# Labour’s housing promises crumble as government cedes ground to developers and deepens crisis



Steve Reed’s tenure as housing secretary—marked by vocal slogans like “Build Baby Build!”—may look superficially energetic, but beneath the propaganda lies a troubling reality: Labour’s promises are crumbling under the weight of a housing crisis exacerbated by their own policies. Rather than addressing the root issues, Reed’s approach seems designed to placate developers and elite interests, leaving ordinary families and vulnerable Londoners further pallled in a desperate housing landscape.

Since Labour’s electoral victory in 2024, the target to build 1.5 million new homes by 2029 has rapidly become a fig leaf for a government increasingly beholden to developer lobbyists. Official figures reveal that progress is woefully inadequate—London, the prime battleground for housing reform, has seen fewer than 3,300 new units started this year against an expected 88,000. With nearly one in six major projects frozen and a backlog of stalled sites, it’s clear that the government’s grand rhetoric amounts to little more than political theatre. Far from a genuine surge in building, it's a crisis management attempt spun out of control.

Behind closed doors, top industry insiders and housing developers benefit from privileged access to government plans—leaving local councils, housing associations, and tenants out in the cold. A leaked memo exposes a government determined to roll back affordable housing commitments—reducing thresholds from 35% to a dismal 20%, with half of that public-funded ‘affordable’ housing effectively subsidising profits rather than meeting social needs. It’s a clear capitulation to big developers seeking quick gains, at the expense of long-term social stability.

The government’s recent measures reveal a blatant prioritisation of developer profits over community welfare. Suspending community levies, which fund local amenities and infrastructure, could inject approximately £1 billion back into industry coffers—funds desperately needed to sustain local services. Meanwhile, the retreat from meaningful affordable housing targets threatens to undo years of progress, risking the cancellation of up to 20,000 homes—a stark throwback to the failed high-end developments of Boris Johnson’s tenure that ignored the needs of ordinary families and the most vulnerable.

This shift coincides with a climate of heavy-handedness from Number 10 and the Treasury, who once clashed with honest voices like Rayner and Pennycook over the urgent need for more social housing. Now, under Reed’s stewardship, government rhetoric has shifted to a developer-friendly stance that deprioritises social solutions, which will only deepen the housing crisis. The grim reality is that without addressing fundamental issues—such as stagnant wages, soaring interest rates, and inflated house prices—no amount of planning reforms can reverse the downward spiral. As Molior bluntly reminds us, “No buyers = no construction starts.”

Meanwhile, Reed’s announcement of new towns—encompassing Adlington, Crews Hill, and Heyford Park—may sound promising, but these are long-term projects that do little to ease the chronic shortages facing Londoners today. Broader reforms promised by the Planning and Infrastructure Bill offer little comfort when actual delivery figures remain shockingly low—only 117,000 homes have been completed since Labour took power, and approvals are at historic lows. Such statistics expose the true priorities: enabling developers to protect their profits rather than solving the housing emergency.

At the recent Labour conference, when pressed on these failures, Reed’s inability to produce concrete figures underscored the government’s lack of accountability. With just 29,000 developments approved in a year, the reality is grim: Labour’s strategy appears rooted in perpetuating the status quo, fobbing off hardworking families with empty promises rather than meaningful action. Their current policies threaten to slip back into a housing strategy reminiscent of the Johnson era—focused on high-end flats and luxury developments that ignore the urgent needs of ordinary people.

It’s clear that the government’s approach is about window dressing rather than real change. As critics and community leaders increasingly point out, this regime is rolling over for developers and elite interests, leaving homelessness and housing insecurity unresolved. With local elections looming, Labour’s credibility on housing hangs in the balance—yet their policies continue to betray the thousands of families and vulnerable individuals trapped in this crisis. The question remains: will they finally prioritise the needs of the many over the profits of the few? Or will this housing disaster deepen, under more empty sloganeering and broken promises?

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/oct/15/labour-housing-memo-leak-steve-reed> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gbnews.com/politics/steve-reed-skewered-eamonn-holmes-labour-housing-targets> - In an October 2025 interview, Housing Secretary Steve Reed defended Labour's ambitious housing targets, aiming to build 1.5 million new homes by 2029. GB News host Eamonn Holmes questioned the feasibility of these targets, suggesting they were 'unachievable'. Reed acknowledged the challenge but emphasized the necessity to address the housing crisis, citing the doubling of rough sleepers over the past decade and families in temporary accommodation. He attributed planning system inefficiencies as a significant barrier to housing development and advocated for reforms to expedite the process.
3. <https://www.gbnews.com/politics/labour-conference-housing-secretary-steve-reed-cant-answer-how-many-new-homes-built-under-labour> - During the 2025 Labour Conference, Housing Secretary Steve Reed faced scrutiny over the number of new homes built under Labour's tenure. When pressed by GB News' Camilla Tominey, Reed admitted he couldn't provide an exact figure, expressing frustration over the questioning. Tominey revealed that only 117,390 homes had been completed since Labour took power, highlighting the discrepancy between the government's ambitious housing targets and actual delivery. Official statistics indicated a significant decline in planning permissions, with only 29,000 developments approved in the 12 months ending June 2025.
4. <https://governmentbusiness.co.uk/news/15092025/new-housing-secretary-calls-more-building> - In September 2025, Housing Secretary Steve Reed urged developers and housebuilders to 'build, baby, build' during a meeting with industry leaders. Reed, alongside Housing Minister Matthew Pennycook, committed to collaborating with the sector to accelerate housebuilding. The government planned to introduce new measures, including the development of new towns and the passage of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, aiming to address the housing crisis by constructing 1.5 million homes as part of their 'Plan for Change'.
5. <https://newleatherheadliving.wordpress.com/2025/09/08/build-baby-build-local-site-developer-signs-major-joint-venture-with-government-housing-agency/> - In September 2025, the slogan 'Build Baby Build' was adopted by Housing Secretary Steve Reed to emphasize the government's commitment to addressing the housing crisis. A local developer in Leatherhead, Surrey, entered a significant joint venture with a government housing agency to construct up to 270 new homes, including 108 affordable units. This initiative aligns with Reed's pledge to build 1.5 million new homes during the current parliamentary term, reflecting the government's focus on large-scale housing projects to meet the nation's needs.
6. <https://www.lbc.co.uk/article/steve-reed-three-new-towns-build-labour-5HjdDbP_2/> - Housing Secretary Steve Reed announced plans to develop three new towns as part of Labour's strategy to tackle the housing crisis. The proposed locations include Adlington in Cheshire East, Crews Hill near Enfield, and a redevelopment of a former airbase at Heyford Park in Oxfordshire. These developments aim to provide new homes and support local economies. Reed's initiative follows a 'building acceleration package' introduced due to a slowdown in housebuilding activity, with planning applications falling to record lows.
7. <https://www.perspectivemedia.com/reed-said-to-have-brought-change-of-tone-to-housing-ministry-after-reshuffle/> - Following Angela Rayner's resignation, Steve Reed was appointed as Housing Secretary in September 2025. Industry sources noted a 'change in tone' within the housing ministry after Reed's appointment. During a meeting with developers, Reed issued a 'call to arms', emphasizing the government's commitment to accelerating housebuilding. He pledged to 'build, baby, build' and highlighted plans to introduce major planning reforms and investments to overcome barriers to development, aiming to initiate one of the largest building eras in the country's history.