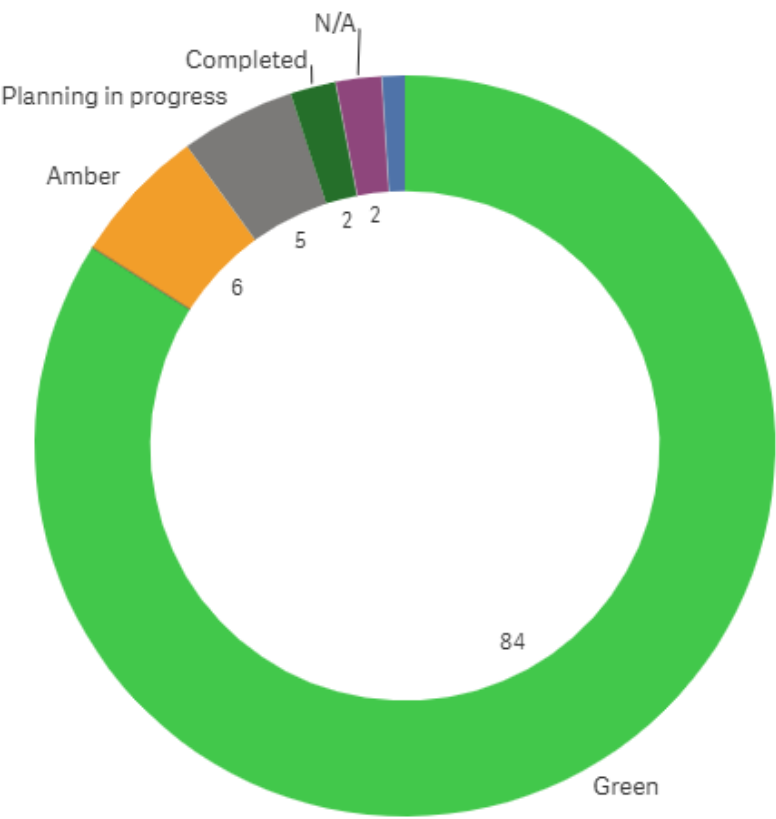




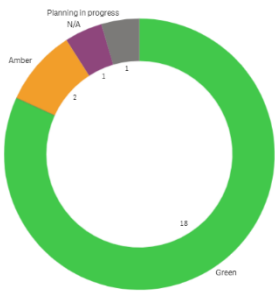
Delivery Plan Overview



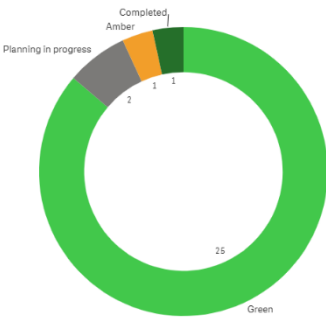
Key
Green – Completed
Green – On track
Blue – Ahead of Schedule

Amber – Potential Risks / Some uncertainty
Red – Challenges

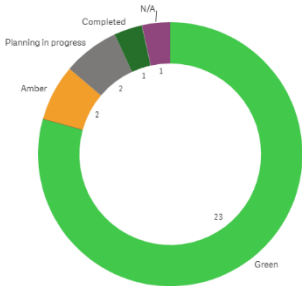
Council Plan Theme - A greener, brighter future



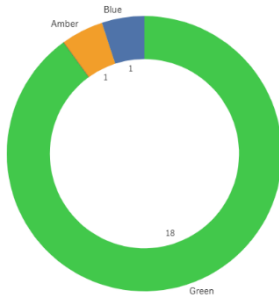
Council Plan Theme - A diverse, happy and healthy town



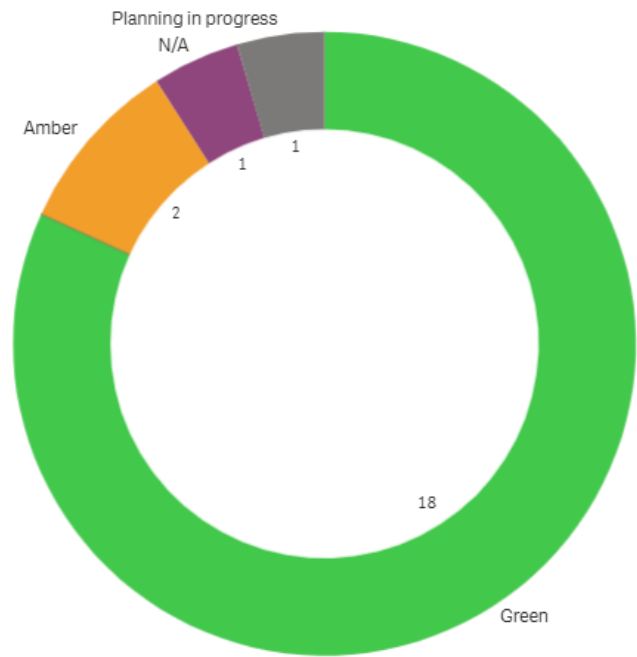
Council Plan Theme - An inspiring, thriving and creative town



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



Theme Overview: A greener, brighter future



Key achievements over this period

1. Since 2020, our partnership with Beryl Bikes has successfully promoted sustainable and convenient travel for both residents and visitors through our bike share scheme. Over the last period, the scheme reached a significant milestone of 500,000 journeys, covering over 1,350,000 km, with 37,000 unique users. As we approach the contract expiry, we have initiated the re-procurement process to ensure the continued success and benefits of this valuable scheme.
2. The Watford Car Club scheme, launched in partnership with Enterprise Car Club (ECC) earlier this year, has almost 100 registered members. We are continuing to grow the scheme to make it accessible to more residents.
3. On 21 October 2024, the council moved to fortnightly recycling collections for houses and flat blocks of 5 or less units. This transition represents a more sustainable approach to recycling, delivering better value for money while significantly reducing carbon emissions by minimising the number of collection vehicles on our roads.

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.	Green	↔	Since 2020, our collaboration with Beryl Bikes has facilitated sustainable and convenient travel for residents and visitors, achieving a significant milestone of 500,000 journeys, covering over 1,350,000 km with 37,000 unique users. The contract extension to 2026, agreed earlier this year, ensures the continuation of these benefits. The scheme's expansion into Bushey, operational since March, includes four bays, with two additional bays planned for Bushey Mill Lane and Sparrows Herne. Further expansion into Croxley Green, in partnership with Three Rivers District Council, launched four bays in October, with another bay forthcoming. Discussions with neighbouring authorities are ongoing for cross-borough expansion. We are also preparing for the re-procurement of the service, engaging internal stakeholders and preparing necessary documents for approval.
	2. Investigate Town Centre transport solutions that work for Watford.	We will continue to investigate the potential for a low-carbon transport hub in Watford Town Centre, to encourage more use of public transport, reducing congestion and improving air quality for everyone.	Green	↔	Progress on the low-carbon transport hub aligns with our Transforming Travel in Watford Strategy delivery. This quarter, we engaged with stakeholders, including property consultants and Herts County Council (HCC), regarding the proposed site and the pre-application process. Public consultations, both face-face and online surveys, in July showed local support for the Lower High Street regeneration plans. We will meet with Transport for London (TfL) next quarter to discuss public realm improvements adjacent to Lower High Street Station.
	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	↔	Round 2 of the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) electric charging point installations programme is progressing with completion expected by the end of this year. Round 3, for which further ORCS funding has been secured, will commence in October with a target completion date of December, subject to approval and sign-off from HCC. This phase will include installation of twin and lamp column charge points.
	4. Continue the roll out of our Watford Car Club.	As usage builds, we will roll out more car club bays and continue to support the operator, to drive up usage and membership.	Green	↔	The Watford Car Club scheme, launched in partnership with Enterprise Car Club (ECC) earlier this year, has almost 100 registered members. We are continuing to grow the scheme to make it accessible to more residents. ECC have launched a traditional car club bay in the Cortland Cassiobury development in Ascot Road, alongside Beryl Bikes bays, offering residents discounted memberships. We are working with the developer to establish an electric car club bay at the site.
	5. Work with our partners to introduce a green loop around the borough.	We will work with Hertfordshire County Council and our cycling and walking communities to improve the cycling and walking network across our town, so more people choose to cycle and walk.	Green	↔	We continue to collaborate and engage with key partners, including SPOKES Cycling Group, Herts Disability Sport Foundation and HCC to advance the Green Loop scheme in Watford. The scheme signage has been approved and is in production, and promotional materials are ready for printing and distribution. A dedicated 'Watford Green Loop' web page has been created for the launch later this year. The scheme includes long-term improvements to several highway junctions along the eastern leg.

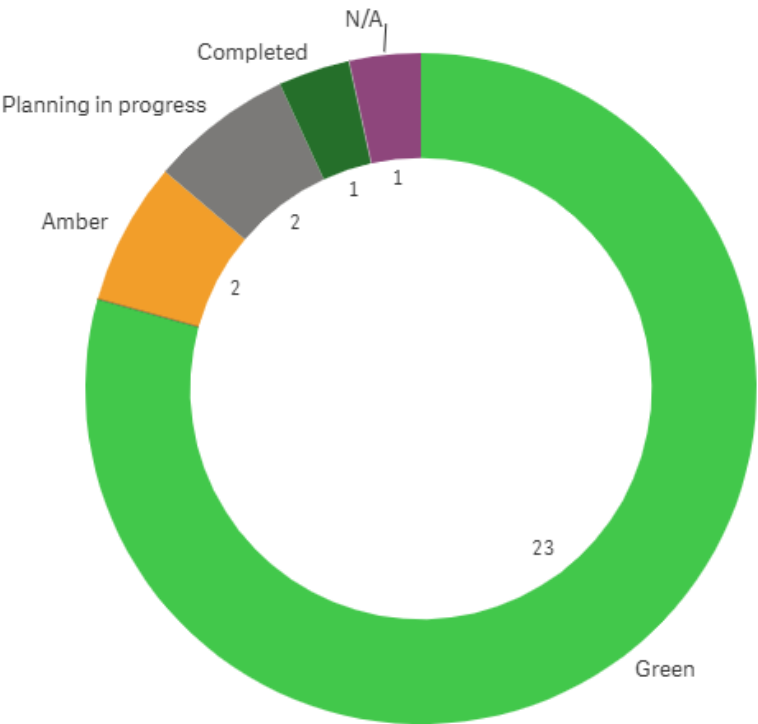
Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	6. Champion proposals for a sustainable transport option for Watford Junction to Croxley.	We will work closely with Hertfordshire County Council on the Watford to Croxley Link, following the completion of initial feasibility work, to secure the best transport system for our town, offering greater choice for our residents, visitors and commuters to travel sustainably.	Planning in Progress	N/A	The options and feasibility study for the Watford to Croxley Link is complete. We are now working with HCC to define the next phase of work. A consultant team working for the HCC-led partnership is conducting derisking work and assessing the work needed to develop a Strategic Outline Case.
	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 the Transforming Travel in Watford programme and HCC continues as they review the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), particularly in light of the new Government. Resident complaints about the current bus service are being forwarded to HCC. The BSIP will be discussed at the Member Steering Group in December.
Promote improvements to Watford’s biodiversity to enhance the range of habitats, plants and wildlife in the town.	8. Set out our commitments to improving Watford’s biodiversity.	We will develop our Green Spaces Strategy, promoting and enhancing biodiversity in line with our Environmental Strategy and Green Flag Management Plans.	Green	↔	The development of our new Green Spaces Strategy, which includes the Play Strategy, is progressing well. External consultation, delivered through an online survey, is now complete, generating over 600 responses. In addition, a further 85 people attended in-person events. Site audit reports have also been reviewed over the last period. This approach highlights our commitment to enhancing green spaces through engagement with the community.
	9. Rediscover the River Colne to enhance the river as a place for our community to enjoy.	We will build on our improvements to date in and around the River Colne, to make it a more appealing place for local people to enjoy and a better environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.	Amber	↔	The River Colne programme remains at amber status, as we continue to find a resolution for the flood risk activity permit with the Environment Agency (EA) for the in river works at the northern sites. However, we have now submitted the EA license application for the Waterfields site, with approval expected next quarter. In preparation, a procurement report is being drafted for the Waterfields works, with a view to appoint a contractor in the next quarter. The Timberlake works are complete, where volunteers installed a series of low banks (berms) with a flow deflector and planted native flowers to help improve biodiversity, attract wildlife and improve the river health. Through the National Lottery-funded ‘Tales of River’ workstream, we completed site visits which will support the development of a self-guided trail brief. Three podcasts produced through the workstream are continuing to be downloaded and a fourth podcast is in production.
	10. Celebrate and enhance Whippendell Woods as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.	We will protect Whippendell Woods, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), in order to preserve its ‘favourable condition’ status by delivering the Forestry Commission Management Plan and relocating the existing cycle trail.	Amber	↔	Plans to relocate the mountain bike trail to its new location, the Golf Club, is well underway in collaboration with Bike Park Chilterns, a Community Interest Company. A project to build new bike trails was initiated in October with the approval of a Project Brief and a grant from the Neighbourhood Grant Scheme has been awarded to complete this work. Now that funding is confirmed, the project timeline will be re-baselined in the next quarter, enabling the project to move to green status. Following the felling of trees earlier this year at Whippendell Woods, a forester meeting was held to discuss replanting areas affected by Ash Dieback. Ruts in the woods have now been mostly restored in pathways.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	11. Continue to extend our green canopy.	We will work with Hertfordshire County Council to provide a further 6,000 trees to be given away to residents and continue our tree-planting programme, seeking further external funding.	Green	↔	The 2024/25 tree planting season has commenced, with a tree briefing held for members in September. The Parks Team is currently reviewing our Ash Dieback plan. Following the 2023/24 tree nominations, officers, alongside the Portfolio Holder, are working to update customers on the status of their nominations. We will inform them whether their nominations have been accepted and, if not, provide the reasons. Initial indications suggest that tree survival rates are nearly 100%, although we are awaiting final confirmation.
	12. Promote healthy and sustainable gardening across the town.	We will continue compost giveaways, using our green waste recycling to bring back the organic material as free, nutrient-rich compost for Watford residents to grow plants and vegetables.	Green	↔	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 2025.
Work alongside our community and businesses to find the right ways to reach net carbon neutral, seeking not just to learn from others, but to explore innovative solutions that will work for Watford.	13. Implement our Environmental Strategy.	We will work with our community and businesses to implement our Environmental Strategy, which will set out how together we can contribute to our target to be a net carbon neutral borough by 2030.	Green	↔	We formalised delivery of the Environment Strategy and set out how we will achieve our ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030 last year. Sustainability is at the heart of everything we do, and is woven through other council projects, programmes, schemes and initiatives such as the Rediscovering River Colne, Town Hall Quarter and Transforming Travel in Watford Programmes. Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Environment Strategy is included within Appendix C3.
	14. Ensure the council's own buildings are as energy efficient as possible within available resources.	We will bid for and utilise any external funding to improve the energy performance of properties within our portfolio.	Green	↔	The PSDS-funded project to enhance the energy performance of The Orbital, Harebreaks and The Palace Theatre, is progressing well. We have completed condition surveys and conducted several technical site visits. Engagement with tenants is ongoing to secure match funding towards the project. In the next quarter, we will conduct further surveys and agree the procurement option for a contractor to undertake the works. The Sustainability Board has reviewed the Sustainable Asset Strategies for all community buildings within the council's portfolio. These strategies outline the necessary improvements to enhance energy efficiency and sustainability and assess the feasibility of further work.
	15. Explore opportunities for improving the sustainability of the council's fleet of vehicles.	We will produce our new Fleet Strategy and work with our service providers to ensure that, as our existing fleet is replaced, new vehicles are as sustainable as possible.	Green	↔	We have recently commissioned a feasibility study into fleet electrification. The research and data collection will be undertaken over the course of 2024/25 and a first draft of the feasibility report is expected in 2025/26.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	16. Reduce our impact on the environment by introducing fortnightly recycling.	We will learn from best practice to build on the success of our waste and recycling scheme and, subject to Cabinet approval, will move to fortnightly recycling and implementing food waste to flat collections.	Green	↔	On 21 October 2024, the council moved to fortnightly recycling collections for houses and flat blocks of 5 or less units. We engaged extensively with residents, distributing leaflets and calendars to ensure they were ready for the transition. This transition represents a more sustainable approach to recycling, delivering better value for money while significantly reducing carbon emissions by minimising the number of collection vehicles on our roads.
Encourage residents and businesses to recycle more, reusing materials and reducing waste and what they throw away.	17. Increase how much our residents recycle whether at home, work or school as well as reducing the waste we throw away as a town.	We will do this by implementing new government regulations on 'Simpler Recycling': - Rolling our food waste and recycling collections to qualifying schedule 2 premises by March 2025. - Rolling out food waste collections to all residents living in flats by March 2026. - Supporting businesses and partners (including our environmental services provider and leisure services provider) to understand the changes required and to deliver the next step change in reducing waste and increasing recycling, particularly through campaigns and changing behaviours.	Green	↔	We are actively engaging with stakeholders on the 'Simpler Recycling' regulations. Following the initial kick-off meeting with the council's Economic Development Team, Watford BID, and the Sustainability and Commissioning Service, a second meeting was held with additional stakeholders, including Atria. Discussions on food waste and Schedule 2 projects are planned for the autumn, following the launch of fortnightly recycling. We are currently awaiting confirmation on the receipt of our first Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) payment. This payment will aid in sorting and managing packaging waste.
	18. Promote Community Waste Days organised by Members.	We will promote Community Waste Days, funded by our neighbourhood locality funds and organised by local ward councillors, to ensure residents are aware of the opportunities to dispose of waste safely and sustainably.	Green	↔	Community Waste Days will continue to be promoted as and when they are arranged by local councillors.
	19. Continue to deliver our annual deep clean programme.	We will work with our partners to ensure we complete the annual spring clean of the Town Centre and deliver our annual deep clean programme across the streets of Watford.	Green	↑	To maintain our clean and welcoming town centre, we successfully completed the 2024 Town Centre Spring Clean in July and this included a thorough cleansing of the High Street pavement, removal of chewing gum, and cleaning of signage and furniture. The Deep Clean Programme for 2023/24 was also successfully completed in March 2024. The programme for 2024/25 is underway and expected to be completed by March 2025. This programme will focus on cleansing difficult-to-access streets, emptying gulleys, repairing potholes, and line marking.
	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	↔	Following the success of our clothes swap event last quarter, we are now planning a second event for this winter. This initiative continues to promote sustainable fashion and community engagement.
	21. Tackle fly-tipping and encourage responsible waste disposal, to reduce the impact on	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	Green	↔	The council is committed to take enforcement action against fly-tipping offenders where evidence is found, in accordance with the Community Protection Compliance Policy. We regularly work with businesses to ensure that they have suitable waste contracts in place to manage their waste responsibly. Duty of Care inspections have been carried out both proactively and reactively.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	our environment and residents.	responsible waste management and will take action where businesses fail in their duty of care.			
	22. Continue to deliver high-quality waste, recycling and parks services.	We will commence reviewing options for the future delivery of our waste, recycling, parks and streets services to ensure that we are able to continue delivering high-quality and good-value services to our residents.	Not started yet	N/A	Our partnership with Veolia is expected to continue until 2028. This activity will commence during the life of this Delivery Plan, and after we have successfully implemented fortnightly recycling, allowing sufficient time for the change to be fully embedded.

Theme Overview: An inspiring, thriving and creative town



Key achievements over this period

1. Following the new government’s new budget, the council has now received confirmation of the £16m of Levelling Up Funding (LUF) which will enable us to progress our plans for an Innovation and Incubation Hub (IIH) in the Town Hall. The IIH will fulfil the council’s commitment to support new and growing businesses across the borough.
2. The LUF funding will also support the refurbishment of the Colosseum which is continuing at pace with significant works completed over the last period. The management contract with AEG was also signed in this period and acts have started to be booked in preparation for the reopening.
3. Following the launch of the Watford Business Pledge in July, ten businesses are in the process of signing up as Pledge ‘early-adopters’. The Pledge aims to create a collaborative environment where businesses can learn from one another about key areas of social responsibility, including local employment and environmental sustainability.
4. Stage 1 of the Whippendell Road Shopping Parade improvement works, covering the junctions and footway alongside Southsea Avenue and Burton Avenue, is now complete and the footway is open to the public.

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.	Amber	↑	Following the new government’s new budget, the council has received confirmation of the £16m of Levelling Up Funding that was previously agreed by the government of the time. Work to design and develop the Innovation and Incubation Hub, which will fulfil the council’s commitment to support new and growing businesses across the town, has now recommenced and it is expected that the status will return to green once the project plan has been fully developed and agreed.
	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>Our Economic Development team continue to act as a point of contact for businesses across the borough, providing information and support. In this quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Watford Business Pledge was launched through the Watford Business Connect event held in July. The event was well attended with over 100 businesses represented.- We supported Watford Chamber to deliver the Meet the Mayor business engagement event in July.- We supported and attended the Hertfordshire SME Awards in September, celebrating several Watford businesses who won awards.- We supported the Environmental Managers business network, helping more Watford businesses join this useful and informative forum.- We met with businesses on a one-to-one basis to help with signposting, connecting and gathering feedback, including new business and major employer to Watford, Epson. <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>All live revenue UKSPF-funded projects have been procured and are underway. In this quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Watford Opportunities Skills Brokerage project commenced, connecting businesses with funded training and staff development opportunities- Growth Springboard business recruitment commenced for the second phase of this micro business growth support project- Developer Skills & Employment Plan approach – work commenced to scope and define how Watford can require developers to do more to support skills and employment opportunities for local people- Visit Herts – new campaign being developed to promote some of Watford’s independent hospitality businesses- Preparation for the next Watford Meet-the-Buyer event is underway (13 November), and the associated Fit-2-Bid business support programme is live, supporting many more businesses with tendering skills- Ongoing monitoring of the impact of the Watford Town Centre BID Business Improvement Grant project and the Watford Net Zero project

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	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	↔	Following the launch of the Watford Business Pledge in July, ten businesses are in the process of signing up as Pledge ‘early-adopters’ and testing out the new application process. The Watford LinkUp platform has been reconfigured to support the success of the Pledge, and the Knowledge Hub has been populated with resources to help businesses meet the five Pledge Commitments.
	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	↔	Following completion of the Watford Skills and Employment Plan delivery in the last reporting period this work has now transferred to BAU and is monitored by the ‘One Watford for Business’ group which is chaired by the Elected Mayor. The Watford Skills and Employment Group met in September and updated the refreshed Action Plan. The meeting enabled new ideas and information to be shared between providers and stakeholders, to help Watford’s residents and businesses get the most from skills and employment support available.
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	↔	Initial planning meetings for the 2025 UKREiiF have commenced and are being led by colleagues in the Regeneration Team. The new Watford Place Brand, 'Watford Actually', is being seeded into a variety of Business Comms, including through the Herts SME Awards collateral, and is being well received by businesses. The business-related content for the new ‘Watford Actually’ website is being drafted by the Economic Development team.
	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 last Watford Business Connect event held in July was well attended and saw the launch of the Watford Business Pledge. Over 100 business representatives joined the Council and Regal at a showcase event in the new Clarendon Works building, which included a panel discussion about what makes Watford a great place for investment, with commercial agents Lambert Smith Hampton in attendance.
	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 Economic Development Team attended the launch of the new Hertfordshire Economy Strategy, with Hertfordshire Futures and stakeholders. The team will support the consultation for the new strategy, with dedicated feedback sessions in Watford. The South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan, drafted with input from the Planning Teams from the five South West Herts districts, is now complete.
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	↔	In the absence of Homes England funding, we are preparing a recommendation for the Joint Venture Partnership with Mace for review over the next period. In the meantime we are continuing to engage with Homes England to strengthen our application for when the funding window reopens in order to fulfil our commitment to establish a new vibrant area at the northern end of the High Street.

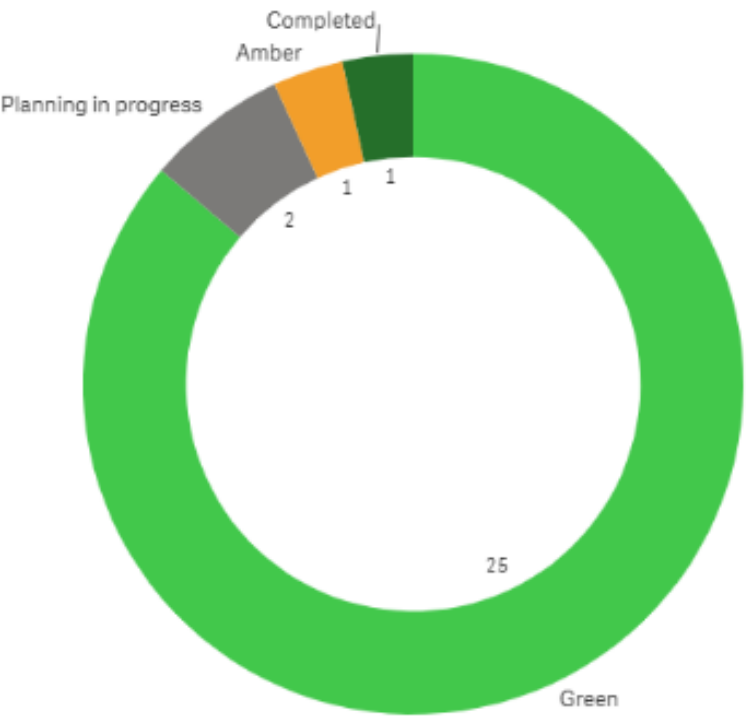
Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
community to enjoy and experience.	32. Launch a refurbished Colosseum with a new, global operator.	We will complete our refurbishment of Watford Colosseum, so it remains a first-class entertainment venue, with a world-class operator bringing an exciting and diverse range of performances and creative events to boost the town's cultural offer and local economy.	Green	↑	The refurbishment of the Colosseum continues at pace, with significant works having been completed over the last period. This includes the completion of asbestos removal, installation of the new staircase and welcome lobby, the commencement of works to the Changing Places facility, a new kitchen roof and the installation of CCTV, access control, fire, and intruder alarms. Over the last period, the contract with AEG was signed and acts have started to be booked in preparation for the reopening. AEG and the council continue to work together, alongside Morgan Sindall, the refurbishment contractors, to ensure that the building is ready for opening in Autumn 2025. The government also confirmed the funding of £8m for the completion of the project, significantly derisking the scheme and returning the status to green.
	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	↑	Over the last period, National Lottery Heritage Funding has been confirmed for the new Museum which will be housed within a refurbished and repurposed Town Hall. Levelling Up Funding for the Innovation Hub, which is intended to share the building with the Museum, was also confirmed, meaning that the project can proceed once more. Over the next period, the council will be undertaking a range of surveys to ensure that the final design can be completed with the intention of on-site works commencing in Spring 2025, following on from the earlier completion of a range of decarbonisation measures within the building. The significant progress over the last period has allowed the status of the project to return to green.
	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	↔	The Communications Team is working closely with Watford Town Centre BID to prepare for launch of the 2024 'Shop and Eat Local' campaign. The BID Gift Card, which is accepted by 149 businesses across the town centre, is at the centre of the campaign. A number of photocalls with local businesses have already been arranged so that the content is prepared well-ahead of time. The aim is to run the campaign under one joint visual identity, featuring both organisations' logos. We are considering how best to apply the 'Watford Actually' branding and narrative.
	35. Promote Watford Market and our offer as a market town.	We will ensure that the new market operator will support our local traders by continuing to run our popular 'Market Late' events and showcasing the great range of food and drink stalls in the market.	Green	↔	We held the Halloween Market Lates event on 1 November where visitors were able to enjoy live music, a pop-up bar, and delicious food, including Caribbean, Asian and Korean street food. Additionally, we held a Christmas pop-up market on 8 December. These market lates provide a wonderful opportunity for residents and visitors to enjoy the market's outdoor space, food stalls, and local bar and build upon the success of our most popular Market Lates event to date in May of this year.
	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	Green	↔	An initial meeting was held with the Business Improvement District (BID) and Atria in September where we discussed and agreed the key pillars and approach for the strategy. A follow up meeting is planned in November where the draft strategy will be presented.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
		positively impact the community and local businesses.			
	37. Support our community of Town Centre businesses in determining their chosen direction for the future of Watford BID in any new term it secures.	We will work with Watford BID to manage the next ballot, so our businesses continue to have a strong voice in their future.	Not started yet	N/A	The current BID term ends in March 2026 and the BID have not yet confirmed the date of the next ballot. However, the council continues to work closely with the BID, supporting BAU activities, board meetings and the recent AGM.
	38. Enhance our district parades.	We will roll out an annual programme of local neighbourhood shopping parade improvements to enhance their appeal, commencing with Whippendell Road, to drive footfall and support local neighbourhoods.	Green	↔	The local neighbourhood shopping parade improvements are being delivered in phases, starting with Whippendell Road. Stage 1 of the first phase, covering the junctions and footway alongside Southsea Avenue and Burton Avenue, was completed this quarter, and the footway is now open to the public. Stage 2, involving Durban Road West and Park Avenue junctions, is progressing as planned. Stages 2 and 3, the junction with Durban Road East, are expected to be completed by mid-November, ahead of the HCC Highways embargo on highway works for Christmas, although completion remains weather-dependent. This phased approach ensures steady progress and minimal disruption to the community. The prioritisation of the further shopping parades will be undertaken using agreed evaluation criteria. Surveys will be conducted to assess the condition of each parade against the criteria and rank them objectively. This exercise is scheduled for completion by year-end, with findings and recommendations to be reported and reviewed with stakeholders.
Ensure the right mix of facilities, services and transport links, as part of new developments to create successful, well designed new communities.	39. Lobby partners to move forward plans for developing the Watford Junction Quarter.	We will continue to work with the Department for Transport, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Network Rail, Homes England, Herts Growth Board and other landowners with an ambition to create a new sustainable neighbourhood that successfully combines new homes, new station facilities, jobs, public spaces and community facilities for both our existing and new residents.	Green	↔	Whilst the council does not own the land around Watford Junction, we are committed to improving the local amenities to create a new neighbourhood and have continued to liaise with key landowners and stakeholders on the redevelopment of the area. The council is seeking a next meeting with Network Rail to progress discussions on a potential development strategy. We have commenced a regeneration benefits workstream which has formed part of a strategic initiatives briefing to the newly formed Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to promote the benefits of investment in Watford
	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	Green	↔	The joint venture partnership is actively managing the Riverwell scheme development. Construction of Avenues Phase 1 is progressing well, with completion expected by the end of November. Upon completion, the scheme will be handed over to the Watford Community Housing Trust, and private homes will be marketed for sale. The planning application for Avenues Phase 2, submitted last quarter, is under review, with consent anticipated by the end of November. The contractor for Industrial Zone N has been appointed, and work is set to commence in Q3. Additionally, the planning application for the Town Square is being prepared for submission in Q3. Discussions with Hertfordshire County Council regarding a school site are ongoing.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
		ensure that any new hospital is sustainable for the future.			
	41. Achieve the right long-term balance of development, services and transport links for our town.	We will continue to deliver our award-winning Local Plan for Watford which will shape how the town will develop sustainably over the next 30 years. We will ensure that our residents understand how our Local Plan is making a difference by producing our Authority Monitoring Report on an annual basis. Towards the end of this Delivery Plan, we will start to review our Local Plan.	Green	↔	We are continuing to deliver our Local Plan through our business-as-usual activities. Annual Monitoring reports are produced and published at the end of each calendar year to demonstrate our performance. The Local Plan review will require scoping and agreement in 2025.
	42. Signpost our residents to Hertfordshire County Council to address their concerns about potholes on our roads.	We will ensure that we provide clear information to our residents on how to report potholes to Hertfordshire County Council and will provide up-to-date information on their performance in resolving issues on our roads.	Planning in Progress	N/A	We are in the process of scoping the data available from HCC and how this objective can be addressed but continue to encourage residents to report potholes to the County Council so that remedial works can be undertaken.
	43. Ensure that we have an effective planning enforcement and building control service.	We will continue to embed our shared service with St Albans City and District Council to ensure that we have a responsive and proportionate planning enforcement and building control service.	Green	↔	The shared services model provides opportunities for us to review and enhance our processes, automate and digitise processes where relevant and reduce costs and increase resilience. The Planning Enforcement and Building Control shared services with St Albans is progressing to plan as we continue to refine the case management process.
	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	↔	The proposal to sell land to Watford Community Housing so that they can deliver a 100% affordable housing scheme will be taken to Cabinet in early 2025, following consultation in October 2024 on consulting with residents on the sale proposals.
	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 newly appointed Senior Surveyor is currently reviewing community asset leases, and guided by the Community Asset Strategy, will ensure that the responsibilities of both tenants and the council are clearly defined and agreed. We are prioritising delivery of the PSDS-funded energy efficiency improvement project at The Orbital, Harebreaks and Palace Theatre. Our focus is on ensuring these are works are completed in accordance with the funder's criteria.
Make sure we have quality homes to meet the needs of residents, including housing that is affordable through direct ownership,	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	Amber	↔	While the new Housing Strategy is at the development stage, we are prioritising delivery of the Nominations Policy to support our residents applying to the housing register, and the Strategy is therefore delayed. This focussed approach allows us to address immediate needs more effectively despite current resourcing challenges.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
private rental, affordable and social rent housing.		contribute to meeting the housing challenges faced by our residents.			The Housing Strategy is scheduled for adoption by Cabinet during Q3 2025/26, however this timeframe is subject to resource availability.
	47. Review and refresh our Nominations Policy.	We will deliver a new Nominations Policy for Watford to help our residents apply to our housing register, and understand how we manage the register, your choice about where you live, how we assess applications and allocate properties.	Green	↔	The draft Nominations Policy is complete. We have established a timetable and plan for consultation, set to begin in early November 2024. While there is a slight delay in commencing consultation, the schedule ensures we will meet the new implementation date of April 2025.
	48. Improve housing provision for those local families who need homes that are affordable.	We will work with partners to deliver high-quality, new homes for social rent, for local families who need them the most, and support the housing needs of the most vulnerable members of our community.	Green	↔	Housing and Development Control continue to try to maximise the delivery of social rented homes through planning gains, with 23 Social Rented units due to complete in 24/25. Approval for commuted sum spend to deliver a further five social rented units at Sydney Road was approved by Council in July. We will be developing a strategy for how we further spend commuted sums and the capital released from the sale of assets, to deliver additional homes. Housing and Property & Asset Management Teams are continuing to explore opportunities to deliver social rented homes on council land e.g. Croxley View Phase 3.
	49. Develop planning guidance to ensure developers provide new homes that support local needs.	We will develop our Design Code and guidance to inform how new homes and buildings should be designed so they meet the needs of Watford and are built to a high standard.	Green	↔	The project initiation is underway, with a consultant brief being developed. Officers are also actively participating in the Hertfordshire Design Officers Group. The guidance draft is expected to be completed by summer 2025, with adoption expected in early 2026 following public consultation.
	50. Deliver a refreshed Private Sector Renewal Policy.	We will review and refresh our Private Sector Renewal policy to support the improvement of Watford’s housing stock, setting out how we can help the private sector improve and maintain housing quality in the town.	Green	↔	The review and refresh of the Private Sector Renewal policy will be informed by our housing stock condition survey, which is now complete. The information provided as part of the survey has been presented to officers so that the policy can be developed.
	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.	Planning in Progress	N/A	Planning for this activity will be progressed once the Resettlement Manager takes up post at WBC.

Theme Overview: A diverse, happy and healthy town



Key achievements over this period

1. The relocation of the museum service to the Town Hall has received a significant boost following confirmation of the £2.4m grant from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. Prior to the award the council hosted a successful site visit for the NLHF Committee in September, demonstrating our ambitious plans for the new service.
2. Monitoring data for the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework shows that over 30k service users have benefitted from attending our community centres, with over 400 sessions addressing social isolation. Additionally, more than 500 health and wellbeing activities were delivered to support residents and Watford Citizens Advice supported over 2,300 individuals with various issues, including debt reduction, marking a significant achievement for Watford.
3. We delivered several achievements through the corporate Equality and Diversity Policy, including the inclusion of an Equality Statement in all recruitment adverts and role profiles, demonstrating our commitment to diversity and fairness in the hiring process, and publication of the Disability Confident Logo on the council website.
4. The Mayor’s Small Grants Fund for 2024-25 received 33 applications with a total funding request of £85,593. The fund provides voluntary and community organisations the opportunity to apply for a grant towards one-off community events or purchase of items of equipment.
5. We successfully delivered our programme of free Big Events over the summer, bringing our diverse community together for fun and engaging activities and experiences.

THEME: A diverse, happy and healthy town

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
Continue our investment in our outstanding parks and open spaces so they remain the best in the area.	52. Continue our programme of investment and improvements in Watford’s parks.	Through the development of our Green Spaces Strategy, we will identify improvements for our parks to ensure that they remain attractive, whilst introducing improvements to paths, our cemetery, waste and recycling provision and installing new water fountains.	Green	↔	The key activities involved in the development of our new Green Spaces Strategy, which will incorporate the Play Strategy, are progressing well. External consultation, delivered through an online survey, is now complete, generating 600+ responses. In addition, a further 85 people attended in-person events. Site audit reports have also been received and reviewed by the Strategic Group as part of the strategic pathway process.
	53. Enhance our public facilities at Woodside Playing Fields.	We will invest in the facilities at Woodside Playing Fields, providing a new toilet block for visitors and users of the park.	Complete	N/A	The Public Toilet Block and Changing Places Toilet construction was completed in this quarter, providing fully accessible facilities for all park users and visitors.
	54. Work in partnership with our leisure operator to promote and improve our leisure facilities.	We will deliver energy efficiency improvements to Woodside Leisure Centre and explore opportunities to improve facilities at Central and Woodside Leisure Centres to support our community to be active.	Green	↔	We have secured Sports England funding to deliver energy efficiency improvements to Woodside Leisure Centre, through the installation of solar panels, in partnership with our Leisure partner. The design work was instructed in the last quarter and in this quarter the detailed designs have been reviewed and are currently under review for approval. The work is expected to be complete by March 2025. As well as easing the pressure on the cost of utilities, the installation of solar panels will contribute towards our ambition to reduce carbon emissions.
Celebrate and promote our town’s rich and diverse culture and creativity.	55. Open our new and exciting museum in a refurbished Town Hall.	Subject to a successful award of Heritage Lottery Funding, we will open a new, modern, inspiring Heritage and Museum service based in our historic Town Hall, working with Warner Bros and Watford FC to ensure that it engages and educates our residents and visitors by telling the story of our town and its rich and diverse history.	Green	↔	Our plans to establish a new museum service at the Town Hall have received a significant boost with a £2.4 million grant from the National Heritage Lottery Fund, following a successful site visit by the NLHF Committee in September. This funding will support our ambitious vision for an exciting and interactive museum service, enhancing the cultural experience for all residents and visitors. We continue to progress the delivery of the museum, recently focussing on design work, recruitment of additional staff and branding.
	56. Enhance the town’s creative and cultural appeal through a new Public Art Strategy.	We will develop a Public Art Strategy for Watford, to explore how art in all its forms, can animate and enhance our public spaces, building on Watford’s strong sense of identity and creativity.	Green	↔	The new Public Art Strategy was delayed to allow the toolkit to be tested by Public Art pilots discussed with Portfolio Holders earlier this year. Lessons learned have been collated from these pilots and in addition we are testing the artist selection part of the toolkit with ‘Tales of the River’ artwork during October and November. An officer workshop has been scheduled for early November to agree updates to and finalise the Strategy and associated toolkit using lessons learned, before submission to the designer for final edits. This is expected to take place in the final quarter of 2024/25.

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.	Green	↔	This scheme builds on the ‘100 people who made Watford’ initiative. The scheme provides a range of information on some of those Watfordians who have made exceptional contributions to the town. An options paper has been developed and approved and a project is being initiated for delivery in collaboration with partners.
	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	↔	<p>Despite resource challenges, reflecting the amber status, significant progress has been made over the last period on three key actions from the Conservation Areas Management Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Plans for the renovation and improvement of the sensory garden at St Mary’s Churchyard are in place, with work set to begin in January 2025. Tree works and hedge height reduction will start next quarter.- Little Cassiobury, a high-risk building on the Historic England register, is in the process of being sold by HCC and there have been positive discussions with the potential purchaser about a refurbishment scheme.- Removal of overgrown plants affecting the Vicarage Road cemetery boundary wall stability at Victoria Passage, along with some repointing works were completed. The Passage has been significantly enhanced with repaving and additional improvements. <p>While the original Conservation Areas Management Action Plan envisioned the creation of extensive bespoke guidance, we are now embracing a more streamlined and targeted approach due to current resourcing challenges. A comprehensive set of FAQs has been developed for the website as an alternative method to provide the information residents need. The FAQs, which are being finalised, will cover all the subjects highlighted in the Conservation Areas Management Plan Actions report, as well as provide links to nationally produced guidance from sources such as Historic England and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.</p>
	59. Support the rich and diverse culture across our town.	We will update our Cultural Strategy to ensure that we continue to support creative and cultural organisations across Watford.	Green	↔	We continue to engage with relevant stakeholders to progress the update of our Cultural Strategy. In the previous quarter discussions were held with both the Watford Cultural Leaders Group and the One Watford Place Board and in this quarter, engagement was undertaken with the Cultural Forum.
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	↔	Safer Watford continues to deliver regular communications and engagement days to reassure and inform the community. In response to major crime incidents this quarter, the partnership has collaborated with the Healthy Hub and other agencies to increase public confidence and support local residents and witnesses, including signposting to relevant services like mental health support. The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) remains committed to its priorities and strategic objectives, evaluating the 2024 action plan outcomes through monthly Community Protection Group (CPG) meetings and quarterly RAG reports. CSP promotional materials have been updated to reflect the new priorities for

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
					2024/25: Acquisitive Crime, Community Wellbeing, and Reassure and Inform for delivery in 2024/25. Successful engagements this quarter include; Op Hotspot (ensuring residents are heard, reassured, and informed), Op Sceptre/Anti-Knife Seminar and Youth Violent Crime Schools Project (addressing youth violence) and Safer Business Awareness (engaging with businesses to keep them informed), and two operations around reaching out to harder-to-reach communities and increasing visibility in Watford. The CSP is preparing for upcoming events such as OPALS, ASB Awareness Week, Safer Business Week, and Hate Crime Week. Efforts continue to support and shape Op Hotspot, with plans to secure further funding to target specific areas and enhance public safety.
	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	↔	A review was conducted over the summer, which indicates that the White Ribbon Initiative remains on track, with significant progress made in both reflecting on past achievements and setting actionable goals for the coming months. The review has provided valuable insights into the impact of our work, highlighting successes in raising awareness and engaging the community in meaningful ways. We have also pinpointed areas for improvement and developed a focused action plan to address them. Our plans for White Ribbon Day will emphasise a streamlined but impactful approach, prioritising a quality communications campaign that engages both internal and external audiences, reaching a wide range of people without compromising effectiveness, given the current capacity constraints. Additionally, we will host a ‘Lunch and Learn’ session on White Ribbon Day, offering an interactive opportunity to discuss the importance of the White Ribbon commitment with staff and reflect on our collective mission to prevent violence. We have scheduled an informal steering committee meeting in December to review the current action plan, assess progress, and discuss plans for the 2024/25 period. This will be followed by a formal steering group meeting, where we will finalise the next steps and present an update to the One Watford Place Board, ensuring ongoing transparency and partner engagement.
	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	↔	We are delivering a number of activities to keep our borough clean and tidy. This includes coordinating high speed road cleansing with HCC and carrying out regular litter bin audits to map and monitor the numbers, types, conditions and suitability of litter bin locations. We were awarded £8k from Keep Britain Tidy’s Chewing Gum Task Force grant for chewing gum removal along St Albans Road and display of prevention signage. This project is now complete.

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	63. Develop a range of information and signposting for residents to create a ‘Welcome to Watford’ resource.	We will develop a digital ‘Welcome to Watford’ resource for new residents, setting out how they can be fully involved in the life of the town and make the most of Watford and all it has to offer.	Planning in Progress	N/A	Scoping of the ‘Welcome to Watford’ resource is now underway with services from across the council feeding into requirements. Over the next period, the approach to development, including engagement, will be discussed with Portfolio Holders so that development can commenced in Q3.
Listen to and hear the diverse voices of Watford.	64. Work with the voluntary sector in Watford to provide positive outcomes for our residents.	We will continue to monitor our newly approved Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework and bring community groups together, alongside the implementation of a Community of Practice.	Green	↔	<p>The new digital process for capturing and monitoring KPIs for the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework has been successfully launched and well received by commissioned organisations. KPIs have not been set for the first year to allow for adjustment and modification to the new system.</p> <p>This quarter, monitoring data shows that over 30k service users have benefitted from attending our community centres, with over 400 sessions addressing social isolation. Additionally, more than 500 health and wellbeing activities were delivered to support residents, demonstrating a comprehensive effort to improve the quality of life for many individuals.</p> <p>Watford Citizens Advice supported over 2,300 individuals with various issues, including debt reduction, marking a significant achievement for Watford.</p> <p>Further information can be seen at Appendix C.</p>
	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	↔	Our next seniors’ forum will be held on the 18 November in the Town Hall Annexe. Several key partners and agencies will be invited to provide targeted support and guidance on Winter Fuel Payments, Pension Credits and keeping warm during the winter period.
	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 decarbonisation and energy efficiency works funded by the PSDS grant have progressed on The Palace Theatre, Harebreaks and Orbital Community Centres. Condition surveys were completed for all three properties and intrusive surveys instructed. The procurement strategy for the contractor appointment has been updated. We are continuing to engage with tenants to secure match funding. Our consultant is also reviewing existing building and internal surveys outside of the PSDS project. The scope of the CAR programme includes the creation of Asset Management Plans for each building. We regularly check on compliance and track any issues with tenant obligations.
	67. Deliver our Equality and Diversity Policy so it underpins what we do and how we engage with our community.	We will review our collectively owned delivery plan via a newly established Corporate Equalities Working Group to align planned delivery to available resource.	Green	↔	<p>A Corporate Equalities Working Group has been established to progress delivery of the Equality and Diversity Policy. Key activities delivered in this quarter are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- An Equality Statement was developed for inclusion in all recruitment adverts and role profiles to embed commitment to diversity and fairness in the hiring process.- An international cuisine lunch was held in support of National Inclusion Week, promoting cultural awareness and celebrating diversity.

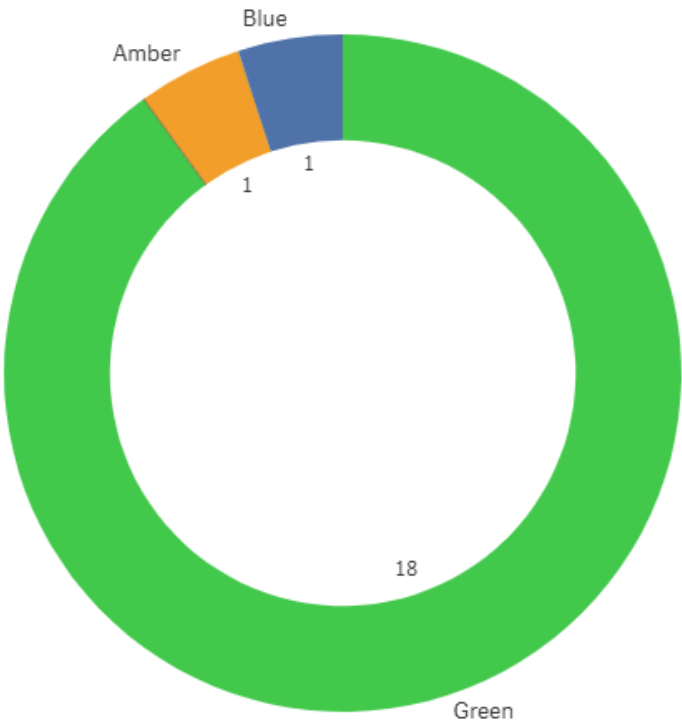
Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
					<ul style="list-style-type: none">- An Awareness Days Calendar has been created to highlight and promote key events related to inclusion throughout the year.- The Disability Confident Logo was published on the council website, demonstrating our commitment to being a Disability Confident employer.- A trial of blind recruitment was implemented to reduce unconscious bias in the hiring process by anonymising candidate information.
	68. Continue to work with partners to end rough sleeping on the streets of Watford.	We will continue to deliver our Homelessness Strategy for Watford, reviewing this on an annual basis and adapting it regularly to ensure that it remains innovative and effective, supporting our target of minimising rough sleepers on the streets of Watford.	Green	↔	We worked in conjunction with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to identify six key challenges that we will face over the next 12 months. The key challenges include asylum seekers and prison releases, adult social care and community mental health services, private rented sector and social housing. We have mapped out key milestones over the next 12 months to address the challenges in line with our Homelessness Strategy. The key milestones, all of which are on track, include ensuring the Duty to Refer received from Probation Services are processed quickly and accurately and building stronger working relationships with Adult Social Care and Community Mental Health Services.
Support improved health and wellbeing across the town.	69. Encourage Watford to develop as an age-friendly town.	We will work towards making Watford an age-friendly town that residents and visitors of all ages can enjoy, ensuring local services are dementia-friendly, accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities.	Green	↔	The council's Strategic Initiatives Officer is developing the approach for this activity for approval. The approach will consider and incorporate wider regional priorities and activities as well ensure we make the best use of available resources.
	70. Support digital inclusion so residents can effectively engage using new technology.	We will work with our partners, volunteers and community groups to explore the scale of digital isolation in the town and, when necessary, support residents who do not have access to technology, choose not to do so, or do not currently have the skills to use IT, to self-serve so that they have the same opportunities as others in our town.	Green	↔	We continue to collaborate with partners like Citizens Advice and W3RT to support digitally excluded residents. This includes a community round-table event to discuss specific challenges, leading to joint working groups to deliver against priorities which include digital inclusion. In September we successfully launched co-browsing, a tool that allows the council's Customer Service Agents to assist Housing customers with housing application forms by sharing screens. In a space of a few weeks the council has supported over 20 customers with positive feedback received. The upcoming council device refresh presents an opportunity to provide ex-equipment to digital isolation schemes, pending assurances that the equipment is fully wiped in line with security requirements. Further work is underway to check viability.
	71. Develop services to support our residents' health and wellbeing.	Watford's Healthy Hub will provide a pivotal link to assistance and guidance, including opening up conversations about the menopause, and for those needing help with mental health issues. With partners, we will develop and promote services and deliver initiatives to support and improve our residents' health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities in outcomes.	Green	↔	The Healthy Hub is actively seeking new opportunities to increase awareness and engage with more residents. The hub at Cussans House in Croxley View is ongoing and held monthly, and new venues are being considered for a regular monthly slot. Recent events and sessions supported include a Faith and Health Conference, NHS nutritional support sessions and Unity in the Community. The key initiatives to highlight this quarter are:

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
					<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Health Inequalities – four healthy eating food project sessions were completed, receiving positive feedback on the success of these projects.- Cycle Hub – the first round of cycle projects has been conducted, with plans for the hub to continue these sessions in schools during term time aimed at year 6 year olds.- Mental Health – supplementary funding from HCC to support projects will start in September in partnership with Red Kite Support.
	72. Engage with health partners to influence and redesign public health services, putting people at their heart.	We will engage across our health partners to make sure the health and wellbeing needs of Watford are represented in new health structures and commissioning of services.	Green	↔	The council is actively engaged in discussions with a wide range of health partners and local government colleagues and is convening a workshop to consider the opportunity to embed an integrated approach to service delivery in a potential health hub within the Town Hall Quarter.
	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.	Planning in Progress	N/A	The council will continue to rely on its existing Physical Activity Framework while an updated Sports and Physical Activity Framework is developed. A high-level draft has been developed for review over the next quarter.
	74. Implement the Air Quality Action Plan and monitor air quality across the borough and work with partners to improve air quality across the Town.	We will work with partners to deliver the Air Quality Action Plan 2024, which aims to help improve air quality in Watford. We will monitor and report progress annually to DEFRA. We will work together with HCC and other Hertfordshire District Authorities to create an Air Quality Strategy that enables continual improvements in air quality across the town and County.	Green	↔	The council’s Air Quality Action Plan, which is aimed at improving the air quality in Watford, was approved by Cabinet in July 2024. We submitted our Annual Status Report to the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) in accordance with the annual reporting timelines and the report has been accepted. A working group, which includes Herts Local Authorities and HCC, has been established to help develop a countywide Air Quality Strategy.
	75. Support refugee and asylum seeker resettlement in Watford.	We will work with regional and local statutory and voluntary agencies to maximise grant income and new property provision to meet the needs of asylum seekers and refugees. This will enable refugees resettled in Watford to integrate swiftly and successfully into our local communities.	Green	↔	The new Refugee Resettlement Framework Agreement, through which individuals and families seeking refuge in this country can be supported, was tendered, responses evaluated and approved suppliers confirmed. The contract with the preferred supplier will be implemented from the start of November. Forty-nine individuals are currently being supported. Our aim is to continue maximising Home Office refugee resettlement income to enable support to continue.
Bring together ways to help our residents who might be struggling financially.	76. Make sure residents are aware of the help we offer to support them to manage their finances.	We will launch and embed our Council Tax Support Scheme so residents know support may be available to help them pay their bills, whilst promoting our discretionary scheme for charities.	Green		The new Council Tax Support Scheme launched with the Council Tax Bill for 2023/24 and is now successfully up and running. An online form is being designed for our discretionary scheme for charities. In preparation for the changes in Winter Fuel payment, work has commenced on a new campaign which will help identify residents in the borough who may qualify for Pension Credit and are not currently receiving it. Targeted comms to residents directly and via social media is expected to commence towards end of October, and residents who successfully claim the benefit by 21 December will receive a winter fuel payment.
	77. Coordinate access to information for those seeking advice on how to	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 funded an additional advisor at the Citizens Advice Centre between June and September to explore and address the underlying causes of residents’ situation and help reduce clients’ dependence on vouchers and charitable support in three areas:

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	cope with the cost-of-living crisis.				<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Benefits – the advisor will maximise individual's income through benefit checks, eligibility assessments, support with applications and Council Tax Reduction, advise and assist with delays or complexities with existing benefit applications, including challenging benefit decisions.- Money advice / debt – the advisor will review priority bills (energy, rent, council tax), address debts with potential solutions, negotiate with creditors, assess eligibility for grants and funds (Warm Home Discount, Energy Grants, Foodbank grants, fuel vouchers) and provide money and budgeting advice to help prevent and manage future debt.- Housing – the advisor will assess rent arrears, housing situations (e.g. homelessness, living with non-dependants) and relationship issues. <p>This aims to provide comprehensive support, helping residents achieve greater financial stability and independence.</p>
	78. Welcome the whole town to our big events and provide an appealing and lively programme of holidays activities for young people	We will deliver our exciting, free programme of Big Events across the town, including our Big Screen, Big Beach and Fireworks, whilst seeking sponsorship opportunities to support bringing our community together. We will also continue to offer our young people exciting things to do during the Easter and summer holidays.	Green	↔	<p>Our free Big Events programme continue to be popular, fostering community engagement through fun activities and highlighting our commitment to providing inclusive community experiences. This quarter has been particularly busy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Big Jiveswing (July): Featured a packed program of dancing entertainment.- Big Screen (5-18 August): Showcased popular movies like The Lion King and Ghostbusters.- Big Beach: Successfully relocated to Watford Central Library, remaining popular with residents. <p>In addition to the Big Events, the Colourscape Festival was held in August, bringing adults and children together to explore a world of colour and light. And finally, the 2024 'Wat's On Programme' was run successfully throughout the school holiday weeks, offering a range of free, fun and challenging activities for children and young people aged 5 – 15 years.</p> <p>The annual Cassiobury Fireworks event is scheduled for 2 November, with planning underway and communications to residents issued in late October.</p>
	79. Improve private sector housing across the town, focusing on how it can contribute to both environmental and community benefits.	We will take advantage of the Energy Company Obligation government grants for sustainability and respond to any grant bid applications to lever in external funding to improve Watford's housing stock. We will ensure that we have an accessible service to enable residents to apply for the funding and support them with the application process. We will support HCC and our residents in development and delivery of schemes that promote and improve Healthy Homes, in particular supporting the development and delivery of an Integrated Care Partnership-wide toolkit to tackle the impacts of damp and mould.	Green	↔	<p>Through collaboration with the HCC Public Health team, we have developed a toolkit for the Fire and Rescue Service to enable them to include initial damp/mould referrals during Safe and Well visits and raise awareness of the referral pathway where further action is required. Additionally, we are exploring funding opportunities with the Public Health team for targeted investigations into damp and mould cases.</p> <p>We are piloting a referral pathway project with Three Rivers District Council for patients with respiratory illnesses presenting at GP surgeries.</p> <p>Due to government policy, Energy Company funding has diminished, impacting scheme delivery. However, Watford is working with the local supply chain to offer an interim scheme until April 2025, when other funding is expected to be available.</p>

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
	80. Support our community through a programme of grant schemes.	We will continue to deliver a diverse range of grants for local groups and communities, including the Mayor’s Grants, Community Lottery and Neighbourhood Locality Funds so that the council can make the biggest impact in the communities we serve.	Green	↔	<p>The Mayor’s Small Grants Fund for 2024-25 received 33 applications with a total funding request of £85,593. The fund provides voluntary and community organisations the opportunity to apply for a grant towards one-off community events or purchase of items of equipment.</p> <p>Officers are in the process of designing a new funding success stories newsletter to promote projects funded by the Mayor’s Small Grants Fund, the Neighbourhood Grant, Watford Community Lottery and the Watford Community Fund and highlight the impact they provide to the communities of Watford.</p>

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








Key achievements over this period

1. Our new AI chat bot ‘Watbot’ and co browsing tool, offering customers and residents alternative ways to contact the council and seek support, was launched. Watbot, currently available for Elections, Council Tax and Waste & Recycling, has been used over 60 times since its launch, and over 20 customers have been assisted through co browsing.
2. A successful and compliant UK Parliamentary General election was delivered, implementing components of the Elections Act 2022.
3. The new Watford PDR process, incorporating the council’s behavioural framework, was launched and the first year cycle completed. A training programme is being developed for all employees using the information provided in the PDR, to support them in meeting their objectives and aspirations.
4. The asset management contract for our investment portfolio and Croxley Park has been successfully extended. The extension, finalised in October 2024, will ensure that our investment portfolio continues to be actively managed to safeguard our income, mitigate risks and maximise our-term value.
5. We remain dedicated to the health and wellbeing of our staff. In the last quarter, we delivered six awareness raising sessions on key topics, including men’s and women’s health and stress management. Further activities are planned for the next quarter, including a session to upskill our Service Delivery Leads to have conversations around menopause and neurodiversity.


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

Commitment	Activity		BRAG Rating	Trend	Headline
Make sure we deliver an outstanding customer experience and the high-quality services our community expects.	81. Provide an excellent customer experience for everyone who engages with the council.	We will deliver our Customer Experience Strategy to transform how we engage with our customers by introducing AI and Live Chat solutions, enhancing our customer experience. We will respond to the recommendations of our Peer Challenge by working with partners to ensure that our services remain accessible to all.	Green	↔	<p>The Customer Experience Strategy provides the framework for how we will enhance the customer journey and meet the evolving needs of our residents and customers. This quarter we achieved two significant milestones by adopting new, proven technology for service delivery. Co browsing, a tool that allows customers to share their screens with customer services agents for support with online processes, was launched in September. We have assisted over 20 customers through co browsing, currently available for Housing services only. Our AI chat bot 'Watbot' was also launched in September. Watbot, available for Elections, Council Tax and Waste & Recycling, has been used over 60 times since its launch.</p> <p>Both tools have received positive feedback from our customers. We plan to expand their use across other service areas to ensure the customers accessing all services provided by the council benefit from these technologies.</p> <p>Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Customer Experience Strategy is included within Appendix C2.</p>
	82. Champion a greener and more sustainable council that strives to reduce our carbon footprint.	We will embed our ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030 by continuing to deliver our Environmental Strategy so that it is intrinsic to everything and ensures we reduce our carbon footprint in line with our green goals.	Amber	↓	<p>Our Environment Strategy, which sets out how we will achieve our ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030, was approved during the life of the previous Delivery Plan. As well as successful decarbonisation funding for some council owned buildings, specific sustainability actions from the Sustainability Delivery Plan have been included in Service Plans from across the organisation. The annual report charting the progress against the Delivery Plan, reviewed by CMB and portfolio holders in September, indicates that we will not hit our net zero targets in 2030, without bolder national action and resourcing, alongside action from everyone within the Borough, hence the amber status.</p> <p>Further information on how the council is progressing delivery of its Environment Strategy is included within Appendix C3.</p>
	83. Explore opportunities to share services with other councils where it delivers best value and better customer outcomes.	We will work with other authorities to develop and implement business cases that explore opportunities to share more services where this will deliver improvements for our customers.	Green	↔	<p>The shared services model provides opportunities for us to review and enhance our processes, automate and digitise processes where relevant and reduce costs and increase resilience.</p> <p>The Planning Enforcement and Building Control shared services with St Albans continues to progress to plan as the focus remains on refining the case management process.</p> <p>The Local Partnerships review of all Watford and Three Rivers shared services is complete and both authorities are now considering options for refreshing the cost model data and SLAs for all existing shared services. The outcome of this exercise will provide guidance on the way forward for a HR & OD shared services with neighbouring local authorities.</p>

	84. Make sure the council continues to hold successful and well run elections	We will support and prepare for the local and national elections over the next two years, ensuring that our elections continue to be effectively managed, the changes introduced by the Elections Act 2022 are embedded and voters are well informed on elections and how to exercise their right to vote.	Green	↔	After successfully delivering the Borough and UK Parliamentary General Elections in May and July, where some components of the Elections Act 2022 were implemented, we are now focused on implementing the remaining components of the Act. This includes the EU electors review and the Absent Vote Signature refresh. Canvassing began in August 2024, with the goal of publishing the revised elections register in February 2025. Additionally, a review of all polling stations is currently underway.
	85. Ensure compliance with our parking restrictions across the borough by effectively managing our parking enforcement contractors.	We will continue to work with our parking enforcement contractors to ensure that motorists park responsibly across the borough and will initiate pre-procurement activity for the new parking enforcement contract when the current contract ends in 2027.	Green	↔	We continue to work with our contractor to ensure adequate resourcing is in place to manage parking enforcement across the borough and to undertake the pre-procurement activities for the new Parking Enforcement and ICT contracts. A business case is being developed for review by stakeholders in the next quarter.
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	↔	Good progress is being made with the projects on the ICT Strategy delivery plan. The majority of projects for 2024/25 have been completed or are in progress. Projects completed included providing ICT support to both Watford and Three Rivers councils for the General Election. We are also carrying out a server refresh and Cheslyn House Wi-Fi. ICT has completed a compatibility audit in preparation for moving to Windows 11 and Network Access Control work to restrict unauthorised users and devices from gaining access.
	87. Deliver a step change in how we use our data and information, so it strengthens our drive for constant improvement and assesses the value for money of our services, allowing us to effectively manage our budget.	We will continue to deliver our Information and Insight Strategy, transforming how we use our data and information to challenge our decisions, enhance performance and support excellent customer experience, using our information to monitor service delivery and to drive action if something needs improving.	Green	↔	Delivery of the Information and Insight Strategy is progressing well, with a current focus on real-time reporting through the integration of our CRM with our business intelligence platform. We are also working on integrating other back-office systems to streamline the reporting process, ensuring provision of timely and accurate data to drive improvements. In October, we held a successful workshop with Citizens Advice to explore ways to better collaborate and support our communities.
	88. Complete the Housing Transformation.	We will complete the transformation of our housing service with a focus on early intervention to reduce temporary accommodation expenditure for the council and achieve better outcomes for clients.	Green	↔	We are progressing delivery of the Housing Transformation programme, set for completion next year. In the next quarter, through internal and external consultations, we will co-create and adopt a new vision of and refresh the existing customer service charter for our housing and homelessness service. This will coincide with the update of our improvement plan. The transformation programme will be guided by our core values and expected behaviours, with regular reviews of lessons learned, feedback, and celebrations of successes within the Housing Team.

	89. Strengthen our approach to contract management to ensure we are making the most of our contracts and that they are delivering for us and the town.	We will continue to strengthen our approach to contract management by regularly updating our contract register, implementing our Contract Management Framework and ensuring that we leverage social value delivery where possible, particularly from our major contracts, such as the Colosseum Operator.	Green		We update our contract register quarterly, adhering to best practices. Our Contract Management Handbook, which replaced the contract management framework last year, offers comprehensive guidance and training materials. This ensures our key strategic objectives are achieved through effective contract delivery. The Handbook has been revised to incorporate changes from the Procurement Act 2023, with its implementation now scheduled for February 2025. We remain committed to incorporating social value in our procurements and are exploring options for delivering outcomes.
	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.	Blue		In September the Government announced that the Procurement Act 2023 changes will come into legislation from 24 February 2025, a delay of 4 months. All relevant internal council documents have been updated to incorporate the changes and are ready for implementation ahead of the new timeline, hence the blue status. The development and communication of a training plan has been rescheduled to align with the new date. Our existing procurements and contract will run to the old rules until they expire.
	91. Deliver a programme of service redesigns to improve how we work and deliver value for money services.	We will commence and deliver our Redesign Sprints to respond to the financial pressures, whilst ensuring that we are informed by data and intelligence, to provide value-for-money services.	Green		Officers have commenced a benchmarking exercise to identify priority areas for taking forward in the next quarter. This exercise will be supported further by the outcomes of a recent staff survey designed to understand our data skills and skills in using Artificial Intelligence which will help areas where there are opportunities to improve processes and generate additional capacity in the organisation. Priority areas for redesign sprints delivery will be identified during the second half of 2024/25.
Focus and challenge how we manage our budget, so it is concentrated on delivering our commitments and securing greater investment for Watford.	92. Ensure our investment portfolio is effectively led so that risk is appropriately managed whilst delivering maximum value to the council.	We will ensure that we are actively managing our investment portfolio to protect our income, manage risk and maximise total value over the longer term (capital and revenue), so that we can continue to provide high-quality services to our residents and businesses.	Green		The asset management contract for the investment portfolio and Croxley Park has been extended, with the extension finalised in October 2024.
	93. Manage and direct the council finances effectively, acting upon our peer challenge recommendations.	We will ensure that our budgets align with our priorities and that budget management is robust, forward-looking and supports the best-possible service outcomes from available resources, enabling us to keep council tax increases below inflation.	Green		The council has set a balanced budget for 2024/25 and a balanced draft budget for 2025/26 and 2026/27, which are aligned to the Council Plan and Council Delivery Plan. The budget for 2025/26 will be set by Council in January 2025 after consideration by Finance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

	94. Work to identify opportunities that align with our ambition.	We will develop a Commercial and Collaboration Strategy to ensure that we are ready to seize commercial opportunities when they become available, including in relation to shared services.	Green	↔	The Commercial and Collaboration Strategy, which will support out financial goals and contribute to our success and resilience, will be developed and presented as a suite of documents for approval by Council in January as part of the budget setting process
	95. Manage our ambitious Capital Programme so that it supports our aspirations.	In line with our Peer Challenge recommendations, we will ensure that the Capital Programme supports the delivery of the Council Plan, is realistic and affordable, unlocks invest-to-save opportunities and growth within Watford.	Green	↔	Schemes within the capital programme are kept under constant review to ensure that they remain affordable and deliver against objectives within the Council Plan. The capital programme is reviewed in full as part of the annual budget setting process to ensure that resource remain appropriately prioritised.
Lead by example, securing our reputation as a forward-thinking, caring and inspiring organisation where colleagues can thrive and achieve their best for our residents and businesses.	96. Secure robust succession planning, making sure we value and manage our talent to recruit and retain the best for Watford.	We will open opportunities for our staff to grow and develop, building their skills and knowledge to achieve and pro-actively encouraging creativity. Where we do recruit, we will appoint the best, ensuring we recruit people with the right experience and behaviours to be part of 'Team Watford'.	Green	↔	Our new People Strategy, approved in June, will be instrumental in supporting our staff to grow and develop, particularly through the themes around 'attracting a modern workforce' and 'developing our workforce', which will focus on recruiting and retaining talent. A training plan is being developed for all employees, using the information provided in the recent PDR cycle. Following the Service Delivery Lead development day focussed on maximising potential and achieving ambitions in the last quarter, a further training session was delivered, linking in with CMB to support cohesion between the two leadership groups.
	97. Embed our values so they inspire our teams to achieve even more and underpin how we work.	We will continue on our journey to ensure our values underpin everything we do, working with the Member Development Group to ensure that these are embedded by members and officers alike. Internally, this will be supported by the roll out of our new behavioural framework, in line with our refreshed Performance Development Review process.	Green	↔	The council's new PDR cycle, incorporating the Behavioural Framework, went live in July 2024. The PDR is supported by a comprehensive online toolkit, which was further enhanced in this quarter to include guidance on mastering feedback to create a change in behaviour. All PDRs were completed in this quarter and a review was undertaken to establish growth data and how improvements in behaviours, objectives and personal development can be measured within the council. Employees were actively encouraged to provide feedback on the new process and how the process can be improved in the future.
	98. Refresh our Organisational Development approach so that it effectively underpins and supports our Council Plan.	We will develop and deliver a new four-year People Strategy to ensure we develop, motivate and inspire our colleagues so they are supported and empowered to do their best for our residents and businesses.	Green	↔	Our People Strategy, approved by Cabinet in June 2024, is now available on the council intranet. Further communication of the Strategy is planned as the delivery framework offers opportunities for employee engagement. Delivery is currently focussed on foundational programmes and initiatives, including comprehensive onboarding processes, ensuring the right skills are in the right place, and continuing to drive leadership development. In the next quarter, CMB and HR will jointly prioritise the commitments to work on first, considering the recent peer challenge review recommendations.
	99. Seek and implement opportunities for our people to have fulfilling local government careers.	We will continue to support apprenticeship opportunities for our teams, providing them with experience, skills and knowledge from across the council.	Green	↔	Whilst we are unable to proceed with the corporate apprentice scheme due to budget constraints, we are exploring other options for how the council can continue to support employees, such as the DAS (Digital Apprenticeship Service) to fund courses for employees.

					A Planning Team employee has started the Pathways to Planning Scheme, a programme that aims to support talented individuals and fast track their career as Planners in local government.
	100. Protect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff and members.	We will ensure that we protect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our colleagues and members by developing their resilience and providing opportunities for genuine two-way engagement. We will work with our Member Development Group to support the safety and security of our elected members.	Green		We remain dedicated to the health and wellbeing of our staff. In the last quarter, we delivered six awareness raising sessions on key topics, including men’s and women’s health and stress management. Further activities are planned for the next quarter, including an online session to upskill our Service Delivery Leads to have conversations around menopause and neurodiversity. The session will be supported by a toolkit which will be available to all employees on the council’s intranet. Additionally, we are leading a level 3 Mentally Healthy Workforce course, which will incorporate a first aider qualification, for selected delegates. This course aims to create a safe space and promote positive mental health in the workplace.