



Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding (SBC)

Information Document

Single Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register for Buckinghamshire Council

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Online version: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/insert-link-to-policy>

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1. Introduction

Buckinghamshire Council has inherited the self-build registers of the legacy district councils (Aylesbury, Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks). These registers were operated using different approaches.

The Council intends to develop and maintain a single register with a consistent approach across the Council area. This means that a person who applies to be placed on the register will be able to specify a location in any area of Buckinghamshire.

1.1. What is Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register?

A Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register is a register that Local authorities are required to keep of persons seeking to acquire land to build a home. The [Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015](#) (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) came into effect on April 1 2016.

The Act does not distinguish between self-build and custom build. But it requires that the built house must be occupied by the owner. This means that the individuals or groups must occupy the house they build. They can either build the home on their own or collaborate with builders.

1.2. Self-build and Custom Housebuilding – What is the difference?

For self-build, a person is more directly involved in organising and constructing their home from beginning to end.

For custom build, a person makes key design and layout decisions but commissions a specialist developer to help deliver their home.

In both instances a full planning permission is required before building can start.

1.3. What are the benefits of self-build and custom housebuilding?

- Diversifies the housing market
- Increases consumer choice
- Opportunity to choose your own design and layout
- Opportunity to be innovative in both design and construction

1.4. Why is the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register relevant?

The register notifies the local authority of the level of demand which can then be used to plan for future needs for this type of housing in its area.

Inclusion on the register is not an entitlement to the provision of serviced plots. However, we will advise people on the register of relevant proposals for development. In this regard, anyone who wishes to build their own home within the Council area may express their interest by applying to be placed on the council's self-build and custom housebuilding register.

The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 as amended, places a duty on the Council to meet the demand on the register. We are required to grant 'development permissions' for enough 'serviced plots' to meet demand during a given period. Serviced plots are plots that are within a development site and which already has a planning permission. These plots come fully serviced – road access, foul and surface water drainage and utilities including water, gas, electricity and telecommunications.

2. The Register

To join a self-build register, you must meet the **national eligibility criteria** set out by the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016, you must be:

- Over 18 years old;
- Either a British citizen, a national of an EEA state (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or any member state of the European Union) or a national of Switzerland; and
- Seeking to build a home as your sole or main residence

The Regulations also allow Councils to set their own local criteria to establish a local connection to their area. If councils choose to apply their own local connection criteria, the register will be split into 2 parts.

- Part 1 register for those who meet the national and local connection criteria
- Part 2 register for those who meet the national eligibility and other criteria but do not meet the local connection criteria

To be on the Part 1 or 2 of the register, in addition to meeting the national criteria, you must:

- satisfy any local eligibility conditions set by the Council (we will have regard to applications from members of the armed forces and ex-services personnel see [paragraph 021](#));
- have paid any fee required by the Council to enter or remain on the register (see paragraph 3.4 below); and
- be seeking (either alone or with others) to acquire a serviced plot of land in the Council's area for your own self-build and custom housebuilding project. ([See Paragraph: 008](#))

Entries on Part 1 of the register will count towards the number of suitable serviced plots that should be accommodated on sites that are granted development permission. Entries on Part 2 will not count towards demand for suitable serviced plots, but the council will have regard to the entries on Part 2 when planning for future [self-build and custom housebuilding](#).

3. What we are proposing for Buckinghamshire's Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register

As mentioned earlier, the regulations allow the Council to introduce a local connection test. The supporting Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that we can include up to two optional local eligibility tests [See Paragraph: 019](#) (a local connection test and a financial solvency test). However, we are only considering applying the local connection test.

3.1. Local connection test

A local connection test sets out a number of local eligibility criteria. An applicant has to meet at least one of these criteria with evidence to show their connection to the Council area.

It allows the Council to operate a 2-part register - part 1 and part 2. And it helps us focus on local need and demand.

If introduced, the local connection test will add a set of local eligibility criteria to the register which would require a demonstration of proof/evidence of eligibility. This evidence will be destroyed after processing the application having regards to the requirements of the GDPR.

To be in the part 1 register, applicants would have to meet one of the following local connection criteria:

- a) Have lived in the council area continuously for 2 years or more immediately preceding the date of the application;
- b) In employment within the Council area for at least 2 years or about to take up permanent employment in the council area immediately preceding the date of the application;
- c) Have immediate family members (parents, children, siblings and spouse) who have lived in the council area for at least 3 years immediately preceding the date of the application; or
- d) Currently serve in the regular armed forces of the Crown or have left regular service within the last 5 years.

We have carefully considered the above criteria to make sure that they align with all our current affordable housing, housing allocations policy and rural exception criteria.

3.2. Rationale for a local connection test

We want to make sure that we are prioritising people who have a local connection to Buckinghamshire. The Council has a high percentage of land that is designated as Green Belt and/or AONB (88% of the former Chiltern area, 87% of the former South Bucks area, 48% of the former Wycombe area and 5.3% of the former Aylesbury area are within the Green Belt). Because of this land constraint, we have reduced capacity to meet all the housing needs in some parts of Buckinghamshire.

3.3. Cost recovery fee

The Council can introduce fees to cover the costs of administering the Register. Any fees charged, must be proportionate and not act as a deterrent for people to enter or remain on the register.

The Act also allows the Council to charge an entry fee to individuals and associations of individuals who apply to be entered on the register. The Council may also charge a different fee to an association of individuals than to individuals where the processing cost incurred is different.

Furthermore, the Council can charge a higher entry fee and an annual fee to those on the part 1 register since their entry onto the register counts towards the number of suitable serviced plots that should be accommodated on sites that are granted development permission.

In introducing the fees, we have carefully considered that the fees reflect the cost likely to be incurred by the use of Council resources in:

- assessing the submitted documents
- requesting additional information if necessary
- updating the register itself
- correspondence with applicants
- potential specialist advice in assessing information against regulatory requirements
- implementation of payments
- Liaising with developers and agents for available plots
- Advising registrants of potential self-build developments
- Annual correspondence with applicants

3.4. What are the fees?

Entry fees will be applicable for joining the register and to remain in part 1.

Joining Fees	Individual	Association
Part 1	£25	£25 per person, up to a maximum of 10 persons?
Part 2	£10	£10 per person, up to a maximum of 10 persons?

Fees payable to renew registration each year:

Renewal fees	Individual	Association
Part 1	£25	£25 per person, up to a maximum of 10 persons?
Part 2	NIL	NIL

Once paid, these fees will be non-refundable, so we strongly advise that you check that you are eligible before making any payments.

4. How will the new register work?

- The registration form will be accessed online at [self-build and custom housebuilding register](#).
- There will be a link for required proof of evidence/documents to be uploaded.
- There will be a link for entry payments to be made.
- We will send, an acknowledgement email within 28 days once we have received and processed a valid application
- We will inform registrants when plots become available, and upload the plot information onto the website
- We will publish the annual headlines report on the website in the month of March. It will cover a base period between 31 Oct -30 Oct the following year.
- We will contact everyone on the register when the annual report becomes available.
- We will send out annual reminders to confirm whether you want to remain on the registers.