

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK – UPDATED DECEMBER 2023



December 2023 saw the [latest revision](#) to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in response to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy consultation. Our Rural Housing Enabler, Laura Atkinson and Community Engagement Officer, Jan Stobart have been reviewing the changes and have noted a few key areas worth highlighting. The small sites policy (paragraph 70) has now been expanded and sets out that local planning authorities should seek opportunities to support small

sites to come forward for community-led development for housing as well as self-build and custom-build housing. All references to entry-level exception sites have now been replaced with community-led developments, defined as those “instigated and taken forward by” a not-for-profit organisation for the purpose of meeting the housing needs of its members and the wider local community. Local planning authorities should support the development of exception sites for community-led development (paragraph 73) as defined in Annex 2: Glossary. Although the wording isn’t perfect, this is a significant achievement by the Community Led Housing sector and will hopefully encourage community led development and relevant policies related to this, to come forward.

Local planning authorities are no longer required to identify a five-year supply of deliverable sites if their adopted plan is less than five years old and a five-year supply was demonstrated at the time its examination concluded (paragraph 76).

The criteria set out in paragraph 14 for when a conflict with a Neighbourhood Plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits have been relaxed and the period it applies to has been increased from 2 to 5 years from when a Neighbourhood Plan is made. The need for a minimum of 3 years supply and a certain level of housing delivery has been removed. The changes provide an up-to-date Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan significantly greater protection from speculative development. There continues to be a need for the plan to contain policies and allocations to meet the identified housing requirement.

There is now an increased emphasis on well-designed and “beautiful” developments, as well as an emphasis on the use of local design codes prepared in line with the [National Model Design Code](#). LPAs should also “give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic”.

Watch this space for more amendments to the Framework expected later in 2024, which will ensure the changes set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act are followed through, including the possible introduction of National Development Management Policies (NDMP).

If you wish to discuss your housing options, including undertaking a Housing Needs Survey in your parish, do contact Laura on laura.atkinson@essexrcc.org.uk

If you wish to discuss your neighbourhood plan or parish plan aspirations, do contact Jan on jan.stobart@essexrcc.org.uk

VILLAGE HALLS WEEK – GO GREEN! 18TH – 24TH MARCH 2024



Organised by ACRE, RCCE's national body, Village Halls Week is a great opportunity to promote the work that goes on in your halls and community buildings. This year following feedback from members, there is a green theme.

So, it is time to promote all the work you and your committees have done and are doing to make your buildings more energy efficient. What plans do you have for the future and what behaviours are you encouraging from your user groups?

ACRE have put together a pack of useful promotional tools for you to use. Halls can register an interest in Village Halls Week, tell them how they are thinking about getting involved and request resources to help them get involved in the campaign. [village halls week 2024](#)

Please let RCCE's Village Halls Adviser Danielle Frost know how you are planning to engage with this event and she will try to help promote your efforts. Email: danielle.frost@essexrcc.org.uk

SMALL GRANTS MADE AVAILABLE TO VILLAGE HALLS IN ENGLAND



Defra funded grant scheme reopens for those managing rural community buildings, this time with a lower award threshold of £2,000 to support smaller projects and make it accessible to more groups.

In 2023, a £3 million village halls fund known as the Platinum Jubilee Fund was launched to provide support for the modernisation and improvement of village halls in England.

Managed by Action with Rural Communities in England (ACRE), the fund has already awarded over £1 million to rural communities, helping them undertake ambitious improvements to their building. Works undertaken or scheduled to take place include new roofs, insulation, extensions, and more energy efficient heating systems. For further information please [click here](#)

Please also free to contact Danielle Frost, RCCE Village Halls and Community Buildings Adviser: danielle.frost@essexrcc.org.uk

RCCE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024 - Update



We are pleased to announce the RCCE AGM will be returning to its traditional spot in July, full details will be released shortly.

YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST!



RCCE's Essex Village of the Year Competition is returning, watch this space as more details are to be revealed about the revamped 2024 competition.

Details will be posted on the [RCCE website](#)

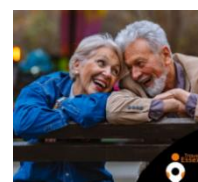
DigiGO EXTENDED UNTIL MARCH 2026



The DigiGo service has been extended for two years from Monday 1 April 2024. DigiGo is a flexible public transport service, allowing advance or on-demand bookings. It enhances connectivity to transport hubs and links rural areas to employment and education.

[Learn more about DigiGo](#) and plan your first journey through the TravelEssex app.

Enjoy FREE bus travel across Essex with the concessionary bus pass. If it's a day out with your grandkids or catching up with some friends, if you're eligible for a state pension you qualify for a FREE concessionary bus pass. To find out more visit [Travel Essex](#)



TRAINING EVENT

EALC

RCCE
RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF ESSEX

Essex Association of Local Councils

Rural Affordable Housing Briefing – Exploring your Options

Delivered by

Laura Atkinson, Rural Housing Enabler & Community Led Housing Advisor

from the Rural Community Council of Essex

On Thursday 7th March 7.00pm – 9.00pm

Briefing Cost £50.00 + VAT

For further information and to book please contact: pearl.willcox@ealc.gov.uk

ESSEX POLICE RURAL ENGAGEMENT TEAM - NEWSLETTER

ESSEX POLICE Rural Engagement Team
Newsletter
January 2024

HIGH SHERIFF VISITS RET

The team were delighted to welcome the High Sheriff of Essex, Charles Birtop for a visit.

The role of the High Sheriff is mainly ceremonial but involves all things judicial, including courts and juries.

The High Sheriff had a talk from PC Jaci Rowen, our wildlife and heritage crime officer about the role and Colchester Park Ranger Calls Desk to find out how we work together to tackle crime and safeguard our heritage.

We were also able to demonstrate our drone capability.

We were keen to highlight the varied work we carry out.

First he visited a farm at St. Laurence, near Maldon to hear about our work tackling agricultural theft. He also learnt about the very successful Farm Watch scheme run by Michael Pugh.

From there he was taken on patrol to Colchester where he visited Goodrich Archaeological Park. This site is of national importance and contains a Roman temple and amphitheatre.

New Britain's a quiet, active area where we're calling 999 for assistance to police ourselves. DIGITAL 101

Domestic abuse is all about control. If you notice that someone seems to be controlling in all areas of their life, it could be a sign they are being abused.

SETDAB.org

IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999

Find out the latest news from the Rural Engagement Team (RET)

The team continue to focus on hare coursing with tremendous results so far this season as they have caught 22 offenders and seized 6 cars.

In addition they continue rural speed checks and were kept busy during the cold snap by keeping the rural roads free from accidents with a little help from their 4X4!

To read the full report for January please [click here](#)

go green!
18-24 March
Village Halls Week