

Self-build and Custom Housebuilding

Briefing Note

02/08/17

Ref No: 276

Background

Updates to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) were published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on 28th July 2017, which provide guidance regarding self-build and custom housebuilding.

Self-build and Custom Housebuilding

In the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) both self-build and custom housebuilding are considered to be where an individual, an association of individuals, or persons working with/for individuals or associations of individuals, build or complete houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals. Therefore the initial owner of the home will have input into its design and layout.

Relevant authorities are required to develop policies in their Local Plan for self-build and custom housebuilding; use their own land if available and suitable and market it to those on the register; engage with landowners who own sites that are suitable for housing; and work with custom build developers to maximise opportunities.

The Act 2015 requires each relevant authority to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the authority's area for their own self-build and custom housebuilding.

For entries on the register, relevant authorities must record: the name and address of the individual/association and the name and address of the lead contact and the number of serviced plots of land the members of the association are seeking to acquire where relevant.

Local Eligibility Test

The Act enables relevant authorities to include up to two optional local eligibility tests. These are limited to a local connection test and a financial solvency test. It is

expected that relevant authorities will apply one or both of these tests only where they have a strong justification for doing so.

Relevant authorities may wish to consider criteria based on residency, having a family member residing in the local area and/or having an employment connection to the local area. In designing a financial solvency test, relevant authorities may wish to assess whether the applicant can afford to purchase the land.

If a local connection test is introduced, registers should be split into two parts; part one should identify people with a local connection, part two should contain everybody else who meets the eligibility criteria.

Maintaining a Register

As a minimum, relevant authorities are recommended to hold a webpage on their website that is dedicated to self-build and custom housebuilding.

The types of information relevant authorities are encouraged to publish include: the number of individuals and associations on their register; the number of serviced plots of land sought; and the preferences people on their register have indicated, such location, plot sizes and type of housing intended to be built.

Section 2(1) of the Act places a duty on relevant bodies to have regard to each self-build and custom housebuilding register, when carrying out their planning, housing, land disposal and regeneration functions.

To recover their costs of registering an individual or association of individuals, relevant authorities can charge an entry fee to individuals and associations of individuals who apply to be entered on their register.

For further information or to discuss the opportunities that the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act offers, please contact your local DLP office.

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