Watford’s Community Plan

April 2003 – March 2006

As at 13th March 2003
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This document – Watford’s Community Plan – sets out a vision for Watford and how the partnership will work together to deliver it.

The focus of this Community Plan is on the needs and priorities of the people and communities of Watford, and the key challenges facing the town.

It recognises that no single organisation can solve the big issues facing Watford; but by working in partnership organisations can have a greater impact on improving the quality of life in Watford.

16 local organisations have formed a ‘Local Strategic Partnership’ for Watford, with the aim of working together to make Watford a better place.

Watford’s Local Strategic Partnership comprises the following organisations and partnerships:

- Watford Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Watford and Three Rivers Primary Care Trust
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- Hertfordshire Police Authority
- Watford Council for Voluntary Service
- Watford & West Herts Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Watford Enterprise Agency

Previous consultation, conducted by members of the partnership, identified the key issues for the town and these have informed the 10 themes in the plan, which are a framework for our work.

The themes and specific targets have been tested with local residents (via Watford’s Citizens’ Panel) and with community organisations (via a community event). The key priorities identified during this consultation will form the basis of a summary Community Plan which will be sent to all Watford residents.
The partnership has agreed the following vision for Watford:

**Our vision is that Watford will be a place where all people will be involved in their communities and where people thrive and grow because:**

- There is a wealth of opportunity for employment, learning, leisure and cultural activities and it is an attractive place to live.
- Streets and public spaces are smart, clean and safe.
- The community has access to high quality public services, which are delivered in a fair and equal way to all sections of the community.
- Citizens’ voices are expressed, heard and have a real influence on decisions.
- The contribution of all individuals and communities is valued, giving a strong sense of community spirit and civic pride.

This vision can only be achieved by key organisations in the town and the community working together.

Many of the targets and objectives in the draft plan are derived from statutory plans, which the Council and its partners have to implement. The most relevant plans linked to each of the themes set out in this document are listed at the end of each section, but these should not be regarded as an exhaustive list, as the Community Plan also needs to reflect community priorities.

Within the lifetime of this Community Plan, Watford Council will produce a ‘Local Development Framework’, or ‘LDF’, which will replace the current Local Plan (the Local Plan is the statutory framework for land use and development in Watford). The LDF will function as a key implementation tool of the Community Plan relating to the use and development of land. In time, the preparation, monitoring and review of Community Plans and LDFs will be closely co-ordinated.
Watford attracts large numbers of visitors on a daily basis, for shopping, nightlife, work, football matches and major cultural events. Watford is within the M25 ring and its housing, cost of living and wage costs reflect London’s influence. It is an affluent place and development pressures are high.

**Watford’s People**
Watford is a relatively small town in terms of population, but benefits considerably from the cultural diversity reflected in the residents of the town.
- 79,726 people live in Watford (Source: Census 2001)
- Watford has a relatively large ethnic minority population, 14% (Source: Census 2001)
- The population in Watford is getting older compared to 1991 (Source: Census 2001)

**Environment and Transport**
Watford is a very compact town with a limited amount of open space and a severe traffic congestion issue, which is a down side of the popularity of Watford as a place to live, visit and do business.

*Residents have told us that tackling congestion and cleaning up streets and open spaces are priorities, along with increasing recycling provision.*
- In 2000/01, 3175.59 tonnes of rubbish was recycled (Source: Quality of life indicators return).
- In 2000/01 Watford Council received 929 complaints from the public over noise (Source: Quality of life indicators return).
- 56% of Watford residents in employment drive to work. (Source: Census 2001)
- The number of cars per household in Watford is 1.21. (Source: Census 2001)

**Economy**
Watford has a thriving business community across a range of sectors; indeed the population of Watford increases four fold during the day.

*Bringing key brown field sites back into use, filling vacant office space and supporting local businesses are some of the key priorities for the partnership*
- The average earnings in Hertfordshire are £26,401 (New earnings survey 2001)
- 79% of all businesses in Watford employ less than 10 people (Annual business inquiry 2000)
- Watford provides jobs for approximately 56,700 people (Business strategies – spring 2002).
Housing in Watford
Properties here are in great demand and finding sites for new homes in Watford is difficult. This makes Watford an expensive place to live, whether you want to buy or rent. Some people are being priced out of the area altogether, and homelessness is an increasing problem.

- Watford Council has 5,000 high quality tenanted properties (reduced from 9,000 following the advent of ‘Right to Buy’)
- The average price of a property in Watford £146,559 (Source: First Quarter 2002, HM Land Registry)
- Single adult households make up 31% of all households in Watford (Source: Watford housing needs survey 2001)
- The average household size is 2.43. (Source: Census 2001)
- 190 homeless households were in temporary accommodation in March 2002 (Source – Government return P1E)

Education
The achievement of young people is high in Watford. The attainment levels are above the national average and most schools have had successful Ofsted inspections, which indicates that the standard of education is generally very good. With more partnerships being developed between schools, the further education college and community groups there are also improved opportunities for local people of all ages to benefit from community education.

- 93% of pupils from LEA maintained schools in Watford achieved 5 or more A to G grades at GCSE/GNVQ level in 2001 (Quality of life indicators return)
- The attendance rate in Watford primary schools was 94.1% in 2001/02
- The attendance rate in Watford secondary schools was 92.6% in 2001/02

Crime
Hertfordshire has a relatively low crime rate and is one of the safest places to live in the country. nevertheless tackling crime and the fear of crime are very important to local people and businesses. The Watford Community Safety Partnership, ‘Fear less in Watford’, has been set up to help target resources and tackle crime more efficiently.

- There were 880 burglaries committed in 2001/02, a reduction of 8% from 1996.
- There was 1460 vehicle crimes committed in 2001/02, a reduction of 26% from 1996.
- Violent crime, outside the Town Centre, has fallen by 14% between 1999 and 2002.
- In 2001/2002 2 acceptable behaviour commitments and 1 anti-social behaviour order were put in place.

Health
Health is obviously a key priority for local people and Watford is, in real terms, a relatively healthy place to live, but:

- Watford has the highest death rate from coronary heart disease in Hertfordshire
- Watford has the highest mortality rate in under 15s from accidents in Hertfordshire.
- Watford & Three Rivers Primary Care Trust has highlighted 5 priority areas for its 3 year plan: orthopaedics and trauma, coronary heart disease, diabetes, mental health and stroke.
Key themes

Informed by previous community consultation, the partnership has agreed the following 10 key themes; to reflect the broad issues we must tackle in order to achieve our vision.

Within these themes we have set, where we can, specific targets to enable us to measure our progress.

The key themes for Watford are:

- Valuing different cultures and building stronger communities in Watford
- A cleaner, greener, less congested Watford
- Making Watford a nicer place to visit and enjoy
- Providing affordable quality homes
- Making Watford a better place to work and do business
- Helping people in Watford to be healthier
- A vibrant, family friendly town centre
- A safer Watford
- Promoting learning opportunities for all residents
- Investing in Watford’s Young People

Community Cohesion
Promoting community cohesion cuts across all of these themes, and is an issue that all partners need to consider. It lies at the heart of what makes strong, safe and vibrant communities.

A cohesive community has the following characteristics:
- A common vision and sense of belonging for all communities.
- Diversity and difference are positively appreciated and valued.
- Those from different backgrounds have the same life opportunities.
- Positive relationships are encouraged and developed within geographical communities and communities of interest.

This will guide the partnership’s approach to community cohesion.
How will we know if we are making a difference?

This Community Plan sets out key targets, which we shall use to measure and monitor our progress.

Progress will be reported to the Local Strategic Partnership twice a year and an annual report will be publicly available.

The timescales of this community plan (April 2003 – March 2006) have been set to coincide with Watford's first mayoral term. The plan will be rewritten and re-launched for April 2006.
Key targets of the Community Plan

To be added following community consultation.

The key targets will be confirmed following consultation with the public.
Valuing different cultures and building stronger communities in Watford

Watford is committed to improving community cohesion and building stronger communities. We appreciate and value the diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances. One of the things that makes Watford a good place to live is the diversity of people and communities that live and work in the town. The word “community” means different things to different people. Some people see the area they live in as their community. Other people feel they belong to a community based around people with similar interests.

We will work with and support local people to build strong and vibrant communities that they can feel part of and which have a real power and influence to improve the quality of life in Watford.

What we are doing
• A cabinet member of the Mayor’s administration has been given the role of community cohesion champion.
• Watford Racial Equality Council is resourced to reinforce our commitment to equality
• Watford Council, Watford Council for Voluntary Service and its members, together with Hertfordshire County Council have developed the “Watford Compact” which sets out clearly the relationship between the voluntary and statutory sectors. The compact has various strands, which cover areas such as community consultation, policy appraisal, good practice, black and minority ethnic voluntary sector, volunteering and funding.
• Watford Council funds and resources Equal Access Help line. The help line offers free help and assistance to people with disabilities, help ranges from advice on accessible entertainment venues to assistance with claiming benefits
• The voluntary and community sector help people come together to find local solutions to local needs
Valuing different cultures and building stronger communities in Watford

Some key targets - Making Watford fairer

Disadvantage and deprivation affects people all over Watford and people who experience the most disadvantaged are often socially excluded:

- We will not tolerate people losing out in any way from what Watford has to offer because of their racial background. We have all promised to put the lessons of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry into practice.
- We will work to reduce racial tension and conflict through joint working, involving community and faith leaders.
- We will confront those who spread hate and division, involving the local media to highlight and celebrate Watford’s diverse local community.
- We will keep on encouraging people from our minority ethnic communities to claim the benefits they are entitled to, concentrating on those who most need our help.
- We will work with the Watford Racial Equality Council and the Commission for Racial Equality to review current arrangements and establish an appropriate race equality organisation for Watford and the county.
- We will ensure full involvement of elected members, so that they own the work on cultural diversity and make it an integral part of Cabinet and partnership meetings.
- We will urge local political parties to consider how they can represent local communities better.

By encouraging young people to feel part of the life of Watford we are investing in their future and helping to head off future problems such as drugs and crime:

- We will establish a multi-purpose town centre venue for young people with advice, information and training.
- More targets can be seen in the theme ‘Investing in Watford’s young people’.
Valuing different cultures and building stronger communities in Watford

Some key targets - Communities working together

When people play a part in the life of their communities they become better able to support each other and work together for lasting improvements. Local people have the opportunity to be involved in decisions about the area they live in through area committees and involvement in community and voluntary sector organisations.

- We will work with voluntary, community and faith groups to help people who are cut off from others get more involved in the life of their communities.
- We will work with black and minority ethnic community organisations funded by the council to strengthen them and help them deliver better services.
- We will ensure that Watford’s community centres are places where local communities work together and are enable to take over the management of their local centre.
- We will work with local people and groups to increase participation in twinning and increase twinning activities in the town particularly working with black and minority ethnic communities, young people and elders.

Theme Leader: Avani Modasia (Watford Council for Voluntary Service)
Supported by: Cate Hall (Watford Council), Councillor Rabi Martins (Watford Council), Phil Willerton (YMCA) and Martin Wayman (residents’ representative)

Key partners: Watford Racial Equality Council, Watford Council, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire County Council (including Children Schools and Families), YMCA, Watford Council for Voluntary Service and all community groups, all key partners involved in drawing up this community plan.

We want Watford to be an attractive place to live, work and visit. Residents have told us they want the town to look better – cleaner streets, less litter, reduced traffic on the roads and have well maintained parks and open spaces.

The state of the environment is a global issue, but local action makes a difference. The quality of the environment can have an impact on crime and people’s health, so improvements will contribute to many of the other targets set out in this plan. Our environmental policies also cover issues such as traffic and public transport, waste and recycling and energy efficiency.

**What we are doing - Cleaner**
- Implementing the short term Action on the Streets programme – addressing litter hot spots, subway cleansing, abandoned cars and chewing gum removal in the High Street.
- Implementing the Integrated Streetcare Best Value Review Performance Improvement Plan for an integrated street cleansing and grounds maintenance service delivering a more responsive, higher quality service at a lower cost, forging strong links with area committees, tenants groups and the Town Centre Partnership.
- We have adopted the outline recycling plan designed to meet statutory recycling targets, the document sets out a plan to expand the kerbside collection of green waste across the town in April 2003, followed by multi-material kerbside collection by April 2004.

**What we are doing - Greener**
- Entering into agreements with developers using Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to provide new or improved children’s play spaces, green amenity areas and community environmental projects to improve local facilities and deliver our Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Maintaining the biodiversity of Local Nature Reserves and identifying the potential for further designation.
- Putting in place a new Allotments Strategy to encourage increased take up and develop community use.
- Developing a Parks Strategy and bidding to the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore Cassiobury Park to its Victorian values.
- Pursuing the Cardiff Road regeneration scheme to regenerate brownfield land.
- The Watford and Three Rivers Energy Agency is working to help businesses, schools and householders to improve energy efficiency, reduce fuel poverty, raise local awareness and provide information.
A cleaner, greener, less congested Watford

What we are doing - Less congested

• Working in partnership to achieve the key objectives of the Local Transport Plan for Hertfordshire and the South West Herts Transportation Strategy.
• Working in partnership to reduce congestion for bus users in Watford and install over 100 new bus shelters during 2003.
• Campaigning for the Croxley Rail Link and Crossrail.
• Working with partners to improve access to Watford Junction Station and develop its role as a regional transport hub.
• Using planning powers to encourage mixed-use, higher density, high quality sustainable developments, especially in the town centre to reduce dependence on the car.
• Approving and putting into action strategies to encourage cycling and walking.

Some Key Targets

• Ensure that 20% of household waste is recycled or composted by 2003/4 and 30% by 2005/6.
• Ensure 85% of streets are cleaned to an acceptable standard.
• Ensure that a standard of 1 hectare of Local Nature Reserve per 1000 head of population is kept to.
• Provide at least 12 allotment plots per 1000 head of population.
• Ensure that Green Transport Plans are delivered in at least 10 schools per year and in 10% of all schools by 2005.
• Enable the delivery of Green Commuter Plans covering 35% of Hertfordshire’s workforce by April 2005.
• Achieve a 10% increase in use of local bus services by 2005/6.
• Improve and enhance the existing passenger transport network.
• Control traffic in Watford through calming, traffic management and parking management.
• Enhance west to east passenger transport links across Hertfordshire.
• Double cycle usage by 2004 and a further 100% increase by 2014.
• Introduce safer routes to school schemes to all secondary schools by 2016.
• Walking is the main travel mode in 33% of all journeys within Watford by 2008.
• Ensure that by 2007 there is a 50% increase in the public’s perception of the safety of the pedestrian environment.
• To ensure that 80% of future housing development is accommodated on previously developed land.
• Ensure that open space provision achieves the current requirement of 2.8 hectares per 1000 population and any new requirements, which will be established during the lifetime of this strategy.
• Ensure that the Council regularly monitors and reviews its Quality of Life indicators in line with statutory indicators and form the basis for measuring performance of cross-cutting themes and strategies.
A cleaner, greener, less congested Watford

Theme Leader: Mike Hayes (Watford Council)

Key Partners:

Strategies and Plans that have informed this section:
Cultural activities have a positive influence on the quality of life of the people of Watford and helps to make it a place to visit and enjoy.

The town is a major sub-regional shopping centre with a thriving nightlife. Watford Football Club and Saracens Rugby Club have a high profile in the sporting world and the Palace Theatre, the Colosseum and the Rainbow Festival attract regional and national recognition for their arts and entertainment programmes.

Private leisure operators make a valuable contribution with Woodside Leisure Park providing a multi-screen cinema, artificial ice rink, ten-pin bowling alley and restaurants. Leavesden Studios has been used to record Harry Potter films and first class health and fitness facilities are provided by a number of operators in and around the town centre, including the YMCA. In addition, Cassiobury Park provides a peaceful haven for walkers, children’s play and family recreation.

Cultural activities can help to combat crime and regenerate communities. They can also provide opportunities for all sections of the community to meet and socialise, to get and stay fit and healthy both physically and mentally, to learn new skills and to have fun.

Watford is fortunate to have a high level of local and town-wide facilities and services for leisure and culture. Unfortunately, this comes at a cost and many of the Council’s buildings are old and need investment to upgrade them to meet modern-day expectations and make them more efficient.

The Cultural Strategy aims to achieve this through a mixture of capital funding by public sector agencies, lottery funding and private sector partnerships.

Although Watford has a thriving nightlife, this is aimed mostly at young adults, with lots of bars and clubs for drinking and dancing. The Strategy aims to counter-balance this by developing a more family friendly town centre.

Over the next five years, the Strategy aims to transform the quality of the facilities and services in the town. It aims to achieve higher levels of satisfaction and to reduce the costs of running the facilities. It also aims to increase the number of opportunities and people taking part in cultural activities with a particular emphasis on diversity and young people.
Making Watford a nicer place to visit and enjoy

The Strategy also aims to maximise the potential of partnership working through building relationships between appropriate agencies from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors.

Some key targets
- Attract a cinema operator to the town centre by 2007.
- Provision of a refurbished or replacement Pump House Theatre by 2005.
- Relocation of the Museum to provide a modern Heritage Centre and potentially a visitor information point integrated with Watford Library by 2005.
- Refurbishment and modernisation of Watford Leisure Centre by 2004.
- Provision of a small fitness area and refurbishment of changing rooms at the Bill Everett Centre by 2004.
- New Sports Hall and Gym at Westfield Community Technology College by end of 2004 and refurbishment of swimming pool by 2005.

Theme Leader: Ken Campbell (Watford Council)


Strategies and plans that have informed this section:
Properties in Watford are in great demand both from local people and those from outside the area. Finding sites for new homes in Watford is difficult. Houses are already densely packed, and any land which does become vacant is the subject of fierce competition. This makes Watford an expensive place to live, whether you want to buy or rent. Some people are being priced out of the area altogether, and homelessness is an increasing problem.

What we are doing

- Working with partners to make best use of all available resources.
- Increasing the provision of affordable housing e.g. continue to negotiate with developers for affordable housing on Section 106 sites.
- Improving access to housing in the private sector.
- Improving housing conditions in the public and private sectors, with particular regard to energy efficiency.
- Developing a homelessness strategy by July 2003, including new and innovative ways of preventing homelessness.
- Developing a key worker strategy by April 2003.
- Moving towards a choice-based lettings system.

Some key targets:

- Increase the supply of affordable accommodation - both temporary and permanent. We are working on plans, which should deliver more than 140 affordable properties in 2002/3 and more than 60 in 2003/4.
- Affordable housing target of 30% on sites with more than 15 dwellings (80% for rent and 20% for low cost ownership).
- By March 2003 to develop ways of improving access to the private rented sector (e.g. new deposit/bond scheme, information packs etc.).
- Implement a new Private Sector Renewal strategy by July 2003.
- By 2006 to reduce energy use by 32% in Council owned properties and 27.6% in private sector properties.
- Ensure that all Council properties meet the Government’s ‘decent homes’ standard by 2010.
- Homeless applicants will only be placed in bed and breakfast accommodation in an emergency and for short periods.
- Work with Registered Social Landlords and the voluntary sector to increase the provision of temporary hostel accommodation.
- Develop a comprehensive range of information services to prevent homelessness, including implementing improvements identified in the review of our Rights and Advice Service, production of leaflets, website etc.
Providing affordable, quality homes

Theme Leader: Valerie Dutton (Watford Council)
Supported by: Sue Gray (HARI)

Voluntary organisations including: Watford New Hope Trust, Group for the Rootless of Watford (GROW), Herts. Young Homeless Group
Tenants and Residents Associations

Over the last decade Watford has benefited from jobs and services resulting from a strong local economy. As older industries have declined, such as printing, new ones have become established. Watford is now known as a regional shopping centre, as well as having a strong base in banking, financial services and information technology. Many companies have their headquarters in Watford such as Mothercare, Iveco Ford, the Hilton International Group and Wetherspoons. In addition the local economy is seeing an emergence of new opportunities as a result of developments in the film and media industries.

As a result, Watford attracts large numbers of commuters from London as well as the surrounding areas. On weekdays there is a fourfold increase in the town’s population.

Watford has a thriving small business sector, 79% of business employ less than 10 people. This sector is actively supported by both the Watford Enterprise Agency and the Watford and West Herts Chamber of Commerce and Industry who provide a range of support services to this key sector.

The key future challenges will be: -

• For the Watford economy to remain competitive in light of wider developments planned in the region, not least the major expansion at Stansted Airport. Watford cannot afford to be complacent as pressures of growth take hold.

• To encourage, attract and retain a range of business sectors to locate and grow within the town, so that there is not an over-reliance on the retail sector. Care and retention of existing businesses in Watford is a key focus of activity with the business community.

• To ensure that the major new businesses planned at Leavesden and Cardiff Road provide a range of good quality employment opportunities for local people and at the same time have a positive impact on improving the town’s environment.

• To ensure that there are lasting benefits from the investments of £7m of Government Single Regeneration Budget funds in Watford.
Cardiff Road
Securing the economic, environmental and social regeneration of Cardiff Road leading to a significant increase in the quality of life for local residents is a key target over the next four years.

This will be achieved by the appointment of a preferred development partner for the site during 2003 and the transfer of the land to them, using compulsory purchase powers if necessary. It is anticipated that construction works will start in 2004 with a new access road connecting Wiggenhall Road to the rear of Watford General Hospital. This road will enable the site to be developed whilst removing unnecessary commercial traffic from Cardiff Road.

Working with a commercial development partner the Council will deliver:
- A high quality of urban design, making the new business units attractive places to work.
- High environmental standards making the scheme energy efficient, and minimising the impact on the ecology of the area, it will be designed to encourage walking, cycling or public transport as the preferred modes of transport to the site.
- Effective support for existing and new local businesses as well as being attractive to new firms moving to Watford.
- An integrated package of measures to enable local people to access the jobs created, establish their own business and retain wealth created by the development in the West Watford and South Oxhey area.

It is anticipated that the scheme will be substantially complete during 2008.

Sun Printers
The site of the former print works, Sun Printers, has been abandoned since 1990. There has been extensive consultation on the future use of this site and local residents have made key contributions.

Plans for this site include building a : - warehouse unit, health club, hotel, restaurant/bar, office showroom, nursing home, day nursery, health centre, retail units, and residential, public open space, with associated new and modified access and pedestrian/cycle routes and car parking”

It is estimated that about 400 new jobs will be created on the site – in addition to the jobs created during the construction process.
Some Key Targets:

- By June 2003, produce a “Welcome to Watford Business Pack”, illustrating what the town offers for both new and existing businesses.
- By June 2003, undertake an analysis of the Watford economy. This will help develop a vision for the future of Watford’s economy.
- Increase the capacity of Watford Enterprise Agency’s business centre by a further 60 starter/incubation units.
- Maximise local training schemes, post Single Regeneration Budget (SRB).
  - With 45 residents being helped into employment within 3 years
  - 200 people will have received advice and guidance within 3 years.
  - 30 people will have received qualifications within 3 years.
- Watford Enterprise Agency to increase its number of business clients across South West Herts from the current 900 clients to 1,500 by the end of 2003 and to 1,800 by the end of 2004.
- Within the above figures, to increase business start ups from 200 per annum to 400 per annum and existing businesses supported from 150 to 500 by 2004.
- To further develop awareness programmes for business start up/self employment with local schools, colleges and minority groups.
- The Chamber of Commerce seeks to expand its membership to 500 local businesses, large and small. It also seeks to act as a focal point of reference for local business representation with public bodies including local authorities. The chamber will further develop its growing range of benefits to members.
- Watford Council will maximise opportunities for trade with local businesses and aim to pay suppliers in 30 days.
- Through the South West Business Partnership encourage the establishment of a Leavesden Business Office. This office will aim to achieve the following:
  - Training and employment co-ordination –for companies moving to the site.
  - Business Support Service
  - An East of England Development Agency sponsored Enterprise Centre for Film TV and Media sector industries, incorporating an innovation centre and incubator units.

Theme Leader: Chris Pichon (Watford Enterprise Agency and Watford & West Herts Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
Supported by: Tricia Taylor (Watford Council)


Strategies and Plans that have informed this section: Hertfordshire Prosperity Forum’s Local Economy Assessment, Watford District Plan 2000
Helping people in Watford to be healthier

For most of us, the quality of local health services is high on our list of priorities.

But health is not just about better hospitals. It also depends on having good housing, a regular income, reliable transport and safe, friendly neighbourhoods, as well as lifestyle factors like diet, exercise and whether people smoke.

Our aim will be to improve the overall health of the community and make sure that everyone has equal access to health advice and quality health services.

What we are doing

Watford and Three Rivers Health Partnership Board, consisting of key people from the Council, the Primary Care Trust (PCT), the Voluntary sector, the County Council, makes joint decisions on Health Improvement and Modernisation Programme (HIMP) funding, key priorities in actions to reduce the causes of ill health and makes decisions on how best to achieve the targets detailed in the HIMP.

The PCT with its partners is working on a number of community initiatives, Single Regeneration Budget is helping the community of West Watford. Much work is being carried out with older people, young people and children. Projects with the Council and Sport England are working to ensure girls from ethnic communities can enjoy sports and learn to teach sports.

Herts Healthy Schools is now leading the way nationally on bringing health awareness to a younger generation and schools in Watford are participating.

Some key targets

- To achieve NHS Plan targets that all patients should be able to see a healthcare professional within 24 hours and a GP within 48 hours by 2004.
- To reduce by 15% the number of accidents to the elderly in Care and Residential Homes by 2006.
- To pilot Health Impact Assessment on at least one proposed project during 2003, in conjunction with partners, and to fully evaluate.
- To run the smoking cessation service in Watford (and Three Rivers) and achieve a target of 217 4-week quitters in 2003 and Department of Health target for 2004.
- To reduce the rate of teenage conceptions by 50% among the under 18s by 2010 and to have established a downward trend in the rate of under 16s conceptions by 2010.
Helping people in Watford to be healthier

Improve the health of the Ethnic Minority Population

- Prepare an ethnic minority health strategy in consultation with residents, local groups and relevant national organisations by November, 2003.
- To put mechanisms in place in primary care to better detect those at risk of diabetes within the ethnic minority population.
- To develop systems for implementation of the NHS National Service Framework for diabetes.

Reducing health inequalities is a high priority and some key targets are:-

- Working in partnership towards improving the health of the population by reducing health inequalities. The PCT will prepare an action plan as soon as the Government’s nationwide plan is issued, following the publication of the findings of consultation carried out on “Tackling Health Inequalities”. Targets and actions will be detailed in the Health Delivery Plan.
- The support of voluntary and community groups with HIMP funding from the PCT will ensure community involvement in improving health.
- To increase understanding of health needs, improve data collection and ensure data is analysed and made available. Improve access to primary and secondary health care and information on health and health services.
- Develop the Ethnic Health project to develop core quality standards in primary care and improve access to all health services for ethnic communities.
- Explore ways in which interagency working can be used to disseminate information on health promotion, self-help for minor health problems and access to health services.

Theme Leader: Peter Wright (Watford and Three Rivers Primary Care Trust)

Key Partners: Watford and Three Primary Care Trust, Watford Council, West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust, Hertfordshire Partnership Trust, Community Groups

Strategies and Plans that have informed this section: Watford and Three Rivers Health Improvement and Modernisation Programme (HIMP), National Service Frameworks (Coronary heart disease, mental health, diabetes and older people), Housing Strategy
A vibrant, family friendly Town Centre

A vibrant, family friendly town centre reflects the health, wealth and aspirations of the borough. We are committed to having a town centre that is smart, clean, green and a pleasure to work in, live in and visit.

Making sure that residents, visitors and businesses can all enjoy Watford town centre is a complex balancing act. Many of the things we need to do in the town are talked about elsewhere in this document, but these are some things that need to happen specifically in the heart of the town.

What we are doing

- We will move towards offering “family friendly” leisure in the town centre by encouraging responsible management of late night venues and attracting new types of leisure into the town centre.
- We will make sure that Watford remains the premier town centre shopping destination in the north London Home Counties area.
- We will promote town centre living by attracting new developments that include some residential space, and by looking at changing how empty space above ground floor businesses is used.
- We will improve the environment of the town centre by making it cleaner, greener, smarter and more interesting for visitors.
- We will work towards making sure people find it easier to get in and out of Watford town centre, especially at night.
- We will encourage the private sector to work with the Council and police to improve safety and reduce crime in the town.
- We will work in partnership to encourage businesses to locate in the town centre, especially along Clarendon Road.
A vibrant, family friendly Town Centre

Some key targets
- Support Watford Council’s Cultural Strategy, especially in attracting a cinema operator to the town centre by 2007.
- Benchmark our town centre’s performance by December 2003 and measure an overall improvement in performance by 2008. We will measure things like recorded crime, number of visitors, value of commercial rents, numbers of empty business premises.
- An increase in the number of people living in the town centre by 2006.
- Introduce Police Community Support Officers into the town centre by 2003.
- Increase the number of businesses actively involved in ShopSafe and PubWatch by 2004.
- Produce a feasibility study on operating a Business Improvement District (a scheme where businesses pay higher rates to improve their local area) in Watford town centre by 2005.

Theme leader: Liz Jones (Watford Town Centre Partnership)

Key Partners: Watford Council, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire County Council, Watford and West Herts Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Watford Town Centre Partnership, Capital Shopping Centres, private sector.

Reducing crime and the fear of crime is essential to improving everybody’s quality of life. The Watford Community Safety Partnership, ‘Fear Less in Watford’ has been established to bring a new approach to the fight against crime and find ways to improve the safety of communities. The partnership is gathering and sharing information that will help target resources and tackle crime more efficiently.

Findings from a Crime and Disorder Audit and subsequent consultation with the community identified 5 key priorities for our town (reducing the fear of crime is an important cross cutting element of each priority area). The priorities are detailed further in the ‘Watford Community Safety Strategy 2002-2005’. Each key priority group, made up of key local agencies, will develop delivery plans.

A change to the way crime is recorded.
From April 2002, as part of a national initiative, Hertfordshire has adopted a new method of recording crime, which will mean for the first time all forces will immediately record crime based on what victims report has happened. The changes are focused on providing victims with a better service and standardising procedures across the country.

There is likely to be a significant rise in the number of crimes recorded, but as the initiative is a national project Hertfordshire looks set to continue to be ranked as one of the safest places in the country to live and work. These changes will help us identify potential hot spots and crime trends and respond more effectively to them.

The Government has a 5 year crime reduction strategy and has identified the following national priorities: Reducing burglary and property crime, tackling vehicle crime, dealing with disorder and anti-social behaviour and helping victims and witnesses.

Local concerns were established through consultation with the community and specific issues were identified for our town that have influenced objectives we have set for Watford Community Safety Strategy 2002-2005.
Some key targets:

- **Reduce and prevent crimes against the person** (wounding, assaults, robbery, muggings, domestic violence, racist and homophobic attacks) – Targets to be set from 2003/04.

- **Tackle anti-social behaviour and criminal damage** (noise nuisance, disorder, intimidation by groups, graffiti and vandalism) – Targets to be set from 2003/04.

- **Reduce vehicle crime** – Reduce the number of thefts from vehicles and theft of vehicles by 2% per year until 2005.

- **Reduce burglary** – Reduce the number of burglaries by 8% year on year and 10% year on year for repeat victims.

- **Reduce crimes involving drugs and alcohol** – Increase the number of offenders dealt with in respect of class A drugs (from baseline to be established 2002/03). Increase the percentage of people arrested and referred for treatment (from baseline to be established 2002/03).

As well as tackling crime we will look at why people become criminals, with the following being amongst the important anti-crime measures we want for Watford: good health, schools, recreational facilities, housing, environment and community involvement.

**Some Specific Initiatives**

**PCSOs** – The Home Office has allocated 14 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to Hertfordshire, 11 will be located within Watford. The CSOs will employed by Hertfordshire Constabulary and will be specifically located within the town centre to support the work of Police Officers.

One PCSO will be working with Francis Combe School and Westfield Community Technology College.

**Alleygating** (installing gates on alley ways) - As part of the burglary priority of our strategy the Watford Community Safety Partnership will be working with the community to deliver a comprehensive Alleygating Scheme across the town.

**Design and Build** – Creating a safer environment and designing out opportunities for criminals is an important factor in reducing crime and the fear of crime in Watford. Architectural Liaison Officers within the police force scrutinise planning applications and make crime reduction recommendations for Watford council.
Crime Prevention – Everyone can help keep crime down, by not becoming a victim of crime. The local Crime Reduction Officers at Shady Lane Police Station, offer crime prevention advice and support is offered locally through neighbourhood watch schemes.

Watford and Three Rivers Against Crime (WATRAC) install security equipment free for vulnerable members of our community.

Theme Leader: Jane Taylor (Watford Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary)

Key Partners: Hertfordshire Constabulary, Watford Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Watford and Three Rivers Primary Care Trust, West Herts College, Fire and Rescue Service, Community and Voluntary Sector, Probation Service, Watford and Three Rivers against crime (WATRAC), Hertfordshire Police Authority and Alcohol Advice Centre.

Promoting learning opportunities for all residents

We are committed to providing people in Watford with opportunities to learn and develop throughout their lives. All of the learning resources within the community must be accessible for all. This will ensure that an increasing proportion of the population participates in learning and acquiring skills, meeting the needs of individuals, the community and employers.

**What we are doing**


The partnership has successfully been awarded £500,000 to establish 30 learning centres across the town; and in a range of locations. For details contact Mike England on 01923 278318.

**Some key targets**

- Promote on line lifelong learning in Watford through:-
  - Opening of 30 new UK on-line learning centres in February 2003
  - Expansion of access in libraries and other local authority sites, including family centres and education support centres.
- Further develop college initiatives that contribute to opportunities for learning in the community.
- Promote pathways in learning through joint initiatives involving Connexions, Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) workers, and other providers.
- Work with disadvantaged and hard to reach groups to design appropriate opportunities that meet their needs and help them into a job.
- Provide a shared town centre ‘one stop shop’ venue, to include YMCA, the Connexions service and IAG.
- Provide special programmes to create more family learning and support opportunities, such as those provided at Watford Football Club.
- Develop programmes for young adults with emotional health and well being problems.
Promoting learning opportunities for all residents

- Deliver improved basic literacy and numeracy skills amongst the 2000 or so Watford residents not achieving level 2 of the national curriculum.
- Campaign to promote 'learning for learning’s sake’ in Watford communities.

**Theme Leaders:** Keith Shephard (Hertfordshire County Council)

**Supported by:** Phil Willerton (Watford learning Partnership and YMCA)

**Key partners:** Watford Learning Partnership, Watford Council, Hertfordshire County Council, University of Hertfordshire, West Herts College, Learning and Skills Council, Westfield Community Technology College, Hertfordshire Careers Service Ltd, 'Connexions '

The wellbeing of children is fundamental to the success of any community. By placing the needs of the individual child at the centre of our thinking we will succeed in maximising the potential of every child.

The achievement of young people is high in Watford. The attainment levels are above the national average and most schools have had successful Ofsted inspections, which indicates that the standard of education is generally very good. With increasing partnerships being developed between schools, the further education colleges and community groups there are also improved opportunities for local people of all ages to benefit from community education.

However there remains concern over:

- The impact of poverty on achievement
- The achievement of particular groups; for example, students with challenging behaviour, children who are in the care of the local authority and children from particular ethnic groups
- The uptake of basic skills by some ‘hard to reach’ groups.

**What we are doing**
In addition to formal education, members of the local strategic partnership are investing in Watford's young people in the following ways:

**Community Safety Initiatives**
- In recent years a Community Police Officer in North Watford has developed a popular motor cycle project with young people.
- The introduction of Youth Shelters, providing young people with their own space to gather.
- Provided training for front-line youth workers.
- Organised courses to build respect in young people and divert them from getting into trouble.
- Promoted drugs awareness, education and information gathering by providing supervised skateboarding and other activities.
Investing in Watford’s young people

Leisure, cultural and play initiatives
• Providing safe, supervised places for children to play.
• Skateboarding & wheeled sports - Options for holiday activities and working to find a long term solution for the development and building of a permanent skate park in Watford town centre.
• Young leader development - Secondary school children working with sports coaches to deliver fun physical activity sports sessions in primary schools. Encouraging juniors to gain health benefits from active lifestyles and older young people to learn and get future employment as sports coaches.
• Organising school visits and talks on the heritage of Watford and other cultures.
• Holding workshops on heritage and arts development, including street dance workshops for teenagers.
• Offering Junior weights for 12-16 year olds as a daily after school activity.
• Sports coaching sessions for skills development and for a healthy physical lifestyle in a number of sports including; swimming, athletics, football, basketball, badminton, trampolining and gymnastics.

Some key targets
Many of these targets are linked to Hertfordshire County Council’s Children, Schools and Families’ Service Plan, and Watford Council’s Cultural Strategy.

• Increase the number of childcare places for 0 to 2 year olds.
• Provide a free nursery education place for every 3 year old whose parents/carers want one.
• Increase the number of parenting support operators.
• Create new out of hours childcare places for children aged 5-14.
• Improve educational attainment at all Key Stages.
• Reduce the level of unauthorised absence from primary and secondary schools.
• Ensure that 100% of permanently excluded children receive full time education.
• Increase the number of young offenders in the community accessing full-time education.
• Increase school links to local employers to address future needs of business.
• Employment and careers support which ensures that the career needs of young people and local employers are met.
• Establish a one stop shop for young people.
• Improved targeting of leisure facilities for Young People, with provision for skateboarding being a priority.
Investing in Watford’s young people

- Developing a corporate policy to ensure that children’s issues are considered across Watford Council.
- Seeking external funding to increase the number of play opportunities available to children.
- Developing youth forums and a youth council to increase understanding and involve young people in the democratic process.
- Increasing the number of specialist activities including music projects and social and personal development.
- Joint working between Play and Early Years Development and the Youth Service to ensure that children and young people’s needs are met in a seamless way.
- Increasing opportunities for accredited learning.
- Greater cooperation with Connexions personal advisers in order to access a broader range of young people.

**Theme Leaders:** Keith Shephard (Hertfordshire County Council)
Supported by: Jan Spavin (Westfield Community Technology College)


**Strategies and Plans:** Children Schools and Families Service Plan. Education Development Plan, Learning and Skills Council Corporate Plan, Community Services’ Best Value Performance Improvement Plan.
## Where to find key plans, strategies and documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan/Strategy/Document</th>
<th>How to obtain</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hertfordshire Policing Plan 2002-2003</td>
<td><a href="http://www.herts.police.uk">www.herts.police.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Children schools and families Service Plan 2002-05</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hertsdirect.org">www.hertsdirect.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hertfordshire Youth Justice Plan 2001-2002</td>
<td>Hertfordshire Youth Justice service, County Hall Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8DP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watford and Three Rivers Health Improvement and Modernisation Programme (HIMP)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.watford3r-pct.nhs.uk">www.watford3r-pct.nhs.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>National Service Frameworks (Coronary heart disease, mental health, diabetes and older people)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.doh.gov.uk/nsf/nsthome.htm">www.doh.gov.uk/nsf/nsthome.htm</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Watford’s Cultural Strategy</td>
<td><a href="http://www.watford.gov.uk">www.watford.gov.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Watford District Plan</td>
<td><a href="http://www.watford.gov.uk">www.watford.gov.uk</a></td>
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