

# Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan Review 2019 – 2037

## Policy SB5 Self-Build and Custom Build

### Supporting Evidence SB5.EV3 Chichester District Council Self-Build Register

(New Feb. 2021)

#### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 There is an insufficient supply of serviced plots in Chichester District to provide for self-build and custom build housing<sup>1</sup>. Current planning policies do not provide for self-build and moreover, where permissions have been granted that present opportunities for self-build and custom build, the Council does not communicate these to people on its self-build Register. People are less likely to apply to be included on the Register and undertake self-build if they are not given encouragement and are not aware of local opportunities. It appears that even the relatively low level of demand shown on the Register is not being met and, in practice, demand may be higher.

#### 2.0 Background

2.1 The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 requires each relevant local authority to keep a register of individuals and groups who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the authority's area for their own self-build and custom housebuilding. Relevant authorities must give suitable development permissions to enough suitable serviced plots of land to meet the demand in their area. The level of demand is established by reference to the number of entries added to an authority's register during a base period (October to October each year). At the end of each base period, relevant authorities have three years in which to grant permission for an equivalent number of plots of land which are suitable for self-build and custom housebuilding as there are entries for that base period.

2.2 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has been collecting information from relevant local authorities in England on self-build and custom housebuilding activity in their areas since 2016. This is to build up a national picture of how authorities are taking forward self-build and custom housebuilding and complying with their statutory requirements. Local Authorities have been asked to report on the numbers of new annual entries of both individuals and groups joining the register and the total number of entries on the register since monitoring began. They are also asked to report on the number of planning permissions for serviced plots they have granted which are suitable for self-build and custom housebuilding during the relevant base period.

2.3 The most recent data was published by MHCLG on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and the returns relating to Chichester District are summarised as follows.

#### 3.0 Chichester District data

3.1 In October 2016 Chichester District recorded 31 individuals (no groups) on its self-build and custom housebuilding register. By October 2018 the total number of individuals, recorded during

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Footnote<sup>1</sup> The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 does not distinguish between self-build and custom housebuilding but provides that both occur where an individual, an association of individuals, or persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, build or complete houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals. In considering whether a home is a self-build or custom build home, relevant authorities must be satisfied that the initial owner of the home will have primary input into its final design and layout.

the previous three year monitoring period (2016; 2016/17; 2017/18), had risen to 148 individuals (no groups). It remained at 148 in the return for the year 2018/2019.

3.2 In the period since 2016 the following returns were submitted to MHCLG by Chichester District Council relating to permissions which were defined as “planning permission for serviced plots suitable for self and custom build”:

2016/17 56 permissions  
2017/18 31 permissions  
2018/19 29 permissions  
Total 2016 to 2019 – 116 permissions

3.3 The Act 2015 defines a “suitable development permission” with examples of suitable criteria being:

- Defined as self or custom build units on the 1APP planning application form;
- a Community Infrastructure Levy or Section 106 exemption has been granted for a particular development;
- developers have identified that self or custom build plots will be included as part of their development and it is clear that the initial owner of the homes will have primary input into its final design and layout; and
- a planning application references self or custom build and it is clear that the initial owner of the homes will have primary input into its final design and layout.

3.4 The current Chichester Local Plan: Key policies was approved in July 2015 and makes no mention of self and custom build. However, the District Local Plan Review 2035 does include a reference in Housing Mix (DM2, 2b). The first mention of relevant policies in any Neighbourhood Plans within Chichester District is recorded in the 2018/2019 return.

3.5 According to these returns to MHCLG, the District Council has “introduced consideration of self-build/custom build as part of land allocation, disposals and acquisitions”, and has “specifically supported identified projects”. However, it has not yet taken action through its housing strategy nor introduced supplementary planning policies in support. Suitable sites are not promoted as part of current housing mix policy nor is self-build adopted as a percentage of housing permitted on larger sites.

#### **4.0 How can relevant authorities increase the number of planning permissions which are suitable for self-build and custom housebuilding?**

4.1 Planning Practice Guidance was up-dated on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021<sup>2</sup> and addressed this point. It advises that: “relevant authorities should consider how local planning policies may address identified requirements for self and custom housebuilding to ensure enough serviced plots with suitable permission come forward (for example, as a number of units required as part of certain allocated sites, or on certain types of site). More widely, relevant authorities can play a key role in brokering and facilitating relationships to help bring suitable land forward. This can include:

- supporting Neighbourhood Planning groups where they choose to include self-build and custom build housing policies in their plans;
- effective joint working across service delivery areas and with local delivery partners including Housing Associations, Arms Length Management Organisations and housing developers;

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Footnote <sup>2</sup> Planning Practice Guidance, MNCLG, Paragraph: 025 Reference ID: 57-025-20210508 (Revision date 08 02 2021).

- using their own land (if available and suitable) for self-build and custom housebuilding and marketing it to those on the register;
- working with Homes England to unlock land and sites in wider public ownership to deliver self-build and custom build housing;
- when engaging with developers and landowners who own sites that are suitable for housing, and encouraging them to consider self-build and custom housebuilding, and facilitating access to those on the register where the landowner is interested.
- working with local partners, such as Housing Associations and third sector groups, to custom build affordable housing for veterans and other groups in acute housing need.”

4.2 While it is appreciated that some of these measures may have to await the Local Plan Review, it is clear that Neighbourhood Plans have a role to play.

4.3 Other matters could be addressed now. It is noted from the MHCLG published data that the District Council does not communicate opportunities to people on the Register. In fact, very little data about the situation in Chichester District is readily available on its website. There would seem to be no reason why this cannot be done in advance of the review of District planning policies. The MHCLG points out that: “The published data can support development opportunities for self-build and custom housebuilding by increasing awareness among individuals and groups as well as landowners, builders and developers of the level and nature of demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in each relevant authority, and across England”.

4.4 The effect of this lack of publicity in the District may be twofold; first, it is likely to lead to demand not being satisfied and secondly, it may also discourage people from applying to be included in the Register. This could account for the very low demand figures for Southbourne Parish (some 15 units maximum) obtained by the Parish Council from the District Council in February 2020 (SB5.EV2). In the circumstances, it is likely that considerably more provision should be made in the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

4.1 It is recommended that provision is made for self-build and custom build housing in the Review of the Southbourne Parish Neighbourhood Plan, and that close liaison is maintained with the District Council, the Southbourne Community Land Trust and developers to ensure that this provision is sufficient to meet apparent and latent demand. It is also recommended that the District Council be requested to give more publicity to the self-build and custom build Register, and to keep those people on the Register informed of suitable planning permissions.

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- *This is a new report to address the issues arising from the data published by MHCLG and up-dated Planning Practice Guidance, both dated 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021.*