

## Q3 2025/26 Highlights

- 9 new businesses meetings to help with signposting, facilitating connections and gathering feedback, and 3 business engagement events
- SW Herts Fit-to-Bid project (collaboration with Dacorum, Hertsmere and St Albans) is supporting many Watford SME's to improve their tendering skills and capacity.
- **Meet the Buyer event** held November '25
  - **120 attendees**
  - **175 meetings held between buyers and potential suppliers**
- Watford Business Improvement Grant has had **6 applications** and continues to help small High Street businesses
- The County-wide services led by Hertfordshire Futures continue to deliver good outcomes for Watford businesses and residents, with support for start-up businesses, growth businesses, the film and screen sector, skills brokerage support, inward investment, and providing support for young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- **27 businesses awarded the Watford Business Pledge** (22 in total last quarter) Wide range of size and sector of businesses participating
- A **Watford Business Pledge Celebration** was held at The Mayors Christmas Networking event, with many Pledge businesses in attendance and showcasing the benefits of this initiative. This generated **applications from 6 more businesses** who would like to join the Pledge.
- A new initiative to ensure **Employment, Skills and Social Value (ESSV) Plans** are delivered by developers and major contractors effectively and with maximum impact is in development. Watford has pioneered this concept which is now being considered on a County-wide basis.
- Innovation Hub operator procurement completed and £2m successful secured for the Hub fit out from Hertfordshire Futures.
- Watford Town Centre BID ballot successful, securing a third term with 91% of voters in favour, raising to 95% when based on rateable value

## Q4 2025/26 Priorities

- South West Herts Meet-the Buyer event to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> November, with 20 buyers, seven of which are based in Watford
- Continued feasibility assessment for a Clarendon Road BID with a notification of ballot recently submitted
- Conclude Innovation Hub operator procurement for the Innovation Hub which is due to be situated within the refurbished Town Hall.

