

# East Suffolk Council Custom & Self-Build Housing Action Plan

December 2025



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# Introduction

Custom and Self-Build Housing (CSB) can be broadly defined as housing whose design and layout is primarily determined by the initial occupant. The demand for these types of homes is significant and continues to grow across East Suffolk<sup>1</sup> and nationally<sup>2</sup>.

Custom and self-build housing is legislated for in the [Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015](#) (as amended). The Act places three legal duties on local authorities:

- To hold a register of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land for their own custom and self-build home (section 1);
- To have regard to the register when carrying out its functions relating to planning, housing, land disposal, and regeneration (section 2); and
- To grant enough planning permissions for custom and self-build housing to meet the demand on the register (section 2A).

The Council's ambitious approach to custom and self-build housing is recognised in the Strategic Plan ([Our Direction 2028](#)), which expressly supports the provision of self-build housing. The Strategic Plan sets out to:

*"Encourage more self-build housing in East Suffolk -  
We will seek to encourage more self-build housing in East Suffolk as a means to create homes in an environmentally sustainable way."*

This has been influenced by the ambitions and policies of the [Waveney Local Plan](#) (2019) and the [Suffolk Coastal Local Plan](#) (2020) which set out planning policies to secure land for custom and self-build housing. The implementation of these policies is supported by the Council's [Custom and Self-build housing Supplementary Planning Document](#) (2024).

However, in light of the rising demand for custom and self-build housing, and alongside our other housing objectives including the delivery of affordable homes, the Council is intent on doing more to support delivery across East Suffolk. This Action Plan outlines actions the Council will endeavour to progress in partnership with relevant stakeholders.

The Council acknowledges the challenge of granting sufficient planning permissions to meet demand for CSB homes in the district. Accordingly, by implementing the following actions, the Council hopes to address the demand for CSB housing across East Suffolk, and in so doing to discharge the Council's legal duties.

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<sup>1</sup> East Suffolk Council custom and self-build register demand data - [Key statistics from the self build and custom build register » East Suffolk Council](#)

<sup>2</sup> National custom and self-build housing data - [Data release: Self-build and custom housebuilding data: 2016 to 2021-22 - GOV.UK](#)

# Recommended Actions

## Delivery of plots by East Suffolk Council and Partners

The Council will explore options to directly deliver CSB homes and facilitate delivery in partnership.

- a. Incorporate and/or strengthen consideration of CSB into Planning, Housing, Asset Management and Regeneration projects and processes as standard.
- b. Identify opportunities to dispose of land specifically for the provision of CSB housing, and opportunities through the acquisition of land. Including the review of land currently owned by ESC that may be suitable for CSB housing.
- c. Proactively engage with Registered Providers and Community-led Housing Groups to deliver Affordable housing projects which include CSB.
- d. Proactively engage Homes England/MHCLG to explore funding streams (e.g. Brownfield Land Release Fund, Home Building Fund, Community Housing Fund, Affordable Homes Programme). The Bacon Review recommends a much stronger role in delivering CSB plots from Homes England. This includes improved access to the brownfield land release fund for creation of CSB plots.

## Planning policy and Development Management

The Council will seek to effectively implement and review planning policies with the aim of improving delivery of CSB homes.

- a. Improving supply of CSB planning permissions
  - i. Support decision-makers in giving appropriate weight to CSB housing in decision making and providing pre-application advice as a matter of course. This includes through effective use of the recently adopted SPD.
  - ii. Proactive consideration being given for sustainable sites on the basis of provision of CSB homes where supply needs to be boosted.
- b. Encourage Neighbourhood Plan groups to plan positively to deliver CSB homes. This could include allocating plots - either large collections or individual plots – or criteria-based policies.
- c. Local Plan review:
  - i. include CSB category in the call for sites process.
  - ii. Undertake or commission specific CSB demand evidence taking account of a range of sources
  - iii. Informed by evidence, consider approaches to diversify and strengthen the strategy for securing CSB plots to increase delivery rates.
- d. Monitor the effectiveness of planning policies through planning decisions made by East Suffolk and the Planning Inspectorate (where relevant) with respect to CSB development

## Monitoring Demand and Supply

The Council will seek to effectively monitor the demand and supply of CSB housing in a transparent manner.

- a. Regularly review demand and supply data
- b. Keep demand and supply monitoring processes up to date with respect to any changes in legislation and policy.
- c. Publish demand and supply data on the Council's website
- d. Focus on the monitoring and enforcement of CSB where Biodiversity Net Gain exemption and Community Infrastructure Levy exemptions are claimed. Ensuring that application and CIL evidence is robust and that monitoring seeks proportionate evidence of CSB status and occupation.

## Improve engagement

The Council will seek to work openly and collaboratively with relevant stakeholders and interested parties.

- a. Within East Suffolk Council
  - i. Bring officers from the Asset Management; Housing; Planning; and Regeneration teams together to consider and develop actions in response to CSB duties.
  - ii. Incorporate consideration of CSB in to working processes for the Asset Management; Housing; and Regeneration teams.
  - iii. Improve awareness and understanding across Members and Officers
  - iv. Identify a Member as the 'Custom and Self-build Champion' who's responsibility it would be to champion CSB housing.
  - v. Identify opportunities for member and officer site visits of CSB developments
  - vi. Share CSB training opportunities with Officers and Members.
  - vii. Incorporate CSB actions into relevant corporate East Suffolk Council documents and strategies
- b. With CSB enablers
  - i. Encourage CSB enablers to operate in East Suffolk
  - ii. Improve understanding of specific CSB enabler requirements
  - iii. Advise CSB enablers on policy and guidance for planning and delivery of CSB plots.
- c. With landowners, developers, and SME builders
  - i. Make landowners, developers and SME builders aware of CSB opportunities in East Suffolk.
  - ii. Encourage landowners, developers and SME builders to work with specialist CSB enablers.
  - iii. Advise landowners, developers and SME builders on policy and guidance for planning and delivery of CSB plots.
- d. With custom and self-build registrants

- i. Share information on new opportunities with those on the Register.
  - ii. Seek further information/understanding from registrants about their needs/desires for a CSB home.
- e. With Parish/Town councils, neighbourhood plan groups, and Community-Led Housing groups etc.
  - i. Engage with these groups to make them aware of CSB opportunities and guidance (e.g. ESC's Neighbourhood Planning Guidance for Housing), and provide support and advice as needed.
- f. With other Custom/self-build related bodies
  - i. Explore opportunities to work with Homes England's Self Commissioned Homes Delivery Unit to aid in the funding and delivery of land for CSB plots.
- g. Continue to engage with the Right to Build Task Force and other relevant industry bodies.
- h. With local RICS surveyors and estate agents
  - i. Engage local RICS surveyors to understand key issues around CSB housing, including valuing plots.
  - ii. Engage local estate agents to understand key issues around CSB housing, including marketing plots.
- i. With other Local Planning Authorities
  - i. Engage with other Local Planning Authorities to discuss common issues and solutions (e.g. through a CSB officers forum).

In order to support the above actions:

- 1. Keep ESC web resources up-to-date with relevant data. Include links to other internal and external resources.
- 2. Develop a communication/engagement strategy to publicise CSB housing opportunities.

## Custom and Self-Build Housing Register

The Council will keep under review its custom and self-build housing register

- a. Review the register questionnaire to obtain more comprehensive data relating to needs and preferences for CSB.
- b. Keep the publicity of the register under review.

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