



**BRENTWOOD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Brentwood Economic Growth Strategy

Action Plan 2025-2026



# Introduction

Based on the vision for an entrepreneurial, start-up friendly, skilled, and sustainable economy in Brentwood, this action plan outlines key projects designed to turn that vision into reality. These initiatives will foster a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem, enhance skills development and promote sustainable growth for the benefit of businesses and the local community.

Funding for these projects may come from multiple sources, including Council budget, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and grants. Some projects will be co-delivered with partners such as Essex County Council, Greater Essex Careers Hub, South Essex Advanced Technical Skills, Ambitious Essex Growth Hub and Backing Essex Business.

## 1. Start-Ups: Entrepreneurial Spirit at the Core

### Project 1.1: Entrepreneurial Training and Mentorship Programme

**Outcome:** Strengthened entrepreneurial talent pool and higher success rates for new businesses.

**Objective:** Offer training programmes and mentoring to budding entrepreneurs to build business acumen.

**Actions:**

- Work with partners to offer workshops, webinars and mentoring schemes for new business owners on subjects like finance, marketing and HR.
- Partner with successful local entrepreneurs to offer mentorship opportunities.
- Promote the Ambitious Essex project and consider whether an extended network of local entrepreneurs would be beneficial.

**Timeline:** Up to one year.

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## Project 1.2: Availability of Business Space

**Outcome:** Increased business occupancy, with new companies attracted to Brentwood Borough for its supportive business environment.

**Objective:** Ensure attractive, modern commercial space is available in the Borough.

**Actions:**

- Explore programmes to support start-ups or specific sectors with competitive rents at council-owned commercial space.
- Work with the planning policy team to ensure appropriate new commercial space is allocated in the new Local Plan.
- Work with local developers to secure high quality, affordable workspace for SMEs.
- Attract inward investment along strategic routes to secure accommodation for larger businesses.

**Timeline:** Up to one year.

## Project 1.3: Business Support Programme

**Outcome:** Increased access to support for local start-ups and innovation-driven businesses.

**Objective:** Offer support to start-ups and small businesses, particularly those focused on innovation.

**Actions:**

- Ensure an appropriate business information and networking programme is active in the Borough.
- Subject to funding, deliver a local business grants programme aimed at specific sectors and early-stage businesses with an emphasis on innovation, sustainability and digital transformation.

**Timeline:** Up to one year.

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## Project 1.4: Promoting Digital, E-commerce and Social Media

**Outcome:** A more digitally proficient local business community with greater online presence and growth potential.

**Objective:** Help local businesses modernise by transitioning to digital platforms and expanding their e-commerce reach.

### **Actions:**

- Offer digital literacy training, focusing on the benefits of online sales, digital marketing and customer engagement via social media.
- Organise workshops and seminars with experts in the digital space to encourage adoption of the latest technologies.
- Work with Digital Essex and commercial partners to drive digital connectivity across the Borough to encourage business growth.

**Timeline:** Up to one year.

## Project 1.5: Supporting Our High Streets

**Outcome:** Ensure that Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone high streets remain vibrant destinations for residents and visitors.

**Objective:** Take an active role in future proofing the Borough's high streets.

### **Actions:**

- Seek opportunities for collaboration with the Brentwood Connected Business Improvement District.
- Progress redevelopment of The Baytree Centre to become a key retail, hospitality and leisure destination in the centre of Brentwood High Street.
- Work alongside partners to ensure that our high streets remain clean, safe and welcoming spaces.

**Timeline:** Up to one year

## 2. Skills: Building a Workforce for a Modern Economy



### Project 2.1: Partnerships with Schools

**Outcome:** A workforce with skills that align with current and future business needs, especially in high-demand sectors like technology and sustainability.

**Objective:** Understand the support secondary schools in Brentwood need in promoting skills and careers to students.

**Actions:**

- Collaborate with Brentwood schools to understand their students' needs in skills and career development.
- Agree actions for Brentwood Borough to take, or to secure from partners, once the needs of students are known.
- Promote work placements and internships with local businesses, and provide connections to a wide range of sectors, for real-world learning.

**Timeline:** Up to one year.

### Project 2.2: Lifelong Learning and Reskilling Programme

**Outcome:** A more adaptable, skilled workforce ready for future job markets.

**Objective:** Promote reskilling and upskilling programmes for adults, focusing on emerging sectors like AI, green technologies and renewable energy.

**Actions:**

- Work with providers and ECC to signpost training courses, certifications and workshops concentrating on key skills and emerging technologies including retrofitting.
- Consider any opportunities to work with Skills England as it develops.
- Work with local businesses to identify skills gaps to be met.
- Encourage skills providers to deliver their courses in the Borough or to host courses at venues that can be reached by public transport.
- Work in partnership with DWP to hold regular job fairs to promote careers and skills opportunities in the Borough.

**Timeline:** Up to one year.

## 3. Sustainability: At the Heart of Growth



### Project 3.1: Renewable Energy Infrastructure Development

**Outcome:** Reduced carbon emissions and lower energy costs for businesses, promoting long-term economic sustainability.

**Objective:** Enhance local energy infrastructure with a focus on renewable sources to support businesses and households.

**Actions:**

- Work with energy providers and Essex County Council as appropriate to offer incentives for local businesses to switch to renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power.
- Work with planning colleagues to secure BREEAM Very Good or Outstanding for all new commercial buildings.
- Work with colleagues to deliver a campaign to raise awareness of renewable energy options and their benefits to businesses.
- Highlight opportunities and provide training as appropriate for local business to be part of the supply chain for major new infrastructure projects.

**Timeline:** Up to one year.

### Project 3.2: Green Business Incentive Programme

**Outcome:** An increase in green businesses and sustainable practices across Brentwood.

**Objective:** Promote sustainability, green innovation and environmental responsibility to businesses.

**Actions:**

- Support Essex County Council proposals for a sustainability certification programme for local businesses to highlight their eco-friendly practices.
- Host knowledge sharing events to implement circular economy principles and reduce carbon footprints.
- Signpost to financial incentives such as tax breaks or grants for businesses that adopt sustainable practices.

**Timeline:** Up to one year.

## 4. Monitoring and Evaluation



The action plan projects will be reviewed quarterly by the internal Economy Board (or its successor) and annually by the relevant Council Committee, which will set the updated plan for the year ahead.