

Ipswich Borough Council Self-build and Custom Build Register Monitoring Report 2021/2022

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1. Self-build and Custom Build Monitoring Report 2021/2022

- 1.1 The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) places a duty on local authorities to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who wish to acquire plots of land on which to build their own home and to publicise that Register. The Act also places a responsibility on local authorities to grant permission for enough serviceable plots for self-build or custom build housing in order to meet that demand.
- 1.2 This report sets out the demand for self-build and custom build housing in Ipswich Borough, as shown by the number of individuals on the Ipswich Borough Council Self-Build and Custom Build Register on the 30th October 2022. The Council has not set a local connection test or financial solvency test and is therefore not required to have two parts to the register.

2. Defining Self-build and Custom Build

- 2.1 Self-build and custom housebuilding are defined in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 as: *“...the building or completion by— (a) individuals, (b) associations of individuals, or (c) persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals of houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals. But it does not include the building of a house on a plot acquired from a person who builds the house wholly or mainly to plans or specifications decided or offered by that person.”*¹
- 2.2 The definition underlines the importance of the role that the future occupier takes. Where a developer delivers speculative units (notwithstanding a purchaser could make various choices during the construction phase (e.g. kitchen and bathrooms) for profit, this is outside the definition.

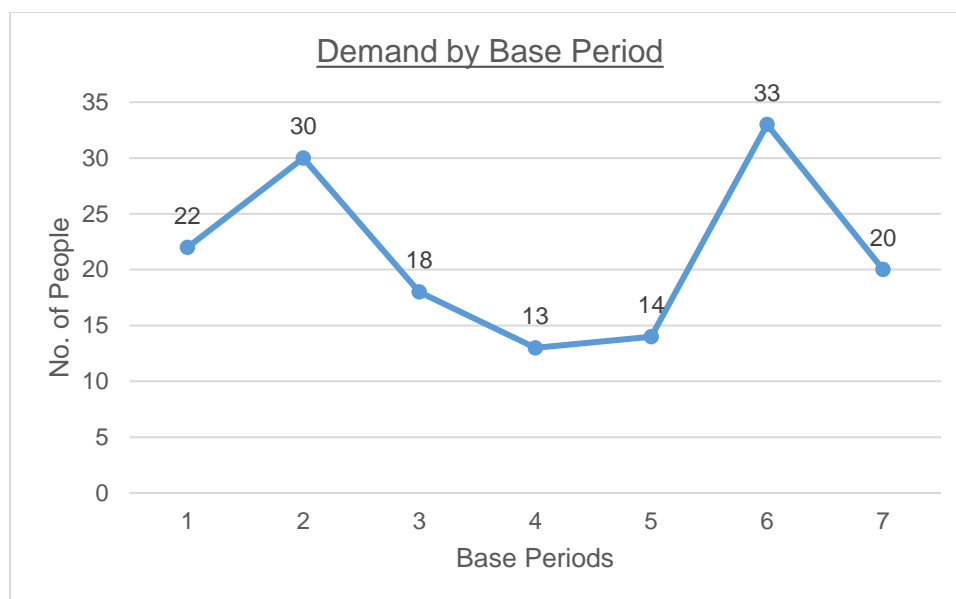
3. Demand for Self-build and Custom Housebuilding in Ipswich

- 3.1 The Ipswich Self-Build and Custom Build Register has been running since May 2015. Demand is measured in ‘base periods’ that run from the start of the register until 30th October 2016 and then annually from 31st October until 30th October the following year.
- 3.2 In Ipswich the base periods run as follows:

Base period 1 - from May 2015 until 30th October 2016
Base period 2 - from 31st October 2016 until 30th October 2017
Base period 3 - from 31st October 2017 until 30th October 2018
Base period 4 - from 31st October 2018 until 30th October 2019
Base period 5 - from 31st October 2019 until 30th October 2020
Base period 6 - from 31st October 2020 until 30th October 2021
Base period 7 - from 31st October 2021 until 30th October 2022

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/22/section/9/enacted>

Figure 1 – Demand by Base Period (May 15 – 30 Oct 22)



3.3 Demand for self-build and custom build plots declined during the seventh base period (2021/22). This drop in demand could be a consequence of the rising cost of living, higher mortgage rates and the increasing cost of construction materials. The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveys (RICS) are reporting delays and increased prices of materials and labour across the economy. These factors maybe causing many people to reassess their housing needs.

3.4 During 2020/21 demand for larger homes with home offices and private outdoor space increased as people spent more time at home, and some were afforded greater job flexibility. This trend was reflected in the self-build and custom build register.

3.5 In October 2020 the Building Societies Association (BSA) and the National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA) conducted an online survey into people’s attitudes to self-building, and whether COVID-19 had changed how they saw their existing home². The research created a snapshot of the market and consumer intentions around the idea of home.

3.6 The key findings from the survey were as follows:

- One in five people considered moving as a result of COVID-19, with one in 20 considering building their own home to ensure the design meets their needs.
- Nearly half (48%) of people wanted more space either inside (36%) or outside (37%).

² Self and Custom Build Consumer Survey of Self Build Intentions & The Effect of COVID-19 On How We See Our Homes, October 2020 - <https://www.bsa.org.uk/BSA/files/43/43a0f297-0206-44a9-8cb5-ee4792929d26.pdf>

- There is sizeable demand for home office space, with almost two in five people saying this was something they needed.

4. Additional Information from the Register

4.1 In addition to the ‘standard’ questions that are needed to establish whether applicants meet the criteria set for inclusion on the self-build register, extra questions are asked to help establish what people are interested in building and how much money is available to finance it. The results are useful in helping to provide evidence to inform planning applications, council decisions and policy development.

4.2 The majority of people on the register are interested in detached housing (4 out of 5 people on the Register). The next largest category is detached bungalows. Ipswich does not have a generally high demand for bungalows and this may be reflective of the demographic of people on the Register, the majority of which are over 60.

Figure 2 – Preferred Property Type (May 15 – 30 Oct 22)

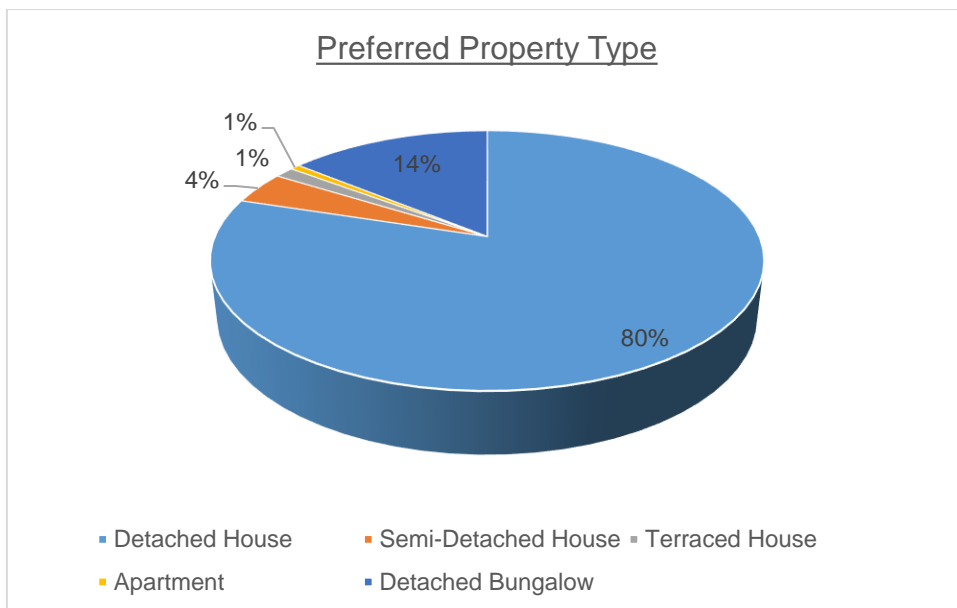


Figure 3 – Minimum Number of Bedrooms (May 15 – 30 Oct 22)

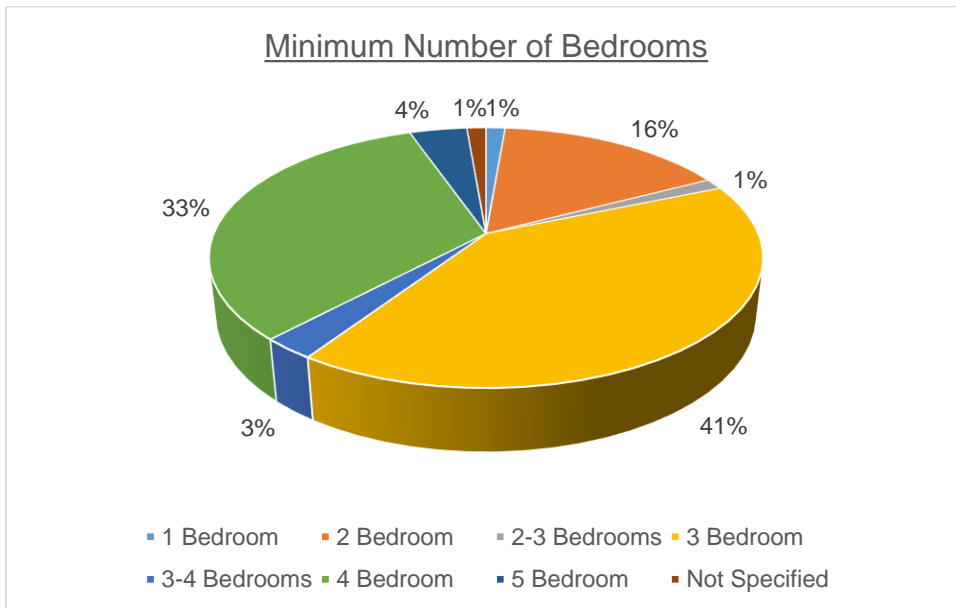


Figure 4 – Number of Individuals on the Register with Previous Experience of a Self-build or Custom Build Project (May 15 – 30 Oct 22)

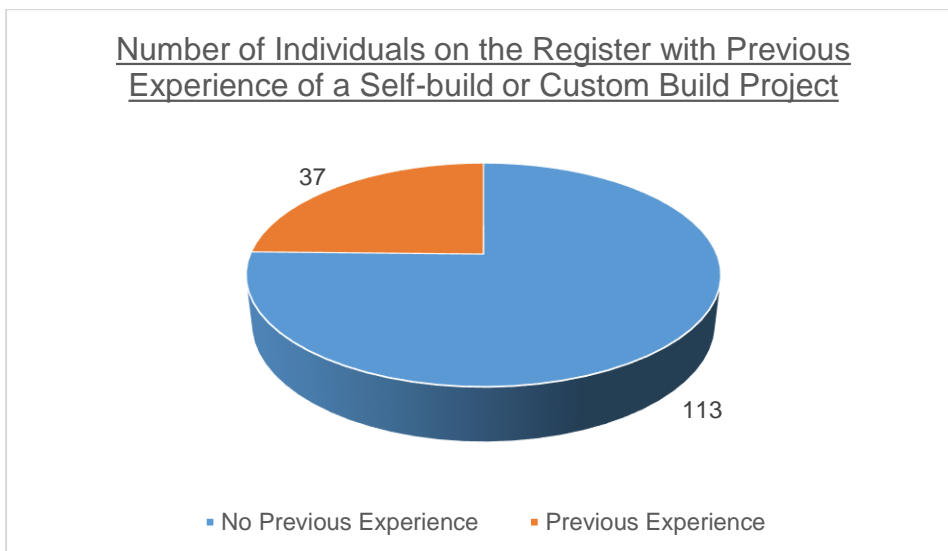
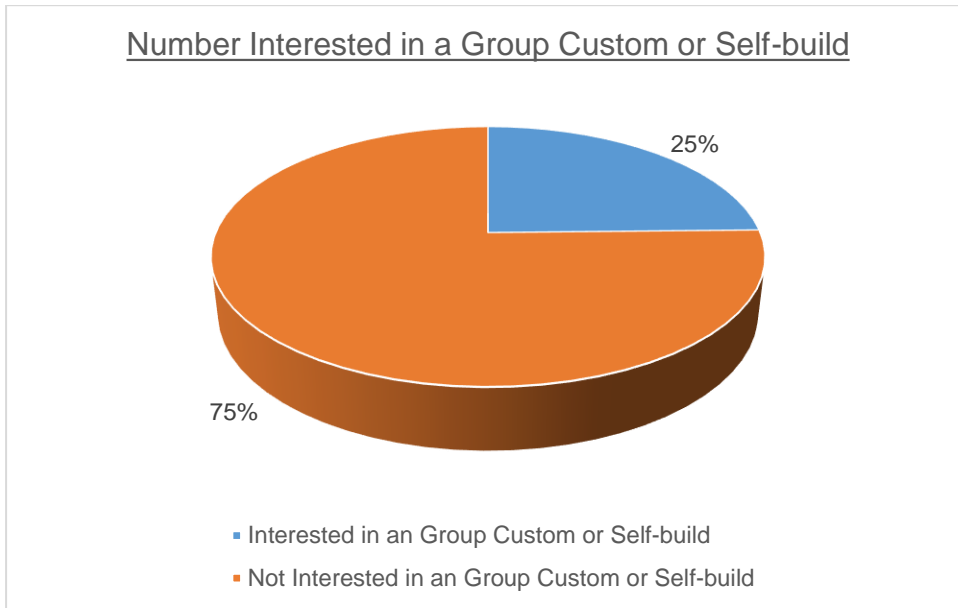
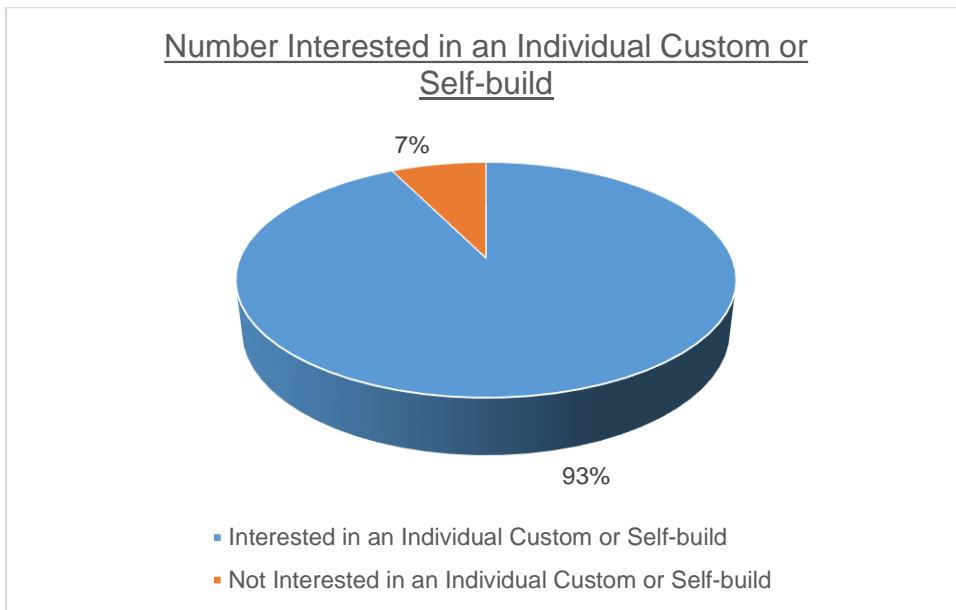


Figure 5 – Number Interested in Group Custom or Self-build
(May 15 – 30 Oct 22)



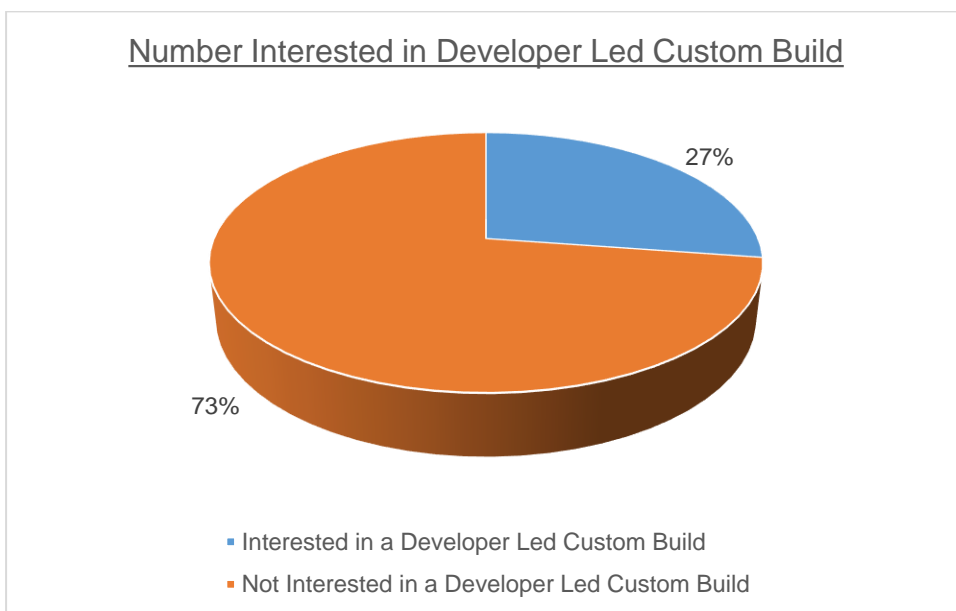
4.3 Group custom / self-build – a group of people come together to design and develop a custom / self-build housing development which they then live in as their sole residence. They may build this themselves or with help from a developer to manage the project. The Borough Register shows that only one in four people on the Register is interested in a group of people come together to design and develop a custom / self-build housing development which they then live in as their sole residence.

Figure 6 – Number Interested in an Individual Custom or Self-Build (May 15 – 30 Oct 22)



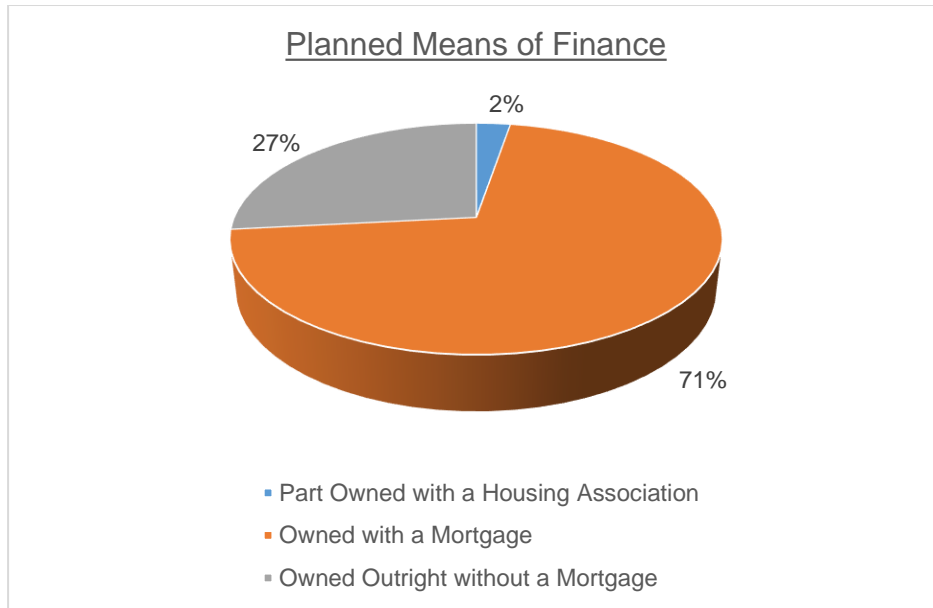
4.4 Individual custom / self-build – a person purchases of a single plot of land to build a home to live in as their sole residence. They may do some or all of the build themselves or employ someone to build the house for them. It is clear from the pie chart above, that 9 out of 10 people on the Register are interested in an individual custom or self-build home and not one located on a new residential estate.

Figure 7 – Number Interested in Developer Led Custom Build (May 15 – 30 Oct 22)



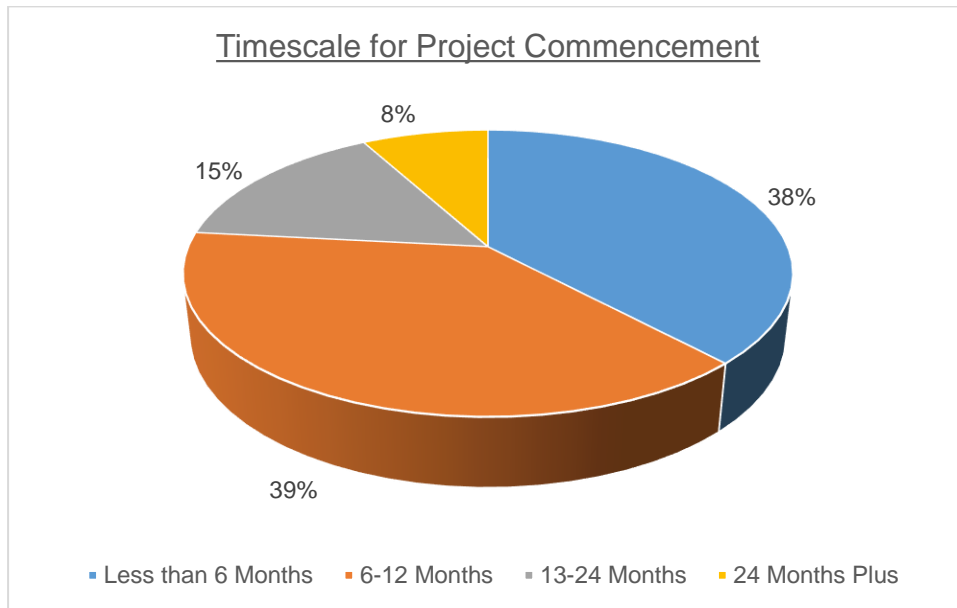
4.5 Developer-led custom build – a developer divides a larger site into individual plots and provides a design and build service to purchasers enabling people to customise existing house designs. It is likely that these plots will be part of a larger housing scheme. This gives people a chance to tailor existing house designs to suit their own preference and needs. Just over one in four on the Ipswich Register are interested in this form of self-build.

Figure 8 – Planned Means of Finance (May 15 – 30 Oct 22)



4.6 In Ipswich, the Register shows that a little over one in four people on the Register can finance the self-build without a mortgage and that over two thirds on the Register would require a mortgage. Interestingly only two people on the Ipswich Register are looking for shared ownership arrangements. However, this Pie Chart does not look at the rental market and self-build.

Figure 9 – Timescale for Project Commencement (May 15 – 30 Oct 22)



4.7 It is clear that over three quarters of people on the Register are looking at early commencement of the self-build project, within a year (half of which expect to commence in six months). Only a small proportion (8%) are looking at a more medium term start of more than 2 years to commence the project.

5. Delivery

5.1 The Right to Build legislation requires councils to ensure that they have met the demand for Self-build and Custom Build plots in their area and this requires robust and ongoing monitoring of the plot delivery.

5.2 During the first base-period, the IBC Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register received 22 eligible applications for entry onto the register. Therefore, by 30 October 2019, IBC had a duty to facilitate suitable development permissions for a minimum of 22 serviced plots.

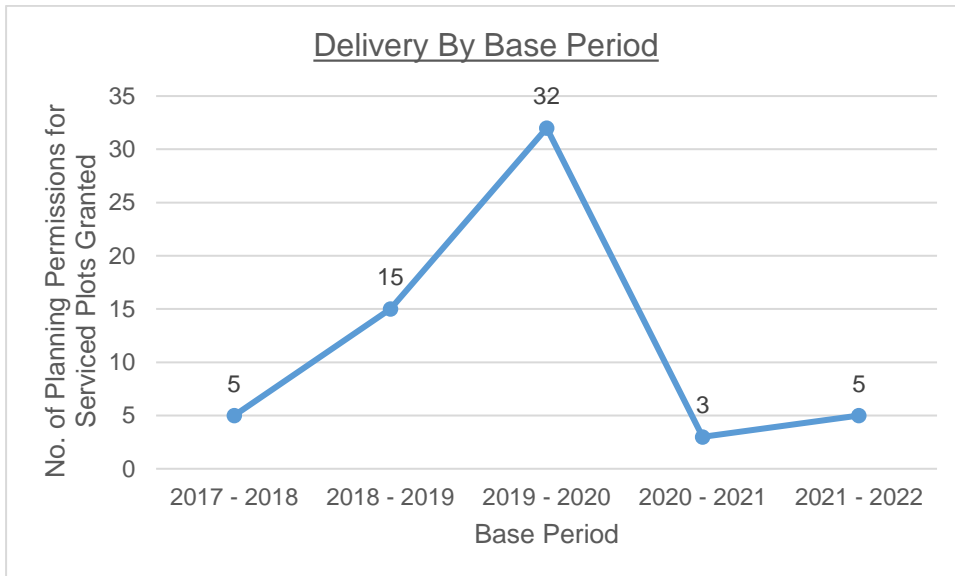
5.3 During the second base-period, the IBC Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register received 30 eligible applications for entry onto the register. Therefore, by 30 October 2020, IBC had a duty to facilitate suitable development permission for a minimum of 30 serviced plots.

5.4 During the third base-period, the IBC Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register received 18 eligible applications for entry onto the register. Therefore, by 30 October 2021, IBC has a duty to facilitate suitable development permission for a minimum of 18 serviced plots.

5.5 During the fourth base-period, the IBC Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register received 13 eligible applications for entry onto the register. Therefore,

by 30 October 2022, IBC has a duty to facilitate suitable development permission for a minimum of 13 serviced plots.

Figure 10 – Delivery by Base Period (30 Oct 2017 – 30 Oct 2022)



5.6 Between 31st October 2021 and 30th October 2022, the Council did not grant sufficient suitable permissions for serviced plots to meet the demand identified through the register. The Council granted permission for five serviced plots which met the definition of self-build / custom build. This was against demand for 13 serviced plots, a shortfall of 62%. The Council is taking steps to address the issue of under delivery of self-build and custom build development. The mechanisms being adopted are reported in Section 6 below.

5.7 A comparable shortfall in delivery was reported during the 2020/21 base period. Between 31st October 2020 and 30th October 2021, the Council granted permission for three serviced plots which met the definition of self-build / custom build. This was against demand for 18 serviced plots, a shortfall of 83%. (The 2021/22 base period coincided with the Coronavirus pandemic, which saw extended periods of lockdown and created uncertainty across the construction sector. Although the Council continued to process planning applications throughout the 2020/21 base period, the general uncertainty caused by the Coronavirus pandemic may have contributed to the decline in self-build custom build permissions.

5.8 During 2019/20 the Council granted planning permission for 32 serviced plots of land suitable for self-build custom build, two in excess of the number required to meet the demand identified through the register. This included 25 self-build/custom build plots at Ipswich Garden Suburb in the Henley Gate Neighbourhood, located between Henley Road and Westerfield Road. Outline Planning Permission was granted on 30 January 2020 on the Henley Gate Neighbourhood (application reference IP/16/00608/OUT). This granted Outline Permission for 1,100 dwellings alongside, a new primary school, a local centre

comprising a mix of retail units and a new 30 ha country park with a visitor centre. This development will also include 25 self-build plots, a vehicular railway bridge and a pedestrian bridge.

5.9 Between 2017 and 2019 the Council granted permission for a total of 20 serviced plots suitable for self-build or custom build development, 2 permissions short of the number required to meet the demand identified through the Self-build Custom Build Register.

6. What is the Council Doing to Support the Delivery of Self-build and Custom Build?

6.1 The Ipswich Borough Council Local Plan adopted in March 2022 supports self-build and custom build development in the interest of delivering high quality homes.

6.2 The newly adopted Ipswich Local Plan looks forward fifteen years (2018-2036) and allocates land for future housing and employment growth, along with planning for infrastructure to support it. Through the newly adopted Local Plan the Council has strengthened its commitment to deliver self-build and custom build housing through Policy CS8 (Housing Type and Tenure). The Local Plan advises that when considering major development applications, the Council will consider the currently applicable Self-build and Custom Build Register and whether provision should be included within the development.

6.3 During this monitoring year the Council has taken steps to improve its self-build and custom build monitoring practices to ensure it is accurately capturing all relevant permission. The Planning and Development Team have written to all agents operating in the Ipswich area reminding them of their duties under the Self-build and Custom Build Act 2015 (as amended). Development Management Officers have taken part in training on self-build and custom build development. Finally, the Council has updated its website to include more guidance for prospective applicants and agents. This is in addition to the data on demand and supply already published through the website.

6.4 In summer 2022 the Council prepared the Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022³ which describes the challenges facing the Council in terms of housing delivery and sets out a clear path to address them. The purpose of the document is to identify what steps the Council needs to take in order to assist with the delivery of sufficient number and quality of new homes to meet annual housing targets and therefore meet the required number of homes for the local plan period to 2036. The report examines the current state of play, exploring the challenges and opportunities to build the scale of housing needed in Ipswich.

6.5 In order to support housing delivery more broadly, including self-build and custom build development, the Council is currently consulting on an update to its Local Validation List. The Local Validation List sets out the information that

³ Ipswich Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022 - <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/draft-housing-delivery-action-plan>

Ipswich Borough Council will require to be submitted prior to a planning application being validated. The review of the Local Validation List will provide greater certainty to applicants (including self-builders) about the type and extent of information required and ensures the Council has all the information it needs to determine applications in a timely manner.

- 6.6 The Planning and Development Department has identified promotion of pre-applications as a service priority. The Council is committed to offering a range of pre-application services and will be updating its website to make clear the process, cost, timetable and output. The Council has reviewed its pre-application procedures and has introduced a traffic light assessment format for pre-application feedback. Issues discussed at pre-application are rated as red (issues that could result in refusal), amber (issues that require further information or clarification) or green (issues that are resolved or agreed). This enables the main messages to be communicated clearly and creates a clearer route map for applicants. This will assist self-build delivery by highlighting to all applicants for major residential developments the demand for self-build and custom build plots in the Borough. It will also help self-builders navigate the complexities of the planning process.
- 6.7 It is envisaged that the above measures will help the Council to support the delivery of self-build and custom build housing in Ipswich.