements. Record what each supplier includes, what they exclude and who will provide the remaining work. Check responsibility for connections, testing, waste removal and making good after installation.

Include temporary arrangements in the budget. Moving stock, providing temporary services or bringing a contractor back to site still costs money, even when it sits outside the main installation price.

Before you commit: Is every requirement assigned to someone, with its cost included or clearly allowed for?

Agree what handover includes

Set out what you need before an area or system is accepted and brought into use. Depending on the scope, that could include completed testing, commissioning records, operating instructions, relevant certificates, drawings and training for your team.

Handover should cover the way the systems work together. Agree how automation will be demonstrated, how Wi-Fi coverage will be checked and how fire alarms, security systems and access controls will be tested by the relevant specialists.

Confirm who gathers the documents, who resolves outstanding work and who your team contacts if a problem appears after handover.

Also agree how changes will be authorised. If a design or site condition changes, ask for the cost and programme impact before approving additional work.

How Oakway brings the project together

Oakway acts as principal contractor, managing your turnkey warehouse fit-out from site survey to handover. We assess how your business operates and coordinate the full scope through one point of contact, covering warehouse and office fit-outs, racking, mezzanines, automation requirements, building services, fire protection, security and connectivity.

An Oakway transformation

Oakway delivered a full turnkey fit-out for [First GB Logistics](#), expanding usable space and creating new offices and welfare facilities.

- A two-tier floor arrangement increased floor area by 6.6%, providing offices and welfare facilities above the ground-floor workshop and reception, with minimal impact on storage capacity.
- Works included fire protection and alarms, Wi-Fi, heating and ventilation, interior finishes and plumbing.
- Oakway also handled the building control application.

You make the decisions that affect your business; we manage the coordination between contractors.

Questions to settle before work starts

- Does the scope cover all requirements, exclusions and supplier responsibilities?
- Who manages the programme, coordinates contractors and approves changes to cost and completion dates?
- How will operations continue during works, and what testing and handover are needed before use?

Resolve any unclear answers before work starts, while changes are easier and your team isn't waiting for the space.



Discuss your warehouse project with Oakway

Planning a move, expansion or refurbishment?

Talk to our team about your warehouse, office and operational requirements, and how the complete fit-out can be brought together in one coordinated project.

[Request a free warehouse space review](#)

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Sources: [Oakway - First GB Logistics](#) / [CBRE UK Logistics Outlook](#)