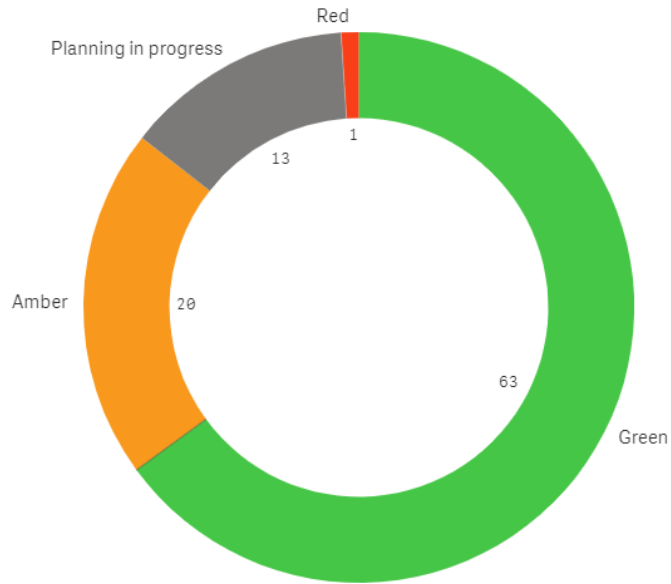


Appendix A - Council Delivery Plan Progress update Q2 2022/23

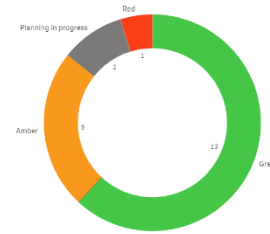
Delivery Plan Overview



Key
Blue – Ahead of schedule
Green – On track
Amber – Potential Risks / Some uncertainty
Red – Challenges

Council Plan Theme - A greener, brighter future

CDP Activity BRAG Split



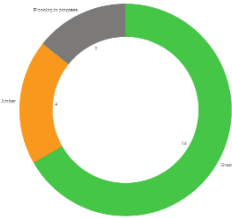
Council Plan Theme - A diverse, happy and healthy town

CDP Activity BRAG Split



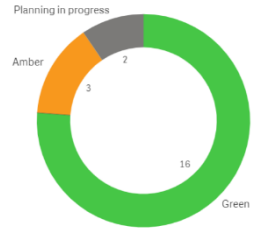
Council Plan Theme - An inspiring, thriving and creative town

CDP Activity BRAG Split



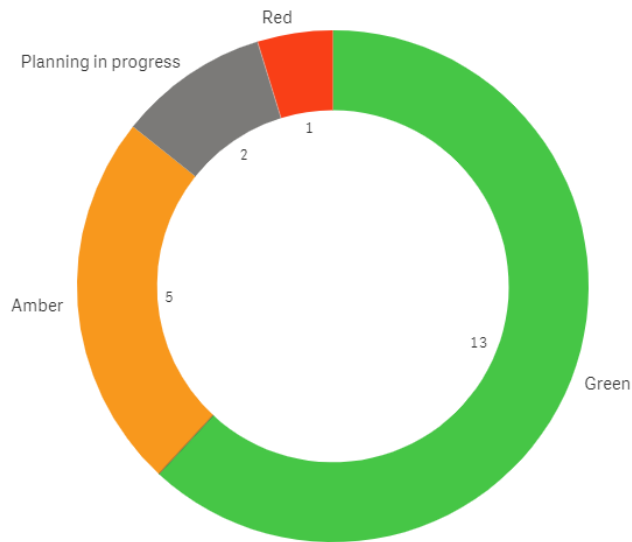
Council Plan Theme - A Council working for our community and serving our residents

CDP Activity BRAG Split



THEME: A greener brighter future

Overview



Key achievements over this period

- To provide our residents with an opportunity to determine the best locations to plant new trees, a Tree Nominations initiative commenced in the Summer. All sites nominated are under review and this builds on the summer tree giveaway by the council and the Autumn tree giveaway by Hertfordshire County Council, which the council has continued to promote to residents in order to increase our green canopy.
- Cycling and walking network plans are progressing, with project validation complete for the Green Loop East and Hempstead Road, and a number of initial projects designed, including the Water Lane to Lower High Street link and the Ebury Way to Ascot Road link. A number of stand-alone sites have also been designed and are ready for implementation.
- Following the successful receipt of more than £3m of grant funding from central government, the work to decarbonise the Town Hall continues. Whilst the current economic market continues to place risk on the project, all listed building consent conditions have been successfully discharged and windows across both buildings have started to be removed for refurbishment and re-installment. Cavity wall insulation works were completed in August 2022 and asbestos removal completed in September 2022. Internally, light fitting removals are underway with the scheme expected to be completed in Spring 2023, slightly later than initially expected.
- We have also applied for the next round of funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to improve the energy efficiency of some of our operational and community estate.

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>	Investigate greener travel and transport solutions that work for Watford	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.	Green	↔	Forming part of the new Transforming Travel in Watford programme, the work to develop a low-carbon transport hub remains underway with the 'Pyramid' site at the junction of the High Street and Exchange Road identified as the preferred site. However, any further progress will be subject to a review of the capital programme in light of the budgetary pressures caused by inflation.
	Promote ways of to travel that support people make greener choices	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.	Green	↔	The council is committed to continuing to work towards net carbon zero by 2030 and, through the new Transforming Travel in Watford programme, will commence work to explore opportunities for cycle parking and school travel plans over the next period. A review of the programme resourcing has been undertaken and plans to commence the Car Club and EVCP are underway.
	Champion sustainable travel initiatives and greener vehicles options	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.	Green	↔	The council is already leading in the number of electric charging points and electric hire vehicles in the borough but, as part of the Transforming Travel in Watford programme will be increasing this provision to help reduce congestion and improve air quality.
	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	↔	Cycling and walking network plans are progressing, with project validation complete for the Green Loop East and Hempstead Road, and a number of some quick win projects designed, including the Water Lane to Lower High Street link and the Ebury Way to Ascot Road link. A number of stand-alone sites have also been designed and are ready for implementation.
	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.	Green	↔	In line with the council's commitment to support proposals for a sustainable transport across the town, we have been working closely with Hertfordshire County Council. A tender issued to consultants to undertake an Options and Feasibility study into potential alternatives for the Watford to Croxley Link (formerly MLX) corridor is now closed and consultants appointed. A formal stage one proposal is due in November 2022.
<p>Promote improvements to Watford's biodiversity to enhance the range of habitats, plants and wildlife in the town</p>	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	↔	Our Biodiversity Strategy is being scoped alongside the emerging Sustainability Strategy to develop a suite of documents supporting planning, sustainability and service delivery. A range of work is already underway to support our commitment to biodiversity, including our improvements to the River Colne and the Cassiobury Wetlands.
	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	↔	To provide our residents with an opportunity to determine the best locations to plant new trees, a Tree Nominations initiative commenced in the Summer and has now closed. All sites nominated are under review and this builds on the summer tree giveaway by the council and the Autumn tree giveaway by Hertfordshire County Council, which the council has continued to promote to residents.

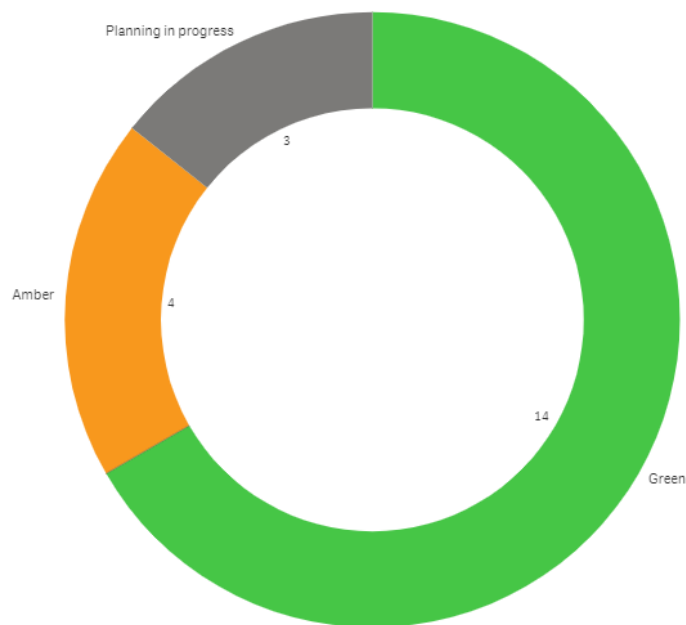
Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	Rediscover the River Colne to enhance the river, the river corridor, as a place for our community to enjoy	We will improve the River Colne through Watford to make it a more appealing place for local people to enjoy and a better environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.	Amber	↔	Work continues to gain permit permissions from the Environment Agency to commence the first set of exciting investments in the River Colne this Winter, with procurement of a contractor to deliver these works underway. As part of enabling residents to rediscover the River Colne, a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant has been provisionally awarded to deliver 'Tales of the River' along with a further successful grant of £20,000 and a new arts mural alongside the river at Waterfields has been completed. In advance of works commencing and as part of the extensive engagement for this project, over the last period a coffee evening marketing event was held and new online portal for volunteers launched.
	Reinvigorate the Cassiobury Wetlands as an important part of our natural environment	We will improve the wetland and habitat of the former watercress beds on the River Gade in Cassiobury Park to enhance biodiversity, water quality and preserve and protect relevant related historical features.	Red	▼	Procurement has been undertaken with a preferred bidder in place. However, the current economic market has meant that the cost of the project following the tender is currently overbudget. Inflation has undoubtedly had an impact as have the risks involved in the project, notably access to the site and regulation. Options are being explored to address the funding gap through working with the contractor to de risk and value engineer the scheme along with seeking further funding. However, the EA permit for the work has been granted an extension for 3 years giving an extended window to complete the scheme. Work over the next period will focus on the budget gap with work on-site anticipated to commence in August 2023.
	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.	Amber	↔	The council remains committed to enhancing Whippendell Woods as a site of special scientific interest and continues to work with the local community on mountain bikes using the space. The winter works for 2022/2023 have been proposed and a management plan review is underway. The Deer Management plan 2021 was reviewed with forester and it was agreed that the vast majority of the estate is in good condition. However, funding from the Rural Payment Agency has not yet been confirmed, hence the amber rating for this activity.
	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, which was hugely successful this summer, will take place every 2 years, contributing to our commitment to enhance the green canopy across the town.
	Provide clear guidance on improving biodiversity in the town	We will set out guidance for developers on how to improve and enhance biodiversity in developments so they contribute to the town's goals for better habitats and environmental diversity	Amber	▲	Recognising that our ambitions to enhance biodiversity across the town will only be achieved if everyone remains committed, we have started to draft guidance for developers on how they can contribute to this vision. A range of work is already underway to support our commitment to biodiversity, including our improvements to the River Colne and the Cassiobury Wetlands.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
<p>Work alongside our community and businesses to find the right ways to reach net carbon neutral, seeking not just to learn from others but to explore innovative solutions that will work for Watford</p>	Develop and implement our new Sustainability Strategy	We will work with our community and businesses to develop and implement our new Sustainability Strategy which will set out how together, we can contribute to our target to be a net carbon neutral borough by 2030.	Green	↔	In line with our declaration of a Climate Emergency, our 2023-2030 Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Strategy has now been drafted and has been launched for public consultation. Following this feedback and subsequent amendments, the Strategy is expected to be reviewed by Cabinet in February 2023.
	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.	Planning in progress	↔	As above, the development of our Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Strategy 2023 - 2030 is on-going and this will include working with residents and businesses in the town in our ambition of net carbon zero by 2030, taking into account the requirements of the Environment Act 2021.
	Explore opportunities that will contribute financially to our green commitments and goals	We will explore innovative, economically viable ideas that contribute to net carbon zero tapping into emerging trends, including investigating the possibility of green bonds to raise funds for planned projects.	Green	↔	The council continues to explore a number of commercial, green initiatives such as the concept of a Green Investment Bond. Discussions with the Government's Green Finance Institute and Abundance, the FCA regulated company who delivers the scheme have been initiated. Another initiative is the Electric Super Hub - a high speed charging hub for Electric Vehicles to be constructed on Council-owned land, which would entail leasing the land to an operator. Soft market testing with two operators is in progress.
	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.	Planning in progress	↔	The installation of solar panels on the roofs of the Town Hall and Colosseum are just one example of how the council is looking to generate sustainable energy within its own buildings and developments. A recent submission to the third round of the government's public sector decarbonisation scheme means that future works cannot yet be confirmed, hence the amber status.
	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	↔	Following the successful receipt of more than £3m of grant funding from central government, the work to decarbonise the Town Hall and Colosseum is now underway. Whilst the current economic market continues to place risk on the project, all listed building consent conditions have been successfully discharged and windows across both buildings have started to be removed for refurbishment and re-installment. Cavity wall insulation works were completed in August 2022 and asbestos removal completed in September 2022. Internally, light fitting removals are underway with the scheme expected to be completed in Spring 2023, slightly later than initially expected.
	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	↔	In line with our ambition to lead by example, we are appointing a consultant at Croxley Business Park to assist in data collection/assessment of energy usage and to act as a case study for potential wider roll out across the council through a procurement exercise. We have also applied for the next round of funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to improve the energy efficiency of some of our operational and community estate.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	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	▼	As with the Town Hall and the Colosseum, the council is continuing to encourage the use of sustainable materials in new development with a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good' targeted for direct development of Gateway Zone at Watford Business Park and HQM of 4 (out of 5) at Riverside Road development. The amber status reflects the delay in commencing construction work at Watford Business Park due to issues with the Environment Agency however there is no impact on the scheme sustainability criteria. We are working with existing joint venture partners to assess and implement the most efficient and viable energy solutions in residential projects. Similarly, the recent refurbishment of the Annexe at the Town Hall saw 94% of all material recycled with similar targets achieved to date on the decarbonisation works at the Town Hall and Colosseum.
Encourage residents and businesses to recycle more, reusing materials and reducing waste and what they throw away	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	↔	The waste and recycling service changes introduced in 2020 has resulted in a significant increase in recycling rates across the town. The council and its contractor will strive to deliver the new target for recycling rates over the next four years, with the target subject to a general review of all council Key Performance Indicators this year. A proposal for the introduction of food waste from flats and high rise building is being developed to make it as easy and simple as possible for all residents to recycle as much as they can.
	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	↔	Work is taking place with key contractors across the borough, including at our leisure centre and Watford Market, to reduce the amount of waste created, and seek to increase the recycling rates. We have successfully reintroduced the public Clothes Swap event post-covid and the first event was attended by 80 people and in excess of 500 items swapped.

THEME: An inspiring, thriving and creative town

Overview



Key achievements over this period

- Alongside the decarbonisation works which are already underway, work continues to refurbish Watford Colosseum with the final design work due to be completed in January to create a modern and exciting venue in the heart of the town. The initial enabling works due to commence in November with final practical completion of the site scheduled for Autumn 2023.
 - Following the sign off of our ambitious and exciting plans to develop Watford Business Park into a new and high quality business space, the main contract works have now commenced on site with an adequate financial contingency. Following the last report, the team have now agreed a phased consent process from the Environment Agency.
 - Following inspection and amendments, the Local Plan has now been adopted by the council and provides the council with the opportunity to influence local and sustainable development across the town.
 - The final site in the WBC / WCH Social Rented Housing Programme has now completed (Brightwell Court) with the new tenants starting to move in during September. The Social Rented Housing Programme has delivered 56 new social rented homes (2 & 3 beds) over the last two years. In terms of all new affordable housing completions expected this financial year, we are expecting a total of 355 new units (this includes the SRP delivery). By the end of Summer, 127 of these 355 have been completed and we are expecting this number to increase to 228 units by the end of this financial year.
- Market Lates have continued to bring more visitors to our vibrant and refreshed market, following the significant investment made in the space over the last 12 months. The Market Late events have provided a great opportunity for local traders to showcase their diverse food and drink offer, with the most recent event held over Halloween.

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	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	▼	As part of our ambitious Town Hall Quarter scheme, the business case for the future use of the Town Hall, including a new innovation and incubation hub, was approved by Cabinet in December 2021. Work is underway on the next stage of due diligence with a bid to both the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and to the government Levelling Up Fund submitted in order to support this opportunity, with the amber status representing that no announcement has yet been made on successful Levelling Up bids.
	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.	Planning in progress	↔	Planning is underway to create a skills and employment plan for Watford, working with key partners, in particular West Herts College, to dovetail Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's current Hertfordshire Skills and Employment Plan and to respond to latest data and evidence in terms of need. This work will also align with emerging work to develop the Innovation and Incubation Hub and the community wealth building plan allowing us to respond to local business needs and to continue to promote Watford as place for investment with a talented and skilled workforce. The plan will reflect the opportunities resulting from Watford's Shared Prosperity Fund allocation.
	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	↔	Building on existing engagement with local businesses, we have drafted a Watford Sectors Action Plan setting out activities and interventions to support the development of Watford's key growth sectors. Working in partnership with Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership as sector sponsors, and other key partners including the University of Hertfordshire, this work will dovetail creative, film and TV work already undertaken by Herts LEP and Herts Growth Board, aligning with the emerging plans for the Innovation and Incubation Hub, the skills and employment plan and the inward investment plan.
	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	↔	An investment plan has been submitted to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities setting out a programme of projects to be funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund
Tell Watford's story as a great location for businesses where they can invest, grow and succeed as part of our flourishing	Promote what makes Watford a great location for business, connecting to building pride in the town and our profile as a great place to visit	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, putting the town on the map as a great place for business.	Green	↔	Our place brand and narrative is being developed to build on the initial concept design, promoting Watford as a great town to attract more visitors and support our local economy. This will be shared with key stakeholders during Quarter 3 and refined. An associated implementation and resourcing plan is being developed alongside the creative content to ensure successful rollout.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
business community and networks that connect people	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	↔	Engagement with businesses is underway and this objective will seek to respond to that feedback by creating two new council-led business forums in order to improve communication and information sharing. Building on this feedback, we will also seek to assess and connect with the range of business networks and forums led by others to ensure a strong business voice is heard and communication with business is effective and productive.
	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.	Amber	↔	We are continuing to work closely with all of our partners to shape our planning and economic partnerships. This includes having agreed a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) with all five south west Herts authorities and the launch of a consultation on the 'Realising our Potential' document which sets out the draft vision and objectives for working together in the future for the benefit of the wider south west Hertfordshire area. Further certainty will be provided following the conclusion of the consultation.
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	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	▲	In line with our ambition to revitalise the north end of the High Street around the Town Hall, the council have continued to seek a joint venture partner to help deliver the ambition. A best and final offer has now been received by Mace and a final decision is scheduled by Cabinet in November, although risks remain in relation to the current market conditions.
	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.	Green	↔	Alongside the decarbonisation works which are already underway, work continues to refurbish Watford Colosseum with the final design work due to be completed in January to create a modern and exciting venue in the heart of the town. The initial enabling works are due to commence in November with final practical completion of the site scheduled for Autumn 2023. Any redundant furniture has been gifted to local charities and schools and work is also underway to appoint an operator to run the building and attract a diverse and varied range of performances and acts to the town.
	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.	Green	↔	In order to ensure that any improvements to the Town Centre are informed by residents and businesses, our phase two consultation on the Draft Framework has launched, running for six weeks and ending on 14 November. Stakeholder meetings have been held with Young Entrepreneurs, Watford Blind Society and Watford BID. Schools have been approached and information packs sent to those that participated in Phase 1 engagement. Drop-in sessions have also been scheduled at the Urban Room and a social media campaign remains ongoing. Amendments to the Framework document following the consultation will be made in December 2022.

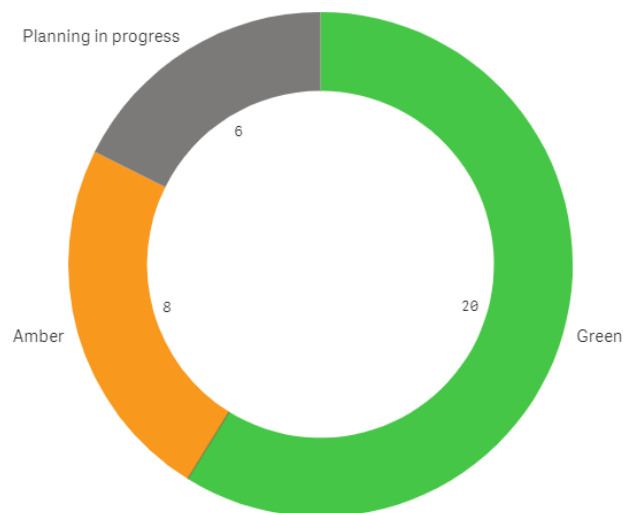
Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	Enhance our outdoor public spaces to make them welcoming and attractive	We will improve a number of our public spaces to provide excellent, safe and attractive outdoor spaces that support a greener Watford. This work will include the enhancement of key areas of our town such as St Mary's Churchyard, Market Street, Queens Road and St Albans Road.	Green	↔	Building on previous public realm improvements in Clarendon Road and Market Street, work is underway in Queens Road and scheduled to finish shortly. The council remains committed to investing in our public realm spaces to support local businesses and is consulting with the County Council on options for the next phase of public realm works.
	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	↔	The council continues to positively promote the appeal of the Town Centre, with our Shop and Eat Local Campaign brought forward and series of promotional photos taken during the last period.
	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	▲	Market Lates have continued to bring more visitors to our vibrant and refreshed market, following the significant investment made in the space last year. The Market Late events have provided a great opportunity for local traders to showcase their diverse food and drink offer, with the most recent event held over Halloween. A number of specialist markets have also been held with an event specifically for new businesses, starts up and young, local traders and plans for vegan and green and continental specialist markets in the pipeline.
Ensure the right mix of facilities, services and transport links as part of new developments to create successful, well-designed new communities	Take forward plans for the Watford Junction Quarter	We will bring landowners together so we can progress with our long-term plans to create a new Watford neighbourhood that successfully combines new homes, station facilities, jobs, public space, school provision and community facilities for both our existing and new residents.	Green	↔	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 regarding the redevelopment of the area. The Council is also in conversation with Network Rail regarding future improvements of the station.
	Continue our transformation of Watford Business Park	We will complete the Gateway development at Watford Business Park to continue our plans to create new and high quality business space to maximise local employment opportunities and generate income for the council to support its wider priorities.	Amber	▲	Following the sign off of our ambitious and exciting plans to develop Watford Business Park into a new and high quality business space, the main contract works have now commenced on site with an adequate financial contingency. Following the last report, the team have now agreed a phased consent process from the Environment Agency. The need to fine-tune the tenants' specifications to reflect the market will continue and is expected to generate savings to mitigate some of the inflation uplift absorbed already.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	Continue to deliver the neighbourhood at Riverwell	We will continue to develop the Riverwell scheme to deliver a high quality mix of new homes, jobs, open spaces and community facilities, maintaining an income source for the council to support its wider priorities. The work at Riverwell will support the opportunity for West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust to deliver its ambition for an acute hospital in Watford.	Green	↔	As part of our commitment to deliver a new neighbourhood at Riverwell, the Woodlands part of the scheme is now complete with sales progressing for the other two existing residential elements of Riverwell; Waterside and Mayfield. The Bellway scheme reached practical completion in September and work continues on site for Phase 1 of the Family Housing element, known as The Avenues, with sales commenced for phase 1 and phase 2 underway. The Mutli-storey car park has been completed and is now in operation providing revenue and much needed safe and accessible parking for hospital visitors. Other elements of programme are ongoing and will be progressed next period including discussions with HCC for the school site and with WHHT for the Central Site for the delivery of Central Zone Housing.
	Achieve the right long-term balance of development, services and transport links for our town	We will adopt our new Local Plan for Watford which will shape how the town will develop sustainably over the next 30 years and make sure that key development sites are underpinned with creative, sustainable and well considered planning frameworks.	Green	↔	Following inspection and amendments, the Local Plan has now been adopted by the council and provides the council with the opportunity to influence local and sustainable development across the town.
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	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	↔	Following the recent Senior Management Restructure, work on the development of the Housing Strategy will commence early next year for completion during the next financial year.
	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	↔	The principles for a revised Nominations Policy have been drafted and are ready for consultation. Over the next period, any changes to the existing policy will be reviewed and informed by legal advice, with consultation undertaken prior to any changes.
	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 final site in the WBC / WCH Social Rented Housing Programme has now completed (Brightwell Court) with the new tenants starting to move in during September. The Social Rented Housing Programme has delivered 56 new social rented homes (2 & 3 beds) over the last two year. In terms of all new affordable housing completions expected this financial year, we are expecting a total of 355 new units (this includes the SRP delivery). By the end of Summer, 127 of these 355 had been completed and we are expecting this number of increase to 228 units by the end of this financial year.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	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.	Green	▲	Scoping of work has now commenced to ensure that are homes meet the needs of the borough and are of a high standard.
	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	↔	The refreshment of our Private Sector Renewal policy will be scoped and the project plan developed for approval over the next period, in line with priorities agreed for all housing strategies and policies. It should be noted that funding for the data that will inform the new policy has not yet been approved through budget processes and that costs and options for funding are being explored.

THEME: A diverse, happy and healthy town

Overview



Key achievements over this period

- Work to our popular and well-loved Meriden Park will commence shortly. Planned works include improvement and extension of the footpath and work to the entrance of the Community Centre car park. Lea Farm Recreation replacement equipment has now been installed and the tree nomination initiative has now closed for 2022/23.
- The 'We are Watford' film was launched to celebrate Watford's diverse community and a further '100 people who made Watford' nominations were received. On Centenary Day, a successful flag flying event with local schools was held, 100 year old residents visited and there was a community-led Centenary Service.
- Community Safety Partnership strategic plan for the next 2 years was approved at One Watford and reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Priorities agreed are: Serious Youth Violence, Violence Against Women and Girls, Community Wellbeing and Reassurance and Inform. CSP training day taken place with wider frontline partners including CEOS, Housing Trust, CCV operatives.
- Cabinet approved the plans to relocate Watford Museum to our historic Town Hall in December 2021. Work on the design of the Museum in this space has continued with a bid to the National Heritage Lottery Fund being prepared to support the final vision. Works to the Town Hall itself are currently expected to commence in 2023 and complete in 2024, at which point fit-out works to the Museum can commence.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
Continue our investment in our outstanding parks and open spaces so they remain the best in the area	Deliver improvements to Meriden Park	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.	Green	↔	Plans to improve our popular Meriden Park are well underway, following significant engagement with residents and members. Works to the car parks, railing and footpaths are due to commence shortly with softworks such as tree and bulb planting will be progressed in spring 2023.
	Continue our programme of investment and improvements in Watford's parks	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.	Amber	▼	The Lea Farm Recreation replacement play equipment has been successfully installed and, as above, works to Meriden Park are due to commence in late October / early November. The rebuild of the Vicarage Road cemetery main wall is now in its final stages with many of the cycling repairs in Cassiobury Park now also complete. Further works will be assessed against budgets available.
	Enhance Woodside Playing Fields so it offers improved facilities and opportunities for leisure and sport	We will invest in Woodside Playing Fields to enhance the activities on offer, including improvements to both the current boxing and cricket facilities.	Green	↔	The council remain committed to investment in Woodside. As such, an options development exercise has been concluded and the shortlisted schemes for Woodside Playing Fields in relation to the pavilion, function hall, changing rooms and gym and toilet block, have been shared with stakeholders including sports bodies and WBC Planning and Conservation Officers who are broadly in agreement with the approach and proposals. Feedback / comments from sport bodies are now being evaluated and an Outline Business Case has been produced for consideration by Cabinet in November 2022.
	Complete our work in partnership for a new crematorium for south west Hertfordshire	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.	Amber	↔	Work continues on-site at the new crematorium at its Hemel Hempstead base, providing residents of South West Hertfordshire, including Watfordians, with enhanced facilities and service provisions. Whilst progress have been made on the substation work, cremator and abatement installation and branding, a slight delay in completion is expected due to delays at the Environment Agency. Completion of the facility is expected in Spring 2023.
Celebrate and promote our town's rich and diverse culture and creativity	Reimagine our Museum and its place in telling the history of our town	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 service and sacrifice of fallen service men and women is recognised.	Green	↔	Cabinet approved the plans to relocate Watford Museum to our historic Town Hall in December 2021. Work on the design of the Museum in this space has continued with a bid to the National Heritage Lottery Fund being prepared to support the final vision. Works to the Town Hall itself are currently expected to commence in 2023 and complete in 2024, at which point fit-out works to the Museum can commence. Consultation has commenced with questionnaires available to the public over a 4- week period to inform the content and exhibitions which will make up the new museum.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	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	↔	Building on our successful centenary celebrations in the Summer, the 'We are Watford' film was launched to celebrate Watford's diverse community and a further '100 people who made Watford nominations' were received. On Centenary Day a successful flag flying with local schools was held with the centenary flag designed by a local young resident, 100 year old residents received a centenary visit and a community-led Centenary Service was held. A fabulous centenary quilt was donated and Watford Museum is holding a Centenary exhibition.
	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 trial heritage trail was successfully launched in March 2022, providing a digitally interactive route along the High Street. Plans to extend this will be timed to align with new projects such as the Blue Plaque Scheme, which formed part of the Mayor's Manifesto and for which planning is underway.
	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.	Amber	↔	Recognising the importance of public art in attracting visitors to our High Streets, work is underway on the development of a Public Art Strategy for the town, with external support already secured. It is expected that the Public Art Strategy will be completed in February 2023.
	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, launched as part of our centenary celebrations. This provides a range of information on some of those Watfordians who have made exceptional contributions to the town and will feed into our innovative heritage trail.
	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.	Amber	↔	Given the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic across the town, work continues to design a public memorial. Further work is required with a revised option to be presented back to Portfolio Holders later in the year.
	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.	Green	↔	Recognising the value of our historic town, an online survey took place over the summer and face to face meetings held with residents to baseline our future proposals. We are now moving to the development of the proposals with further resident engagement to be confirmed.
Promote our welcoming and respectful town	Ensure everyone feels welcome, included and safe in Watford	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.	Amber	↔	The Community Safety Partnership strategic plan for next two years has been approved at One Watford and reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The delivery plan is being finalised with dates for action completion and monitoring via Joint Action Group and exception reporting to One Watford. Priorities agreed are: Serious Youth Violence, Violence Against Women and Girls, Community Wellbeing and Reassurance and Inform. A bid to the Safer Streets 5 fund is under consideration which may provide additional opportunities for further action. CSP training day taken place with wider frontline partners including CEOs, Housing Trust, CCTV operatives.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	Establish our commitment to the wellbeing of women and girls	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.	Green	↔	The Delivery Plan for Watford's White Ribbon accreditation has been progressed. Plans are in progress to mark White Ribbon Day (25 Nov 2022) by launching Watford's accreditation. A detailed three-year action plan is being developed as part of the council's commitment.
	Make sure our town remains clean and free from litter	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.	Amber	↔	The review in relation to our CCTV systems and operations has been completed, alongside the need to relocate the existing CCTV control room as a result of the move of the police station from Shady Lane to George Street. The pilot project to test the viability of mobile cameras is being planned.
	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	↔	This project is scheduled to commence in Quarter 3.
Listen to and hear the diverse voices of Watford	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.	Planning in progress	↔	We are taking forward a council-wide approach to how we engage with our community through the development of a Community and Participation Strategy. The strategy has been scoped and research undertaken to inform the strategy. This will be completed by the end of 2023/24.
	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 Pensioners Forum continues to be held regularly, supported by Watford and Three Rivers Trust. A successful Forum was held in October 2022 where the focus was on the cost of living crisis.
	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	↔	Following a clear commitment in the Mayor's Manifesto, this project will be scoped in Quarter 3. More widely, the council is actively engaging with the community through a range of forums and groups including the Sustainability Forum, Cycle Forum, Cost of Living Crisis Forum and Pensioners Forum and through key consultation and engagements – town centre framework, the future of Watford Museum, a public art strategy for Watford.

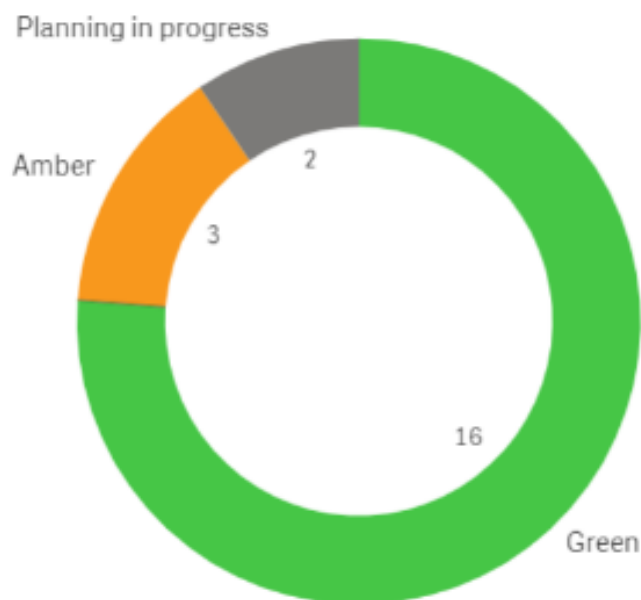
Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	Support the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for our residents	We will develop a new Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework and work in partnership with charitable, community and voluntary organisations focused on helping our 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	↔	Cabinet have agreed to extend the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework for one year (2023/2024) to conduct a review of the commissioned organisation. This work stream is also linked to the council's new community Framework that is in progress. This will help inform the VSCF for implementation in 2024.
	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.	Amber	↔	Works on Cheslyn House and St Marys now complete and the recommendation for the Vicarage Road Cemetery stonework has been approved. Three properties have been submitted for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding Scheme which will allow us to further improve our buildings, although the outcome of our bid is not currently known.
	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	↔	The policy is being developed but is waiting for the key data from Census 2021 so that it is based on a more up to date portrait of Watford's diverse community. Initial figures on population and age and sex profile has been released with the release date for other information scheduled for November 2022. Scoping for policy undertaken in Quarter 2 into Quarter 3.
	Work with partners to end rough sleeping on the streets of Watford	We will continue to deliver our Homelessness Strategy for Watford, reviewing this on an annual basis and adapting it regularly to ensure that it remains innovative and effective, supporting our target of minimising rough sleepers on the streets of Watford.	Green	↔	Significant progress has been made to reduce homelessness across the town in the last few years. The next review of the homelessness strategy is scheduled for Autumn 2022 to also ensure the Action Plan aligns with the government's latest Rough Sleeping Strategy published in September 2022.
Support improved health and wellbeing across the town	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	↔	Work will commence over the next period to replicate the success of our Dementia Friendly Town initiative through creating an age friendly town. This will ensure that our local services are inclusive and accessible.
	Tackle digital isolation so residents can effectively engage using new technology	We will work with our partners, volunteers and community groups to support residents who do not have access to technology, choose not to do so or do not currently have the skills to use IT so that they have the same opportunities as others in our town.	Green	↔	As part of the staying connected project, for which Watford is the county lead, a digital recycling scheme is now in place with residents able to drop off old devices for use by those who cannot afford to buy new technology, further supporting residents impacted by the cost of living crisis.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	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.	Green	↔	<p>Our Mental Health Strategy is currently being scoped. Proposals will include; exploring the mental health support available to residents and making it accessible to all; reviewing the HCC mental health strategy to ensure representation of WBC in any development of a new strategy; making recommendations for future service provision and secure funding; linking with the Healthy Hub for provision of events, pop ups, promotions etc.</p> <p>The Healthy Hub service provision continues to be developed to deliver Herts County Council's core offer and remains open at the Town Hall with a focus on mental health.</p>
	Engage with health partners to improve public health and health inequalities for our residents	We will engages 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	↔	Funding of £30k/annum for next two years to support delivery of work to reduce health inequalities has been secured. The council's overarching approach is to add value to Primary Care Network health inequalities projects under development and has been agreed with the Locality Partnership for health and care. The current focus is on engaging with residents to develop a portrait of health for areas and groups that can inform health and care service delivery and development. As opportunities arise for local projects to amplify resident voices and deliver bespoke outcomes, we will seek funding and support and facilitate delivery with partners. To date, £10,000 funding has been secured to fund a women only clinic for sex workers and other vulnerable women, including those affected by domestic violence or drug and alcohol abuse who are unable to access health care. Other initiative include a badminton session for Pakistani women as initial step to addressing mental health exacerbated by social isolation and working with cancer charities, the Peace Hospice and cancer special nurses to educate on prevention, early screening and signposting to relevant services for support once cancer diagnosis made. A recent Healthy Hub session supported by the Lead Cancer Specialist nurse promoting cancer prevention, early screening and available support proved very successful.
	Support single homeless people to access accommodation and support	We will continue to establish and embed our single homelessness pathway, focusing on the root causes of homelessness and working closely with our partners to support individuals on every part of their journey into independent living.	Amber	↔	The council is continuing to work with a range of partners to address rough sleeping with our single homelessness pathway having been in place for the past year. Over the past period, 7 residents have successfully moved on in the Afghan Scheme and we are also progressing the 3 rd tranche of Housing First units to bring the total to 25. Following the recent senior management restructure, enhanced focus will be given to embedding the single homelessness pathway further.
Bring together ways to help our residents who might be struggling financially	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	↔	We no longer require customers to complete a claim form for council tax reduction where they are in receipt of Universal Credit. We promote the scheme at all contacts with customers on the telephone or at the customer centre. We have a dedicated officer to provide help for customers complete an online form if required.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	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 Forum was convened with local voluntary and community organisations to work together on a response for Watford. We are engaging with Hertfordshire County Council to link into county support and ensure local residents are accessing all the help available. Watford is also launching the 'Welcoming Spaces' campaign for the winter months.
	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.	Green	▲	There are a number of local lottery formats adopted across other areas that we will explore for Watford. The project has now started to be scoped, building on initial work that has been undertaken.
	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	↔	The Big Beach and Big Screen events were both successful, with the latter attracting 4k visitors. The Big Sports event was also held in Q2. Planning is now underway for Fireworks and Winter in Watford. A review of the programme will be undertaken for 2023/2024.
	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	↔	We have received positive feedback on our free summer programme with more children attending than in previous years.
	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	↔	We are now starting ECO delivery through to the end of scheme in March 2026. Marketing will start over the winter when take up is better and also having progressed the partnership administration with E.ON. Processes to progress ECO directly with installers via our partners at National Energy Foundation have been set up.
	Help our community better access the benefits of Watford's economic growth	We will explore ways to create a resilient and inclusive economy that benefits our community, building on foundations from the Hertfordshire Community Wealth Building project, linking local people with opportunities and supporting our voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector link to make a greater economic contribution.	Planning in progress	↔	Following the approval of the Council Plan 2022-26 and our Economic Growth Strategy, planning is underway to develop and deliver a community wealth building plan which helps our communities – both business and resident communities – benefit more from the investment. Through this work, we will also connect with developers, skills providers and the voluntary/community sector to shape the plan and set out delivery activities. We will utilise the UKSPF to help increase development supply chain opportunities for local businesses.

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

Overview



Key achievements over this period

- Implementation of the Planning Enforcement and Building Control shared services with St Albans City and District Council is well underway. Staff consultation has been completed and management roles confirmed. Launch of the Planning Enforcement and Building Control shared service was successfully implemented at the beginning of November 2022.
- In order to support local residents, and particularly our younger residents, we have recruited two Corporate Apprentices to join us on a two year programme, working with services from across the organisation to provide them with the skills, knowledge and experience to help start their careers, whilst providing valuable public services to our customers.
- Health and wellbeing training was delivered to staff during September and October. The aim was to increase the resilience of all staff, particularly front-line staff and provide opportunities for line managers to support employees and discuss health and wellbeing. Due to the popularity of the training, more sessions are scheduled to take place in January 2023.
- Following the approval of the Council Plan 2022-26, our senior management restructure has now been completed and aligns our senior resources and services to the delivery of the Council Plan. A number of Strategic Initiatives Officer secondments have been offered to existing members of staff to drive forward specific initiatives, such as the local lottery and community engagement work. The Organisational Development Strategy (updated in Appendix B) continues to ensure that we continue to support staff to develop and grow.

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>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>The council's refreshed Customer Experience Strategy is due to be considered by Cabinet in November 2022. The Strategy aims to ensure that we engage with and provide the best service for our customers whether they be residents, businesses, community groups or partners and so will help to inform the Customer Engagement Review. The Strategy, and associated delivery plan, has been developed following engagement with residents, staff and members and will be published once approved by Cabinet.</p>
	<p>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 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>The council continues to lead by example to deliver our organisational Sustainability Action Plan. Climate change has been incorporated into the latest Corporate and Service risk registers and sustainability is being considered in the delivery of the council's projects and programmes. Work is ongoing with our property management company Lambert Smith Hamilton to embed sustainability in our investment portfolio. The Shared Director of Finance is undertaking the LGA Senior Leadership training on sustainability which will ensure sustainability is considered in the council's financial decisions and processes. We are also progressing the introduction of Sustainability Impact Assessments into our governance processes and updating our procurement process to include sustainability and climate action measures in all tenders.</p>
	<p>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>Following the approval of our Council Plan, our senior management restructure has now been completed and aligns our senior resources and services to the delivery of the Council Plan. A number of Strategic Initiatives Officer secondments have been offered to existing members of staff to drive forward specific initiatives, such as the local lottery and community engagement work. The Organisational Development Strategy (updated in Appendix B) continues to ensure that we continue to support staff to develop and grow.</p>
	<p>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>Implementation of the Planning Enforcement and Building Control shared services with St Albans City and District Council is well underway. Staff consultation has been completed and management roles confirmed. Due diligence is complete for both and the shared service officially launched on 1 November. The implementation of the Legal Shared Services continues to be planned for January 2023 with the recruitment of a Head of the new service underway.</p>
	<p>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>Planning in progress</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>Whilst the council continue to plan for successful elections, the Government has yet to produce specific detail in relation to the requirements of the Elections Act 2022, beyond the need for Voter ID in 2023. However, in preparation the Elections Team attended the AEA training in September and are working through the necessary actions, whilst awaiting secondary legislation to become available.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
<p>Pioneer new ways of working that challenge us to innovate, transform and consistently improve</p>	<p>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>Work on the ICT Strategy has commenced and expected to be completed in early 2023. Through the IT service transformation programme the council's IT team are continuing to improve our ICT and digital technology to meet the ongoing needs of the council and community. Migration to Office 365 has commenced which will enhance the council's ability to work remotely, securely, collaboratively and support agile working.</p>
	<p>Deliver a step change in how we use our data and information so it strengthens our drive for constant improvement</p>	<p>We will improve how we use our data and information to challenge our decisions, enhance performance and support excellent customer experience, using our information to monitor service delivery and to drive action if something needs improving.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>We are continuing to maintain and enhance use of the Business Intelligence platform to support the council's decision making process and improve performance across the organisation. Integration of the platform with key management systems within the council such as the HR management system to deliver real time and relevant data and information is enabling informed decision making. Work on the Business Intelligence Strategy is underway.</p>
	<p>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>Amber</p>	<p>▼</p>	<p>In order to ensure that we continue to achieve the very best value from our contracts, a review of our existing contract management approaches has been initiated. A first draft of new guidance for officers has been produced and shared with key contract managers, although final publication has been delayed slightly as a result of leave over the summer period and the senior management restructure.</p>
	<p>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>Amber</p>	<p>▼</p>	<p>Our updated Procurement Strategy will make sure we continue to get best value from the market during this period of economic instability. As such, the Strategy will include a comprehensive proposal on social value and measurement which supports the delivery of our Sustainability Action Plan A draft of the strategy has been developed and reviewed internally. Some amendments have been requested which has delayed the final publication of the document which is now expected before the end of this year.</p>
<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>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>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>We have agreed 4 long leasehold extensions on Watford Business Park (WBP) which generated capital receipts in excess of £1.5m and secured rental income (with rent review protection) for the medium to long term. We are continuing to utilise the council's existing land bank to generate further income through development. Examples include the Gateway site at WBP and the Riverwell Multi-Storey Car Park. Our out of Borough Assets are continuing to perform well, including the Coleshill Industrial Estate rents which have grown from £6.50 psf to £7.50 psf in the last twelve months with all income used to support the delivery of our corporate priorities as outlined within the Council Plan.</p>
	<p>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. As part of our bid to central government's Levelling Up Fund, a further £500k has been requested to complement the Innovation Hub initiative. This would allow a £1m fund to be set up to support businesses in the Hub, through a grants and loan scheme to enable them to access funding that they would</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
					otherwise not easily be able to obtain, in order to develop their businesses and support the local economy.
Manage and direct the council finances effectively		We will ensure that our budgets align with our priorities and that budget management is robust, forward-looking and supports the best possible service outcomes from available resources, enabling us to keep council tax increases below inflation.	Green	↔	The 2022/23 budget included a Council Tax increase of 1.5%, well below inflation. The Council proactively manages and monitors budgets during the year to ensure value for money and effective prioritisation of resources. The 2023/24 budget setting process has now begun and will ensure that council resources continue to align to council priorities to deliver the best possible service outcomes. The council tax rate for 2023/24 will be agreed when the budget is set in January 2023 and will balance the need to fund budget pressures to continue to deliver services against the commitment to keep council tax increases low. The Local Government Finance Settlement, expected late Autumn, will set out the referendum limit for council tax increases alongside details of core funding.
Identify new commercial opportunities that align with our ambition		We will look for new and innovative commercial opportunities that will align to our values, whilst ensuring a financial return that can be used to support the council's activities for the benefit of the borough.	Green	↔	The strategic outline cases for a Vertical Farm, EV charging hub and Green Investment Bond have been agreed by members. Detailed business cases are now being developed which will require working with external partners with expertise in the specific areas to enable these initiatives. A lack of suitable sites within the Borough and constraints imposed by Government on investments outside of the Borough suggest the Vertical Farm is unlikely to proceed but we are awaiting proposals on suitability of a site within the borough for an EV charging hub.
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	↔	The rapid and significant increase in inflation poses significant risks to the affordability of the Capital Investment Programme. 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 council also continues to seek advice and future market information from Employers Agents working on our major capital programmes.
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	↔	Funds from the Croxley Park investment are placed with the Royal London Sustainable Diversified Trust Fund and Royal London Sustainable Managed Growth Trust Fund with the aim to provide capital growth that will maintain the value of the investment in line with inflation. The performance of these funds is monitored by the Property Investment Board and reported through the Council's budget monitoring report, with income utilised to deliver our corporate priorities as outlined within the Council Plan.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
<p>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</p>	<p>Build on our innovative approach to agile working, realising the benefits for our staff and our community</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>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. Staff feedback has been collated since the opening and will be reviewed.</p>
	<p>Secure robust succession planning, making sure we value and manage our talent to recruit and retain the best for Watford</p>	<p>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'.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>Whilst the new agile space has provided the physical space to attract and retain the best staff, a new performance management system has also been launched to facilitate and promote staff development needs. In addition, the values and behaviours project will set out expected behaviours for 'Team Watford', ensuring that we provide the very best service to our residents, businesses and community. Further information can be found in Appendix B of this report.</p>
	<p>Embed our values and behaviours so they inspire our staff to achieve even more and underpin how we work</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>All staff Value and Behaviour workshops have been completed and the analysis of work by external consultants and design group members is now complete. The initial framework was presented to the council's Corporate Management Team in July with final values and behaviour framework to be agreed in the next period, aligning our new space with the expectations for staff across the organisation.</p>
	<p>Refresh our Organisational Development approach so that it effectively underpins and supports our Council Plan</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>To ensure that we continue to support staff to deliver the very best service for our residents, a new performance management system has been launched alongside new mandatory learning modules so all objectives, linked to the delivery of the Council Plan, and check ins can be accessed in one place for staff. Our refreshed values and behavioural framework will be confirmed over the next period and then worked into the employment lifecycle from recruitment and onboarding to development and progression.</p>
	<p>Seek and implement opportunities for people to have fulfilling local government careers</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>In order to support local people, and particularly our younger residents, we have recruited two Corporate Apprentices to join us on a two year programme, working with services from across the organisation to provide them with the skills, knowledge and experience to help start their careers, whilst providing valuable public services to our customers.</p>
	<p>Protect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>Health and wellbeing training was delivered to staff during September and October. The aim is to increase the resilience of all staff, particularly front-line staff. Due to the popularity of the training, more sessions are scheduled to take place in January 2023. The yearly appraisal cycle and the new collaborative working space provides further opportunity for line managers to support employees and discuss health and wellbeing.</p>

