

ANNEX 1 - Current business engagement arrangements

Business Ambassadors

Hemel Business Ambassadors (HHBA) was established in 2014 when the Council was developing its place message and identity. The HHBA brought together the District's economic champions, with the aim of influencing the regeneration of Hemel Hempstead, in order to compete, attract investment, business and visitors and to create a more successful economy.

It is led and administered by West Herts College and is financed on a subscription model (up to £3,500 pa for a large business). A website was also developed, <https://investhemel.co.uk/ambassadors/> focussing on attracting inward investors.

However in the last couple of years, HHBA has had difficulty maintaining membership of the larger businesses and has gradually morphed into a SME networking forum. The aim of championing the District to investors has been lost due to the lack of engagement from big businesses with the current HHBA offer.

Economic Development's Team's 1-1 business engagement

The Council's Team Leader and Economic Development Officers have been carrying out business engagement visits on a regular basis, (subject to COVID restrictions), with an additional focus on the sectors which have been most affected by the Pandemic (hospitality and retail).. The Council also has a dedicated officer who engages and supports companies within the film and creative sector to facilitate the increase in filming activity in the borough. Around 8-10 individual engagements take place each week. A comprehensive database also exists and discussions and meetings are recorded on this.

The Maylands Business Centre provides space for over 40 small businesses and flexi space for up to 10 daily customers. Furthermore, as part of the recovery plan, the LEP Growth Hub now offers a monthly business surgery, providing support and business advice. In addition to this a bi-monthly business newsletter is sent out to over 3,000 business contacts that have been built up over many years.

Economic Recovery Board

This Board was set up in May 2021 to support the recovery of the local economy following the Pandemic and also to achieve longer term objectives for the future growth of the economy in Dacorum. A representative from the HBA sits on the Board together with a representative from the hospitality sector.

Hemel Place Board

The newly established Hemel Place Board will be engaging with businesses to identify their barriers to further growth and sustainability. Currently the Board has two business representatives, Amazon and ProLogis. The input from businesses on the Board will contribute towards the development of a Hemel brand and identify the conditions needed for further investment and growth.

Hemel Business Improvement District

The BID is a business-led and business-funded organisation which runs various events every year, operates cleaning projects and runs safety initiatives to improve the area for businesses, visitors and residents. It was established in 2018 with the priorities to promote the town and attract more visitors by improving the environment and the visitor

experience. The Council works in partnership with the BID and the Council's Strategic Director of Place is also on the BID Board.

Herts Innovation Quarter

Herts IQ taps into, and uses, trusted existing channels and forums to engage and communicate with businesses, supporting both local business growth and wider new inward investment opportunities. Herts IQ works closely with Hemel Hempstead Business Ambassadors, providing speakers for their events, it shares information for newsletters and supports relevant activities.

At a regional, national and sector level, Herts IQ has led Off Site Manufacturing (OSM) construction opportunities, showcasing events and undertaken comms activities using construction related forums and media.

In spring 2022, Herts IQ will be launching the Herts IQ Network, which is a platform aimed at connecting and supporting businesses specifically involved in construction, OSM, agri-science, enviro and clean tech industries. Formed in partnership with built environment experts BRE Group, agricultural research pioneers Rothamsted Research and the University of Hertfordshire, the Herts IQ Network will boost collaboration, innovation and new business opportunities county-wide, bolstering Hertfordshire's green economy.