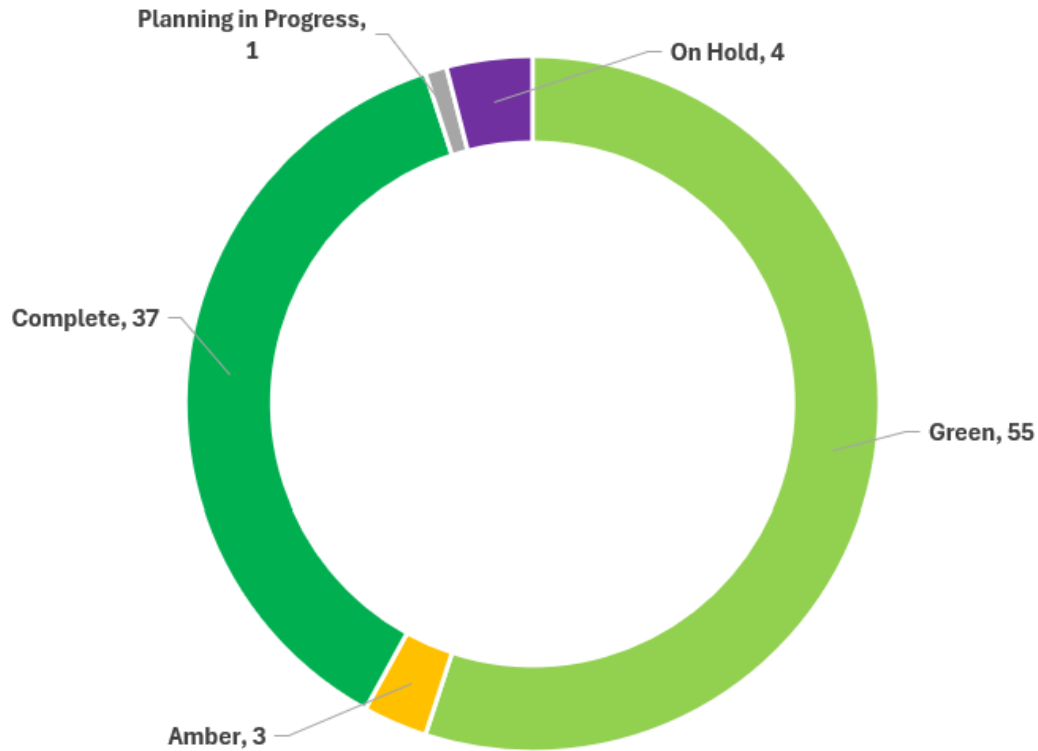




Delivery Plan Progress Update

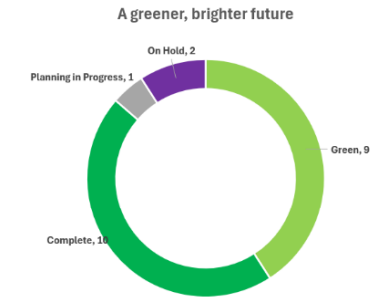
Delivery Plan Overview

Delivery Plan Overview

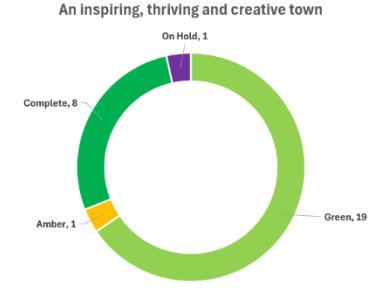


Key	
Green – Completed	Amber – Potential Risks / Some uncertainty
Green – On track	Red – Challenges
Blue – Ahead of Schedule	

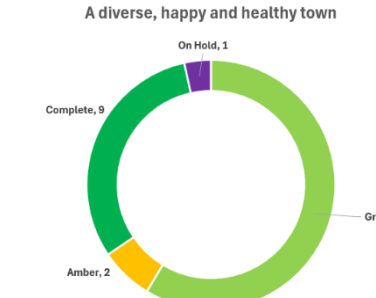
Council Plan Theme - A greener, brighter future



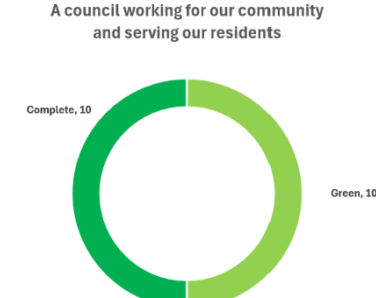
Council Plan Theme - An inspiring, thriving and creative town



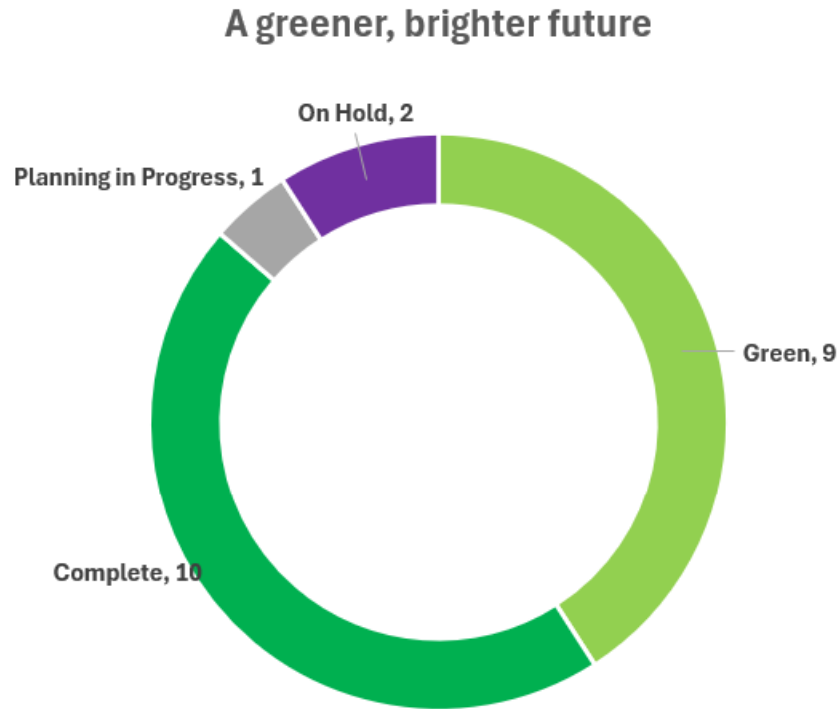
Council Plan Theme - A diverse, happy and healthy town



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







Theme Overview: A greener, brighter future







Key achievements over this period

- We have secured significant expansion of the bike share scheme, with 13 new bays and 36 additional e-bikes to be delivered across Three Rivers, strengthening cross-borough sustainable transport options. In addition, a new bike bay in Bushey at Lower High Street near Bushey Station is now operational, improving resident connectivity.
- The EV Charging Phase 2 programme is progressing well with all ORCS2 sites installed and the majority of ORCS3 roadside points in place pending grid connection. Preparations for ORCS3 Stage 2 installations are underway, with necessary permissions being secured to enable works to proceed.
- The Tales of the River three-year heritage project concluded successfully, delivering high community engagement and creative outputs which are accessible online.
- The implementation of food waste collections in flats was completed, ensuring that every resident benefits from this improved recycling service.

THEME: A greener, brighter future

Commitment	Activity	BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline	
Encourage people to make greener travel choices, reducing congestion and improving the health and wellbeing of the town.	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.	Complete		The bike share scheme is set for significant expansion following the successful collaborative work with Three Rivers District Council. This will deliver 13 new bays and 36 additional E-bikes, ensuring that the scheme works for residents across borough boundaries. These enhancements will further strengthen sustainable transport options in the region, with new bay locations scheduled for review in the next quarter. In addition, the scheme has recently expanded in Bushey, with a new bay at Lower High Street near Bushey Station now operational, further improving connectivity for local residents.
	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.	On Hold	N/A	Whilst the council remain committed to the delivery of sustainable transport, building on the success of the bike share scheme, electric vehicle charging points, the Green Loop and the e-car club, plans for the low-carbon transport hub in Watford Town Centre are currently paused due to Local Government Reorganisation.
	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		Delivering on the council's commitment to support sustainable transport, the EV Charging Phase 2 continues to progress well. All remaining ORCS2 sites now have EV infrastructure installed, and 20 out of 24 ORCS3 roadside charge points are in place, although grid connection by UKPN is pending for these charge points. Two alternative sites in Harebreaks have been approved. For ORCS3 Stage 2, preparations are underway for the installation of 53 lamp column charge points, with necessary permissions being secured to enable works to proceed through to January 2026. These efforts support the Council's ambitions to provide a robust and accessible EV charging network across the area.
	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 continues to thrive, operating nine bays across the town and reaching 184 members. To date, members have completed 702 journeys, travelled over 37,500 miles, and logged over to 7,600 hours of vehicle hire, saving 4911 kg of CO2. The feasibility of two new electric vehicle bays at Market Street and St Johns Road are currently being considered. Additional locations are under consideration for 2026–2027, supporting ongoing efforts to improve sustainable transport options.
	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.	Complete		The Green Loop has been operational for one year, creating a safe and attractive route for walking and cycling. Further enhancements are being explored through partnership work with Hertfordshire County Council. Work on schemes such as St Johns Road, Lower High Street and the Rickmansworth Road crossing continues, with updated costings received and funding options under active consideration.

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	Work continues in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council to shape the next phase of the Watford to Croxley Link. Consultants are progressing de-risking and survey requirements to support the Strategic Outline Case and long-term options. As part of public engagement, a demonstration vehicle wrapped in HERT branding will be showcased by HCC in May 2026, with council officers supporting delivery of this campaign in Watford High Street for a day.
	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		Engagement with Hertfordshire County Council remains positive, with ongoing discussions around the Town Centre bus network review as part of Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP2). Watford continues to feed resident concerns and service feedback directly into HCC processes. Progress on the Watford Bus Study continues, and HCC have agreed to deliver real-time information screens at bus stops at Watford General Hospital as part of the 2026/27 programme.
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.	Complete		The council's Green Spaces Strategy has now been completed, marking a significant milestone in our commitment to enhancing and maintaining green spaces across the borough. The Strategy provides a comprehensive framework to improve residents' quality of life, foster biodiversity, and strengthen environmental sustainability. The Strategy is scheduled to be presented to Cabinet in January 2026 for formal approval. Once approved, this will enable us to implement the Strategy and advance our commitment to enhancing Watford's diversity.
	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.	Green		Key milestones this quarter include the completion of the main Flood Risk Activity Permit for Radlett Road following Environment Agency confirmation, and we are seeking a direct award with Salix to ensure delivery within this financial year. Bidders have been successfully appointed for all Water Restoration Fund deliverables, with contracts for Lots A (Southern Sites) and B (Fish Pass) signed and regular meetings underway; Lot C (Constructed Wetland Feasibility and Outline) is nearly finalised, with all parties informed of the critical project deadlines. The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Tales of the River funded project, a three-year community engagement initiative, has reached its planned conclusion. During the three-year period, the project successfully engaged with Watford residents to connect them with the River Colne's natural and industrial heritage through a diverse programme of activities, events, and creative outputs. The project website is now directing users to engaging video and podcast resources.
	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	Complete		Health and safety tree works at Whippendell Woods were successfully completed, and tree planting effort achieved an encouraging 80% survival rate, and in line with Forestry Commission requirements, the council will replace any losses. Volunteer replanting events are scheduled for winter 2025 / early January

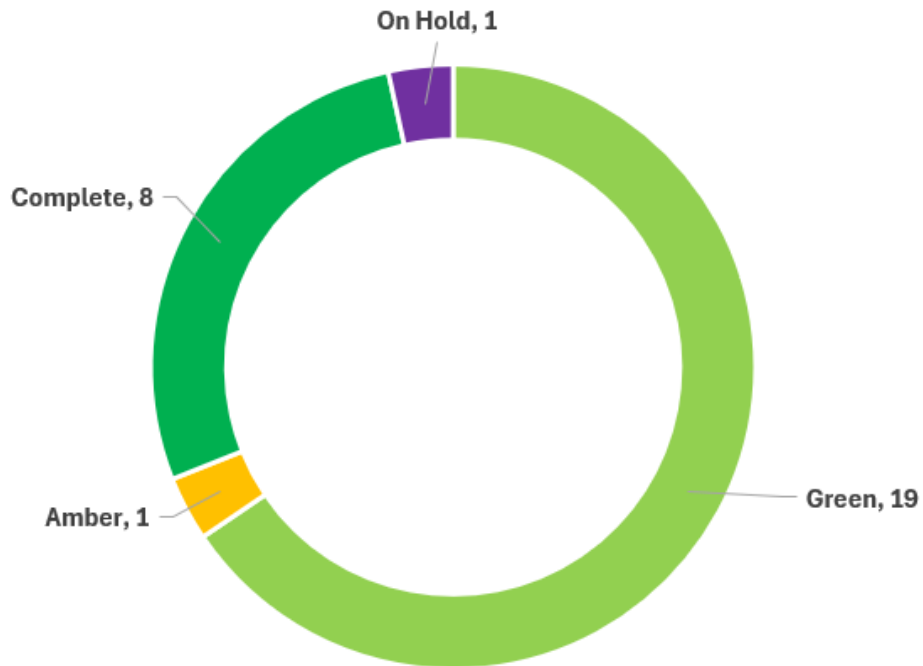
Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
		Forestry Commission Management Plan and relocating the existing cycle trail.			2026, further enhancing community involvement and supporting our commitment to a greener future. The new bike trails by Bike Park Chiltern on land near West Herts Golf Club was launched in October 2025.
	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.	Complete	↑	Tree planting activity across the borough has surpassed our initial targets, supporting our commitment to achieving net zero status by 2030. The Tree Planting Programme has now concluded, and management of highway trees has been transferred to Hertfordshire County Council. Work continues on the Ash Die Back Plan, with a draft version recently received and currently under review for feedback. We remain committed to enhancing the borough’s tree canopy. In Whippendell Woods, 3,000 trees were planted with an 80% survival rate. Tree planting replacement events are planned for winter 2025 and early January 2026, with support from volunteers.
	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.	Complete	↔	The last compost giveaway event held in May at Woodside was a great success, attracting over 80 residents. The next giveaway event is anticipated to take place in May 2026.
<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. 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	↔	<p>The implementation of the Environmental Strategy Delivery Plan 2025-2027 is progressing however we are unlikely to achieve net carbon zero in the borough by 2030, and the council’s own net carbon zero target is also at risk but remains achievable through focused action and regular review. The 2025/27 delivery plan sets out 119 actions, of which 70 are on target and 39 are scheduled for timely completion, with only a small number awaiting data or impacted by external factors. The evolving Delivery Plan, together with active engagement through the Sustainability Programme Board and Forum, ensures our strategy remains dynamic and responsive to changing priorities. Recent achievements include a strategic visit to an innovative energy project, publication of the November energy efficiency newsletter, and a plan to progress the LASER utility management solution. Staff engagement through the Travel Plan working group continues to identify improvement opportunities, and the publication of the Annual Report 2024/25 on the Sustainable Watford website demonstrates our ongoing commitment to transparency and excellence in sustainability.</p> <p>Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Environmental Strategy is included within Appendix C3.</p>

Commitment	Activity	BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline	
	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	↔	The energy efficiency upgrade works, funded by the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), have been successfully delivered at both the Orbital Community Centre and Harebreaks Community Centre. We are now in the final stages, awaiting formal confirmation of practical completion from our contractor. Progress at The Palace Theatre remains on track, with completion anticipated well within the PSDS deadline, despite a minor delay. This positions us strongly to meet our sustainability objectives and deliver lasting benefits for the community.
	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.	On hold	N/A	The council commissioned a feasibility study to assess opportunities for electrifying its operational fleet early on, however in light of the ongoing Local Government Reform and the significant investment required for the installation of an enhanced power station, a decision has been made to pause the Fleet Strategy. Nonetheless, the council continues to demonstrate its strong commitment to environmental sustainability by actively reducing emissions from council vehicles. This is exemplified by the deployment of electric vehicles within our facilities management team and the installation of new charging infrastructure at the Town Hall Car Park, ensuring we remain at the forefront of positive change.
	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.	Complete	↔	The Council successfully launched fortnightly recycling on 21 October 2024.
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.	Complete	↑	In collaboration with Veolia, the implementation of food waste collections in flats commenced as scheduled in August 2025, with collections starting in October. The rollout has now been completed across all flats, ensuring that every resident benefits from this improved recycling service. We remain committed to maintaining the highest service standards and will continue working into the new year to promptly resolve any outstanding issues.
	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.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	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.	Complete	↑	The Spring Clean and Deep Clean for 2025 were successfully completed. Updates for these annual activities, and updates for 2026 will continue next year.
	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 successfully delivered one of the two clothes swap events agreed for 2025 during the Great Big Green Week. To maximise participation and make the most of seasonal opportunities, the next event will be held end of March 2026 to allow attendees to swap any unwanted Christmas gifts and clear out, ensuring an even more successful and engaging event for the community.
	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	↔	We continue to take firm action against fly-tipping in line with the Community Protection Compliance Policy. Where evidence has been available, officers have progressed formal investigations and initiated legal action against identified offenders, ensuring that those responsible are held to account. Proactive partnership working remains central to our approach. We continue to collaborate with local businesses to ensure they have appropriate waste contracts in place and are meeting their legal requirements. From January 2026, we will also be working closely with Veolia to review current fly-tipping hotspots, identify emerging patterns and explore targeted interventions.
	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.	Complete	↑	Cabinet agreed to extend the Veolia Contract on 9 February 2026 to ensure service continuity through Local Government Reorganisation.

Theme Overview: An inspiring, thriving and creative town





An inspiring, thriving and creative town














Key achievements over this period





- The Innovation and Incubation Hub operator procurement is well underway. In addition, we have secured £2 million (part loan, part grant) through a successful Herts Futures bid, supporting our commitments to foster start-ups and attract new enterprises.
- The 2025/26 UKSPF programme is progressing very well. The Watford Fit to Bid project hosted the SW Herts Meet the Buyer event in collaboration with Dacorum, St Albans and Hertsmere Councils, attracting over 120 attendees, facilitating 13 buyers, and enabling 175 buyer-supplier meetings in a single afternoon.
- We have commenced the construction work in the Town Hall to create a new community and civic hub for the town.
- Delivery of social rented homes continues to strengthen, with 42 of the 62 affordable homes forecast for 2025/26 providing social rent, an uplift on previous years.






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.	Green		<p>Following confirmation of Levelling Up Funding, the Council has made significant progress towards establishing a new Innovation and Incubation Hub (IIH) in Watford. Procurement for an operator is underway, to ensure that a commercially sustainable and impactful Hub is launched following completion of the Town Hall refurbishment.</p> <p>In another significant step towards establishing the IIH, the council has successfully secured £2 million in part loan, part grant funding through a successful Herts Futures bid. This investment will enable the council to deliver on its commitment to foster start-up businesses and attract new enterprises to the borough.</p>
	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		<p>During the last quarter, the team actively represented the Council at three business events and engaged individually with nine new businesses, offering bespoke guidance and valuable introductions. We remain committed to our proactive approach in signposting and sharing information, ensuring businesses stay well-informed about services and initiatives designed to support them. Our communications utilise newsletters, social media, websites, event participation, networking opportunities, and our partners' channels to amplify key messages and deliver essential information.</p> <p>Further information on the delivery of our Economic Growth Strategy can be seen at Appendix D1.</p>
	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		<p>The 2025/26 UKSPF programme is progressing very well. The Watford Fit to Bid project hosted the SW Herts Meet the Buyer event at Shendish Manor, in collaboration with Dacorum, St Albans and Hertsmere Councils. This successful event attracted over 120 attendees, facilitated 13 buyers, and enabled 175 buyer-supplier meetings in a single afternoon. The business support element of the programme continues to provide expert tendering advice and tailored 1-to-1 support for local businesses. Additionally, the Watford Town Centre Business Improvement Grant has secured six applications. Hertfordshire Futures, leading county-wide services, continue to deliver good outcomes for Watford businesses and residents, offering solid support for start-ups, growth businesses, the film and screen sector, skills brokerage, inward investment, and targeted assistance for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).</p>
	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		<p>The Watford Business Pledge was celebrated at the Mayor's Christmas Networking Event, where a strong representation of Pledge businesses highlighted the notable benefits and impact of the initiative. The event generated significant interest, resulting in six further applications to join the Pledge and expanding the network to 27 businesses, an increase from 22 last quarter. The Pledge continues to enhance its profile, evidenced by 300 social media impressions, and welcomes the addition of</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
					ProHal to the Assessor panel, further strengthening the expertise and momentum of this valued initiative.
	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 Watford Skills and Employment Plan is complete and transitioned to business as usual. The Watford Skills and Employment Group meets quarterly to oversee activities, reporting into the One Watford for Business economy steering group chaired by the Elected Mayor. Watford is taking a leading role on a new initiative, ensuring Employment, Skills and Social Value (ESSV) Plans are delivered by developers and major contractors, setting an example that is being considered for broader adoption across the County.
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 for networks that connect people.	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 UKReiIF 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 team continues to deliver a broad spectrum of initiatives that enhance Watford's appeal to both investors and visitors, in collaboration with Watford Town Centre BID, Hertfordshire Futures and other key strategic partners. During this quarter, we worked proactively with Hertfordshire Futures to develop an interim plan supporting the visitor economy, ensuring continuity in the absence of Visit Herts. The 'Watford Actually' place brand is consistently leveraged across a range of business communications, further strengthening Watford's position as a destination of choice.
	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 Watford Business Connect event is scheduled to return in June 2026, providing a valuable opportunity for engagement and collaboration within our business community. In the interim, the team are actively participating in a wide range of business events and forums led by organisations such as Watford Chamber, Herts Chamber, Watford BID, Herts Futures, as well as initiatives driven directly by local businesses. These activities are designed to empower Watford's business community and ensure their perspectives are effectively represented, contributing to the ongoing success and vibrancy of the town.
	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		The South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan has now been successfully completed and published. The wider team remains actively engaged in supporting the initiatives of the Hertfordshire Growth Board and Herts Futures. Notably, significant progress has been made on the forthcoming Hertfordshire Economy Strategy, with a draft version already circulated and publication anticipated in early 2026.
Create a distinctive and successful neighbourhood at the heart of our town, providing space and time for residents, businesses and the	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		The New Neighbourhood Project continues to make steady progress, with the establishment of the joint venture with Mace representing a notable achievement. Opportunities to include a Health Hub in the scheme is moving forward with ongoing engagement with the NHS. Options for public realm improvements and enhancements to the Gade Car Park are also being scoped to ensure that the area to the northern end of the High Street supports our investment in the Town Hall and adjacent Colosseum.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
community to enjoy and experience.	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.	Complete		Following the successful opening of the Colosseum, highlighted by standout performances from the BBC Concert Orchestra and Ocean Colour Scene, the venue has continued to gain momentum under AEG's management. Valuable lessons learned from these initial events have contributed to smooth and successful ongoing operations. The Strategic Partnership Board has reported a positive first three months, with contract managers and project teams diligently tracking and addressing any defects or issues as they arise. A draft five-year Business Plan is under council review, and the council is also collaborating with AEG on the Colosseum's five-year maintenance plan.
	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.	Green		Following the signing of the construction contract, work commenced on site during Q3, with the seamless transition to temporary power completed without issue on 16 November. Once completed, the Town Hall will provide a new home for the Museum of Watford, the Innovation and Incubation Hub, a new public café, community gallery, temporary exhibition space and customer access centre. Over the next period, the external terrace will start construction and the entrance to the museum and café will be built, demonstrating visible progress to the repurposing of this important and much loved community asset.
	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.	Green		Photocalls with local businesses have been arranged to prepare content for the latest 'Shop and Eat Local' campaign. This will include how best to apply the Watford Actually branding and narrative to further attract people to the town centre, supporting local businesses and their unique appeal.
	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.	Complete		All 2025 events are now complete, ensuring another outstanding year of community engagement and entertainment.
	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.	Complete		The new 'Town Centre Strategy 2025-2030' was adopted at the June 2025 Cabinet and is available online at Watford Actually. Developed in partnership with Watford BID, Visit Herts, Warner Bros, and AEG, the Strategy sets out a five-year vision to position Watford as a vibrant, inclusive, and economically thriving town centre. It focuses on three interconnected pillars: a great place to live, a thriving economy, and a hub for culture and entertainment, all underpinned by safety, accessibility, and inclusivity.
	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.	Complete		Watford Town Centre BID achieved a major milestone in October, securing a third term with nearly half of eligible businesses participating and over 90% support both by number of votes and rateable value. Building on this success, preparations are underway for the Clarendon Road BID ballot in early spring, with continued collaboration on a robust business plan to further strengthen support for businesses in the area and ensure positive growth for our local community.

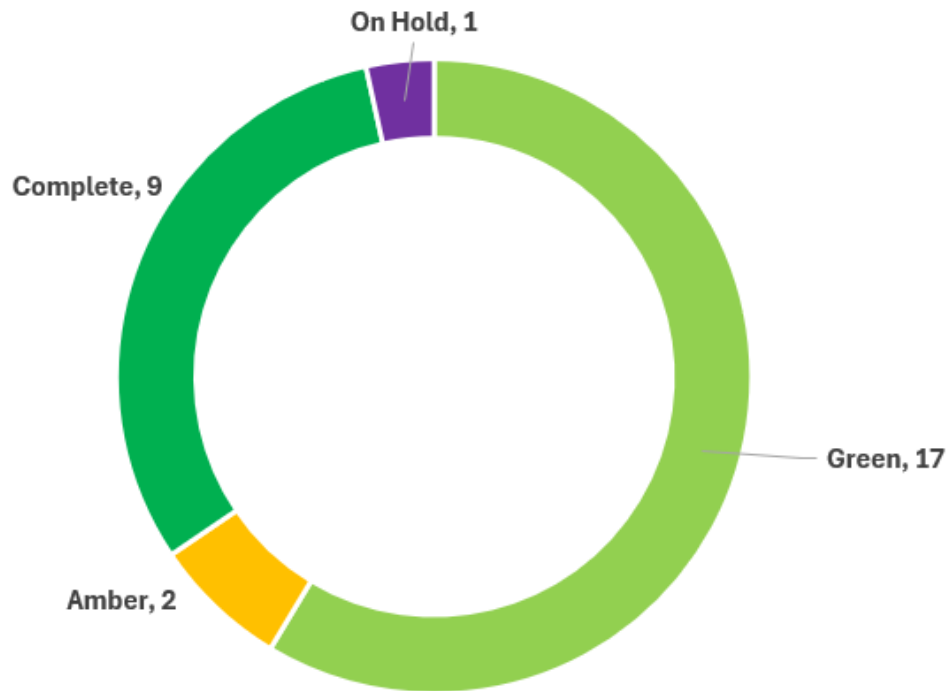
Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	38. Enhance our district parades.	We will roll out an annual programme of local neighbourhood shopping parade improvements to enhance their appeal, commencing with Whippendell Road, to drive footfall and support local neighbourhoods.	Green		Following the successful completion of the Whippendell Road Parade improvement works, the Vicarage Road Shopping Parade enhancement project continues to make progress. Surveys have provided robust data on how the parade and surrounding gyratory operate for businesses, residents, and visitors. The analysis has highlighted the parade's vibrancy, with over 4,000 visitors recorded on a typical Thursday in July and up to 6,500 on matchdays, reaffirming its status as a thriving community hub. Guided by this comprehensive, data-driven approach, the next phase will focus on stakeholder engagement and the development of a concept design. A rigorous procurement process is underway to appoint a specialist consultancy, with six suppliers already invited to tender.
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.	Amber		The council continues to champion opportunities for redevelopment of the Watford Junction rail lands, maintaining strong engagement with partners including Network Rail. Although progress depends on Network Rail advancing its station improvement strategy, hence the amber rating, we are proactively ensuring the borough's ambitions for new homes, improved station facilities, jobs and community spaces remain visible and well-supported.
	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		Significant progress continues across the Riverwell programme, supporting the long-term goal of delivering high-quality homes, employment space and community facilities. Phase 1 of the Avenues is fully occupied, and we continue to secure built to rent operator partnerships for upcoming phases, strengthening the area's housing offer. Construction of the Town Square and Industrial Zone North is advancing well, including new commercial spaces for Travelodge, Tesco and Greggs and the new Safestore facility, which is expected to open in late 2026.
	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		The delivery of the Local Plan, which aims to shape sustainable development in Watford over the next 30 years, is ongoing as part of business as usual. The council's Authority Monitoring Reports (AMR), which tracks the progress and performance of our Local Plan, has been drafted and scheduled to go to Portfolio Holders in January followed by Cabinet in February 2026 for adoption.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	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.	Complete		The council website provides residents with a convenient link, enabling direct reporting of potholes to HCC online. In addition, our 'Welcome to Watford' resource clearly outlines the respective responsibilities of Watford and HCC, ensuring clarity for all users. We are also actively exploring the data available from HCC to further support our goal of effective pothole reporting.
	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.	Complete		The Planning Enforcement & Building Control Shared Services is complete. The Partnership Board is now fully established and operational, ensuring robust governance and collaboration across all stakeholders. Regular operational client meetings have been set up, facilitating clear communication and effective issue resolution.
	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 formal decision has been made to sell land to Watford Community Housing (WCH), with legal negotiations progressing. WCH intends to submit a planning application in early 2026, supporting sustainable housing solutions for the community.
	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		The Community Asset Strategy continues to progress well, supported by a clear and well managed process that ensures our community buildings are responsibly maintained. The Strategy is now embedded as business as usual, providing structured oversight through the Community Facility Review Board and enabling repairs and statutory compliance work to be prioritised effectively. Over a five-year cycle, all buildings will undergo condition assessments, with necessary repairs completed in a planned and transparent way, ensuring long term sustainability for our community facilities. Vital repairs are being planned across a number of community buildings this year, with all works scheduled for commissioning before end of March 2026. In addition, a comprehensive statutory compliance programme in progress is currently focused on Herons FC, Woodside Boxing Club, and Watford Bowls Club, ensuring safe and welcoming facilities for all.
Make sure we have quality homes to meet the needs of residents, including housing that is affordable through direct ownership, private rental,	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.	Green		The council remains on track to deliver a comprehensive Housing Strategy that sets the direction for housing activity over the next five years. Despite a delayed start, resources are in place and the strategy is now progressing through consultation, ahead of its planned adoption later this year.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
affordable and social rent housing.	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.	Complete		Following consultations with residents, housing associations, and a broad range of stakeholders, alongside the completion of the Equalities Impact Assessment, the new Nominations Policy was successfully completed and approved by Cabinet in October 2025. The policy reflects our collective commitment to inclusive decision-making, progressive housing policy and will ensure fairer, clearer, and more flexible access to housing for our community. The Policy will be implemented by April 2026.
	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		Delivery of social rented homes in Watford continues to strengthen, with 42 of the 62 affordable homes forecast across Thomas Sawyer Way and Sydney Road for 2025/26 providing social rent, an increase on previous years, which saw eight completions in 2024/25 and 25 completions in 2023/24. Partnership working across Housing, Development Control and Property & Asset Management remains central to securing new social rented homes through planning, council-owned land and commuted sums. However, viability remains a significant challenge to the delivery of affordable housing. Progress at Sydney Road, is being closely managed to maintain delivery timelines and ensure these much-needed homes reach local families.
	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.	On Hold	N/A	This project is currently on hold. The timeframe is dependent on Local Government Reorganisation. The National Planning Policy Framework consultation was published in December 2025. Officers are proactively preparing a response, working closely with Members to ensure our collective views are represented, ahead of the March 2026 submission deadline.
	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		In light of evolving local government landscape, the approach to the Private Sector Renewal Policy has been reframed to ensure it aligns with the new Housing Strategy. Priorities for the Private Sector Renewal Policy will now be incorporated into the refreshed Housing Strategy, ensuring a joined-up approach to supporting good-quality homes across the borough.
	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 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.	Green		A successful landlord engagement event, hosted by the Mayor, was held in October 2025, bringing together local landlords, letting agents and housing professionals, which generated strong participation. Building on this momentum, a targeted session is scheduled for January 2026 to provide focused guidance. This ongoing engagement will support better housing quality, informed landlords and improved experiences for tenants, including those in temporary accommodation.

Theme Overview: A diverse, happy and healthy town






A diverse, happy and healthy town











Key achievements over this reporting period






- Phase 1 of the £3.1m Watford Leisure Centre redevelopment was successfully completed, delivering modernised dryside changing rooms, a refreshed vending and sales area, and a brand new Group Cycle Studio. The Sports Hall also reopened with enhanced facilities, including new flooring and inclusive court markings.
- We progressed delivery of the winter Community Safety Partnership plan, refreshed governance, and proactive multi agency initiatives such as Safer After Dark and support for Violence Against Women and Girls.
- The Sports & Physical Activity Framework 2025–29, setting a clear, evidence-based direction for improving residents’ health and wellbeing was approved by Cabinet.
- The latest Senior Forum brought together 63 participants from 17 organisations, offering a high-impact platform for connection, learning, and empowerment.
- The latest round of Neighbourhood Grants allocated £300,000 to 20 local projects that strengthen communities and help mitigate the impacts of local development. Funded schemes include improvements to sports facilities, support for residents facing cost-of-living pressures, and enhancements to green spaces.
- The Cassiobury Park fireworks display attracted approximately 25,000 residents and visitors, and raised almost £5k in donations for local charities and the Community Fund.





THEME: A diverse, happy and healthy town






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>52. Continue our programme of investment and improvements in Watford's parks.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Complete</p>		<p>The council's Green Spaces Strategy has now been completed, marking a significant milestone in our commitment to enhancing and maintaining green spaces across the borough. The Strategy provides a comprehensive framework to improve residents' quality of life, foster biodiversity, and strengthen environmental sustainability. The Strategy was approved in February 2026 and will enable us to implement the Strategy and advance our commitment to invest and improve Watford's parks.</p>
	<p>53. Enhance our public facilities at Woodside Playing Fields.</p>	<p>We will invest in the facilities at Woodside Playing Fields, providing a new toilet block for visitors and users of the park.</p>	<p>Complete</p>		<p>The Public Toilet Block and Changing Places Toilet construction is complete and providing fully accessible facilities for all park users and visitors.</p>
	<p>54. Work in partnership with our leisure operator to promote and improve our leisure facilities.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>		<p>We have made significant progress on the £3.1m redevelopment project at Central Leisure Centre with completion of phase 1, delivering newly refurbished dryside changing rooms, a modern vending and sales area, and a new Group Cycle Studio. The Sports Hall reopened with enhanced facilities, including new flooring and inclusive markings. The project remains on schedule, representing a strong step forward in enhancing local leisure amenities. At Woodside Leisure Centre, new padel facilities have been agreed and will open shortly. Following the installation of solar panels at Woodside Leisure Centre, solar solutions have also been agreed for Central Leisure Centre to further enhance energy efficiency across our leisure centres and the planning process will commence shortly.</p>
<p>Celebrate and promote our town's rich and diverse culture and creativity.</p>	<p>55. Open our new and exciting museum in a refurbished Town Hall.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>		<p>Strong progress continues towards the council's vision for a modern, inspiring Heritage and Museum service at the Town Hall. Key milestones this quarter include completion of the RIBA 4 pre-tender cost plan, Museum Advisory Panel Chair interviews, and the appointment of an Exhibition Officer and Visitor Experience & Operations Manager, ensuring expert leadership. The Collections Placement post attracted 60 applications, showing strong interest. Community engagement remains central, highlighted by the Museum on Tour participation in Diwali celebrations and a visit to Transport for London, both informing our inclusive service design. Additionally, café operators have been approached to help shape a vibrant, sustainable catering offer.</p>
	<p>56. 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.</p>	<p>Complete</p>		<p>The new Public Art Strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2025 and is now published on the council's website. This 10-year strategy, the first for Watford, is accompanied by a toolkit and public art audit. The strategy aims to enhance the town's cultural offer, inspire and support the commissioning of public art, and foster a more vibrant and engaging environment for residents and visitors.</p>


Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	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.	Complete		The Watford Digital Heritage Trail, launched in May 2025 and in partnership with the popular guided walk app, TrailTale, provide residents and visitors with a valuable opportunity to discover Watford's history and cultural landmarks in an accessible and engaging way. The self-guided routes incorporate historic photographs, informative storytelling, and local knowledge for a modern-day exploration of the town's heritage. The trail also highlights the council's celebrated '100 People Who Made Watford' initiative, recognising individuals who have contributed to the character and vibrancy of the community.
	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.	Amber		In light of Local Government reform the current WBC Conservation capacity and opportunities is not yet clear. As part of this, we are currently reviewing the Conservation Area management plan to consider the potential deliverables and opportunities for improvements.
	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.	On hold	N/A	The Watford Cultural Strategy refresh has been paused due to the Local Government Reform, thereby ensuring available resources are allocated to areas of greatest impact. This decision allows Watford Cultural Leaders Group to concentrate on being sustainable going forward along with delivering measurable outcomes and effectively preparing for future opportunities.
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>This quarter, we continued to strengthen our approach to community safety by delivering the winter CSP activity plan and setting clear priorities for 2026. The updated CSP brochure is now live online, on the council's Community Safety Partnership web page.</p> <p>Work is ongoing with partners to assess the updated Watford Crime Risk Matrix, ensuring risks, impacts, and existing operational responses are fully understood ahead of discussion at the February RAG (Responsible Authorities Group?) meeting.</p> <p>Partnership governance continues to be strengthened, with RAG membership and Terms of Reference now being refreshed to align representation across agencies. A review of CSP communications has also been completed, with recommendations shaping a new action plan focused on shifting from information-sharing to a model of active community reassurance, community partnership and empowerment.</p> <p>Delivery across the winter themes remains strong. Highlights include cycle theft project with BTP, Safer After Dark event focused on women's safety, Op Hotspot focused on Winter Fest, Violence Against Women and Girls presentation to Watford Football Club staff and guests, with alarm and anti-spike kits given out, Ask for Angela checks with all premises successfully passing, and Op Vigilant.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	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		We continue to actively champion the White Ribbon campaign, reaffirming our commitment to preventing violence against women and girls. We recruited new ambassadors ahead of reaccreditation and implemented comprehensive plans to mark White Ribbon Day. During the 16 Days of Activism, the council raised the White Ribbon flag at the Town Hall and took part in a series of partnered community events, demonstrating visible leadership and proactively advocating for safer communities.
	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		The litter bin audit was successfully completed, and a social media planner for 2024 and 2025 developed, ensuring litter awareness remains a communications priority. A £12k grant from Keep Britain Tidy enabled the completion of the chewing gum removal project along Queens Road in October 2025. With £2.5k remaining, additional cleansing will now take place elsewhere by 31 March 2026, further enhancing public spaces.
	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.	Complete		The 'Welcome to Watford' resource is now live, providing residents new to Watford with the essential information and opportunities to get involved in town life. The Council is working closely with the communications teams and local businesses to ensure wide distribution, supporting community integration and engagement.
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		Our next Community Support Forum will take place at the end of March 2026. This event will provide an opportunity for local organisations, partners, and community members to come together, share insights, and collaborate on initiatives that strengthen support across our area. To ensure the forum is as valuable and inclusive as possible, we are working closely with W3RT to align our efforts and avoid duplicating existing services or activities. Our goal is to complement the support already available and create a space that fosters meaningful connections and practical solutions for the community. Further information can be seen at Appendix C.
	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		The recent Senior Forum was a successful and impactful gathering, bringing together 63 attendees, including representatives from 17 different organisations. The event served as a vital platform for connection, support, learning, and empowerment, addressing many of the unique challenges faced by seniors. Of the participants, 28 completed an evaluation form, providing valuable feedback that will help shape future initiatives. Discussions and activities focused

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
					on promoting well-being, particularly in preparation for the approaching winter months, a time that can present additional difficulties for older adults.
	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		The Orbital Community Centre and Harebreaks Community Centre works are complete. Palace Theatre works are on track for completion in February 2026. These improvements will ensure our facilities remain safe, accessible, and well used by local residents.
	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.	Amber		We are committed to fostering a diverse workforce that reflects our community. As part of this, we are reviewing and updating our Equality Impact Assessment template and developing comprehensive supporting guidance to ensure we adopt best practices. Additionally, we are enhancing equalities disclosure in both recruitment and staff monitoring processes but there are some delays to the delivery of the plan because of capacity constraints caused by Local Government Reorganisation, hence the amber rating.
	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		Our new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan, which will replace the 2020-2025 plan, is making good progress and is on track for presentation to the Mayor in February 2026, with the aim of aligning approval alongside the new Housing 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.	Complete		Watford's successful membership in the UK Network of Age Friendly Communities was launched to coincide with the International Day of Older Persons, demonstrating our commitment to fostering an inclusive environment for older residents. The "Live Longer Better" celebration at Woodside Leisure Centre attracted over 150 participants, who engaged in a variety of activities specifically designed to enhance their health and wellbeing. The event was further strengthened by the participation of partner organisations, who provided valuable support and resources, reflecting the council's dedication to collaborative working and the continuous improvement of services for our older community.
	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 continue to work in partnership with W3RT and other organisations to actively champion digital inclusion through the 'Staying Connected' scheme. Our collaborative efforts aim to reach residents who may not currently have access to digital resources or the necessary skills, ensuring that everyone in our community has the opportunity to benefit from the advantages of being online in Watford.

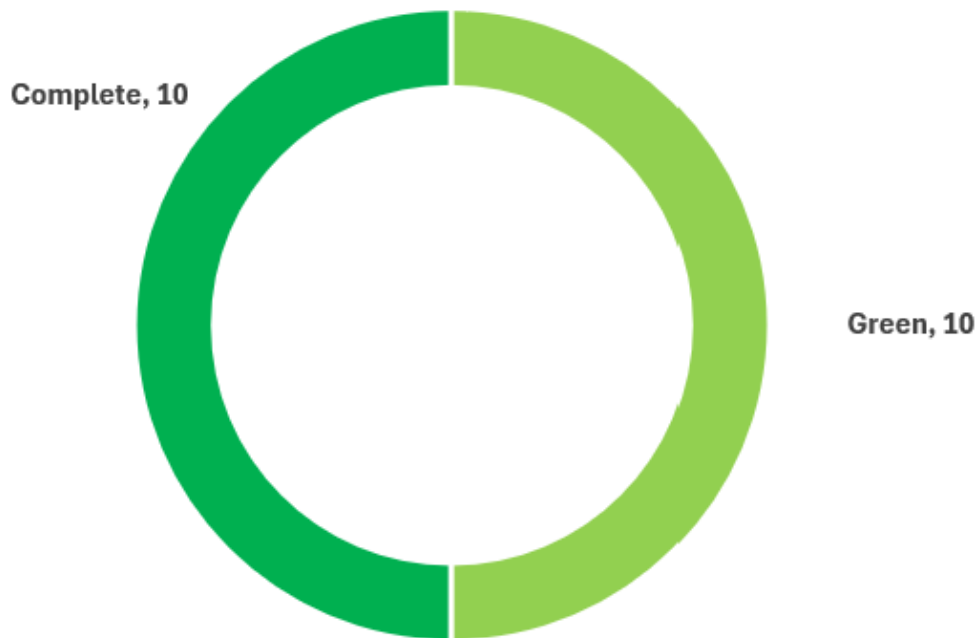
Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	71. Develop services to support our residents' health and wellbeing.	Watford's Healthy Hub will provide a pivotal link to assistance and guidance, including opening up conversations about the menopause, and for those needing help with mental health issues. 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		Watford Healthy Hub plays an essential role in supporting residents' health and wellbeing by providing guidance on important topics, including the menopause and mental health. By collaborating with council colleagues and external partners, the Hub ensures residents in need are referred to appropriate services for further assistance. The Hub continues to expand its reach, particularly at new locations with growing attendance, and has enhanced its offer by linking with other providers, introducing drop-in housing surgeries, and distributing household support vouchers, ensuring practical, timely support for our community.
	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 remains steadfast in its commitment to championing the health and wellbeing needs of the community within new health structures and commissioning processes. By engaging proactively with local health partners, the council ensures that the voices of Watford residents are represented and that the crucial role of local government in influencing health outcomes is recognised. This advocacy is reflected in our ongoing work across various service areas, where health benefits are integrated into council activities.
	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.	Complete		The Sports & Physical Activity Framework 2025–29, approved at Cabinet in December, reflects the council's commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of Watford's residents by building on the successes of previous approaches and setting out clear, evidence-based plans. Developed through extensive consultation and rooted in partnership, the framework champions inclusivity and community engagement, recognising the vital role that sport and physical activity play in bringing people together and improving quality of life. By linking to strategies such as Green Spaces and Sustainable Transport, the framework aims not only to provide greater opportunities for residents to be active but also to reduce health inequalities and pressures on public services, strengthen community connections, and support Watford's multicultural diversity.
	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 remains focussed on delivering its Air Quality Plan, as approved by Cabinet in July 2024. A principal objective of this plan is to advance public health through targeted interventions. Key measures include promoting active travel options such as walking and cycling, enhancing access to public transportation, adopting policies that encourage developers to reduce emissions, and expanding the availability of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Through these initiatives, the council seeks not only to achieve environmental compliance but also to foster safer and healthier communities for all residents. The most recent Annual Status Report submitted to DEFRA has received approval and recommends revoking Air Quality Management Area 3, located along Aldenham Road. This recommendation follows sustained compliance with national air quality standards in the area over the past three years.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
					The working group comprising Hertfordshire local authorities and HCC is continuing to develop a countywide Air Quality Strategy. The draft strategy is set for review by the HCC Panel in January 2026, followed by public consultation.
Bring together ways to help our residents who might be struggling financially.	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		The Refugee Resettlement Framework Agreement contract, which commenced in November 2025, allows us to provide essential support to some of the borough's most vulnerable community members while optimising Home Office funding to sustain these services. Additional funding secured through the Local Authority Housing Fund has facilitated the acquisition of four properties for the 2025/26 period. The allocation of Year 2 funding in December 2025 further enhances our capacity to assist individuals on resettlement visas. Ongoing collaboration with Migrant Help ensures that residents receive tailored support, supported by regular contract monitoring and responsive service delivery.
	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.	Complete		We have successfully launched and embedded our Council Tax Support Scheme, ensuring residents are well informed about the help available to manage their Council Tax bills. Alongside this, we have delivered and promoted our improved discretionary rates relief process for charities, providing clearer access to financial support. Both initiatives are now fully operational and contributing to greater awareness.
	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		We continue our commitment to supporting our most vulnerable residents by strategically utilising our allocation of the Household Support Fund to bolster local food banks. Furthermore, our Healthy Hub stands ready to assist, with over £20,000 in food and energy vouchers set aside to help those in need. Through close collaboration with our partners, we remain dedicated to ensuring that individuals facing financial challenges, especially those at risk or managing debt, have access to vital advice and information.
	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.	Complete		Watford's Big Events programme continues to bring the community together through a vibrant calendar of free activities, including the Big Screen, Big Beach, Fireworks, and the Wat's On holiday sessions for young people. The Cassiobury Park fireworks display, a highlight of the calendar, attracted approximately 25,000 residents and visitors to enjoy a spectacular evening of entertainment. This annual event not only offered a dazzling fireworks show but also featured live music, food stalls, and family-friendly activities, further strengthening community ties. The event raised almost £5k in donations for local charities and the Community Fund.
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	Green		The council is committed to improving the quality and sustainability of local housing stock. The delivery of the Warm Homes Local Grant fund, which began over the summer and will run for the next three years, is well underway. With approximately 65% of the first year's allocation already committed, we are on track to meet the ambitious target of utilising 100% of year one funds by 31	

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
		<p>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.</p>			<p>March 2026. Our consortium’s careful planning ensures the available funding will fully support the required works for 2025/26.</p>
	<p>80. Support our community through a programme of grant schemes.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>		<p>The most recent round of Neighbourhood Grants allocated £300,000 to fund 20 local projects aimed at supporting the community and reducing the impacts of local development. These projects include improvements to local sports facilities, programmes that assist residents struggling with the cost of living, and enhancements to green spaces.</p>

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




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







Key achievements over this period







- We have integrated AI into the telephone system for routine Council Tax enquiries, reducing low value demand and freeing officer capacity. We are now strategically expanding this capability to further service areas through a phased approach.
- The 2025 Canvass and the December Tudor Ward by election was delivered successfully, maintaining high governance and transparency standards. Planning for 2026 elections is underway, including a polling district review aimed at optimising voter access. Targeted engagement with postal voters continues, with clear communication efforts to safeguard voting rights for all residents.
- We continue to support staff through the Multiverse Apprenticeship programme, with the first cohort successfully completing their apprenticeship and applying their new skills internally.
- We completed the Watford Maps Portal creating a single, intuitive hub for all mapping data. This transformation will materially strengthen decision making, support service planning, and improve organisational insight.
- To further enhance our organisational culture and readiness for White Ribbon re-accreditation, we have appointed new ambassadors and delivered robust plans to mark both White Ribbon Day and the 16 Days of Action.




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

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>81. Provide an excellent customer experience for everyone who engages with the council.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p></p>	<p>Delivery of the Customer Experience Strategy has moved to business as usual following the successful achievements of key objectives, such as launch of our AI Chatbot, Live Chat, Co Browsing and the new 'Welcome to Watford' online resource. In addition, we have delivered significant process enhancements and optimised online service processes, further enriching the customer journey. Enhanced data management practices and implementation of comprehensive data dashboards have been introduced to provide deeper insights and enable more informed decision-making across the organisation.</p> <p>To ensure sustained progress, a new Customer & Experience Innovation Board has been established to oversee the delivery of the remaining objectives and to champion continuous improvement in service delivery, foster best practices and innovation.</p> <p>In this quarter we launched AI within our telephone system to handle routine and low-complexity Council Tax enquiries. Building on this achievement, we are now strategically expanding this capability to further service areas through a phased approach.</p> <p>Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Customer Experience Strategy is included within Appendix C2.</p>
	<p>82. 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 Environmental Strategy so that it is intrinsic to everything and ensures we reduce our carbon footprint in line with our green goals.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p></p>	<p>We remain firmly committed to embedding our ambition of achieving net carbon neutrality by 2030, ensuring our Environmental Strategy is at the heart of all our activities. The Environmental Strategy Annual Report was endorsed by Cabinet and shared with the Climate Emergency & Sustainability Forum, reflecting our progress and dedication. We have developed the second draft of our e-learning training module to further promote understanding and engagement with the strategy. Key dates have been agreed for Councillor training on climate change, and our involvement with the UK100 Policy Advisory Group in December 2025 demonstrates our proactive approach to policy development. Additionally, dates for Carbon Literacy training have been confirmed for February 2026, alongside the scheduling of our next travel survey and waste audit,</p> <p>Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Environment Strategy is included within Appendix C3.</p>
	<p>83. Explore opportunities to share services with other councils where it delivers best value and better customer outcomes.</p>	<p>We will work with other authorities to develop and implement business cases that explore opportunities to share more services where this will deliver improvements for our customers.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p></p>	<p>The shared services model allows for the review and enhancement of processes, automation and digitisation where appropriate, and cost reduction while increasing resilience. The new HR & OD Shared Service between Watford, Three Rivers District Council and St Albans District Council went live on 1 October 2025. This milestone marks a significant step in building resilience for our organisations, enabling us to pool resources, share expertise, and deliver high-quality support for our staff. By aligning our strengths and processes, we are</p>

				well positioned to respond effectively to the opportunities presented by the Local Government Reorganisation and to deliver best value for residents.	
	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 voters are well informed on elections and how to exercise their right to vote.	Green	↔	The Canvass 2025 has been completed, with the revised register now published, ensuring our electoral roll remains accurate and up to date. The 2025 elections, including an additional by-election in Tudor Ward held on 4 December 2025, were delivered successfully with no reported issues. The Watford Town Centre BID ballot was also successfully delivered, demonstrating our commitment to supporting local economic growth. Planning for the 2026 elections is already in progress, including a review of polling districts in Holywell and Oxhey Borough wards to further optimise voter access and participation. We are also making strong progress in our engagement with postal voters, maintaining clear communication to ensure that everyone’s voting rights are protected. Approximately 3,000 outstanding re-applications are being actively pursued, and those who do not respond by 31 January 2026 will receive a cancellation letter and a new application form.
	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.	Complete	↑	As a result of local government reorganisation, the procurement approach for parking has changed. Following successful engagement with our current parking enforcement contractor, a three-year extension has been agreed to our existing contract, running through to 2030. The new contract includes a break clause after the second year to ensure ongoing flexibility and performance assurance but ensures that we can continue to deliver this valuable service to the town during the reorganisation process.
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	↔	The ICT Strategy is making good progress, with ongoing improvements that are helping to create a secure and modern digital environment for everyone. We are actively upgrading our computer systems and moving away from older technology, which means our organisation is now working with more reliable and supported systems. Recent efforts, such as the 45-day policy initiative, are boosting our compliance and making our digital workspace safer and more robust. We are also renewing our network connections to ensure the council can support future service demands and provide better services. All devices have now been upgraded to Office 365, and the desktop refresh programme is complete, with all officer laptops replaced and legacy Windows 10 devices removed or disabled. These initiatives collectively enhance the council’s ICT environment, driving improved performance, security, and service delivery efficiency.
	87. Deliver a step change in how we use our data and information, so it strengthens our	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	Complete	↑	The council has successfully delivered the majority of commitments with the Information and Insight Strategy. We achieved a key milestone with the creation of the Watford Maps Portal. This new centralised data hub, completed in November 2025, brings together all mapping resources in an intuitive and accessible format, available to all council staff. This tool will transform the way

	drive for constant improvement and assesses the value for money of our services, allowing us to effectively manage our budget.	information to monitor service delivery and to drive action if something needs improving.			data and information are utilised across the organisation, enabling better decision-making.
	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.	Complete		<p>We have successfully completed the Housing Transformation Programme. Although this signifies the end of the transformation phase, we will maintain our commitment to continuous improvement. We will routinely review and integrate lessons learned, acknowledge and celebrate our achievements, and conduct regular workshops with staff to identify opportunities for enhancing service delivery. These initiatives will be driven by our core values and expected behaviours.</p> <p>An audit was undertaken by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and successfully completed in November 2025. Formal feedback has been received that supports and validates the significant improvements in the Housing Service. Recommendations focus primarily on ensuring all the excellent work being undertaken is captured on systems. An action plan is monitoring implementation of the recommendations and the MHCLG team are returning in February.</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		The latest quarterly update of the contracts register has been completed , in line with our internal processes. Additionally, we are in discussion with, a technology company that develops a Community Data Platform to improve urban planning and community development, to use their Social Value Framework tool that produces measurable outcomes directly linked to procurement and Watford contracts.
	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.	Complete		The Procurement Act 2023 has been embedded into new tenders, supported by an internal audit of the implementation. However, there are still Frameworks under the Procurement Regulations 2015 that are still being used and our new Procurement Manager will undertake a one-year review of the implementation to identify any areas which require amendment or updating.
	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 initiation of redesign sprints for delivery in 2025/26 has been temporarily paused in light of Local Government Reorganisation, hence the amber RAG status. However, service innovation continues internally and a balanced budget has been delivered following central government’s fairer funding announcement, negating the need to prioritise services against limited budget.

<p>Focus and challenge how we manage our budget, so it is concentrated on delivering our commitments and securing greater investment for Watford.</p>	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		Our quarterly reporting provides enhanced focus on identifying and addressing risks, as well as monitoring projected income against budget expectations. We have extended the asset management contract for both our investment portfolio and Croxley Park, securing continuity of professional oversight until December 2026.
	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.	Complete		The budget is aligned to the Council Plan and Council Delivery Plan. The 2026/27 budget and medium-term financial strategy, which includes a council tax freeze, has been presented to Finance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, and was approved by Council on 27 January 2026.
	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.	Complete		The Commercial and Collaboration Strategy, which will support our financial goals and contribute to our success and resilience, has been incorporated into the 2026/27 Capital Strategy which is due to be presented to Council on 27 January 2026.
	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. The capital programme has been reviewed and updated as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process. The revised capital programme is due to be presented to Council on 27 January 2026.
	<p>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.</p>	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'.	Complete	
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.	Complete		The GREAT Conversation framework, launched on 1 June 2025, is firmly rooted in our organisational values in action. It is supported by a comprehensive toolkit, featuring templates with behavioural prompts, FAQs, and more, to foster high-quality conversations. Communication has been delivered via Intouch, with drop-in sessions offered to provide ongoing support.

<p>98. Refresh our Organisational Development approach so that it effectively underpins and supports our Council Plan.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>		<p>The People Strategy remains a dynamic and adaptable framework, enabling us to respond proactively as Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) activities clarify our future priorities. Over the next six months, as these areas of focus become more defined, we will review and refine the framework to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the organisation and support our staff. This quarter, we have prioritised building resilience across the workforce, rolling out mental health first aider training and conducting health and wellbeing awareness campaigns. Looking ahead, we are committed to ensuring all compliance training is completed, reinforcing our focus on staff development and organisational excellence.</p> <p>We remain committed to the White Ribbon campaign and reaccreditation. A comprehensive three-year action plan has been developed, providing a clear roadmap through to 2028.</p>
<p>99. Seek and implement opportunities for our people to have fulfilling local government careers.</p>	<p>We will continue to support apprenticeship opportunities for our teams, providing them with experience, skills and knowledge from across the council.</p>	<p>Green</p>		<p>We continue to demonstrate our commitment to supporting colleagues participating in the Multiverse Apprentice programme. The first cohort of officers have successfully completed the apprenticeship and are now equipped to apply their enhanced skills and knowledge within the organisation to drive positive outcomes.</p> <p>We are proactively preparing to take part in careers fairs during National Apprenticeship Week and National Careers Week in the next quarter. These initiatives will strengthen our engagement with the wider community and reinforce the council's position as an employer of choice for emerging talent and aspiring professionals.</p>
<p>100. Protect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff and members.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Green</p>		<p>Equality, diversity and inclusion remain central priorities for the council. We are actively exploring additional training opportunities to enhance members' awareness and understanding in these areas, ensuring we are well equipped to support all residents. Our commitment to promoting health and wellbeing is ongoing, with targeted campaigns and initiatives throughout the year reflecting seasonal and topical priorities. In light of the forthcoming Employment Rights Act 2025, we are considering its implications for our health and wellbeing provision and have updated our action plan accordingly.</p> <p>To further strengthen our approach, we recruited new ambassadors in preparation for White Ribbon re-accreditation, and comprehensive plans were implemented to mark White Ribbon Day and the subsequent 16 Days of Action. Regular awareness campaigns, such as National Walking Month and National Inclusion Week, were delivered to keep health and wellbeing at the forefront. Finally we collaborated with our partner, Henpicked, to raise awareness during World Menopause Month in October 2025, ensuring continued focus on inclusion and staff wellbeing.</p>