

# **Self-build and Custom Housebuilding: Progress Report**

**December 2020**

**Uttlesford District Council**

## Introduction

The Government is committed to boosting housing supply and believes that the self-build and custom housebuilding sector has an important role to play in achieving this objective. Legislation and regulations require local authorities to keep track of the demand for self-build and custom-build housing in their area and to find ways of meeting that demand. This report sets out how demand has been met for the first and second monitoring base period (the first base period covering the period 1 April 2016 to 30 October 2016, and the second base period covering the period 31 October 2016 to 30 October 2017) and progress to date towards meeting demand for subsequent years. An update to this report will be published annually (in December).

### 1. Statutory duties

- 1.1. As required by the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, the Council has formally held a Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register since April 2016. This is a register of individuals or groups of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the district to build their own houses.
- 1.2. The Act (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) places two further duties on the Council:
  - A duty to have regard to the register when carrying out its planning, housing, land disposal and regeneration functions; and
  - A duty to grant, within three years, 'suitable development permission' to enough serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the authority's area.
- 1.3. The Act defines 'suitable development permission' as '*permission in respect of development that could include self-build and custom housebuilding*'; and a 'serviced plot of land' as a plot of land with '*access to a public highway*' and '*connections for electricity, water and waste water*' (or one that '*can be provided with those things in specified circumstances or within a specific period*').
- 1.4. The level of demand is determined by reference to the number of entries added to the register during a base period:
  - The first base period starts on the day on which the register was launched (1 April 2016) and ends on 30 October 2016 and subsequent base periods run annually from 31 October to 30 October of the following year.
  - The Council has three years from the end of each base period to fulfil the 'duty to grant planning permission etc' (The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (Time for Compliance and Fees) Regulations 2016).

- 1.5. In accordance with the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016, Uttlesford District Council introduced a local connection test in December 2020. This will enable the register to be split into 2 parts, with individuals/associations with a local connection on Part 1 and all other individuals/associations on Part 2 of the register. The 'duty to grant planning permission etc' described above only applies to Part 1 of the register.

## **2. Meeting Planning Policy Framework**

- 2.1 Uttlesford District Council seeks to support those who wish to self-build and custom build; the bulk of the applications made in the district tend to be single dwelling applications. The council understands the importance of self and custom build housing in supporting the local economy. Self-build and custom housebuilding contributes to effective designs and sustainable construction, as well as facilitating the provision of a range of high quality homes, the right mix of housing of appropriate size, type and tenure to help meet the demands of the different group within the community.
- 2.2 **The Uttlesford Local Plan (20 January 2005), was adopted before the Uttlesford Self and Custom Build register was set up. Therefore, there are no policies that specifically refer to self and custom build. However, though there is no reference to self and custom building within the supporting text, Policy H3 – New Homes within Development supports the principle to develop Self-Build plots as windfall sites, within the defined development boundaries-and on land allocated to housing.**
- 2.3 The principle of developing Self-Build plots outside of the defined development boundaries, which is open countryside where developments should be strictly controlled and limited to rural development proposals and development is specifically supported by Policy H11 – Affordable Housing on Exception Sites.
- 2.4 Policy H7-Replacement Dwellings supports the replacement of an existing dwelling in the open countryside with a new single dwelling subject to the stipulated criteria, and this form of development could include Self-Build and custom building dwellings.
- 2.5 Neighbourhood Development Plans in the **Localism Act 2011**, gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood. They are able to choose where they want new homes, to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided.

### **3. Meeting the duty to have regard to the register when carrying out planning, housing, land disposal and regeneration functions**

- 3.1. The duty to have regard to the register relates to the Council's planning, housing, land disposal and regeneration functions. National planning guidance (Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 57-014-20170728) suggests ways in which the duty may be demonstrated in carrying out each function. For planning functions, it is advised that '*relevant authorities with plan-making functions should use their evidence on demand for this form of housing from the registers that relate to their area in developing their Local Plan and associated documents*'.
- 3.2. The Uttlesford District Local Plan was adopted by Council in January 2005. The Adopted Local Plan is not up-to-date and makes no direct mention of provision for self-build and custom housebuilding in its housing policies as it was adopted prior to the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.
- 3.3. However, in the emerging Local Plan which was withdrawn by Council on 30 April 2020, Policy H8 supported Self-Build and Custom Units to address the need and demand for self and custom built housing and the Council continues to support the principle of self-build and custom building housing.
- 3.4. Even though the Council does not have current Policy on Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding the Council continues to support and encourage development proposals promoting a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure needed for different groups in the district. The housing mix includes affordable housing, family homes, homes for the elderly, renters, and people wishing to build their own homes.
- 3.5. The Council promotes self- and custom- building plots in neighbourhood planning, encouraging developers to include self-and custom -build plots in proposed developments and supporting community-led housing.
- 3.6. It is considered that the active encouragement of self- and custom build plots in neighbourhood plans, supporting community led housing and provision of self-build and housebuilding plots in development proposals demonstrates that the Council is meeting the duty to have regard to the register in the absence of a current Local Plan.

### **4. Demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the District**

- 4.1. The Uttlesford Self-build and Custom Build Register was established in April 2016, and is available for people to submit their application through the Uttlesford Council website **Online form**
- 4.2. The local connection test was introduced during the fourth base period (in December 2020) and the register will be split into two parts from then.

4.3 Table 1 below sets out the number of new entries on the register by base period since it was launched in April 2015 prior to the formal launch of a Self-Build Register in April 2016. During the second base period (31 October 2016 to 30 October 2017), 71 people were included on the register. As required by the legislation, for this second base period the Council needs to have granted planning permission for as many plots as there were entries on the register by 30 October 2020.

**Table 1: Demand for self- and custom-build as evidenced by the Council's Self-build Register**

Base period		Number of new entries in the base period		Suitable permissions required by
	29 Jan 2015 to 31 March 2016 <i>(Prior to First Base Period)</i>	Part1:35	57 Individuals	N/A
		Part 2:22		
1	1 April 2016 to 30 Oct 2016	Part1: 12	30 Individuals	30 October 2019
		Part 2: 18		
2	31 Oct 2016 to 30 Oct 2017	Part 1: 26	71 Individuals 1 Group	30 October 2020
		Part 2: 45 Part 2:1 Group		
3	31 Oct 2017 to 30 Oct 2018	Part 1: 14	44 Individuals	30 October 2021
		Part 2: 30		
4	31Oct 2018 to 30 Oct 2019	Part 1: 12	32 Individuals	30 October 2022
		Part 2: 10		
5	31Oct 2019 to 30 Oct 2020	Part 1: 3	5 Individuals	30 October 2023
		Part 2: 2		

\* Government guidance (Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 027 Ref. ID: 57-027-201760728) states that for the purpose of calculating demand, local planning authorities should count associations of individuals as a single entry on the register and assume that they would be interested in a single site that is large enough for their needs rather than separate plots of land.

## 5. Meeting the ‘duty to grant planning permission etc’

- 5.1 The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding legislation does not provide any details on how local authorities should record ‘suitable development permissions’. In the absence of guidance, the Council considers that only single dwelling plots are the most likely to come forward as self-build or custom-build projects. Planning permissions for this type of development could therefore be ‘suitable’ for the legislation. This does not mean, or require, that they are delivered as self-build or custom-build homes (and not all will be).
- 5.2 For monitoring purposes, we will only count plots:
- With planning permission that have self and custom build in their description, and
  - Single plots that meet the legal definition set out by the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015
- 5.3 Table 2 below shows the number of dwellings that have been granted permissions (full or outline), on single plots for each base period. Conversions of buildings from other uses (barn conversions...) to dwellings have been included. Planning permissions for flatted schemes have been excluded (as they are not typically self- or custom-built projects in the District). Retrospective applications have also been excluded.

**Table 2: Availability of suitable serviced plots to meet demand**

Demand	Year	Number of serviced plots permitted		
		Self-build/Custom build in application description	Single Plots dwelling permissions	Total
<b>1st BASE PERIOD: 1 APRIL TO 30 OCTOBER 2016</b>				
64 entries	31 October 2016 to 30 October 2017	29	187	216
	31 October 2017 to 30 October 2018	5	151	156
	31 October 2018 to 30 October 2019	9	151	160
	<b>64 TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>532</b>
<b>2nd BASE PERIOD: 31 OCTOBER 2016 TO 30 OCTOBER 2017</b>				
29 entries	31 October 2017 to 30 October 2018	5	151	156
	31 October 2018 to 30 October 2019	9	151	160
	31 October 2019 to 30 October 2020	3	51	54

<b>29</b>	<b>TOTAL 30</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>370</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> BASE PERIOD: 31 OCTOBER 2017 TO 30 OCTOBER 2018</b>				
15 entries	31 October 2018 to 30 October 2019	9	151	160
	31 October 2019 to 30 October 2020	3	51	67
	31 October 2020 to 30 October 2021			
<b>15</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12 (to date)</b>	<b>202 (to date)</b>	<b>214 (to date)</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> BASE PERIOD: 31 OCTOBER 2018 TO 30 OCTOBER 2019</b>				
3 entries	31 October 2019 to 30 October 2020	3	51	67
	31 October 2020 to 30 October 2021			
	31 October 2021 to 30 October 2022			
<b>3</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16 (to date)</b>	<b>51(to date)</b>	<b>67 (to date)</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> BASE PERIOD: 31 OCTOBER 2019 TO 30 OCTOBER 2020</b>				
0 entries	31 October 2020 to 30 October 2021			
	31 October 2021 to 30 October 2022			
	31 October 2022 to 30 October 2023			
<b>0</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>			

According to the self-build legislation, the Council has a rolling three year deadline from the end of each base period to fulfil its “duty to grant planning permission etc.”

Table 2 above shows that:

- The Council permitted sufficient suitable plots (532 in total) to meet the demand identified on the register a total of 30 for the first base period and 57 individuals before the Register was a legal requirement.
- The Council permitted sufficient suitable plots (370 in total) to meet the demand identified on the register (71 in total) for the second base period.

4.6 For both the first base period and the second base period, the Council has therefore fulfilled its duty having permitted sufficient suitable permissions that could include self-build and custom housebuilding to meet the demand identified on the register.

## 5. Location Preferences Evidenced By Register

Table 3 below shows the location preferences of entrants on the register. Approximately 56 % of the entrants on the Register have indicated No Preference on location. Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow are the most preferred locations.

**Table 3: Location Preferences by Parish**

Location/Parish	Number of Plots	Location/Parish	Number of Plots
<b>No Preference Indicated</b>	<b>126</b>		
1. Arkesden	1	31. Leaden Roding	1
2. Ashdon	2	32. Lindsell	0
3. Aythorpe Roding	2	33. Little Bardfield	0
4. Barnston	3	34. Little Canfield	4
5. Berden	1	35. Little Chesterford	0
6. Birchanger	1	36. Little Dunmow	0
7. Broxted	0	37. Little Easton	1
8. Chickney	0	38. Little Hallingbury	1
9. Chrishall	2	39. Little Sampford	0
10. Clavering	3	40. Littlebury	0
11. Debden	2	41. Manuden	1
12. Elmdon	0	42. Margaret Roding	0
13. Elsenham	2	43. Newport	5
14. Farnham	0	44. Quendon and Rickling	2
15. Felsted	1	45. Radwinter	1
16. Flitch Green	0	46. Saffron Walden	17
17. Great Canfield	2	47. Swards End	0
18. Great Chesterford	2	48. Stansted Mountfitchet	4
19. Great Dunmow	11	49. Stebbing	1
20. Great Easton	0	50. Strethall	0
21. Great Hallingbury	0	51. Takeley	1
22. Great Sampford	1	52. Thaxted	4
23. Hadstock	0	53. Tilty	0
24. Hatfield Broad Oak	2	54. Ugley	
25. Hatfield Heath	3	55. Wenden Lofts	0
26. Hempstead	0	56. Wenden Ambo	
27. Henham	3	57. White Roothing	0
28. High Easter	1	58. Wicken Bonhunt	0
29. High Roothing	1	59. Widdington	4
30. Langley	0	60. Wimbish	0

## 6. Dwelling Size Preferences Evidenced by Register

Table 4 below shows the that the highest percentage i.e. 43.8% of entrants on the Register prefer dwelling sizes of 4 bedrooms. The least preferred number of bedrooms is 1 bedroom and 6 bedroom dwellings.

**Table 4: Dwelling Size Preferences Evidenced by Register**

<b>Number of Bedrooms</b>	<b>Entries</b>	<b>%</b>
1 Bedroom	1	0.4%
1 to 3 Bedrooms	1	0.4%
2 Bedrooms	11	4.9%
2 to 3 Bedrooms	2	0.8%
3 Bedrooms	70	31%
3 to 4 Bedrooms	13	5.8%
4 Bedrooms	99	43.8%
4 to 6 Bedrooms	9	4%
5 Bedrooms	19	8.4%
6 Bedrooms	1	0.4%

A progress report will be produced every December.