

Section 6: Self and custom built housing

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 **The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015** (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016). This forms part of the government's agenda to increase the supply of homes and to tackle the housing crisis. This Act is expected to work in conjunction with grants and exemptions to making Self-build and Custom Housebuilding both accessible and affordable.
- 1.2 The Act provides a legal definition of self-build and custom housebuilding. It is where an individual, an association of individuals, or persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, build or complete houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals (**Guidance, Self-build and custom housebuilding, 2016**).
- 1.3 The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (c 17) ("The Act") requires relevant authorities to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in the authority's area. According to regulation 3 of The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016, a serviced plot of land is defined as land with (or can be provided with) utilities (electricity, water and waste water) and access to the public highway.
- 1.4 Section 2A of the Act imposes a duty on relevant authorities to grant sufficient development permissions in respect of serviced plots of land to meet the demand as evidenced by the number of entries on the register in a base period. Regulation 2 specifies 3 years as the period within which the required number of development permissions relating to a base period must be granted to satisfy the duty, **The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (Time for Compliance and Fees) Regulations 2016**.
- 1.5 The register provides information on the demand characteristics and demographics of self and custom build housing. The evidence collected will be crucial in encouraging the adoption of a policy that supports Self-Build within the Hereford Area Plan, the Rural Area Site Allocations Development Plan Documents and the Neighbourhood development plans (NDP's). Potential investors and financiers in the sector can also use the register to gauge demand.

2. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 Herefordshire Council seeks to support those who wish to self-build and custom build; the bulk of the applications made in the county tend to be single unit applications. The council understands the importance of self and custom build housing in supporting the local economy. Encouraging effective designs and sustainable construction, as well as supporting a more resilient supply which constitutes 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 group within the community (Hereford Area Plan Issues and Options Consultation 2017).
- 2.2 **The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted October 2015), was adopted before the Herefordshire Self and Custom Build register was set up. Therefore there are no policies that specifically refer to self and custom build. However there is reference to self and custom building within the supporting text** and the housing policies of the Core Strategy supports the principle to develop Self-Build plots, within the defined development boundaries and on land allocated to housing and subject to the other policies of the Core Strategy. This includes individual Self-Build plots; sites made up of a number of Self-Build plots as part of the wider market housing mix on larger developments. Policy SS2- (Delivering new homes) and Policy SS3 (Ensuring sufficient housing land delivery).
- 2.3 The principle of developing Self-Build plots outside of the defined development boundaries, which is open countryside where developments should be strictly controlled and limited to rural development proposals and development specifically supported by Policy H2 – Rural exception sites.
- 2.4 Policy RA3- (Herefordshire's Countryside) Replacement Dwellings in the Open Countryside supports the replacement of an existing dwelling in the open countryside with a new single dwelling subject to criteria, and this form of development could include Self-Build dwellings.
- 2.5 In addition to this, Neighbourhood Development Plans in the **Localism Act 2011**, gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood. They are able to choose where they want new homes, to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided.

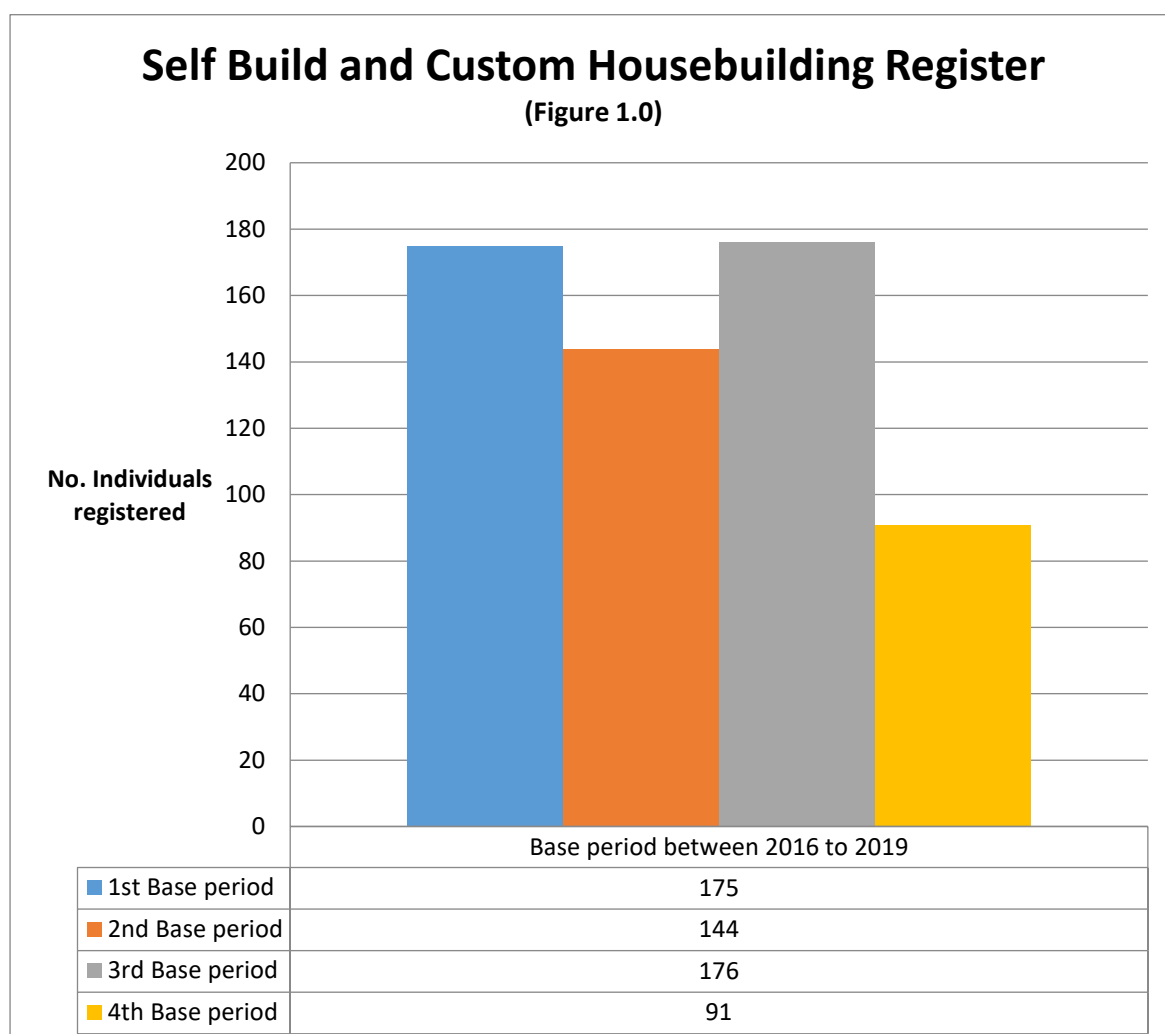
3 THE SELF-BUILD AND CUSTOM HOUSEBUILDING REGISTER

3.1 The Herefordshire County Self-build and Custom Build Register was established in April, 2016, and has been available for people to submit their application through the Herefordshire council website [Online form](#).

3.2 At present, we have 591 entrants on the register who are interested in building their own properties.

- The First base period - 174 individuals and 1 group (with 3 members) registered and were accepted onto the register
- The second base period saw a further 144 people applying and accepted. This represented a reduction of 21.52 percent in the uptake
- The third base period has seen 176 individuals registered and accepted. This represents an increase from the previous baseline
- The fourth base period has seen 91 individuals registered and accepted.
- Fifth base period currently has 5 individual registered and accepted. (updated 15/12/2019)

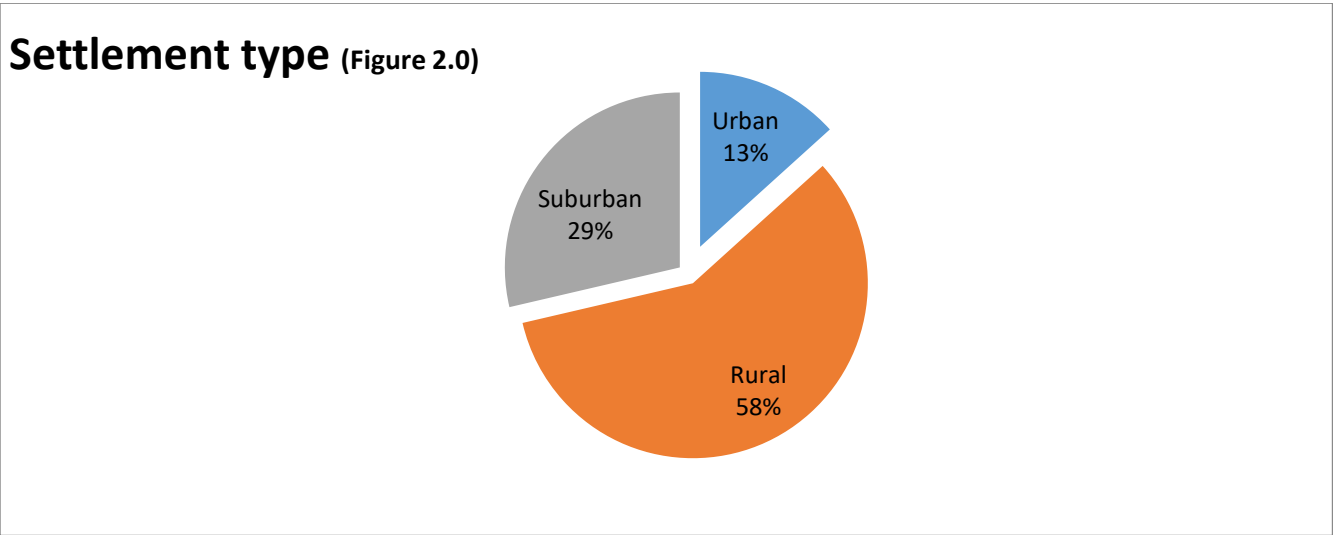
a. Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register



The Council is aware of Community Land Trusts (CLT) who wish to become involved in site assembly for self-build on sites.

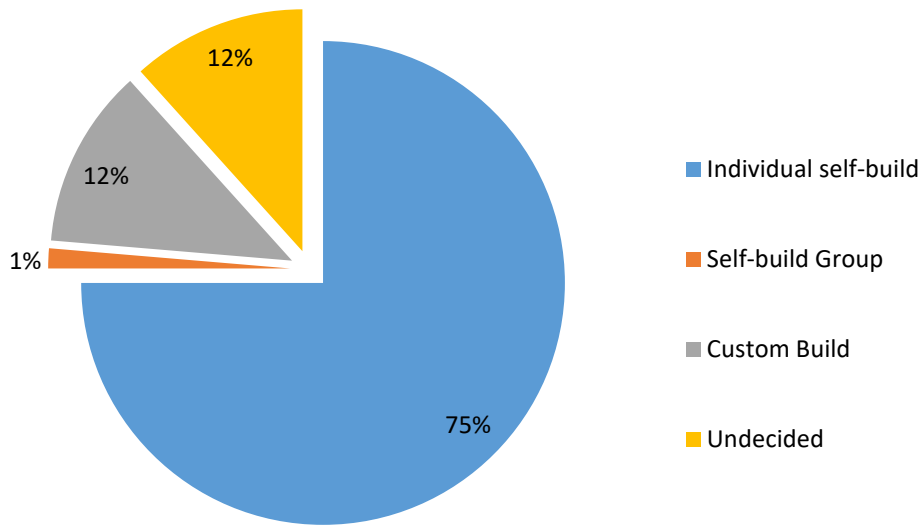
It is worth noting that not all self-build and custom build housing are recorded under the self-build and custom build register. **80%** of all applications for housing in Herefordshire is for 5 units and below, of which **90%** of these applications were single units.

b. Location by Characteristics



Over 58% of the applicants preferred rural areas with 30% opting for suburban development while only 13% considered urban developed. This preference for low density settlement has a direct correlation with the type of building schemes and type of housing.

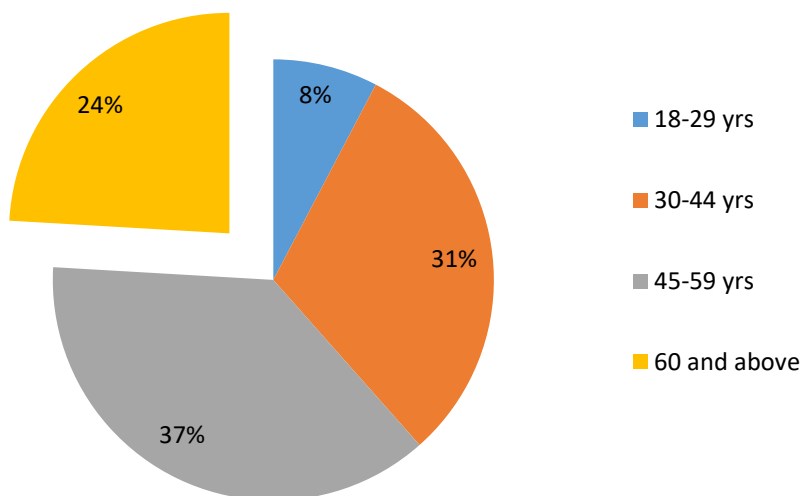
Type of building schemes (2016-2019) (Figure 3.0)



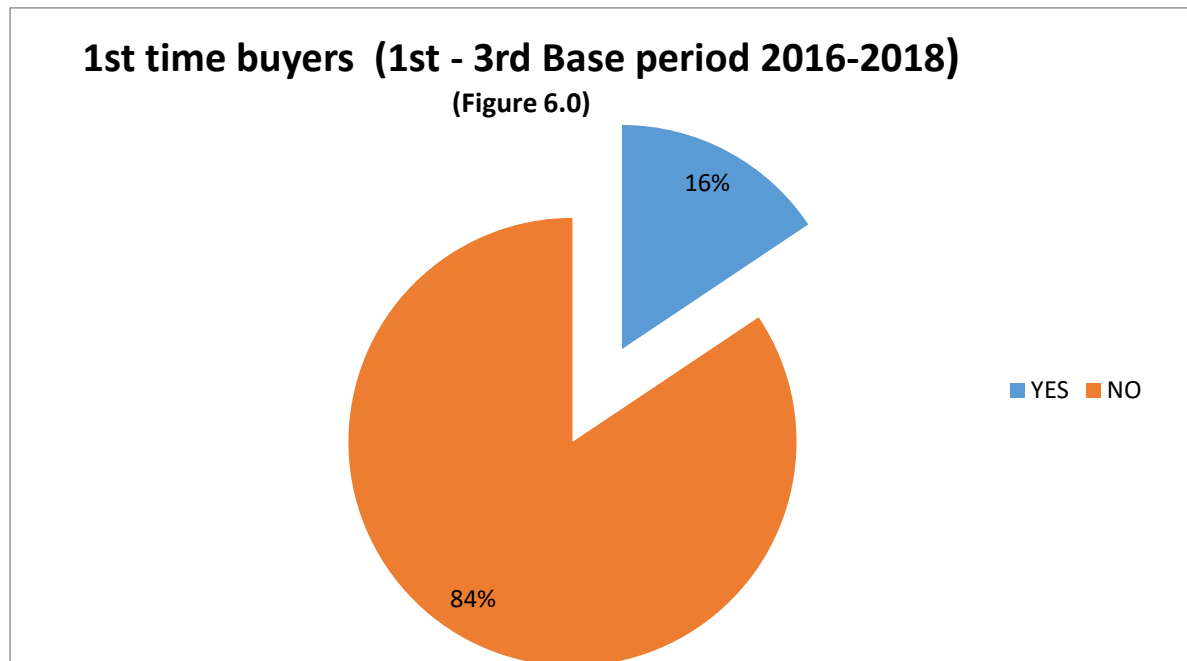
c. The age of the applicants

The age of the applicants was representative of the counties demographics with over 60% of the applicants over 45 years of age. This generally had a link to access to finances, readiness to build and size of property and access to the property ladder.

Age of applicants (1-3 Base period 2016-2019) (Figure 5.0)

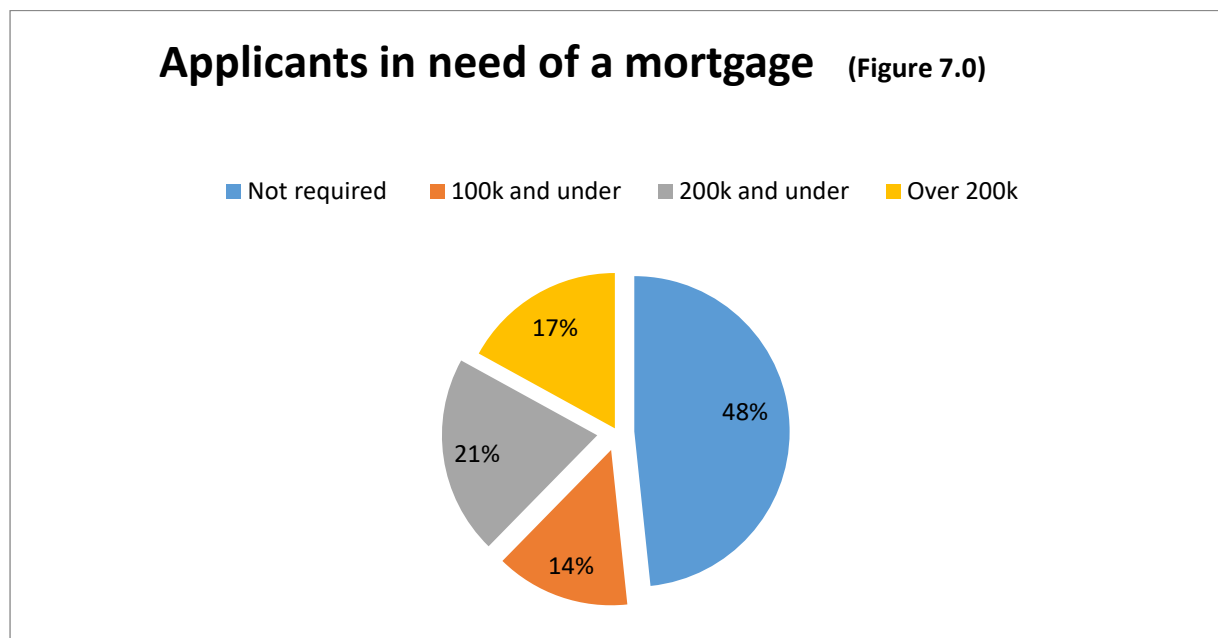


d. 1st time buyers



A large number of people on the register are already on the housing ladder which would suggest that that the type of housing available is not affordable but aspirational.

e. Finances



98% of the applicants on the register have access to adequate financing with 48% requiring no funding of any kind.

Planning Permissions Granted

Herefordshire Council consider section 2A(6)(c) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 which defines 'suitable development permission' and the accompanying guidance.

At the end of each base period, Herefordshire Council has 3 years in which to permission an equivalent number of plots of land, which are suitable for self-build and custom housebuilding, as there are entries for that base period.

Total number of permissions granted for base periods 2, 3 and 4 = **620**

The legislation does not specify how suitable permissions must be recorded, however, as of 4/04/2019 Herefordshire council has decided to adopt the methodology below.

Methodology

For monitoring purposes, we will only count plots:

- With planning permission that have self and custom build in their description, and
- Single plots that meet the legal definition set out by the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015

The formula is as follows:

[Number of planning permissions for serviced plots suitable for self and custom build granted during a base period = (Number of planning permissions that have self and custom build in their description + Number of single plots that meet the legal definition set out by the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015)].

In addition to those applications that have self or custom build in their description, Herefordshire Council has also analysed the single permissions granted since 31 October 2016 to determine whether these meet the definition of a suitable permission provided in the regulations. Whilst these all meet the strict definition it was felt that including the total could be considered an overestimate of the supply of self and custom build housing. Therefore only 33% of total dwellings are included and a further 20% have been deducted to provide for a margin of error for the Delta Government Audit.

For more information please visit

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200185/local_plan/141/self_and_custom_build_register/1