



SELF BUILDERS PRESENT PLANNING MINISTER WITH NINE IDEAS FOR MAKING IT EASIER TO DELIVER MORE SELF BUILD HOMES

3 May 2013

Planning Minister Nick Boles MP will be asked to consider a number of ways of adjusting the planning system to make it easier for thousands more people to build a home for themselves.

The Minister will be participating in a planning debate at the Grand Design Live exhibition in London on Tuesday 7 May (12 noon). The radical ideas are grouped under two main headings – strategic planning initiatives that would encourage more land for self building; and ‘planning red tape’ that could be removed to make the processing of planning applications more straight forward.

The strategic issues the Minister will be asked to consider include:

- Encouraging large scale self build communities in the UK – like they have done in The Netherlands and Germany
- Allowing self builders to acquire surplus Government land on a ‘Build Now Pay Later’ basis (in the same way as the volume housebuilders can)
- Encouraging councils to run land auctions to buy land cost effectively, so that this can be used to provide modestly priced serviced building plots for local self builders
- Defining certain small self build homes as being ‘affordable’ – this could help encourage more self building in needy rural areas

The ‘planning red tape’ issues he will be asked to look at include:

- Reducing the number of ‘conditions’ local planning authorities impose on self builders. For example a typical bat survey can cost thousands of pounds and delay the construction of a home by many months.
- Allowing more people to build in large gardens. For example there are many examples of elderly people wanting to move into a bungalow in their garden, so they can pass their home on to their growing families; but at present projects like this seldom get approval.
- Encouraging more people to build really green homes by giving them ‘automatic’ planning approval is they reach a certain sustainability standard. (There would need to be some safeguards in areas such as the Green Belt).

The suggestions will be presented to the Planning Minister by the National Self Build Association (NaSBA), during a debate that should be one of the highlights of [National Self Build Week](#).

NaSBA Chair, Ted Stevens said: “The Government has already done a lot to make it easier for people to build a home for themselves, and they deserve credit for this. But we believe there is more that could be done. Most would-be self builders still find it incredibly difficult to find a suitable plot of land, and when they do acquire one they often encounter planning hurdles that can be very challenging to overcome. We want to work with the Government’s planning team see if there are some innovative ideas that can be progressed that might transform the self build sector and help it grow significantly.”

ENDS

For further information contact:

Ted Stevens on 07860 336087 or chair@nasba.org.uk.

Notes:

1. The first ever National Self Build Week (NSBW) will take place from 4-12 May 2013 and consists of a wide-ranging programme of events to help millions of Britons turn their self build dreams into a reality.

The news of the initiative coincides with the results of an exclusive Ipsos MORI poll, which shows that around six million people in Briton are currently planning or researching how to build a home for themselves and want to start their new home in the next year or so. The survey also suggests that one million people have already moved from the 'researching' to the 'action' stage, and are currently in the process of acquiring a building plot, obtaining planning permission or expect to start construction in the next 12 months.

Despite all this interest, in 2012 only around 12,000 Britons managed to build a home this way. And the UK's self build output is a fraction of that delivered by most European countries.

This mismatch between 'desire' to build a home and the actual output clearly highlights the need for NSBW.

One of the key aims of the initiative is to help more people understand the many ways it is now possible to get a home built. For example the Week will help explain what a Custom Build Home is; it will showcase some of the more innovative ways local authorities, specialist developers/enablers and others have been pioneering the delivery of self build homes; and it will provide lots of practical advice for would-be self builders.

NSBW is being organised by the National Self Build Association (NaSBA) and Grand Designs Live, and is supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). It coincides with the huge Grand Designs Live exhibition that takes place at Excel in London.