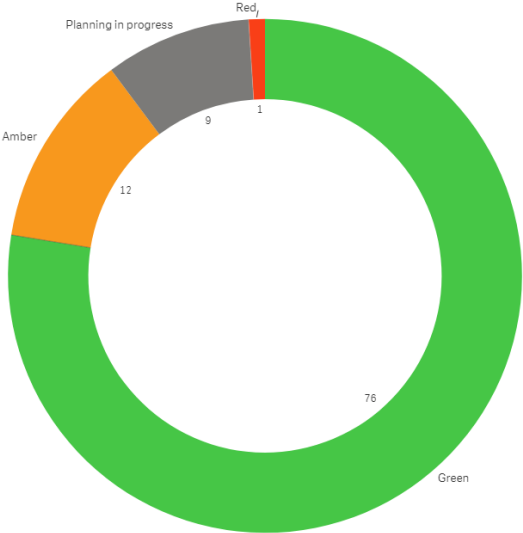


Appendix A - Council Delivery Plan Progress update Q3 2022/23

Delivery Plan Overview

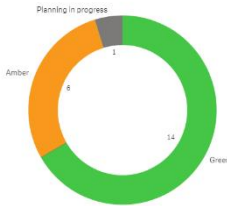


Key

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

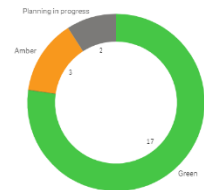
Council Plan Theme - A greener, brighter future

CDP Activity BRAG Split



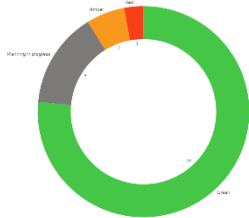
Council Plan Theme - An inspiring, thriving and creative town

CDP Activity BRAG Split



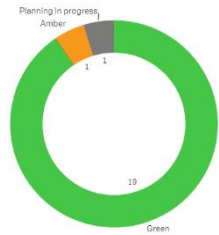
Council Plan Theme - A diverse, happy and healthy town

CDP Activity BRAG Split



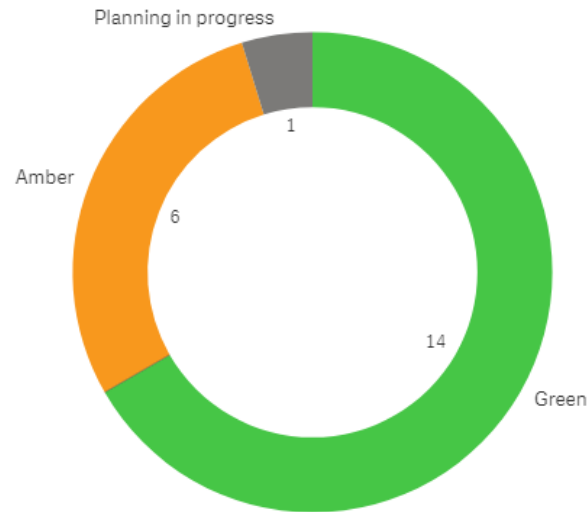
Council Plan Theme - A Council working for our community and serving our residents

CDP Activity BRAG Split



THEME: A greener brighter future

Overview








Key achievements over this period

- In line with our commitment to sustainable transport, work with a number of Watford schools to develop and improve their School Travel Plan (STP) which will enable them to be provided with cycle parking is underway.
- Following the Tree Nominations initiative held in the summer, tree planting is now underway, with additional funds for whip replacement also secured.
- The 'Tales of the River' project, funded by a successful £246.7k bid to the National Heritage Lottery Fund has been initiated and will help to promote the value of the River to our town.
- A Supplementary Planning Document for developers on how they can contribute to enhancing biodiversity across the town has been developed. The SPD is expected to be adopted later in the year following consultation.
- The consultation on the draft Sustainability Strategy. 2023-30 ended in December 2022. 679 responses were received across various media, all generally positive with 'net zero' being the most engaged topic. Formal endorsement of the Strategy, now called Watford's Environmental Strategy: addressing the climate and ecological emergency at Cabinet is expected in March 2023

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>Forming part of our ambitious Transforming Travel in Watford programme, the exploration of a low-carbon transport hub in the Town Centre remains underway with feasibility works being progressed.</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 our work towards achieving net carbon zero by 2030 through the Transforming Travel in Watford programme. Progress to date includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desktop study to understand the current market for sustainable reward schemes to inform the development of the council's own reward scheme has commenced. - Framework identified to progress procurement of the new Car Club for Watford. The specification and procurement strategy are being finalised with six bays across the town identified for car club vehicles. - Work on our Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan continues with priorities for the 'Green Loop' identified for further consideration. - Contacted primary and secondary schools within Watford to encourage the uptake of Schools Travel Plans (STPs), supported by local councillors. Two virtual sessions have been held to promote the STPs and work is underway with interested schools. Cycle parking will be provided to schools who have a STP and are actively working towards national accreditation via Modeshift STARS programme.
	<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>In order to support our drive for greater uptake of sustainable journeys, an application for external funding (On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme) was submitted in November 2022. We have continued to work closely with Hertfordshire County Council, as the Highways Authority, who have drafted a county-wide Electric Vehicle Strategy.</p>
	<p>4. Work with our partners to improve our cycling and walking network, including designing and implementing a green loop</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>Cycling and walking network plans are progressing, with project validation complete for the Green Loop East and Hempstead Road, and design underway for a number of other routes, including the Water Lane to Lower High Street link and the Ebury Way to Ascot Road link.</p>
	<p>5. Champion proposals for a sustainable transport option for Watford Junction to Croxley</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>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. The Options and Feasibility study into potential alternatives for the Watford to Croxley Link (formerly MLX) corridor is underway. Following evaluation of the stage one proposal we have now appointed a consultant to proceed to stage two.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
<p align="center">Promote improvements to Watford's biodiversity to enhance the range of habitats, plants and wildlife in the town</p>	<p>6. Set out our commitments to improving Watford's biodiversity</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p align="center">Green</p>	<p align="center">↔</p>	<p>Our Biodiversity Strategy is being scoped alongside the emerging Watford's Environmental Strategy to develop a suite of documents supporting planning, sustainability and service delivery. We are recruiting additional resource to drive forward this work. A range of work is already underway to support our commitment to biodiversity, including our improvements to the River Colne and the Cassiobury Wetlands. We have recently been awarded £246.7k National Lottery Heritage fund to support engagement activities for the River Colne's 'Tales of the River' project.</p>
	<p>7. Enhance and extend our green canopy, through our proactive tree planting initiative</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p align="center">Green</p>	<p align="center">↔</p>	<p>Trees have been delivered and planting is now underway based on the Tree Nominations initiative held in the summer. We held a successful Tree Giveaway event on 3 December 2022 and have secured additional funds from HCC for whip replacement.</p>
	<p>8. Rediscover the River Colne to enhance the river, the river corridor, as a place for our community to enjoy</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p align="center">Amber</p>	<p align="center">↔</p>	<p>Having recently been successful with our National Lottery Fund bid (£246.7k), the 'Tales of the River' project, to bring the important place of the river within our town to the fore for residents, has been initiated with the launch of a Press Release and video. We have recruited a Project Support Officer and shared a Podcast brief and job description with West Herts College for an intern position. We are continuing to pursue other sources of funding to support delivery of the wider River Colne programme. We are progressing our engagement activities with the local community and recently approved a corporate offering. We have also confirmed joint school sessions with Veolia and held initial discussions with Affinity Water on their involvement in the programme. Whilst we are still waiting for the relevant permission from the Environment Agency to proceed with the Knutsford South volunteer work this winter, hence the amber rating, we have been given the go ahead to complete the tree works outside of the permit. We are currently evaluating the tree works bid.</p>
	<p>9. Reinvigorate the Cassiobury Wetlands as an important part of our natural environment</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p align="center">Amber</p>	<p align="center">↑</p>	<p>Our ambitious project to improve the Cassiobury Wetlands has continued to progress and ongoing discussions with the proposed contractor and the Environment Agency (EA) have confirmed that site investigations can progress under the existing permit variation. The contractor is due to visit the site in January 2023 to complete the investigatory work. The EA permit for the work has been granted an extension for 3 years giving an extended window to complete the scheme and currently the expected work commencement date is August / October 2023.</p>

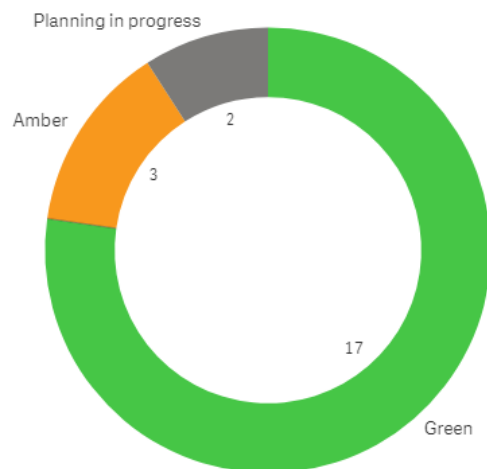
Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	10. Celebrate and enhance Whippendell Woods as a site of special scientific interest	We will protect Whippendell Woods, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), in order to preserve its 'favourable condition' status.	Amber		In line with our commitment to sustainability, works remain ongoing in Whippendell Woods alongside the Forestry Commission with maps created to show the works completed and those planned across the next 5 years. An agreement has been reached with Veolia to complete a tree health and safety survey this year. An annual grant is currently under debate hence the amber status.
	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, which was hugely successful this summer, will take place every 2 years, contributing to our commitment to enhance the green canopy across the town. We are preparing for the next round of compost giveaway and planning future tree giveaways.
	12. Provide clear guidance on improving biodiversity in the town	We will set out guidance for developers on how to improve and enhance biodiversity in developments so they contribute to the town's goals for better habitats and environmental diversity	Amber		Recognising that our ambitions to enhance biodiversity across the town will only be achieved if everyone remains committed, a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for developers on how they can contribute to this vision has been drafted. The SPD has been reviewed by the relevant Portfolio Holders and a briefing provided to Corporate Management Team. Consultation is expected to begin in January 2023 and formal adoption of the SPD later in the year, slightly later than expected. A range of work is also underway to support our commitment to biodiversity, including our improvements to the River Colne and Cassiobury Wetlands.
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		The consultation on the draft Watford's Environmental Strategy 2023-30 ended in December 2022. 679 responses were received across various media, all generally positive with 'net zero' being the most engaged topic. The Strategy is being reviewed and updates are being made in light of the feedback, including adding 'light pollution' in the Strategy. A review of the resource requirements and delivery plan for the Strategy was undertaken in December 2022. Cabinet approval of the final strategy is scheduled for to March 2023
	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		As above, the development of our Environmental Strategy 2023 - 2030 is in progress and this includes working with residents and businesses in the town on our ambition of achieving net carbon zero by 2030, taking into account the requirements of the Environment Act 2021. The Strategy will be presented to Cabinet in March 2023 for approval with a view to commencing delivery from April 2023.

Commitment	Activity	BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline	
	15. 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 has initiated discussions with the Government's Green Finance Institute and Abundance, the FCA regulated company who delivers the Green Investment Bond scheme. Whilst we need to identify funding in the capital programme and specific schemes that the funding will be used for and also gauge interest in specific schemes from residents, due to the current economic climate and the rise in interest rates this proposal has been deferred until the economic climate improves.
	16. 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. The outcome of the bid is expected in early 2023.
	17. 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 to the Town Hall and Colosseum, funded by the £3m central government grant, is progressing well. We are commencing the final phase of the planned work on the windows, M&E systems and fabric repairs. Our contractor, Morgan Sindall, are looking at options for the safe repair of the Clock Tower. The scheme is expected to be completed in Spring 2023, slightly later than initially expected as a result of the specialist repair of the heritage windows.
	18. 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 are developing a brief for the consultant to review WBC assets. 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.
	19. 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 even higher targets achieved to date on the decarbonisation works at the Town Hall and Colosseum.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
<p>Encourage residents and businesses to recycle more, reusing materials and reducing waste and what they throw away</p>	<p>20. Increase how much our residents recycle and reduce the waste we throw away as a town</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>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 and due to be launched for the 2023/24 financial year. A proposal for the introduction of food waste from flats and high-rise building is being developed with a view to implementing the changes in 2023 subject to budget. The scheme will make it easy and simple for all residents to recycle as much as they can.</p>
	<p>21. Support our partners to reduce waste and increase recycling</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>We are awaiting new regulations on waste this year. Our provider (Veolia) is analysing waste and public behaviours which will inform our future waste strategy. The Herts Waste focus for 2023 is food waste and we will be developing a proposal to introduce food waste collection to flats this year. We are planning Veolia education events and further clothes swaps in the New Year. We will also be raising 'Repair Cafés' at Herts Waste partnership and exploring a 'repair fair' event.</p>







THEME: An inspiring, thriving and creative town

Overview



Key achievements over this period

- The government approved Watford's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) investment plan in December 2022 and year 1 funding allocation has been received.
- Our place brand and narrative has been developed to build on the initial concepts. An associated implementation and resourcing plan is being developed alongside the creative content to ensure successful rollout.
- In November 2022, Mace Develop were selected as our preferred joint venture partner to help deliver our ambition to revitalise the north end of the High Street and around the Town Hall.
- Work is continuing on the refurbishment of Watford Colosseum with the decarbonisation works now almost complete.
- The Town Centre Strategic Framework consultation is now complete will be presented to Cabinet in March 2023 for final sign off.
- The 'Shop and Eat Local' campaign was brought forward to coincide with the festive period. The council is continuing to engage with new businesses and encouraging local people to nominate businesses to be promoted locally.
- 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.

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	22. 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. However, the recent announcement that the council was unsuccessful in their application to the Levelling Up Fund means that the options in relation to the delivery of the Hub need to be reviewed. This will be undertaken over the next quarter.
	23. 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		West Herts College is drafting the Watford Skills and Employment Plan and Herts Chamber are leading the Herts-wide Local Skills Improvement Plan which will provide some of the evidence base for the Watford Skills and Employment Plan. The Economic Development Team is assisting with the plan development by providing the Watford context. The plan will align with the emerging Community Wealth Building Plan and the emerging Sectors Action Plan.
	24. 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 quarter 1 2023/24 due to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund taking priority, although the evidence has been gathered and sub-regional work is underway with parties around creative and screen industry potential.
	25. 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 government approved Watford's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) investment plan in December 2022 and year 1 funding allocation has been received. The UKSPF Delivery Plan has now been approved and the council's Economic Development Team are preparing for procurement of year 1 and 2 projects by the end of March 2023.
Tell Watford's story as a great location for businesses where they can invest, grow and succeed as part of our flourishing business community and networks that connect people	26. 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 has been developed to build on the initial concepts. The revised concepts were shared with key stakeholders during Quarter 3. An associated implementation and resourcing plan is being developed alongside the creative content to ensure successful rollout.
	27. 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.

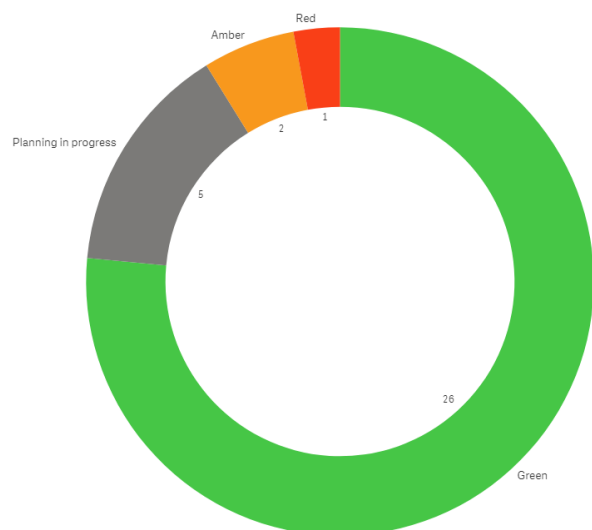
Commitment	Activity	BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline	
				The Economic Development Team is preparing for the first Business Connect meeting which is scheduled for 21 March. The first Business Leaders meeting is expected to be held in September 2023.	
	28. Engage with wider economic, business and planning 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 our partners to shape our planning and economic partnerships. This includes agreeing 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	29. 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 November 2022, Mace Develop were selected as our preferred joint venture partner to help deliver our ambition to revitalise the north end of the High Street and around the Town Hall. Whilst the current economic climate has meant that the anticipated investment has not yet been made, hence the amber status of this commitment, a meeting was held with Mace to discuss the practical activities and working arrangements going forward. We have also commenced de-risking activities associated with utilities, highways and financial analysis. We are continuing discussion with NHS on the Health Hub and a funding contract for £40k has been confirmed with Homes England.
	30. 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. Our construction contractors are in the process of completing the final design with enabling works already underway at the venue. The full refurbishment will commence in the Spring and is expected to be completed towards the end of 2023. A procurement process to appoint a new operator is underway with a decision due to be made by Cabinet in March 2023.
	31. 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	↔	Following a significant level of public engagement, the Town Centre Strategic Framework consultation is now complete and will be presented to Cabinet in March 2023 for adoption.
	32. 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 almost complete in Queens Road. Planning work will commence in St Mary's Churchyard over the next period. 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.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	33. 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 'Shop and Eat Local' campaign was brought forward to coincide with the festive period and attract people to our busy town centre. We are continuing to engage with new businesses and encouraging local people to nominate businesses.
	34. 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 during half term, which attracted around 600 people. 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	35. 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.
	36. 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.	Green	↑	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 are progressing well and completion is expected in quarter 1 2023. We have appointed an agent for the marketing element of the programme and we will be establishing a Marketing Team in the next period. A market report confirms the viability of the scheme. We are looking at options fit out eight of the large units for office use.
	37. 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. The multi-storey car park has been completed and is now in operation providing revenue to the council and much needed safe and accessible parking for hospital visitors.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	38. 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. There were no legal challenges in the 6 weeks following adoption, therefore the Local Plan is now finalised.
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	39. 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	↔	A paper on the approach to delivering the Housing Strategy will be taken to Portfolio Holders in March 2023 including an outline project plan. We have planned to commence the new Strategy in Q2 of 2023/24.
	40. 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 major changes.
	41. 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	↔	A Steering Group to deliver social rented homes across the town has been created with representatives across the council from Property, Housing, Planning, Finance etc. This group will work, liaising with Members, to develop and secure opportunities. A meeting with Homes England took place to discuss options to make best use of land, assets, influence and finance.
	42. 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 work is continuing, including document structure reflecting different parts of the borough (principles of high density living, Town Centre, Colne Valley, householder development). The project will likely consist of several guidance documents rather than just one Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
	43. 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

- The council remain committed to investment in Woodside and the updated scheme and multi-million pound investment was approved by Cabinet in January 2023. It will include renovating the buildings to provide energy efficient facilities for cricket, football, and boxing for all ages, as well as spaces for shared community use. There will also be modern and accessible changing rooms for clubs already based there – including Watford Town Cricket Club, the junior and adult football clubs and Watford Amateur Boxing Club.
- In recognition of Watford’s 100 years as a borough, a successful flag flying exercise with local schools was held, 100-year old residents were recognised and a community led centenary service was held on Centenary Day. The end of year 100-year celebration exhibition was held at Watford Museum.
- White Ribbon Day on 25 November 2022 was marked by the council in line with the achievement of White Ribbon accreditation.
- Winter Shelter provided accommodation for rough sleepers during pre-Christmas cold spell.
- The annual fireworks display attracted circa 30k people and raised funds for local charities.
- The Cost of Living Forum was convened with groups and organisations to bring together the support available and to make sure people are aware of where to go for help. Watford established ‘Welcoming Spaces’ for the winter months.

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>44. 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>Plans to improve our popular Meriden Park are well underway, following significant engagement with residents and members. The hardworks (pathway construction, dropped kerbs, knee high railing and height barrier) are now nearing completion, although there is a slight delay due to adverse weather conditions. The softworks, including tree and bulb planting, benches and seeding mounds, should be completed over the next period. We have also reached an agreement to install an additional table tennis table in the park.</p>
	<p>45. 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>The planned works relating to the Vicarage Road Cemetery main wall are now complete. The cycling path repairs and improvements in Cassiobury Park are also complete. We have installed temporary 'Considerate Cycling' banners in the park. Overall projects are now tracking to plan, hence the improvement in the BRAG rating. Further works will be assessed over the next period.</p>
	<p>46. 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>The council remain committed to investment in Woodside and the updated scheme and multi-million pound investment was approved by Cabinet in January 2023. It will include renovating the buildings to provide energy efficient facilities for cricket, football, and boxing for all ages, as well as spaces for shared community use. There will also be modern and accessible changing rooms for clubs already based there – including Watford Town Cricket Club, the junior and adult football clubs and Watford Amateur Boxing Club. Further engagement with the Cricket and Boxing Clubs in relation to their business plans, tenancy heads of terms, and terms of the associated community use agreements is planned over the next period.</p>
	<p>47. 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>Red</p>	<p>↓</p>	<p>Work continues on-site at the new crematorium at its Hemel Hempstead base, providing residents of South West Hertfordshire, including Watford residents, with enhanced facilities and service provisions. There is a risk that the opening of the facility may be delayed to Summer 2023 due to issues with utilities work and delay by the Environment Agency. Nevertheless, work continues to complete the on-site build on time and to progress plans in relation to wayfinding and opening preparations. NB: Since Quarter 3, the issue with the Environment Agency has been resolved and additional outstanding utility works have been undertaken which means the facility should open in the Spring as planned and this RAG rating will show an improvement in the next reporting period.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
<p align="center">Celebrate and promote our town's rich and diverse culture and creativity</p>	<p>48. 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 service and sacrifice of fallen service men and women is recognised.</p>	<p align="center">Green</p>	<p align="center">↔</p>	<p>Cabinet approved the plans to relocate Watford Museum to our historic Town Hall in December 2021. The developing designs were approved in November 2022 following a significant consultation exercise. The National Heritage Lottery Fund round 1 bid was submitted in November 2022 and a decision is expected in March 2023. Inflation continues to have an impact on many of our major projects, reflected by the amber status.</p>
	<p>49. Celebrate 100 years of Watford Borough, building a legacy for future generations</p>	<p>We will lead a programme of celebrations across the town commemorating 100 years since the formation of the borough of Watford.</p>	<p align="center">Green</p>	<p align="center">↔</p>	<p>We are continuing our centenary celebrations. Centenary commemorative Council meeting photos have been taken. On Centenary Day, we held successful flag flying with local schools, visited 100-year old residents and held a community led Centenary Service. The 100 people nominations were completed and stories published through Q3 and into 2023. The end of year 100-year celebration exhibition was held at Watford Museum.</p>
	<p>50. Bring our local heritage to life for our community</p>	<p>We will create a new innovative heritage trail across the town to recognise Watford's rich culture and past.</p>	<p align="center">Green</p>	<p align="center">↔</p>	<p>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. Our successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund also means that a heritage trail will form part of the 'Tales of the River' project.</p>
	<p>51. Enhance the town's creative and cultural appeal through a new Public Art Strategy</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p align="center">Green</p>	<p align="center">↑</p>	<p>Recognising the importance of public art in attracting visitors to our High Street, work is well underway in the development of the Public Art Strategy for the town. Since the last update, consultation events have taken place with a total of 117 individuals consulted to date. Further consultation events are planned in January and the final consultation report will be delivered by end of January 2023. Feasibility work is to be completed to see if the River Colne's 'Tales of the River' artwork can be used to pilot the Strategy. It is expected that the strategy will be formally adopted in June 2023.</p>
	<p>52. Commemorate the town's links to our past</p>	<p>We will introduce a Blue Plaque scheme which will commemorate links between our historic buildings and famous residents, events or former buildings.</p>	<p align="center">Planning in progress</p>	<p align="center">↔</p>	<p>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 who have implemented similar schemes and understanding how learning could be applied to Watford.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	53. 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	↑	Given the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic across the town, work continues to design a public memorial. A revised options paper will be presented to Portfolio Holders in April 2023 along with proposed timescales for completion.
	54. 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 importance of heritage in our town, over the last period, we have analysed the responses from the resident engagement on our Conservation Management Plans and drafted a set of proposed actions. Formal consultation will commence over the next period. This will include public meetings, an online survey and all residents and businesses in conversation areas will be engaged with. A final draft of the proposal is expected in the first quarter of 2023/24.
Promote our welcoming and respectful town	55. 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 (CSP) strategic plan for the next two years was approved at One Watford and reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Community Safety Action plan tracks the progress of community safety projects and deliverables set against the CSP priorities; Serious Youth Violence, Violence Against Women and Girls, Community Wellbeing and Reassure and Inform. The Joint Agencies Group members are successfully progressing through the action plan and opportunities for actions within core business and set against the CSP priorities included in the plan. Our Safer Streets bid was unsuccessful however we are considering a bid for Safer Streets round 5 and are in conversation with the PCC for smaller bid opportunities. Our bids to progress Violence Against Women and Girls environmental improvement aims identified in the original Safer Streets round 4, as well as Victoria passage to tackle hotspots in the town centre for ASB crime have been successful.
	56. 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	↔	White Ribbon Day on 25 November 2022 was marked in Watford and linked to the Council achieving accreditation. A Steering Group has been established to take forward the Council's action plan and an update will be provided to One Watford in March 2023.
	57. 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	↔	A review of our CCTV provision has been completed. The remedial actions identified through this review are now being progressed. Mobile trial sites were partially delivered in December 2022 and discussions are planned for further deployment in January 2023. Over the next period, the focus will be on the relocation of the CCTV Control Room from Shady Lane.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	58. 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 Q4 in line with the delivery of our recently approved Customer Experience Strategy.
Listen to and hear the diverse voices of Watford	59. 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	↔	A Community and Participation Strategy is being drafted to provide strategic direction and action planning on a council-wide approach to how we engage with our community. During Quarter 3 the strategy has been developed for engagement with the community later in the year.
	60. 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.
	61. 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 reprofiled and scoped in Quarter 4. 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.
	62. 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 has agreed to extend the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework for 1 year (2023/2024) to conduct a review of the commissioned organisation. This work stream is linked to the council's new community engagement and participation strategy that is in progress. This will help inform the review of the VSCF.
	63. 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	↔	The stonework and roof repairs for Vicarage Road Cemetery are underway and due to be completed by end of January 2023. We are still waiting for the outcome of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding scheme bid which was submitted for three of our properties. A proposal to include Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) works within the programme was approved and we have appointed an EPC surveyor and initiated the surveys.
	64. 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 Census 2021 figures have been released which will underpin the council's approach to its Equality and Diversity policy. Scoping for the policy was undertaken in Quarter 3 and a draft is being developed during Quarter 4.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	65. 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 review of the homelessness strategy, which will ensure the Action Plan aligns with the government's latest Rough Sleeping Strategy published in September 2022, commenced in Autumn 2022. The Review is to be completed in quarter 4 of 2023/24.
	66. Encourage Watford to develop as an age friendly town	We will work towards making Watford an age-friendly town which residents and visitors of all ages can enjoy, ensuring local services are accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities.	Planning in progress	↔	The scope of work is being considered and how this relates to design guidance. Hertfordshire County Council has completed a draft study to update evidence related to provision for people with disabilities and for the elderly. This is useful for supporting local housing and planning guidance.
	67. 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.
Support improved health and wellbeing across the town	68. 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>Following a successful procurement process for a scoping exercise on mental health services in Watford, Prego Services has been awarded the contract for the Mental Health Assessment of Watford.</p> <p>We have linked in with the Healthy Hub for provision of events, pop ups, promotions, etc. We have engaged with Muslim women who feel isolated and have started a ladies-only badminton session which has proven very popular. We have also referred 6 MIND clients to Everyone Active for a free 12 months' gym membership.</p> <p>We have secured funding from the WCH Community Development Fund for the continuation of a full time Mental Health Community Support Worker. We have secured additional funding to enable 3 Satellite Hubs to continue: 'Think About Living with Dementia', 'Palliative Care' and 'Bereavement Programme'.</p> <p>We have completed a Service Level Agreement for a Diabetes lifestyle project in partnership with Watford Primary Care Network which will target individuals from the BAME community. We have opened up the physical Healthy Hub in the Town Hall one day per week for the Watford Women's Centre. We have also booked NHS Health checks with Herts Health Improvement team and have completed a Job Description and job evaluation for the Healthy Hub project worker.</p>

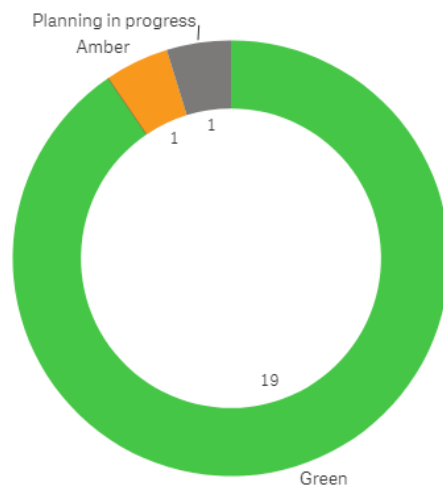
Commitment	Activity	BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline	
	69. Engage with health partners to improve public health and health inequalities for our residents	We will engage across our health partners to make sure the health and wellbeing needs of Watford are represented in new health structures and commissioning of services.	Green	↔	The Health Intervention Plan has been revised to reflect placed based health inequalities for cancer and we are awaiting feedback from Hertfordshire County Council. Reducing cancer across all Watford residents remains a priority and we continue to work closely with Primary Care Networks, non-statutory services and public health leads to address barriers that hinders early intervention and access to cancer services. A project is being discussed to address the disparity in rate of cervical screening for younger cohort of women, as well as in specific communities where uptake is particularly low. Addressing the relationship between population health and deprivation identified that obesity, especially childhood obesity in Watford is of concern. A pilot project to look at improving healthier lifestyle for families in an area of high deprivation with highest level of childhood obesity is currently being developed.
	70. Support single homeless people to access accommodation and support	We will continue to establish and embed our single homelessness pathway, focusing on the root causes of homelessness and working closely with our partners to support individuals on every part of their journey into independent living.	Green	↑	<p>Since the last update, we have successfully recruited an experienced Single Homelessness Pathway (SHP) Coordinator to drive forward SHP in the business as usual environment and we have allocated additional resource (Housing Strategy Manager) to support this workstream. The Winter Shelter in Watford was used during the pre-Christmas cold spell and we have been able to verify seven rough sleepers. HCC are looking to extend the Housing Related Support funding contracts until April 2024, which would enable funding to be increased to assist providers with inflationary pressures.</p> <p>We have initiated a Strengthening Housing project to progress the findings of a peer review and equip our Housing Team with the requisite capacity and resource to design and deliver improvements.</p>
Bring together ways to help our residents who might be struggling financially	71. 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.
	72. 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. Partners are collaborating to make sure support is coordinated. We are engaging with Hertfordshire County Council to link into county support and ensure local residents are accessing all the help available. Watford has established 'Welcoming Spaces' for the winter months.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	73. 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 have explored for Watford. A project proposal presented to Cabinet in January 2023 was approved and we are currently planning the project in detail for launch later this year in order to support community organisations across the town
	74. 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 Quarter 2. The fireworks display attracted circa 30k people and raised funds for local charities. Planning is underway for events throughout 2023.
	75. 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 delivered a free Easter and summer holiday programme and have received very positive feedback on the summer programme, with more children attending than in previous years. The Cost of Living Forum with groups and organisations was convened to bring together the support available and to make sure local people are aware of where to go for help. This will include making sure people are aware of the benefits they are entitled to, including those administered by the council. The forum is also 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. Watford launched its 'Welcoming Places' campaign for winter, supported by the Watford Community Fund. We have received Household Support Fund 3 which will be allocated in Quarter 4. Initial meetings with invited community groups and organisations were held in Q2 with a robust action plan developed.
	76. 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 the scheme in March 2026. Targeted marketing has taken place and follow up letters are about to be sent 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 and our statement of intent has been issued in accordance with the revised government guidance. We are awaiting further ECO+ guidance in spring 2023 and will adapt our own assistance to reflect these changes once known.
	77. 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)	Green	↑	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. The Community Wealth Building plan is currently being drafted with input from partners and businesses. It includes a proposal for a Watford Employer Charter which encourages businesses to invest locally. The plan will be reviewed by a business panel before being finalised.

Commitment	Activity	BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	sector link to make a greater economic contribution.			

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

Overview








Key achievements over this period

- The Council's Customer Experience Strategy 2022-26 and Delivery Plan have been approved and implemented commence to ensure that we continue to deliver the very best services for our residents and community.
- The Building Control and Planning Enforcement Shared Services with St Albans City District Council went live from 1 November 2022. The implementation of the Legal Shared Services is well underway with implementation scheduled for 1 February 2023, ensuring that we continue to delivery high quality but efficient services.

Planning is underway for the 2023 Borough Ward Elections and will be implementing the changes introduced by the Elections Act 2022 such as Voter ID, with town-wide communications planned.

- Our updated Procurement Strategy was approved by Cabinet in January 2023.
- Further health, wellbeing and resilience training courses as well as a menopause and cost of living sessions have been rolled out to support our employees and partners.

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>78. 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 Customer Experience Strategy 2022-26 was approved 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. Over the last period, the Delivery Project Plan has been developed in conjunction with our Enterprise Programme Management Office, with the programme governance now established. The delivery of the Strategy will be overseen by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p>
	<p>79. 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 Environmental Strategy and associated Sustainability Action Plan. The public consultation period is now complete and we will be reviewing the strategic targets for the council and the Borough. Internally, initial discussions have taken place on the introduction of Sustainability Champions and we have also explored e-learning modules for WBC staff. We are continuing to work with our property management company Lambert Smith Hamilton to embed sustainability in our investment portfolio.</p>
	<p>80. 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 continue to deliver the commitments made in the Council Plan under the new senior management structure. The Organisational Development Strategy (updated in Appendix B) continues to ensure that we continue to support staff to develop and grow and the review of our next tier of management, to align with the restructured senior leadership team is now underway.</p>
	<p>81. 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 council remains committed to deliver best value and efficient services through the implementation of shared services with our neighbouring boroughs. The Building Control and Planning Enforcement Shared Services with St Albans City District Council (SADC) officially went live on 1 November 2022. The WBC and SADC Partnership Board has been established and the first meeting held in December 2022. Planning Enforcement remediation activities are underway. The implementation of the Legal Shared Service project, being led by SADC, is progressing well and go-live is now expected in February 2023 (a minor delay from the original go-live date). The Head of Legal has been recruited and the TUPE process and procedural arrangements will be progressed in the next quarter.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	82. Make sure the council continues to hold successful and well run elections	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.	Green		Secondary legislation for several policy areas in connection with Elections Act 2022 has now been made, including assistance with voting for people with disabilities (i.e., accessibility), voter identification, First Past the Post, and around Notional Expenditure. Remaining expected Election Integrity Programme secondary legislation is due to follow from 2023 to 2025 although all implementation dates remain subject to change.
Pioneer new ways of working that challenge us to innovate, transform and consistently improve	83. Adopt the right digital technology that matches and supports our ambition for excellent service delivery for our residents	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.	Green		Work on the ICT Strategy has commenced and the draft is expected to be completed in Q4 and sign off process will occur through Q1/Q2 of 2023/2024. 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 commenced which will enhance the council's ability to work remotely, securely, collaboratively and support agile working. The O365 user mailbox migration is now complete and we are progressing public mailbox migration.
	84. Deliver a step change in how we use our data and information so it strengthens our drive for constant improvement	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.	Green		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 and is expected to be presented to Cabinet for endorsement in March 2023.
	85. 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	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.	Green		Good progress has been made in the review of our existing contract management approaches. The review will ensure that we continue to achieve the very best value from our contracts. The first draft of the new 'Contract Management' handbook for officers is now complete and will be available on the Council's website by February 2023. A training programme will be published on the intranet and offered to officers to support them with the new guidance.
	86. Embed social value through our procurement process	We will update our Procurement Strategy to strengthen our approach to evidencing economic, social and environmental outcomes when procuring, awarding and delivering contracts.	Green		Our updated Procurement Strategy, which will make sure we continue to get best value from the market during this period of economic instability, was reviewed internally and approved by Cabinet in January 2023. The Strategy will include a comprehensive proposal on social value and measurement which supports the delivery of our Sustainability Action Plan.

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>87. 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. We are progressing development of the Croxley Park Business Plan 2023/24 which is expected to be completed in March 2023.</p>
	<p>88. 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 (LUF), a further £500k was requested to complement the Innovation Hub initiative. This would have allowed 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 otherwise not easily be able to obtain, in order to develop their businesses and support the local economy. However, the recent announcement that the council were unsuccessful in their bid means that this initiative will continue on a smaller scale whilst details of Levelling Up round three funding are finalised.</p>
	<p>89. 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 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 proposed MTFS includes an expected increase in council tax of 2.99% for 2023/24 and 2024/25, reducing to 1.99% in 2025/26. This is well below current levels of inflation. The proposed increases balance the need to fund budget pressures to continue to deliver services against the commitment to keep council tax increases low. The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement set out the referendum limit for council tax increases as 3% for 2023/24 and 2024/25.</p>
	<p>90. 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 strategic outline case for a Vertical Farm was reviewed by members in the last quarter however following further review it is unlikely that the scheme will not proceed due to sustainability reasons. We are however still exploring opportunities for solar arrays.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	91. 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.
	92. 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.
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	93. 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.	Green	↔	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 survey to collate feedback on both the space and technology and implementing changes as required.
	94. 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 alongside the behavioural framework. The next stage is to fully roll the values and behaviours across the Council and incorporate them into each stage of the employee lifecycle. The PDR cycle is now complete with every employee having an opportunity to set objectives for the year ahead and identify development.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	95. 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 Values and Behavioural Framework, which was presented to Corporate Management Team in July, was reviewed by the Staff Ambassador Group and Agile Pathfinders in October 2022 and feedback collated. A soft launch of the Values and Behaviours was completed in December 2022 and a full roll out is planned for early 2023.
	96. 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	↔	Our refreshed Values and Behavioural Framework will be worked into the employment lifecycle from recruitment and onboarding to development and progression. A soft launch of the framework was completed in December 2022 and a full rollout is planned for early 2023.
	97. 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.	Green	↔	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. We are aiming to support more local people by recruiting a further four Corporate Apprentices in the next quarter, although this will be dependent on funding availability.
	98. 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	↔	Further health, wellbeing and resilience training courses were delivered in the last quarter as well as a menopause workshop and cost of living session, to support our employees. The Performance and Development Review cycle is now complete and gave line managers an opportunity to support employees and discuss health and wellbeing with them.