# Labour unveils ambitious plan to build three new towns before the next general election



Labour has pledged to begin construction on three new towns in England before the next general election, signalling a major commitment to tackling the country’s housing shortage while aiming to stimulate economic growth. The announcement is expected to be made by Housing Secretary Steve Reed in a speech at Labour’s annual party conference, marking a prominent moment for the party as it seeks to place housebuilding at the centre of its economic strategy. According to the party’s plans, three locations—Tempsford in Bedfordshire, Leeds South Bank, and Crews Hill in north London—have emerged as the frontrunners from a wider shortlist of 12 recommended by the New Towns Taskforce.

These new towns are each set to include at least 10,000 homes and collectively could deliver around 300,000 houses across England over several decades. The Taskforce's recommendations, which will undergo environmental assessments and local consultations before any final commitments, span a diverse range of sites including standalone new settlements, expansions of existing towns, and urban regeneration projects within cities. Other potential sites named include areas in Cheshire, South Gloucestershire, East Devon, Plymouth, and Manchester, among others.

The initiative draws inspiration from the post-World War Two wave of housing development led by the Attlee government, which established new towns such as Stevenage and Crawley to provide housing for families displaced by war and poor living conditions. Reed is expected to evoke this legacy in his speech, promising to "build baby build" once again and create "cutting-edge communities fit for families of all shapes and sizes." The approach will focus heavily on integrating critical infrastructure — such as schools, GP surgeries, green spaces, and transport links — into these developments, with a dedicated New Towns Unit set up to mobilise millions in public and private investment.

Labour’s commitment also includes a pledge that at least 40% of new homes in these towns will be classified as affordable housing. The proposed new towns would be delivered through development corporations endowed with special planning powers, enabling them to compulsory purchase land, grant planning permissions, and invest directly in local services. This model mirrors the successful regeneration framework employed during the redevelopment of Stratford and its surrounding areas for the 2012 Olympics.

While the government has welcomed the New Towns Taskforce’s proposals and ambitions, industry voices have expressed concerns about the practical challenges Labour faces in meeting its targets. Rising costs and tax pressures on housebuilders persist as significant obstacles, and there are cautionary signs from recent data showing that planning approvals for new homes in England hit record lows during Labour’s first year in office. These conflicting signals underscore the complexity of scaling up housing delivery in the current economic environment.

The creation of the New Towns Taskforce in mid-2024, led by Sir Michael Lyons, marked a strategic move to identify optimal locations for new housing developments while ensuring alignment with local needs and environmental standards. The taskforce has worked collaboratively with local leaders and communities to recommend sites with strong existing infrastructure and high housing demand. Various reports—including those by independent think tanks such as Britain Remade and property consultancy Carter Jonas—highlighted locations based on factors like population growth projections, affordability, and land availability. Some recommended areas, like Bradford, Buckinghamshire, Kirklees, and Cornwall, have been spotlighted for their potential to support thriving new towns.

This latest push for new towns fits into a broader government recognition of the need for large-scale, sustainable housing solutions that also foster economic revival. Earlier government statements and Labour’s manifesto elucidate how these projects will not only provide homes but also create jobs by involving British workers in construction and infrastructure development. The strategy also focuses on overcoming planning challenges to accelerate delivery, recognising past struggles with meeting housing targets.

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer has framed the initiative as a response to the “toxic divide and decline” exemplified by fringe political parties, positioning Labour as a party of practical solutions to the housing crisis. As Labour leaders gather for their conference in Liverpool, the new towns proposal represents a tangible demonstration of the party’s vision amid ongoing political pressures and scrutiny of Starmer’s leadership.

In summary, Labour’s commitment to building a new generation of towns is a significant step towards addressing long-standing housing shortages, with ambitions to marry affordability, infrastructure investment, and sustainable community development. Whether these plans translate into the anticipated scale of delivery will depend on overcoming financial, regulatory, and construction sector challenges, but the political will underpinning the project is clear.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cly7kn4z399o), [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/angela-rayner-keir-starmer-prime-minister-government-british-b1210834.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/expert-taskforce-to-spearhead-a-new-generation-of-new-towns), [[4]](https://www.britainremade.co.uk/newtowns)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/expert-taskforce-to-spearhead-a-new-generation-of-new-towns), [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/angela-rayner-keir-starmer-prime-minister-government-british-b1210834.html)
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* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[4]](https://www.britainremade.co.uk/newtowns), [[5]](https://www.theplanner.co.uk/2025/08/11/bradford-bucks-and-cornwall-should-be-among-new-town-locations-report)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cly7kn4z399o), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/12/up-to-12-new-towns-will-be-under-construction-in-england-by-next-election-says-starmer)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/angela-rayner-keir-starmer-prime-minister-government-british-b1210834.html), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/12/up-to-12-new-towns-will-be-under-construction-in-england-by-next-election-says-starmer)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly1geen679o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cly7kn4z399o), [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/angela-rayner-keir-starmer-prime-minister-government-british-b1210834.html)

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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.co.uk/news/articles/cly7kn4z399o> - In February 2025, Housing Minister Matthew Pennycook announced that work on several new towns would commence before the next general election. Over 100 locations across England were proposed, with each new town aiming to have at least 10,000 homes. The initiative is part of the government's strategy to address the housing shortage and stimulate economic growth. The development plans include essential infrastructure such as public transport and schools, alongside affordable housing. The government is committed to overcoming planning challenges to expedite these projects.
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/expert-taskforce-to-spearhead-a-new-generation-of-new-towns> - In July 2024, the UK government established the New Towns Taskforce, led by Sir Michael Lyons, to identify suitable locations for new towns. The taskforce aims to deliver large-scale communities of at least 10,000 homes each, with recommendations expected within 12 months. The initiative seeks to boost economic growth and address housing shortages by creating sustainable, well-connected communities. The taskforce will work closely with local leaders and communities to ensure developments meet local needs and preferences.
4. <https://www.britainremade.co.uk/newtowns> - Britain Remade, in collaboration with Create Streets, proposed 12 locations for new towns, including Tempsford in Bedfordshire, Greater Cambridge, and others. The selection was based on high housing demand and existing infrastructure. The initiative aims to address housing shortages and stimulate economic growth by developing well-connected communities. The proposed sites are considered ready for development due to their strategic locations and infrastructure readiness, potentially providing a significant number of new homes in areas with high demand.
5. <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 identified Bradford, Buckinghamshire, Kirklees, and Cornwall as among the 12 most suitable locations for new towns. The analysis considered factors such as projected population growth, affordability ratios, and land availability. The report aims to inform the New Towns Taskforce's recommendations by highlighting areas with high housing demand and potential for economic growth. The proposed sites are seen as capable of supporting substantial new communities with the necessary infrastructure and services.
6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/angela-rayner-keir-starmer-prime-minister-government-british-b1210834.html> - In February 2025, Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer announced plans for new towns to begin construction before the next election, with British workers leading the projects. Over 100 potential locations across England were identified, each aiming to have at least 10,000 homes. This initiative is part of the government's commitment to address the housing shortage and stimulate economic growth. The new towns are expected to include essential infrastructure such as public transport, schools, and affordable housing.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/12/up-to-12-new-towns-will-be-under-construction-in-england-by-next-election-says-starmer> - In February 2025, Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer announced that up to 12 new towns would be under construction in England by the next election. Each new town is planned to have at least 10,000 homes, with accompanying infrastructure such as public transport, schools, and affordable housing. The initiative aims to address the housing shortage and stimulate economic growth. The government is committed to overcoming planning challenges and environmental objections to expedite these developments.