
Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Monitoring Report 2023/24



December 2024



Elmbridge
Borough Council

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Introduction

- 1.1 To help tackle the housing crisis and increase housing supply, the government wants to enable more people to build or commission their own home, with councils required to keep a register of aspiring self and custom housebuilding.
- 1.2 Elmbridge established a Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register for local people to register their interest in 2016, which is available for people to submit applications through an [online form](#). The register provides an indication of the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the borough. The council is required to identify a range of suitable sites to meet the needs and requirements of self and custom house builders identified by the register.

Purpose

- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to provide the latest data on the council's self-build and custom housebuilding register entries for the 2023/24 monitoring period. The monitoring base period set out for self-build and custom housebuilding is 31 October to 30 October the following year. This does not match the standard monitoring period for the Authorities Monitoring Report (AMR), which is based on a financial year from 01 April to 31 March the following year. It is therefore important to provide a separate monitoring report to present the findings.

Definitions

- 1.4 As the monitoring report frequently refers to the following terms, the definitions of these have been set out below.

Self- build housing means that you are directly involved in organising the design and construction of your new home.

Custom build means you are working with a specialist developer to help you deliver your new home. There may be some overlap between the two for example, some custom build developers offer the option of a serviced plot where you can design and build your own home as part of a larger scheme.

Serviced plot means a plot of land that has access to a public highway and has connections for electricity, water, and wastewater or these can be provided within the period before any development permission granted expires.

Statutory Duties

Legislation

- 1.5 Section 1 of the **Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016)** places a duty on local planning authorities (LPAs) to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who wish to acquire serviced plots of land to bring forward self-build and custom housebuilding projects.
- 1.6 It also requires each LPA to publicise its register. As a minimum, it is recommended that LPAs hold and regularly update a web page that is dedicated to self-build and custom housebuilding.
- 1.7 The Act (under section 2 and 2A) places two further duties on the council:
- A duty to have regard to the register when carrying out its planning, housing, land disposal and regeneration functions.
 - A duty to grant, within three years, 'suitable development permission' to enough serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the authority's area.
- 1.8 The Act defines 'suitable development permission' as 'permission in respect of development that could include self-build and custom housebuilding'.
- 1.9 The level of demand is determined by the number of entries added to the register during a base period. The first base period starts on the day on which the register was launched (1 April 2016) and ends on 30 October 2016 and subsequent base periods run annually from 31 October to 30 October of the following year.

Regulation

- 1.10 The **Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016** came into force on 31 October 2016 and makes provision in relation to the definition of a serviced plot of land, the registers kept under the Act and exemption from the duty.
- 1.11 The regulations explain that the register may be broken up into two parts; Part

1 for those who meet all criteria including the Local Eligibility Conditions and Part 2 for those who meet all criteria except any Local Eligibility Conditions. For those on Part 2 of the register, an LPA does not have to meet the requirements relating to the number of planning permission granted for serviced plots.

- 1.12 An LPA has three years from the end of each base period to fulfil the 'duty to grant planning permission'. This is set out at regulation 2 of the **Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (Time for Compliance and Fees) Regulations 2016**.
- 1.13 LPAs must give suitable development permission to enough suitable serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in their area for Part 1 entries. There is no duty on a LPA to permission land which specifically meets the requirements expressed by those on the register.
- 1.14 LPAs should use preferences expressed by those on the register to guide their decisions when looking at how to meet the duty to grant planning permission. This will help ensure that LPAs permission land suitable for self-build and custom housebuilding.

National Policy and Guidance

- 1.15 The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2023** requires local planning authorities to identify local need for people who want to build their own homes and make provision in their local plans (Paragraph 63).
- 1.16 In July 2024, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government proposed reforms to the NPPF¹. This includes a new policy to promote developments that have a mix of tenures and types including plots sold for custom or self-build. At the time of this report, comments were still being considered and a revised NPPF has not been published to date.
- 1.17 **Planning Practice Guidance** provides detailed guidance on how to implement the above legislation, regulations, and national policy.

¹ [Proposed reforms to the NPPF and other changes to the planning system](#) consultation took place between 30 July 2024 and 24 September 2024.

Local Planning Policy

1.18 The council understands the importance of self and custom build housing in supporting the local economy. Self-build and custom housebuilding can contribute to effective designs and sustainable construction, as well as facilitating the provision of a range of high-quality homes, the right mix of housing of appropriate size, type, and tenure to help meet the demands of the different groups within the community.

Adopted Local Planning Policy

1.19 The Core Strategy (July 2011) and Development Management Plan (2015) were adopted before the Elmbridge Self and Custom Build register was set up. Therefore, there are no adopted policies that specifically refer to self and custom build housing.

Draft Elmbridge Local Plan 2037

1.20 Work began on the draft Elmbridge Local Plan in 2016 with three regulation 18 consultations taking place in 2016, 2019 and 2020 as well as call for sites in 2017, 2018 and 2019. No sites for self-build and custom housebuilding were identified during the evidence gathering, consultations and site assessment planning process and therefore no site allocations were proposed for a self or custom build development in the draft Elmbridge Local Plan 2037.

1.21 A specific self-build and custom housebuilding policy was proposed in the Draft Elmbridge Local Plan 2037 which was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination on 10 August 2023 for consideration. Even though the plan (the spatial strategy in particular) was found unsound in its current form, the draft policy on self and custom build housing demonstrates the council's intent to support and permission land suitable for self-build and custom housebuilding.

1.22 In the absence of a specific policy, applications that included self-build in their description will be supported in terms of ensuring a mix of types of housing in line with the adopted policy CS19 - Housing type and size.

HOU8 – Self and custom build housing (draft policy)

1. The council will support proposals for self and custom build housing on residential development sites in locations where there is a demonstrable demand for plots and other relevant planning policies are satisfied.
2. Proposals shall deliver the level of affordable housing required by Policy HOU4.
3. All self and custom build housing developments shall achieve the technical standards as set out in Policy HOU5 as a minimum.

The Elmbridge Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register

1.23 Since 2016, Elmbridge Borough Council has formally held a Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register. This is a register of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the borough to build their own houses. The register can also include groups of individuals, but the council has not received any applications from groups or associations of individuals to date.

1.24 In compliance with the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016, applicants must meet all eligibility criteria for entry on the register. Each individual applicant and every member of an association of individuals that applies for entry on the register must:

- be aged 18 or older.
- be a British citizen, a national of an EEA State other than the United Kingdom, or a national of Switzerland;
- be seeking (either alone or with others) to acquire a serviced plot of land in the LPA's area for their own self-build and custom housebuilding project.

1.25 Elmbridge Borough Council has not chosen to set a local connection test, so the council does not currently have a Part 1 and Part 2 to the register. Additionally, the council does not currently charge a fee to be included on the register.

1.26 Table 1 sets out the number of new entries on the register since it was launched in January 2016. In 2020, notifications were sent out to all those registered asking whether they wanted to remain on the register. This resulted in 164 individuals being removed from the register in 2020.

Table 1: Demand for self and custom-build evidenced by the council’s self-build register

Base	Year	Number of new entries in the year	Cumulative Total	Suitable permission required by
1	January – 30 October 2016	80	80	N/A
2	31 October 2016 to 30 October 2017	60	140	30 October 2019
3	31 October 2017 to 30 October 2018	44	184	30 October 2020
4	31 October 2018 to 30 October 2019	80	264	30 October 2021
E-mails were sent to the 264 people on the register to ascertain whether they wanted to remain.				
5	31 October 2019 to 30 October 2020	63*	163	30 October 2022
6	31 October 2020 to 30 October 2021	109	272	30 October 2023
7	31 October 2021 to 30 October 2022	50	322	30 October 2024
8	31 October 2022 to 30 October 2023	22	344	30 October 2025
9	31 October 2023 to 30 October 2024	25	369	30 October 2026
Total			369	

**163 new entries were submitted in the government returns; however this was an error and 163 refers to the total number of entries in that base year.*

1.27 As well as the basic eligibility questions on age, citizenship and interest in undertaking a self-build, there are a number of questions in the online form which help provide additional information to give a greater understanding of the nature of demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the borough. The online form includes these questions:

- Number of adults in the household
- Number of children in the household
- Do/ have you found a site, own a site that you think would be suitable, neither of these.
- What is your reason for wanting to build in Elmbridge?
- What is the type of project you want to be involved in?
- How many bedrooms are required?
- What is the type of property you would like to build?
- What is your preferred tenure? Owner occupied/ shared ownership.
- What is your current housing situation?
- Are you currently on the council's housing register?
- What is the maximum amount you have to put towards the build without having to borrow?
- What is the maximum mortgage you could realistically access?
- What is the maximum rent / mortgage repayments you could afford per calendar month basis?
- How quickly would you be able to progress if a site became available?
- Have you previously lived in Elmbridge?
- How long did you live in Elmbridge?
- Do members of your immediate family (Children, Siblings, Parents, Grandparents) live in Elmbridge?
- How long have they lived in Elmbridge for?
- Are you employed in Elmbridge in a permanent job of more than 18 hours a week and have you held this job for 12 months or more?
- Are you currently or have you previously been a serving member of the Armed Forces?
- Do you have any other ties to Elmbridge which have not been covered so far?

Meeting the duty to grant permission

- 1.28 As the register has not been divided into two parts, the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended) requires the council to grant suitable planning permissions to enough serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the borough identified by the council's register within three years (each base period) for every entry regardless of local connections.
- 1.29 The legislation does not specify how suitable permission must be recorded, however paragraph 038 of the planning practice guidance (Reference ID: 57-038-20210508) on self-build and custom housebuilding provides the following examples of methods to determine if an application, permission, or development is for self-build or custom housebuilding:
- Developers have identified that self-build 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.
 - A planning application references self-build or custom build and it is clear that the initial owner of the homes will have primary input into its final design and layout.
 - Whether a Community Infrastructure Levy or Section 106 exemption has been granted for a particular development.
- 1.30 In terms of planning applications, there has only been one planning application that has referenced self-build and custom housebuilding plots in the description. This was an outline planning application (for access only) and was refused planning permission (2024/0946). There have been no permissions granted that identifies self-build or custom build plots to be included as part of the development description.
- 1.31 Planning Application 2024/0946 was refused as (1) it was determined the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt which would result in definitional harm as well as spatial and visual harm to the openness of the Green Belt contrary to Policy DM17 and the NPPF; (2) the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character of the area and would reduce the open and rural character setting of Downside contrary to Policies CS10, CS17, DM2 and the NPPF; (3) the proposed development would fail to secure a financial contribution towards the provision of off-site affordable housing contrary to Policy CS21; (4) the proposed development fails

to secure the necessary mitigation towards the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area contrary to Policy CS13; and (5) the proposed development would result in a net loss of biodiversity contrary to Policy CS15, DM21 and the NPPF.

- 1.32 Even though applicants have not explicitly stated their planning application is a self and custom build development, many apply for a CIL exemption certificate as their development falls under self-build. The majority of these are single dwelling applications. Therefore, this monitoring report is counting plots/units which have received an exemption from CIL, on the basis that the development is self-build.
- 1.33 Table 2 shows the number of permissions achieved against the demand on the register as required by legislation. It presents the findings on a yearly basis using new entries on the register and any remaining entries after permissions have been granted the previous year. If additional permissions have been granted for the reporting year that amount is deducted from the following years permissions.
- 1.34 As permissions are required to be granted within a 3-year period, no surplus permissions can be carried forward if it predates the end of the subsequent base period. There is only one year (base period 3) where a surplus is identified, and this has been deducted in base period 4 as the year is within a 3-year base period.

Table 2: Number of permissions achieved against the requirement.

	Number of Permissions required	Number of Permissions achieved	Shortfall/ surplus
Base Period 1 (January 2016 - 30 Oct 2016)	80 entries	51	-29
Base Period 2 (31 Oct 2016 - 30 Oct 2017)	60 new entries	81	-8
<i>Period ending 30 October</i>	29 remaining on the register.		

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	Number of Permissions required	Number of Permissions achieved	Shortfall/ surplus
<i>2019</i>	89 Total		
Base period 3 (31 Oct 2017 - 30 Oct 2018) <i>Period ending 30 October 2020</i>	44 new entries 8 remaining 52 Total	66	+14
Base Period 4 (31 Oct 2018 - 30 Oct 2019) <i>Period Ending 30 October 2021</i>	80 new entries -14 surplus in 2017/18 - within base period 66 Total	58	-8
Base Period 5 (31 Oct 2019 - 30 Oct 2020) <i>Period Ending 30 October 2022</i>	63 new entries 8 remaining 71 Total	63	-8
Base period 6 (31 Oct 2020 to 30 Oct 2021) <i>Period Ending 30 October 2023</i>	109 new entries 8 remaining 117 Total	54	-63
Base period 7 (31 Oct 2021 to 30 Oct 2022) <i>Period Ending 30 October 2024</i>	50 new entries 63 remaining 113 Total	39	-74

1.35 It is important to note that the figures in table 2 differ from the figures submitted for previous government returns and data provided for freedom of information requests. This is due to the different parameters used to answer the question for example the government return asks:

How many planning permissions for serviced plots suitable for self and custom build were granted between October 31 and October 30 of a reporting year?

1.36 Suitable has been underlined for emphasis but this word was omitted in Section 2A (2) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended) on 31 January 2024 by virtue of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023.

1.37 Whether a planning permission is considered suitable for self-build could result in greater numbers being reported in the past. For this monitoring report, only permissions with a granted self-build CIL exemption have been considered to be suitable self-build planning permissions as this is considered the most robust evidence that plots/units are being achieved for self-build. The council will use this method/evidence of self-build permissions going forward.

Appendix 1: Permissions granted self-build exemption certificates for base period 7 (31 October 2021 to 30 October 2022)

Planning application number	Description of development	Unit number (gross)	Date of letter of determination of claim for self-build (The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 54B (4)).
2021/1934	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof space, integral garage, landscaping and parking following demolition of existing house.	1	28/01/2022
2021/3019	Detached two-storey house with roof terraces to the rear, basement, detached coach house with rooms in the roof and associated forecourt, outdoor kitchen area, swimming pool and entrance gates and piers.	1	22/12/2021
2021/2864	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof space, dormer windows and attached garage following demolition of existing house.	1	24/11/2021
2021/1979	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof space, dormer windows, rear balcony, integral garage, widening of existing vehicular access, entrance piers and landscaping following demolition of existing house and outbuilding.	1	13/12/2021
2021/3137	Detached, two-storey house with rooms in the roof space, integral garage and landscaping following demolition of existing house.	1	17/12/2021
2021/3199	Detached two-storey house following demolition of existing house.	1	07/01/2022

Planning application number	Description of development	Unit number (gross)	Date of letter of determination of claim for self-build (The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 54B (4)).
2021/3822	Detached two-storey house with associated parking and landscaping and front gates and piers following demolition of existing house.	1	18/01/2022
2021/3564	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof space, dormer windows, basement and integral garage following demolition of existing house and outbuilding.	1	02/02/2022
2021/4146	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof, swimming pool and front gates and piers following demolition of existing house.	1	04/02/2022
2021/3111	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof space, dormer windows, integral garage, front and rear balconies with external swimming pool and associated parking following demolition of existing house.	1	09/02/2022
2021/3413	3 detached two-storey houses with rooms in the roof space, front gates and associated landscaping and access following demolition of existing house.	3	28/06/2022
2021/3447	Detached single-storey house with rooms in the roof space, dormer windows, associated bin store, cycle store, parking and landscaping following demolition of existing house and detached garage.	1	17/03/2022

Planning application number	Description of development	Unit number (gross)	Date of letter of determination of claim for self-build (The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 54B (4)).
2021/3541	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof space, dormer windows, integral garage and external swimming pool following demolition of existing house.	1	22/02/2022
2021/1923	A pair of semi-detached two-storey houses following demolition of existing house.	2	02/08/2022
2021/4006	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof space, new driveway and gates and piers following demolition of existing house.	1	07/03/2022
2021/3536	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof space and dormer windows following demolition of existing house and outbuilding.	1	10/03/2022
2021/4104	3 detached two-storey houses with rooms in the roof space and integral garages, and 2 new vehicular accesses following demolition of existing house.	3	22/04/2022
2021/3829	Detached two-storey house with integral garage, swimming pool front gates and associated landscaping following demolition of existing house and garage.	1	29/04/2022
2021/0201	Detached single-storey house with basement, integral garage, vehicular access and associated landscaping.	1	25/03/2022

Planning application number	Description of development	Unit number (gross)	Date of letter of determination of claim for self-build (The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 54B (4)).
2021/3952	Detached two-storey house with basement, incorporating garage and swimming pool, and associated landscaping following demolition of existing house.	1	25/04/2022
2021/4261	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof space following demolition of the existing house.	1	13/04/2022
2021/3731	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof space, front piers and relocation of vehicular access following demolition of existing house.	1	13/04/2022
2021/4307	Detached two-storey house, detached outbuilding, glasshouse, swimming pool and associated landscaping following demolition of existing house and outbuildings.	1	09/06/2022
2022/0295	Detached three-storey house with rooms in the roof space, dormer windows, rear balconies and basement incorporating garage following demolition of existing house.	1	14/10/2022
2021/3192	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof space following demolition of existing house.	1	20/05/2022

Planning application number	Description of development	Unit number (gross)	Date of letter of determination of claim for self-build (The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 54B (4)).
2021/3208	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof space, single-storey rear pool enclosure and front gates and piers following demolition of existing house.	1	04/05/2022
2022/0694	Detached two-storey house with basement, associated parking, landscaping, front gates and piers following demolition of existing house.	1	20/05/2022
2022/0411	Detached two-storey house with attached garage following demolition of existing bungalow and rear outbuilding.	1	29/06/2022
2021/3991	Detached single-storey house with rooms in the roof space with associated vehicular access, widening of existing vehicular access, parking and bin store following demolition of existing detached garage.	1	29/06/2022
2021/3926	Pair of detached two-storey houses with associated parking and new access following demolition of existing house.	2	10/08/2022
2022/0796	Detached single-storey house with rooms in the roof space and dormer windows and detached single-storey outbuilding with associated parking and landscaping following demolition of existing house.	1	30/06/2022

Planning application number	Description of development	Unit number (gross)	Date of letter of determination of claim for self-build (The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 54B (4)).
2022/1582	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof space, dormer windows, integral garage and entrance gates and piers following demolition of existing dwelling.	1	02/09/2022
2022/1907	Detached two-storey house with rooms in the roof space, integral garage and entrance gates and piers following demolition of existing house.	1	07/10/2022
Total		39	