

Summary Self-Build and Custom
Housebuilding Evidence of Andrew
Moger BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

Land at Pear Tree Lane, Euxton, Chorley

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Outline application for the erection of up to 180 dwellings including 30% affordable housing, with public open space, structural planting and landscaping, surface water flood mitigation and attenuation and vehicular access points from School Lane

Land at Pear Tree Lane, Euxton, Chorley

Gladman Developments Ltd

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Introduction

Section 1

- 1.1 This Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Proof of Evidence has been prepared by **Andrew Moger** of Tetlow King Planning on behalf of **Gladman Developments Ltd**. It relates to the residential development proposals at land at Pear Tree Lane, Euxton, Chorley.
- 1.2 This Proof of Evidence examines the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding sector in Chorley Borough and considers the weight to be attributed to the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding provided by the appeal proposals in the overall planning balance.
- 1.3 The appeal scheme seeks permission for up to 180 dwellings, of which 10% - a total of up to 18 plots – are to be provided as serviced plots for Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding.
- 1.4 My credentials as an expert witness are summarised in my main Proof of Evidence in Section 1.

Evolution of Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding in the National Policy Context

Section 2

- 2.1 The provision of Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding is increasingly forming a key part of the planning system. The demand for this tenure of housing was first detailed in the 2011 Housing Strategy for England and has since become enshrined in national policy within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
- 2.2 The subject was first addressed in the Housing Strategy for England (2011) before being introduced into national policy through the first iteration of the NPPF in 2012 which required local authorities to take account of *“people wishing to build their own homes”*.
- 2.3 Amendments were also made to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations in 2014 to exempt Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding from CIL in order to further encourage the delivery of this type of housing.
- 2.4 The Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act (2015) placed a legal duty on local authorities to keep a Register of individuals and associations of individuals (i.e. groups) who want to acquire serviced plots of land and to have regard to that Register.
- 2.5 The 2016 Housing and Planning Act then made subsequent amendments to the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act and placed a statutory duty (which came into force on 31 October 2016) on local authorities to grant sufficient ‘development permissions’ to meet the demand for Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding on their Register arising in each ‘Base Period’ within the three years after the end of each Base Period.
- 2.6 A separate section was added to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in 2016 covering Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding to support the implementation of the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act (as amended).
- 2.7 The PPG makes clear that local Registers of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in their area to build homes for those individuals to occupy are a key material consideration. It also states that to obtain a

- robust assessment of demand for this type of housing in their area, local planning authorities should supplement the data from the Registers with secondary data sources to understand and consider future need for this type of housing in their area¹.
- 2.8 The PPG also sets out² that *“in considering whether a home is a Self-Build or Custom Build home, relevant authorities must be satisfied that the initial owner of the home will have primary input into its final design and layout”*.
- 2.9 The matter of Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding has been subject to a number of debates in the House of Commons between 2014 and 2019, all of which have seen continued Government support for the growth of this sector.
- 2.10 In February 2019, the revised NPPF detailed that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in policy, including *“people wishing to commission or build their own homes”*.
- 2.11 Annex 2 of the NPPF 2019 defined Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding as:
“Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.”
- 2.12 The former Minister of State for Housing, Esther McVey MP, provided further support for the sector in her September 2019 speech at the RESI Convention, which was followed by the publication of the National Design Guide in October 2019. This sets out ten characteristics that make up well-designed places and includes Self and Custom Build within these.
- 2.13 The Conservative Party Election Manifesto of December 2019 reaffirmed the Government’s commitment to Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding where it commits to *“support community housing by helping people who want to build their own homes find plots of land and access the Help to Buy scheme”*.
- 2.14 Central Government has been consistent in seeking to boost the supply of Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding from as far back as the 2011 Housing Strategy for England and it is clear that there is national demand for this type of housing.

¹ Data sources referred as examples are: building plot search websites, ‘Need-a-Plot’ information available from the Self-Build Portal; and enquiries for building plots from local estate agents.

² Paragraph 016 Reference ID 57-016-20170728

- 2.15 The requirement to deliver Self-Build and Custom-Build homes is now enshrined in national policy through both the NPPF and the PPG.
- 2.16 Local authorities are required to address this through granting sufficient development consents to meet the demand for Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding arising within their administrative area.

The Development Plan and Related Policies

Section 3

- 3.1 The Development Plan for Chorley currently comprises the Chorley Local Plan (2015) and the Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012). Other material considerations include the NPPF (2019), the PPG and the emerging Central Lancashire Local Plan Update.
- 3.2 Neither the adopted Core Strategy nor the adopted Local Plan contain any policies specifically related to the provision or delivery of Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding.
- 3.3 Emerging Policy in the form of the Central Lancashire Local Plan Update is at issues and options stage and is currently silent on Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding.
- 3.4 On a national basis there is a clear desire to boost significantly the supply of Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding through the NPPF (2019), the PPG and more recently the National Design Guide and Conservative Party Election Manifesto of December 2019.

Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Demand and Delivery in Chorley Borough

Section 4

- 4.1 The adopted Development Plan does not include any policies specifically relating to the provision or delivery of Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding. Central Government have been clear of their objective to boost significantly Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding delivery since at least 2011.
- 4.2 The most recent assessment of housing need is the Central Lancashire Housing Study (2020) which forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Plan. Key findings of the Housing Study include:
- a. That the Government has long had a clear agenda for supporting and promoting the self-build and custom housebuilding sector;
 - b. That Ipsos Mori data shows that only one in eight of the populace are even aware that Self-Build Registers exist;
 - c. An endorsement of the PPG recommendation to use secondary data sources with reference drawn to Buildstore as a secondary data source which (at the time) identified 185 individuals on their Custom Build Register and 699 Plotsearch subscribers looking for a plot to build or commission their own home in the Borough;
 - d. That there is a sizeable level of demand for serviced plots which has not yet been reflected in the Council's own Self-Build Register;
 - e. That NaCSBA research shows that one in 50 of the adult population are looking to build their own home and when this ratio is applied to Chorley then ONS data indicates that there is a potential need for 1,929 serviced plots; and
 - f. Recognition that the level of demand indicates that a policy should be developed to promote and encourage delivery of self-build and custom housebuilding,
- 4.3 It concludes that when consideration is given to secondary data sources in line with the provisions of the PPG, then *“this points towards a greater level of demand than the Council's current self-build registers”*.

- 4.4 Whilst there are a relatively low number of registrants on the Council's own Self-Build Register, research by the National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA) has shown that 8 out of 10 people are not even aware that local authorities hold a Self-Build Register and the Council's own evidence base identifies a level of demand far exceeding that on the register.
- 4.5 The PPG recommends that secondary data sources are utilised to supplement the Council's own self-build register data in order to achieve a robust assessment.
- 4.6 Secondary data sources indicate that the level of demand within the vicinity of the appeal site substantially exceeds the level of demand on the Council's Self-Build Register. Data from Buildstore shows that within a 10-mile radius of the appeal site there are 481 registrants on their Custom Build Register wishing to create their own home and 1,874 Plot-Search subscribers searching for a plot to build a home or commission one.
- 4.7 The Council's own evidence base in the form of the Central Lancashire Housing Study (2020) found that *"there is a sizeable level of demand for serviced plots...which hasn't yet been reflected in the Council's own Self-Build Register"* and identified that demand could be as high as 1,929 serviced plots when national data is used as a proxy.
- 4.8 My analysis (**Appendix AM11** of my main Proof of Evidence) of the Council's Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement (May 2020) found evidence of a total of 49 self-build and custom housebuilding plots that the Council anticipates delivery of within the next five years.
- 4.9 It is important to view this firstly in the context that there is no adopted nor emerging policy mechanism for securing increased delivery of Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding plots, and secondly in the context of the Council's own evidence base identifying that demand could be as high as 1,929 serviced plots within the Borough.
- 4.10 It is also important to consider that a total of 27 of these 49 Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding plots in the Council's supply are not secured by legal agreement or condition but are sites where the applicant has indicated through the CIL form that they intend to exercise the Self-Build Exemption.
- 4.11 Until such time that these have achieved certification of CIL Form 7 Part 2 i.e. provided evidence that they have been undertaken as Self-Build and/or Custom Housebuilding then it is questionable whether these will be actually delivered as Self-Build and/or Custom-Build homes. One such example within the Borough is Gleadhill House Stud

proposals³ which achieved consent for 12 self-build homes yet only saw 10 developed as self-build homes and achieving the CIL Self-Build Exemption with the remaining two paying CIL in full.

- 4.12 Given the level of demand identified and the lack of an adopted or emerging policy position to increase delivery, it is unclear how the Council intends to address demand without sites such as the appeal scheme.
- 4.13 What is abundantly clear is that the Council need to take urgent action now to address identified demand. The lack of any clear policy position does not negate the need to address identified demands.

³ Application No: 16/00633/OUTMAJ

The Weight to be Attributed to the Provision of Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding

Section 5

- 5.1 The Government attaches weight to achieving the objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes.
- 5.2 NPPF Paragraph 60 sets out that in order to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment. It goes on at paragraph 61 to detail that the type of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policing, including for people who wish to commission or build their own homes.
- 5.3 The most recent assessment of housing needs for Chorley, the Housing Study (2020) utilises secondary data sources as recommended by the PPG to undertake a more robust assessment of demand. Having taken these into account the Council's own Housing Study found that *"this points towards a greater level of demand than the Council's current self-build registers"*.
- 5.4 In the absence of any adopted specific policy target, specific monitoring indicator or mechanisms to address any shortfall in delivery of Self-Build and Custom Build homes, it is unclear how the Council intend to address this level of demand within Chorley without sites such as the appeal site.
- 5.5 The importance of Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding as a material consideration has been reflected in a number of recent Secretary of State and appeal decisions. Of particular interest is the amount of weight which has been afforded to the provision of Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding plots relative to other material considerations.
- 5.6 Secondary data sources indicate that within a 10 mile-radius⁴ of the appeal site there are 481 registrants on Buildstore's Custom Build Register who are wishing to create their own homes within the area and 1,874 Plot-Search subscribers, who are seeking a serviced plot to build or commission their own home in the area. This represents a substantial level of demand.

⁴ The smallest site search radius that the Buildstore data allows for

- 5.7 The evidence demonstrates a substantial demand for Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding plots in Chorley Borough.
- 5.8 In light of this, and the lack of an adopted or clear emerging policy position relating to the delivery of Self-Build and Custom Build homes within Chorley, I consider that nothing less than substantial weight should be afforded to the provision of up to 18 Self-Build and Custom Build homes in the determination of this appeal.