



**BRENTWOOD
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Our Plan, Our Future

2024-2028



Ambitious for Brentwood

Our Borough: A sustainable, vibrant community
where everyone thrives and belongs

Hello All,

Welcome to Brentwood Borough Council's New Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028. It sets out the Joint Administration's plans for the Brentwood Borough and priorities for the next four years.



Councillor Barry Aspinell
Leader of Brentwood Borough Council

Since I took office in May 2023, our Joint Administration has been looking to steer Brentwood towards a cleaner and greener environment, to make our community even safer, and ensure our local economy is flourishing and remains so for the future. In doing this, we must exercise sound budgetary management to balance the books and to ensure we operate transparently. This will allow us to remain sustainable for the future and continue to provide and deliver excellent quality services to our residents, businesses and visitors.

In March 2024, we were pleased to have the Local Government Association undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge on the Council. This assessed how the Council operates, with positive findings reported across the organisation.

We have achieved substantial local success already. Our new plan builds on this success, focusing on the areas of environment, sustainable development, parks and leisure, alongside the promotion and development of our commercial and retail centres to bring about positive outcomes we can all be proud of.

This new Corporate Plan sets out our ambitions for the Borough, captured in three clear and distinct strategic themes. We believe these themes resonate with you, our residents and our businesses. They are the essential issues we care about for our present and future generations.



The themes are:

A Place to Call Home Cleaner, Greener & Safer A Thriving & Growing Economy

Each theme is underpinned by a set of ambitions and priorities, which will focus our activity on achieving benefits for you, the residents and businesses of Brentwood.

As a Council, we have already started bringing these ambitions to life. We were the first and only council in Essex to have the entire council vehicle fleet running on hydrotreated vegetable oil (bio-diesel), equivalent to a 90% reduction in carbon emissions. Something to be proud of, I believe.

Along with increasing our electric charging facilities, we are continuing to build carbon-neutral homes at Brookfield Close, Hutton and Harewood Road, Pilgrims Hatch - a welcome increase within our Council housing stock.

We will continue to work with commercial and community partners and residents on the actions we believe are needed to protect and enforce areas such as our high streets and public spaces, including making these areas cleaner and more attractive to visit during both day and night.

We will build on the unique Business Improvement District that was successfully set up last year. Developing these good relationships with local businesses is key to ensuring that the Borough of Brentwood continues to be a safe, vibrant and welcoming place to shop, relax and do business.

As a Council, we are also committed to reflecting on our own performance and ways of working. To this end, we want Brentwood Borough Council to be a 'Leading Local Authority'. This means ensuring a solid foundation of good governance underpins all we do and we exercise sound financial management as an organisation.

Earlier this year, we introduced a Scrutiny Performance and Standards Committee, which shows our commitment to ensuring good governance throughout all the Council's decision-making.

We will deliver our Corporate Plan the Brentwood way. That means doing so in a way that aligns with our Council's core values:

Belong, Innovate, Nurture and Trust

Delivering our Plan

Our Plan, Our Future is the principal corporate strategy of Brentwood Borough Council. It is our blueprint for success, informing co-ordinated action across the council to deliver against our 3 strategic themes



Jonathan Stephenson
Chief Executive of
Brentwood Borough Council

Underpinning our plan is a strong commitment to good governance and robust financial management. This is reflected in our ambition to be a leading local authority. This is something all council staff embrace on a daily basis and reflect in their work to deliver good quality services to residents and businesses across the Borough. It means working together as a whole council to develop our services, as well as doing those things that put Brentwood Borough Council on a sound financial footing and support the organisation to operate efficiently and effectively for the people of Brentwood.

Councillors have identified and agreed key activities that will commence in 2024/25. We will monitor progress on these activities to ensure their delivery. Each year we will update our Corporate Plan, so that new actions take the place of those that have been delivered. This will ensure that the outcomes we seek to achieve become a reality for the Borough. Every year we will update you on our progress by producing an Annual Report, allowing you to hold the Council to account for its performance and contributing to us being an effective and trusted organisation.

In parallel to this, we will align the annual refresh of the Corporate Plan with our budget setting process. This will ensure that the yearly allocation of financial resources within the Council's budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy and our ambitions as set out in the Corporate Plan accord and remain aligned.

The Corporate Plan will also inform other key policies and strategies of the Council and our partners, ensuring the collective pursuit of the goals we have set.

Our Borough

Innovative creation of the Brentwood Connected Business Improvement District (CID), bringing together high street businesses in Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone.



Borough

Our borough covers an area of approximately

59 square miles
(15,312ha)



Population

Brentwood borough has a population of approximately

77,000³



Between **2011** and **2021** the local population increased by **4.7%**, which was lower than the overall increase for East of England (**8.3%**). This means the population is growing at a slower pace than many other areas in the East of England.

Lowest 45% Population Density The population density of Brentwood is **3.6** people per football pitch-sized piece of land, meaning it is among the lowest **45%** for population density across English local authority areas.

Age

18.4% ages 15 under



61.4% ages 16-64



20.2% ages 65+



Households⁴

16% of households in Brentwood are privately-rented homes, an increase of **4.7%** since **2011**.

This increase is also greater than across the East of England.

71.9% Own their own home

0.7% Shared ownership

11.3% Social rented

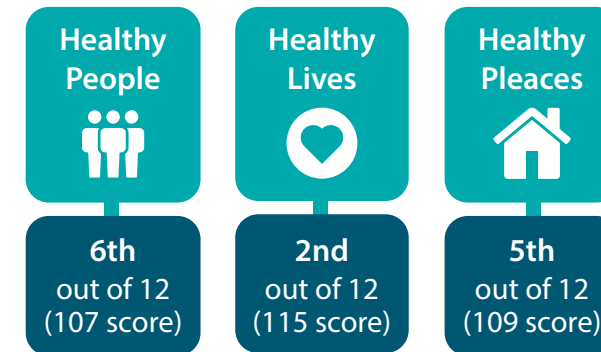
0.1% Rent free



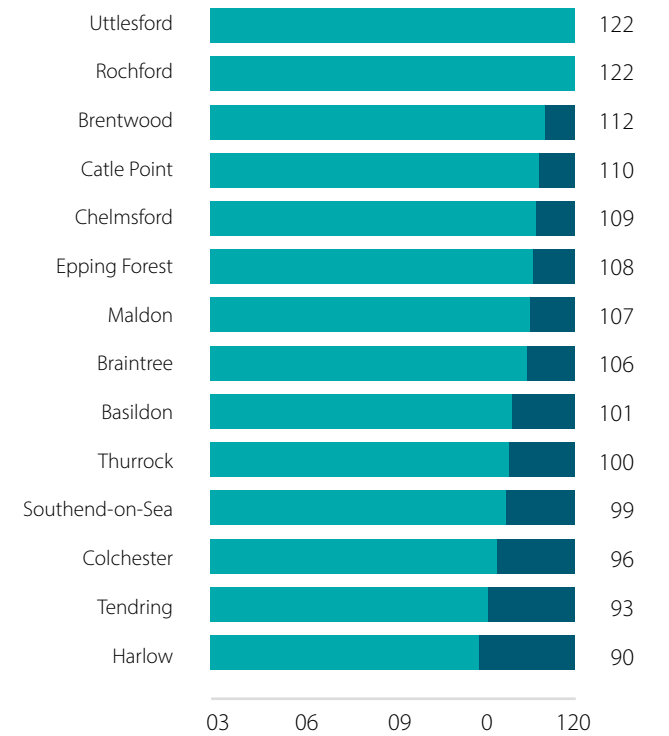
Health

The Health Index⁵ is a national measure of health in England. It provides a broad picture of health, including health outcomes, health-related behaviours and personal circumstances and wider drivers of health that relate to the places where people live.

Brentwood has a median health index score of approximately **112**, the third highest in the county.



Health Score



Disability⁶

5.4% of residents are identified as being disabled and limited a lot, **8.3%** are identified as disabled and limited a little. **86.3%** of residents are identified as not disabled.

Deprivation

A relatively affluent area, the Borough ranks **287⁸** out of **317** authorities nationally (where **1** is the most deprived and **317** the least deprived).

55.9%⁹ of households in Brentwood are not deprived in any of the **6** categories used to measure deprivation.

Earnings

Brentwood residents typically have a gross median weekly pay of **£730¹⁰** per week, **£135** higher per week than the East of England average.

Ethnicity⁷

People living in Brentwood who identify as:

- 88.5%** White
- 5.1%** Asian/Asian British/Asian Welsh
- 2.3%** Black/Black British/Black Welsh/Caribbean or African
- 3.1%** 'Multiple' ethnic groups
- 1.1%** 'Other' ethnic group

Crime

Brentwood Borough has a crime rate of **74.6** police recorded crimes per **1,000** population.



This places Brentwood **7th** out of all districts and boroughs in Essex for crime rate.¹¹

¹Essex Tracker Survey 2023, ²Essex Tracker Survey 2023, ³Census 2021, ⁴Census 2021, ⁵Health Index Dashboard | Essex Open Data ONS 2021, ⁶Disability in the context of this statistic relates to people with a long-term health problem or disability, including conditions and illnesses relating to old-age

⁷Ethnic group - Census Maps, ONS, ⁸Microsoft Power BI - IMD 2019, ⁹Household deprivation - Census Maps, ONS, ¹⁰Local indicators for Brentwood (E07000068) - ONS, ¹¹Compare your area | Police.uk (www.police.uk)

Your Council



One of 12 borough and district councils in Essex providing services in a two-tier structure, alongside Essex County Council



There are 39 Members of the Council, who represent 13 Wards



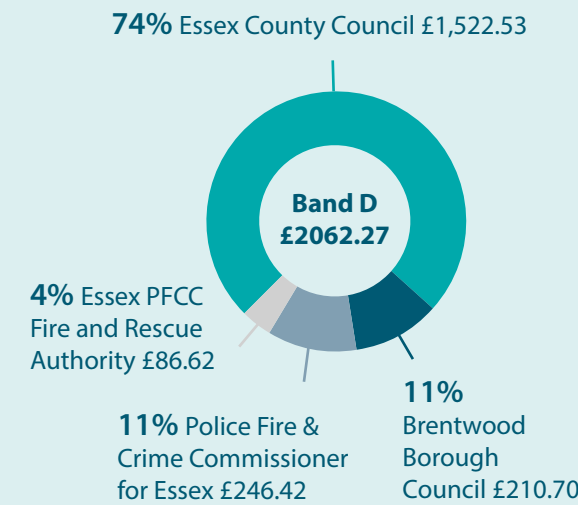
There are 9 parish councils serving local communities

As a local authority, our primary role is the delivery of good quality public services in the Borough. The majority of our resources are used to achieve this.

The services we provide include:

- Community services
- Community safety
- Housing services
- Planning services
- Building control
- Economic development
- Leisure and tourism
- Waste and recycling collection
- Electoral services
- Council Tax and Business Rates collection
- Benefits
- Off street parking

In 2024/25 the council will collect £7,903,218 in Council Tax, which also includes Parish Precepts. Every £1 of Council Tax is shared in the following way:



On average, each household will pay £2062.27 in Council Tax in 2024/25. Only a fraction (10.2%) of that - £210.70 for an average band D property – is paid to Brentwood Borough Council to help fund the services it provides to local people and businesses. Essex County Council will receive £1522.53 for the services it provides to the whole county, including Brentwood Borough.

These services include:

- Children services and education
- Adult social care
- Libraries
- Highways

What this looks like:

- 44600** Total employee jobs in the Borough of Brentwood
- 4245** Enterprises in the Borough of Brentwood
- 786** Planning applications processed per year
- 3,750** Memberships to The Brentwood Centre
- 484** People awaiting homes on the Housing Waiting List
- 2000** Routine play spaces safety inspections carried out per year
- 600** Litter bins emptied every week
- 16.7** Million square metres of grass cut throughout the year
- 1195** Fly tipping investigations completed with 68 fixed penalty notices issued
- 1410** Fixed penalty notices issued for litter offences
- 58727** Telephone calls received by our Contact Centre in 2023/24

Our Partnerships

We work in partnership when we share a common goal and where it is mutually beneficial to do so. Brentwood has the following partnership arrangements in place with other councils:

- **South Essex Councils (SEC)** – oversees sub-regional growth and infrastructure development affecting Brentwood and partners across south Essex.
- **One Team** – our strategic partnership with Rochford District Council that supports both councils to share resources and achieve more together than would be possible by acting alone.
- **South Essex Housing Group** – a group comprising housing professionals across Essex used to share best practice and collaborate on schemes such as rough sleeping.

We also collaborate with Partners on the following:

- **Peabody** – working together via our customer services hub to provide a wide range of additional support that complements council services such as housing.
- **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Citizens Advice** – co-location at the Town Hall to provide residents with wide ranging services all under one roof.
- **Essex Police** – The Community Safety Hub brings together the Council, police and broader enforcement agents.

Governance and Financial Management

To deliver this Corporate Plan, the Council must have a solid foundation of good governance and sound financial management. Our commitment to this is specifically expressed in the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance and the key principles set out therein and as defined by CIPFA and SOLACE.

We will review the effectiveness of our governance arrangements and report on our performance and areas for improvement in the Annual Governance Statement, which is published each year as part of the annual Statement of Accounts.

We will monitor and report on progress against the Corporate Plan throughout the year and our management of associated risks.

We will publish an Annual Report which will provide an opportunity for our residents to hold us to account for our performance. It sets out the progress we have made in the delivery of our Corporate Plan and our performance in the delivery of our services.

Each year, the Council reviews its financial strategy to ensure resources follow our agreed priorities. As part of this process, the Council considers:

- How it can work differently to achieve efficiencies necessary to maintain services
- Opportunities to generate income streams to support the Council's ambitions for the Borough
- Service design and delivery options to best meet the needs of the community
- How to utilise the Council's asset portfolio both efficiently and effectively

Our approach is set out in the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy, which is approved each year as part of the budget setting process.





Strategic Theme:

A Place to Call Home

Priorities:

- ✓ Engage communities and community representatives in Council service design, policy development and decision making
- ✓ Influence to ensure residents achieve the best physical and mental health and have access to care and support when they need it
- ✓ Plan for and deliver high quality homes for all to meet current and future housing needs

Key Deliverables

- 1 Develop a long-term strategy to deliver more affordable housing, whilst also creating greater housing choice and types of developments to meet the needs of our local community, young families and older residents who may wish to downsize
- 2 Review the Brentwood Borough Local Development Plan to ensure it continues to meet the future development needs of the Borough, with particular consideration given to parking, infrastructure, open spaces and social housing provision
- 3 Ensure Council-owned properties and estates are well managed and maintained, with tenants and leaseholders supported to have an active voice in decision making about their homes
- 4 Tackle the wider determinants of health by embedding health considerations into policy development and related interventions, across the whole Council. We will work with all our partners, including Essex County Council and the voluntary and charitable sector, to ensure that health is at the forefront of our work so that residents can live good healthy lives and thereby help to relieve the burden on our healthcare services
- 5 Introduce a Brentwood Locality Grant Scheme to expand support for local groups and organisations to target small community projects that will improve health and wellbeing, including mental health



Strategic Theme:

Cleaner, Greener and Safer

Priorities:

- ✓ Deliver a net zero council by 2030 and encourage sustainability across the borough
- ✓ Lead on environmental improvement initiatives that enhance our natural environment for all to enjoy
- ✓ Deliver initiatives that create a cleaner and greener borough

Key Deliverables

- 1 Implement agreed actions arising from our Climate Emergency Declaration and continue to develop and deliver our route map to achieving Net Zero Carbon Emissions for council operations by 2030
- 2 Explore the creation of a Local Area Energy Plan to identify the most effective route to being a Net Zero Borough by 2040
- 3 Work with our partners, licensed venues and residents to create a Women's Safety Charter so that everyone is safe and feels safe, whether they work or visit Brentwood
- 4 Explore the re-introduction of a Green Award scheme for local businesses to celebrate those who lead the way in positive climate action
- 5 Develop plans for active travel and leisure walking opportunities across our borough, including a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), to encourage physical activity and sustainable modes of transport



Strategic Theme:

A Thriving & Growing Economy

Priorities:

- ✓ Promote responsible growth that results in well-designed neighbourhoods
- ✓ Support vibrant town centres
- ✓ Nurture local business whilst securing inward investment

Key Deliverables

- 1 Develop a new Economic Growth Strategy for the Borough, working alongside Brentwood Connected BID to improve our high streets
- 2 Use our influence to create a focus on improving both the large and small scale retail offer in high streets, shop parades and key retail areas across the Borough
- 3 Develop a new strategy that sets out a programme of renewal and enhancement of community infrastructure and street furniture to enhance our community spaces
- 4 Review our Parking Strategy to determine where investment and improvements to parking are best suited and will positively contribute to the strategic priorities of the Council
- 5 Use our influence and work with partners to remedy the challenges of Brentwood High Street, including enhancing accessibility and improving road maintenance

A leading Local Authority

To deliver this Corporate Plan, the Council must have a solid foundation of good governance and sound financial management



Priorities:

We are committed to operating in accordance with the 7 principles of good governance set out in the CIPFA 2016 Framework:

- ✓ Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- ✓ Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- ✓ Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefit
- ✓ Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- ✓ Developing the entity's capacity including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
- ✓ Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- ✓ Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

Fit for the Future

Developing the organisation so that it is best placed to respond to challenges and opportunities that may arise in the future. This means:

- ✓ Continuing to develop the capability and capacity of our workforce so that they are appropriately skilled and supported to deliver the council's priorities, now and in the future
- ✓ Transforming our services so that they continue to meet the needs of our residents, service users and businesses
- ✓ Creating a work environment and culture that reflects our core values and can withstand uncertainty and change

Key Deliverables

- 1 Develop and deliver a Communications Strategy that utilises different platforms and forms engagement to reach our residents and stakeholders
- 2 Create a platform for parish councils, residents' associations, business groups, and appropriate local organisations to be able to participate in the development of council policy and strategy
- 3 Demonstrate proactive leadership within South Essex Councils (SEC) and contribute to the success of the partnership, whilst also ensuring the voice of Brentwood is heard
- 4 Deliver a balanced budget and stable long term financial plan for Brentwood Council
- 5 Make best use of our scrutiny powers by investigating opportunities and barriers to strengthening our community, economy and culture across the Borough





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