

The Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Gerald Downey
1 Copper Beeches
Warley Hill
Brentwood
Essex
CM14 5HW

10 February 2016

Dear Mr Downey

As you know, I made inquiries on your behalf about the self build register and have now received a response.

I hope you find the information helpful and it clarifies the current situation. Please contact me again if you feel there is anything further with which I can assist you.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Sir Eric Pickles".

Rt. Hon. Sir Eric Pickles MP
Brentwood and Ongar

Member of Parliament for Brentwood and Ongar

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Communities and
Local Government**

The Rt Hon Sir Eric Pickles MP
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London
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Brandon Lewis MP

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Our Ref: 1834883

- 5 FEB 2016

Dear Sir

Thank you for your letter of 4 January on behalf of your constituent Gerald Downey of 1 Copper Beeches, Warley Hill, Warley, Brentwood, Essex, CM14 5HW about self-build and custom housebuilding registers and brownfield land registers.

We are currently working on the Regulations for the self-build and custom housebuilding registers and intend to lay them in Parliament early this year. Subject to the necessary clearance from Parliament it is expected that local authorities will be required to hold a register of demand for self-build and custom housebuilding from April 2016. All district councils, including Brentwood Borough Council, will be required to hold a self-build and custom housebuilding register.

Mr Downey may also be interested to know that the Housing and Planning Bill, which is currently going through Parliament, will require councils to give permission to sufficient serviced plots for self-build and custom housebuilding projects consistent with the demand on their register.

We have also set out our intention in the Housing and Planning Bill to require local planning authorities to publish and maintain up-to-date registers of brownfield sites suitable for housing. This will enable local authorities to identify those sites which they regard as suitable for housing. As a local planning authority, Brentwood Borough Council would be expected to hold a register of brownfield land suitable for housing. We will be consulting on the detail of the proposals shortly.

BRANDON LEWIS MP

Representation ID: 13510 – 21st March 2016.

- As referenced by Brandon Lewis MP in communication to Rt Hon Sir Eric Pickles MP (ref 1834883), The “Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015” comes into force in April 2016. I would like this to be referenced in the LDP self-build policy 7.2 as appropriate.
- Given the expected demand for self-build (as referenced in point #67 of the 2011 Housing Strategy for England), I would propose that the minimum 5% self-build should also apply to developments of 20 or more dwellings.
- As referenced by Brandon Lewis MP in communication to Rt Hon Sir Eric Pickles MP (ref. 1834883), The Housing and Planning Bill which is currently going through Parliament will require local authorities to ensure there are sufficient plots with planning permission to meet the local demand shown on the local self-build register. Therefore, the number of self-build plots allocated per site should be proportional to the local demand for self-build within Brentwood, with 5% considered as a minimum. This percentage should be evaluated at the time of any planning application versus the demand noted on the local self-build register once this is in place.
- For smaller dwellings (under 20) on brownfield land owned by the taxpayer, I propose that local Brentwood residents (represented as individuals or local community groups; eg Community Interest Companies) who have shown an interest in self-build by signing up to a self-build register should be given first priority for such brownfield sites with at least 10% of sites (IE, not dwellings within sites) being prioritised for self-build and custom housebuilding.
- For smaller dwellings (under 20) on brownfield land not owned by the taxpayer, I propose that the decision for the proportion of plots to be allocated as self-build would be a decision solely for the landowner, with the local council merely encouraging the landowners to consider “direct-to-consumer self or custom-build” as an attractive option.
- A strong focus and lead on self-build within Brentwood will bring communities together, will get more dwellings built and more bricklayers trained in this country.
- With regards to developing self-build and custom-build guidance, a useful site locally can be found on the neighbouring council website - this includes access to a custom build homes fund and a self-build register: <http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/selfbuild>

Summary

- *Reference Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 in Policy 7.2.*
- *Propose that minimum 5% self-build should also apply to developments of 20 or more dwellings.*
- *For smaller dwellings (under 20) on brownfield land owned by the taxpayer, propose that local Brentwood residents be given first priority with at least 10% of sites being prioritised for self-build.*
- *As referenced by Brandon Lewis MP in communication to Rt Hon Sir Eric Pickles MP, the number of self-build plots allocated per site should be proportional to the local demand for self-build within Brentwood as noted on the local self-build register.*