Essex Rural Strategy 2020 consultation

Overview

**Essex Rural Strategy Questionnaire**

**The Essex Rural Strategy 2020-2024**

Essex is a rural county with 72% of its land area designated as rural. The Essex Rural Partnership (http://www.essexruralpartnership.org.uk) brings together a wide range of organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors to co-ordinate action on the major challenges facing the county’s rural areas.

Since 2016, the Essex Rural Strategy has provided the focus for its work setting out a shared vision of a thriving future and helping to shape the priorities of those who provide services to rural communities.

The Essex Rural Strategy has a four year timespan so it is now time to review and refresh it, ready for a relaunch in 2020.

**How you can help us**

We would like to know:

* What issues are important in rural areas
* What you like about life in rural areas
* What causes concern in rural areas
* What could be done to improve life in rural areas
* Who might be able to help us achieve this

This questionnaire is open to all Essex residents however we are seeking views particularly from:

* People who live in rural areas
* People who work in rural areas
* People who own businesses in rural areas
* People who visit rural areas for recreation or access to services

The current Rural-Urban Classification used by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) defines areas as rural, “if they fall outside of settlements with more than 10,000 resident population”.

**How you can give us your comments**

* You can complete a questionnaire on-line. Please give us your feedback before 30/06/20. We will not be able to include views submitted after this date.
* If you have any queries about the Essex Rural Strategy please call Elizabeth Rose at 01376 574330 or email info@essexruralpartnership.org.uk
* If you require a paper copy of the survey due to COVID-19 this can only be sent via email for printing off as RCCE staff are currently working remotely.  Please contact via email only to Elizabeth Rose (details above).

**What will happen next?**

We will write up all of the feedback we receive in a written report, which will be used to inform the priorities and aims of the refreshed Essex Rural Strategy. The report will be available on Consultation portal at consultations.essex.gov.uk and in accessible formats on request.

**Other formats and languages**

If you would like this questionnaire in another format (such as Large Print, audio version, Easy Read or Braille) or in an alternative language, please contact us at the details above.

**What you need to know about completing this questionnaire**

* All information gathered will be anonymous. This means that your name will not be published.
* This activity is voluntary and you can decide not to take part at any point.

**Data Protection and your privacy**

* The information you provide as part of this questionnaire is anonymised and will only be used to analyse the public response to the proposals set out in this questionnaire. Your data will not be shared with a third party other than as strictly required to allow the analysis to take place.
* Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 We have a legal duty to protect any information we collect from you.
* We will not share your personal details with any other agency unless we have concerns that you or another individual may be at risk of harm of if it is required by law.
* We do not collect personal information for commercial purposes.

PART 1: ABOUT YOU

**1.** What is your connection to rural Essex?

(please select as many as apply)

*Please select all that apply*

* I live in rural Essex
* I work in rural Essex
* I own a business in rural Essex
* I am a student studying in rural Essex
* I am a visitor to rural Essex
* I am responding on behalf of a Town or Parish Council or other public or voluntary body

**2.** What do you value most about rural Essex?

(please select up to three answers)

*Please select all that apply*

* The community spirit
* The landscape
* The heritage and culture
* The historic buildings
* The wildlife and nature
* Living close to family members
* Peace and tranquillity
* Easy access to London

PART 2: ISSUES AFFECTING RURAL ESSEX

**ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT**

**3.** How important do you think it is to encourage sustainable economic development and employment in rural Essex?

(Please select one answer only)

*Please select only one item*

* Essential
* Important
* Not important
* Undesirable

**4.** If you answered essential or important are there particular sectors of the economy you think should be prioritised?

(Please select as many as apply)

*Please select all that apply*

* Agriculture, land based businesses and fisheries
* Food and drink production
* Tourism
* Technology
* Sustainable energy
* Small and micro-businesses
* Social/community enterprise
* No specific sector

Other - Please specify

**5.** Which of the following do you think are most important in encouraging sustainable economic development and employment in rural Essex?

(Please select up to three answers)

*Please select all that apply*

* A supportive planning framework
* Good digital and mobile connectivity
* Effective transport connections to markets
* Easy access to banking and post office facilities
* Availability of specialist business advice
* Funding to support business development and diversification
* Availability of workforce with appropriate skills
* Promotion of the benefits of locating to rural Essex

Other - please specify:

**NB. See Part 4 – for a separate questionnaire for businesses operating in rural Essex.**

HOUSING AND PLANNING

**6.** Which of the following statements do you agree with?

(Please select up to three answers)

*Please select all that apply*

* Young people struggle to get on the property ladder in rural areas
* There is a good supply of housing locally
* There are too many new homes being built in rural areas
* More affordable housing is needed in rural areas
* More retirement accommodation is needed in rural areas
* The planning system is impeding necessary development in rural areas

Other - please specify:

**7.** Please select the top three improvements that you think would best address housing needs in rural Essex.

1.

*Please select only one item*

* More sheltered housing
* More affordable housing for young people and families
* More open market housing
* More housing for people with special needs
* More housing to enable older people to downsize
* No housing development at all

2.

*Please select only one item*

* More sheltered housing
* More affordable housing for young people and families
* More open market housing
* More housing for people with special needs
* More housing to enable older people to downsize
* No housing development at all

3.

*Please select only one item*

* More sheltered housing
* More affordable housing for young people and families
* More open market housing
* More housing for people with special needs
* More housing to enable older people to downsize
* No housing development at all

Other - please specify:

**8.** How can the planning system best support sustainable development while ensuring the environment and character of rural Essex is respected?

(Please select up to three answers)

*Please select all that apply*

* Increase local planning authorities’ understanding of the needs of the rural economy and communities
* Encourage the use of redundant and under-utilised buildings in the countryside
* Encourage Neighbourhood Plans and other initiatives to increase community involvement in the planning system
* Ensure development respects local character, the Green Belt and other protected landscapes
* Focus development on rural towns and other identified key settlements

Other – please specify:

ACCESS TO SERVICES AND AMENITIES

**9.** What goods, services and amenities can you access within the rural community where you live or work?

(Please select as many as apply)

*Please select all that apply*

* General store
* Post Office
* Public House
* Banking services
* Cashpoint
* Farm shop
* GP surgery
* Pharmacy
* School
* Library - static
* Library – mobile
* Village Hall
* Place of worship
* Playing field/ public open space
* Playground
* Sports facilities
* None of the above

Other - please specify

**10.** What do you regularly travel outside of your village to access?

(Please select as many as apply)

*Please select all that apply*

* All shops
* Larger retail outlets
* Post Office
* Banking services
* Health services
* School/further education
* Leisure and entertainment facilities

Other - please specify

**11.** What form of transport do you use when you travel outside of your village?

(Please select any you use at least once a month)

*Please select all that apply*

* Car
* Bus
* Community transport
* Train
* Cycling
* Walk
* Taxi
* Lift from friend/neighbour

Other - please specify

**12.** Which facility would you most like in your community which isn’t there at the moment?

(Please select up to three answers)

*Please select all that apply*

* Shop
* Post Office
* Bank/cashpoint
* Public House
* GP surgery
* School
* Library
* Village Hall
* Playing field/public open space
* Playground
* Place of worship
* Community transport
* Good neighbour/befriending service
* Youth club/activities for young people
* Clubs/activities for older people
* Adult education

Other - please specify

**13.** Please select the top three improvements that you think would most improve access to services for people in rural Essex.

1.

*Please select only one item*

* Better availability of public transport
* Enhanced provision of community transport
* More multi-purpose provision of services, for example, a shop or post office run from a village hall or church
* Enhanced provision of outreach services
* Improved broadband connectivity
* More services delivered online
* More support for community-led initiatives to sustain services

2.

*Please select only one item*

* Better availability of public transport
* Enhanced provision of community transport
* More multi-purpose provision of services, for example, a shop or post office run from a village hall or church
* Enhanced provision of outreach services
* Improved broadband connectivity
* More services delivered online
* More support for community-led initiatives to sustain services

3.

*Please select only one item*

* Better availability of public transport
* Enhanced provision of community transport
* More multi-purpose provision of services, for example, a shop or post office run from a village hall or church
* Enhanced provision of outreach services
* Improved broadband connectivity
* More services delivered online
* More support for community-led initiatives to sustain services

Other - please specify

DIGITAL

**14.** How would rate the broadband connectivity where you live or work?

(Please select one answer only)

*Please select only one item*

* Very good
* Adequate
* Patchy
* Poor
* Non-existent
* I do not have broadband connectivity

**15.** If you answered patchy, poor or non-existent, please specify briefly the impact this has on your quality of life

**16.** If you do have broadband, what speed can you get for your fixed broadband?

(Please select one answer only)

*Please select only one item*

* Under 30Mb
* 30 – 100Mb (ie Superfast Broadband)
* Over 100Mb (Ultrafast Broadband)
* Don’t know
* I do not have broadband connectivity

**17.** Does the speed you have now meet your needs?

(Please select one answer only)

*Please select only one item*

* Yes
* No
* Don’t know
* I do not have broadband connectivity

**18.** If you answered No, please specify briefly the impact this has on you

**19.** How would you rate the mobile phone signal where you live or work?

(Please select one answer only)

*Please select only one item*

* Very good
* Adequate
* Patchy
* Poor
* Non-existent
* I do not have a mobile phone

**20.** If you answered patchy, poor or non-existent, please specify the impact this has on your quality of life

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**21.** Please identify from the following list, improvements you think would most improve the health and wellbeing of people in rural Essex

(Please select up to three answers)

*Please select all that apply*

* Improved access to GP services
* Better provision of transport to hospitals
* More community outreach services (such as district nurses, health visitors, respite care, Community Agents etc.)
* More emergency care within the community (e.g. first responder services)
* Better access to addiction support services (e.g. smoking, alcohol, drugs)
* Better access to a healthy diet
* More clubs and social activities within the local community
* More fitness and healthy living activities
* Better access to public open space and the countryside

Other - please specify

**22.** Do you feel lonely or isolated as a result of living in a rural area?

*Please select only one item*

* Yes
* No
* Don't know

**23.** Please explain your answer:

**24.** Which of the following groups do you think are most vulnerable to isolation and loneliness in rural Essex today?

(Please select the three most vulnerable groups)

*Please select all that apply*

* Children of school age (under 18)
* Young people (aged 18-25)
* Young parents
* Elderly people
* Unemployed people
* People who work alone
* Single parents
* Widowed people
* People with disabilities (including those with learning disabilities, mental health issues and long-term sickness)

Other - please specify

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

**25.** Please identify from the following list, measures you think will help sustain small rural primary schools in Essex

(Please select no more than two)

*Please select all that apply*

* More collaboration between schools – e.g. school clusters or partnerships between rural schools and secondary or independent schools
* Long-term investment in infrastructure (e.g. digital) for small rural schools
* More initiatives to encourage community use of school premises
* Measures to ensure children can travel safely to small rural schools

Other - please specify

**26.** Please identify from the following list, measures you think will help people in rural communities’ better access further education, skills training and lifelong learning opportunities

(Please select no more than two)

*Please select all that apply*

* More apprenticeships to support food, farming and other rural businesses
* Better access to transport for post 16 year olds attending Further Education colleges
* Development of career pathways specific to rural business needs
* Investment in training for the long-term unemployed and people excluded from the labour market
* More provision of adult education in rural locations

Other – please specify:

CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

**27.** Do you feel safe when you are in rural Essex?

(Please select one answer only)

*Please select only one item*

* Always
* Most of the time
* Sometimes
* Never

**28.** If you did not answer ‘Always’ to Q23 what makes you feel unsafe?

(Please select all that apply)

*Please select all that apply*

* Isolated location of home/farm/business
* Unlit areas
* Anti-social behaviour
* Fear of crime – e.g. burglary, theft, vandalism
* Gang activity - e.g. drugs, hare coursing, fly tipping
* Road safety issues – including speeding traffic
* Lack of visible police presence

Other - please specify

**29.** Please identify the improvements you think are needed to make rural Essex a safer place

(Please select up to three answers)

*Please select all that apply*

* More visible and accessible police
* More rural Special Constables and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)
* Greater understanding of the needs of the rural and farming community
* More Neighbourhood Watch schemes and other community crime prevention initiatives
* Improved traffic, road safety and speed controls
* Improved pavements and pathways
* Increased street lighting
* Targeting specific criminal activities – e.g. drug gangs, hare coursing etc.

Other - please specify

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**30.** Which of the following issues do you think pose the biggest threat to rural Essex?

(Please select up to three answers)

*Please select all that apply*

* Loss of tranquillity
* Pollution
* Loss of wildlife and natural habitats
* Overdevelopment and loss of green space
* Impact of extreme weather (e.g. flooding)
* Littering and fly tipping

**31.** Please explain your answer:

**32.** Please identify from the following list, measures you think would help to improve the environment in rural Essex.

(Please select up to three)

*Please select all that apply*

* More restrictions on new development on greenfield sites
* More encouragement for sustainable transport schemes
* Initiatives to protect wildlife, natural habitats and green spaces
* More action against littering and fly tipping

Other - please specify

**33.** Please identify the measures you think would help to make rural Essex more resilient to climate change.

(Please select all that apply)

*Please select all that apply*

* Stronger environmental constraints on new development
* Encourage energy efficiency and more use of renewable energy in homes and businesses
* Policies that encourage land use management practices that can prevent flooding and erosion and reduce carbon emissions
* More planning for extreme weather occurrences

Other - Please specify

TOURISM AND LEISURE

**34.** Please identify the measures you think would do most to attract visitors to rural Essex.

(Please select all that apply)

*Please select all that apply*

* More promotion of rural Essex and its particular character and attractions
* Increased collaboration between businesses within the visitor economy
* Better transport connections to rural tourist attractions
* Encourage the development of local food and drink products/brands
* Improvements to public rights of way, cycle routes and other ‘green’ infrastructure
* Funding to support sustainable tourism initiatives
* Develop local residents’ understanding of the benefits of sustainable tourism

Other - please specify

PART 3 – VOLUNTEERING, PUBLIC BODIES AND CHARITABLE/COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS IN RURAL ESSEX

**VOLUNTEERING AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

**35.** Do you participate in a voluntary organisation or activity in your community?

(Please select one answer only)

*Please select only one item*

* Yes
* No
* Not applicable

**36.** If yes, what do you do?

**37.** Do you attend locally or travel to the next community to access the voluntary organisation or activity?

(Please select one answer only)

*Please select only one item*

* I attend locally
* I travel to the next community

Other - please specify

**38.** Are there any voluntary organisations, clubs or activities that do not exist which you would like to access within your community?

*Please select only one item*

* Yes
* No

**39.** If Yes, please tell us what organisations you would like to access in your community

PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

**40.** Are you a member or clerk of a Parish or Town Council?

*Please select only one item*

* Yes
* No

PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

**41.** Please select the issues that have been discussed at a Parish or Town Council meeting in the last 2 years.

(Please select as many as apply)

*Please select all that apply*

* Affordable housing
* Objections to large-scale development
* Ways of encouraging local employment
* Improving leisure facilities in the parish
* Acquiring new assets for example halls, recreation ground or community-run facilities
* Managing crime and/or anti-social behaviour
* Health and wellbeing
* Social isolation and loneliness
* Broadband and digital connectivity
* Supporting the local school
* Traffic and road safety
* Climate change
* Communications
* Litter or graffiti
* None of the above

Other - please specify

**42.** Please state here what is the biggest challenge facing your Parish or Town Council in the next 5 years.

PUBLIC BODIES AND CHARITABLE/VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

**43.** Are you a member of or employed by a Public Sector Organisation? For example NHS, Fire Service or Local Authority

*Please select only one item*

* Yes
* No
* Not sure

**44.** Does your organisation look at rural issues distinct from urban issues?

(Please select one answer only)

*Please select only one item*

* Yes
* No
* Don't know

**45.** Does your organisation assess the specific impact of all of its policies on rural areas (the process referred to by the Government as ‘rural proofing’)?

(Please select one answer only)

*Please select only one item*

* Yes
* No
* Don't know

**46.** Are you representing a charity or voluntary organisation with employees working in rural Essex?

*Please select only one item*

* Yes
* No
* Not sure

ANY OTHER COMMENTS

**47.** Please state any other comments you would like to make regarding the Essex Rural Strategy 2020-2024.

Any other comments

**48.** Please state here how you or your organisation could help to address the issues highlighted in this questionnaire.

DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

In order to ensure the continued development of our Diversity and Equality practices, everyone that we work with is asked to complete the information below. You are not obliged to answer any of the questions, but the more information you supply, the more effective our monitoring will be. If you choose not to answer questions, it will not affect your participation. The information you supply below is confidential and will be used solely for monitoring purposes.

**49.** What is your age?

*Please select only one item*

* 30 or under
* 31 - 40
* 41 - 50
* 51 - 60
* 61 - 70
* 71 or over
* Prefer not to say

**50.** To which gender identity do you most identify?

*Please select only one item*

* Male
* Female
* Transgender Male
* Transgender Female
* Prefer not to say

Other, Please state:

**51.** What is your marital status?

*Please select only one item*

* Married
* Single
* Widowed
* Prefer not to say

Other, Please state:

**52.** What is your sexual orientation?

*Please select only one item*

* Heterosexual
* Gay
* Lesbian
* Bisexual
* Prefer not to say

Other, please state

**53.** What is your ethnicity?

*Please select only one item*

* White British
* White Irish
* White Other
* Gypsy / Roma
* Traveller of Irish Heritage
* Black or Black British African
* Black or Black British Caribbean
* Mixed White/Black African
* Mixed White/Black Caribbean
* Black Other
* Asian or Asian British Pakistani
* Asian or Asian British Indian
* Asian or Asian British Other
* Mixed White/Asian
* Asian Other
* Chinese
* Mixed Other
* Not Known
* Prefer not to say

Other, Please specify

**54.** What is your religion/faith?

*Please select only one item*

* Christian
* Muslim
* Hindu
* Buddhist
* Sikh
* Jewish
* None
* Not sure
* Prefer not to say

Other, Please state

**55.** Do you consider yourself to have an impairment?

(Please select all that apply)

*Please select all that apply*

* Physical Impairment
* Sensory Impairment
* Learning Difficulty or Disability
* Mental Health Needs
* No Impairment

**56.** What district do you live in?

*Please select only one item*

* Basildon
* Braintree
* Brentwood
* Castle Point
* Chelmsford
* Colchester
* Epping Forest
* Harlow
* Maldon
* Rochford
* Tendring
* Uttlesford

Other, Please state

**57.** A copy of the report

Once the consultation has finished, the final report will be published on consultations.essex.gov.uk. If you require the report in an alternative format please contact Research@essex.gov.uk

**Further information**

If you have any queries about the Essex Rural Strategy please call Elizabeth Rose at 01376 574330 or email info@essexruralpartnership.org.uk

PART 4 - BUSINESSES IN RURAL ESSEX

**58.** Would you like to answer the business consultation questions?

*Please select only one item*

* Yes
* No

PART 4 – BUSINESSES IN RURAL ESSEX

**This section is for completion by businesses operating in rural Essex only.**

**59.** Do you own or work for a business operating in rural Essex?

*Please select only one item*

* Yes
* No
* Don't know

BUSINESSES IN RURAL ESSEX 2

**60.** Are you planning to set up a new business in Essex?

*Please select only one item*

* Yes
* No
* Not applicable

BUSINESSES IN RURAL ESSEX 3

**61.** What is the nature of the new business?

(Please select as many as apply)

*Please select all that apply*

* Retail
* Manufacturing
* Food and drink
* Agriculture, fisheries
* Professional services

Other, Please specify

**62.** How many employees will you have?

Please specify how many Full Time Equivalent employees you expect to employ

**63.** Do you require assistance with setting up your new business? If so, what assistance do you need?

**64.** Why have you chosen Essex as your business location?

BUSINESSES IN RURAL ESSEX 4

**65.** Which statement best describes why your business is based in rural Essex?

(Please select one answer only)

*Please select only one item*

* I am in agriculture or I serve the farming industry
* I was attracted to set up in a rural area due to the availability of suitable premises
* The environment and aesthetic value of the countryside attracts me to rural Essex
* I work for/manage a tourist/visitor attraction
* Rural Essex is close to my consumer market

Other, Please specify

**66.** Where do your employees live?

(Please select one answer only)

*Please select only one item*

* Mostly in the local area
* A mix of local and commuter
* Mostly my staff commute from other areas

Other, Please specify

**67.** Is your business looking to expand in the near future?

(Please select one answer only)

*Please select only one item*

* Yes – we have plans already
* Yes – we hope to plan the expansion in the next 5 years
* It is a possibility but there are no definite plans
* No expansion is likely
* We may need to reduce our operations (output or staff numbers)
* Don’t know

Other, Please specify

BUSINESSES IN RURAL ESSEX 5

**68.** What has the most adverse effect on your ability to do business in rural Essex?

(Please select your top three answers)

1.

*Please select only one item*

* Lack of local post offices
* Poor internet connection
* Poor mobile phone signal
* Distance to banking facilities
* Distance to other services
* Availability of business advice and support
* Inability to expand operations due to planning restrictions
* Lack of local and skilled employees
* Distance to the markets
* None of the above

2.

*Please select only one item*

* Lack of local post offices
* Poor internet connection
* Poor mobile phone signal
* Distance to banking facilities
* Distance to other services
* Availability of business advice and support
* Inability to expand operations due to planning restrictions
* Lack of local and skilled employees
* Distance to the markets
* None of the above

3.

*Please select only one item*

* Lack of local post offices
* Poor internet connection
* Poor mobile phone signal
* Distance to banking facilities
* Distance to other services
* Availability of business advice and support
* Inability to expand operations due to planning restrictions
* Lack of local and skilled employees
* Distance to the markets
* None of the above

Other, Please specify

**69.** Please state here the issues that might impact your existing or new business in the next 5-10 years?