



Self-build housing for inter-generational living

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The potential for inter-generational living has received a boost following the enactment of the Self-Build and Custom Housing Building Act¹ in 2016. This was followed last month by a government announcement of £60 million for local authorities affected by high levels of second home ownership to develop community-led responses to address pressures on local housing supply².

Historically self-build housing has made up only a small percent of the UK housing market and has remained the province of wealthy older households, whereas in other European countries it has accounted for a significant proportion of the market³. The UK government estimates that over 50% of households aspire to build their own home and over 100,000 are actively seeking to build⁴.

Local authorities now have a duty to maintain a register of households who are seeking a plot of land on which to build a home. They must provide enough serviced plots and give sufficient planning consents to meet this demand. We have been talking to 11 authorities appointed by the government as self-build 'vanguards' to gain an understanding of some of the lessons learned in setting up registers and meeting demand. We found that authorities had adopted differing approaches to providing the building plots needed, for example by:

- Adopting specific policies to encourage provision of self and custom building plots, such as setting quotas for self-build on new development sites;
- Identifying land from their own portfolios for sale to self-builders;
- Exploring ways of extending schemes to those on lower incomes, for example through working with social landlords or using rural exception sites;
- Working with Community Land Trusts or other community based groups.

The flexibility of self-build lends itself to a range of housing options including making provision for inter-generational living. This could involve designing self-build family housing to accommodate older members' requirements, today or for the future. Other inter-generational models include schemes of several homes, designed so that

¹ Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 was enacted in April 2016 with supporting regulations issued in April 2016 and October 2016

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/60-million-boost-for-communities-affected-by-second-homeownership>

³ 7% of new build housing in England is self-build compared to 80% in Sweden & 60% in France (Parliamentary Briefing Paper 06784 Self-Build & Custom-Build Housing June 2015)

⁴ *ibid*

different generations can live side by side and offer mutual support, working with community groups or through co-housing networks.

Intergenerational self-build will often require larger or taller units. Local authorities need to be aware of this and recognise the potential for savings to social care budgets. However, in the market sector, large units are likely to remain the preserve of wealthy households unless shared ownership becomes a viable self-build option. (This will require dialogue with mortgage lenders.)

In our view, there is scope for using the opportunities offered by the Act to deliver inter-generational self-build housing in imaginative ways that are unique to, and owned by, those that will occupy the homes. This will require agencies and communities to work closely together to identify innovative solutions that allow for inter-generational living within the self-build sector.

We have recently published a research paper on self-build housing which explores some of the current issues facing local authorities on this subject which can be accessed at <http://three-dragons.co.uk/self-build-custom-build-housing-three-dragons-publishes-research-paper>

We would also be interested to hear about any local projects or examples of inter-generational self-build. If you would like to share any case studies with the Housing LIN, please email the Housing LIN at info@housinglin.org.uk.

Three Dragons will also be hosting a self-build event on 25th May 2017 at Wyboston Lakes training Centre, St. Neots, Cambridgeshire.

The event is aimed primarily at local authorities who are looking at ways to meet the need for building plots identified on their self-build register. More information at: www.three-dragons.co.uk

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