

Part J:

Self-build & Custom Build Housing & Modular Housing

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This part of the Development Requirements SPD provides further detailed guidance on the interpretation of a range of Core Strategy policies, in particular and as appropriate:

- CS.2 Climate Change and Sustainable Construction
- CS.16 Housing Development

It provides additional guidance about Self –Build and Modular Housing. The SPD will be used by Stratford-on-Avon District Council to help reach decisions on whether to approve or refuse planning applications. Making sure that applications comply with the guidance contained within the SPD at the earliest stage in the design process will make it easier for the Council to grant planning permission. The Council’s Planning Policies are set out in the Core Strategy available at www.stratford.gov.uk/corestrateg.

Key words or terms which appear throughout the document are included in the Glossary.

J1. Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding

The National Context

The Government wants to enable more people to build or commission their own home and make this form of housing a mainstream housing option. The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) has placed this matter on a statutory basis.

Self-build and custom-build can be market and or affordable homes and are defined as follows:

- Self-build - projects where individuals or groups directly organize the design and construction of their new home(s);
- Custom build – projects where individuals or groups work with a specialist developer to help deliver their new home(s).

Section 2A(2) of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 states that:

An authority...must give suitable development permission in respect of enough serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the authority's area in each base period.

All self-build and custom build properties are exempt from the payment of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy).

www.stratford.gov.uk/cil.

The 2015 Act places a duty on local authorities to have regard to their self-build register when carrying out their planning, housing, land disposal and regeneration functions. The Government is monitoring the situation with registers and what actions local authorities are taking in response to the overall scale and nature of interest expressed.

The Council's custom and self-build register

In accordance with the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding (Register) Regulations 2016, from 1 April 2016 this Council will keep a register of individuals (and associations of individuals) who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in their area for this purpose.

The Local Context

Whilst the Core Strategy does not contain a policy that specifically provides for this form of housing development, paragraph 5.2.16 in the explanation to Policy CS.16 makes it clear that the District Council supports the principle of schemes being delivered as self-build projects. The Council is considering including such a policy in its emerging Site Allocations Plan, and is also looking to allocate specific sites to deliver custom and self-build homes.

Find out more:

Find out more about the Site Allocations Plan that will sit alongside the Core Strategy:

www.stratford.gov.uk/siteallocations

The Government does not expect local authorities to provide such opportunities on plots or sites that would not otherwise be acceptable for other forms of housing development, such as in open countryside. It should also be recognised that the Core Strategy provides scope for individual and small groups of dwellings, including self-build schemes, to be built in a wide range of settlements in the District.

Local communities considering Local Needs Housing Schemes and or Neighbourhood Plans are specifically encouraged to consider custom and or self-build housing.

In addition, the Development Management service through the pre-application process will encourage developers to incorporate opportunities for self-build in their housing schemes.

Single 'Local market' homes brought forward under Core Strategy policy CS.15(G) i.e. the Local Needs Housing policy are invariably self-build/ or custom build properties.

The occupancy of any self-build or custom build affordable housing will be subject to local occupancy controls.

Requirements for Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Schemes

Custom and self-build housing can be developed either to provide affordable or market housing. In the case of market housing, it is anticipated there will be two main modes of delivery:

- (1) Individual plots, sourced and acquired by the developing household, or small sites provided to meet the specific identified needs of individual households.
- (2) Larger schemes, involving sub-division of the site in accordance with a masterplan to provide serviced plots, for subsequent sale to households who will in due course prepare their own detailed designs.

In the latter case of larger schemes, the principles in Core Strategy Policy CS.19 (A) still remain highly relevant, and so adherence to the optimum stock mix in CS.19 (B) remains appropriate. This matter should be dealt within the necessary masterplan for a site.

It is essential that self-build schemes, due to their particular nature, can be implemented in an appropriate and effective manner. For this reason, a number of specific considerations need to be applied.

Schemes that include self-build or custom-build plots are expected to make the following provisions:

1. A legal access to a public highway (or equivalent) for each individual plot;
2. A Design Code to help clarify and guide what form of in dwellings is appropriate, e.g. size, height, materials;
3. A connection to all services, i.e. electricity, water, drainage, at the boundary of each plot;
4. A phasing plan, where applicable, to ensure CIL is not triggered for the self-build element due to commencement elsewhere on the site¹.

¹ An amendment to the CIL Regulations in 2104 introduced an exemption to persons building or commissioning their own home provided that it is occupied as their sole or main residence.

J2. Modular Homes

What are modular homes?

Modular homes are homes that are built away from the site and then assembled on-site. They are also referred to as Off-Site Manufactured Housing (OSM) or prefabricated (prefab) buildings. This is an umbrella term for a system of housing building that relies on individual components being manufactured in the factory, transported to a site and mostly or entirely completed and assembled on site. The homes can be manufactured in the factory at the same time as the site preparation; foundations and utilities connections are carried out.

Manufactured Homes such as Mobile Homes and Caravans which are placed on the ground rather than having permanent foundations are not however the same as modular homes.

Modular housing was once prevalent in the 1950s and 60s and is now soaring in popularity due to improvements in modern techniques. They are becoming increasingly popular in larger development schemes in the UK such as hotels, student accommodation, hospitals and flats; modular buildings are now becoming the preferred choice for self-builders too.

Benefits

The time taken to build these types of homes is considerably shorter than a traditional built home. This is because the foundations can be laid and other preparatory work carried out, whilst the 'shell' of the home is being manufactured in the factory. There are also less issues of delays for sourcing materials or delays due to bad weather during construction.

Modular homes are considered to be a modern, more energy efficient and cost saving alternative to traditional building styles.

The Council encourages the development of modular homes, subject to complying with the design principles set out in [Part C D E & F](#). The external appearance or cladding of a modular home will require careful consideration to ensure that it reflects and harmonises with the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Applicants are advised to hold discussions with the relevant case officer about the proposed external appearance/cladding of the building early on in the planning application process.

There will be a policy on self-build and modular housing in the Council's Site Allocations Plan, which is currently being prepared.

Find out more

Planning Portal Self-build homes

https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/49/self-build_homes/2