# Labour’s new towns plan aims to transform England’s housing landscape by 2029



Labour has committed to beginning construction of three new towns before the next general election as part of an ambitious housing plan that would see 1.5 million new homes built by 2029. This pledge, expected to be detailed by Housing Secretary Steve Reed during the Labour party conference, comes amid a strategy to revive housebuilding and stimulate economic growth through large-scale community developments.

The proposal follows recommendations from the independent New Towns Taskforce, formed last year and chaired by Sir Michael Lyons, which has identified 12 potential locations across England for new town developments. Among the most promising are Tempsford in Bedfordshire, Leeds South Bank, and Crews Hill in north London. These new towns are envisioned to be significant settlements, each delivering at least 10,000 homes. Collectively, they could contribute around 300,000 homes over the coming decades, aligning with Labour’s broader housing goals.

The taskforce’s remit focuses on areas with high housing demand and the potential for economic uplift. Their recommendations include a mix of standalone new settlements, expansions of existing urban areas, and regeneration projects within cities. Sites proposed for development also span from Cheshire and South Gloucestershire to Oxfordshire, Plymouth, and Manchester, reflecting an integrated approach to addressing regional housing shortages and infrastructure needs.

Labour’s vision echoes the post-World War Two housing boom, when the Attlee government pioneered new towns to address housing deficits and rebuilding needs after the war. Steve Reed is expected to reference this history in his speech, pledging to "build baby build" and create "cutting-edge communities" to offer homes fit for contemporary families. The government aims to replicate aspects of the post-war model by employing development corporations which would have special planning powers, enabling them to compulsory purchase land, grant planning permissions, and invest in vital public services such as schools, GP surgeries, and transport links, similarly to the successful regeneration of Stratford in London after the 2012 Olympics.

However, reaching these ambitious targets will not be without challenges. Industry voices caution that rising construction costs, increasing taxes, and wider economic pressures pose significant hurdles. Recent data reveals that new planning approvals for homes fell to a record low in England during Labour’s first year in office, underscoring obstacles in translating policy to delivery.

The government has welcomed recommendations for at least 40% of homes in the new towns to be affordable, addressing long-standing concerns about housing accessibility. Infrastructure investment is planned to be a major component of the initiative. A dedicated New Towns Unit will mobilise public and private sector funds to support comprehensive community infrastructure. This is aligned with plans announced earlier in 2025, which indicated that over 100 locations across England had been proposed for development as new or expanded towns, each expected to incorporate essential services and sustainable transport solutions.

Labour’s renewed focus on building new towns signals a shift from smaller scale, fragmented housebuilding strategies to a broader vision of creating integrated communities that could help meet the country’s pressing housing demands while boosting local economies. The forthcoming decisions regarding the final locations and funding are expected by next spring, with environmental assessments and public consultations to shape the projects.

This announcement comes at a politically sensitive time for Labour, with challenges to Sir Keir Starmer’s leadership and growing competition from parties like Reform UK, which currently donors polling pressure. Starmer has used the party conference to contrast his vision of inclusive growth with what he describes as the divisiveness of his opponents, framing the housing plan as a cornerstone of his government’s agenda to rebuild and unite the country.

If successfully implemented, this initiative could mark a transformative approach to England’s housing crisis, combining the scale of post-war development with modern planning priorities tailored to the 21st century.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[7]](https://www.productivity.ac.uk/news/new-towns-and-old-cities/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/new-towns-taskforce), [[5]](https://www.britainremade.co.uk/newtowns), [[7]](https://www.productivity.ac.uk/news/new-towns-and-old-cities/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/new-towns-taskforce), [[5]](https://www.britainremade.co.uk/newtowns), [[6]](https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2025/08/11/bradford-bucks-and-cornwall-should-be-among-new-town-locations-report)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/expert-taskforce-to-spearhead-a-new-generation-of-new-towns)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/expert-taskforce-to-spearhead-a-new-generation-of-new-towns)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly7kn4z399o), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/expert-taskforce-to-spearhead-a-new-generation-of-new-towns)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly7kn4z399o), [[7]](https://www.productivity.ac.uk/news/new-towns-and-old-cities/)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly7kn4z399o> - In February 2025, Housing Minister Matthew Pennycook announced that work on new towns would commence before the next general election, with over 100 locations across England proposed. The initiative aims to build towns with at least 10,000 homes each, contributing to Labour's target of 1.5 million new homes over five years. Each town is expected to include essential infrastructure such as public transport and schools, alongside affordable housing. The government plans to extend existing towns and cities, as well as establish new standalone settlements. ([bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cly7kn4z399o?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/new-towns-taskforce> - The New Towns Taskforce, established by the UK government, is tasked with advising ministers on suitable locations for significant new communities, including large-scale urban extensions and regeneration schemes. The taskforce aims to recommend locations for new towns by July 2025, focusing on areas with high housing demand and potential for economic growth. Each new settlement is intended to contain at least 10,000 homes, with a goal of 40% affordable housing. ([gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/new-towns-taskforce?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/expert-taskforce-to-spearhead-a-new-generation-of-new-towns> - In July 2024, the UK government announced the formation of an independent New Towns Taskforce, chaired by Sir Michael Lyons, to lead the development of a new generation of new towns. The taskforce is responsible for recommending locations for new towns within 12 months, aiming to deliver large-scale communities of at least 10,000 new homes each. The initiative is part of the government's strategy to boost economic growth and address housing shortages. ([gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/expert-taskforce-to-spearhead-a-new-generation-of-new-towns?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.britainremade.co.uk/newtowns> - Britain Remade, in collaboration with Create Streets, has proposed a list of twelve locations for new towns, including Tempsford in Bedfordshire, Greater Cambridge, and others. The recommendations are based on areas with high housing demand and existing or planned infrastructure, suggesting that development could commence promptly. The proposed towns aim to address housing shortages and stimulate economic growth. ([britainremade.co.uk](https://www.britainremade.co.uk/newtowns?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2025/08/11/bradford-bucks-and-cornwall-should-be-among-new-town-locations-report> - A report by property consultancy Carter Jonas identifies Bradford, Buckinghamshire, Kirklees, and Cornwall as among the twelve most suitable locations for new towns. The analysis considers factors such as projected population growth, affordability ratios, and available land area. The report aims to inform the New Towns Taskforce's recommendations for new settlements of 10,000 homes or more. ([theplanner.co.uk](https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2025/08/11/bradford-bucks-and-cornwall-should-be-among-new-town-locations-report?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.productivity.ac.uk/news/new-towns-and-old-cities/> - The Productivity Institute discusses the UK's plans for new towns, highlighting the government's commitment to building 1.5 million homes in the current Parliament. The New Towns Taskforce, chaired by Sir Michael Lyons, was established in 2024 to advise on potential locations for new towns. The taskforce's interim report suggests up to 12 new towns could be under construction by the next election, each with the potential for at least 10,000 homes. ([productivity.ac.uk](https://www.productivity.ac.uk/news/new-towns-and-old-cities/?utm_source=openai))