# West Suffolk Council logoWest Suffolk Interim Policy Statement for Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding in West Suffolk

The proposed interim policy statement for self-build and custom housebuilding in West Suffolk is:

**The council will actively support proposals for the sustainable development of self-build and custom build homes where the proposal accords with other policies within the development plan.**

Proposals will need to be in accordance with national and local policy and the fact that the proposal is for self-build will be one of the material considerations and given appropriate weight in the planning balance when making a decision.

The council’s self-build register will be used as a source of evidence of the demand for self-build and custom build housing locally, and the level of demand will be a consideration in determining proposals.

The council has adopted local plans which identify a spatial strategy for the former area of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury areas and identify the types of settlement within them. These are within the Forest Heath Core Strategy’s Policy CS1, and St Edmundsbury’s Core Strategy Policy CS4. The council encourages the sustainable development of sites within settlement boundaries for custom and self-build dwellings subject to complying with these and other planning policies.

The local plans also detail circumstances where dwellings may be located outside of settlement boundaries (identified as small settlements or countryside), such as where they are part of a conversion of an existing building, or replace a current dwelling, or meet the criteria in Policy DM27 of the Joint Development Management Policies document. Other policies in this document may be relevant, depending on the location and nature of the specific proposal.

Many self-build applications will come forward in the same way as those for other housing and will have the same requirements in terms of achieving an appropriate design. Policy and advice on key considerations can be found within the local plans.

In order to provide a variety of development types in West Suffolk, the council has made a number of allocations in the adopted local plans which are still undeveloped and could be suitable for self-build. It is possible that some (or parts of some) larger allocations or existing sites with outline planning permission may also be suitable for an element of self-build.

The council is currently working on a new local plan, and potential self-builders may wish to put sites forward to be considered for inclusion in the emerging West Suffolk Local Plan. In addition to local plans, a number of West Suffolk parish councils are undertaking neighbourhood plans; a neighbourhood plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the local plan, but could allocate additional sites, make amendments to the development boundary or introduce a new policy to facilitate self-build. Consequently, self-builders may wish to contact the relevant parish council to find out whether a neighbourhood plan is being considered; contact details can be found on the [Local plans](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/Planning_Policies/local_plans/index.cfm) pages of the West Suffolk website.

Where self-build units form part of a larger scheme, there may be a requirement for a design code, so that the constituent units come forward in a coherent (but not prescriptive) manner and achieve the requirements of the Joint Development Management Policies DM2 (Creating Places- Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness) and DM22 (Residential Design).

Potential applicants may find it useful to consider the [pre-application service](https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning_applications/preapplicationadvice.cfm) offered by the council, which provides guidance on the necessary supporting information, relevant issues and policies, and an assessment of proposals. The council will use the pre-application service to alert applicants proposing residential developments of the possibility of bringing some, or all, of the site forward as custom or self-build.

Applicants are requested to clarify whether their application is for a custom or self-build dwelling(s)as early as possible, and at the time the application is made this may be identified on the application form.

Applicants will be requested to confirm to the council completion or occupation of their custom or self-build dwelling(s). Once notified and where relevant, the council will remove the applicant’s name from the custom or self-build register.