



Watford:
a great place
to live, work
and play



Foreword



Elected Mayor of Watford Dorothy Thornhill

Jobs are at the heart of a successful, thriving town so I made supporting businesses and helping to strengthen the town's economic prospects one of my key manifesto pledges last election. As such, Watford Borough Council has been working closely with businesses across the town on retention, expansion and attracting inward investment.

I'm proud of our achievements so far – in terms of direct inward investment, we have landed over 30 companies, representing additional investment in excess of £20 million, creating or safeguarding over 500 jobs. We continue to see new companies opening on a steady basis – across a range of sectors from retail and office to healthcare, IT and the media.

We also choose to invest our own capital into the town. Our programme of town centre improvements is well underway. We have had the green light for government funding for the Croxley Rail Link, a project which further improves our links to the capital. Plus, our major regeneration project planned for West Watford – Watford Health Campus – is set to deliver great things for the town.

Watford is well worth investing in.



Richard Harrington – MP for Watford

Watford is a fantastic place to do business and be in business.

Business dominates the local economy, with over 3,000 small businesses and many large national and international companies based here. We have a strong local infrastructure to help and support businesses from start up to expansion.

With close links to London and international travel hubs, Watford is the ideal location for your company. Recent developments such as the Croxley Rail Link, and the opening of the Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden are making Watford an even better place to be.

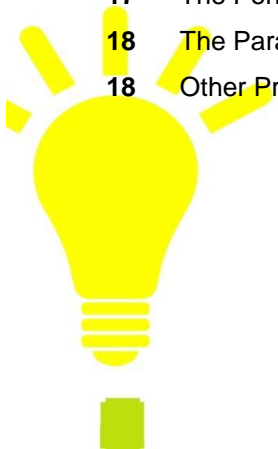
Having been in business for most of my life, I know only too well the stresses and strains of starting and running a business, but I also know of the rewards and excitement that it can bring. To me, running a business and employing people is one of the most important things you can do for the country and the economy, and as MP I make it a priority to encourage more business in Watford and help those that are here.

There are many good reasons to relocate or grow your business in Watford. Watford is open for business and I hope that you will consider taking up this invitation.



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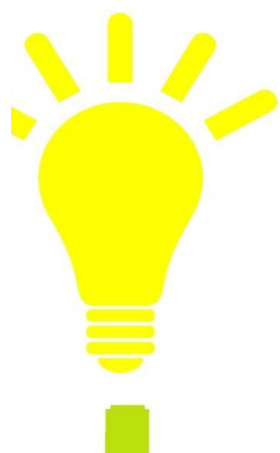
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Watford – A Great Place to Live, Work and Play

Where is Watford?

The Borough of Watford is located in South West Hertfordshire in the South East of England. It borders three other Hertfordshire Boroughs – Dacorum (whose main town is Hemel Hempstead), St. Albans and Three Rivers, as well as the County of Buckinghamshire. Watford is the only regional centre for the Northern Home Counties in Hertfordshire, and the most westerly of the centres as a whole. Hertfordshire County Council has designated Watford as a major sub regional centre heading its preferred sites for retail development. Watford has a population of approximately 90,300 (Census 2011, first report September 2012).

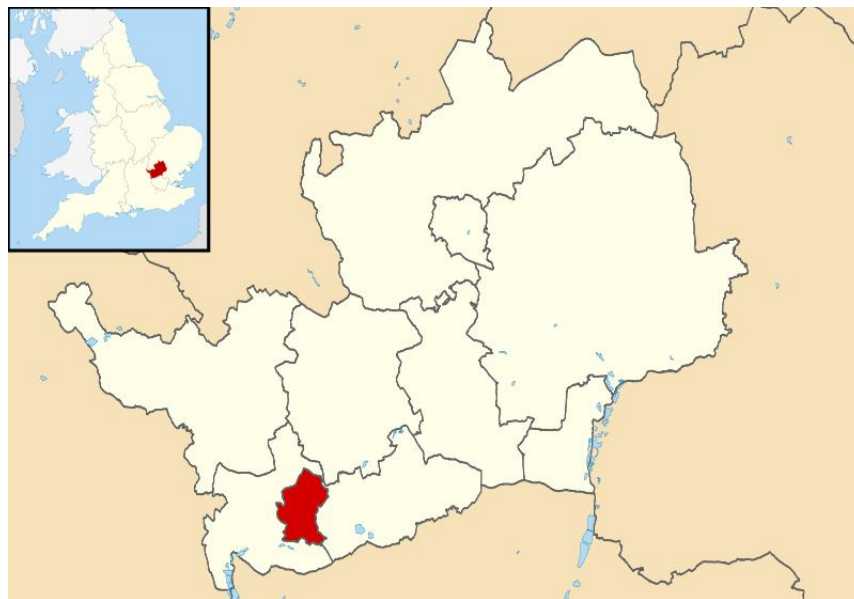


Fig. 1: Watford's location within Hertfordshire (marked in red)



Fig. 2: Major Road Links connected to Watford

London is within only 17 miles of Watford and easily accessible by road, it can also be reached by rail in less than 20 minutes. Watford links directly to many of the Country's major towns and cities through major roads, including the M25 and M1 motorways. Watford is central to the golden triangle of London, Oxford and Cambridge.



Fig. 3: Watford's location within the Golden Triangle

Economic Profile

Overall Picture and Active Enterprises

Watford was previously considered the smallest Borough in Hertfordshire with a population of just 79,700 (2001 Census). Over the past 10 years the population has greatly increased to 90,300 which equates to 12.4% of Hertfordshire's total population of 1,116,000 (First report 2011 Census). This means that the Borough is no longer the smallest in Hertfordshire, which reflects the opinion that Watford is a vibrant and desirable place to live.

As well as building a strong community and population, Watford's business numbers have also been steadily increasing (Business Demography 2010 through ONS/Annex 1). In 2010, there were approximately 3,935 active enterprises registered in Watford, up from 3515 in 2004. This figure represents 13.7% of Hertfordshire's combined active businesses of around 53,825. 2007 was a particularly good year for business in the Borough with a net increase of 175. This took the total business count for Watford to 3705, from 3530 in 2006. These figures account for both business relocations (domestic and foreign) and new start-up businesses.

Business Start-Ups

From the information and figures available it is clear that despite the current economic climate, start-up businesses are not only being established and surviving, but thriving. Between 2004 and 2010, 3385 new businesses were started in Watford (Business Demography 2010 through ONS/Annex 2). Both 2007 and 2010 were record years for start-ups in Watford with between 545 and 555 new enterprises registered. Watford has the second highest business survival rate in Hertfordshire – the average percentage of businesses which survive their first year of trading is between 91.5% and 96.7% (Business Demography 2010 through ONS/Annex 3). Both 2008 and 2009 were more reflective of the recession with year one dipping to 89.5%. In 2010 93.8% of businesses started in 2009 were still trading, putting Watford above County average.

(NB: These figures are purely related to business start ups, they appear quite different for active enterprises highlighted above as they do not account for business relocations or deaths of both newly registered companies and mature companies).

Business Closures

2008 was a prominent time for business to cease trading, but this is not unexpected as it was a time when businesses suffered most from the economic downturn – Watford lost 650 businesses, including national and international names (Business Demography 2010 through ONS/Annex 4). This figure is, however, offset by both the significantly lower numbers of business deregistration in 2009, at 485, and the steady increase of businesses created in 2008, 2009 and 2010. These figures reflect a strengthening economy in Watford as well as a strong and resilient business community. Watford is consistent with the wider Hertfordshire area when looking at businesses which have ceased trading or deregistered.

(NB: The Business Demography used to inform this economic profile has been compiled by the Office of National Statistics (ONS), this information is regularly updated and the most comprehensive public record available)

Business Growth

As well as support for start-up businesses, organisations in Watford are keen to see their existing businesses grow and prosper. There are various schemes, organisations and projects to assist and support them along the way. For example, exporting across the world can be key to facilitating business growth and is a strong area of expertise in Watford, therefore businesses looking to expand into foreign markets will be in good company and can access a high level of assistance from organisations such as the Watford and West Herts Chamber of Commerce, who have a dedicated Export service.

A number of our local businesses have shown considerable growth over the past few years. The Pharmaceuticals Company, DDD, have recently opened a new arm to their business, along with another site and employed a further 40+ staff. Local Technology, Media and Telecoms Company, Freedom Communications, has shown continuous growth over 23 years. They serve both local and national organisations and are fully accredited on the Public Services Network PSN, a core element of the Government's ICT strategy, providing secure and collaborative communications connectivity. Further examples of sector growth include Clock, a Creative and Digital Agency who continue their rapid expansion, going from 40 staff to 50+ over the next twelve months enabling them to deliver another year of 50%+ year on year growth. Twin Technologies are punching above their weight by bidding for and being awarded national contracts which are normally won by the likes of BT.

Other Averages and Statistics

- **House Prices** – The average house price in the UK is currently £161,490, with the South East at £291,569 and Hertfordshire £337,444. The average house price in Watford is £269,245. Below is a further breakdown showing just what you can get for your money in Watford. As you will see, whilst Watford's average prices are above that of the UK, they are slightly below the County average. This along with a high quality housing stock complete with excellent communication links means that Watford has become a desirable place to live.

Type	Watford (£)	Hertfordshire (£)	UK (£)
Flat	185,115	187,021	152,550
Terraced	248,430	251,7074	122,069
Semi-Detached	305,761	341,754	153,437
Detached	598,164	627,673	253,501

(Land Registry of England and Wales, Crown Copyright via BBC 07/12/2012)

- **Commercial Property** – On average, for a freehold commercial office space in Watford, a company would be looking at anywhere between £50 and £205 per sq ft depending on specification, location, quality and size. Based on the same criteria, industrial and warehousing space can range between £70 and £140 per sq ft. Leasehold offices are available between £10 and £22 per sq ft and industrial/warehouse at £4 to £11 per sq ft.

- **Unemployment** – According to the current figures available from the Office of National Statistics (ONS), the East of England has the highest rate of employment in the Country, with 74.7% (Annex 5) of people aged between 16 and 64 being in some type of work (benchmarked against the lowest in the North East at 67.9% and London at 69.1%). The claimant count is also the lowest in the South East, at 3.3%. Breaking these figures down to local level, the level of unemployment in Watford as of December 2012 is below the national average, and also at its lowest for some time.
- **Crime** – The Hertfordshire Police Service have reported the lowest crime figures in five years. The overall crime figure for the County is down by 14.04% compared with last year, breaking down to 5272 fewer reported offences. Hertfordshire’s crime levels are significantly lower than the national average (National Statistics).

In the Watford area, crime is down by 9.60% (432 fewer reported crimes) compared with last year. Below is a table showing average offence decreases benchmarked against the wider County.

Offence Type	Watford	Hertfordshire
Robbery	-44.00%	-18.46%
Burglary	-22.15%	19.73%
Theft and Handling	-15.49%	-17.40%
Drugs	-11.36%	-4.12%

*Figures available from Hertfordshire Constabulary

Ward crime figures have also predominantly fallen as highlighted in the table below. Only one ward has had a small increase in reported criminal activity, where all others have fallen – some by as many as 74 counts.

Wards	Previous Figure	Current Figure	Up/Down
Callowland and Leggatts	115	94	-21
Watford Central	417	343	-74
Hollywell and Vicarage	140	139	-1
Meriden and Tudor	109	80	-29
Nascot and Park	103	71	-32
Oxhey	33	38	5
Stanborough and Woodside	118	103	-15

*Figures available from Hertfordshire Constabulary

One of the main areas of notable improvement is Watford town centre – in the last 12 months certain types of crime have dramatically reduced, for example Anti Social Behaviour is down by half and Vehicle Crime down by 75%. Most other types of crime have been decreasing, most noticeably robbery, with none reported at all in September 2012.

The area also benefits from **Watford Business Against Crime**, which is an organisation supported by many Watford retailers and organisations and facilitated by the **Watford and West Herts Chamber of Commerce**. The main focus and area of operation for this group is Watford Town centre, with the aim to make the area safer for visitors and shoppers as well as the local community and businesses.

Why Watford?

Strategic Positioning, Transport Links and Business Areas

The strong strategic location and excellent infrastructure make Watford an ideal location of choice for local, national and international businesses. With direct links to both the M1 and M25, Watford boasts quick and easy access to major towns and cities across the Country through road networks including the M3, M40, M11 and A1M. Several major A roads also run through or close to the town.

Existing rail networks complement the road connections, strengthening the argument that Watford is a prime business location. The West Coast Main Line service provided by National Rail offers a direct route into London Euston from Watford Junction in under 20 minutes. There are longer routes through this service which connect Watford to the Midlands, Northwest and Scotland and a more localised service with links into St. Albans.

Realising the importance of Watford as a key business area, Central Government has given both the go ahead and financial support for the new Croxley Rail Link regeneration scheme. The plans will not only strengthen the current underground service, but will provide the area with two further underground stations ensuring the connections across the town and into London are even faster and more frequent. (See the details of future regeneration plans for further details).

London's five international airports are in close proximity to Watford and easily accessible via road or rail. The closest is Luton Airport which can be reached in approximately 30 minutes. There are frequent coach and bus services in operation which directly connect Watford Junction with Heathrow and Luton, as well as direct train services which run from Watford Junction to both Birmingham and Gatwick. Elstree, an area within Hertsmere around 10 minutes away, has an airfield which can be used for more private forms of transportation.

Clarendon Road

Clarendon Road is located next to Watford Junction station, making it an ideal place for businesses with links to London and other areas in the Country by train. It is also an excellent place to be for companies who have employees commuting to and from work. Clarendon Road is an impressive modern, headquarter style business location situated within one of the main business districts of Watford. Close to local amenities and town centre, Clarendon Road is also minutes away from both the M1 & M25. The varied and high end of office accommodation has for many years attracted major household names from a range of business sectors.



Fig 4, 5 and 6: Clarendon Road, Watford

Croxley Green Business Park

This really is a business park with a difference. Firstly, the 75 acre site is in total sole ownership and is also managed by the owners. Home to 50 businesses and around 2500 employees, Croxley Green Business Park is extremely high quality and prestigious, an exceptional concept, style and business 'community'. Not only are there both industrial and office uses available, but also a crèche, gym and even a hair and beauty salon. Going and remaining green is also a key priority with their aim to create a Grade A, energy efficient business space



Fig 7 and 8: Croxley Green Business Park

Leavesden Park

Part of the MEPC portfolio, Leavesden Park covers an area of 300 acres. Competitive and flexible lease terms, this business park allows any company to be sited in high quality, flagship office accommodation ranging from 1,000 to 43,000 sq ft. Leavesden is a premier and vibrant business location which has already attracted a greater number of national and international household names and is strategically placed, within close proximity to six motorway junctions. It also has the added attraction of being directly opposite the new redeveloped Warner Bros Studio, and Harry Potter attraction.



Fig 9, 10 and 11: Leavesden Park

Watford Business Park

Offering office, industrial and warehouse space, Watford Business Park is situated in a premier location to run a business. Also on this site is Watford Business Centres Limited, which has flexible unit space from 150 to 10 000 sq. feet. In total, around 100 businesses are based at this business park which also offers 24 hour access and free parking.



Fig 12 and 13: Watford Business Park

Watford Town Centre

Predominantly offering retail accommodation, Watford Town Centre is home to both National and International brands. Also available within this location is office space as well as a number of large function facilities which cater for events of all shapes and sizes in the very heart and centre of the town. The High Street is within close proximity to Watford Metropolitan Line Station and Watford Junction Station, offering a direct link to London and other destinations across the country.



Fig 14, 15 and 16: Watford Town Centre

Watford into the Future

With so many regeneration and major development projects in the process of being adopted or already underway, within the next 20 years Watford will be unrecognisable in some areas. Although 20 years may sound like a long time, in terms of regeneration this would be considered a medium timescale. Many of the visible improvements will be coming forward a lot sooner, with some completing within the next 2 to 5 years.

Watford Health Campus

The Health Campus is the biggest of the regeneration schemes planned in Watford. At a total estimated cost of £750million, the project will provide a diverse and exciting mixed use development. The developers have been announced as Kier, who will be joint partners in the scheme with Watford Borough Council.

The Watford Health Campus will be sited primarily on the current Watford hospital site and will incorporate land from the surrounding area. One of the main features of this project is a new NHS hospital with an Accident and Emergency department serving the South West Herts area. Other key features include a 'Hub' of office accommodation which will be based in the central piazza area, which will be the focus for the entire scheme incorporating a retail offering as well as cafes and excellent public realm designs. It is aspired that the Hub will house companies of the Pharmaceuticals industry, in keeping with the 'Health Campus' theme.

Other uses across the scheme will be a high level of residential allocation comprising of apartments and houses, a hotel, industrial uses towards the rear of the site, a new leisure club and possible school. Transportation and infrastructural links are paramount to the overall scheme – a new Metropolitan Line station and a service road through the site will give ease of access to the M1.



Fig 17: Artists illustration of the preferred Watford Health Campus design

Charter Place

Charter Place is part of the Harlequin shopping centre, owned and managed by Capital Shopping. Although the shopping centre as a whole has a high quality appearance, Charter Place, which was part of the original landscape, has been somewhat left behind the times. Although many national and international brands are there, it looks dated and tired. For some time redevelopment of this area has been talked about – now it is actually being taken forward, due to begin in 2013 with completion over two years. Part of the new development will be not only to retain the household names already in Charter Place, but to attract a host on additional retailers – some of whom have already shown an interest. The project is being delivered and funded by Capital Shopping and has the full support of the Local Authority.



Fig 22: The current Charter Place



Fig 23: Artists impressions of how Charter Place could look

Ascot Road

The Ascot Road site, previously owned by the Royal Mail has now been bought by the owners of Morrisons, the supermarket chain, who have a major redevelopment scheme designed to be put in place. The first phase, which is worth in the region of £80million and will see the delivery of a new Morrisons food store with dedicated car parking. The remaining site will be split between residential, a potential hotel and restaurant, and what could be considered the most important aspect – a new primary school. There is some space allocated on the site for some commercial office use.



Fig 24: Proposed new layout for Ascot Road

Watford Town Centre

The centre of Watford has not always been seen in a positive light by making the most of its assets and features. Watford Borough Council has taken these comments on board and allocated a fund of £4.3million to make vital public realm improvements to make the town centre a more desirable place, whilst also supporting the day and night economies. The money is being split between two specific projects, due to commence work in 2013.

- **The Pond** – Over the years many changes have been made to this feature, but still it is not being used to its full potential. Plans have been designed to change the layout at both ends, and install a bridge across the centre to link each side of the High Street creating ease of movement with a more integrated feel. Seating and a deck will be incorporated, allowing access closer to the water's edge. At the centre of the pond, wildlife habitats will be created ensuring an overall refreshing, environmentally friendly space. In line with the green agenda, plans seek to improve the quality of water in the pond, achieved through drainage and cleaning, new filters, improved fountains and shady areas.

- **The Parade** – The aspiration is to improve the visual experience of the town whilst retaining the ethos of Watford Town Centre being ‘family friendly’ and to ensure that the town has a striking, high quality and recognisable identity. Incorporating a flexible, yet temporary, outdoor event space, as well as a space which works well for both the daytime and night time economy. Improvements will be made to allow pedestrians and cyclists to have ease of movement. Stronger connections to the assets of the town centre will be made, linking venues such as the Colosseum, Palace Theatre and Leisure Centre.



Fig 25 and 26: The Pond and Parade as it is now, and designs for the regeneration

Other Projects

To further enhance the Borough of Watford there is an array of other, smaller redevelopment and regeneration projects which will be taken forward, with a potential further spend of £30million. This will include work to one of Watford’s biggest employment areas – The Watford Business Park.

Through all of the projects highlighted above, Watford is an area set to have a total investment of £1.5Billion.

Home of Business

Watford is considered one of the smallest boroughs within Hertfordshire, although it has a very high concentration of business with between approximately 3900 established/registered businesses at the last count (business demography through ONS). Watford is a County leader in terms of being home to the Headquarters of National companies including **JD Wetherspoons, Mothercare, KMPG, Camelot Group** (operator of the National Lottery), the building division of **Balfour Beatty, Hayden Young** and the UK's largest bathroom retailer, **Bathstore**. Watford is also a major UK base for large Multi-national corporations such as **Total Oil, Sanyo, Hilton Group, Ferrero, TK Maxx, Costco, Vinci, Iveco and Beko**.

Pharmaceuticals and Life Sciences have a particularly strong representation in the area. Sigma and DDD, two of Watford's biggest privately owned companies operate in this sector. DDD has recently opened a new arm to the business in Watford (Summer 2012) creating a number of jobs in the area. Both have links with national/international brands such as Blistex, Soap and Glory, Body Shop and Derma Labs (best known for products such as Double Base). There is a good mix of manufactures, supplies, R&D, testing and marketing and strong links with other Pharma companies around the Country. The trend of this industry being located in Watford is showing signs of steady increase, supported by dedicated groups and future area plans.

Clusters

Aside from Pharmaceuticals, Watford also has a high concentration of **Digital and Creative, ICT, Financial** and **Business Services** companies. Supporting Watford's sectors is of paramount importance as such Cluster Groups have been established and are extremely successful. The longest standing cluster is the Pharmaceuticals Interest Networking Group (PING), which is facilitated through a partnership between Watford Borough Council, Watford Chamber of Commerce and Matthew, Arnold and Baldwin Solicitors. The main aim is to bring Pharma companies together to build business and supply chains, to share information and support one another, highlighting issues and discussing as a group possible solutions. PING operates in two formats – intimate round table events with attendance of 20 to 40 (the higher number spilt into two groups), and larger events which have attracted over 100 delegates. The group is not just limited to Watford but the focus is certainly there.

A Creative and Digital Cluster Group has been formed (Summer 2012) and is organised in partnership with Watford Borough Council, Watford Chamber of Commerce, Clock (a major local Creative Agency) and West Herts College. Formed on the same basis as PING, over 50 companies from Watford, surrounding areas and London attended the launch and following this huge success the cluster will continue to meet on a regular basis. An Exporters Cluster has been established by the Watford Chamber with a high level of backing from HSBC bank. This group will focus to growing business and strengthening the South West Herts exporting position.

Other Clusters which are currently being considered and moving forward to be established are around Warehousing/Logistics, Wholesale, Retail (likely to be through a Town Centre Partnership) Business Services and E-Commerce. If there is a call for other Cluster Groups from the local business community, any group will be considered according to demand.

Business Matters

Economic Development is of extreme importance in Watford. The area is open for business, with barriers being removed to accommodate companies, instead of barriers being put in place to stop development and growth. Economic and Business Development along with Regeneration is one of Watford Borough Council's top priorities. There is strong support for the business community from organisations such as Wenta and West Herts College, particularly in terms of apprenticeships and business training which is also offered through the Watford Chamber of Commerce. Key partnerships have been formed to ensure the business community is constantly engaged with, listened to and supported in ways that matter to them. A One Stop Business Shop is due to be opened in 2013 offering support, guidance and training etc, to any business primarily in Watford but also across Hertfordshire. Businesses will be able to access assistance across many topics from Inward Investment and Business Start-up, to Accounting, Marketing and Finance/Banking. Input to this scheme from the local Business Community has been paramount to ensure it is a success.

Business Growth Forum

One of the main Partnerships established in Watford is the Business Growth Forum (formally the Business Advisory Group). The group has been in place for a number of years going from strength to strength. It has the right people around the table, ranging from Watford Borough Council, Watford Chamber of Commerce, West Herts College, representation from the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Banks and a range of businesses of different sizes and sectors who come together regularly and achieve actual outcomes. This is a group that anyone can become involved in, and that delivers against an action plan set against local priority areas. This group gives the Watford Business Community lobbying power to both Local and Central Government and has been key in attracting funding for particular projects and support for major projects and schemes.

Schools and Education

Whether it is necessary for employees to relocate with a company, or wanting to start/move the company to the right location, education could be a crucial consideration. Watford has an excellent offering from infants through to higher and further education and additional staff training.

Primary Schools

In total there are 29 infant (some with nurseries attached) and junior schools in Watford (Annex 6). The state-funded primary schools are co-educational, however, there are still some linked pairs of infant (reception to year 2) and junior (years 3 to 6). There are also two Roman Catholic schools which are voluntary aided. From OFSTED reports for these primary schools, 9 have been awarded Outstanding, 12 Good, 6 Satisfactory and 1 Inadequate. Berrygrove Primary and Nursery was rated so highly through the OFSTED inspection that it has now been converted to an Academy.

Secondary Schools

Most state-funded secondary schools in the Borough are comprehensive and operate on varying scales for intake which include partially selective schools, non-selective Roman Catholic schools, and non-selective schools. Some of the schools do accommodate children with special needs or disabilities as well as emotional and behavioral difficulties. In total there are 7 secondary schools in Watford (Annex 7), with OFSTED inspections rating 2 as Satisfactory, 1 as Outstanding, 1 awaiting their first inspection and 3 being converted to Academy Status through such high Outstanding ratings. Three of these seven schools are in the top 100 secondary schools in the Country.

Independent Schools

In total there are 6 Independent Schools located in the Borough of Watford (annex 8). Four cater from nursery to primary ages, the remaining two for secondary school ages, and one also having boarding facilities. Not all of the schools are subject to OFSTED, some are inspected by the Independent School Board. In general, the ratings are between excellent and good, with only one at satisfactory standard. Within close proximity to Watford are two exceptionally high quality private boys' schools; Merchant Taylors in Northwood and Haberdashers Askes in Elstree.

Further Education: West Herts College

Watford is proud to be home to a brand new campus for West Herts College, which re-opened in 2010 following a £74million redevelopment. This was achieved with no expense to the local community, drawing instead on the college's reserves, the sale of college land and substantial Central Government funding.

Commendation for West Herts College includes an Ofsted Outstanding rating (2010), LSIS Beacon status (for innovation), plus a renewed Investors in People award (2012).

In total, more than 4,500 young people study with West Herts College across its three South West Hertfordshire campuses – with Watford home to half of the intake. In all, around 12,000 students study with the college annually, on adult part-time evening and short courses in addition to the day-time courses for young people.

The college's community involvement is equally rich and diverse, spanning many partnerships and forums. Recent additions to this activity include the Watford Business Growth Forum, as well as supporting and facilitating the Creative and Digital Cluster Group, and a full range of apprenticeships.

Higher Education

Although Watford does not have a University based within the area, the University of Hertfordshire based in Hatfield is within close proximity. This University is extremely successful – they are part of many joint working opportunities and partnerships, not only with other organisations and Government bodies, but in the wider Hertfordshire community and particularly business. The facilities and business school within the University are very impressive and constantly evolving and improving.

(NB: OFSTED Inspection reports can be obtained through www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Amenities and Leisure

There are a wealth of points of interest, amenities and activities in the Watford area. From a Championship football teams to arts, leisure, green space including the award winning Cassiobury Park, not to mention the Purple Flag town centre with fantastic shopping areas, restaurants and bars. Watford really is a place where you can live, work and play!

Watford Football Club

The Borough is home to nPower Championship side, Watford Football Club, also known as the Hornets. Watford FC is much more than a football club, heavily supported by former Chairman Sir Elton John, the stadium has also seen concerts played on the pitch. They are strongly linked to the local community through the Hornets Community Trust who work with local children and young people as well as supporting other local charities. The club can be hired for functions, including the use of the Elton John suite, and also provides an excellent corporate package. Season tickets and week by week tickets are available at competitive and reasonable prices and the club also prides itself on having a family friendly atmosphere.



Fig 27: Watford Football Club Stadium

The Harlequin

The Harlequin is a major shopping centre, located in the heart of Watford town centre. With over 140 national, international and local stores of all shapes and sizes, you can always find what you are looking for – there are also 17 cafes/restaurants to choose from. There are always lots of exciting events at The Harlequin, from fashion shows and style advice events to fun activities for kids with The Harlequin Secret Agents, competitions and offers regularly available.



Fig 28: The Harlequin Shopping Centre

The Palace Theatre

The beautiful 600-seat Edwardian theatre is considered to be the ‘creative hub at the heart of Watford’. The Palace Theatre is a Charity which engages people through commissioning, creating and presenting high-quality theatre, and developing audiences, artists and communities through exciting opportunities to participate. As a producing theatre it has received critical acclaim for a number of its productions.

Not only are stage shows on offer at this fantastic facility, but they also now show a number of films at selected times, along with live screenings of some of the most prestigious theatrical productions, including ballet. The newly incorporated Green Bar increases the venue’s assets, which also has space for private functions and meeting hire.



Fig 29: Watford Palace Theatre

The Colosseum

The Colosseum is one of Watford’s major assets. It has recently undergone a major £5.5million refurbishment, to bring it back up to the world class performance venue that it once was. It now features the main auditorium as well as a cafe, restaurant and a number of bars. As a concert venue with world renowned acoustic qualities, it has even been used for the recording of Lord of the Rings, the Sound of Music and the Star Wars Trilogy. It has been home to the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra for many years.

Watford Colosseum now opens its doors to a host of shows and performances, from live comedy to pop music. It can also be hired for functions including business conferences, seminars and meetings as well as weddings and celebrations. The facility is managed by HQ Theatres, which is the UK’s second largest theatre operator.



Fig 30: Watford Colosseum

Warner Bros Studio Tour

People the world over have been enchanted by the Harry Potter films for nearly a decade. The wonderful special effects and amazing creatures have made this iconic series beloved by both young and old. Now, in Watford, the doors are open and you have the chance to go behind-the-scenes and see many things the camera never showed. From breathtakingly detailed sets to stunning costumes, props and animatronics, Warner Bros. Studio Tour provides a unique showcase of the extraordinary British artistry, technology and talent that went into making the most successful film series of all time.



Fig 31: Warner Bros. Studio Tour

Green Space and Cassiobury Park

For the fourth consecutive year Watford Borough Council has won three national Green Flag awards for Cassiobury Park, Woodside Playing Fields and Cheslyn House and Gardens. Green Flag awards are the national standard for quality parks and green spaces, and are a sure sign that the facility is well maintained and managed, with excellent facilities for the public. It is the fourth year that Woodside and Cheslyn have been awarded their flags and an amazing sixth year for Cassiobury Park, which won its first award in 2007. The parks are judged on eight criteria; a welcoming place, healthy, safe and secure, clean and well maintained conservation and heritage, community involvement, marketing and management.

Cassiobury Park is the largest public open space in Watford comprising over 190 acres of green space stretching from Watford town centre to woodland and countryside to the west of the town. The park contains a wide variety of sports facilities, attractions for children and parts of the park are designated as a Local Nature Reserve. Activities and facilities range from Football, Cricket, Fishing, Bowls and Tennis to name but a few sports on offer. There are Paddling Pools, Playgrounds, a Miniature Railway and a multitude of events taking place through the year.

Cassiobury Park is one of Watford's most popular attractions receiving around 800,000 visits per year.

The Grove

Watford is proud to have on its doorstep this 5 star hotel which has accommodated national sports teams, movie stars as well as a wealth of business people and even Royalty. It comprises so many exquisite and stunning elements, you could describe it in different ways...it's a 5 star hotel, a luxury golf resort, a health spa resort, your perfect meeting and event venue or a grand country house hotel.

The Grove, set in 300 acres, has 217 rooms and suites available – there are the ultra modern West Wing and the unique and beautiful Mansion. Other facilities include a spa, one of England's finest 18 hole golf course, 3 Restaurants one of which has been awarded 3 Rosettes and is included in the 2012 Good Food Guide and offers a fine dining master class.



Fig 32: The Grove Hotel Watford

Anyone for Golf?

Not only does Watford have one of the finest golf courses in England situated at the Grove, but we are also lucky enough to have three other golfing facilities through, Top Golf a premier golf entertainment complex with exciting point scoring games along with a bar and full menu, Bushey Hall Golf Club which is Hertfordshire's oldest parkland golf course which not only provides a challenging round, but is a great venue for events and meetings and West Herts Golf Club providing over 100 years of golfing tradition.



Fig 33: Bushey Hall Golf Club



Fig 34: West Herts Golf Club



Fig 35: Top Golf

Other Activities and Venues

In case everything already mentioned in this section is not enough, there are a host of other offerings which strengthens Watford's position as an excellent location to live, work and play. These include the ***Vue Cinema, The Pumphouse Theatre and Arts Centre***, a multi-functional leisure centre with swimming pools, a fitness suite, a crèche, children's activities, various classes, squash courts, sports hall and cafe.

The town centre provides a varied night time economy providing everything from bars and pubs, to nightclubs and comedy venues. There is a wide choice of restaurants, particularly in the town centre including 6 new restaurants since 2012 some being major brands, for example ***Carluccios, Wagamama and Nados***.

Watford has been awarded Purple Flag status - a new accreditation scheme 'that recognises excellence in the management of town and city centres at night'. The independent Purple Flag assessors who came to Watford were particularly impressed with the police presence, taxi marshals, staggered closing times for pubs and clubs and the 'God After Dark' project that provides care for vulnerable drinkers.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Responsibility can be defined as how companies address the social, environmental and economic impacts of their operations and so help to meet sustainable development goals. The Government has a role in setting standards in areas such as environmental protection, health and safety and employment rights. It can also provide a policy and institutional framework that stimulates companies to raise their performance beyond minimum. The UK Government approach is to encourage and incentivise the adoption of Corporate Responsibility, through best practice guidance. Specifically, CR is seen as the voluntary actions that business can take, over and above compliance with minimum legal requirements, to address both its own competitive interests and the interests of wider society.

For businesses and companies who operate under ISO standards and regulations, ISO 26000, from the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), covers voluntary guidance on social responsibility. It is intended to be a worldwide standard and is aimed at both public and private organisations. It will inform participating organisations how to operate in a socially responsible way, and will be a distillation of international experience of what social responsibility means in practice.

Watford CVS

Watford has an extremely active Council for Voluntary Services (CVS). The aim is that it will lead an outstanding local voluntary sector that is valued by a prosperous, vibrant, diverse and successful community. In pursuing this vision, the mission is: strengthening Watford's voluntary sector through leadership, support, advice and example. The CVS is a membership organisation with over 200 local voluntary and community groups.

The CVS manage activities under four broad headings:

- Supporting local groups
- Promoting community activity
- Providing public services
- Providing community facilities

This organisation is perfect for companies looking to give more than money back to the local community. Companies who would like to offer their time can approach the CVS who will work with them to partner with charities who need assistance in particular areas that fit the business in question.

Local Charities

There are in excess of 250 charities with a base in Watford and it would be impossible to mention them all. Three of the more well known are the Peace Hospice, Watford Mencap and the New Hope Trust. All are very different, but equally worthwhile organisations which are active within the local business community which is reflected in the support they receive.

The Peace Hospice

The Peace Hospice cares for people living with life limiting or terminal illness and supports their families from across South West Hertfordshire. Most of the patients have cancer but an increasing number have other conditions such as end stage heart disease, respiratory and neurological disease. The care provided is holistic looking after the whole person, helping with emotional and spiritual issues as well as the physical symptoms each patient has. The focus is on enabling patients to live their lives to the full and providing the best quality of life when a cure is not possible. The Hospice provides inpatient care, day care, an outpatient service, complementary therapy, a hospice at home service and family services including spiritual care and bereavement support. The charity needs to raise £3.8 million of charitable income each year in order to run and develop the services. All the care given to patients and their families is free.

The Peace Hospice's mission is to improve quality of life for people in South West Hertfordshire coping with life-limiting illness. It is achieved by:

- Providing the highest quality care, free of charge, both within the hospice and in the community
- Respecting patients' dignity and independence
- Supporting their family and friends before and after the end of life
- Helping other care providers to improve the lives of those who are facing the end of life

Watford Mencap

Watford Mencap is a local independent charity for people with learning disabilities and their parents and carers living in South West Hertfordshire. They are affiliated to Mencap but are self funding and have to raise their own funds. Despite this Watford Mencap is one of the largest local Mencap societies in the UK, with a long-established history of providing high quality services to people with learning disabilities and their families in Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere. They are a registered charity with an annual turnover of £2.6 million, currently employ 120 staff, and have over 140 volunteers and provide support to over 500 local people with learning disabilities and their families.

Watford Mencap believes that people with learning disabilities have the right to enjoy equal opportunities and be valued as members of society, enabling them to lead the kind of

life they want for themselves. Over the last 5 years they have developed a range of creative and innovative new services for people with learning disabilities and their families. They also offer more personalised support to local people, ensuring all services are client focused and promote independence and choice for people, while balancing risk. The organisation is always open to new ideas and strives to seek out best practice, with the aim of achieving high standards in everything they do.

Watford Mencap has 3 residential homes which offer 24hour individually tailored and highly personalised residential care. Watford Mencap also provides 1:1 advice and practical support to help you find, set up and manage a home of your own. They visit people in their own homes as well as in the community and have received an Excellent rating from the Care Quality Commission over the last three years. Growing up brings a lot of changes – perhaps a need to be more independent, which can be hard. They have services for people aged 14 – 25 that can help you learn new things, make friends and become more independent. The Children’s Services are based at a fully-accessible Children’s Centre in North Watford but also use local community facilities. There are a variety of activities for children, however severe their disabilities, and also provide respite for families. There are two welcoming playrooms, a soft-play area, sensory room and all-weather outdoor play area. The Centre was rated ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted in February 2012.

The New Hope Trust

WNHT exists to serve homeless and vulnerably-housed people by providing accommodation and opportunities to rebuild damaged lives. They house 56 people every night and help over 600 people every year. Founded upon Christian values, which are at the core of our operation, we support people regardless of faith.

The New Hope Trust provides various different types of accommodation and support for homeless people across the South West Herts area. Dependant on the facility, residents are able to stay anywhere between night to night or up to two years. There is specialist support for those with issues such as alcohol abuse. The main aspiration of this charity is to encourage homeless people to change their lives and circumstances, enabling them to leave the streets and return to a more normal live.

For further information on Charities active in the area, please contact the Watford CVS.

Contact Details

If you would like to discuss any information contained within this document, have a business in Watford or are thinking about locating/starting your business to Watford, please contact Tara Clark, Inward Investment Manager, Watford and West Herts Chamber of Commerce through tara@watford-chamber.co.uk or call 01923 442442/07814876423

Other Publications available

- **Going for Business Relocation**
- **Going for Business Start-up**
- **Going for Business Growth**
- **Going for Business Investment**
- **Going for Business Networking**

ANNEX 1

Active Enterprises

LOCATION	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<i>UK</i>	2,158,555	2,182,750	2,207,290	2,280,215	2,325,770	2,341,900	2,300,355
<i>HERTFORDSHIRE</i>	48,145	48,540	49,260	51,200	53,160	55,135	58,825
<i>Broxbourne</i>	3350	3505	3585	3740	3880	3895	3765
<i>Dacorum</i>	6580	6575	6650	6855	7160	7300	7205
<i>East Hertfordshire</i>	6750	6870	7030	7265	7470	7615	7415
<i>Hertsmere</i>	4915	4930	5030	5185	5415	5670	5850
<i>North Hertfordshire</i>	5870	6015	6065	6325	6420	6395	6240
<i>St. Albans</i>	6875	6855	6880	7115	7400	8605	7795
<i>Stevenage</i>	2290	2345	2410	2580	2765	2730	2600
<i>Three Rivers</i>	3950	3940	4040	4240	4465	4635	4615
<i>WATFORD</i>	3515	3465	3530	3705	3785	3860	3935
<i>Welwyn Hatfield</i>	4050	4040	4040	4190	4400	4430	4405

ANNEX 2

Business Births

LOCATION	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<i>UK</i>	280,080	274,855	255,530	280,730	267,445	236,030	235,145
<i>HERTFORDSHIRE</i>	5985	5735	5805	6520	6690	5745	5820
<i>Broxbourne</i>	520	515	485	505	600	385	380
<i>Dacorum</i>	820	780	735	815	860	745	690
<i>East Hertfordshire</i>	920	805	865	900	960	820	740
<i>Hertsmere</i>	540	570	585	615	650	675	670
<i>North Hertfordshire</i>	715	655	670	765	735	610	595
<i>St. Albans</i>	775	790	780	915	890	805	915
<i>Stevenage</i>	325	295	315	420	430	285	255
<i>Three Rivers</i>	440	455	470	505	510	445	495
<i>WATFORD</i>	425	445	455	545	490	470	555
<i>Welwyn Hatfield</i>	505	425	445	535	565	505	525

ANNEX 3

Survival of New Enterprise (Hertfordshire and Watford only)

Year Established	Births	Year 1	%	Year 2	%	Year 3	%	Year 4	%	Year 5	%
<i>HERTFORDSHIRE</i>											
2005	5735	5410	94.3	4495	78.4	3695	64.5	3095	53.9	2540	44.3
2006	5805	5500	95.6	4615	79.5	3790	65.3	3085	53.2		
2007	6520	6270	96.1	5360	82.2	4195	64.3				
2008	6690	6165	62.1	4975	74.4						
2009	5745	5315	92.5								
<i>WATFORD</i>											
2005	445	430	96.2	350	77.9	290	64.9	235	52.6	195	43.2
2006	455	440	96.7	360	79.1	285	62.6	230	50.3		
2007	545	490	89.5	415	76.3	310	57.2				
2008	490	440	89.8	350	71.0						
2009	470	440	93.8								

ANNEX 4

Business Deaths

LOCATION	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<i>UK</i>	243,615	228,155	207,125	223,600	222,560	276,990	297,395
<i>HERTFORDSHIRE</i>	5285	5070	4595	5060	6350	7340	6760
<i>Broxbourne</i>	510	470	360	405	335	455	375
<i>Dacorum</i>	825	785	765	665	605	615	630
<i>East Hertfordshire</i>	885	900	690	715	660	730	700
<i>Hertsmere</i>	620	760	550	485	440	490	515
<i>North Hertfordshire</i>	695	675	520	590	525	600	630
<i>St. Albans</i>	1805	1075	785	740	690	705	1740
<i>Stevenage</i>	425	315	250	260	255	260	260
<i>Three Rivers</i>	550	580	475	370	325	375	405
<i>WATFORD</i>	485	675	460	395	370	415	650
<i>Welwyn Hatfield</i>	540	525	430	445	390	415	445

ANNEX 5

Unemployment

	UK	Scotland	Wales	South West	South East	London	East of England	West Midlands	East Midlands	Yorks/Humber	North West	North East
Change on quarter	0.1	-1.0	0.5	-0.1	0.0	0.0	-0.2	0.7	-0.4	1.3	-0.5	1.0
Rate	71.2	70.4	69.2	74.7	74.7	69.1	74.7	70.0	71.3	70.6	69.2	67.9

Annex 6

Watford Primary Schools

School Name	OFSTED Result
Alban Wood Primary	Satisfactory
Beechfield Primary	Satisfactory
Berrygrove Primary and Nursery	Converted to Academy/Outstanding
Bromet Primary	Good
Bushy and Oxhey Infants	Good
Cassiobury Infants	Outstanding
Cassiobury Junior	Outstanding
Central Primary	Satisfactory
Charter Infants	Outstanding
Charter Junior	Outstanding
Cherry Tree Primary	Good
Coates Way JMI and Nursery	Good
Field Infant and Nursery	Good
Field Junior	Satisfactory
Holy Rood Roman Catholic Primary	Outstanding
Holywell Primary	Satisfactory
Kingsway Infants	Good
Kingsway Junior	Inadequate
Knutsford Primary	Outstanding
Laurance Haines	Good
Leavesden Green JMIO and Nursery	Good
Nascot Wood Infant	Outstanding
Nascot Wood Junior	Outstanding
Orchard Primary	Good
Parkgate Infants and Nursery	Good
Parkgate Junior	Satisfactory
St. Antony's RC Primary and Nursery	Outstanding
St Catherine of Siena Roman Catholic	Good
St Joseph's Roman Catholic	Good

(OFSTED Inspection Reports www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Annex 7

Watford Secondary Schools

School Name	OFSTED Result
Chessbrook Education Support Centre	Outstanding
Francis Combe Academy	Satisfactory
Parmiter's	Converted to Academy/Outstanding
St Michaels Roman Catholic	Awaiting first inspection
Stanborough Park	Awaiting first inspection
Watford Grammer School for Boys	Converted to Academy/Outstanding
Watford Grammer School for Girls	Converted to Academy/Outstanding
Westfield Community Technical College	Satisfactory

(OFSTED Inspection Reports www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Watford Further Education

School Name	OFSTED Result
West Herts College	Outstanding

Annex 8

Watford Independent Schools

School Name	OFSTED Result
Bhaktivedanta Manor Primary School	Good
Immanuel College	Excellent
Longwood Nursery and Infants	Good
Longwood School	Good
Purcell School	Satisfactory
St Hilda's School	Excellent
St Margaret's Schools	Good

(OFSTED and Independent School Reports)

