

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 01 July 2024

Portfolio:	Planning and Development
Subject:	Self and Custom Build Housing Action Plan Review
Report of:	Director of Planning and Regeneration
Corporate Priorities:	Provides Housing Choices

Purpose:

To review the Self and Custom Build Housing Action Plan and the Council's next steps in relation to the approach to planning for self and custom build housing.

Executive summary:

The Council adopted its Self and Custom House Building Action Plan in 2018. The Action Plan set out actions to support the Council's objective 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-build homes to meet demand in the Borough'. In the action plan the Council committed to review the progress of the actions to ensure that progress is being made in meeting the objective.

A review of the action plan has been undertaken to assess the progress made to date in supporting the delivery of self and custom build homes and to establish whether the original actions identified are proving successful in supporting the Council's objectives. In particular, the review considers what further steps the Council can take in supporting the delivery of self and custom build homes to facilitate delivery.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) notes the progress made in supporting the delivery of self and custom build homes in the Borough; and
- (b) approves the implementation of the future actions set out in the Action Plan Review attached at Appendix A to the report.

Reason:

To provide a review of the work undertaken by the Council to date and to ensure continued progress in meeting Council objectives.

Cost of proposals:

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Appendices: A: Self and Custom Build Housing Action Plan Review

Background papers: None

Reference papers: Self and Custom Build Action Plan 2018
Report to the Executive for Decision 10 July 2017 - Self
and Custom Build Register

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	01 July 2024
Subject:	Self and Custom Build Housing Action Plan Review
Briefing by:	Director of Planning and Regeneration
Portfolio:	Planning and Development

INTRODUCTION

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 housebuilding:

'Self build and custom housebuilding means the building or completion by individuals, associations of individuals, or 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.'

2. Custom build is commonly regarded as where a person commissions a specialist developer to deliver their own home. Whereas self-build is where a person 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. In considering whether a home is a self-build or custom-build 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. In 2018 the Council set out its corporate aims, in respect of self and custom build housebuilding in the borough, in a Self-Build and Custom House Building Action Plan.
4. The Action Plan set out the Council's aim of *'positively influencing or helping to 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'*. It set out the key actions the Council considered appropriate to achieve this aim.
5. Whilst the Action Plan set out the direct actions the Council could take, it also recognised that self and custom build housing is not the sole responsibility of the Council. For this reason, the Action Plan also set out the Council's wider ambitions, where it would like to work with customers and partners to influence and help deliver high quality self and custom build homes.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

6. National planning policy increasingly recognises the role self and custom homes have in providing for a diverse range of housing needs, with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlighting that, in delivering a sufficient supply of homes, the needs of people wishing to commission or build their own homes should be planned for.
7. Recognising this, the Council has been engaging with the self and custom build housing market from an early stage and has included requirements for provision in the development plan. The Welborne Plan adopted in 2015, seeks to secure 1% custom build plots (i.e. homes) on the site and the Fareham Local Plan 2037 includes a suite of policies which support delivery of self and custom build homes.
8. 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 house building. The Council are also under a duty to have regard to this and to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand.
9. A 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 a European Economic Area state other than the UK, or a 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.
10. In 2017, as permitted in legislation, the Council introduced a Local Connection Test for people seeking to join the register. This test asks that applicants 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. As a result the register is divided into two parts; those with a local connection fall within in Part 1 of the register and those without a local connection are in Part 2.
11. As set out in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), to meet its duty, the Council are required to permit sufficient planning permissions within a three-year period to meet the need identified by part 1 of the register. Part 2 of the register does not count towards demand for this purpose but is included as the starting point for establishing overall demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in plan making. The PPG identifies that local connection tests should only be applied where a Local Planning Authority has a strong justification for doing so.

REVIEW OF THE ACTION PLAN

12. In preparing the 2018 Action Plan, the Council committed to reviewing the effectiveness of the original actions. This is the first such review.
13. The Action Plan Review outlines the significant progress the Council has made in supporting the delivery of Self and Custom Build Housing including the adoption of the

Fareham Local Plan 2037 which provides a suite of policies to support their delivery. This includes a specific policy requiring the delivery of 10% of homes on sites of 40 or more dwellings to be provided as self or custom build plots, a specific housing allocation policy for a self-build site at Bye Road and a policy to support the delivery of small custom and self-build homes which are sustainably located. These policies have been further supported through the adoption of the Self and Custom Build Homes Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which seeks to provide guidance and advice for planners, developers and self-builders on progressing self and custom build development in Fareham.

14. In addition to considering the Council's progress to date, the Action Plan Review identifies future actions which the Council can take to demonstrate its continued support for the delivery of self and custom build homes. This includes exploring whether this type of housing can also support Affordable Housing delivery in the borough.
15. The Action Plan also identifies the importance of best practice in supporting the delivery of self and custom build and proposes that the Local Connection Test which is currently imposed on those joining the Council's Self and Custom Build Register, should be removed. Whilst this will result in an increase in the number of planning permissions the Council will be required to permit, this revision will ensure parity with how general market housing need is considered and provide potential site developers with a clearer picture of the level of interest in self and custom build homes in the borough.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

16. The subject matter of this report is not anticipated to have an impact on the Council's carbon footprint, nor is it expected to have a detrimental or beneficial impact to the wider environment.

CONCLUSION

17. The Review of the Self and Custom Build Action Plan identifies the significant progress that the Council has made in supporting delivery of Self and Custom Build Housing and seeking to meet its duties under the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.
18. The review has identified new steps which the Council can take to be proactive in supporting this sector of housing delivery but recognises that meeting the need for self and custom build homes in the borough cannot be achieved by the Council in isolation but requires land owners and developers to also engage positively in its delivery.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Lee Smith, Head of Planning. Tel 01329 824427.