

FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S

**SELF-BUILD & CUSTOM HOUSE BUILDING
ACTION PLAN**

SEPTEMBER 2018

FOREWORD

This marks the first document where the Council has set out both its responsibilities and ambitions for self-build and custom house building in the Borough.

Self-build and custom house building has recently received increasing Government attention in the face of meeting the need for housing in the UK.

This action plan sets the background as to why self-build and custom house building has gained increasing focus from Government, which has translated into national legislation, policy, regulations and guidance, as well as local plan policies. This document marks the first corporate action plan that comprehensively covers this issue.

It explains the current and emerging local policies and strategies guiding Council decisions and development in the Borough, as well as the latest evidence the Council has regarding the local demand for self and custom build housing.

The Council recognises that self and custom house building developed in the Borough offers an important potential route to home ownership. This action plan marks the first step in the Council *'positively influencing or helping to secure development opportunities where it can support individuals or organisations in our local communities to deliver high quality self-build or custom house building to meet demand in the Borough.'*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Purpose and Role of Fareham Borough Council's Self-Build & Custom House Building Action Plan

- 1.1 The purpose of this action plan is to set out the Council's own responsibilities and wider ambitions in respect to self-build and custom house building in the Borough.
- 1.2 The delivery of self and custom house building in the Borough is not the sole responsibility of the Council, it in fact relies heavily on those wishing to and having the means to build houses themselves, organisations who would like to facilitate or deliver self-build plots or build custom built houses and interested landowners and developers promoting sites for such products. Given this context, the Council aims to *'positively influence or help secure development opportunities where we can support individuals or organisations in our local communities to deliver high quality self-build or custom house building to meet demand in the Borough'*.
- 1.3 This document sets out the Council's proposed actions to directly meet its own responsibilities to help deliver quality self-build and custom house building in the Borough to meet local demand. It also sets out the Council's wider ambitions, where we want to work with customers and partners to influence and help deliver such high-quality housing products.
- 1.4 This action plan will need to be reviewed and updated as and when necessary. This is the Council's first comprehensive action plan focused on this issue. The Council also recognise that this sector in many respects is in its infancy in the UK, and with increasing experience in the Borough, it is important that lessons are learnt and reflected in future action plans.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Self-Build & Custom House-Building Gaining Increasing Focus from Government

- 2.1 Back in November 2011 the Government published 'Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England'.¹ This national strategy supported many proposals that had been set out in an industry-led Government Working Group Action Plan promoting self-build housing, produced in July earlier that year.² Within the strategy the Government explained how it was intent on doing more than ever to support individuals and communities taking the initiative to build their own homes, which in turn is considered beneficial to the national economy. However, the Government saw that there was a huge untapped potential for custom-built homes, especially when making international comparisons. The Government pledged to enable this housing sector to become mainstream, and to double the number of self and custom-built homes over the next decade. The Government recognised that there were also challenges to self-build and custom house-building, as well as limited information regarding this housing sector.
- 2.2 In the 2014 March Budget, the Government announced that it would consult on a new 'Right to Build' giving prospective custom builders a right to a plot of land from their local council, and established several vanguards to test the practicalities of operating such a 'Right' across England. In addition, in March 2014 the Government announced that all new developments by individuals extending or building their own home would be exempt from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). CIL is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008 as a tool for local authorities to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of their area. The Housing White Paper in February 2017, which this document mentions later, continues this exemption commitment.
- 2.3 In October 2014, the Government produced 'Right to Build: Supporting Custom and Self Build',³ a consultation document, in which it explained how it intended to further empower aspiring self-builders to build their own home in their local area by bringing legislation through the next Parliament, as well as taking into consideration the experiences from the vanguards and the outcome of the consultation.⁴ This led to the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act (2015).

¹ HM Government (November 2011) 'Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England'.

² Self-Build Government Industry Working Group (July 2011) 'An Action Plan to promote the growth of self-build housing'.

³ Department for Communities and Local Government (October 2014) 'Right to Build: Supporting Custom and Self Build'.

⁴ DCLG (March 2015) 'Right to Build: Supporting Custom and Self Build Government response to consultation'.

2.4 Since this time, several pieces of Government legislation, regulations, policy and guidance have come into force that have placed certain responsibilities on Councils. However, before this document explains these, it is firstly important to define what self-build and custom house building is.

3.0 WHAT IS SELF-BUILD & CUSTOM HOUSE BUILDING?

- 3.1 The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) provides a legal definition of self-build and custom house building:

'Self-build and custom housebuilding means the building or completion by –

- a) individuals,*
- b) associations of individuals, or*
- c) persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, of houses to be occupied by those individuals.*

But it does not include the building of a house on a plot acquired from a person who builds the house wholly or mainly to plans or specifications decided or offered by that person.'

- 3.2 Whilst legally self-build and custom house building share the above definition, custom build is commonly regarded as where an individual, commissions a specialist developer to deliver their own home. Whereas, self-build is where the individual is more directly involved in organising or constructing his or her own home. Both routes require more significant input into the design of their home than other forms of housing.

Forms of Self-Build and Custom House Building

- 3.3 Currently there are a variety of ways self-built homes and custom house building are being delivered. Firstly, there are different approaches to the process, some self-builders take forward projects alone, others work in groups. Secondly, the level of self-build can vary, ranging from self-builders carrying out the whole of the construction to custom builders who hire a contractor to carry out the construction through to completion.
- 3.4 In considering whether a home is a self-built or custom-built home, the Council must be satisfied that the initial owner of the home will have the primary input into its final design and layout.
- 3.5 Some of the typical approaches to self-build or custom home building are outlined briefly in Figure 1 on the next page. However, it should be highlighted that the housing products listed below are not exhaustive. With this being an emerging sector, it is highly likely that new self-build and custom house building housing products will rapidly change over time.

Figure 1. Examples of Self-Build & Custom House Building Products

Contractor Built One-off Home

The owner manages the design process including finding the land, hiring an appropriate consultant, and securing planning permission and building regulations approval. Often the owner either hires a main contractor to do all the construction work; or they themselves project-manage the construction phase and hire various sub-contractors to do the work. The owner might also undertake some of the simpler tasks, such as decorating, themselves.

Self-Built One-off Home

The owner follows a similar route to above method except that they then undertake virtually all the construction work themselves. This is popular with people who want to take 'hands on' approach and who may already have experience of building.

Kit or Package Home

The owner finds the plot of land and then works with a kit home company to finalise design. The kit company then supply and erect the house. Sometimes the owner has a watertight shell built and then carries the fitting out work themselves.

Developer Built One-off Home

Here the owner finds a developer with a site and a design that meets their requirements, and the developer then builds it for them.

Supported Community Self build

This is where a group of people come together to share their skills and build a number of houses collectively. The group will normally all work on everyone's house until completion. Often these schemes include training to boost the participants' knowledge of building. Some community groups form themselves and some are coordinated by housing associations or other agencies.

Independent Community Collaboration

Here a group is formed to acquire a larger site that is split into individual plots. They then organise the design and construction of their own home, sometimes collaborating with others to, for example, order materials in bulk.

Developer/Contractor led Group Project

A developer/contractor finds a suitable site then seeks a number of self-build clients and builds the homes to their specification under contract. Often the developer provides an option to just build a watertight shell, so the owner can 'self-finish'. An alternative arrangement is for the developer to offer serviced plots which are sold 'off plan' with a design and build contract.

4.0 WHAT ARE THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SELF-BUILD & CUSTOM HOUSE BUILDING?

- 4.1 In the light of national legislation, regulations, policy and guidance the following paragraphs explain what responsibilities Councils have in respect of self-build and custom build homes.

National Legislation

- 4.2 The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) placed a duty that (by 1st April 2016) all local authorities should keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire plots of land for self and custom build housing in the local authority's area (to build houses for those individuals to occupy as homes).

National Regulations

- 4.3 The relevant regulations, The Self and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016 and The Self and Custom Housebuilding (Time for Compliance and Fees) Regulations 2016, allowed authorities to introduce a 'local connection test' and charge applicants a fee to be on the register.

'Fixing our Broken Housing Market' Housing White Paper

- 4.4 In February 2017, the Government published a Housing White Paper entitled 'Fixing our broken housing market'⁵ which set out the Government's plans to reform the housing market and boost the supply of new homes in England. Whilst wide ranging in nature, one of its main aims was to diversify the construction sector through supporting custom house building. It also reaffirmed its commitment to support custom-build homes with greater access to land and finance and giving people more choice over the design of their home. Finally, it also commented that *'If we do not believe local authorities are taking sufficient action to promote opportunities for self and custom house-building, we will consider taking further action including possible changes to legislation.'*

⁵ MHCLG (7th February 2017) 'Fixing our broken housing market'.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.5 In July 2018, the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework, which sets out national planning policy. Under the section entitled *'Delivering a sufficient supply of homes'*, the Government makes it clear that to boost supply, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, and that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. Furthermore, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies *'including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes'*.
- 4.6 The footnote to this paragraph reminded authorities that they are required to keep a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots in the area for their own self-build and custom housebuilding. They are also subject to duties to 'have regard' to this and to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand.
- 4.7 The footnote also explained that self and custom-build properties could provide market or affordable housing. This is reinforced in the glossary of NPPF - *'Self-build and custom-build housing: as housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing.'*
- 4.8 Furthermore, importantly the NPPF now requires on applications of 10 homes of more that at least 10% of the homes are available for affordable home ownership. However, there are exemptions, one of which is where 100% of the site is proposed for people wishing to build or commission their own homes.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

- 4.9 It is envisaged that National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), which provided guidance on policy in the previous NPPF, will be updated to reflect the recent changes to the new NPPF in terms of local housing need. However, it is helpful to highlight that the NPPG that supported the previous NPPF advised that authorities, when assessing the housing and economic development needs of their area, can supplement data from their register with secondary data sources to obtain a robust assessment of demand for this type of housing in their area. Examples of secondary data sources listed in the guidance include building plot search websites, 'Need-a-Plot' information available from the Self Build Portal; and enquiries for building plots from local estate agents and local planning

authorities.⁶ It also provided guidance on matters such as administering the self-build and custom house building registers, the duties (i.e. giving suitable permissions) and where exemptions to such duties apply.

4.10 The following section will look at current local policy context and local evidence of demand for self-build and custom house building in the Borough from the register.

⁶ National Planning Policy Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments> Paragraph: 021 Reference ID: 2a-021-20160401 Revision date: 01 04 2016

5.0 WHAT HAS THE COUNCIL DONE TO SECURE SELF-BUILD AND CUSTOM HOUSE BUILDING TO DATE?

- 5.1 The Council has already put strategies and plans to facilitate self-build and custom house building in place. These are detailed in the following paragraphs; however, the situation is evolving to reflect more recent Government legislation, regulations, policy and guidance.

Corporate Strategy

- 5.2 The Corporate Strategy, entitled '*Fareham: a prosperous and attractive place to be*', sets out the Council's priorities for the next few years, from 2017 to 2023. It shows how the Council has planned to ensure that Fareham remains a prosperous, safe and attractive place to live and work. It explains that one of the Council's key aims is '*Providing Housing Choices*', and ensuring everyone has somewhere to live is one of the Authority's vital roles. Working against the backdrop of a national shortfall in housing and accommodation, it explains that the Council has worked hard to develop key strategies that will enable the Council to ensure there are housing choices for people in Fareham.
- 5.3 This work is continuing largely through three main strands. The first is through the Adopted Local Plan. The Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan that will plan for the provision of new homes across the Borough up to 2036. The second is enabling the delivery of a new Garden Village community at Welborne of up to 6,000 homes. The third is preparing and implementing a new Affordable Housing Strategy, which will determine the Council's future role in the provision of affordable housing.

Adopted Local Plan

- 5.4 The Adopted Local Plan is a document that sets out policies that guide future development in Fareham and is used to help determine planning application decisions. In the context of self-build and custom house building, it is important to understand that existing local planning policies were developed and adopted as part of the Local Plan, prior to the recent Government legislation. There are three parts of the current Adopted Local Plan; the Core Strategy, the Development Sites and Policies Plan and the Welborne Plan.

Adopted Local Plan: Part 1 - Core Strategy

- 5.5 The Core Strategy was adopted in August 2011. It identifies the Borough's overall development needs up to 2026 and how they will be met. A number of strategic objectives set out how the strategy will be delivered including '*Strategic Objective 6*'. This identifies the need to '*provide a range of dwelling sizes and tenures which take into account existing and future housing needs.*' Strategic policy (CS2) on '*Housing Provision*' indicates that development in the

Borough will achieve a mix of different housing sizes, types and tenures that will be informed by the Housing Market Assessment and the Council's Housing Strategy. In addition, another strategic policy (CS18) on the '*Provision of Affordable Housing*' outlines the requirement for development proposals to provide a mixture of dwelling types, sizes and tenures reflecting the identified affordable housing needs of the local population.

Adopted Local Plan: Part 2 - Development Sites and Policies Plan

- 5.6 The Development Sites and Policies Plan, which was adopted in June 2015, provides further detail of the specific sites (except the Welborne site) and local policies which will deliver the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy. It outlines the Council's support for self-build housing, encouraging those wishing to build their own houses where the opportunity arises. For example, Policy DSP7, highlights there are opportunities for small scale residential infill development which could help support self-build schemes (paragraph 5.167). It further indicates that the Council will continue to review the demand for self-build and custom house building in the Borough, and through the review of the Local Plan, will explore making land available for such products should future demand exceed the land made available for self-build in the Borough (paragraph 5.168).

Adopted Local Plan: Part 3 - Welborne Plan

- 5.7 The Welborne Plan, a bespoke plan for the new community north of Fareham, was adopted in June 2015. Welborne is a new community of up to 6,000 homes. It will create c. 5,735 new jobs on approximately 97,250 sqm of new office, light industrial and warehouse floorspace. Welborne will provide a new village centre and two local neighbourhood centres, providing a new secondary school and up to 3 new primary schools. New community and health facilities will be an integral part of the new community, along with c.108 ha of natural green space, play areas, leisure and sports facilities. With a new bus rapid transit transport system serving the community and wider area, Welborne will be accessed by an 'all moves' junction 10 on the M27.
- 5.8 The plan makes provision within the Welborne development for custom and self-build housing through a specific policy (WEL21) on Custom Build Homes. The policy requires that a proportion of homes be delivered as dwelling plots for sale to individuals or groups of individuals wishing to build their own home. This policy requires that the number of custom build homes (i.e. plots) in any each residential phase should reflect up-to-date evidence of demand, coupled with the need to ensure that the character and nature of that phase are not compromised. Overall, however, the policy states that it is expected that not less than 1% of all homes at Welborne should be delivered as custom-build plots.

Local Plan Review

- 5.9 The Council has committed to a review of its Local Plan to reflect emerging housing and employment needs until 2036. The new plan looks at a timeframe of up to 2036, in line with the existing Adopted Welborne Plan. This new Local Plan, once adopted will fully supersede Parts 1 and 2 of the Adopted Local Plan, and update delivery timescales in the Welborne Plan (Part 3). The new plan is currently at draft stage, and the following paragraphs detail the current draft policies that the Council have consulted on last year (25 October-8 December 2017).

Emerging Local Plan: Draft Fareham Local Plan 2036

- 5.10 The new draft plan has a specific policy (H7) on '*Self and Custom Build Homes*' that supports such provision in principle as long as a number of criteria are met. It also looks to sites of 100 dwellings or more to provide 5% of the overall dwellings as plots for self or custom-built homes, with the exception of sites in Fareham Town Centre or a specific draft allocation (H3: Southampton Road). In combination, this draft policy and the allocations provide suitable provision for self or custom build (partly or wholly on sites) to meet local demand.
- 5.11 Lastly, it is important to highlight that the Draft Fareham Local Plan 2036 was published before the new NPPF issued, therefore it was based on the previous national policy (NPPF) and associated guidance (NPPG). The Council needs to assess whether there are any implications of these recent changes to national policy on the plan's content and progression.
- 5.12 The following paragraphs explain the local demand for self-build and custom house building based on the latest register information.

6.0 LOCAL SELF-BUILD AND CUSTOM HOUSE BUILDING DEMAND IN FAREHAM

Fareham's Self-build and Custom Build House Building Register

- 6.1 The Self and Custom Build Register was launched on the Council's website on 21st March 2016. The eligibility criteria for entry onto the Council's self-build register is established through The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding (Register) Regulations 2016. It stipulates that any individual or member of an association that signs up to the register must be aged 18 or older and a British citizen, or a national from an EEA State other than the UK, or national of Switzerland. The individual or member of an association must also seek to acquire a serviced plot of land in the Borough to build a house to occupy as their sole or main residence.
- 6.2 To better understand local demand for self and custom build plots in the Borough, the Council has included additional questions, researching the preferences of those on the register. This includes locations within the Borough they would prefer, the type of self or custom build property they are interested in building and the number of bedrooms they are seeking.
- 6.3 Since then, this information indicates that there are 58 individuals interested in self and custom build (21st March 2016 up until 6th August 2018). In terms of the type of self and custom build those on the register are interested in, the highest preference is for detached houses (88%), followed by those seeking a detached bungalow (31%). There is a very low demand for other types of housing. The locational preferences indicate that the highest demand is in Stubbington/Hill Head (69%), then followed by Warsash (66%), dropping to the lowest in Portchester (29%). Finally, in terms of preferences for the number of bedrooms spaces, demand ranges with 4 bedrooms the highest at 60%, closely followed by 3 bedrooms at 51%, with 1 bedroom demand being the lowest at 2%.

Charging & Local Connection Test

- 6.4 The Council approved several changes to the register in July last year. This included a charge for applicants joining or remaining on the register. It also introduced a 'local connection test'. This test means that applicants must confirm they have either lived in the Borough for a minimum of 2 years, or they have been employed in the Borough (for more than 16 hours per week) continuously over the last two years. This means the register now falls into two parts, those with a local connection are in Part 1 and those without a local connection are in Part 2. Of the 58 individuals registered, 55 meet the local connection test.

6.5 This register information is reported in the Authority Monitoring Report on an annual basis. The following section outlines the actions that the Council, working with other interested parties, can take in meeting its duties.

7.0 THE COUNCIL'S SELF-BUILD & CUSTOM HOUSE BUILDING ACTION PLAN

- 7.1 Given this national and local context, the Council's objective is to: *'positively influence or help secure development opportunities where we can support individuals or organisation in our local communities to deliver high quality self-built or custom-built homes to meet demand in the Borough'*. This section of the action plan sets out what actions can be taken to achieve this.

Engaging with Self-build & Custom Build Customers

- 7.2 The Council is proposing further measures to improve its services to different customers, such as notifying those on the register when planning permission is granted for self-build and custom-built homes (having regard for data protection) and publishing local demand and delivery evidence through the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).
- 7.3 In line with the Council's continuing service improvement (through 'systems thinking'), which ensures a 'customer focused' approach to service delivery and the quick resolution of problems. The Council will aim to update its website with useful information for those interested in self-build and custom house building in the Borough, such as producing guidance for applicants and headline information on permissions.

Action 1. Explore and implement innovative methods for engaging with customers who are interested in self-build and custom house building in the Borough and raising awareness of the grant of suitable planning permissions or suitable Council land disposals.

Understanding Local Demand for Self & Custom House Building

- 7.4 Importantly, the Council need to first understand more about the nature of demand for self-build and custom house-building in the Borough. Whilst the existing register is a helpful guide, it relies on individuals and organisations' knowing the register exists. Through undertaking research, the Council will be able to get a realistic understanding of local demand, but also their ability to afford available options. The Council will also need to understand whether there are any barriers to those individuals or organisations that can afford self-build and custom housebuilding, and whether the Council can play a role in preventing these barriers from occurring.

Action 2. Continue to improve the Council's understanding of those individuals or organisations that are interested in self-build or custom housebuilding opportunities within the Borough (as well as their ability to afford available options) by undertaking detailed research.

Opportunities for Self & Custom House Building in the Borough

- 7.5 Next, it is important we engage with those who have the means to assist individuals or organisations interested in self-build and custom housebuilding. In its simplistic form, to make self-build and custom housebuilding a reality for those who desire it, it requires the provision of suitable land and finance, the skills and materials to build it, as well as suitable utility and public highway access provision. It is important that the Council understands how all these interested parties can work together, to help those who are interested in self and custom build.
- 7.6 Turning to the first, available land. The Council has a direct role where it is a landowner itself, to establish if the land is suitable for self-build and/or custom-build homes. This can be exercised through its land disposal, regeneration or housing functions.
- 7.7 Secondly, using its planning functions, the most appropriate route for the Council is to approach landowners or relevant parties with land suitable for development to meet local demand for self and custom-built housing, is through Council's housing availability assessment, commonly known as the 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment' (SHLAA). A SHLAA is a technical exercise to determine the quantity and suitability of land potentially available for housing development. A SHLAA should be updated on an annual basis. Another example is when pre-application inquiries are made to the Planning Service for self-build and custom-build homes.

Action 3. Assess sites potential for self-build and custom house building through the Council's housing availability assessment (e.g. Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment).

- 7.8 With the backdrop of the Government looking to boost house building, Councils like Fareham are looking at an increasingly diverse range of housing products, such as self-build and custom-build homes to meet local housing demand. Therefore, it is appropriate that when sites are promoted to the Council, these local needs (including self-build and custom house building) are part of the

initial site assessment. Furthermore, the Council will also assess the potential for self-build and custom housebuilding on its own land assets, in the context of the Corporate and Housing Strategies, as well as the current (adopted) and emerging Local Plan.

Achieving High Quality Design

- 7.9 Where sites have already been identified for self or custom-built housing, such as Welborne, the Council will endeavour to ensure its services, such as planning and building control, help deliver high quality self and custom-built homes. Taking Planning Services, there are different ways the Council can help ensure this type of house building is high quality, this can be an area of concern as self and custom build can potentially lead to a huge degree of variation with so many parties involved, which risks undermining design quality.
- 7.10 One such mechanism is the use of overarching design codes for developers of large sites with phases of different housing products, including self-build or custom house building, to ensure design quality is maintained throughout the site. The use of plot passports for individual plots to ensure that, for example, self-builders understand what they can or cannot build within their plot is also a helpful mechanism for securing high quality self-build and custom-build homes.
- 7.11 Plot passports aim to produce important information on means of access, available services, what they have permission to build (i.e. the rules of the build) or what they need to do to gain it. Often such passports set out information on what options they have with regard to which materials to use for different aspects of the home, and the physical limits of the home within the plot. It is for these reasons it is important that the Council work with interested parties to produce design guidance on how to produce design codes and plot passports for self-build and custom house building developments.

Action 4. The Council will work with interested parties to produce design guidance to achieve high-quality design on self and custom build developments in the Borough (e.g. design codes/plot passports).

- 7.12 Furthermore, self and custom build development pose new challenges for the planning, and it is important that the Council can make good decisions on such applications appropriately and swiftly. The use of procedural advice when submitting a planning application for self-build and custom-build housing is likely to be beneficial to both the applicant and the Council. It could include helpful information on matters such as the level of detail required for outline, full, hybrid and reserved matters applications, as well as how to claim CIL exemption and the use of standard conditions or clauses for s106 agreements.

Action 5. The Council will work with interested parties to produce procedural guidance on how to apply for planning permission for self-build and custom house building developments in the Borough (e.g. standard conditions).

- 7.13 For both, actions 4 and 5, the Council will aim to involve experienced applicants in helping define what the Authority's design and procedural guidance should cover, as well as provide helpful feedback to the Planning and Building Control Services for continuous service improvements. This is in line with the Council's Vanguard approach, as previously mentioned, which puts the customer at the centre of Council services.
- 7.14 It is important to explain that serviced plots for self-build are defined by national legislation as a parcel of land with legal access to a public highway, and at least water, foul drainage and electricity supply available at the plot boundary. It is also desirable that plots have surface water drainage, telecommunication services, and gas (or district heating) where available. The Council will seek to work with utility companies and the highway authority (Hampshire County Council) to understand how best utilities and public highways can be delivered to self-build plots or custom house building sites in the Borough to inform the Council's design and procedural guidance.

Update Relevant Corporate Strategies

- 7.15 Whilst both the adopted and emerging Local Plan have specific provisions for self-build and custom house building, any new significant change in evidence on local demand for these housing products will need to be reflected in the review of the Local Plan. Furthermore, with the Government confirming in the recent NPPF for example, that self and custom-built housing can include both market and affordable housing, it is important that the Council are clear how this distinction is made in the emerging Local Plan.

Action 6. Any new significant change to national policy or in evidence on the local demand for self-build and custom house building, should be reflected in reviewing the Local Plan, as well as other emerging strategies.

Financing Self & Custom House Building

- 7.16 Ultimately, the personal financing of self-build and custom house building is largely a matter for interested individuals and the organisations involved. The Council will work to secure funding streams, such as the Home Building Fund currently available from the Government; to enable self-build and custom-build homes to be delivered.

Action 7. The Council will actively work with Government and other partners to secure funding to enable self and custom-build housing to be delivered.

Sharing Experience

- 7.17 When it comes to the skills and materials to develop self-build and custom-build homes, the Council are keen to work with all relevant partners to help facilitate investment in construction skills and support economic activity of this sector. The Council are keen to encourage the sharing of skills and best practice in self and custom house building. Hosting or facilitating a series of events that share good practice and skills will help increase collective awareness of all the parties involved.

Action 8. The Council hosting or facilitating a series of events or forums, such as Expos, workshops and webpages, to encourage skills and experience sharing with interested parties.

Monitoring & Review

- 7.18 The Council will look to continually monitor this action plan. If circumstances change significantly, the actions are not appropriate or not working to achieve the Council's objective, the Council will look to update this action plan. This is the first action plan the Council has ever produced on self-build and custom house building, a relatively new housing sector, therefore it likely it will need to be updated to reflect local experience over the coming years.