Buildings at Risk : Testing the National Framework
Harlow and Clavering, Essex

Revised Sept 2015

Essex County Council

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PROJECT REPORT

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Author: M. Medlycott

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Cover: General view of Clavering

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1   SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Historic England (formerly English Heritage) is developing a national framework for the recording of Grade II Listed Buildings by volunteers. This comprises an online recording tool and accompanying training package, aimed at collecting and maintaining nationally consistent Grade II Listed Building data across the country, and providing volunteers with the guidance and skills required to undertake condition surveys.
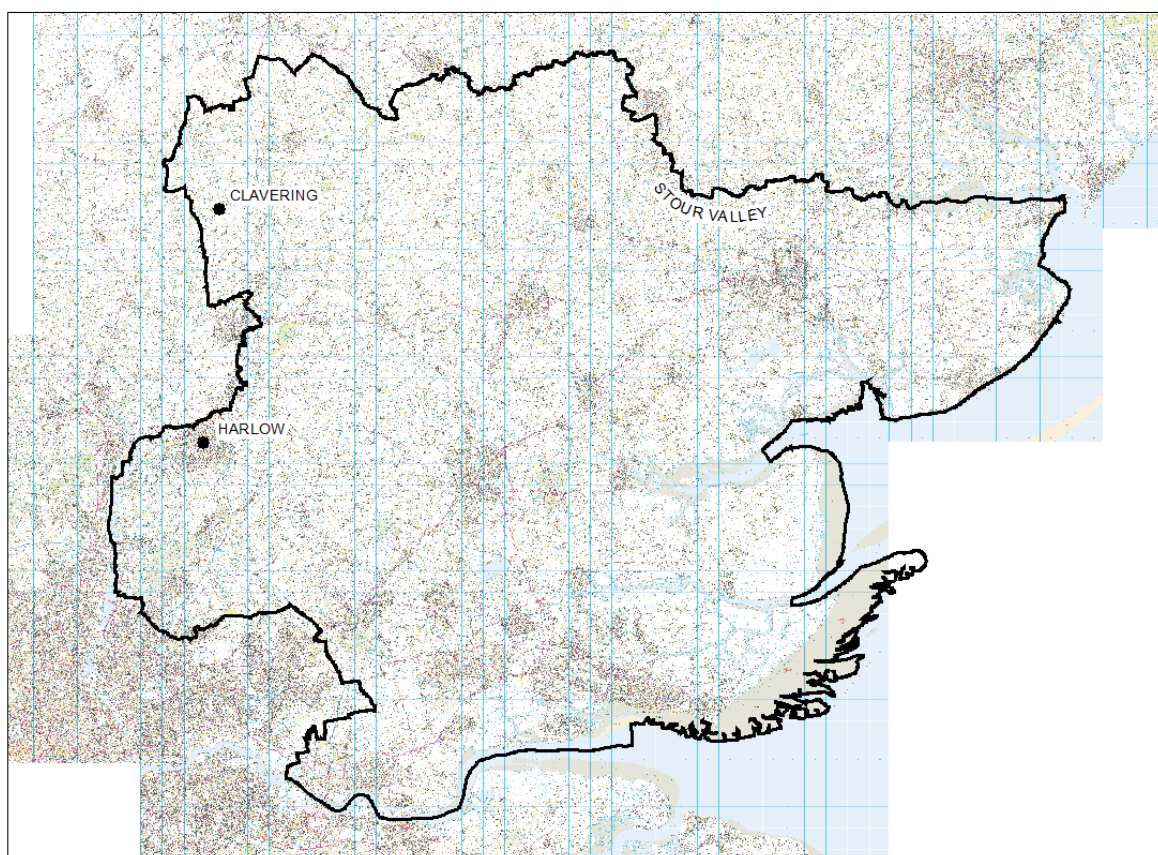
Fig. 1   Location of the Survey Areas

This project aimed to support the national framework by rigorously testing the usability and impact of the emerging framework through the use of local volunteers supported by heritage professionals, in order to ensure that the tools which are being developed nationally were fit for purpose locally. In order to give as wide a range of historic buildings scenarios as possible to test against, two areas (Fig. 1) were chosen with widely differing characteristics, both in the forms of Grade II Listed structures present and the types of threats and opportunities that they face. These comprised Harlow District (175 buildings) and Clavering Parish (85 buildings). Harlow District is overwhelmingly urban in nature with areas of deprivation, the Listed Buildings comprise a mix of medieval/post-medieval buildings relating to small rural hamlets that have been subsumed into the modern urban area and the 1950/60s buildings and other structures, mainly sculpture, relating to the construction of Harlow New Town. In contrast Clavering parish is a rural area comprising a small village, a number of outlying hamlets and isolated farms, it is generally prosperous with a largely medieval/early post-medieval building stock. The results of the project, in addition to feeding into the development of the Historic England national framework, also updated the Heritage At Risk registers, the Essex Buildings at Risk Registers and the Essex Historic Environment Record, as well as providing groups and individuals with news skills, empowering them to engage with their local heritage.

The project was carried out by staff from the Place Services team at Essex County Council, based at County Hall, Chelmsford. The survey work was undertaken by community volunteers.

2   Background

The project was a result of a Call for Proposals that would contribute to the delivery of the NHPP Measure 6; Activity 6B1 Strategic Condition Monitoring. The project tested a nationally applicable methodology intended to enable local community volunteers to assess Grade II Listed Buildings for inclusion on Heritage At Risk (HAR) registers. This built on the results of the pilot projects undertaken in 2013-14 to assess the use of volunteers to record the condition of Grade II Listed Buildings and to develop and test recording methodologies. Essex ran one of the pilot projects; *6734 Expanding English Heritage HAR to include Grade II Listed Buildings in the Stour Valley - Essex and Suffolk* (Medlycott and Gascoyne 2013 and Medlycott 2014) which had contributed towards the successful completion of this initial phase of development. The lessons learned during the pilot project had real benefits towards the successful implementation of the second phase of testing of a nationwide methodology, particularly in relation to the management and support of volunteers through the recording process.

3   Research Aims and Objectives

Essex County Council maintains a county-wide Heritage at Risk Register, which covers Grade I, II* and II Listed Buildings, as well as Conservation Areas, Locally Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments. There are currently 249 heritage assets on the Essex Heritage at Risk register; over 70% of these are Grade II Listed Buildings. The register is updated each year, but updates are only made when Historic Buildings Advisers or Conservation Officers become aware of a threat to a Listed building, for example through members of the public notifying of buildings which are at risk. There has been no strategic assessment of the historic building resource in Essex for Grade II Listed Buildings until the undertaking of this project and the previous Stour Valley project. The aims and objectives for this project were identified in the Project Design

The primary purpose of the project was to rigorously test the recording solutions being developed by Historic England using volunteer recorders in two contrasting survey areas; Harlow District and Clavering Parish.).

3.1   Research aims

1   To provide a rewarding volunteering experience for participants, and maintain and strengthen the links between volunteers and historic environment specialists in Essex.
2   Collect data locally to a nationally consistent standard to enable analysis of trends, the development of guidance and prioritisation of action on Grade II buildings at risk
3   To expand and complement the existing evidence base for the historic built environment in Essex, serving to enhance the Essex Historic Environment Record and HAR register, and to allow Historic England and local authorities to make better-informed, more efficient conservation and development management decisions, thus contributing to long-term asset management.

3.2   Research Objectives

1   To rigorously test a nationally applicable methodology and tools for community volunteers to systematically assess Grade II buildings at risk in the project area, and to assess and manage their contributions consistently
2   To test the national framework against two contrasting areas:- Clavering and Harlow.

3   To enable local communities in the survey areas to be better involved in decisions on their local heritage through training, participation, and communication.

4   To identify and record Buildings at Risk and have a mechanism in place to highlight these sites both within the Heritage at Risk register and the EHER.

5   To produce a concise formal report assessing the findings of the project, for dissemination to Historic England to aid the future direction of the national framework.

4   METHODOLOGY

4.1   Volunteer recorder recruitment

It was intended that the survey would be undertaken by individual members of the public, and members of local groups, with support from the Project Officer (Maria Medlycott) and the local Conservation Officers. To this end publicity material on the project, emphasising the need for volunteer recorders was sent to the Parish Council and Local History Society for Clavering and to the Harlow Civic Society and the Friends of Harlow Museum. The majority of the volunteers were recruited via this means, however there were a number of additional recruits, some who came via the previous Stour Valley Heritage at Risk project, some who had been in touch with Historic England Cambridge Office regarding the national project and were recommended to contact the Essex project, and one from the Essex Industrial Archaeology Group.

A total of 36 volunteer recorders were trained, which was considered enough to cover the number of buildings to be recorded (approximately 7 each). The majority of the volunteers had extensive knowledge of their chosen survey area, and most were long-term residents, unsurprisingly given the nature of the groups that had been approached to act as recorders. Several of the volunteers also had previous relevant professional experience, either as architects or building surveyors.

4.2   Training

4.2.1 Online film:

Historic England had prepared an online film explaining the role of the survey and demonstrating the principals of identifying structures that might be at risk, the volunteers were asked to watch the film and provide feedback.

Feedback: The majority of the feedback was favourable, although it was commented on that all of the examples of buildings discussed were urban and brick-

built in nature. The range of structures and materials did not cover those that were likely to be encountered in Essex, where the building type is predominately timber-framed, with thatch and tiles the most common roofing types.

4.2.2 Group training sessions:

In addition to the online training, and in order both to introduce the project and the Project Officer and Conservation Officers to the volunteers, as well as to ensure that the discussion of risk matched the local building characteristics two group training sessions were held, one in Harlow and one in Clavering.   The training included a presentation showing the examples of damage and deterioration in Listed Buildings, covering both the mildly deteriorating to those with serious structural issues. The examples chosen were typical of the styles of buildings that the recorders could be anticipated to encounter in the west of Essex. The Project Officer and Conservation Officers answered questions arising from the slides and practice survey sheets were filled in with advice from the Project Officers and Conservation Officers.   Historic England had requested volunteer feedback on the three versions of survey sheet in development, so these were tested and a poll was taken from volunteers regarding clarity and ease of use at the training session, and the results reported back to Historic England.

The training session also covered Health and Safety and passed on some of the lessons and experience gained during the Stour Valley Heritage At Risk project so that the volunteers were better prepared for the task ahead, and interaction with the public (see Appendix 2.2 and 2.3). Volunteers were provided with hard copies of the guidance and survey forms and Health and Safety advice. A copy of the Health and Safety documentation is provided in Appendix 2.

Feedback: The feedback was favourable; there were however a number of follow-up queries by phone and e-mail once the volunteers had a chance to go home and digest details and re-read training back, and once they were out in the field.

4.3   The survey and survey support

The areas to be surveyed and the allocation of groups of buildings to individuals or pairs of individuals was largely done during the training sessions. The project used the web-based risk assessment survey supplied by Historic England. However as this was not fully functional at the beginning of the project, some of the volunteers undertook their surveys using printed-out maps and survey sheets supplied by the Project Officer. Once the web-based Heritage at Risk risk assessment survey was up and running the results were then transferred from the paper record on to the web-site.

Feedback: Feedback on the functionality of the website was passed back to the Project Officer who collated comments and in turn passed them on to the website designers and the Historic England Officer. In some cases where it was not clear what the issue was further conversations were held via email with the individual volunteer by both the Project Officer and the Historic England Officer. The website was developed and adapted in response to the feedback and further instructions provided as to its use. By the end of the project the majority of the participants were reporting no problems, although there were a number of outstanding issues, largely it is thought due to the use of older software and resulting incompatibility issues. A number of the volunteers, passed their paper survey forms on to the Project Officer to complete the data entry on the web-site. There were also issues relating to the uploading of photographs, as some of the owners did not wish photos to be taken, but the website did not allow the record to be completed without the uploading of a photo. The recommendation from Historic England was in these cases a photo of the street or road name should be uploaded.

4.4   Survey monitoring, evaluation and verification

When a building assessment was added to the web-site a Risk Score was automatically generated by the Historic England web-site based on the results submitted, thus:-

- A building recorded as Fair and Vacant/Not Applicable/Unknown = Vulnerable
- A building recorded as Poor and Vacant/Not Applicable/Unknown = Vulnerable
- A building recorded as Very Bad and Occupied = Vulnerable
- A building recorded as Very Bad and Vacant/Not Applicable/Unknown = At Risk

Feedback: This assessment of Risk however raised a number of issues and discrepancies, in particular with structures such as statues, headstones, memorials etc., which cannot be occupied. Some of the volunteers recorded these as Vacant whilst others recorded them as Not Appplicable or Unknown. Consultation with the Conservation Officers suggests that it is possible that the best way to get an accurate assessment for those structures would be to record them as part occupied. Ideally there needs to be a separate option for structures which cannot be occupied, with an associated algorithim for assessing vulnerability.

All buildings identified as being Vulnerable or At Risk were checked by the Conservation Officer, with those that were vulnerable checked against the web-site and photo and the building identified as At Risk visited by the Conservation Officer in

order to establish contact with the owner and estimate the extent and nature of any remedial or repair works required.

4.5 Data management, updating the HAR registers and inputting to Historic Environment Records

The data generated by the volunteers on the website was exported as a .csv file, which was then converted to Excel spreadsheet format. The data will be added to the Heritage at Risk register and the Essex HER using the existing Buildings at Risk option under Status on the Exegesis HBSMR.

5 SURVEY RESULTS

225 historic buildings were surveyed as of the 13th May 2015, Appendix 1 lists those that were identified as being either At Risk or Vulnerable.

5.1 Clavering

All 85 of the Clavering buildings were recorded. The majority comprised houses and cottages, but two inns, the Church, two mills, a K6 telephone box, the War Memorial, a former forge and a number of outbuildings and barns were also recorded.

All were considered to be in good condition, in fact what was evident from the survey was the degree of pride that the locals had in their parish and its historic buildings. However four of the structures were given a Vulnerable grading by Historic England, on the basis that they were not occupied (see Section 4.4). These included the K6 telephone box and the War Memorial.

A number of the buildings on the Historic England map were inaccurately located, the correct grid-references were added to the record for these structures and Historic England notified.
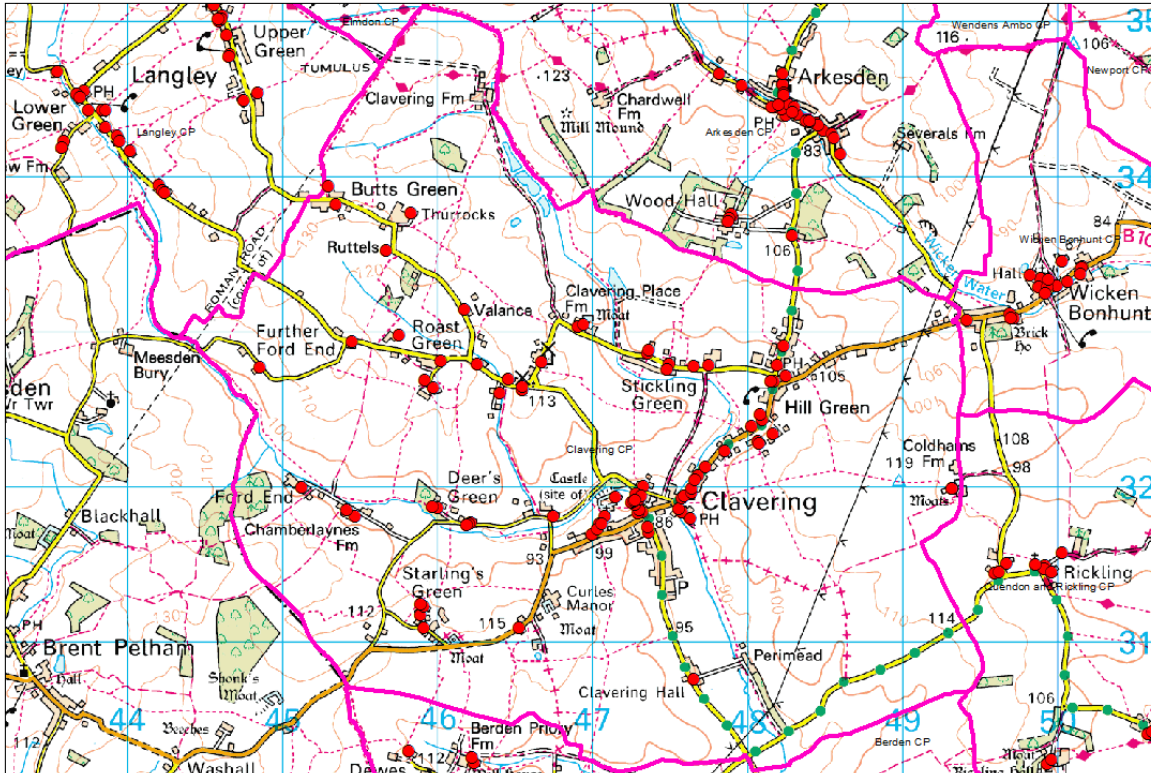
Fig. 2 Clavering parish

Fig. 3 View of Chamberlayne Farmhouse, Clavering

5.2 Harlow

140 of the 175 Harlow Listed Buildings were recorded by the 13th May. A further group of Harlow buildings were also surveyed but the results submitted too late to be part of the online database. When the nationwide survey starts the remaining Harlow surveys will be uploaded on to it. The majority of buildings comprised houses and cottages, but three parish churches, a lychgate, a Congregational Church, a K6 telephone box, two sculptures, a number of walls, a pump, stable blocks and barns, a clock tower and two watermills were also recorded.

Harlow differs from Clavering in that historic buildings make up only a small minority of the building stock, and though there are notable clusters in Old Harlow and on Churchgate Street, the remainder largely comprise small groups or isolated farmhouses that have been subsumed within the New Town. There are also a number of Listed Buildings that date to the creation of the New Town. It was evident both from the enthusiasm to record the Listed Buildings from the volunteers and from feedback to them from members of the public that the significance of the Listed Buildings and their role in illustrating the history of Harlow was generally appreciated.
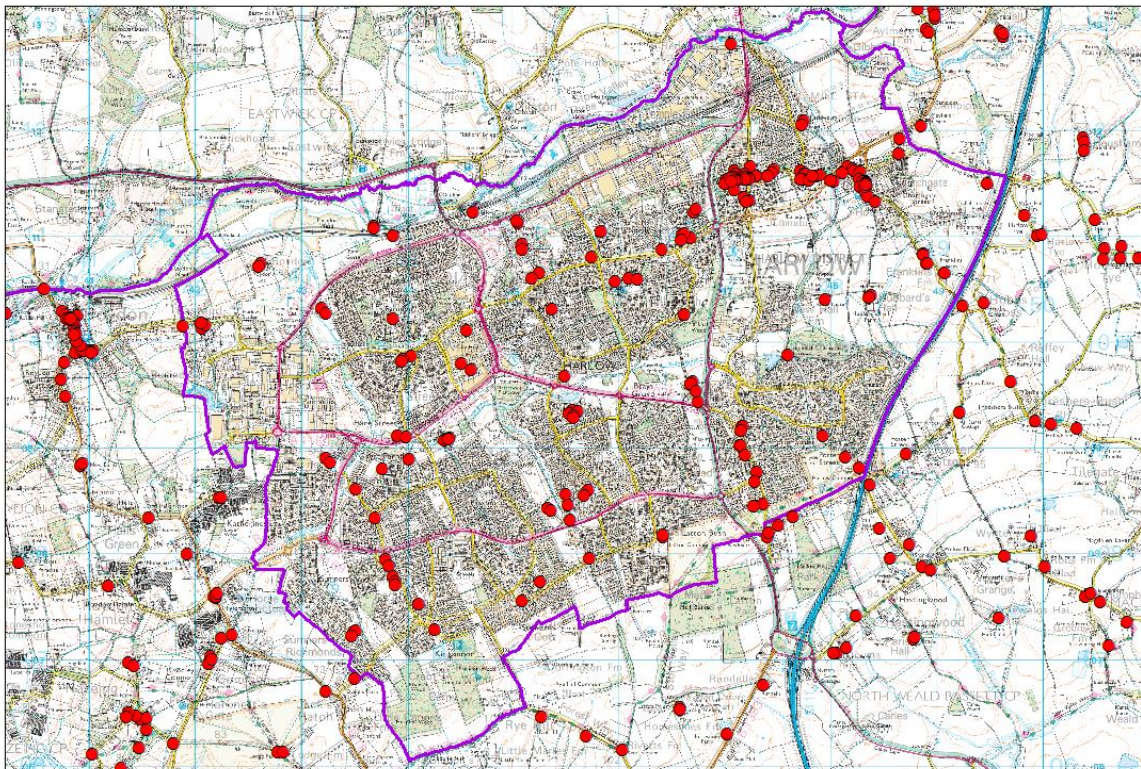

Fig. 4 Harlow District

The Harlow buildings included 21 structures ranked as Fair, and 3 that were identified as Poor, the reminder ranked as good. 16 structures were given a Vulnerable grading by Historic England, largely because of lack of occupancy, these however included the two sculptures and various walls (see also Section 4.4). One structure, Hogg's Farm, was identified as At Risk. This building was as a consequence visited by the Conservation Officer and initial approaches made to the owner regarding the need for repair.

Fig. 5 Hoggs Farm, Harlow

6   CONCLUSIONS

The project was successful in the recruitment and training of volunteers in the two study areas, greatly helped by the presence of a number of existing community groups, whose local knowledge and enthusiasm could be tapped into. The collection of data proceeded with only a few minor difficulties, largely relating to the misidentification of individual buildings. No issues with regard to interaction with home-owners or the wider public were reported, apart from a high level of support for the historic built environment and considerable local pride.

The testing of the web-site and the feed-back of comments to Historic England worked well, with most of the issues identified by the volunteers and the Project Officer resolved during the course of the project.

Those structures identified as being Vulnerable or At Risk were moderated by the Conservation Officers, and the results will be updated in the Essex Historic Environment Record and HAR register, enabling Historic England and local authorities to make better-informed, more efficient conservation and development management decisions, thus contributing to long-term asset management.

7   BIBLIOGRAPHY

Medlycott, M. and Gascoyne, A.	2013	*The Stour Valley Heritage at Risk project: the tool-kit*, Place Services client report
Medlycott, M.	2014	*The Stour Valley Heritage at Risk Project,* Place Services client report

Appendix 1: Buildings identified as Vulnerable or At Risk by the survey

Listed Building No.	Name	Risk Factor
Clavering		
1112420	Barn to west of Deers	Vulnerable
1112432	Windmill Approximately 180 metres north east of the Mills and Shop, Mill end	Vulnerable
1267716	K6 Kiosk, Hill Green	Vulnerable
1418866	Clavering War Memorial	Vulnerable
Harlow		
1031594	Sheep Shearer Sculpture Outside Tenants Common Room, Momples Road	Vulnerable
1111692	Church of St Andrew	Vulnerable
1111699	Lychgate to Churchyard of St Mary and St Hugh, Churchgate Street	Vulnerable
1308963	Pump Approximately 15 metres south of Spiers, Hobbs Cross Road	Vulnerable
1111639	K6 Telephone Kiosk, Churchgate Street	Vulnerable
1111702	Churchgate Hotel, Churchgate Street	Vulnerable
1337071	Garden Wall of 70 Feet and Gatepiers Immediately south east of Mill Hurst Fronting Road, Sheering Road	Vulnerable
1146684	Hoggs Farm	At Risk
1259612	1, Park Hill	Vulnerable
1111661	Outbuilding south east of White House, Potter Street, Outbuilding south east of White House, London Road	Vulnerable

Appendix 2: HEALTH AND SAFETY

2.1 Risk Assessment

Location / activity assessed:	Assessed by:
Working in the community Surveying properties along public highways Visiting premises and photographing property Working in remote locations	Maria Medlycott Adrian Gascoyne

Significant hazards:	How is harm likely to arise:
Traffic	Potential for traffic accidents arising from stepping back from pavement/road edge or slowing down car to photograph building/ fill-in record sheet
Refusal to co-operate/aggressive responses by house-holders	Possible anger, shouting or swearing, in extreme cases physical violence
Interaction with members of the public	Possible intimidation or nuisance
Dogs	Potential for aggressive dogs associated with individual properties
Trips, falls or related incidents	Accidental injuries relating to uneven surfaces or other hazards
Ill-health, sunstroke, etc.	Ill-health on part of volunteer resulting from climatic conditions or exertion

Who could be harmed?
Volunteers Conservation staff

Length of exposure: (e.g. number of employees & length of normal working week)
Dependent on individuals input – not more than 37 hours per week and 4 weeks per person

What existing measures are in place to control the risk? (Include ECC codes of

practice)

Traffic
- Safety guidance provided, read and agreed
- Hi-vis vests provided.
- Volunteers all have access to mobile phone to contact emergency services in case of need

Refusal to co-operate/aggressive responses by house-holders
- Correct identification carried by all volunteers
- Volunteers all have access to mobile phone to contact emergency services in case of need
- Safety guidance provided, read and agreed
- Instructions to withdraw if the situation becomes contentious or surveyor feels unsafe
- Working in pairs/buddying up

Interaction with members of the public
- Correct identification carried by all volunteers
- Volunteers all have access to mobile phone to contact emergency services in case of need
- Safety guidance provided, read and agreed
- Instructions to withdraw if the situation becomes contentious or surveyor feels unsafe
- Working in pairs/buddying up

Dogs
- Volunteers all have access to mobile phone to contact emergency services in case of need
- Safety guidance provided, read and agreed
- Working in pairs/buddying up
- Avoid interaction

Trips, falls or related incidents
- Correct identification carried by all volunteers
- Volunteers all have access to mobile phone to contact emergency services in case of need
- Safety guidance provided, read and agreed
- Working in pairs/buddying up

Ill-health, sunstroke, etc.
- Volunteers all have access to mobile phone to contact emergency services in case of need
- Safety guidance provided, read and agreed
- Working in pairs/buddying up

Emergency addresses and numbers:

Princess Alexandra Hospital - Hamstel Rd, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1QX, 01279 444455

Addenbrooke's Hospital - Hills Rd, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ, 01223 245151

Are the existing measures adequate to control the risk?	**Y**
If Not, what additional measures are needed to control the remaining risk?	**Priority** High, Medium, Low
To be monitored as project progresses	
Date of Assessment:	**Date for Review:**

2.2 Volunteer letter

place
services

Maria Medlycott
Place Services
Essex County Council
County Hall
Chelmsford
CM1 1QH

Tel: 03330-136853   6/1/2015
Maria.medlycott@essex.gov.uk

BUILDINGS AT RISK: TESTING THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

To whom it may concern,

…………………………………………… is a Registered Volunteer Recorder for the Buildings at Risk: Testing the National Framework project

This innovative project is funded by English Heritage, and it comprises a base-line survey to assess the condition of Grade II Listed Buildings within Harlow and Clavering, in order to provide a template for extending the survey nationally. Volunteer recorders from the local community have been recruited and trained to undertake external visual surveys of Grade II Listed Buildings and record those that are at danger of damage or decay.

The record will comprise a visual assessment of the exterior of the building and a photograph. The data recorded will be supplied to the English Heritage at Risk team.

If there are any queries about this project, please contact Maria Medlycott on 03330-136853 or maria.medlycott@essex.gov.uk

Maria Medlycott (Project Officer)

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Essex County Council

2.3 Conflict de-escalation strategies

Personal space:
Give people personal space. Invasion of personal space (or perception of it) is one of the most common causes of violence. Remember that when people are under pressure or stressed, what is regarded as safe personal space is often expanded.

Make your body language speak positively for you:
Know what a non-aggressive stance looks like and adopt it. Look like you are paying the person your full attention.

Don't interrupt:
Listen properly to someone who is being aggressive; if you don't you could miss some key information which you can use in your negotiations with them. It is also important to help them feel Understood, Valued and Reassured, and listening to them is a vital part of this.

Slow things down:
Try as far as possible to slow things down. In some situations you will need to act quickly, but in others a second or two taken to order your thoughts, appraise the situation, take in your surroundings, 'read' the other person will be time well spent. The act of simply not reacting can be crucial. Situations can be set alight by sudden movements, noise, gestures, decisions or obvious displays of nerves.

Mood empathy:
Try not to panic in the face of aggression, but equally, avoid coming across as too calm. It can be perceived as extremely patronising, particularly if you use an excessively quiet, paced voice and you risk escalating the person's behaviour further. Keep your voice calm and even.

Make your words work harder for you:
Show genuine concern, acknowledge how they are feeling and show respect by what you say, regardless of how 'right' they are or are not. In the technique of 'talking someone down', using the person's name can be helpful, and if you can keep your sentences short and clear, they are more likely to reach someone who is in an emotionally heightened state.

Avoid aggressive questioning:
When people are in a heightened state, they are often not capable of answering rational questions, particularly 'why' questions that can be perceived as aggressive. Instead of asking questions in the early stages, try to engage the person, gently, in general conversation – but only when they are ready.

Work towards outcomes:
Involve the other person in decision making, and get their agreement to any actions you propose. Summarise the issue as you understand it; it helps them feel listened to and slows the conversation down.

Make your words work harder for you:
Show genuine concern, acknowledge how they are feeling and show respect by what you say, regardless of how 'right' they are or are not. In the technique of 'talking someone down', using the person's name can be helpful, and if you can keep your sentences short and clear, they are more likely to reach someone who is in an emotionally heightened state.

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Work towards outcomes:
Involve the other person in decision making, and get their agreement to any actions you propose. Summarise the issue as you understand it; it helps them feel listened to and slows the conversation down.

Diversionary tactics:
Changing the subject or environment can take the tension out of a situation. Diversionary tactics can be successful, but you can only ever use it once with someone.

NEVER do the following, your actions might be misconstrued!
- Ask them to calm down – it will have the opposite effect.
- Use humour. They don't think it's funny.
- Counter aggression with aggression.
- Get drawn into a shouting match.
- Try to touch the other person, even to show empathy or support.
- Stick around if your instincts tell you the situation is dangerous.

If the householder objects to the photographing/recording of the house do not persist. Apologise for intrusion and withdraw from the situation. When safely away make a note on the record sheet as to why there is no photograph or why the record is incomplete.