

MATTER 7 – OTHER POLICIES FOR COMMUNITIES

**v) Are the requirements of Policy C8 for self-build and custom-build housing justified and deliverable?**

1. William Davis Ltd accepts that the Government is seeking to encourage Self-Build/Custom Build as part of its initiatives to seek to boost the supply of housing and that the LPA has a duty under the Self-Build and Custom House Building Act (2015) to both keep a Register of those wishing to build such plots, and to grant planning permission for sufficient plots to meet demand. What is at issue is the strict 'requirement' for provision which Policy C8 provides. Nowhere in the NPPF, or the associated Practice Guidance, is this direct policy approach specifically supported.
2. In our originally submitted representations we drew attention to specific problems which may arise from the Policy. These were as follows:
  - Adverse implications on future sales. The reservation of plots for Self-Build/Custom Build may make it difficult for house builders to sell properties on adjacent land due to uncertainties regarding the design and appearance of these plots and the impact on amenity during protracted construction, much of which could be taking place during evenings and weekends.
  - Practical Difficulties for Construction- Evening and weekend working creates problems for health and safety policy control and practice.
3. By applying the policy requirement to every site over 100 dwellings the cumulative effect of these adverse impacts is likely to be significant and fundamentally at odds with the objective to boost overall housing delivery. The Council will be heavily reliant on these larger sites in the future to meet its housing trajectory. Any adverse impact on sales on these sites could therefore be detrimental to overall performance.
4. It is also questionable whether the scale of potential plot yield for Self-Build/Custom Build from the Policy is justified in relation to the level of anticipated demand. Paragraph 5.13.8 of the Local Plan refers to 63 people being on the Register for Self-Build/Custom Build in the Borough. Provision in the Plan for sites over 100 dwellings would yield a total of 178 plots for Self-Build/Custom Build (assuming 5% on each site). However, because sites of 100 plus dwellings are exclusively focussed at Melton Mowbray, Asfordby and Bottesford the Policy

will exclude provision of plots at any other settlements within the Borough. The level of proposed housing delivery on smaller sites within these other settlements is particularly significant. Policy C1 provides for a further 635 dwellings on sites smaller than 100 dwellings in Melton Mowbray and a further 1403 dwellings in other settlements. By focussing provision for Self-Build/Custom Build on sites in excess of 100 units therefore a significant opportunity is being missed to encourage such provision on other sites across the Borough.

5. William Davis questions therefore whether Policy C8 is the most appropriate strategy; and therefore whether the test of soundness is met. The alternative which we put forward in our submitted representations was a policy which encouraged (rather than required) Self-Build/Custom Build on all sites. Such a policy would allow flexibility for provision on a larger range of sites, including those in smaller settlements across the Borough, where demand is likely to be perhaps strongest.
  
6. The Practice Guidance notes that LPA's should consider the following actions to support Self-Build/Custom Build:
  - *developing policies in their Local Plan for self-build and custom house building;*
  - *using their own land if available and suitable for self-build and custom house building and marketing it to those on the register;*
  - *engaging with landowners who own sites that are suitable for housing and encouraging them to consider self-build and custom house building and facilitating access to those on the register where the landowner is interested; and*
  - *Working with custom build developers to maximise opportunities for self-build and custom house building.*

(Paragraph: 025 Reference ID: 57-025-201760728 refers)

7. A more broadly drafted Policy C8, in the manner suggested above, would also better address the third bullet point above.