




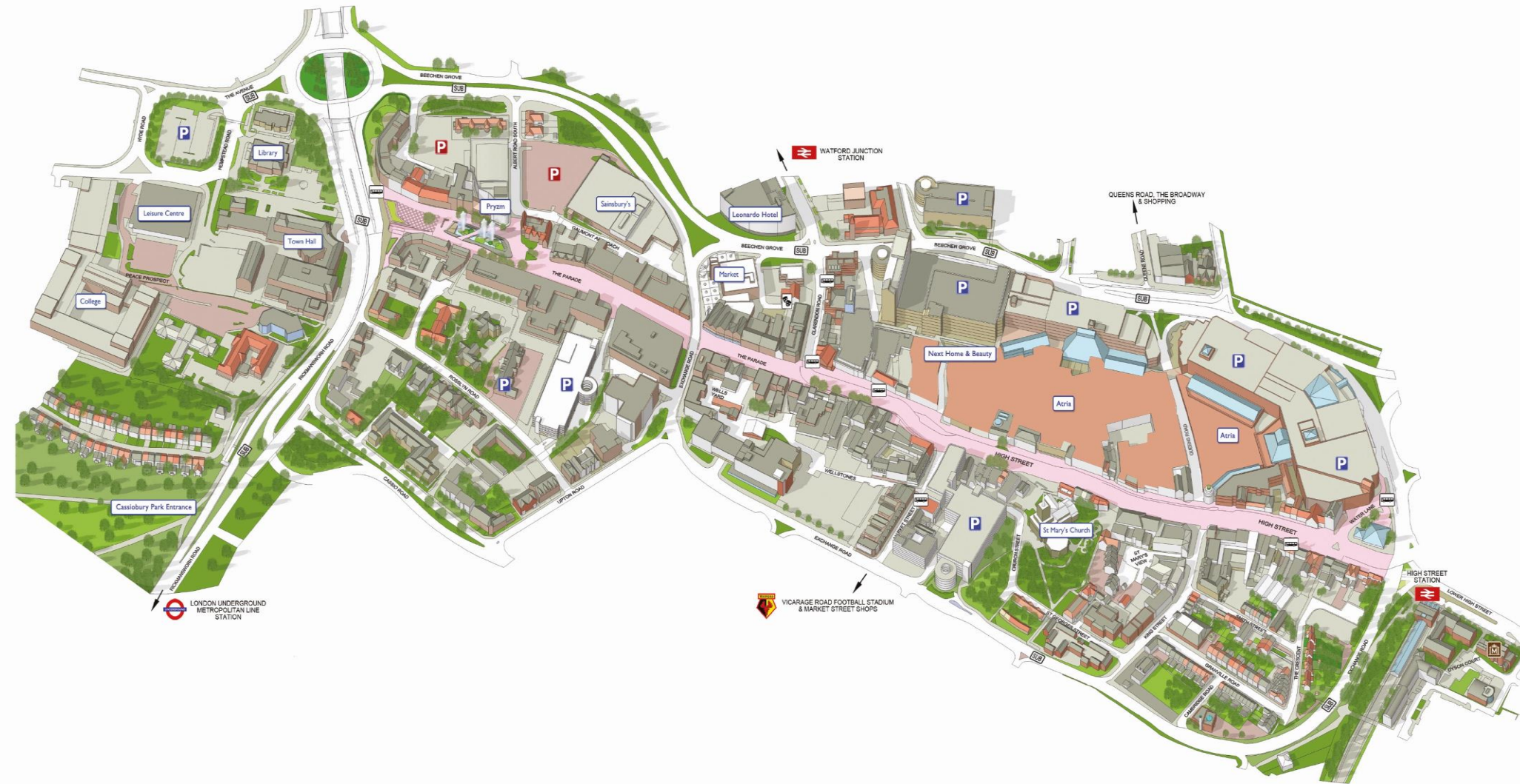
TOWN CENTRE BID

**Overview and Scrutiny
Committee Presentation
2023/24**

- 
- **BID stands for Business Improvement District.**
 - **There are over 330 in the UK.**
 - **A BID term is 5 years.**
 - **BIDs operate in a defined BID area.**

Watford Town Centre BID

497 'hereditaments that pay a BID levy



Sector split:

Sector	No	%
Retail	158	32%
Cafes, restaurants & takeaways	89	18%
Office / professional	45	9%
Other	39	8%
Hair & Beauty	29	6%
Consumer Services	21	4%
Leisure	20	4%
Bars, clubs & pubs	19	4%
Health & Wellbeing	18	4%
Charities	16	3%
Banks	14	3%
Estate Agents	11	2%
Gambling	9	2%
Car parks	9	2%
Total	497	100

Geographical split:

Sector	No	%
Atria Shopping Mall	143	28.77%
The Parade	116	23.34%
High Street	92	18.51%
Atria Non Retail	44	8.85%
Market Street	24	4.83%
High Street (Atria)	15	3.02%
Clarendon Road	11	2.21%
Civic Quarter	10	2.01%
King Street	9	1.81%
Queens Road (Atria)	8	1.61%
Wilmington Crescent	8	1.61%
Exchange Road	7	1.41%
George Street	3	0.06%
Rickmansworth Road	4	0.01%
Rosslyn Road	1	<0.01%
Sutton Road	1	<0.01%
The Crescent	1	<0.01%
Total	497	100

Levy payers:

(Highest paying hereditaments)

Total: £109,462.50

(19% of all levy)

John Lewis Unit	King / Queens Car Park
Marks & Spencer	Next
TK Maxx	Cineworld
WH Smiths	Boots The Chemist

(Highest paying companies)

Total: £159,472.50

(28% of all levy)

Watford Centre Ltd	Marks & Spencer
Town Centre Carparks	Next
Watford Council	Primark
Sports Direct	Cineworld
WH Smiths	Boots

Independents:

Total no: 111
Total levy: £51,046.27
(9% of all levy)

Sector	No
Retail	18
Hair & Beauty	18
Restaurants	11
Office / Professional	10
Consumer services	10
Minimarket/newsagent	9
Leisure	7
Café / fast food	7
Bar / pub	6
Health / wellbeing	6
Estate agent	6
Other	1

Estimated total levy:

2023/24
£570,804.29

2024/25
£441,147.13

2025/26
£441,147.13



Reduction of £129,655

Watford Town Centre BID's Vision is for Watford town centre to be a place where everyone feels **safe**, **confident** and **comfortable**, and where businesses thrive and prosper. It will be competitive and dynamic, a place that is attractive to businesses and investors.



The slide features a teal background with four decorative geometric patterns in the corners. Each pattern is a square composed of smaller triangles in shades of blue, yellow, red, and purple, arranged in a complex, interlocking design. The top-left and bottom-left patterns are larger and more prominent, while the top-right and bottom-right patterns are smaller.

Estimated £1.5m BID investment!


How is Watford Town Centre performing?

Footfall

Month	Footfall	Change from previous month	YTD Year on Year 2022 / 2023
September 22	1,177,228	-2.36%	
October 22	1,144,187	-2.81%	
November 22	1,108,934	-3%	
December 22	1,138,737	+3%	
January 23	1,068,211	-6%	+25.4%
February 23	961,564	-10%	+20%
March 23	1,075,695	+12%	+17%
April 23	1,084,092	+1%	+13.4%
May 23	971,535	-10%	+10.7%
June 23	1,132,335	+17%	+8.7%
July 23	986,320	-2%	+6.4%
August 23	939,579	-5%	+5%
September 23	1,002,659	+7%	+3.3%
October 23	947,111	-14.2%	+1.4%
November 23	962,747	-14.3%	-0.2%

Average dwell time in 2023 was approx. 90 minutes

Vacancy rates



	National	Watford High Street
Q1 - Apr 22 - Jun 22	14.1%	7.6%
Q2 - Jul 22 - Sept 22	14.0%	5.6%
Q3 - Oct 22 - Dec 22	13.9%	5.6%
Q4 - Jan 23 - Mar 23	13.8%	7.8%
Q1 - Apr 23 - Jun 23	13.9%	7.0%
Q2 - Jul 23 - Sept 23	13.8%	6.7%
Q3 - Oct 23 - Dec 23	13.9%	7.4%

The figures are calculated using 269 ground level units within the BID area, including the atria High Street

visible units, but excluding the units inside the shopping centre.



Business Investment

2022 - 29 new businesses opened.

26 remain open in the Town Centre - 88.5%.

2023 - 19 new businesses opened.

19 remain open in the Town Centre - 100%.

How do we compare?

TownandPlace.AI

Location	Visit Frequency	Catchment Size	Est. Monthly Footfall	Est. Weekly Footfall	National Chains	Typical Retail Dwell (h:m:s)	BID
Harrow	2.41	1,025,551	665,933	150,372	90	01:30:22	Y
Hemel Hempstead	2.21	378,825	466,595	105,361	84	01:21:38	Y
Hertford	2.70	428,968	343,098	77,474	26	01:28:44	N
Reading	2.66	1,228,677	1,661,608	375,202	169	01:39:43	Y
St Albans	2.35	1,021,501	701,007	158,292	133	01:31:07	Y
Watford	2.05	1,353,870	948,598	214,200	181	01:29:31	Y

Responding to the BID levy income reduction

2023

- **Communicated the upcoming change to stakeholders**
- **2023 BID Survey - April 23**
- **Restructure of the BID team**

2024

- **2024 BID Survey - Currently live**
- **Build 2023 surplus levy income to support 2024-2026**



2023 Priorities

01 Town Centre marketing.

02 More support for businesses with ‘Going Greener’.

03 Support in the reduction of crime & increase safety.

The delivery

01 New Town Centre branding.

02 Cardboard collection service.

03 Improved Town Centre partnership approach.

Town Centre Marketing

Social media: impressions/views									
Social media account	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
Facebook impressions	13,195	10,876	11,560	42,674	118,490	31,680	131,875	420,257	276,880
Instagram impressions	2,528	2,704	2,164	6,832	16,395	5,519	51,552	5,644	10,922
TikTok views	3,781	3,829	2,690	11,784	3,449	3,557	3,609	3,635	20,604
Twitter/X impressions	2,341	4,887	2,244	18,900	9,953	6,961	9,222	23,700	5,839
LinkedIn impressions	1,042	1,070	950	3,884	1,788	2,168	1,370	3,437	453
Total impressions	22,887	23,366	19,608	84,074	150,075	49,885	197,628	456,673	314,698
% change		2.1%	-16.1%	328.8%	78.5%	-68.4%	296.2%	131.1%	-31.1%
Social media: new followers (net)									
Social media account	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
Facebook followers	17	9	7	40	104	21	285	380	87
Instagram followers	50	35	28	79	65	45	204	123	161
TikTok followers	3	5	4	13	11	1	19	31	150
Twitter/X followers	-13	-6	-4	-4	-9	-8	5	0	0
LinkedIn followers	12	7	8	17	5	7	8	21	10
Total new followers	69	50	43	145	176	66	521	555	408
% change		-27.5%	-14.0%	237.2%	21.3%	-62.5%	689.4%	6.53%	-26.5%
Website: unique visitors									
Website page	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
Home page	-	-	-	-	2,385	1,689	1,850	1,227	1,346
Who we are	-	-	-	-	51	94	85	83	79
What's on	-	-	-	-	115	108	283	5,978	438
Plan your visit	-	-	-	-	94	87	53	100	145
Gift card	-	-	-	-	35	21	42	28	22
For BID Businesses	-	-	-	-	37	84	67	36	41
Contact Us	-	-	-	-	40	34	52	52	24
Total	315	439	180	271	2,531	1,999	2,200	6,800	1,211
% change		39.3%	-59.0%	50.5%	833.9%	-21.0%	10.1%	209.1%	-82.2%

Going Greener

- **Free Cardboard Collection Scheme launched in August 23 - 5 tonnes collected to date.**
- **Participation & support of the growth of the Environmental Managers Network.**
- **Continue to offer award winning sustainability events in Watford Town Centre - The Gift Swap.**
- **Encourage BID business to make green changes to their business via the Business Improvement Grant.**
- **Continue to lead by example.**



Crime & Safety

- **Increased partnership working.**
- **Financial support for community engagement media board.**
- **£15,000 CCTV contribution.**
- **Continue to participate in ASB Forum and PubWatch.**
- **Continue to deliver WBAC (Watford Business Against Crime) Scheme.**
- **Encouraged businesses to assess their property and support crime & safety initiatives via the grant.**

Watford Gift Card



2023 Total Sales: £50,890

£5,810

2020 total sales

£8,495

2021 total sales

£37,794

2022 total sales



2024-26 Vision

Our vision remains the same, as outlined in our 2021-2026 business plan

↳ Strategy

To work with key partners in the town to develop and deliver a programme of activities that support business growth and improve the Watford town centre experience for them, their staff and their customers.



BID Themes

**Theme 1 - Safeguarding the future of
Watford**

**Theme 2 - Enhancing the look and feel of
Watford**

**Theme 3 - Marketing, communication and
events**



Drive improvements that address current concerns over safety in the town centre during the day, early evening and at night.

- **Continue to run our business crime reduction partnership: ‘Watford Business Against Crime’.**
- **Review the funding of the CCTV – Regular reporting required.**
- **Explore BID Ranger options for the Town Centre to enable us to continue to support businesses with retail crime.**
- **Monitor street drinking, begging and rough sleepers.**
- **Attend ASB Forum Group, PubWatch and any additional Town Centre safety Working Groups.**
- **Continue to work closely with Herts Police – BID levy payers from 2024.**
- **Create a ‘Town Centre Safety’ video.**
- **Support ‘White Ribbon’ and work in partnership to reduce VAWG.**

Maintain initiatives that enhance the town centre experience, in a more cost effective way.

- **Review lamppost banners – Match new branding.**
- **Flower displays to be reviewed. Options include reducing the cost of the current displays or a brand-new town centre enhancement offer.**
- **Christmas lights (in place from November to January) – New 2-year contract to be agreed.**
- **LED tree lighting – Potential loss.**



Build an ethos that is welcoming and inclusive

- **Continue to support 'Purple Tuesday' and work with town centre businesses to ensure they're unlocking the disability consumer spend.**
- **Review the £5,000 contribution to Shop Mobility.**
- **Work with businesses to ensure their venue is accessible.**
- **Ensure our events are inclusive.**
- **Continue to be a 'Proud Watford' supporter.**



To ensure levy payers have access to the information and support they need.

- **Capture town centre data & create a quarterly digital ‘Watford Town Centre Performance Report’.**
- **Drive levy payers to our website for up to date information on BID activities, training, important news.**
- **Continue to create and circulate 2 newsletters per year, reducing printing.**
- **Grow our e-database & send regular e-comms.**
- **Share relevant partner information to our levy payers.**

To maintain initiatives that lock-in local spend.

- **Grow the Watford Gift Card scheme - focus on larger corporate sales.**
- **Support the Watford Business Charter – Buy more from local suppliers.**
- **Establish better connections with wider Watford business community.**
- **Share information about networking opportunities held by partner organisations.**

To support businesses with the recruitment and retention of staff.

- 
- **Support employment & recruitment initiatives organised by partners.**
 - **Work with ED team at council on overcoming barriers to employment.**
 - **Work with partners on the creation of a fortnightly jobs bulletin, listing all job vacancies in the BID area / Watford and how to apply.**
 - **Continue Excellent Employee Awards & look at other ways to recognise exemplary businesses and organisations.**
 - **Support the Watford Business Pledge in partnership with Watford ED team and the Chamber – Support local recruitment.**

Generate additional revenue to invest into BID initiatives and support long term growth.

- Increase WBAC membership fees.
- Voluntary levy payments.
- Explore event sponsorship / partnership.

Other options could include:

- Expansion of the BID area.
- Additional BIDs in Watford.





Deliver our strategic marketing plan

- ✓ **Explores the Watford town centre offer.**
- ✓ **Identifies our USPs and footfall drivers.**
- ✓ **Know our target audiences.**
- ✓ **Understands the best channels.**
- ✓ **Identifies the key communication messages.**
- ✓ **Outlines our marketing tactics.**

Promote the Watford Town Centre brand

- Continue campaigns to support the rebrand.
- Continue to drive traffic to our website via our socials and e-communications to levy payers.
- Ensure the new branding is visible at all events.
- Consider Town Centre branded banners on the High Street.



TOWN CENTRE



TOWN CENTRE BID

Town centre events

**BID
events**



**Other
events**

The Gift Swap

Breakfast with the BID

BID blood drive

Marketing & events working group

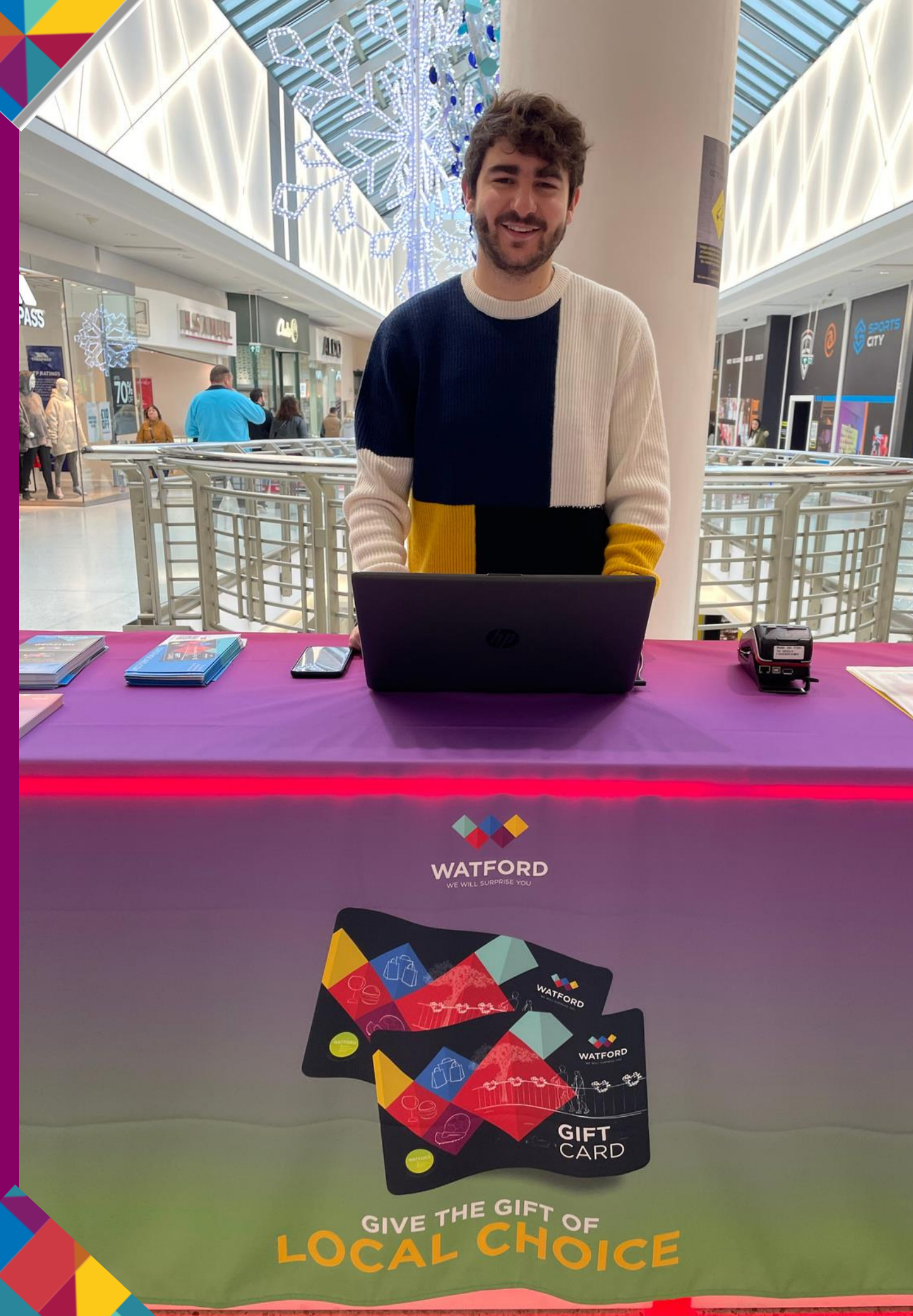
Share info

Agree comms

Promote ALL town centre events

Watford Gift Card marketing

- **Promote Watford Gift Card as the gift of choice.**
- **Publicise every new business that joins.**
- **SEO campaign to drive Xmas sales.**
- **Sales booth in the Atria throughout December weekends.**





Challenges

- ✓ **Loss of 23% BID income – Impact on delivery.**
- ✓ **Sourcing additional revenue.**
- ✓ **Securing a third term.**
- ✓ **Resource and funding to react appropriately to changes.**
- ✓ **Recruitment and retention.**
- ✓ **Retail theft / Crime & ASB.**
- ✓ **National issues within the hospitality sector.**

Response to the cost-of-living crisis

- **The BID where possible will continue to free of charge town centre events such as Winterfest and Sustainable Sunday.**
- **Promote businesses that are offering discounts and promotions to consumers.**
- **Promote all support/events from partners via the Watford Town Centre website.**
- **Support our businesses that are affected by the loss of revenue / retail theft as a result of the crisis.**



Questions?