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## **SELF BUILD AS A VOLUME HOUSING SOLUTION**

A report published today by the National Self Build Association (NaSBA) outlines a detailed plan to help solve the housing crisis by significantly increasing the number of homes constructed by self builders.

Currently as many as 20,000 people build their own homes each year. NaSBA's report says there is potential to increase this to 50,000 or more homes a year, and that this expansion would help provide good homes for people on lower incomes and would also safeguard tens of thousands of construction jobs.

The report, entitled 'Self build as a Volume Housing Solution', details how the expansion of the UK self build sector can be achieved. NaSBA believes that the availability of building plots is the biggest obstacle preventing the growth of self build, and therefore, the report proposes a number of reforms that would improve the availability of land for self builders.

The report's key recommendations include:

- An immediate review of all public sector land holdings to identify sizeable sites that could be made available for self builders, with the aim of providing thousands of individual plots
- Every local authority in the UK should be tasked with identifying sites for at least 30 individual self builds each year
- The creation of a new organisation to help speed up the process of dividing up larger sites and selling them direct to self builders
- Amending section 106 Planning Agreements so that developers make self build plots available on all new housing developments
- Private landowners should be encouraged to sell some of their land holdings to the self build community

Celebrity builder and TV presenter Tommy Walsh, who built his own eco house in 2007, has added his support to NaSBA's campaign. He comments:

"I meet lots of people who are fed up with the output from the volume housebuilders and decide to build a home that will fit their own needs. However, most of them spend years searching for the ideal plot. I am convinced that if more land was made available, many more people would choose to self build. And what great homes they'd be too – well designed, well built, with quality materials, and far more energy efficient than the current housing stock.

"Self build ticks all the boxes of affordability, adaptability, sustainability and quality – there is an army of people out there who would love the opportunity to build a good home for themselves – that opportunity comes down the availability of land."

Tim Doherty, managing director of the National Self Build & Renovation Centre, explains that expanding the self build sector has significant financial benefits: "Despite the illusion created by Grand Designs, self builders do not need to have an endless supply of cash; there are many people who build modest family homes on a tight budget. For example, it's perfectly feasible to build a three bedroom house for less than £100,000, plus the cost of the site.

"Expanding the self build sector also makes sense for the wider economy – self builders currently spend at least £3 billion a year on materials and services, so a doubling in output would inject another £3 billion into the supply chain of mainly small to medium sized businesses who support the sector."

Publisher of industry magazine, Build It, Ted Stevens, believes that the expansion of self build will safeguard thousands of construction industry jobs:

"At a time when construction activity, in particular, housebuilding, is at an all time low, it is imperative that we try to protect the skilled workforce. Already tens of thousands of construction workers have been laid off, but we estimate that with more investment in the self build sector, as many as 50,000 jobs could be saved.

“Self builders also represent a significant part of the demand for, and spending on, skilled and master craftsmen and professionals, such as architects, stonemasons, master carpenters and thatchers.”

Jackson Moulding, an eco self builder and founder of Ecomotive, which promotes sustainable communities, is keen to emphasise the environmental benefits of self build:

“Many self builders are very concerned with their carbon footprint, and therefore seek the more sustainable and environmentally friendly systems and products to help reduce the impact of their house on the environment.

“The ability to choose how your house is built allows the option of introducing sustainable building methods and energy-saving products and technologies into homes, such as solar water heating panels, heat pumps and photovoltaics. If 25,000 new homes were built this way, we estimate that 100,000 tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup> could be saved each year, as compared to conventional homes.”

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors:**

NaSBA was formally launched in October 2008, and is still in its early formative stages. Membership is open to individuals/households and organisations that are involved or interested in the self build sector. NaSBA also incorporates the former Association of Self Builders.

Its objectives are:

- To promote the release of more land for self build projects across the UK
- To raise the profile of self building as one of the best methods of delivering new housing
- To encourage best practice in self build
- To provide a structured forum for people and organisations with an interest in self build
- To be a central representative body to put the views of the self build community to Government departments and agencies, Parliament, the European Commission and other relevant organisations
- To be a research and statistical centre, to aggregate and publish statistics, and to provide analysis on self build and other relevant market information

Visit [www.nasba.org.uk](http://www.nasba.org.uk) for more information

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