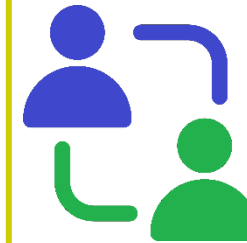


Economic Growth Strategy

Q2 Highlights

- Met several new businesses on Clarendon Road, Croxley Business Park and across Watford, signposting to local resources, networks and business support services.
- Joined Clarendon Road Connect business networking event to support that business community
- Increased sign ups to the Watford Business newsletter
- Worked with FSB to visit St Albans Road businesses who are FSB members to help with their challenges and raise awareness of small businesses in Watford.
- Worked with Herts LEP to ensure maximum benefit for Watford businesses and residents from Herts-wide Watford funded UKSPF skills and business support services
- Drafting of the Watford Skills and Employment Plan, reflecting the needs of our businesses, key sectors and local communities, is underway.
- The Watford Business Charter is drafted and ready for consultation with businesses and stakeholders
- Supported the University of Herts Healthcare Accelerator event, which involved Watford businesses
- Worked with the BID team and Job Centre Plus to connect staff from Wilko and Iceland with new employment opportunities within the Town Centre.
- 143 businesses have been supported by the Watford Net Zero project (UKSPF funded). This project provides fully funded support to help Watford businesses start to measure and reduce their carbon footprint.



60 local businesses attended our second Watford Business Connect event to come and hear about developments in Watford and find out more about the wide range of funded business support services available.

Watford Fit to Bid project (UKSPF funded) has supported 157 businesses, with resources and mentoring to help with bidding and tender writing, or through events.



Q3 Priorities

- Scope the Gaming Training Hub project (UKSPF funded)
- Work with FSB to complete the Watford Local Leadership report, setting out how Watford Council supports small businesses across its range of services.
- Reconvening the construction/development skills task group to review progress made by all participants since March, and conclude the work of this task group
- Follow up with all businesses who engaged with the Meet the Buyer and Business Connect events to address their questions and connect them with relevant services and organisations
- Gather feedback from business community on the draft Watford Business Charter
- Convene a Business Leaders task group to feedback to the Council on the new Place Brand and other future Council initiatives

4

new grant applications have been reviewed and approved through the BID Business Improvement Grant panel, helping to review and approve applications from BID businesses for small grants to help make improvements to their businesses.

The first Meet the Buyer event at Watford FC had 7 large organisations acting as buyers and 70 SMEs attended as potential suppliers.

