

Strategy, Insight & Engagement

Essex County Council

ESSEX

Essex Rural Strategy 2020 – 2024

Consultation report

**Essex Rural Strategy 2020-2024**

**Consultation Report**

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Rural strategy

# **Introduction**

Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) is an independent charity working to help rural communities achieve a thriving and sustainable future. We address issues such as social isolation, poor access to services and a shortage of affordable housing that are crucial to people living and working in rural Essex today.

Set up in 1929, RCCE is rooted in the villages and market towns of Essex. Over 400 local community organisations - principally Parish and Town Councils and Village Hall trusts - are currently members of RCCE.

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.

This online consultation will directly feed into the new strategy for rural Essex over the next 4 years.

This report shows the findings from the consultation. Respondents were asked to comment on a number of issues relating to rural Essex and the analysis has been reported at an overall county level with sub-analysis provided on a district by district basis. The data has been split into the following districts

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

There were 3 sections to the consultation, Working or Residing in Rural Essex, Volunteering within rural Essex and Businesses in rural Essex with questions specific for each section of the consultation. This report outlines the finding in each section.

# **Interpreting the data within the consultation**

This report contains several tables and charts that present the consultation findings. In some instances, responses may not add up to 100%.

There are several reasons why this might happen:

* The question may have allowed each respondent to give more than one answer.
* A response of between 0% and 0.5% will be shown as <1%.
* Percentages have been rounded up to nearest 2 decimal numbers when applicable.
* As the questionnaire was completed by respondents themselves (self-completion), not all respondents have answered all the questions. Therefore, the base size (the number of people answering a question) varies by question.

To ensure inclusivity, the questionnaire was open for anyone to take part and was available online and in paper format.

Within the report you will see numbers reported as a percentage. When a second percentage is shown within a bracket, this indicates how much greater or lower the percentage is than the average for that particular response.

Eg *Epping forest respondents had the highest proportion to select Funding to support business development and diversification (54.17% +25.6%).*

This means that 54.17% of respondents selected that answer which was 25.6% greater than the mean average of all respondents to answer that question.

For the analysis of free text comments, all have been read through and a coding frame was developed on a theme by theme basis and quantified thereafter.

For access to all non-identifiable data complied within this consultation please contact research@essex.gov.uk for your request.

### **Key Conclusions**

* Essex Rural respondents value many different aspects of rural life. Ranging from Wildlife, Nature, Landscapes, peace and tranquillity and history and heritage as key values of living and/or working in rural Essex
* There are a number of worries faced for rural respondents in the consultation ranging from planning issues, Not enough housing for young people, Poor transport infrastructure and patchy broadband/mobile phone coverage.
* Essex rural respondents have access to lots of services and amenities in rural Essex, but banking services was something the majority of respondents did not have access to.
* Respondents would travel for larger retail outlets and leisure and entertainment facilities
* Agriculture, land-based businesses and fisheries are the main sectors for employment in rural Essex.
* Emphasis from some respondents to work harder in addressing environmental issues threatening the layout of rural Essex County Council
* Respondents were of a belief that good digital and mobile connectivity were vital in establishing sustainable growth and increase business within rural Essex County Council
* Respondents showed appetites for food and drink services based in rural Essex understanding that spending money locally helps local communities.
* Over a quarter of respondents believe there is a gap in training for long-term unemployed people who reside in rural Essex
* There is a common trend of more people working from home based in rural Essex.
* A high proportion of respondents stated they live in rural Essex by choice.
* Nearly all respondents travelled via car in rural Essex. This could be due to the poor transport links within rural Essex which was an ongoing theme to responses within the survey
* Over half of the respondents stated they had sufficient mobile phone coverage in rural Essex.
* Over 90% of respondents feel safe in rural Essex (always or Most of time)
* Rural residents have a high level of concern around overdevelopment of communities and loss of green spaces.
* Respondents understand that there is a lack of jobs within rural Essex and measures are needed to increase the job opportunities within these communities.
* Improvements to highways infrastructure and sustainable transport are key to improving tourism in rural Essex
* Over ¾ of the volunteers who responded to the consultation volunteer locally.
* Town and parish councils’ main objections are to large scale development in their communities
* Distinct lack of funding towards town/parish councils based in rural Essex is detrimental to acquiring assets seen to be beneficial for the community
* Although there is a belief that there is a lack of work available in rural Essex, there are businesses who are interested in growing their rural based business and value being located rurally.

#### **Executive summary**

* *Just under 87% of respondents felt it was essential or important to encourage sustainable economic development and employment in rural Essex (Essential – 38%, Important – 49%).*
* *The sectors that were deemed the most important to encourage sustainable economic development and employment were Agriculture, land-based businesses and fisheries (71%), Small and micro-businesses (59%), Social/community enterprise (45%) and Sustainable energy (42%).*
* *When asked about most important parts of sustainable economic development and employment respondents felt Good digital and mobile connectivity (72%), Effective transport connections to markets (49%), A supportive planning framework (40%), Availability of workforce with appropriate skills (34%) and Easy access to banking and post office facilities (34%).*
* *Respondents felt that issues such as Young people struggle to get on the property ladder in rural areas (66%), Too many new homes being built in rural areas (62%) and More affordable housing is needed in rural areas (53%) as the main problems with housing and planning in rural Essex.*
* *When asked about the top three improvements for housing and planning in rural Essex, the most answered improvement was More affordable housing for young people and families. Second most answered was No housing development at all and third most answered was More housing to enable older people to downsize.*
* *Regarding the question, how can the planning system best support sustainable development while ensuring the environment and character of rural Essex is respected? 74% of respondents stated Ensure development respects local character, the Green Belt and other protected landscape, 66% stated Encourage the use of redundant and under-utilised buildings in the countryside and 49% said Increase local planning authorities’ understanding of the needs of the rural economy and communities.*
* *Within Access to services and amenities, the most accessed amenity was Village hall (81%), then Place of worship (80%) and followed by playing field and public space (80%). The least accessible amenities for respondents in rural Essex was Banking services (15%) and Static libraries (23%).*
* *Respondents stated that they would most likely travel outside of there community to access larger retail outlets (79%), Leisure and entertainment facilities (71%) and Banking services (66%)*
* *Car (94%) was the most common mode of transport when travelling outside of their village followed by bus (16%) and walking (16%).*
* *Regarding looking at what is not in their local community currently, People would like to have access to Youth club or activities for young people the most (23%). They would then like Better community transport (19%) and a more local shop (19%) then what they have available now.*
* *Three improvements respondents would like around access to services and amenities were Better availability of public transport, Improved broadband connectivity and More support for community-led initiatives to sustain services.*
* *Looking at digital, 32% of respondents said their broadband connectivity was Patchy (19%) or poor (14%). While only 1% said it was non-existent.*
* *Under 30mb was the most common speed of broadband amongst respondents (37%).*
* *33% of people feel that their current broadband speed does not meet there needs.*
* *39% of respondents said that their mobile phone signal was Patchy (26%) or Poor (13%) While only 2% said it was non-existent and only 1 respondent said that they do not own a mobile phone (<1%)*
* *Health and Wellbeing Respondents believed the number 1 improvement for people in rural Essex was Improved access to GP services (55%) and More community outreach services (such as district nurses, health visitors, respite care, Community Agents etc) (54%).*
* *89% of respondents stated that they did not feel isolate or lonely in rural Essex.*
* *When asked about isolated and lonely cohorts in rural Essex, Respondents believed that Elderly people were the most vulnerable (77%), followed by people with disabilities (53%) and then people who were widowed (40%).*
* *Education and Skills – When asked what measures could help sustain small rural primary schools, the most important measure chosen was Long-term investment in infrastructure (e.g. digital) (49%)*
* *More apprenticeships to support food, farming and other rural businesses (62%)was seen as the help people in rural communities’ need to better access further education, skills training and lifelong learning opportunities.*
* *Crime and community safety – 93% of respondents felt safe Always or Most of the time in rural Essex.*
* *To improve safety within Rural Essex, Respondents selected More visible and accessible police (63%), Targeting specific criminal activities – e.g. drug gangs, hare coursing etc (49%) and More rural Special Constables and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) (45%) as the most popular choices to improve safety.*
* *Environment and Climate change – 86% of respondents felt Over development and loss of green space is the biggest threat to rural Essex.*
* *Out of the measures to help improve the environment within Rural Essex the two most popular choices were More restrictions on new development on greenfield sites (78%) and Initiatives to protect wildlife, natural habitats and green spaces (76%).*
* *Stronger environmental constraints on new development (77%), Encourage energy efficiency and more use of renewable energy in homes and businesses (73%) and Policies that encourage land use management practices that can prevent flooding and erosion and reduce carbon emissions (71%) were identified as the measures likely to provide resilience to climate change in rural Essex.*
* *Tourism - Improvements to public rights of way, cycle routes and other ‘green’ infrastructure (65%), More promotion of rural Essex and its particular character and attractions (58%) and Better transport connections to rural tourist attractions (51%)were seen as the main measures to attract more visitors to rural Essex.*

*The breakdown of volunteering and business questions can be found in more detailed in separate sections within detailed findings*

##### **Who gave their views?**

**378** responses to the online consultation. Multiple choices were available to declare how respondents wanted to respond as. **344** responded as a **Resident of rural Essex** (91.01%), **110 work in rural Essex (29.10%), 52 own a business in rural Essex (13.76%), 51** responded as a **councillor for town or parish council**, or **other public or voluntary body** (13.49%), **23** as a **visitor of rural Essex** (6.09%), and **1** response from a **student studying in rural Essex**(<1%).

**Gender**

**48.82%** of respondents were **Female**, **42.00%** were **Male**, **5.77%** **preferred not to say** and **2.62%** **did not state their gender**. **<1%** Preferred to **self-describe**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Female | 186 | 48.82% |
| Male | 160 | 42.00% |
| Prefer not to say | 22 | 5.77% |
| Not Answered | 10 | 2.62% |
| Self-described | 3 | <1% |
| Transgender Male | 0 | 0% |
| Transgender Female | 0 | 0% |

**Age**

**29.63%** were aged between **61 – 70, 24.34%** of respondents were aged **51 - 60**, **16.67%** were aged between **71 or over**, **13.76%** were aged **41 - 50**, **6.35%** were aged **31 - 40** years old, **1.06%** were **30 or under**, **6.08%** of respondents **preferred not to say and 2.12% did not state their age.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| 61 - 70 | 112 | 29.63% |
| 51 - 60 | 92 | 24.34% |
| 71 or over | 63 | 16.67% |
| 41 - 50 | 52 | 13.76% |
| 31 - 40 | 24 | 6.35% |
| Prefer not to say | 23 | 6.08% |
| Not Answered | 8 | 2.12% |
| 30 or under | 4 | 1.06% |

**Marital status**

**71.43%** were **Married, 10.32%** of respondents were **Single**, **4.23%** were **Widowed**, **8.47%** **preferred not to say, 3.70% self-described and 1.85% did not state their marital status.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Married | 270 | 71.43% |
| Single | 39 | 10.32% |
| Prefer not to say | 32 | 8.47% |
| Widowed | 16 | 4.23% |
| Self-described | 14 | 3.70% |
| Not Answered | 7 | 1.85% |

**Sexual orientation**

**84.39%** were **Heterosexual, <1%** of respondents were **Gay**, **<1%** were **Bisexual**, **9.52%** **preferred not to say, 2.12% self-described and 9.52% did not state their sexual orientation.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Heterosexual | 319 | 84.39% |
| Prefer not to say | 36 | 9.52% |
| Not Answered | 13 | 3.44% |
| Self-described | 8 | 2.12% |
| Gay | 1 | 0.26% |
| Bisexual | 1 | 0.26% |
| Lesbian | 0 | 0% |

**Ethnicity**

**84.92%** of respondents stated they were **White British**, **1.32%** respondents said they were **White other**, **3.53%** stated **White Other, 7.94%** of respondents **preferred not to say, 2.34% self-described and 2.08% did not state their ethnicity.** All other stated ethnicities were below 0.5% responses

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| White British | 321 | 84.92% |
| Prefer not to say | 30 | 7.94% |
| Self-described | 9 | 2.34% |
| Not Answered | 8 | 2.08% |
| White Other | 5 | 1.32% |
| White Irish | 1 | 0.26% |
| Black or Black British African | 1 | 0.26% |
| Asian or Asian British Other | 1 | 0.26% |
| Asian Other | 1 | 0.26% |
| Not Known | 1 | 0.26% |
| Gypsy / Roma | 0 | 0% |
| Traveller of Irish Heritage | 0 | 0% |
| Black or Black British Caribbean | 0 | 0% |
| Mixed White/Black African | 0 | 0% |
| Mixed White/Black Caribbean | 0 | 0% |
| Black Other | 0 | 0% |
| Asian or Asian British Pakistani | 0 | 0% |
| Asian or Asian British Indian | 0 | 0% |
| Mixed White/Asian | 0 | 0% |
| Chinese | 0 | 0% |
| Mixed Other | 0 | 0% |

**Religion/Faith**

**55.50%** of respondents stated they were **Christian**, **28.31%** respondents said they had **No Religion (None)**, **10.32%** stated **they would Prefer not to say, 7.94%** of respondents **preferred not to say, 2.91% self-described and 1.85% did not state their religion/faith.**

All other stated Religions/faiths were below 0.5% responses

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Christian | 206 | 54.50% |
| None | 107 | 28.31% |
| Prefer not to say | 39 | 10.32% |
| Self-described | 11 | 2.91% |
| Not Answered | 7 | 1.85% |
| Buddhist | 3 | 0.79% |
| Not sure | 3 | 0.79% |
| Muslim | 1 | 0.26% |
| Jewish | 1 | 0.26% |
| Hindu | 0 | 0% |
| Sikh | 0 | 0% |

**Impairment**

**80.42%** of respondents stated they had **No impairment**, **8.47%** respondents said they had **Physical impairment, 4.50%** stated **Sensory impairment, 1.85%** of respondents **stated they had Mental Health Needs, (<1%)** stated that they had **Learning difficulty or disability while 6.61% did not state whether they had an impairment or not.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| No Impairment | 304 | 80.42% |
| Physical Impairment | 32 | 8.47% |
| Not Answered | 25 | 6.61% |
| Sensory Impairment | 17 | 4.50% |
| Mental Health Needs | 7 | 1.85% |
| Learning Difficulty or Disability | 2 | 0.53% |

**Selected district breakdowns**

The selected district breakdowns number of respondents completing is shown in the table below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Braintree | 83 | 21.96% |
| Uttlesford | 77 | 20.37% |
| Rochford | 42 | 11.11% |
| Colchester | 40 | 10.58% |
| Tendring | 26 | 6.88% |
| Maldon | 25 | 6.61% |
| Epping Forest | 24 | 6.35% |
| Chelmsford | 22 | 5.82% |
| Brentwood | 18 | 4.76% |
| Self-described | 13 | 3.38% |
| Not Answered | 4 | 1.05% |
| Basildon | 3 | 0.79% |
| Harlow | 1 | <1% |
| Castle Point | 0 | 0% |

###### **Detailed findings**

**About you**

The consultation asked respondents to identify their connection to rural Essex.

Out of the 378 respondents to this question and could answer multiple options. **91.01%** (n=344) lived in rural Essex, 29.10% (n=110) work in rural Essex, 13.76% (n=52) **own a business in rural Essex**, 13.49% (n=51) was **responding on behalf of a town or parish council or other public or voluntary body**, **6.08%** (n=23) was **a visitor to rural Essex** and <1% stated they were **a student studying in rural Essex**.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| I live in rural Essex | 344 | 91.01% |
| I work in rural Essex | 110 | 29.10% |
| I own a business in rural Essex | 52 | 13.76% |
| I am responding on behalf of a Town or Parish Council or other public or voluntary body | 51 | 13.49% |
| I am a visitor to rural Essex | 23 | 6.08% |
| I am a student studying in rural Essex | 1 | 0.26% |

When asked about what do you most value about rural Essex

Out of the 378 respondents to this question and could answer multiple options. The most answered response was the **wildlife and nature** **74.60%** (n=282), 73.02% (n=276) stated **The landscape**, **57.67%** (n=218) **Peace and tranquillity**, **35.98%** (n=136) was the **community spirit**, **27.25%** (n=103) was **The heritage and culture**, **19.31%** (n=73) was the **historic buildings**, **16.40%** (n=62) was Living close to family members and **13.49%** (n=51) stated that they valued **easy access to London**.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| The wildlife and nature | 282 | 74.60% |
| The landscape | 276 | 73.02% |
| Peace and tranquility | 218 | 57.67% |
| The community spirit | 136 | 35.98% |
| The heritage and culture | 103 | 27.25% |
| The historic buildings | 73 | 19.31% |
| Living close to family members | 62 | 16.40% |
| Easy access to London | 51 | 13.49% |

Selected District findings

* **Braintree, Maldon, Tendring** respondents valued **the landscape** higher than other option.
* **Uttlesford** had the highest proportion of respondents who selected the **community spirit** as what they value most about rural Essex.
* **Chelmsford** respondents valued the **heritage and culture** (+13.66% above average) and **Peace and tranquillity** (+11.14% above average) more than any other district.
* **Tendring** respondents values the **Living close to family members more than any other district** (+8.98% above average)
* **Epping forest** respondents valued **Easy access to London more than any other district** (+28.18%)
* **Rochford** respondents **did not value The community spirit** as much as all other districts (-19.69% lower than average)
* **Colchester** respondents **valued The wildlife and nature the most** (+5.4%)

**Issues affecting Rural Essex**

When asked around importance to encourage sustainable economic development and employment in rural Essex

Out of the 378 respondents to this question, **37.57%** of respondents selected **Essential** (n=142), **49.21%** (n=186) chose **Important**, **7.94%** answered **Not important** (n=30) and only **5.29%** stated it was undesirable **(n=20).**

**Graph**

If a respondent had answered essential or important, a further question was asked looking at which sectors should be prioritised around economy.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Agriculture, land based businesses and fisheries | 267 | 70.63% |
| Small and micro-businesses | 224 | 59.26% |
| Social/community enterprise | 169 | 44.71% |
| Sustainable energy | 160 | 42.33% |
| Food and drink production | 125 | 33.07% |
| Tourism | 123 | 32.54% |
| Technology | 73 | 19.31% |
| Not Answered | 23 | 6.09% |
| Other – Please specify | 20 | 5.29% |
| No specific sector | 17 | 4.50% |

Regarding the free text comments box relating to Other sectors to be prioritised, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Theme** | **Count** | **Percentage** |
| Address environmental issues | 8 | 38.10% |
| Other comments not stating a sector | 3 | 14.29% |
| Public transport | 3 | 14.29% |
| Protecting local rural businesses | 3 | 14.29% |
| Improved infrastructure for businesses in rural Essex | 1 | 4.76% |
| Use brownfield sites only for building | 1 | 4.76% |
| Mechanical engineering businesses | 1 | 4.76% |
| Agricultural food services | 1 | 4.76% |

When asked about what do you think the most important in encouraging sustainable economic deployment and employment in Rural Essex?

Looking at what was the most important sustainable economic development within rural Essex, these options were ranked in importance’s.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Good digital and mobile connectivity | 274 | 72.49% |
| Effective transport connections to markets | 185 | 48.94% |
| A supportive planning framework | 150 | 39.68% |
| Availability of workforce with appropriate skills | 130 | 34.39% |
| Easy access to banking and post office facilities | 129 | 34.13% |
| Funding to support business development and diversification | 108 | 28.57% |
| Promotion of the benefits of locating to rural Essex | 58 | 15.34% |
| Availability of specialist business advice | 27 | 7.14% |
| Other – please specify | 19 | 1.75% |
| Not Answered | 4 | <1% |

Regarding the free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around important factors, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Theme** | **Count** | **Percentage** |
| Planning that values rural Essex for what it is | 5 | 21.75% |
| Stop overdevelopment in rural areas | 4 | 17.39% |
| Funding for rural social enterprises | 3 | 13.04% |
| Focus on clean energy production | 2 | 8.70% |
| Improve public transport in rural Essex | 2 | 8.70% |
| Promoting local rural businesses | 2 | 8.70% |
| More Traffic/Parking measures in rural Essex | 2 | 8.70% |
| Improved flood defences | 1 | 4.35% |
| Faster broadband connectivity | 1 | 4.35% |
| Funding for communities | 1 | 4.35% |

Selected district breakdowns

* **Tendring** had the biggest proportion of respondents who believed sustaining economic development and employment was essential (73.08% - +35.51%)
* **Brentwood** had the biggest percentage of respondents who felt sustainable economic development and employment was not important (16.67% - +8.73%)
* **Maldon** believed the most important sector to be prioritised was Small and micro businesses (84% of respondents) unlike all other districts that believed the most important sector was Agriculture, land-based businesses and fisheries.
* **Tendring** had the biggest percentage of tourism to be a prioritised sector (73.08% +40.54%)
* **Uttlesford** had the highest proportion of respondents that stated sustainable energy as a a prioritised sector (53.25% - +10.92%)
* **Colchester** respondents believed Food and drink production (42.50% +9.43%) was more prioritised than every other district with the exception Maldon (48%)
* **Uttlesford** had the highest proportion of respondents wanting easy access to banking and Post office facilities to contribute to sustainable growth (48.05% +13.92%).
* **Rochford** was the only district that selected both Good digital and mobile connectivity and Effective transport connections to markets as most important to sustainable economic development (64.29% each)
* **Epping forest** respondents had the highest proportion to select Funding to support business development and diversification (54.17% +25.6%)

**Housing and planning**

Respondents were asked about statements they agree with in relation to housing and planning in Rural Essex and asked to select 3 answers.

Out of the 378 respondents to this question who could select 3 answers, **65.61%** of respondents selected **Young people struggle to get on the property ladder in rural areas** (n=248), **61.90%** (n=234) chose **There are too many new homes being built in rural areas** , **52.12%** answered **More affordable housing is needed in rural areas** (n=197), **21.96%** answered **More retirement accommodation is needed in rural areas** (n=83), Only **14.81%** answered **There is a good supply of housing locally** (n=56) and **The planning system is impeding necessary development in rural areas** was the least selected statement with 13.23% (n=50).

In addition there was 37 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around important factors, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Housing developments changing rural communities | 11 | 27.5% |
| More planning needed to allow more sustainable housing | 10 | 25% |
| Needless destruction of green spaces and natural woodlands | 7 | 17.5% |
| Other comments specific to communities | 4 | 10% |
| Need to make homes for specific cohorts (young and older people) | 2 | 5% |
| Small scale developments across smaller villages | 2 | 5% |
| Housing to be built on brown fields | 1 | 2.5% |
| Lack of evidence to show over development leads to increase in traffic | 1 | 2.5% |
| Sustainable amount of housing currently | 1 | 2.5% |
| Increased Tax on holiday homes | 1 | 2.5% |

Selected district breakdowns

* **Maldon** was the only district that selected **There are too many new homes being built in rural areas** more than **Young people struggle to get on the property ladder in rural areas** which all other districts had as the most important statement**.**
* **Colchester** had the highest proportion of respondents who selected **More retirement accommodation is needed in rural areas** as there most important statement **(30% +8.04%)**
* **Braintree** respondents selected **there is a good supply of housing locally statement** in comparison to all other districts **(22.89% +8.08%)**
* **Brentwood** had the highest proportion of respondents who selected **the planning system is impeding necessary development in rural areas than any other districts (22.22% +8.99%)**

In asking about improvements, respondents were asked to choose 3 improvements to address the housing needs for rural Essex.

Out of the 378 respondents to this question who could select top 3 improvements. Looking at the number 1 improvement.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| More affordable housing for young people and families | 197 | 52.12% |
| No housing development at all | 95 | 25.13% |
| More housing to enable older people to downsize | 53 | 14.02% |
| More open market housing | 13 | 3.44% |
| More sheltered housing | 9 | 2.38% |
| Not Answered | 7 | 1.85% |
| More housing for people with special needs | 4 | 1.06% |

The number 2 improvement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| More housing to enable older people to downsize | 142 | 37.57% |
| More affordable housing for young people and families | 67 | 17.72% |
| No housing development at all | 56 | 14.81% |
| Not Answered | 42 | 11.11% |
| More sheltered housing | 27 | 7.14% |
| More open market housing | 23 | 6.08% |
| More housing for people with special needs | 21 | 5.56% |

The number 3 improvement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Not Answered | 93 | 24.60% |
| No housing development at all | 74 | 19.58% |
| More sheltered housing | 62 | 16.40% |
| More housing to enable older people to downsize | 44 | 11.64% |
| More open market housing | 38 | 10.05% |
| More housing for people with special needs | 34 | 8.99% |
| More affordable housing for young people and families | 33 | 8.73% |

In addition, there was 41 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around improvements for housing in rural Essex, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Increased numbers of sustainable housing | 12 | 23.08% |
| Redesigning old housing | 10 | 19.23% |
| No development in open countryside | 8 | 15.38% |
| Redevelopment on brown sites | 5 | 9.62% |
| Increased Community housing | 4 | 7.69% |
| More Housing for people with impairments | 2 | 3.85% |
| Lower carbon emissions in rural Essex | 2 | 3.85% |
| Putting more facilities in rural areas prior to development (GPs, additional parking, shops) | 2 | 3.85% |
| Improved social housing | 2 | 3.85% |
| Allow residents in rural Essex to self-build | 1 | 1.92% |
| No second homes allowed or encouraged with rural Essex | 1 | 1.92% |
| No social housing for people outside of the community | 1 | 1.92% |
| other comments | 1 | 1.92% |
| Improved Sheltered housing | 1 | 1.92% |

Selected district breakdowns

* **Brentwood** respondents selected **More sheltered housing** as there 3rd most important housing statement **(27.78%)**
* **Colchester** respondents selected **No housing development at all** as there 3rd most important housing statement **(25.00%)**
* **Chelmsford** respondents selected **More open market housing** as there 3rd most important housing statement **(22.73%)**
* **Maldon** respondents selected **More affordable housing for young people** as there 2nd most selected 2nd most important housing statement **(28.00%)**
* **Tendring** respondents selected **More affordable housing for young people** as there 2nd most important housing statement **(27.78%)**

Respondents were asked about how the planning system can help support sustainable development while ensuring the environment and character of rural Essex is respected and were asked to select 3 answers.

Out of the 378 respondents to this question who could select 3 answers, **74.34%** of respondents selected **Ensure development respects local character, the Green Belt and other protected landscapes** (n=281), **65.34%** (n=247) chose **Encourage the use of redundant and under-utilised buildings in the countryside** , **48.94%** answered **Increase local planning authorities’ understanding of the needs of the rural economy and communities** (n=185), **44.71%** answered **Encourage Neighbourhood Plans and other initiatives to increase community involvement in the planning system** (n=169), Only **22.75%** answered **Focus development on rural towns and other identified key settlements** (n=86).

In addition there was 32 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around planning, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Effective local development plans | 8 | 28.58% |
| Other comments related to specific communities | 6 | 21.43% |
| Better amenities to serve the community | 4 | 14.29% |
| More affordable housing for local people | 3 | 10.71% |
| Improving local transport infrastructure | 3 | 10.71% |
| Concentrate on new homes in urban centres rather than rural areas | 3 | 10.71% |
| More Eco-friendly housing | 1 | 3.57% |

Selected district breakdowns

* **Epping forest (95.83%)** of respondents selected **Ensure development respects local character, the Green Belt and other protected landscapes** the highest in all Selected districts
* A high proportion of **Rochford** respondents answered that **Encourage the use of redundant and under-utilised buildings in the countryside** was the way to support sustainable development in Rural Essex **(83.33%)**
* **Brentwood** respondents selected **Increase local planning authorities’ understanding of the needs of the rural economy and communities** as the most important support for sustainable development of rural Essex **(66.67%).**
* **Tendring** respondents had the highest proportion of choice of **Encourage Neighbourhood Plans and other initiatives to increase community involvement in the planning system** **(65.38%,+19.67%)** more than any other district.

**Access to services and amenities**

When asked about what goods, services and amenities can be accessed within the respondent’s rural community they listed the following.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Village Hall | 307 | 81.22% |
| Place of worship | 303 | 80.16% |
| Playing field/ public open space | 302 | 79.89% |
| Public House | 292 | 77.25% |
| School | 259 | 68.52% |
| General store | 245 | 64.81% |
| Playground | 238 | 62.96% |
| Post Office | 218 | 57.67% |
| GP surgery | 193 | 51.06% |
| Pharmacy | 171 | 45.24% |
| Cashpoint | 163 | 43.12% |
| Sports facilities | 142 | 37.57% |
| Library – mobile | 127 | 33.60% |
| Farm shop | 117 | 30.95% |
| Library - static | 86 | 22.75% |
| Banking services | 57 | 15.08% |
| Not Answered | 14 | 3.70% |
| None of the above | 10 | 2.65% |

In addition, there was 32 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around goods, services and amenities which have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Other comments directly related to specific communities | 9 | 27.27% |
| All the list is within close proximity of where respondent lives/works/visits | 7 | 21.21% |
| Green spaces/Nature reserves | 5 | 15.15% |
| Restaurant | 3 | 9.09% |
| No facilities in respondent’s area | 2 | 6.06% |
| Community agents | 1 | 3.03% |
| Community run shop | 1 | 3.03% |
| Golf course | 1 | 3.03% |
| Additional medical services | 1 | 3.03% |
| Railway station | 1 | 3.03% |
| Community facilities about to close due to lack of funding | 1 | 3.03% |
| Sports facilities | 1 | 3.03% |

When looking at the travel movements of respondents and looking at what they access outside their village. Out of 378 respondents they selected from a list of facilities/amenities they access elsewhere.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Larger retail outlets | 298 | 78.84% |
| Leisure and entertainment facilities | 267 | 70.63% |
| Banking services | 250 | 66.14% |
| Health services | 218 | 57.67% |
| All shops | 157 | 41.53% |
| Post Office | 130 | 34.39% |
| School/further education | 84 | 22.22% |
| Not Answered | 19 | 5.03% |

In addition, there was 31 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around goods, services and amenities travelled to access have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Employment | 7 | 25.93% |
| Access all goods/services/amenities | 5 | 18.52% |
| Other comments directly linked to a specific community | 5 | 18.52% |
| Sports clubs | 2 | 7.41% |
| Country walks | 1 | 3.70% |
| Library | 1 | 3.70% |
| Online banking | 1 | 3.70% |
| Pharmacy | 1 | 3.70% |
| Restaurant | 1 | 3.70% |
| Specific services not found in common retail | 1 | 3.70% |
| Supermarket | 1 | 3.70% |
| Vet | 1 | 3.70% |

When looking at the travel methods of the respondents when they access amenities outside their community. Out of 378 respondents that could choose as many forms of transport as they use, most selected **Car with 94.18%** of respondents using this as a form of transport (n=356), **Bus** use and **walking** were the next popular both **16.14%** (n=61 each), **Train** equated to **15.34% (n=58), Cycling 11.11% (n=42),** Then **Lift from friend/neighbour** **4.50%** (n=17) followed by **Taxi 3.97%** (n=15) and lastly **Community Transport** which was only accessed by 4 respondents **(1.06%).**

Additional there was 15 comments within the Other methods – free text box around travel to access amenities and these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| No public transport access in specific rural areas | 5 | 41.67% |
| Other comments directly related to specific communities | 4 | 33.33% |
| Push bikes | 1 | 8.33% |
| Poor transport infrastructure | 1 | 8.33% |
| Motorcycle | 1 | 8.33% |

When looking at what rural Essex residents/visitors/workers would like to access in there community that they can’t currently, Respondents answered the following:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Youth club/activities for young people | 86 | 22.75% |
| Community transport | 72 | 19.05% |
| Shop | 70 | 18.52% |
| Bank/cashpoint | 69 | 18.25% |
| Post Office | 58 | 15.34% |
| Other – Please specify | 53 | 14.04% |
| GP surgery | 49 | 12.96% |
| Good neighbour/befriending service | 46 | 12.17% |
| Adult education | 46 | 12.17% |
| Clubs/activities for older people | 45 | 11.90% |
| Not Answered | 42 | 11.09% |
| Public House | 23 | 6.08% |
| Library | 20 | 5.29% |
| Village Hall | 8 | 2.12% |
| Playing field/public open space | 6 | 1.59% |
| Playground | 5 | 1.32% |
| School | 0 | 0% |
| Place of worship | 0 | 0% |

In addition, there was 53 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around goods, services and amenities that would be desired in the respondent’s rural community. These have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| All services listed were already available in the rural community | 10 | 18.87% |
| More access to Food and drink services | 7 | 13.21% |
| Current community has no access to the services listed. | 6 | 11.32% |
| Improved transport infrastructure (Linking village to village) | 4 | 7.55% |
| Other comment specifically related to certain communities | 4 | 7.55% |
| More emergency/health services need to be available | 3 | 5.66% |
| More sustainable travel options needed for rural Essex | 3 | 5.66% |
| Larger supermarket | 2 | 3.77% |
| Increased Police presence needed in rural Essex | 2 | 3.77% |
| Improved access to further education | 1 | 1.89% |
| Improved Banking facilities/services | 1 | 1.89% |
| More Childcare/nurseries options within rural Essex | 1 | 1.89% |
| Improved access to green spaces | 1 | 1.89% |
| More leisure facilities | 1 | 1.89% |
| Increased library options | 1 | 1.89% |
| Community specific Post office open times | 1 | 1.89% |

In asking about improvements, respondents were asked to choose 3 improvements to address access to services for residents/visitors/workers in rural Essex.

Out of the 378 respondents to this question who could select top 3 improvements. Looking at the number 1 improvement.

The number 1 improvement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Better availability of public transport | 160 | 42.33% |
| Improved broadband connectivity | 88 | 23.28% |
| More multi-purpose provision of services, for example, a shop or post office run from a village hall or church | 44 | 11.64% |
| More support for community-led initiatives to sustain services | 35 | 9.26% |
| Enhanced provision of community transport | 24 | 6.35% |
| Not Answered | 12 | 3.17% |
| More services delivered online | 9 | 2.38% |
| Enhanced provision of outreach services | 6 | 1.59% |

The number 2 improvement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Improved broadband connectivity | 84 | 22.22% |
| More support for community-led initiatives to sustain services | 60 | 15.87% |
| Better availability of public transport | 57 | 15.08% |
| Enhanced provision of community transport | 54 | 14.29% |
| More multi-purpose provision of services, for example, a shop or post office run from a village hall or church | 54 | 14.29% |
| Not Answered | 35 | 9.26% |
| More services delivered online | 18 | 4.76% |
| Enhanced provision of outreach services | 16 | 4.23% |

The number 3 improvement

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Not Answered | 83 | 21.96% |
| More support for community-led initiatives to sustain services | 82 | 21.69% |
| Improved broadband connectivity | 46 | 12.17% |
| More multi-purpose provision of services, for example, a shop or post office run from a village hall or church | 43 | 11.38% |
| Enhanced provision of community transport | 35 | 9.26% |
| Enhanced provision of outreach services | 32 | 8.47% |
| Better availability of public transport | 30 | 7.94% |
| More services delivered online | 27 | 7.14% |

In addition, there was 33 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around improvements to access services in rural Essex, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Better transport infrastructure to access services | 16 | 48.48% |
| More EV charging points in rural Essex | 3 | 9.09% |
| Incentives for rural community run services | 3 | 9.09% |
| Reduce air pollution to improve quality of life in rural Essex | 3 | 9.09% |
| Currently happy with Rural Essex | 2 | 6.06% |
| Improve emergency services within rural Essex | 2 | 6.06% |
| Improved broadband connectivity | 2 | 6.06% |
| More delivery services or collection points to help with logistics in rural Essex | 2 | 6.06% |
| Encourage wildlife activity within rural Essex | 1 | 3.03% |
| Using rural Essex to improve mental and physical health | 1 | 3.03% |
| An increase in mortgage paying jobs in rural Essex | 1 | 3.03% |
| Better flood prevention to access services | 1 | 3.03% |
| Stop over development to preserve rural Essex | 1 | 3.03% |

Selected district breakdowns

* Respondents from **Tendring** selected Improved broadband connectivity as the most popular improvement for access to services in rural Essex **(30.77% +7.49%)**
* **Brentwood** respondents comprehensively stated that Better availability of public transport **(66.67% - +24.33%)** would be the number 1 improvement for better access to services in rural Essex
* **Maldon** respondents selected **Enhanced provision of community transport (20%) as their choice for most selected 2nd improvements**
* **Braintree** respondents selected More support for community-led initiatives to sustain services **(25.30% +9.43%) as their choice for most selected 2nd improvements**
* Looking at the 3rd improvement, **Uttlesford** respondents had the biggest proportion of respondents selecting **More multi-purpose provision of services, for example, a shop or post office run from a village hall or church (19.48%, +8.10%)**
* **Chelmsford** respondent’s **3rd improvement** was **Enhanced provision of community transport with 13.64% (+4.38%)**

**Digital**

Respondents were asked around broadband connectivity in rural Essex.

Out of the 375 respondents to this question, **45.56%** of respondents selected **Adequate** (n=176), **19.05%** (n=72) chose **Very good**, **18.52%** answered **Patchy** (n=70), 13.76% answered **Poor** (n=52) and only **1.32%** stated it was non-existent **(n=5).**

A follow up question was asked to respondents that answered Poor, patchy or non-existent in the previous question to describe the impact of this on their life.

**10** respondents provided free-text comments relating to the impact on their lifethese have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Affects home working | 54 | 25.96% |
| Affects streaming (Films, Videos and streaming services) | 45 | 21.63% |
| Broadband speeds not consistent within the rural area | 33 | 15.87% |
| Feeling of frustration | 24 | 11.54% |
| Affects internet shopping | 16 | 7.69% |
| Affects contact with friends and family | 11 | 5.29% |
| Lack of Broadband connectivity causes family conflict | 6 | 2.88% |
| Reliant on mobile connectivity (4g) | 6 | 2.88% |
| Cannot access online banking | 4 | 1.92% |
| Broadband coverage poor so have sort alternative solution  | 3 | 1.44% |
| Lack of internet providers in rural area | 2 | 0.96% |
| Other comment non-related to question | 2 | 0.96% |
| Affects business expansion in rural areas | 1 | <1% |
| Affects education and studying online | 1 | <1% |

Asking respondents who do have broadband about the speed of the fixed broadband.

Out of the 378 respondents to this question, **36.77%** of respondents selected **Under 30mb** (n=139), **28.84%** (n=109) chose **30 – 100mb (superfast broadband)**, **26.72%%** answered that they **Did not know their speed** (n=101) and only **15** respondents had over 100Mb speed (ultrafast broadband) **(3.97%). 5** respondents answered they **do not have broadband connectivity** (1.32%) and (2.38%) did not answer**.**

When asked if the broadband speed they have currently meets their needs**, 60.5%** of respondents said **Yes it does meet there needs (n=227), 32.54%** said it **did not meet there needs (n=123), 17** respondents **did not know (4.50%)** and **4** stated they **did not have broadband connectivity (1.06%).**

**107** respondents provided free-text comments relating to the impact on broadband not meeting their needs have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Broadband speeds make it difficult to access online services | 35 | 20.11% |
| Unable/struggle to work from home | 33 | 18.97% |
| Unable to download media/streaming services | 23 | 13.22% |
| Feelings of frustration with broadband coverage | 17 | 9.77% |
| Unable to use some new technology (e.g online banking) | 15 | 8.62% |
| Unable to send media/emails | 14 | 8.05% |
| Evening and weekends slow broadband speeds | 10 | 5.75% |
| Family conflict because lack of coverage | 10 | 5.75% |
| Other comments directly related to certain communities | 10 | 5.75% |
| Unable to study online | 2 | 1.15% |
| Community use of a wi-fi signal to combat lack of home broadband coverage | 2 | 1.15% |
| Must travel to work as home coverage not sufficient | 1 | 0.57% |
| Must use 4g provider as more reliable than broadband | 1 | 0.57% |
| Specialist rural broadband provider | 1 | 0.57% |

Respondents were asked about Mobile phone connectivity in rural Essex.

Out of the 378 respondents to this question, **38.89%** of respondents selected **Adequate** (n=147), **25.93%** (n=98) chose **Patchy**, **17.99%** answered **Very good** (n=70), **13.49%** answered **Poor** (n=51) and only **2.38%** stated it was non-existent **(n=9). (<1%)** said that they **do not have a mobile phone.**

A follow up question was asked to respondents that answered Patchy, poor or non-existent in the previous question to describe the impact of this on their life.

**154** respondents provided free-text comments relating to the impact on their lifethese have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Lack of signal so cannot take/make calls | 93 | 46.5% |
| Annoyed with lack of mobile phone signal/coverage | 21 | 10.5% |
| Affects communication with friends and family | 20 | 10% |
| Unable/Difficult to WFH | 17 | 8.5% |
| Inconsistent broadband coverage within the community | 16 | 8% |
| Causes problems when running a business in rural Essex | 15 | 7.5% |
| Financial impact as must keep landline | 6 | 3% |
| Other comments nonrelated to mobile phone subject | 6 | 3% |
| Lack of mobile phone signal does not affect them | 2 | 1% |
| Lack of mobile phone providers in the area | 2 | 1% |
| Must use Wi-fi to make calls | 1 | 0.5% |
| Mobile banking does not work due to lack of signal | 1 | 0.5% |

Selected district breakdowns

* **Brentwood** had the biggest proportion of respondents who stated they had **Patchy** Broadband connectivity out of all the districts **(33.33% +14.81%)**
* **Maldon** had the biggest proportion of respondents who stated they had **Very good** Broadband connectivity out of all the districts **(28.00% +8.95%)**
* Looking at broadband speeds, the district with the **highest proportion of superfast** broadband was **Maldon (44% +13.16%)**
* The district that had the biggest proportion of broadband speeds **Under 30mb** was **Tendring (46.15% +9.38%)**
* Looking at where broadband meets their needs, **Maldon** had the highest percentage breakdown of respondents that said it met their needs (76% - +15.5%)
* **Brentwood** and **Uttlesford** respondents both had the highest average for broadband speeds that **do not meet their needs** (44.44% and 44.16% respectively)
* In regards to mobile phone signal, **Brentwood respondents** had the highest proportion of **responses saying signal was Poor (22.22% - +8.73%)**
* **Epping forest** had the highest percentage of respondents who stated they had **very good mobile phone signal (33.33% - +15.34%)**

**Health and Wellbeing**

Respondents were asked about Health and Wellbeing and what improvements could be made to people in rural Essex.

In asking about improvements, respondents were asked to choose 3 improvements to address the health and wellbeing needs for rural Essex.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Improved access to GP services | 207 | 54.76% |
| More community outreach services (such as district nurses, health visitors, respite care, Community Agents etc.) | 206 | 54.50% |
| Better provision of transport to hospitals | 142 | 37.57% |
| More clubs and social activities within the local community | 88 | 23.28% |
| More emergency care within the community (e.g. first responder services) | 85 | 22.49% |
| More fitness and healthy living activities | 83 | 21.96% |
| Better access to public open space and the countryside | 64 | 16.93% |
| Better access to a healthy diet | 26 | 6.88% |
| Not Answered | 21 | 5.56% |
| Better access to addiction support services (e.g. smoking, alcohol, drugs) | 17 | 4.50% |

In addition, there was 32 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around improvements to access Health and wellbeing in rural Essex, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Better access to health services | 7 | 21.88% |
| Better transport infrastructure needed for rural Essex | 7 | 21.88% |
| Other comments non-relating to Health and wellbeing | 5 | 15.63% |
| Creating a healthy environment for all to live in with rural Essex | 4 | 12.5% |
| More visible public services (e.g Police) in rural Essex | 3 | 9.38% |
| Better access to locally sourced food | 1 | 3.13% |
| Rural areas are reliant on local volunteers | 1 | 3.13% |
| Improving education on rural issues to rural residents | 1 | 3.13% |
| Free parking to access emergency services | 1 | 3.13% |
| Health and fitness activities to be held within rural Essex everyday | 1 | 3.13% |
| None of the above | 1 | 3.13% |

Respondents were asked about isolation and loneliness within rural Essex.

In asking about feelings of loneliness and isolation, Out of the 378 respondents to this question, **88.86%** of respondents said **No** (n=335), **5.56%** (n=21) chose **Yes** and **3.97%** answered **Don’t know** (n=15) and only **1.85%** did not answer.

A follow up question was then asked for respondents to explain there answer and there was **226 free text comments, which have been Themed, coded and quantified below**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Have friends/family so do not feel lonely/isolated | 70 | 23.97% |
| Great community spirit | 55 | 18.84% |
| Personal transport available so can make social interactions | 50 | 17.12% |
| Live rural by choice | 35 | 11.99% |
| Village has services and helps bring people together | 28 | 9.59% |
| Fit and active so does not feel isolated | 13 | 4.45% |
| In-close proximity of major town | 10 | 3.42% |
| Other comment nonrelated to loneliness | 8 | 2.74% |
| Lack of response from public services to combat isolation and loneliness | 6 | 2.05% |
| Need more services to combat isolation and loneliness | 6 | 2.05% |
| Feel lonely due to lack of physical interaction | 5 | 1.71% |
| Become part of the parish council to combat loneliness | 2 | 0.68% |
| Informative local social media/support group | 2 | 0.68% |
| More investment in rural public transport could increase social interactions | 1 | <1% |
| New to rural area and have little friends in the community | 1 | <1% |

Looking at groups who are most vulnerable to loneliness’s and isolation within rural Essex the 378 respondents to answer this question and could select three cohorts said the following.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Elderly people | 290 | 76.72% |
| People with disabilities (including those with learning disabilities, mental health issues and long-term sickness) | 202 | 53.44% |
| Widowed people | 151 | 39.95% |
| Unemployed people | 106 | 28.04% |
| People who work alone | 74 | 19.58% |
| Young people (aged 18-25) | 70 | 18.52% |
| Single parents | 65 | 17.20% |
| Young parents | 61 | 16.14% |
| Children of school age (under 18) | 48 | 12.70% |
| Not Answered | 19 | 5.03% |

In addition, there was 22 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around most vulnerable cohorts in rural Essex, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| All of the listed cohorts are vulnerable | 6 | 28.57% |
| Cannot be defined to a group | 6 | 28.57% |
| Other comments relating to personal circumstances | 3 | 14.29% |
| Teenagers (12-18 years old) | 2 | 9.52% |
| Farmers | 1 | 4.76% |
| Individuals dependant on public transport | 1 | 4.76% |
| New mothers in rural Essex | 1 | 4.76% |
| Residents new to rural Essex | 1 | 4.76% |

Selected district breakdowns

* Regarding improvements to health and wellbeing within rural Essex, **Epping forest** had the highest percentage of respondents that said **Improved access to GP services (62.50% - +7.74%)** and also highest percentage of **More community outreach services (such as district nurses, health visitors, respite care, Community Agents etc.) from all districts (66.67%)**
* Only **Maldon and Brentwood** selected **Better provision of transport to hospitals** over Improved access to GP services when looking at Selected districts.
* Looking at Selected districts and vulnerable people, **Epping forest** selected **elderly people** the most with **87.5% (+10.78%)** of respondents stating they were the most vulnerable cohort in rural Essex, also selected **widowed people** higher than any other district **(50% - +10.05%)**
* **Colchester** respondents had the highest proportion of respondents who selected **People with disabilities (including those with learning disabilities, mental health issues and long-term sickness)** as the most vulnerable cohort **(60%)**

**Education and skills**

Respondents were asked about sustaining small rural primary schools in Essex and measures will help this.

In asking about measures, respondents were asked to choose no more than 2 measures to address the concern of sustaining education and skills in rural Essex.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Long-term investment in infrastructure (e.g. digital) for small rural schools | 187 | 49.47% |
| Measures to ensure children can travel safely to small rural schools | 184 | 48.68% |
| More initiatives to encourage community use of school premises | 154 | 40.74% |
| More collaboration between schools – e.g. school clusters or partnerships between rural schools and secondary or independent schools | 143 | 37.83% |
| Other – Please specify | 28 | 7.41% |
| Not Answered | 21 | 5.56% |

In addition, there was 28 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around measures to sustain education and skills in rural Essex, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Other comments relating to specific communities | 6 | 26.09% |
| Encourage parents sending children to local schools | 5 | 21.74% |
| Transport infrastructure to cope with demand of schools | 2 | 8.70% |
| Support for rural staff to access education and skills to improve  | 2 | 8.70% |
| Education on climate crisis | 2 | 8.70% |
| Planned affordable housing | 1 | 4.35% |
| Merge schools | 1 | 4.35% |
| Links with Higher education (Uni/colleges) | 1 | 4.35% |
| Key worker housing initiative | 1 | 4.35% |
| IT training | 1 | 4.35% |
| Access to green infrastructure | 1 | 4.35% |

Respondents were asked about helping people in rural Essex access further education, skills training and lifelong learning opportunities measures will help this.

In asking about measures, respondents were asked to choose no more than 2 measures to help people access further education and increase skills and training.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| More apprenticeships to support food, farming and other rural businesses | 234 | 61.90% |
| Better access to transport for post 16 year olds attending Further Education colleges | 213 | 56.35% |
| Development of career pathways specific to rural business needs | 134 | 35.45% |
| Investment in training for the long-term unemployed and people excluded from the labour market | 102 | 26.98% |
| More provision of adult education in rural locations | 79 | 20.90% |
| Not Answered | 13 | 3.44% |

In addition, there was 15 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around measures to access further education and skills in rural Essex, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Employers to offer training to upskill staff | 4 | 23.53% |
| Other comment relating to specific communities | 4 | 23.53% |
| Encourage rural employers to uptake the apprenticeships  | 3 | 17.65% |
| Further/higher education opportunities for the over 55-year olds residing in rural Essex | 3 | 17.65% |
| Make public transport free in rural Essex | 1 | 5.88% |
| More collaborations with other organisations to offer education opportunities | 1 | 5.88% |
| Scheme for employers to support childcare so skill development can happen | 1 | 5.88% |

Selected district breakdowns

* **Maldon** district respondents selected **Measures to ensure children can travel safely to small rural schools** as the most important reason for sustaining small rural schools **72%** (+23.32%) as did **Chelmsford with 63.64%** of the responses.
* **Braintree** respondents selected **More collaboration between schools – e.g. school clusters or partnerships between rural schools and secondary or independent schools** as the most important reason for sustaining small rural schools 48.19% (+10.36%)
* **Epping forest** had the biggest proportion of respondents that selected **Long-term investment in infrastructure (e.g. digital) for small rural schools** as the most important reason for sustaining small rural schools 66.67% (+17.20%)
* In regard to accessing Higher and further education in rural Essex, **Maldon** respondents selected **Better access to transport for post 16 year olds attending Further Education colleges** as the most important factor for improving access. **(76% +19.65%)**
* **Rochford** had the biggest percentage of respondents who selected **More provision of adult education in rural locations** as a main reason for improving access to education **(28.57% +7.67%)**
* Tendring respondents had the highest percentage of people selecting **More apprenticeships to support food, farming and other rural businesses (76.92% +15.12%)** as the main reason for improving access

Crime and Community safety

Respondents were asked around Safety in rural Essex.

Out of the 376 respondents to this question, **68.78%** of respondents selected **Most of the time** (n=260), **23.81%** (n=90) chose **Always**, **5.56%** answered **Sometimes** (n=21), 1.32% answered **Never** (n=5) and <**1%** did not answer **(n=5).**

A follow up question was asked to respondents that answered anything other than **Always**, to explain why they feel like this.

**276** respondents answered a pre-populated list of reasons for feeling unsafe and were asked to choose as many as they feel was appropriate.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Lack of visible police presence | 190 | 50.26% |
| Road safety issues – including speeding traffic | 168 | 44.44% |
| Fear of crime – e.g. burglary, theft, vandalism | 122 | 32.28% |
| Anti-social behaviour | 110 | 29.10% |
| Gang activity - e.g. drugs, hare coursing, fly tipping | 106 | 28.04% |
| Not Answered | 83 |  |
| Unlit areas | 60 | 15.87% |
| Isolated location of home/farm/business | 53 | 14.02% |
| Other – Please specify  | 24 |  |

21 free-text comments relating to the impact on their lifethese have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Fear of burglary because of lack of police presence | 10 | 47.62% |
| Maintenance of transport infrastructure to help feeling safe | 4 | 19.05% |
| Littering issue in rural Essex | 2 | 9.52% |
| Traveller sites causing people to feel unsafe | 2 | 9.52% |
| Concerns around Drug issues in rural Essex | 1 | 4.76% |
| Lack of mobile connectivity leading to feeling unsafe | 1 | 4.76% |
| Rural Essex is safer than other areas | 1 | 4.76% |

In asking about improvements, respondents were asked to choose improvements to address unsafe feelings for residents/visitors/workers in rural Essex.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| More visible and accessible police | 239 | 63.23% |
| Targeting specific criminal activities – e.g. drug gangs, hare coursing etc. | 186 | 49.21% |
| More rural Special Constables and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) | 170 | 44.97% |
| Improved traffic, road safety and speed controls | 167 | 44.18% |
| Improved pavements and pathways | 104 | 27.51% |
| Greater understanding of the needs of the rural and farming community | 94 | 24.87% |
| More Neighbourhood Watch schemes and other community crime prevention initiatives | 59 | 15.61% |
| Increased street lighting | 47 | 12.43% |
| Not Answered | 8 | 2.12% |

In addition, there was 28 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around improvements for making rural Essex safer, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| More timely response by police in rural Essex | 12 | 40% |
| Improving transport infrastructure and road safety | 4 | 13.33% |
| Improved Cycle routes | 3 | 10.00% |
| Community watch services | 2 | 6.67% |
| ECC to ensure lighting maintenance is order | 2 | 6.67% |
| Education around sense of community | 2 | 6.67% |
| Stop over development in rural Essex | 2 | 6.67% |
| Other comments relating to specific community | 1 | 3.33% |
| Reduce parking | 1 | 3.33% |
| Uptake of religious community groups | 1 | 3.33% |

Selected district breakdowns

* **Rochford** respondents had the **highest percentage** of people that felt safe **Most of the time** in rural Essex **(78.57% - +9.79%),** **Brentwood** had the **lowest percentage** of respondents that stated that they felt safe Most of the time **(44.44% - -24.34%)**
* **Tendring** respondents had the **highest proportion** stating they felt safe **Always (34.62% - +10.81%)**
* For respondents who stated that they did not answer Always for feelings of safety in the community, **Maldon** had the highest percentage of respondents who selected **Lack of visible police presence (64% - +13.74%)**
* Tendring respondents selected **Road safety issues – including speeding traffic (61.54% - +17.1%)** as there most important factor.
* **Rochford** respondents had the **highest percentage of people** that chose **Antisocial behaviour** as a reason **(45.24% - +16.14%), Braintree** respondents selected **Gang activity - e.g. drugs, hare coursing, fly tipping** morethan any other district **(42.31% - +14.27%) and Colchester selected Fear of crime – e.g. burglary, theft, vandalism** more than any other district **(40% - +7.72%)**
* Looking at addressing improvements **to help people feel safer in rural Essex, Maldon** had the **highest proportion of respondents** who wanted **More visible and accessible police (76% - +12.77%)**
* **Tendring** was the only district to select **Targeting specific criminal activities – e.g. drug gangs, hare coursing etc** as their top priority to make rural Essex safer**. (61.54% - +12.33%)**

Environment and Climate change

Respondents were asked about Environment and climate change and what following issues pose the biggest threats to rural Essex.

In asking about threats, respondents were asked to choose 3 answers to understand threats to rural Essex.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Overdevelopment and loss of green space | 322 | 85.19% |
| Loss of wildlife and natural habitats | 243 | 64.29% |
| Littering and fly tipping | 200 | 52.91% |
| Loss of tranquility | 162 | 42.86% |
| Pollution | 108 | 28.57% |
| Impact of extreme weather (e.g. flooding) | 57 | 15.08% |
| Not Answered | 0 | 0% |

A follow up question was then asked for respondents to explain their answer and there were **229 free text comments, which have been Themed, coded and quantified below**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Overdevelopment reducing/impacting small rural villages | 108 | 25.23% |
| Dumping waste/Fly tipping | 61 | 14.25% |
| Clear plans needed for preservation of rural Essex | 45 | 10.51% |
| Pollution affecting rural Essex | 44 | 10.28% |
| Wildlife being affected by overdevelopment | 42 | 9.81% |
| Negative impact on biodiversity of rural Essex | 40 | 9.35% |
| Traffic issues affecting rural Essex | 25 | 5.84% |
| Whole ecosystem approach needed for development in rural Essex | 17 | 3.97% |
| Destroying social cohesion built within communities in rural Essex | 15 | 3.50% |
| Other comment relating to personal circumstances | 10 | 2.34% |
| Improved transport/cycle infrastructure | 5 | 1.17% |
| Localised approach for community housing planning | 5 | 1.17% |
| Respondent would have selected all listed threats | 5 | 1.17% |
| Lack of trust in county/district councils | 3 | 0.70% |
| More police presence needed in rural Essex | 2 | <1% |
| More affordable housing needed in rural Essex | 1 | <1% |

Respondents were asked about measures to help improve the environment and climate change in rural Essex.

In asking about the environment, respondents were asked to choose 3 answers to understand improvements to rural Essex.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| More restrictions on new development on greenfield sites | 293 | 77.51% |
| Initiatives to protect wildlife, natural habitats and green spaces | 286 | 75.66% |
| More action against littering and fly tipping | 250 | 66.14% |
| More encouragement for sustainable transport schemes | 168 | 44.44% |
| Not Answered | 5 | 1.32% |

In addition, there was 32 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around improvements for the environment in rural Essex, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Improving rural and urban spaces concurrently | 7 | 22.58% |
| More Investments in woodlands and green spaces | 7 | 22.58% |
| Do not build unnecessary housing | 4 | 12.90% |
| More Eco-friendly housing in rural Essex | 2 | 6.45% |
| Free public transport for residents of rural Essex | 2 | 6.45% |
| Reusing water to help flood management schemes | 2 | 6.45% |
| Better waste recycling schemes for rural Essex | 2 | 6.45% |
| All the improvements listed should be considered | 1 | 3.23% |
| Electric Vehicle charging points needed in rural Essex | 1 | 3.23% |
| Improve road maintenance/infrastructure in rural Essex | 1 | 3.23% |
| Less Traveller sites in rural Essex | 1 | 3.23% |
| Other comment that is community specific | 1 | 3.23% |

Respondents were asked about measures to help make rural Essex more resilient to climate change.

In asking about the environment, respondents were asked to choose as many answers to understand improvements to resilience to rural Essex.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Stronger environmental constraints on new development | 290 | 76.72% |
| Encourage energy efficiency and more use of renewable energy in homes and businesses | 275 | 72.75% |
| Policies that encourage land use management practices that can prevent flooding and erosion and reduce carbon emissions | 270 | 71.43% |
| More planning for extreme weather occurrences | 140 | 37.04% |
| Not Answered | 11 | 2.91% |

In addition, there was 37 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around improvements for the environment in rural Essex, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Solar power/new technologies for heating in rural areas | 9 | 21.43% |
| Flooding prevention | 8 | 19.05% |
| More investment in green spaces and woodlands | 8 | 19.05% |
| Improving planning process to preserve rural Essex | 6 | 14.29% |
| Less toxic air emissions in rural areas | 4 | 9.52% |
| All the above measures should be considered | 1 | 2.38% |
| Build reservoirs to help with water levels in rural Essex | 1 | 2.38% |
| Encourage behaviour to reverse climate change | 1 | 2.38% |
| Financial help for farmers and landowners | 1 | 2.38% |
| Initiatives to support rural businesses to WFH  | 1 | 2.38% |
| Reduce the development of transport infrastructure | 1 | 2.38% |
| Replicating best practices in planning and development in rural areas | 1 | 2.38% |

Selected district breakdowns

* In relation to the biggest threats to rural Essex within environment and climate change, **Epping forest** had the highest percentage of respondents who selected **Overdevelopment and loss of green space as the main issue (95.83% - +10.64%)**
* **Brentwood** respondents selected **Littering and fly tipping** as the main issue (77.78% - +24.87%)
* **Colchester** respondents’ number 1 threat was **Loss of wildlife and natural habitats (80% - +15.71%)**
* Looking at improvements to environment and climate change in rural Essex, Braintree had the highest proportion of respondents that selected **More restrictions on new development on greenfield sites than any other districts (84.34% - +6.83%).**
* **Chelmsford** had the biggest percentage of respondents to select **Initiatives to protect wildlife, natural habitats and green spaces (86.36% - +10.7%).**
* **Brentwood** had the highest percentage of respondents answering **More action against littering and fly tipping as the main improvement (88.89% - +22.75%)**
* Improvements to resilience to rural Essex, **Epping Forest** had the biggest percentage of respondents who selected **Stronger environmental constraints on new development (87.5% - +10.78%)**
* Maldon respondents selected **Encourage energy efficiency and more use of renewable energy in homes and businesses as the most selected choice for improving resilience (80% - +7.25%)**
* **Policies that encourage land use management practices that can prevent flooding and erosion and reduce carbon emissions** was the most selected measure for respondents in **Colchester (77.5% - +6.07%)**

Tourism and Leisure

Respondents were asked about measures to help make rural Essex attractive to visitors of the county.

In asking about attracting tourists, respondents were asked to choose as many answers to understand how this could happen in rural Essex.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Improvements to public rights of way, cycle routes and other ‘green’ infrastructure | 244 | 64.55% |
| More promotion of rural Essex and its particular character and attractions | 219 | 57.94% |
| Better transport connections to rural tourist attractions | 194 | 51.32% |
| Encourage the development of local food and drink products/brands | 177 | 46.83% |
| Funding to support sustainable tourism initiatives | 143 | 37.83% |
| Develop local residents’ understanding of the benefits of sustainable tourism | 99 | 26.19% |
| Increased collaboration between businesses within the visitor economy | 79 | 20.90% |
| Not Answered | 21 | 5.56% |

In addition, there was 25 free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around increasing tourism in rural Essex, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Other comment directly related to specific communities | 14 | 56% |
| Respondents do not want to encourage tourism | 4 | 16% |
| Trying to banish the myths of Essex | 3 | 12% |
| Better upkeep of public rights of way/green spaces | 2 | 8% |
| More food and drink amenities in rural Essex | 1 | 4% |
| Better transport/highways infrastructure | 1 | 4% |

Selected district breakdowns

* When looking at the Selected district and making rural Essex more attractive to visitors, there was various different districts who selected different measures for this.
* **Improvements to public rights of way, cycle routes and other ‘green’ infrastructure** was selected by **Epping forest (79.17%),** **Uttlesford (61.04%)** and **Colchester (60%)** as the most important measures.
* **Tendring** respondents selected **Encourage the development of local food and drink products/brands** as the most important measure **(69.23%** **+22.4%**)
* Respondents from **Chelmsford** selected **More promotion of rural Essex and its particular character and attractions** as the most important measure to make rural Essex more attractive **(63.64% - +5.70%)**
* The most important measures for **Maldon (64%) and Brentwood (61.11%)** respondents was **Better transport connections to rural tourist attractions**

**Any other comments**

In this section respondents were asked to provide any other comments for consideration for the development of the Essex rural Strategy 2020-2024. These have been themed, coded and quantified below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| ECC need to better understand rural issues | 31 | 17.67% |
| Overdevelopment in rural villages | 20 | 11.4% |
| More help needed to sustain rural communities | 16 | 9.14% |
| Improved accessibility of public transport in rural Essex | 14 | 8.05% |
| Increased Road safety measures in rural Essex | 12 | 6.90% |
| Encourage redevelopment of waste land | 9 | 5.17% |
| Help wildlife against extinction | 8 | 4.60% |
| Fly tipping affecting rural Essex | 7 | 4.02% |
| Energy efficient housing | 6 | 3.45% |
| Government should listen to local communities | 6 | 3.45% |
| More local shops needed for rural communities | 6 | 3.45% |
| Essex residents need to understand the success of the strategy | 6 | 3.45% |
| Communities need to fight against climate change | 5 | 2.87% |
| More police presence required in rural Essex | 5 | 2.87% |
| Other comments directly related to specific communities | 5 | 2.87% |
| More local business connections/dedicated hub | 4 | 2.30% |
| More EV chargers in rural Essex | 2 | 1.15% |
| Parish councils need to do more for their communities | 2 | 1.15% |
| Problem with stereotyping Essex as rural | 2 | 1.15% |
| Rural areas should pay less council tax | 2 | 1.15% |
| Safe cycle routes connecting towns/villages/communities | 2 | 1.15% |
| Farming/Agricultural sector to be involved with strategy development | 1 | 0.57% |
| Turn off street lighting | 1 | 0.57% |
| Older people services to keep rural residents in their chosen community | 1 | 0.57% |
| RCCE support is vital for rural communities | 1 | 0.57% |

Respondents were asked how they could help address issues that have been highlighted within the consultation. There were 90 free text comments relating to working to address these issues. These have been themed, coded and quantified below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Essex County Council should help develop plans for rural Essex | 17 | 18.09% |
| Provide a platform for a voice of the rural community | 11 | 11.70% |
| Parish councils to be given more authoritative measures | 10 | 10.64% |
| Improve services for the rural community | 8 | 8.51% |
| Other comment directly related to specific communities | 7 | 7.45% |
| Personally, educate others about issues with rural areas | 7 | 7.45% |
| Successful neighbourhood plans to be acted on | 6 | 6.38% |
| Improve communication between ECC and district council | 4 | 4.26% |
| ECC should oppose unnecessary development | 4 | 4.26% |
| Other organisations to be involved within the development of the strategy | 4 | 4.26% |
| Improved road infrastructure in rural Essex  | 4 | 4.26% |
| Distrust of local councils not understanding rural Essex | 3 | 3.19% |
| New residents within rural areas do not understand rural issues | 3 | 3.19% |
| Ensure that local services has a presence everywhere in the local community | 2 | 2.13% |
| Improve digital capability in rural areas | 1 | 1.06% |
| Replanting of woodlands in rural areas | 1 | 1.06% |
| Use the info gathered in the consultation to make change | 1 | 1.06% |
| Respondent would like to leave rural Essex | 1 | 1.06% |

**Volunteering, public bodies and charitable/community organisations in Rural Essex**

In this section respondents were asked about their involvement with Volunteering, public bodies and charitable/community organisations in Rural Essex. This was to gather understanding of volunteering behaviour and what roles were being undertaken in rural Essex.

Respondents were asked about participating in voluntary activity or being part of a voluntary organisation.

Out of the 378 respondents to this question, **67.46%** of respondents selected **Yes**(n=255), **29.10%** (n=110) chose **No**, **2.38%** answered **Not applicable** (n=9), **1.06%** did not answer **(n=4).**

A follow up question was asked to respondents that answered **Yes**, to explain what volunteering role they do.

**248** respondents stated there volunteering roles or activities, and these have been themed, coded and quantified below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Involved within local community | 83 | 19.76% |
| Help run a local service/activity group | 71 | 16.90% |
| Parish councillor | 68 | 16.19% |
| Local volunteering role | 60 | 14.29% |
| Member of a community association | 51 | 12.14% |
| Work/involved in place of worship | 29 | 6.90% |
| Litter pick in local community | 16 | 3.81% |
| Fund raiser for local community | 7 | 1.67% |
| Involved with neighbourhood plans | 7 | 1.67% |
| A neighbourhood watch | 5 | 1.19% |
| Other comments relating to volunteering in general | 5 | 1.19% |
| District councillor | 4 | 0.95% |
| School governor | 4 | 0.95% |
| Help support members of the local community | 3 | 0.74% |
| Essex young farmers | 2 | <1% |
| Develop a local newsletter | 2 | <1% |
| Town councillor | 2 | <1% |
| Attend political forums | 1 | <1% |

A follow up question was then asked to respondents that answered **Yes**, to find out travelling patterns for volunteering.

**259** respondents stated their travel to volunteering roles or activities, 194 respondents said they attended locally, 65 said they had to travel to the next community and 45 answered an other- Please specify. These have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Both | 20 | 83.33% |
| Nationally | 2 | 8.33% |
| Volunteer from home | 1 | 4.17% |
| Other Comment relating to volunteering | 1 | 4.17% |

Respondents were asked if there was any particular voluntary organisations that should be in the local community that is currently not.

Out of the 378 respondents to this question, **19.05%** of respondents selected **Yes**(n=72), **65.61%** (n=248) said **No** and **15.34%** did not answer **(n=58).**

**67 of the 72 respondents that stated yes gave names/ideas of voluntary organisations that they would like to have access in their community. These have been themed, coded and quantified below.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| More fitness activities | 23 | 29.11% |
| Adult education | 11 | 13.92% |
| Youth clubs | 9 | 11.39% |
| General lack of activities for community | 4 | 5.06% |
| Local environmental group | 4 | 5.06% |
| Specific activities for older people | 3 | 3.80% |
| Community scheme to grow fruit and vegetables | 3 | 3.80% |
| Men’s group (ie men’s with sheds) | 3 | 3.80% |
| Theatre/arts clubs | 3 | 3.80% |
| Local befriending service | 2 | 2.53% |
| Health and Wellbeing services for all ages | 2 | 2.53% |
| Local mother and toddler group | 2 | 2.53% |
| Neighbourhood watch group | 2 | 2.53% |
| Other comment relating to volunteering in general | 2 | 2.53% |
| Road traffic coordinators | 2 | 2.53% |
| Local activities for younger people | 1 | 1.27% |
| Charity for women | 1 | 1.27% |
| Community library | 1 | 1.27% |
| Other comment relating to a local community | 1 | 1.27% |

Parish and Town Councils

In this section respondents were asked about their involvement with Parish and town councils directly relating to Rural Essex. This was to gather understanding of involvement and what roles were being undertaken in rural Essex.

Out of the 378 respondents to this question, **30.06%** of respondents selected **Yes**(n=114), **68.78%** (n=260) said **No** and **1.06%** did not answer **(n=4).**

**A follow up question was asked to understand what issues had been discussed within parish or town councils meeting in the last 2 years**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Objections to large-scale development | 230 | 60.85% |
| Traffic and road safety | 217 | 57.41% |
| Managing crime and/or anti-social behaviour | 170 | 44.97% |
| Broadband and digital connectivity | 164 | 43.39% |
| Litter or graffiti | 163 | 43.12% |
| Affordable housing | 159 | 42.06% |
| Improving leisure facilities in the parish | 145 | 38.36% |
| Acquiring new assets for example halls, recreation ground or community-run facilities | 115 | 30.42% |
| Health and wellbeing | 90 | 23.81% |
| Supporting the local school | 80 | 21.16% |
| Social isolation and loneliness | 79 | 20.90% |
| Communications | 78 | 20.63% |
| Climate change | 43 | 11.38% |
| Ways of encouraging local employment | 29 | 7.67% |
| None of the above | 5 | 1.32% |

In addition, there was **59** free text comments box relating to Other – please specify around what other issues have been discussed at parish/town councils in rural Essex, these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Other comments directly non-related to parish or town council meetings | 18 | 30.51% |
| Have not attended meetings  | 8 |  13.56% |
| Not applicable | 7 | 11.86% |
| Managing local amenities | 4 | 6.78% |
| Managing local community assets | 4 | 6.78% |
| Road repairs | 3 | 5.08% |
| Respondent does not attend meetings | 2 | 3.39% |
| Flooding | 2 | 3.39% |
| Pollution | 2 | 3.39% |
| Anti-social behaviour | 1 | 1.69% |
| Community forums | 1 | 1.69% |
| Fly tipping | 1 | 1.69% |
| Fraud prevention | 1 | 1.69% |
| Gypsey and Traveller sites | 1 | 1.69% |
| Local events | 1 | 1.69% |
| Better availability is needed for Parish council minutes to be accessed | 1 | 1.69% |
| School transport | 1 | 1.69% |
| Youth activities | 1 | 1.69% |

Respondents were asked what do they think will be the biggest challenge facing parish/Town councils over the next 5 years. There was 254 responses to this question and these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Over development in rural communities | 63 | 17.17% |
| Infrastructure not built to cope with planned development | 48 | 13.08% |
| Increasing traffic through rural Essex | 34 | 9.26% |
| Objecting new housing development | 33 | 8.99% |
| Preservation of rural areas | 25 | 6.81% |
| Recruitment for parish/town councils | 18 | 4.90% |
| Lack of finances for Town/Parish councils | 16 | 4.36% |
| Councillors to take time to serve their community and understand what rural residents want | 15 | 4.09% |
| Effects of climate change | 13 | 3.54% |
| Maintaining facilities in the rural villages (pubs,shops,GPs) | 12 | 3.27% |
| Planning out of town/parish control | 11 | 3.00% |
| Crime/Anti-social behaviour | 11 | 3.00% |
| Keeping community spirit | 10 | 2.72% |
| Strategic development from other organisations/authorities | 10 | 2.72% |
| More affordable housing in rural Essex | 9 | 2.45% |
| Pollution | 9 | 2.45% |
| Other comments not related to issues in rural Essex | 8 | 2.18% |
| Improved broadband connectivity | 7 | 1.91% |
| Councils need to focus on things that can make a difference to local community | 4 | 1.09% |
| More physical activities for members of the community | 2 | 0.54% |
| Noise pollution | 2 | 0.54% |
| Not enough employment in rural Essex | 2 | 0.54% |
| Encourage alternative energy sources | 1 | <1% |
| More emergency services for rural Essex | 1 | <1% |
| Preventing social isolation | 1 | <1% |
| Promote tourism | 1 | <1% |
| Religious groups and their beliefs | 1 | <1% |

Member of or employed by a public sector organisation

In this section respondents were asked about their involvement with Public sector organisation. This was to gather understanding of involvement with organisation looking at rural issues.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Yes | 56 | 14.81% |
| No | 315 | 83.33% |
| Not sure | 2 | 0.53% |
| Not Answered | 5 | 1.32% |

Respondents were asked whether the organisation look at rural issues distinct from urban issues.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Yes | 82 | 21.69% |
| No | 78 | 20.63% |
| Don't know | 68 | 17.99% |
| Not Answered | 150 | 39.68% |

Respondents were asked whether the organisation assess the specific impact of policy changes to rural areas. (Rural proofing).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Yes | 47 | 12.43% |
| No | 78 | 20.63% |
| Don't know | 107 | 28.31% |
| Not Answered | 146 | 38.62% |

The respondents were asked about the organisation that has employees working in rural Essex. This was to gather understanding of knowledge of organisation employee needs.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Yes | 34 | 8.99% |
| No | 269 | 71.16% |
| Not sure | 8 | 2.12% |
| Not Answered | 67 | 17.72% |

**Business section of consultation**

In this section respondents were asked about businesses based in the rural areas of Essex. This was to gather understanding volume of businesses, intentions to grow businesses and priorities for businesses in rural Essex.

FUTURE BUSINESSES

Out of the respondents to answer this question, **12.70%** of respondents selected **Yes**(n=48), **5.82%** (n=22) said **No** and <**1%** did not know **(n=1).**

**A follow up question asked whether the respondents were planning to set up a new business in rural Essex.** Out of the respondents to answer this question, Only **2.91%** of respondents selected **Yes**(n=11), **14.29%** (n=54) said **No** and **1.59% stated Not applicable (n=6).**

To understand the nature of the planned new businesses in rural Essex, further follow up questions were asked. **10** respondents declared the nature of the new businesses**. 4** respondentsdeclared **professional services, 3** stated **agriculture, fisheries.** Free-text commentscaptured the other sectors of business which were **Emergency healthcare, Hospitality and Tourism**

New businesses planned to employ different numbers of staff. This ranged from **1 – 10** employees.

When asking about specific help needed for the rural businesses to start their new business, The free-text comments were themed and quantified. 3 respondents said help with Grants/financing, 1 respondent stated Improved broadband connectivity and 1 said Improved transport infrastructure.

Reasons behind locating the potential business in rural Essex was mainly because the respondent resided in rural Essex (n=4), 1 stated it was “Where it is desperately needed”, 1 respondent said location was due to Large employment and Growing population and another respondent stated “diversification of an existing business”

CURRENT BUSINESSES

The next section looked at current business owners within rural Essex and asked which statement best described why their current business was based in rural Essex.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| I am in agriculture or I serve the farming industry | 17 | 56.67% |
| I was attracted to set up in a rural area due to the availability of suitable premises | 5 | 16.67% |
| The environment and aesthetic value of the countryside attracts me to rural Essex | 4 | 13.33% |
| I work for/manage a tourist/visitor attraction | 2 | 6.67% |
| Rural Essex is close to my consumer market | 2 | 6.67% |

In addition, there was 18 free text responses relating to Other – please specify part of this question. these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Family business | 4 | 22.22% |
| Reside in rural area | 4 | 22.22% |
| Other comments | 3 | 16.67% |
| Engineering | 2 | 11.11% |
| Agriculture service | 1 | 5.56% |
| Work within/for community centre | 1 | 5.56% |
| Private sector partnership | 1 | 5.56% |
| Technology consultant | 1 | 5.56% |
| Home business | 1 | 5.56% |

Respondents where then asked where their staff travel to work for the business.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Mostly in the local area | 29 | 80.56% |
| A mix of local and commuter | 5 | 13.89% |
| Mostly my staff commute from other areas | 2 | 5.56% |

In addition, there was **7** free text responses relating to Other – please specify part of this question. these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| No employees | 3 | 42.86% |
| Self-employed business owner/sole trader | 1 | 14.29% |
| staff member commutes from suffolk | 1 | 14.29% |
| Team are home based in different counties | 1 | 14.29% |
| N/A | 1 | 14.29% |

Respondents where then asked about plans for expansion to current business in rural Essex.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| No expansion is likely | 20 | 46.51% |
| It is a possibility but there are no definite plans | 10 | 23.26% |
| Yes – we hope to plan the expansion in the next 5 years | 7 | 16.28% |
| Yes – we have plans already | 4 | 9.30% |
| Don’t know | 2 | 4.65% |
| We may need to reduce our operations (output or staff numbers) | 0 | 0.00% |

In addition, there was 2 free text responses relating to Other – please specify part of this question.

* *“Depends how disastrous Brexit actually is”*
* *“Possibly. Never say never. I am mentoring our daughter to continue our fire risk assessment business. In this regard the future is bright.”*

**Question for all business owners in rural Essex**

Respondents to the business section of the consultation were asked what would have the most adverse effect on your ability to do business in rural Essex? Respondents were asked to select up to 3 effects that could affect business

1.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Poor internet connection | 15 | 28.30% |
| Inability to expand operations due to planning restrictions | 11 | 20.75% |
| None of the above | 10 | 18.87% |
| Distance to banking facilities | 4 | 7.55% |
| Lack of local and skilled employees | 4 | 7.55% |
| Distance to the markets | 4 | 7.55% |
| Lack of local post offices | 2 | 3.77% |
| Poor mobile phone signal | 2 | 3.77% |
| Availability of business advice and support | 1 | 1.89% |
| Distance to other services | 0 | 0.00% |

2.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| Poor mobile phone signal | 13 | 31.71% |
| Poor internet connection | 7 | 17.07% |
| Inability to expand operations due to planning restrictions | 6 | 14.63% |
| Lack of local and skilled employees | 6 | 14.63% |
| None of the above | 6 | 14.63% |
| Lack of local post offices | 1 | 2.44% |
| Distance to banking facilities | 1 | 2.44% |
| Distance to the markets | 1 | 2.44% |
| Distance to other services | 0 | 0.00% |
| Availability of business advice and support | 0 | 0.00% |

3.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Total | Percent |
| None of the above | 8 | 26.67% |
| Poor mobile phone signal | 6 | 20.00% |
| Availability of business advice and support | 5 | 16.67% |
| Lack of local and skilled employees | 4 | 13.33% |
| Poor internet connection | 3 | 10.00% |
| Distance to banking facilities | 2 | 6.67% |
| Distance to other services | 1 | 3.33% |
| Inability to expand operations due to planning restrictions | 1 | 3.33% |
| Lack of local post offices | 0 | 0.00% |
| Distance to the markets | 0 | 0.00% |

In addition, there was **7** free text responses relating to Other – please specify part of this question. these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Poor transport/highways infrastructure | 3 | 42.86% |
| Crime | 1 | 14.29% |
| Lack of engagement with rural schools | 1 | 14.29% |
| Land ownership issue so unable to expand | 1 | 14.29% |
| Labour cost | 1 | 14.29% |

Finally, that last question for businesses in rural Essex was to understand the impact of businesses in the next 5-10 years.

(Please note. This consultation was undertaken pre-COVID-19 and extended through the start of the pandemic and finally closed 24th July 2020)

There were **29** free text responses relating to understanding impact to businesses in next 5-10 years. these have been themed, coded and quantified below

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Option** | **Total** | **Percentage** |
| Improved highway and road infrastructure | 5 | 17.24% |
| Rules and Regulations directly affecting businesses | 4 | 13.79% |
| Changes to future agricultural policy | 3 | 10.34% |
| COVID-19 pandemic | 2 | 6.90% |
| Lack of funding for education sector | 2 | 6.90% |
| Improved Internet/Broadband connectivity | 2 | 6.90% |
| Lack of skilled workers in rural Essex | 2 | 6.90% |
| Corporation tax | 1 | 3.45% |
| Increasing rural crime | 1 | 3.45% |
| Limitations to planning for rural Essex | 1 | 3.45% |
| Rural logistics companies to move to carbon neutral goals | 1 | 3.45% |
| Loss of trade | 1 | 3.45% |
| Lower Thames crossing development | 1 | 3.45% |
| Increased minimum wage | 1 | 3.45% |
| Increase of new homes in rural Essex | 1 | 3.45% |
| Other comment directly related to business | 1 | 3.45% |

**Appendix**

**Figure 1.1** – **Web link of Consultation landing page On Essex county council consultation platform**

<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/rci/essex-rural-strategy-2020-consultation>

**Figure 1.2** – **Hard copy of the consultation questionnaire**

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?

This report was prepared and completed by the Essex County Council’s Strategy Insight and Engagement Function.

For more information email: research@essex.gov.uk