

# Watford Authority Monitoring Report: 2022-2023

November 2023

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# Executive Summary

Monitoring Indicator	Relevant Watford Local Plan policy	Policy target	Previous Monitoring Year (MY)	Current MY	Target met in current Monitoring Year? Yes or NO	Current trend- Red Amber Green
Annual Residential completions	Policy H03.1	784 dwellings per annum (dpa) completed, 13,328 over the plan period, maintain a 5 year supply	754 Net additional dwellings (dws)	778 Net additional dwellings (dws)	N	Green
Residential delivery within the Core Development Area	CDA2.1; CDA 2.2 and CDA 2.3	No specific target set	368 dws (49%)	352 dws (45%)	-	Amber
Residential delivery within the Watford Gateway Strategic Development Area	CDA 2.1	No specific target set	171 dws (23%)	9 dws (1%)	-	Red
Residential delivery within the Town Centre Strategic Development Area	CDA 2.2	No specific target set	104 dws (14%)	55 dws (7%)	-	Red
Residential delivery within the Colne Valley Strategic Development Area	CDA 2.3	No specific target set	93 dws (12%)	288 dws (37%)	-	Green
Residential delivery on PDL	Policy SS1.1	80% of all residential development	95%	93%	Y	Amber
Number of dwellings granted permission	Policy H03.1	784 dpa completed, 13,328 over the plan period, maintain a 5 year supply	991 dws	838 dws	Y	Amber
Lapse Rate	Policy H03.1	Keep lapse rate as low as possible	6%	4%	Y	Green
Density of new residential development within the Core Development Area dwellings per hectare (dph)	Policy H03.2	Minimum target of 95 dph within the CDA	177dph	241dph	Y	Green
Density of new residential development outside the Core Development Area (dph)	Policy H03.2	Minimum target of 45 dwellings per hectare outside the CDA.	95dph	82dph	Y	Green
Size of dwellings completed	Policy H03.2	20% of all completions to be family sized (3 bed plus)	10%	6%	N	Red

Affordable housing delivery- by unit	Policy H03.3 Policy H03.4	Specific target set by habitable room not by unit	251 dws	94 dws (12%)	-	
Affordable housing delivery- by habitable room	Policy H03.3 Policy H03.4	35% of all habitable rooms on sites of 10 or more dwellings to be affordable.	-	196 habitable rooms (14%)	N	-
Number of applications for residential conversions permitted	Policy H03.9	No specific target set	-	2 applications	-	-
Number of specialist and care bed spaces completed	Policy H03.5	102 bed spaces over the plan period (6 bed spaces per year).	0	0	N	
Number of student bed spaces	Policy H03.6	No specific target set.	0	0	-	-
Number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches granted planning permission.	Policy H03.8	Meet the identified need for two pitches over the plan period.	0	0	N	
Number of self build or custom build plots provided and completed.	Policy H03.7	Proposals for 20 houses or more to provide plots to contribute towards meeting the needs of people on the self build and customhouse building list	2 CIL exemptions issued for self build	5 CIL exemptions issued for self build	-	
Building standards for new homes	Policy H03.10	All new homes to comply with M4(2) accessibility standard.		<i>No data available</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
		6% of all new dwellings to meet M4(3) accessibility standard.		<i>No data available</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
		2% all dwellings on developments of 50 or more dwellings to be dementia friendly.		<i>No data available</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Net Industrial floorspace	Policy SS1.1 Policy EM4.2	No net loss of industrial floorspace	-5,143sqm	-8,082sqm	N	
Net Office floorspace	Policy EM4.3	No net loss of E(g)(i) class office floorspace	15,507sqm	-6,399sqm	N	

Net delivery of employment floorspace within the designated industrial areas	Policy EM4.2	No net loss of industrial floorspace within the designated industrial areas	-4,863sqm	-7,737sqm	N	
Net delivery of E(g)(i) office floorspace within the Primary Office Location and the Town Centre	Policy EM4.2	No net loss of office floorspace within the Primary Office Location or the Town Centre	15,235sqm	69sqm	Y	
Delivery of employment floorspace outside designated employment locations	Policy EM4.4	No net loss of floorspace	242sqm	-6,813sqm	N	
Employment land available on extant permissions	Policy EM4.1	No specific target set	43,514sqm	53,932sqm	-	
Net delivery of retail E(a) floorspace over the monitoring year	Policy VT5.1	No specific target set	Town Centre: 711sqm	Town Centre: 144sqm	-	
			District Centre: 0sqm	District Centre: 58sqm		
			Local Centres: -163sqm	Local Centres: 98sqm		
Net delivery of main town centre uses over the monitoring year	Policy VT5.1	No specific target set	Town Centre: -3748sqm	Town Centre: 1,005sqm	-	
			District Centre: 0sqm	District Centre: 175sqm		
			Local Centres: -163sqm	Local Centres: 46sqm		
Percentage of designated centres which are in main town centre uses	Policy VT5.1	No specific target set	<i>No data available</i>	Town Centre: 84%	-	-
Vacancy rate in the designated centres	Policy VT5.1	No specific target set	Town Centre 2019: 11.8%	Town Centre 2023: 8.9%	-	
Number of planning applications where Policies QD6.2; or QD6.4 is listed as a reason for refusal	Policy QD6.2 QD6.4	No specific target set	<i>No data available</i>	<i>No data available</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Number of planning applications where Policies QD6.3 is listed as a reason for refusal	Policy QD6.3	No specific target set	<i>No data available</i>	<i>No data available</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Number of applications completed over the	Policy QD6.5	No specific target set	3	3	-	

MY that exceed the base building heights						
Number of developments granted planning permission over the monitoring year that exceeded the base building heights	Policy QD6.5	No specific target set	2	2	-	
Number of applications refused over the monitoring year where Policy QD6.5 (Building Height) is listed as a reason for refusal	Policy QD6.5	No specific target set	<i>No data available</i>	<i>No data available</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Number of assets on the heritage at risk register	Policy HE7.2	Reduce the number of buildings on the heritage at risk register.	6	6	-	
Number of applications granted contrary to advice from Historic England	Policy HE7.2	No specific target set	<i>No data available</i>	0	-	
Percentage of carbon reduction since 2018	Policy CC8.1	Reduction in carbon emissions over the plan period	11.7%	7.5%	Y	
Percentage of non-residential developments which meet BREEAM standards	Policy CC8.2	100% of non-residential developments meeting either excellent or very good	<i>No data available</i>	<i>No data available</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Number of new residential permissions that meet carbon emission standards	Policy CC8.1	19% energy efficiency above Part L of the Building Regulations.	<i>No data available</i>	<i>No data available</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Number of new homes achieving 110 litres/person/day water usage	Policy CC8.3	100% of new homes	<i>No data available</i>	<i>No data available</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Number of Air Quality Management Areas	Policy CC8.4	Reduce the number of Air Quality Management Areas	2	2	-	
Number of planning applications refused on pollution grounds	Policy CC8.5	Zero refusals	<i>No data available</i>	<i>No data available</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Number of Environment Agency	Policy NE9.3	No planning permissions granted contrary to	0	0	Y	

objections to planning applications.	Policy NE9.4 Policy NE9.5	the advice of the Environment Agency on flooding and water quality grounds.				
Net gain/loss of designated open space	Policy NE9.6 Policy NE9.7	No net loss of designated open space	614 hectares	0 losses	Y	
Net gain in Biodiversity	Policy NE9.8	10% net gain	<i>No data available</i>	<i>No data available</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Delivery of Infrastructure	Policy IN10.1 Policy IN10.2	Deliver the infrastructure set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan	-	Progress has been made on a variety of IDP projects- See Table 54 for full details	Y	
Developer contributions collected (financial)	Policy IN10.3	No specific target set	£1,203,484 (CIL) £154,541.98 (s106)	£2,786,962 (CIL) £1,971,918 (s106)	-	
% of new housing within 400m of a bus stop/railway station	Policy ST11.1	No specific target set	Bus stop- 100% Railway station- 29%	Bus stop- 88% Railway station- 12%	-	
% of developments granted with policy compliant cycle parking provision	Policy ST11.4	100%	<i>No data available</i>	<i>No data available</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
% of people walking and cycling for their main mode of transport	Policy ST11.4	Improvement on baseline levels	32% walking	<i>No new data</i>	-	
			3.7 % cycling	<i>No new data</i>		
% of electric vehicles within the boroughs total car ownership	Policy ST11.5	Improvement on baseline levels	2,125 additional ultra-low emission vehicle registrations	2,204 additional ultra-low emission vehicle registrations	Y	
Number of electric vehicle spaces delivered	Policy ST11.5	No specific target set	129 spaces provided	2,140 spaces provided	-	
Level of car ownership in the borough	Policy ST11.5	Improvement on baseline levels	44,028 (2011 census)	30,744 (2021 census)	Y	
% of new developments which have an active travel plan	Policy ST11.6	Improvement on baseline levels	<i>No data available</i>	<i>No data available</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Number of qualifying schemes with a Health	Policy HC12.2	All schemes over 100 dwellings	<i>No data available</i>	<i>No data available</i>	<i>n/a</i>	

Impact Assessment completed						
Number of new community facilities approved/completed	Policy HC12.3	No specific target set	0	1	-	
Number of community facilities lost over the monitoring year	Policy HC12.3	No net loss	0 losses	0 losses	Y	
Number of housing allocations permitted, started or completed over the monitoring year	Policy SA13.1	8,604 dwellings over the plan period	-	0 permitted 2 under construction 1 completed	-	
Number of mixed use allocations permitted, started or completed over the monitoring year	Policy SA13.1	8,604 dwellings over the plan period	-	1 permitted 2 under construction	-	
Number of employment allocations permitted, started or completed over the monitoring year	Policy SA13.1	12,799sqm of industrial floorspace over the plan period 19,428sqm of office floorspace over the plan period	-	0 permitted 2 under construction	-	
Number of education site allocations permitted, started or completed over the monitoring year	Policy SA13.1	No specific target	-	0 permitted	-	-

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# 1. Introduction

Section 113 of the Localism Act (2011) requires every Local Planning Authority (LPA) to publish monitoring information at least annually<sup>1</sup>. In the past Watford has complied with this requirement by producing an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).

The structure and content of an AMR is not fully prescribed in legislation and it is largely up to each LPA to decide what is included. The report must however be consistent with regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012.

This sets out the following minimum requirements for what monitoring information must be published by LPAs:

- A Local Development Scheme setting out a timetable for Local Plan production;
- The boroughs performance against the housing delivery targets in the development plan;
- Any Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments the authority has received;
- Details of any Duty to Co-operate issues and meetings that have arisen or been undertaken.

This AMR is monitoring performance against the policies in the new Watford Local Plan 2021 – 2038 which was adopted during the current monitoring year in October 2022. Monitoring of the newly adopted Plan started in the 2021-2022 AMR to ensure that the monitoring of the Plan reflected the start of the plan period being 2021 and so this report is the second AMR that reports on progress made against policies in the Watford Local Plan.

The borough's development plan now consists of:

- Watford Local Plan 2021-2038
- The Waste Core Strategy and Development Management policies 2011-2026 within the Minerals and Waste Local Plan, prepared by Hertfordshire County Council.

It is these documents which are used, alongside any relevant supplementary planning documents, and any other relevant material considerations, to determine planning applications in the borough.

The Local Plan incorporates the following key objectives for future growth in the borough within its overarching vision:

- Watford will be an exemplar town that embraces sustainability and the challenges of climate change.
- Achieve a high quality of design on new developments and ensure that they are accessible and inclusive.
- Conserve and enhance green and blue infrastructure, maximising biodiversity.
- The town centre will retain its role as a retail destination in the sub-region.
- Watford will have a comprehensive network of cycling and walking routes, plus public transport will be enhanced to encourage a move away from car usage.
- Protect and enhance Watford's social, cultural, built environment and heritage.
- Support the local economy through creating business opportunities and providing a mix of employment spaces to support growth.
- Support growth with high quality infrastructure.

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<sup>1</sup> [Plan-making - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/plan-making)- para 073

The above vision has been reflected in the Plan's policies, and monitoring these policies will help the Council to determine the extent to which this vision is being realised and whether further interventions such as revised or new policies are needed in the future. The data reported in the AMR will be used when the Council is considering the need for a partial or full review of the Plan.

As was the case in previous AMRs, this document goes significantly beyond the minimum requirements of regulation 34 and monitors a wide variety of indicators covering a range of economic, social and environmental topics.

The Local Plan includes a monitoring framework (Appendix A) which sets out what indicators will be monitored, how they will be monitored and what targets the Council is seeking to achieve over the plan period. Some of these targets are more prescriptive than others, and some indicators do not have a specific target where applying one would not be appropriate.

This report covers the period **1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023**.

Whilst the Council has made every effort to collect as much data as possible, there are some gaps where data was not available. It is the intention that future AMRs will monitor every indicator effectively, and the policy team have already put in place procedures to build on the monitoring process used in 2021-2022 and have continued to do this in 2022-2023. This will enable the team to collect additional data in future years.

The AMR allows the monitoring of trends by comparing results over a number of years. This report compares last year's data to this years, however definitive trends and the full impacts of new plan policies may take several years to emerge fully, and it is likely that results may fluctuate early in the plan period.

It should also be noted that the majority of applications referenced in this report, and contributing to the data that has been recorded, were approved prior to the adoption of the new Watford Local Plan and the policies within it being given full weight in decision making.

Please note that every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the data provided but in the event of any honest errors noticed please let us know by emailing the following address [strategy@watford.gov.uk](mailto:strategy@watford.gov.uk).

The Council welcomes views on the new Authority Monitoring Report's format and content so improvements to future reports can be made. If there are any comments then please send also these to [strategy@watford.gov.uk](mailto:strategy@watford.gov.uk).

### Why do we have an AMR?

Local authorities have a duty to monitor the effectiveness of their planning policies. The AMR is not intended as a state of the Council report and should not be read as such, it is instead an important evidence base that will help to inform Council and planning decisions across the Plan period. It will also inform any future review of the Local Plan based on the identification of long term trends.

The AMR allows the Council to;

- Establish what new development and change has occurred in the borough and monitor trends.

- Consider the extent to which Local Plan policies are effective and successful (or where there may be problems).
- Decide whether changes to policies or targets are necessary and whether these are significant enough to prompt a full or partial review of the Local Plan.

### How to use this document

The AMR is structured roughly in plan order and divided into chapters that broadly reflect chapters in the new Local Plan. The majority of indicators correspond directly to a row in the Watford Local Plan monitoring framework.

An Executive Summary is provided at the start of the document setting out the annual results and giving a basic indication of whether targets are being met, and whether the broad trend is up, down or unchanged from the previous year. This should be read in conjunction with the detailed analysis in the report.

It is expected that in this early phase of the Plan period, the AMR will be fairly transitional as applications approved against superseded policies get delivered and replaced by applications approved against the new Local Plan policies.

The majority of indicators are reported in tables that will provide data from 2021/2022 to 2025/2026. This will enable comparisons to be clearly shown and enable more streamlined updating of the indicators in future years. After 2025/2026, a column titled 'Pre-2026' will be added to include the cumulative total of completions prior to this date. This will keep the tables legible and compact.

For most indicators three analysis boxes are provided, one describing what has happened over the monitoring year, one to analyse comparisons and wider trends with previous years and finally a section which will seek to explain the impacts of the year's data on the Local Plan and the effectiveness of the Plan's policies.

The following sub sections summarise the different sections of this AMR and the key indicators that are monitored.

### A Spatial Strategy for Watford

This section of the Plan sets out the overall strategy for growth in the borough including the number of residential dwellings, and level of employment floorspace that is required to meet local needs and broadly where this growth will be located within the borough.

This AMR reports the number of residential completions over the monitoring year, and the net gain/loss of employment floorspace and will offer comparisons with identified needs in the borough.

### The Core Development Area

The vast majority of development in the borough is to be directed towards three Strategic Development Areas as the most sustainable locations for growth.

- The Watford Gateway Strategic Development Area;
- The Town Centre Strategic Development Area; and
- The Colne Valley Strategic Development Area.

This area is known collectively as the Core Development Area (CDA). 80% of all residential and mixed use allocations in the Plan are situated within the CDA.

This AMR will report the number of residential completions taking place within and outside the Core Development Area and within each of the three Strategic Development Areas individually. This will help to show where new development in the borough is being concentrated.

### Homes for a Growing Community

The Local Plan aims to provide the housing that the community needs and ensure that these homes are well designed, high quality and that they meet building standards.

This AMR will report on the delivery of market housing, specialist housing, including affordable housing, and the quality of new residential development relative to required access and space standards.

### A Strong Economy

The Local Plan aims to support the delivery of new, and the protection of existing, office and industrial employment floorspace. Clarendon Road, along with the town centre, will be the focus for new E(g)(i) office uses; whilst there are several designated industrial areas that will be the focus for the majority of industrial E(g)(iii)/B2/B8 floorspace.

This AMR will report on the delivery of both industrial and office uses, both within designated employment areas and outside.

### A Vibrant Town

The policies in the Plan seek to support the Town Centre, District Centre and Local Centres in challenging economic times following the Covid-19 pandemic by protecting their long term vitality and viability. Policies provide flexibility to encourage a mix of uses within the town centre whilst ensuring that it remains a focus for main town centre uses as defined in the NPPF.

This AMR will report on the net delivery of retail and main town centre uses floorspace over the monitoring year and will report the results of a town centre survey conducted by Hertfordshire County Council to determine the proportion of the centres that are in an active town centre uses and the proportion of units that are currently vacant.

These indicators will allow assessment of the health of the Centres, and changing demands as peoples shopping habits change.

### An Attractive Town

Achieving a high quality of design is a key objective for the borough and the policies in the Plan require applicants to demonstrate how they have designed schemes in a way that reflects the character of the area, the National Planning Policy Framework, the National Design Guide and any Supplementary Planning Documents.

The Plan also includes a policy on building heights which is a locally important issue, setting base building heights for each part of the borough as well as a detailed set of criteria that a proposal must adhere to in order for it to be acceptable over these base building heights.

The new AMR is the first time that design is being specifically monitored in Watford. The document will report; the number of planning applications where poor design has been listed as a reason for refusal, and the number of applications approved that exceed the base building heights, and conversely the number of applications where the building heights policy, Policy QD6.5, has been listed as a reason for refusal.

### The Historic Environment

Policies in the Plan seek to preserve and enhance both nationally and locally designated heritage assets and conservation areas, ensuring that new development compliments the boroughs historic environment.

This AMR will report on the number of buildings in Watford that are considered to be 'at risk' both on the Historic England 'heritage at risk' register which is released annually, and the Council's own list. The report will also monitor the number of applications which were granted contrary to advice from Historic England, and any works or changes to listed buildings that have taken place over the monitoring year.

### A Climate Emergency

Policies in the Plan aim to move the borough towards a more carbon neutral future and ensure that the borough adapts to and mitigates the effects of climate change, reflecting the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019. Policies also seek to ensure that development does not have an unacceptable impact on a variety of pollution related issues such as noise, odour, air quality or light pollution.

This AMR will monitor progress on reducing carbon emissions, pollution, and improving air quality across the borough. It will also monitor the proportion of new developments that meet sustainability standards regarding BREEAM, water and energy efficiency.

### Conserving and Enhancing the Environment

The Local Plan seeks to protect, enhance and increase biodiversity, and access to open space and green and blue infrastructure. The Plan recognises the importance of these spaces to the local community and their role in helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

This section of the AMR will report on the number of applications that have been approved contrary to advice from the Environment Agency, any net gains/losses of open space and green infrastructure and the proportion of approved planning applications that have resulted in a net gain in biodiversity.

### Infrastructure

The full infrastructure requirements for the Plan are set out in an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which was submitted as part of the Local Plan evidence base and remains a live document that will be updated over the plan period. Much of the funding for this infrastructure will be sought from developer contributions as part of new development.

This AMR will therefore report on progress with the delivery of infrastructure in the IDP, and on the receipt and spending of developer contributions in the borough.

### A Sustainable Travel Town

The Local Plan seeks to achieve a modal shift over the plan period, away from private cars towards more active travel and better, more convenient and accessible, public transport.

There are a variety of indicators relating to this objective within this AMR, including the proportion of new developments that are located within 400m of a bus stop and railway station, and the proportion of new developments that include policy compliant car and cycle parking provision.

There is also an indicator relating to the provision of electric vehicle charging points and the level of electronic vehicle ownership compared to diesel or petrol vehicles.

### A Healthy Community

The Plan has a chapter on health, reflecting the importance of getting people to be more active by walking and cycling more through the improved provision of cycle ways and greenspaces, healthy eating, tackling noise and air pollution and providing for a healthy older population and protecting and supporting community facilities.

This AMR will report on the number of approved planning applications that include a Health Impact Assessment (HIA), and the net delivery of new community facilities.

### Site Allocations and new development

There are four types of site allocation in the Plan, thirty two are purely residential (28 of them are under 1 ha in size), alongside twenty three mixed use allocations which together provide for 8,604 residential units alongside a variety of other uses including employment, education or retail.

There are employment allocations providing for office and industrial floorspace.

There is one Gypsy and Traveller allocation for two pitches.

There are two sites allocated for education facility development over the plan period.

All allocated sites have associated development criteria which are used to highlight the specific requirements of applications on them and any potential issues or special considerations that need to be taken into account in delivering them.

The AMR will report generally on housing and employment delivery across the borough but it will also specifically report updates on allocated sites.

### Duty to Co-operate

The Duty to Co-operate is a statutory duty that all LPAs must adhere to, requiring co-operation (not necessarily agreement) on cross boundary issues that arise between neighbouring plan making authorities, and other statutory bodies, when developing strategic policies.



During the preparation of their respective Local Plans, Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Three Rivers District Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Watford Borough Council have been working collaboratively to identify and consider how to appropriately address cross boundary issues where they exist.

These six Councils have also been working together on the South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan, which was subject to an initial vision consultation during the 2022-2023 monitoring year.

Before submission of the Local Plan in 2021, Watford Borough Council signed Statements of Common Ground with all of these Councils. Following the adoption of Watford's Local Plan, further cross boundary work and discussions will be ongoing as these Council's progress their own Local Plans.

At the Hertfordshire County wide level, Watford has played an active role in the Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership, the Hertfordshire Planning Group and the Hertfordshire Development Plans Group. The work of these groups is helping to progress a number of joined up strategies on infrastructure needs, development viability and in agreeing future joint working arrangements.

There were no Duty to Co-operate issues raised by the Planning Inspector or any other stakeholder during the examination of the Local Plan, nor during the subsequent consultation on main modifications, adoption or legal challenge period which ended during the monitoring year. This reflects and endorses the collaborative approach taken to cross boundary issues in Watford, and the positive engagement that was undertaken at all stages of the Local Plan process.

Over the monitoring year, a variety of Duty to Co-operate meetings were attended by officers in the Planning Policy team. These included meetings with neighbouring Councils in South West Hertfordshire in relation to Local Plan progress and minerals and waste issues led by Hertfordshire County Council.

This section of the AMR will continue to record any key Duty to Co-operate issues that have arisen over each monitoring year.

### Local Development Scheme

The timetable for production of Local Plan Documents is known as the Local Development Scheme (LDS). AMRs are required to include the latest progress with preparing local plan documents during the monitoring year relative to targets in the LDS; and whether any changes to the LDS are required.

Following the adoption of the Local Plan there is currently no new LDS or any timetable in place to undertake a review of it. Once a decision is formally made to review the Local Plan a new LDS will be published in this section of future AMRs.

### Watford Local Plan 2021-2038

The Watford Local Plan which covers the time period 2021-2038, was adopted at the Full Council meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

Paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that local plans are reviewed every five years (from the date of local plan adoption). Any review will take into account changing circumstances affecting the area and any changes in national policy guidance.

During this 2022-2023 monitoring year, the development plan was therefore changed and so some applications approved over the monitoring year were done so in accordance with now superseded policies and other applications subsequent to the Plans adoption approved against the new Plan policies.

### Supplementary Planning Guidance

Following the adoption of the Local Plan, the Council is intending to prepare some additional guidance to support the policies in the Plan. These are expected to generally take the form of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to ensure they have sufficient weight in decision making.

Over the plan period this section will provide written updates on progress with these guidance documents and any other supplementary planning guidance that is being produced.

Table 1: Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) being prepared by the Council

Name of document	Progress over the monitoring year
Affordable Housing SPD	Scoping and internal discussions have been undertaken. Further development work and drafting will be undertaken over the next monitoring year.
Colne Valley Strategic Development Area SPD	The Council committed to doing an SPD during the Local Plan hearing sessions. Internal discussions are taking place as to how his project will be taken forward and what the priorities for it are.
Biodiversity SPD	Further national guidance has been published on this issue over the monitoring year and more is expected during the 2023/2024 monitoring year so discussions are ongoing as to whether any additional supplementary planning guidance is necessary.
Design SPD	Scoping has been undertaken by a project team and an initial vision document is being prepared.

### Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood/Local Development Orders

The borough currently has no Neighbourhood Plans in place, or in production and there are no Neighbourhood Plan groups currently active. This section will record any changes to this situation over the plan period.

## 2. Housing

### Plan Period and Housing Targets

The Watford Local Plan sets a minimum target of 13,328 homes to be delivered over the plan period between 2021 and 2038, an average rate of 784 dwellings per annum. This target reflects the Government's standard methodology figure for calculating local authority housing needs in Watford.

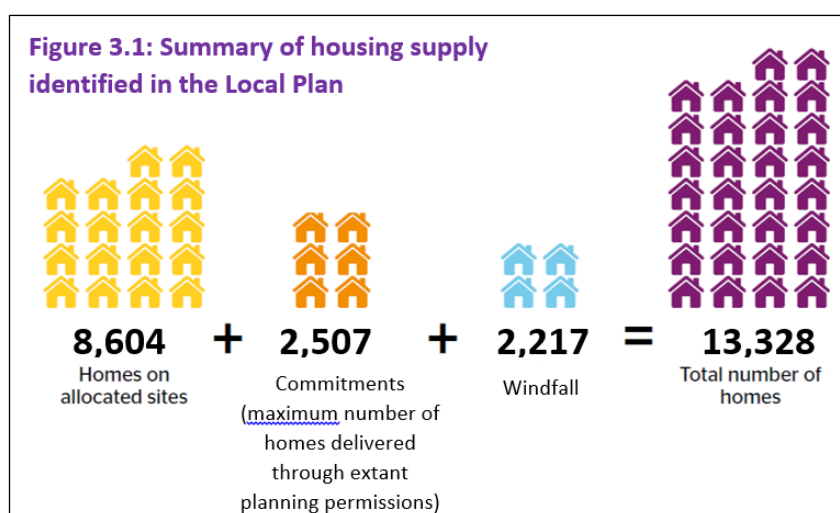
The Plan makes provision for this scale of growth through a combination of residential and mixed use site allocations, windfall completions and the implementation of current extant commitments.

Figure 3.1 of the Local Plan (replicated below in Figure 1) shows the breakdown of how the housing target will be met in the borough over the Plan period.

Figure 1- Housing supply identified in the Watford Local Plan- 2021-2038

### Housing Trajectory

The housing trajectory assesses actual net annual completions in the past and projected numbers of completions in the future compared to the Plan's target for new housing growth.



The main purpose of the trajectory is to support forward planning by monitoring housing performance and supply to determine if any action is necessary or whether any amendments to planning policy are required to meet targets.

The table below shows residential completions over the plan period to date. For some additional context, prior to the new Plan period starting, between 2015 and 2021 there was an average delivery of 312 residential completions per annum with a maximum annual delivery of 416 dwellings in 2020/2021. This provides useful historic context when looking at the following table. More detail on past housing completions can be found in previously published AMRs on the Council's website<sup>2</sup>.

Table 2 sets out both the gross and net residential completions recorded over the monitoring year.

<sup>2</sup> [Watford Local Plan – www.watford.gov.uk](http://www.watford.gov.uk)

Table 2: Residential completions over the monitoring year (MY) (dwellings)

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Gross residential completions MY	812	787				1,599
Net residential completions MY	754	778				1,532

### What Happened?:

In total there were 778 net residential completions over the monitoring year, April 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2023. This represents a minor shortfall on the Local Plan annual housing target of 784 dwellings.

It takes the total number of dwellings completed over the plan period to 1,532 (Net).

Over the year, there was significant delivery on the following large sites:

- 288 completions at 'Riverwell', Thomas Sawyer Way (17/01511/FULM and 19/01342/VARM)
- 145 completions at Land East of Ascot Road (18/00703/NONMAT)
- 81 completions at Whippendell Marine (19/00936/VAR)
- 72 completions at 425-455 St Albans Road (20/00037/FULM)

### Comparisons:

Whilst the annual target for net residential completions was narrowly missed, the figure of 778 represents the largest single year of completions in the borough since the previous style AMR was first published in 2006/2007. It is an uplift of 24 units on the number delivered in 2021-2022, which also represented a record level of completions at the time.

The last two years since the start of the plan period have seen significantly higher delivery than the average between 2015-16 and 2020-21.

### Implications of the Local Plan:

The delivery of 778 net additional dwellings represents a further substantial increase in the delivery of new dwellings relative to historic trends and a slight increase on last year's completions.

It is clear that Watford is currently in a peak of housing delivery. It is expected that delivery rates will stabilise as the plan period progresses but it is positive to see delivery broadly in line with the annual need requirement, reflecting the positive approach to development in the borough. The Local Plan should help to ensure that this growth is well designed and sustainably located.

708 of these residential completions were on major applications (defined as applications of 10 or more dwellings), 433 completions were on developments of 100 units or more.

These type of large developments tend to contribute towards a peak and trough style of housing delivery due to them delivering large numbers of dwellings in one year and low numbers in other years. It is likely that delivery will become more consistent once these mainly small to medium sized site allocations start to come forward.

## Housing Delivery Test

The Housing Delivery Test was introduced by the Government in 2018 to monitor how effectively new homes are being delivered within local authorities over a three year period. The test is based on comparing the standard methodology produced by Government against the actual number of homes delivered over a rolling three year period.

The following table shows the latest Housing Delivery Test result in Watford for the period up to 2021. A revised Housing Delivery Test is expected from the Government up to 2022 and for 2023, but neither of these have been published at the time of publication.

It is clear from the reported delivery in Table 2 that the Councils position in relation to the Housing Delivery Test will have changed since the Governments previously released results.

Table 3: Housing Delivery Test results (dwellings)

Number of homes required			Total number of homes required	Number of homes delivered			Total number of homes delivered	Housing Delivery Test: 2021 measurement	Housing Delivery Test: 2021 consequence
2018-19	2019-20	2020-21		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21			
798	726	524	2,048	298	266	416	980	48%	Presumption

As a result of the above, the Council is subject to all of the following:

- Less than 95%- An action plan must be produced within six months.
- Less than 85%- A 20% buffer must be added to the five year housing land supply
- Less than 75%- The 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' applies. This introduces a test, which has become known in legal cases as the 'tilted balance' in favour of granting permission for housing development. This means that local development plan policies carry less weight and increased emphasis should be placed on the NPPF in decision making.

As a result of this, a 20% buffer was added to the borough's five year housing supply and the Council has produced an Action Plan which can be viewed on the Council's website.

There has been no change to the published Housing Delivery Test results since the previous 2021 results were published. Given the significantly increased housing delivery in the past two years, it

will be interesting to see how this translates into any updated results. These results will be published by the Council once available.

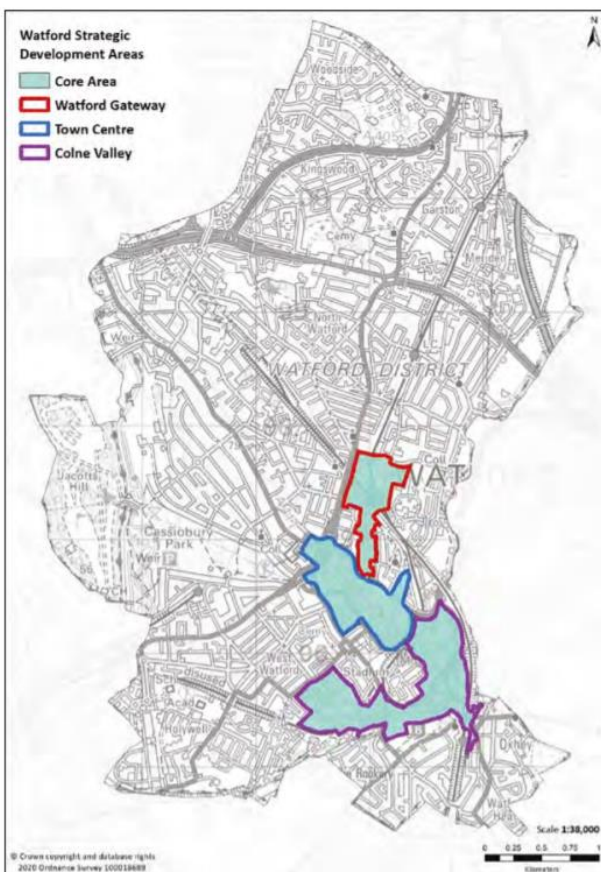
Given the high levels of delivery in the past two years, it is predicted that the Council will be out of the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' and out of the 20% buffer zone when the new 2023 results are published.

Until the updated Housing Delivery Test is released by Government, Watford remains under the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' and the 20% buffer sanction.

### Five Year Housing Supply

The Five Year Housing Supply is published separately from this report. A Five Year Supply position was agreed by the Planning Inspector during the Local Plan hearings.

### 2022-2023 Housing Completions



Following on from the overall annual delivery in Table 2, this section breaks down the current monitoring years residential completions by location and type.

The Core Development Area (CDA) includes the areas covered by the three Strategic Development Areas (SDAs); the Town Centre SDA, Colne Valley SDA and Watford Gateway SDA. Figure 2 shows the geographic extent of the CDA and each of the SDAs.

80% of dwellings proposed on site allocations in the Local Plan are located within the Core Development Area and it is expected that a significant percentage of all completions over the plan period will be located within this area.

Figure 2- Core Development Area and Strategic Development Areas

Tables 4 and 5 below, break down annual residential completions into those within the Core Development Area as a whole and then into each of the three SDAs.

Table 4: Net residential completions within the Core Development Area (dwellings)

		2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Net residential completions within Core Development Area	No.	368	352				720
	%	49%	45%				47%
Net residential completions outside Core Development Area	No.	386	426				812
	%	51%	55%				53%

Table 5: Residential completions by Strategic Development Area (dwellings)

		2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Net residential completions within Watford Gateway SDA	No.	171	9				180
	% of total HC's	23%	1%				12%
Net residential completions within the Town Centre SDA	No.	104	55				159
	% of total HC's	14%	7%				10%
Net residential completions within the Colne Valley SDA	No.	93	288				381
	% of total HC's	12%	37%				25%

### What Happened?:

In the current monitoring year there were 352 net residential completions within the Core Development Area out of a total of 778 net completions. This equates to 45% of all completions.

The Colne Valley SDA saw the highest number of residential completions over the monitoring year (288 dwellings- 37% of all completions). These were all delivered on two phases of the 'Riverwell' development.

55 completions (7% of total completions) were within the Town Centre SDA however in contrast with the Colne Valley SDA this delivery was spread across a range of small development sites, only two of which were major developments of 10 or more dwellings.

There were just 9 completions (1% of total completions) within the Watford Gateway SDA, all on one site on Station Road.

**Comparisons:**

There was a considerable contrast between 2021-22 and 2022-23 for this indicator. With considerably more delivery in the Colne Valley SDA, and much less delivery within the Watford Gateway SDA.

This indicator may be subject to annual fluctuations based on the delivery of one specific large site however the trends will be analysed over the coming years to review levels of delivery in each part of the Core Development Area.

Overall there was not a significant variation in the overall proportion of completions inside and outside the Core Development Area, remaining slightly less than half the total completions within the Core Development Area.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

The Plan directs the majority of growth to the Core Development Area reflecting the areas sustainability in terms of access to services, facilities and public transport and therefore its suitability in principle for development.

80% of all residential and mixed use site allocations are within the Core Development Area and so it is likely that delivery in this area will increase, and that the proportion of delivery relative to outside the Core Development Area will also increase as these site allocations come forward.

The Core Development Area designation was only confirmed through the Local Plan adoption and so it is hard to make any long term conclusions on its effectiveness at this early stage of the Plan period. It would be expected that the proportion of delivery in the Core Development Area may increase as site allocations in the Local Plan start to come forward.

### Residential Completions on Previously Developed Land (PDL)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Local Plan seek to make effective use of land by optimising densities and prioritising the re-use of brownfield sites (Previously Developed Land). There is a target in the monitoring framework for 80% of all residential development to be on Previously Developed Land (PDL).

The proportion of completions on PDL has historically been high in Watford, 84% on average over the five years prior to the start of the plan period (2015-2020), and it is expected that this trend will continue given the dense, urban geography of the borough and the focus in the Local Plan on delivering growth on brownfield sites.



Table 6: Residential completions on Previously Developed Land (Gross) (dwellings)

		2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Residential completions on PDL (gross)	No.	767	735				1,502
	%	95%	93%				94%

**What Happened?:**

In 2022/2023 there were 735 gross completions on PDL compared to a total of 787 gross completions.

This equates to 93% of all gross completions being on PDL meaning that the borough has comfortably exceeded the 80% target in the Local Plan.

**Comparisons:**

Historically Watford has seen a very high proportion of development on PDL and this trend has clearly continued this year, as it did last year where 95% of all delivery was on PDL.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

The Local Plan, and the NPPF, supports a 'brownfield first' approach to the delivery of housing, with only one site allocation being on a 'greenfield site'. As such, it is expected that the majority of development will continue to take place on Previously Developed Land.

This year's figure of 93% means that the borough has substantially exceeded the Local Plan target of 80% which is positive.

**Extant Permissions**

Table 7 records the number of dwellings that have been granted planning permission over the monitoring year and the total number of extant permissions for residential development in the borough at the end of the monitoring year.

The number of dwellings being granted permission will have a direct impact on the level of housing development coming forward in future years and so it is a useful indicator to monitor.

Table 7: Number of dwellings granted permission over the monitoring year (MY) (dwellings)

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of dwellings granted planning permission over the MY	991	838				1,829
Number of dwellings on extant permissions at the end of the MY	4,202	3,569				-

### What Happened?:

Over the monitoring year 838 dwellings were granted planning permission, this takes the total of dwellings granted over the plan period to 1,829 dwellings.

As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 there were 3,569 dwellings in total with extant planning permission. This should provide a considerable supply of new homes over the coming years, even taking into account the fact that a proportion of these extant permissions will inevitably lapse without being implemented.

### Comparisons:

Compared to the 2021/2022 monitoring year there was a slight reduction in both the number of dwellings granted and the total number of dwellings that have extant permission. Despite this, there remains a significant extant supply and number of dwellings being granted planning permission.

### Implications for the Local Plan:

There are a considerable number of extant housing permissions in the borough. It is likely that these permissions will provide the bulk of housing delivery in the short term and will contribute towards meeting the annual Local Plan housing requirement of 784 dwellings.

## Lapse Rate

It is a reasonable assumption that not all planning applications granted permission will end up being implemented. To ensure that the published housing supply in the borough is robust, an allowance should be made for the non-implementation of some permissions.

This allowance is known as a Lapse Rate. The Lapse Rate is calculated by determining the percentage of all dwellings on extant permissions which have lapsed over a given period compared to the annual number of residential units granted permission over the same given period.

It was determined during the Local Plan examination that a 15% lapse rate was appropriate and reflective of past trends in the borough.

Table 8 below reports the number of lapsed permissions over the monitoring year, compared against the 15% figure over the plan period.

Table 8: Lapse Rate over the monitoring year and plan period (dwellings)

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of dwellings granted permission	991	838				1,829
Number of dwellings lapsed	62	32				94
Lapse Rate	6%	4%				5%

Table 9 below further breaks down this Lapse Rate data into major developments (10 or more dwellings) and minor developments (under 10 dwellings). Over the course of the plan period this will highlight whether non implemented permissions are evenly distributed between major and minor applications and provide additional and useful data when it comes to reviewing the local plan policies and the borough's five year supply assumptions.

Table 9: Lapse Rate on major and minor developments (dwellings)

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of dwellings granted permission on sites of 10 or more dwellings	863	768				1,631
Number of dwellings lapsed on sites of 10 or more dwellings	39	0				39
Lapse rate on sites of 10 or more dwellings	5%	0%				2.5%
Number of dwellings granted permission on sites of less than 10 dwellings	128	70				198
Number of dwellings lapsed on sites of less than 10 dwellings	23	32				55
Lapse rate on sites of less than 10 dwellings	18%	46%				28%

### **What Happened?:**

Over the monitoring year 32 dwellings previously granted planning permission were on applications that lapsed between April and March 2022-2023. This is a lapse rate over the year of 4%.

Table 9 analyses whether this lapse rate has been consistent across all types of application or whether it is more prevalent in major or minor applications. Over this monitoring year, there were no lapses on major applications (10 or more dwellings), compared to a lapse rate of 46% on minor applications of less than 10 dwellings.

It will be interesting to monitor this over the plan period to determine if this is a trend that continues.

### **Comparisons:**

There was an assumed lapse rate of 15% provided at the examination of the Watford Local Plan based on historic trends. The overall lapse rate this year was considerably less than this figure, although the lapse rate on minor applications was higher.

The 46% lapse rate on minor applications is mainly a reflection of the lower number of dwellings granted on minor applications this year compared to last, the overall number of dwellings on lapsed minor permissions has not increase to the same extent. It will be interesting to see how this percentage develops over the plan period.

### **Implications for the Local Plan:**

It is positive to see a lower than average lapse rate over the monitoring year demonstrating the strong market conditions that exist in the borough which allow the vast majority of permissions, particularly major permissions, to be implemented.

There was however, a high Lapse Rate on minor applications over the monitoring year and it will be important to consider over the coming years whether it is an anomaly or part of a broader economic and market trend that means permissions are not getting implemented.

Ultimately the Council has limited control over Lapse Rates. It cannot force developers to implement permissions and so there is limited potential for a policy approach being able to resolve any identified issue.

## Density of Residential Completions

The new Watford Local Plan sets minimum targets with regard to the density of new residential development within and outside the Core Development Area:

- Within the Core Development Area new residential developments should be a minimum of 95 dwellings per hectare (dph).

- Outside the Core Development Area new residential developments should be a minimum of 45 dwellings per hectare.

This indicator will highlight how the density of new development is changing across the area, reflecting the increased demand for new homes, and the effectiveness of the Local Plan policies to distinguish between applications within and outside the Core Development Area.

Table 10: Average density of residential development (dwellings per hectare)

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Average density of residential completions within Core Development Area	177dph	241dph				209dph
Average density of residential completions outside Core Development Area	95dph	82dph				89dph
Overall average density of residential completions	116dph	122dph				119dph

**What Happened?:**

Over the monitoring year the average density of new residential development completed within the Core Development Area was 241dph compared to outside the Core Development Area where the density was 82dph on average.

Across the whole borough the average density was 122dph.

It is clear that the minimum density standards above have been exceeded both within the Core Development Area and outside, and that the density of new development is considerably higher within the Core Development Area than outside it.

**Comparisons:**

The density of new development in the 2021-2022 AMR was 116dph, and prior to that, densities had been averaging under 100dph.

Compared to the last monitoring year, the density of new development within the Core Development Area has increased from 177dph to 241dph and is now over 200dph for the plan period. Outside the Core Development Area however, average densities reduced from 95dph to 82dph.

It is clear that the density of new development in the borough is increasing and the new minimum density figures in the Local Plan reflect a desire to optimise densities and make more efficient use of available land.

#### **Implications for the Local Plan:**

The Local Plan seeks to optimise densities and make more efficient use of land by setting minimum density standards for within the Core Development Area and outside the Core Development Area. It is clear that over the first two years of the plan period these densities have been exceeded. It will be important to monitor this indicator to get an idea of the density of new development being approved in the borough relative to these minimum densities and to historic density rates in the borough.

### Delivery of Site Allocations

Chapter 13 of the Local Plan allocates a range of sites for housing and other mixed-uses. Details of any progress that has taken place on these allocations over the monitoring year can be found in section 12 of this AMR.

### Type of Dwellings

Previous AMRs have reported that the vast majority of new residential dwellings being delivered in Watford are 1 or two bedroom flats. The 2021-2022 AMR indicated that the number of dwellings that were 3+ bedrooms was just 10%, a further reduction to the previous five year trend which showed that, on average, 12.6% of new dwellings were 3+ bedrooms.

The Local Plan evidence base (South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment, 2020), indicated however, that there is a need in Watford for:

- 68% of market homes to be 3+ bedrooms
- 38% of affordable homes to be 3+ bedrooms.

It was clear however that were the Local Plan to require this mix it would not be able to meet its quantitative housing needs relative to Government targets.

The Local Plan has therefore sought to balance the delivery of local housing needs in quantitative terms, with the qualitative need to deliver larger family sized housing. Policy H03.2 requires new residential development to provide at least 20% family sized dwellings (3+ bed properties). Tables 11 and 12 show the breakdown of type and size of dwelling in the borough over the monitoring year and the percentage of all completions in terms of dwelling size and type.

Table 11: Type of dwellings being completed over the monitoring year (gross) (dwellings)

		2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Flats, Apartment or Maisonette	No.	728	745				1,473
	%	90%	95%				92%
Bungalow	No.	10	0				10
	%	1%	0%				1%
House	No.	40	19				59
	%	5%	2%				4%
Studio	No.	28	22				50
	%	3%	3%				3%
Other	No.	6	0				6
	%	<1%	0%				<1%

Table 12: Size of dwelling units completed over the monitoring year (gross)

		2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
1 bed	No.	311	278				589
	%	38%	35%				37%
2 bed	No.	422	460				882
	%	52%	58%				56%
3 bed	No.	64	42				86
	%	8%	5%				5%
4+ bed	No.	15	7				22
	%	2%	1%				1%

### What Happened?:

Over the monitoring year 98% of all residential completions were flats, apartments, maisonettes or studios. Houses and Bungalows made up just 2% of all dwellings delivered over the year.

Just 6% of all dwellings delivered over the monitoring year were 3+ bedrooms and therefore defined as 'family sized'. The Local Plan target for 20% of all dwellings to be family sized dwellings of 3+ bedrooms was not met over the monitoring year.

Nearly 60% of all dwellings completed were 2 bed units, with 35% being 1 bed.

### Comparisons:

The prevalence of flatted development compared to traditional housing types is a long term trend in the borough. It is expected that this trend will likely continue, although it will be important to monitor the proportion of dwellings that are family sized in comparison to the target in Policy HO3.2.

The proportion of 3+ bedroom units over this monitoring year is reduced compared to last year with 6% compared to 10%. This is a particularly low proportion of family sized units compared to historic trends.

### Implications for the Local Plan:

The Local plan targets for family sized dwellings have been missed in this monitoring year with just 6% delivered compared to the 20% target.

The provision of family sized units is a key element of meeting the housing needs of the borough. The vast majority of completions recorded this year will have been approved against old planning policies and not subject to this 20% requirement so it will be important to monitor this going forward to determine how effective the requirements in Policy HO3.2 have been in securing more family sized homes.

## Affordable Housing

The Watford Local Plan (Policy HO3.3) sets a target of 35% of habitable rooms on major residential developments to be affordable. Previously, affordable housing was based on the number of units, but in the new Local Plan, the number of habitable rooms is used instead, as a way of trying to facilitate delivery of larger family sized affordable units rather than only delivering 1 or 2 bed units.

Whilst the policy is not specific on tenure mix across all the affordable housing typologies included within the NPPF definition, 60% of affordable dwellings should be social rent tenure.

The following tables set out both the overall number and proportion of affordable housing delivered over the monitoring year as a percentage of total completions as well as breaking down this delivery into tenures, allowing comparison against the above local plan targets. Tables 13 and 14 consider affordable housing delivery both by number of units and by habitable room.

Table 13- Number of Affordable houses (Net) (dwellings)

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of net affordable dwellings completed	251	94				347
% of all net completions	33%	12%				23%



Table 14- Number of Affordable houses (Net) (dwellings) by habitable room

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of affordable units delivered by habitable room	No data	196				196
% of all net completions	No data	14%				14%

Table 15: Type of affordable dwellings completed over the monitoring year (gross) (dwellings)

		2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Social rented	No.	30	30				60
	%	10%	32%				15%
Affordable rented	No.	229	49				278
	%	75%	52%				70%
Intermediate and Shared Ownership	No.	44	15				59
	%	15%	16%				15%
Build to rent	No.	0	0				0
	%	0%	0%				0%
Discounted Market	No.	0	0				0
	%	0%	0%				0%

### What Happened?:

Over the monitoring year 94 affordable dwellings were completed in the borough, equal to 12% of all completions by unit, and 14% by habitable room. This is considerably below the 35% target in Policy HO3.3 of the Local Plan.

The Watford Local Plan policy HOU3.3 sets an affordable housing target by habitable room rather than by number of units. Last year's AMR only reported affordable housing delivery by unit however this year, results are reported both by unit and by habitable room.

Of these affordable completions, 32% were social rent compared to the local requirement for 60%, whilst 52% were affordable rented; and 16% were shared ownership or intermediate tenure.

### **Comparisons:**

The 2021/2022 monitoring year saw the largest number of affordable dwellings built in a single year in Watford since records in the AMR began in 2014 by a considerable margin with 251 completions.

This year's delivery of 94 dwellings, whilst disappointing relative to the Local Plan policy requirement, is more consistent with historic trends in the borough where the average annual affordable completions between 2014/15 and 2020/21 was 74 affordable dwellings per year.

Despite the considerably fewer overall affordable housing units being delivered, the number of social rent units is exactly the same compared to 2021/2022, representing a much higher proportion of the overall affordable housing delivery this year (32%). This is positive given the identified need for social rent units, albeit still not policy compliant in terms of the need for 60%.

It is not possible to compare affordable housing delivery by habitable room this year as it is the first year this has been monitored in the borough.

### **Implications for the Local Plan:**

Affordable housing delivery this year is below the Local Plan target and below the number delivered in the previous monitoring year.

Whilst almost all of the completions this year were on applications approved prior to the Local Plan's adoption it will be important that the Council considers the barriers to securing and delivering affordable housing and ways to overcome them.

This indicator will continue to observe delivery of affordable housing and trends over a longer period.

## [Residential Conversions](#)

Table 16 below sets out the number of residential conversions that have been permitted over the monitoring year.

Conversions and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) make an important contribution to an area's housing stock and as such are supported in the Local Plan where they are well located with regard to public transport and services and facilities, and where they would not result in unacceptable amenity impacts.

The delivery of this type of housing will need to be carefully managed, and this indicator will allow the location of new HMOs to be evaluated with regard to avoiding over-concentrations of such units and their potential amenity impacts.

Table 16: Number of permissions granted for Residential conversions (applications)

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of conversions from a single dwelling house into multiple smaller houses permitted	14*	2				2
Number of conversions of residential units into a large House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) of over 6 occupants	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				

*\*This was the total number of extant permissions for residential conversions to be used as a baseline. From 2022/2023 onwards the figure represents the additional applications approved over the monitoring year.*

Table 16 above highlights two distinct types of conversion; the sub-division of an existing residential dwelling into a larger number of smaller dwellings and secondly the number of residential dwellings that have been converted into HMOs. Note that the above indicator only includes larger HMOs of 6 occupants or more; HMOs of less than 6 occupants can be created under Permitted Development and so it is not possible to monitor these effectively.

#### **What Happened?:**

Over the monitoring year, 2 applications were granted permission for the conversion of existing residential dwellings, which will result in a net gain of 2 dwellings (2 dwellings converted into 4 dwellings).

#### **Comparisons:**

As mentioned in the caption to the table, the figure in 2021/2022 was a current baseline position of all current permissions for residential conversions.

2022/2023 focuses only on the number approved over the monitoring year. Direct comparisons are therefore not possible for this indicator between this year and last year.

#### **Implications for the Local Plan:**

It will be important to assess the number and location of units being delivered through conversions and HMOs to ensure that they are well located and that they do not contribute to or exacerbate amenity issues.

## Specialist Housing and Care Homes

Policy HO3.5 of the Local Plan supports the provision of specialist housing to meet the needs of vulnerable people. This type of development will become increasingly important given the ageing population and the increasing number of residents with disabilities living in the borough. This indicator will therefore monitor the delivery of this type of development across the plan period.

Table 17: Number of specialist and care home beds completed and the number lost over the monitoring year

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of specialist and care home beds completed	0	0				0
Number of specialist and care home beds lost	0	0				0

Table 18 will add further detail to the above table, reporting the number of specialist housing units completed and approved over the monitoring year, plus the location and type of these developments.

It is important given the wide variety of different specialist housing typologies to suit different levels of care and need that the type of specialist housing being delivered is monitored alongside the monitoring of overall housing.

Table 18: Location and type of specialist and care bed spaces completed and approved

Location/App number	Type of specialist housing (extra care/supported living)	Number of dwellings
N/A	N/A	N/A
Total		

### What Happened?:

Over the monitoring year there were no gains or losses of specialist care or extra care development.

### Comparisons:

There were also no gains and losses of specialist care or extra care units in the previous monitoring year.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

Over the course of the plan period it will be crucial that the needs for specialist care homes are met, especially when considering the ageing population within the borough. This indicator will continue to report any delivery of this type, and assess whether more direct interventions are necessary as part of a future plan review.

## Student Accommodation

There are a variety of education institutions within and adjacent to Watford that could create a need for student accommodation in the borough. These include West Herts College, the Harrow branch of the University of Westminster and Middlesex University in Hendon.

Whilst the borough has no such facilities currently and at the start of the plan period there are no current permissions to deliver any student specific accommodation, this indicator will monitor any permissions or completions of this type that come forward over the plan period.

Table 19: Number of applications for student accommodation completed or approved

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of student bed spaces completed	0	0				0
Number of student bed spaces approved	0	0				0

**What Happened?:**

Over the monitoring year there were no gains or losses of student bed spaces.

**Comparisons:**

There were also no gains and losses of student accommodation in the previous monitoring year.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

The Local Plan provides a positive base on which proposals for student housing can be assessed. There is no identified demand currently for this type of unit and so there is no target to assess any provision against.

If the demand for this type of accommodation is shown to have increased in the borough then this will be considered in a future iteration of the Local Plan.

## Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

Watford Borough Council currently accommodates a single 10 pitch gypsy and traveller site (which can accommodate up to 20 caravans) at Tolpits Lane in the south of the borough. This site is managed by Hertfordshire County Council. There are currently no transit sites present in Watford.

The Local Plan allocates a site adjacent to the existing site at Tolpits Lane for the provision of two additional pitches. This meets in full the current identified need in the borough. This need was identified in the Gypsy and Traveller assessment undertaken as part of the Local Plan evidence base.

Policy H03.8 sets out the basis by which proposals for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation will be assessed.

Table 20: Number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches completed or approved over the monitoring year

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches completed	0	0				0
Number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches approved	0	0				0

### What Happened?:

Over the monitoring year there were no gains or losses of Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

### Comparisons:

There were also no gains and losses of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the previous monitoring year.

### Implications for the Local Plan:

The target for and allocation of 2 Gypsy and Traveller pitches reflects the assessed need in the latest Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment.

Any future Local Plan review would need to take account of an up to date Gypsy and Traveller Assessment. There is no indication of any demand for additional pitches over and above the need identified in the borough at present.

## Self-Build and Custom Build Housing

Section 1 of the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, requires local authorities to keep a register of any person seeking to acquire serviced plots in the area for self-build and custom housebuilding. Under Section 2 of the Act they are also required to have regard to this register in developing strategies that will provide enough suitable permissions to meet this identified demand. These can be delivered as either market or affordable homes.

Table 21: Number of people seeking to acquire plots that are registered on the authorities' self-build register

Number on the register as of 31/3/2023	Number added over the monitoring year
36	13

Table 22: Delivery of Self and Custom Build Units

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of Self and Custom Build plots approved	0	0				
Number of Self and Custom Build units completed	0	0				
Number of CIL exemptions for self-build offered	2	5				

### What Happened?:

A review of the self-build register was undertaken over the monitoring year which asked people whether they wished to remain on the register. Anyone who did not respond was removed which explains the reduction in the number of people on the register compared to the number reported in the 2021/2022 AMR.

There were 36 people on the self-build register as of the end of the monitoring year. People can request to be added at any time of the year and so this figure may have changed at the time of reading.

Over the monitoring year, 13 people requested to be included on the Self and Custom Build Register.

This will likely be only an indication of demand. In reality, there may be others who have not registered that would have the means and interest in self or custom build development if opportunities were to arise. There may also be those that are on the register who desire a self-build plot but in reality would not have the means to acquire or deliver a self-build development.

Table 22 shows that over the monitoring year there were no self and custom build plots approved and there were no plots completed.

There were however five CIL exemptions offered for self-build over the monitoring year.

### **Comparisons:**

As mentioned, a full review of the self-build register was undertaken over the monitoring year, this means making direct comparisons with previous data is difficult in terms of total numbers. This review lowered the number of entrants on the register from 62 to 36.

In the 2021/22 monitoring year there were 9 additional requests received and added to the self-build register. This has remained relatively steady with 13 additional requests in the 2022/23 monitoring year.

There was no delivery or approvals of self-build units over the monitoring year but there were five self-build CIL exemptions issued. This is an increase from two CIL exemptions in 2021/22.

### **Implications for the Local Plan:**

Given the current and expected dominance of flatted developments in the borough, particularly within the CDA the opportunities for delivering self and custom build units in the borough may be limited. It is therefore important that any opportunities that do arise are taken advantage of to ensure that the demand for self-build is met.

The number of additional people being entered onto the self-build register is reported to assess growing demand that the council will have an obligation to try and meet.

## **Building Standards**

Policy H03.10 sets out four requirements relating to the quality of new residential units:

- Firstly, that all new homes will meet the nationally described space standards;
- Secondly, that all new housing will be designed to comply with M4(2) of the building regulations unless they are meeting M4(3) of the building regulations;
- Thirdly, on developments over 10 homes at least 4% of the dwellings should be wheelchair adaptable and built to M4(3) standard.
- Finally, on developments of 50 or more dwellings 2% are to be designed to support living someone living with dementia.

Meeting these standards is an important requirement for delivering high quality homes in the borough that provide a high quality of life for residents.



Table 23- Percentage of new development meeting building standards in H03.10

		2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number and percentage of completions meeting national space standards	No.	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
	%						
Number and percentage of completions complying with M4(2) accessibility standard	No.	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
	%						
Number and percentage of completions on developments of over 10 dwellings meeting M4(3) accessibility standard	No.	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
	%						
Number and percentage of dementia friendly homes delivered on sites of 50 or more dwellings	No.	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
	%						

**What Happened?:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Comparisons:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

### 3. Employment and the Economy

The following indicators present a variety of data on the provision of new employment floorspace in the borough, and the gains and losses resulting from changes of use to and from employment.

In 2020 the Use Class Order was revised nationally, resulting in a large number of uses including offices, and light industrial uses being collated into a new single commercial use class known as Class E.

The following indicators will therefore take into account the following Use Classes as defined in the Use Class Order (2020):

B Class:

- B2 (General Industrial)- Use for industrial processes other than uses falling within Class E(g)(iii) (*previously Class B1c*).
- B8 (Storage and Distribution).

E Class:

- E(g)- Previously B1 Use Class- uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity:
  - E(g)(i)- Offices to carry out any operational or administrative function
  - E(g)(ii)- Research and Development of products or processes
  - E(g)(iii)- Industrial processes

Note that some of the applications reported in this section were approved prior to 2020 so were approved against the previous Use Class Order. For the purposes of the indicators in this section, the provision of both B1a, B1c and E Class Uses have been taken into account. For ease of analysis, any B1a uses have been combined with any E(g)(i) uses; any B1b uses have been combined with E(g)(ii) uses and any B1c uses have been combined with E(g)(iii) uses. They are all referred to in this report as per the current Use Classes Order.

If an application involves a process of demolition and rebuild, the demolition element can often take place in one year and the replacement provision will not be completed until the following year (or years in the case of larger sites). This can sometimes be the cause of substantial net losses in employment floorspace. It is important therefore to assess trends in this section over a period of time rather than make overall conclusions based on single monitoring years. Where it is clear that the losses are likely to be balanced by subsequent re-provision, this has been indicated in the written analysis.

#### Permitted Development

Some changes of use involving commercial floorspace can take place through Permitted Development (PD) under the regulations of the General Permitted Development Order (GDPO, 2021). This means they do not require planning permission. As these changes take place outside the planning system they cannot be monitored effectively and as such are not included within the following figures.

## Article 4 Directions

The Council has previously had Article 4 Directions in place to try and protect designated employment areas from changes of use through Permitted Development. This reflected the importance of these areas to local employment and the lack of alternative sites within Watford available for these uses, as well as concerns over the quality of development delivered through PD.

Given the changes to the Use Class Order and the Permitted Development Order (GDPO), re-issued Article 4 Directions are currently being drawn up to try and protect the employment areas designated in the Local Plan.

The Directions were issued in June 2023 and were subject to consultation with landowners and occupiers during June/July. During this time they were also considered by representatives of the Secretary of State at DLUHC who have requested additional information from the Council.

A response to these comments is being worked on but it is still expected that these Directions, with necessary revisions will be confirmed over the 2023/2024 monitoring year.

## Watford Local Plan

The plan designates five separate industrial areas within which the loss of employment land will be resisted. It also designates a Primary Office Location along Clarendon Road which, along with the town centre, will be the focus for office development in the borough and for the protection of existing provision.

Figure 3: Locations of designated industrial and office areas in the Watford Local Plan

The plan includes provision for 85,488sqm of office floorspace and 25,206sqm of industrial floorspace. This represents, relative to identified needs across South West Hertfordshire, an over provision of office floorspace and an under provision of industrial floorspace.

The over provision of office floorspace will help neighbouring authorities to meet their needs, reflecting Watford's role as the sub-regional hub of office based employment. The under provision of industrial floor space is reflective of the dense, residential, urban character of Watford and the lack of suitable sites available for these uses.

The following tables highlight this provision relative to the identified needs in Watford and South West Hertfordshire.

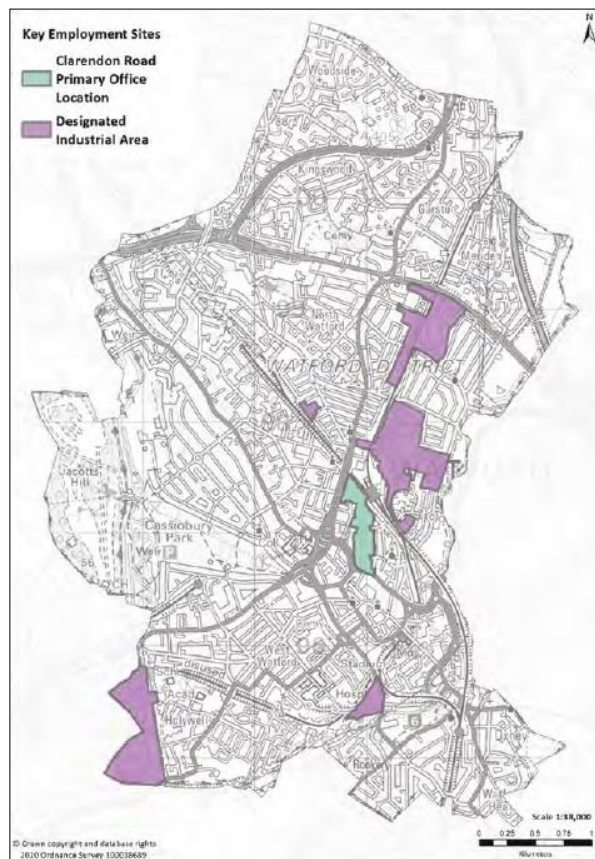


Table 24: Industrial floorspace supply and targets

Summary of industrial floorspace provision 2021-2038	Floorspace provision (sqm)
South West Hertfordshire requirement	481,500
Watford requirement	98,400
Provision through site allocations	12,799
Provision on sites with planning permission	12,407
Total industrial floorspace provision in the Local Plan	25,206

Table 25: Office floorspace supply and targets

Summary of office floorspace provision 2021-2038	Floorspace provision (sqm)
South West Hertfordshire requirement	188,000
Watford requirement	37,600
Provision through site allocations	19,428
Provision on sites with planning permission	66,060
Total office floorspace provision in the Local Plan	85,488

Policies EM4.1-EM4.6 set out the Plan’s approach to the economy and employment in detail. The indicators in this section will help to monitor progress on the implementation of this strategy across the plan period.

## COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had a particularly significant impact on the economy, and in particular in changing the way people work compared to traditional working methods.

The full impacts of the pandemic are still emerging in relation to the economy but it is likely that levels of home working will increase in the long term and that more flexible types of working may become more common at the expense of traditional 9-5 patterns of office work.

It is vital therefore that the Council monitors the economic sector closely to identify longer term patterns and trends that could help the council deliver on the changing needs and demands of businesses and employees going forward. The indicators in this section will play a role in doing this.

## South West Hertfordshire Economic Study

A South West Hertfordshire Economic Study was commissioned towards the end of the monitoring year and will be undertaken by Hatch Regeneris. The study will help to inform future Local Plan policy development across South West Hertfordshire and will provide an evidence base from which to further analyse trends and economic changes post-Covid.

Progress on this will be updated in the next AMR but it is expected that the study will be completed over the monitoring year.

## Employment Floorspace Delivery

This indicator will record the net gains and losses of employment floor space in the borough over the plan period. It will do this collectively, and by Use Class, to allow analysis of the overall economic performance of the borough as well as the relative performance of individual employment sectors.

This indicator takes account of the changes to the Use Class Order in 2021 which removed B1a, B1b and B1c as Use Classes, replacing them with Class E(g)(i), E(g)(ii) and E(g)(iii). For the purposes of office, research and development and light industrial process uses, these have been combined into a single figure described as per the new E Class definition.

Table 26: Net employment floorspace delivered over the monitoring year (sqm)

Use class	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
B2 (General Industrial)	-1,214	-324				
B8 (Storage and Distribution)	-2,121	42				
E(g)(I) (Offices)	15,507	-6,399				
E(g)(ii) (Research and Development)	0	0				
E(g)(iii) (Industrial Processes)	-1,744	-503				
Mixed E Class	-64	-7,297				
Total	10,364	-14,481				

### What Happened?:

There was an overall net loss of -14,481sqm of employment floorspace over the monitoring year.

This is clearly a considerable loss that was largely due to two large applications:

- One for the change of use of an office building to residential uses on Cherry Tree Road (20/00803/OPD). This application resulted in a net loss of -6,992sqm of office floorspace.
- The other is an application for the demolition of a mixed E Class industrial building, prior to its redevelopment for three new industrial buildings on Colonial Way (21/00971/FULM). The demolition took place over the monitoring year but the rebuild has not yet taken place, resulting in a reported net loss of over -7,200sqm.

There was a variety of smaller losses across the borough, and only a few gains.

**Comparisons:**

Compared to last year's overall net gain it would appear that this year has reversed the trend with a substantial reported loss compared to last year's substantial net gain.

Although a substantial amount of this loss was on an application for demolition and rebuild, it is still apparent that a loss has been recorded.

It will be important to monitor this indicator over a period of time to determine trends and consider the effectiveness of the Local Plan policies in protecting employment floorspace.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

Historically there has been concern over a loss of employment floorspace in the borough which resulted in Article 4 Directions being put in place in 2013 on Clarendon Road and in 2019 on industrial areas. There is an ongoing Article 4 Direction process to re-issue Directions on all the designated employment areas identified in the Local Plan.

It is still very early in the plan period and so it is not possible to make any overall conclusions on employment floorspace trends, especially given the very different results in each year so far. This will be monitored closely over the coming years to allow a better understanding of whether this indicator will continue to fluctuate each year or whether a more defined pattern will emerge once the new Local Plan policies are implemented.

## Designated Industrial Areas

The plan designates five areas within the borough as 'industrial areas'. Policy EM4.2 states that within these locations proposals will only be supported where they result in no net loss of industrial floorspace other than in the specific circumstances set out in the policy. The monitoring framework sets a target for there to be no net loss of industrial uses over the plan period within these locations.

Table 27 below highlights net gains and losses in B2, B8, and E(g)(iii) employment floorspace within the five industrial areas over the monitoring year.

Over the plan period this indicator will be used to assess the health of the borough's key industrial areas and the extent to which they remain viable and growing.

Table 27: Net delivery of employment floor space within designated industrial areas over the monitoring year (sqm)

Use class	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
B2 (General Industrial)	-1,400	-440				
B8 (Storage and Distribution)	-2,121	0				
E(g)(ii) (Research and Development)	0	0				
E(g)(iii) (Industrial Processes)	-1,342	0				
Mixed E Class	0	-7,297				
Total	-4,863	-7,737				

### What Happened?:

Over the monitoring year there was a loss of -7,737sqm of B2, B8 and E(g)(iii) class floor space within the designated industrial areas.

All of this loss was a result of two applications, one for the demolition of a mixed E use industrial building and redevelopment as three new industrial buildings on Colonial Way (21/00971/FULM). The demolition took place over the monitoring year but the rebuild has not, resulting in a reported net loss, although in the long term it will reprove employment floorspace.

The other (20/01457/FUL) was for the conversion of a small B2 use to an E(g)(i) office use within the Trade City industrial area.

Whilst a significant loss has been recorded, the vast majority of this loss is due to an industrial building being demolished prior to being redeveloped.

### Comparisons:

Both years of the plan period so far have reported an overall net loss of industrial floorspace in designated areas. In both years, this has largely been the result of applications for demolition and then rebuild being started but not completed within the monitoring year. Demolition is reported as a net loss before the new development has been registered as a net gain.

### Implications for the Local Plan:

The industrial areas were designated specifically to try and protect employment floorspace within these strategically important employment areas. It will need to be assessed through this indicator whether this designation is providing suitable protection or whether additional protection or guidance is needed.



It is important that the analysis is done to determine whether the losses continue to be as a result of redevelopment that will subsequently provide a net gain in the medium term or whether they are genuine losses that will be longer term with greater impacts on the overall character and economy of the area.

## Office Development

Policy EM4.3 states that applications within the Clarendon Road Primary Office Location or the Town Centre that result in any net loss of office floor space will be resisted other than in certain circumstances that are set out in the policy. Policy EM4.3 also states that any office development proposed outside either the Primary Office Location or the Town centre will be subject to assessment against an office development hierarchy (Figure 4.3 of the Local Plan) to try and ensure that these areas remain the focus for office employment in the borough.

The monitoring framework sets a target for there to be no net loss of E(g)(i) Class office floor space within the Primary Office Location or the Town Centre.

Table 28 highlights net gains or losses of office floor space within the Clarendon Road Primary Office Location and the Town Centre. Over the plan period this indicator will provide key data on the health of Watford as a regional office hub.

Table 28: Net delivery of E(g)(i) office floorspace within the Primary Office Locations (sqm)

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Net E(g)(i) class office floorspace delivered within the Clarendon Rd Primary Office Location	20,470	69				20,539
Net E(g)(i) class office floorspace delivered within the Town Centre	-5,235	0				-5,235
Totals	15,235	69				15,304

### What Happened?:

Over the monitoring year there was a minor net gain of 69sqm of office floorspace on Clarendon Road. This was due to the reconfiguration of a current office building. There was no net gain or loss of office floorspace within the Town Centre.

### Comparisons:

The previous AMR reported a significant net gain in office floorspace on Clarendon Road and a significant loss of office floorspace in the Town Centre (albeit to another acceptable town centre use).

This year has seen much more modest delivery in both areas.

### Implications for the Local Plan:

The Local Plan is clear on the importance of the Clarendon Road Primary Office Location and the Town Centre to the local and regional economy and therefore seeks to resist the loss of existing floorspace whilst encouraging new floorspace to be delivered.

This indicator is useful in highlighting the health of the designated office locations and providing evidence on the current state of the local and regional economic market.

There are currently several large redevelopments for mixed uses, incorporating a considerable uplift in office floorspace, under construction along Clarendon Road. As these are delivered over the coming years, it is likely that delivery of office floorspace will be considerable.

## Employment Floorspace outside designated employment locations

Although employment floorspace in the borough is concentrated within the designated industrial and office areas there are other smaller employment sites outside of these which continue to be an important part of the local economy. The Watford Employment Land Review (2017) shows that the risk of losing employment floor space is higher on sites outside these designated areas than it is within them, even if they do not have the same strategic importance.

As such policy EM4.4 seeks to also prevent the loss of employment space outside designated locations other than in specific circumstances as set out in the policy and sets a target of no net loss of employment floor space over the plan period. Tables 29 and 30 highlight delivery of employment floorspace over the monitoring year outside of designated areas.

Table 29: Net delivery of office floorspace outside of designated employment locations (sqm)

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Net E(g)(i) class floor space delivered outside the Clarendon Rd Primary Office Location or the Town Centre	458	-6,468				-6,010

Table 30: Net delivery of B2, B8, E(g)(ii) and E(g)(iii) floorspace outside of the designated industrial areas (sqm)

Use class	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
B2 (General Industrial)	186	116				302
B8 (Storage and Distribution)	0	42				42
E(g)(ii) (Research and Development)	0	0				0
E(g)(iii) (Industrial Processes)	-402	-503				-905
Total	-216	-345				-561

### What Happened?:

Over the monitoring there was a substantial net loss of -6,468sqm of office floorspace outside of the Primary Office Location and the Town Centre.

This loss was entirely on a single site on Cherry Tree Road (Former Mothercare building) which has permission for a change of use from office to C3 residential.

There was also a modest net loss of industrial floor space of -345sqm outside the designated industrial areas. This loss was entirely in E(g)(iii) (Industrial Processes) Use Class as a result of a change of use application to residential on Queens Road.

### Comparisons:

In the first two years of the Plan period there has been a small loss of industrial floorspace outside the designated areas. Interestingly in both years this loss has been in Class E(g)(iii) with either no change or a small net increase in other industrial use classes.

There is a significant contrast between the first two years of the Plan period regarding office floorspace outside of Clarendon Road and the Town Centre. This year saw a significant loss, entirely on one major development site. This is contrasted with the modest growth in floorspace in the first year of the Plan.

### Implications for the Local Plan:

The Primary Office Location and employment area designations are intended to be the main focus for employment floorspace in the borough but the Local Plan is clear that employment floorspace outside these areas should also be subject to protection.

Whilst it is concerning to see a large loss of office floorspace this year, it was all on one site that has now nearly completed. There are very few extant permissions of a similar nature in the pipeline and the protection provided by the new Local Plan should help limit the number of future proposals of this type. It will however be important to monitor this indicator over the coming

years to see whether this trend continues and whether additional interventions might be required in the future.

## Employment Land Available

This indicator will highlight the current level of employment land permitted on applications which have not yet been implemented. This again takes into account permissions relating to the old Use Classes Order as well as the new Use Classes Order.

Table 31: Employment floor space available in Watford (with planning permission that is not yet implemented) (sqm)

Use class	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
B2 (General Industrial)	4,469	5,056			
B8 (Storage and Distribution)	3,220	4,380			
E(g)(I) (Offices)	25,416	26,160			
E(g)(ii) (Research and Development)	250	-428			
E(g)(iii) (Industrial Processes)	3,170	13,599			
Mixed E Class	6,989	5,165			
Total	43,514	53,932			

### What Happened?:

Currently, there is a total of 53,932sqm of employment floorspace available, taking into account all planning permissions that have not yet been implemented. This is a significant amount of committed employment floorspace that should provide a substantial supply going forward.

By far the largest amount of floorspace available is in E(g)(i) Class office uses which accounts for nearly 50% of all floorspace available.

### Comparisons:

The amount of floorspace permitted for employment use has risen since last year and amounts to a substantial amount of future supply.

This increase has been mostly in Class E(g)(iii) floorspace with more modest increases in the amount of permitted B2, B8 and E(g)(i) floorspace.

### Implications for the Local Plan:

There is a substantial amount of employment floorspace permitted in the borough, particularly for E(g)(i) office uses. It is reasonable to think that a significant proportion of this floorspace will come forward in the short-medium term, contributing to meeting the floorspace targets in the Local Plan.

### Delivery of Site Allocations

Chapter 13 of the Local Plan allocates several sites for employment uses. Details of any progress that has taken place on these allocations over the monitoring year can be found in chapter 12 of this AMR.

### Training and Skills

Policy EM4.6 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that major development could provide employment and training initiatives for local people. This indicator will report any training programmes and apprenticeships that have arisen as a result of new development during the monitoring year.

Table 32: Training schemes and apprenticeships delivered as a result of development being permitted

Applications with training schemes or apprenticeship programmes for local people	
Application Reference	Details of scheme (description, type of scheme, number of people involved, length of time)
21/00934/VARM- 37-39 Clarendon Road	The developer of this site has implemented their own apprenticeship scheme for ex-servicemen on the site which is currently under construction for a mixed use development of office floorspace, 154 residential units and a café/restaurant use. This is an ongoing scheme that was referenced in the previous monitoring year and the site remains under construction.

### What Happened?:

Over the monitoring there were no formal training schemes implemented as a result of new development that were secured by the Council through a s106 agreement.

The scheme reported in the previous AMR which providing apprenticeships for ex-servicemen at 37-39 Clarendon Road remains ongoing during its construction. This was not secured by the Council through s106 but through the developers own internal scheme but is still worthy of note.

### Comparisons:

It is disappointing not to have seen more progress on this over the monitoring year but procedures are being put in place with Development Management to try and secure more of these from major development over the coming year.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

The new Local Plan policy should provide a methodology by which more training schemes and apprenticeships can be secured through s106 agreements driven by the Council.

There has been a project established to try and provide further guidance on how to implement this policy. The best way of providing this is still being determined and progress will be reported in future AMRs.

## 4. A Vibrant Town: Town Centre and Retail

Watford has a strongly performing sub-regional Town Centre, along with a supporting District Centre which incorporates a wide range of services and facilities, and a series of Local Centres that meet the day to day needs of communities across the borough. The Local Plan designates these areas as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: The location of the designated Town Centre, District Centre and Local Centres

Watford functions as a sub-regional Town Centre that serves residents of the town and beyond, drawing people from across South West Hertfordshire. The wide availability of facilities and shops helps to attract people into it, sustaining the dynamism and vibrancy of the area as well as supporting a large number of local jobs and businesses.

The continued success of the Town Centre and other local centres can reduce the need to travel by car, encourage combined trips and promote sustainable transport methods such as walking and cycling.

Incorporating flexibility within the retail policies of the Plan was important in allowing the centres to evolve in response to the changing nature of the retail market, ensuring that they remain vibrant and successful.

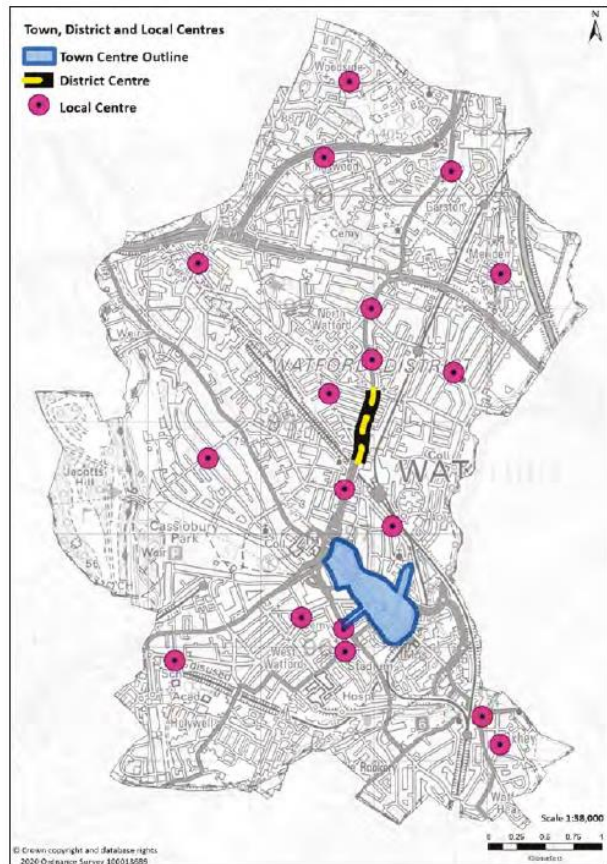
It is vital that Town Centre, District Centre and Local Centres performance over the plan period is monitored. The indicators in this section will report on the provision and loss of traditional retail uses, and of all other uses that fall within the definition of 'Main Town Centre Uses' in the NPPF. It will also assess current vacancy rates within the centres as a key indicator of centre health.

### Watford Local Plan

Policies VT5.1, VT5.2 and VT5.3 set out the Plan's approach to development in the Town Centre, District Centre and Local Centres.

These policies are reflective of national policy; applying a sequential, 'town centre first' approach to the delivery of retail, and other Main Town Centre Uses within Watford. This supports the provision of 'Main Town Centre Uses' in the Town Centre first of all, then Edge of Centre locations, then Local Centres and only supporting limited convenience floorspace outside these centres where they support the day to day needs of residents at new strategic sites.

There are several mixed use residential allocations in the Plan that are located within the Town Centre boundary and it is likely that the population living within the Town Centre will increase over



the plan period as a result. The provision of additional residential uses within the Town Centre can encourage increased footfall and promote the continued use of shops, services and businesses. It can also reduce the need for car parking due to the increased availability and viability of walking, cycling and public transport options for short journeys.

Chapter 2 of this AMR provides data on the delivery of residential dwellings in the Town Centre SDA (Table 5) and chapter 13 provides details and updates on the delivery of all allocated sites, including those within the Town Centre. Although residential uses are supported in the Town Centre, the Plan emphasises the importance of retaining active frontages on ground floors even if residential uses are being provided above. All development in the Town Centre should be designed sensitively with regard to heritage assets and conservation areas.

## COVID-19

It is important to monitor the performance of the designated centres and whether the pre-pandemic footfall levels resume in the short, medium and long term. This chapter will monitor vacancy rates as a key indicator of their current health and viability post Covid.

## Town Centre Strategic Framework

Over the monitoring year a Town Centre Framework document which sets out an overarching vision and a series of recommendations relating to the future development and enhancement of the Town Centre was published<sup>3</sup>. This document will be used as a planning framework to inform development in the Town Centre particularly focusing on issues of connectivity, heritage, public realm and sustainable transport.

It will feed into future design guidance and design coding in the borough and the Town Centre more specifically.

The document was adopted by Watford Borough Council at a Cabinet meeting in March 2023.

## Delivery of Retail uses over the Monitoring Year

The plan supports the provision of new retail uses within the centres as defined in Figure 4. Table 33 records the net delivery of retail uses over the monitoring year within the Town centre, District Centre, Local Centres and elsewhere in the borough.

Table 33: Net delivery of retail E(a) floor space (sqm) over the monitoring year

Location	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Town Centre	711	144				855
District Centre	0	58				58
Local Centres	-163	98				-65
Outside Centres	126	-175				-49
Total	674	125				799

<sup>3</sup> [Strategic Framework – www.watford.gov.uk](http://www.watford.gov.uk)



**What Happened?:**

Over the monitoring year there was an overall net growth of 125sqm in Class E(a) retail floorspace across the whole borough.

A net gain of 144sqm of retail floorspace was delivered within the designated Town Centre, virtue of a single application for a mixed use development at 60 High Street.

There were losses of floorspace within the Town Centre as a result of two applications, one on King Street and the other on The Parade. One of these applications was for a conversion to another E use and the other to a Sui Generis use and so they have both been retained as active commercial units.

There was also a minor net gain in both the District Centre and Local Centres resulting from several small scale applications.

Outside of designated centres there was a net loss of -175sqm. This was largely the result of one application at the Centrepont Community Centre where the retail unit onsite was replaced by a smaller retail unit along with a community space and 17 residential units.

**Comparisons:**

There was a smaller net gain of retail floorspace this year compared to last although there was still a net gain which is positive.

Whilst last year, a considerable proportion of the net gain was outside designated centres with losses reported in Local Centres, this year there was a net gain in the Town Centre, Local and District Centres but a net loss outside designated centres.

It will be important to monitor the growth and loss of retail floorspace to assess trends regarding the health and viability of the designated centres.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

The growth of retail floorspace in the Town Centre, District Centre and Local Centres, over the monitoring year to date, demonstrates their continuing viability.

The Local Plan highlights the importance of these centres to the economic performance of the borough, and monitoring the gains and losses in retail floorspace will provide a measure by which the Council can determine the success of the Local Plan's retail policies in protecting centres as the primary locations for retail uses.

## Main Town Centre Uses in the Town Centre, District Centre and Local Centres

This indicator assesses the delivery and provision of all ‘Main Town Centre Uses’ in the different designated centres, broadening the previous indicator which focused only on class E(a) retail uses. This indicator will report on the provision of all the following uses. These are all defined as Main Town Centre Uses in the NPPF glossary definition.

- Retail units
- Leisure uses
- Cinemas
- Restaurants
- Drive through restaurants
- Bars and Pubs
- Nightclubs
- Casinos
- Health and Fitness centres
- Indoor bowling
- Bingo halls
- Offices
- Theatres
- Museums
- Galleries
- Concert halls
- Hotels
- Conference facilities

Table 34 below sets out the net delivery of any ‘Main Town Centre Uses’ within the Town Centre, District Centre and Local Centres.

Note that the figures in this table include the retail provision that was assessed in isolation in Table 33 above.

Also note that these figures **do not** include Class E(g (ii)) Office floorspace which, although counting as Main Town Centre Uses, were assessed in the previous chapter on employment. This is to avoid the results in this table being distorted by the net gain/loss of office floorspace which tends to be considerable in Watford.

Table 34: Net delivery of Main Town Centre Uses over the monitoring year (sqm)

Location	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Town Centre	-3,748	1,005				
District Centre	0	175				
Local Centres	-163	46				
Total	-3,911	1,226				

### **What Happened?:**

Over the monitoring year there was a net gain of 1,226sqm of Main Town Centre Use floorspace within designated centres. This included 1,005sqm of floorspace within the Town Centre, accompanied by a gain of 175sqm within the District Centre and a minor net gain of 46sqm in Local Centres.

This gain reported in the Town Centre was largely due to a single application (21/01731/FUL) for a new restaurant of 747sqm.

The gain reported in the District Centre was largely due to a single application (18/00542/FULM) for a mixed use development resulting in a net gain of 117sqm of Main Town Centre Use.

### **Comparisons:**

There has been a net gain in Main Town Centre uses this year compared to a loss reported last year.

As discussed in last year's report however, the net loss of Main Town Centre Uses was a result of a single change of use from an office use to an F1 use law courts. Whilst this use is acceptable, and welcomed, in a Town Centre, it is not classed as a Main Town Centre Use as per the NPPF definition.

If excluding the change of use from office use to law court that was reported in 2021-2022, there would have been a net gain of 1259sqm which is comparable and consistent with the net gain seen in this monitoring period.

### **Implications for the Local Plan:**

The net gain in Main Town Centre uses reported this year is positive, particularly the reported opening of a new restaurant in the Town Centre.

This indicator will report trends over a period of time to try and provide evidence as to the health of the Town, District and Local Centres.

Table 35 sets out the current proportion of centres that are in a Main Town Centre uses as defined in the NPPF. This is assessed in terms of number of units.

This indicator will be useful to monitor over the plan period as it will provide an indication of the health of the centres and the extent to which they remain viable locations, not just for retail but for a range of other services, facilities, leisure, arts and cultural uses.

This data is collected through the undertaking of a retail survey by Hertfordshire County Council. This year, the survey was undertaken in mid-2023. The results of this survey have informed the data reported in Tables 35 and 36. This year the survey only assessed the Town Centre. In future years the Council will seek to also gather data for the District and Local Centres as well.

Table 35: % of each centre that are in active town centre uses

Location	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Town Centre	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	84%				
District Centre	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Local Centres	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				

**What Happened?:**

84% of units in the Town Centre were reported as being within a Main Town Centre use as defined in the NPPF.

No data was available this year for the District or Local Centres.

**Comparisons:**

The last retail survey was completed in 2019 and so comparisons for this indicator are made over a four year period.

It is clear that despite this time gap, there remains a high proportion of units in the Town Centre in a Main Town Centre use.

### **Implications for the Local Plan:**

It is positive to see that the Town Centre remains a strong focus for town centre uses and that it has remained so since 2019 in spite of the COVID pandemic, and the changing nature of retail nationally.

This indicator will allow the Council to track trends within the Town Centre and determine how effective the retail policies are although it is recognised that the market plays a part in this which the Council has limited control over.

### Vacancy Rates in Town, Local and District Centres

This indicator will monitor the number, location and proportion of vacant ground floor units within the Town Centre, District Centre and Local Centres.

Having a large number of vacant units within a centre can have impacts on the centre's perceived and actual vitality and viability, affecting the surrounding public realm, people's perceptions of a place and the local economy.

Table 36 assesses the number and percentage of units in each of the centres that are vacant as of the end of each monitoring year.

These figures only include ground floor units as these have a greater impact on the vitality of a centre and ensures that the data is not distorted by a large number of upper floor residential units, which are less likely to be vacant, being included.

It is recognised that there may be some units that become vacant and active again within the same monitoring year which will not be recorded in these figures but as there would be no net difference over the monitoring year, this is not considered to be a limitation in the accuracy of the data.

This data is collected through the undertaking of a retail survey by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). This year, the survey was undertaken in September 2023, midway through the 2023/2024 monitoring year. It is likely that this data will always be slightly backdated as it relies on the external collection and compilation of data by HCC.

The Atria Centre, which is the main indoor shopping centre situated within the Town Centre has been included as a separate category in the above table. This is due to the way the data is recorded in the shop front survey, where the Atria Centre is assessed separately from the rest of the Town Centre.

Table 36: Vacancy rates in the Town Centre, District Centre and Local Centres

Location		2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
Town centre	No.	<i>No data was available in this year.</i>	27 units			
	%		7.4%			
Atria shopping Centre	No.	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	17 units			
	%		13.4%			
District centre	No.	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>			
	%					
Local centres	No.	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>			
	%					
Total	No.		44 units			
	%		8.9%			

### **What Happened?:**

There was a reported vacancy rate of 7.4% within the Town Centre (excluding the Atria shopping centre). This resulted from 27 units being vacant at the time the survey was undertaken.

There was a reported vacancy rate of 13.4% within the Atria shopping centre, this was from 17 vacant units.

In total within the town centre and Atria there was a vacancy rate of 8.9%.

It has not been possible within the timescale for production of this report to get accurate survey results for the District and Local Centres.

### **Comparisons:**

There was no retail survey completed last year against which to compare. The last retail survey was completed in 2019.

In the Town Centre (exc Atria) there was a reported vacancy rate of 9.3% in 2019 compared to 7.4% in 2023. This is interesting given the COVID-19 pandemic was in between these two surveys that had a dramatic effect on the operation of town centres and businesses.

Within Atria there was a reported vacancy rate of 17.7% in 2019 compared to this year where the vacancy rate is 13.4%. Similar to in the Town Centre, there has been a slight drop in vacancy rate since 2019.

Overall within the Town Centre and Atria the vacancy rate has dropped from 11.8% in 2019 to 8.9% in 2023.

Whilst caution with regard to this data is recommended given the length of time between the two surveys and the potential for slight unintentional differences in the methodological approach used, it would appear that there has certainly not been an increase in vacancy rates in the Town Centre.

### **Implications for the Local Plan:**

It is pleasing to see that despite the COVID pandemic and the long term change in patterns of consumer behaviours, there appears to not have been any increased vacancy rates in the Town Centre. It is important that the Council, in conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council, continue to undertake these surveys on an annual basis to monitor changes.

## 5. An Attractive Town: Design and Building Height

Well designed development provides an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of an area. Equally, poorly designed developments can lead to negative impacts on both the character and environment of a place as well as on residents' health and quality of life.

Ensuring that Local Plan policies contribute to achieving a high quality of design is therefore crucial in creating successful places both in terms of the internal and external environment where people live. This can help to create a safe, attractive and sustainable borough that improves the health and wellbeing of residents.

The policies in the Local Plan do not, therefore, only focus on a developments external appearance but also its sustainability, its compliance with internal living standards, and its impacts on the surrounding area. They provide both general design principles and specific design requirements.

Watford has experienced a significant increase in the number of applications for taller buildings, particularly within the Core Development Area. A key issue in the preparation of the new Local Plan was therefore how high density development can be incorporated into the borough without having unacceptable impacts on the character of the area or on important heritage assets.

The Local Plan sets out specific requirements for buildings that exceed set base building heights. These heights vary depending on location as shown in Figure 5. Buildings exceeding these heights should be of outstanding design, and provide substantial public and sustainability benefits.

The AMR will report on the extent to which the standards for design set out in the Local Plan are being met and how the policies are being applied in practice. It will record specifically the number of applications where design is a listed reason for refusal and on both refusals and approvals of development that proposes to exceed the base building heights.

This section of the AMR should be read in conjunction with Table 22 of the housing chapter which outlined the extent to which internal space and accessibility standards were being met, and Table 10 of the housing chapter which sets out the average density of new residential development in the borough.

In this early stage of the plan period, it has proved difficult to source reliable data for some indicators in this section in particular. Processes have been put in place that should enable more comprehensive coverage in future years.

### Watford Local Plan

Policies QD6.1 to QD6.4 set out broad and detailed design principles that will direct the delivery of high quality development in the borough.

These principles include the following topics:



- **Character and Identity**- Making sure new buildings and streets are attractive and distinctive including consideration of how the area looks, feels and functions. They should make a positive contribution to the character of the area so that it is identifiable and relatable to residents.
- **Built Form**- Ensure that the scale and massing of proposed buildings relate to their local context.
- **Active Frontages**-New buildings should include an active frontage to ensure there is a visual and physical relationship between the street and the building.
- **Movement and Connectivity**- Streets should be efficient, convenient, legible and permeable to prioritise non-vehicle travel.
- **Views**- New development should contribute positively towards important views in the borough.
- **Sustainability**- Development should be designed to minimise negative impacts on the environment and embrace sustainability principles. This should include measures to reduce the use of resources.

Policy QD6.5 sets out the criteria that a proposal needs to meet for it to be acceptable as a ‘taller building’ in the borough. The height of new development has become a significant issue for Watford and as such this policy, and the monitoring of it, is an important one for the future growth of the borough over the plan period.

The plan sets four different base building heights; within each of the three Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) and then a single base height for any proposals that are located outside the Core Development Area (CDA). These base building heights can be seen in Figure 5 below. Development proposed over and above these base building heights will be considered a ‘taller building’ and subject to the requirements of Policy QD6.5.

Area of the borough	Base building height
Watford Gateway	Up to 8 storeys on a street frontage, stepping up to 10 storeys to the rear.
Town Centre Strategic Development Area	Up to 5 storeys on the High Street, stepping up to 8 storeys to the rear.
Colne Valley Strategic Development Area	Up to 6 storeys.
Outside of the Core Development Area	Up to 4 storeys.

Figure 5: Base Building Heights

This AMR will record the number of taller buildings (over the base building heights) that have been approved over the monitoring year and the number of applications where Policy QD6.5 is listed as a reason for refusal.

## High Quality Design

This indicator will provide details of how many applications the Council have received where Policy QD6.2 or Policy QD6.4 are listed as reasons for refusal.

Table 37 includes all new build development, both residential and non-residential, but it excludes any extensions or other householder applications where the above policies have been referenced.

Table 37: Number of applications where Policy QD6.2 (Design Principles) or QD6.4 (Building Design) are listed as a reason for refusal.

Location	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Residential	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Non-residential B use	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Non-residential E use	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Other uses	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Total						

**What Happened?:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Comparisons:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Implications for the Local Plan:***No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs***Public Realm**

Providing a high quality and functional public realm is crucial to creating places in which communities and businesses can thrive. Policy QD6.3 requires new development to be designed in a way that makes places safe, accessible, inclusive and attractive. Criteria a-f of this policy will ensure that new development has a positive impact on the surrounding public realm.

Table 38 below reports the number of new build applications where Policy QD6.3 is listed as a reason for refusal.

Table 38: Number of applications where Policy QD6.3 (Public Realm) is listed as a reason for refusal

Location	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Residential	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Non-residential B use	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Non-residential E use	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Other uses	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Total						

**What Happened?:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Comparisons:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

Public realm improvements and projects can be undertaken without links to a planning application or a new development. Over the plan period the AMR will also provide a written commentary on any major public realm enhancements undertaken in the borough over the monitoring year. This will likely not be an exhaustive list and is provided for information only.

During the 2022 to 2023 monitoring year, the following public realm projects were completed:

- In Brush Rise and Bridle Path, footpath and cycling improvements have been made.
- Along Queens Road from the High Street to the subway under Beechen Grove, public realm improvements have been undertaken involving new granite paving, new planters, cycling facilities and new seating.
- On behalf of the County Council, substantial footpath reconstructions have been done on Villiers Road, the Gossamers, Eastfield Avenue, Vicarage Road and Moor View.

## Building Height

Building height is an important issue for the borough, both for local residents and for the Council. There has been a growing prevalence in applications for taller buildings in the borough. Policy QD6.5 sets out the criteria that a proposal over the base building heights must meet for it to be acceptable.

Tables 39 and 40 include two sets of data relating to building height. Table 39 shows the number of applications totally completed over the monitoring year that were over the Local Plan base building heights in Figure 5 above.

These applications were all approved prior to the base building heights being formally adopted in the Local Plan.

Table 40 reports the number of applications that were granted permission over the monitoring year despite being above the base building heights.

Table 39: Applications completed over the monitoring year that are in excess of the base building heights

Core Development Area (CDA)/Not Core Development Area	2022/2023
Not CDA	86 comps
	6 storeys
Town Centre Strategic Development Area (SDA)	32 comps
	8 storeys
Not CDA	72 comps
	5 storeys

**What Happened?:**

Table 39 shows that there were three permissions completed over the monitoring year that were above the base building heights (completed means every unit on the scheme has been recorded as completed). Two of these were outside the CDA and one was in the Town Centre SDA. These delivered a total of 190 dwellings and were 5, 6 and 8 storeys.

**Comparisons:**

This is the first partial year, where the new Local Plan policy on building heights has been in place. Therefore it is hard to make any long term comparisons at this stage.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

The above permissions were all approved prior to the adoption of the new Local Plan and the full implementation of the base building heights. It is expected that the policies in the new Local Plan will give the Council greater ability to resist inappropriately tall development and will ensure that any proposals above the base building heights are of outstanding quality and that they provide substantial public benefits.

Table 40: Applications granted planning permission that are over the base building heights

Core Development Area (CDA)/Not Core Development Area	2022/2023
Watford Gateway SDA	703 dwellings
	28 storeys
Watford Gateway SDA	65 dwellings
	12 storeys

**What Happened?:**

Over the year, two applications were approved despite being in excess of the base building heights set out in Policy QD6.5.

One of the two applications was a variation of a previously approved scheme on St Albans Road (21/01575/VARM). The other was for a mixed use office/residential scheme on Clarendon Road (21/01811/FULM).

These applications will deliver a total of 768 dwellings plus office and retail floorspace.

**Comparisons:**

This is the first partial year where the new Local Plan policy on building heights has been in place. Therefore it is hard to make any long term conclusions this year.

Both of the applications approved over the base building heights during the monitoring year were approved prior to the Local Plan being adopted in October and its policies being given full weight.

This indicator will be monitored going forward to show how much of the boroughs possible future growth is to come forward on tall buildings, and where these applications are concentrated.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

The building height policy does not prevent buildings over the base building heights being delivered, rather it requires developments that exceed them to be of outstanding design, have significant public benefits and substantial sustainability benefits in order for them to be permitted.

The two applications granted permission that exceeded the base building heights were determined prior to the adoption of the new Local Plan, so Policy QD6.5 did not have full weight.

It will be interesting to keep this table updated over the plan period to consider whether the number of buildings above the base building heights decreases or whether the borough is still subject to development in excess of these.

Table 41 below sets out the number of applications that were refused on the basis of their height. This, along with the above indicator on approvals, will help to make an assessment on the effectiveness of this policy.

Table 41: Applications refused over the monitoring in which Policy QD6.5 (Building Height) was listed as a reason for refusal

Location	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Watford Gateway SDA	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Town Centre SDA	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Colne Valley SDA	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Outside the CDA	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Total						

**What Happened?:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Comparisons:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*



## 6. The Historic Environment

Both national and local policy attaches great importance to the preservation of the historic environment. The NPPF recognises heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource that should be given great weight in decision making, whilst the Local Plan reiterates the need to conserve, and where possible enhance, their significance.

Watford has a wide range of important heritage assets, including locally and nationally listed buildings, several defined Conservation Areas, and historic parks and gardens. These assets have considerable value to local people and add significantly to the character of the town.

The following list, replicated from paragraph 7.2 of the Local Plan, sets out some of the key elements of the town's heritage:

- Surviving buildings from the medieval core of the town (St Mary's Church, Almshouses, Fuller Free School);
- 18th Century town houses (Frogmore House , 97 High Street, Little Cassiobury and Watford Museum);
- Industrial heritage;
- Parks, gardens and cemeteries;
- Residential streets and buildings of the Victorian period; and
- Innovative twentieth-century buildings and housing developments.

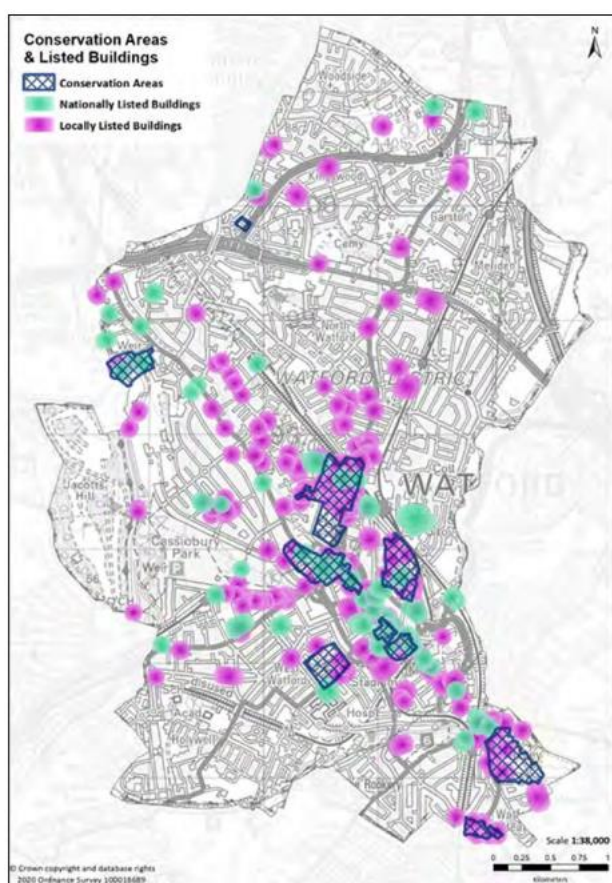


Figure 6: Heritage assets in Watford

### Watford Local Plan

Policies HE7.1-HE7.4 outline the Local Plan's approach to the historic environment.

Overall the policies in the Plan give great weight to the conservation of important historic assets and to avoiding and mitigating any possible harm to their significance.

This AMR will monitor the impacts of new development on the historic environment, as well as reporting on any major heritage projects or issues that have arisen over the monitoring year.

### Conservation Areas

The town's historic environment is protected by the designation of several Conservation Areas. The existing Conservation Areas in the borough can be seen in Figure 6.

Conservation areas exist to protect and enhance the special architectural and historical interest of a place. Applications submitted within them are subject to additional planning controls and considerations in order to protect their unique character.

The section below reports progress on the Conservation Areas Management Plan review and any changes to the conservation areas over the monitoring year.

#### **What Happened?:**

Work on a review of the Watford Conservation Areas Management Plan progressed over the monitoring year. The work was undertaken to ensure that the Plan reflects the latest policy and guidance.

An informal, early-stage consultation took place between August and September 2022. A set of actions to help support and enhance the Borough's conservation areas was developed as a result of this process.

Following this, five face to face meetings with members of the local community took place near to the Borough's 10 conservation areas. These were completed between February and March 2023. An online consultation using the Commonplace platform also took place at the same time, to help assess wider support for the proposed actions.

Following this, a finalised document was produced. This was adopted as an action plan for the period 2023-2026 at a Cabinet meeting in June 2023, just after the end of the 22-23 monitoring year.

The adopted document sets out actions that the Council will take to ensure that the special architectural or historic interest of the borough's conservation areas is protected for future generations. Resourcing pressures are currently slowing progress on implementing this.

#### **Implications for the Local Plan:**

The adopted 'Conservation Management Plan – Actions 2023-2026' will allow the Council to better assess proposals that sit within, or adjoining, conservation areas and ensure that they respond to the unique character of the area in accordance with Policies HE7.1 and HE7.2 of the Local Plan.

### [Heritage at Risk](#)

Every year Historic England publishes a Heritage at Risk report that identifies those sites most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development. This report only includes buildings of Grade I or Grade II\* status, with the exception of places of worship, which can be included even at Grade II.

The Council therefore produces a local Buildings at Risk (BAR) register that also includes other types of Grade II properties. The list was last updated in 2017, but any additional buildings at risk that have come to light in the intervening years have been included below.

This indicator will report any individual assets or conservation areas in Watford that are considered at risk and any known changes from the previous year. The objective over the plan period is to reduce the number of assets at risk and to prevent any additional assets from becoming at risk.

Table 42: Heritage Assets at risk in Watford

Asset Name/Conservation Area	Condition and Description
Little Cassiobury and former stable block, Hempstead Rd (Grade II*)	Condition poor – Late C17 house built as dower house to Cassiobury. Last occupied as offices, the building has been empty for many years. The building was raised to Priority A by Historic England following site visits in September 2022. Hertfordshire County Council currently have the building up for sale.
Gateway and attached walls of approx. 30m northwest of 42, The Gardens (Grade II)	Condition poor/fair – Mid to late C16 walls and gateway, altered c.1830, formed part of the gardens of Cassiobury. Visible cracks and movement in brickwork (loose and missing bricks), missing pointing, and vegetation growing on and around structure noted when assessed in 2017.
Administration Block at Watford General Hospital, Vicarage Road (Grade II)	Poor – Former Watford Union Workhouse of 1838 with later alterations. Currently disused and in need of extensive renovation work. It was damaged by a car impact over the 21-22 monitoring year, although that has now been repaired.
97 High Street (Grade II)	Poor - Townhouse of c.1740 with notable surviving interior. The building is in a state of considerable disrepair, although some works have taken place since 2020 to limit further water ingress.
Watford Place, 27 King Street (Grade II)	Poor/Fair – Georgian mansion of c1797, altered c.1822. One wing severely damaged by fire in 2015.
The Old Station House, 147 St Albans Road (Grade II)	Poor/Fair – The former ticket office of Watford's original station, built in 1837. Currently unoccupied and has been subject to some vandalism. Permission has been granted for re-use of the building as part of redevelopment of the surrounding land but renovation work on the building has yet to start.

#### What Happened?:

There are currently 6 designated heritage assets considered to be at risk in Watford.

No heritage assets have been removed from the register over the monitoring year.

## Applications Impacting Historic Assets

The recording of an asset as a nationally or locally listed building does not prevent planning applications that affect it being submitted. Listed buildings do, however, have significant additional protection when applications are received by the Council.

Policy HE7.1, HE7.2 and HE7.3 of the Local Plan seek to ensure that development impacting a heritage asset does not diminish its significance, and where possible it should enhance it. All applications will be determined in accordance with an asset's significance and heritage value.

Historic England are consulted as required on developments that could have an impact on designated heritage assets, and provide comments based on their expert opinions. This indicator records any applications that have been granted permission by the Council over the monitoring year contrary to advice received from Historic England. The objective is for there to be no applications granted contrary to Historic England advice.

Table 43: Number of applications granted contrary to Historic England advice

2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	0				0
Total	0				0

### What Happened?:

There were no applications granted over the monitoring year contrary to advice received from Historic England

### Comparisons:

No complete data was available in the first monitoring year for this indicator and so this year is the first data recorded. Comparisons are therefore not possible for this indicator.

### Implications for the Local Plan:

It is pleasing to see that the Council has not acted against the specialist advice of Historic England over the monitoring year. The preservation of the historic environment and historic assets is a key part of the Local Plan and will likely be a key part of any future plan review. Working closely and following Historic England guidance will be an important part of this.

## Changes impacting on Historic Assets

The following table will report any nationally or locally listed assets that have been subject to works, loss, damage, redevelopment, extension or change of use over the monitoring year. This only reports those incidences that the Council is aware of. There may be other unreported changes that have taken place.

Table 44: Changes and alterations to heritage assets over the monitoring year

Name of Asset	Description of change	Reasons for change
Former Workhouse building - Administration Block at Watford General Hospital, Vicarage Road	Repair of damage to the building that was caused by a car colliding with it	Repair works carried out over the monitoring year.
Little Cassiobury and former stable block, Hempstead Rd	Historic England have raised the risk category of Little Cassiobury to Priority A, their highest priority level.	Historic England assessment of the condition of the building.
97 High Street	A Dangerous Structures Notice was issued under Sec.76 of the Building Act 1984 over the monitoring year	The notice was issued due to concerns about the safety of loose render etc. around the windows of the front elevation. Works have been undertaken to stabilise the areas concerned.
Rigby House, 30 - 34 The Parade, High Street	Addition of an extra floor and change of use	Change of use from offices to residential.

The above cases highlight the importance and vulnerability of Watford's historic assets. It is crucial that over the plan period damage to, and the loss of, assets is minimised to avoid degradation of the area's historic environment. It is hoped that it will be possible to improve the condition of all three of the above cases so that they are not lost, or damaged beyond repair.

## 7. A Climate Emergency

Local Plan policies have an important role to play in ensuring that development in Watford becomes more sustainable, environmentally friendly and that it considers sustainability and climate change early in the application process. This section of the AMR reports on progress relating to climate change targets following the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, as well as reporting on how new developments are helping Watford to becoming carbon neutral.

### Watford Local Plan

The Watford Local Plan is an important tool for implementing change and improving the borough through new development and transformational change. The Plan seeks to ensure that all developments in the borough should be considering both adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

The efficient management of resources is important and policies in the Local Plan seek to improve this through a variety of requirements including energy and water efficiency, carbon reduction and offsetting, overheating, the appropriate use of materials and effective waste management.

Air quality has historically been worsening nationally due to increased emissions, largely from the use of private vehicles. Watford is not immune from this and currently has two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in place which need to be monitored and improved over the plan period.

The Plan discusses issues of sustainability and climate change in multiple sections as a broad overarching theme for the Plan but also has one dedicated chapter 'Chapter 7: A Climate Emergency'. This chapter focuses on how to achieve a carbon neutral Watford, by promoting sustainable construction, producing efficient new buildings that develop in a cumulative way and how to make use of opportunities for a low carbon future.

### Reducing Carbon Emissions

The Climate Change Act 2008 includes a national duty to ensure that carbon emissions in the UK in 2050 are at least 100% lower than the 1990 baseline. This covers the net amount of carbon dioxide emissions and net UK emissions for each of the other targeted greenhouse gases for the year.

Watford Borough Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has since prioritised the reduction of carbon among other climate and ecological improvements. The Local Plan is an important part of the Council's response to the climate emergency.

The reduction in carbon emissions is important to monitor as a way of assessing progress towards the carbon neutral target put in place by the Council as part of its declaration of a climate emergency. This information is taken from UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics which publish new results every year in June. The data is however produced approximately two years after the data is collected so the most recent data available at this time is referring to data collected in 2020. The data includes exclusively carbon dioxide emissions and is measured in kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (kt CO<sub>2</sub>e).

**The 2019 baseline is 333 kt CO2e.** This is the figure against which future year’s data in Table 45 will be measured. The 2019 baseline reflects the year which the Council declared a Climate Emergency and committed to taking more action to reduce carbon emissions in the borough.

Table 45: The level of carbon reduction since 2019

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Percentage of carbon reduction since 2019 (kt CO2e)	11.7%	7.5%				

**What Happened?:**

Over the monitoring year there was a reported net decrease in carbon dioxide emissions of 7.5% when compared to the 2019 baseline. This equates to a reduction of 25 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent from 333kt CO2e to 308 kt CO2e.

**Comparisons:**

There has been a reported reduction in carbon emissions since the 2019 baseline of 7.5% according to the above nationally produced dataset. This indicator will continue to monitor carbon emissions over the plan period to assess whether this is a long term trend.

As mentioned above, the way the data is published means that this indicator will always have a lag, and that data presented will always apply to a time period that is two years out of date.

It is noted that the level of reduction is lower this year than it was reported as being in 2021/2022. It is likely that COVID resulted in 2020 being a particularly low year for carbon emissions which may explain the change in figures. It is also clear that the reported reduction is not cumulative and so will fluctuate year on year.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

The reduction in carbon emissions is in line with Policy CC8.1 and it is positive to see a reduction on the 2019 baseline figures. However, if this current level of decrease was maintained over the plan period it would be insufficient to achieve the Council’s target to be carbon neutral by 2030 and so more needs to be done.

**BREEAM Standards**

An important method of assessing the sustainability of non-residential buildings has been created by the British Research Establishment and is called the Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM). This helps to ensure that non-residential developments are as energy efficient and sustainable as possible.

BREEAM is a standardised tool used to assess sustainability measures and inform stakeholders in planning developments. There are multiple levels of BREEAM that can be achieved based on established rating systems. The Local Plan requires major non-residential developments to meet BREEAM Excellent/Very good standard and the following indicator will report the number of non-residential developments which are meeting this target.

Table 46: The number of major non-residential applications approved which are meeting BREEAM excellent or very good standard

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Major non-residential developments which meet BREEAM excellent/very good	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				

**What Happened?:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Comparisons:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Carbon Emission Reduction Standards**

Developments are required to individually meet carbon emission reduction standards above those specified in Part L of Building Regulations in 2013. The Local Plan requires a 19% increase above Part L regulations but this has since been superseded with national building regulations to require 31% above Part L 2013 standards for dwellings and 27% above for other buildings which is what will be monitored in the AMR.



Table 47: Number of new residential permissions that meet carbon emission reduction standards

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of new residential developments which meet carbon emission reduction standards	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				

**What Happened?:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Comparisons:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

## Water Efficiency

All residential developments should be meeting a technical standard of 110 litres per person, per day. This is particularly important in Watford as it is located within an area of high water stress.

This is a new standard with this Local Plan and will be monitored going forward to determine the level of compliance with this target.

Table 48: The number of new homes achieving water use standards

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of homes achieving that water use standard of 110 litres per person per day	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				

**What Happened?:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Comparisons:**

Affinity Water are the main provider of water in Watford and their customers on average use 150 litres per person per day (Affinity Water) compared with the national average of 140 litres per person per day (Waterwise). This is the baseline against which this indicator will be considered.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

### Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)

Every local authority in the UK has been assessing air quality since 1997 and locations where national objectives are not achieved become Air Quality Management Areas. At the start of the plan period Watford had two AQMAs:

- Watford AQMA 2: Vicarage Road
- Watford AQMA 3A: Aldenham Road/Chalk Hill

The Council recognises the concerns around poor air quality and has reduced the number of AQMAs from 19 in 2018 to just the two listed above. The main pollutants of interest in the borough are nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter, smaller than 10mm in size (PM<sub>10</sub>) which are both associated with road traffic. Decreases and improvements to air quality in these areas will occur through a shift to green transport options and increased mitigation measures. Improving air quality will mean less AQMAs will be needed in Watford.

Table 49: The number of AQMAs in place within Watford Borough

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
AQMAs in Watford	2	2				

**What Happened?:**

Watford currently has 2 AQMAs which are being monitored, Vicarage Road and Aldenham Road/Chalk Hill.

**Comparisons:**

There has been no change in the amount of AQMAs in Watford over the monitoring year.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

Policy CC8.4 strives to minimise the worsening effects of poor air quality and increase standards of air quality overall. This will reduce the need for the 2 remaining AQMAs. Whilst there has been no reduction in the number of AQMAs during the monitoring year there has equally been no increase.

Improvements to air quality will be recorded over the medium to longer term and so the implications for a future Local Plan review should not be considered based on single monitoring years.

**Pollution and Disturbance**

Development can negatively impact adjacent land uses and future occupants if not carefully managed. New developments need to assess their impacts on neighbouring land while taking into account its use and the possible cumulative effects in accordance with the Agent of Change principle. Management of these potential effects must be dealt with early in the planning process otherwise permissions may be refused.

Table 50: Number of applications refused on the basis of pollution or disturbance

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number planning permissions refused on pollution or disturbance grounds	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				

**What Happened?:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Comparisons:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

## 8. Natural Environment

Watford Borough Council recognises the importance of the natural environment and has declared an ecological and climate emergency to try and prevent any losses to it.

Through the monitoring of any improvements to green and blue infrastructure, and the Local Plan requirement for a net gain in biodiversity from new development, Watford hopes to strengthen and enhance its natural environment for current and future generations, and for the boroughs wildlife and habitats.

### Watford Local Plan

Watford is blessed with many important natural environment features that are important to the residents and biodiversity in the borough. The Plan seeks to improve biodiversity and protect existing open spaces and green infrastructure to ensure that this is preserved.

This section of the AMR will report any gains and losses in green infrastructure and open space over the monitoring year, and the number of applications that provide a sufficient net gain in biodiversity. It will also record any applications which the Council has approved in spite of an outstanding Environment Agency objection.

Policy NE9.8 sets out a requirement for a Biodiversity Net Gain of 10% to be achieved from all new development in the borough. This is in advance of the expected national policy that will make this requirement mandatory across the country. The mandatory national requirement is expected to come into force over the 2023/2024 monitoring year.

### Consistency with Environment Agency Advice

The Environment Agency (EA) have policies and advice covering a variety of topics around environmental protection. The EA is consulted on all major development proposals and any applications on sites that have specific environmental risks. They also have authority over all major rivers in the UK, which includes the River Colne. In Watford, the EA is largely consulted on issues of flood risk.

Each year the Environment Agency produce a spreadsheet of all applications they have objected to on flood risk and water quality grounds and whether their advice was followed.

Table 51 highlights levels of compliancy with EA advice as per this published data. There is a target in the Local Plan for there to be no applications approved contrary to EA advice on flooding or water quality grounds.

Table 51: The number of applications approved over the monitoring year that was contrary to advice from the Environment Agency

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of applications granted planning permission contrary to Environment Agency advice	0	0				

[Environment Agency objections to planning applications based on flood risk and water quality - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/environment-agency-objections-to-planning-applications-based-on-flood-risk-and-water-quality)

### What Happened?:

Over the monitoring year, two applications in Watford were objected to by the Environment Agency on the basis of flood risk. Neither of these were approved by the Council against this advice.

### Comparisons:

In the first two years of the plan period no permissions have been granted contrary to Environment Agency advice.

### Implications for the Local Plan:

This indicator will report these figures each year to determine whether the Local Plan policies relating to the natural environment are preventing development seen as unacceptable by the Environment Agency from being approved.

## Open Space/Green Infrastructure

Having access to green spaces such as parks, public gardens, play spaces, allotments and sports facilities is highly beneficial to the health and wellbeing of a community as well as having considerable environmental benefits. Watford has a good amount of greenspace and a considerable number of high quality open spaces, but needs to work towards creating a more connected and robust Green Infrastructure Network.

There are a large number of areas designated in the Local Plan which protects green infrastructure and open space from loss or development.

Within the newly adopted Local Plan there are 614 hectares of land designated as green infrastructure or open space, ranging from large parks of regional significance like Cassiobury Park to small amenity spaces of local importance. These are all provided policy protection against their loss.

New developments can establish new areas of open space onsite or make off-site contributions towards its provision. They can also help to enhance and improve connectivity between green spaces by creating linkages between sites. The target is to ensure that there is no net loss in open space or green infrastructure, but seeing a gain would be preferable particularly to ensure that there is adequate provision to support new development being delivered in the borough.

A broad assessment has been undertaken to record which major developments in the borough have been completed with open space included. It has not been possible to gather exact sizes of these over the monitoring year and so it is just provided as a written commentary.

Table 52: Gains and losses in designated open space and green infrastructure (sqm)

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Developments with gains to Open/Amenity space and Green Space	<i>See summary in the box below</i>	<i>See summary in the box below</i>				

**What Happened?:**

The baseline figure for this indicator is 614 hectares which was the amount of designated open space and green infrastructure in the Local Plan. The sites making up this existing provision are shown on the policies map.

Over the monitoring year there have been multiple park improvement projects that seek to enhance the quality of open spaces in Watford. These however do not increase the size of the open space or green infrastructure.

There were seven major developments totally completed over the monitoring year, three of which included some form of amenity space or green infrastructure on-site.

Whilst the other sites included landscaping features they are not considered to be new open space or green infrastructure.

The Council has not recorded any loss of designated open space or green infrastructure over the monitoring year, and so given the above it is reasonable to assume there has been a small net increase in green infrastructure over the monitoring year.

**Comparisons:**

A similar update was provided last year where there were 9 major applications completed, all of which had some form of open/amenity space. This year had more mixed results in terms of whether they included any amenity space on-site.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

Access to sufficient open space is a key part of achieving sustainable development, and in improving the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the residents that occupy new and

existing development. It is therefore important to monitor this indicator to ensure sufficient provision is being made.

The new Local Plan policies should strengthen the ability of the council to require sufficient amounts of open space as part of developments in future years.

## Net gain in Biodiversity

Watford Borough Council declared an Ecological Emergency in early 2021 and has committed to increasing existing, and providing new, areas of biodiversity in the borough. Any sustained loss of green infrastructure and the fracturing of its networks can have a damaging effect on habitats.

The new Environment Act (2021) includes means to strengthen biodiversity and is mandating a net gain which will come into effect in November 2023<sup>4</sup>. All applications submitted after the adoption of the Watford Local Plan in October 2022 need to include a 10% net gain of biodiversity and this will soon be mandated in national guidance. As was the case in the first year of the plan period, it cannot be accurately reported on yet in this AMR. It is expected that the Government will provide more guidance on how to monitor net gain as part of their full guidance that is now expected in November 2023.

Table 53: Number of applications which have delivered a net gain in Biodiversity as per the DEFRA metric

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Biodiversity net gain as per DEFRA biodiversity metric	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				

### What Happened?:

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

### Comparisons:

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

### Implications for the Local Plan:

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

<sup>4</sup> At the time of writing the Government has just announced an intention to delay introduction of this to January 2024

## 9. Infrastructure

New development must be supported by sufficient and appropriate infrastructure in order to create high quality, sustainable places.

Infrastructure falls into three categories:

- Social infrastructure: Schools, healthcare, community facilities, leisure and cultural centres, places of worship and emergency services.
- Physical infrastructure: Roads, footpaths, cycleways, water provision and treatment, sewerage, flood prevention and drainage, waste disposal, electricity, gas and electronic communications networks.
- Green Infrastructure: Open spaces, recreation facilities, trees, green corridors, wildlife corridors and landscape features.

Figure 7 below replicates Figure 10.1 of the Local Plan setting out all the different types of infrastructure that will be subject to assessment in this section of the AMR.

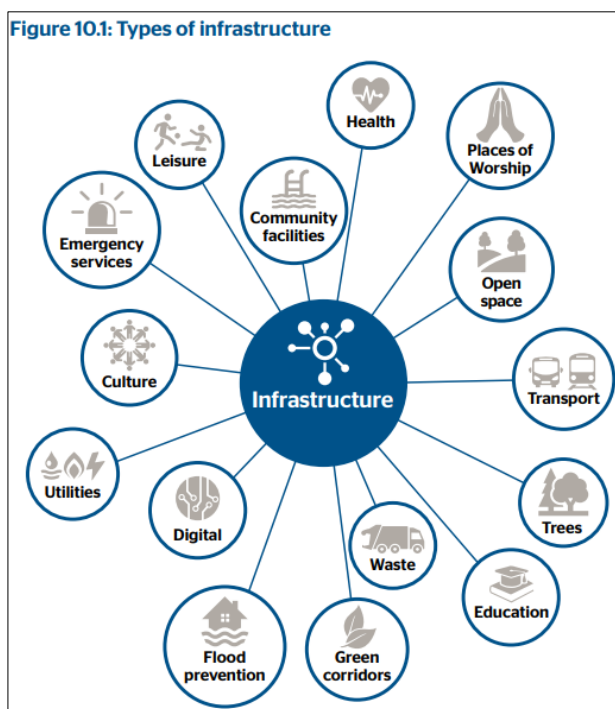


Figure 7: Types of Infrastructure

### Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

Details of the infrastructure requirements in the Local Plan to support the planned increase in new homes, businesses and other facilities are found in the IDP<sup>5</sup>. The IDP identifies essential infrastructure projects and prioritises them according to their importance, as well as providing indicative costs and timescales.

The IDP includes strategic level infrastructure such as health facilities, education facilities, sustainable transport projects and communication infrastructure as well as more locally specific infrastructure projects.

Table 54 reports on the delivery of projects referenced in the IDP over the monitoring year.

Table 54: Progress on infrastructure projects over the monitoring year

IDP section	Name of project	Progress 2022/23
7.1	20mph speed limit	HCC consultation on proposal to introduce 20mph zones in West Watford and Cassiobury Park Triangle.
7.1	Exchange Road cycle link	Feasibility work ongoing through a ring road crossing study.
7.1	Watford Gateway Scheme 4 -	Project Validation completed for this section of the St Albans Road Masterplan

<sup>5</sup> [Microsoft Word - 2021 WBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan \(usrfiles.com\)](#)



	Bradshaw Road Quietway (Intervention 8,16)	
7.1	Watford Ring – Road gateway junction enhancements	Town Centre Framework considered high level proposals for junction improvements that were supported during consultation. HCC are now progressing detailed feasibility work.
7.1	Route 1: Cycling gap analysis (Hempstead Road)	LCWIP route 17 has been through Project validation with next steps to take northern sections through Feasibility.
7.1	Route 2: Cycling gap analysis (Rickmansworth Road/ St Albans Road)	Feasibility and scoping work ongoing.
7.1	Route 3: Cycling gap analysis (Between Vicarage Road and Rickmansworth Road)	Project validation completed
7.1	Route 5: Cycling gap analysis (Between Wiggshall Depot and Rickmansworth Road)	Project validation completed
7.1	Lower High Street shared use cycle path	Project validation completed
7.1	Watford Western Gateway to Watford Junction orbital cycle route	Feasibility work ongoing with HCC.
7.1	Safety Scheme 2: Waterfields Way/ Lower High Street	Being looked at as part of a ring road crossing study
7.2	2f.e. primary school at Watford Gateway SDA (MU05 St Albans Road)	Development commenced, new primary school to be delivered in phase 2, forecast start date Q1 2026, forecast completion date Q2 2027.
7.4	Colne Valley Linear Park	Ongoing programme of improvements.
7.5	Crematorium	<p>A new 'West Herts crematorium' began construction in March 2022 as a sister site for the existing site in Garston. This is located outside of Watford borough boundary in Hemel Hempstead but provides additional capacity for the whole of SW Herts.</p> <p>The building has been completed and open days were held in August 2023 with a full opening expected during the 2023-2024 monitoring year.</p>

**What Happened?:**

A range of projects were progressed over the monitoring year. They were mostly feasibility and scoping work on transport improvement projects.

**Comparisons:**

It is the intention that projects in the IDP are progressed over the plan period. Last year, updates were only provided on two projects. This year a considerable number of projects have made some progress albeit not many have resulted in physical works at this stage.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

Infrastructure provision is essential to support development. Due to the nature of scoping, costing and delivery, projects are phased over a period of several years.

It will be important to monitor the timely delivery of infrastructure projects over the plan period to ensure that new development is supported by the timely and sufficient delivery of infrastructure.

## Developer Contributions

There are various methods the Council can use to fund infrastructure projects, many of which involve securing funding through developer contributions as a way of mitigating the impacts of new development.

Developer contributions can take various forms:

- Securing appropriate on-site enabling and development works.
- Charging the Community Infrastructure Levy on developments as required by any charging schedules in operation for the area within which the development is located;
- Securing Section 106 Agreements to provide affordable housing and make provisions to mitigate the impacts of the development where necessary, or appropriate, having regard to any relevant supplementary planning documents or guidance;
- Securing off-site highway works where necessary;

The Council will primarily use Section 106 Agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy payments to secure appropriate contributions from developments for affordable housing and pieces of infrastructure, such as new schools and transport network improvements.

Table 55 will report the amount of contributions secured through s106 or CIL payments over the monitoring year. This information is a summary of the headline figures that are set out in more

detail in the latest Infrastructure Funding Statement that was published by the Council in September 2023 and covers the same period as this AMR<sup>6</sup>.

Table 55: Amount of developer contribution collected through s106 and CIL over the monitoring year (£)

Type of contribution	2021/2022 (£)	2022/2023 (£)	2023/2024 (£)	2024/2025 (£)	2025/2026 (£)	Total (£)
CIL	£1,266,825 <sup>7</sup>	£2,786,962				
S106	£154,542	£1,971,918				
Total (£)	£1,421,367	£4,758,880				

### What Happened?:

Over the monitoring year £2,786,962 was collected through CIL payments towards infrastructure projects.

In addition to the above CIL receipts, the Council received £1,971,918 in s106 contributions over the monitoring year. This was largely contributions towards affordable housing, with smaller contributions towards street trees and controlled parking zones.

The Council spent a total of £84,784 of s106 contributions over the monitoring year.

Further detail on CIL and S106 collection and spend is reported in the council's Infrastructure Funding Statement.

### Comparisons:

The following table provides a comparison between the CIL contributions received this year compared to previous years. There has been a general upward trend in the amount of CIL contribution received since 2018 and overall the amount of CIL and s106 contributions collected has increased this year compared to last.

Year	Amount collected
2015/16	£160,275
2016/17	£421,060
2017/18	£762,986
2018/19	£1,442,328
2019/20	£3,270,390
2020/21	£3,029,271
2021/22	£1,266,825
2022/23	£2,786,962

The annual delivery of CIL contributions will vary based upon the sites that are developed, existing floorspace, and levels of affordable housing contribution.

<sup>6</sup> [infrastructure-funding-statement-22-23 \(watford.gov.uk\)](https://www.watford.gov.uk/infrastructure-funding-statement-22-23)

<sup>7</sup> Note that this figure has been slightly revised to that which was published in the 2021/2022 AMR. This is to ensure full consistency with the published Infrastructure Funding Statement.

Areas around Riverwell and the Hospital, Watford Junction and Ascot Road are £0 rated and so any development in these areas will not receive any CIL contributions.

The annual delivery of CIL and any other relevant developer contributions will be reported in the Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement and summarised here over the plan period.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

The collection and use of developer contributions through CIL and s106 can ensure that appropriate infrastructure comes forward to support the scale of development anticipated in the Local Plan. The delivery of infrastructure helps to ensure the delivery of sustainable development.

This indicator will highlight the availability of funds to deliver infrastructure and whether development is contributing sufficiently to the infrastructure needs of the borough.

# 10. A Sustainable Travel Town

The Council are aiming to make Watford a Sustainable Travel Town by incorporating the features in Figure 8 below, which is replicated from Figure 11.2 of the Local Plan.

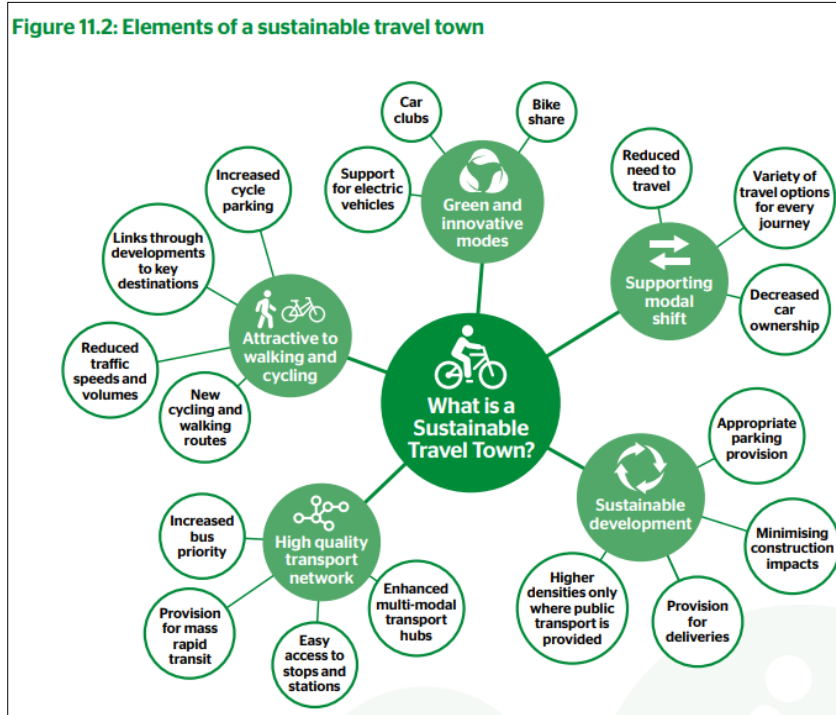


Figure 8: Elements of a Sustainable Travel Town

Watford’s compact urban form gives it significant potential to achieve these aims especially through encouraging and prioritising walking, cycling and public transport use and moving away from car dependence.

The conversion into a Sustainable Travel Town will involve changing the perceptions and priorities of all highway users so that cyclists and pedestrians have priority over cars.

The majority of new development will take place within the Core Development Area, where there is high accessibility to public transport and where key services and facilities are accessible by walking and cycling.

## Sustainable Travel Town

Policy ST11.1 sets out the criteria and principles that development should meet when contributing towards promoting sustainable and active travel behaviour. Proximity to sustainable transport options is a key part of this.

As such this indicator assesses the amount of new residential development that is located within walking distance (400m) of an active bus stop or train station and therefore provides easy and convenient access to sustainable transport options.

Table 56: % of new residential development that is located within 400m of a bus stop or railway station

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
% of new development within 400m of a bus stop	100%	88%				
% of new development within 400m of a railway station	29%	12%				

**What Happened?:**

630 of the 778 net residential units completed over the monitoring year were within 400m of a bus stop. This equates to 37 out of 42 applications, or 88%.

12% of applications (5 out of 42) that recorded net residential completions over the monitoring year were within 400m of one of the six railway stations located within Watford Borough<sup>8</sup>.

**Comparisons:**

The method used to calculate these figures has changed over the monitoring year. Previously distances were taken 'as the crow flies' from one point to another. This year the 400m buffer takes account of physical constraints and uses the highway network to determine whether it is within the threshold distance or not. This makes direct comparisons between the two years difficult but the new method should provide a more accurate, 'real life' assessment of access to public transport.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

It is positive to see a high proportion of new residential development providing opportunities for public transport use through having walkable access to a bus stop. This should help new development contribute effectively towards modal shift and encourage more sustainable transport usage across the borough.

It is likely that the number of site allocations within the Core Development Area will increase the proportion of new development located within 400m of a railway station over the plan period.

## Safeguarded Transport Routes

Policy ST11.2 of the Local Plan safeguards several transport routes (listed in Table 57) for incorporation into future mass transit, bus prioritisation or walking and cycling routes.

These are safeguarded to ensure that designs do not compromise the prioritisation of public transport or active travel now or in the future.

The Policy also safeguards the role of Watford Junction as a multi modal hub, preventing development that would hinder the provision of key infrastructure that would support this.

This indicator will report any changes or updates in relation to these safeguarded routes that have taken place over the monitoring year.

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<sup>8</sup> Note that this includes Watford Underground station on the Metropolitan Line.

Table 57: Annual updates on safeguarded transport routes

Safeguarded routes	2022/2023- Any updates
Disused Croxley Rail Line	None
Ebury Way cycle path	None
Abbey Line	None
Existing and Planned cycle routes in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan	None
Any future planned mass rapid transport routes identified by the county council	None
Watford Junction	None

**What Happened?:**

There were no updates to any of the safeguarded transport routes over the monitoring year.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

There were no updates during this monitoring year and so there are no immediate implications for the Local Plan.

**Walking and Cycling Infrastructure**

Policy ST11.4 states that developments need to demonstrate that they have sought to prioritise walking and cycling through the delivery of on-site infrastructure, wayfinding measures and a safe and secure design. The overall objective of the Plan is to reduce car use by increasing the convenience and attractiveness of walking and cycling.

Appendix D of the Local Plan sets out the standards for on-site cycle parking that all new development will be expected to meet.

Table 58 will report the number of applications that have been approved with levels of cycling parking provision in accordance with Appendix D of the Local Plan.

Table 58: Number of applications with policy compliant cycle parking provisions

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of applications with policy compliant cycle parking	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
% of all new development with policy compliant cycle parking	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				

**What Happened?:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Comparisons:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

### Sustainable Transport Usage in Watford

Hertfordshire County Council produce a travel survey every 3 years, which provides data on how many people are walking and cycling for their main mode of transport, compared to car use. Table 59 records the latest results of this survey. The objective is to increase the percentage of people mainly using cycling or walking over the plan period. The latest available data comes from the Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Travel Survey published in December 2022.



Table 59: The % of people walking or cycling for their main mode of transport

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
% of people walking for main transport	32%	<i>No additional update</i>				
% of people cycling for transport	3.7%	<i>No additional update</i>				

**What Happened?:**

32% of people use walking as their main method of transport in Watford, and 3.7% of people use cycling as their main method of transport. This data is taken from the 2022 HCC travel survey published in December 2022. It remains the most up to date data available for this indicator.

**Comparisons:**

There was no update to the published information in the 2022 HCC Travel Survey. The below analysis is replicated from last year’s AMR.

In comparison with other districts in Hertfordshire, Watford has the highest levels of walking and cycling recorded as being the main method of transport.

The use of cars is still marginally higher than walking in Watford with 35.5% of people using cars as their main method of transport compared to 32% walking.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

Achieving significant modal shifts in transport will take time to occur across the plan period, but it is encouraging to see Watford’s position relative to the rest of Hertfordshire regarding the use of walking and cycling as the main form of transport.

The locating of 80% of new residential and mixed use allocations within the Core Development Area should increase the attractiveness and viability of walking and cycling as a main transport option. In trying to increase walking and cycling, it will also be important to provide safe and accessible routes to and from key locations, and good quality infrastructure such as cycle parking opportunities, particularly in the town centre and at major transport hubs.

**Electric Vehicle Ownership and Infrastructure**

Policy ST11.5 supports the increased provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. It states that 20% of all new parking spaces should have active charging infrastructure and all spaces should have passive provision. The provision of electric charging infrastructure should make electric vehicles

a more viable option for a wider range of people and should drive up levels of ownership in the borough over the plan period.

Standard car parking should be provided in accordance with Appendix E of the Local Plan with all development in the Core Development Area being 'car-lite'.

The following indicators seek to track the level of electric vehicle ownership in the borough as a percentage of total car ownership, the number of new electric charging infrastructure being delivered and lastly the level of car ownership generally across the borough.

Table 60: Ownership of Ultra-Low emission vehicles as a % of total car ownership

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of Ultra-low emission vehicles registered in Watford	2,125	2,204				
% of all car registrations in the borough that are Ultra-low emission.	4%	5%				

[Vehicle licensing statistics data tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/vehicle-licensing-statistics-data-tables)

#### What Happened?:

There were 2,204 electric or ultra-low emission vehicles registered over the monitoring year.

In total there were 45,500 vehicles registered in Watford at the end of the 2022/2023 monitoring year, electric vehicle registrations therefore equate to 5% of all registrations.

#### Comparisons:

Over the 2021-2022 monitoring year, there were 2,125 electric or ultra-low emission vehicle registrations in the borough and so the 2022-2023 figure of 2,204 demonstrates a clear and consistent demand for electric vehicles.

In terms of comparing the ownership of electric vehicles against the total number of registered vehicles in the borough, the above table shows that the electric vehicle registrations for this monitoring year (2,204) would represent 5% of the total vehicle registration figure. Again this is fairly consistent across the first two years of the plan period.

#### Implications for the Local Plan:

This indicator will provide an indication of the demand for electric vehicles in Watford and in turn provide evidence as to whether there is more demand for associated infrastructure in the borough that could be given further encouragement in Local Plan policy.

Table 61: Electric vehicle charging spaces delivered over the monitoring year

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of electric vehicle charging spaces delivered on new developments in Watford	95	2,061				
Number of electric vehicle charging spaces provided by the Council	34	79*				

### What Happened?:

There were a total of 2,061 electric vehicle spaces delivered on new development sites over the monitoring year.

These were provided as part of the following applications:

Permission Reference	Electric Vehicle Charge Points provided
22/00442/FUL	6
22/00983/FUL	9
22/01313/FUL	1
22/00565/FUL	9
22/00322/FULM	2000
22/00706/FUL	1
21/01575/VARM	21
22/00216/FUL	9
22/00567/FUL	5

2,000 of these 2,061 spaces were provided as part of the expansion to Warner Bros studios which is a cross boundary site that is split between Watford and Three Rivers District Council.

In addition to spaces delivered as a result of new development the Council is currently installing 79 new on-street twin electric charging points at 38 different locations in the borough. This followed a successful bid to the On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme (ORCS) which has provided the funding for this.

It is positive to see electric vehicle spaces being delivered in the borough and this indicator will continue to monitor the quantum of this provision.

\*This is the number of charging points currently being installed, not all of these have been completed over the 2022-2023 monitoring year.

### **Comparisons:**

It is clear that in total, there was a considerably higher net delivery of electric vehicle charging points this year compared to last. This was however largely down to the Warner Bros studio which has delivered a very large number of charging points.

The Council is continuing to increase its direct provision of on-street electric charging points as demonstrated by the number currently being installed through the ORCS.

### **Implications for the Local Plan:**

It is important that the Local Plan policies allow the demand for electric vehicle charging to be supported by sufficient charging infrastructure.

The above indicators relating to electric vehicle registrations will be used to give an indication of demand and this should provide a useful measure of the extent to which this need is being met on new development sites and in the borough generally. The requirement in Building Regulations to provide active and passive electric charging infrastructure should increase the proportion of new development that includes electric vehicle spaces.

## Car Ownership

The policies in the Plan seek to move people towards more active travel modes and away from using private cars. The locating of the majority of development within the Core Development Area should enable people to choose to live in Watford and not own a private vehicle because there will be ready access to services, facilities and public transport by walking and cycling.

This indicator will assess the level of car ownership in Watford, allowing the Council to assess trends that could indicate the increased viability and attractiveness of active travel.

Over the monitoring year, the 2021 Census data on car ownership was published<sup>9</sup>. This data is used in the below analysis, replacing the information from the 2011 Census that was reported last year.

### **What Happened?:**

There were 30,744 cars owned in Watford according to the 2021 Census data.

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<sup>9</sup> [Car or van availability - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

### **Comparisons:**

There were 44,028 cars owned in Watford according to the 2011 Census compared to the 30,744 cars owned in the 2021 Census. This is a reduction in levels of car ownership of 30% between 2011 and 2021.

This is a positive trend with regard to modal shift and sustainability. It provides a demonstration of the potential for Watford to become less dependent on cars over the plan period. Given the scale of the difference, caution is recommended and further analysis on car ownership levels will be interesting to see whether the conclusions of the Census is born out.

### **Implications for the Local Plan:**

The Local Plan seeks to make Watford a 'Sustainable Travel Town', directing the majority of growth towards the most sustainable locations close to services, facilities and public transport and prioritising the needs of active transport (pedestrians, cyclists and public transport) over cars.

The Plan supports development that is 'car-lite' or 'car-free' within the Core Development Area. It will be interesting to assess whether this has an impact on levels of car ownership over the plan period.

It is anticipated that the need for cars as part of new development in the borough will reduce as new infrastructure initiatives to support active transport are delivered. Looking at the updated 2021 Census data in comparison to 2011 it would appear that this process has already started within Watford.

Reducing the level of reliance on private car ownership could provide opportunities for more pedestrianisation schemes and reducing road widths where appropriate could contribute towards making Watford more pedestrian friendly and reducing the perceived priority of cars in the town.

## [Travel Plans](#)

Travel plans are required to support a planning application in all cases where a transport assessment would be required and where local circumstances set out in the Hertfordshire County Council Travel Plan Guidance document dictate that one is required. The Travel Plan should encourage sustainable travel behaviour and should include clear objectives and measures to achieve it.

The following indicator records the number and percentage of applications which include a travel plan that was submitted as a supporting document, either in a standalone format or within another, larger document such as the Design and Access Statement.

Table 62: % of applications that include a Travel Plan

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Number of applications including a Travel Plan	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
% of all applications that include a Travel Plan	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				

**What Happened?:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Comparisons:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

# 11. A Healthy Community

The design of new development and the provision of suitable outdoor and community spaces and facilities can have a significant effect on people’s health and wellbeing. The Local Plan seeks to create a healthy, active population by ensuring sufficient access to open spaces, creating pedestrian and cycle friendly environments, limiting pollution, providing homes to meet the needs of specific sections of society such as older residents and supporting the provision of well located and good quality community facilities.

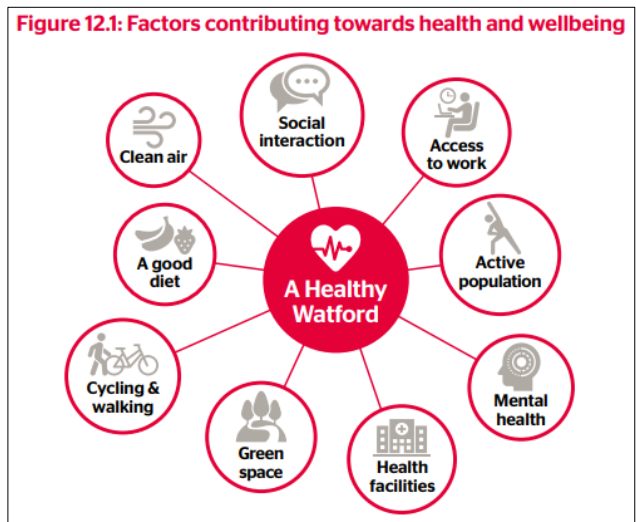
Figure 12.1 of the Local Plan is replicated below highlighting the factors that can contribute towards health and wellbeing. Many of these factors are reported on in other sections of this AMR.

Figure 9: Factors contributing towards health and wellbeing

## Health Impact Assessments

The Local Plan seeks to ensure that development does not have a detrimental impact on the health of a population or health inequalities.

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is essential to demonstrate that a proposal would not have a negative impact on physical health or mental wellbeing.



Health Impact Assessments are a tool through which development can:

- Understand local community health needs and demonstrate how it can support these;
- Demonstrate how it has considered health inequalities;
- Meet the requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations for human health;
- Meets the policy requirements of the Watford Local Plan that major development proposals undertake a Health Impact Assessment;
- Demonstrate the opportunities of a proposal and how a development has been positively planned.

Policy HC12.2 sets out what type of applications require a HIA to be completed, these are;

- Major residential developments of 100 units or more
- Major transport infrastructure
- Any other locally or nationally significant infrastructure project

Table 63 records the number of HIAs completed on relevant schemes over the monitoring year.

Table 63: Number of HIAs completed for new applications over the monitoring year

Type of development	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Total
Residential development over 100 dwellings	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Major transport infrastructure improvements	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Any other locally or nationally significant infrastructure	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>	<i>No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs</i>				
Total						

**What Happened?:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Comparisons:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

*No data available this year. Data will be reported in subsequent AMRs*



## New Community Facilities

Facilities providing opportunities for leisure, recreation, sport and tourism are vital for the health and wellbeing of a population. These facilities should be located close to where people live and in the heart of communities.

Built cultural or community facilities can include education and health facilities, public houses, local places of worship, community centres, public halls, leisure and sports centres, or arts buildings.

Policy HC12.3 support the delivery of new, extended or improved cultural and community facilities, where they are located in sustainable and accessible locations and where they do not conflict with existing uses. The Policy resists the loss of existing facilities unless it is demonstrated that the facility is no longer needed; it is being provided to a higher quality; and that the facility has been vacant for 12 months with clear marketing evidence showing it could not have any community use in the future.

Table 64 reports on the provision of new, and the loss of existing, community facilities. There is a target of no net loss of community facilities over the plan period.

Table 64: New community facilities delivered over the monitoring year

Type of Facility	Location/Name of facility
Community Hall	150sqm functional community space- Centrepont Community Centre, Raphael Drive, Watford

### What Happened?:

There was a community facility provided as part of the mixed use scheme at Centrepont Community Centre in Watford alongside 17 residential dwellings. This facility was reprovided following the demolition of the existing community centre in 2021. The replacement facility is smaller than what was there before by 125sqm.

### Comparisons:

There were no community facilities delivered in the previous monitoring year.

### Implications for the Local Plan:

There is no set target for the delivery of community facilities in the borough over the plan period, other than there being no net loss, but it is important that provision is supported when it comes forward. It is likely that most of the community facilities delivered over the plan period will be linked to new development.

It is pleasing to see that despite it being smaller than the existing provision, there is still a desire to reprovide community facilities where they are proposed as part of a major development such as that at Centrepoint Community Centre.

## Loss of Community Facilities

This indicator reports on any community facilities that have been lost over the monitoring year and gives a reason as to why the facility was lost with reference to the criteria in Policy HC12.3 (e.g. replacement facility being provided, vacant for over 12 months, not needed by the community).

Table 65: Number of community facilities lost over the monitoring year

Type of Facility	Location/Name of facility	Reasons for loss
None	N/A	N/A

### What Happened?:

There were no community facilities lost over the monitoring year.

### Comparisons:

There was similarly no community facilities lost over the monitoring year

### Implications for the Local Plan:

The protection of community facilities is supported by Policy HC12.3 and as such the recording of no net loss of community facilities over the monitoring year is positive.

This indicator will help to demonstrate whether the policy is effective in protecting community facilities.

## 12. Site Allocations

The Local Plan includes a variety of site allocations for residential, mixed use, employment and education development. In total, these allocations are expected to deliver 8,604 homes over the plan period and so represent a critical element of meeting the target for 13,328 over the plan period and 784 dwellings per annum. This section of the AMR monitors any progress made on each of these allocated sites.

Figure 13.1: Allocated sites for delivery

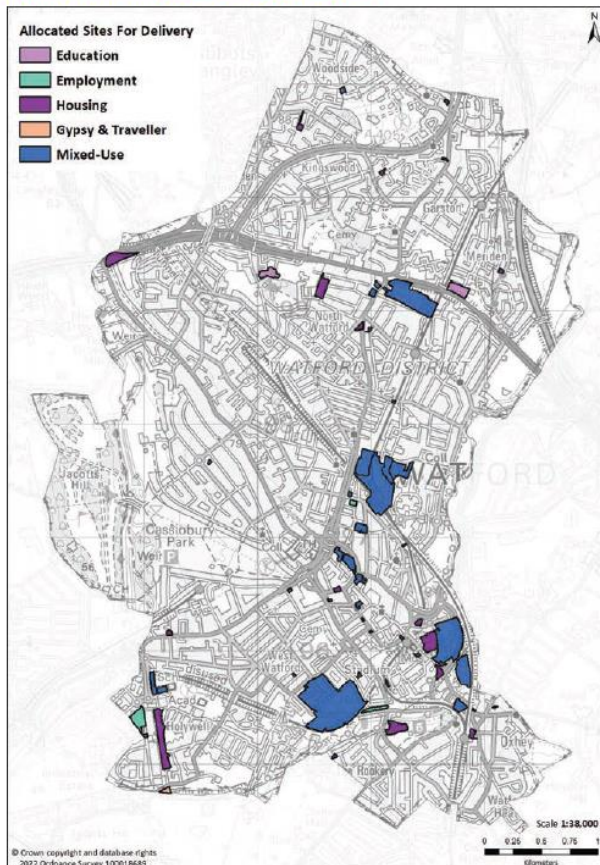


Figure 10: Allocated sites in the Local Plan

Figure 10 replicated from Figure 13.1 of the Local Plan provides a map of all allocated sites in the Local Plan.

### Residential Site Allocations

There are a total of 32 purely residential site allocations in the Plan. Table 67 reports any planning or delivery updates that have been reported over the monitoring year. There have occasionally been major updates that occur between the end of the monitoring year and the time of writing, where this is the case they have been reported in the table but acknowledged as being within the 23-24 monitoring period.

Table 66: Progress on residential site allocations over the monitoring year (MY)

Reference/Name	Yield	Progress/Updates over MY
HS01- Lych Gate	5	Planning permission granted but no recorded start on site over the monitoring year
HS02- 275 Sheepcot Lane	21	
HS03- 1 Lavinia Avenue	5	
HS04- 5 Sheepcot Drive	9	
HS05- Land at Badger PH	9	
HS06- Land at Russell Lane	93	
HS07- Former Mothercare site	98	Permission granted for 145 dwellings 20/00803/OPD and 21/00455/AAPA). Existing buildings demolished over the monitoring year prior to redevelopment and all 145 dwellings are under construction.  9 houses are also currently under construction (22/00565/FUL)
HS08- Longspring Car Park	17	
HS09- Land and Buildings at 420-420a St Albans Road	9	
HS10- Land at Balmoral Road	5	
HS11- Land to the Rear of 53 Langley Way	7	
HS12- Land and Garages between 139-149 Queens Road	5	
HS13- Corner of Park Avenue and Rickmansworth Road	9	
HS14- Land at 14-20 Upton Road	48	
HS15- Land at 80 Cassio Road	17	
HS16- Land and Buildings at 176-186 Rickmansworth Road	12	
HS17- 120-122 Exchange Road	5	
HS18- Car Park at Vicarage Road/Exchange Road	5	
HS19- Crown Passage Car Park	18	
HS20- Land at Lower Derby Road	59	
HS21- Land at Waterfields Retail Park	414	
HS22- Land and Buildings at 252-272 Lower High Street	110	
HS23- Land and Buildings at 247 Lower High Street	31	
HS24- Land and Garages between 41 and 61 Brightwell Road	4	
HS25- Land and Garages to the rear of 15-17 Liverpool Road	11	

HS26- Land and Garages to the rear of Elfrida Road	8	
HS27- Land at Croxley View	240	44 completions over the monitoring year (21/00592/NONMAT) and phase 1 for 86 units completed November 2022
HS28- Wiggshall Depot	330	
HS29- 41 Aldenham Road	5	Planning permission granted just after the 22-23 monitoring year in May 2023 for 6 flats, (23/00102/FUL).
HS30- Chalk Hill Car Park	9	
HS31- Land at Bushey Station	68	
HS32- Riverside Road and Garages	5	Site completed over the 2021-2022 monitoring year (20/00413/FUL) for 5 residential units

### What Happened?:

Only one allocated site for housing, (H27) reported net completions over this monitoring year. Progress was made on a further site (HS07) with demolition of existing buildings in preparation for redevelopment.

### Comparisons:

As this is still early in the plan period it would be unlikely that a large number of site allocations are already delivering.

It will be vital to assess how sites are progressing over the coming years to ensure that delivery remains aligned to the housing trajectory in Appendix B of the Local Plan.

### Implications for the Local Plan:

The delivery of housing is crucial in maintaining a five year housing supply, and in passing the Housing Delivery Test, and therefore in ensuring that the policies in the Plan remain up to date and given full weight by Planning Inspectors at appeals.

The delivery of residential site allocations will be an important part of ensuring that housing needs are met.

## Mixed-Use Housing Allocations

Alongside the above residential allocations there are a variety of mixed use allocations incorporating residential and employment or E class uses.

Table 67 provides any planning or delivery updates that have been reported over the monitoring year.

Table 67: Progress on mixed use site allocations over the monitoring year (MY)

Reference/Name	Yield	Progress/Updates over MY
MU01- Land at Woodside Community Centre	12	
MU02- Land at 501 St Albans Road	13	
MU03- Land at the Lemarie Centre	7	
MU04- 453 St Albans Road	18	
MU05- Land and Buildings at 94-98 St Albans Road	1214	<p>Subject to extant full planning permission (19/00507/FULM) for 1214 dwellings.</p> <p>Subject to a Non Material Amendment (21/000094/NONMAT) on 249 of these units. This application was reported as started over the monitoring year but no completions yet recorded.</p> <p>Subject to a Variation of condition (21/01575/VARM) on 703 of these units. This was approved and started over the monitoring year but completions have not yet been recorded.</p>
MU06- Land at Watford Junction	1232	
MU07- Land and Buildings at Astral House	131	
MU08- 22-28 Station Road	21	Half the site (26-28 Station Road) has permission for 9 dwellings. No start was recorded on this over the monitoring year.
MU09- Land at Watford Police Station	120	
MU10- Land at the Rear of 125-127 The Parade	90	
MU11- 23-37 The Parade	72	Live application received just after the end of the 22-23 monitoring year in June 2023 (23/00391/FULM) and is pending consideration at the time of writing
MU12- 19-21 Clarendon Road	14	Permission granted (21/01811/FULM) for 65 dwellings over the monitoring year.
MU13- Land at Sainsbury's Town Centre	220	
MU14- Land at the Car Park, Wellstones	40	
MU15- 18 Watford Field Road	19	
MU16- Land at Tesco, Lower High Street	1338	
MU17- Land at Colne Valley Retail Park	466	

MU18- Land to the West of and Parallel to Ascot Road	43	
MU19- Land East of Ascot Road	27	
MU20- Land at Riverwell	1383	288 residential completions recorded over the monitoring year on two parcels- (17/01511/FULM and 19/01342/VARM)
MU21- Land at Colne Bridge Retail Park	141	
MU22- Land at Asda, Dome Roundabout	422	
MU23- Land at Colonial Way/Clive Way	8,215sqm of industrial floorspace	Has planning consent but no start recorded over the monitoring year. Site has been cleared and boarded up.

### What Happened?:

Several mixed use sites currently have applications granted permission, or are progressing towards getting an application submitted. There were a total of 288 completions reported across these site allocations over the monitoring year; all recorded as part of the Riverwell Development.

Several other planning updates are reported in the table.

### Comparisons:

It is positive to see progress on some of these allocations and the delivery at Riverwell. It will be vital to assess how sites are progressing over the coming years to ensure that delivery remains aligned with the housing trajectory in Appendix B of the Local Plan.

### Implications for the Local Plan:

The delivery of housing is crucial in maintaining a five year housing supply, and in passing the Housing Delivery Test, and therefore ensuring that the policies in the Plan remain up to date and given full weight by Planning Inspectors at appeals.

The delivery of mixed use site allocations will be an important part of ensuring that housing needs are met.

## Employment Site Allocations

Table 13.3 of the Local Plan allocates several sites for employment uses.

Delivery of these sites will be crucial to ensuring that the needs for both office and industrial floorspace will be met. The below table will report any updates over the monitoring year.

Table 68: Progress on employment allocations over the monitoring year (MY)

Reference/Name	Uses	Progress/Updates over MY
EM01- Cassiobury House, 11-19 Station Road	Office	Redevelopment/refurbishment currently under construction
EM02- South of Wiggshall Industrial Estate	Industrial	
EM03- Gateway Zone	Industrial	Has planning consent and the site has been cleared
EM04- Land between 14-18 Greenhill Crescent	Industrial	

### What Happened?:

There was no delivery or permissions granted on employment allocations over the monitoring year although two out of the four allocated sites have extant permission and one is currently under construction.

### Comparisons:

As this is early in the plan period it would be unlikely to see a large number of site allocations already delivering but it is notable to see a high proportion of sites with extant permission.

### Implications for the Local Plan:

This indicator will assess the delivery of employment floorspace in the borough which will allow the Council to see how these key employment sites are coming forward and whether they are able to provide job opportunities for local people.

## Education Site Allocations

The delivery of sufficient education facilities to support the level of new development expected in the area is crucial to achieving sustainable development and providing essential infrastructure to meet needs. Table 13.4 of the Local Plan, therefore, allocates two sites as being suitable for a new education facility.

Table 69 below will report any updates and progress on these two sites over the plan period.



Table 69: Progress on education allocations over the monitoring year (MY)

Reference/Name	Uses	Progress/Updates over MY
ED01- Former Meriden School Site	Education	
ED02- Former Bill Everett Centre	Education	

**What Happened?:**

There was no delivery or permissions granted on education allocations over the monitoring year.

**Comparisons:**

There has been no delivery in either of the first two years of the plan period.

**Implications for the Local Plan:**

It is important that education facilities are delivered alongside housing growth in the borough to ensure that there are sufficient school places to cater for an increased population. The delivery of these two sites is therefore critical to achieving sustainable development over the plan period.