

**Hounslow Local Plan (2020-2041)
Examination
Stage 1 Hearings Note**

**Housing
Note on Approach to Custom and Self-Build Housing**

February 2026



**London Borough
of Hounslow**

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1.0 Approach to Custom and Self-build Housing

Introduction

1.1 This section of the Housing Note responds to a request from the Inspectors during the Matter 3 hearing (Meeting the Borough's Housing Needs) of the Stage 1 Hounslow Local Plan 2020-2041 hearings, held on Thursday 15th January 2026. The details of the tasks undertaken in this section of the Note are set out in Documents Requested by the Inspectors in Hearings Week 1 2026 (**EX30a**)¹ as follows:

*Explain why the Council does not have a specific Custom and Self-Build Housing policy, use figures to demonstrate lack of need in comparison to other types of housing need in the borough, specifically affordable tenures, as evidenced by the Local Housing Needs Assessment update (2024) (**EBSC3**)².*

Legislative and Policy Context for Custom and Self-Build Housing

1.2 The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act (2015)³ sets the requirement that LB Hounslow, as a relevant authority, must maintain a register of groups and individuals interested in Custom and Self-build Housing in the borough. The Act also stipulates that Local Planning Authorities should seek to provide the number of plots for Custom and Self-Build Housing that corresponds to the additions to the register.

1.3 The 2023 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (**ORD3**)⁴ reiterates these expectations. In paragraph 63 it states that the type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed including '*people wishing to commission or build their own homes*'. Paragraph 70, part B states, in the context of small sites, that local planning authorities should:

seek opportunities, through policies and decisions, to support small sites to come forward for community-led development for housing and self-build and custom-build housing

¹[examination-document-ex30a-documents-requested-by-inspectors-in-hearings-week-1-update-february-2026-](#)

² [Hounslow Local Housing Needs Assessment Refresh](#)

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/17/contents>

⁴ [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

1.4 The London Plan 2021 (**ADP1**)⁵ reflects the small-sites focus of paragraph 70 of the NPPF. Policy H2 Small Sites, part A, sub-part 4 says that boroughs should ‘*support those wishing to bring forward custom, self-build and community-led housing*’.

1.5 Within this context, the Council’s approach to Custom and Self-build Housing is set out in Hounslow Local Plan 2020-2041 (**S1**)⁶ Policy SC1 part G, which states that the Council will support:

The delivery of custom and self-build housing development provided they make efficient use of land through optimising densities as far as appropriate in the context of the site, and in accordance with all other development plan policies.

1.6 The Council considers that, due to the constraints and considerations outlined in subsequent sections of this Note, the approach taken in Policy SC1 is consistent with the London Plan, fulfils the Council’s statutory duties and responds to the specific housing needs in the borough.

Custom and Self-Build in Hounslow

1.7 Hounslow’s Custom and Self-build Housing register is currently comprised of 505 individuals and 4 associations. While this would appear to indicate a relatively high demand for Custom and Self-Build Housing in the borough, analysis of the data (fig. 1 in Appendix 1 of this note) demonstrates that additions to the register peaked following its introduction in Base Period 1 and diminishes after: 214 of the 505 total entries on the individuals register come from Base Period 1 (1 April 2016 to 30 October 2016). This is not considered to indicate a high level of consistent interest in Custom and Self-Build Housing in the borough.

1.8 Furthermore, the interest is not specific to Hounslow Borough. Of the 451 individuals on the register for years in which we hold detailed returns, only 120 (27%) indicated that they lived within Hounslow borough. Additionally, 432 (96%) are open to sites in other areas of the country⁷.

1.9 Regarding the preference of types of homes indicated by individuals on the register, 270 (60%) expressed a preference for a detached property. While this is an optional preference and does not necessarily preclude the individual accepting a smaller plot, it does demonstrate a desire

⁵ [the_london_plan_2021.pdf](#)

⁶ [Hounslow Local Plan 2020-2041 Proposed Submission Version.pdf](#)

⁷ Detailed DELTA returns are unavailable for Base Periods 3, 4, and 5. As a result these years are included in totals of registrations but discounted from other more detailed analyses.

to build at densities that would be incompatible both with Hounslow's London-Plan derived housing targets and with Local Plan Policy SC1 G's aim that Custom and Self-Build Housing optimises density. Part Q of the same policy states that development proposals should: *'make effective and efficient use of land by seeking to optimise housing densities'*; London Plan Policy D3 also seeks a density-by-design approach.

1.10 Following the end of the London Plan housing targets in 2028-29, the Council proposes a capacity-led housing target that seeks to maximise housing delivery and other development on brownfield land in the borough. In this context, given brownfield sites will be utilised to optimise the borough's housing capacity, the registered interest in Custom and Self-Build Housing presents a conflict and would likely reduce the overall number of homes that could be accommodated within the borough, especially given the expressed preference for detached homes. The approach would therefore not be consistent with the Plan as a whole, or the aims of paragraph 4.1.11 of the London Plan and the requirements of Policy D3 of the London Plan.

1.11 There is a low bar for entry onto the Custom and Self-Build Housing register in Hounslow, with no local connection test, financial solvency test or charge to be entered onto the register. This can result in those on the register not being necessarily committed to building in Hounslow. The high percentage of people on the register that express interest in other local authorities means that they may not accept a plot in Hounslow should one come forward. In light of other pressing elements of the borough's housing needs, it is not considered to be justified or effective to prioritise the delivery of Custom and Self-Build plots, beyond the approach already in place through Part G of Policy SC1 of the Plan. Crucially, this qualified interest must be offset against the overwhelming need for affordable housing in the borough, discussed on page 6 of this Note.

Hounslow's Affordable Housing Need

- 1.12 As set out on page 62 the Local Housing Needs Assessment update 2024 (LHNA) (EBSC3)⁸, 10,876 households will be unable to afford Social Rent in Hounslow over the Plan period. There is an overall affordable housing need in the borough of 18,157.
- 1.13 The affordable housing needs as calculated in the LHNA refer only to the need within the administrative area of Hounslow Borough over the Plan period, whereas the interest in Custom and Self-Build Housing has nationwide coverage, with the only limits to registration being set by the 2015 Act. As such, it is the Council's position that delivery of higher-density housing, either entirely affordable on Council-owned schemes, or of a sufficient size that the affordable housing requirements in Policy SC2 would be triggered, should be prioritised in order to meet the needs of Hounslow's residents.
- 1.14 Only 28 of those on the register (excluding Base Periods 3-5 for which data is unavailable) living in Hounslow expressed an interest in a part-ownership scheme, which is the only question that relates to affordable housing on the Council's Self-Build Registration Form. 56 people reported that they had an annual income or capital to expend on the project exceeding £50,000, making them ineligible for affordable housing in any event. When considering people on the register from outside the borough, these numbers rise to 93 and 168 respectively.
- 1.15 These figures suggest that Custom and Self-Build Housing will be unable to meet the affordable housing needs of Hounslow's existing residents, which in the context set out above, is a priority for the Plan.

Benchmarking against other Boroughs

- 1.16 For context, it is useful to compare the approach taken to Custom and Self-Build Housing in other London boroughs who have recently adopted Local Plans. Of the six London boroughs with a recently adopted⁹ Local Plan,¹⁰ only Lewisham has a dedicated policy specifically for Custom and Self-Build Housing: HO9. Similar to SC1 G of the Hounslow Plan, Lewisham Policy HO3¹¹ requires that housing of this type optimises density. There is an additional expectation that any scheme that comes forward should do so with a design-led approach.

⁸ EBSC3 - [Hounslow Local Housing Needs Assessment update \(2024\)](#)

⁹ As defined by the GLA, the term 'recently adopted' means formally adopting a Local Plan within the last 2 calendar years

¹⁰ <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/planning/implementing-london-plan/local-plans-and-general-conformity-london-plan/local-plans-status-map>

¹¹ <https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/planning/policy/adopted-local-plan/adoption-of-the-local-plan>

The supporting text of this policy also reinforces that a design-led approach will be required to ensure that Custom and Self-Build Housing responds positively to the environment.

1.17 The other five London boroughs with recently adopted Local Plans have taken an approach similar to LB Hounslow, using clauses within a strategic housing policy to demonstrate support for Custom and Self-Build Housing while ensuring that schemes comply with the rest of the Development Plan. A table comparing these policies is given in Appendix 2 of this Note.

1.18 Of the remaining five recently adopted Local Plans, Barking and Dagenham, Merton, and Richmond have policy wording which is similar to LB Hounslow, supporting the delivery of Custom and Self-Build Housing that accords with the development plan and is at sufficiently high densities. Kensington and Chelsea's Policy HO2: Small Sites features more detailed wording, but the supporting text states that, per their Local Housing Needs Assessment:

demand in the borough is low for self-build and custom build homes compared to, for example the pressing demand for affordable homes. There are also no suitable plots of land that have been identified in the borough for this purpose

1.19 Barnet Policy GSS01: Delivering Sustainable Growth encourages Neighbourhood Plans to identify appropriate sites to deliver 'policy compliant' Custom and Self-Build Housing, where there is unmet demand. The Barnet Local Plan also includes references to Custom and Self-Build Housing in Policy HOU02: Housing Mix and in the monitoring indicators.

Conclusions

1.20 The Council considers that the approach taken to Custom and Self-Build Housing in the Plan is consistent with national policy and in general conformity with the London Plan 2021. The requirement in Part 4 of London Plan Policy H2 – Small Sites is for boroughs to, "support those wishing to bring forward custom, self-build and community-led housing".

The approach taken in Policy SC1 of the Local Plan is consistent with this requirement. As demonstrated in Appendix 2 of this Note, the majority of recently adopted Local Plans in London do not include a policy dedicated to Custom and Self Build housing. Including criteria for Custom and Self Build sites as part of a wider strategic housing policy is appropriate and consistent with Policy H2 of the London Plan. Accordingly, by benchmarking against other

recently adopted Local Plans in London, the Council has demonstrated that the approach taken in the Plan is aligned with other London boroughs that face similar challenges around affordable housing delivery and availability of brownfield land.

1.21 In light of the steer given by the London Plan Policy D3 to maximise housing density through design, and with consideration of the evidence of affordable housing need presented by the LHNA (**EBSC3**), the Plan approach is justified in supporting but not prioritising the delivery of Custom and Self-Build Housing, which, especially given that 53% of the total entrants to Hounslow's register expressed a preference for detached houses, would come at the expense of higher-density affordable housing delivery. In this context, and having regard to the points discussed in this Note, it is considered that the support for Custom and Self-Build Housing expressed by Part G of Policy SC1 of the Plan takes a balanced and proportionate approach that is appropriate in the context of Hounslow.

Appendix 1: Summary of Custom and Self-Build Register. *indicates that these columns do not feature data from each base period

Base period	Additions to register	No. living in LBH	No. open to sites beyond LBH	No. expressing preference for detached home	No. that would consider a part-ownership scheme (LBH residents)	No. that would consider a part-ownership scheme (non-LBH residents)	No. with capital to provide to project, or gross household income over 50000 (LBH residents)	No. with capital to provide to project, or gross household income over 50000 (non-LBH residents)
1 (2015/16)	214	20	212	132	7	61	11	103
2 (2016/17)	47	6	46	29	0	12	1	22
3 (2017/18)	(24)							
4 (2018/19)	(2)							
5 (2019/20)	(28)							
6 (2020/21)	76	33	72	46	7	10	17	22
7 (2021/22)	43	18	42	24	4	5	11	7
8 (2022/23)	18	12	17	15	4	1	8	4
9 (2023/24)	29	13	25	15	2	3	4	8
10 (2024/25)	24	18	18	9	4	1	4	2
Totals	505	120*	432*	270*	28*	93*	56*	168*

Appendix 2: Comparison of Custom and Self-build housing Policies in Recently Adopted Local Plans within London

LPA (year of adoption)	CSB Policy	Reference in other policies	Policy content
Barking & Dagenham (2024) ¹²	No	SP3: Delivering Homes that Meet People's Needs	<i>"supporting planning applications for self-build and custom-build, as well as purpose built shared housing through innovative approaches, subject to proposals adhering to other relevant Local Plan policies"</i>
Barnet (2025) ¹³	No	GSS01: Delivering Sustainable Growth	<i>"The Council will support policy compliant proposals that make efficient use of land to meet demand for Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding, including on small sites. Neighbourhood Plans will be encouraged to identify appropriate sites for self-build or custom-build where there is unmet demand."</i>
		Policy HOU02 – Housing Mix	Reference to "Potential for custom-build and community led schemes." When considering dwelling-size mix
		Monitoring indicators	Indicates how Custom and Self-Build Housing delivery will be monitored, this is in line with current LBH practice.
Kensington and Chelsea (2024) ¹⁴	No	HO2: Small Sites	<i>"The Council takes a positive approach to the delivery of new homes by supporting delivery on small sites as follows: 4. Self-build and custom build homes including the provision of serviced plots subject to availability and community-led housing"</i>
Lewisham (2025)	H09: Custom-Build and Self-Build Housing		<i>"B. Development proposals for self-build or custom-build housing will only be supported where they: a. Make the optimal use of land and support the delivery of the spatial strategy; b. Where appropriate make provision for affordable housing in line with Policy HO3 (Genuinely affordable housing); and c. Are appropriately located and of a high-quality design, with reference to other Local Plan policies. C. Development proposals for self-build and custom-build housing must demonstrate how the design-led approach has been used. They should clearly identify whether there are any elements of the design that may require adaptation to secure the delivery of new housing."</i>
Merton (2024) ¹⁵	No	H11.2 Housing Provision	<i>"Supporting proposals for custom, self-build and community-led housing which optimise the use of land and meet all relevant policy requirements, such as those for affordable housing."</i>

¹² <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/planning-building-control-and-local-land-charges/planning-guidance-and-policies/development-plan>

¹³ <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/2012-local-plan-superseded>

¹⁴ <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan>

¹⁵ <https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/local-plan>

Richmond (2025) ¹⁶	No	Policy 12: Housing Needs of Different Groups	<i>“Proposals for custom, self-build and community-led housing will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the residential density of the site has been optimised and other policy requirements have been met, including those for affordable housing in accordance with Policy 11 'Affordable Housing (Strategic Policy)’”</i>
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¹⁶ https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/planning/planning_policy/local_plan/adopted_local_plan