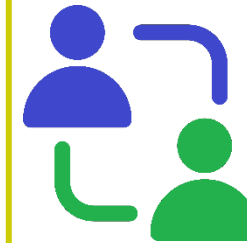


Economic Growth Strategy

Q3 Highlights

- Produced Watford's FSB (Federation of Small Businesses) Local Leadership Report setting out how the Council supports small business across its range of services; this is the first of its kind in the East of England.
- Convened the first meeting of a Business Task Group comprising leading business in the town, in this instance to help with development of the Watford Place Brand, but also other key initiatives in the future.
- Held the second construction industry / developer skills workshop with good participation and follow up actions.
- A wide range of business engagement has happened, including meetings with key businesses and support for the Christmas shop local campaign.
- Supported the County-wide All the Help you Can Get event and the 10 Year Better Business for All (BBfA) celebration, of which Watford was a founding member.
- Completed the Watford Skills and Employment Plan 2024-26.
- Consulted with a range of businesses and groups on the draft Watford Business Charter to inform the delivery plan for this initiative.



In total now 250 businesses are supported on the UKSPF funded Watford Net Zero project

Supported the Purple Tuesday initiative promoting accessibility and inclusivity to Watford's businesses



Q4 Priorities

- Launch the Watford Skills and Employment Plan and convene the first Skills and Employment delivery group to bring together the actions needed to deliver against the plan.
- Successfully deliver the next Meet the Buyer event, as part of the Watford Fit to Bid project.
- Support the Innovation and Incubation Hub project to revalidate the concept and proposal.
- Complete the UKSPF Year 2 programme and prepare for reporting for DLUHC.
- Complete research and consultation related to the Watford Business Charter, propose the delivery model options, and seek agreement on a delivery approach.
- Collate and share with Herts LEP information about Watford's key inward investment assets and propositions, to ensure Watford is well promoted through the forthcoming Invest Herts portal
- Support Watford BID in its planning for 2024

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Start up businesses from the Watford Young Entrepreneurs have been supported through their next stage of growth by the Watford Growth Springboard project funded by the UKSPF

In total now 216 businesses are supported on the UKSPF Watford Fit to Bid local supply chain

