

Economic Growth Strategy

Q1 Highlights

- Helped promotion of Watford as an attractive place for investment at UKREiIF (UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum) and the Council's great support for small businesses at the Three Counties Business Expo, at the Hilton Hotel Watford, with circa 250 attendees.
- Met with many businesses this quarter, including big brands and HQ's as well as many small companies representing a range of industry sectors. This has helped all of those businesses access useful support services, information and networks that they would not otherwise have known about.
- Worked with VVV on a new plan to invigorate the Clarendon Road Connect network, so it can better support and represent businesses.
- Supported Watford Chamber in creating a plan for a sustainable future as a local chamber. This means Watford Chamber can continue to act as a representative body for many in our small business community and provide valuable networking opportunities and business support signposting.
- Commenced Phase One of our UKSPF funded projects and provided DLUHC with reporting on Year 1 spend.
- Our One Watford for Business meeting of economy stakeholders enabled good sharing of local and regional insight and information, and brought a new focus on decarbonisation in the voluntary sector, and wider promotion of the UKSPF funded projects.
- Supported the Community Network Event to ensure good links are made between economy and community strategies and attended the Digi-Cluster networking event, supporting local collaboration in the creative digital sector.
- Attended the Watford Health Workshop to help ensure that plans are cognisant of the links between economic wellbeing and health.
- Met Services for Young people to explore how we can increase the volume of work experience opportunities our local businesses offer young people, and how to connect the people they support with new employment opportunities.
- Met LEP colleagues leading the Herts Film Office and screen industries strategy, to ensure Watford's businesses benefit from regional activity comes into the borough. The team also met with Visit Herts to ensure Watford is well represented through the county's tourism / visitor economy initiatives.
- Successfully launched the Watford Fit to Bid project, with over 60 SME's in attendance. This project will provide funded training, resources and mentoring to help our small business community win more local contracts.
- Worked with local businesses and Watford Chamber on early-stage plans for the Watford's Purple Tuesday initiative in November, which promotes disability confidence and awareness.
- Launched 'Watford Net Zero', which will provide funded support for businesses to start to measure and reduce their carbon footprint and supported the Environmental Managers forum, inviting new businesses to be part of this group, so that they can share best practice.



Q2 Priorities

- Drafting the proposal for Phase 2 of UKSPF funded projects. The proposed projects intend to support Economic Growth Strategy delivery, help our business community overcome barriers and thrive, and help our communities access economic opportunity.
- Holding our Watford Fit to Bid 'Meet-the-Buyer' event, through which we will connect our small businesses with the contract tendering opportunities that our some of our larger organisations can offer over coming months.
- Working with FSB (Federation of Small business) to create a Watford Local Leadership report, which will set out how Watford Council is supporting small businesses and making it easy for them to connect with our services.
- Promoting Watford as a great place for business through the Herts Chamber Inspire magazine, which reaches businesses across the county and beyond.
- Targeting business support to our secondary high streets utilising Watford's allocation of Herts Growth Boards 'Save the High Street' funding.
- Meeting with several more businesses on Clarendon Rd to help inform a view of how we can better support them and how they can connect with wider initiatives happening across the town.

