

<b>Committee(s):</b> Policy, Resource and Economic Development	<b>Date:</b> 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
<b>Subject:</b> Economic Development Data Report	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
<b>Report of:</b> Phil Drane, Director of Strategic Planning	<b>Public Report</b>
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### Summary

This report moves forward the recommendations of the Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee minute 121, held on the 10 July 2019, which agreed to provide to this committee detailed economic data for the borough, such as:

- i) List of the largest companies by turnover;
- ii) List of the largest non-domestic rate payers;
- iii) Employment figures by sector;
- iv) Updated retail audit of the Brentwood town centre.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Members note the economic data provided.
- Members approve a new economic development strategy be prepared in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chair of the Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee, to be brought back to Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee.

### Main Report

#### Introduction and Background

1. The Council's current Economic Strategy was approved and published in 2016 (Item 399, Economic Development Committee, 10 March 2016). It is designed to look forward over a three-year period, between 2017-2020.

2. The Council produces a number of strategies to deliver specific service area goals in line with the Corporate Plan. The current Economic Strategy 2017- 2020 is now nearing the end of its life and at a time when the Corporate Plan is also to be revised, this is an ideal time to begin consideration of economic priorities for the future informed by current data and the Council's wider aspirations.
3. An overview of economic data for the borough was presented at the Policy, Resources and Economic Development (PRED) Committee on 11 July 2019. Members requested more detailed information, which is attached as appendices to this report. Consideration of this data, and the collection of other types of data, should inform the setting of priorities for the three year period ahead as part of work to prepare a new Economic Development Strategy (2020-2023).

## **Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

### Brentwood's Largest 50 Companies by Turnover

4. Appendix A includes a list of Brentwood's 50 largest companies by turnover, as reported to Companies House. The turnover data presented is for the parent company. Privately held companies are not included. The businesses fall predominantly into the following Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) categories: Information and communications (14%); Administrative and support activities (14%); Wholesale and retail trade (14%); Construction (12%); Finance and insurance activities (12%); and Professional, scientific and technical activities (12%). The remaining 12% of the borough's largest businesses is comprised of companies working in the Manufacturing; Education; and Human health and social work sectors.
5. The majority of the largest companies are located in 3 wards: Warley (30%), Brentwood West (20%) and Brentwood South (16%). These wards include a number of business parks, such as the Warley Hill Business Park and Codham Hall; shared commercial space, such as BT, Academy Place, Kingsgate and Kings House; and stand-alone office buildings such as Sky CP (information and communications), Liverpool Victoria (insurance) and Majenta (information and communications).

### Brentwood's Largest 50 Non-Domestic Rate Payers

6. Appendix B provides the top 50 non-domestic rate paying businesses in Brentwood as of 30 June 2019. The annual charge is calculated by multiplying the property's rateable value, which is set by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), by a rate in the pound set annually by central Government.
7. The rateable value of a property broadly represents the yearly rent the property could have been let for on the open market on a particular date.

## Essex Employment and Skills Board 'Evidence Base District Profile 2019 – Brentwood'

8. Appendix C is a detailed report compiled by the Essex Employment and Skills Board. The 'Evidence Base District Profile 2019 – Brentwood' provides skills and economy headlines; statistics about enterprises, employees and vacancies; and employment forecasts.
9. The Essex Employment and Skills Board (ESB) was established in order to give employers a platform to shape skills provision across Essex. By working with large employers, academic institutions, SMEs and local government, the ESB creates solutions to the skills challenges that industries face and helps provide opportunities for people to build long-term careers. ESB is focused on the following priority sectors which are set for growth and are suffering skills shortages: Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering; Care; Construction; Financial & Related Services; Health; IT, Digital and Creative; and Logistics.
10. According to data from the Office for National Statistics, 91% of Brentwood businesses fall into the micro category (1-9 employees).
11. The five largest employment sectors by SIC code in Brentwood include Professional, scientific and technical activities (21%); Construction (18%); Wholesale and retail trade (13%); Information and Communication (11%); and Administrative and support service activities (10%).

## Brentwood Town Centre Monitoring Report

12. Appendix D includes the Brentwood Town Centre Monitoring Report, which has been updated on 19 August to include the most recent snapshot of retail occupancy of the High Street, Ongar Road, Crown Street and Kings Road.
13. The area included in the Brentwood Town Centre Monitoring Report has been expanded to include the boundary outlined in the Brentwood Town Centre Design Guide. The current vacancy rate is 12.06% (calculated at 19 August). This rate is almost 2% higher than the national average of 10.3% and 3.6% higher than the East of England average, according to the latest statistics provided by Springboard UK.
14. The largest cluster of vacant units is located within The Baytree Centre, which is currently 35% unoccupied. Since securing planning permission in June to make changes to floor space and use classes for several units, the Centre has seen an increase in enquiries. Two retailers have entered into new leases and letting agents are in advanced talks with various businesses. In July, Clarks Shoes relocated from the High Street into The Baytree Centre. The centre is also creating two pop-up experiences: Table Tennis England, in partnership with Active Essex, is taking out a

temporary lease to set up a table tennis venue from September, and the Rotary Club will be operating a Santa's Grotto in an empty unit from 30 November-24 December.

15. Units opening soon include two premises that have been unoccupied for almost a decade: Pinney Talfourd Solicitors is taking over the former Post Office, creating an additional office to support their current operations on Ongar Road. Box Fit Gym is moving into the former Westbury Press building on Kings Road.
16. Monitoring will be extended to include Shenfield and Ingatestone in future business monitoring reports.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

17. It is important to share economic data to inform Councillors about current situations and trends within the borough to inform the aims and objectives of a new economic development strategy for the Council.

### **Consultation**

18. No formal consultation has taken place regarding this report.

### **References to Corporate Plan**

19. Economic Development is a key priority in the Council's 'Vision for Brentwood' Corporate Plan 2016-2019. Consideration of local economic data as well as responses from the Vision for Brentwood consultation will help inform preparation of a new Economic Development Strategy for the Council to replace the current Economic Strategy 2017-2020 (June 2017).

### **Implications**

#### **Financial Implications**

**Name & Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Director of Corporate Resources**  
**Tel & Email: 01277 312829/jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk**

20. The Economic Development budget for this financial year has allocated funds for preparation of a new Economic Development Strategy.

#### **Legal Implications**

**Name & Title: Paula Harvey, Corporate Governance Solicitor & Deputy Monitoring Officer**  
**Tel & Email: 01277 312705/paula.harvey@brentwood.gov.uk**

21. None.

## **Economic Implications**

**Name & Title: Phil Drane, Director of Strategic Planning**

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22. The economic implications are set out within this report.

**Other Implications** (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

23. No other implications.

**Background Papers** (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

Brentwood Economic Strategy 2017-2020, Brentwood Borough Council, June 2017  
Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee, Minutes, 10 July 2019  
Brentwood Town Centre Design Guide (Draft), October 2019, page 10

## **Appendices to this report**

Appendix A: Top 50 Brentwood businesses sorted by turnover

Appendix B: Top 50 Brentwood businesses by non-domestic rates payable

Appendix C: Essex Employment and Skills Board, Evidence Base District Profile 2019 – Brentwood

Appendix D: Brentwood Town Centre monitoring report (August 2019)