

The Conservative YIMBY Candidates Handbook

How to Make the Conservative Case
for Building on the Door — and Win.

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Why this matters

The Conservative Party has historically always been the home of the builders.

From Macmillan's new towns to Thatcher's Right to Buy, we have always understood that owning a home is the foundation of family life, community stability, and national prosperity.

A generation of young people are locked out of ownership. Rents are soaring, waiting lists are growing, and planning permissions have fallen to record lows. For millions, the dream of a secure home feels further away than ever before.

That is why Conservative YIMBY exists: to reclaim that mantle as the party of the builders. To champion growth, aspiration, and opportunity in every town and city. And to ensure that when people hear "Conservative," they think of the people that get homes built.

This Handbook is designed to give candidates the tools to win the housing argument on the doorstep. It sets out the scale of the crisis, what the public really thinks, and how we can make the Conservative case for building with confidence.

Because the choice is stark: either we build – or Britain stagnates.

The Housing Crisis in Numbers

The housing crisis is not abstract — it is measurable, visible, and worsening year by year.

- The UK now has a shortage of **6.5 million homes**. To close the gap by 2040, the UK needs to build **565,000 homes** per year – more than double the current rate (Centre for Policy Studies, 2025).
- Young renters now expect to be at least **37 years old** before they'll be able to afford their own home (Land Promoters and Developers Federation, 2023).
- In 2023, just **39% of young people** owned their own home – down from 59% in 2000 (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2024).
- In the 1960s we built **3.6 million homes**, while in the 2000s and 2010s we built around **1.5 million homes** a decade (Centre for Policy Studies, 2023).
- The average house price in the 1980s was **3 times the average salary** – it's now **9 times** the average salary (Centre for Policy Studies, 2023).
- Britain has **just 446 homes per 1,000 people**, the second worst rate in Europe. This compares to 560 in France and 516 in Germany (Centre for Policy Studies, 2025).

What Britain Thinks

The loudest voices in planning meetings don't speak for the majority.

Recent Public First polling shows a silent majority of Britons want more homes built.

- **Clear majorities in favour:** 55% of voters back new homes in their area, while just 33% oppose them. That support cuts across parties, ages, and regions.
- **Young Britain is pro-building:** Among 30–39 year olds, those open to voting Conservative are the most likely to be YIMBY — ahead of Labour or Reform voters.
- **Why people support:** Younger YIMBYs focus on jobs, investment, and affordability; older YIMBYs prioritise homes for the next generation and making use of derelict land.
- **Few have their say:** Only 29% of YIMBYs and 38% of NIMBYs have ever commented on a planning application — meaning decision-makers mainly hear from a vocal minority.

The opportunity is there.

If Conservatives champion housing, we speak for the quiet majority — not just the noisy few.

The Human Cost of Not Building

Housing isn't just about bricks and mortar. It's about real people, real families, and real communities.

Onward's recent report *The Anti-Social Contract* found Britain's social contract is breaking down — with housing at the heart of the crisis:

- **Homeownership out of reach:** The average deposit has tripled since 2000, now over £60,000. The average first-time buyer is 33, up from 27 in 1980.
- **Families delayed or abandoned:** High housing and childcare costs mean people are starting families later — or not at all. Birth rates have fallen to 1.44 children per woman, well below replacement rate.
- **A generation trapped renting:** Average rent for a single room is £744 a month, nearly £1,000 in London. Saving for a deposit now takes seven years on average.
- **Pensions at risk:** As young people sacrifice pensions to scrape together deposits, Britain has an ageing population with fewer workers supporting more retirees — a fiscal time-bomb set to blow.

Failing to build is failing a generation. It means fewer families, fewer opportunities, and a country that grows old before it grows up.

How to Build and Win: A Conservative Case Study

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead under Conservative Leader Simon Dudley (2016–19) shows how Conservatives can be boldly pro-building and win.

Dudley unrelentingly drove through the Borough Local Plan, unlocked Maidenhead Golf Club for 1,800 homes, and struck joint ventures with Cala Homes and Countryside. Delivery was real – not rhetorical.

Opposition was fierce. A new anti-housing party, The Borough First, fought to block virtually all development. Yet Conservatives stood firm: homes for young families, value for taxpayers, regeneration for the future.

In 2019, when the party nationally lost over 1,300 councillors, Windsor and Maidenhead held the line – 23 seats, 43% of the vote, 36,000 ballots – while neighbouring anti-development councils fell.

After Dudley stepped down, some of his successors essentially began competing with the local Liberal Democrats over who could be more anti-development. The council now has a Liberal Democrat majority.

The lesson is blunt: when Conservatives are unapologetically pro-housing and stand firm against a vocal minority of blockers – we can win. And that you simply cannot out-NIMBY the Liberal Democrats.

How to Talk About Building on the Doorstep

When you speak to voters, keep it simple. Think of the **Three Fs**:

1. **Family:** “No young couple should have to delay starting a family because they can’t find a place to live.”
2. **Fairness:** “The more homes we build, the more first-time buyers can afford to get on the ladder.”
3. **Future:** “If we build, our children and grandchildren can stay near us. If we don’t, they’ll be priced out of their own neighbourhoods.”

Quick rebuttals to common objections:

- **“They’ll be ugly.”** → “We’ll make sure new homes are well-built, attractive, and come with green spaces.”
- **“It’s all for immigrants.”** → “Immigration needs to come down — but even if net migration fell to zero tomorrow, Britain would still face a housing shortage of nearly 7 million homes. Housing won’t become affordable until we fill that gap.”
- **“It will ruin the countryside.”** → “We’re focusing on towns and cities where demand is highest — to take pressure off the countryside.”

Myth-Busting: Cutting Through the Noise

The housing debate is full of myths. Voters hear them repeated so often they begin to sound like truth.

Here's how to cut through with the facts:

- **"Developers are landbanking."**

False: Despite unprecedented access to developers' internal records this year, the Competition and Markets Authority found no evidence of landbanking, instead identifying the planning system as the real barrier to housing delivery, with 1.4 million homes having been granted planning permission since 2007 still not built (Institute for Public Policy Research, 2025)

- **"Foreign buyers are driving the crisis."**

Around 0.7% of homes are owned by overseas buyers – this has no meaningful impact on prices (Centre for Public Data, 2021).

- **"We can just build on brownfield."**

Even if all brownfield sites were developed in Britain, that would account for just 31% of our 15-year housing need (Lichfields, 2022)

- **"We already have plenty of homes."**

We are now 6.5 million homes short (Centre for Policy Studies, 2025). The backlog grows annually, locking a generation out of ownership.

Conclusion: The Time to Build is Now

The choice facing us is simple: lead on housing – or fade into irrelevance.

The centre-right has always been at its best when we have been ambitious: building homes, building infrastructure, building businesses. That is the tradition we must reclaim.

By putting building back at the heart of Conservatism, we can restore pride in our local communities and secure the next generation of Conservative voters.

It is time to show that the Conservative Party is – and always will be – the home of the builders.



Bracknell Beeches, Weston Homes

Weston Homes

“As a young man in the 1970s, I was inspired by Margaret Thatcher’s belief that home ownership is the foundation of a stronger country. Owning your own home gives people pride, purpose, and security. It means paying off your mortgage before retirement so that you can enjoy your later years without the burden of rent. For me, and for Weston Homes, this principle remains as true today as it was then: building homes people can afford is the key to unlocking growth, opportunity, and stability for Britain’s future.”

— **Bob Weston, Founder & Chairman, Weston Homes**

Who We Are

Founded in 1987 by Bob Weston, Weston Homes has grown into one of the leading housebuilders in the South East of England, renowned for its commitment to quality, innovation, and community impact.

The company combines the craftsmanship of traditional housebuilding with the efficiency and sustainability of cutting-edge technology. Its subsidiary, British Offsite, pre-manufactures key elements of homes in state-of-the-art factories — reducing waste, cutting carbon, and ensuring outstanding standards of finish.

Driven by the belief that building homes changes lives, Weston Homes remains dedicated to delivering developments that people are proud to call home — and to leaving a lasting legacy across Britain’s towns and cities.

LGA Conservative Group

"You cannot make an authentic case for capitalism if people don't own a stake of capital in society. Conservative led councils are delivering beautiful and appropriately placed housing with planning design codes that reflect the needs of our communities."

- **Cllr Kevin Bentley, Leader of the LGA Conservative Group**

Our Chairman

"For years, Britain has ducked the question of housing. We have promised and failed, talked and delayed - and the result is a generation locked out of home ownership, rents spiralling, and families stuck in limbo. That is not Conservatism. Our party was built on the dream of a home of your own, and we cannot afford to betray that legacy. It is time to face the facts, end the excuses, and build again - boldly, unapologetically, and in the national interest."

- **Sir Simon Clarke, Chairman of Conservative YIMBY**

Acknowledgements

Bob Weston and Weston Homes

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Work With Us

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