

# **Self-Build and Custom-Build Monitoring Report**

February 2026

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## Introduction

Central Bedfordshire Council are required by the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended) to operate a Register of people and groups interested in self and custom housebuilding. The Self-Build and Custom-Build Register enables the Council to assess the demand for this type of housing within the local authority area. The demand for serviced plots registered runs between 31<sup>st</sup> October to 30<sup>th</sup> October. The Council has a duty to grant permission for sufficient serviced plots to match the demand demonstrated by the Self-Build and Custom-Build Register within 3 years of the end of each period.

The Self and Custom Build Housing report outlines the current level of demand using data collected from the Self-Build and Custom-Build Register of Interest. The report analyses the responses provided by individuals and associations when joining the register. This includes information on plot, dwelling, scheme, and reason for wanting a self- or custom-build house. Locations of preference for self or custom build opportunities in Central Bedfordshire are also examined.

## Self-Build and Custom Build Housing Demand and Supply

A. Base Period	B. Carry Forward Demand (G)	C. New Entries (table 15)	D. Total Demand (B + C)	E. End of Rolling Period	F. Qualifying Permissions Granted	G. Shortfall / Oversupply
1	n/a	73	73	30/10/2019	73	Provision Met
2	0	155	155	30/10/2020	38	Under Provision (117)
3	117	114	231	30/10/2021	44	Under Provision (187)
4	187	139	326	30/10/2022	25	Under Provision (301)
5	301	128	429	30/10/2023	361	Under Provision (68)
6	68	145	213	30/10/2024	62	Under Provision (151)
7	151	19	170	30/10/2025	170 <sup>1</sup>	Provision Met
8	0	11	11	30/10/2026	*2	*
9	*	20	*	30/10/2027	*	*
10	*	15	*	30/10/2028	*	*

Table 1: Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Demand and Supply

<sup>1</sup>In base period 10 (31 Oct 2024–30 Oct 2025), 201 qualifying self- and custom-build plots were approved. As councils have a three-year rolling period to meet demand, 170 approvals met the outstanding need, and the remaining 31 will count toward future periods within that timeframe.

<sup>2</sup> Cells marked \* show that the three-year delivery period has not yet ended. Data will be added in future AMRs once the period closes. This applies to base periods 8–10, so their demand is not yet due.

The recording period for the self- and custom-build register and the 3-year rolling period to deliver the required plots runs from the 31<sup>st</sup> of October one year, to the 30<sup>th</sup> of October the next year, e.g., 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022 – 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Column F in Table 1 outlines the number of qualifying permissions counted against the demand for each base period. The permissions granted can be split between the demand from each base period as Local Authorities have a 3-year rolling period to meet demand.

The adoption of the Local Plan, which includes a policy on Self Build and Custom Housing, has resulted in a significant uplift in the delivery of self- and custom-build plots. Local Plan Policy is now the predominant delivery mechanism for self and custom build plots. Policy H6, Self-Build and Custom Housing makes a requirement for all applications of 10 or more dwellings to deliver a minimum of 10% of the dwelling capacity as serviced plots for Self-Build and Custom Housing.

In the 2024-25 base period, 37 planning permissions were granted that included self-build or custom-build plots. Cumulatively, these provided for 201 self- and custom-build plots. 11 of the planning permissions granted provided for self- or custom-build plots through the requirement of Local Plan Policy H6. Cumulatively, those applications provided 172 self- and custom-build plots, which means 85.57% of the self- and custom-build plots granted permission in the 2024-2025 base period were a direct result of Local Plan Policy H6.

A significant decline in new registrations was seen in Base Period 7. This decrease may be attributed to the introduction of a charging fee by the council from September 2021 for all new applicants joining the Self-Build and Custom-Build Register. The fee is an administration fee and entry onto the Self-Build and Custom-Build Register does not guarantee that a self-build plot will be made available. Other factors contributing to the decline may include the increasing cost of materials, labour, and general cost of living.

## Meeting the Demand

The Council has a duty to grant sufficient permissions to meet the demand and has 3 years from the end of each base period to achieve this.

Base Period	Dates
1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2016
2 <sup>nd</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2016 to 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2017
3 <sup>rd</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2017 to 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2018
4 <sup>th</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2018 to 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2019
5 <sup>th</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2019 to 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
6 <sup>th</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2020 to 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
7 <sup>th</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2021 to 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2022
8 <sup>th</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2022 to 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
9 <sup>th</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2023 to 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
10 <sup>th</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2024 to 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2025

*Table 2: Base Period Dates*

In July 2021, the Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan was adopted, which supports self- and custom-build housing development in the interest of delivering high quality homes. Through the adopted Local Plan, the Council has strengthened its commitment to deliver self-build and custom build housing through Local Plan Policy H6.

Policy H6: Self-Build and Custom Housing states that development proposals for sites of ten or more dwellings (excluding schemes for 100% flats or conversion) will be required to deliver a minimum of 10% of the sites dwelling capacity as serviced plots for Self-Build and custom build. The Council will encourage applications for the delivery of serviced plots for self-build and custom build on sites of fewer than ten dwellings.

In August 2023, the Council adopted the Housing Policy Technical Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Housing Policy Technical Guidance SPD has been produced to provide detailed guidance on the interpretation and implementation of housing policies in the adopted Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2015-2035). The SPD being a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and provides clarity on the interpretation and implementation of the Self- and Custom-Build Housing Policy.

Since the adoption of the Local Plan, a range of planning applications with Outline Planning permission and FULL planning permission have been approved. The data

shows a significant increase in the percentage of plots secured through S106 agreements over the past three years:

- **2021/22:** 20% of plots secured
- **2022/23:** 96% of plots secured
- **2023/24:** 94% of plots secured
- **2024/25:** 86% of plots secured

The upward trend indicates that Local Plan Policy H6 has been successful in securing the majority of plots over these three years and now represents the most prevalent delivery mechanism.

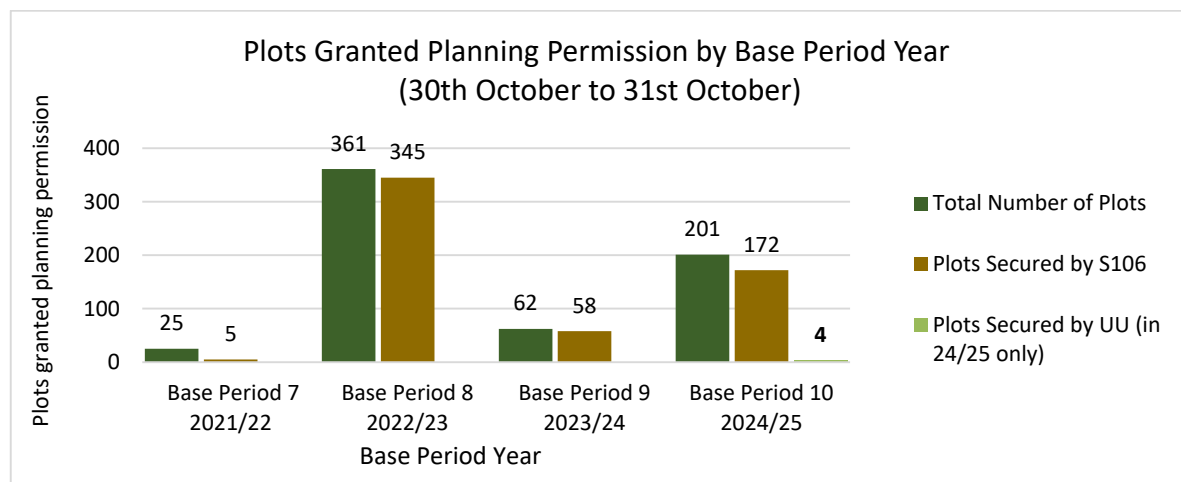


Figure 1: Plots granted planning permission by base period year

The graph shows the number of plots granted planning permission by base period year and the mechanism through which they are secured. The majority of plots are secured through S106 agreements, demonstrating the success of Local Plan Policy H6 which remains the principal mechanism for delivering self and custom build plots. The introduction of Unilateral Undertaking (UU) Agreements reflects their use on securing single self and custom build dwellings and on developments under ten units which fall below the threshold of Local Plan Policy H6. While Unilateral Undertaking Agreements currently account for a small proportion of plots, their use to secure small sites is expected to increase in future years as small-scale development continues.

## Self and Custom Build housing plots granted planning permission.

Year	Number of plots granted planning permission
Base Period 7 - 2021/22	25
Base Period 8 - 2022/23	361
Base Period 9 - 2023/24	62
Base Period 10 - 2024/25	201

*Table 3: Plots granted planning permission which include Custom and Self Build Dwellings*

When self- and custom-build housing plots come forward through permitted planning permissions secured through Local Plan Policy, the Council will be made aware of these via the developer through the associated Marketing Strategies. At this point, the Council will contact the applicants on the Self-Build and Custom-Build Register.

## Additional Information from the Register

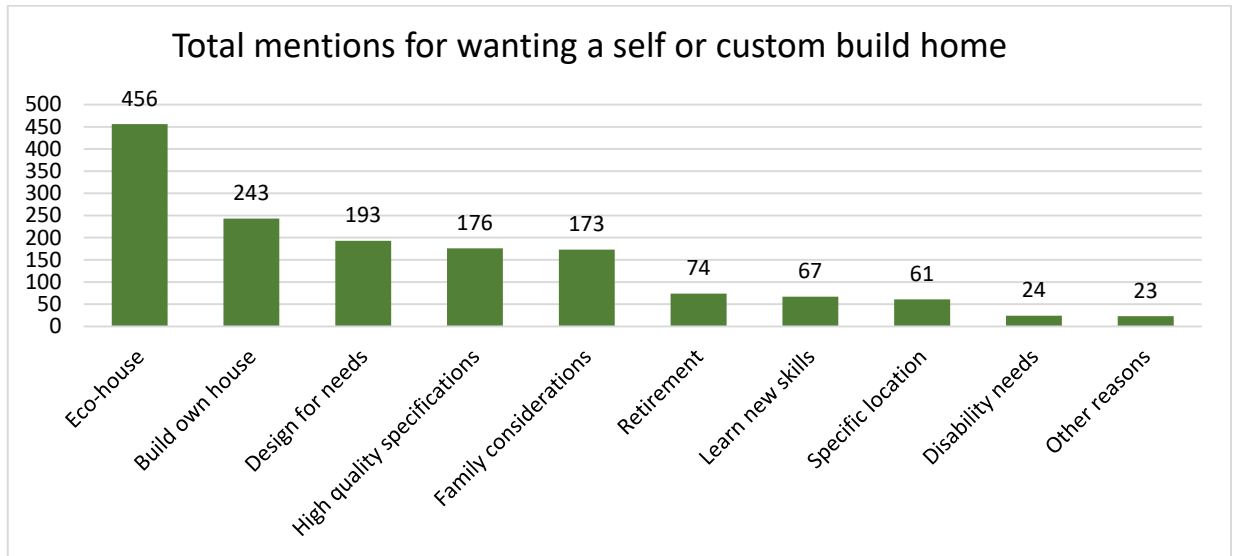


Figure 2: Reasons for undertaking a self- and custom-build project

The reasons stated by those registered on the Self-Build and Custom-Build Register for wanting to build a self- or custom-build house are primarily sustainability, lifestyle, and life-stage factors. Wanting to build an eco-house is the most frequently cited reason, highlighting a strong demand for environmentally sustainable homes. The data shows that most applicants are seeking bespoke, high-quality homes tailored to their current and future circumstances.

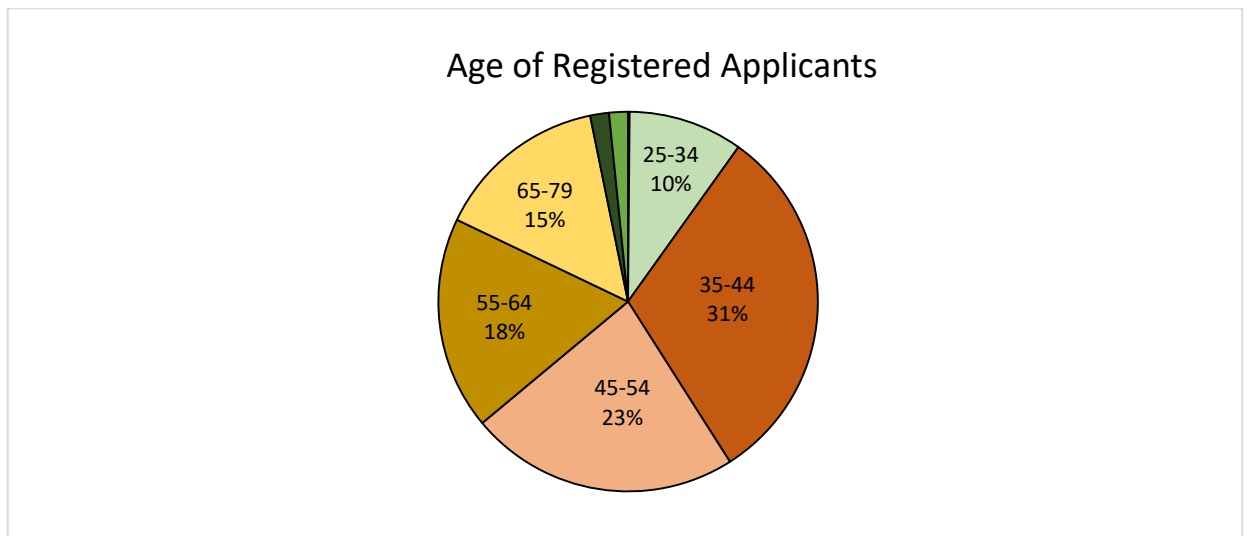


Figure 3: What are the age groups of registered applicants?

The largest age demographic registered are for those within the 35 to 44 age demographic. This age demographic makes up 31% of the total number. This is closely followed by applicants within the 45 to 54 age demographic which represents 23%. This could suggest a workforce-oriented population, where middle aged applicants are at their career peak or most active stages of life. Older applicants aged 55 and over account for 34% of all registrations indicating a significant interest from older applicants, including those post-retirement or late-career individuals.

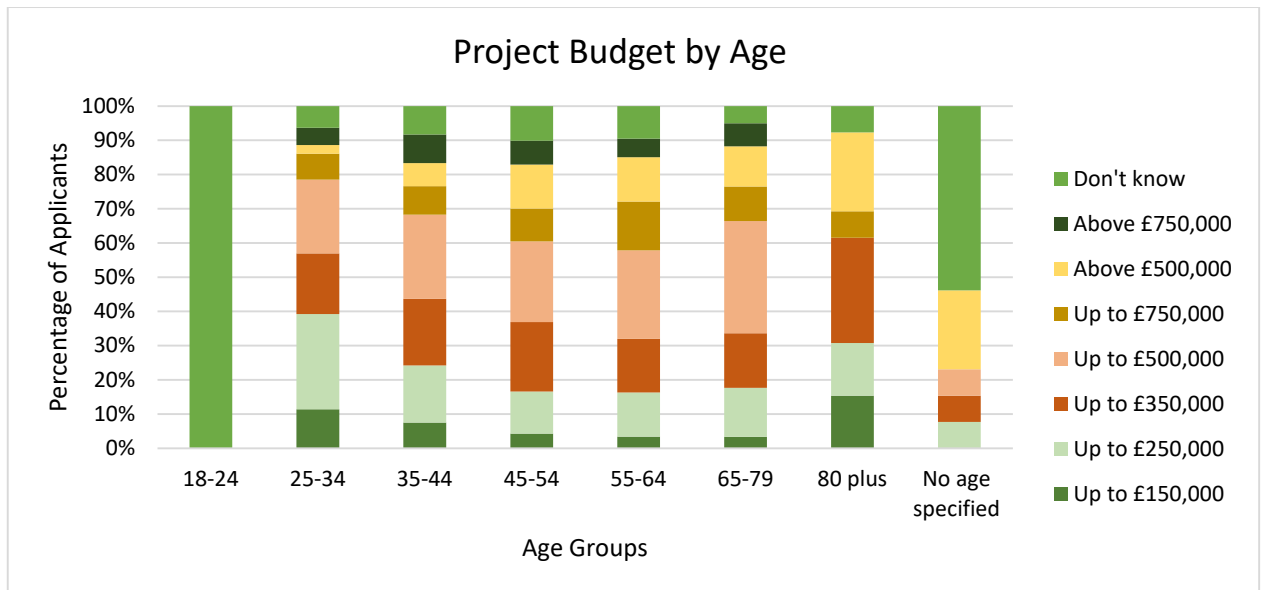


Figure 4: Project Budget by Age Group

Applicants aged 35 to 44 mostly have project budgets in the £250,000 to £500,000 budget range, while budgets above £500,000 are mainly concentrated among those aged 35- to 54-year-olds. Younger age groups particularly those aged 25 to 34, tend to have budgets in the lower to mid ranges suggesting affordability constraints. One applicant registered in 18-24 age group and were unsure of their project budget.

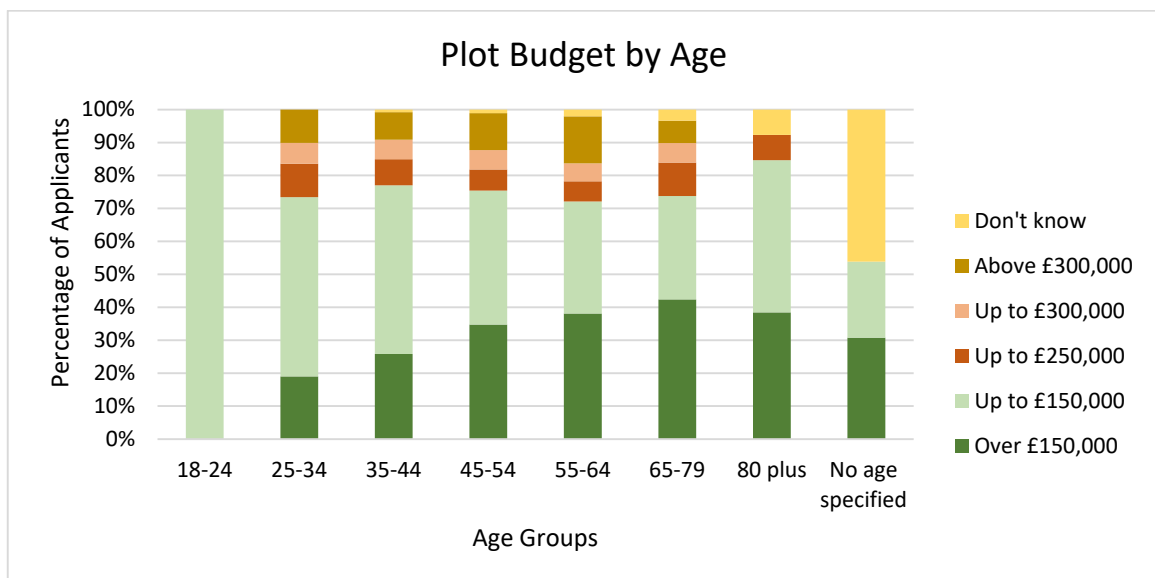


Figure 5: Plot Budget by age group

Applicants aged 35-54 have the highest budgets to spend on a plot and dominate the upper budget ranges, particularly above £300,000. Younger applicants tend to have lower plot budgets indicating affordability constraints. Older applicants (55+) are more concentrated in the lower to mid-range plot budgets, suggesting more cautious spending. One applicant registered in 18-24 age group indicated a plot budget of up to £150,000.

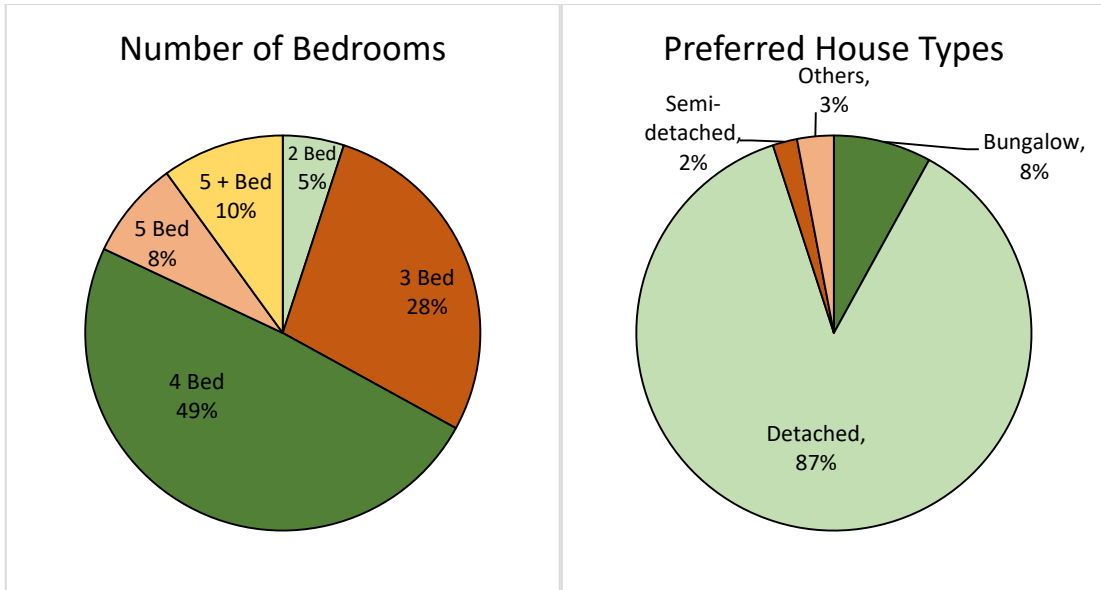


Figure 6: Preferred house types and Number of Bedrooms

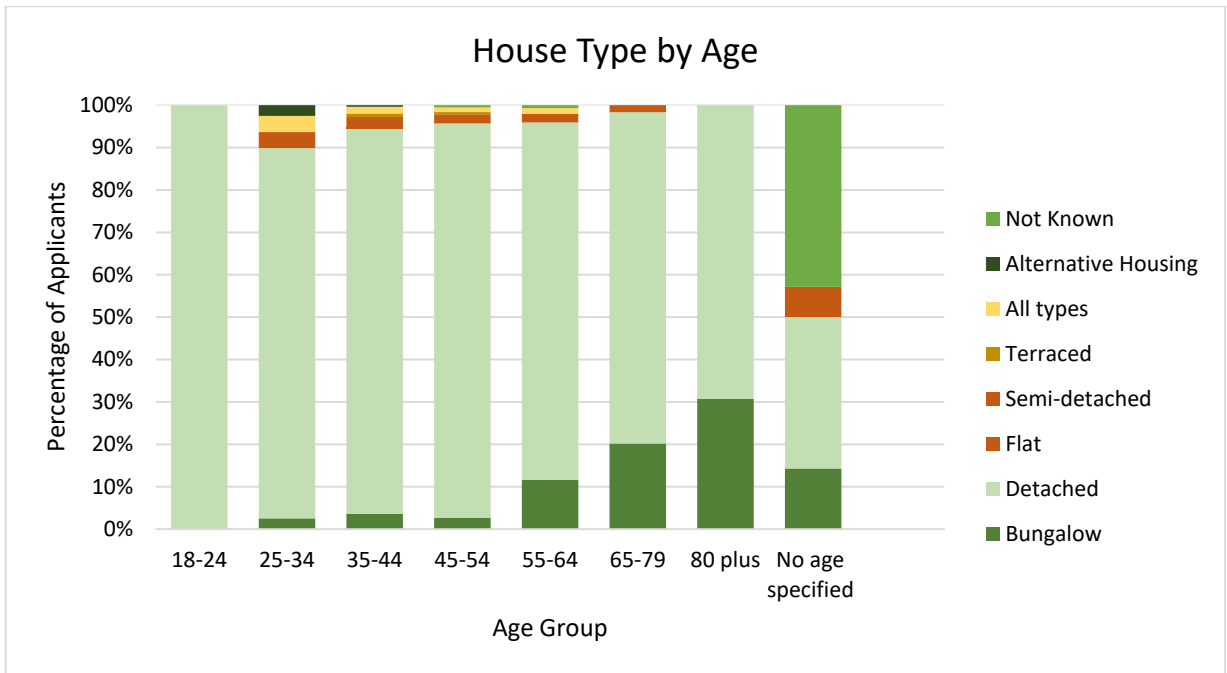


Figure 7: House types by age

The majority of applicants registered aspire to build a detached house. This preference has not changed throughout all base periods and represents the predominant house type in all age ranges. Bungalows feature as the second most popular house type for applicants in the 55-79 age range, suggesting a preference for single-level, accessible homes in later life.

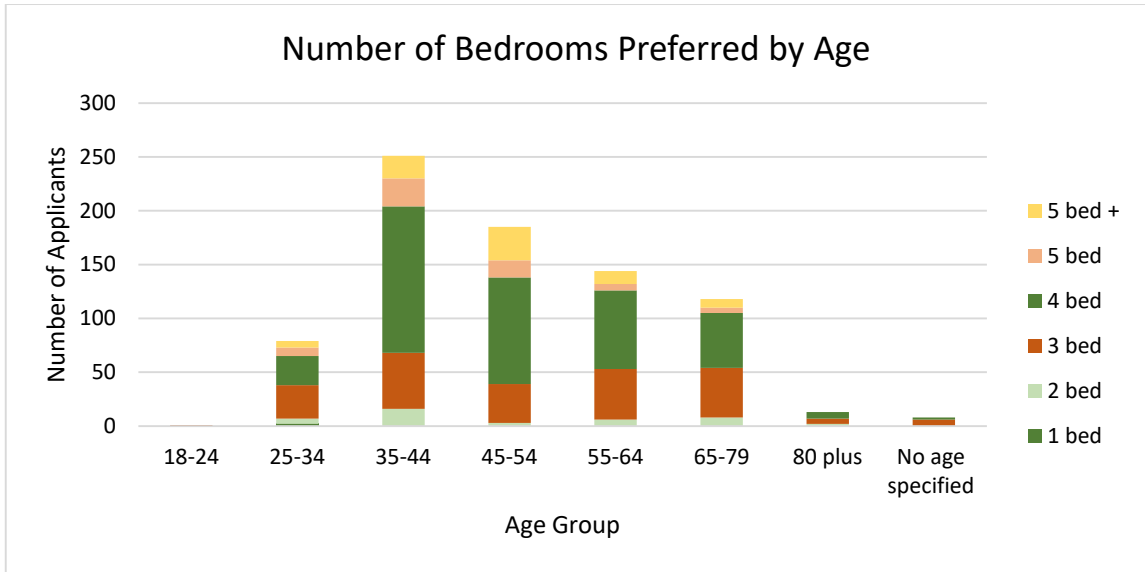


Figure 8: Number of bedrooms preferred by age

Four-bedroomed homes are the most popular overall, particularly among applicants aged 35-54, reflecting demand for larger family homes at this stage of life. Three-bedroom homes show a broad appeal across all age groups, indicating flexibility for family living and downsizing.

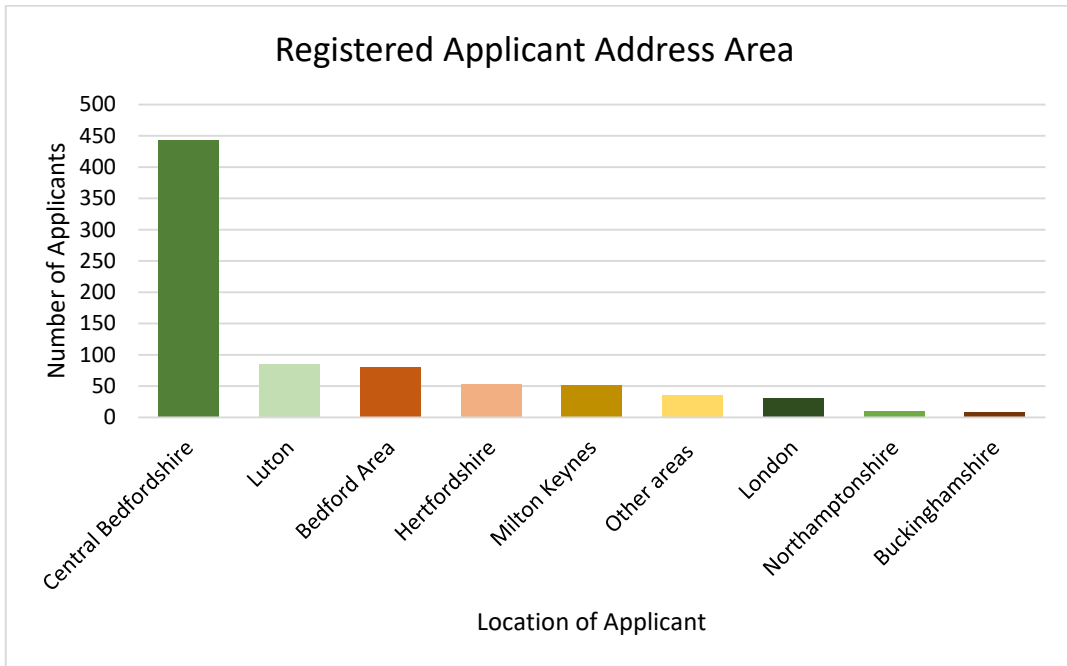


Figure 9: Where are applicants registered?

The majority of applicants are registered in Central Bedfordshire, indicating a strong local applicant base. Luton and the Bedford area account for the next largest applicant locations followed by smaller numbers from neighboring Hertfordshire and Milton Keynes. Registrations from London and other nearby counties are small, showing that demand is driven by local rather than distant applicants.

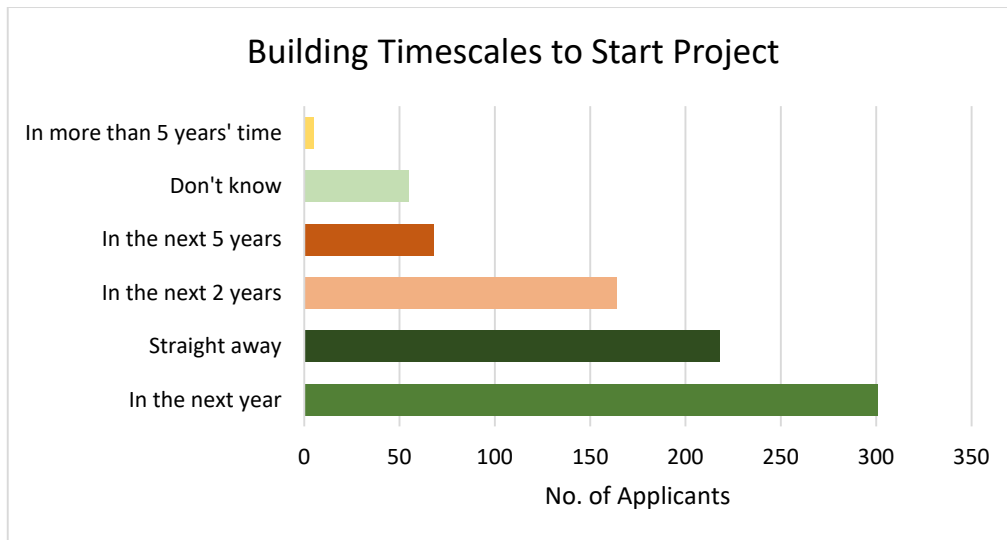


Figure 10: When do applicants want to start building?

The majority of applicants on the Self-Build and Custom-Build Register are looking to start their self and custom build project straight away or within the next year. With the significantly increasing number of permitted self and custom build plots through Local Plan Policy, this will present greater opportunities for those on the Self Build Register to fulfil their aspirations.

## Preferred Locations to build a self-build or custom build dwelling.

**Important Note:** There is NO requirement for the council to meet demand in specific parts of the local authority area. The Councils duty is to provide sufficient plots across the whole authority area to meet the demand on the Councils Self and Custom Build Housing Register. Applicants often select multiple preferred parishes.

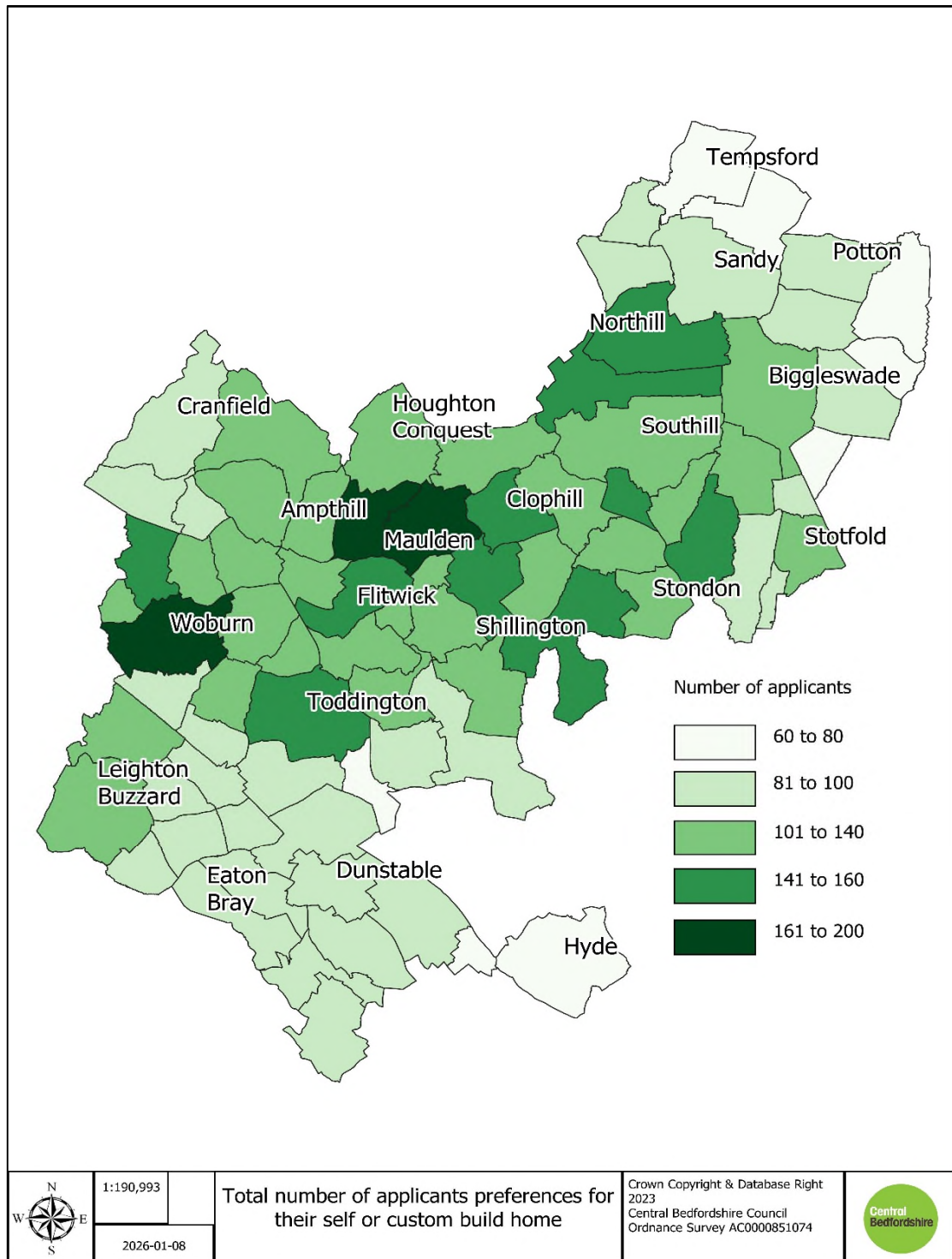


Figure 11: Locations that those on the Self-Build and Custom-Housebuilding Register indicated as areas of preference.

## Number of Applicants Preferred Locations by Parish

**Important Note:** There is NO requirement for the council to meet demand in specific parts of the local authority area. The Councils duty is to provide sufficient plots across the whole authority area to meet the demand on the Councils Self and Custom Build Housing Register. Applicants often select multiple preferred parishes.

Parish	Base Period 1 to 5	Base Period 6	Base Period 7	Base Period 8	Base Period 9	Base Period 10	Total
Ampthill	121	48	9	4	9	2	193
Arlesey	72	24	5	1	6	1	109
Aspley Guise	86	38	7	3	8	4	146
Aspley Heath	77	37	6	3	7	2	132
Astwick	53	25	5	1	2	1	87
Barton-le-Clay	81	32	9	1	8	1	132
Battlesden	57	18	3	2	3	1	84
Biggleswade	82	29	7	2	5	2	127
Billington	54	22	3	1	5	1	86
Blunham	52	18	5	2	6	2	85
Brogborough	52	25	4	3	4	1	89
Caddington	55	18	4	1	7	3	88
Campton & Chicksands	71	33	6	1	4	2	117
Chalgrave	63	20	3	1	5	1	93
Chalton	41	21	3	1	5	1	72
Clifton	82	31	8	2	6	2	131
Clophill	89	41	11	5	8	4	158
Cranfield	65	31	5	2	4	2	109
Dunstable	60	20	4	1	3	2	90
Dunton	52	23	5	1	3	1	85
Eaton Bray	68	21	4	1	7	1	102
Edworth	52	25	4	1	3	1	86
Eggington	58	26	3	1	3	1	92
Eversholt	92	33	5	3	7	1	141
Everton	52	15	4	2	3	1	77
Eyeworth	46	17	5	1	2	1	72
Fairfield	51	23	4	1	4	1	84
Flitton & Greenfield	76	34	8	3	8	1	130
Flitwick	97	43	5	4	8	2	159
Gravenhurst	81	35	8	4	7	1	136
Harlington	81	30	6	2	8	2	129
Haynes	76	37	6	3	6	2	130
Heath & Reach	75	30	3	3	4	1	116
Henlow	96	35	5	2	7	1	146
Hockliffe	57	19	3	1	5	2	87
Houghton Conquest	90	35	6	1	6	1	139

Parish	Base Period 1 to 5	Base Period 6	Base Period 7	Base Period 8	Base Period 9	Base Period 10	Total
Houghton Regis	55	21	3	1	2	1	83
Hulcote & Salford	52	28	3	2	3	1	89
Husborne Crawley	73	31	4	2	6	1	117
Hyde	38	14	3	1	3	1	60
Kensworth	60	23	4	1	5	2	95
Langford	82	30	7	2	4	1	126
Leighton Buzzard	84	27	1	2	6	1	121
Lidlington	68	33	5	2	3	2	113
Marston Moretaine	75	30	5	3	6	2	121
Maulden	120	47	10	5	7	4	193
Meppershall	85	37	7	1	8	1	139
Millbrook	84	34	5	3	6	2	134
Milton Bryan	76	27	3	2	4	1	113
Moggerhanger	62	23	5	3	5	1	99
Northill	98	30	6	5	5	2	146
Old Warden	93	37	6	3	7	2	148
Potsgrove	65	24	3	1	3	2	98
Potton	70	19	7	3	4	2	105
Pulloxhill	89	33	6	3	7	2	140
Ridgmont	76	29	5	2	5	1	118
Sandy	64	22	5	3	3	2	99
Shefford	93	31	8	2	6	2	142
Shillington	89	36	8	1	6	2	142
Silsoe	95	34	7	2	9	2	149
Slip End	40	14	3	1	2	2	62
Southill	92	36	6	2	3	2	141
Stanbridge	65	24	3	3	3	1	99
Steppingley	83	35	3	2	6	1	130
Stondon	72	30	5	3	5	1	116
Stotfold	73	25	6	2	6	1	113
Streatley	60	20	5	1	5	1	92
Studham	63	24	5	1	5	1	99
Sundon	57	24	4	1	3	1	90
Sutton	63	21	5	2	3	1	95
Tempsford	43	15	5	1	2	1	67
Tilsworth	66	20	4	1	3	1	95
Tingrith	73	28	5	2	5	1	114
Toddington	91	35	5	1	9	2	143
Totternhoe	72	22	3	1	7	1	106
Westoning	79	34	6	1	7	2	129
Whipsnade	71	25	6	1	7	1	111
Woburn	113	43	9	5	10	3	183

Parish	Base Period 1 to 5	Base Period 6	Base Period 7	Base Period 8	Base Period 9	Base Period 10	Total
Wrestlingworth & Cockayne Hatley	53	12	4	2	7	1	79

*Table 4: Preferred Locations to have a self/custom build plot. Applicants can select multiple locations.*

## **Key Findings**

- The majority of applicants are looking to build a detached house; older applicants prefer bungalows; four-bedroom homes are common among 35–54-year-olds.
- Most applicants want to start their self-build within a year of registering.
- Sustainability, lifestyle, and life-stage factors are the main motivation for wanting a self build. Eco-friendly homes were the most cited reason.
- The most desired locations for a plot are the parishes in the middle of Central Bedfordshire including Flitwick, Ampthill, Maulden, Woburn, across to Old Warden and down to Henlow.

**Central  
Bedfordshire**

# **Central Bedfordshire in contact**

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