

SWLP Annex E

Self-Build & Custom Build Housing

Policy Guidance

E1. Introduction

Self-Build & Custom Build Housing refers to those homes where the occupiers have the primary influence in the design and/or construction of the homes. Self-build homes are those where prospective occupiers directly organise the design and construction of their new home(s) whereas custom-build homes are those that have been commissioned by the prospective occupiers.

In either case, it is expected that the home will be the principal residence for the prospective occupiers for at least three years following completion. In such circumstances, self-build and custom-build occupiers can claim an exemption from payment of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (find out more, including how to apply for an exemption, at www.southwarwickshire.org.uk/cil). Please note: any move to either sell or rent the property during that period would trigger a retrospective requirement for CIL to be paid by the self/custom builder.

There is no expectation for local authorities to provide plots on sites that would not otherwise be acceptable for other forms of housing development, such as in open countryside.

The occupancy of any self-build or custom build affordable housing may be subject to local occupancy controls.

E2. Self-Build & Custom-Build Register

Following the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, and the subsequent Housing and Planning Act 2016, and in accordance with the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (Register) Regulations 2016, Local Planning Authorities are required to maintain a Custom and Self-build register in order to monitor interest and to quantify the volume of plots that suitable planning permission should be granted. The Act states that “a development permission is “suitable” if it is permission in respect of development that could include self-build and custom housing” (Part 1, Chapter 2, Section 10).

In line with the Government’s requirements, the Local Planning Authority keeps a register of those people interested in acquiring a serviced plot for self-build development. The Custom and Self-build register runs in base periods of 12 calendar months, the first full base period commencing on 01 November, 2016. Find out how you can register your interest in South Warwickshire.

E3. Planning Policy

Local Planning Authorities are required to ensure that there are sufficient plots available to match the number of individual/groups on the register, over a three-year rolling period. Suitable sites have been identified through the South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP). Policy HO.12 of the SWLP also supports self-build and custom-build homes on suitable unidentified or ‘windfall’ sites, in accordance with the criteria set out in the policy. Neighbourhood Plans may also contain policies relating to self build and custom build.

Regard should be had to any relevant Design Code, Supplementary Plan, and guidance issued by the Local Planning Authority.

E4. Provision of Serviced Plots

Where custom and self-build plots are to be offered for sale these must be provided as serviced plots with electric, water, foul and surface water drainage, and broadband/telecommunications utilities. Safe and legal access to the highway must be also be provided.

E5. Single Plot Schemes

Individual custom-build and self-build plots may often be brought forward on challenging or unusually shaped plots. Single plot schemes may also come forward to meet the specific housing needs of the occupier. These may be health, employment or family needs. Whilst the amenity of neighbouring properties must be maintained, there may be individual circumstances where the proposed self-build or custom-build home provides lower standards of amenity for the perspective occupier than would otherwise be acceptable. Each case will be considered on its merits.

E6. Multiple Plot Schemes

Whilst some self-build and custom-build plots will come forward on an individual basis, the SWLP also supports schemes of between 2 and 9 homes. Such schemes will meet wider demands and offer a variety of opportunities and deliver distinctive and quality developments across South Warwickshire.

Where small clusters of self-build or custom-build plots come forward as part of the above principles, the production of simple design codes is encouraged. Such design codes should be prepared in discussion with the local planning authority as part of pre-application advice to ensure that they are appropriate for the site.

As a minimum, design codes should address the following parameters:

- Building height
- Building form and orientation
- Building lines and types
- Density
- Developable footprint
- Palette of materials
- Separation distances
- Soft landscape
- Views and vistas
- Waste facilities

Where applicable, for example as part of a larger residential development, a phasing plan should be prepared to ensure CIL is not triggered for the self-build/custom-build element due to commencement elsewhere on the site.

E7. Marketing

The Local Planning Authority must be contacted once the marketing of any consented available plots has commenced. The authority may then take the opportunity to contact those on the Custom and Self-build register and use their website to promote the opportunity afforded by the scheme. This will help ensure that the marketing of the site reaches those who have already expressed an interest in custom and self-build in South Warwickshire.

Following notification to the local authority about the availability of a plot, should a custom or self-build plot not sell after 12 months marketing at an appropriate price and a further 6 months at an appropriately reduced price, the plot may be developed as general market housing. In such instances, the appropriate CIL payment will be made. This will ensure that plots do not remain vacant for significant periods of time and ensures that the planning authority continues to meet housing needs.