

## **Amendments to the Custom and Self-Build Register Process**

### **1.1 What is the Self-Build Register?**

The government has brought forward legislation to encourage the delivery of diverse homes. Under the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, Local Authorities are required to maintain a register of individuals or groups of individuals who are seeking plots to build their own home. This will inform the council of the level of demand for self-build and custom housing in the area of the local authority.

### **1.2 The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016 which came into force on 31<sup>st</sup>**

October 2016, set out that for applicants to be placed on the register, the individual or each individual in a group/association has to be 18 years and over; a British Citizen; a national of an EEA state other than the United Kingdom; or a national of Switzerland, and seeking to acquire for a serviced plot of land in the area of the local authority to build a house to occupy as their main residence.

### **1.3 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 which also came into force on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016, placed a duty on local authorities to grant sufficient planning permissions in respect of serviced plots of land to meet the demand for custom and self-build as evidenced by the number of entries on the register. Local authorities must have regard to this register when carrying out functions relating to planning, housing, the disposal of any land of the authority and regeneration.**

### **1.4 The demand for custom and self-build is increasing in Warwick District as evidenced by the large volume of entrants on the register. This increases the need to grant more planning permissions to serviced plots in order to meet the statutory duty. The current route of entry on Warwick District Council's custom and self-build register is a straightforward process which requires applicants to submit a form expressing their interest, free of charge. This has attracted many applicants who have no connection to the district to join the register and increased demand.**

### **1.5 A member of the register recently made formal complaint regarding the process and proactivity of the Council in dealing with the demand of the Self-build register. Although the complaint was not upheld, the Council committed to improving the service to those on the register, of which this forms a part.**

### **1.6 Considering the current situation as described above, it is appropriate to introduce a mechanism that will keep the level of demand genuine and achievable for the council to meet the statutory duty and also improve the quality of service.**

### **1.7 This report sets out the changes proposed to enter on Warwick District Council's Custom and Self-Build register.**

## **2 Self-Build Charging Scheme**

The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (Time for Compliance and Fees) Regulations 2016 allows Local Authorities to charge a fee to individuals/ groups of individuals to be entered on the council's self-build register for a base period which is from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 30<sup>th</sup> October, or part of a base period. An annual fee to remain on the register can also be charged.

- 2.1 It is proposing to charge a fee for applicants to enter the register and an annual fee to remain on it from the start of the next base period, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019. The fee will apply to an individual or the group of individuals who are looking to take a self-build project.

### **3 Registration Proposal**

Entry to the register will be via application which will be determined within 28 days of receiving the form.

- 3.1 From 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019, the register will be kept in two parts. Part 1 will include entrants who meet the basic eligibility criterion (as set by the government in The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016) and the local connection test (as set by the council). Local authorities are required to consider the number of registrations recorded in part 1 when providing sufficient planning permissions to serviced plots suitable for custom and self-build to meet the duty.
- 3.2 Part 2 will include entrants that meet the basic eligibility criteria but do not meet the local connection test. This part of the register will show general demand for custom and self-build plots which will help to guide policy making, but are not included in the number of plots we need to demonstrate that planning permissions could have been granted for.

### **4 Local Eligibility criteria**

The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016 sets out that local eligibility is established if the applicant has sufficient local connections with the area of the local authority based on residency, having a family member who lives in the local area and/or having an employment connection to the local area.

- 4.1 Currently there are significant number of entries on the register who have no local connection to Warwick District, so by setting a local connection test, it will allow the council to achieve its statutory requirements of granting sufficient number of permission to serviced plots to meet local needs.

### **5 Fee**

To be included on the register, there will be an entry charge of £50 for Part 1 and £25 for Part 2. People entered on Part 1 of the register are to pay a higher fee as there is duty for local authorities to meet the demand on this part of the register. The fee is outside of the scope of VAT.

- 5.1 If an application to join the register is unsuccessful then the fee will be refunded in full.
- 5.2 After 12 months, entrants in part 1 are required to pay a renewal fee of £20 and re-register otherwise they will be removed.

5.3 The table below shows the fees charged by different local authorities.

Local Authorities	Charge for entry in Part 1	Charge for entry in Part 2	Annual Fee to remain on part 1 of register	Annual Fee to remain on part 2 of register
Daventry District Council	£17	£7.50	£16.50	0
Stroud District Council	£75	£25	0	0
Hart District Council	£75 (£125 for an association)	£75 (£125 for an association)	£30	£30
Cotswold District Council	£75	0	0	0
Derbyshire Dales District Council	£100	£25	£50	0
Average Registration Fee	£68	£27	£19	£6
<b>Warwick District Council (Fees proposed)</b>	<b>£50</b>	<b>£25</b>	<b>£20</b>	<b>0</b>

Currently no other Warwickshire authorities have applied a charge to their register.

## 6 Consequences of placing a local connection test and a charge

6.1 There are several consequences to the introduction of a charge

- a. It is likely that volume on register decreases
- b. Greater opportunity and mandate to engage with registrants
- c. Manage plot promotion as set out in the Custom & Self-Build Supplementary Planning Document. This would include regular newsletters that would detail plots available or applications granted with plots in the housing mix and other relevant information and resources for self-builders.

## 7 Summary of WDC Self-Build Register

7.1 The register is currently on its 4<sup>th</sup> base period which runs from October to October each year. As at 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019, there are 370 entrants registered. There is high demand for four bedroom detached houses, and many of the entrants are interested in areas around Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth.



# Registration Process

