

NEWS RELEASE: 5th January 2011

Government wants a housebuilding revolution

Housing minister Grant Shapps has today launched an initiative to support the self build sector and encourage more people to build their own homes.

Working with the National Self Build Association (NaSBA), the Government will develop an action plan to boost the number of self builders across the country, and address the common barriers aspiring self builders face.

Mr Shapps said for far too long the aspirations of ordinary people to build their own home have been thwarted by barriers and red tape, and that the Government wanted the idea of 'building your own home' to become mainstream and less problematic. Barriers that stand in the way of self builders will be torn down - including a complex and bureaucratic planning system and regulatory burdens, and the Government is working with NaSBA members to tackle the issues lack of access to land and finance.

The announcement, the first time a Government have had a policy for self build, has been welcomed by self build specialists, and founding member of NaSBA, BuildStore, who have been campaigning for the self build model to become a mainstream housing supply route. Chief Executive of BuildStore, Raymond Connor, commented:

"Today's announcement is great news for aspiring self builders, the construction supply chain, and local economies. This level of support from Government is exactly what is needed to kick start a new revolution of self build homes, and we are looking forward to working with Mr Shapps' officials to develop the action plan and tackle the issues.

"We have been making the case for self build as a valid housing procurement route for some time, and the current climate has created a unique opportunity for the self build sector. Factors such as increased availability of land for sale, a drop in land prices, and the lower cost of labour have made self build more appealing and accessible, and for many people, self building is the only way to get the home they want at a price they can afford."

The self build sector has developed significantly in the last decade, and has an established marketplace and infrastructure in place to support anyone who wants to build their own home. The National Self Build & Renovation Centre in Swindon, also a NaSBA member, has been open for nearly four years, and has played a significant role in helping people understand the process of building a house, offering advice, information, and self build courses. Tim Doherty, of the National Centre, said:

"We have had a burgeoning self build sector in this country for the last ten years, with a dedicated supply chain and infrastructure in place to help self builders, so the announcement of government policy to support this sector is very welcome indeed, and will ensure that more people can take advantage of the expert advice and support on offer when deciding to build their own homes."

The new Community Right to Build will offer communities the chance to give the green light to new developments without the need for specific planning applications, whether its local people working alone to build their own homes, or entire communities coming together to build the homes and amenities the area needs.

Mr Shapps said self build could make a significant contribution to easing the housing shortage if the restrictions are relaxed:

“I want to break down the barriers that many aspiring self-builders often come up against. That’s why I’ve asked experts at the National Self Build Association to work with us to develop an action plan to make it easier for people to build their own homes, whether on their own or as part of a community effort to build a whole new neighbourhood.

“But the action plan will also look at how more people can be helped to make the most of the opportunities to build their own homes. For example, the new Community Right to Build will put power in the hands of local people to give the go-ahead to new developments in their area – and could open the door to a whole new generation of self builders.”

To learn more about building your own home, register for free tickets for the National Self Build & Renovation Show, 26 – 28 February 2011, hosted at the National Self Build & Renovation Centre in Swindon, at www.buildstore.co.uk/show

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Notes to Editors

BuildStore is at the heart of the UK’s self build and renovation sector, with a bespoke end-to-end offering of products and services, specifically designed to help self builders and renovators throughout their projects.

BuildStore’s core services include:

- Land finding via PlotSearch, the UK’s largest and most accurate online database of building plots, renovations and conversions. There are over 9,000 plots, renovations and conversions available, constantly validated for accuracy and include aerial photography
- Financial Services – BuildStore is the UK’s leading provider of tailored self build and renovation mortgages, allowing funds to be released in stages throughout the project giving positive cash flow. Mortgages are sold direct to the public and via intermediaries
- Buying materials - BuildStore’s TradeCard provides over 3,000 members with discounts and offers of building materials, plant and tool hire from leading suppliers and builder’s merchants, by combining the buying power of the UK’s self builders and renovators
- The UK’s first and only National Self Build & Renovation Centre, opened in February 2007 in Swindon; an impressive 67,000 sq ft Centre designed to educate, inform and inspire self builders and renovators.

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