


| | |
|---|---|
|  | Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 1 st December 2020 |
| | Report from the Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment |
| Supporting the Economic Recovery | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Wards Affected: | All |
| Key or Non-Key Decision: | Non-Key |
| Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act) | Open |
| No. of Appendices: | Appendix 1 – Growth Sectors in Brent Appendix 2 - Employment and Skills Support |
| Background Papers: | 0 |
| Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details) | Alan Lunt Strategic Director of Regeneration & Environment Alan.Lunt@Brent.gov.uk |

1. Purpose of the Report

To update the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee regarding the council and partners response to assist Brent residents into employment in a turbulent labour market and to support businesses and town centres to adapt and survive the impacts of Covid.

2. Recommendation(s)

That the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee note and comment on the contents of the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 The impacts of Covid will be significant in the short term to the survival of Brent businesses, employment prospects and income of residents. This is evident from the rising unemployment and the number of businesses that have closed since the first lockdown in March 2020. The council is doing all it can, working with its partners, to support local businesses and to help residents to find employment.
- 3.2 Residents will also need support to develop skills in sectors that are the most resilient to the economic turbulence and with the greatest chance of growth such as digital, tech, creative and the green economy, with a focus on access to quality employment and progression. There

is some resilience in existing sectors that are important to the Brent economy such as logistics and food warehouse and food manufacturing.

- 3.3 Some businesses and high streets will need to adapt to changing ways of working, such as increased home working¹ and the rapid acceleration of digital commerce. The council will work in the short, medium and long term to ensure that high street diversification and improvements are continued. This will include supporting the digital skills of businesses, as well as developing a mixed offer that works for local communities, including cultural and community amenities, food, drink and leisure, as well as workspaces that can host SMEs and potentially flexible spaces for firms looking for alternatives to Central London.
- 3.4 The paper will outline the economic context, the response to the Covid impacts, highlighting how the council and partners are supporting residents into work, to improve their skills or reskill, and to help businesses and town centres to survive and ultimately succeed.

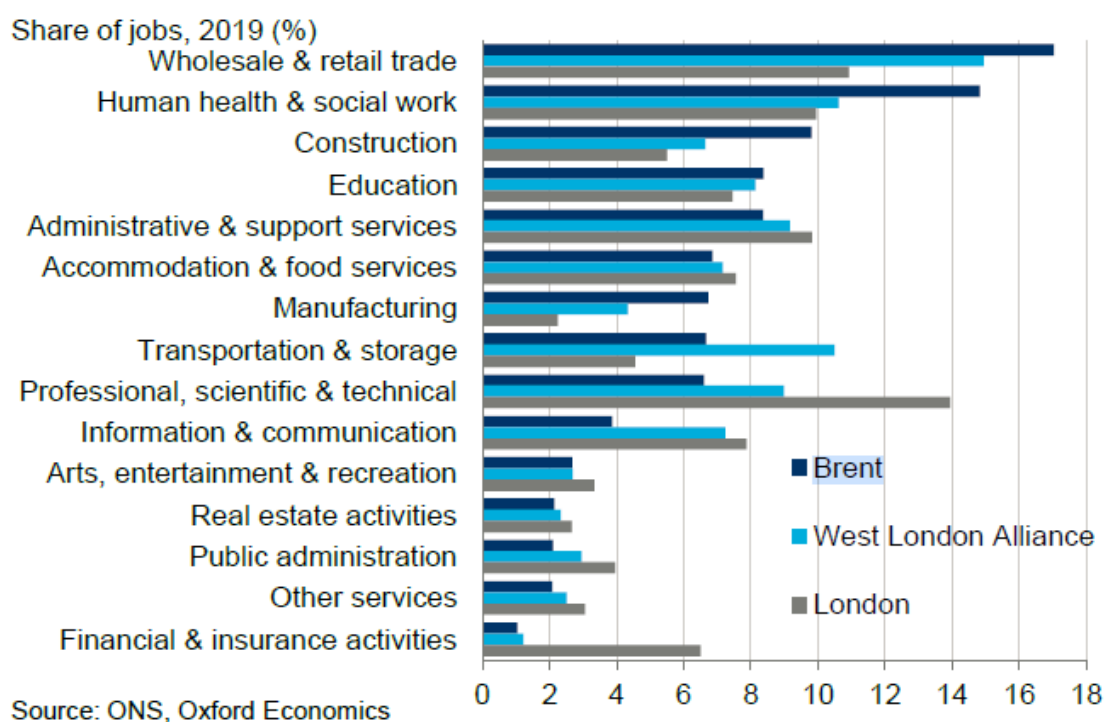
4. Economic data and context

Impact on employment and unemployment:

- 4.1 The National ONS Labour Force Survey, released in October and based on data to the end of September 2020 and which can be compared with information from March 2020 shows that for Brent:
- Total employment in Brent at the end of August 2020 was 163,100 (including 25,300 people who were furloughed.)
 - Unemployment has increased rapidly for young people in Brent; in September there were 3,410, 18 to 24 year olds claiming unemployment-related benefits, up by 315% since March.
 - There are 22,575 claiming out of work benefits in September compared with 7,875 in March. The number has trebled for 18-49 year olds and nearly doubled for people over 50.
 - The number of self-employed women increased slightly from March to June.
 - The number of self-employed men fell by 800 from March to June (from 23,300 to 22,500).
- 4.2 The West London Alliance commissioned some research from Oxford Economics to look at the impact of the Coronavirus on the West London economy, and on each individual Borough. This has given some valuable contextual information and data, although as it was published in June it only assesses the very early impact of the pandemic. The report can be downloaded [here](#).
- 4.3 Brent's economy is heavily represented by employment in sectors likely to be especially impacted on by the pandemic. Much of the employment in these sectors is low paid, part time and can be insecure. This is the key driver of the Brent's low median household income, with the second lowest of all London boroughs.

¹ According to the latest Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, the proportion of British adults who worked from home increased to 29%, the highest since the beginning of July.

Table 1 Workplace employment by sector, Brent, 2019 %



- 4.4 The report found that the borough has above-average exposure to manufacturing and (compared to London as a whole) transport & storage. Combined, these sectors represent 13% of the borough’s workplace employment. The Borough’s working age population tends to be older than elsewhere, and less highly qualified (48% of Brent working age residents were educated to degree level or above in 2019, the lowest share across the WLA and below the London average). Younger people are also over represented amongst the Borough’s jobseekers. This is partly because businesses which traditionally employ younger people have been hit hardest by the restrictions and may be amongst the last to recover – or to re-open at all.
- 4.5 The report looked at sizes of businesses. Micro-sized enterprises (0-9 employees) are particularly important in Brent. The concern is that these businesses are less resilient in the face of reduced demand for their services. Many are likely to be small retail outlets and may have weaker financial positions than larger companies. In addition, as household income in the borough is relatively low local businesses may be reliant on a weakening customer base compared to other parts of London.
- 4.6 The self-employed are also more exposed to the negative impact of the pandemic. Self-employment accounts for a relatively large share of jobs in Brent (measured on a workplace basis) at close to 20% of jobs in the Borough in 2019.
- 4.7 The research baseline forecast projects workplace employment in Brent to contract by 5,000 or 3.2% in 2020, most significantly in the accommodation and food services and arts, entertainment and recreation sectors. These losses may be offset in part by job growth in education and health. The report predicts a recovery in 2021, but that was back in June, in anticipation of lockdown easing.

- 4.8 High Value Employment and High Level Skills Achievement are strands in the Borough Plan pinned to Every Opportunity to Succeed. These are long-term objectives, which Employment, Skills and Enterprise team are working to and have made progress. The 2019 Inclusive Growth Strategy (IGS) set out an approach to supporting sustainable growth in employment in Brent from 2019 to 2040. Although written pre-pandemic the recommendations for supporting growth in employment remain pertinent. The strategy recognises that a significant part of the borough's economy is dominated by sectors which are not growing and provide low value employment. These sectors are also at highest risk of automation and new technology.
- 4.9 The strategy's focus is on improving prospects for low-paid workers, boosting adult education and skills, and connecting people to economic opportunities. The approach is therefore on what we can do to support sectors that will grow and create sustainable employment and higher-level jobs. It is also important to create jobs and careers in sectors that are most resilient to the post-Covid economic environment as well as rapid technological change, which is forecast to reduce employment in low skills sectors.
- 4.10 Research undertaken to support the IGS identifies six crosscutting sectors critical for local economic growth (further details of these sectors is provided in Appendix 1):
- Digital Sector:
 - Creative Sector
 - The Low Carbon Circular Economy
 - Food Preparation and Consumption
 - Life Sciences
 - Knowledge Economy
- 4.11 These sectors comprise of the types of businesses which influence other activities and which are identified as priorities for growing future jobs for local residents. These are the sectors which can create the sustainable jobs in the future and provide a mix of entry level and higher-level jobs.

Impact on businesses:

- 4.12 The annual business data is not yet available from the ONS Business demographics, the latest release was in 2018. The Council is therefore reliant on survey-based data since Covid impacts started in March 2020.
- 4.13 Our understanding of the impact on businesses is partly derived from the ONS Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey, a voluntary fortnightly business survey, focusing on how turnover, workforce and trading status have been affected in two-week reference periods. The following data is from Wave 16 (5th October to 18th October 2020). This is national so only partly representative of Brent.

Turnover compared to what is normally expected at this time of year:

- 9.2% reported an increase
- 37% reported no change
- 25% reported decrease of up to 21%
- 24% reported a decrease of over 20%

Profits, compared to what is normally expected at this time of year:

- 7% reported profits were higher

- 34% reported profits the same
- 44% reported profits were lower

Footfall compared with normal expectations for this time of year:

- 3% reported an increase
- 14% reported no change
- 23% reported a fall

Cashflow reserves:

- 3% had no cashflow reserves
- 3% had less than one month reserves
- 20% had 1-3 months reserves
- 17% had 4-6 months reserves
- 34% had more than 6 months reserves

Imports:

- 48% say imports not affected
- 27% importing less than normal
- 1% importing more than normal

Exports:

- 7% exporting more than normal
- 37% exporting less than normal
- 9% not able to export in this period
- 41% exporting not affected

4.14 Brent has also conducted local business surveys on the impacts of Covid, as well as preparing for the end of the Brexit trade transition period. The first survey took place 4 May - 30 June 2020.

- 107 Businesses responded, from a range of sectors (26% retail, 10% arts, entertainment & recreation, construction 5%, manufacturing 5%)
- When asked about the biggest challenge facing them, 83% said cash flow, 79% declining sales and 74% property costs.
- 72% of businesses do not have an e-commerce platform
- 58% stated that their landlord requests rent payments as usual
- 21 businesses (19.6%) stated they were not eligible for any kind of government support – their detailed feedback influenced the discretionary grants scheme that opened later in the summer.

4.15 A further business survey was launched on the 2nd November and closes 18th December 2020.

5. Overall national closures or trends

5.1 National data indicates that between July and September 2020 that whilst there were 102,269 business closures, 221,020 new business opened.

5.2 However, at the end of September 2020, 395, 694 businesses are on the course of either closing down or becoming insolvent.

6. Sector trends and challenges

6.1 While recognising the economic impact of the pandemic across the UK, there are some specific impacts on London:

- The structure of its economy due to high number of sectors most severely impacted by the pandemic, such as cultural and creative industries, tourism and hospitality. London's hospitality sector has seen over 70% of the workforce using the job retention scheme. Three quarters of London's arts, entertainment and recreational businesses are reporting a decrease in turnover. This is reflected in London experiencing the fastest increase in unemployment compared with other UK regions since the pandemic.
- London's heavy reliance on international and domestic travel and commuting, with many businesses servicing tourists and office workers London is losing out on an estimated £10.19 billion in tourism spending this year. This impact is particularly severe in the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) and in areas surrounding major airports, such as Heathrow.

7. Impact on high streets:

7.1 Prior to the pandemic Brent's town centres provided 20% of jobs within the Borough and over the last decade significant investment has delivered improvements to the overall retail and leisure offer, including the London Designer Outlet and numerous improvements to the public realm on key high streets. Despite this, even prior to the pandemic the Borough's town centres still faced significant challenges.

7.2 The following business rates data suggests the vacancy rate in Brent's priority high streets, which can be used as an indicator for the borough more widely.

| | March 2020 | September 2020 | % Increase |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Wembley | 113 | 113 | 0 |
| Ealing Road | 4 | 10 | 150 |
| Kilburn High Road | 19 | 24 | 26 |
| Harlesden | 31 | 31 | 0 |
| Neasden | 11 | 8 | -27 |
| Willesden | 11 | 15 | 36 |
| Church End | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| The Hyde | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| Burnt Oak | 3 | 3 | 0 |

8. Helping residents to access training and quality employment

8.1 Brent Start provides adult education and training for the London Borough of Brent. It is one of the key services that the council provides in supporting residents to upskill, re-train, develop language skills and prepare residents for the world of work. In addition, through our community provision it helps to improve people's confidence, resilience, and wellbeing.

- 8.2 The service provides its learning under contract to the Greater London Authority (GLA) in 2019-20 academic year, a grant of £3.06m was awarded. In 2017, OFSTED graded the service as Good.
- 8.3 Brent Works is council's job brokerage service. It is run by a small team of 8 FTE. Brent Work role is to help local residents into sustainable employment, harnessing the socio-economic benefits of regeneration and enabling priority groups of vulnerable residents into work. The role of Brent Works is also to respond to a gap in local provision of careers advice and support resident with information advice and guidance on jobs and apprenticeships, CV preparation, applications and interview skills and techniques; guiding residents throughout the whole recruitment process.
- 8.4 Brent Works with employers and businesses to advertise vacancies free on our website, assess all potential candidates to ensure a good match to their vacancies and offer information and support regarding recruitment
- 8.5 The council is working in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, the United Colleges Group, the West London Alliance who commissioned services delivered by The Shaw Trust and Twining Enterprises to work on the Borough's behalf, and the Employment Partners Forum (training providers and voluntary and community sector organisations). It is imperative that the council does not seek to tackle challenges of skills and employment in isolation, a wider system response is needed to utilise the available resources and the sum of all parts. The support is summarised in Table 1 in appendix 2.
- 8.6 Brent Start is in dialogue with GMB Aim High, London region, partnering in developing curriculum and course delivery to GMB members. Thus far, 24 union members from the Food Manufacturing sector have completed initial assessments. Covid 19 pandemic has delayed the start of the language course, but anticipate a start date in the new year
- 8.7 The ongoing **Keep Brent Working** campaign is promoting available support to employers and residents. Initially the focus of the campaign is to engage employers to engage those that are recruiting and have demand. This is critical at this point in time, as there has been significant natural demand from residents seeking work, namely the claimants engaging with Jobcentre Plus and also a significant increase in registrations with Brent Works from people seeking jobs, apprenticeships or Kickstart opportunities
- 8.8 In summary:

Accessing and creating quality job opportunities for Brent residents:

- **Brent Works** engages with employers including developers and contractors that have social value commitments with the council. This will be key as vacancy levels are currently at a low ebb due. In particular, there has been significant interest from employers in the government Kickstart scheme, with 59 employers engaged to date and circa 170 Kickstart placements currently being suggested by the employers. This includes a commitment of up to 30 Kickstart placements by the council at London Living Wage – the emphasis being on quality placements with clear line management, mentoring and training in place.
- Since August 2020, Brent Works are part of a collaboration of partners creating an **Employment and Skills hub** in Park Royal. This will give a much greater access to

opportunities to further broaden the spectrum of industries supported including media and tech companies and food manufacturing, which have seen a significant level of growth in Brent in recent years. Alongside this, Brent Works will act as an official Job Brokerage partner for HS2. This will ensure stronger relationships with HS2 Tier 1 suppliers, and their supply chains throughout duration of the build, creating better employment pathways and access to opportunities for local residents; in particular those from underrepresented groups looking for work.

- **Moving On Up** - Support for those seeking work is supplemented by the Moving on Up programme, commissioned to a consortium of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to support young black men into employment, an initiative that began in 2019 working in partnership with the Black Training and Employment Group (BTEG), Trust for London and City Bridge Trust. The aim at its outset was to respond to structural inequalities in employment rates and the quality of employment accessed by young black men. There is now a short term imperative for the project to support young black men who will now face greater challenges in the labour market. From Jan 2020 to date, 135 young men are being supported of which 43 have secured employment.

Support for residents who require further support to develop their employability and progress into work

- There is strong capacity in the borough to support those furthest from the labour market, principally contracted by the West London Alliance boroughs through devolved funding secured from the Department of Work and Pensions and European Social Funding.
 - The Shaw Trust are delivering both the **Work and Health Programme and Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS)**, which combined have capacity to support Brent residents who are unemployed for more than 3 months. The JETs is a year long programme and is a national response to Covid and the economic impacts. The Work and Health programme is in place for a further 3 years to support long-term unemployed residents. It is targeted at those with more complex barriers such as mental health, physical health issues, or disabilities, or learning disabilities.
 - Twinings Enterprise are commissioned to deliver the **Mental Health Trailblazer**, which is accessible via self-referral and receives many of its referrals from the IAPT primary care service (Talking Therapies). Up to February this year the programme supported 213 clients with 50 supported into work.
 - **Care Leaver Project** – Previously Brent Works in partnership with The FA and Delaware North created a “Training Kiosk” at Wembley stadium for Care Leavers. The project gives care leavers three work experience opportunities at Wembley Stadium during cup finals and England games. We were due to run 3 x cohorts of 8 this Summer but due to the pandemic this has had to be postponed to 2021.
 - **Kickstart for care leavers.** The Care Leaver Team currently has 150 NEET clients, 40-50 of whom are eligible for the Kickstart scheme. Brent Works will be working closely with their Personal Advisers and Social Workers to identify suitable roles and support them throughout the process.
 - **Wembley Park Supported Internships.** The Employment and Skills team, working with the Inclusion team, CNWL and Tottenham Hotspur Foundation launched the Wembley Park Supported Internship project in September 2020. This aims to support students with Education, health and care plans to gain skills to make them

more employable. To date all the council departments have been very supportive with 9 placements confirmed and another 2 in the pipeline. Due to the second lockdown the placement start has been delayed but the team is working with all the departments to ensure that all 11 interns have placement opportunity. When restrictions are eased local employers will also be approached to support the project. Initially we had some positive engagement with local employers but due to the pandemic it had to be postponed till the New Year.

- **Bright Futures** is a project delivered by the Forward Trust to support Brent residents, who are ex-offenders leaving prison and working with probation services. It is funded by the DWP, commissioned by the council's Employment, Skills and Enterprise Team in partnership with Community Safety. To date it is supporting a cohort of 45 people, with 12 moving into employment.

The Black Community Action Plan identifies the main areas of concern and actions to be delivered to readdress racial inequality faced by Brent's Black communities including employment and progression. A steering group comprised of officers from ESE, CYP and Strategic Partnership team, local stakeholders including DWP, employers and training providers has been established. The aim is to build on the progress that has been made in developing employment services, with a work plan to ensure progress continues. The plan also focusses on promoting entrepreneurship as a viable option for young people. The aim is also to encourage and support Brent Black businesses to be part of the council supply chain. A number of NCIL applications are currently in train, subject to final approval, from Black businesses supporting areas including entrepreneurship. This is in addition to the c. £250k NCIL agreed in September to add additional capacity to deliver the Moving On Up programme.

Supporting residents to develop skills relevant to the labour market (current and focussing on sectors that are more resilient and likely to grow).

A number of things are being delivered in the short term to support unemployed residents to find work.

- **Sector Based Work Academies (SBWA)** are short training programmes focussed on sectors that are recruiting. Referrals are made by Jobcentre Plus to these courses, and there are guaranteed interviews with employers upon completion of the training. Two SBWAs are planned for early 2021. These will focus on the Care and the construction sectors. Each SBWA will have a cohort of 15 learners. Brent Works will arrange work experience and job interviews. The Training will be divided between Brent Start and the College of North West London. Working with employers, the likes of Asian People's Disability Alliance, (APDA), Supreme Care; MD Homes and Westminster Care, Brent Start and Brent Works have set up the first Care SBWA to run mid-January 2021 subject to referral by JCP partner
- **Supporting residents into growth sectors**, identified by the Inclusive Growth Strategy, which include Digital, Tech, Creative Industries, and Professional Services (such as finance, accounting, and legal). The following activity is underway
 - Brent Work's engagement with growth sectors companies such as HyperOptic, Community Fibre and Rype. In 2020, the team have supported a wide range of roles including lab technicians, art technician apprenticeships, software designers, IT technicians and furniture designers.

- Tech Career Camps, part of Digital Programme, commissioned to Career Camps CIC with involvement of four major employers linked to four sector career training programmes providing mentoring, work experience and guaranteed interviews for local residents. The following four camps will support a total of 40 residents into employment: The programme will be delivered over 12 months starting on 1 December 2020.
 - Media Camp working with IPG Media Brands
 - Tech Camp working with Transport for London
 - Networking Camp working with Openreach
 - Construction Camp working with Mace Group Ltd.
- **Business in the Community (BITC)** commissioned as part of the Moving on Up programme to engage growth sectors, to test inclusive recruitment practice, building on the Inclusive Employer Toolkit recently published by the GLA and the Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG). Co-design with employers will take place with young black men from the MOU cohort. This will also generate a minimum of 15 work experience opportunities as well as potential access to job, apprenticeship and Kickstart opportunities.
- **A Skills Supply and Demand Study** has been commissioned by the WLA boroughs. This will identify areas of sector growth and granular detail of their skills requirements, which will need to be translated into action with education provider partners. For example, opportunities in the Green Economy will be considered, such as a response to government investment in the retrofitting of homes to make them more environmentally sustainable, which will generate job and apprenticeship opportunities and will require specific skills and qualifications.
- **Partnership with HS2** to support investment in essential skills and quality work. Following discussions with the employment team HS2 have committed to delivering a programme of skills, education and employment activities to meet the construction requirements and leave a legacy of highly-skilled and diverse workforce to address needs in the wider transport infrastructure sector.

Facilitating partner networks and referral pathways, seeking to ensure that there is “No Wrong Door”

- It can be challenging for some residents to navigate the services available to enhance their skills and access employment. It is important to adopt the ‘No Wrong Door’ principles to help people to access the best support for them when they need it.
- There are a number of ‘front-door’ services, the most obvious being the Jobcentres, but there are only two in the borough and it is important to support people where either they are already engaging with services, or they are more comfortable engaging with discussions about employment and training. This includes access to employment and skills advice and services when engaging with:
 - Primary health services: links between primary health settings and employment services have been developed via an Outcome Based Review, and referrals are made by IAPT (Talking Therapies) and are now being encouraged in GP Surgeries via newly appointed and trained ‘Linkworkers’. The Employment and Skills team has introduced the linkworkers to the various employment services available within

the borough to ensure they can refer their clients to the most relevant partners. All partners have also provided a one page overview of their services. The linkworkers were scheduled to shadow the teams to better understand their work but this has been delayed due to the pandemic.

- Community Hubs in six locations across the borough where conversations with residents can start with whatever their need is, can explore issues such as debt and unemployment, and can refer on to other Council or partner services.
- Family Wellbeing Centres, when launched, will provide help to parents and young adults to access the support they need, alongside childcare advice for parents – a significant barrier to work for many.
- Housing Options and Advice – where frontline housing officers can identify residents that need employment and skills support that can prevent homelessness and mitigate debt. This is particularly important for those affected by the Overall Benefit Cap where access to employment and Working Tax Credits means exemption from the cap and can be critical to sustaining housing in Brent – particularly in the private rented sector.
- Brent Work working with housing colleagues to open up employment pathways to those at risk of homelessness, particularly focussed on young adults.
- Youth Hubs is a new approach by Jobcentre Plus (JCP) to provide support to young people within their localities. JCP is working with Young Brent Foundation, Community Hubs, Brent Council and other local providers/colleges and services. The aim is to have designated 'Youth Hub' spaces where the different support services would be offered to young people to help them in areas such as job searching, support with benefits advice and applications, health and wellbeing and referrals to local services. The aim is to provide a dedicated space with support services to help clients to get more job ready. JCP are working with the community hubs and the family wellbeing centre teams to ensure there is no duplication and to foster cooperative joint working.

9. Council and partner's response – supporting small businesses and high streets

9.1 Since the beginning of lockdown, the Employment, Skills and Enterprise Team – particularly the Town Centre Managers - have worked closely with other council teams to deliver a range of interventions to support the local economy. Much of the following information was provided in the update to Scrutiny Committee in July 2020, and has been updated below.

9.2 Supporting the re-opening of town centres during and after the first lockdown:

- Created and published an online delivery map, in order to promote those businesses delivering locally, to help people access goods and services, and to encourage local spend.
- Engaged with businesses and provided red and green cards so businesses were aware if they could open or not. The cards provided further detail and signposted businesses to information.

- Helped businesses with risk assessments in order to reopen safely, spending 1 hour with each retailer.
- Worked with 200 businesses to collate photos and quotes to launch a Shop Safe, Shop Local' campaign around 'following the shops re-opening.
- Posters were provided for shops to display once they carried out the requirements needed to open. Businesses were advised about how they could safely reopen and what enforcement action they would face if they did not comply with the guidelines.
- A programme of street/pavement widening at pinch points in high-footfall locations were implemented, alongside signage to promote social distancing. Collaboration between Neighbourhood Manager, Town Centre Managers, and Highways allowed pinch-points to be identified quickly as more shops re-opened. A spreadsheet of new requests was maintained, resulting in inspections to assess potential action.
- Applications for street trading (e.g. stalls outside shops or outdoor tables/chairs) were approved where businesses could demonstrate a clear 2m of pavement will remain for pedestrians to move to. Those where 2m space is not possible were referred to Highways colleagues to ensure that any approvals are not creating more pinch points or an additional burden to widen footways.
- Planning enforcement extended compliance periods for enforcement notices to give businesses longer to rectify breaches of planning control.
- Planning enforcement initiative on improving street frontages in some of the town centres was paused so as not to impose additional burdens on businesses.
- Clear and consistent communications produced to support social distancing, disseminated through a range of channels including through the business newsletter (with over 9,000 subscribers) and Town Centre Manager's informal networks.
- New guidelines for businesses were introduced in September (mandating them to display QR codes, wear masks and adhere to the 'rule of 6', among other measures). Teams representing a range of services inspected over 2,000 businesses, 81 were given telephone advice, 79 were given written warnings giving them a time period to comply and 69 takeaways are on a regular watch list to monitor their compliance. The operation has adapted to ensure compliance with the current lockdown.

10. Support for local businesses throughout the pandemic:

- 10.1 The Economic Growth team sent out weekly business e-newsletters to over 9,000 businesses, providing updates on support, advice and information. Supported by Town Centre Managers promoted the government grant schemes to maximise awareness and take-up and continuously liaised with businesses to advise them of other various grants and loan schemes available as well as training and support to help them adapt their business to be fit-for-purpose (where possible) in this new context
- 10.2 As of mid-November the council has paid out over £62m of grants to 558 businesses across the Small Business Grants, Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grants, and Discretionary Grants. The next round of grants will open imminently. The Economic

Growth Team responded to grant fund payments, liaised with Business Rates team and Capita to ensure as many grants as possible reached local businesses. Town Centre Managers helped business get online and apply for grants, helping with the application form and working with businesses to gather evidence to show losses.

- 10.3 Town Centre Managers used positive relationships with landlords to ensure that grant payments reach intended tenants wherever possible [transferring over £1m from landlords to tenants]. Tenants were brought into the business rates system.
- 10.4 80 Brent businesses were sign-posted by Town Centre Managers to a business support provider: 'Newable'. 50 received one to one support and 30 businesses received training webinars on social media/website development
- 10.5 The Brent for Business events programme was moved online and delivered a series of business webinars in partnership with White Label and the Federation of Small Businesses, to provide support and advice. Across the webinar programme we had:
 - 316 registrations
 - 180 individual attendees
 - 52 questions asked using the Q&A function
 - 41 of these questions were answered live
 - 26 speakers appeared on our panels
 - And some very positive feedback
- 10.6 Working with procurement to implement the new Social Value and Ethical Procurement policy, a framework for more local procurement spend, with the amount of local spend and the number of local suppliers as key performance indicators.
- 10.7 Meet the Buyer (supply chain) events, focussed on the construction sector, commenced in November. The events aim to make 60 local suppliers aware of 2m of secured tendering contract opportunities through 10 Buyers.
- 10.8 The Small Business Saturday Awards ran as normal. 157 nominations have been received from 79 different businesses. Winners will be announced ahead of Small Business Saturday on 5 December. If lockdown is extended, a concerted campaign to promote the winners and reinstate the Shop Local campaign will occur upon reopening.
- 10.9 Multi-lingual Health and Safety support is being commissioned for businesses who need additional support in order to comply with guidance and minimise risk.
- 10.10 Support to help businesses with online sales and marketing is being commissioned.
- 10.11 Brent Works are providing a recruitment and apprenticeships service free of charge for local businesses, including piloting of apprenticeship levy transfer for a cohort of SMEs.
- 10.12 Other measures to support residents and businesses are being pursued under the financial inclusion workstream.
- 10.13 Colleagues will continue work to improve highways and public realm, primarily with a focus on physical distancing in the short term.

- 10.14 Continuing to animate the public realm through greening, street art and other local infrastructure initiatives.
- 10.15 Pushing for more diversification of town centres, creating a framework for council investments in vacant properties, and using the levers in our new Meanwhile Strategy and Affordable Workspace Strategy to encourage different types of uses to come forward on our high streets.

11. Longer term strategies

The Inclusive Growth Strategy, approved by Full Council in Autumn 2020, sets out some policy responses to support a changing economy, and reducing economic inequalities. These include, for example:

- Curating a strategic vision for workspaces to meet business need
- Establish local enterprise zones
- Develop an adult skills strategy
- Develop the circular economy

The draft Local Plan, which sets out the Council's planning policies, includes a number of ambitions to support the economy, businesses, workspaces, training and development. It seeks to promote and enhance town centre vitality and viability to create hubs for a diverse range of uses, including employment, business space, shopping, culture, leisure, night time economy, tourism, social infrastructure and residential development.

An employment, apprenticeship and training plan will be required for all developments above a certain size, to be prepared in partnership with Brent Works. In the largest developments, a proportion of affordable workspace will also be sought. Existing Strategic and Locally Significant Employment sites will be protected, and where possible, intensified.

Cabinet recently agreed the Affordable Workspace Strategy and Action Plan, which proposes a number of initiatives which seek to secure a range of affordable workspace in new development, find ways to attract new providers, secure affordable workspace in town centres, keep rents and costs low, deliver business support and fill vacant units in town centres.

Officers are also developing a Meanwhile Use Strategy which will be presented to Cabinet on 07 December. This sets out an Action Plan to increase meanwhile uses and realise their full potential across the borough

12. Financial Implications

12.1 This report is for comment, there are no specific financial implications arising at this stage.

13. Legal Implications

13.1 This report is for comment, there are no specific legal implications arising at this stage.

14. Equalities Implications

14.1 Some of the employment support programmes particularly focus on sectors of the population particularly impacted on by the pandemic.

Report sign off:

Alan Lunt
Strategic Director of Regeneration and
Environment.

Appendix 1

The six growth sectors in Brent.

1. Digital Sector: In Brent there is a moderate and growing business base, with a slightly lower concentration than London and with the vast majority of businesses of SME size (98%). The sector accounts for 4% of total employment (5,650) with a lower concentration than London and has seen a small decline (-3%) in employment levels since 2013. The Covid-19 crisis has underlined the crucial role that technology plays in our society and our economy. London is one of the world's leading cities for technology, entrepreneurship and digital creativity. The crisis has accelerated digital adoption and the future growth of the tech sector will be key to London and Brent's economic recovery.

2. Creative Sector: A moderate business base that has grown in the borough, up by 24% since 2013 and with a slightly lower concentration than London. The vast majority of businesses within the sector are SMEs (99%) with employment at around 5,665 accounting for 4% of total employment. Employment within the sector has increased since 2013 but remains less concentrated compared to London as a whole.

3. The Low Carbon Circular Economy: Analysis completed in early 2020 as part of the report 'Growing Brent's Low Carbon Circular Economy'. May 2020, estimated that there are 860 businesses in Brent in the Low Carbon Circular Economy. The number of businesses and employment is set to continue to grow. The report concludes that 'as we move into a period when government and businesses are focused on recovery and adapting to doing business in the 'new normal', that we grasp the opportunity to address the climate emergency'. This is echoed in 'Build and An Economic Recovery Strategy for West London' which acknowledges that 'Covid19 also provides a once in a generation opportunity to re-think our long-term aspirations for West London, kick-starting the low carbon economy'.

4. Food Preparation and Consumption: A relatively small but growing business base in Brent, albeit with a higher concentration relative to London. The sector accounts for around 8,750 of total employment in the borough and has increased by 45% since 2013 making it one of the fastest growing cross cutting sectors.

5. Life Sciences: A small sector in both employment and business terms accounting for just 1% of total employment in the borough. The sector has a significantly lower proportion of SME size businesses (75%). The sector has seen reasonable growth in the proportion of businesses and employees since 2013 and has concentration levels on a par or slightly above London as a whole.

6. Knowledge Economy: The borough has a large and growing business base but with a lower concentration than London and with the vast majority of businesses of SME size (99%). The sector employs around 16,650, having grown by 19% since 2013 and accounting for 13% of total employment within the borough but with a substantially lower concentration

Appendix 2:

Table 1: Employment and Skills Support

| Objective | Services available | Lead Partners | Measures of success |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Accessing and creating quality job opportunities for Brent residents</p> | <p><u>Brent Works job brokerage:</u></p> <p>Leading the Kickstart scheme for the council as an ‘intermediary’, supporting SMEs and VCS to create placements.</p> <p>Brokering and placing Brent residents into apprenticeships and local recruitment.</p> <p>Managing the commitments by developers in Section 106 Agreements.</p> <p>Supporting Brent contractors to deliver their Social Value commitments.</p> <p>Official Job brokerage Partner with HS2</p> | <p>Brent Council (working with employers, developers, Social Value contract commitments)</p> | <p>Residents supported into employment Residents supported into apprenticeships Kickstart placements</p> <p><i>Progress since lockdown:</i></p> <p>46 job outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 78% LLW • 21% in growth sectors • 0% zero hour contracts <p>24 apprenticeship outcomes April to October jobs by sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Social Care – 11 • Construction – 7 • Creative – 6 • IT - 2 • Customer Service – 2 • Warehouse – 2 • Cleaning – 2 <p>April to October 2020 apprenticeships by sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction – 9 • Admin and Customer Service – 4 |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities Management – 1 • Creative - 2 <p>Registered and engaged over 1,000 people for employment related advice and support</p> <p>Created a series of 10 interactive employment webinars, which have supported over 300 residents, including partnerships with the Metropolitan Police and HS2.</p> <p>HS2 Jobs Portal will officially launch in January 2021, however, Brent Works have already been engaging with HS2 supply chain opportunities and have brokered 4 job outcomes and are currently promoting 2 Level 4 Apprentices.</p> |
| | <p>Moving on Up:</p> <p>Consortium funded by NCIL, Trust for London, and City Bridge Trust, in partnership with the Black Training and Employment Group and GLA.</p> <p>Pathway support to work</p> <p>Mentoring</p> <p>BITC project</p> | <p>Council with MOU Collective Impact Partnership</p> | <p><i>Desired Outcomes:</i></p> <p>Over the 3 years Engagement 450 Jobs 144</p> <p><i>Progress to date:</i></p> <p>Engagement 135 Jobs 43 Mentors recruited 15 Mentees matched 11</p> |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|-----|---|--------|---|--|--------------|---|--|-------------------------|--|---|----------|---|--|------------------|--|--|----|---|--|-----------------------|--|---|
| | | | <p>Outcomes breakdown Jan – July 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship – 5% • Permanent/Full Time – 81% • Fixed Term/Temporary – 14% <p>Average Pay Jan – Jul 10.15/hr</p> <p>Sector breakdown Aug-Oct 2020</p> <table> <tr> <td>Retail</td> <td>6</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Construction</td> <td>7</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transport and Logistics</td> <td></td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Security</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Customer Service</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>IT</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Merger & Acquisitions</td> <td></td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table> | Retail | 6 | | Construction | 7 | | Transport and Logistics | | 3 | Security | 1 | | Customer Service | | | IT | 1 | | Merger & Acquisitions | | 1 |
| Retail | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Construction | 7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Transport and Logistics | | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Security | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Customer Service | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| IT | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Merger & Acquisitions | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Support for residents that require further support to develop their employability and progress into work | <p>The Shaw Trust – West London Alliance (WLA) contracts:</p> <p>Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) for those unemployed for 3 months or more, started in October 2020. Funded by DWP, commissioned by WLA sub-region. Only a one-year contract in response to the Covid economic impact.</p> <p>Work and Health Programme (WHP), supporting long-term unemployed and those with more complex barriers to employment such as common mental health issues, learning disabilities, and physical health issues or</p> | WLA | <p>The JETS programme will support over 9,000 West London residents.</p> <p>The West London Alliance runs until 2024 and is focused on supporting over 13, 000 people. The latest data published in August 2020 shows 5,051 have been supported on the WHP programme across the sub region</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | <p>disabilities. Funded by DWP and European Social Fund (ESF).</p> <p>Twining's Enterprise: Mental Health Trailblazer deliver to support clients either self-referred, or referred by primary health (usually IAPT – Talking Therapies). Funded by ESF.</p> <p>Bright Futures:</p> <p>Support for ex-offenders provided by Forward Trust, funded by DWP, commissioned by the council.</p> <p>Care Leaver's Programme Brent Works delivered programme to support Care Leavers into jobs</p> <p>Supported Internships</p> <p>Support interns with employability skills and on the job experience. Support the interns with their job search post completion.</p> <p>Black Community Action Plan – Employment Strand</p> | <p>Council (Employment, Skills and Enterprise, co-commissioned with Community Safety and CRC)</p> <p>Council teams (ESE, CYP), CNWL and Tottenham Hotspur Foundation</p> <p>All Council Departments providing opportunities for placement. Some local employer provide placements as well.</p> | <p>Till Feb 2020 Engagements 213 Job Outcomes 50</p> <p>Bright Futures Outcomes</p> <p>45 engaged 12 into jobs 6 sustained for 26 weeks (thus far) This should grow as intensive post-employment support is delivered to support job retention</p> <p>Supported Internship</p> <p>11 interns engaged All interns completed at least two placements over the year. Each placement for 8-12 weeks. City and Guilds entry level 3 award in Employability English, Maths and ICT training Post programme support</p> |
|--|---|--|--|

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | | Brent Employment, Enterprise and Partnerships, business including HS2 and Quintain and local black community businesses and organisations. | Steering group set up to progress the Employment and Enterprise recommendations of the Black Community Action Plan to address the inequalities of access to employment and careers development. Considering how best to streamline with the existing Moving On Up programme already in delivery. |
| Supporting residents to develop skills relevant to the labour market (current and focussing on sectors that are more resilient and likely to grow) | <p>Sector Based Work Academies</p> <p>Brent Works – development of opportunities in growing and resilient sectors, including the promotion and creation of Apprenticeships; and offering wrap round employability support for the Kickstart Scheme to ensure quality work placements, which prepare young people for the workforce.</p> <p>Tech Careers – commissioned to Career Camps CIC, funded by the council’s Digital Programme</p> <p>Moving on Up Business in the Community project</p> | Council (including Brent Works and Brent Start), United Colleges Group and JCP | <p>Progress- Two Sector Based Work Academies (SBWAs) are planned for early 2021. These will focus on the Care and the construction sectors. Each SBWA will have a cohort of 15 learners. Brent Works will arrange work experience and job interviews. The Training will be divided between Brent Start and the College of North West London.</p> <p>Business In The Community (BITC) commissioned as part of the Moving on Up programme to engage growth sectors, to test inclusive recruitment practice, building on the Inclusive Employer Toolkit recently published by the GLA and the Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG). Co-design with employers in these growth sectors</p> |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | <p>Skills Supply and Demand Study – to consider sector needs across West London to inform the Further Education system, apprenticeships and links to Higher Education in the sub-region. This will include focus on skills needed for growth sectors including tech, digital, the green economy, and creative industries.</p> | West London Alliance | <p>will take place with the involvement of young black men from the MOU cohort.</p> <p>Progress to date. Initial scoping work commissioned by WLA in consultation with borough partners. Aims to provide a tool that will inform on the skills needs of growth sectors. This will support leveraging further and higher education, and wider skills delivery to meet the needs of labour market growth sectors and inform IAG services to support residents in making more sustainable skills development and career choices.</p> |
| <p>Facilitating partner networks and referral pathways, seeking to ensure that there is No Wrong Door.</p> | <p>Health and Employment Forum: Resulting from an Outcome Based Review of Health and Employment, bringing together primary health, the Clinical Commissioning Group, council, and Jobcentre Plus. Focus on developing operational working relationships and referrals.</p> <p>Community Hubs: Employment support embedded in the Community Hub teams to ensure this is part of the holistic response offered to residents.</p> <p>Family Wellbeing Hubs: Employment and skills support to be provided from the Family Wellbeing Centres, to support parents and young people to access services that are available.</p> | <p>Council (Employment, Skills and Enterprise)</p> <p>Council (Transformation Team)</p> <p>Council (Early Years Service and Employment, Skills and Enterprise)</p> | <p><i>Outcomes:</i> <i>Improving referrals between health and employment services.</i></p> <p><i>Progress to date:</i> A programme of employer engagement to promote disability confidence to Brent employers.</p> <p>Community Hubs The TLR team is now embedded in hubs. Since April 2020 the team has achieved.</p> <p>Jobs 17 Soft Outcomes 17</p> |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| | <p>Housing Options and preventing homelessness: Referrals to employment support by frontline housing teams where households are affected by the Overall Benefit Cap (OBC)/Spare Room Subsidy (SRS) or if there is evidence of growing rent arrears</p> <p>‘Youth Hub’: A proposed co-location of United Colleges Group, Jobcentre Plus and Brent’s employment and skills offer at the colleges Willesden Campus.</p> | <p>United Colleges Group, Jobcentre Plus, and Council (Employment, Skills and Enterprise)</p> | <p>Skills Escalator Income Increase 17 Skills Escalator training outcome 8</p> <p>Housing Options and Preventing Homelessness</p> <p>TLR data since April 2018</p> <p>Council tenant 252 Housing Association 72 On Housing Benefits 330 Job starts from this group 82 Affected by OBC/SRS 71 Preventing Homelessness 15</p> |
|--|--|---|---|

