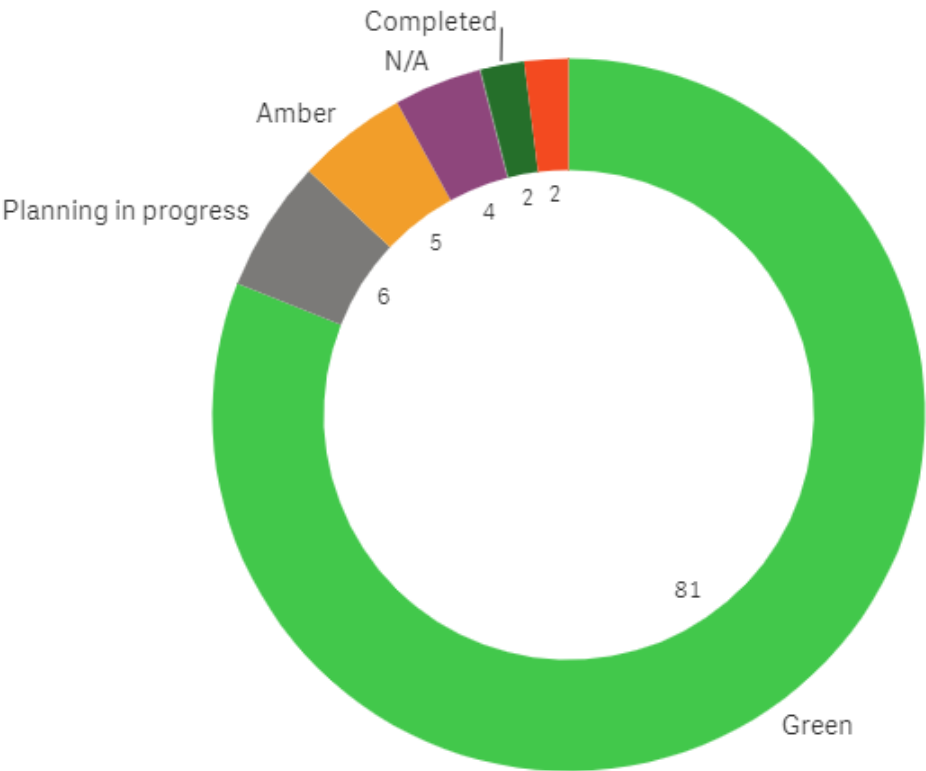




Delivery Plan Overview



Key

Green

Completed

Green

On track

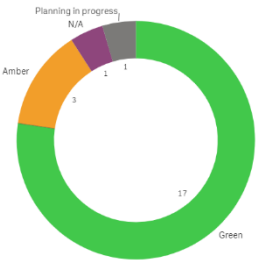
Amber

Potential Risks / Some uncertainty

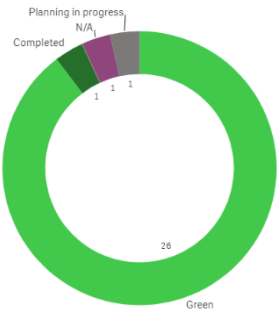
Red

Challenges

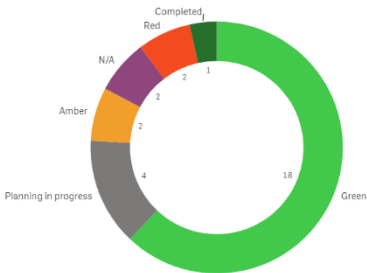
Council Plan Theme - A greener, brighter future



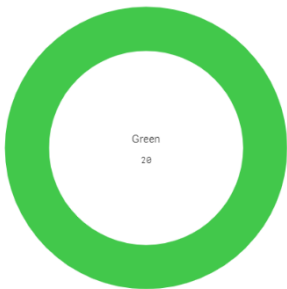
Council Plan Theme - A diverse, happy and healthy town



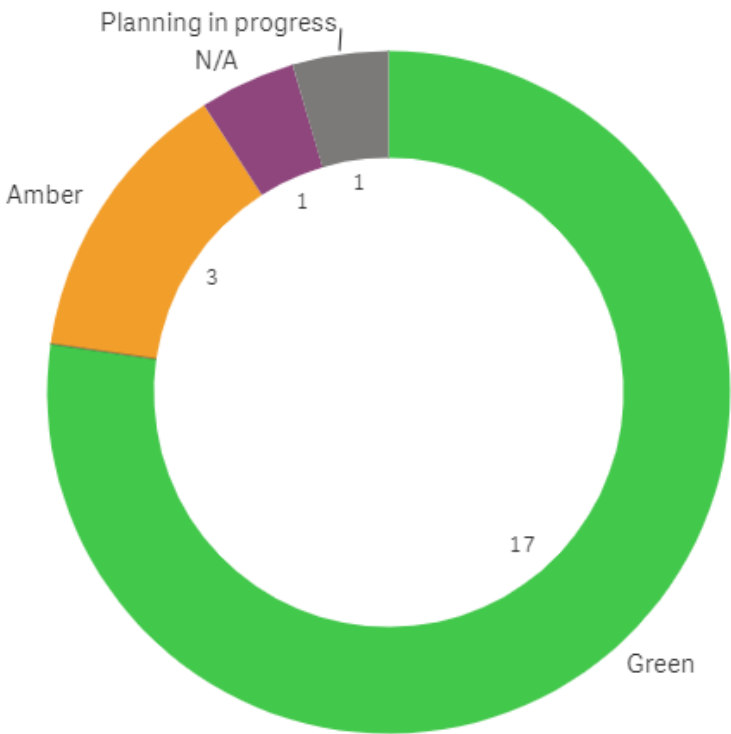
Council Plan Theme - An inspiring, thriving and creative town



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



Theme Overview: A greener, brighter future



Key achievements over this period

- The Watford Car club, which was launched in the previous quarter, has been extensively promoted by Enterprise Car Club with a dedicated web page established and offering incentives for Watford residents. Cars are available from a number of locations around the borough including in Sutton Road, Granville Road and Queens Road and further bays are being planned.
- A Green Loop scheme in Watford is being progressed through delivery of the Transforming Travel in Watford Strategy. The Green Loop route map has been approved and the design for the directional signposts for all highway elements of the route is now being progressed.
- We have promoted the Herts County Council December 2024 tree giveaway event for which over 5300 trees have been claimed.
- The majority of the 2024 Town Centre Spring Clean has been completed with the northern area of the Town Centre remaining, which will be completed in July 2024.

**THEME: A greener, brighter future**


Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
<b>Encourage people to make greener travel choices, reducing congestion and improving the health and wellbeing of the town.</b>	1. Enhance our successful bike-share scheme.	We will work with our partner authorities to extend the scheme beyond the borough boundaries into Three Rivers and Hertsmere and, subject to a business case, will commence work to reprocure the scheme upon the current contract expiry.	Green	↔	Our partnership with Beryl Bikes since 2020 has enabled our residents and visitors to travel around the town and enjoy thousands of journeys through the convenient and sustainable bike-share scheme. We have recently taken up the option to extend the contract with Beryl Bikes for a further 2 years and in doing so, we have successfully secured 30 new Segway e-bikes. The scheme has been extended into Bushey, where 4 out of 5 new bays are now live, providing 15 new e-bikes. We are working with Three Rivers District Council to agree the extension into Croxley Green.
	2. Investigate Town Centre transport solutions that work for Watford.	We will continue to investigate the potential for a low-carbon transport hub in Watford Town Centre, to encourage more use of public transport, reducing congestion and improving air quality for everyone.	Green	↔	The low-carbon transport hub remains a priority in our new council delivery plan and is being progressed through delivery of the Transforming Travel in Watford Strategy. We are consulting and engaging with the relevant stakeholders including Herts County Council (HCC) and the general public.
	3. Champion sustainable travel initiatives and greener vehicles options.	We will continue our roll out of electric charging points and investigate other initiatives, such as e-scooters and e-cargo bikes, working with partners such as the Cycle Hub to encourage more use of green transport.	Green	↔	Our electric charging point installations programme is progressing well with over 50% of the planned charging points, funded by On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) round 2, now complete and in use. The remaining sites are planned to be completed in the next quarter. Round 3, for which we have secured an additional £187,500 ORCS funding and which will be match funded by the delivery contractor, will commence after round 2.
	4. Continue the roll out of our Watford Car Club.	As usage builds, we will roll out more car club bays and continue to support the operator, to drive up usage and membership.	Green	↔	The Watford Car Club scheme was launched in the last quarter and since then our partner, Enterprise Car Club, have carried out extensive promotional activities, including setting up a dedicated Watford Car Club web page and offering incentives for Watford residents. Car club bays are provided in various locations around the borough including on Sutton Road, Granville Road and Queens Road and further bays are being planned (once usage on current cars reaches a certain level).
	5. Work with our partners to introduce a green loop around the borough.	We will work with Hertfordshire County Council and our cycling and walking communities to improve the cycling and walking network across our town, so more people choose to cycle and walk.	Green	↔	We are continuing to engage with key partners, including SPOKES Cycling Group and HCC to progress plans for a Green Loop scheme in Watford. The Green Loop route map was approved by the TTIW Programme Board in this quarter and we are now progressing the design for the directional signposts for all highway elements of the route. The scheme will improve the cycling and walking network across the town to enable more people to choose to cycle and walk by improving sign posting, wayfinding and road lining measures.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	6. 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, following the completion of initial feasibility work, to secure the best transport system for our town, offering greater choice for our residents, visitors and commuters to travel sustainably.	Planning in Progress	N/A	The options and feasibility study for the Watford to Croxley Link was completed in the last quarter. We are now working with HCC to scope the next phase of work.
	7. Work with partners to ensure we have a high-quality bus network that serves our community.	We will continue to actively engage with Hertfordshire County Council to promote the benefits of a strong and well-connected bus network and franchise model that serves our community, including to new developments, such as Riverwell and Watford Business Park.	Green	↔	There is ongoing engagement with the Transforming Travel in Watford programme and HCC as they review the approach to the Bus Service Improvement Plan, particularly in the context of a new Government. A members meeting is being scheduled.
Promote improvements to Watford’s biodiversity to enhance the range of habitats, plants and wildlife in the town.	8. Set out our commitments to improving Watford’s biodiversity.	We will develop our Green Spaces Strategy, promoting and enhancing biodiversity in line with our Environmental Strategy and Green Flag Management Plans.	Green	↔	The development of our new Green Spaces Strategy, which will also include the Play Strategy, is well underway. In this quarter we completed all site visits for green spaces and play areas and in the next quarter we will commence consultation and engagement with stakeholders.
	9. Rediscover the River Colne to enhance the river as a place for our community to enjoy.	We will build on our improvements to date in and around the River Colne, 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 programme is continuing to report amber as we work to progress the flood risk activity permit with the Environment Agency (EA) for the in river works at the northern sites. However some progress has been made as the EA have confirmed they will accept a permit request for the Waterfields site, which will increase our ability to complete in river works this autumn / winter. The Timberlake volunteer works are also progressing well with 2 of 3 berms (raised barriers within the river channel) now completed.</p> <p>Continuing high water levels have been impacting our volunteers’ ability to complete water quality monitoring since last year. It is expected that monitoring will recommence from July 2024 and we will increase the activities to make up in part for lost time.</p> <p>We held 3 Junior River Champion sessions and attended the Big Green Week Market Festival in June to represent the programme.</p> <p>Through the Tales of the River project we held a number of wildplay events during the May half term school holiday with a total of 51 attendees. In addition we held 7 travelling tales sessions at Bushey Manor School and Guideposts Watford.</p> <p>The LGA Annual Conference Innovation Zone in which we were successful for showcasing the Tales of the River project, has been rescheduled due to the general election.</p>
	10. Celebrate and enhance Whippendell Woods as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.	We will protect Whippendell Woods, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), in order to preserve its ‘favourable condition’ status by delivering the Forestry Commission Management Plan and relocating the existing cycle trail.	Amber	↔	To preserve the SSSI status of Whippendell Woods we are continuing to work with Bike Park Chilterns, a Community Interest Company, to firm up the new location for the unofficial mountain bike trail that had been in use in the woodlands. The Heads of Terms for the new site has been agreed with the Golf Club. We will initiate the project for the delivery of the bike trail in the next quarter. Tree felling at the site which was completed in the last quarter is

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
					expected to generate some income from the timber sale which will go towards the costs of delivery.  The activity is reporting amber as we continue to firm up the plan and confirm funding for delivery.
	11. Continue to extend our green canopy.	We will work with Hertfordshire County Council to provide a further 6,000 trees to be given away to residents and continue our tree-planting programme, seeking further external funding.	Green	↔	Having successfully planted 20k trees well in advance of our target date of 2026, we are now reviewing the benefits. We have calculated the carbon offsetting for tree planting for the 2023/24 season. We implemented a 3-year watering regime in 2022, a move from 1 year, in order to increase tree survival rates during extreme temperatures. Initial data suggests that no trees have been lost as a result of lack of water or drought, therefore meeting the expected benefits. We will continue to monitor the benefits. We have also committed to tackling ash dieback and are updating our plan for review. We have promoted the Herts County Council December 2024 tree giveaway event for which over 5300 trees have been claimed.
	12. Promote healthy and sustainable gardening across the town.	We will continue compost giveaways, using our green waste recycling to bring back the organic material as free, nutrient-rich compost for Watford residents to grow plants and vegetables.	Green	↔	We are working with our partner Veolia to continue our annual compost giveaways. The last compost giveaway session, which was held in May 2024, was well attended with over 80 residents, the Mayor and several members. As well as free compost, residents were also given wildflower seeds which were well received.
Work alongside our community and businesses to find the right ways to reach net carbon neutral, seeking not just to learn from others, but to explore innovative solutions that will work for Watford.	13. Implement our Environmental Strategy.	We will work with our community and businesses to implement our Environmental Strategy, which will set out how together we can contribute to our target to be a net carbon neutral borough by 2030.	Green	↔	We formalised delivery of the Environment Strategy and set out how we will achieve our ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030 last year. Sustainability is at the heart of everything we do, and is woven through other council projects, programmes, schemes and initiatives such as the Rediscovering River Colne, Town Hall Quarter and Transforming Travel in Watford Programmes. In this quarter we held successful Great Big Green Week events.  Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Environment Strategy is included within Appendix C3.
	14. Ensure the council's own buildings are as energy efficient as possible within available resources.	We will bid for and utilise any external funding to improve the energy performance of properties within our portfolio.	Green	↔	Having been successful in securing £900k PSDS funding to improve the energy performance of 3 council community buildings, we have initiated a project to start delivery of the necessary works. The outline programme has been created and a procurement strategy approved. Engagement has taken place with stakeholders, and we have instructed surveyors to undertake condition surveys, so any essential maintenance work can be undertaken at the same time.

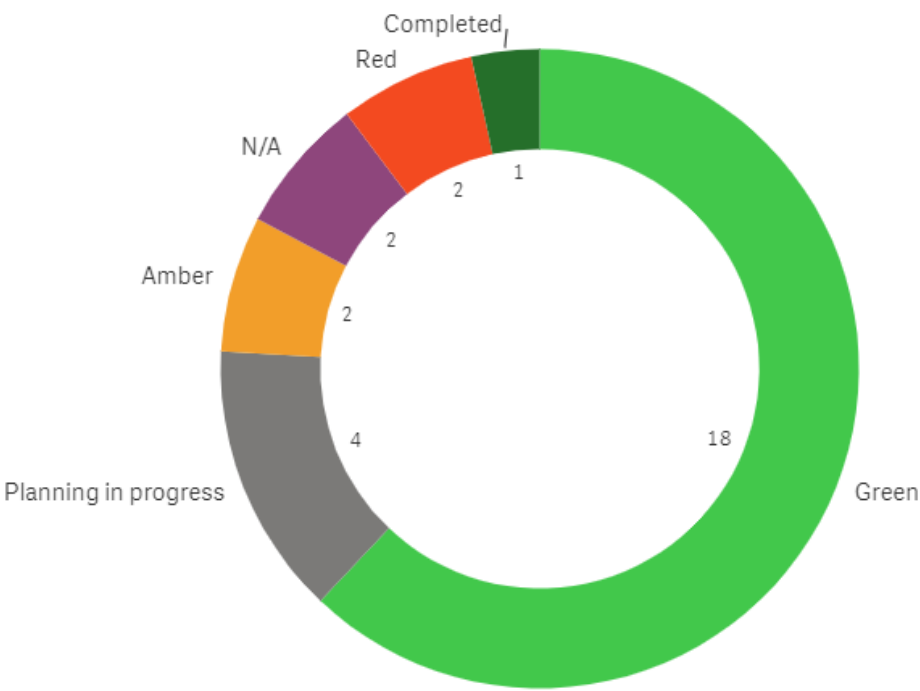


Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	15. Explore opportunities for improving the sustainability of the council’s fleet of vehicles.	We will produce our new Fleet Strategy and work with our service providers to ensure that, as our existing fleet is replaced, new vehicles are as sustainable as possible.	Green	↔	Subject to the availability of funding, we will be commissioning a feasibility study of fleet electrification. The key milestones dates are yet to be confirmed.
	16. Reduce our impact on the environment by introducing fortnightly recycling.	We will learn from best practice to build on the success of our waste and recycling scheme and, subject to Cabinet approval, will move to fortnightly recycling and implementing food waste to flat collections.	Green	↔	Following the initial decision to move to fortnightly recycling by Cabinet, the decision was subsequently ‘called-in’ and debated at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 July 2024. The outcome of the debate, voted on by Overview and Scrutiny Committee members, was to ratify the original Cabinet decision and roll out is now underway with communications sent to all households. These changes are expected to be implemented by 21 October 2024 for low-rise properties.
Encourage residents and businesses to recycle more, reusing materials and reducing waste and what they throw away.	17. Increase how much our residents recycle whether at home, work or school as well as reducing the waste we throw away as a town.	We will do this by implementing new government regulations on ‘Simpler Recycling’: - Rolling our food waste and recycling collections to qualifying schedule 2 premises by March 2025. - Rolling out food waste collections to all residents living in flats by March 2026. - Supporting businesses and partners (including our environmental services provider and leisure services provider) to understand the changes required and to deliver the next step change in reducing waste and increasing recycling, particularly through campaigns and changing behaviours.	Green	↔	We have started engagement with key stakeholders on the new regulations. An initial kick off meeting was held with the council’s Economic Development Team, Watford BID and Sustainability and Commissioning Service. The second meeting will take place in the next quarter with key stakeholders including Atria. We will take forward discussions for food waste and schedule 2 projects with Veolia in the autumn after implementation of fortnightly recycling.
	18. Promote Community Waste Days organised by Members.	We will promote Community Waste Days, funded by our neighbourhood locality funds and organised by local ward councillors, to ensure residents are aware of the opportunities to dispose of waste safely and sustainably.	Green	↔	Community Waste Days will continue to be promoted as and when they are arranged by local councillors.
	19. Continue to deliver our annual deep clean programme.	We will work with our partners to ensure we complete the annual spring clean of the Town Centre and deliver our annual deep clean programme across the streets of Watford.	Amber	↔	We have completed the majority of the 2024 Town Centre Spring Clean with just the northern area, which requires use of a mechanical sweeper, outstanding. This is expected to be completed by July 2024. The Deep Clean programme for 2023/24 was successfully completed in March 2024 and we are aiming to complete the programme for 2024/25 by March 2025.
	20. Provide opportunities for residents to reuse and recycle.	We will continue our programme of clothes swap events, providing our residents with an opportunity to reuse pre-loved clothes, reducing their environmental impact.	Green	↔	We held a successful clothes swap event in June in collaboration with Watford Palace Theatre which was attended by around 25 people.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	21. Tackle fly-tipping and encourage responsible waste disposal, to reduce the impact on our environment and residents.	We will continue our programme of action, enforcement and education, ensuring that fly-tips are cleared as quickly as possible and that, where possible, perpetrators are dealt with through formal legal action. We will work with businesses to promote responsible waste management and will take action where businesses fail in their duty of care.	Green		The council is committed to take enforcement action against offenders of fly-tipping where evidence is found. We regularly work with businesses to ensure that they have suitable waste contracts in place to manage their waste responsibly. The fees for littering, duty of care residential and fly tipping offences were increased significantly from 1 April 2024 in order to deter offending, with options to pay lower fees for early payments. For example, the full fixed penalty notice for littering is £250, however this is reduced to £75 for early payment.
	22. Continue to deliver high-quality waste, recycling and parks services.	We will commence reviewing options for the future delivery of our waste, recycling, parks and streets services to ensure that we are able to continue delivering high-quality and good-value services to our residents.	Not started yet	N/A	Our partnership with Veolia is expected to continue until 2028 so whilst this activity will commence during the life of this Delivery Plan, the focus at the current time remains on the implementation of fortnightly recycling.



Theme Overview: An inspiring, thriving and creative town



Key achievements over this period

- A soft launch of the Watford Business Pledge took place at the Business Connects event in July. The Watford Business Pledge aims to create a collaborative environment where businesses can learn from one another about key areas of social responsibility, including local employment, local supply chains, good business practices, environmental sustainability, and community support.
- The Watford Market Late events for 2024/25 are back. The events, the first of which was held in May 2024, are a great opportunity for our residents and visitors to come together and enjoy the outdoor space of the market, the food stalls and the local bar.
- The first phase of the local neighbourhood shopping parade improvements work will commence in the next quarter at Whippendell Road Parade. The proposed improvements are welcomed by businesses in the parade.
- The draft Nominations Policy is complete and we have developed a timetable and plan for consultation, which will begin in early September 2024 after the summer holidays.

THEME: An inspiring, thriving and creative town

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
Position Watford as a town where start-ups and business innovation can thrive, supported by strong local skills, generating a range of job opportunities, including for our young people.	23. Deliver our Innovation and Incubation Hub.	Following confirmation of Levelling Up Funding, we will provide a new Innovation and Incubation Hub, which will support start-up businesses, give our key sectors a boost and draw businesses into the borough.	Red	↔	The Levelling Up funding, which was previously confirmed to support delivery of the Innovation and Incubation Hub (IIH), is now subject to further review by the newly elected government. Until the position is confirmed by the government members have agreed to not proceed with the planned IIH feasibility work. However, the council continues to engage at all levels of government to secure the funds.
	24. Provide opportunities for our local businesses to maximise their economic potential.	We will maintain signposting for businesses and improve information sharing, including continuing to hold our popular business events.	Green	↔	Our Economic Development team continue to act as a point of contact for businesses across the borough, providing information and support. Our next Business Connects event will be held in July 2024 at the Clarendon Works.
	25. Make the most of our UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation.	We will use our UK Shared Prosperity Fund to create a climate to support our local economy and boost our ambitions for prosperity, jobs and skills, delivering schemes such as Growth Springboard, Small Grants Access, Green Retrofits and the Get Enterprising Programme.	Green	↔	All live revenue UKSPF-funded projects have been procured and are underway. Developer Skills and Employment Plans project will be procured by the end of July. £140k capital funding has been reprofiled towards the delivery of St Marys Churchyard improvement project.
	26. Help our communities access opportunities resulting from Watford’s economic success.	We will encourage businesses to make the Watford Business Pledge and we will secure opportunities from new developments for local residents and businesses to drive social value	Green	↔	A soft launch of the Watford Business Pledge will take place at the Business Connects event in July. We have identified some early adopters. The Watford Business Pledge aims to create a collaborative environment where businesses can learn from one another about key areas of social responsibility, including local employment, local supply chains, good business practices, environmental sustainability and community support.
	27. Support our residents to develop their skills for employment.	We will work closely with West Herts College to deliver the Watford Skills and Employment Plan, supporting our local residents and young people, to boost the Watford economy.	Complete	↔	The delivery of the Watford Skills and Employment Plan is now complete and any remaining activities will be delivered in business as usual and monitored by the One Watford for Business group which is chaired by the Elected Mayor
Tell Watford’s story as a great location for businesses, where they can invest, grow and succeed as part of our	28. Promote what makes Watford a great location for business, connecting to building pride in the town and raising our profile as a great place to visit.	We will regularly attend UKREiF and the Hertfordshire Growth Board and work with partners to market our town through the promotion of our place narrative and brand. We will highlight projects and areas for investment, sharing what is great about Watford, attracting more visitors and supporting our local economy, to put the town on the map as a great place for business.	Green	↔	The council attended UKREiif in May 2024 to promote Watford as a great place to do business, collaborating with other Hertfordshire authorities whilst using the Watford Actually Place Brand to make the maximum impact. The event provided the opportunity for senior council officers to meet with key figures from the infrastructure and real estate industries. A review into benefit realisation is underway which will form the basis of the planning meetings for the 2025 UKREiif which have commenced in this quarter.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
<b>flourishing business community, and for networks that connect people.</b>	29. Ensure there is a strong voice for local businesses by fostering effective business networks and forums.	We will continue to hold our popular Watford Business Connect events to engage with Watford businesses and encourage an empowered business community that can be a strong voice for the town, make the most of opportunities and encourage vibrant networks and forums that bring businesses together in a meaningful and effective way.	Green	↔	The next Business Connects event will be held in July 2024 at the Clarendon Works, where a soft launch of the Watford Business Pledge will take place. The free events provide an excellent opportunity for business professionals to get together and network.
	30. Engage with the wider economic, business and planning partnerships to make sure Watford's interests are represented.	We will work closely with our partners in Hertfordshire Futures, Herts Growth Board, the county-wide Screen Industries Working Group and the South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan to shape and influence wider discussions on our economic role and impact.	Green	↔	Teams across the organisation continue to work closely with partners, including Hertfordshire Futures (the new name for Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership) who are producing a new economic strategy for the County. We are strengthening links with Herts Growth Board with the Elected Mayor recently confirmed as the new vice chair of Board.
<b>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.</b>	31. Progress our transformational plans for the Town Hall Quarter.	Subject to Homes England funding, we will explore opportunities to revitalise the north end of Watford High Street for our residents to enjoy, as well as establishing a new area in the town for culture to flourish.	Green	↔	Whilst Homes England are not progressing our full proposal at this stage, we are working with them to support our application for when the funding window re-opens. In the meantime we are exploring other options and engaging with HCC to complete the highways re-risking works and engaging with the NHS to progress a business plan for a new health hub.
	32. Launch a refurbished Colosseum with a new, global operator.	We will complete our refurbishment of Watford Colosseum, so it remains a first-class entertainment venue, with a world-class operator bringing an exciting and diverse range of performances and creative events to boost the town's cultural offer and local economy.	Amber	↔	We are continuing the Colosseum refurbishment works, having instructed the full removal of asbestos from the auditorium and the full replacement of the fire alarm in this quarter. We are also working with the contractor to progress other works such as the external works, timber panel repairs and new bars. We continue to engage with AEG, the new Colosseum operator, to agree a handover date. The project RAG remains amber due to the ongoing risk inherent with refurbishing a heritage building
	33. Complete the refurbishment of the Town Hall, repurposing its use and opening it up to our community.	We will finish the refurbishment of Watford Town Hall whilst protecting its heritage, providing a new home for our museum, space for the community and a refreshed customer space for those accessing face-to-face council services.	Red	↔	The Town Hall refurbishment is continuing and we are currently reviewing plans with our contractor on how best to proceed given the current uncertainty relating to Levelling Up Funding. The Levelling Up Funding, which had previously been confirmed and would have funded the delivery of the IIH, is now unknown due to the recent change in government. However senior officers are engaged with relevant parties including our new Labour MP and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Civil Servants to highlight the benefit of the LUF investment.
	34. 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.	Not started yet	N/A	The Communications team is currently working through campaign delivery options with Watford Town Centre BID. In order to maximise coverage of this campaign and use resources most effectively, we are exploring how we can split the campaign, with the BID leading on town centre businesses and content to promote them across various channels, and WBC Communications identifying businesses outside of the town centre. We are also looking at weaving in the BID Gift Card to

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
					communications messages, which is accepted by 149 businesses across the town centre. The aim is to run the campaign under one joint visual identity, featuring both organisations' logos. We are also considering how best to apply the Watford Actually branding and narrative.
	35. Promote Watford Market and our offer as a market town.	We will ensure that the new market operator will support our local traders by continuing to run our popular 'Market Late' events and showcasing the great range of food and drink stalls in the market.	Green	↔	We are continuing to deliver our successful Market Late events with three planned for this year. The first event held in May was the most successful one yet with over 800 people in attendance. The next events will be held in quarters 2 and 3. The events are a great opportunity for our residents and visitors to come together and enjoy the outdoor space of the market, the food stalls and the local bar.
	36. Adopt a strategic approach to our Town Centre to support key parts of the local economy.	Aimed at enhancing the vibrancy of the Town Centre, we will develop a new strategy and associated policies whilst working with Watford BID, Visit Herts and industry leaders, such as Warner Bros and AEG, to support our Town Centre, night-time and visitor economy and positively impact the community and local businesses.	Planning in Progress	N/A	An inception meeting to scope the project has been arranged in July 2024.
	37. Support our community of Town Centre businesses in determining their chosen direction for the future of Watford BID in any new term it secures.	We will work with Watford BID to manage the next ballot, so our businesses continue to have a strong voice in their future.	Not started yet	N/A	The current BID term ends in March 2026 and the BID have not yet confirmed the date of the next ballot. However, the council continues to work closely with the BID.
	38. Enhance our district parades.	We will roll out an annual programme of local neighbourhood shopping parade improvements to enhance their appeal, commencing with Whippendell Road, to drive footfall and support local neighbourhoods.	Green	↔	The programme of local neighbourhood shopping parade improvements will be delivered over several phases. In the first phase we will be focussing on delivering improvements to Whippendell Road Parade. The road space booking application has been approved by HCC and the necessary works are expected to take place from July to September 2024. Engagement with business owners were undertaken in June and the vast majority of businesses welcome the proposed improvements. An initial review of The Brow shopping parade has concluded that only minor improvements are needed.
Ensure the right mix of facilities, services and transport links, as part of new developments to create successful, well designed new communities.	39. Lobby partners to move forward plans for developing the Watford Junction Quarter.	We will continue to work with the Department for Transport, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Network Rail, Homes England, Herts Growth Board and other landowners with an ambition to create a new sustainable neighbourhood that successfully combines new homes, new station facilities, jobs, public spaces 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 on the redevelopment of the area. The council is seeking a next meeting with Network Rail to progress discussions on a potential development strategy. We have commenced a regeneration benefits workstream which has formed part of a strategic initiatives briefing to the newly formed Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to promote the benefits of investment in Watford

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	40. 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, community facilities and public services, maintaining an income source for the council to support its wider priorities. We will continue to work closely with West Herts Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust to realise South West Hertfordshire's ambition to deliver a new hospital in Watford, in relation to their planning application and health and care integration, to ensure that any new hospital is sustainable for the future.	Green	↔	The joint venture partnership is continuing to manage the development of the Riverwell scheme. Following the appointed contractor for Avenues Phase one going into administration, delivery is behind schedule and above budget, however, the joint venture has put remedial measures in place. An amendment to the planning application for phase 2 has been submitted. We are also preparing the planning application for Town Square and hope to submit this in the next quarter. We have also selected a contractor for the Industrial Zone N and are planning the construction stage. Discussions with HCC in relation to a school site is to be continued.
	41. Achieve the right long-term balance of development, services and transport links for our town.	We will continue to deliver our award-winning Local Plan for Watford which will shape how the town will develop sustainably over the next 30 years. We will ensure that our residents understand how our Local Plan is making a difference by producing our Authority Monitoring Report on an annual basis. Towards the end of this Delivery Plan, we will start to review our Local Plan.	Green	↔	We are continuing to deliver our Local Plan through our business-as-usual activities. Annual Monitoring reports are produced and published at the end of each calendar year to demonstrate our performance. The Local Plan review will require scoping and agreement in 2025.
	42. Signpost our residents to Hertfordshire County Council to address their concerns about potholes on our roads.	We will ensure that we provide clear information to our residents on how to report potholes to Hertfordshire County Council and will provide up-to-date information on their performance in resolving issues on our roads.	Planning in Progress	N/A	We are in the process of scoping the data available from HCC and how this objective can be addressed.
	43. Ensure that we have an effective planning enforcement and building control service.	We will continue to embed our shared service with St Albans City and District Council to ensure that we have a responsive and proportionate planning enforcement and building control service.	Green	↔	The shared services model provides opportunities for us to review and enhance our processes, automate and digitise processes where relevant and reduce costs and increase resilience. The Planning Enforcement and Building Control shared services with St Albans is progressing to plan as we continue to refine the case management process. The training for technical leads on using the relevant systems is now complete.
	44. Explore opportunities for the delivery of Croxley View 3 and 4.	We will work with Watford Community Housing Trust to explore options for a sustainable housing solution for this location.	Green	↔	A proposal to sell land to Watford Community Housing so that they can deliver a 100% affordable housing scheme will be taken to Cabinet at the end of September 2024.

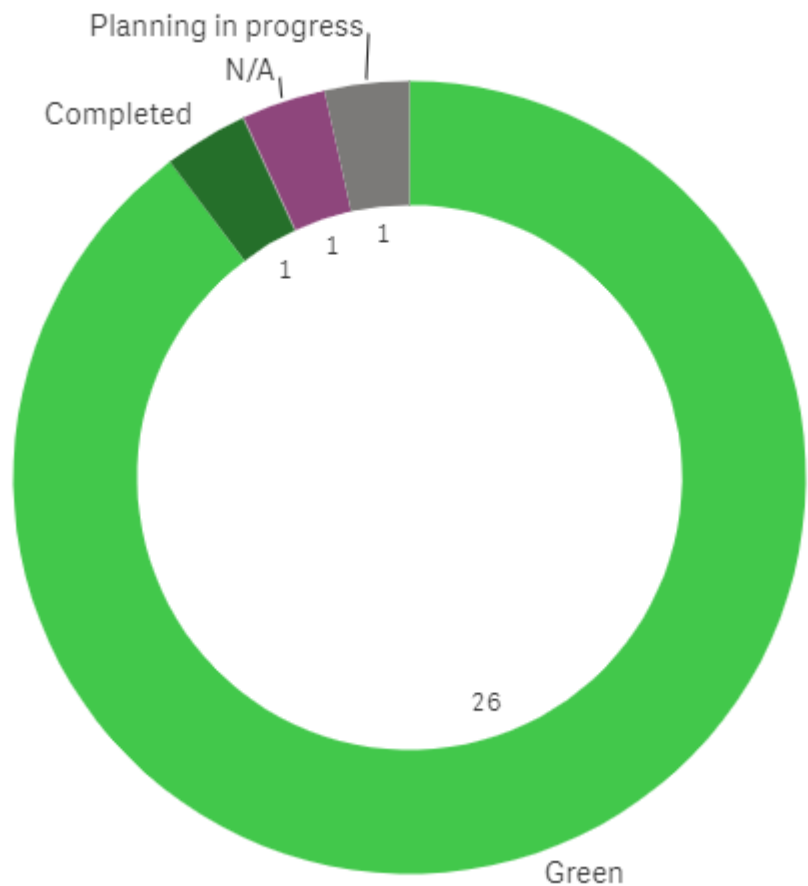


Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	45. Embed our Community Asset Strategy.	We will ensure that our recently approved Community Asset Strategy will continue to guide our management of local buildings, ensuring that we have a clear understanding of tenant and council responsibilities.	Green	↔	We are now operating under the new strategy upon lease renewal events. We are undertaking a review of the current carbon impact of our estate and identifying potential improvements with payback periods to formulate proposals for external funding requests to help meet zero carbon targets.
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.	46. 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.	Amber	↔	Preparing a new Housing Strategy for Watford has been delayed due to prioritising other work, however, we are now mobilising to undertake the activity.
	47. Review and refresh our Nominations Policy.	We will deliver a new Nominations Policy for Watford to help our residents apply to our housing register, and understand how we manage the register, your choice about where you live, how we assess applications and allocate properties.	Green	↔	The draft Nominations Policy is complete and we have developed a timetable and plan for consultation, which will begin in early September 2024 after the summer holidays.
	48. 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	↔	Housing and Development Control continue to try to maximise the delivery of social rented homes through planning gains, with 23 Social Rented units due to complete in 24/25. Approval for commuted sum spend to deliver a further five social rented units at Sydney Road was approved by Council in July. We will be developing a strategy for how we further spend commuted sums and the capital released from the sale of assets, to deliver additional homes. Housing and Property & Asset Management Teams are continuing to explore opportunities to deliver social rented homes on council land e.g. Croxley View Phase 3.
	49. Develop planning guidance to ensure developers provide new homes that support local needs.	We will develop our Design Code and 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.	Planning in Progress	N/A	We are in the process of initiating this project, as we were waiting to understand government policy on this matter.
	50. 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.	Green	↔	The review and refresh of our Private Sector Renewal policy will be informed by our stock condition survey which has now been completed. The information provided as part of the survey have been presented to officers across the housing and wellbeing service.
	51. Engage with landlords and tenants.	We will set up and run a new Watford Landlords' Forum to engage with private sector landlords to support their businesses and improve the quality	Planning in Progress	N/A	This activity will be developed in the next quarter following the recruitment of a Resettlement Manager who will lead this activity.



Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
		and supply within the town. We will ensure that our landlords are aware of their responsibilities by producing information and education to let responsibly and to give assurance to those renting in the town. We will ensure that private rented tenants and temporary accommodation tenants are provided with information and education about their responsibilities and rights.			

Theme Overview: A diverse, happy and healthy town



Key achievements over this period

- The Public Toilet Block and Changing Places Toilet construction was completed in this quarter, providing fully accessible facilities for all park users and visitors at Woodside Playing Fields.
- Sports England Funding has been successfully secured for the installation of solar panels at Woodside Leisure Centre which will not only ease the pressure on utility costs but also contribute towards our ambition to reduce carbon emissions.
- We completed and submitted the round 2 National Lottery Heritage Funding application which if successful will, alongside Levelling Up funding, support the delivery of the museum in the refurbished Town Hall.
- In June we delivered a Safer Streets campaign, Op Hotspot continues to be delivered and Op Sceptre is underway, which will include delivery of a knife crime seminar in July 2024. For the first time this year shop theft is showing a consistent decline from 12%+ at the start of the year to -5%.
- A community round-table event to discuss specific challenges with our key community groups has been held, resulting in joint working groups to deliver against priorities which include digital inclusion.

THEME: A diverse, happy and healthy town

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
Continue our investment in our outstanding parks and open spaces so they remain the best in the area.	52. Continue our programme of investment and improvements in Watford’s parks.	Through the development of our Green Spaces Strategy, we will identify improvements for our parks to ensure that they remain attractive, whilst introducing improvements to paths, our cemetery, waste and recycling provision and installing new water fountains.	Green	↔	We are working with an external consultant to develop our Green Spaces Strategy, which will also incorporate the Play Strategy. In this quarter we completed site visits of all green spaces and play areas, and undertook consultations with internal officers. In the next quarter we will launch our programme of external consultations.
	53. Enhance our public facilities at Woodside Playing Fields.	We will invest in the facilities at Woodside Playing Fields, providing a new toilet block for visitors and users of the park.	Complete	N/A	The Public Toilet Block and Changing Places Toilet construction was completed in this quarter, providing fully accessible facilities for all park users and visitors.
	54. Work in partnership with our leisure operator to promote and improve our leisure facilities.	We will deliver energy efficiency improvements to Woodside Leisure Centre and explore opportunities to improve facilities at Central and Woodside Leisure Centres to support our community to be active.	Green	↔	We have successfully secured Sports England funding to deliver energy efficiency improvements to Woodside Leisure Centre. We are working with our Leisure partner to explore and implement the most feasible option for the installation of solar panels. As well as easing the pressure on the cost of utilities, the installation of solar panels will also contribute towards our ambition to reduce carbon emissions
Celebrate and promote our town’s rich and diverse culture and creativity.	55. Open our new and exciting museum in a refurbished Town Hall.	Subject to a successful award of Heritage Lottery Funding, we will open a new, modern, inspiring Heritage and Museum service based in our historic Town Hall, working with Warner Bros and Watford FC to ensure that it engages and educates our residents and visitors by telling the story of our town and its rich and diverse history.	Green	↔	The plans to create the new museum service, which will be based at the Town Hall, have continued over this period. In this quarter we completed and submitted the round 2 National Lottery Heritage Funding application which, if successful, will fund the delivery of the museum. A procurement strategy has been created for review and sign off by the Project Board in the next quarter.
	56. Enhance the town’s creative and cultural appeal through a new Public Art Strategy.	We will develop a Public Art Strategy for Watford, to explore how art in all its forms, can animate and enhance our public spaces, building on Watford’s strong sense of identity and creativity.	Green	↔	Our Public Art Strategy will be a key tool in enhancing our public spaces and attracting visitors to our High Street. Pilots are in progress with two community projects which are currently on track for delivery by quarter 3.
	57. Commemorate the town’s links to our past.	We will introduce a Blue Plaque scheme, which will commemorate links between our historic buildings and famous residents, events or former buildings.	Green	↔	This scheme builds 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. This activity will also link into the new Heritage and Museum service, with options to explore including virtual blue plaques.
	58. Enhance our town’s historical features and character.	We will deliver on the key commitments within our Conservation Area Management Plan to enhance and protect the historical features and character of different areas across the town.	Green	↔	We have agreed the project plan for delivery of the Conservation Area Management Plan. In the next two quarters we will focus on updating the Watford Conservation Area website as well as commence drafting the Conservation Area guidance.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	59. Support the rich and diverse culture across our town.	We will update our Cultural Strategy to ensure that we continue to support creative and cultural organisations across Watford.	Green	↔	There have been initial discussions with both the Watford Cultural Leaders Group and the One Watford Place Board to kick-off the process of updating the Cultural Strategy.
Promote our welcoming and respectful town.	60. Ensure everyone feels welcome, included and safe in Watford.	We will ensure a welcoming and safe environment in Watford by collaborating closely with partners within the Community Safety Partnership. Additionally, we will seek opportunities to secure funding that supports the achievement of the partnership's objectives, focusing on tackling acquisitive crime, promoting community wellbeing, and providing reassurance and information to residents.	Green	↔	<p>We are continuing to promote opportunities for a safer environment in Watford. In June we delivered a Safer Streets campaign, Op Hotspot continues to be delivered and Op Sceptre is underway, which will include delivery of a knife crime seminar in July 2024.</p> <p>For the first time this year shop theft is showing a consistent decline from 12%+ at the start of the year to -5%.</p> <p>WBC won the Beacon Victim Support Award for Outstanding Partnership in relation to the ASB Care Review and was nominated for the Outstanding Victims Advocate in Statutory Services.</p>
	61. Continue delivering on our commitment to the wellbeing of women and girls.	Following our successful 'White Ribbon' accreditation, we will continue to tackle violence against women and girls and continue our productive engagement with our One Watford Place Board, which is bringing together all strands of this work across the town.	Green	↔	<p>Over the summer, we will conduct a comprehensive review of the White Ribbon Initiative, reflecting on the journey so far and evaluating our achievements and challenges. This review aims to assess the impact of our efforts in promoting awareness and fostering change within the community.</p> <p>In addition to this retrospective analysis, we will actively explore and identify new opportunities to enhance our annual White Ribbon event scheduled for November 2024. Our goal is to create an even more impactful and engaging event, building on past successes and incorporating fresh ideas to further advance our mission.</p> <p>Through this dual approach of reflection and forward planning, we aim to strengthen our commitment to ending violence and fostering a culture of respect and equality. We invite all stakeholders to contribute their insights and ideas as we work together towards a more effective and inclusive initiative.</p>
	62. Work to keep our town clean and tidy.	We will deliver our Litter Strategy to ensure we meet our key performance indicators in relation to litter.	Green	↔	<p>We are delivering a number of activities to keep our borough clean and tidy. This includes coordinating high speed road cleansing with HCC and carrying out regular litter bin audits to map and monitor the numbers, types, conditions and suitability of litter bin locations.</p> <p>We have installed smart bins in Cassiobury Park using funding from the WRAP Litter Binrastructure Grant funding and we are considering installing 'Recycling on the Go' bins, which are litter bins for recycling, at Oxhey Activity Park and Woodside Community Sports Village.</p> <p>We have been awarded £8k from Keep Britain Tidy's Chewing Gum Task Force grant which will enable chewing gum removal along St Albans Road and display prevention signage.</p> <p>We are undertaking quarterly NI 195 surveys of environmental cleanliness.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
					We have produced an annual social media planner to share positive stories generated from campaign work engagement, call to action and raise awareness to create environmental behavioural change.
	63. Develop a range of information and signposting for residents 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	N/A	Scoping of the 'Welcome to Watford' resource is now underway with services from across the council feeding into requirements. Over the next period, the approach to development, including engagement, will be discussed with Portfolio Holders so that development can commenced in Q3.
Listen to and hear the diverse voices of Watford.	64. Work with the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for our residents.	We will continue to monitor our newly approved Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework and bring community groups together, alongside the implementation of a Community of Practice.	Green	↔	Following the development of our Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework, which was approved by Cabinet, we have now issued SLAs to our community partners for the delivery of services. We will monitor progress and KPIs through quarterly reports.
	65. 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, as well as listening to our residents through our newly created People's Panel and exploring options to support veterans across the town.	Green	↔	We have invited guest speakers from Hertfordshire Constabulary and Trading Standards to our next senior's forum to raise awareness on scams that are targeted towards older residents. W3RT will be providing advice on wellbeing and coordinating chair based for those who would like to participate. Communities 1st will be attending the event to encourage sign up for the shopper bus. We hosted an event to commemorate the D-Day 80th anniversary beacon lighting at Watford Museum on 6 June 2024.
	66. Ensure our community buildings benefit local residents.	We will work with our community tenants to ensure our community buildings are well maintained, and that our buildings maximise the benefits for local people.	Green	↔	We are progressing the decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures for the three community buildings that were awarded PSDS funding through our CAR Refurbishment programme. A procurement strategy has been developed and approved, an outline programme has been created and a consultant appointed to undertake condition surveys. Our consultant is also reviewing existing building and internal surveys. The scope of the CAR programme has been extended to include the creation of Asset Management Plans for each building. We regularly check on compliance and track any issues with tenant obligations.
	67. Deliver our Equality and Diversity Policy so it underpins what we do and how we engage with our community.	We will review our collectively owned delivery plan via a newly established Corporate Equalities Working Group to align planned delivery to available resource.	Green	↔	A Corporate Equalities Working Group has been established to progress delivery of the Equality and Diversity Policy. Whilst the group will be meeting in the next quarter to firm up delivery and agree tangible outputs, a number of activities are in progress which will support the policy. This includes implementation of the Behavioural Framework and delivery of health and wellbeing workshops to raise awareness. In addition, an EDI session was held in conjunction with WBC and TRDC to support employees and managers to have difficult conversations. In the next quarter we will have developed and inserted an equality statement in all recruitment adverts.

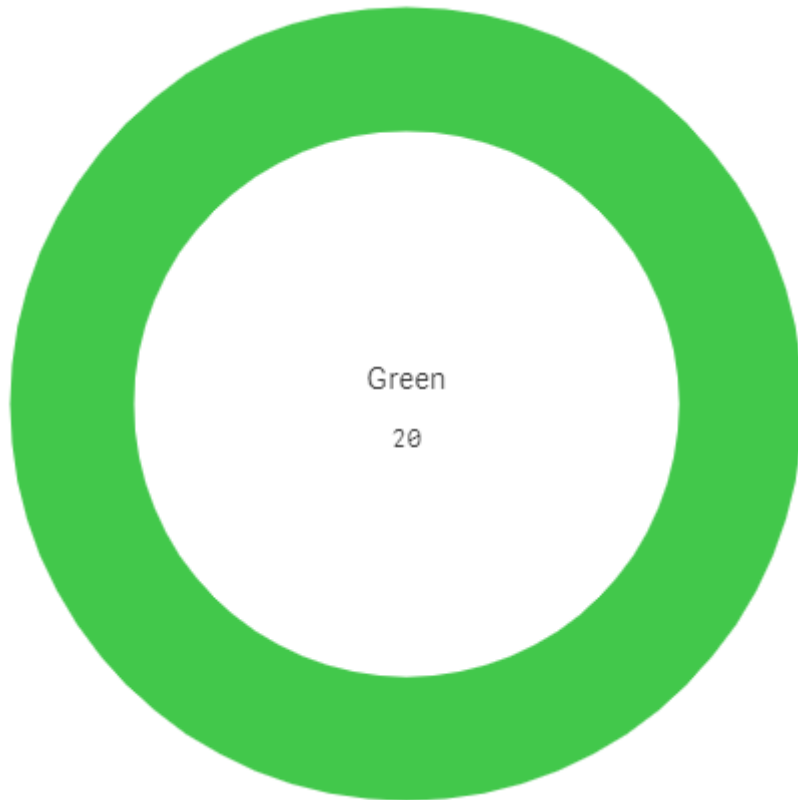
Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	68. Continue to work with partners to end rough sleeping on the streets of Watford.	We will continue to deliver our Homelessness Strategy for Watford, reviewing this on an annual basis and adapting it regularly to ensure that it remains innovative and effective, supporting our target of minimising rough sleepers on the streets of Watford.	Green	↔	We have worked in conjunction with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to identify six key challenges that we will face over the next 12 months. The key challenges include asylum seekers and prison releases, adult social care and community mental health services, private rented sector and social housing. We have mapped out key milestones over the next 12 months to address the challenges in line with our Homelessness Strategy.
Support improved health and wellbeing across the town.	69. Encourage Watford to develop as an age-friendly town.	We will work towards making Watford an age-friendly town that residents and visitors of all ages can enjoy, ensuring local services are dementia-friendly, accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities.	Green	↔	An approach has been scoped to this commitment considering proposed governance models and an engagement plan. Discussions are taking place to consider how this initiative would fit in with wider priorities to ensure we can make the best use of resources.
	70. Support digital inclusion so residents can effectively engage using new technology.	We will work with our partners, volunteers and community groups to explore the scale of digital isolation in the town and, when necessary, support residents who do not have access to technology, choose not to do so, or do not currently have the skills to use IT, to self-serve so that they have the same opportunities as others in our town.	Green	↔	We are continuing to work with partners such as Citizens Advice and W3RT to support residents who are digitally excluded. This has included a community round-table event to discuss specific challenges with key community groups, resulting in joint working groups to deliver against priorities which include digital inclusion. We are working towards the implementation of co browsing, a function that will enable us to support and guide customers to complete housing forms by sharing their screens. The upcoming device refresh provides a potential opportunity to provide ex-equipment to digitally isolation schemes although the council requires assurances that equipment has been fully wiped in line with security requirements so further work is underway to check viability.
	71. Develop services to support our residents' health and wellbeing.	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. With partners, we will develop and promote services and deliver initiatives to support and improve our residents' health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities in outcomes.	Green	↔	We are working closely with Watford Community Housing Trust to provide new Healthy Hub sessions in Holywell House. The sessions have and will focus on specific themes, and in past sessions we have covered topics such as money worries and mental and health wellbeing. The targeted sessions are supported by other service providers such as Everyone Active or partners like W3RT. The Healthy Hub have attended other events including the Meridian Fun Day and CDA SW Herts Heath and Wellbeing event, where we have promoted services and help support and signpost residents to access services to help improve their health and wellbeing. The HCC Place Based health inequalities priorities have now been approved for Watford and will focus on Healthy Eating.
	72. Engage with health partners to influence and redesign public health services, putting people at their heart.	We will engage across our health partners to make sure the health and wellbeing needs of Watford are represented in new health structures and commissioning of services.	Green	↔	The council is actively engaged in discussions with a wide range of health partners and local government colleagues. The opportunities to impact population health in existing and new initiatives are being identified. The council is engaged in making the case for the role of district councils in the prevention of ill-health.



Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	73. Support physical activity.	We will develop an updated Sports and Physical Activity Framework to benefit all residents of the borough whilst promoting the use of leisure centre facilities and schemes.	Not started yet	N/A	This activity has not yet started and the council continues to rely on its existing Physical Activity Framework. Once resource is available, planning will commence on developing the updated framework to support the broader benefits of physical activity across the borough.
	74. Implement the Air Quality Action Plan and monitor air quality across the borough and work with partners to improve air quality across the Town.	We will work with partners to deliver the Air Quality Action Plan 2024, which aims to help improve air quality in Watford. We will monitor and report progress annually to DEFRA. We will work together with HCC and other Hertfordshire District Authorities to create an Air Quality Strategy that enables continual improvements in air quality across the town and County.	Green	↔	The council's Air Quality Action Plan has been drafted and was approved by Cabinet in July 2024. A working group has been set up to establish a countywide Air Quality Strategy.
	75. Support refugee and asylum seeker resettlement in Watford.	We will work with regional and local statutory and voluntary agencies to maximise grant income and new property provision to meet the needs of asylum seekers and refugees. This will enable refugees resettled in Watford to integrate swiftly and successfully into our local communities.	Green	↔	Our new Refugee Resettlement Framework Agreement has been tendered and evaluated. The process of contracting with supplier(s) will begin over July/August 2024 and we hope to make appointments in Q3. We are continuing to maximise Home Office refugee resettlement income to enable support to continue for refugees in Watford.
Bring together ways to help our residents who might be struggling financially.	76. Make sure residents are aware of the help we offer to support them to manage their finances.	We will launch and embed our Council Tax Support Scheme so residents know support may be available to help them pay their bills, whilst promoting our discretionary scheme for charities.	Green	↔	The new Council Tax Support Scheme was launched with the Council Tax Bill for 2023/24 and is now successfully up and running.
	77. Coordinate access to information for those seeking advice on how to cope with the cost-of-living crisis.	We will work with partners to ensure people can access the advice and information they need when they face financial difficulties, particularly those who are vulnerable or are dealing with debt.	Green	↔	Our cost-of-living forum brings together organisations and groups from statutory, voluntary, business, community, health and charitable sectors in a bid to find ways to ensure residents have the support they need. The forum meets quarterly to share ideas and how best they can work as a partnership to help release people from financial burdens which affect their health and wellbeing and everyday life.
	78. Welcome the whole town to our big events and provide an appealing and lively programme of holidays activities for young people	We will deliver our exciting, free programme of Big Events across the town, including our Big Screen, Big Beach and Fireworks, whilst seeking sponsorship opportunities to support bringing our community together. We will also continue to offer our young people exciting things to do during the Easter and summer holidays.	Green	↔	The council's events plan is on schedule to deliver our Big Events, starting off with the Big Liveswing, Big Screen and Big Beach over the summer months. Our Wat's On Summer programme is expected to start in the first week of the school summer holidays.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	79. Improve private sector housing across the town, focusing on how it can contribute to both environmental and community benefits.	We will take advantage of the Energy Company Obligation government grants for sustainability and respond to any grant bid applications to lever in external funding to improve Watford’s housing stock. We will ensure that we have an accessible service to enable residents to apply for the funding and support them with the application process. We will support HCC and our residents in development and delivery of schemes that promote and improve Healthy Homes, in particular supporting the development and delivery of an Integrated Care Partnership-wide toolkit to tackle the impacts of damp and mould.	Green	↔	Officers have worked with colleagues from Hertfordshire and Essex Public Health Teams following requests from the Integrated Care Partnership Board and Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board to provide an assurance report on dealing with cases of damp and mould in properties. Officers also delivered presentations on healthy homes, specifically on the impact of damp and mould on health. Invites have now been extended for the officers to attend and present other health related seminars and training day. The team are currently developing a toolkit and discussions are in progress with the Fire and Rescue Service to include initial damp/mould referrals as part of the Safe and Well visits.
	80. Support our community through a programme of grant schemes.	We will continue to deliver a diverse range of grants for local groups and communities, including the Mayor’s Grants, Community Lottery and Neighbourhood Locality Funds so that the council can make the biggest impact in the communities we serve.	Green	↔	The Mayor’s small grants for 2024 have been awarded. The grant provides voluntary and community organisations support for one-off community events, purchase of new equipment and for green or environmental initiatives that supports our commitment to reduce the carbon footprint of the borough. The Watford Community Lottery which was launched in June 2023, recently celebrated its first anniversary, and a community event was held to further promote the initiative. The funding programme for 2024/25 has been agreed.

**Theme Overview: A council working for our community and serving our residents**



**Key achievements over this period**

- The UK Parliamentary General Election was successfully held on 4 July 2024 in line with the new boundaries resulting from changes from the recent Boundary Review and incorporating elements of the Elections Act 2024 including Voter ID, updates to the way postal votes are processed and changes to the process of overseas electors.
- KPIs have been reviewed and agreed for 2024/25. A new process has been implemented to capture and report on KPIs of commissioned services.
- Following the launch of the council's six values last year, the Behavioural Framework is now being embedded through the Personal Development Review process. The new process will enable employees to have meaningful conversations with line managers around their behaviours, objectives and development.
- The council's new four-year People Strategy was approved by Cabinet in June 2024.
- Three health and wellbeing lunch and learn sessions were delivered on men's health, women's health and stress awareness and management.

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



Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
<b>Make sure we deliver an outstanding customer experience and the high-quality services our community expects.</b>	81. Provide an excellent customer experience for everyone who engages with the council.	We will deliver our Customer Experience Strategy to transform how we engage with our customers by introducing AI and Live Chat solutions, enhancing our customer experience. We will respond to the recommendations of our Peer Challenge by working with partners to ensure that our services remain accessible to all.	Green	↔	<p>Delivery of our Customer Experience Strategy is well underway. Following the successful implementation of our new switchboard contract, in this quarter our efforts were focused on the implementation of the council's AI web bot. The web bot, which will sit on our website, will provide an additional channel through which our customers can contact us and receive support, including out of hours support. Initially the web bot will address simple queries and as it learns and evolve through each interaction, it will be able to address more complex queries and link through directly to a live chat with Customer Service Agents in the event that the web bot is unable to assist. The web bot is expected to go live in the next quarter and engagement is underway with partners to ensure that the tool is accessible to all.</p> <p>Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Customer Experience Strategy is included within Appendix C2.</p>
	82. Champion a greener and more sustainable council that strives to reduce our carbon footprint.	We will embed our ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030 by continuing to deliver our Environmental Strategy so that it is intrinsic to everything and ensures we reduce our carbon footprint in line with our green goals.	Green	↔	<p>Our Environment Strategy, which sets out how we will achieve our ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030, was approved during the life of the previous Delivery Plan. As well as successful decarbonisation funding for some council owned buildings, specific sustainability actions from the Sustainability Delivery Plan have been included in Service Plans from across the organisation. To further embed sustainability, we have now incorporated the 'Watford Sustainability Wheel', a tool that visually display the environmental and social impacts of our projects, within the council's project management framework.</p> <p>Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Environment Strategy is included within Appendix C3.</p>
	83. 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 shared services model provides opportunities for us to review and enhance our processes, automate and digitise processes where relevant and reduce costs and increase resilience.</p> <p>The Planning Enforcement and Building Control shared services with St Albans is progressing to plan as we continue to refine the case management process. The training for technical leads on using the relevant systems is now complete. Following feedback from our Corporate Peer Challenge, Local Partnerships is undertaking a review of all Watford and Three Rivers shared services, the outcome of which will provide guidance on the way forward for a HR &amp; OD shared services with neighbouring local authorities.</p>
	84. Make sure the council continues to hold successful and well run elections	We will support and prepare for the local and national elections over the next two years, ensuring that our elections continue to be effectively managed, the changes introduced by the Elections Act 2022 are embedded and	Green	↔	<p>The UK Parliamentary General Election was successfully held on 4 July 2024. Given the short notice provided, there were significant arrangements to make over the short six-week period with 60 polling stations across the constituency, in line with the new boundaries resulting from changes from the recent Boundary Review. Components of the Elections Act 2022 were successfully</p>

		voters are well informed on elections and how to exercise their right to vote.			implemented, including the requirement for Voter ID, updates to the way postal votes are processed and changes to the process for overseas electors.
	85. Ensure compliance with our parking restrictions across the borough by effectively managing our parking enforcement contractors.	We will continue to work with our parking enforcement contractors to ensure that motorists park responsibly across the borough and will initiate pre-procurement activity for the new parking enforcement contract when the current contract ends in 2027.	Green	↔	<p>We are working with our contractor to review resource availability to ensure we have adequate resourcing in place to manage parking enforcement across the borough.</p> <p>We will commence market testing for reprocurement of the service in spring 2025.</p>
Pioneer new ways of working that challenge us to innovate, transform and consistently improve.	86. Investigate further opportunities for IT and using technology to improve efficiency across the organisation.	We will deliver our 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. This will include the use of technology, such as AI, which will be supported by a new AI Usage Policy.	Green	↔	<p>Through our IT Service Transformation programme we are continuing to ensure that our IT infrastructure remains fit for purpose, resilient and secure to enable delivery of council services. Leading up to the UK Parliamentary General Election, the priority was a strengthened focus on maintaining security and delivery of an internal campaign on cyber-attacks.</p> <p>A draft AI Policy has been developed for review, which will guide us as we explore further opportunities for implementing AI for delivering efficient services.</p>
	87. Deliver a step change in how we use our data and information, so it strengthens our drive for constant improvement and assesses the value for money of our services, allowing us to effectively manage our budget.	We will continue to deliver our Information and Insight Strategy, transforming 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>We reviewed and agreed the KPIs for 2024/25 to reflect the priorities in the new Council Delivery Plan against resource and budget availability. We have also implemented a new process for reporting KPIs of commissioned services. The quarterly reporting of KPIs will now feed into our continuous improvement tracker. This will enable officers to put forward proposals for improving performance and tracking these.</p> <p>We are maintaining focus on automating data transfer between the council's key operational systems. The benefits of this includes accurate and efficient transfer of data and timely and up to date reports for decision making.</p> <p>In this quarter we also attended a community partners event and demonstrated the Geographic Information System (GIS) and map layers relating to the Census 2021 data, which was well received.</p>
	88. Complete the Housing Transformation.	We will complete the transformation of our housing service with a focus on early intervention to reduce temporary accommodation expenditure for the council and achieve better outcomes for clients.	Green	↔	<p>We are continuing delivery of the Housing Transformation programme which is expected to be completed by next year. In the next quarter, through internal and external consultation we will co-produce and adopt a new vision of and refresh the existing customer service charter for the type of housing and homelessness service we wish to deliver. This will be delivered alongside the refreshment of our improvement plan. The transformation programme will be underpinned by our core values and expected behaviours and through regular reviews of lessons learnt, complaints, compliments and celebrating successes in the Housing Team.</p>

	89. 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 continue to strengthen our approach to contract management by regularly updating our contract register, implementing our Contract Management Framework and ensuring that we leverage social value delivery where possible, particularly from our major contracts, such as the Colosseum Operator.	Green	↔	We continue to update our contract register every quarter in line with good practice. Our contract management framework was translated into the council's Contract Management Handbook which was developed last year. The Handbook provides an overview and guide to contract management across the council and is accompanied by training materials, which will ensure that the council's key strategic objectives are met through the delivery of contracts. The Handbook will require some update to reflect changes in the Procurement Act 2023, due to be implemented in October of this year. We have recently updated our reporting process to enable the capture and reporting of social value delivered through procurements.
	90. Implement changes introduced by the Procurement Act 2024.	We will ensure that the changes introduced by the Procurement Act 2024 are embedded within our ways of working through an update to our Procurement Strategy.	Green	↔	The Procurement Act 2023 changes will come into legislation from 28 October 2024. The council's Contract Procedure Rules will be updated to reflect the changes and a training plan will be developed and communicated in the next quarter. Our existing procurements and contracts will run to the old rules until they expire.
	91. Deliver a programme of service redesigns to improve how we work and deliver value for money services.	We will commence and deliver our Redesign Sprints to respond to the financial pressures, whilst ensuring that we are informed by data and intelligence, to provide value-for-money services.	Green	↔	The upcoming General Election has delayed the start of this activity, however we are currently in the discovery phase and have established a project board with representation and expertise from across the council. The findings of the discovery phase will be reviewed by Corporate Management Board in August and pilot services will be agreed. The sprints will formally commence in October once engagement has taken place with services, Services Delivery Leads and members.
<b>Focus and challenge how we manage our budget, so it is concentrated on delivering our commitments and securing greater investment for Watford.</b>	92. Ensure our investment portfolio is effectively led so that risk is appropriately managed whilst delivering maximum value to the council.	We will ensure that we are actively managing our investment portfolio to protect our income, manage risk and maximise total value over the longer term (capital and revenue), so that we can continue to provide high-quality services to our residents and businesses.	Green	↔	The asset management contract for the investment portfolio and Croxley Park is to be extended. The Property Management contract at Croxley Park has been procured for a further 5 years and the legal support at Croxley is in the process of being procured at present. We are reviewing our continued ownership of a number of our assets in terms of rental income versus market value which may lead to a slight re-balancing of the portfolio. We continue to market aggressively the new development at Watford Business Park, called Inspire.
	93. Manage and direct the council finances effectively, acting upon our peer challenge recommendations.	We will ensure that our budgets align with our priorities and that budget management is robust, forward-looking and supports the best-possible service outcomes from available resources, enabling us to keep council tax increases below inflation.	Green	↔	The council has set a balanced budget for 2024/25 and a balanced draft budget for 2025/26 and 2026/27, which are aligned to the Council Plan and Council Delivery Plan. The budget for 2025/26 will be set by Council in January 2025 after consideration by Finance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.



	94. Work to identify opportunities that align with our ambition.	We will develop a Commercial and Collaboration Strategy to ensure that we are ready to seize commercial opportunities when they become available, including in relation to shared services.	Green	↔	The development and approval of the Commercial and Collaboration strategy will be aligned to the Council's budget setting process.
	95. Manage our ambitious Capital Programme so that it supports our aspirations.	In line with our Peer Challenge recommendations, we will ensure that the Capital Programme supports the delivery of the Council Plan, is realistic and affordable, unlocks invest-to-save opportunities and growth within Watford.	Green	↔	Schemes within the capital programme are kept under constant review to ensure that they remain affordable and deliver against objectives within the Council Plan. The capital programme is reviewed in full as part of the annual budget setting process to ensure that resource remain appropriately prioritised.
Lead by example, securing our reputation as a forward-thinking, caring and inspiring organisation where colleagues can thrive and achieve their best for our residents and businesses.	96. Secure robust succession planning, making sure we value and manage our talent to recruit and retain the best for Watford.	We will open opportunities for our staff to grow and develop, building their skills and knowledge to achieve and pro-actively encouraging creativity. Where we do recruit, we will appoint the best, ensuring we recruit people with the right experience and behaviours to be part of 'Team Watford'.	Green	↔	The new People Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in June 2024, has four themes, including 'attracting a modern workforce' and 'developing our workforce' with a focus on recruiting and retaining talent. Council employees have been briefed on the new Performance Development Review (PDR) cycle for 2024, which has been launched for implementation in Q2. Through the new PDR process employees will be encouraged to set SMART objectives and develop a plan for their personal and professional growth. We held a development day for Service Delivery Leads which focussed on maximising their potentials and achieving ambitions.
	97. Embed our values so they inspire our teams to achieve even more and underpin how we work.	We will continue on our journey to ensure our values underpin everything we do, working with the Member Development Group to ensure that these are embedded by members and officers alike. Internally, this will be supported by the roll out of our new behavioural framework, in line with our refreshed Performance Development Review process.	Green	↔	Our six core values (agile, bold, integrity, respect, trust and working together) were launched last year with the support of colleagues across the council. The values underpin everything we do, from onboarding in our recruitment process through to our business as usual activities. We are now embedding the Behavioural Framework, which will bring our core values to life, into the council's PDR cycle. Through this process employees will be able to have meaningful conversations with their line managers around 3 key areas – behaviours, objectives and development. The data gathered from this process will enable us to measure and support growth in Watford. The new PDR cycle was launched in this quarter for implementation from July 2024 and is supported by a toolkit including guidance notes and a video on setting SMART objectives.
	98. Refresh our Organisational Development approach so that it effectively underpins and supports our Council Plan.	We will develop and deliver a new four-year People Strategy to ensure we develop, motivate and inspire our colleagues so they are supported and empowered to do their best for our residents and businesses.	Green	↔	Following consultation with Corporate Management Board and the Staff Ambassadors Group, the council's People Strategy was approved by Cabinet in June 2024. The Strategy, which is structured around 4 themes, is positioned as a framework rather than a fixed strategy and will allow us the flexibility to adapt as the council changes over the next 4 years. In the first year we will work to establish foundational programs and initiatives, including comprehensive onboarding processes, focus on "right skills, right place" and continue to drive leadership development.

	99. Seek and implement opportunities for our people to have fulfilling local government careers.	We will continue to support apprenticeship opportunities for our teams, providing them with experience, skills and knowledge from across the council.	Green		Whilst we are unable to proceed with corporate apprentice roles due to budget constraints, we are exploring other options to enable the council to continue to support employees. We are using DAS (Digital Apprenticeship Service) to fund courses for employees. Two employees on the Level 4 Associate Project Manager Apprenticeship, funded by the apprenticeship levy, have recently taken and passed the APM Project Management Qualification, and another employee has just commenced the course. The council's Planning Team is working in partnership with the Local Government Association to secure a graduate for the Pathways to Planning Programme, which will support talented individuals and fast track their career as a Planner in local government. Applications for this programme are currently being reviewed. We have just completed a work experience programme which was offered to local schools and colleges via Youth Connections.
	100. Protect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff and members.	We will ensure that we protect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our colleagues and members by developing their resilience and providing opportunities for genuine two-way engagement. We will work with our Member Development Group to support the safety and security of our elected members.	Green		We remain committed to the health and wellbeing of our staff. A total of six health and wellbeing lunch & learn sessions have been delivered since January 2024, three of which were delivered in this quarter on Stress Awareness and Management, Women's Health and Men's Health. All sessions were delivered by a certified psychologist and wellbeing coach. We have identified two key topic areas, neurodiversity and menopause, for further development and have held a planning meeting to progress these.