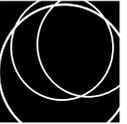
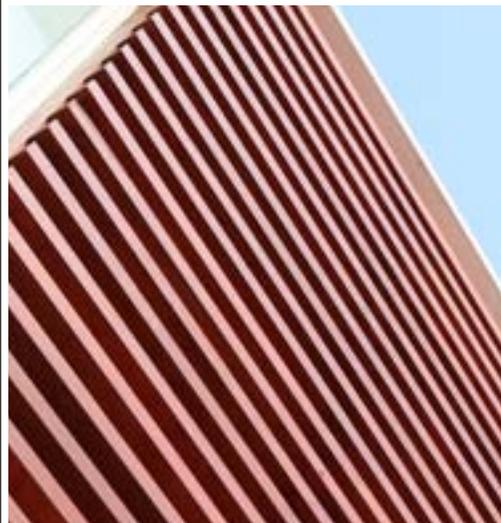


# THE ESSEX DESIGN GUIDE

PIONEERING  
LOCAL DESIGN



EPOA  
Essex Planning  
Officers Association



# FOREWORD

**Graham Thomas**  
Chair of Essex Planning  
Officers' Association



For 45 years, the Essex Design Guide (EDG) has pioneered local design, creating space for innovation and encouraging high-quality development, gaining both national and international recognition. This 2018 guide is the culmination of 15 months' work to significantly enhance the EDG to create the UK's first interactive web-based design document.

Essex is a county of many challenges. Increasing demand, high house prices and constrained land availability have led to some developments being completed at both high financial cost and the expense of quality. This is of great concern as it prevents us from creating the high-quality, balanced communities for people to enjoy, live and work in. Through the EDG review, it has been my privilege to collaborate with house builders, public sector, central government and third sector organisations who share my vision for quality. All of them have offered innovation and practical solutions around how we use the EDG to achieve our shared goals and for that, I thank them.

In commissioning this work, I was clear that this would be the last significant update of the EDG. Through the creation of an interactive web portal and development

of a clear updating process, owned by EPOA, we can ensure the EDG is future-proofed and responsive to changing trends and ongoing learning. Moreover, we have laid the foundations to ensure the EDG responds to emerging challenges and opportunities incorporating new themes around Ageing Population, Digital and Smart Technology, Health and Wellbeing, Active Design and Garden Communities.

Whilst the EDG continues to be relevant to its core user base of town planners, urban designers and developers, it is my expectation that the online content will support engagement with a greater user base including communities, politicians and the media. The aspiration is that through the Guide these individuals will be better informed about design, planning processes and the importance of quality, becoming advocates of the principles reflected in the EDG.

We are both at the end and the beginning of a process. I am confident that the work completed to date and work that will be completed going forward will be central to improving the quality of the built environment in Essex long into the future.

# KEY CHANGES

The 2018 EDG seeks to ensure that the Guide retains the pioneering aspirations and core design principles, whilst focusing on the future with a new structure, thematic updates and content that enhances its usability.

## Key changes include:

- **New sections on SuDS, Highways Technical and Garden Communities**
- **New local authority profiles highlighting the local context and serving as a reference source of key local and county policies and guidance**
- **New themes on Ageing Population, Digital and Smart Technology, Health and Wellbeing, Active Design and Garden Communities embedded throughout**
- **Significant revisions to existing text including embedding National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) principles**
- **New and more relevant case studies.**

The aspiration for the 2018 EDG is that relevant information, pertaining to creating high-quality, sustainable developments, should be concentrated into one reference source. With this in mind, the following new sections have been incorporated into the widened scope of the EDG website.



## Highways technical manual

In response to user feedback on the 2005 EDG, an additional highways manual, containing tables, diagrams and Manual for Streets references, has been created. This will provide clarity on the specific technical requirements and standards which relate to the creation of a layout compliant with the Essex Highways adoption guidance.

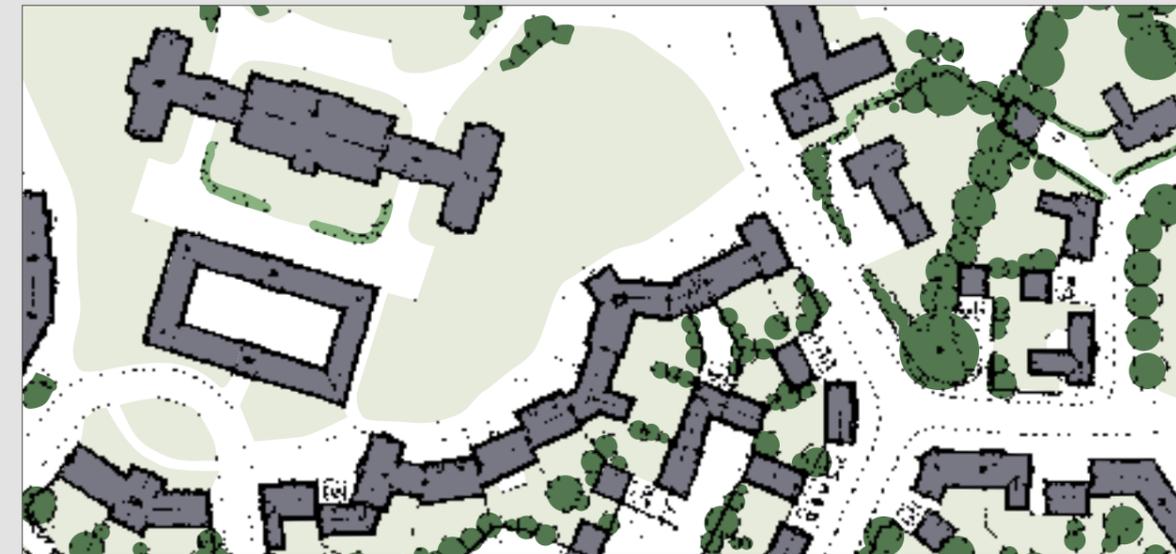


## Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

This section highlights the key aspects of the Essex County Council SuDS Design Guide relevant to creating high-quality communities using images, links and case studies to demonstrate how the principles can be applied to residential developments. Content includes consideration for how developments can control surface water runoff as well as the proper maintenance and protection of the natural water cycle. It also details how flood management and sustainable drainage systems can be used to create and sustain natural environments that create a better quality of life for residents.

## Garden Communities

With at least seven new Garden Communities under consideration across Essex, this section has been established to describe the particular nature and requirements of these developments and respond to the opportunities offered to place-making, environment and society through delivery of high-quality new communities.



## Local authority profiles

Local authority profiles have been put together following feedback from developers that they would value a single reference source for the policies, design guidance and context appraisals that apply to a specific locality. The sections will provide clickable links to relevant Local Planning Authority (LPA) documents and a table outlining the local, countywide or national policies and standards that apply.

# UPDATED CONTENT INCORPORATING NEW THEMES

The 2018 update provides a comprehensive review throughout all sections to ensure EDG content remains contemporary including incorporating new socio-economic themes that reflect the challenges and opportunities facing Essex. It also includes expert revision of the content to ensure it is effective for the new online format, reflects updated policy (including NPPF) and responds to suggested improvements in the previous guide. Diagrams, images and annotations have also been revised to include new examples of contemporary design and reinforce the importance of context appraisal in the delivery of the most appropriate solution for a place.

The following new thematic content has been interwoven throughout the EDG including the case studies.

**Ageing Population** where for the first time, the EDG gives specific consideration to the principles for planning and designing new homes and layouts in response to the forecast increased number of older people and those impacted by age-related conditions for example, dementia.

**Digital and Smart Technology** which recognises the importance of and provides solutions for the successful integration of digital technology in our lifestyles by asking users to consider how we account for or validate the use of space and the delivery of services to include smart technology, utilities, connectivity and flexible design.

**Active Design** provides specific guidance on how to incorporate socially inclusive design in all layouts to activate spaces by prioritising the main user whilst also encouraging sport and physical activity to create more successful, well-managed and safer communities.

**Health and Wellbeing** which identifies the positive characteristics of an environment that support achievement of better quality lifestyles including how this can be achieved through creation of dynamic urban space. The section also gives consideration to future of health care provision and how this should be considered in design of new communities.

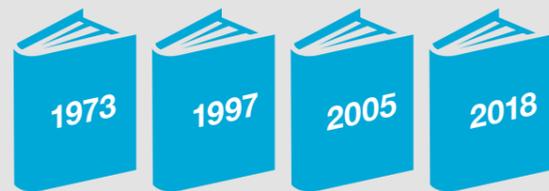


# DELIVERING THE EDG

15 MONTHS REVIEW



FOURTH VERSION



THREE DEDICATED PROJECT OFFICERS  
generating 2,615 hours project officer time



13 WORKSHOPS  
to review existing content  
and add new themes



45 HOURS  
WORKSHOP  
TIME



57 INDIVIDUALS  
INVOLVED IN  
WORKSHOPS

SIX NEW THEMES INCORPORATED  
THROUGHOUT THE EDG



Ageing  
Population



Digital and  
Smart Technology



Health and  
Wellbeing



Active Design



Garden  
Communities



15 representatives from EPOA, LPAs, ECC, Sport England, Active Essex  
and DCLG attended 6-weekly steering groups

OVER 30 ORGANISATIONS FROM ACROSS THE PUBLIC AND  
PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVED IN THE REVIEW INCLUDING:



Essex  
LPAs



Government  
departments



Non-departmental  
public bodies



Charities



Housing  
developers



Architects

THREE WEEK ENGAGEMENT PERIOD  
(29 NOVEMBER – 20 DECEMBER 2017)



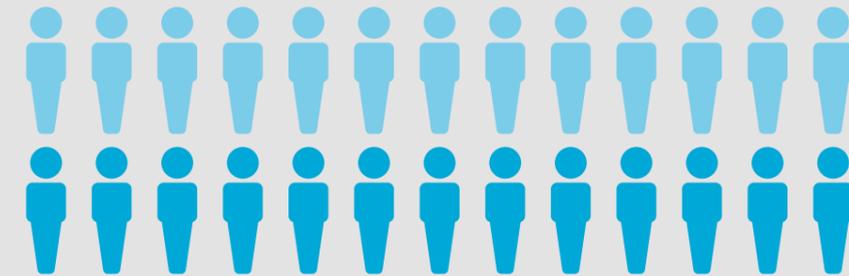
Two engagement events



Over 150 individuals viewed revised material

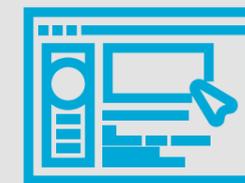


Six sets of detailed  
feedback received



50% of respondents introduced to the EDG for the first time

ONE NEW  
EDG WEBSITE  
COMPRISING:



348 NEW  
PAGES



56,500 WORDS  
OF NEW OR  
AMENDED TEXT



OVER 30 NEW OR  
UPDATED IMAGES  
OR DIAGRAMS

## New and more relevant case studies

This revision of the EDG features a new suite of case studies that are reflective of the changing focus of the Guide, with less attention paid to the specific architectural features and greater focus on how developments reflect the themes of the EDG. Featured case studies are short and succinct using high-quality professional images and links to external websites. Reflecting the flexible nature of the online guide, regular reviews will ensure that case studies remain relevant whilst providing the opportunity for user-suggested developments to be included. This will ensure that we create a rich resource library on the EDG website.



# APPLYING THE EDG IN PRACTICE: NEWHALL BE CASE STUDY

**Development name:** Newhall Be  
**Location:** Harlow, Essex  
**Size:** 8,200m<sup>2</sup>  
**Architect:** Allison Brooks  
**Developer:** Linden Homes  
**Accommodation type:** 84 2&3 bedroom homes

Newhall Be is an 84-unit scheme for Linden Homes which completes the award-winning South Chase of Phase 1 of Newhall development in Harlow, Essex. When complete, the Newhall scheme will comprise over 2,500 homes and two school sites, employment space and a district centre, embracing the balanced community principles outlined in the EDG. Newhall Farm was earmarked as a neighbourhood of the Harlow New Town in Sir Fredrick Gibberd's original plans, however never made it into the final town plan. As the population of Harlow grew in the 1990s the District Council revisited the location, working with architectural and urban planning firm Rogers Evans Associates Limited (REAL) to develop the scheme.

The development encapsulates the mantra of the 2018 EDG, using design codes and a 'form-based' approach to set out requirements for streets, public spaces, building lines and heights, but stopping short of being prescriptive about architectural detail. Newhall Be, as with the EDG, used this to encourage innovation that is representative of the context, limiting the pastiche development that previous versions of the EDG tempted designers to deliver.

At Newhall Be this approach is effective in integrating a mix of new and familiar house typologies including apartments, terraced homes and courtyard homes. Buildings have been inspired by the traditional materials of Essex rural buildings and paired with modern architectural form create striking black-timbered structures that align to the traditional Essex barns across the landscape. Through a highly efficient masterplan the development delivers a layout which maximizes living space and flexibility for individual homes as well as bringing light into potentially dark terraced courtyards. The use of roof terraces ensures residents are able to access outdoor space.

In 2013 Newhall Be was shortlisted for the prestigious RIBA Stirling prize. This is what the judges had to say:

"Newhall Be demonstrates the added value that good architects can bring to the thorny problem of housing people outside our major cities. By halving the size of the gardens – creating roof terraces in total equalling the land 'lost' – the architects fitted an extra eight houses on to the development. This paid for extras such as full-height windows, dedicated studies and convertible roof spaces.



The overall scheme raises the bar for suburban housing so that, if emulated, could and should have a significant impact on development across the country.

This is a fine achievement in its own right. In the context of much of the UK's new house building it is truly exceptional."

From the perspective of the EDG, Newhall Be demonstrates what is achievable when the principles of quality design are embedded throughout a scheme. Specifically, the development exemplifies a number of the principles of the EDG including:

- Being highly sustainable with consideration for long-term energy use and incorporating measures to reduce energy use in properties
- Incorporating flexibility; all dwellings are built to Lifetime Homes Standards, loft spaces can either be fitted as bedrooms or further workspaces
- Giving consideration to changing economies and home working; villas and courtyard houses include an office, with some properties also having higher ground floors facilitating the later conversion to other uses
- Considering permeability in the layout through a consistent use of block structure, making the street pattern legible with the use of shared spaces away from the main route further enhancing the permeability
- Access to green space considered through provision of roof terraces and creating linkages to the parkland surroundings of the existing Harlow New Town
- Responding to the challenge of non-adoptable green infrastructure through the establishment of a residents' association to oversee its management.

As with all case studies within the 2018 EDG, it is these design principles rather than the architecture at Newhall Be which serve as exemplars for other new development in Essex.

# COMMISSIONING THE EDG



Place Services was delighted to be commissioned to deliver the new Essex Design Guide on behalf of EPOA. We have a long-standing association with and expertise on the Guide from its original conception to its more recent revisions.

Place Services is a specialist provider of integrated environmental assessment, planning, design and management services. We are a leading public sector service provider with a loyal and growing client base. Our multi-disciplinary team includes planners, urban designers, landscape architects, historic environment consultants, ecologists, arboriculturists, conservation, public art and community engagement specialists. We have a strong reputation for high-quality work undertaken by skilled professionals across a variety of sectors including the public sector, infrastructure, housing and development and countryside management.

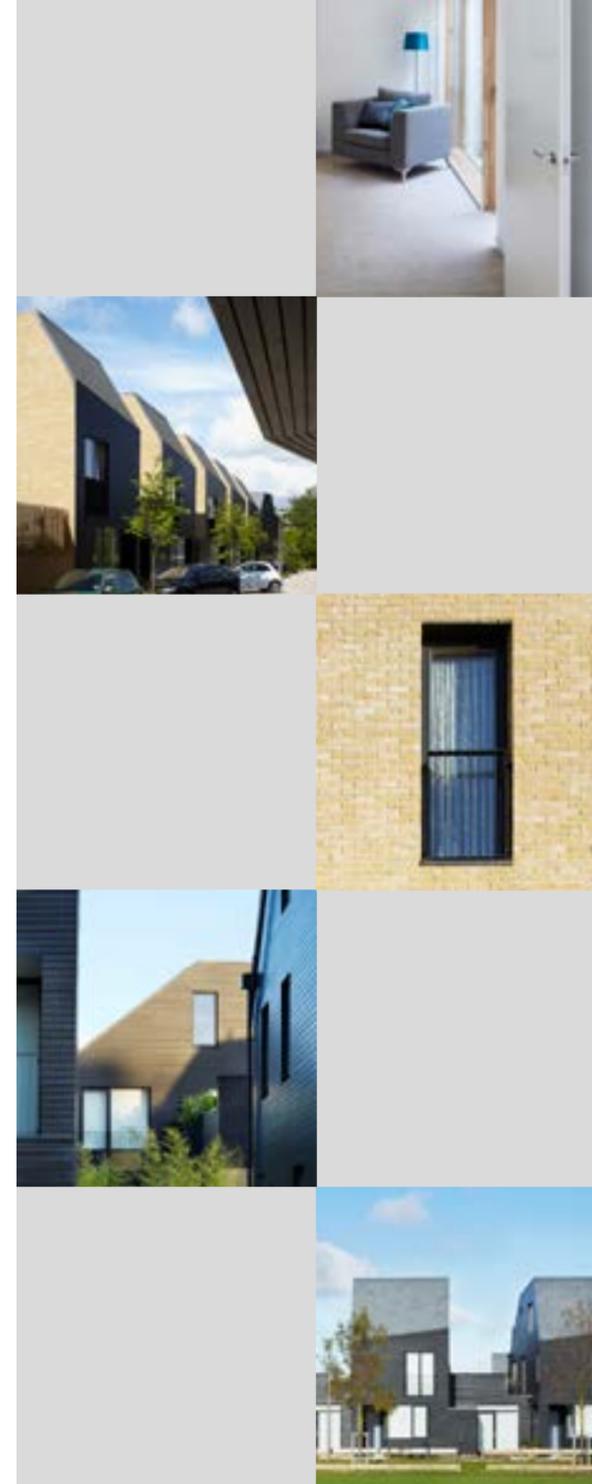
Our unique place in the market stems from strong public sector roots which are embedded in a detailed understanding of local government. We are a trusted provider of professional services with a strong record of delivering across sectors.

With well-established partnerships with a number of key specialist groups in Essex County Council, including Highways, Flood Consultancy Services, Environmental Planning and Asset Management, as well as our network of private sector associates, Place Services occupies an insightful position with experience on both sides of the public and private sectors. This enables us to add significant value when improving the operation of the planning process.

For further information on any of our services contact:

**Paul Frainer**  
Head of Partnerships and Development

T: 03330 136 875  
E: paul.frainer@essex.gov.uk  
W: www.placeservices.co.uk





THE  
ESSEX  
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GUIDE

If you want to know more  
about the EDG, drop us a line at:  
**[essexdesignguide@essex.gov.uk](mailto:essexdesignguide@essex.gov.uk)**  
or call **0333 013 6840**

Newhall Be images © 2018 Paul Riddle