

Code for unauthorised encampments in Essex



14 November 2013

A nomadic way of life is not against the law. From time to time groups of people come to Essex and temporarily camp on local authority owned land. The code for unauthorised encampments in Essex is a policy for the management of unauthorised camping.

Subject to the satisfactory assessment of the following factors, the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit will not normally pursue immediate action subject to a mutually agreed departure date, and continued compliance with the code.

- 1 The number of caravans involved. The maximum number normally acceptable will be three caravans in any one group although larger groups may be permissible in locations remote from residential or commercial premises.
2. Damage. No damage shall be caused to any property, fences, trees etc on that or adjacent land during access and encampment.
3. Previous recorded encampments. The behaviour and compliance (or non compliance) with the code on previous recorded encampments involving the group or individuals within the group.
4. Impact on the land and surrounding property. The occupation of any land shall not have a serious detrimental effect on the amenities of, or otherwise cause nuisance to, the occupants/users of the land and of any adjacent property.
5. Occupation of local authority or other partner authority land. The occupation of local authority or other partner authority land shall not impede its necessary operational use or, insofar as parkland or other public open space is concerned, shall not detract from its amenity value.
6. The distance between groups. The minimum distance between unauthorised encampments shall normally be half a mile
7. Behaviour. Behaviour towards other members of the public and surrounding properties shall be acceptable i.e. no intimidation especially involving actual violence or the use of abusive or insulting language, no excessive noise or any other forms of anti-social behaviour.
8. Access to the land/encampment. The landowner / representatives, or local authority officer must not be prevented in accessing the encampment (not individual homes/vehicles).
9. Tipping/rubbish. There shall be no dumping or inappropriate disposal of household, trade, human or animal waste on the encampment, or on adjacent land, nor any stockpiling of materials.
10. Fires. No fires shall be lit on any land other than for cooking or washing purposes.
11. Site Safety. Vehicles shall be parked, and any animals kept, in such a manner as to ensure the safety of the site users and cause no inconvenience to or affect the safety of users of the land and adjacent or nearest highway. Appropriate fire distances to be maintained between caravans.
12. Departure. Once the agreed period of occupation has elapsed, the site must be vacated and the distance moved must be at least two miles from the site occupied. Re-occupation of the same site must not take place within three months.