



THE NATIONWIDE FOUNDATION SUPPORTS VITAL WORK TO ENABLE MORE PEOPLE TO BUILD THEIR OWN AFFORDABLE HOMES



For release: **STRICTLY EMBARGOED until 00:00:01 26 November 2014**

The Nationwide Foundation is providing nearly £180,000 to fund a major programme designed to boost overall housing output, and in particular to make it much easier for people on modest incomes to build their own homes.

In most other countries, between a third to a half of all new homes are organised or built by people themselves, yet in the UK less than 10% are currently delivered this way. However, a recent survey^A suggested that there are seven million people in the UK who are keen on self building, and many of them are on modest incomes.

The year-long project will involve identifying why other European countries deliver a much higher proportion of their new homes via self build. The project will also involve working with around 50 local authorities in the UK to help them to facilitate thousands of opportunities for people to build or commission their own homes. In addition the work will examine whether new financial products would help the sector grow and make it easier for people in need of affordable housing to access loans enabling them to self build.

The work will focus on two main ways of boosting output of affordable self build homes:

- The delivery of ready-to-go, modestly priced serviced building plots. For example, in France it is currently possible to buy a decent fully-serviced building plot for about £20,000: the project wants to facilitate similar solutions here.
- How communities can collaborate to jointly commission their own homes. For example, in Berlin around 15% of all the new homes currently being built are now organised by local 'building groups'; the homes are custom designed to suit their occupants, and they also typically work out about 25% cheaper than conventional market built properties.

The research proposal was assembled by the National Custom & Self Build Association (NaCSBA), and a three-strong team will co-ordinate the work, starting in the next few weeks.

Heading up the team will be Mario Wolf, who will be seconded for a year from the Department for Communities and Local Government. Mario is a senior housing policy advisor and he has worked on the Government's various initiatives to expand the self and custom build sector for the last four years. He will be supported by Ted Stevens OBE (until recently, the chair of NaCSBA), and Sam Brown, a research associate at the University of Sheffield.

Towards the end of the project, the team will produce a range of practical guidance material aimed at communities, planners and public and private sector housing providers. It will also communicate the findings widely across the housing and planning sectors and within the financial community.

Welcoming the support of the Nationwide Foundation, NaCSBA chair Michael Holmes said: "We believe there is scope to grow the current number of UK homes built this way from roughly 10,000 a year now, to nearer 50,000 in the long term. But if we are going to do this, we need to learn from experiences abroad where self build and custom build are a major part of new home building, and we must work more closely with our local authorities to help them to create more opportunities for people who want to build."

Gary Hartin, the Nationwide Foundation's programme manager said: "Mainstream home-ownership is currently cost prohibitive for many people on low to middle incomes. Yet if self build housing was to become more accessible in the UK, it would offer a real alternative. We have funded this work with the intention that it will lead to the creation of opportunities for more affordable self build homes in the UK."

ENDS

SOURCES:

- A. Survey conducted by IPSOS Mori in January 2014 – see www.nacsba.org.uk/images/press-releases/nasbapresser_20140227SSI.pdf

NOTES:

1. For further information contact:
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2. For more information on NaCSBA – see www.nacsba.org.uk/about-us
3. For more information about the Nationwide Foundation:
 - see www.nationwidefoundation.org.uk
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