

Task 1

In this task, participants were asked to discuss the challenges and opportunities faced by different demographic groups.

Brenchley

Teenagers

Opportunities

- Sports facilities (4)
- Youth groups (3)
- Recreation facilities – skittles, clubs, films
- Pub
- Bell ringing
- Casual work at little bull
- Evening opening shop
- Village shop
- Coffee shop
- Pub

Challenges

- Transport/travel (3)
- Gathering places (2)
- Activities (2)
- Mobile phone signal
- Internet signal
- Employment opportunities
- Speed of traffic on lanes makes walking hazardous
- Not too much to do in evening
- GP services
- Schools If more housing

Summary

There is a sense of a limited ability to travel within the area and places for teenagers to meet up. There is a feeling that they have limited access to activities in the evening and daytime with not a lot for them to do. However, there are many well attended sports clubs and facilities as well as groups.

Businesses & Employers

Opportunities

- Butchers (2)
- Agriculture (2)
- Home-working
- Employee resource pool
- Car garage
- Gardeners
- B and B
- Grays
- Schools
- Iron foundry
- Car workshop
- Pub/café
- Evolution tennis
- Village shop
- Coffee shop
- Pub

Challenges

- Broadband speed (4)
- Mobile phone signal (2)
- Public transport lacking (2)
- Few premises (2)
- 4G
- Parking
- Few larger employers
- Businesses come and go

- Rates too high
- GP services
- Schools if more housing

Summary

There are limited employment premises in the area and a concern that businesses will leave. Further concerns raised with those businesses that have shut such as the shops. The limited Broadband and mobile phone signal or 4G was also raised as a concern for limiting businesses.

Pensioners & Empty-Nesters

Opportunities

- Bowls (2)
- Pubs (2)
- Café (2)
- Ready call (2)
- Clubs
- Rural idyll
- History society
- WI
- Horticultural society
- O Club – *needs clarification*
- Tennis
- Shop

Challenges

- Down size houses (4)
- Lights/pavements (3)
- Transport (2)
- Resistant to change by influential groups
- Availability of housing
- Heavy vehicles on road
- Matfield – the loss of the shop
- Traffic crossing in Matfield
- GP services

- Broadband
- Meeting places
- Pub in village

Summary

Common concerns were the lack of downsize properties and transport between villages. The lights and pavements make travelling within the village difficult as well. Many different social clubs and groups were frequently mentioned as well as the fact the villages are considered a rural idyll.

Young Professionals Without Children

Opportunities

- Sports clubs (3)
- Rail links (2)
- Pub (2)
- High end rural lifestyle
- Squash facilities
- Dentist
- GP
- Village shop
- Coffee shop

Challenges

- Affordable housing (3)
- Availability of housing (2)
- Transport
- Mobile phone signal
- Evening activities
- Night bus
- GP services
- Schools If more housing
- Poor internet

Summary

The mainline train station and transport links provide opportunity for commuting out of the village. Various sports facilities are in the village along with pubs making for a high end rural lifestyle. However young professionals lack an opportunity to purchase their first home due to affordability as well as availability.

Families with Young Children

Opportunities

- Primary school (4)
- Nursery schools (3)
- Sports facilities (2)
- Pubs (2)
- Parks
- Playground in Hatfield
- Improved playground in Brenchley
- Improved network of Rights of Way Footways and Cycle routes
- Grays
- Scouts
- Mobile library
- Mobile fish and chips
- Countryside
- Village shop
- Coffee shop

Challenges

- Playground equipment (4)
- Affordable housing (2)
- Footpaths (2)
- Transport (2)
- Fitness activities
- Good schools
- Lacking entry level homes
- Mobile phone signal
- Availability of housing

- Heavy vehicles on road
- GP services
- Schools if more housing
- broadband

Summary

There is a suitable provision of schools, nursery and child care facilities which eases pressure on young families living arrangements. However, lack of affordable housing restricts the ability of families to live in the local area in the first place. Furthermore, ability of families to travel around the villages is limited due to footpaths and transport. Although playground facilities are provided in Brencley they aren't considered to be sufficient and are lacking in Matfield.

Visitors & Tourists

Opportunities

- Pubs (4)
- Walking trails (3)
- Scenery (2)
- B & B (2)
- Archaeology
- Maps
- Historical tours
- Church
- Parish website
- Village shop
- Coffee shop

Challenges

- Accommodation (3)
- Parking (2)
- Maps/Information
- Places of interest
- Walks
- Mobile phone signal
- Parking
- Transport

- Cafes
- Broadband
- Pubs closing

Summary

It seems that the opportunity of attracting visitors is limited as is the available accommodation. However, there are ample pubs, scenery and walking trails to attract visitors if appropriate information was provided to advertise it.

Students

Opportunities

- Sports facilities (3)
- Pubs (2)
- Don't bother!
- Start village businesses
- Duke of Edinburgh training
- Bell ringing
- Youth groups
- Farm work
- Local businesses hire students
- Shop
- cafe

Challenges

- Transport (2)
- Not suited
- Mobile phone signal
- Library
- Employment opportunities
- Broadband

Summary

Like the teenagers there is a sense of a limited ability to travel within the area and places for them to meet up, although the over-18's would be able to utilize the pub. The students have access to many sports clubs and facilities as well as groups however some groups felt there was nothing for them in the villages.

Matfield

Teenagers

Opportunities

- Scouts and guides (4)
- Sports facilities (4)
- Sports clubs (3)
- Connection Matfield – Brenchley
- LOGS – *clarification needed*
- Outdoor activities
- Village halls
- Nice community
- Church youth club
- Pubs
- Youth clubs
- Local rep
- Buses
- Walking trails
- Pizza at Hopbine
- Riding

Challenges

- Public transport (6)
- Access to entertainment, groups and social facilities (5)
- Meeting places (2)
- Lighting
- Traffic for riders
- Traffic speed
- Mobile signal
- 4G
- Broadband
- School distance from villages
- Cycle routes

Summary

There are many sports clubs, facilities and organised groups such as scouts and guides available for the teenagers in the village. However, travel around the area is restricted with a limited ability to travel within the area and places for teenagers to meet up. There is a feeling that they have limited access to activities in the evening with entertainment, groups and social activities.

Businesses & Employers

Opportunities

- Small units (2)
- Close to transport hub
- Nice community
- Train access
- Farms
- Good communication links
- Well supported
- More B and Bs
- Schools

Challenges

- Broadband (5)
- Limited premises (3)
- 4G (4)
- Recruitment (3)
- Phone signal (3)
- Small businesses
- Parking
- Rural care agency needed
- No shop
- Transport
- Broadband

Summary

There are limited employment premises and concerns over the number of available units. Recruitment is also lacking in the area with access to trained staff. Further concerns raised were the limited Broadband and mobile phone signal or 4G. The lack of a local shop was also a major concern.

Pensioners & Empty-Nesters

Opportunities

- Clubs, classes, groups, activities and societies (6)
- Health services (3)
- Nice community
- A1
- U3A nearby
- Brenchley garage
- Lots of people
- Sports
- Ready call

Challenges

- Shops (5)
- Lack of downsize homes (4)
- Lack of sheltered accommodation/assisted living (3)
- Transport (3)
- Buses (2)
- Affordable housing (2)
- Narrow pavement (2)
- Limited clubs
- Hospital car service
- Loneliness
- Access to medical services
- Lighting
- Disabilities not catered for
- Broadband
- Phone signal
- 4G

Summary

Common concerns were the lack of affordable properties and downsize properties. Transport and travel between villages was further raised as a concern with limited buses and narrow poorly lit pavements. Many different clubs, societies and groups were frequently mentioned as well as the fact the villages are considered a rural idyll. A lack of shops raises concerns for residents to carry out day to day activities although access to health services is considered good.

Young Professionals Without Children

Opportunities

- Commuters (5)
- Nice community (2)
- Sports (2)
- Nice place to live
- Open space
- Pubs
- Restaurants
- Outdoor life

Challenges

- Affordable housing (4)
- Availability of homes for locals
- Shop opening hours
- No taxi or reliable transport from station
- Social events
- Evening entertainment
- Closeness to London
- Don't want to live here
- Train times and prices
- 4G

Summary

Young professionals lack an opportunity to purchase their first home and to have local employment. Although the mainline train station and transport links provide opportunity for commuting out of the village. Various sports facilities are in the village along with pubs making for a nice place to live and good community.

Families with Young Children

Opportunities

- Sports facilities (5)
- Good schools (4)
- Nice community (2)
- Play groups (2)
- Child care (2)
- Nice place to live
- Access to city and Tunbridge Wells
- Brenchley memorial
- Space and quiet
- Fishing
- Pond
- Clubs

Challenges

- Affordable housing (5)
- Lack of play area (3)
- Pedestrian safety (3)
- Traffic
- Transport to essential services
- Rugby club needed
- Bike lanes
- Child care
- 4G

Summary

There is a suitable provision of schools, nursery and child care facilities as well as playgroups. However, lack of affordable housing restricts the ability of families to live in the local area. Playground facilities are lacking although sports facilities are considered to be suitable.

Visitors & Tourists

Opportunities

- Wonderful Countryside (4)
- Public footpaths (4)
- Architecture/history (2)
- B & B (2)
- Green space
- Toilets
- Nice community
- Cafes
- Variety
- National Trust
- Farmsteads
- Camping
- Pubs x2
- If lose Wheelrights lose some social links
- Pond
- Cinema in village hall

Challenges

- No tourists information (4)
- Lack of accommodation (3)
- Café (2)
- No draw/drive through
- Facilities Public transport – particularly Brenchley
- Walks
- 4G

Summary

The wonderful countryside is considered to be the biggest draw for tourism as well as the public footpaths available for walking. Various types of accommodation are available in the village but they are less formal arrangements of camping and farm stays so it is felt that more accommodation would be beneficial to encourage tourism. A further attraction are the rural local pubs however no tourist information available means that tourists aren't sure what else is available in the area or its history when in the area.

Students

Opportunities

- Good access to city and TW
- Tonbridge
- Seasonal farm work
- Nice community
- Reasonable internet
- Bus
- Summer jobs
- Apprentices
- Volunteer roles

Challenges

- Poor public transport (4)
- Safe access to schools and colleges (3)
- No opportunities/jobs/apprentices (2)
- School capacity
- 4G
- Wi-Fi
- Leave home

Summary

Like the teenagers there is a sense of a limited ability to travel within the area and safely access schools and colleges. The students have no access to jobs or apprentices after college so there is a significant gap in the ability to provide for late teens and early 20's locally.