

**£3  
million+**  
investment for  
Watford Town  
Centre



**TOWN CENTRE BID**

# **Business Plan**

2026-2031

**Committed to your business**

**Vote YES for our future**





The purpose of this business plan is to establish our BID's commitments for Watford Town Centre from April 2026 – March 2031.

The investment, projects and services proposed in this business plan can only be achieved with a successful 'YES' vote from a majority of Watford Town Centre BID levy payers.

*Unsure if you're a Watford Town Centre BID levy payer and eligible to vote?*

**VISIT SECTION 4, PAGES 29-34 ►**



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# 1. Who we are



## Our vision

Our vision is to maximise Watford Town Centre's potential as a dynamic, safe and welcoming place where its businesses flourish. We aim to create a vibrant destination that attracts visitors, supports enterprise and encourages investment.

## Our mission

Our mission is to deliver the five commitments we have outlined in this business plan for 2026-2031. Our commitments are decided and funded by levy paying businesses, with the overall purpose of improving Watford Town Centre.

**Enhance** the town centre experience

**Promote** Watford Town Centre

**Support** business growth

**Champion** collaboration

**Embrace** sustainability and innovation

**DETAILS ON PAGE 12 ►**

Our 5 commitments: what we will deliver for you







# BID: Business Improvement District

## What is a BID?

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a business-led and business funded company, supported by government legislation and formed to improve the commercial wellbeing of a specified geographic area; the 'BID area'.

A BID has a maximum term of five years. Organisations within the BID area pay an annual levy to the BID company, based on a percentage of the rateable value of their premises. This money is then spent on delivering the five-year business plan.

## Why there are over 330 BIDs in the UK

There are over 330 BIDs successfully operating across the country. BIDs succeed because they are focused, cost-efficient and entrepreneurial. They do not replace local authority and police services, but they do provide additional, supplementary resources and activities.

**BIDs are established through a ballot of businesses within a defined BID area. For the BID to go ahead, two conditions must be met:**

- **Over 50% of businesses that vote must vote in favour**
- **Those voting 'YES' must represent more than 50% of the total rateable value of all the votes cast**

If both of these conditions are fulfilled, payment of the levy becomes mandatory for all eligible businesses, regardless of how they voted.

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***“The BID’s Watford Business Against Crime scheme is vital in helping us address crime and anti-social behaviour issues, which can directly affect our town centre businesses. Our partnership has produced promising results, with reductions in shoplifting and reports of anti-social behaviour.”***

**Andy Wiseman**

Chief Inspector, Hertfordshire Constabulary



## 1. Who we are

### Who are Watford Town Centre BID?

Watford Town Centre BID (trading name Watford BID Ltd) is a business-led, non-profit company voted for by town centre businesses and supported by the public sector. We represent over 400 organisations in our defined geographical BID area from a multitude of different sectors that make up our vibrant town centre.

We were established and began trading on 3 April 2016 following a successful ballot in October 2015. We then went to ballot for a second five-year term in 2021, which resulted in another successful 'YES' vote.

This business plan sets out what we will deliver if a successful ballot leads to a third five-year term, from 2026-2031.

**The ballot for Watford Town Centre BID will take place from 12 September 2025 to 9 October 2025. Ballot papers will be issued by Watford Borough Council and must be returned to Watford Town Hall before 5pm on 9 October 2025.**

If the ballot is successful, our third five-year term will begin on 1 April 2026 and will generate over £3million worth of investment across five years.

## Our BID team



### Kara Mesiano

BID Manager, Company Director & Secretary



### Glen Hempenstall

Marketing & Communications Manager



### Fiona Hadley

BID Business Support



### John Hattingh

Watford Business Against Crime Co-ordinator



### Cameron Evans

Cardboard Collection Service



# Our BID board



**Simon Plumb**

Centre Director

**HARLEQUIN**  
WATFORD



**Donna Lawrie**

Head of Fundraising,  
Corporate Partnerships  
& Marketing

**YMCA** | Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you



**Kwame Tefe**

General Pub  
Manager – The Moon  
Under Water

**wetherspoon**



**Samantha Ford**

Head of Community  
Engagement

**WATFORD  
PALACE  
THEATRE**



**Robert Walker**

Cluster General  
Manager

**LEONARDO**  
*Hotels*



**Carol Andrea**

Executive Director

*Hair Connections*  
By Andrea of Wembley



**Peter Taylor**

Elected Mayor of  
Watford

**WATFORD  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**



**Cherie Norris**

Economic  
Development Manager

**WATFORD  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**



**Saffron  
Johnson**

Operations Director

**Watford & West Herts  
Chamber of Commerce**



**Ben Martin**

Director of Regeneration  
& Growth

**WATFORD  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**



**Justine Hoy**

Associate Director of  
Housing and Well-being

**WATFORD  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**



**Sergeant  
Karl Diggins**

Community Safety  
Unit Sergeant



**Mark Ryan**

Business Manager

**METRO  
BANK**



**Lavanya Gamsani**

Franchise Director

**SUBWAY**



***“Watford Town Centre BID is an organisation that epitomises everything that we want our town to be: forward-thinking, ambitious and focused on our community. It is an initiative that is shaped by businesses and committed to delivering for the local area.***

***Over the past 10 years, our local BID has delivered outstanding campaigns and services that prioritise making Watford Town Centre a better place for everyone. I urge our businesses to vote ‘YES’ for an exciting third BID term from 2026-2031.”***

**Peter Taylor**  
Elected Mayor  
of Watford





# Chair's introduction

**It is with great pride that, on behalf of the board and management team, I introduce this Business Plan for Watford Town Centre BID.**

As we head into a new term, we're stepping forward with a clear vision and fresh energy, focused on keeping Watford Town Centre a lively, welcoming place for businesses, residents and visitors.

Watford has always been full of ambition – powered by its creative people and strong business community. This plan lays out our next steps and reaffirms what we're all about: making the town centre better, promoting everything Watford has to offer, supporting businesses to grow, championing collaboration and embracing sustainability and innovation.

These five key priorities come straight from what you, our levy payers, have told us. They're based on your input, shaped by real insight and guided by a shared belief – that a town centre works best when it works for everyone. From better public spaces and standout marketing to targeted business support and stronger partnerships, we're focused on delivering results that matter to you.

As Chair of Watford BID Ltd, I've seen what's possible when we work together and this next phase is about building on what we've achieved so far: tackling new challenges and unlocking even more potential for Watford Town Centre.

I invite you to read this plan not just as a strategy, but as a shared commitment – to one another, to our town and to its future.

*Simon Plumb*

**Simon Plumb**

Centre Director, *Harlequin Watford*  
Chair, *Watford Town Centre BID*





## 2. 2026-2031: Committed to your business

THE  
FLORIST





# Listening to levy paying businesses

In early 2025, we shared a Watford Town Centre BID Ballot Survey via email, printed newsletter and through face-to-face visits with our levy paying businesses.

We gathered valuable feedback on the services, projects and activities provided by Watford Town Centre BID. The responses have helped to shape our deliverables for 2026-2031 in the result of a successful 'YES' vote from levy payers.



Survey available via this QR code for reference.

## 156

**levy paying business responded** within the Watford Town Centre BID area (40% of all surveyable businesses)

**Positive response =**  
**Very Satisfied / Satisfied / Good initiative but wasn't aware the BID delivered it**

**Negative response =**  
**Very Dissatisfied / Dissatisfied / Bad initiative and wasn't aware the BID delivered it**

Approximately **90%+ positive** responses for all projects and services.

Our survey also allowed respondents to comment and provide feedback on each project, service and the BID generally. Respondents were also invited to consultation meetings with the BID team in May 2025, which helped shape our future commitments.

**We highly value all quantitative and qualitative data we have received. We have used it to shape our commitments for our proposed third term from 2026-2031.**

## Positive survey results





2. 2026-2031: Committed to your business

**Our 5 commitments:**  
what we will deliver for you

**£3million+**  
worth of **investment** for  
**Watford Town Centre**  
**from 2026-2031**

Deliver existing projects, campaigns  
and services **better** – as decided by  
levy paying businesses.

Implement **new ideas** –  
provided by survey  
feedback and business  
consultation meetings.

## **Enhance** the town centre experience

Crime reduction, public realm enhancements, accessibility.



## **Promote** Watford Town Centre

Marketing, events, campaigns to boost footfall & communication.



## **Support** business growth

Training, town centre performance insights, support services.



## **Champion** collaboration

Partnering for shared success and influence.



## **Embrace** sustainability and innovation

Greener initiatives and forward-thinking ideas.





## 2. 2026-2031: Committed to your business

# Enhance the town centre experience

We're committed to reducing crime and enhancing public spaces, whilst increasing safety and accessibility.

Our objective is to create a more welcoming, attractive and safe environment for all Watford Town Centre users, day and night.

*"Together with Watford Town Centre BID, we can continue to protect and support our businesses, and work with them to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour."*

Andy Wiseman  
Chief Inspector  
Hertfordshire Constabulary



## Enhance safety and security initiatives

- Manage and further develop the **'Watford Business Against Crime'** scheme to support the reduction of retail crime and anti-social behaviour, with its own dedicated member of staff.
- Provide **additional funding to our town's CCTV** system to reduce crime and increase safety.
- Monitor street drinking, begging, rough sleepers and immediately **flag anti-social behaviour (ASB)** to *Hertfordshire Constabulary* and relevant authorities. We'll work alongside them and our businesses to minimise the impact on our town centre and seek solutions.
- Remain members of the **'Community Safety Partnership'** and attend the monthly **'ASB forum'**.
- Provide the crucial opportunity for businesses to directly communicate and receive updates from *Hertfordshire Constabulary* by hosting our **'Community Safety Partnership Seminar'**.
- Attend monthly **'Pub Watch'** meetings and work closely with members to ensure a safe and fun night out for visitors.
- Partner with *Hertfordshire Constabulary* and our night-time economy businesses on **anti-spiking** campaigns and **anti-violence towards women and girls** initiatives.
- Join with *Hertfordshire Constabulary* to deliver **'Safer Business Action Day'** events.
- Maintain our BID-funded **defibrillators (AEDs)** in Watford Town Centre to ensure they remain fully operational and accessible in the event of a cardiac emergency.



- Assist our town centre businesses in preparing for the upcoming implementation of **'Martyn's Law'** ('Protect Duty'). This includes providing guidance, resources and signposting them to relevant training that will help them comply with new counter-terrorism security requirements.

## Enhance the look and cleanliness of our townscape

- Brighten up Watford Town Centre with beautiful **floral displays**.
- Ensure Watford Town Centre boasts stunning **Christmas installations** that captivate and delight all visitors during the festive period.
- Run seasonal **litter picks** to ensure our town looks clean and attractive for residents, employees and visitors.
- Work with our partners to ensure we maintain a high-quality townscape which is clean and well cared for, **free from graffiti** where it is not approved.
- Maintain the colourful and purposeful **lamppost banners** in our town centre.
- Allow businesses to decide on new cost-effective ways of enhancing and **brightening up the townscape**, incorporating our diverse community and culture.

## Enhance accessibility around our town

- Contribute to financially **Shopmobility** to ensure our town is accessible for those with mobility concerns.
- Ensure Watford Town Centre is accessible for people with disabilities, their families and their carers through progressive initiatives such as **'Purple Tuesday'**.
- Check that street traders fully comply with Watford Council licensing policies, so that consumers can freely roam our streets without **unlawful, unauthorised or aggressive street trading**.



## 2. 2026-2031: Committed to your business

# Promote Watford Town Centre

We're committed to showcasing Watford Town Centre as a vibrant, must-visit destination through marketing, campaigns and captivating events.

Our objective is to increase Watford Town Centre's brand awareness, footfall and consumer spend.

*"Great information given to us and keeps the centre buzzing with fresh events to keep customers coming in! Brilliant to see the investment in the town centre helping drive business."*

Grant Burton  
M&S



## Promote what's on in Watford Town Centre

- Strengthen and grow the Watford Town Centre brand to reflect our lively, exciting destination with plenty of things to do.
- Coordinate high-quality **campaigns and events** to build recognition, pride and engagement among Watford Town Centre users.
- Optimise our increasingly popular **watfordtowncentre.com** website, ensuring content is accurate, engaging and up to date.
- Expand our **@WatfordTownCentre social media** presence beyond 22,000 followers by sharing compelling, engaging content that draws visitors and positively shapes perceptions of Watford as a vibrant destination.



- Develop and refresh our Watford Town Centre events and activities programme by reviewing popular activities, such as the **'Birds of Prey Experience', 'Trick or Treat Week'** and **Easter programme of activities**. We will explore new ideas and proven successes from other leading towns.
- Maintain and enhance Watford Town Centre's reputation as a premier Christmas destination through our annual **festive campaigns** and the popular **'Winterfest'** event.
- Promote existing events from other partners via our channels, such as **'BIG Screen', 'BIG Beach', Diwali celebration, Harlequin Shopping Centre's extensive events calendar** and the **'Watford Fringe Festival'**.
- Strengthen our partnership with **Visit Herts** to collaboratively promote Watford Town Centre, BID events, projects, and activities, attracting more consumers and raising the town's profile.

## Promote your business offering

- Actively support and **promote levy payer's news, events and offering**, utilising our existing Watford Town Centre channels as well as sharing with *Watford Observer* and *Vibe 107.6FM*.
- Promote **'Shop and eat local'** campaigns to encourage residents and visitors to support independent and town centre businesses, boosting the local economy and strengthening community connections.
- Support and promote Watford's hospitality sector, consulting with those businesses to deliver a showcase event(s) for them, such as a **food and drink trail or tasting experience**.
- Create an exclusive Watford Town Centre **employee discount scheme** designed to encourage local workers to shop and eat local at lunch and after work.

## Promote relevant business information

- Continue to provide regular **newsletters, e-updates** and **business visits** to keep you informed about the latest news from the BID and our partners.
- Invite you to our **AGM** and provide **annual reports** – including a detailed finance report – digitally, ensuring you have convenient, transparent access to our BID's progress and financial management.
- Make full use of existing communication channels – including *Harlequin Shopping Centre's 'Retail Advantage'* platform, **'Pub Watch'**, and **'Watford Business Against Crime'** meetings – to share relevant information that benefits our businesses.

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***"I have found the BID engaging and very supportive to date."***

**Kalpesh Shah**  
*The Massage Company*

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## 2. 2026-2031: Committed to your business

# Support business growth

We're committed to providing services such as staff training, networking, advocacy and cost-saving opportunities.

Our objective is to help organisations survive, grow and thrive in Watford Town Centre.

*"BID Socials are a fabulous way to meet and get to know your neighbouring retailers and a great way to try our facilities around the town centre."*

Safina Khan  
FatFace



## Support staff retention and training

- Offer a comprehensive **online training package** tailored to our businesses, enabling flexible, accessible upskilling opportunities for their workforce to meet the evolving needs of their business.
- We will gather insights on **employment trends** and collaborate with key stakeholders, including local training providers, job centres and business support organisations. The aim is to help address workforce challenges, promote local job opportunities and improve staff retention in the town centre.

## Support small-medium sized businesses with grant funding

- Offer a **Business Improvement Grant scheme** for small to medium-sized organisation, enabling them to enhance their premises, invest in innovation and contribute to the overall vibrancy and appeal of Watford Town Centre.
- Support businesses in Watford Town Centre to source and access **grant funding and investment opportunities** to assist their growth and success.

## Support networking and business-to-business events

- Reintroduce the **black-tie networking and awards** evening to celebrate business excellence, strengthen professional relationships and raise the profile of Watford's vibrant business community.
- Host **'Breakfast with the BID'** to facilitate local connections and keep businesses informed of our work on a quarterly basis.
- Host **'BID Socials'** that provide informal networking opportunities whilst being a great team evening-out for our businesses.

## Support Watford Town Centre performance insights

- Monitor and maintain a local **high street vacancy list** for the BID area and identify market gaps for new investment.

### Vacancy Rates

National average: **14.0%**

Watford High Street: **<10%**

Oct 2024 - Dec 2024

- Provide deep, real-time insights into **consumer retail spending** to help businesses understand customer spending patterns to optimise their offerings and target markets.
- Utilise social media insights and *Google Analytics* to develop a clear understanding of **customer demographic data**. We will share these valuable insights with levy payers to help inform their marketing strategies and grow their business.
- Ensure all **Watford Town Centre performance insights** are easily and readily available to levy payers on our watfordtowncentre.com website, hosted in our 'For BID Businesses' section.

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***"The BID is invaluable as it gets all the business meeting in the area in an informal setting. It's a way of helping other businesses to complement each other. It keeps us informed. I think the breakfast is a lovely way to bond and it's free which doesn't hurt anyone."***

**Farheen Zafar**

*Leeds Building Society*

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## 2. 2026-2031: Committed to your business

# Champion collaboration

We're committed to working closely with the local council, police, transport providers and our business community.

Our objective is to deliver unified improvements and ensure the voices of Watford Town Centre businesses will be heard and acted upon.

*"Having Watford Town Centre BID as a Proud Partner is hugely important to us. We both share fundamental values with regards to human equality and celebrating diversity in our home."*

Ian Port  
Founder, Proud Watford



## Champion partnership working

- Collaborate regularly with **key stakeholders** in Watford, including; *Watford Council, Harlequin Shopping Centre, Watford & West Herts Chamber of Commerce* and *Hertfordshire Constabulary*.
- Strengthen the relationship between **Watford Colosseum** and our town centre businesses ahead of its reopening, particularly encouraging collaboration with the night-time and hospitality sectors.
- Connect relevant Watford Town Centre businesses with one another to **facilitate partnership working**, for example encouraging theatre guests to eat out in our town centre before their show.
- Continue to be an active '**One Watford for Business**' member – a collaborative initiative aimed at supporting and promoting local businesses in Watford.
- Collaborate with *Watford Council* as it navigates the **local government reorganisation**. We will ensure businesses are informed, represented and supported through any resulting changes.
- Establish working relationships with global attractions **Warner Bros. Studio** and **Watford Football Club**, exploring promotional opportunities that better connect their consumers with our town centre and our businesses.

## Champion local diversity, inclusion and culture

- Welcome **local community and cultural groups** to creatively **transform underused spaces**, including The Parade's event space. Collaborate to host new projects and events that enrich Watford's cultural identity, activate vacant areas and boost our town's diversity.
- Work with **local cultural leaders, community leaders and religious leaders** to reach our broader communities, to ensure locals are aware of Watford's offer, both socially and economically.

- Remain **Proud Watford** and **Herts Pride** ambassadors, working hard to achieve a progressive community where self-expression is celebrated and everyone takes active steps toward a wholly inclusive local society.
- Champion greater awareness and **inclusion for neurodivergent individuals**, working with partners to promote accessible spaces and events that reflect the needs of all members of our community.

## Champion the voice of our businesses through strong advocacy

- Provide you with a 'dedicated voice' through an **annual survey**, ensuring your insights directly shape our priorities and guide our BID in delivering meaningful support for your business.
- Listen to your concerns around town centre operations and the trading environment, **using your feedback** to shape how we advocate for practical improvements at local, regional and national levels.
- Attend and participate in the monthly '**Pub Watch**' meetings to support and advocate for the night-time economy businesses.

## Champion Watford as a thriving town

- Work in partnership with the **Elected Mayor of Watford** and local councils; drawing on local consultations to help shape informed, responsive planning that reflects shared ambitions for our town.
- Support and promote the '**Watford Business Pledge**' to encourage responsible business practices across the town centre. This means championing sustainability, community engagement, employee wellbeing and ethical operations.
- Continue to sit on the '**One Watford Placeboard**', which brings together the town's key partners across sectors to create and deliver a long-term vision of place to 2040.



## 2. 2026-2031: Committed to your business

# Embrace sustainability and innovation

We're committed to encouraging greener practices and embracing innovation wherever appropriate.

Our objective is to future-proof Watford Town Centre and align with sustainability goals, both locally and nationally.

*"We're delighted that the BID is supporting us to develop placement opportunities for our learners."*

Amanda Washbrook  
West Herts College



## Embrace green initiatives

- Maintain and improve our FREE **‘Cardboard Collection Service’** with the goal of increasing the volume of cardboard collected each year, supporting local businesses in sustainable waste management and reducing environmental impact.
- Partner with other local stakeholders to host the **‘Watford Green Festival’**. An event that encourages eco-friendly activities and promotes sustainability within the community.
- Support businesses in navigating upcoming legislative changes related to the **‘Green Agenda’** by providing guidance, resources and training to help them comply and adopt sustainable practices.
- Discuss with key partners regarding a range of **sustainable transport proposals** for the town.
- Maintain support for businesses in implementing **green strategies** that contribute to Watford’s broader sustainability goals.

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***“We hugely admire our BID’s plans to further embrace eco-friendly, sustainable initiatives in our town.”***

**Iain Milton**

*Watford Leisure Centre – Central*

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## Embrace forward-thinking ideas

- Incorporate **new technologies** such as AI software wherever it can optimise efficiency, productivity and help our BID maintain a competitive edge.
- Grow the **‘Watford Gift Card’ programme** which boosts local spending and raises awareness of the ‘shop and eat’ local message. Explore advancements to the programme – such as contactless payments – that will align with consumer behavioural trends.
- Install a self-servicing, permanent **Watford Gift Card** kiosk in *Harlequin Shopping Centre*, providing an innovative solution that will improve the consumer journey.



## Embrace future generations

- Build strong links with **West Herts College** and their students. We will strive to create employment and work experience opportunities that benefit both students and businesses. Students represent future talent as well as being valued customers to our town; their involvement contributes to a dynamic, inclusive and economically active Watford Town Centre.
- Back *Watford Council’s* approved plans to **revitalise the town centre over the next 20 years**, helping to make it an even more attractive place to live, work and visit for future generations.

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***“The cardboard collection scheme is a vital service to our business, it helps to reduce our operational cost and our environmental impact. The BID delivers so much for the town, and we really value the improvements they make.”***

**Kasia Chajdacki**

*Heather & Rose*

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# 3. A BID worthy of your support

## Our achievements for Watford Town Centre

Our five commitments for 2026-2031 will expand upon the strong foundations which we have established since 2016.

Our BID has a proven track record of successfully delivering what is outlined in a business plan. In this section, we highlight

achievements from our 2021-2026 term that we committed to deliver in our previous business plan.

For more information on each project visit:

[watfordtowncentre.com](https://watfordtowncentre.com) >

[For BID Businesses > What we do](#)



**£5 million+** investment  
into Watford Town Centre



**75** Watford  
Business Against  
Crime members



**10** years of  
lighting up  
Christmas



**55k**  
[watfordtowncentre.com](https://watfordtowncentre.com)  
visitors



**22k+**  
@WatfordTownCentre  
followers



**£177k**  
Watford Gift  
Card sales



**10,000s** of  
Watford Town Centre  
event attendees



**£100k**  
small-medium sized  
business grant funding



**18 tonnes**  
of cardboard  
recycled via  
our service



**44** colourful  
umbrellas to celebrate  
neurodiversity



**545** bright  
and colourful  
floral displays



# Theme 1: Safeguarding the future of our town

## Business support services

**Business Improvement Grant** – Collaborated with Watford Council to distribute over **£100,000** worth of grant funding to small-medium sized businesses.

Achieved “Watford Business Pledge Ambassador” status from Watford Council in 2025 to recognise our commitment to local suppliers and social responsibility.

## Sustainability

**Cardboard collection service** – Collected over **18 tonnes** of cardboard for recycling as part of our **FREE** cardboard collection service for BID businesses.

**Green events** – Collaborated with partners to host Watford Green Festival and The Gift Swap, where we repurposed **250+** unwanted Christmas presents.



“Hertfordshire SME Awards” for Sustainability: Won Silver in 2023 and went on to win **Gold** in 2024!

## Welcoming and accessible

**“Neurodiversity Umbrella Project”** – Introduced the Neurodiversity Umbrella Project in 2024 to celebrate all the different minds we are proud to have in our town.

**Supporting inclusivity** – Championed Proud Watford and Purple Tuesday in our town and became ambassadors of their fantastic causes.

**Shopmobility funding** – Contributed **£20,000** towards Shopmobility to help with accessibility around Watford Town Centre.

## Locking in spend

**Watford Gift Card programme** – Sold over **£177,000** worth of Watford Gift Cards since launching the BID-funded programme in 2020, with **148** accepting the card.

**Watford Town Centre performance** – Shared valuable vacancy rate and retail spend insights with levy payers to inform them on how Watford compares with the nation.

Winner of Retail District Award in 2022 at the “Good Retail Awards”





### 3: A BID worthy of your support

## Theme 2: Enhancing the look and feel of Watford

### Crime and safety

#### Watford Business Against Crime scheme

– Managed our town’s vital shop link radio scheme which links over **75** retailers to police and CCTV.

**Agnieszka, Hobbs:** *“We joined the radio scheme just before Christmas and we are really happy with the security it gives us. We always feel reassured that we can receive the help we need when we need it.”*

**CCTV funding** – Contributed **£75,000** to provide additional funding for the operations and management of our town’s surveillance.

**Community Safety Partnership seminars** – Hosted **2** seminars along with *Hertfordshire Constabulary* and *Harlequin Shopping Centre* to allow for transparency and levy payer feedback.

**Safety equipment funding** – Contributed towards **2** AED defibrillators as well as anti-drink spiking kits and bleed control kits for night-time economy operators.

### Townscape enhancements

**Floral displays** – Increased the number of colourful floral displays from 215 in our first term to **330** floral displays in this current second term.

**Flav Popa, Flannels:** *“Really happy with the floral displays, always great feedback from customers, they really brighten up the town and bring colour.”*

**Lamppost banners** – Introduced **36** colourful lamppost banners to brighten up the town, raise awareness of our brand and help users with wayfinding.

**Christmas installations** – Lit up the festive season every year with our stunning LED twinkly lights. Switched on the tree lights for other popular celebrations during the year.

### Cleanliness

**Community litter picking** – Organised **6** litter picks for local employees to tidy privately owned areas that are prominent and unsightly to town users.

**Service Road Q clean up** – Funded a deep clean-up of Service Road Q following high demand for improvement from businesses located in that area.

**Watford was crowned as the UK’s top-ranked location in the 2024 Vitality Index**





## Theme 3: Marketing, communications and events

### Online presence

**watfordtowncentre.com**  
**website** – Created a website to showcase what's on in Watford Town Centre and promote businesses. **55,000+** users since August 2023 launch.

**@WatfordTownCentre social media** – Promoted the very best of our town on popular social media platforms, reaching **2.5 million+** users since July 2023 launch.

### Watford Town Centre events and activities

**“Winterfest” and “Christmas lights switch-on”** – Coordinated annual, free Christmas events to attract thousands of visitors to our town.

**“Birds of Prey Experience”** – Invited *Berkshire Birds of Prey* to provide a free interactive experience with Watford Town Centre visitors in August 2024 (returning in August 2025).

**“Wellbeing Day”** – Organised a day out for families to celebrate “Emergency Services Day”, “National Fitness Day” and “World First Aid Day” with fun, free activities.

**“Trick or Treat week”** – Celebrated spooky season with the thrilling Trick or Treat show and Trick or Treat trail to encourage footfall and dwell time (returning in October 2025).

**Easter programme of activities** – Introduced a fortnight of Easter fun, including a hugely popular Easter Egg Hunt where we gave out **6,000** mini chocolate eggs!

**“Watford Fringe Festival Presents: Cultural Party”** – Partnered with *Watford Pump House Theatre* and *Watford Council* to have a huge summer celebration by the pond in June 2025!

#### **Susie Benjamin, *Beats School Uniform:***

*“Watford Town Centre BID is wonderful, so friendly and helpful. We love all the events they promote, the exercise days, the bands, the flowers. They are so proactive and really enhance Watford Town Centre.”*

### Engaging with levy payers

**Communications** – Provided BID newsletters, email updates and business visits to ensure levy payers are informed of our latest projects and services available to them.

**Networking events** – Hosted quarterly Breakfast with the BID events and biannual BID socials to allow local employees to engage with one another and our BID team.



### 3: A BID worthy of your support

## What we all lose with a NO vote

**NO...** Watford Business Against Crime scheme

**NO...** additional CCTV funding

**NO...** support with improved safety initiatives

**NO...** additional funding for anti-crime initiatives

**NO...** one to liaise alongside *Hertfordshire Constabulary* to manage street drinkers, rough sleeping and anti-social behaviour

**NO...** Community Safety Partnership seminar, or newsletters

**NO...** floral displays

**NO...** Christmas light installations

**NO...** colourful lamppost banners

**NO...** additional support for *Shopmobility*

**NO...** additional funding for inclusivity initiatives such as 'The Neurodiversity Umbrella Project', 'Proud Watford', 'Herts Pride'

**NO...** dedicated marketing of Watford Town Centre

**NO...** Watford Town Centre website or @WatfordTownCentre social media channels

**NO...** family-friendly events such as 'Cultural Party', 'Winterfest', 'Mobile Farm Experience' or 'Trick or Treat Show'

**NO...** promotional activities to encourage footfall such as 'Trick or Treat Trail', 'Easter Egg Hunt', 'NumberFit Scavenger Hunt'

**NO...** business improvement grants

**NO...** Watford Gift Card to support the local economy

**NO...** free cardboard collection scheme

**NO...** dedicated organisation championing the town and its businesses

**NO...** town centre performance insights to help businesses succeed

**NO...** retail spend insight data to support for struggling sectors

**NO...** support for 'Pub Watch'

**NO...** BID socials or breakfast with the BID networking

**NO...** information sharing with businesses via regular newsletter and e-communications

**NO...** passionate, caring BID team dedicated to the prosperity of our town centre

**NO... £3m+ of investment for Watford Town Centre**

## YES...

**Watford Town Centre BID really is that essential to our local businesses, residents and economy**

# 4. Vote YES for our future

## Ballot dates

**12 September 2025:**  
Ballot opens

**28 September 2025:**  
Deadline for proxy  
nominations

**9 October 2025:**  
Ballot closes

**10 October 2025:**  
Ballot result  
announced

**31 March 2026:**  
Last day of current  
BID term

**1 April 2026:**  
First day of third  
BID term  
(if successful  
'YES' vote)

## How to vote

- 1.** You should receive one ballot paper for each property that you are eligible to vote for by post. If you do not, please email: [enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com](mailto:enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com)
- 2.** Please check that each ballot paper has its own return envelope.
- 3.** Complete the ballot paper putting a cross (x) beside your choice to retain the BID for a further five years or not.
- 4.** Write your name in **BLOCK CAPITALS** and your **POSITION** in the business and then add your **SIGNATURE**.
- 5.** Each ballot paper must be returned in its own separate envelope.
- 6.** Return your completed ballot paper(s) by post in the pre-paid envelope provided. Or alternatively it can be returned by hand to Watford Town Hall.

All ballot papers are sent out to the registered address of the property which you are paying the levy on behalf of. If you wish for your ballot paper to be sent to an alternative address, please email the details to [enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com](mailto:enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com)



#### 4. Vote YES for our future

## Watford Town Centre BID area



## Full list of streets

- Albert Road South
- Bentine Lane
- Cambridge Road
- Charter Place Bus Lane
- Clarendon Road
- Crown Passage
- Exchange Road  
(East side of road, including  
BT Exchange Building, Church Car Park  
and Wren House)
- Gaumont Approach
- George Street
- Granville Road
- Halsey Road
- Hempstead Road  
(up to and including the Leisure Centre,  
West Herts College and Avenue Car park)
- High Street  
(down to numbers: 165 & 174)
- King Street
- Market Street  
(from High Street to numbers 24 & 25)
- New Street
- Peace Drive
- Peace Prospect
- Queen Road (1-19A)
- Rickmansworth Road  
(numbers 1-5 and up to Peace Drive)
- Rosslyn Road (only Gade Car Park)
- Smith Street
- St Mary's View
- St Mary's Close
- St Mary's Churchyard
- Sutton Road (only Sutton Car Park)
- The Crescent
- The Parade
- Water Lane (west of Beechen Grove)
- Watford House Lane
- Wellstones
- Wilmington Close





## 4. Vote YES for our future

# Levy rules

### The Ballot

1. Watford Borough Council will send those responsible for properties or hereditaments to be subject to the BID a ballot paper prior to 12 September 2025.
2. Each property or hereditament subject to the BID will be entitled to one vote in a postal ballot which will commence on 12 September 2025, and close at 5pm on Thursday, 9 October 2025. Ballot papers received after 5pm on 9 October 2025 will not be counted. The result of the ballot is due to be announced on the following day.
3. In order for the proposal to be successful at ballot the result will need to meet, as a minimum, two independent criteria which are: (a) of those ballots returned by the close, those voting in favour of the proposal must exceed those voting against it, and (b) of those ballot papers returned by the close, the total rateable value (RV) of those properties or hereditaments which vote in favour, must exceed the total of those voting against.
4. If successful at ballot, the BID will commence delivery of services on 1 April 2026 and will continue for a period of 5 years to 31 March 2031.

### The Levy

1. The levy rate to be paid by each property or hereditament is to be calculated as 2% of its RV.
2. Only properties or hereditaments with a rateable value of £12,000 or more will be eligible for payment of the levy.
3. The number of properties or hereditaments liable for the levy is approximately 497.
4. In all instances, any national ratings revaluation during the BID term will be disregarded and the RV assigned to each hereditament will be fixed to the value as at 31 March 2026.
5. The levy is due annually in advance (1 April to March each year) on 1 April each year (the 'chargeable day') and no refunds will be made.
6. If a revised or new RV is applied because of any change of use or a physical change to a property or hereditament including, inter alia, new construction, merger, subdivision, extension, and refurbishment, the revised RV would be applied as at the next 'chargeable day'. If that new RV is below £12,000, the property or hereditament will only be exempt from the levy as from that next 'chargeable day'.
7. If, either; (a) a new property or hereditament enters the list or (b) a property or hereditament with a RV which had previously been below the £12,000 threshold is assigned a RV which is £12,000 or more, the property or hereditament will become liable from the next 'chargeable day' after the effective date of change.
8. The ratepayer of untenanted properties or hereditaments will be liable for payment of the levy. This includes listed buildings.
9. Ratepayers within the 'Harlequin' shopping centre that are subject to a service charge will pay a reduced levy of 1.75% of RV.
10. Organisations that are subject to relief on their business rates liability will pay a reduced levy of 0.25% save as for premises that are for retail, leisure or hospitality use where no such discount will be applied. Of these, organisations providing education or healthcare as a primary function will be considered for further relief or exemption on a case-by-case basis. The liable party must submit a written request to the BID Company and until the Company accepts any such application the BID levy shall remain payable.
11. Any hereditament also liable for a levy to another BID Arrangement operated by Watford BID Ltd will be charged an annual maximum equivalent to 2% of its RV, split proportionally by the number of Arrangements.

12. The local billing authority will be responsible for administering the collection of the levy. Charges will be made at cost for the printing and distribution of levy bills. Over the last term this has equalled approx. £500 per annum.

## Accountability and Transparency

1. The BID Body will be Watford BID Limited (Company Number 09851128) a company limited by guarantee without share capital.
2. The Directors of the BID (the 'Board') shall be primarily representative of levy-paying businesses with representation from across the whole BID area and business types.
3. The Board will have responsibility for governance matters such as financial arrangements, contractual obligations, human resources, standards, performance, and compliance.
4. From time to time, the Board shall appoint a Chair who will always be from a levy paying business.
5. The Board may form such sub-groups that from time to time become necessary.

6. Provided that the BID is meeting its overall objectives, the Board shall have the ability to vary service delivery and expenditure allocation according to the changing demands of levy payers. However, any change to the BID boundary or to the levy rate proposals may require an Alteration Ballot.
7. The Company shall meet with the Council, as the Billing Authority, every 3-months to monitor service delivery, levy collection and financial management arrangements.
8. Levy paying businesses may become Members of the BID Company, subject to Board approval.
9. If a business with a rateable value of less than £12,000 wishes to contribute to the BID, it may do so as a voluntary contribution.
10. The BID will file annual accounts compiled by independent accountants with Companies House. An annual report on activities, including finances, will be published. An Annual Meeting for Members and levy payers will be held.
11. An Operating Agreement including a statement relating to the Baseline services has been agreed.
12. Notification of the intention to hold a ballot was sent to the Secretary of State on 25th February 2025.

## Finances

1. A cautious approach has been adopted to budgeting for the BID term with a levy collection rate of 95% assumed.
2. The average annual levy available to be spent by the BID for the term is £560,687.
3. Annual surpluses act as a contingency provision on expenditure and total reserves will reduce to £149,649 by the end of the term. This equates to 4.7% of total expenditure over the term.
4. Overheads of the BID (e.g. levy collection, accountancy, insurances, and office costs and a proportion of staff costs) are estimated as 15.9% of total expenditure.
5. In the event that the BID Body operates another BID Arrangement, overhead costs will be split proportionally by the number of Arrangements.





## 4. Vote YES for our future

# Budget 2026-2031

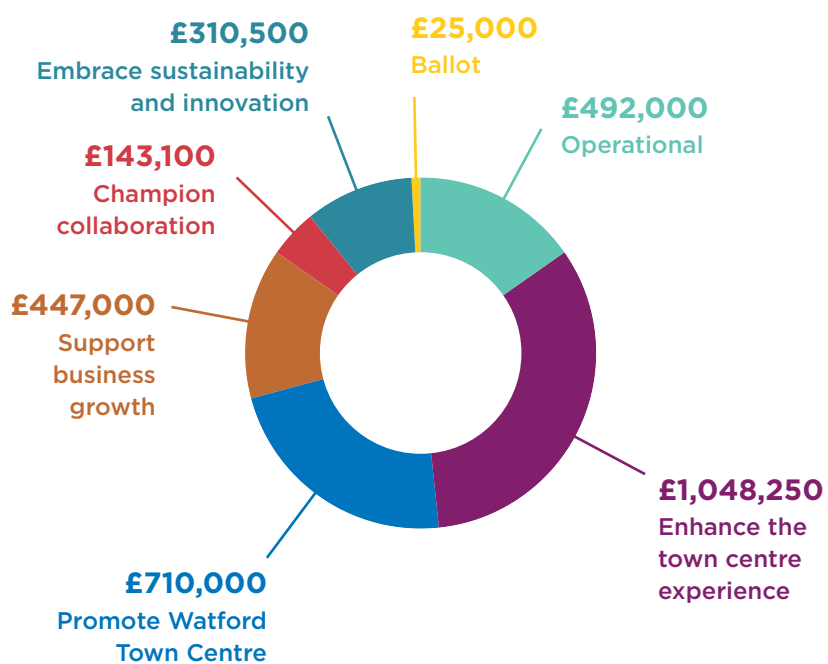
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Income</b>					
Levy (95% collection rate assumed)	£560,687	£560,687	£560,687	£560,687	£560,687
Additional Income	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£620,687</b>	<b>£620,687</b>	<b>£620,687</b>	<b>£620,687</b>	<b>£620,687</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Operational	£96,000	£96,000	£98,000	£100,000	£102,000
Enhance the town centre experience	£222,250	£207,750	£204,750	£209,750	£203,750
Promote Watford Town Centre	£137,000	£138,000	£142,000	£145,000	£148,000
Support business growth	£101,000	£62,000	£107,000	£64,000	£113,000
Champion collaboration	£24,500	£24,600	£31,000	£32,000	£31,000
Embrace sustainability and innovation	£64,000	£59,100	£56,200	£72,800	£58,400
Ballot	£5,000	£0	£0	£0	£20,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£649,750</b>	<b>£587,450</b>	<b>£638,950</b>	<b>£623,550</b>	<b>£676,150</b>
<b>Surplus / Deficit</b>	<b>-£29,063</b>	<b>£33,237</b>	<b>-£18,263</b>	<b>-£2,863</b>	<b>-£55,463</b>
<b>Reserves</b>	<b>£193,000</b>	<b>£226,237</b>	<b>£207,974</b>	<b>£205,111</b>	<b>£149,649</b>

## Total

**£2,803,436**  
Levy (95% collection rate assumed)

**£300,000** Additional Income

**£3,103,436** Total Income



**£3,175,850** Total Expenditure

**-£72,414** Total Surplus / Deficit

**£149,649** Total Reserves





TOWN CENTRE BID

## Contact us

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## Social media



@WatfordTownCentre



Watford Town Centre BID



@WatTownCentre

