

Warwick District Council

CUSTOM & SELF-BUILD SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Consultation Draft, January 2019



CHAPTER 1

Introduction & Purpose

Custom and self-build housing is an aspect of housebuilding that the government is keen to promote and expand. It offers an alternative and financially accessible model for home owners, as well as helping deliver energy efficient, well designed and bespoke properties.

Following the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, and the subsequent Housing and Planning Act 2016, and in accordance with the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (Register) Regulations 2016, Warwick District Council maintains a Custom and Self-build register in order to monitor interest and to quantify the volume of plots that suitable planning permission should be granted. The Act states that "a development permission is "suitable" if it is permission in respect of development that could include self-build and custom housing" (para 10.6).

This document responds to these challenges, as well as to Policy H15 in the district's Local Plan. The following Supplementary Planning Document will clearly lay out the requirements of custom and self-build plots, helping those who wish to bring forward self-build plots either for themselves or others, and thereby assist appropriate delivery. This document should be read in parallel with the Warwick District Council Local Plan.

Definition

Custom build houses are properties commissioned by people from a builder, contractor or package company.

Self-build housing is when people physically build their homes themselves, sometimes with help from sub-contractors.

In either case, it is expected that the dwelling will be the principle residence for the owner for at least the following three years.

The provision of a plot for either custom or self-build requires an appropriate highway along with the basic utilities brought to the edge of the plot.

CHAPTER 2

Policy context

In March 2015, the government enacted legislation (Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015) that placed a requirement on local councils to maintain a register of people seeking to acquire land to build a home for themselves. The government is keen to promote self- and custom building (also sometimes referred to as private homebuilding in government and national publications) as a means of increasing the overall number of dwellings and encouraging the growth of the custom build sector.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016, Chapter 2, set out further legislation relating to self-build and effectively amended the 2015 Act. It included a new section (2a), which required any authority to which the section applied to give suitable development permissions in respect of enough serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the authority's area arising in each base period. The first base period runs from the time the register was established and ends with the date on which Section 10 of the Housing and Planning Act came into force (and every subsequent 12-month period thereafter).

The Act requires local authorities to understand what the demand is in their areas for self- and custom build housing and to have regard to that demand when exercising their strategic planning and other relevant functions.

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF, as amended in 2018, includes at para 61, "people wishing to commission or build their own homes" within the list of the different groups whose needs should be assessed and reflected in planning policies.

Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations

The Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (CIL) defines self-build as a dwelling built or commissioned by a person and occupied by them as their main or sole residence. Under current legislation, self-build dwellings are exempt from the need to pay CIL as long as they are the sole or main residence for at least three years following completion; any move to either sell or rent the property during that period would trigger a retrospective requirement for CIL to be paid by the self-builder.

Warwick district Local Plan

Warwick District Local Plan was adopted in September 2017 and contains a specific Custom & Self-Build Policy.

H15 Custom and Self-build Housing Provision

Proposals for custom and self-build housing in the district are encouraged and will be approved in suitable, sustainable locations:

- a) sites to the south of Coventry
- b) other major strategic housing sites
- c) brownfield sites in built-up areas
- d) growth villages
- e) appropriate locations within infill villages

subject to compliance with all other relevant policy requirements in the Local Plan and national policy, including green belt, historic and environmental designations,

Neighbourhood plans are encouraged to identify sites for self/custom build. The neighbourhood plan may also establish a locally derived design code.

The Council will produce an SPD to assist in the delivery of self/custom build dwellings

The subsequent explanatory texts explains the benefits of custom and self-build and the authority's commitment to encourage developers to bring them forward.

Neighbourhood plans

Under the Localism Act 2011, Neighbourhood Plans can be proposed by relevant Qualifying Bodies, and may propose to alter non-strategic Local Plan policies where a local need can be demonstrated. Policy H15 of the Local Plan is not considered a strategic policy and therefore, where evidenced, Neighbourhood Plans may propose a requirement for the provision of self-build plots.

Following a public referendum on 15 November 2018 the Kenilworth Neighbourhood Plan was made and its policies came into effect on 16 November 2018. It includes a requirement for self-build plots on the major extension to the east of the town. The policy KNP4 reads that developments at Land East of Kenilworth should follow the following principles...

- e) the provision of a proportion of the open market homes as self-serviced plots for self-build and custom build, commensurate with demand evidenced on the local authority self-build register of interest, not exceeding 5% of the total number of dwellings

The policy presented in this SPD for the delivery of plots on larger sites may be a starting point for future Neighbourhood Plans to consider, should they wish to encourage self-build plots in their area.

CHAPTER 3

The Custom & Self-Build Register

In line with the Government's requirements, the Council keeps a register of those people interested in acquiring a serviced plot for self-build development. The Custom and Self-build register runs in base periods of 12 calendar months, the first full base period commencing on 01 November, 2016. The Annual Progress Report covering the first three base periods, i.e. two full periods (16/17 and 17/18) and the partial base period that ran from April 2016-October 2016 is provided as part of the evidence base and is published on the Council's website.

The Register is open to all who have an interest in custom or self-build within the District. The Council has not at this time enacted a requirement for a local connection or to charge for entry to the Register. As of the end of Base Period 3 (i.e. end of October 2018) there were 303 entries on the register.



CHAPTER 4

Plot requirements

Individual custom and self-build plots may often be brought forward on challenging or unusually-shaped plots, responding to both site-specific constraints and the requirements of the applicant. It would, therefore, be unhelpful to set a rigid spatial requirement for individual plot dimensions as it may unnecessarily fetter the development coming forward. Where an application is coming forward as a part of a larger scheme it will need to respond to the local housing mix requirements in line with the wider site.

It is expected that applications for custom and self-build dwellings will meet the requirements of all relevant policies in the Local Plan and its Supplementary Planning Documents such as Parking Standards.



Serviced plots requirements on larger sites

Many self-build plots will come forward on an individual basis, meeting the needs of the specific plot owner. However, custom and self-build plots will also be encouraged as part of larger developments to meet wider demand, offering a variety of opportunity and helping to deliver distinctive and quality developments throughout the district.

In order to assist these coming forward the following principles should be met;

- a) Custom and self-build plots should be in small clusters rather than individual plots dispersed throughout the site.
This will ensure that the individual street scene is not broken up with discordant custom or self-build properties whilst also providing a good volume of plots
- b) The mix of plot typology offered should respond to the most recent SHMA or subsequent documents in line with the wider site.
The Custom and Self-build Register is used to understand the demand for custom and self-build plots. However, the type of plots provided should conform to the housing type needs established in the SHMA or subsequent documents and accord to the housing mix agreed for that particular site. This detail is explained in detail in the Housing Mix Guidance document.
- c) Custom and self-build plot size should conform to the average size of plot typology provided on the rest of the site
To ensure that sufficient space is available on plot to build appropriate dwellings and that there is consistency across the site
- d) a Custom or Self-build plot should have the following infrastructure in place and to provided edge of plot prior to marketing
 - i) suitable highway access
 - ii) Electric
 - iii) Gas (where being delivered elsewhere on site)
 - iv) foul water
 - v) broadband/telecommunication conduitsThis will ensure that the plot is available, viable and desirable self-build or custom build plot.
- e) The authority will be contacted once marketing of available plots has commenced. The authority may then take the opportunity to contact those on the Custom and Self-build register and use their website to promote the opportunity
This will help ensure that the marketing of the site reaches those who have already expressed an interest in custom and self-build
- f) Following notification to the local authority about the availability of a plot, should a custom or self-build plot not sell after 12 months marketing and that this can be evidenced by the applicant, the plot may be developed as market housing (if the plot came forward as part of the market housing allocation), conforming to the appropriate market housing mix
This will ensure that plots do not remain vacant for significant periods of time and ensures that we continue to meet the housing needs evidenced in the Local Plan.

Design codes for larger developments

Where small clusters of self-build plots come forward as part of the above principles, the production of simple design codes are encouraged. The Local Authority commits to working with developers in producing these, as they will help ensure that there is clarity and consistency for the building-out of the self-build plots within the larger site. Design codes may be expected to address the following;

- building form and orientation
- density
- developable footprint
- building lines and types
- views and vistas
- soft landscape
- waste facilities

Other policies to be considered

Applications will need to meet other relevant policies in the Local Plan, and also adhere to relevant Supplementary Planning Documents such as Parking Standards.

Commuted Sums

Para 4.103 of the Local Plan states "It may be that an element of commuted funding could be used to purchase and service plots in suitable areas as a means of offering opportunities to local people". Should a site that is compelled to provide custom and self-build plots be unable to deliver these plots on site on the grounds of viability, a commuted sum in lieu of plot provision may be considered upon presentation of suitable evidence.

CHAPTER 5

Monitoring progress

An annual analysis of the Custom and Self-build Register will be provided in the yearly Progress Report that will be produced and published on the Council's website by the end of each calendar year. This will include a summary of the registrants each year, as well as detailing the volume of plots suitable for custom and self-build in the base period in question.

Following the adoption of this SPD a further chapter will be added to the report for following years that will detail the plots brought forward in line with the larger sites policy above, demonstrating the active marketing of said plots.

Should the demand demonstrated by the Register significantly exceed the quantum of suitable plots being granted planning permission then this SPD will be reconsidered along with any other powers the Local Authority might have in order to meet the Councils' obligation.





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