Rural Essex

Data Briefing

March 2016

Place & Customer Intelligence Team
Introduction

Essex is made up of almost 1500 square miles, 72% of this is considered to be rural. Around 36% of the population of Essex call these rural areas home. The challenges of living in the rural parts of the county include the increased distances to key services and the access to main transport links.

General Demographics of the rural population

The total population of Essex is currently just less than 1.4m, 354,669 of these live in rural areas. The highest proportions of these live in the district of Uttlesford, with the district of Maldon also having more than half its citizens in rural areas.

The following information is taken from the 2011 census. The graph below shows the population make up of rural areas, displaying that 80% of the population of Uttlesford live in rural areas. Basildon, Castle Point and Harlow have almost no resident population in areas that are classified as rural.

There are just over 400,000 families in household in the county of Essex, these household’s contain almost 300,000 dependent children but less than a third of these children live in rural areas of Essex (74,073).
The chart below shows the household composition of those rural areas. It shows that in 32% of rural households there are no adults in employment, this is slightly lower than their urban counterparts. This is also the case for numbers of one person in households with a long term health problem or disability. In 2% of rural households where there are also dependent children there are no adults in employment, the figure rises to 30% where there are no dependents. These figures are similar to that of families in living in urban areas.

Household Languages

English is the main household language in over 98% of Rural homes in Essex this is slightly higher than in urban areas (96.56%) within the households that list an alternative language as the primary one, the most common of these in rural areas is ‘Other EU European language’ this accounts for 38.63% of the non-English speaking households, the second most prevalent language in our rural areas are East Asian Languages, which accounts for almost 20%.

Education and skills

The below table shows the attainment levels of school pupils through Foundation stage, KS2 and KS4. Though pupils in rural areas achieve above Essex average results in their early school careers this figure drops significantly by the time they reach GCSE stage. Where 46% of pupils form hamlets and isolated dwellings gained 5 A*-C, this is over 10% less that the Essex Average.
The graph below shows the highest levels of qualifications data, from the census, split into the rural and urban citizens. The only significant difference here is that there is a higher percentage of people with level 4 qualifications in rural areas. This equates to people with a degree level or higher education.

Travel times to schools vary significantly from rural to urban areas, this data is only available at a national level and is due to be refreshed in the summer of 2016.

% pupils achieving threshold measures in 2015 (** provisional data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Stage - Measure</th>
<th>Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Town and Fringe</th>
<th>Urban &gt; 10k</th>
<th>Essex Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Years Foundation Stage (age 5)</td>
<td>EYFS - % Good Level of Development</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Pupils</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>2297</td>
<td>12,218</td>
<td>16,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 2 (age 11)**</td>
<td>% level 4+ Reading, Writing &amp; Maths</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Pupils</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>1425</td>
<td>2200</td>
<td>11,057</td>
<td>15,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 4 (age 16)**</td>
<td>KS4 - % 5+ A*-C including English &amp; Maths</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Pupils</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>1595</td>
<td>13,106</td>
<td>15,273</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EYFS - pupil download extracted from Keypas, KS2 - provisional pupil download from Key to Success, KS4 - pre-checking Performance Tables pupil download from Key to Success.

Notes: EYFS and KS2 include special schools, KS4 has only two schools in Hamlets (one of which is a special school).
Rural people are far more likely to take their children to school in a private vehicle like a car (Rural: 41% vs Urban: 34%) or a private bus or school bus (Rural: 13% vs Urban: 3%). School children in urban settings are far more likely to travel to school by walking than any other method (Rural: 24% vs Urban 44%).

These differences are largely linked to the distances which people have to travel. At aged 5-10, children in Rural communities have an average journey length 2.2 miles further than their Urban counterparts (69% further to travel), whilst those aged 11-16 have 7.5 miles further to travel (126 further to travel).

Data from the 2011 census shows that the average earnings in rural Essex are higher than the regional average in urban areas.
This is broadly comparable to urban Essex but with a greater proportion of urban residents actively seeking work (4.1%) and a marginally smaller proportion classified as economically inactive (28.5%).

The graph below shows the claimant count of those claiming job seekers allowance (As of March 2013) split into the rural and urban areas of each district. Levels in Tendring are high in both sectors. Figures for rural Harlow are too small to count here. There is more recent data relating to claimant counts but not currently split into rural/urban by district.

A higher proportion of people are self-employed in rural Essex (36,954, or 14.3%) than in urban areas (10%). This is broadly in line with Rural England as a whole.
Tourism

The local employment rate is consistent between both rural and urban areas (around 67%) though the levels of those classified as economically inactive are slightly higher in the rural areas. In Essex 26% of all the people that are employed, live in rural areas. The percentage of people working part time is slightly higher in rural areas than in urban geographies.

The most recent data (from 2014) indicates that visitors to Essex increased by 13% from 2013 to 2014 to a total of 48,829,716, the vast majority of these were day trips to the county, with only about 5% of these being overnight stays. The majority of these visits were also the urban areas (58%) with visits to the countryside equating to just over 25%.

The graph below shows the visitor number figures for Essex CC owned country parks. Generally since, 2012 monthly visitor figures have been consistent. The July, August and December figures for 15/16 are much improved on previous years. Please note – The chart shows a drop from January 2016 where the data is not yet available.
This graph shows the populations vs the employment potential in rural areas of Essex. It shows that in places such as Tendring and Uttlesford there is significant differences in where the industry / businesses are and where the citizens reside. This maybe a contributing factor to the high levels of unemployment in Tendring, as the population is significantly more centred in the urban areas and 77% of business and industry is located in the rural areas of the district.

In all cases, expect for Uttlesford, the percentage of business and industry in rural areas is greater than the percentage of the population that reside there.
In Essex, there are approximately 22,500 businesses and industries that are based in rural areas. As a whole, the most common type of industry in rural areas is construction, equating for 16%, though this is significantly higher in some areas such as Basildon where construction represents 28% of all rural business and industry (where known). The graph below shows the breakdown by category, some areas have a high prevalence of some categories, for example, in Castle Point over 30% of rural business and industry is dedicated to wholesale & retail trade, repair of motor vehicles.

### Agriculture and Farming

The latest available figures from 2013, report that the total farmed area for Essex is 237,920 hectares. The majority of this land is used for Cereals, this accounts for almost half of all total farming land. The Farming sector employs 1776 full time farmers, over 1700 full time regular worker and over 800 additional casual workers. These total employment figures have decreased since 2007. The most significant decline was in the Maldon district where the total labour force has declined by 30%. Employment in this sector generally has increased significantly in the Colchester area since 2007.

---

1 The most common category was ‘other’ so this analysis is done with that data removed.
2 These agriculture figures include Southend as in this data set Rochford, Castle point and Southend are reported together.
**Carers**

The table below shows the number of citizens acting as unpaid carers for friends or family members. The figures are generally low and there are no significant differences between people living in urban or rural areas. Suggesting provision of care is consistent throughout the county.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Care Provision</th>
<th>Urban Citizens</th>
<th>Rural Citizens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides no unpaid care</td>
<td>89.83%</td>
<td>88.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides 1 to 19 hours unpaid care a week</td>
<td>6.59%</td>
<td>7.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides 20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week</td>
<td>1.27%</td>
<td>1.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week</td>
<td>2.31%</td>
<td>2.24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Access to Health Services**

As shown in the map below travel times to GP services by foot and / or public transport there are areas in Braintree, Chelmsford, Epping Forest and Uttlesford that have travel time of 30 minutes or more. Travel times for accessing hospital services was further increased for those residents in Braintree and Maldon to 90 minutes.

In rural Essex 36% (56,500) of households are within 2 kilometers of the nearest dental practice. However, 70 households are 12 kilometers or more from a dental practice. There are more people living more than 2 kilometers from a dentist in rural Essex (64%) than rural England (60%).

60% (95,230) of household are within 2 kilometers of the nearest GPs surgery, similar to rural England as a whole. However, 30 households are 8 kilometers or more from a GP surgery. The proportion of households not within 2 kilometers (40%) is marginally less than for rural England as a whole.
Research conducted by ACRE suggests that generally access to key services and amenities in Essex are similar to those for Rural England as a whole.

**Accessibility to amenities**

37.1% of the population of rural Essex are more than 40 minutes travel time from a town centre, which is higher than rural East of England (34.1%) and significantly higher than rural England as a whole (28.5%).

72% (114,100) of households are within 2 kilometers of the nearest cashpoint, similar to rural England as a whole. However, 390 households are 8 kilometers or more from a cashpoint.

85% (134,470) of households are within 2 kilometers of the nearest post office, similar to rural England as a whole. However, 2,250 households are more than 2 kilometers from a post office.

94% (149,250) of households are within 2 kilometers of the nearest pub.

54% (85,720) of households are within 2 kilometers of the nearest petrol station.

48% (76,460) of households are within 2 kilometers of the nearest supermarket.

**Car Owners**

Urban citizens are twice as likely as Rural Citizens to have no access to any vehicles at their home address. This would confirm what is expected in that cars are more crucial for citizens when they live outside of the main towns and cities. Rural citizens are also more likely to live in multi car households, and are almost 50% more likely to have 3 or more cars.
Travel Times

National data in relation to travel time is due to be updated in the summer of 2016. This data is not currently available at an Essex level. The data below is based on the national results for England.
People in Rural areas, perhaps predictably, travel far greater distances per year than their Urban counterparts (56% more). The main difference between the two groups is seen in the types of transportation used. Rural people use private transportation (particularly cars or vans) far more regularly than people in Urban settings (Rural: 57% vs Urban: 47%), whilst those in Urban areas are more likely to take public transportation or walk to their destination (Rural: 10% vs Urban: 22%). This can be linked back to the transportation links in these areas, with bus and rail accessibility far greater in Urban areas.

There is almost no difference in the proportional breakdown of hours spent travelling by people in Urban and Rural communities. The key difference between the two groups is time spent commuting, where people in Urban settings spend 5% of their time travelling (32 hours more). This may be impacted upon by the methods of transportation. As seen in other surveys, people in Urban environments are far more likely to travel by foot or public transport, which may add time to their commute.

The only other difference of more than 1% in time spent travelling can be seen in holiday and day trips, where Rural people spent 11% of their travel time, compared to 8% for their Urban counterparts. Again, this is likely to come down to distance of travel, as people in Urban environments may be more likely to have accessible day trips and pastimes within a closer proximity to their homes.

**Housing**

Organisational Intelligence

Rural Data Brief
Information shown below taken from the 2011 census, shows the breakdown of recorded accommodation types in Essex split between rural and urban areas. Detached houses are almost twice as common in rural areas than in urban ones, whereas terraced properties and flats and maisonettes of any type are less common in rural areas.
There are just over 5000 rural homes off the mains gas grid in Essex. This is 67% of the total amount of homes in Essex that are not connected to mains gas. Almost 75% of these rural properties are categorised as ‘Rural village and dispersed’ with the remainder being rural town and fringe properties. These properties are at higher risk of being ‘fuel poor’ than others due to the higher costs of electricity and oil as fuel in replacement of gas.

House Prices

Based on district averages (and including Southend and Thurrock), housing in rural areas is more expensive than in urban areas across all three dwelling types. However, there are some significant variations between districts.

![House Price Chart]

District average: Detached - £395,091, semi-detached - £244,160, flat and terraced = £192,060 Based on average price house data for April 2012 to March 2013, there is significant variation in rural house prices across Essex
Unfortunately this data is not available for the small rural areas of Castle Point and Harlow.
The chart below shows the Essex average against the averages of both the East of England and England nationally. Across all dwelling types, district averages for Rural Essex are higher than for rural East of England and rural England as a whole.

**Broadband and Communications**

The latest data from the Essex super-fast broadband project reports that as of February 2016, the upgrade to fibre optic broadband has been completed in 77% of rural and 27% of urban areas. Prior to this contract this level of broadband service was only available to 23% of rural postcodes.

Rural challenge project, this funded project is focused on the district of Epping Forest and sets out to provide Ultra-Fast Broadband to rural properties. Following the completion of this project and phases one and two of the original project there will be broadband coverage for 95% of Essex. For the final 5% there are alternative options in order to get broadband including the UK Government Satellite Broadband Scheme.

This map shows the current project data. (I am waiting for a heat map version and will replace when it is available.)