



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 March 2024

7.00 pm

**Rooms 201 and 202, Annexe, Town Hall,
Watford**

Contact

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For information about attending meetings please visit the [council's website](#).

Publication date: 5 March 2024

Committee Membership

Councillor A Grimston (Chair)

Councillor F Ezeifedi (Vice-Chair)

Councillors S Ahmed, M Devonish, P Hill, A Khan, P Kloss, L Nembhard MBE and T Osborn

Agenda

Part A - Open to the Public

1. Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership

2. Disclosure of interests (if any)

3. Minutes

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 21 February 2024 to be submitted and signed.

4. Other scrutiny meetings - minutes

The following scrutiny committees and task groups have met since the last meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Finance Scrutiny Committee ([6 March 2024](#))

5. Q3 Performance & Progress Report 2023/24 (Pages 4 - 72)

6. Call-in

To consider any executive decisions which have been called in by the requisite number of councillors.

7. Executive Decision Progress Report (Pages 73 - 78)

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to review the latest edition of the Executive Decision Progress Report and consider whether any further information is required.

8. Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Grimston, the Council's appointed representative to Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee to provide an update.

9. Work Programme (Pages 79 - 82)

The scrutiny committee is asked to review the current version of the work programme and consider any additional areas councillors wish to scrutinise.

Agenda Item 5

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Report to: | <i>Other (please specify)</i> |
| If other: | <i>Overview & Scrutiny Committee</i> |
| Date of meeting: | <i>13 March 2024</i> |
| Report author: | <i>Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services, Delivery Support Lead, Intelligence, Performance and Improvement Lead</i> |
| Report sponsor: | <i>Director of Partnerships</i> |
| Portfolio holder: | <i>Councillor Mark Watkin</i> |
| Report title: | <i>Performance and Progress Report – Q3 2023/24</i> |

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Following the Mayoral election in June 2022 Watford Borough Council launched its new Council Plan which set out an ambitious agenda for the town and the council. The Council Plan forms part of the organisation's strategic framework, which aims to ensure that the council delivers on its commitments. Underpinning the Council Plan is a two-year Delivery Plan and our key corporate strategies, which are supported by a suite of key performance indicators (KPIs). This allows the council to ensure that both projects, strategies and high-quality services continue to be delivered, and for action to be taken if areas of concern are identified. A critical part of this approach is regular reporting of the key elements of the council's strategic framework and day to day performance. This report, therefore, contains updates comprising:

- the Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2022-24;
- the external key performance indicators for Q3 of 2023/24.
- Key corporate strategies

1.2 The updates reflect the positive outcomes that have been achieved over the third quarter of 2023/24. The progress achieved since the last update to Cabinet is shown in the documents appended to this report (Appendices A, B and C).

1.3 The successful delivery of the commitments in the Council Plan 2022-26 is critical to ensuring we remain focused on what is important to Watford and we are recognised as an organisation that delivers on its promises. As such, the council has committed to reporting on progress against our key plans on a quarterly basis. This report forms the seventh of these updates since the approval of the new Council Plan.

2.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny Committee note:

2.1 The progress updates within this report relating to:

- the Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2022 -24 (Appendix A)
- the external key performance indicator results for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 (Appendix B)
- the council's key corporate strategies (Appendix C)

3.0 Report pathway

3.1 Next review body: *Not applicable:*

3.1.1 Indicative date: *Not applicable*

4.0 Contact Officer:

For further info contact: Liam Hornsby, Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services,

Email: liam.hornsby@watford.gov.uk

Reviewed and signed off by: Alan Gough, Director of Partnerships and Performance

5.0 Detailed proposal

5.1 The council has an ambitious agenda for Watford and recognises that a focused, and aligned, strategic framework is fundamental to the successful delivery of its plans for the town.

5.2 Following the Mayoral election in May 2022, the council reviewed and refreshed its strategic framework to better reflect these ambitions as well as the Mayor's Manifesto, local intelligence, community feedback and best practice. The renewed framework, comprising the council's key strategies and plans, confirms our focus on what is important to the town and its residents and that resources are allocated to its priority commitments.

5.3 A critical part of the successful delivery of the renewed framework is robust, and regular, monitoring and reporting of the associated plans including:

- the Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2022-24;
- Key performance indicators.
- Key corporate strategies

This report presents a progress update of the plans outlined in 5.3 and in associated Appendices (A, B and C).

5.4 A significant amount of progress has been achieved across all delivery areas. The direction set by the strategic framework has ensured services have clarity on where they need to concentrate, focus their energies and support the council's reputation as a council that gets things done and that delivers on what is important to the town.

5.5 Running throughout the council's progress is the strengthening of our organisational approach, governance and structure. This means the council has the essential building blocks in place to support all of our activities and commitments not just across these plans but also across all of our corporate work and effort. This has particularly focused on:

- making sure we have the right capacity to deliver on our priorities in the context of a challenging financial climate;
- a renewed emphasis on integrating how we work strategically;
- making sure the way we make our decisions is transparent, timely and supported by the relevant information; and
- our organisational culture, underpinned by our values and behaviours, is directed to our 'one team' approach, shared ownership of our corporate priorities and commitment to deliver

5.6 All of our plans and strategies are supported by a suite of key performance indicators, which have recently been reviewed and ensure that, as an organisation, we continue to provide high quality services to our residents, businesses and community.

5.7 The approach taken by the council in relation to the Council Plan and reporting was noted by the recent Local Government Association Peer Challenge as strong, providing a clear link between the Mayoral Manifesto and the Council Plan and ensuring that staff had a clear sense of purpose to delivery for the community.

6.0 Council Plan 2022-26 and Delivery Plan 2022-24

6.1 The new Council Plan 2022-26 was approved by Council in June 2022 as was the associated Delivery Plan 2022-24.

6.2 The Council Plan is designed to be strategic, high level and outward-facing, with an emphasis on outcome focused commitments based around four key themes:

- A greener, brighter future
- An inspiring, thriving and creative town

- A diverse happy and healthy town
- A council working for our community and serving our residents

Each theme has a number of areas of commitment under which specific projects and areas of work have been identified and articulated through the Delivery Plan 2022-24.

- 6.3 Whilst the Council Plan has a four-year perspective, the Delivery Plan has been developed to focus on key priorities to mid-2024. The 18-month perspective means that the Council can remain flexible and agile to respond to emerging and future challenges and opportunities over the life of the Council Plan. Over the next period, the council will develop the next iteration of its Delivery Plan to cover the period 2024-2026, up to the next scheduled Mayoral Election.
- 6.4 By reporting regularly to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress made by the organisation against the Council Plan and, particularly the Delivery Plan, we can ensure we are continuing to focus our resources on what is important to our town and community. It also provides transparency and clear accountability to our community.
- 6.5 The full report can be seen in Appendix A but some key highlights, by Council Plan theme, are included below:

A greener brighter future

- The planned works at Cassiobury Wetlands were completed in December 2023 and closure signs have been displayed to allow the wetlands to recover this winter. When the site is re-opened, visitors will be encouraged to visit, explore and engage with the nature reserve, whilst managing access to protect biodiversity. There will also be opportunities for community engagement with schools undertaking educational visits and volunteers maintaining habitats.
- All planned trees (200+) for 2023/24 have been planted ahead of schedule including 121 trees funded by £75k Treescape funding. A successful tree giveaway event, a joint initiative with HCC, was held at Woodside in December 2023 with over 9,000 trees collected and the ambition to plant an additional 20,000 by 2026 already met.
- £35k Garfield Weston funding has been successfully secured for the ongoing delivery of the Rediscovering River Colne Programme
- Stage 2 of the options and feasibility study for the Watford to Croxley Link is now complete and the report finalised. Stakeholder engagement will be undertaken and the findings published in the new year.

- The proposal for the Green Investment Bond Scheme which would have addressed the activity to ‘explore opportunities that will contribute financially to our green commitments and goals’ has been identified previously within these reports as challenging because of the economic climate. It has therefore been removed from the Delivery Plan for reporting purposes.

An inspiring, thriving and creative town

- Following a successful bid, £16m was provisionally awarded from the third round of the Levelling Up Fund from central government towards the delivery of the Innovation & Incubation Hub and the Colosseum refurbishment.
- The Watford Skills and Employment Plan has been drafted and is going through the approvals process. Once approved, West Herts College will coordinate the associated Action Plan and will bring together relevant skills and education providers to form the Watford Skills and Employment Group.
- A Business Feedback Group was convened for the first time in November 2023 to help with thoughts and comments on the new Place Brand. The group will also help with feedback on other council initiatives over the coming months.
- Construction of the Gateway at Watford Business Park is complete and a partial possession certificate has been issued for the buildings. There is already a good level of interest in the new facility. Heads of Terms (HoTs) for two units have been agreed and two further HoTs are currently underway. A café operator for the facility has been agreed. Practical Completion is expected in the next quarter.

A diverse, happy and healthy town

- Demand at the new crematorium continues to exceed all expectations and by mid-December, 223 funerals had been held for families to say farewell to their loved ones. Feedback from users (funeral directors and the bereaved) continue to be overwhelmingly positive. The new facility has been shortlisted for a Civic Trust award reflecting the council’s commitment to high quality design for the facility.
- The new Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework (VSCF), developed through extensive engagement with commissioned organisations, was approved by Cabinet in October 2023 alongside the proposed changes to funding from 2024/25. Service Level Agreements are being drafted for commissioned organisations.

- The council's Community Asset Strategy and Community Lettings Policy were approved by Cabinet in November 2023.
- Continuing engagement with health partners and representing the health and wellbeing needs of Watford residents, including attendance at flu and covid booster clinics and women's wellness session.
- Marked White Ribbon Day in November 2023 by delivering activities including training for council staff.
- The Community Engagement and Participation Strategy, which provides strategic direction and action planning on a council-wide approach to how we engage with our community, was approved.
- The council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy and Delivery Plan, which covers the council's role as an employer as well as a service provider and convener of place, were approved.

A council working for our community and serving our residents

- We are leading by example in the delivery of the council's Environmental Strategy with 23 colleagues attending the Climate Literacy training and receiving Carbon Literacy certification.
- The council's Continuous Improvement Framework, which formalises the process for continual improvement of our processes and service delivery, was approved by Cabinet in November 2023 and will contribute to the ongoing delivery of high quality services for residents, businesses and our community.
- The council's four-year ICT Strategy has been approved and ready for delivery. The Strategy will ensure we continue to deliver and keep pace with the rapidly changing landscape both within technology developments and across the cyber security threats, enabling the council to continue delivering digital but secure services to our residents.
- As part of our commitment to support the health and wellbeing of employees, Lunch and Learn sessions are planned for the next few months with the first session 'Winter Wellness' in January 2024.
- Successful 'Living the Values' event was held to further embed the council's six corporate values: Agile, Bold, Integrity, Respect, Trust and Working Together.

7.0 Key Performance Indicators

- 7.1 Our key performance indicators underpin our Council Plan by ensuring that the organisation continues to perform against a range of measures

relating to the services we provide to our residents, businesses and community.

7.2 The measures highlighted within this report have supported the delivery of good quality services by highlighting areas of good performance and, more importantly, under performance. This allows the council to ensure that services continue to offer a high-quality service to our residents and businesses, and for action to be taken if areas of concern are identified.

7.3 The attached report (Appendix B), therefore, shows the results for the current set of key performance indicators during the first quarter of the 2023/24 financial year. In summary, out of the 49 indicators, 48 results were received for Q3 with face to face satisfaction in the customer service centre to recommence in the refurbished Town Hall once complete. Of those 48 results, 44 have targets set. 25 KPIs exceeded targets and 16 were outside of the target. Three indicators were outside of the target but within tolerance. Some key highlights, by Council Plan theme, are included below:

A greener brighter future

- Both indicators related to fly-tipping exceeded the targets set.
- Net Zero Carbon footprint for Watford Leisure Centre has achieved a reduction of 3% this year to date. The target set for this KPI was a 3% reduction by the end of 2023/24, and this was achieved in Q2, primarily due to the installation of a pool cover. Both leisure centres have had pool covers installed as well as LED lighting. Customer service response times for both leisure centres remained high, with 100% of customer comments responded to within 48 hours.
- Levels of detritus were within target, and much improved compared with Q3 last year. Levels of graffiti were just outside of the target, however improved on this time last year. Levels of litter and fly-posting were outside of target and showed a small increase on Q3 the previous year. Fly posting levels remain low overall, with a significant reduction within Main Road areas. Issues involving estate agent boards and yellow developer signs contributed to the result.
- There were 27,953 journeys made on Beryl Bikes, contributing to a total of 93,186 journeys made since April 2023 - on track for the yearly target of 115,000.
- Both recycled and composted waste and residual household waste indicators were outside of the targets but within tolerance.

An inspiring, thriving and creative town

- Good results were recorded for the planning service in Q3, with all indicators related to the processing of planning applications exceeding

targets. See table below for detail on number of applications and processing time.

| | Total number received | Processed within timescale | Required an extension of time | Processed outside of timescale |
|-------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Major | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Minor | 38 | 32 | 6 | 0 |
| Other | 89 | 84 | 5 | 1 |

- The number of parking penalty charge notices (PCN) issued in Q3 was 9,892, a decrease compared with Q2. Hertfordshire County Council took over the management of the bus gate from the 1 November 2023, which has reduced the number of PCNs issued. There was one tribunal appeal in Q3 which was not contested.
- Watford Market occupancy rate continues to be above target at 93.50%.

A diverse, happy and healthy town

- There were five verified rough sleepers at the end of December, increased from three at the end of June. The number of rough sleepers in the town is currently low due to the Winter Shelter running at New Hope's The Haven until 31 March 2024. There are three rough sleepers who have not engaged with support offered. On average there are 11 people being housed at the winter night shelter, seven of whom have restricted eligibility.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation (TA) continues to increase with the most frequent reason for the loss of the last settled home being the end of a private rented tenancy. This has increased by 140% compared with April to December 2022. Settled housing move-on options are challenging. It is incredibly difficult to find affordable private rented accommodation. For example, only one private rented home was let to a homeless household in 2023-24 Q3 compared with six in the same period last year. During the quarter there were 98 lettings of housing association homes, which is a higher number of lettings than usual and included the Yeatman Court development. This development enabled a small reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation for a few weeks. However, going forward there are delays in the expected completion of new affordable home developments which compounds the challenge for the Housing service.
- The number of households placed in temporary accommodation out of area has increased significantly since Q2. There are a number of reasons for this including: the number of households presenting as homeless has increased; all local authorities are facing the same homelessness pressures and are competing for a limited pool of temporary accommodation units, comprising of self-contained homes and shared rooms, which results in the service having to take TA units wherever they are available.

- The percentage of homeless relief cases closed with a successful outcome was 67%, exceeding the 60% target and improving on Q2. This KPI measures the outcomes for those clients whose relief duty has been closed this quarter. Relief cases include households the council has provided temporary accommodation for because they are homeless. The service has continued to exceed the target of 60% despite the dwindling supply of homes from housing associations and little availability of affordable private rented accommodation available locally for these households to move on.
- The percentage of successful homeless preventions also showed improvement since Q2 and exceeded the 60% target at 74%. Prevention cases involve households who are not yet homeless, so the council works with them to source alternative homes before they become actually homeless.
- There were 2 new homes for social rent handed over in Q3. The 2 properties were Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) social rent lettings. LAHF properties are second hand purchases, not new developments. The ambition is 120 new homes by 2026. This year, 27 properties in total have been handed over for social rent. A full report on progress on this KPI will be provided in Q4.
- Q3 results were on track for both Central and Woodside Leisure centre usage. There was a small dip in throughput, membership and swimming lesson take up, causing these indicators to be outside the quarterly target, however this an expected trend over the Christmas period. Swimming lesson take up was slightly lower than expected but not of concern.
- Customer satisfaction with sports and leisure centres remained high with 95% of customers rating the service at 7 or above (out of 10). Contract Managers continue to promote an open-door policy for any queries and have customer forums at least twice a year.

A council working for our community and serving our residents

- Looking at customer experience measures, self-service levels were above target at 79%, the highest result achieved this year. The number of telephone calls answered has improved since Q2 and is now exceeding the target. Telephone waiting time to the CSC has seen a significant jump since Q2, going from below target due to staffing challenges over the summer period, to well within target in Q3.
- The FOI response within timescales was 92%. Much improved on Q2 (78%) but still outside the 100% target.
- The result for the indicator relating to staff sickness was within target. Numbers of long and short-term sickness remained similar to Q2.
- Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates collection are both on track to be within target at the end of the year, and similar to results this time last year. Percentage of Housing benefit classified as 'LA error' is 0.29% higher than

this time last year due to one large LA error paid in Q1, however it has been reducing steadily throughout the year as expected and is currently below the target threshold.

- The number of customers signed up to digital/email as preferred contact channel improved in Q3 to 77%. Complaints response time showed slight improvement at 68% compared with Q1 (65%). New functionality in the Firmstep complaints module was implemented in November that will ask officers to add a reason why a complaint has been answered late. It is hoped this will enable better insight as to how this result can be improved. A breakdown reasons for late responses will be provided in the Q4 reporting.
- Several new KPI's related to Customer satisfaction by contact channel were added as part of the KPI review, and the metrics are based around the percentage of customers who have given a positive rating of the service received. The contact channels assessed in Q3 were website, telephone and digital. Customer satisfaction for digital channels has dropped slightly since Q2, and is now just outside of target, with 86% of customers giving the service a positive rating. Telephone satisfaction also has dropped in Q3 (79%) when compared with Q2 (97%). The CSC went live with a new SMS feedback channel in October. This means *all* customers that called via a mobile phone were given the opportunity to leave feedback. It has been noted, however, that feedback received since going live with SMS has been more constructive, and this is shared with all services during regular monthly meetings, enabling improvements where needed. Website satisfaction remained steady at 43% - the lowest rating of all channels measured. Most poor ratings related to customers using the website to pay a Penalty Charge Notice. A review of all parking content of the website took place during Q3, and changes will be implemented in Q4, which will hopefully result in improvement in this area.
- The result for speed of processing Housing Benefit (HB) Claims is an average of 6 days, 1 day within target and an improvement on Q2. The service receives very few HB claims, so it only takes a couple of claims to take the maximum amount of time given to process (30 days) for it to impact on processing times. The service continues to closely monitor each new Housing Benefit claim received and actively chase customers several times a week to encourage them to supply the documentation required to process their claim.
- The result for the average time to process a change of circumstances was 6 days. An improvement on Q2 and within target.

8.0 Key Council Strategies

- 8.1 Aligned to the Council Plan are a number of key strategies which guide the organisation's delivery of services in a number of specific areas. These strategies have each been approved individually by Cabinet and, in line with our ambition to strengthen delivery across the council, updates on these

strategies are included as part of this quarterly Performance and Progress report.

- 8.2 These are attached at Appendix C and are intended to give an overview of progress over the past period, highlight the key activities for the next period and provide key pieces of information about the particular area of delivery.

9.0 Implications

9.1 Financial

9.1.1 When setting the budget for 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2026/27, Portfolio Holders agreed a set of budget principles to help guide the identification of savings. The first of these principles was to ‘prioritise our Council Plan commitments when we make financial and budget decisions.’ The Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy is therefore aligned with the Council Plan.

9.1.2 The Council’s budget underpins the whole of the Council Plan and Delivery Plan, ensuring that appropriate financial resources are available to meet the commitments.

9.1.3 The Chief Finance Officer comments that there are no further financial implications arising from the contents of this report.

9.2 Legal issues (Monitoring Officer)

9.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the Council Plan is one of the policy framework documents listed in the constitution that has to be approved by Council. The plan was approved by Council on 13 June 2022.

10.0 Risks

| Nature of risk | Consequence | Suggested control measure | Response (treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer) | Risk rating (combination of severity and likelihood) |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Slippage on delivery of the Council Plan | Failure to deliver our commitments resulting in poorer outcomes for | Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny | Treat | 3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6 |

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|-------|-----------------------------------|
| | our town and residents. Potential impact on the reputation of the Council. | Robust project and programme management | | |
| Failure to recognise milestones / completion of commitments | Lost opportunity to celebrate success internally and externally | Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Robust project and programme management Clear communication of milestones / achievements | Treat | 3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6 |
| Failure to promote and recognise the Council's strategic approach and culture that is focused on delivery and outcomes | Lost opportunity to embed a renewed strategic approach and culture that ensures Watford BC remains a high performing, innovative and agile organisation | Regular, robust and accurate reports for Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny that is owned across service areas Linking delivery to staff and team objectives | Treat | 3 (severity) x 1 (likelihood) = 3 |
| Slippage on delivery of the key strategies | Failure to deliver our commitments to staff potentially resulting in failure to deliver our Council Plan. | Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny | Treat | 3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|-------|-----------------------------------|
| | | Robust project and programme management. | | |
| Failure to scrutinise organisational performance | Potential for performance to slip with consequences for quality of service delivery | Robust scrutiny and challenge | Treat | 3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6 |
| Failure to respond to issues with organisational performance | Potential for issues with performance not to be addressed, and for poor performance to continue | Response to issues identified monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Leadership Board and Portfolio Holders. | Treat | 3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6 |
| Failure to provide transparency over organisational performance | Lack of understanding and trust related to organisational performance, particularly where performance is below the standard expected. | Ensure KPIs have sufficient commentary explaining the context around the quarterly results. Ensure portfolio holders have regular opportunities to review and discuss organisation performance. | Treat | 3 (severity) x 2 (likelihood) = 6 |

11.0 Equalities and Human Rights

11.1 An Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) was developed for the Council Plan 2022-2026. This is consistently reviewed based on up-to-date information and data the council receives to ensure the council meets its public sector equalities under the s149 (1) of the Equality Act 2010.

12.0 Data Protection Impact Assessment

12.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not

required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

13.0 Sustainability

13.1 The council's commitment to sustainability runs through the Council Plan and a range of actions to deliver our climate change commitments are identified within the Delivery Plan. These range from pushing forward with delivering greener ways to travel in Watford to promoting Watford's transition to a low-carbon economy. Indeed, an entire theme is devoted to delivering 'a brighter, greener future' with a whole range of activities planned to meet our sustainability commitments.

14.0 People Implications

14.1 The Council Plan sets the Council's strategic direction, and is, therefore, a key document for staff, enabling them to understand our commitments and priorities and allowing them to contribute fully to our success and achievements. As the overarching plan for the Council, it provides the framework for all our strategies and policies and links, through the Delivery Plan, to service business plans and individual staff objectives and outcomes. The principles demonstrate how we go about our work and are an important guide for staff on the Council's expectations recognising it is not just what we deliver but how we deliver that is a measure of our organisational culture.

15.0 Community Safety/Crime and Disorder

15.1 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the Council to give due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of its functions on crime and disorder in its area and to do all it reasonably can to prevent these. Our theme: A diverse, happy and healthy town, underpins our commitment to 'promote our welcoming and respectful town' and the associated action to 'ensure everyone feels welcome, included and safe in Watford' and to 'establish our commitment to the wellbeing of women and girls' by working with partners and using our statutory powers.

16.0 Next steps

16.1 In order to improve transparency of our corporate performance, a designated web page has been created providing a single location for the Council Plan 2022-26, Delivery Plan 2022-24 and key strategies to be publicly accessible. Alongside these strategies, the Performance and Progress reports will also be available.

17.0 Appendices

- Appendix A –Delivery Plan 2022-24 progress update
- Appendix B –Key Performance Indicators update Q3 2023-24
- Appendix C1 – Economic Growth Strategy 2022-26
- Appendix C2 – Customer Experience Strategy 2022-26
- Appendix C3 – Sustainability Strategy 2023-30
- Appendix C4 – Transforming Travel in Watford Strategy
- Appendix C5 – Community Engagement and Participation Strategy 2023-26
- Appendix C6 - Cultural Strategy 2018-25

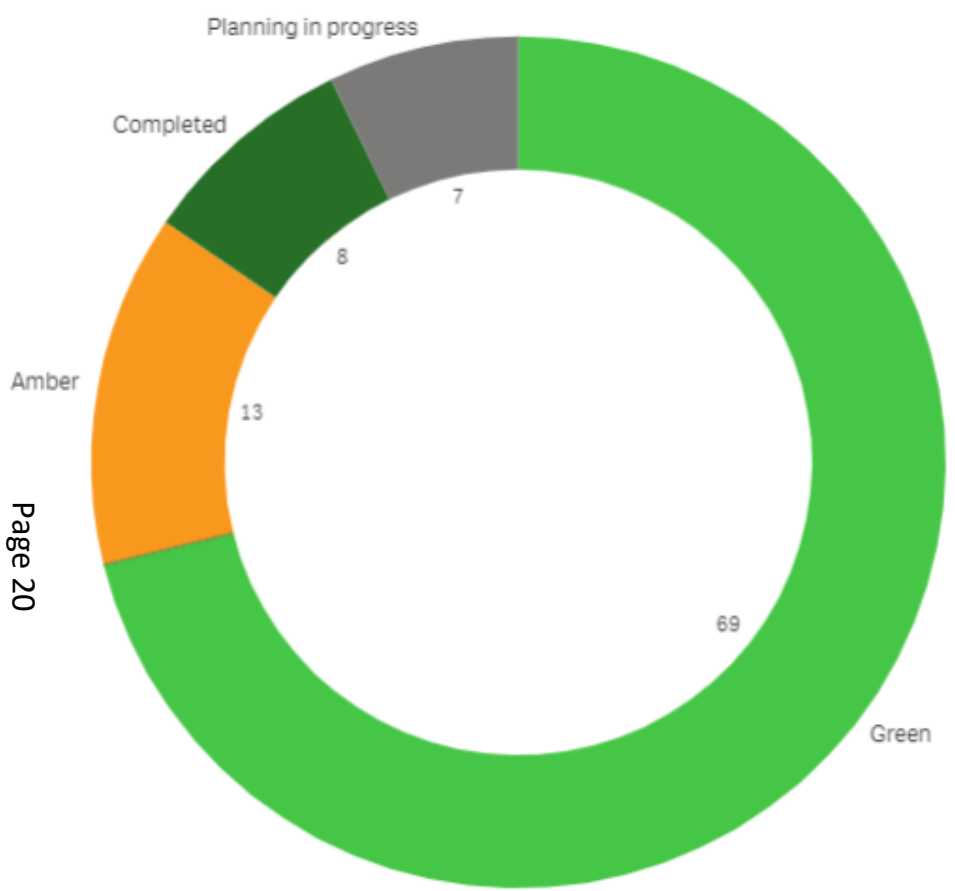
18.0 Background papers

- Watford Borough Council: Council Plan 2022-26
- Watford Borough Council: Delivery Plan 2024-26
- Economic Growth Strategy 2022-26
- Customer Experience Strategy 2022-26
- Sustainability Strategy 2023-30
- Transforming Travel in Watford Strategy
- Community Engagement and Participation Strategy 2023-26
- Cultural Strategy 2018-25



Delivery Plan Progress Update

Delivery Plan Overview

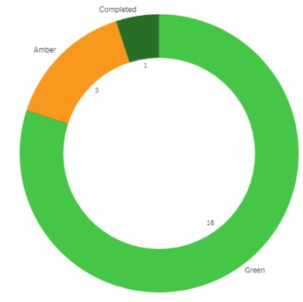


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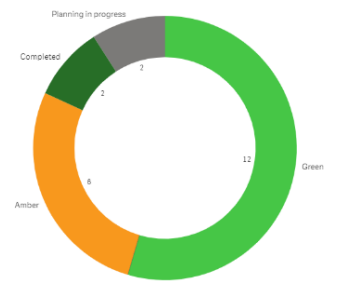
Key

- Green** – Completed
- Green** – On track
- Amber** – Potential Risks / Some uncertainty
- Red** – Challenges

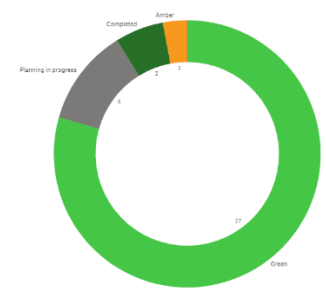
Council Plan Theme - A greener, brighter future



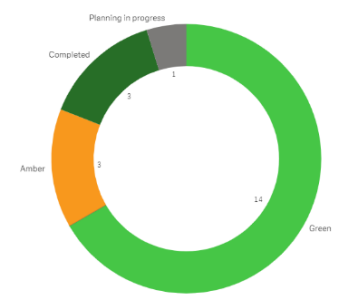
Council Plan Theme - An inspiring, thriving and creative town



Council Plan Theme - A diverse, happy and healthy town

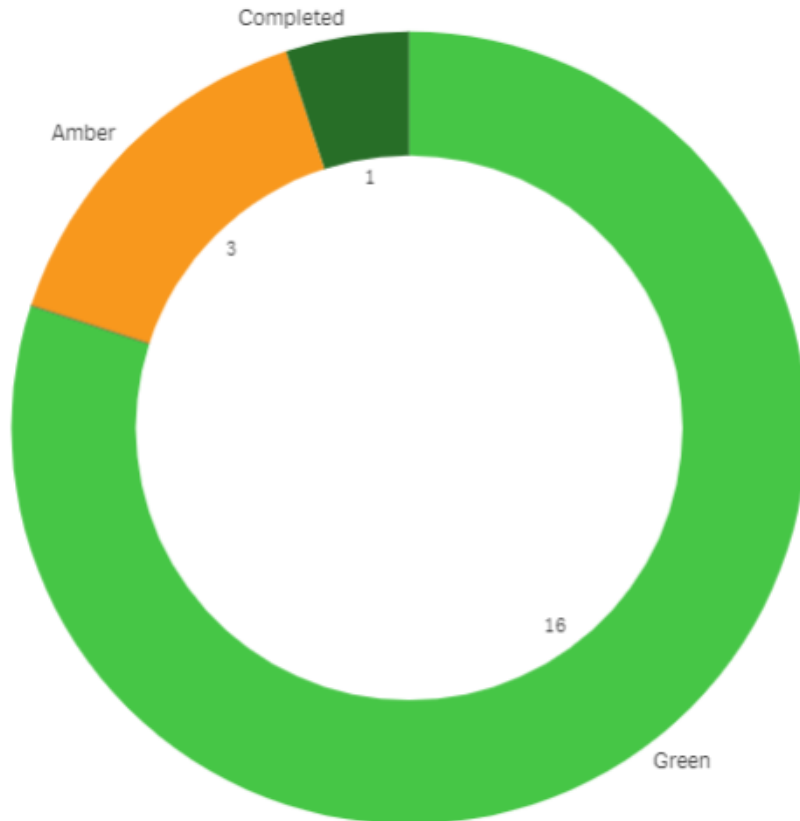


Council Plan Theme - A Council working for our community and serving our residents



THEME: A greener brighter future

Overview



Key achievements over this period

- The planned works at Cassiobury Wetlands were completed in December 2023 and closure signs have been displayed to allow the wetlands to recover this winter. When the site is re-opened, visitors will be encouraged to visit, explore and engage with the nature reserve, whilst managing access to protect biodiversity. There will also be opportunities for community engagement with schools undertaking educational visits and volunteers maintaining habitats.
- All planned trees (200+) for 2023/24 planted ahead of schedule including 121 trees funded by £75k Treescape funding. Successful tree giveaway event held at Woodside in December 2023, a joint initiative with HCC, with over 9000 trees collected.
- £35k Garfield Weston funding has been successfully secured for delivery of the Rediscovering River Colne Programme
- Stage 2 of the options and feasibility study for the Watford to Croxley Link is now complete and the draft report finalised. Stakeholder engagement will be undertaken and the findings published in the new year.

| Commitment | Activity | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline |
|---|--|--------------|----------|---|
| <p>Encourage people to make greener travel choices, reducing congestion and improving the health and wellbeing of the town</p> | <p>1. Investigate greener travel and transport solutions that work for Watford</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>Through our ambitious Transforming Travel in Watford (TTIW) Strategy we have continued to make steady progress in our investigation for a low-carbon transport hub in the town centre. The initiative will support the Strategy's overall objectives including reducing congestion and providing green ways of travel. In this quarter we appointed agents to undertake soft market testing and prepared a strategy for the proposed low-carbon transport hub site. We are working with the council to refine the pre app and will re-submit the application for a formal response.</p> <p>In the next quarter we will present the draft masterplan to Herts County Council (HCC).</p> |
| | <p>2. Promote ways of to travel that support people make greener choices</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>We are continuing to explore, progress and deliver initiatives that will provide residents with options other than using their own cars for short and long journeys through the TTIW Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The development of the new Traffic Regulation Orders (the legal mechanism for making changes on the highway) relating to the new Car Club is underway and engagement activities with residents in the immediate areas has been completed. The TRO will be completed and sealed in the next quarter, followed by signs and lines works and implementation of the EV charging infrastructure. - The Active and Safer Travel Team at HCC met with The Grove Academy in this quarter to discuss the development of a School Travel Plan. <p>Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Transforming Travel in Watford Strategy is included within Appendix C4.</p> |
| | <p>3. Champion sustainable travel initiatives and greener vehicles options</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>Our electric charging point installations programme, funded by an On-Street Residential Chargepoint scheme (ORCS) grant, is progressing with phases 1, 2 and 3 now complete. We are half-way through the programme and working to obtain permissions for the next phase of delivery before reconvening the programme in early 2024. The funders are satisfied with programme delivery to date and will be releasing the 25% of the fund being held on completion of the programme. We are actively progressing a third ORCS bid for 25 new sites which is subject to member approval.</p> <p>HCC's Active Travel Team have delivered a trial electric cargo bike to Watford Football Club through their Cargo Bike pilot scheme. The scheme encourages local businesses and charities to swap their vehicles for more ecofriendly e-cargo bikes, giving them an opportunity 'to try before they buy'.</p> |

| Commitment | Activity | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline | |
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| | 4. Work with our partners to improve our cycling and walking network, including designing and implementing a green loop | We will work with Hertfordshire County Council and our cycling and walking communities to improve the cycling and walking network across our town so more people choose to cycle and walk. | Green | ↔ | We are progressing plans to improve our cycling and walking networks. We are reviewing priority areas for the Green Loop scheme through consultation and engagement with key stakeholders, and where possible we will ensure that any planned works are aligned with existing improvement plans for the borough. |
| | 5. Champion proposals for a sustainable transport option for Watford Junction to Croxley | We will work closely with Hertfordshire County Council on the Watford to Croxley Link, examining the feasibility of options to secure the best transport system for our town, offering greater choice for our residents, visitors and commuters to travel sustainably. | Stage 2 Complete | ↔ | Stage 2 of the options and feasibility study for the Watford to Croxley Link is now complete and the report has been finalised. The next stage is to undertake stakeholder engagement, publish the findings in the new year and agree the next steps with partners. |
| Promote improvements to Watford's biodiversity to enhance the range of habitats, plants and wildlife in the town | 6. Set out our commitments to improving Watford's biodiversity | We will develop our Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan, recognising the importance of our range of habitats across the town and setting out how we will improve and enhance these for future generations. | Green | ↔ | The development of our Biodiversity Strategy has been aligned to our emerging Green Spaces Strategy and HCC's Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The first principles report on the Biodiversity Duty, which maps out the path for the Biodiversity Strategy development, was approved by Cabinet in November 2023. A further report on Biodiversity Net Gain will be reviewed by Portfolio Holders in February 2024. The new Green Spaces Strategy is progressing and procurement for consultancy is currently underway. A range of work is also underway to support our commitment to biodiversity including improvements to the River Colne, Cassiobury Park Wetlands and our Tree Planting Programme. |
| | 7. Enhance and extend our green canopy, through our proactive tree planting initiative | We will work with our community to plant 20,000 trees across the town by 2026, increasing our green canopy, making Watford a more pleasant place to live, work and enjoy recreation time. | Green | ↔ | All planned trees (200+) for 2023/24 have been planted ahead of schedule including 121 trees funded by £75k Treescape funding. A further 15 trees have been planted by Hertfordshire County Council whilst the tree giveaway event, a joint initiative with HCC held at Woodside in December 2023, was successful with over 9,000 trees collected. In the past three years over 20,000 trees have been planted by the council and residents via the tree giveaway initiative, meeting this commitment earlier than planned. |
| | 8. Rediscover the River Colne to enhance the river, the river corridor, as a place for our community to enjoy | We will improve the River Colne through Watford to make it a more appealing place for local people to enjoy and a better environment for plants and wildlife to flourish. | Amber | ↔ | The Rediscover River Colne programme saw some improvement in the last quarter following the delays reported in the last quarter's report. In light of the growing delay in obtaining the EA license, a reduced scope to allow works to proceed at Timberlake Allotments this winter was agreed. The new permit was submitted to the EA and they have confirmed that they now have all the necessary information to start determining the permit application. Once we receive the permit along with agreement on the approach for the main permit for Waterfield and Radlett Road, this will allow the status to return to green. |

| Commitment | Activity | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline |
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| | | | | <p>We rely on volunteers to deliver the environmental monitoring workstream and in recognition of this we held a volunteer 'thank you' evening which was attended by the Mayor and Portfolio Holder.</p> <p>Through our engagement workstream, two Junior River Warden sessions at Bushey Federation School were held in November 2023, a Travelling Tales session with Bushey House was held in October 2023 and a new seasonal e-newsletter has been circulated</p> <p>The first podcast recorded through the Tales of the River workstream is ready for release and the second podcast has been recorded. West Herts College finalists have been selected to record a video and TikTok.</p> |
| 9. Reinvigorate the Cassiobury Wetlands as an important part of our natural environment | We will improve the wetland and habitat of the former watercress beds on the River Gade in Cassiobury Park to enhance biodiversity, water quality and preserve and protect relevant related historical features. | Green | ↔ | The planned works at Cassiobury Wetlands were completed in December 2023 and closure signs have been displayed to allow the wetlands to recover this winter. We are now working with Wetland designers and other interested parties to agree and develop the site management and maintenance plan to ensure that this new site for Watford residents and visitors remains sustainable. The outcome of a £50k funding application to the EA should be confirmed in the next quarter. |
| 10. Celebrate and enhance Whippendell Woods as a site of special scientific interest | We will protect Whippendell Woods, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), in order to preserve its 'favourable condition' status. | Green | ↔ | <p>In line with our commitment to sustainability, works remain ongoing in Whippendell Woods. To preserve the SSSI status of Whippendell Woods we are working with Bike Park Chilterns, a Community Interest Company, to find a new location for the unofficial mountain bike trail that had been in use in the woodlands.</p> <p>A management plan is being developed for the woods with works planned for winter 23/24 including Ash Diebacks work which will commence in January 2024.</p> <p>A countryside Stewardship agreement for 2024-2029 has been agreed for the site.</p> |
| 11. Promote healthy and sustainable gardening across the town | We will continue compost give-aways using our green waste recycling to bring back the organic material as free, nutrient-rich compost for Watford residents to grow plants and vegetables. | Green | ↔ | In line with our commitment to promote healthy and sustainable gardening across the town, the council's popular Compost Giveaway will continue on an annual basis, encouraging and supporting our residents to grow plants and vegetables. The tree giveaway will take place every 2 years with the latest event completed in December 2023 resulting in the giveaway of 9,000 trees. |
| 12. Provide clear guidance on improving biodiversity in the town | We will set out guidance for developers on how to improve and enhance biodiversity in developments so they contribute to the town's goals for better habitats and environmental diversity | Green | ↔ | The requirement for a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for how developers can contribute to our vision and ambition to enhance biodiversity across the town has been superseded by recent legislation. An alternative approach, such as an implementation note to assist decision making, is being progressed. |

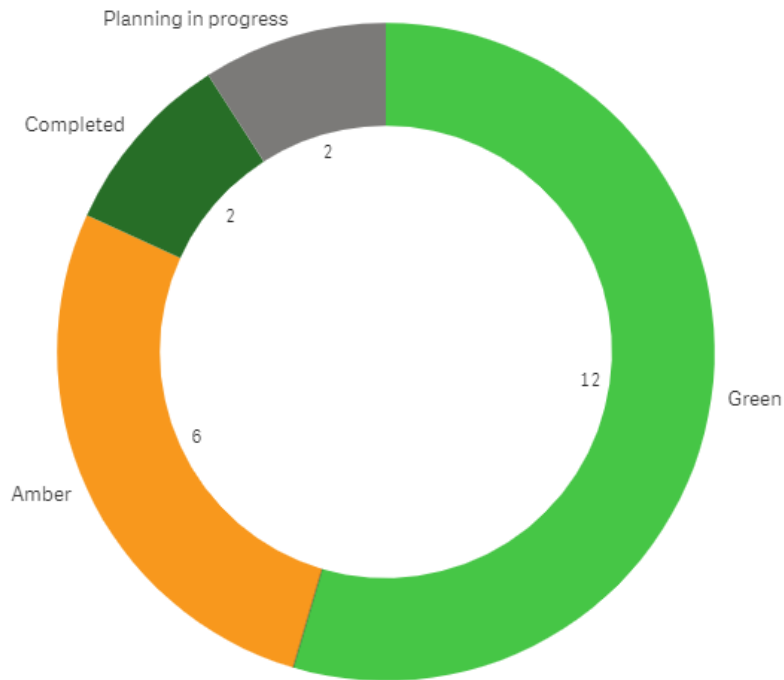
| Commitment | Activity | | BRAG ¹ Rating | Trend | Headline |
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| <p>Work alongside our community and businesses to find the right ways to reach net carbon neutral, seeking not just to learn from others but to explore innovative solutions that will work for Watford</p> | 13. Develop and implement our new Sustainability Strategy | We will work with our community and businesses to develop and implement our new Sustainability Strategy, now called Watford's Environmental Strategy: addressing the climate and ecological emergency, which will set out how together, we can contribute to our target to be a net carbon neutral borough by 2030. | Green | ↔ | <p>Now that the council's Environment Strategy is approved, delivery is in progress via a designated Sustainability Programme, however the commitment to achieve net carbon zero by 2030 and the promotion and enhancement of sustainability is a key objective in other projects and programmes such as the River Colne and Town Hall Quarter Programmes.</p> <p>Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Environment Strategy is included within Appendix C3.</p> |
| | 14. Prepare for legislative changes to help protect our environment | We will respond to the requirements of the Environment Act 2021 to ensure we deliver on our role in improving air quality, tackling waste, improving biodiversity and making other environmental improvements. | Green | ↔ | <p>The council's Environmental Strategy, which takes into account the requirement of the Environment Act 2021 and sets out our ambition and plan for achieving new carbon zero by 2030 was adopted in March 2023, and delivery is in progress.</p> <p>Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Sustainability Strategy is included within Appendix C3.</p> |
| | 15. Investigate generating energy from renewable sources | We will examine including sustainable energy generation in council developments so we lead by example and demonstrate how it can work effectively. | Green | ↔ | <p>Following completion of the extensive decarbonisation works to the Town Hall and Colosseum, we have now successfully appointed sustainability consultants to undertake a review of council assets and to identify further opportunities for sustainability measures, as well as external funding opportunities. A final report is expected by spring 2024.</p> <p>In November 2023 we submitted a Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme bid to fund works to three of the council's community buildings.</p> |
| | 16. Improve the energy performance of the Town Hall and Watford Colosseum | We will carry out extensive de-carbonisation works to our Town Hall and Colosseum to improve their energy efficiency and ensure they have a reduced carbon footprint. | Amber | ↔ | <p>The decarbonisation work and fabric repairs to the Town Hall and Colosseum, funded by the £3m central government grant, is now complete. As part of the initiative, the council has installed 144 state-of-the-art photovoltaic (PV) panels on the roof of the Town Hall and 36 on the Colosseum to harness renewable energy, reducing the reliance on traditional power sources. It is expected to save 24 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per year. In addition a 30% saving in gas bills and carbon emissions is expected due to the new cavity wall insulation and a further 166-tonne annual saving in carbon through the replacement of lights with LED equivalents and installation of new roof insulation.</p> <p>The activity is reporting an amber status due to the delay in completing the final windows snagging and final inspections. It is expected that these will be completed over the next quarter.</p> |

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| | 17. Ensure the council's own buildings are energy efficient | We will explore ways to improve the energy performance of all properties within our portfolio. | Green | ↔ | <p>In line with our ambition to lead by example, we have appointed a consultant to assist in the data collection and assessment of energy usage at Croxley Business Park and to act as a case study for potential wider roll out across the Council.</p> <p>We have also appointed a sustainability consultant for works to improve the energy efficiency of our operational and community estate and the report on WBC assets is due in January 2024.</p> <p>Our application for PSDS funding for the planning year 2024/25 to improve the energy efficiency of our operational and community properties was not successful however we have submitted an application for round 4 funding.</p> |
| | 18. Promote sustainable construction in our own developments | We will actively encourage the use of sustainable materials in any of our new developments so we can role model to others who develop in our town. | Amber | ↔ | <p>As with the Town Hall and the Colosseum, the council is continuing to encourage the use of sustainable materials in new developments with a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good' targeted for direct development of Inspire (Gateway Zone) at Watford Business Park and Riverwell Industrial Zone North. We have completed the EPC assessments across our community estate and are assessing opportunities to further improve EPC bands at Croxley and across our other investment portfolio. We are also working with joint venture partners to assess and implement the most efficient and viable energy solutions in residential projects.</p> <p>The amber rating reflects viability challenges which will reduce our ability to consider additional works over and above the new set of building regulations that came into force in July 2023. This will also put further onus on developers and contractors to improve the energy efficiency of residential properties.</p> |
| Encourage residents and businesses to recycle more, reusing materials and reducing waste and what they throw away | 19. Increase how much our residents recycle and reduce the waste we throw away as a town | We will build on the success of our waste and recycling scheme to boost household recycling rates across the borough, introducing the opportunity for food waste collections for all households and setting targets that reflect our sustainability ambitions. | Green | ↔ | <p>The waste and recycling service changes introduced in 2020 has resulted in an increase of recycling rates for the council. The council and its contractor will strive to deliver the new target for recycling rates over the next 4 years. The food waste collection in flats programme went live on 16 October 2023 in some blocks of flats in the borough where the service is being used by the residents. The majority of flats who have requested food waste collection will be delivered by end of March 2024.</p> <p>Single-use plastic takeaway cutlery/containers was banned from October 2023 and an audit of market providers indicates that compliance is relatively high.</p> <p>The government has issued new guidance on simpler recycling which will bring consistency in the materials that are collected for recycling across England.</p> |

| Commitment | Activity | BRAG ¹ Rating | Trend | Headline | |
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| | 20. Support our partners to reduce waste and increase recycling | We will work with our partners, including our environmental services provider and leisure services provider to deliver the next step change in reducing waste and increasing recycling, particularly through campaigns and changing behaviours. | Green | ↔ | <p>We are working with our key contractors across the borough, such as Watford Market and leisure centres, to reduce the amount of waste created and seek to increase the recycling rates.</p> <p>Our new Environmental Strategy 2023-30 is a key tool and will support us to achieve these ambitions. We have committed to reducing waste by 50% by 2030 and with recycling making up at least 60% of the waste. We have also committed to reducing the council's own waste to near zero by 2030.</p> <p>We are currently calculating the council carbon emissions from waste produced at council buildings such as the Annexe, market and Cassiobury Hub.</p> |

THEME: An inspiring, thriving and creative town

Overview



Key achievements over this period

- £16m was provisionally awarded from the third round of the Levelling Up Fund from central government towards the delivery of the Innovation & Incubation Hub and the Colosseum refurbishment.
- The Watford Skills and Employment Plan has been drafted and is going through the approvals process. Once approved, West Herts College will coordinate the associated Action Plan and will bring together relevant skills and education providers to form the Watford Skills and Employment Group.
- A Business Feedback Group was convened for the first time in November 2023 to help with thoughts and comments on the new Place Brand. The group will also help with feedback on other council initiatives over the coming months.
- Construction of the Gateway at Watford Business Park is complete and a partial possession certificate has been issued for the buildings. There is already a good level of interest in the new facility. Heads of Terms (HoTs) for two units have been agreed and two further HoTs are currently underway. A café operator for the facility has been agreed. Practical Completion is expected in the next quarter.

| Commitment | Activity | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline | |
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| Position Watford as a town where start-ups and business innovation can thrive, supported by strong local skills, generating a range of job opportunities, including for our young people | 21. Deliver our Innovation and Incubation Hub | We will provide a new Innovation and Incubation Hub, as part of our Town Hall Quarter, which will support start-up businesses in the town and give our key sectors a boost, tapping into the significant opportunity provided by the flourishing creative sector and drawing businesses into the borough. | Amber | ↔ | Our bid for the third round of Levelling Up Funding was successful, securing £8m towards the delivery of the Innovation and Incubation Hub. Whilst this funding is subject to further verification, the Town Hall Quarter Programme team are considering the options for delivering the Hub within the current funding remit. This will provide an exciting, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to support the higher-than-average start ups across the town to thrive, grow and support local employment. |
| | 22. Develop a skills and employment plan for Watford that supports the current, and future, needs of our local businesses and life chances of residents | We will work with our business community and education partners, linking to the Hertfordshire LEP Skills and Employment Plan to develop and deliver a Watford Skills and Employment Plan, connecting local skills to business needs. | Green | ↔ | The Watford Skills and Employment Plan has been drafted and is going through the approvals process. A delivery approach has been agreed with West Herts College, who will coordinate the associated Action Plan. They will bring together relevant skills and education providers to form the Watford Skills and Employment Group. This will enable all programmes and activities to be monitored together for the first time, in order to find opportunities for collaboration, spot gaps or overlap in provision, and help more effective targeting of services to businesses and residents who could benefit. |
| | 23. Maximise economic potential and harness new opportunities from Watford's future growth sectors | We will engage with our successful business sectors and partners at local, county and regional levels, building on the economic drive our sectors provide for Watford's economy, promoting clustering where it makes sense for our town to create greater growth and encourage inward investment. | Green | ↔ | The Sectors Action Plan will be progressed in Q1 of 2024/25 due to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) taking priority, although the evidence has been gathered and sub-regional work is underway with parties around creative and screen industry potential. However, the UKSPF projects are automatically supporting key sectors as they are cross-cutting. |
| | 24. Make the most of our Shared Prosperity Fund allocation | We will use our Shared Prosperity Fund to boost our ambitions for prosperity, jobs and skills, spreading opportunities and building our sense of community pride. | Green | ↔ | The Watford Fit to Bid project continues to progress well with more new businesses being supported. We are preparing for the next Meet the Buyer event in March 2024 and have some good anchor brands confirmed as buyers. The Watford Net Zero decarbonisation project is still progressing well, Wenta are actively targeting new SME's with 5-20 employees. The Growth Springboard project has 9 businesses on board, all of whom came from the Watford Young Entrepreneur Programme and are ready for support with next stage growth. The Herts LEP-led countywide projects and services are on track with quarterly progress and impact reporting in place from Herts LEP. We will be drafting the specification for the Upskilling in the Workplace project in January, looking to procure this by March 2024. |
| Tell Watford's story as a great location for businesses where they can invest, grow and | 25. Promote what makes Watford a great location for business, connecting to building pride in | We will work with partners to shape our place narrative and brand, sharing what is great about Watford, attracting more visitors and supporting our local economy, | Green | ↔ | Our Place Brand Strategy was completed and presented to a range of partners in Q3. A project plan has been developed for the next phase and a website is being developed. Our Place Brand Strategy will support our local economy, attracting visitors and providing a consistent and recognisable brand for the town. |

| Commitment | Activity | | BRAG ¹ Rating | Trend | Headline |
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| succeed as part of our flourishing business community and networks that connect people | the town and our profile as a great place to visit | putting the town on the map as a great place for business. | | | |
| | 26. Ensure there is a strong voice for local businesses by fostering effective business networks and forums | We will engage with Watford businesses, encouraging an empowered business community that can be a strong voice for the town, making the most of opportunities and new ventures and encouraging vibrant networks and forums that bring businesses together in a meaningful and effective way. | Green | ↔ | A Business Feedback Group was convened for the first time in November 2023 who have supported the council with thoughts and comments on the new Place Brand. They will help with feedback on other council initiatives over the coming months. The team have supported the Shop Local initiative and other secondary High Street activity, and connected lots of businesses to support services they were not aware of. Engagement is underway with great new key sector businesses like Wired Productions, as well as major businesses such as Warner Bros, discussing the skills opportunities and the Innovation Hub potential with them. UKSPF continues to provide opportunities to engage with businesses in different ways. We have connected with Watford businesses through several networks and business group events, including the Digi-Cluster, Developer Forum, Environmental Manager Forum, All the Help You Can Get event. |
| | 27. Engage with wider economic, business and planning partnerships to make sure Watford's interests are represented | We will work closely with our partners in Hertfordshire LEP, Herts Growth Board and the South West Herts Joint Strategic Partnership to shape and influence wider discussions on our economic role and impact. | Green | ↔ | The draft South West Herts Economic Study is being reviewed and input has been received from Herts LEP and other stakeholders. Once finalised, the Economic Study will inform the Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) and local plans. The JSP vision document has been agreed and is available on the JSP website. In October 2023 the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act received Royal Assent, and whilst this changes the requirements of the JSP, no significant issues are expected. Briefings with JSP members are taking place. |
| Create a distinctive and successful neighbourhood at the heart of our town, providing space and time for residents, businesses and the community to enjoy and experience | 28. Progress our transformational plans for the Town Hall Quarter | We will take forward plans to revitalise the north end of Watford High Street to create a vibrant and attractive neighbourhood within our Town Hall Quarter for our residents to enjoy, as well as establishing a new area in the town for culture to flourish. | Amber | ↔ | Work with our preferred joint venture partner, Mace Develop, on the New Neighbourhood scheme continues to progress with de-risking activities for utilities, highways and financial viability. The highways de-risking work is close to completion and no major issues have been identified. Engagement with Homes England to discuss further funding opportunities continues and we have provided further information to enable them to progress their stage 2 assessment. We are progressing a business plan with the NHS and plans for a Healthy Hub in the Town Hall alongside discussions with local community groups for occupation of the proposed community space in the Town Hall. The activity status remains amber due to the ongoing current economic climate which has delayed the anticipated investment. |

| Commitment | Activity | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline | |
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| | 29. Secure the future of Watford Colosseum, improving the heritage building and attracting a new operator | We will refurbish the Watford Colosseum so it remains a first-class entertainment venue, attracting a new operator to bring an exciting and diverse range of performances and creative events to boost the town's cultural offer and local economy. | Amber | ↔ | We have provisionally been awarded Levelling Up Funding, subject to further verification, towards the refurbishment costs of the Colosseum. The main refurbishment work to the Colosseum commenced on site in November 2023 as planned but a firm opening date, which will be subject to the event plans for the new Colosseum operator, AEG, has not yet been confirmed. Council officers continue to meet regularly with AEG to plan for the reopening of the venue, although the final operator contract remains subject to negotiations and has not yet been signed, hence the amber rating for this activity. |
| | 30. Enhance a sustainable town centre with a mixed economy that will have a broad appeal to all ages and interests | We will develop our Town Centre Framework to ensure that our vibrant and diverse town centre continues to attract residents, businesses and visitors to live, work, shop, eat, drink and enjoy spending time. | Complete | ↔ | Following a significant level of public engagement, the Town Centre Strategic Framework consultation was completed and approved by Cabinet in March 2023. |
| | 31. Enhance our outdoor public spaces to make them welcoming and attractive | We will improve a number of our public spaces to provide excellent, safe and attractive outdoor spaces that support a greener Watford. This work will include the enhancement of key areas of our town such as St Mary's Churchyard, Market Street, Queens Road and St Albans Road. | Green | ↔ | Since the approval of the Delivery Plan, the council has already delivered a range of public realm improvement works, including in Market Street, Queens Road and Clarendon Road, supporting local businesses and visitors to the area. Mindful of the current economic climate, improvement works to St Mary's Churchyard and the delivery of improvements to district shopping parades within the borough have been rebaselined. |
| | 32. Promote the appeal of our town centre and all it has to offer | We will continue to deliver our 'Shop and Eat Local' campaign to attract people to our town centre, supporting our local businesses and their unique appeal. | Green | ↔ | A very successful Shop and Eat Local campaign was launched in Quarter 3, highlighting a range of local businesses in the run up to the festive period. We are continuing to engage with new businesses and encouraging local people to nominate businesses to appear in campaigns. |
| | 33. Promote Watford Market and our offer as a market town | We will support our local traders by continuing to run our popular 'Market Late' events, showcasing the great range of food and drink stalls in the market and trialling specialist markets. | Green | ↔ | The new operator for Watford Market will take on the day-to-day management of the market, including the Market Lates and Specialist Markets events, and support our local market traders who provide a wide variety and wonderful stalls for our residents and visitors such as food and beauty services. The Market Lates and Specialist Markets, which provide a great opportunity for local traders to showcase their diverse food and drink offer, will continue. We are currently planning events for 2024/25 with the first events likely to be in the spring/summer 2024. |

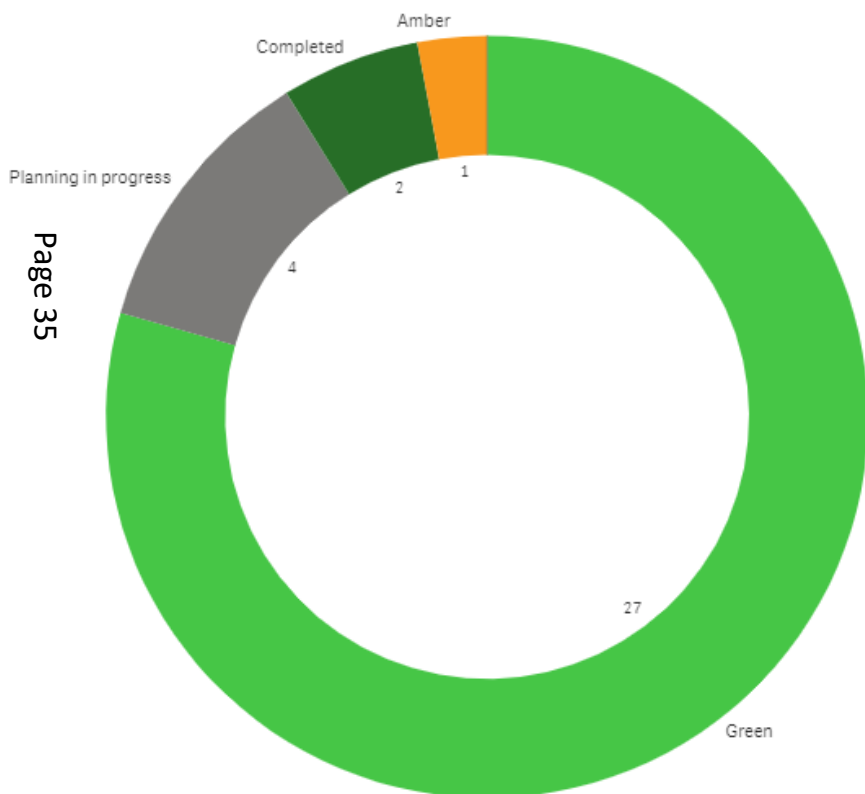
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| <p>Ensure the right mix of facilities, services and transport links as part of new developments to create successful, well-designed new communities</p> | 34. Take forward plans for the Watford Junction Quarter | We will bring landowners together so we can progress with our long-term plans to create a new Watford neighbourhood that successfully combines new homes, station facilities, jobs, public space, school provision and community facilities for both our existing and new residents. | Green | ↔ | <p>Whilst the council does not own the land around Watford Junction, we are committed to improving the local amenities to create a new neighbourhood and have continued to liaise with key landowners and stakeholders on the redevelopment of the area. The council is in conversation with Network Rail (NR) regarding future improvements of the station and on a development strategy.</p> <p>We are waiting to hear from NR operations on funding for design work on the station to improve the journeys of many of our residents who use Watford Junction every day.</p> |
| | 35. Continue our transformation of Watford Business Park | We will complete the Gateway development at Watford Business Park to continue our plans to create new and high quality business space to maximise local employment opportunities and generate income for the council to support its wider priorities. | Amber | ↔ | <p>Construction of the Gateway at Watford Business Park is complete and a partial possession certificate has been issued for the buildings. The new facility will provide modern and flexible commercial units, a number of which will be fitted out for office accommodation to meet the requirements of potential businesses.</p> <p>The marketing and letting strategy is progressing well and we are seeing a good level interest. Heads of Terms (HoTs) for two units have been agreed and two further HoTs are being agreed. A café operator for the facility has been agreed.</p> <p>The amber status reflects a delay in the last quarter relating to the s278 agreement for highways work with HCC. The necessary legal agreement and permit from HCC have been obtained and the outstanding highway works are progressing and expected to be complete by end of February 2024. The Practical Completion certificate will be issued once the necessary works are complete.</p> |
| | 36. Continue to deliver the neighbourhood at Riverwell | We will continue to develop the Riverwell scheme to deliver a high quality mix of new homes, jobs, open spaces and community facilities, maintaining an income source for the council to support its wider priorities. The work at Riverwell will support the opportunity for West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust to deliver its ambition for an acute hospital in Watford. | Amber | ↔ | <p>The joint venture partnership is managing the impact of the current economic climate and inflationary pressures on the Riverwell scheme. KIER Construction have been commissioned to complete the remaining works on the Avenues phase 1 development. Sales of the Avenues Phase 1 are progressing strongly and Belway has sold out.</p> <p>The programme is amber rated as the partnership continues to review all Riverwell development phases to understand the ongoing economic impacts and explore options to maintain progress and delivery.</p> |
| | 37. Achieve the right long-term balance of development, services and transport links for our town | We will adopt our new Local Plan for Watford which will shape how the town will develop sustainably over the next 30 years and make sure that key development sites are underpinned with creative, sustainable and well considered planning frameworks. | Complete | ↔ | The Watford Local Plan 2021-2038 was adopted in Q2 of 2022/23 and will provide the council with the opportunity to influence local and sustainable development across the town. |

| Commitment | Activity | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline | |
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| Make sure we have quality homes to meet the needs of residents, including housing that is affordable through direct ownership, private rental, affordable and social rent housing | 38. Deliver a new Housing Strategy for Watford | We will deliver a Housing Strategy that sets out the strategic direction for housing activity in Watford for the next five years. The delivery of housing growth, bringing inward investment into the borough, ensuring existing homes are of good quality, and preventing homelessness will all contribute to meeting the housing challenges faced by our residents. | Planning in progress | ↔ | Significant work has been undertaken to strengthen our housing service so that it is best positioned to manage the challenges of the future. It is crucial that our future strategy is aligned to this work and so a paper on the approach to delivering the Housing Strategy, including an outline project plan will be taken to Portfolio Holders in Q4 and the formal work to develop the strategy will commence in Q1 of 2024/25. |
| | 39. Review and refresh our Nominations Policy | We will deliver a new Nominations Policy for Watford to help our residents apply to our housing register, how we manage the register, your choice about where you live, how we assess applications and allocate properties. | Green | ↔ | In this quarter we have continued to develop the Nominations Policy. A consultation plan has been developed and an Equalities Impact Assessment is in development to accompany the policy. The implementation date has been re-baselined to October 2024, after the consultation plan is delivered. |
| | 40. Improve housing provision for those local families who need homes that are affordable | We will work with partners to deliver high quality new homes for social rent, for local families who need them the most and support the housing needs of the most vulnerable members of our community. | Green | ↔ | The Steering Group to deliver social rented homes across the town is developing a strategic action plan to consider regeneration opportunities and proposals for spend of commuted sums to deliver social rented homes. There are ongoing delays to the Ascot Road development, however the Yeatmans development is now occupied. We delivered 12 social rented 2 bed properties in Q1 and Q2. Whilst we did not deliver any new homes in Q3, we purchased 2 existing homes through the LAHF programme for use as social rented. We are on track to deliver our target of 120 properties over 4 years. |
| | 41. Develop planning guidance to ensure developers provide new homes that support local needs | We will provide guidance to inform how new homes and buildings should be designed so they meet the needs of Watford and are built to a high standard. | Amber | ↔ | Work exploring the viability associated with affordable housing delivery and build to rent schemes is continuing. If a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is not progressed, statutory consultation on a final document may not be required. An implementation note requiring less formal engagement would be acceptable. The activity is continuing to report amber as a revised government planning guidance has been issued and the implications for housing delivery are being considered, however with an up-to-date Local Plan, this is less of an issue for the council than other LPAs. The South West Herts draft Local Housing Needs Assessment has been received and reviewed. The Housing Team have reviewed the affordable housing section and provided comments. An updated version is expected in January 2024. |

| Commitment | Activity | | BRAG ¹ Rating | Trend | Headline |
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| | 42. Deliver a refreshed Private Sector Renewal Policy | We will review and refresh our Private Sector Renewal policy to support the improvement of Watford's housing stock, setting out how we can help the private sector improve and maintain housing quality in the town. | Planning in progress | ↔ | A stock condition assessment, which will be used to inform the refresh of our Private Sector Renewal policy, was completed towards the end of 2023. We will aim to present the findings in early 2024 and set up workshops to inform the new policy, which will be completed towards the end of 2024. |

THEME: A diverse, happy and healthy town

Overview



Key achievements over this period

- Demand at the new crematorium continues to exceed original estimates and by mid-December, 223 funerals had been completed. Feedback from users (funeral directors and the bereaved) continue to be overwhelmingly positive. The new facility has been shortlisted for a Civic Trust award.
- The new Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework (VSCF), developed through extensive engagement with commissioned organisations, was approved by Cabinet in October 2023 alongside the proposed changes to funding from 2024/25. Service Level Agreements are being drafted for commissioned organisations.
- The council's Community Asset Strategy and Community Lettings Policy were approved by Cabinet in November 2023.
- Continuing engagement with health partners and representing the health and wellbeing needs of Watford residents, including attendance at flu and covid booster clinics and women's wellness session.
- Marked White Ribbon Day in November 2023 by delivering activities including training for council staff.
- The Community Engagement and Participation Strategy, which provides strategic direction and action planning on a council-wide approach to how we engage with our community, was approved.
- The council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy and Delivery Plan, which covers the council's role as an employer as well as a service provider and convener of place, were approved.

| Commitment | Activity | | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline |
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| <p>Continue our investment in our outstanding parks and open spaces so they remain the best in the area</p> | <p>43. Deliver improvements to Meriden Park</p> | <p>We will, in consultation with our residents, improve the popular and well-loved Meriden Park, including providing new paths, planting and landscaping, for the whole community to enjoy.</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>The improvement works to our popular Meriden Park are nearing completion. In this quarter we completed all bulb planting and agreed the location for installing the benches and picnic tables ordered in the last quarter. We will be handing over the site to Veolia for ongoing maintenance from May 2024.</p> |
| | <p>44. Continue our programme of investment and improvements in Watford's parks</p> | <p>We will carry out a range of improvements across our award winning parks and open spaces, including improving footpaths, refurbishing grass tennis courts, and carrying out cycling path repairs. In addition, we will promote the 'cycling code of conduct' and associated engagement programme to support considerate cycling.</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>We are continuing to deliver improvements to our popular Cassiobury Park. In this quarter we completed a site visit to review priority repairs for cycle paths and developed a two-year repairs cost profile for review. The temporary Beryl Bike bay trial has been officially extended by six months to March 2024.</p> <p>The Green Spaces Strategy, which will also incorporate our Play Strategy, is in progress. The procurement process for consultants is underway.</p> |
| | <p>45. Enhance Woodside Playing Fields so it offers improved facilities and opportunities for leisure and sport</p> | <p>We will invest in Woodside Playing Fields to enhance the activities on offer, including improvements to both the current boxing and cricket facilities.</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>Whilst the detailed technical design stage for the Woodside Playing Fields scheme is now complete, it is being proposed that in light of the council's current financial position and following the capital programme review, the scheme is paused for two years.</p> <p>The Public Toilet Block and Changing Places element of the scheme will continue as planned. The tender evaluation for this element is currently in progress with a view to commencing construction by mid-January 2024. The work is planned to be completed by March 2024. This activity is reporting green in line with the revised timelines agreed by Full Council.</p> |
| | <p>46. Complete our work in partnership for a new crematorium for south west Hertfordshire</p> | <p>We will complete the new crematorium and agree future running arrangements, with our partner local authorities, to deliver enhanced facilities, including a remembrance chapel and gardens.</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>The Hemel Hempstead Crematorium officially opened in September 2023 and funerals are being held. The new state of the art facility provides additional capacity, alongside West Herts Crematorium, and gives our residents and those of the Joint Committee a choice in where they say goodbye to their loved ones.</p> <p>Demand at the new crematorium continues to exceed original estimates and by mid-December, 223 funerals had been completed. Feedback from users (funeral directors and the bereaved) continue to be overwhelmingly positive.</p> <p>The new facility has been shortlisted for a Civic Trust award.</p> |
| <p>Celebrate and promote our town's rich and diverse culture and creativity</p> | <p>47. Reimagine our Museum and its place in telling the history of our town</p> | <p>We will develop proposals for a modern, inspiring Heritage and Museum service based in our historic Town Hall that engages and educates our residents and visitors by telling the story of our town and its rich and diverse history, including ensuring that the</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>The plans to create the new museum service, based at the Town Hall, have continued over the last period. In the last quarter we continued with consultation, evaluation of feedback and continue to work on the operational requirements of the new Museum, based on a set of agreed values. The public consultation will support the council's round 2 HLF bid. Whilst Benskin House is now closed to the public, the Museum service has</p> |

| Commitment | Activity | | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline |
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| | | service and sacrifice of fallen service men and women is recognised. | | | continued to provide services to local residents through the Museum on Tour initiative. |
| | 48. Celebrate 100 years of Watford Borough, building a legacy for future generations | We will lead a programme of celebrations across the town commemorating 100 years since the formation of the borough of Watford. | Green | ↔ | Whilst our centenary year was celebrated during 2022, the council continued to celebrate our 'centenary heroes' through 2023. |
| | 49. Bring our local heritage to life for our community | We will create a new innovative heritage trail across the town to recognise Watford's rich culture and past. | Green | ↔ | Our Town Centre pilot Heritage Trail was successfully launched in March 2022, providing a digitally interactive route along the High Street. Any further expansion of the Heritage Trail will be undertaken via a future Wayfinding project, which will ensure that our maps and signage outline the landmarks and destinations of heritage importance. |
| | 50. Enhance the town's creative and cultural appeal through a new Public Art Strategy | We will develop a Public Art Strategy for Watford, to explore how art in all its forms, can animate and enhance our public spaces, building on Watford's strong sense of identity and creativity and linking to improved wayfinding across the town. | Green | ↔ | Our Public Art Strategy will be a key tool in enhancing our public spaces and attracting visitors to our High Street. The draft Strategy has been reviewed and comments fed back to the appointed consultant. A proposal is being developed for the pilot commission, which is being considered in conjunction with the Watford Community Neighbourhood Grant scheme, and once approved, the project plan will be re-baselined. |
| | 51. Commemorate the town's links to our past | We will introduce a Blue Plaque scheme which will commemorate links between our historic buildings and famous residents, events or former buildings. | Planning in progress | ↔ | This scheme will build on the '100 People Who Made Watford' initiative. This provides a range of information on some of those Watfordians who have made exceptional contributions to the town. The project has been scoped by looking at areas where similar schemes have been implemented and understanding how learning could be applied to Watford. This activity will also link into the new Museum and Heritage Service as it relocates to the Town Hall. A review of this activity is planned in the next quarter. |
| | 52. Mark and reflect on Watford's response to COVID-19 | We will install a public memorial providing a place for reflection and commemoration to build on the community spirit and recognising the outstanding work across the town during the COVID-19 pandemic. | Green | ↔ | The location for a general space for reflection and contemplation has now been agreed and will be delivered alongside the improvements works to St Mary's Churchyard. This activity is reporting green in line with the revised timelines agreed by Full Council. |
| | 53. Enhance our town's historical features and character | We will develop a series of conservation management plans to enhance and protect the historical features, and character, of different areas across the town. | Amber | ↔ | The Conservation Areas Management Plan was approved by Cabinet in June 2023, alongside the Action Plan. The programme for the delivery of the plan has been delayed due to turnover of staff, hence the amber rating. Resources to deliver the plan will be considered as part of the budget setting process in January 2024. |

| Commitment | Activity | | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline |
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| <p align="center">Promote our welcoming and respectful town</p> | <p>54. Ensure everyone feels welcome, included and safe in Watford</p> | <p>We will continue to make sure people feel welcome and safe in Watford, working closely with our partners to bid for funding that will support ways to have a positive impact on levels of violence against women and girls.</p> | <p align="center">Green</p> | <p align="center">↔</p> | <p>Safer Watford, the town's Community Safety Partnership, is continuing to deliver regular engagement days to reassure and inform the Watford community. This quarter we delivered an ASB Awareness Week, Older Persons Active Learning Sessions, Hate Crime Awareness Week and a reassure and inform event at Watford General Hospital. Upcoming engagement days include Safer Business Awareness Week and a NTE event as part of our 16 Days of Action (Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)). We have successfully secured PCC funding to address violent youth crime. A project will be delivered in local schools to empower young children to make positive choices.</p> <p>We are also progressing VAWG environmental improvement aims identified in the original SS4, as well as Victoria passage, to tackle hotspots in the town centre for ASB crime.</p> |
| | <p>55. Establish our commitment to the wellbeing of women and girls</p> | <p>We will deliver 'White Ribbon' accreditation for Watford Borough Council as a part of our ongoing commitment to tackle violence against women and girls, and continue our productive engagement with our One Watford partnership, which is bringing together all strands of this work across the town.</p> | <p align="center">Green</p> | <p align="center">↔</p> | <p>Following our successful White Ribbon accreditation last year, the Steering Group, which is chaired by the Elected Mayor, completed and submitted an action plan to white Ribbon in the summer. We delivered a training session for members in July 2023.</p> <p>Watford marked 'White Ribbon Day', a global campaign, on 22 November 2023 and delivered activities including flag raising, an awareness-raising walk for victims and training for staff.</p> |
| | <p>56. Make sure our town remains clean and free from litter</p> | <p>We will trial a new mobile CCTV approach, as part of our overall CCTV review, which allows us to target litter and fly-tipping hotspots and obtain evidence so that we can prosecute offenders, helping to keep our streets clean and litter-free.</p> | <p align="center">Green</p> | <p align="center">↔</p> | <p>We are continuing to progress the remedial actions identified in the CCTV Review undertaken in 2022, which are now expected to be completed by April 2024. Whilst there are ongoing risks these are being managed in line with the council's risk management plan.</p> <p>The physical relocation of the CCTV Control Service will commence in the last week of January 2024 and the service is expected to be operational from Charter Place by the end of that week.</p> |
| | <p>57. Develop a range of information and signposting to create a 'welcome to Watford' resource</p> | <p>We will develop a digital 'welcome to Watford' resource for new residents, setting out how they can be fully involved in the life of the town and make the most of Watford and all it has to offer.</p> | <p align="center">Planning in progress</p> | <p align="center">↔</p> | <p>A revised timetable has been agreed for the delivery of our 'Welcome to Watford' resource for new residents. The project will be scoped in Q4 of 2023/24 for launch in 2024/25. The resource will link into our Place Brand work, building on the narrative and key messages about Watford.</p> |
| <p align="center">Listen to and hear the diverse voices of Watford</p> | <p>58. Engage with our community to support better outcomes for our town and residents</p> | <p>We will develop our strategic approach, setting out how we will proactively work and engage with our community and our voluntary and community sector.</p> | <p align="center">Green</p> | <p align="center">↔</p> | <p>The Community Engagement and Participation Strategy provides strategic direction and action planning on a council-wide approach to how we engage with our community. The Strategy was approved by Cabinet in October 2023.</p> |

| Commitment | Activity | | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline |
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| | | | | | Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Community Engagement and Participation Strategy is included within Appendix C5. |
| | 59. Continue to engage with our community so we actively listen to their views and ideas | We will continue to run our Pensioners Forum to provide support, guidance and companionship for our older residents, who contribute so much to the life of our town. | Green | ↔ | Recognising the valuable contribution our elderly residents made to the town, and mindful of the additional support they may need, our Senior's Forum continues to be held regularly, supported by Watford and Three Rivers Trust. |
| | 60. Understand and support specific groups within our community | We will introduce a new Veterans Forum for ex-forces personnel, who have done so much for our town and country, building on our commitment to the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant, which provides support between our civilian community and local Armed Forces community. | Planning in progress | ↔ | We are working closely with community groups and organisations to support Veterans in Watford. Cllr Grimston has been appointed as the Veterans champion for the council. A successful Remembrance Day parade and service were held in November 2023 in partnership with the newly formed Watford Royal British Legion. |
| | 61. Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for our residents | We will develop a new Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework and work in partnership with charitable, community and voluntary organisations focused on helping our residents live healthy, happy and independent lives, understanding and meeting their needs through initiatives such as opening up the Town Hall to wider community use. | Green | ↔ | The new Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework (VSCF), which was developed through extensive engagement with commissioned organisations, was approved by Cabinet in October 2023 alongside the proposed changes to funding from 2024/25 and will ensure that the council can continue to sustainably support key voluntary organisations across the town. Commissioned organisations have been sent formal notification of funding from 2024/25 and Service Level Agreements are being drafted. Work has commenced on revising Key Performance Indicators and developing a monitoring framework. The draft Terms of Reference for the Community of Practice Board, who will be responsible for overseeing ongoing delivery of the VSCF, have been developed. |
| | 62. Ensure our community buildings benefit local residents | We will work with our community tenants to ensure our community buildings are well maintained, and, that our buildings maximise the benefits for local people. | Green | ↔ | We have now completed 100% of the EPC surveys for our community buildings and appointed a consultant to develop the Sustainable Asset Strategy, which will be developed through engagement with our tenants and by March 2024. We will be identifying and planning the repairs and maintenance works that need to be conducted across our community asset portfolio over the next five years. To support this, a further Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funding bid was submitted in November 2023. The Community Asset Strategy and Community Lettings Policy were approved by Cabinet in November 2023. |
| | 63. Deliver our Equality and Diversity policy so it underpins | We will develop an Equality and Diversity policy for Watford, making sure it reflects | Green | ↔ | The Census 2021 figures underpin the council's approach to its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy. The EDI Policy and Delivery Plan, which |



| Commitment | Activity | | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline |
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| | what we do and how we engage with our community | our diverse town and our commitment to being a place where everyone can thrive. | | | were developed with an internal and external focus, covering the council's role as an employer as well as a service provider and convener of place, was approved by Cabinet in October 2023. |
| | 64. Work with partners to end rough sleeping on the streets of Watford | We will continue to deliver our Homelessness Strategy for Watford, reviewing this on an annual basis and adapting it regularly to ensure that it remains innovative and effective, supporting our target of minimising rough sleepers on the streets of Watford. | Green | ↔ | Significant progress has been made to reduce homelessness across the town in the last few years. We are continuing to monitor delivery of the updated and refreshed Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan. Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities advisors visited the council in October 2023 and we are also engaging with HCC to ensure recommissioning of support aligns with WBC's priorities. The new Housing Service structure was implemented in Q3 to further develop prevention work, and to ensure effective spend of grant and other budgets. We have reviewed the Temporary Accommodation Strategy. |
| Support improved health and wellbeing across the town | 65. Encourage Watford to develop as an age friendly town | We will work towards making Watford an age-friendly town which residents and visitors of all ages can enjoy, ensuring local services are accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities. | Planning in Progress | ↔ | The government has issued revised planning guidance reaffirming its expectation that Local Planning Authorities are to have design codes (guidance) in place for older people housing. Further government guidance is expected to be released in spring 2024 but it is uncertain what this will entail. The Planning team are considering the implications of this and resources available to undertake the work. The draft SW Herts Housing Needs Assessment has been reviewed. HCC as a provider of assisted living accommodation has compiled information about need and requirements to make it easier to interpret to support planning. This is being considered as part of the project. |
| | 66. Tackle digital isolation so residents can effectively engage using new technology | We will work with our partners, volunteers and community groups to support residents who do not have access to technology, choose not to do so or do not currently have the skills to use IT so that they have the same opportunities as others in our town. | Green | ↔ | Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT), the lead in tackling digital isolation, are delivering training sessions and supporting residents. To date approx. 48 Watford residents have been supported. NHS funding is available to the end of this financial year. Other Hertfordshire CVS' are working on a lottery bid for further funding. Going forward a Watford lead has been identified to work with W3RT on this project. We are planning to promote the scheme as an option for staff looking to volunteer through the council's Employee Volunteering Scheme. |
| | 67. Develop services to support our residents' health and wellbeing | We will work closely with our partners to develop a mental health strategy for Watford, ensuring the right support is available for residents who need it. Watford's Healthy Hub will provide a pivotal link to assistance and guidance, including opening up conversations about the | Complete | ↔ | Mental Health is embedded within the Healthy Hub service offer and the Mental Health Community Support Officer is currently working at capacity. The Healthy Hub ensures that interactions support our residents' mental health and wellbeing at every opportunity. Examples of recent events include the Multi-Cultural Centre women's only health awareness sessions and Watford Muslim Family festival fun day. The Hub continues to provide advice and support on the menopause and new leaflets are being distributed at appropriate events. |

| Commitment | Activity | | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline |
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| | | menopause and for those needing help with mental health issues. | | | A mental health strategy will not be developed at this time, as agreed with Members, given this is a core responsibility of other partners such as Health and Social Care. The main focus is embedding positive mental health approaches into WBC core service delivery and working with the key partners to ensure their strategies positively impact Watford residents. |
| | 68. Engage with health partners to improve public health and health inequalities for our residents | We will engage across our health partners to make sure the health and wellbeing needs of Watford are represented in new health structures and commissioning of services. | Green | ↔ | Engagement with our health partners continued during Q3 and some examples of activities include: - Attendance at flu and covid booster clinics at two local GPs to engage with residents and raise awareness around the importance of cancer screening. These sessions were well received by the practices and additional sessions are being considered. - Women's wellness session, funded by an Integrated Care Board (ICB) project, targeting women who have not responded to cervical screening are being held at the two surgeries that have been identified with lowest uptake. - ICB Cervical Screening project, which aim to highlight disparities in current service provision, identify best practice and influence change to ensure all patients are offered the same service across all surgeries. The project will aim to work across seven GP surgeries in Watford from mid-December and will be reviewed at the end of February 2024. The Healthy Hub service provision continues to be developed to deliver Herts County Council's core offer. |
| | 69. Support single homeless people to access accommodation and support | We will continue to establish and embed our single homelessness pathway, focusing on the root causes of homelessness and working closely with our partners to support individuals on every part of their journey into independent living. | Green | ↔ | The Single Homelessness Project (SHP) was initiated in 2021 to bring together all temporary accommodation providers into a multi-agency team and to provide a holistic view of Watford's approach to accommodating and supporting single homeless people and was formally completed in the last quarter of 2022/23. Since its inception, the SHP project has effectively reduced the number of people sleeping rough in Watford from 80+ to a handful. The formal pathway has been in place since April 2021 and through this over 300 single homeless clients have been provided with a safe, secure, welcoming physical environment with access to the most appropriate support that meets their individual needs, such as mental health, substance abuse and debt advice. A delivery plan, addressing all the requirements of the SHP project closure report, with key milestones is being delivered. |
| ring together ways to help our residents who might be struggling financially | 70. Make sure residents are aware of what help we offer to support them manage their finances | We will promote our council tax discount scheme so residents know support might be available to help them pay their bills. | Green | | Customers in receipt of Universal Credit are not required for complete a claim for council tax reduction and this is promoted on the telephone and at the customer centre. The Discount and Exemptions online form, which enables residents to apply online for a discount or exemption, went live in Q2. In some cases customers will receive a decision immediately, improving |

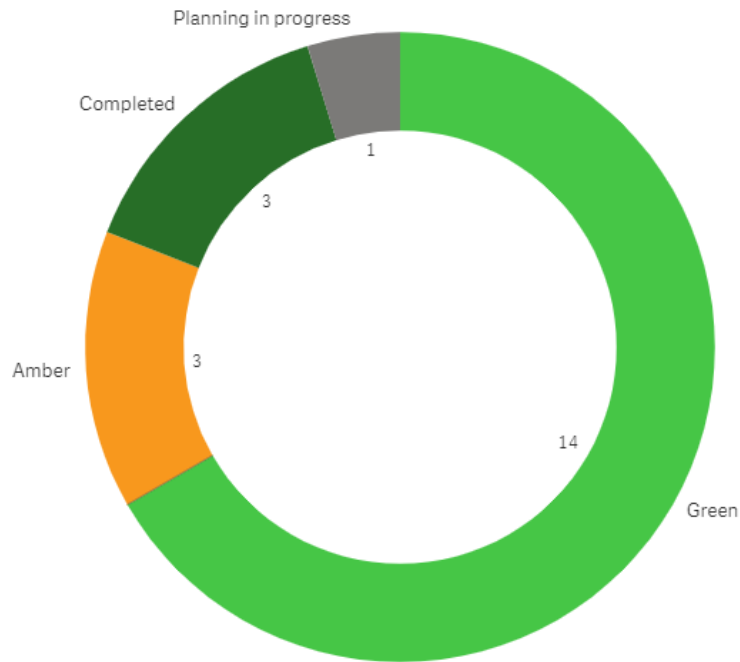


| Commitment | Activity | | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline |
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| | | | | | <p>the customer experience, providing greater flexibility and improving service efficiency.</p> <p>'Arrangements Manager', a self-serve tool for customers wishing to make online payments, went live in October 2023.</p> <p>We are in the process of changing the Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme from April 2024. Once signed off, we will commence promotion of the scheme and a sign-up campaign. We purchased an Experian tool in the last quarter to assist us in identifying areas in the borough where benefit uptake is low and to help us deliver targeted campaigns for the uptake of the CTS and other benefits.</p> |
| | <p>71. Coordinate advice in the town for those seeking information on how to cope with the cost of living crisis</p> | <p>We will work with partners to ensure people can access the advice and information they need when they face financial difficulties, particularly those who are vulnerable or are dealing with debt.</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>The 'Cost of Living' page on the council website continues to provide information to local people who may be facing financial difficulties. The 'Cost of Living Forum' which was convened with local voluntary and community organisations to work together on a response for Watford and to ensure that support is coordinated is now known as the 'Community Support Forum' to recognise the wider discussions and remit of the Forum. We are continuing to engage with Hertfordshire County Council to link into county support and ensure local residents are accessing all the help available. Our well established 'Welcoming Spaces' will continue to provide support for our more vulnerable residents. The Community Fund is still available to provide cost of living support of up to £2k.</p> |
| | <p>72. Use innovative ways to support our local community financially</p> | <p>We will build upon the success of our COVID-19 Fund, Ukraine Community Funds and Watford Community Fund to investigate a new local lottery to support our local community so that they can continue their good work in our town.</p> | <p>Complete</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>The Watford Community Lottery was successfully launched in May 2023, and since its launch, 54 organisations have signed up as good causes including Watford Palace Theatre, One YMCA, Citizens Advice Bureau, and Watford Women's Centre.. As at December 2023, a total of 1,182 tickets were in the weekly draw, 350 of which were supporting the Central Fund and 826 supporting other good causes. The total funds raised from May to October 2023 was just over £16k for good causes. The scheme will ensure that at least 60% of all tickets sold goes towards supporting our local community and good causes.</p> |
| | <p>73. Welcome the whole town and visitors to our Big Events</p> | <p>We will deliver our exciting, free programme of Big Events across the town, including our Big Screen, Big Beach and Fireworks, bringing our community together regularly in our town centre and parks.</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>We delivered the Big Beach, Big Screen, Big Sports and Big Fireworks events last year. The events are successful in attracting and bringing together many of our residents together.</p> <p>We will review the programme for 2024/25 and line this up into the work of our Cultural Leaders.</p> |

| Commitment | Activity | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline | |
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| | 74. Provide an appealing and lively programme of holiday activities for young people | We will continue to offer our young people exciting things to do during the Easter and summer holidays so they can be engaged and involved in an enjoyable range of free activities. | Green | ↔ | <p>We delivered the free Easter 2023 holiday programme and piloted a scheme offering sessions to families via a local voluntary organisation, for which there was a good uptake. A review of the data indicates the majority of people who benefitted from the scheme are Watford residents from across the community.</p> <p>The Cost of Living Forum with groups and organisations convened to bring together the support available and to make sure local people are aware of where to go for help, is now the 'Community Support Group'. The forum is bringing together data and information to build understanding of the extent of the crisis within Watford and make sure Watford is coordinating with county, regional and national support and campaigns.</p> <p>The 'Welcoming Places', which are supported by the Watford Community Fund, are continuing as they have proven to be very successful and are meeting a range of community needs.</p> <p>The government's round 1 Household Support Fund 4 for 2023/24 was allocated at district level to support food charities and energy support. Round 2 will be delivered during the next quarter. Initial meetings have been held with invited community groups and organisations and a robust action plan developed.</p> |
| | 75. Improve private sector housing across the town, focusing on how it can contribute to both environmental and community benefits | We will support the sustainability of the town's privately owned homes making use of Energy Company Obligation funding to improve the energy efficiency and warmth of those who are vulnerable or on low incomes. | Green | ↔ | <p>The Energy Company Obligation (ECO), which aims to tackle fuel poverty and help reduce carbon emissions, will be delivered through to the end of March 2026. Targeted marketing has taken place in multiple areas, making use of WCH projects to market adjacent properties. We have set up relations with a significant number of new installers to engage and attract ECO in our area. We have systems in place and are now actively using the GB Insulation scheme available this autumn as another offshoot from ECO. Our Statement of Intent has been updated and re-published to reflect this.</p> |
| | 76. Help our community better access the benefits of Watford's economic growth | We will explore ways to create a resilient and inclusive economy that benefits our community, building on foundations from the Hertfordshire Community Wealth Building project, linking local people with opportunities and supporting our voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector link to make a greater economic contribution. | Green | ↔ | <p>The draft Watford Business Charter is going through consultation with businesses and stakeholders. We will review and respond to the feedback in the next quarter.</p> <p>The Charter will encourage businesses to do more in 5 areas: recruit local, buy local, go green, connect with community and be an employer of choice. We are creating a 'Resource Bank' to help businesses deliver upon this, with signposting to information advice and guidance, best practice, and also to connect them with other businesses. Work on the Resource Bank, using the Watford LinkUp platform, is underway and going well.</p> |

THEME: A council working for our community and serving our residents

Overview







Key achievements over this period

- We are leading by example in the delivery of the council's Environmental Strategy. 23 colleagues have attended the Climate Literacy training and received Carbon Literacy certification.
- The council's Continuous Improvement Framework, which formalises the process for continual improvement of our processes and service delivery, was approved by Cabinet in November 2023.
- The council's four-year ICT Strategy has been approved and ready for delivery. The Strategy will ensure we continue to deliver and keep pace with the rapidly changing landscape both within technology developments and across the cyber security threats which upon the council.
- As part of our commitment to support the health and wellbeing of employees, Lunch and Learn sessions are planned for the next few months with the first session 'Winter Wellness' in January 2024.
- Successful 'Living the Values' event was held to further embed the council's six corporate values: Agile, Bold, Integrity, Respect, Trust and Working Together.

| Commitment | Activity | | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline |
|---|--|---|--------------|----------|---|
| <p>Make sure we deliver an outstanding customer experience and the high quality services our community expects</p> | <p>77. Provide an excellent customer experience for everyone who engages with the council</p> | <p>We will prepare and deliver a new Customer Experience Strategy to transform how we engage with our customers over the next four years, delivering a real step change across all our services, embracing innovation and embedding a first class experience our customers will value.</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>We are progressing delivery of the Customer Experience Strategy, working collaboratively with colleagues across the council and capitalising on synergies with other projects to deliver the Strategy vision. A successful staff engagement event was held in December 2023, where colleagues had the opportunity to learn about the Strategy, including our updated Customer Care Standards, see the progress made to date and provide valuable feedback.</p> <p>In line with our commitment to continuous improvement and following customer feedback, a review of the Parking Service webpages has been completed and work continues to implement changes to improve the customer journey.</p> <p>We have initiated the council's switchboard contract procurement process and are investigating opportunities to expand our contact channels through which we deliver services including Artificial Intelligence and Live Chat, providing residents with an enhanced service which can be accessed at their convenience, including outside of office hours</p> <p>Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Customer Experience Strategy is included within Appendix C2.</p> |
| | <p>78. Champion a greener and more sustainable council that strives to reduce our carbon footprint</p> | <p>We will embed our ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030 by continuing to deliver our organisational Sustainability Action Plan (now part of our newly approved Environmental Strategy) so that it intrinsic to everything and ensures we reduce our carbon footprint in line with our green goals.</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>We have formalised delivery of the Environment Strategy and set out how we will achieve our ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030. Sustainability is at the heart of everything we do, and is woven through other council projects, programmes, schemes and initiatives such as the Rediscovering River Colne, Town Hall Quarter and Transforming Travel in Watford Programmes. We are in the process of incorporating the 'Watford Sustainability Wheel', a tool that will visually display the environmental and social impacts of our projects, within the council's project management framework.</p> <p>23 colleagues have attended climate literacy training and received 'Carbon Literacy' certification.</p> <p>Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Environment Strategy is included within Appendix C3.</p> |
| | <p>79. Focus the right resources in the right places to secure future success</p> | <p>We will review how we employ our resources (including staff and finances) to make sure they are focussed on the areas which are most important to the council and support the delivery of this Plan.</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>We are continuing to engage with staff and working collaboratively across service areas to ensure we prioritise delivery of the Council Plan whilst being mindful of the council's financial position. As such, a restructure of our Corporate Management Board has been proposed and a range of service reviews are underway across the organisation.</p> <p>In this quarter we launched the 'Conversation with SDLs' initiative which encourages our Service Delivery Leads (SDLs) to connect with other management teams from across the organisation to identify synergies and work collaboratively across projects and service areas.</p> |

| Commitment | Activity | | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline |
|---|---|--|--------------|----------|--|
| | | | | | <p>Whilst we remain committed to delivering the Council Plan, some activities will be paused and others prioritised to ensure we maximise our resources and deliver our Council Plan.</p> |
| | <p>80. Explore opportunities to share services with other councils where it delivers best value and better customer outcomes</p> | <p>We will work with other authorities to develop and implement business cases that explore opportunities to share more services where this will deliver improvements for our customers.</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>The shared services model provides opportunities for us to review and enhance our processes, automate and digitise processes where relevant and reduce costs and increase resilience.</p> <p>We are continuing to work with St Albans City Council (SADC) to progress phase 2 of the Planning Enforcement & Building Control (PE&BC) Shared Services. The data migration workstream is in progress and once complete, will enable both WBC and SADC to deliver services and manage cases from one system.</p> <p>We are developing a business case for a HR & OD Shared Service with a number of neighbouring districts.</p> |
| | <p>81. Make sure the council continues to hold successful and well run elections</p> | <p>We will support and prepare for the implementation of the Elections Act 2022 so that our elections continue to be effectively managed and voters are well informed on elections and how to exercise their right to vote.</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>We introduced some aspects of the Elections Act 2022 during the May 2023 Local Elections. This included Voter Photo ID and providing greater assistance to voters with disabilities. We will continue to implement the remainder of the Elections Act from 2023 through to 2025 which will include as part of the General Election, which must be held by January 2025, although the date has not yet been confirmed.</p> |
| <p>Pioneer new ways of working that challenge us to innovate, transform and consistently improve</p> | <p>82. Adopt the right digital technology that matches and supports our ambition for excellent service delivery for our residents</p> | <p>We will develop and deliver a new four-year ICT strategy to drive forward how we use ICT and digital technology to deliver our ambitions, seeking opportunities to innovate to meet the needs of the council and our community.</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>The council's new four-year ICT Strategy has now been approved. The delivery of the Strategy will commence in the next quarter. The Strategy supports the ICT team to deliver a secure environment to enable the work of the council for our residents and communities. Progress against the key areas of delivery will be monitored over the life of the Strategy to ensure that ICT continues to deliver and keep pace with a rapidly changing landscape both within technology developments and across the cyber security threats which impact upon the council. This will be monitored through quarterly reports to IT Steering Group.</p> <p>In the last quarter we submitted our PSN application for the Public Services Network certification and this quarter we will be working on the remediation for risks that have been identified. The PSN certification demonstrates our compliance with information assurance security requirements. The team are also continuing to migrate users from Office 2016 to the new O365 apps.</p> |

| Commitment | Activity | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline | |
|------------|--|---|------------------------|----------|--|
| | <p>83. Deliver a step change in how we use our data and information so it strengthens our drive for constant improvement</p> | <p>We will improve how we use our data and information to challenge our decisions, enhance performance and support excellent customer experience, using our information to monitor service delivery and to drive action if something needs improving.</p> | <p>Green</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>We are progressing delivery of the council's Information and Insight Strategy 2023-26, which was approved by Cabinet in June 2023. The Strategy sets out how we will achieve our vision of an organisation driven by intelligence to meet the demands of our customers and continue to provide high quality services.</p> <p>We are continuing to develop and enhance our performance reporting dashboards. We are building graphs for internal KPIs which will help us identify trends, the areas we are excelling in and those that need addressing. Our complaints procedure, which enables us to react to customers' comments, has been amended to help identify the reasons for not responding to complaints within the specified time as stated in the Customer Care Service Standards, which will allow us to further drive service improvements for our residents.</p> <p>We have started to map Census 2021 on GIS to support colleagues and our delivery partners. For example, we provided Citizens Advice information on areas of deprivation and fuel poverty to support their service delivery.</p> <p>We held a staff engagement event in December 2023 to showcase our new Customer Contact App and invited feedback and suggestions from colleagues on how we can further support them.</p> <p>The Continuous Improvement Framework was approved by Cabinet in November 2023. This tool will ensure that we continue to review and improve our services and processes.</p> |
| | <p>84. Strengthen our approach to contract management to ensure we are making the most of our contracts and that they are delivering for us and the town</p> | <p>We will implement a robust contract management framework to ensure we deliver expected outcomes and excellent value for money from our contracts, providing the best service for our customers.</p> | <p>Complete</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>The review of our existing contract management approach has been completed and the final version of the Contract Management Handbook has been published. Relevant officers have been given the necessary training to ensure that the council continues to achieve the very best value from our contracts. Training guides are also available on the intranet to enable officers to refresh their training as and when required.</p> |
| | <p>85. Embed social value through our procurement process</p> | <p>We will update our Procurement Strategy to strengthen our approach to evidencing economic, social and environmental outcomes when procuring, awarding and delivering contracts.</p> | <p>Complete</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>The council's updated Procurement Strategy was approved by Cabinet in January 2023. The Strategy will make sure we continue to get best value from the market during this period of economic instability and includes a comprehensive proposal on social value and measurement which supports the delivery of our Sustainability Action Plan.</p> |

| Commitment | Activity | | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline |
|---|--|--|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Focus and challenge how we manage our budget so it is concentrated on delivering our commitments and securing greater investment for Watford | 86. Ensure our investment portfolio is ambitious and effectively managed to deliver maximum value to the council | We will ensure that we are actively managing our investment portfolio, including exploring new opportunities to protect our income, manage risk and maximise value over the longer term, so that we can continue to provide high quality services to our residents and businesses. | Amber |  | We continue to agree long leasehold extensions on Watford Business Park (WBP) where appropriate which generate capital receipts and secure rental income for the medium to long term. We are continuing to utilise the council's existing land bank to generate further income through direct development or through joint venture arrangements. Examples include the Gateway site at WBP and the Riverwell Multi-Storey Car Park. Out of Borough Assets are performing well. For example, Coleshill Industrial Estate rents agreed have grown from £6.50 psf to in excess of £7.50 psf in the last 2 years. Croxley Park is actively managed to ensure that open market rent is maintained with minimal voids. The GT Model tracks the financial performance of the Park compared to assumptions made at the time of the lease being taken in 2019. It was assumed in 2019 that the whole of Building 1 would have been let and income producing by now, rather than just a single floor, so the revenue being generated at present is not as was originally forecasted, due to the availability of 40,000 sq ft in Building 1, although occupier interest in the building is now increasing, with 20,000 sq ft recently let to DLL. The vacant occupancy costs to the council and annual headlease rental uplifts are at capped level. |
| | 87. Assess the feasibility of a Growth Fund and its benefits for Watford | We will explore where our financial strength can support start-up and growth opportunities delivering a positive investment return for the council and renewed prosperity for the town. | Planning in progress |  | The Council has set aside £500k towards a Growth Fund. Whilst our bid to central government's Levelling Up Funding (LUF) for a further £500k to complement the Innovation Initiative and which would have allowed a £1m fund to be set up to support businesses in the Hub, was unsuccessful, in November 2023 we received provisional confirmation that we were successful in the latest bid. Officers are now engaging with central government on the validation process so that the funds can be confirmed. |
| | 88. Manage and direct the council finances effectively | We will ensure that our budgets align with our priorities and that budget management is robust, forward-looking and supports the best possible service outcomes from available resources, enabling us to keep council tax increases below inflation. | Green |  | The 2023/24 budget included a Council Tax increase of 2.99%, well below inflation. The Council proactively manages and monitors budgets during the year to ensure value for money and effective prioritisation of resources. The 2024/25 budget setting process has now been completed with ratification at Full Council and will ensure that council resources continue to align to council priorities to deliver the best possible service outcomes. |
| | 89. Identify new commercial opportunities that align with our ambition | We will look for new and innovative commercial opportunities that will align to our values, whilst ensuring a financial return that can be used to support the council's activities for the benefit of the borough. | Green |  | The Commercial and Collaboration Strategy is not yet finalised and is scheduled to go to cabinet over the next period. Due to current financial climate the council are not seeking to undertake any major investments at the current time and will look to pursue opportunities to collaborate with partners, ensure our existing investments hold up and explore opportunities as they arise. |

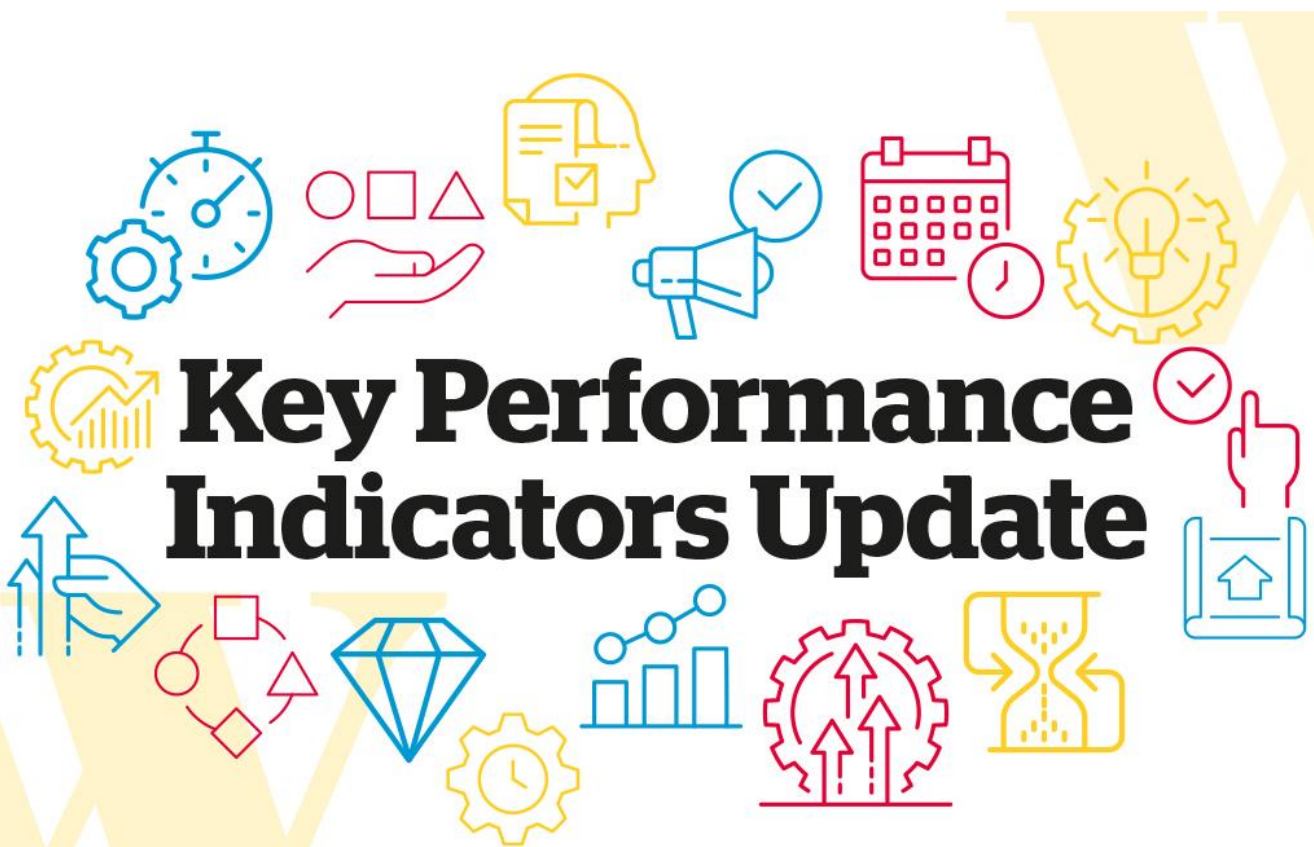
| Commitment | Activity | | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline |
|--|--|---|--------------|-------|--|
| | 90. Manage our ambitious capital programme so that it supports our aspirations | We will develop a commercial risk and mitigation strategy for our capital programme to protect the council against turbulence in global markets, whilst still delivering our ambitious programme of improvements. | Amber | ↔ | Our Commercial Risk and Mitigation Strategy has been completed, although the rapid and significant increase in inflation continues to pose significant risks to the affordability of the Capital Investment Programme, hence the amber rating. The greatest exposure is to projects that are at the pre-tender stage where the council has not yet entered into contract. Where possible, mitigations are in place such as the early purchase of materials to protect against future price rises. The affordability of all schemes within the Capital Programme is kept under review and project appraisals take into account the cost of funding projects and include the associated borrowing costs where relevant. Furthermore, the council has undertaken a robust review of the capital programme and realigned the capital budgets which have been approved by Full Council. |
| | 91. Invest our Croxley Park funds in ethical investments | We will make sure the funds we receive from Croxley Park are invested in a sustainable way to deliver financial goals and better future for us all. | Green | ↔ | Due to the changing interest rate environment, the Council has divested from the pooled investment funds in order to utilise the cash for internal borrowing. This reduces the Council's overall risk within Treasury Management activities by reducing exposure to both investment and borrowing risks. This will support the Council in delivering financial goals and ensuring that the Council can set a balanced budget that delivers the Council plan. |
| Lead by example, securing our reputation as a forward thinking, caring and inspiring organisation where staff can thrive and achieve their best for our residents and businesses | 92. Build on our innovative approach to agile working, realising the benefits for our staff and our community | We will ensure our staff are able to provide timely high quality and efficient services to customers by opening up opportunities for staff to work in an agile way in a modern, collaborative and inspiring workplace, helping the council to become an employer of choice. | Complete | ↔ | The council's new collaborative and focused working space opened in July 2022, providing a modern and fit for purpose space for teams to deliver the very best services to residents, businesses and the community. To ensure the working space remains fit for purpose, we are regularly conducting staff surveys to collate feedback on both the space and technology and implementing changes as required, ensuring that this aligns with our broader values and behaviours. |
| | 93. Secure robust succession planning, making sure we value and manage our talent to recruit and retain the best for Watford | We will open up opportunities for our staff to grow and develop, building their skills and knowledge to achieve. Where we do recruit, we will appoint the best, ensuring we recruit people with the right experience and behaviours to be part of 'Team Watford'. | Green | ↔ | The Values and Behaviours, which set out the expected behaviours for 'Team Watford', ensuring that we provide the best service to our residents, businesses and community, were launched in December 2022. The full roll out and implementation of the values and behaviours is currently in progress. Through this process we will incorporate the Values & Behaviours into each stage of the employee lifecycle, such as the recruitment process and appraisal cycle, so that we can support our staff throughout their time at the council. We are currently reviewing our performance management approach and looking at best practices, including those employed by other councils, and will be making recommendations. |

| Commitment | Activity | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline | |
|------------|--|--|-------|---|---|
| | | | | As well as the Values and Behaviours, our new People Strategy will also determine how we support, develop and retain our staff. | |
| | 94. Embed our values and behaviours so they inspire our staff to achieve even more and underpin how we work | We will collaboratively develop meaningful corporate values and behaviours with our staff and use these as the foundation to implement a behaviours framework. This will help develop the skills of our people at all levels, and from all backgrounds, to recognise individual contributions, expertise and knowledge and to improve the resident and customer focused services we deliver. | Green | ↔ | The implementation of the council's values and behaviours framework is well underway, with support from our Agile Pathfinders and Service Delivery Leads who have all benefitted from external facilitator-led training sessions. In the last quarter we held a successful and well-attended 'Living the Values' event for staff. Feedback from staff during the event is being reviewed and will be incorporated in our branding and approach. Service areas have almost completed their Team Charters incorporating the six council values in the way we work as a team and individually. In the next quarter we will be reviewing the Behavioural Framework and the PDR cycle and addressing feedback from the 'Living the Values' event. |
| | 95. Refresh our Organisational Development approach so that it effectively underpins and supports our Council Plan | We will ensure we develop, motivate and inspire our staff so they are supported and empowered to do their best for our residents and businesses by refreshing our Organisational Development approach. | Green | ↔ | The council's People Strategy and Delivery Plan have been finalised and taken through the council's approval process. The next step is to review the delivery plan in light of the feedback received from the Peer Challenge and also the council's financial position and prioritise projects for delivery. The roll out and implementation of our refreshed Values and Behaviours Framework is underway. Through this process the Values and Behaviours Framework will be worked into the employment lifecycle from recruitment and onboarding to development and progression and through to the Performance Development Review process. |
| | 96. Seek and implement opportunities for people to have fulfilling local government careers | We will create apprenticeship opportunities for local people at the beginning of their working life, providing them with experience, skills and knowledge from across the council to help kick start their careers. | Amber | ↔ | The council's Corporate Apprenticeship Scheme aims to support local people, particularly our younger residents, at the beginning of their working lives. Currently one apprentice is on the Scheme working with services across the council in order to gain the skills, knowledge and experience they need to help them start and progress in their career, whilst providing valuable public services to our customers. Due to the current recruitment freeze, further recruitment of apprentices is on hold. The development of a delivery plan to consider all early careers including apprentices, graduates, pathways to planning, work experience and T-Levels, has been delayed to the end of March 2024 as we are considering feedback from the Peer Challenge alongside the financial position of the council. |
| | 97. Protect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff | We will ensure that we protect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff by developing their resilience and providing opportunities for genuine two-way engagement | Green | ↔ | Our health and wellbeing survey, which was incorporated within the wider council staff survey, was completed in this quarter. The results of the survey will enable us to review our health and wellbeing initiatives and guide our next steps. We have planned online health and wellbeing lunch and learn sessions for employees. The first session on 24 January 2024 is a 'Winter Wellness' |

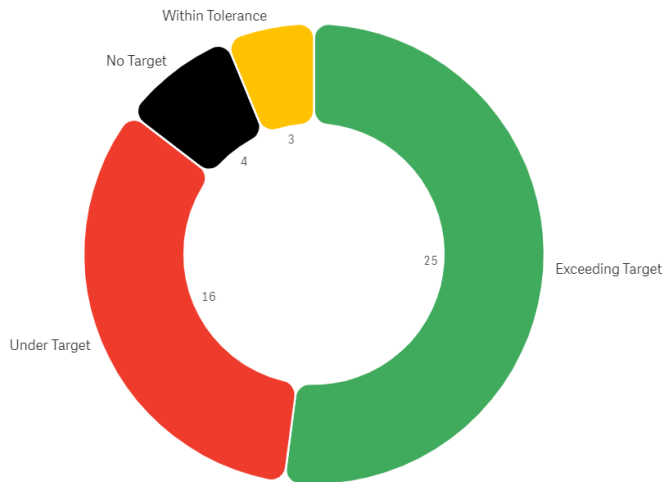
| Commitment | Activity | Activity | BRAG' Rating | Trend | Headline |
|------------|----------|----------|--------------|-------|--|
| | | | | | workshop designed to help our employees thrive and continue to deliver high quality services during the winter months. |



**WATFORD
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Appendix B: Quarter 3 Key Performance Indicators 2023/24

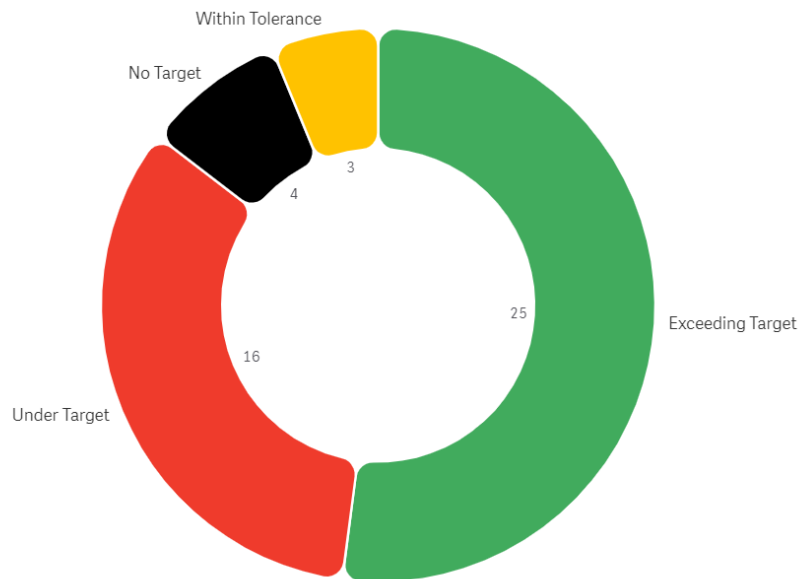


- 49 indicators agreed for 2023/24
- 48 results returned in Q3
- 44 indicators with targets
- 25 exceeded target
- 3 outside of target but within tolerance
- 16 outside target

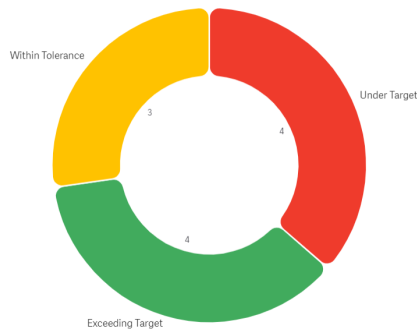
Summary – Quarter 3 Key Performance Indicators

- This report presents the third set of results from the new list of KPIs agreed as part of the KPI Review process that took place between January and March 2023. The new KPIs fulfil the following principles:
 - Aligned to our Council Plan and associated outcomes
 - Provide insight into key services provided to customers by the Council
 - Measurable targets which are realistic but challenge the organisation to continually improve and inform decision making
 - Focused on trends so that performance can be seen over time
- KPIs are grouped by Council Theme, and where applicable, for each KPI the following information will be shown; Desired result (low or high), target, latest result, latest result vs target, previous result, and trend.
- A target has been defined for each KPI where possible, however there are 4 KPIs that do not have targets. These are number of short term sickness instances, number of long term sickness instances, number of parking penalty charge notices issued and number of parking tribunal appeals, for which targets are not permissible.
- Where appropriate, services have defined a tolerance for some of the KPIs. This is where the result is under target, but by a small amount, and not considered to be of concern.

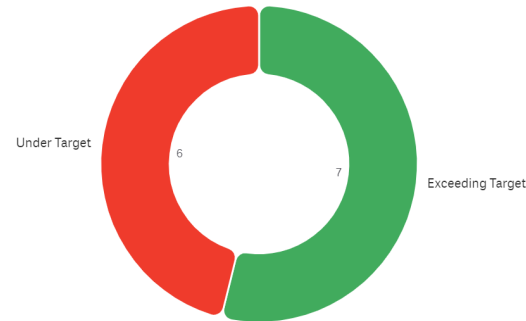
Q3 Key Performance Indicators Overview



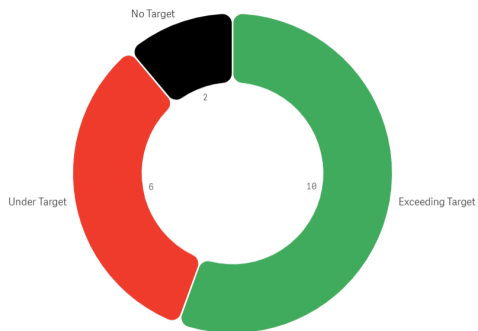
Council Plan Theme - A greener, brighter future



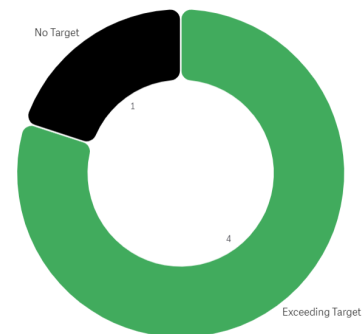
Council Plan Theme - A diverse, happy and healthy town



Council Plan Theme - A Council working for our community and serving our residents

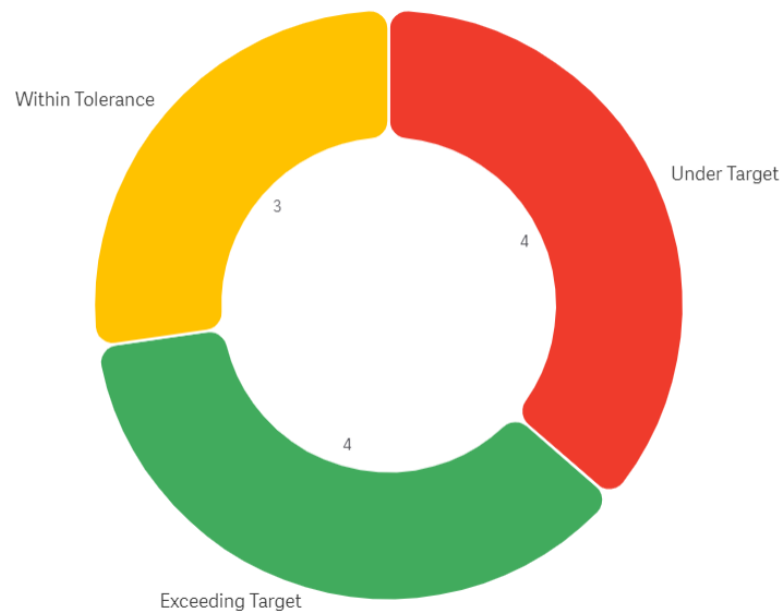


Council Plan Theme - An inspiring, thriving and creative town



Council Plan Theme: A greener, brighter future

- Both indicators related to fly-tipping exceeded the targets set.
- Net Zero Carbon footprint for Watford Leisure Centre has achieved a reduction of 3% this year to date. The target set for this KPI was a 3% reduction by the end of 2023/24, and this was achieved in Q2, primarily due to the installation of a pool cover. There was no carbon reduction reported in Q3. Both leisure centres have had pool covers installed as well as LED lighting. Customer service response times for both leisure centre remain high, with 100% of customer comments responded to within 48 hours.
- Levels of detritus were within target, and much improved compared with Q3 last year.. Levels of graffiti were just outside of the target, however improved on this time last year. Levels of litter and fly-posting were outside of target and showed a small increase on Q3 the previous year. Fly posting levels remain low overall, with a significant reduction for main road areas. Issues involving estate agent boards and yellow developer sign, contributed to this.
- Both recycled and composted waste and residual household waste indicators were outside of the targets but within tolerance.



- There were 27,953 journeys made on Beryl Bikes, contributing to a total of 93,186 journeys made since April 2023 - on track for the yearly target of 115,000.

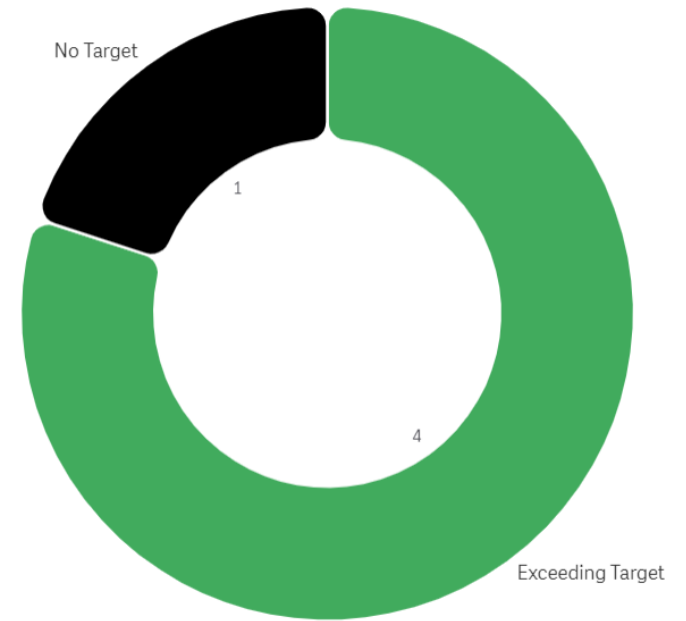
Council Plan Theme: A greener, brighter future

| Service Area | Indicator | [Desired result (low/high)] | Target | Latest Result | Latest Result vs Target | Previous Result | Trend | Performance over Time |
|--|---|-----------------------------|--------|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Environment (Waste and Recycling, Parking, the Market) | Beryl Bikes – usage | High | 28,750 | 27,953 | ● Within Tol. | 34,840 | ● Declined | |
| Environment (Waste and Recycling, Parking, the Market) | Residual household waste per household | Low | 83.75 | 85.27 | ● Within Tol. | 83.23 | ● Declined | |
| Community Protection | Fly tip response - urgent requests | High | 95.0% | 100.00% | ● Exceeding Target | 100.00% | ● No Change | |
| Environment (Leisure and Community) | Watford Leisure Centre - Customer Service single customer view response times | High | 100.0% | 100.00% | ● Exceeding Target | 100.00% | ● No Change | |
| Community Protection | Fly tip response - standard requests | High | 95.0% | 98.30% | ● Exceeding Target | 95.50% | ● Improved | |
| Environment (Waste and Recycling, Parking, the Market) | Waste recycled and composted | High | 52.0% | 50.06% | ● Within Tol. | 52.16% | ● Declined | |
| Environment (Leisure and Community) | Levels of Detritus: Improved street and environmental cleanliness | Low | 5.5% | 4.20% | ● Exceeding Target | 6.50% | ● Improved | |
| Environment (Leisure and Community) | Levels of Litter: Improved street and environment | Low | 4.5% | 5.16% | ● Under Target | 4.76% | ● Declined | |
| Environment (Leisure and Community) | Watford Leisure Centre - Net zero/carbon footprint | High | 0.8% | 0.00% | ● Under Target | 3.00% | ● Declined | |
| Environment (Leisure and Community) | Levels of Graffiti: Improved street and environmental cleanliness | Low | 3.7% | 3.77% | ● Under Target | 1.98% | ● Declined | |
| Environment (Leisure and Community) | Levels of Fly Posting: Improved street and environmental cleanliness | Low | 0.4% | 1.39% | ● Under Target | 0.79% | ● Declined | |

Council Plan Theme: An inspiring, thriving and creative town

- Excellent results recorded for the Planning team in Q3, with all indicators related to planning application processing times exceeding targets. See table below for detail on number of applications and processing time.

| | Total number received | Processed within timescale | Required an extension of time | Processed outside of timescale |
|-------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Major | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Minor | 38 | 32 | 6 | 0 |
| Other | 89 | 84 | 5 | 1 |



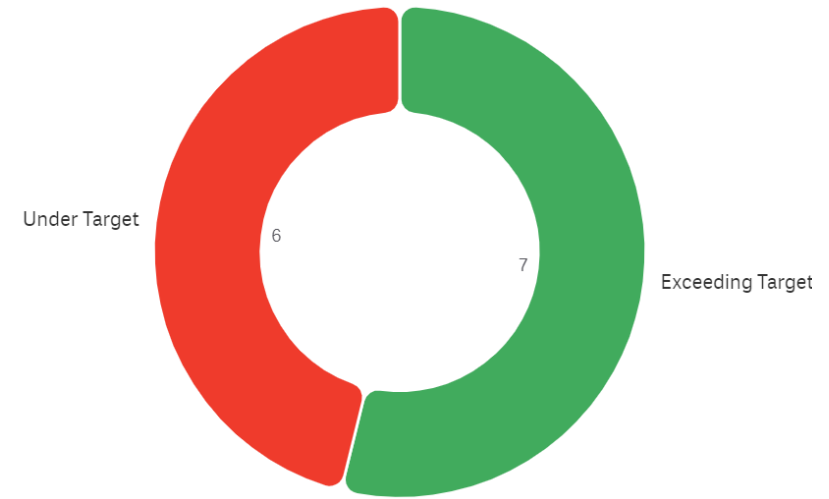
- The number of parking penalty charge notices issued in Q3 was 9,892, a decrease compared with Q2. Hertfordshire County Council took over the management of the bus gate from the 1st of November 2023, which has reduced the number of PCN's issued. There was one tribunal appeal in Q3 which was not contested.
- Watford Market occupancy rate continues to be above target at 93.50%.

Council Plan Theme: An inspiring, thriving and creative town

| Service Area | Indicator | [Desired result (low/high)] | Target | Latest Result | Latest Result vs Target | Previous Result | Trend | Performance over Time |
|--|--|-----------------------------|--------|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Environment (Waste and Recycling, Parking, the Market) | Penalty Charge Notices issued | n/a | 0 | 9,892 | ● No Target | 10,169 | ● Improved | |
| Planning | Processing of planning applications: 'major' applications - % determined within 13 weeks | High | 90.0% | 100.00% | ● Exceeding Target | 100.00% | ● No Change | |
| Planning | Processing of planning applications: 'minor' applications - % determined within 8 weeks | High | 92.0% | 100.00% | ● Exceeding Target | 100.00% | ● No Change | |
| Environment (Waste and Recycling, Parking, the Market) | Watford Market occupancy rate | High | 90.0% | 93.50% | ● Exceeding Target | 93.50% | ● No Change | |
| Planning | Processing of planning applications: 'other' applications - % determined within 8 weeks | High | 92.0% | 99.00% | ● Exceeding Target | 93.00% | ● Improved | |

Council Plan Theme: A diverse, happy, healthy town

- There were five verified rough sleepers at the end of December, increased from three at the end of June. The number of rough sleepers in the town is currently low due to the Winter Shelter running at New Hope’s The Haven until 31 March 2024. There are three rough sleepers who are now willing to engage or accept offers of accommodation. On average there are 11 people being housed at the winter night shelter, seven of whom have restricted eligibility.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation (TA) continues to increase with the most frequent reason for the loss of the last settled home being the end of a private rented tenancy. This has increased by 140% compared with April to December 2022. Settled housing move-on options are challenging. It is incredibly difficult to find affordable private rented accommodation. For example, only one private rented home was let to a homeless household in 2023-24 Q3 compared with six in the same period last year. During the quarter there were 98 lettings of housing association homes which is a higher number of lettings than usual and included the Yeatman Court development. This development enabled a small reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation for a few weeks. However, going forward there are delays in the expected completion of new affordable home developments which compounds the challenge for the Housing service.
- The number of households placed in temporary accommodation out of area has increased significantly since Q2. There are a number of reasons for this including: the number of households presenting as homeless has increased; all local authorities are facing the same homelessness pressures and are competing for a limited pool of temporary accommodation units, comprising of self-contained homes and shared rooms, which results in the service having to take TA units wherever they are available.



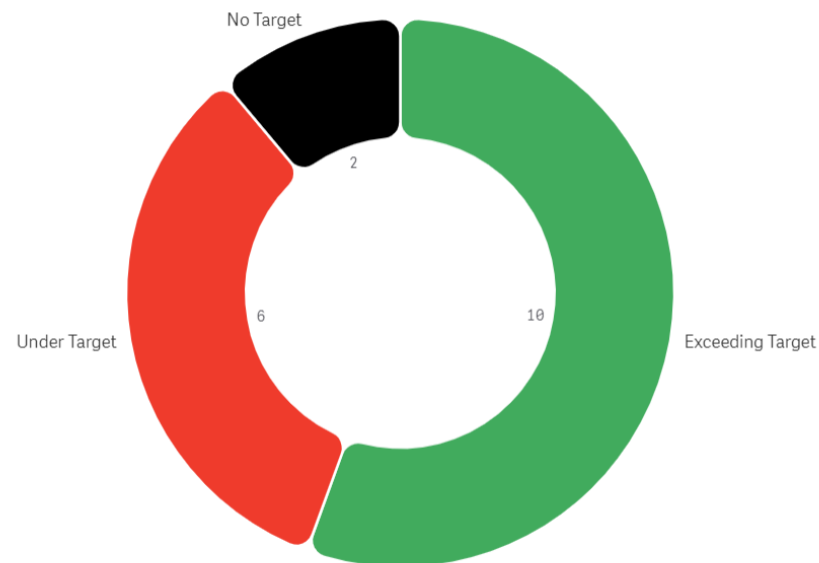
- The percentage of homeless relief cases closed with a successful outcome was 67%, exceeding the 60% target and improving on Q2. This KPI measures the outcomes for those clients whose relief duty has been closed this quarter. Relief cases include households the council has provided temporary accommodation for because they are homeless. The service have continued to exceed the target of 60% despite the dwindling supply of homes from housing associations and little availability of affordable private rented accommodation available locally for these households to move on.
- The percentage of successful homeless preventions also showed improvement since Q2 and exceeded the 60% target at 74%. Prevention cases involve households who are not yet homeless, so the council works with them to source alternative homes before they become actually homeless.
- There were 2 new homes for social rent handed over in Q3. The 2 properties were Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) social rent lettings. LAHF properties are second hand purchases, not new developments. The ambition is 120 new homes by 2026. This year, 27 properties in total have been handed over for social rent. A full report on progress on this KPI will be provided in Q4.
- Q3 results were on track for both Central and Woodside Leisure centre usage. There was a small dip in throughput, membership and swimming lesson take up, causing these indicators to be outside the quarterly target, however this an expected trend over the Christmas period. Swimming lesson take up was slightly lower than expected but not of concern.
- Customer satisfaction with sports and leisure centres remained high with 95% of customers rating the service at 7 or above (out of 10). Contract Managers continue to promote an open-door policy for any queries and have customer forums at least twice a year.

Council Plan Theme: A diverse, happy and healthy town

| Service Area | Indicator | [Desired result (low/high)] | Target | Latest Result | Latest Result vs Target | Previous Result | Trend | Performance over Time |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---------|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Environment (Leisure and Community) | Throughput of Watford Leisure Centre: Woodside | High | 164,329 | 169,836 | ● Exceeding Target | 194,726 | ● Declined | |
| Environment (Leisure and Community) | Throughput of Watford Leisure Centre: Central | High | 134,693 | 112,282 | ● Under Target | 169,259 | ● Declined | |
| Environment (Leisure and Community) | Membership of Watford Leisure Centre: Woodside | High | 5,170 | 5,909 | ● Exceeding Target | 6,162 | ● Declined | |
| Environment (Leisure and Community) | Membership of Watford Leisure Centre Central | High | 3,560 | 3,668 | ● Exceeding Target | 4,207 | ● Declined | |
| Environment (Leisure and Community) | Watford Leisure Centre - Woodside - swimming lessons take up | High | 2,149 | 2,064 | ● Under Target | 2,161 | ● Declined | |
| Environment (Leisure and Community) | Watford Leisure Centre – Central - swimming lessons take up | High | 1,744 | 1,667 | ● Under Target | 1,875 | ● Declined | |
| Housing | Households in Temporary Accommodation | Low | 100 | 196 | ● Under Target | 179 | ● Declined | |
| Housing | Homeless Households in Temporary Accommodation Out of Area | Low | 3 | 61 | ● Under Target | 26 | ● Declined | |
| Housing | Number of new homes for social rent | High | 10 | 2 | ● Under Target | 12 | ● Declined | |
| Housing | Number of Rough Sleepers | Low | 5 | 5 | ● Exceeding Target | 3 | ● Declined | |
| Environment (Leisure and Community) | Watford Leisure Centre - Satisfaction with sports and leisure centres | High | 90.0% | 95.00% | ● Exceeding Target | 95.00% | ● No Change | |
| Housing | Successful Homelessness Preventions | High | 60.0% | 74.00% | ● Exceeding Target | 69.00% | ● Improved | |
| Housing | Successful Homeless Relief Cases | High | 60.0% | 67.00% | ● Exceeding Target | 61.54% | ● Improved | |

Council Plan Theme: A council working for our community and serving our residents

- Looking at customer experience measures, self-service levels were above target at 79%, the highest result achieved this year. The number of telephone calls answered has improved since Q2 and is now exceeding the target. Telephone waiting time to the CSC has seen a significant jump since Q2, going from below target over the summer as a result of staffing challenges to well within target in Q3.
- The FOI response within timescales was 92%. Much improved on Q2 (78%) but still outside the 100% target.
- The result for the indicator relating to staff sickness was within target. Numbers of long and short-term sickness remained similar to Q2.
- Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates collection are both on track to be within target at the end of the year, and similar to results this time last year. Percentage of Housing benefit classified as 'LA error' is 0.29% higher than this time last year due to one large LA error paid in Q1, however it has been reducing steadily throughout the year as expected, and is currently below the target threshold.
- The number of customers signed up to digital/email as preferred contact channel improved in Q3 to 77%. Complaints response time showed slight improvement at 68% compared with Q1 (65%). New functionality in the Firmstep complaints module was implemented in November that will ask officers to add a reason why a complaint has been answered late. It is hoped this will enable better insight as to how this result can be improved. A breakdown reasons for late responses will be provided in the Q4 reporting.



Council Plan Theme: A Council working for our community and serving our residents

- The result for speed of processing Housing Benefit (HB) Claims is an average of six days, one day within target and an improvement on Q2. The service receives very few HB claims, so it only takes a couple of claims to take the maximum amount of time given to process (30 days) for it to impact on processing times. The service continues to closely monitor each new Housing Benefit claim received and actively chase customers several times a week to encourage them to supply the documentation required to process their claim.
- The result for the average time to process a change of circumstances was six days. An improvement on Q2 and within target.
- Several new KPIs related to Customer satisfaction by contact channel were added as part of the KPI review, and the metrics are based around the percentage of customers who have given a positive rating of the service received. The contact channels assessed in Q3 were website, telephone and digital.

Customer satisfaction for digital channels has dropped slightly since Q2, and is now just outside of target, with 86% of customers giving the service a positive rating.

Telephone satisfaction also has dropped in Q3 (79%) when compared with Q2 (97%). The CSC went live with a new SMS feedback channel in October. This means *all* customers that called via a mobile phone were given the opportunity to leave feedback and it should be noted that despite the realignment of satisfaction levels as a result of this new way of recording information, the feedback received since going live with SMS has been more constructive, and this is shared with all services during regular monthly meetings, enabling improvements where needed.

Website satisfaction remained steady at 43% - most poor ratings related to customers using the website to pay a Penalty Charge Notice. A review of all parking content of the website took place during Q3, and changes will be implemented in Q4, which will hopefully result in improvement in this area.

Council Plan Theme: A Council working for our community and serving our residents

| Service Area | Indicator | [Desired result (low/high)] | Target | Latest Result | Latest Result vs Target | Previous Result | Trend | Performance over Time |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------|--------|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Human Resources | Staff sickness – short term | Low | 0 | 46 | ● No Target | 42 | ● Declined | |
| Revenues and Benefits | Speed of processing Housing Benefit Claims | Low | 7 | 6 | ● Exceeding Target | 7 | ● Improved | |
| Revenues and Benefits | Average time to process change of circumstances (from date of receipt to date processed) | Low | 6 | 6 | ● Exceeding Target | 7 | ● Improved | |
| Human Resources | Sickness absence (working days lost per employee, rolling 12 month rate) | Low | 5 | 4 | ● Exceeding Target | 3 | ● Declined | |
| Human Resources | Staff sickness – long term | Low | 0 | 4 | ● No Target | 3 | ● Declined | |
| Customer Services | Customer Satisfaction by contact channel – TELEPHONE | High | 99.0% | 79.00% | ● Under Target | 97.00% | ● Declined | |
| Customer Services | Telephone calls answered | High | 95.0% | 97.00% | ● Exceeding Target | 94.00% | ● Improved | |
| Customer Services | Customer Satisfaction by contact channel – DIGITAL | High | 90.0% | 86.00% | ● Under Target | 91.00% | ● Declined | |
| Community Protection | Pest Control response times | High | 98.0% | 46.40% | ● Under Target | 81.90% | ● Declined | |
| Customer Services | FOIs response time | High | 100.0% | 92.00% | ● Under Target | 75.50% | ● Improved | |
| Customer Services | Self service levels | High | 70.0% | 79.00% | ● Exceeding Target | 73.00% | ● Improved | |
| Customer Services | Customers signed up to digital/email as preferred contact channel | High | 70.0% | 77.00% | ● Exceeding Target | 66.00% | ● Improved | |
| Customer Services | Complaints response time | High | 100.0% | 68.00% | ● Under Target | 65.00% | ● Improved | |

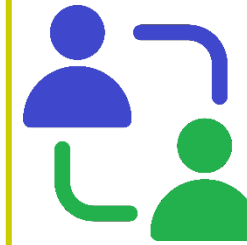
Council Plan Theme: A Council working for our community and serving our residents

| Service Area | Indicator | [Desired result (low/high)] | Target | Latest Result | Latest Result vs Target | Previous Result | Trend | Performance over Time |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Revenues and Benefits | Collection Rates of Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) | High | 72.7% | 82.35% | ● Exceeding Target | 55.86% | ● Improved | |
| Revenues and Benefits | Council Tax Collection Rate | High | 72.7% | 80.00% | ● Exceeding Target | 53.80% | ● Improved | |
| Customer Services | Customer Satisfaction by contact channel - WEBSITE | High | 80.0% | 43.00% | ● Under Target | 43.00% | ● No Change | |
| Customer Services | Telephone waiting time to the CSC (Less than 20% waiting for more than 2 minutes) | Low | 20.0% | 14.00% | ● Exceeding Target | 34.00% | ● Improved | |
| Revenues and Benefits | % of Housing Benefit overpayment classified as 'LA error' | Low | 0.5% | 0.36% | ● Exceeding Target | 0.47% | ● Improved | |

Economic Growth Strategy

Q3 Highlights

- Produced Watford's FSB (Federation of Small Businesses) Local Leadership Report setting out how the Council supports small business across its range of services; this is the first of its kind in the East of England.
- Convened the first meeting of a Business Task Group comprising leading business in the town, in this instance to help with development of the Watford Place Brand, but also other key initiatives in the future.
- Held the second construction industry / developer skills workshop with good participation and follow up actions.
- A wide range of business engagement has happened, including meetings with key businesses and support for the Christmas shop local campaign.
- Supported the County-wide All the Help you Can Get event and the 10 Year Better Business for All (BBfA) celebration, of which Watford was a founding member.
- Completed the Watford Skills and Employment Plan 2024-26.
- Consulted with a range of businesses and groups on the draft Watford Business Charter to inform the delivery plan for this initiative.



In total now 250 businesses are supported on the UKSPF funded Watford Net Zero project

Supported the Purple Tuesday initiative promoting accessibility and inclusivity to Watford's businesses



9

Start up businesses from the Watford Young Entrepreneurs have been supported through their next stage of growth by the Watford Growth Springboard project funded by the UKSPF

In total now 216 businesses are supported on the UKSPF Watford Fit to Bid local supply chain



Q4 Priorities

- Launch the Watford Skills and Employment Plan and convene the first Skills and Employment delivery group to bring together the actions needed to deliver against the plan.
- Successfully deliver the next Meet the Buyer event, as part of the Watford Fit to Bid project.
- Support the Innovation and Incubation Hub project to revalidate the concept and proposal.
- Complete the UKSPF Year 2 programme and prepare for reporting for DLUHC.
- Complete research and consultation related to the Watford Business Charter, propose the delivery model options, and seek agreement on a delivery approach.
- Collate and share with Herts LEP information about Watford's key inward investment assets and propositions, to ensure Watford is well promoted through the forthcoming Invest Herts portal
- Support Watford BID in its planning for 2024



Customer Experience Strategy

Q3 Highlights

- Successful staff engagement event held in December 2023 to present the Customer Experience Strategy, giving colleagues an opportunity to discuss and feedback on the Strategy delivery.
- Continuing to develop our online services, including streamlining, and automating processes through integration with back-office systems. Processes in development include Pavement Licensing and Temporary Event Notice.
- Working with W3RT to deliver digital isolation workstream. W3RT organising and delivering group training sessions across the borough.
- Continuing to develop our customer experience dashboard to support service areas to self-serve, forecast customer demand and identify improvement opportunities for our customers. Mapping Census 2021 on GIS and areas of deprivation and fuel poverty maps built for Citizens Advice.
- Our switchboard contract re-procurement is underway, providing an opportunity to explore other contact channels, such as SMS and AI, through which we can deliver our services. At present we have been looking at demos from potential suppliers.
- Automated customer telephone surveys, which allows mobile phone users to leave feedback via text message went live in October 2023. More constructive feedback about our services has been received as a result.
- Parking Services website review completed following feedback from customers.
- Co-Browsing which allows officers to see customer's screens and to help them successfully use the website and forms is currently being tested on third party websites, specifically the Housing form, as that is where most customers need our support online.

Q3 Priorities

- Procuring a new Switchboard operator/Smart IVR for the council which will include additional technologies like AI.
- Introducing customer co-browsing.
- Continue development of customer experience dashboards and digital processes



Almost 8,234 online forms submitted

22% reduction in the number of complaints received in the same quarter last year



495,340 visits to the council website

1,116 visits to the Customer Service Centre



97% of all telephone calls answered



Sustainability Strategy

Q3 Highlights

- Climate Emergency Scorecards published – Watford is the leading district in Herts and 19th among all district councils across the UK
- Agreement to incorporate the Watford Sustainability Wheel into the Project Framework
- Benefits Realisation Plan signed off to ensure environmental benefits are measured and tracked
- Environment Agency permit submitted to complete River Colne in-river works at Timberlake Allotments this Winter – ‘duly made’ status achieved
- Staff travel survey completed to assess our own impact on the environment
- Water Quality Forum relaunched
- Single-use plastic takeaway cutlery/containers banned from 1 October
- Tree planting completed for this year (200+) and has exceeded Mayor’s commitment

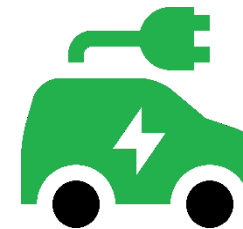
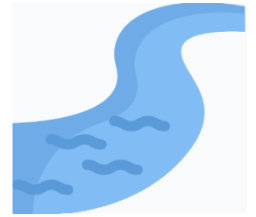
Q4 Priorities

- Additional Carbon Literacy training and certification for Planners
- Watford Sustainability Wheel fully incorporated into the Project Framework and project documentation
- Sustainability e-learning module developed
- Outcome of application for solar panels on Woodside and Central leisure centres via Sport England
- Publish ‘About Watford’ Winter edition with sustainability project updates and promoting the Waste Aware campaign
- Develop Green Spaces strategy
- Extending Beryl Bike contract and reaching agreement to extend coverage to neighbouring authorities
- Planning for Great Big Green Week 2024 Council activities

1

Watford ranked 1st in Hertfordshire on the Climate Emergency scorecard

2 further ‘Tales of the River’ podcasts have been recorded, bringing the river and community back together



Our first staff travel survey has been launched to inform the development of a green travel plan

319 businesses and residents signed up to Herts Solar Together Phase 2 to date



20

officers from across the council have received Carbon Literacy training and certification, cementing our corporate commitment to sustainability



Transforming Travel in Watford

Q3 Highlights

- Delivery of the new EV charging points progressing.
- Final car club locations agreed and Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) advertised.
- Engagement on the Whippendell Parade improvements targeted 170 addresses, and 51 responses were received. Issues such as ASB and illegal parking were raised and suggestions to widen pavements and introduce greening were supported.
- Watford's Green Loop cycle route immersive virtual reality (VR) bike ride continues to be well received.
- Beryl's bike-share scheme is expanding across parts of south-west Hertfordshire, thanks to the collaboration of Watford Borough Council, Three Rivers District Council, and Hertsmeire Borough Council.



51 responses to Whippendell Road improvements.

Installation of 79 new EV chargers for public use.



Q4 Priorities

- Prepare further funding bid for on street electric vehicle charging points.
- Agree communications strategy for the new car club.
- Whippendell Parade improvements – detailed proposal to be priced and delivery programme produced.
- Initial launch of electric vehicle car club scheduled for Q4. This will be a convenient, flexible and cost-effective solution for people who don't want to incur the high costs associated with car ownership, providing another travel option for the residents of Watford.
- Green Loop implementation plan to be shared with stakeholders for engagement.



Cycle counters installed in Watford's parks.

Respondents to the HCC consultation on the width restriction at Woodmere Avenue support the existing layout. 210 responses received.



Community Engagement and Participation Strategy

Q3 Highlights

- The final draft Community Engagement and Participation Strategy and associated Delivery Plan were presented to Cabinet in October 2023 and were approved

43

Community and charity organisations represented at our inaugural Community Networking Event



Q4 Priorities

- Review the Delivery Plan and assign to relevant service and management teams to coordinate the delivery of the approved actions
- Arrange the second Community Networking Event for February 2024



Cultural Strategy

Q3 Highlights

- Over 30,000 people enjoyed the 20-minute firework display at Cassiobury Park at the beginning of November.
- Watford Market was full of spooktacular tricks, treats and scarily good street food on Friday 27 October, as 'Market Lates' returned for Halloween
- Watford Town Centre Winterfest commenced with a wonderful FREE event to begin the festive season which included funfair rides, festive activities, food & drink stalls, a high street parade and live music performers.

Q4 Priorities

- Watford Town Centre BID has partnered with Atria to organise a gift exchange for locals to trade their unwanted gift for someone else's unwanted gift! The Gift Swap is a fun, sustainable, and environmentally friendly initiative taking place in the Gift Swap pop-up shop on the Lower Mall in Atria, Watford on Sunday 28 January.
- Elected Mayor of Watford, Peter Taylor and Deputy Mayor, Cllr Aga Dychton, will be walking the Abbey Line Trail to raise money for Watford Women's Centre. The 10-mile walk will start at 10am on 25 February, beginning at Watford Junction station and ending at St Albans Abbey station, and the community is invited to join in.





Executive Decision Progress Report

From May 2023

Contact Officer: Jodie Kloss
Senior Democratic Services Officer

Telephone: 01923 278376

Email: democraticservices@watford.gov.uk

March 2024

All officer decisions are available on the [Officer Decision Register](#) or on the full [Decision Register](#). Only key decisions are shown below. Further information about [forthcoming decisions](#) is available online.

| Date key decision is due to be taken and by whom | Proposed decision published in the Notice of Executive Decisions | Details of the proposed decision | Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private and what are the reasons for this? | Status |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| 5 June 2023 Cabinet | 3 May 2023 | Business Intelligence Strategy Lead officer: Liam Hornsby | No | Approved by Cabinet 5 June 2023 |
| 5 June 2023 Cabinet | 23 May 2023 | Conservation Areas Management Plan - Actions 2023-26 Lead officer: Sian Finney-MacDonald | No | Approved by Cabinet 5 June 2023 |
| 10 July 2023 Cabinet | 3 May 2023 | Community Engagement and Participation Strategy Lead officer: Natalie Frost | No | Approved by Cabinet 10 July 2023 |
| 10 July 2023 Cabinet | 9 June 2023 | Watford's Place Brand and Narrative Lead officer: Kathryn Robson | No | Approved by Cabinet 10 July 2023 |

| Date key decision is due to be taken and by whom | Proposed decision published in the Notice of Executive Decisions | Details of the proposed decision | Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private and what are the reasons for this? | Status |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| 4 September 2023 Cabinet | 3 August 2023 | Communications and Conversations Strategy 2023-26 Lead officer: Kathryn Robson, Marie Power | No | Approved by Cabinet 4 September 2023 |
| 4 September 2023 Cabinet | 3 August 2023 | Letting at Croxley Business Park Lead officer: Peter Hall | Yes on the grounds that it contains commercially sensitive information. | Approved by Cabinet 4 September 2023 |
| 4 September 2023 Cabinet | 16 August 2023 | UK Shared Prosperity Fund Phase 2 Proposals Lead officer: Cherie Norris | No | Approved by Cabinet 4 September 2023 |
| 2 October 2023 Cabinet | 3 August 2023 | SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan Vision Report Lead officer: Jack Green | No | Approved by Cabinet 2 October 2023 |
| 2 October 2023 and 17 October 2023 Cabinet and Council | 29 September 2023 | Annual Review of Fees and Charges Lead officer: Hannah Doney | No | Approved by Cabinet 2 October 2023 Approved by Council 17 October 2023 |

| Date key decision is due to be taken and by whom | Proposed decision published in the Notice of Executive Decisions | Details of the proposed decision | Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private and what are the reasons for this? | Status |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| 30 October 2023 Cabinet | 29 September 2023 | Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework Lead officer: Semeta Bloomfield | No | Approved by Cabinet 30 October 2023 |
| 30 October 2023 Cabinet | 29 September 2023 | Continuous Improvement Framework Lead officer: Liam Hornsby | No | Approved by Cabinet 30 October 2023 |
| 30 October 2023 Cabinet | 29 September 2023 | Community Engagement and Participation Strategy Lead officer: Natalie Frost | No | Approved by Cabinet 30 October 2023 |
| 30 October 2023 Cabinet | 16 October 2023 | Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Lead officer – Christella Menson | No | Approved by Cabinet 30 October 2023 |
| 27 November 2023 Cabinet | 27 October 2023 | Authority Monitoring Report Lead officer – Thomas Shaw | No | Approved by Cabinet 27 November 2023 |
| 27 November 2023 Cabinet | 27 October 2023 | Extension of Bike Share Contract Lead officer – Paul Stacey | Yes, part exempt on the grounds that it contains commercially sensitive information. | Approved by Cabinet 27 November 2023 |

| Date key decision is due to be taken and by whom | Proposed decision published in the Notice of Executive Decisions | Details of the proposed decision | Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private and what are the reasons for this? | Status |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| 27 November 2023 Cabinet | 27 October 2023 | Community Asset Strategy Lead officer – Peter Hall | No | Approved by Cabinet 27 November 2023 |
| After 19 January 2024 Mayoral delegated decision | 16 November 2023 | Approval of s.106 Expenditure to Deliver Social Rented Housing Lead officer: Laura Marland | No | |
| 5 February 2024 Cabinet | 5 January 2024 | LABV Watford Riverwell Business Plan 2023-2025 Lead officer: Lauren Sharkey | Yes, part exempt on the grounds that it contains commercially sensitive information. | Approved by Cabinet 5 February 2024 |
| 5 February 2024 Cabinet | 11 January 2024 | Breakspeare School CIL bid Lead officer: Ellen Higginson | No | Approved by Cabinet 5 February 2024 |
| 5 February 2024 Cabinet | 12 January 2024 | Long Lease Disposal of Ashington's Car Park, Lady's Close Lead officer: Peter Hall | Yes, part exempt on the grounds that it contains commercially sensitive information. | Approved by Cabinet 5 February 2024 |
| 4 March 2024 Cabinet | 8 December 2023 | A review of fines for fixed penalty notices Lead officer: Nick Egerton | No | Approved by Cabinet 4 March 2024 |
| 4 March 2024 Cabinet | 2 February 2024 | Croxley Park Business Plan 2024-25 | Yes on the grounds that it contains commercially sensitive information. | Approved by Cabinet 4 March 2024 |

| Date key decision is due to be taken and by whom | Proposed decision published in the Notice of Executive Decisions | Details of the proposed decision | Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private and what are the reasons for this? | Status |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | Lead officer: Peter Hall | | |
| 4 March 2024 Cabinet | 2 February 2024 | West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee Lead officer: Carol Chen | No | Approved by Cabinet 4 March 2024 |
| 3 June 2024 Cabinet | 9 June 2023 | Collaboration and Commercial Strategy Lead officer: Carol Chen | No | |
| 3 June 2024 Cabinet | 2 February 2024 | SLM contract Lead officer: Paul Stacey | Yes on the grounds that it contains commercially sensitive information. | |

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2023/2024 draft work programme

| Date | Publishing | Topics | Type of item | Speakers |
|--------------|--------------|--|---|--|
| 21 June | 13 June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSC work programme 2023/24 • Customer Experience Strategy • Report-it update | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny business • Service performance • Service performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jodie Kloss (Senior Democratic Services Officer) • Liam Hornsby (Associate Director of Corporate and Customer Services), Michelle Carty (CSC Operations) • Lee Anderson (Digital Improvement Manager) |
| 19 July | 11 July | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan and performance update (Quarter 4 2022/23) • Establishment of task group - housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance and delivery monitoring • Review of outside organisations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liam Hornsby (Associate Director of Corporate and Customer Services), Lee Pound (Executive Head of HR and OD), Claire Dow (Intelligence, Performance and Improvement Lead) • Jodie Kloss (Senior Democratic Services Officer) |
| 20 September | 12 September | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan and performance update (Quarter 1 2023/24) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance and delivery monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liam Hornsby (Associate Director of Corporate and Customer Services), Lee Pound (Executive Head of HR and OD), Claire Dow ((Intelligence, Performance and Improvement Lead) |

| | | | | |
|-------------|------------|---|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spotlight on service delivery – waste and recycling. • Local response to the cost-of-living crisis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service performance • Review of outside organisations and partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate Director of Environment and Service Delivery Leads • Representatives from Citizens’ Advice, W3RT and Elim Church |
| 18 October | 10 October | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLM contract update • Executive-Scrutiny protocol | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service performance • Scrutiny business | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Stacey (Associate Director of Environment), Semeta Bloomfield (Community Commissioning Lead), Julietta Federico (Contract and Relationship Manager) • Jodie Kloss (Senior Democratic Services Officer) |
| 15 November | 7 November | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on hospital development • Health integration • Watford Business Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of outside organisations and partnerships • Service review • Service review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from West Herts Teaching Hospital Trust • Donna Nolan (Chief Executive), Toby Hyde (West Herts Teaching Hospital Trust) • Lauren Sharkey (Property Development Project Manager), Peter Hall (Associate Director of Property and Asset Management) |

| | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|---|---|--|
| 13 December | 5 December | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan and performance update (Quarter 2 2023/24) • Spotlight on service delivery – street cleansing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance and delivery monitoring • Service performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liam Hornsby (Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services), Claire Dow (Intelligence, Performance and Improvement Lead) • Associate Director for Environment and Service delivery leads |
| 31 January | 23 January | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on recommendations of Sustainability Strategy Task Group • Performance of the high street | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny business • Review of outside organisations and partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alan Gough (Director of Partnerships), Susheel Rao (Sustainability Officer) • Representatives of the BID and Atria |
| 21 February | 13 February | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Safety Partnership • Task group final report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of outside organisations and partnerships • Scrutiny business | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liam Fitzgerald (Community Safety Manager) and CSP partners • Jodie Kloss (Senior Democratic Services Officer) |
| 13 March | 7 March | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan and performance update (Quarter 3 2023/24) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance and delivery monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liam Hornsby (Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services), Claire Dow (Intelligence, Performance and Improvement Lead) |

Other items for longer-term planning:

- Recruitment and retention at WBC
- Visit Herts
- Shared services (St Albans/ Three Rivers)
- Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework (End of Year Report – 2022-2023)
- Neighbourhood Locality Fund process review (2024/25)
- Review of CCTV service (2024/25)
- Thames Water