
TITLE: Custom and Self-Build Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Committee: Finance and Assets

Date: 6 February 2020

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[U169]

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 For Committee to determine whether to approve the Custom and Self-build Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation. The Custom and Self-build Housing SPD can be found at Appendix 2.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 That Committee:

- I. Approves the draft Custom and Self-Build Housing SPD for the purpose of public consultation (with any minor editorial or presentation improvements delegated to officers, in consultation with the Chair, prior to publication), with public consultation anticipated to be for 6 weeks over the period mid-February to end of March.

3.0 BACKGROUND

Introduction

3.1 Whilst still a niche part of the housing market, some local residents have an ambition to 'build their own homes', doing so in accordance with their own design wishes rather than one built by a developer to an off-the-shelf design. Custom and Self-build housing could also be a route for some to get on to the property ladder, whilst for others it is the opportunity to build their 'dream home'.

3.2 This is a new SPD, prepared in order to help local residents that have a desire to build their own home. This SPD also provides guidance to large scale developers that are obliged to meet the Local Plan policy to provide self-build plots (i.e. development consisting of more than 100 dwellings should set aside a minimum 5% of plots for self-build purposes). The SPD also provides useful advice for Community Land Trusts (or similar) that may be interested in providing self-build plots. Parishes that are interested in including self-build plots in their Neighbourhood Plans may also find this SPD useful.

Context and Background

- 3.3 Custom and Self-build housing can play a role in meeting the housing needs of local residents. Some of the benefits of providing this type housing are:-
- Opportunity to provide lower cost market housing for residents;
 - Enable more self-build housing to be provided via community-led development;
 - Help to provide jobs for local residents, in particular in the construction industry;
 - Support a more resilient supply of housing from a diversity of sources, not just volume house builders; and
 - Encourage good and distinctive design and sustainable construction.

What is custom and self-build housing?

- 3.4 There is little difference between the two forms of development, with custom build being whereby a person essentially designs the home but commissions a specialist developer to help advise and construct it, whilst self-build is where a person is more directly involved in actually organising and constructing their home. The SPD follows the definition of self-build and custom house building as set out in the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016). That Act (and the subsequent Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (Register) Regulations 2016) places a number of duties on local authorities in respect of self-build and custom housebuilding which, in short, is broadly a duty to help promote such housing and provide help to meet local demand.

Planning Policy

- 3.5 Both national and local planning policy provide support for custom and self-build housing. Policy HOU 1 (Housing mix) of the Local Plan is a key policy in delivering self-build homes because any development of 100 or more dwellings is required to provide at least 5% self-build plots. This policy has provided a number of self-build home opportunities in East Cambridgeshire.
- 3.6 National policy also provide support for those who wish to build their own homes. The NPPF in paragraph 61 includes self-build as a distinct type, size and tenure of housing needed to help cater for different groups in the community. The Government has also recently published a National Design Guide in an effort to improve design quality, and self-build homes provides an opportunity to build homes to higher design standards than that built by volume builders who tend to have standard templates for homes.

Custom and Self-Build Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 3.7 In accordance with the Act and Regulations, the Council maintains a *Custom and Self-build Register* in order to monitor interest and to help quantify the volume of plots for which suitable planning permission should be granted. Whilst not strictly required, provision of an SPD on this matter will help provide clarity and guidance on how the Council will assist in meeting its obligations via the planning system.

- 3.8 The purpose of the SPD is therefore to provide guidance to all who may be interested in this form of housing especially those on the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register. Guidance provided in the SPD will help potential builders with information and what is required to support their proposal. Whilst the SPD will prove useful, applicants are still encouraged to seek pre-application advice at an early stage to prevent any unnecessary costs and abortive work.
- 3.9 The SPD discuss how communities can be involved in delivering self-build in the form of Community-led Development. Community Land Trusts could get involved by delivering self-build homes through community-led development as a way to help some residents to get on to the property ladder. Parishes who are preparing Neighbourhood Plans could include policies in their plan to help deliver self-build homes, subject to local circumstances.

Consultation

- 3.10 As is legally required, prior to the Council adopting an SPD, the Council must undertake appropriate consultation for a minimum of four weeks. Officers will ensure at least minimum legal requirements in this regard are met, and recommending a six week consultation period. Thereafter, any appropriate revisions will be made to the SPD before it is returned to this committee for adoption.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT/CARBON IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 There are no financial implications in preparing this SPD that cannot be covered by existing budgets. The consultation on the SPD will be carried out primarily via emails and the Council's web site. Other more specific consultation, such as with the agents forum and parish councils, can be achieved under existing budgets.
- 4.2 Equality Impact Assessment (INRA) completed – appendix 1.
- 4.3 Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) completed. In summary, the CIA concluded as follows:

There are no direct significant carbon impacts arising from the recommendations of this report. Any attempt to make Self and Custom Build Homes undertake increased carbon saving measures (such as energy efficiency or renewable energy) would require a review of Local Plan policy. An SPD does not have the power to set such requirements

5.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Completed INRA

Appendix 2 – Draft Custom and Self-Build Housing SPD

Background Documents

East Cambridgeshire Local
Plan – 2015
National Planning Policy
Framework (NPPF) - 2019

Location

Room12A
The Grange
Ely

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Appendix 1 - Completed INRA

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – INITIAL SCREENING

Initial screening needs to take place for all new/revised Council policies. The word ‘policy’, in this context, includes the different things that the Council does. It includes any policy, procedure or practice - both in employment and service delivery. It also includes proposals for restructuring, redundancies and changes to service provision. This stage must be completed at the earliest opportunity to determine whether it is necessary to undertake an EIA for this activity.

Name of Policy:	Custom and Self-Build Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
Lead Officer (responsible for assessment):	Harjinder Kumar
Department:	Strategic Planning
Others Involved in the Assessment (i.e. peer review, external challenge):	None
Date Initial Screening Completed:	January 2020

- (a) **What is the policy trying to achieve?** i.e. What is the aim/purpose of the policy? Is it affected by external drivers for change? What outcomes do we want to achieve from the policy? How will the policy be put into practice?

The SPD is a supplementary document, in support of policy contained in the Local Plan and in support of national policy. It does not set new policy, but rather gives clarity on how to interpret existing policy, and sets out what information is needed by applicants, parishes or communities in order to help them to deliver self-build homes.

The aim is to assist applicant and developers in preparing proposals or plans to help deliver custom and self-build homes in East Cambridgeshire.

- (b) **Who are its main beneficiaries?** i.e. who will be affected by the policy?

It is primarily aimed at those interested in building custom and self-build homes in East Cambridgeshire. Developers will be helped by the clarity provided in the SPD as to how the policy will be implemented. Parishes and communities will be helped in planning and delivering self-build homes. Applicants will be encouraged to come forward with their proposals with the knowledge that if their proposals meet the policy requirements they will be approved.

However, all residents and business of (and visitors to) the district could, potentially, benefit from the proposals, to a lesser or greater degree, because the SPD will help those who want to build their own homes either to get on to the property ladder or to build their ‘dream home’.

(c) Is this assessment informed by any information or background data? i.e. consultations, complaints, applications received, allocations/take-up, satisfaction rates, performance indicators, access audits, census data, benchmarking, workforce profile etc.

The draft SPD will be subject to public consultation in spring 2020.

(d) Does this policy have the potential to cause a positive or negative impact on different groups in the community, on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics (please tick all that apply):

Ethnicity	No	Age	No
Gender	No	Religion or Belief	No
Disability	No	Sexual Orientation	No
Gender Reassignment	No	Marriage & Civil Partnership	No
Pregnancy & Maternity	No	Caring Responsibilities	No

Please explain any impact identified: i.e. What do you already know about equality impact or need? Is there any evidence that there is a higher or lower take-up by particular groups? Have there been any demographic changes or trends locally? Are there any barriers to accessing the policy or service?

There is no apparent reason why any of the different groups as listed above will be particularly affected, negatively or positively, as a result of the SPD

(e) Does the policy affect service users or the wider community?	NO
(f) Does the policy have a significant effect on how services are delivered?	NO
(g) Will it have a significant effect on how other organisations operate?	NO
(h) Does it involve a significant commitment of resources?	NO
(i) Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities, e.g. disabled people's access to public transport etc?	NO

If you have answered **YES** to any of the questions above, then it is necessary to proceed with a full equality impact assessment (EIA). If the answer is **NO**, then this judgement and your response to the above questions will need to be countersigned by your Head of Service and then referred to the Council's Equal Opportunities Working Group (EOWG) for scrutiny and verification. Please forward completed and signed forms to the Principal HR Officer.

Signatures:

Completing Officer:	<u>HK</u>	Date:	<u>Jan 2020</u>
Head of Service:	<u>RK</u>	Date:	<u>Jan 2020</u>