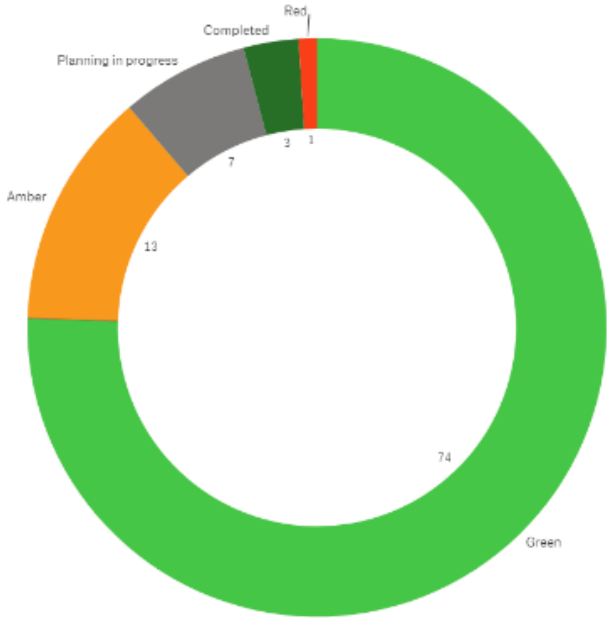


Appendix A - Council Delivery Plan Progress update Q4 2022/23

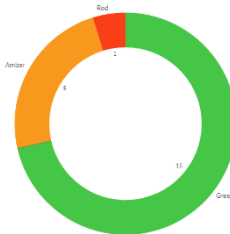
Delivery Plan Overview

CDP Activity BRAG Split



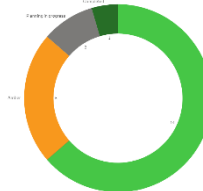
Council Plan Theme - A greener, brighter future

CDP Activity BRAG Split



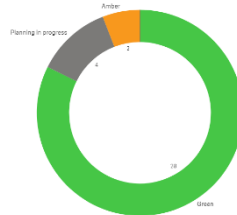
Council Plan Theme - An inspiring, thriving and creative town

CDP Activity BRAG Split



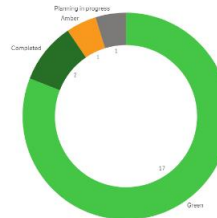
Council Plan Theme - A diverse, happy and healthy town

CDP Activity BRAG Split



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

CDP Activity BRAG Split

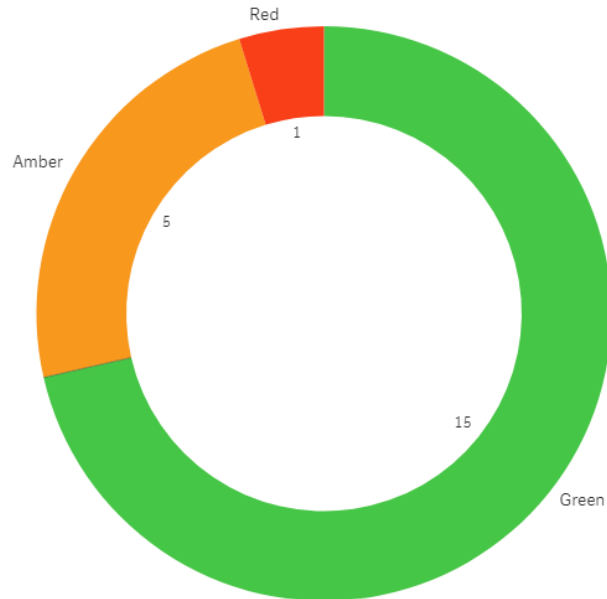


Key

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

THEME: A greener brighter future

Overview







Key achievements over this period

- Work is continuing to promote and provide our residents with options for greener travel and transport solutions. The successful On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) funding bid will enable the installation of 79 on-street charge points across Watford. The District Shopping Parade Improvements project will implement measures to promote active ways of travelling such as improved cycle infrastructure and pedestrian walkways.
- Our approach for addressing the climate and ecological emergency and plans for achieving net carbon by 2030 are set out in 'Watford's Environmental Strategy: Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency 2023-2030' and Delivery Plan 2023-2025 which were approved by Cabinet in March 2023.
- Through our Tree Planting Programme for the year 2022/23, we planted 126 public trees across the borough and in addition gave away 10,000 trees to Watford residents in December 2022 in our popular Tree Giveaway event with HCC.
- Through our 'Tales of the River' project we delivered two successful Wildplay sessions during the February 2023 half term break which was attended by 27 attendees. The sessions offer our younger residents and their parents an opportunity to explore local green spaces and learn about Watford's history and heritage through arts and crafts and other activities.


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>As part of our ambitious Transforming Travel in Watford Programme, we are progressing the feasibility works and working towards an Outline Business Case for a low-carbon transport hub in the town centre. The design development will commence in the next reporting period and progress the pre-app by autumn 2023.</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. The following progress was achieved over the last period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progressed the work towards creating Healthy Neighbourhoods by identifying residential areas that are likely to benefit from measures that will reduce traffic. The aim is to identify, prioritise and gain support for such locations in Watford and encourage future funding bids for delivery by HCC. - Received 75% of the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) funding for the delivery of 79 on-street charge points. - Progressed the Watford Car Club contractor procurement and working towards awarding the contract in Q1 of 2023/24. - Initiated the District Shopping Parade Improvements project which will implement measures to promote active ways of travel such as improved cycle infrastructure and pedestrian walkways. The first phase of the project will focus delivery at The Brow and Whippendell Road.
	<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>We are continuing to promote and progress the uptake of sustainable travel initiatives across Watford. Our On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) application was successful and £592.5k has been secured for the installation of 79 new electric vehicle charging points across the town. The site surveys will commence in May 2023 and the delivery of the first phase of the new charge units will commence in July 2023.</p> <p>We are also continuing to work closely with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), the Highways Authority, and we have recently volunteered to be test-bed following the circulation of the draft HCC 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>We are progressing our plans with Hertfordshire County Council to improve our cycling and walking network, working to identify how our Wayfinding Strategy can align with the Green Loop to create a comprehensive solution.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	5. Champion proposals for a sustainable transport option for Watford Junction to Croxley	We will work closely with Hertfordshire County Council on the Watford to Croxley Link, examining the feasibility of options to secure the best transport system for our town, offering greater choice for our residents, visitors and commuters to travel sustainably.	Green	↔	We are continuing to work closely with HCC in line with the council's commitment to support proposals for sustainable transport across the town. The Options and Feasibility study into potential alternatives for the Watford to Croxley Link (formerly MLX) corridor is well underway, with completion of the stage two inception meeting and site visit this quarter. The stage 2 report is expected by the end of May / beginning June 2023.
Promote improvements to Watford's biodiversity to enhance the range of habitats, plants and wildlife in the town	6. Set out our commitments to improving Watford's biodiversity	We will develop our Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan, recognising the importance of our range of habitats across the town and setting out how we will improve and enhance these for future generations.	Green	↔	Our Biodiversity Strategy is being scoped with the Planning Policy team and in line with our newly approved Environmental 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 improvements to the River Colne and the Cassiobury Wetlands and our ambitious Tree Planting programme.
	7. Enhance and extend our green canopy, through our proactive tree planting initiative	We will work with our community to plant 20,000 trees across the town by 2026, increasing our green canopy, making Watford a more pleasant place to live, work and enjoy recreation time.	Green	↔	<p>We have made good progress with our Tree Planting programme with only 10 trees now awaiting confirmation of being planted for the year 2022/23. In addition to the 126 public trees planted this year, our popular Tree Giveaway event was successfully held on 3 December 22 where in conjunction with HCC, 10,000 trees were given away to Watford residents,</p> <p>We will be continuing with our efforts to plant 20,000 trees by 2026 and are currently planning the approach for the Tree Planting programme for 2023/24. A further tree giveaway day with HCC this winter (December 2023) with a target to provide a further 6,000 trees.</p>
	8. Rediscover the River Colne to enhance the river, the river corridor, as a place for our community to enjoy	We will improve the River Colne through Watford to make it a more appealing place for local people to enjoy and a better environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.	Amber	↔	<p>The 'Tales of the River' project, which is funded by a successful National Heritage Lottery Fund bid, has now moved to the delivery phase. We have appointed an intern role and have engaged with West Herts College digital content and multi-media course tutors to agree support for podcasts and videos. We also held two successful Wildplay sessions during the February 2023 half term break which was attended by 27 attendees. Further sessions are planned including school sessions for the summer term.</p> <p>With the support of our volunteers we have almost completed the planned In River work at Knutsford South. Our INNS Out funding bid for £5k was successful and we will be delivering this work in 2023/24.</p> <p>We shared a social media marketing campaign of the Citizen Science Scheme with our partners on social media.</p> <p>This activity remains Amber as the completion of the full scope of in river works along the southern section of the river this Autumn / Winter is at risk, due to the dependency on the EA agreeing a permit in time. This risk is being monitored closely and being reviewed with our in-river specialists.</p>

Commitment	Activity	BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	<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 style="text-align: center;">Amber</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Our ambitious project to improve the Cassiobury Wetlands has progressed. Site investigations have now been completed and an investigatory report submitted by our contractor with proposed changes alongside the risks and costings. The potential contractor is looking to review the permit process with the EA so the scheme can commence this August. A funding request to the Landfill Communities Fund has been submitted which will help to support the works. This activity remains Amber as there is a risk that works will not commence early August 2023 as this is subject to appointing a contractor and agreeing a bespoke permit with the EA for a portion of the work to be completed. Recent and regular dialogue is in place between all parties with active involvement from the Project Sponsor in order to progress.</p>
	<p>10. Celebrate and enhance Whippendell Woods as a site of special scientific interest</p>	<p>We will protect Whippendell Woods, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), in order to preserve its 'favourable condition' status.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Green</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>In line with our commitment to sustainability, works remain ongoing in Whippendell Woods. Winter works are complete and timber stacked ready to be extracted in the summer and sold when paths allow. In parallel, the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust have been working on increasing the size of glade and managing holly. The tree works are currently underway with an agreement for the Veolia tree health and safety survey to take place this spring to incorporate all main paths, boundaries, property etc. Our contractors are working on an Ash selective fell plan for Autumn 2023.</p>
	<p>11. Promote healthy and sustainable gardening across the town</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Green</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>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 next session is scheduled for 20 May 2023 at Woodside Playing Fields. The Tree Giveaway will take place every 2 years, contributing to our commitment to enhance the green canopy across the town.</p>
	<p>12. Provide clear guidance on improving biodiversity in the town</p>	<p>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</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Amber</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Whilst a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for how developers can contribute to our vision and ambition to enhance biodiversity across the town has been drafted and a briefing session held with councillors, the government has recently released draft guidance which indicates that the process will be standardised. This will remove the ability of Local Planning Authorities to set out local projects and charge rates for schemes that qualify for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) investments. The BRAG rating remains amber until the guidance is formalised however it is possible that the SPD may not be required. An application for the first tranches of ringfenced funding (£15k) from the government for biodiversity net gain implementation was submitted in April 2023.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
					A range of work is also underway to support our commitment to biodiversity, including our improvements to the River Colne and Cassiobury Wetlands.
<p>Work alongside our community and businesses to find the right ways to reach net carbon neutral, seeking not just to learn from others but to explore innovative solutions that will work for Watford</p>	13. Develop and implement our new Sustainability Strategy	We will work with our community and businesses to develop and implement our new Sustainability Strategy, now called Watford's Environmental Strategy: addressing the climate and ecological emergency, which will set out how together, we can contribute to our target to be a net carbon neutral borough by 2030.	Green	↔	Watford's Environmental Strategy: Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency 2023-2030' and Delivery Plan 2023-2025, developed in consultation with our community and businesses, were approved by Cabinet in March 2023. A summarised, public facing version of the strategy, which clearly sets out our targets, has also been finalised and published. Resourcing requirements have been finalised and the support of 12 internal Sustainability Champions has been secured to commence delivery of the strategy.
	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	↔	Watford's Environmental Strategy: Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency 2023-2030' and Delivery Plan 2023-2025 were approved by Cabinet in March 2023. The Strategy, which takes into account the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, sets out our ambition and plan for achieving net carbon zero by 2030. Delivery of the Strategy commenced in April 2023.
	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.	Red	↓	As previously reported due to the current economic climate and the rise in interest rates the proposal for the Green Investment Bond Scheme has been deferred until the economic climate improves. The Electric Super Hub initiative, a high-speed charging hub for Electric Vehicles constructed on council-owned land, is still being explored which would entail leasing the land to an operator. Two operators are currently undertaking soft market testing and developing business cases to test the viability of this initiative.
	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.	Green	↑	Alongside the extensive decarbonisation works to the Town Hall and Colosseum, we are undertaking a procurement exercise to appoint sustainability consultants to undertake a review of further opportunities on council assets, making the most of external funding opportunities. The final report will be available by Autumn 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. The final phase of the planned work on the windows, M&E systems and fabric repairs, as well as the PV framing installation, have now commenced. The scaffolds are now being removed as each level of windows are completed, although practical completion has been confirmed as the end of June, slightly behind schedule due to poor weather condition for some roofing works, hence the amber

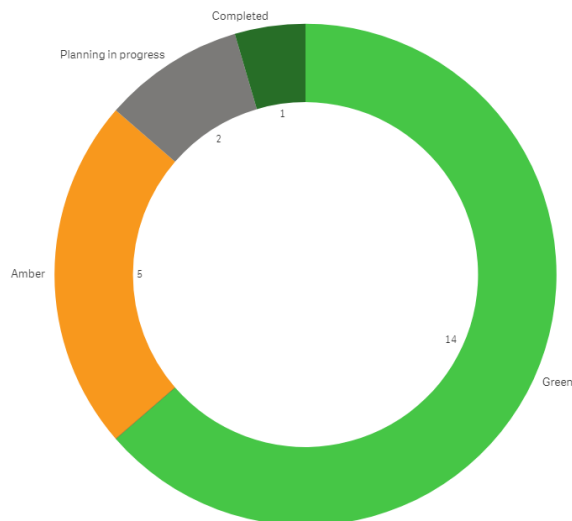
Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
					<p>status. This will not, however, impact the associated refurbishment of the Town Hall.</p> <p>Training will be arranged for our Facilities Management team to equip them with the knowledge and skills for operating and managing the new systems.</p>
	<p>18. Ensure the council's own buildings are energy efficient</p>	<p>We will explore ways to improve the energy performance of all properties within our portfolio.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Green</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↔</p>	<p>In line with our ambition to lead by example, we are working on data collection/assessment of energy usage at Croxley Business Park, and to act as a case study for potential wider roll out across the Council. An application has been made 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.</p> <p>A validation of EPC scores across the WBC estate was completed in March 2023 to ensure that our building remain compliant with more stringent environmental standards.</p>
	<p>19. Promote sustainable construction in our own developments</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Amber</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↔</p>	<p>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 a Home Quality Mark, an independently assessed certification scheme for new homes, 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.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">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 style="text-align: center;">Green</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↔</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, which was increased from 48% to 52% following the 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. The scheme will make it easy and simple for all residents to recycle as much as they can.</p>

Commitment	Activity	BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	21. 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 	We have now received the new government regulations on waste have now been received and the council will be introducing food waste collection to flats in 2023. Our provider (Veolia) is analysing waste and public behaviours which will inform our future waste strategy.

THEME: An inspiring, thriving and creative town

Overview

CDP Activity BRAG Split



Key achievements over this period

- Following the successful award of the Shared Prosperity Fund, we are overseeing the delivery of projects funded through the Fund. Including training and support for Watford's small businesses to be more successful in bidding for contracts and in turn supporting their future growth prospects and inviting larger local organisations to act as potential buyers through the Fit-to-Bid project.
- We are progressing our plans to promote Watford as a great location for businesses, attract more visitors and support the local economy. Our place brand and narrative has been developed and shared with a range of partners and a launch is planned in the Summer 2023.
- The Watford Business Connect has been established and the first meeting, held in March 2023, was a great success, over-subscribed and generated positive feedback from businesses that attended the event. The event also reached businesses that the council had not engaged with previously.
- The Watford Town Centre Strategic Framework was approved in March 2023. The Framework focuses on improvements such as to the infrastructure, environments and transport and will support the economic growth and development of the borough.
- A preferred operator has been identified for Watford Market. A 'Celebrate the King's Coronation' Market Late event was held in May 2023 with more planned throughout 2023.
- The appointment of the new Colosseum operator, AEG, was approved by Cabinet in March 2023. AEG is engaged in the refurbishment of the Colosseum and providing an input into the future design of the building which will support and deliver future entertainment and performances.




Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
<p>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</p>	<p>22. Deliver our Innovation and Incubation Hub</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>Following the council's unsuccessful Levelling Up funding bid, options to develop a lower cost, scaled down business model for the proposed new innovation and incubation hub have been considered, although the government's recent announcement that there will be a third round of Levelling Up funding provides an opportunity to fulfil the original ambition. In both scenarios, we will ensure that we can still support Watford start-up businesses and give our key sectors a boost, whilst making efficient use of the Town Hall.</p>
	<p>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</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>24. Maximise economic potential and harness new opportunities from Watford's future growth sectors</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>The Sectors Action Plan will be progressed in Q1 of 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.</p>
	<p>25. Make the most of our Shared Prosperity Fund allocation</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>Following the approval and allocation of year 1 funding of Watford's UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Economic Development team have been overseeing the delivery of year 1 projects with providers to ensure the required outcomes are delivered. For example, the Fit-to-Bid project uses an established and proven model to provide training and support to help many of Watford's small businesses be more successful in bidding for contracts, in turn supporting their future growth prospects. We are inviting a handful of local larger organisations to act as potential buyers, willing to open up their purchasing power to enable Watford's SME's to bid for projects, services and contracts. As well as giving new bidding opportunities to our SME's, this project also has the potential to help the 'buyer' organisations establish new supply relationships locally, which could prove greatly beneficial over time, and would also provide good local PR opportunities.</p> <p>Wenta will be delivering a two-year program aimed at helping SMEs reduce carbon emissions in the Watford area. Through this innovative initiative, experienced net zero business advisors will provide free support to 250 local businesses, including access to the latest learning content, resources and</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
					<p>tailored support for their net zero journeys. Wenta offers bespoke guidance tailored to the size of the venture, industry sector and progress made so far. The benefits to these businesses are numerous, from access to green grants to attracting and retaining staff teams, improving brand reputation and gaining a competitive edge over other businesses.</p> <p>In addition the team are progressing the year 1 summary return which is due for submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in May 2023, and once received by DLUHC, will enable year 2 allocations to be made. The team are planning year 2 and 3 projects.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>Our place brand and narrative has been developed and shared with a range of partners. An associated implementation and resourcing plan is being developed alongside the creative content to ensure a successful rollout. The launch is planned in summer 2023 and will be supported by a website and social assets.</p>
	<p>27. Ensure there is a strong voice for local businesses by fostering effective business networks and forums</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>Engagement with businesses is underway and this objective will seek to respond to the 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.</p> <p>The Watford Business Connect has been established, well ahead of schedule. The first business connect meeting on 21 March was a great success, over-subscribed and we received positive feedback from businesses that attended the event. In addition we also reached businesses that we had not engaged with previously. The next event will be scheduled for October 2023.</p>
	<p>28. Engage with wider economic, business and planning partnerships to make sure Watford's interests are represented</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↑</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The works towards the development and adoption of the JSP (Joint Strategic Partnership) is underway. The tender documents have been issued to commission the SW Herts infrastructure and green belt assessments. Consultants are expected to be appointed mid-April 2023.</p> <p>The contract extension for the Strategic Lead Officer has been confirmed which will provide increased security moving forward.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
<p>Create a distinctive and successful neighbourhood at the heart of our town, providing space and time for residents, businesses and the community to enjoy and experience</p>	<p>29. Progress our transformational plans for the Town Hall Quarter</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>We are continuing to work with our joint venture partner, Mace Develop, on the New Neighbourhood scheme to progress the de-risking activities for utilities, highways and financial viability. We have secured £55k Homes England funding to do further investigatory work and the viability work on the scheme is ready to present to Homes England, pending confirmation of highways costs.</p> <p>Discussion with the NHS for the Healthy Hub is ongoing and a business case is tentatively expected by early summer.</p> <p>The activity status remains amber due to the ongoing current economic climate which has delayed the anticipated investment.</p>
	<p>30. Secure the future of Watford Colosseum, improving the heritage building and attracting a new operator</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>↓</p>	<p>Alongside the decarbonisation works which are already underway, work continues to refurbish Watford Colosseum.</p> <p>The new Colosseum operator, AEG, was approved by Cabinet in March 2023. A site walk was completed by the operator with specialists in production, sound and lighting. The enabling works handover inspection has been held and final items are being resolved by Morgan Sindall, the on-site contractors prior to the commencement of the main refurbishment works. The amber status reflect the ongoing risk of inflation to capital build projects of this type.</p>
	<p>31. Enhance a sustainable town centre with a mixed economy that will have a broad appeal to all ages and interests</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>Following a significant level of public engagement, the Town Centre Strategic Framework consultation was completed and approved by Cabinet in March 2023.</p>
	<p>32. Enhance our outdoor public spaces to make them welcoming and attractive</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>Building on previous public realm improvements in Clarendon Road and Market Street, work in Queens Road is now complete. 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.</p> <p>Recently the District Shopping Parade Improvements project was initiated which will introduce improvements to identified shopping parades within the Borough in order to create vibrant and welcoming spaces and enhance public realm for businesses, residents and visitors.</p>

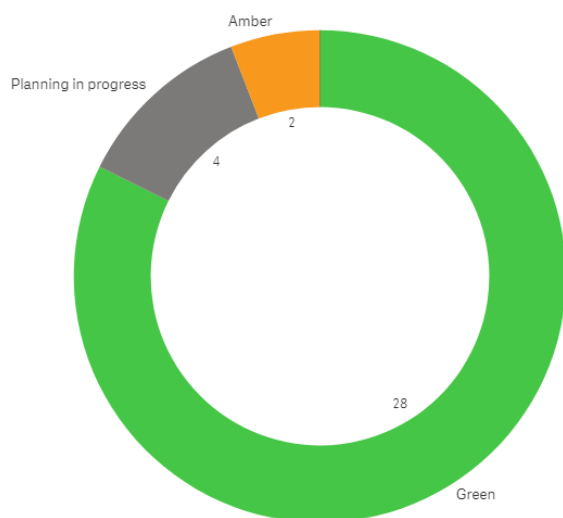
Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	33. Promote the appeal of our town centre and all it has to offer	We will continue to deliver our 'Shop and Eat Local' campaign to attract people to our town centre, supporting our local businesses and their unique appeal.	Green	↔	We are continuing to engage with new businesses and encouraging local people to nominate businesses to appear in campaigns. We are also working with Watford BID and Atria to understand when new businesses arrive with the recent announcement of Dunelm in part of the old John Lewis site a vote for confidence in the town's retail offer
	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	↔	We have completed the Watford Market operator procurement and issued a letter of confirmation to the preferred operator. Our Legal team have agreed and completed the contract with the operator. The Market Lates and Specialist Markets, which provide a great opportunity for local traders to showcase their diverse food and drink offer will continue in 2023/24. On 5 May a Market Lates - Celebrate the Kings Coronation event was held and on 21 May a Speciality Market 'Start Up Sunday /Love Your Local Market' event is planned.
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. We are waiting to hear about funding from NR operations for design work on 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 Q 2 of 2023/24. We have appointed an agent and Marketing Team for the marketing element of the programme and held initial meetings. We are expecting the first draft of the marketing material in the next quarter. The Elected Mayor visited the site in Q4 and was given a tour of the site.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	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.	Amber	↓	The JV partnership is managing the impact of the current economic climate and inflationary pressures on the Riverwell scheme, which includes Avenues, the 2 / 3 bedroom housing zone. Alternative delivery mechanisms for Avenues have been implemented, prioritising the completion of homes in phase 1 – where people have reserved homes and paid deposits. The programme is amber rated as the partnership continues to review all Riverwell development phases to understand the ongoing economic impacts and explore options to maintain progress and delivery.
	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	↔	<p>The Watford Local Plan 2021-2038 was adopted in Q2 and will provide the council with the opportunity to influence local and sustainable development across the town.</p> <p>We are progressing the delivery of our Transforming Travel in Watford Programme which includes a number of sustainable initiatives around. The District Shopping Parade Improvements project, initiated in last quarter will implement measures to promote active ways of travel such as improved cycle infrastructure and pedestrian walkways. Watford has volunteered to be a test-bed following the circulation of the Herts County Council EV draft strategy. In addition we have secured ORCS funding to install EV charge points across the borough. The procurement of the new car club operator is underway with evaluation of the submission in progress. A briefing has been held with Councillor Stotesbury in regard to the Green Loop East VR project. A comms strategy is being finalised for the engagement events planned for the summer and autumn.</p>
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 developed in June 2023 including an outline project plan. Formal work to develop the strategy will commence 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. An approach document, which sets out the timetable, has been agreed with Corporate Management Board, the Housing Portfolio Holder and the Elected Mayor. 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.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	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		<p>A Steering Group was created in Q3 to deliver social rented homes across the town with representatives across the council from Property, Housing, Planning, Finance etc. This group will work, liaising with Members, to develop and secure opportunities.</p> <p>The final site in the WBC & Watford Community Housing Social Rented Programme (SRP) is due for handover in May 2023, a delay from the initial handover date. The SRP has delivered 53 new social rented homes across 2021/22 and 2022/23.</p> <p>The number of new affordable housing completions and the final outturn for 2022/23 was 139, which is lower than expected due to a number of schemes not handing over during the year.</p>
	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.	Amber		<p>A session was held with Development Management to identify the design issues to be addressed in the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and we are preparing the vision document for the initiation consultation to gain feedback on the issues to be covered in the SPD.</p> <p>The timetable for the delivery of this activity has slipped which reflects the existing lack of certainty until national guidance is clarified.</p>
	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		<p>The refreshment of our Private Sector Renewal policy has been delayed to enable alignment with Housing strategy work. 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.</p>

THEME: A diverse, happy and healthy town

Overview



Key achievements over this period

- Two Beryl Bike bays have been installed in Cassiobury Park and were launched in April 2023, making it easier for our residents to use and park the Beryl bikes to travel around the borough.
- We have made significant progress in the delivery of the New Crematorium with neighbouring boroughs. The facility trademark registration has been accepted, highways signage agreed and staff recruited for the opening in the Summer 2023.
- Our Heritage National Lottery Fund application for a development grant of £68k to support the creation of the new museum at the Town Hall was successful. The funding has enabled us to recruit additional resource to progress the design of the museum and the service.
- We are continuing the work to ensure our community buildings are well maintained and benefit our local residents. In the last quarter we completed the stonework and roof repairs for Vicarage Road Cemetery thereby safeguarding this important building for many years to come. We have also progressed the energy performance surveys of our community buildings, allowing us to plan the delivery works that will improve the energy efficiency of our buildings.
- We have appointed Gatherwell to run Watford's Community Lottery, a scheme that will help raise funds to support our local community financially. The inaugural draw is planned for Summer 2023.

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>We are continuing to deliver improvements to our popular Meriden Park. Having completed the hardworks in Q3, in Q4 we appointed a contractor to deliver the softworks, which saw 19 trees planted and signed off. In addition, a successful photocall with a press release was held, maintenance access was completed and the accessibility swing was made operational.</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>We have undertaken a full budget review against all projects to plan our improvements going forward. In the last quarter, we successfully completed our Green Flag judging, the Tree Planting programme for the 2022/23 is nearing completion and the planned works in Whippendell Woods SSSI are complete. The Meriden Park softworks are in progress, with 19 trees planted. Two temporary Beryl bay sites in Cassiobury Park were launched on 1 April 2023 and are now in use. The development of our Green Spaces Strategy is now underway to ensure that we continue to support parks and open spaces across the town.</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>We are progressing the enhancement of Woodside Playing Field. The RIBA 2 design stage is now complete and the external area improvement schemes have been advanced alongside the design options for improvements to the building facades. We have engaged with the Cricket and Boxing Clubs and both have confirmed that the schemes and layouts proposed meet their needs. Governing bodies including Sport England, ECB, Herts Cricket, England Boxing have also been updated in relation to the schemes and layouts and their comments noted. In general they all agree in principle with the proposals, which are due for completion in early 2025.</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>Amber</p>	<p>↑</p>	<p>Good progress with the delivery of the new crematorium has been made over the last period, hence the move from Red to Amber RAG. The facility branding has been designed and submitted for trademark registration and accepted. We are now in a 2-month period waiting for any objections to be submitted. The application for new highways signage was submitted and the locations for the signage agreed. We are waiting for a quote and installation date from Ringway. Practical completion is expected over the next period and all staff have now been recruited for the new facility, which is on track to open in summer 2023.</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>Our Heritage National Lottery Fund application for a first round development grant of £68k to support the creation of a new museum at the Town Hall was successful. Over the next year, we will continue to develop our plans for the Museum through ongoing engagement with stakeholders in advance of a final decision on the full HNLF grant in June 2024. Following successful receipt of the development grant, additional resource has been recruited and the project team is now fully resourced with roles and responsibilities identified to progress the design of the museum and service.</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>Whilst this activity is now complete, we are however continuing to celebrate 'centenary heroes' through 2023.</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 Town Centre heritage trail was successfully launched in March 2022, providing a digitally interactive route along the High Street. Plans to update 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, the development of the Public Art Strategy for the town is underway. The draft strategy, toolkit and public art audit documents have been shared and reviewed by the project team and an initial briefing session held with the designer. Further sessions to finalise the draft strategy have been scheduled throughout May in advance of review by Cabinet on 10 July 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>
	<p>53. Mark and reflect on Watford's response to COVID-19</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p align="center">Green</p>	<p align="center">↔</p>	<p>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 drafted over the next period.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	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	↔	The formal consultation on our Conservation Management Plans took place between February and March 2023. Five public meetings were held, there was one drop-in session and an online response form was launched. All properties in the conservation areas also received a letter. Following review of all comments much of the feedback will be used to help with the implementation of the actions. The final draft for adoption will be completed during April and May ready for adoption by Cabinet in June/July 2023.
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.	Green	↑	<p>One Watford's Joint Action Group members are progressing the Community Safety Action plan as well as opportunities set against the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) priorities in the Plan such as Serious Youth Violence and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). In Q4 the following were achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CSP Comms Plan 2023/24 was agreed. Whilst the initial focus of the Plan is to raise the profile of Safer Watford and how partners work together to keep Watford safe and thriving, several activities were undertaken in Q4. This includes an anti-violence event for schools (students and parents) and partners, a VAWG safeguarding event at Pryzm for night-time economy businesses and staff, both delivered in March 2023, and a community wellbeing engagement event in Cassiobury Park. In addition, since January 2023 we have begun distributing Drink Spiking Kits and personal safety alarms. - A CSP training day was held with wider frontline partners including CEOS, Housing Trust, CCV operatives. The training raised awareness of risks in the town, reporting mechanisms and created a joint protocol for responding to missing persons. - Our bids have been successful to progress VAWG environmental improvement aims identified in the original SS4, as well as Victoria Passage, to tackle hotspots in the town centre for ASB crime. - Operation Square has been rolled out with multiple inter agency actions to counter ASB and CSE in the town centre and has been reported back and making notable improvements to the location.
	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	↔	The Steering Group, which is chaired by the Elected Mayor, is continuing to work on the action plan for submitting to White Ribbon in the summer 2023. An update was presented to One Watford in March 2023

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	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	↔	In line with the council's commitment, in the last quarter an additional camera was installed in Queens Avenue which, following a short delay to permissions, has now been approved by the County Council contractor's for go live. The final mobile camera will be installed by the end of May with the mobile CCTV scheme to be reviewed for effectiveness in September 2023. The project to relocate the CCTV Control Room following the departure of the Police from Shady Lane, is in progress. The expected completion date of the relocation is provisionally December 2023.
	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 will now start in 2023/24 and will link to our Place Brand work, building on the narrative and key messages about Watford.
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.	Green	↑	The Community Engagement and Participation Strategy, which will provide strategic direction and action planning on a council-wide approach to how we engage with our community, was developed during Quarter 4 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 Senior's Forum continues to be held regularly, supported by Watford and Three Rivers Trust. Our Elections team delivered a session on voter ID photo for the May 2023 Elections at the March meeting.
	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 scoped and taken forward in 2023/24. 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 had agreed to extend the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework (VSCF) for 1 year (2023/2024) to allow time to conduct a review and to develop a new VCSF for 2024-27. The review is now in progress and a Project Initiation Document is being developed to scope out the project. Engagement will be undertaken in Q1/Q2 of 2023/24.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	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 were completed in the last quarter safeguarding this important building for many years to come. We are still waiting for the outcome of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding scheme bid which was submitted for three of our properties. In the meantime, we have progressed and completed the Energy Performance Certificate surveys, which will allow us to plan and deliver the EPC works that were brought within the scope of the Community Asset Refurbishment Programme.
	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 and will underpin the council's approach to its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. The policy will have both an internal and external focus, covering the council's role as an employer as well as a service provider and convener of place. The policy is expected to be completed in Autumn 2023.
	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 Q4 of 2023/24 and refreshed in line with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities requirements.
Support improved health and wellbeing across the town	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	↔	We are preparing a design guidance in which we will integrate our guidance for developing Watford as an age friendly town. In addition, we are engaging with the Centre for Ageing Better and exploring options and models for Watford to continue to develop as an age-friendly town.
	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	↔	The funding to deliver the digital recycling scheme ended at the end of March 2023. We are developing another proposal to tackle digital isolation, 'Laptops 4 Learning' scheme, which will focus on recycling old devices by working with local businesses and the voluntary sector. The proposal will be presented to Portfolio Holders in Q1 of 2023/24.

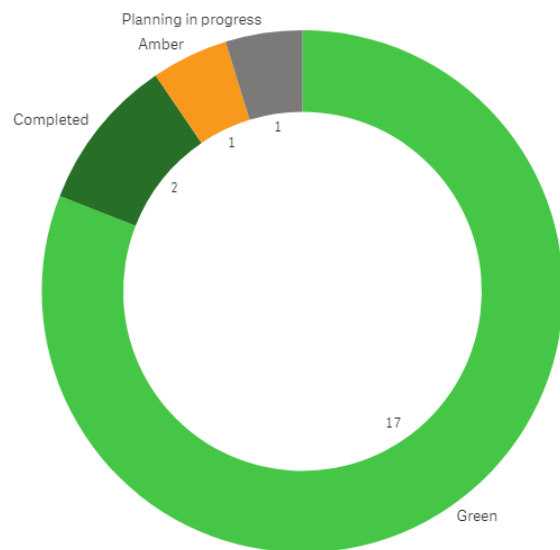
Commitment	Activity	BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline	
	68. Develop services to support our residents' health and wellbeing	We will work closely with our partners to develop a mental health strategy for Watford, ensuring the right support is available for residents who need it. Watford's Healthy Hub will provide a pivotal link to assistance and guidance, including opening up conversations about the menopause and for those needing help with mental health issues.	Green	↔	In Q4 a Healthy Hub Coordinator was successfully recruited and is now in post to support delivery of the Healthy Hub services. Plans for the alignment of health inequalities and Healthy Hub work are underway, with the Healthy Hub at the Town Hall now open every Wednesday and with further promotion and opening times planned.
	69. 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	↔	Working with partners, data is being used to help identify factors that impact on health to help determine priorities. For example, the link between deprivation, ethnicity, access to physical activity, health literacy and long-term health conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. We are focussing on creating opportunities for disadvantaged communities to access help and empower them to make healthier lifestyle choices. For example, a community-led project addressing childhood obesity in disadvantaged communities has already started. We are working with health colleagues, charities and community leads to delivery health initiatives such as cancer awareness and prevention. Finally, we are using the Healthy Hub to signpost, offer health awareness sessions (inhouse and virtual) as well as outreach health initiatives into marginalised communities.
	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	↔	Activities are ongoing within the Single Homeless Pathway (SHP) scheme. The SHP Co-ordinator, in post since March 2023, has been holding introductory meetings with key partners including One YMCA, New Hope, Citizens Advice, Watford & Three rivers Refugee Partnership, Hertfordshire Constabulary and Watford General Hospital. The role of a SHP Officer has been identified and recruited for, with the Officer starting in May 2023. Currently the focus of work is on strengthening the start (single point of entry) of the single homeless pathway, improving partnership working between the council's housing team and the partners, reducing unplanned evictions and improving the standard of immigration advice. Rough sleeping remains similar to the previous quarter with nine verified rough sleepers week ending 5 May 23. Of these five have no recourse to public funds (restricted eligibility).
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 Service Centre. We have a dedicated officer to provide help for customers complete an online form if required. Our new 'change in circumstance' online form went live at the end of Q4. This is for benefit customers that need to report a change, such as a house

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
					<p>move. Our discount and exemption form is currently undergoing user acceptance testing with a planned go-live date for mid-May. Residents will be able to apply online for a discount or exemption and in some circumstances will receive a decision immediately, improving the customer experience, providing greater flexibility and improving service efficiency.</p>
	<p>72. Coordinate advice in the town for those seeking information on how to cope with the cost of living crisis</p>	<p>We will work with partners to ensure people can access the advice and information they need when they face financial difficulties, particularly those who are vulnerable or are dealing with debt.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>A 'Cost of Living' page has been added to the council website to provide information to local people who may be facing financial difficulties. This is in addition to the 'Cost of Living Forum' which 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 also engaging with Hertfordshire County Council to link into county support and ensure local residents are accessing all the help available. Some of the 'Welcoming Spaces' which were established for the winter months, will continue post-winter due to the success in terms of numbers visiting.</p>
	<p>73. Use innovative ways to support our local community financially</p>	<p>We will build upon the success of our COVID-19 Fund, Ukraine Community Funds and Watford Community Fund to investigate a new local lottery to support our local community so that they can continue their good work in our town.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>The implementation of the Watford Community Lottery, which will support local organisations across the town, is progressing well and we are on track for the inaugural draw this Summer 2023. We have appointed an experienced external provider, Gatherwell Ltd, who will implement and run the scheme for Watford. The Gambling License application, a requirement for running a lottery scheme, was processed and approved by the Gambling Commission well ahead of schedule and new policies were approved by the Elected Mayor. The recruitment of local good causes is underway.</p>
	<p>74. Welcome the whole town and visitors to our Big Events</p>	<p>We will deliver our exciting, free programme of Big Events across the town, including our Big Screen, Big Beach and Fireworks, bringing our community together regularly in our town centre and parks.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>In 2022/23 we successfully delivered a number of Big Events attracting and bringing together many of our residents. The Big Events for this year, such as Big Beach, Big Screen, Big Sports and Big Fireworks, have now been planned. In addition a special Big Coronation lunch at the Bandstand took place on 7 May as part of the town's Coronation celebrations.</p>
	<p>75. Provide an appealing and lively programme of holiday activities for young people</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>We have successfully delivered the free Easter 2023 holiday programme and have also piloted a scheme offering sessions to families via a local voluntary organisation, for which there was a very good take up. A review of the scheme will be undertaken before summer 2023. 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. 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.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
					Although the winter months are over, the 'Welcoming Places', which are supported by the Watford Community Fund, will continue as they have proved to be very successful and are meeting a range of community needs. We have been advised by the government that Household Support Fund 4 will be available for the year 2023/24.
	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 started delivery of the ECO, which will be delivered through to the end of the scheme in March 2026, in the last quarter. Processes to progress the ECO directly with installers via our partners at National Energy Foundation were also established and our statement of intent 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. We are currently developing the proposals for the 2023/24 offers.
	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) sector link to make a greater economic contribution.	Green	↔	The Community Wealth Building plan, which will help our communities, both business and resident communities, benefit from the investment, 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. This will be reviewed by a business panel before being finalised.

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

Overview



Key achievements over this period

- The review and implementation of the new Tier 4 management level is complete. The new management level will report to Associate Directors and help strengthen the council's ability to deliver the Council Plan and key priorities.
- Following the Building Control and Planning Enforcement Shared Services go-live in November 2022, the Legal Shared Service go-live was achieved in February 2023. These Shared Services with St Albans City & District Council will ensure that we continue to deliver best value, efficient services and achieve better outcomes for our residents and customers.
- The new Voter ID was implemented for the May 2023 local elections, in line with the Elections Act 2022 requirements. The Elections Team ensured that all other requirements were met which ensured the delivery of a successful local election.
- A new set of external and internal KPIs have been agreed in consultation with stakeholders. The new KPIs reflect our ambition to improve our services and deliver value for money to our residents.
- The launch and implementation of the council's values and behavioural framework has commenced.

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 delivery of the council's Customer Experience Strategy 2022-26 is now underway. In Q4 the Staff Ambassadors Group reviewed and provided feedback on the updated Customer Care Service Standards, a document which sets out what our customers can expect from us and how we will deliver our services by adopting best practice and in line with the council's values. The Customer Care Service Standards will be adopted in June 2023. A new Digital Improvement Officer has been recruited to support the delivery and promotion of our digital and online services. Whilst retaining our face to face services, we are also exploring new delivery solutions, such as voice automated telephony, customer alerts, SMS and WhatsApp to make the most of new technology. Business cases will be developed to ensure all proposals are viable and can deliver the expected benefits.</p> <p>An update on progress is planned for Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2023.</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 (now part of our newly approved Environmental Strategy) so that it intrinsic to everything and ensures we reduce our carbon footprint in line with our green goals.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>↔</p>	<p>The 'Environmental Strategy - Addressing the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency' and Delivery Plan, approved by Cabinet in Q4, will build on the work already taking place across the council and support our ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030. The summary / public facing version of the Strategy was also finalised and published on the council website.</p> <p>The recent Watford Community Housing (WWCH) bid for energy funding to improve social housing was successful - £18m is available to insulate 430 Watford homes which have already been identified by WCH. A submission to Innovate UK to fund a 'people power' portal / website was made in 1 March 2023, however the council was unsuccessful in securing the fund.</p> <p>We are continuing to help facilitate energy schemes to help local residents and housing associations obtain funding. As at 31 March, Solar Together, an external provider has installed solar panels on 32 out of 95 residential properties in Watford. Once all installed, CO2 will be reduced by 243,360kg pa in Watford.</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>Following the implementation of the new senior management structure in 2022, the review and implementation of our next tier of management, known as Tier 4, is now complete and will further strengthen the organisation's ability to deliver our Council Plan and key priorities. An introductory face-to-face meeting with the Chief Executive, interim Head of HR and Tier 4 staff was held in April 2023. Further training is now planned to ensure our Tier 4 staff are supported in their new roles.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	81. Explore opportunities to share services with other councils where it delivers best value and better customer outcomes	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.	Green	↔	<p>The council remains committed to delivering best value and efficient services through the implementation of shared services with our neighbouring boroughs. The Legal Shared Service with St Albans City & District Council (SADC) go-live was achieved in February 2023. SADC, the lead authority, are now responsible for delivering the subsequent phases of the Legal Shared Service.</p> <p>The Building Control and Planning Enforcement Shared Services, also with SADC, went live on 1 November 2022. As the lead authority, Watford are now planning and scoping phase 2 of this project.</p> <p>The WBC and SADC Partnership Board, implemented as part of the shared services arrangements to oversee shared services, are meeting regularly.</p>
	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	↔	<p>In line with the secondary legislation for the Elections Act 2022, a national and local publicity campaign to raise awareness of the Voter ID requirement for the 2023 elections was undertaken. The national portal opened to accept applications for Voter Authority Certificates from those who have no valid ID. The remaining expected Election Integrity Programme secondary legislation is due to follow from 2023 to 2025 although all implementation dates remain subject to change.</p> <p>Our Elections team, with the support of colleagues in other services areas, have been working diligently on the 2023 local elections. This includes publishing the Notice of Election, delivering poll cards, booking venues, organising postal vote and checking IT connectivity, all of which ensured a successful local election on 4 May.</p>
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	↔	<p>The new four-year ICT Strategy approval is expected to take place through Q1/Q2 of 2023/24. The current IT Service Transformation programme which delivered improvements to our ICT and digital technology to meet the ongoing needs of the council and community will shortly be completed. This programme saw many improvements including enhancing the council's ability to work remotely, securely, collaboratively and support agile working. Once approved, the new ICT Strategy and associated Delivery Plan will ensure that we continue to deliver improvement to our ICT and digital technology.</p>
	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	↔	<p>The Q3 Council Performance Report (comprising of Council Plan, Organisational Development and Key Performance Indicators) was presented to Cabinet and to Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March 2023. We have undertaken consultation with stakeholders to agree a new set of external and internal KPIs, which have been signed off by the Elected Mayor, Corporate Management Board and Portfolio Holders and presented to Overview & Scrutiny Committee. These will help to drive continuous improvement across the council.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
					<p>The new draft Business Intelligence Strategy and Delivery Plan will be taken to Cabinet in June 2023 for final approval and delivery of the Strategy will commence soon after.</p> <p>The GIS infrastructure, which was used to create maps of polling stations for the Elections Team, was successfully upgraded with the support of our GIS Officer.</p>
	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.	Complete	↔	We have completed the review of our existing contract management approaches and published the final version of the Contract Management Handbook on the intranet. Relevant officers have been given the necessary training to ensure that the council continues to achieve the very best value from our contracts. Training guides are also available on the intranet to enable officers to refresh their training as and when required.
	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.	Complete	↔	The council's updated Procurement Strategy was approved by Cabinet in January 2023. The Strategy will make sure we continue to get best value from the market during this period of economic instability and includes a comprehensive proposal on social value and measurement which supports the delivery of our Sustainability Action Plan.
Focus and challenge how we manage our budget so it is concentrated on delivering our commitments and securing greater investment for Watford	87. Ensure our investment portfolio is ambitious and effectively managed to deliver maximum value to the council	We will ensure that we are actively managing our investment portfolio, including exploring new opportunities to protect our income, manage risk and maximise value over the longer term, so that we can continue to provide high quality services to our residents and businesses.	Green	↔	<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>The Croxley Park Business Plan for 2023/24 is now complete, gaining approval from Cabinet in March 2023. The GT Model tracks the financial performance of the Park compared to assumptions made at the time of the lease being taken in 2019. It was assumed in 2019 that the whole of Building 1 would have been let and income producing by now, rather than just a single floor, so the revenue being generated at present is not as was originally forecasted, due to the continuing availability of 60,000 ft in Building 1.</p>
	88. Assess the feasibility of a Growth Fund and its benefits for Watford	We will explore where our financial strength can support start-up and growth opportunities delivering a positive	Planning in progress	↔	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, which would have allowed a £1m fund to be set up to support businesses in the Hub, through

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	investment return for the council and renewed prosperity for the town.				a grants and loan scheme. However, since the council was unsuccessful in securing the LUF funding, a decision has been made to not progress the initiative due to the economic climate.
89. 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	↔	<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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement set out the referendum limit for council tax increases as 3% for 2023/24 and 2024/25.</p>
90. 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	↔	Having discounted the Vertical Farm proposal for sustainability reasons, we are continuing to assess other commercial opportunities that align with our ambition and values. Our Collaboration and Commercial Strategy, identifying further future opportunities, is in developed and will be taken to Cabinet for endorsement over the next period.
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.

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>93. 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. 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.</p>
	<p>94. 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>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. We have now commenced the full roll out and implementation of the values and behaviours, which will also include incorporating these into each stage of the employee lifecycle so that we can support the performance of our staff. As well as the Values and Behaviours, our new People Strategy, currently in development, will also determine how we support, develop and retain our staff.</p>
	<p>95. 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>Following extensive engagement with our staff to identify our corporate values and a soft launch in December 2022, we have now initiated a 12-month project to launch, implement and embed the council's Values and Behaviours Framework. The project will also incorporate the Values and Behaviours into the Performance Development Review process and develop a robust mechanism to enable us to regularly measure our values and behaviours.</p>
	<p>96. 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>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 values was completed in December 2022, and we initiated a 12-month project in April 2023 for the full roll out and implementation of the Values and Behavioural framework. Our new People Strategy, which will stretch to 2027, has been initially agreed and a delivery plan is currently being developed. Once approved by Cabinet, we will commence delivery against the delivery plan.</p>
	<p>97. 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>The council's Corporate Apprenticeship Scheme aims to support local people, particularly our younger residents, at the beginning of their working lives. Currently one apprentice is on the Scheme working with services across the council in order to gain the skills, knowledge and experience they need to help them start and progress in their career, whilst providing valuable public services to our customers. We are still awaiting confirmation on funding availability to recruit a further four apprentices. A decision is expected in May 2023.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG' Rating	Trend	Headline
	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	↔	<p>Following a review of the health and wellbeing initiatives for our staff, we have engaged with a new wellbeing solutions provider to deliver a refreshed approach. We will be delivering 12 lunch & learn sessions across the year in line with Health and Wellbeing events. In addition to this a 'thank you' session with a talk around neurodiversity will take place with our Health and Wellbeing champions.</p> <p>We will be conducting a health and wellbeing audit across the council in the form of a staff survey. The responses will be summarised into a report which will then guide our next steps.</p>