

News Release: 3rd May 2011

Government pledge more land for Self Builders

SELF build and renovation specialists, BuildStore, has welcomed an announcement by Minister for Housing, Grant Shapps, in which he unveiled new measures to support people wanting to build their own homes, adding that self building "should be an option for all".

In a speech at the Grand Designs Live Show in London today (3rd May 2011), Mr Shapps said he wanted the UK's self build rates to catch up with Europe's and to become a mainstream housing option.

Further to his announcement about the Government's new 'Build Now, Pay Later' scheme last month, Mr Shapps said he wants public and private land to be made available for individual self builders, and community self build schemes. He called on housing associations and local authorities to show more support for the self build sector, and private landowners and investors to release more land to the growing self build community. He said he would soon reveal the first publicly owned sites to be made available to housebuilders with plots exclusively for self-builders.

Mr Shapps said the government would 'put its money where its mouth is' to help people to build their own homes.

He continued: "Self builders deliver affordable, greener and more innovatively-designed homes; and make a big contribution to the number of new homes built in this country, yet there is scope to significantly increase the number of self built homes in the UK - both for individual households and for community-driven projects."

"I want to turn around the fortunes of self-builders by cutting the red tape and bureaucracy they often face and make self build a reality for many more people. I'm encouraged by the ongoing work of our self-build working group, which is making good progress in developing an action plan to reduce the barriers that aspiring self-builders often face. These efforts will help bring self-build into the mainstream, and not simply be the preserve of the privileged few - meaning not just Grand Designs, but common designs."

"I can confirm that the government will lead the way to promote more self build housing by using the government's build now, pay later scheme to earmark public sector land, with plots available exclusively for self-builders."

"This will sit alongside the efforts we are already making to reduce the burden of regulation on the house building industry and through the Localism Bill to put power in the hands of communities up and down the country, enabling them to give the green light to new developments through the community right to build, and simplifying the overly-bureaucratic planning system."

Raymond Connor, Chief Executive of BuildStore has welcomed the measure: "As any prospective self builder will tell you, finding suitable land is one of the biggest barriers to building your own home, so this is great news for aspiring home builders."

"Ear-marking land exclusively for the self build community will be a massive boost to the industry, not only allowing more people to build their own homes, but also supporting the construction industry and local economies."

"BuildStore is already working with Local Authorities to develop new self build schemes and, as part of the Government-Industry Self Build Working Group, we look forward to helping develop more policies and measures to further support the industry, including tackling the availability of finance."

ENDS

About Buildstore

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 7,500 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. Mortgages are offered direct to the public and via intermediaries
- Buying materials - BuildStore's TradeCard provides over 4,000 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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