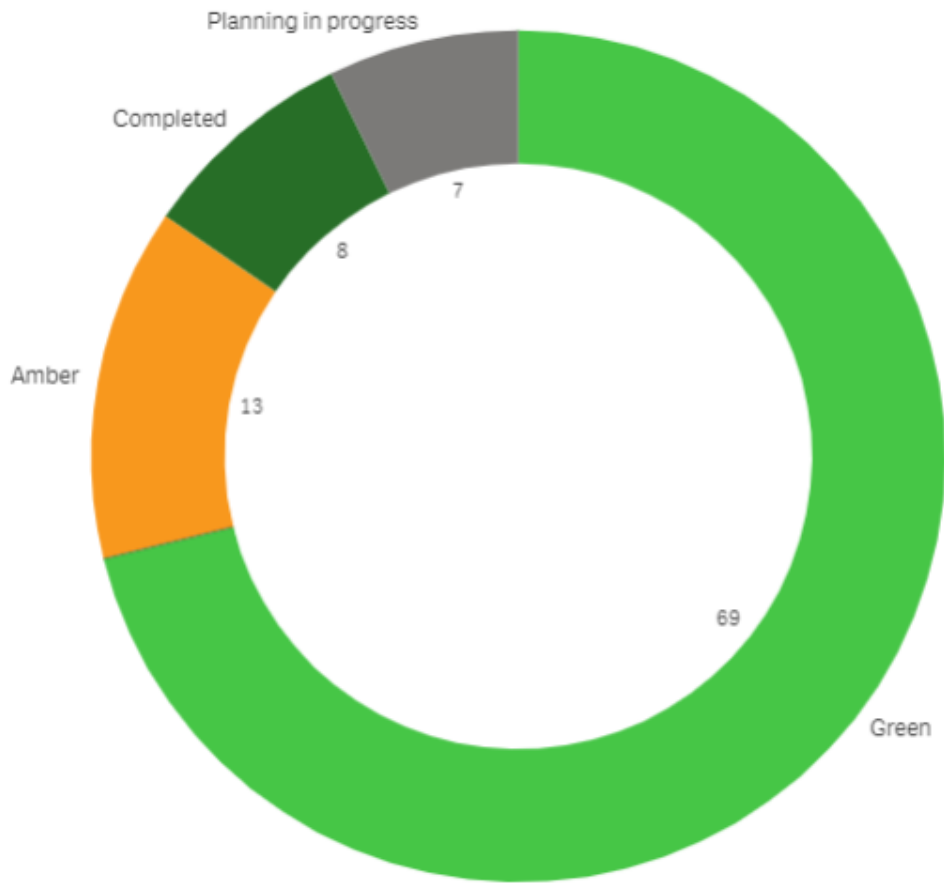


Delivery Plan Progress Update



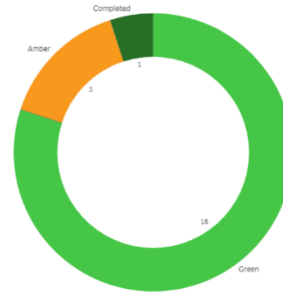
Delivery Plan Overview



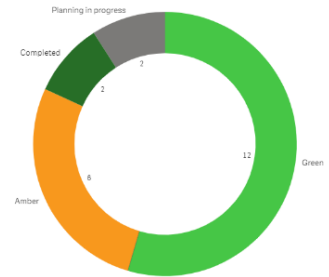
Key

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

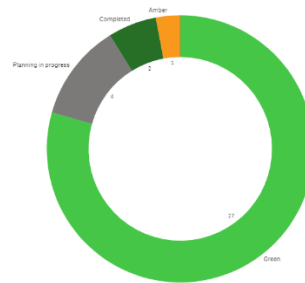
Council Plan Theme - A greener, brighter future



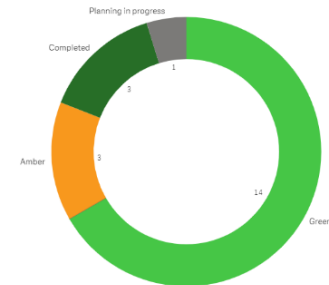
Council Plan Theme - An inspiring, thriving and creative town



Council Plan Theme - A diverse, happy and healthy town

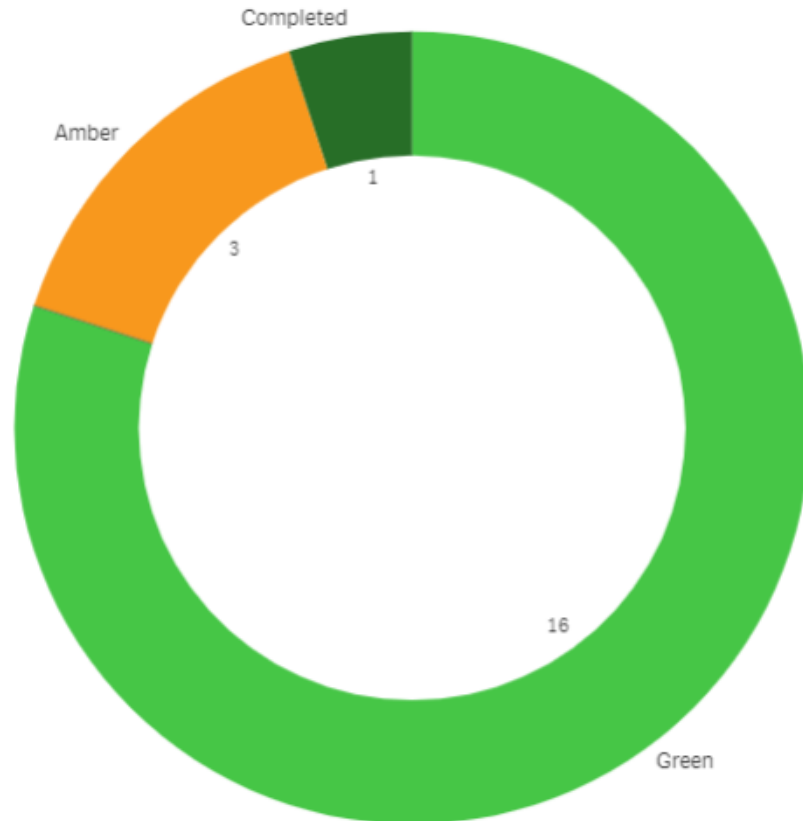


Council Plan Theme - A Council working for our community and serving our residents



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>We will continue to investigate the potential for a low-carbon transport hub in Watford town centre to encourage more use of public transport, reducing congestion and improving air quality for everyone.</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>We will explore initiatives such as secure cycle parking and school travel plans to give people options other than using their car for every journey.</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>We will introduce initiatives such as electric vehicles, e-cargo bikes, electric charging points and e-car clubs to encourage more use of green transport, reducing congestion and improving air quality.</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 the infrastructure for phases 1, 2 and 3 now complete and 6 chargers fully operational. The remaining sites are awaiting connection dates from UK Power Networks. 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 ¹ Rating	Trend	Headline	
	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

Commitment	Activity	BRAG ¹ Rating	Trend	Headline
				<p>approach for the main permit for Waterfield and Radlett Road, this will allow the status to return to green.</p> <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 elated 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	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.

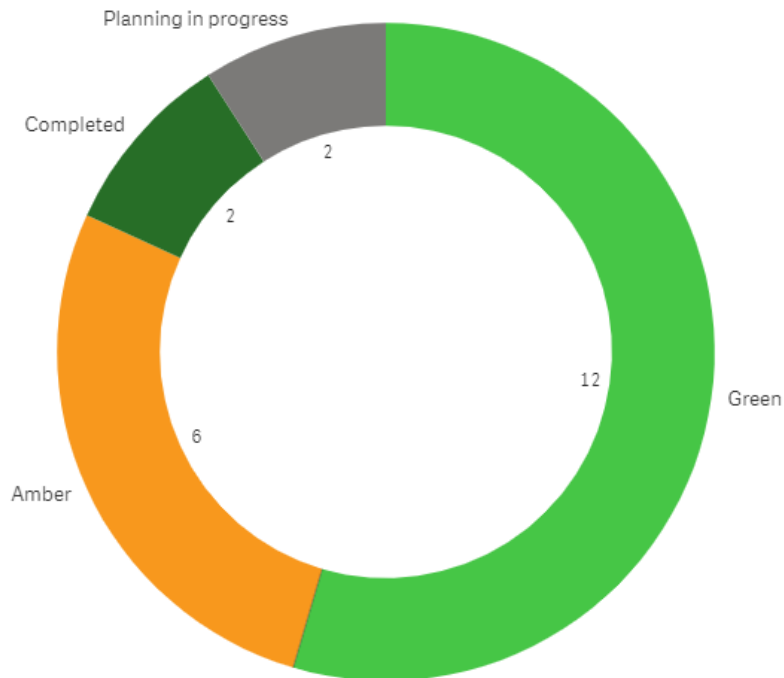
Commitment	Activity		BRAG ¹ Rating	Trend	Headline
	town's goals for better habitats and environmental diversity				An alternative approach, such as an implementation note to assist decision making, is being progressed.
Work alongside our community and businesses to find the right ways to reach net carbon neutral, seeking not just to learn from others but to explore innovative solutions that will work for Watford	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	↔	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. Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Environment Strategy is included within Appendix C3.
	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	↔	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. Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Sustainability Strategy is included within Appendix C3.
	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	↔	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. In November 2023 we submitted a Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme bid to fund works to three of the council's community buildings.
	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	↔	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 (CO ₂) 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. 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.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG ¹ Rating	Trend	Headline
	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 there are no incidences of non-compliance.</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' Rating	Trend	Headline	
	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	
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
<p>succeed as part of our flourishing business community and networks that connect people</p>	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.
<p>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</p>	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	↔	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The activity status remains amber due to the ongoing current economic climate which has delayed the anticipated investment.</p>

Commitment	Activity	BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline	
	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	↔	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
	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	↔	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
	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	↔	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

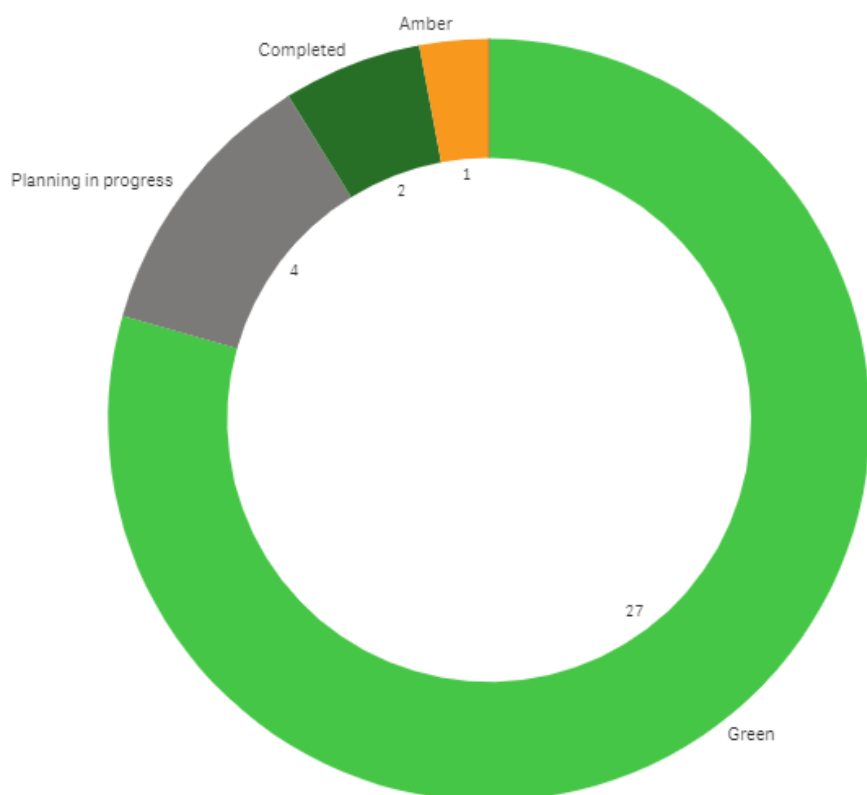
Commitment	Activity		BRAG ¹ Rating	Trend	Headline
<p>Ensure the right mix of facilities, services and transport links as part of new developments to create successful, well-designed new communities</p>	<p>34. Take forward plans for the Watford Junction Quarter</p>	<p>We will bring landowners together 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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<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>
	<p>35. Continue our transformation of Watford Business Park</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>↔</p>	<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>
	<p>36. Continue to deliver the neighbourhood at Riverwell</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>↔</p>	<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>
	<p>37. Achieve the right long-term balance of development, services and transport links for our town</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>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.</p>

Commitment	Activity	BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline	
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
	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
<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
		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
<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. In December 2024 a new fly tipping campaign was launched in Callowland ward to tackle fly tipping hot spots around St Albans Road. This uses Hertfordshire Waste Partnership's S.C.R.A.P fly tipping resources and has included creating a 'crime scene' of a fly tip to raise awareness, refreshing the large posters on display at key locations and distributing informative letters and flyers to local residents in affected streets. Messages focus on how to dispose of waste correctly, how to report fly tipping and that fly tipping can result in a £300 fine or prosecution. This follows on from a previous targeted campaign across a wider area of Callowland from 2019 to 2022 which saw a reduction in the number of fly tips while the extra measures were in place. This initiative made sure that all residents and businesses had suitable waste provision, investigated and enforced fly tips, and provided educational materials to residents, schools and businesses'.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	57. Develop a range of information and signposting to create a 'welcome to Watford' resource	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.	Planning in progress	↔	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.
Listen to and hear the diverse voices of Watford	58. Engage with our community to support better outcomes for our town and residents	We will develop our strategic approach, setting out how we will proactively work and engage with our community and our voluntary and community sector.	Green	↔	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. 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.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	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	↔	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Community Asset Strategy and Community Lettings Policy were approved by Cabinet in November 2023.</p>
	63. Deliver our Equality and Diversity policy so it underpins what we do and how we engage with our community	We will develop an Equality and Diversity policy for Watford, making sure it reflects our diverse town and our commitment to being a place where everyone can thrive.	Green	↔	<p>The Census 2021 figures underpin the council's approach to its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy. The EDI Policy and Delivery Plan, which 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.</p>
	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	↔	<p>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.</p>
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	↔	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
	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	Green	↔	<p>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</p>



Commitment	Activity	BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	have the skills to use IT so that they have the same opportunities as others in our town.			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 menopause and for those needing help with mental health issues.	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. 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	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



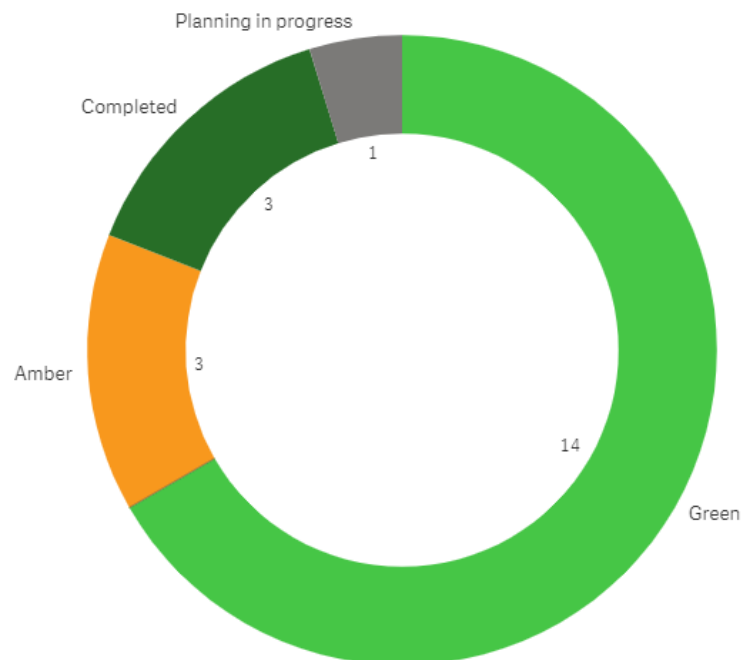
Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
		support individuals on every part of their journey into independent living.			reduced the number of people sleeping rough in Watford from 80+ to a handful. The formal pathway has been in place since April 2021 and through this over 300 single homeless 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	↔	The vast majority of customers in receipt of Universal Credit are now automatically signed up to the council tax reduction scheme without the need to complete an additional claim form. 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 the customer experience, providing greater flexibility and improving service efficiency. 'Arrangements Manager', a self-serve tool for customers wishing to make online payments, went live in October 2023. 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.
	71. Coordinate advice in the town for those seeking information on how to cope with the cost of living crisis	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.	Green	↔	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.
	72. Use innovative ways to support our local community financially	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.	Complete	↔	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

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
					<p>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>
	73. Welcome the whole town and visitors to our Big Events	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.	Green	↔	<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. We will review the programme for 2024/25 and line this up into the work of our Cultural Leaders.</p>
	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. 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. 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. 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>

Commitment	Activity	BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	<p>76. Help our community better access the benefits of Watford's economic growth</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Green</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↔</p> <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 style="text-align: center;">↔</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 style="text-align: center;">↔</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 style="text-align: center;">↔</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
<p>Focus and challenge how we manage our budget so it is concentrated on delivering our commitments and securing greater investment for Watford</p>	<p>86. Ensure our investment portfolio is ambitious and effectively managed to deliver maximum value to the council</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>87. Assess the feasibility of a Growth Fund and its benefits for Watford</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Planning in progress</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>88. Manage and direct the council finances effectively</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>89. Identify new commercial opportunities that align with our ambition</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>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.</p>

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.