

Self-build and Custom Housebuilding: Progress Report

December 2023

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 from the period prior to the introduction of base periods i.e. 29 Jan 2015 to 31 March 2016, and April 2016 to 30 October 2016 as well as the subsequent official base periods with the first base period covering the period 31 October 2016 to 30 October 2017, the second base period covering the period 31 October 2017 to 30 October 2018), the third base period covering 31 October 2018 to 30 October 2019,), the fourth base period covering 31 October 2019 to 30 October 2020, the fifth base period covering 31 October 2020 to 30 October 2021, and the sixth base period covering 31 October 2021 to 30 October 2022 and the seventh base period covering 31 October 2022 to 30 October 2023. An update to this report will be published annually.

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 wastewater*' (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 for this Report starts on the day on which the register was officially launched (31 October 2016) and ends on 30 October 2017 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 on 08 December 2020. This enabled 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 contribute 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 groups 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 The emerging Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041(Regulation 18) has a specific policy for self-build and custom housebuilding. **Core Policy 58: Custom and Self-Build Homes** in the emerging Uttlesford Local Plan provides opportunities for individuals and landowners/developers to bring more custom and self-build homes forward through development.
- 2.6 Neighbourhood Development Plans in the **Localism Act 2011**, gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood. They can 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 before the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.
- 3.3. However, the emerging Local Plan 2021 -2041 which is currently under preparation, includes **Core Policy 58: Custom and Self-Build Homes** enables different opportunities for custom and self-build homes to be brought forward to address the need and demand for self and custom-build housing as shown in the Uttlesford Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register.
- 3.4. Even though the Council does not have up to date Policies 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 (on 8 December 2020) and the register was split into two parts from then.
- 4.3. Table 1 below sets out the number of new entries on the register since it was launched in April 2015. However, the first base period began in April 2016 when the Uttlesford Register met the requirements of the 2015 Act. During 31 October 2022 to 30 October 2023 base period there were 8 individual entries comprising 7 individuals

on Part 1 and 1 individual on Part 2 of the Register. As required by the legislation, for this base period the Council needs to have granted planning permission for as many plots as there were Part 1 entries on the register by 30 October 2023.

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 Official Base Period)</i>	Part 1:35	57 Individuals	N/A
		Part 2:22		
1	1 April 2016 to 30 Oct 2016	Part 1: 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	31 Oct 2018 to 30 Oct 2019	Part 1: 12	32 Individuals	30 October 2022
		Part 2: 10		
5	31 Oct 2019 to 30 Oct 2020	Part 1: 3	5 Individuals	30 October 2023
		Part 2: 2		
6	31 Oct 2020 to 30 Oct 2021	Part 1: 8	10 Individuals	30 October 2024
		Part 2:2		
7	31 Oct 2021 to 30 Oct 2022	Part 1: 3	5 Individuals	30 October 2025
		Part 2: 2		
8	31 Oct 2022 to 30 Oct 2023	Part 1: 7	8 Individuals	30 October 2026
		Part 2: 1		

** Government guidance (Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 027 Ref. ID: 57-27-201760728) 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 has a 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	Number of serviced plots permitted			
	Year	Total		
1st BASE PERIOD: 1 APRIL 2016 TO 30 OCTOBER 2016				
Part 1 Entries		Self-build/Custom build in the application description	Single Plots dwelling permissions	Total
12 entries	1 April 2016 to 30 October 2016	1	57	58
12	TOTAL	1	57	58
2nd BASE PERIOD: 31 OCTOBER 2016 TO 30 OCTOBER 2019				
52 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
52	TOTAL	43	489	532
3rd BASE PERIOD: 31 OCTOBER 2017 TO 30 OCTOBER 2020				

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
29	TOTAL	17	353	370
4th BASE PERIOD: 31 OCTOBER 2018 TO 30 OCTOBER 2021				
23 entries	31 October 2018 to 30 October 2019	9	151	160
	31 October 2019 to 30 October 2020	3	51	54
	31 October 2020 to 30 October 2021	1	121	122
23	TOTAL	13	323	336
5th BASE PERIOD: 31 OCTOBER 2019 TO 30 OCTOBER 2022				
14 entries	31 October 2019 to 30 October 2020	3	51	54
	31 October 2020 to 30 October 2021	1	121	122
	31 October 2021 to 30 October 2022	1	101	102
14	TOTAL	6	273	278
6th BASE PERIOD: 31 OCTOBER 2020 TO 30 OCTOBER 2023				
11 entries	31 October 2020 to 30 October 2021	1	121	122
	31 October 2021 to 30 October 2022	1	101	102
	31 October 2022 to 30 October 2023	62	57	119
	TOTAL	64	279	343
7th BASE PERIOD: 31 OCTOBER 2021 TO 30 OCTOBER 2024				
	31 October 2021 to 30 October 2022	1	101	102
	31 October 2022 to 30 October 2023	62	57	119
	31 October 2023 to 30 October 2024			
	Total	(63 to date)	(158 to date)	(221 to date)

5.4 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 (**221** in total) to meet the demand identified on the register for the relevant base period.

5.5 The Council has permitted sufficient suitable permissions for the first, second, third, fourth, fifth base and sixth periods that could include self-build and custom housebuilding to meet the demand identified on the register.

6. Location Preferences Evidenced by Register

Table 3 below shows the location preferences of entrants on the register. Approximately 51 % 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
No Preference Indicated	129		
1. Arkesden	6	31. Leaden Roding	3
2. Ashdon	5	32. Lindsell	2
3. Aythorpe Roding	4	33. Little Bardfield	3
4. Barnston	5	34. Little Canfield	6
5. Berden	6	35. Little Chesterford	2
6. Birchanger	2	36. Little Dunmow	2
7. Broxted	1	37. Little Easton	3
8. Chickney	0	38. Little Hallingbury	2
9. Chrishall	5	39. Little Sampford	2
10. Clavering	11	40. Littlebury	3
11. Debden	6	41. Manuden	5
12. Elmdon	3	42. Margaret Roding	2
13. Elsenham	4	43. Newport	9
14. Farnham	1	44. Quendon and Rickling	5
15. Felsted	2	45. Radwinter	5
16. Flitch Green	0	46. Saffron Walden	20
17. Great Canfield	3	47. Swards End	3
18. Great Chesterford	4	48. Stansted Mountfitchet	7
19. Great Dunmow	14	49. Stebbing	4
20. Great Easton	1	50. Strethall	1
21. Great Hallingbury	1	51. Takeley	3
22. Great Sampford	4	52. Thaxted	6
23. Hadstock	2	53. Tilty	1
24. Hatfield Broad Oak	6	54. Ugley	2
25. Hatfield Heath	6	55. Wenden Lofts	1
26. Hempstead	3	56. Wenden Ambo	3
27. Henham	3	57. White Roothing	1
28. High Easter	4	58. Wicken Bonhunt	4
29. High Roothing	4	59. Widdington	7
30. Langley	3	60. Wimbish	4

7. Dwelling Size Preferences Evidenced by Register

Table 4 below shows that the highest percentage, approximately 45% of entrants on the Register prefer a dwelling size of 4 bedrooms. The least preferred number of bedrooms is 1- bedroom and 6-bedroom dwellings.

Table 4: Dwelling Size Preferences Evidenced by Register

Number of Bedrooms	Entries	%
1 Bedroom	1	0.4%
1 to 3 Bedrooms	1	0.4%
2 Bedrooms	13	5.2%
2 to 3 Bedrooms	2	0.8%
3 Bedrooms	77	39%
3 to 4 Bedrooms	14	5.6 %
4 Bedrooms	111	44.2%
4 to 6 Bedrooms	10	3.9%
5 Bedrooms	19	7.6 %
6 Bedrooms	1	0.4%

A progress report will be produced annually.