

# Self-Build Idea Paper

Under our Local Plan, Cornwall must deliver more new homes to meet the needs of our current and future residents. Historically, many people built their own homes in Cornwall, although in more recent years, policies of restraint outside of the main towns and villages reduced the supply of suitable small plots. The Cornwall Local Plan provides for a more dispersed pattern of development, allowing for organic growth where it supports or enables the local provision of appropriate services and facilities.

In line with our strategic aims to deliver a mix of housing under Policy 6, the Council want to deliver more housing choice by supporting residents to build their own homes. Self-build rates in Cornwall (and nationally) are low; elsewhere in Europe, self-build is much more mainstream<sup>1</sup>, delivering more than half of all new builds in some other EU countries.

## Our idea

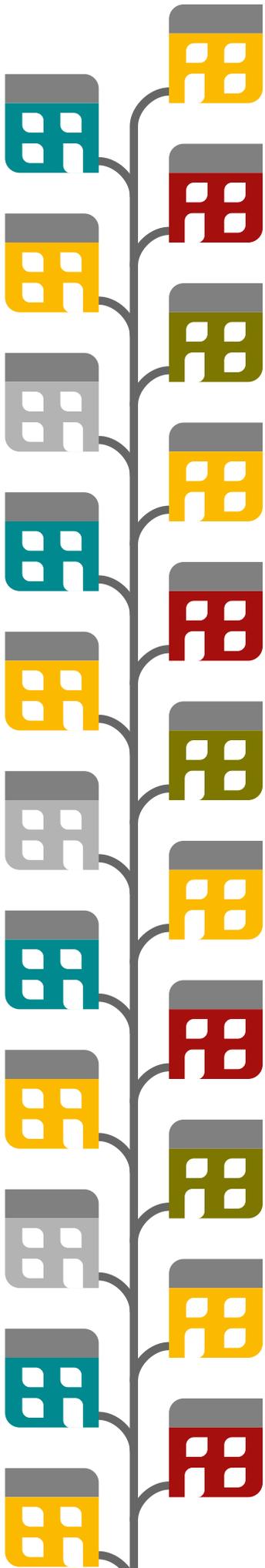
We are proposing a community-led approach where we support small scale self-build development on sites outside of but adjacent to the existing built up area of towns, villages and other small settlements whose primary purpose is to provide self-build opportunities to meet local needs. Any such sites would be well related to the physical form of the settlement and appropriate in scale, character and appearance and would need to meet all of the following conditions:

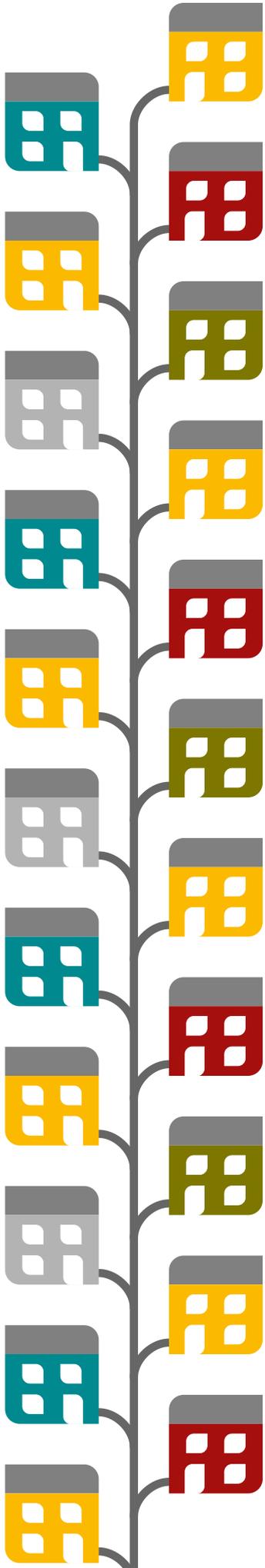
- Small scale self-build schemes, supported by the community, of up to 6 plots (minimum of 2);
- In smaller villages and hamlets smaller sites of 2 or 3 homes would only usually be appropriate depending on the size of the settlement
- Evidenced local need as shown on the self-build register;
- The freehold of at least half of the developable land (excluding any infrastructure) must be transferred at zero cost to the Council as serviced plots (this would be enforced through a section 106 agreement)<sup>2</sup>;
- The proportion of plots that must be transferred to the Council will vary depending on the relevant value zone (in value zone 1, a greater proportion will be required than in lower value areas) but will always be a minimum of 50% of the developable land;
- The allocated Cornwall Council plots must be serviced, readily accessible and transferred to the Council within [an agreed period of time or before work commences on any of the market plots] of outline permission being granted – transfer will not be contingent on the sale of any market plots;
- CC Plots will be allocated on a freehold or leasehold basis to residents meeting the eligibility criteria<sup>3</sup> to build a home for their own permanent occupation;
- The remaining portion of the land can be developed by the landowner or sold on an open market basis as self-build plots, thus enabling the landowner to make a return on the land.
- All such proposals should be subject to a Design Code
- This policy must not permit artificial subdivision of a site and must not be used as a way to get round normal site thresholds.

1 in the UK the sector makes up around 7-10% of new builds while in Austria 80% of housing completions are self-build; in France the figure is nearer 60%. (source: HoC research paper March 2017)

2 We are still determining what will constitute a 'serviced plot' but it may include road access, utilities and other infrastructure.

3 The mechanism to determine who qualifies and means of control are currently being researched but control will only be at the first point of sale





This policy is additional to Policy 9 (Rural Exception Sites); if a site is appropriately located and can accommodate a greater scale of development, a mix of additional affordable housing and self-build could be accommodated together.

We can encourage Neighbourhood Plans to support schemes of this sort, but a mechanism should still exist to enable these sites to come forward where there is no NDP or where the NDP is silent on the issue.

Determination of which plots will be open market and which will be transferred to the Council will form part of the planning discussions. The policy should also benefit small local builders who may have had difficulty finding appropriate sites to build on and who may be engaged to assist with the building of the open market or self-build homes; it is unlikely to be of any interest to volume house builders.

Tell us what you think about our idea or any specific views you have on the following issues

- The split between landowner retained land and that transferred to the Council
- The qualifying criteria for first purchasers of a plot?
- Should Cornwall Council seek financial claw-back if a relevant property is sold before a certain period of time? Or require that the property can only be sold on to another qualifying local resident if it is sold in the first [5] years? Note that policies that are overly onerous may make it very difficult to secure development finance to complete any build.
- Should there be a standard specification Cornwall Council plot size?

Are you aware of any local demand for this type of development – are there any proposals that you know about that could come forward under this approach and would you support them?

Please let us know if you support this proposal and send all comments or feedback by email to [cosullivan@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:cosullivan@cornwall.gov.uk) by 23/2/2018. You can also reach me on 01209 616964.