



## **Colchester Preferred Options Local Plan - Regulation 18 Representation**

### **Policy H6: Self and Custom Build**

We object to Policy H6 as drafted. The policy is not justified by the evidence base and risks being ineffective in practice.

#### **1. Evidence of Need and Type of Provision**

The Colchester Local Housing Needs Assessment identifies a need for approximately 218 self and custom build plots over the plan period. However, there is no evidence to demonstrate that this need is for serviced plots within large strategic housing sites, as opposed to bespoke, small-scale or edge-of-settlement locations, which self-builders typically prefer.

The policy therefore does not adequately reflect the characteristics of demand identified on the Self-Build Register.

#### **2. Strategic Sites Requirement Is Not Justified**

The requirement for developments of 150 dwellings or more to provide 2% self or custom build plots is unsupported by evidence. No justification is provided for either the site threshold or the percentage requirement, and neither is clearly linked to the scale or nature of identified need. In practice, self-build housing is often less compatible with large, phased developments and can create delivery, design and management challenges.

#### **3. Delivery Risks and Timing**

By relying primarily on large strategic sites to deliver self and custom build housing, the policy risks such homes being delivered late in the plan period, as these plots are likely to come forward in later phases of development. This undermines the ability of self and custom build housing to contribute to early housing supply.

A more flexible, site-by-site approach would allow self and custom build homes to come forward earlier and more organically.

#### **4. Alternative Approach**

An alternative and more effective approach would be for the Council to introduce a policy exemption or encouragement framework around larger settlements, enabling self and custom build housing to come forward on smaller sites where demand is demonstrably stronger. This would better reflect market realities, increase deliverability, and provide greater choice.