

Elected Mayor's Report- June 2018

It's an honour to be producing my first report as Elected Mayor of Watford. I have very much hit the ground running in terms of starting to implement the manifesto I was elected on, as well as meeting lots of our fantastic local community groups.

I've also helped over 260 residents so far with their issues and I hope to be doing more of this through my time in office.

Partnership Work

Everyone Active

I visited Woodside Leisure Centre at the beginning of June to mark the first day of the new partnership with Everyone Active as well as see some of the improvements they were starting to make on the site. I saw the new changing facilities that were being built and a new toning suite. At Central, we're offering some free gym sessions as well as free swimming on a Sunday afternoon for families.

I'm really proud of the work we are doing with Everyone Active and of the first class leisure facilities we've got in the town.

Veolia

Veolia have been working to maintain our grass verges, which has been challenging this year due to the weather we have been having in the last few months. They have brought in extra staff and machines to make sure our verges are well maintained.

I'd like to note my thanks to Veolia for the work they have been doing on our High Street making sure it is immaculate and the pond has got a beautiful display in it ahead of our Big Events.

Working with our neighbours

I have had several productive meetings with neighbouring council leaders, including Cllr David Williams, the leader of Hertfordshire County Council and Cllr Sara Bedford, leader of Three Rivers District Council. As well as this we are regularly meeting as Hertfordshire council leaders to further the idea of a new garden village. It's clear that, as a small densely populated borough, the only chance we have to reach the government's new 'supercharged' housing targets is to work collaboratively with our neighbours. I will continue to work with them in order to build new settlements outside of the town, whilst promoting us as a leisure, business, education and retail destination for the region.

Community Events

One of the best parts of my job is meeting so many of our fantastic community groups. We're lucky in Watford to have such a diverse voluntary sector, representing all sections of our community.

I have opened the Metro Bank in the High Street on 25 May, which will be a great asset to our vibrant town. They have done a fantastic job with renovating this part of the High Street and it is great to welcome them to the town.

I visited the St Anthony's Residential Care Home, a specialist in dementia care for their Royal Wedding themed open day. The whole day was a fantastic success and it was lovely to see such a well-run care facility where residents seem happy. I also visited the Alzheimer's Society Roadshow when they came to Watford to raise awareness of the condition.

I was lucky enough to meet the fantastic Electric Umbrella when they came to Watford to perform at our renovated bandstand at Cassiobury Park. Electric Umbrella are a locally based charity providing musical performing opportunities for adults in Watford and the surrounding area with disabilities and learning difficulties. They have a musical called '*I am the Dream Machine*' being performed at Watford Palace Theatre shortly.

I opened the *Imagine Watford* festival and was lucky enough to get along to a few of the events myself as well. I'm proud that Watford Borough Council continues to support this festival and that we are able to have performances of this calibre taking place for free in our town centre. I'd like to give my thanks to Watford Palace Theatre for helping put the event on, as well as our terrific officers here at Watford Borough Council for making it such a success.

I helped open the new play facilities at the Meriden Community Centre, supported by Watford Community Football Trust, Veolia and Watford Borough Council.

I attended several Iftars with our Muslim community during the Ramadan period.

I've also had some really productive meetings with New Hope about tackling rough sleeping in the town and Watford Football Club at looking at ways of supporting the club as a council.

Delivering my Manifesto

Cycle Hire Scheme

I've held meetings with both Hertfordshire County Council and Systra about having a cycle hire scheme for the town, similar to that in other major towns and cities. At the moment we

are costing the scheme and looking at different types of cycle hire scheme that we could have as a town. We're hoping to be able to have it up and running in Watford next year.

Hop on Hop off Bus

I held an excellent meeting with Arriva about the potential to introduce 'Arriva Click' in the town. This is a scheme that is currently running in Sittingbourne in Kent, where users can book a mini bus via an app, allowing them to go to their chosen destination similar to other app services. We're looking at the possibility of bringing this to Watford next year.

Making Watford a more cycle friendly town

I went on a cycle ride with Velo Watford and Spokes to see for myself the current situation for cyclists in the town. It's clear that as a council there are a number of things we could do to make Watford a better place for cyclists and pedestrians, including more cycle routes in the town.

Dementia Friendly Town

I'm passionate about making Watford a Dementia Friendly Town and have set to work trying to get this started. We're holding our first Dementia Forum with interested groups in September, along with representatives of the Alzheimer's Society. We're working with businesses and other local organisations, including staff in the Town Hall, to get more individuals trained as Dementia Friends.

Metropolitan Line Extension

I held meetings with Transport for London (TfL), officials from Hertfordshire County Council and Watford Borough Council at the TfL offices in central London a few weeks ago. During the meeting, TfL had agreed that the current tube scheme had timed out since the Mayor of London withdrew his support from it in January. They agreed to return unspent funds of around £67 million to the Department for Transport, who would then return this money to funding partners.

In the meeting, we pushed for an alternative to the scheme to be looked at, such as a light rail link or a guided bus way. We also agreed to protect the land along the old Croxley Rail Link. This was supported by TfL, and the alternative will be looked into further by the County Council and Watford Borough Council with some support from TfL.