

INFORMATION SHEET

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Subject: Self-Build & Custom Housebuilding

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1. The Government believes that self-build (where individuals or groups directly organise the design and construction of new homes for themselves to occupy) and custom build (where individuals or groups work with a specialist developer to deliver new homes that meet their specific aspirations) can play an important role in delivering high-quality housing that meets the needs of all sections of the community. This has been encapsulated in the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.
2. The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding (Register) Regulations 2016 oblige all district councils in England to keep a register of individuals (and associations of individuals) who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in their area for this purpose. Local authorities are required to give planning permission for enough suitable serviced plots to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in their area.
3. In accordance with national policy, self-build housing schemes are exempt from the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Government believes this will help to make such schemes more viable by reducing the financial outlay involved when building or commissioning a dwelling.
4. A total of 106 plots have already been granted planning consent to assist in meeting the District's needs for custom-build and self-build housing. These have primarily come forward as single dwellings where the landowner has claimed an exemption against the CIL charge thus confirming that they are self-build plots. To date, only one scheme comprising more than a single dwelling has been granted planning permission; this is for 8 plots on a site in Ettington.
5. As at the end of February 2020, there were 157 interested parties on the Register. Although this figure is rising slowly at the present time, it can be anticipated that the momentum will increase over time. Furthermore, the Register is unlikely to accurately reflect the actual level of interest in building your own home in the District. For that reason it is important that the District Council is in a position to respond by providing suitable opportunities for self-build plots.
6. As things stand, with the exception of plots expected to be provided at Gaydon Lighthorne Heath and Long Marston Airfield new settlements, there is no established local planning policy which supports the provision of self-build and custom build dwellings on greenfield sites on the edges of settlements in Stratford-on-Avon District. This was because the Core Strategy was substantially complete when the obligation to deliver self and custom build housing emerged. To address this, it was always envisaged that this issue would be incorporated into the Site Allocations Plan.

7. Given the established approach to locating housing development in the Core Strategy, it is appropriate for such sites to be at Stratford-upon-Avon, Main Rural Centres and Local Service Villages. This is because self-build schemes will invariably not be restricted solely to meeting the needs of the immediate community (they are for a District need), so it would normally not be appropriate to treat them as rural exception schemes.
8. It should also be noted that Core Strategy Policy CS.18 (see DMC 3), establishes that the provision of affordable housing does not apply to self-build housing schemes. Furthermore, Policy CS.19 on the mix and type of dwellings would not be applied rigidly because schemes of this nature reflect the requirements of prospective owners and occupiers of each dwelling.
9. The Proposed Submission Site Allocations Plan, which was published for consultation last August, identified a number of proposed sites to be developed solely for self-build and/or custom-build dwellings. In addition, the SAP proposed policies to deal with custom and self-build proposals on non-allocated sites. These draft policies, SAP.3 and SAP.5 respectively, are reproduced at the end of the report in **Appendix 1**.
10. The District has a number of adopted and emerging Neighbourhood Plans. A Neighbourhood Plan also forms part of the Development Plan when 'made'. Of the 15 made and 9 well-advanced (ie. Regulation 14 or beyond) Neighbourhood Plans, the following have specific policies relating to custom-build and self-build housing schemes:

NDP	Status as at April 2020	Policy Reference
Harbury and Deppers Bridge	Made	<p data-bbox="663 1077 1382 1144"><u>Policy H.03 - Securing a Suitable Mix of Housing Types, Tenures and Sizes in New Development</u></p> <p data-bbox="663 1144 1382 1756">To ensure that future housing development meets the housing requirement identified in the Core Strategy and also helps to Harbury and Deppers Bridge Neighbourhood Development Plan, Made Plan, November 2018 36 meet the different needs that will arise over the plan period from the existing and future population, in housing developments of 6 or more dwellings, a range of types, tenure and sizes of dwellings will be required, including a proportion of suitable homes to meet the needs of older and younger residents as well as the potential to provide for those seeking to build their own home on appropriate sites. Before finalising the housing mix on such sites developers must take account of up-to-date demographic, housing need, self and custom build demand and strategic housing market information and are particularly encouraged to consult and take into account the views of the Parish Council.</p> <p data-bbox="663 1789 1145 1821"><u>Policy H.04 – Local Needs Schemes</u></p> <p data-bbox="663 1821 1382 2042">Supporting Text: Not all local housing need will necessarily be addressed by affordable housing provision on market-led housing development. Where this is the case, in exceptional circumstances, rural exception housing will be allowed when it meets the criteria in Policy H.04. Where the criteria in Policy H.04 and other</p>

		development plan policy is fulfilled self-build may be appropriate as such rural exception housing.
Shipston-on-Stour	Made	<p><u>Policy HSG7 Encouraging custom and self-build housing 25 opportunities</u></p> <p>Objective: to expand the supply of affordable housing to meet identified future local needs by encouraging and creating opportunities for custom and self-build housing construction.</p> <p>Policy: to support prospective custom and self-builders on sites of more than 20 dwellings. Developers will be encouraged to supply at least 5% of dwelling plots for sale to custom and self-builders, which dwelling plots will be controlled by the following means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resulting custom and self-build development will conform to an agreed design code; • Where plots are marketed appropriately for at least 12 months and have not sold such plots may either remain on the open market as custom or self-build plots or revert to the developer to be built out. • In the case of a fractional requirement the provision of a self-build plot will be rounded upwards in any circumstance. <p>Development proposals for custom or self-build on smaller sites with a capacity of less than 20 dwellings will be strongly supported, subject to meeting the other relevant policy requirements within this plan.</p> <p>Explanation: custom and self-build development can locally contribute to meeting the identified needs for affordable housing. This role is recognised in the Framework with a specific reference in paragraph 50. There has been Government funding for local authorities to pursue this objective. There are incentives such as CIL levy exemption applied to self-build housing. Some local planning authorities have introduced policies to support the delivery of affordable housing by this method. In anticipation of that potentially happening locally this plan contains such a policy, applicable to larger sites. There may also locally be opportunities for small-scale custom and self-build development, typically the re-use of previously developed land or buildings. This plan positively welcomes and supports such projects for smaller sites, subject to compliance with other relevant policies within this plan. If suitable small sites do become available, and there is a sound case for intervention to facilitate a custom or self-build project, the Town Council will actively encourage the District Council and other bodies such as Warwickshire Rural Community Council to investigate and consider what can be made possible.</p>
Alcester	Post	<u>Policy HBE 1- Residential Development within the</u>

	Examination	<p><u>Built-up Area Boundary</u> Proposals for new housing within the Built-up-Area Boundary, either by means of new build, or by converting, extending and/ or redeveloping existing vacant or partly occupied buildings, will be supported, where appropriate having regard to Policies EC1, EC4 and CLW1. The Built-Up-Area Boundary as defined in the Core Strategy is shown on Map 2. For the avoidance of doubt, the sections which are within the parishes of Kinwarton and Arrow with Weethley and not included in the Neighbourhood Area are shaded blue. Within the Built-up-Area boundary, community-led housing schemes and serviced plots for those wishing to build or commission their own housing will be supported. All areas outside of the Built-up-Area Boundary are classed as countryside. New housing in the countryside will only be supported in accordance with the criteria in paragraph 79 of the NPPF and Policies AS.10 and CS.10 of the Core Strategy.</p>
Napton-on-the-Hill	Regulation 16	<p><u>Policy 3 – Self-Build Homes and Custom Housebuilding</u> A proposal for the development of self-build homes or custom housebuilding will be supported providing that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) it is located within or immediately adjacent to the defined Built-up Area Boundary of the village; b) it is on a small scale; c) it is appropriate to its surroundings and does not overshadow or overlook adjoining properties; d) it has regard to the Character Area Assessment in terms of scale, layout and materials, and retains local distinctiveness to create a sense of place; e) the height of rooflines do not impact adversely on the important views identified in Policy 10; f) it does not affect gaps and important open spaces, which are of particular significance to the form, character and setting of the settlement; g) it protects and enhances public rights of way and encourages the use of the existing network of public footpaths, green lanes and tracks to enable access by foot around the village; and h) there is suitable access by car with adequate off road parking provision. <p>The applicant, working with Stratford-on-Avon District Council and the Parish Council, should prepare a Design Code or Plot Passports for the site to demonstrate how the above criteria have been met.</p>

11. The Council has also published guidance in respect of custom and self-build housing in Part J of the Development Requirements Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) available at www.stratford.gov.uk/devreq-spd. This includes a number of site specific requirements that such schemes should comply with.

12. Because the Core Strategy is silent on the issue of custom and self-build housing sites, the promoters of a small number of sites have been waiting for the SAP to progress before seeking to bring forward their schemes. However, they are currently unsure about whether to progress with an application because of the current local policy void.
13. If the Council cannot demonstrate that it is meeting its needs for this form of housing, including on suitable sites, then it could have schemes granted on appeal on unsuitable sites and potentially be open to costs being awarded.
14. Given national policy enshrined in the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 and accompanying Regulations, as well as the NPPF (i.e. para. 61), there is considerable expectation and justification for taking such a positive approach.
15. The NPPF (para. 11) makes it clear that where there is no policy in a Development Plan relating to a specific form of scheme, planning permission should be granted unless there is a clear reason for refusing the proposed development because its adverse impacts would outweigh the benefits. This principle is reiterated in Core Strategy Policy CS.1 Sustainable Development.
16. It is envisaged that most schemes will come forward on sites where the proposal is deemed to be suitable, save for the location of the site being contrary to the development strategy (i.e. outside the built-up area) established in the Core Strategy at the present time.
17. Given the legal obligation to maintain a rolling delivery of sites for self-build and custom build housing, and the fact that the adopted Development Plan (apart from a small number of made Neighbourhood Plans) is silent on the issue, it is considered that the existence of national policy and guidance on this matter should be a material consideration weighing heavily in favour of the granting of planning permission for such schemes in appropriate locations. In these circumstances, and to ensure consistency in decision making, some weight can be given to the provisions of the policies put forward in the Proposed Submission SAP (as set out in **Appendix 1** to this report).
18. At the current time, the impact of COVID-19 on the housing market is unknown. It could impact on delivery in the short-term as well as affect the ability of prospective occupiers to obtain a mortgage in the longer-term. Self-build and custom housebuilding will not be immune to its effects. However, in both the short and long term, self-build and custom housebuilding could play an important role in delivery by diversifying the housing market, supporting alternative financial products and SME builders, thereby helping to maintain supply.

Appendix 1

Extracts from Proposed Submission Site Allocations Plan (July 2019)

Policy SAP.3

Meeting Self-build and Custom-build Housing Needs

The provision of self-build and custom-build homes will be facilitated in the following ways:

- As an integral part of the housing mix in the new settlements at Gaydon/Lighthorne Heath and Long Marston Airfield.
- On reserve housing sites comprising 100 or more dwellings that are released for development, of which at least 5% of the plots should be made available for this purpose.
- On sites allocated for this specific purpose in accordance with Policy SAP.4.
- On unallocated sites in accordance with Policy SAP.5.

All sites promoted in accordance with the above will be required to satisfy the following criteria:

- (a) A legal access to a public highway (or equivalent) for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists to serve each individual plot.
- (b) Connections to all services, i.e. electricity, water, drainage, internet, at the boundary of each plot.
- (c) Provision of suitable arrangements for surface water outfall.

On sites providing self-build and custom build housing alongside other housing, schemes should also meet the following criteria:

- (d) Provision of plots in small clusters and not as individual plots throughout a site so as to prevent an inharmonious street scene.
- (e) Submission of a phasing plan to ensure CIL is not triggered for the self-build dwellings due to commencement of construction elsewhere on the site.

While the initial permission is likely to be outline, individual plots would come forward for reserved matters approval to allow each one to be separate chargeable development for the purposes of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Self-build and custom-build housing sites have been identified to help meet specific identified housing needs. Applications for schemes that provide for general market housing on self-build and custom-build sites will not be supported.

Policy SAP.5

Unallocated Self-build and Custom-build Housing Sites

Proposals for self-build and/or custom-build housing will be supported in the following locations subject to the following criteria:

- (a) As individual and small groups of plots within the Built-Up Area Boundaries of Stratford-upon-Avon, Main Rural Centres and Local Service Villages.
- (b) On suitable sites adjacent to the Built-Up Area Boundaries of Stratford-upon-Avon, Main Rural Centres and Local Service Villages (except where the site is within the Green Belt), solely for this specific purpose.

All schemes promoted under (b) will be expected to satisfy the following criteria:

- There is evidence to show a sufficient level of interest to take up each dwelling plot proposed on the site.
- A legal agreement requiring all plots to be offered in the first instance to individuals or households that have a local connection through living and/or working in Stratford-on-Avon District or by having close family living in the District.
- An agreed marketing strategy which specifies the minimum length of time for advertising plots, the appropriate means of doing so, and based on an independent valuation.
- A Design Code or Plot Passport and other technical information to guide the nature of the dwellings and other aspects of development that are appropriate to the site.