

Business Survey

15 responses were received

The Issues

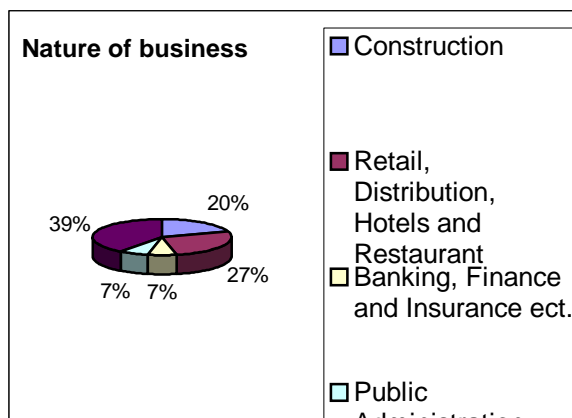
1. Better road connections with the A12
2. Difficulty in recruiting staff
3. Faster broadband connection
4. Difficulty in finding premises of suitable size within the village should a business wish to expand

60 business were identified as operating from the village.

The business questionnaire was hand delivered or posted and a stamped address envelope included for a reply.

The majority of businesses were based in the owners homes or a mix of domestic and commercial premises - 25% being solely based in commercial premises.

Nearly 40 % of businesses in the village did not fall into the 4 specific categories.



Over 75% of the businesses are owner-operated, with 17 % employees being part-time and only 6% fulltime.

Of the fulltime employees only 17% were female while women made up 69% of part time workers.

74% of the owner operated businesses were run by men.

Whilst of 76% owner-operators lived locally only 32% of employees were village residents.

The majority of businesses (62%) have been established in the village during the last 20 years.

Of those 50 % of businesses which did have employees 25% found that they did have difficulty in recruiting or retaining staff.

12.5 % of businesses stated that their employees experienced difficulty with public transport i.e. the no 66 bus route which runs between the village and Colchester town centre.

The cost of the fares was also mentioned as being very expensive.

56% of businesses considered broadband communication was important facility and of these 33% were unhappy with the service because of the speed of transmission of data or the loss of connection.

The services in the village were sufficient to meet the needs of all the businesses based here. There is a local Post Office and easy access to trains for London, Cambridge and Norwich.

Factors which were highlighted as rendering West Bergholt an advantageous location for the businesses were:

- level of business

- proximity to Colchester
- easy access to A12
- no competitors
- reasonable cost of rent and rates
- pleasant village environment

54% of businesses stated they would not be able to stay in the village if there was a need to expand their premises.

38% of business expressed view that small serviced office or light industrial units were needed in West Bergholt – one respondent highlighted the use of redundant farm building to meet the need. Provision in the region of 500 – 1000 sq feet was the most requested size.

Suggestions about what changes would benefit the businesses based in the village were:

- an opportunity to informally network with other village based-businesses
- availability of parking at the local shop, where the Post Office is based, is sometimes restricted
- lower cost of commercial waste disposal
- fewer planning restriction on light industrial development
- better road connection with A12 for larger lorries
- something needs to be done about North Station 'bottleneck'
- additional shops to increase the use of the retail sector within the village
- A12 connection both ways at off the Colchester Road at bridge

- A more positive attitude by those who make the decisions

Of the organisations which are able to assist small businesses the 'Business Link for Essex' and Colchester Chamber of Commerce and DEFRA were the most widely known.