

Release date: 30 November

*Embargoed until 12.01am on 30 November*

## **NEW GUIDANCE LAUNCHED TO HELP PLANNERS AND DEVELOPERS 'ENABLE' THOUSANDS OF ADDITIONAL SELF BUILD HOMES EACH YEAR**

A new Guide, published today by the National Self Build Association (NaSBA), offers advice on the ways planners and custom build developers can make it easier for people to build their own homes.

With a reduction in central planning guidance and the housing market remaining depressed, the role of local authorities in planning for new homes is even more critical.

The Government's Housing Strategy for England sets out a clear ambition to double the size of the custom build homes sector over the next decade and enable this form of housing to become a mainstream housing option. Under the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), local planning authorities are asked - for the very first time - to accommodate the needs of people wishing to build their own homes when planning to meet their housing needs.

The Guide applies this national policy and identifies a range of ways in which this can be delivered locally.

These include:

- Encouraging larger scale self build communities – like those that are already underway in Continental Europe
- Using public land to proactively facilitate self build projects
- Setting a target for a certain proportion of new homes to be self builds when allocating sites or planning for new homes
- Treating modest low cost self builds as 'affordable' housing
- Specifically encouraging self builds in certain areas – for example on 'infill' sites, or as small scale extensions on the edge of towns or villages

The Guide explains what custom build development is and asks planners to be 'custom build friendly' and avoid jargon and red tape. It also reminds local planning authorities that they should not impose unnecessary burdens that affect the viability of projects.

A separate section explains the methods planners can use to measure the local level of demand there is for people that want to build their own homes. This is an important

feature of the NPPF, as all local authorities now have to assess self build demand levels, and then make provision for self builders, where there is a proven demand.

The Guide has been welcomed by the Housing Minister, Mark Prisk, MP who said: "There has been a national surge of interest in self-build and this Government is committed to expanding the sector. The self-build industry already accounts for one in ten new homes, but we have a long way to catch up to places like France and Germany.

"So I'm delighted that NaSBA has taken the initiative to produce this guide, which will make it easier for aspiring self builders to take their plans to the next level, and enable more councils to adopt strategies that encourage self-build development in their area."

Self Build Industry Champion, *Grand Designs* presenter Kevin McCloud, called for a new spirit of collaboration between planners, communities and the construction industry: "I've always believed planning isn't about stopping people doing things; at its best it's about enabling people to do things – so I'd urge planners to read the Guide and do everything they can to support the millions of people in the UK that want to build their own homes."

The 24 page document has been written by two experienced town planners active in the self build sector - Sally Tagg , the managing director of Foxley Tagg Planning, and Julia Riddle, an associate director of DTZ.

It is available free of charge and can be downloaded from the Information and Publications section of the NaSBA website ([www.nasba.org.uk](http://www.nasba.org.uk)).

As the whole subject of using the planning system to encourage self build is still quite new, it is intended that the Guide will be a 'living' document that will be updated regularly as further Good Practice becomes available.

"While planners obviously have a key role the Guide should also be useful to local authority housing teams, custom build developers, registered social landlords and community groups that are developing their ideas for group self build projects," said Ted Stevens, the chair of NaSBA.

"We know of at least 50 local councils that are already looking to support self builders, and we hope this Guide will act as a roadmap for all the others as they work out how they can help the thousands of local people in their areas that want to build their own homes."

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## **Editor's Notes**

1. At the heart of the “National Planning Policy Framework” is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, running through both plan-making and decision-taking. Both paragraphs 50 and 159 require Local Planning Authorities to provide for a broad choice of housing to widen opportunities for home ownership, including **‘people wishing to build their own homes’**. The National Planning Policy Framework is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

2. “Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England” sets out the Government's plans to support social mobility and get the housing market - and in particular new house building - moving again, including a Custom Build Homes programme to support and encourage more individuals and communities to build their own homes. The Housing Strategy can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/laying-the-foundations-a-housing-strategy-for-england--2>

3. There is lots of information about the self build sector available on the Self Build Portal ([www.selfbuildportal.org.uk](http://www.selfbuildportal.org.uk)) or the NaSBA website ([www.nasba.org.uk](http://www.nasba.org.uk)). The full Guide can be downloaded from the NaSBA website on 30 November.