

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 05 November 2018

Portfolio:	Planning and Development
Subject:	Self Build & Custom Housebuilding Register
Report of:	Director of Planning and Regulation
Corporate Priorities:	Providing Housing Choices Strong, safe, inclusive and healthy communities

Purpose:

To approve the removal of the charging fee for the Council's Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Register.

Executive summary:

On the 21st March 2016, the Council launched the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Register, which ensured the Authority complied with relevant Government policy, legislation and regulation. On 10th July 2017, the Executive approved the introduction of both a 'local connection test' and a charge in response to new relevant Government regulations. Since then, the Council has produced a Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Action Plan, that considered what it could do to promote this form of housing. This Action Plan was approved by the Executive on 3rd September 2018. In paragraph 7.4 of the Action Plan, the Council recognised that the register is a helpful guide to understanding interest and potential demand for self-build and custom-housebuilding. The Action Plan also explained that it is important that the Council undertakes more detailed research to obtain a realistic understanding of local demand and need, including such individuals and organisations abilities to afford such housing options. Consequently, the Council considers the lifting of a charge will encourage interest in self-build and custom housebuilding in the Borough.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Executive currently removes the administrative charge for the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Register.

Reason:

To encourage interest in self-build and custom housebuilding in the Borough, in a housing sector which is currently in its infancy.

Cost of proposals:

The costs of administering the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Register will be met within existing operational budgets.

Appendices: None

Background papers: None

Reference papers: None

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	05 November 2018
Subject:	Self Build & Custom Housebuilding Register
Briefing by:	Director of Planning and Regulation
Portfolio:	Planning and Regulation

BACKGROUND TO THE REGISTER

1. A key Council responsibility, required by national legislation, is to keep a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots in the area for their own self-build and custom-built home in the Borough. The Council are also subject to duties to have regard to this and to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand.
2. The Self and Custom Build Register was launched on the Council's website on 21st March 2016. The eligibility criterion 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.

INTRODUCTION OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGE LAST YEAR

3. As the Executive may recall, it approved an Executive Report making several changes to the register in July last year, largely due to the Housing and Planning Act 2016, which amended the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations. These changes not only placed an additional duty on authorities to provide sufficient development permissions (i.e. plots with permission) to meet the need for self build and custom housebuilding in the Borough. It also provided such authorities with an option to establish a fee charge for applicants wishing to gain entry and remain on the self and custom housebuilding register.
4. The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (Time for Compliance and Fees) Regulations 2016 enabled local planning authorities to charge a fee for entry onto the register and a separate annual fee for remaining on it. Fees must be set on a cost recovery basis, in other words the cost must clearly relate to the Council's time in maintaining the register in accordance with the regulations.

5. The charge was set at £20 to join the register and an annual fee of £10 to remain on the register. This minimal charge took account of the staff time required to determine the applications for the register, time taken to test whether an applicant has a local connection, maintaining correspondence and dealing with any queries. Since then, the Council has produced a Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Action Plan, which considered what it could do to optimise the promotion of this form of housing.

REMOVAL OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGE

6. The Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Action Plan was approved at the previous Executive (3rd September 2018). Consequently, the Council considers the lifting of a charge will encourage interest in self-build and custom housebuilding in the Borough.
7. In paragraph 7.4 of the Action Plan, the Council recognised that the register is a helpful guide to understanding interest and potential demand for self-build and custom-housebuilding. It also explains however that it is important that the Council undertakes more detailed research to obtain a realistic understanding of local demand and need, including such individuals and organisations abilities to afford such housing options.
8. The Council believes that with increased awareness of the initiative, along with the removal of the administrative charge, there will be more engagement with individuals or associations who are keen to develop this form of housing. Whilst clearly this is a matter the Council will keep under review, as part of the Action Plan, it currently believes this administrative charge can be borne by the Council within existing operational budgets.

Enquiries:

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