

Until there's a home for everyone

Anxiety on the rise, NIMBYism in decline

Public attitudes to fixing the housing shortage

Shelter

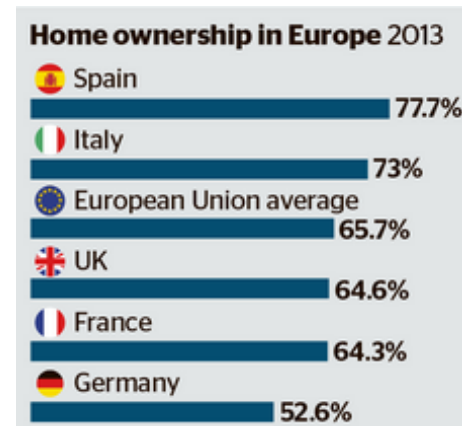
Summary

- Spiralling house prices and rents have increased voter anxiety about housing, as parents worry about their children's future. Ahead of the election, **housing is now a top 5 issue for voters.**
- Unfortunately, until now anxiety and support *in principle* for more homes has not translated into support for more homes 'in my local area' (NIMBYism).
- However, **the last three years has seen a staggering turn-around in attitudes.** As anxiety about housing has risen, NIMBYism has declined sharply. Independent research shows:
 - In 2010, there was not a single major voter group who overall supported homes being built in their area. By 2013, there was not a single voter group who didn't.
 - NIMBYism has collapsed across all age groups, falling most sharply among the over 60s.
 - There has also been a reversal in homeowners' attitudes to building more homes in their area.
- Research shows that if certain recurring concerns are addressed, most voters can now be won round to the idea of homes in their area.
- All of this adds up to **an unprecedented political opportunity** to both speak to voter anxiety about the problem and solve England's housing shortage once and for all.

England's worsening housing crisis

Across the country, England's housing shortage no longer just affects those on low incomes. Increasingly it's a crisis hitting the middle too.

- **High house prices mean home ownership is declining for the first time on record.** Home ownership in the UK is now below the EU15 average – and falling faster than in any other major country in Europe.
- **Rise of 'the rent trap'.** High house prices and the shortage of social housing has pushed more people into unstable renting, pushing up rents. Despite most wanting to own, 66% of renters say they have nothing left to save for a deposit after paying rent and bills.



Source: Eurostat/The Times, November 2014

The Telegraph

Home buying will be out of reach for an 'entire generation'

Daily Mail

First-time buyers get £17,000 help from the Bank of Mum and Dad: Anxious parents eating into retirement pots to help children get on property ladder

As the problem has worsened, public anxiety has risen...



- As a result, **voter anxiety about housing has risen sharply in recent years.**
- **This anxiety is felt not just by those directly affected, but their parents too.** They worry that their children's declining prospects of home ownership means **less stability, less security and less prosperity** for their future (BritainThinks)
- As the election approaches, this is now consistently making housing a **top 5 issue for voters** (YouGov).
- Overwhelmingly, **'cost and availability of housing'** is the issue which voters in marginal seats think has got worse in the last few year (ComRes).

Which of the following do you think are the most important issues facing the country at this time?
Please tick up to three.

	Dec 8-9	Jan 5-6
Immigration & Asylum	49	52
The economy	49	52
Health	33	46
Welfare benefits	30	28
Housing	20	19
Europe	20	19
Education	13	14
Pensions	12	9
The environment	10	9
Crime	10	8
Tax	9	7
Family life & childcare	8	6
Transport	3	3
None of these	1	1
Don't know	4	3

Source: YouGov, Jan 2015

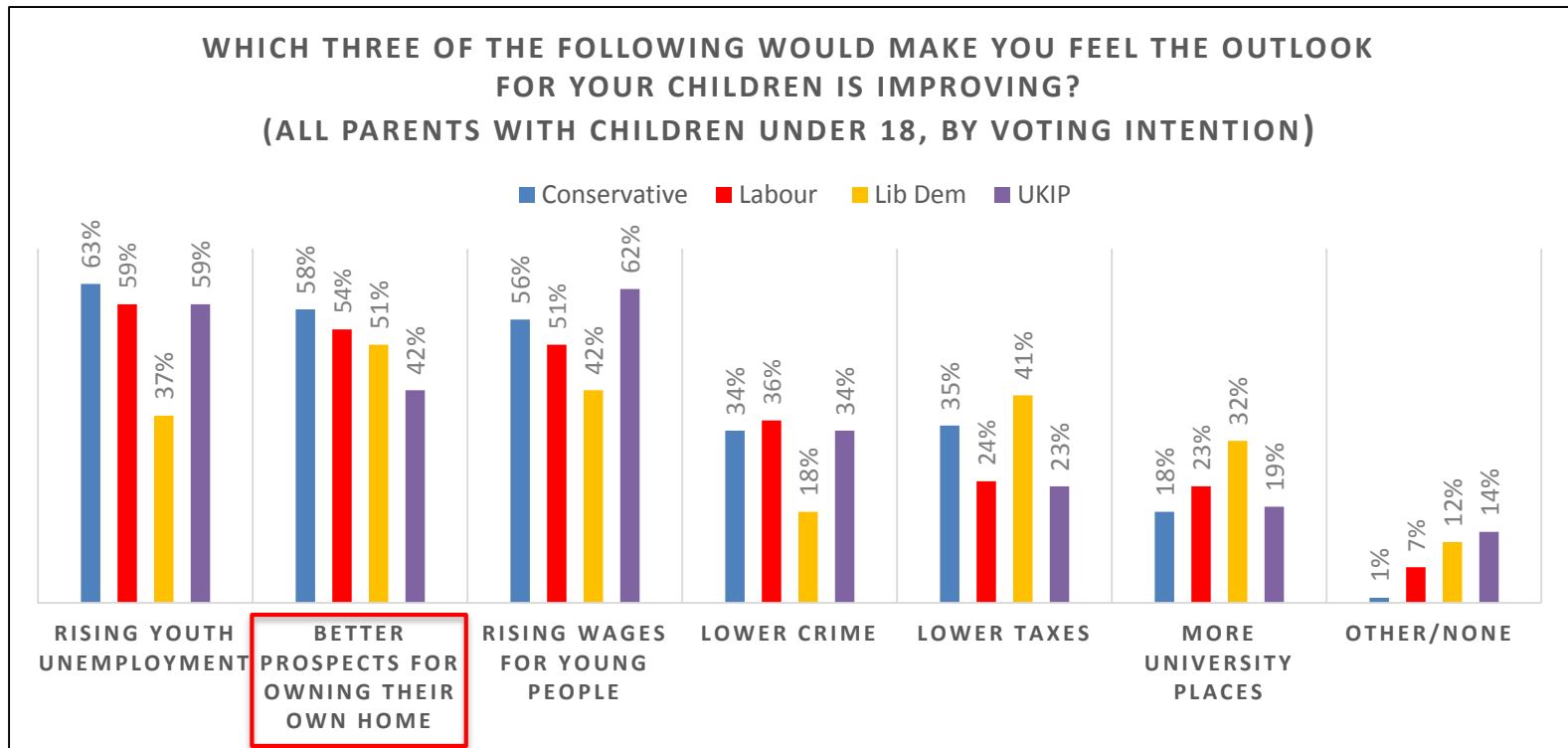
Over the last five years, would you say each of the following has got better, stayed the same or got worse? (voters in top 40 marginal seats)

Options	Got better	Stayed the same	Got worse	Don't know
Cost and availability of housing	6%	18%	72%	4%
Levels of immigration	4%	23%	69%	4%
Quality of healthcare	6%	38%	53%	3%
Quality of schools	6%	41%	45%	8%
Levels of unemployment	27%	28%	42%	3%
Levels of crime	16%	42%	36%	6%

Source: ComRes, July 2014

This is influencing voters' views about the future

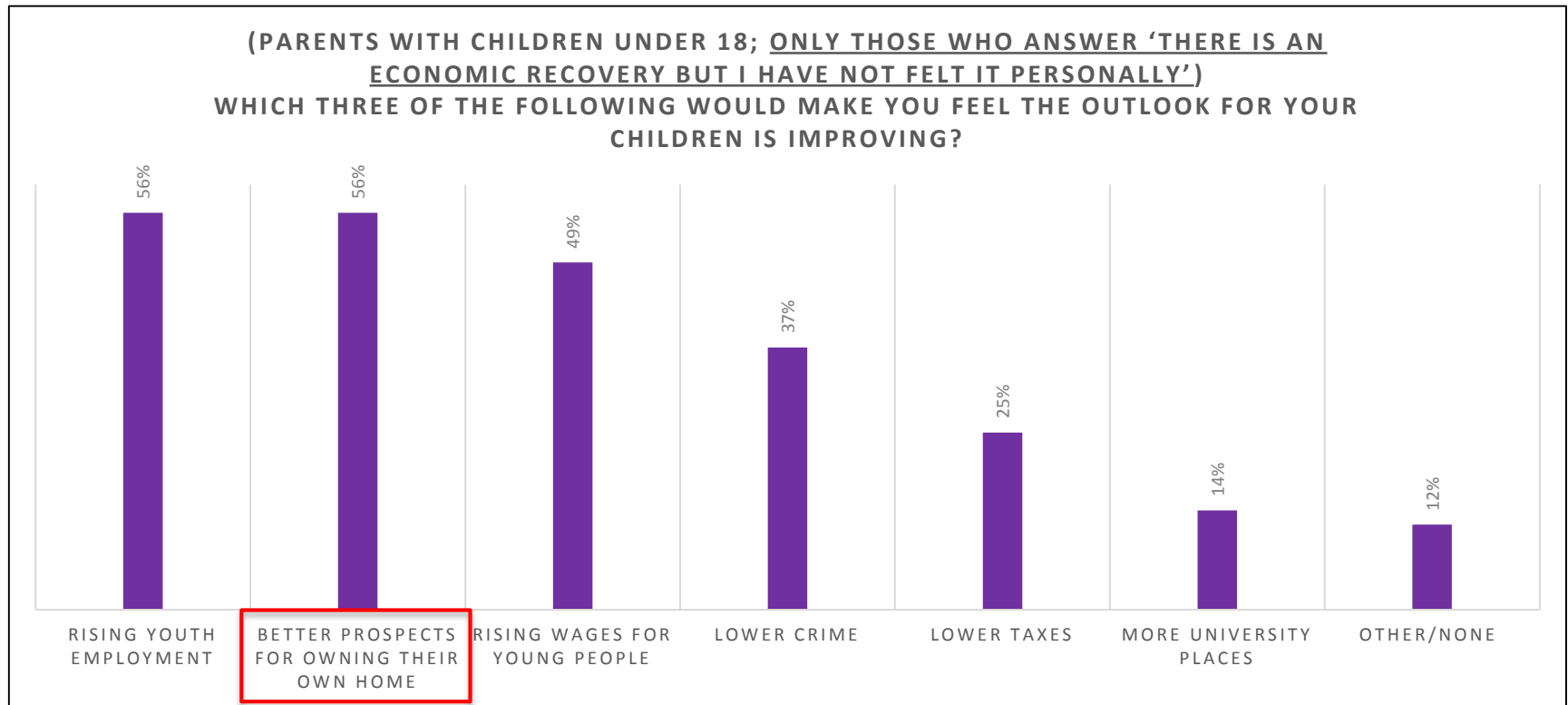
- That's why when parents are asked what would make them feel better about their children's future, 'better prospects for home ownership' is now in the top 2 among most major voter groups.



Source: Populus for Shelter, November 2014

...and their views about the economic recovery

- This anxiety also influences views of the economic recovery. **Housing is joint first as an issue among families who feel the economic recovery is not yet benefiting them.**

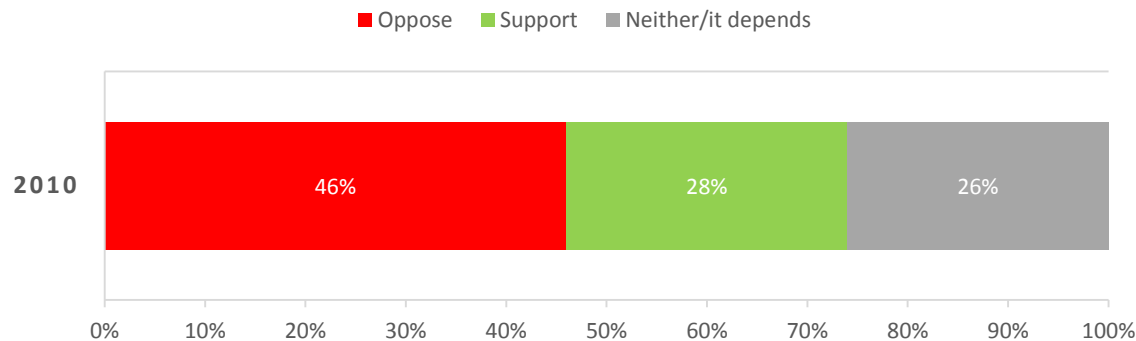


Source: Populus for Shelter, November 2014

Until recently, however, this has not fed through in to support for new homes.

- The only solution to our housing shortage is to build the homes we need, particularly affordable homes. There has long been support at *national* level for this.
- But this has not always extended to a local level, where a 'not in my back yard' (NIMBY) attitude has caused opposition to development.

2010: "WOULD YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE MORE HOMES BEING BUILT IN YOUR LOCAL AREA?"



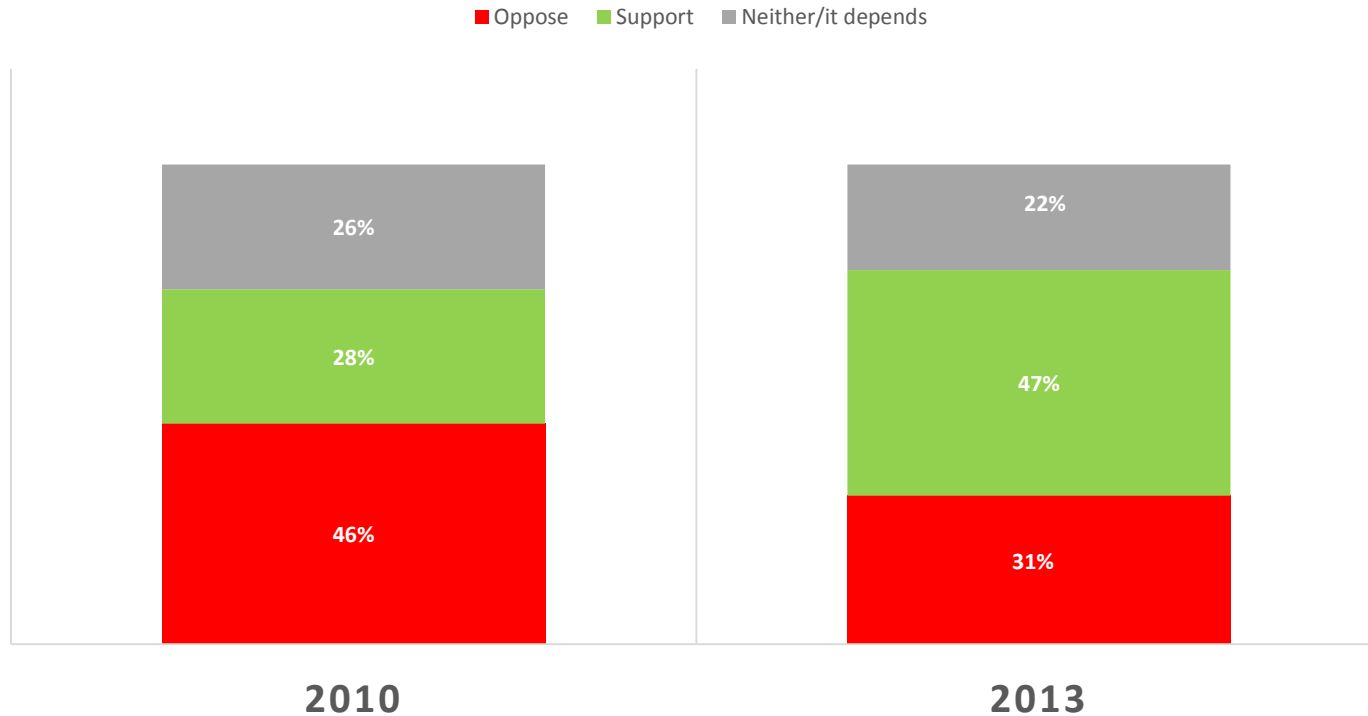
Source: British Social Attitudes survey, NatCen, 2013

But things are changing: NIMBYism is now in decline



- However, as anxiety has risen in recent years **there has been a significant collapse in those saying they would oppose more homes being built in their local area.** There has been a large increase in support.

"WOULD YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE MORE HOMES BEING BUILT IN YOUR LOCAL AREA?"

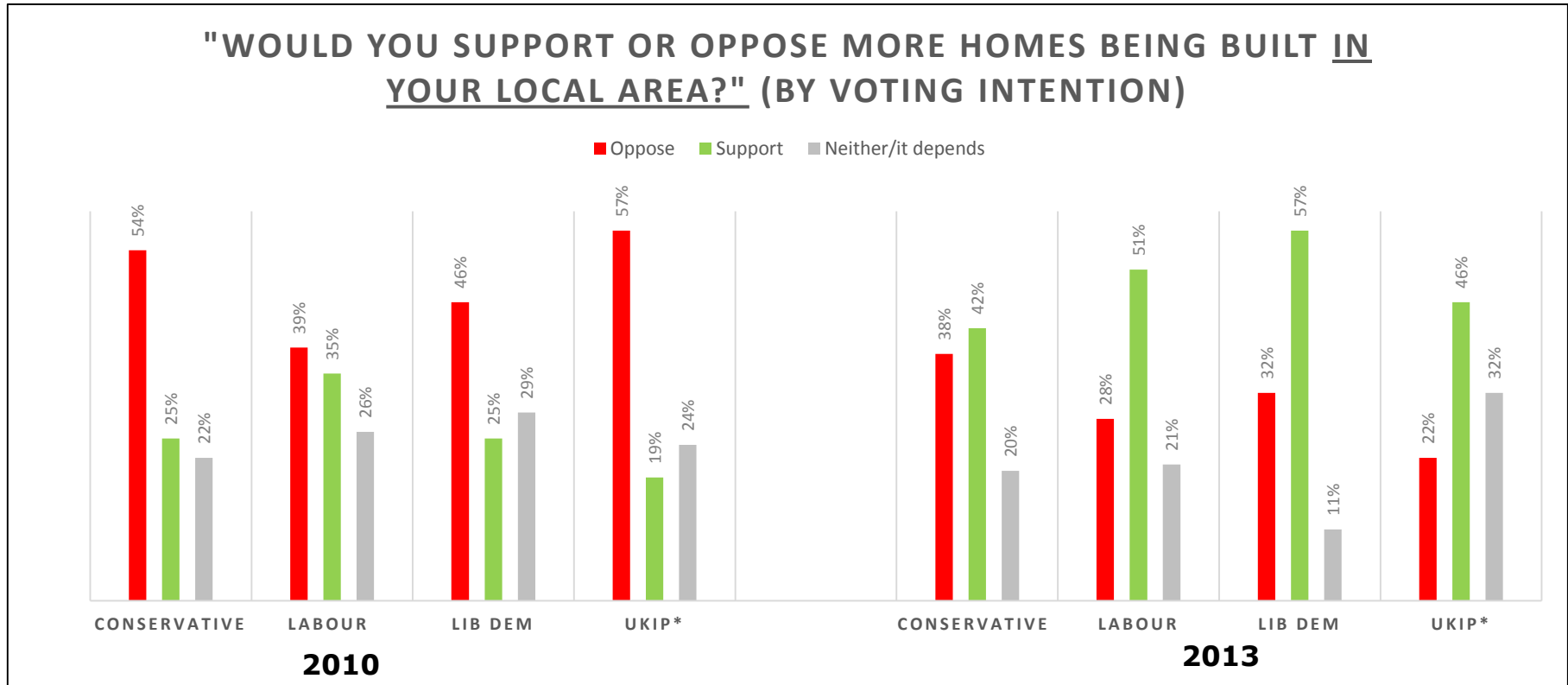


Source: British Social Attitudes survey, NatCen, 2013

NIMBYism in decline across all voter groups



- Support for new homes 'in my area' has risen dramatically since 2010 across all voter groups, with NIMBYism declining.
- In 2010, there was not a single group of voters that, overall, supported new homes in their area. By 2013, there was not a single voter group that didn't.



All data based on the latest British Social Attitudes Survey, NatCen, 2013

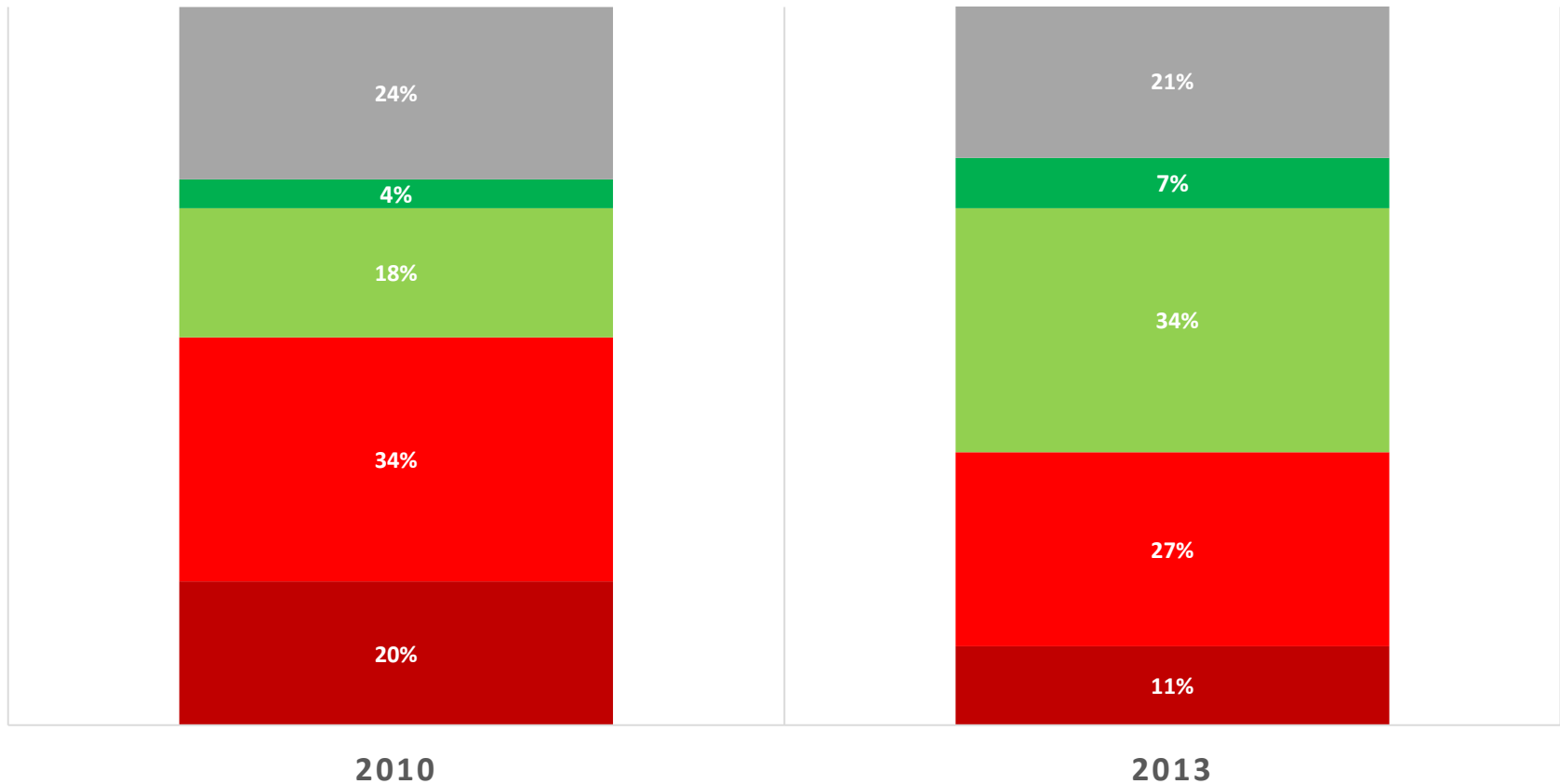
*Caution: small UKIP sample

NIMBYism in decline: Conservative voters



"WOULD YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE MORE HOMES BEING BUILT IN YOUR LOCAL AREA?" (JUST THOSE WHO VOTED **CONSERVATIVE** AT GE 2010)

■ Oppose strongly ■ Oppose ■ Support ■ Support strongly ■ Neither/it depends



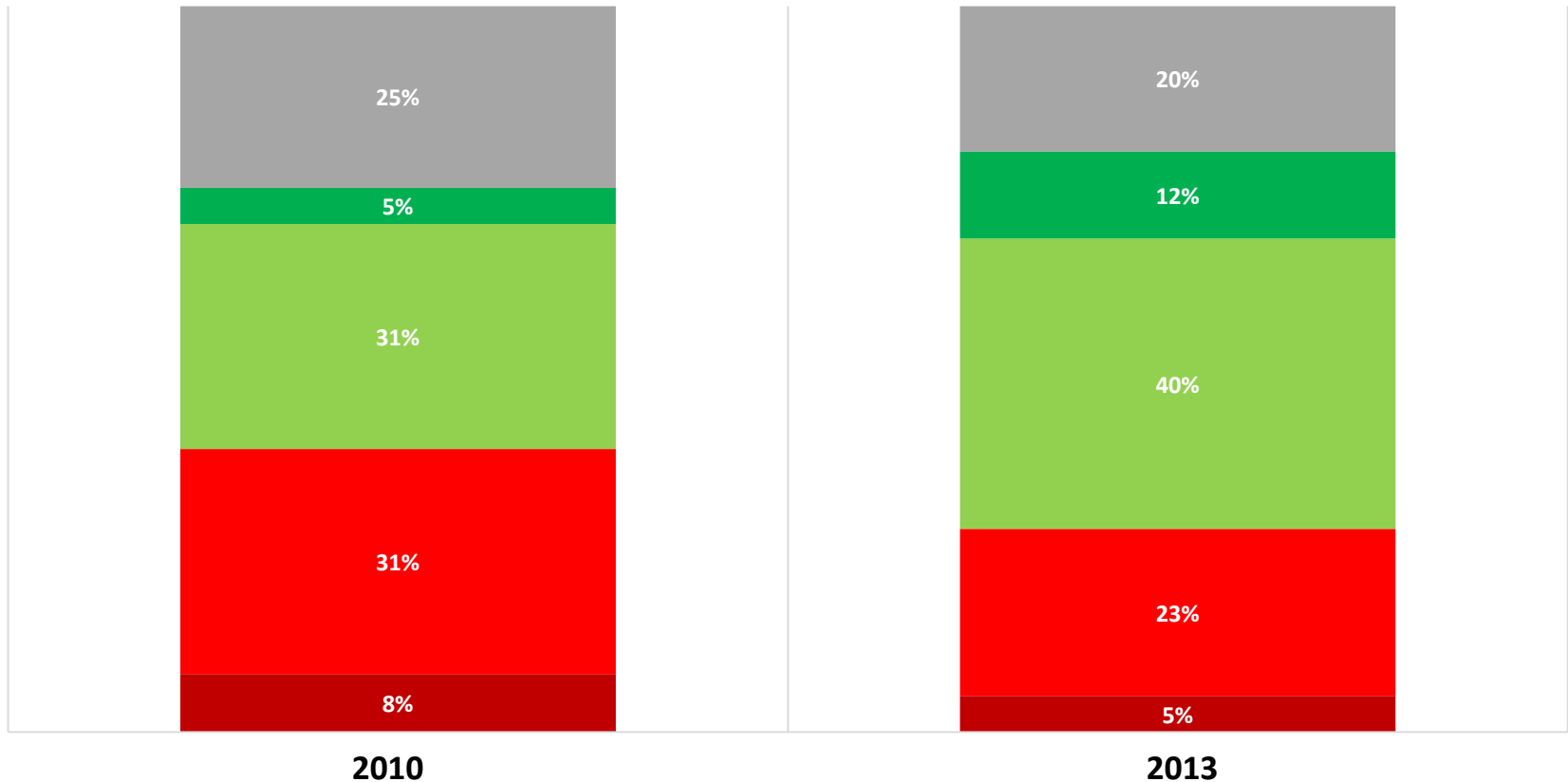
All data based on the latest British Social Attitudes Survey, NatCen, 2013

NIMBYism in decline: Labour voters



"WOULD YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE MORE HOMES BEING BUILT IN YOUR LOCAL AREA?" (JUST THOSE WHO VOTED **LABOUR** AT GE 2010)

■ Oppose strongly ■ Oppose ■ Support ■ Support strongly ■ Neither/it depends



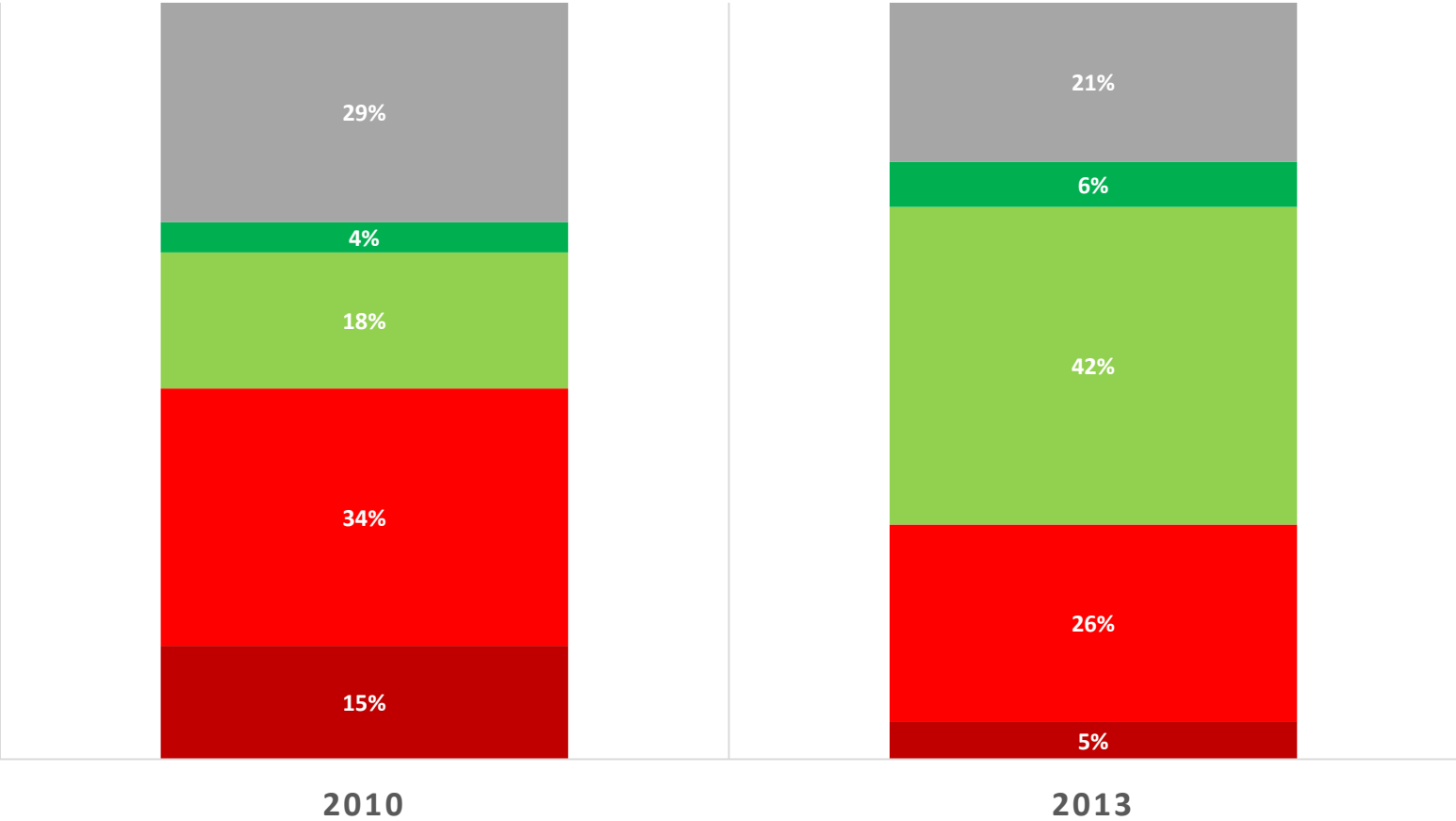
All data based on the latest British Social Attitudes Survey, NatCen, 2013

NIMBYism in decline: Lib Dem voters



"WOULD YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE MORE HOMES BEING BUILT IN YOUR LOCAL AREA?" (JUST THOSE WHO VOTED **LIB DEM** AT GE 2010)

■ Oppose strongly ■ Oppose ■ Support ■ Support strongly ■ Neither/it depends

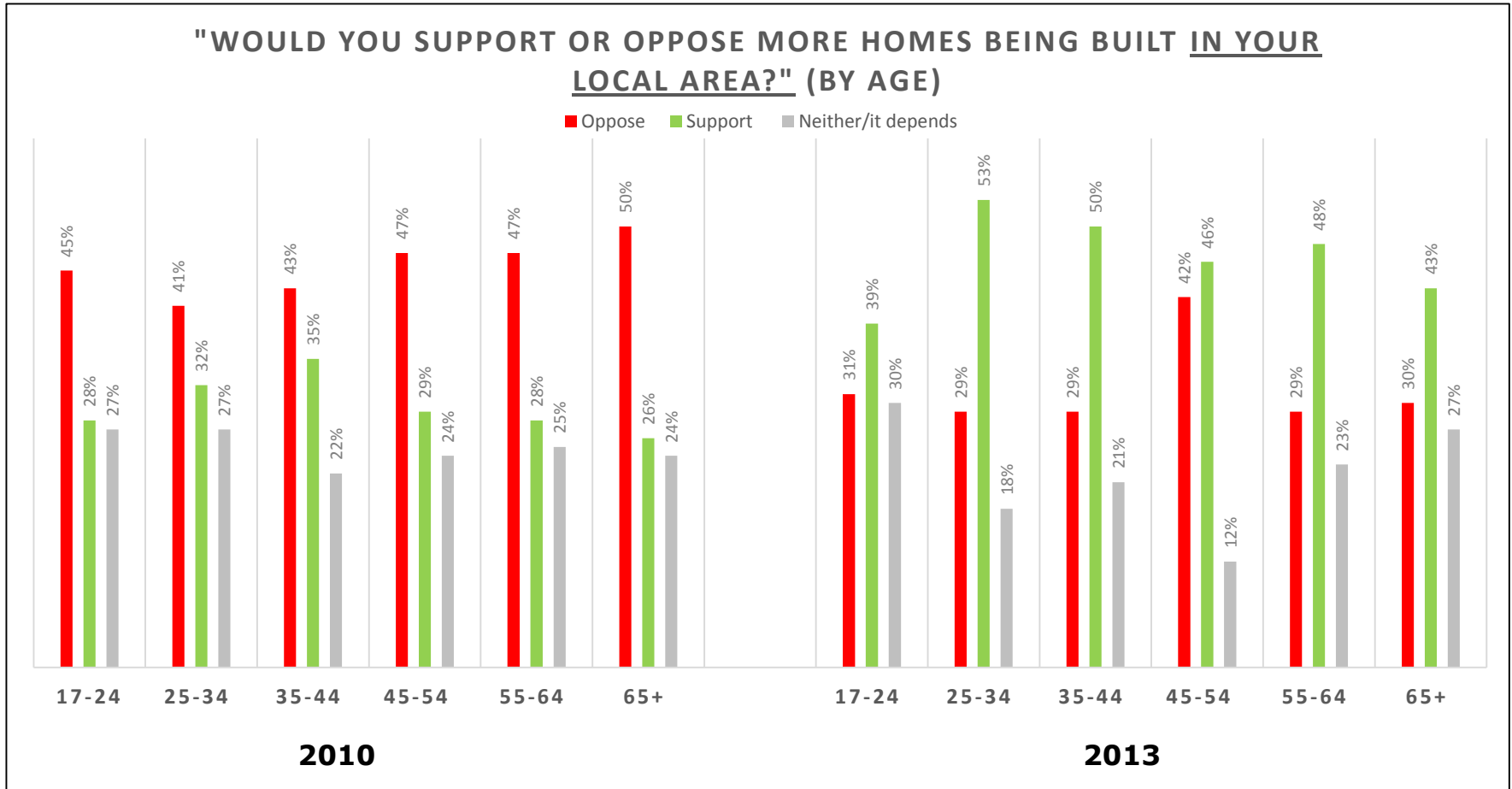


All data based on the latest British Social Attitudes Survey, NatCen, 2013

NIMBYism in decline across all age groups



Support has also increased across all age groups. The decline in NIMBYism is most pronounced among the 65+ demographic, a traditionally anti-development group.

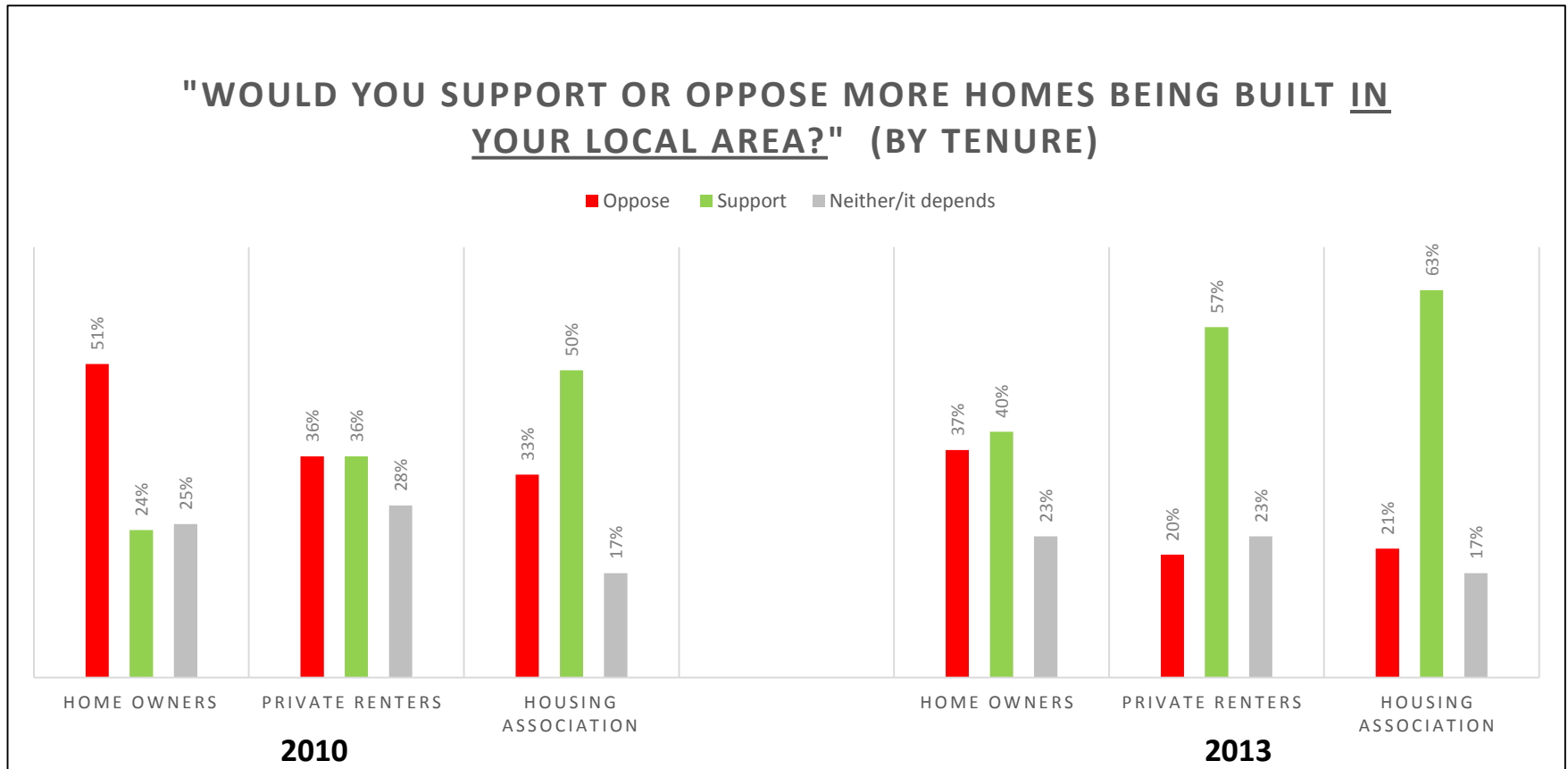


All data based on the latest British Social Attitudes Survey, NatCen, 2013

NIMBYism in decline across all tenures



A majority of home owners now also support new homes in their area, compared to 2010. Renters – private and social - remain supportive.



All data based on the latest British Social Attitudes Survey, NatCen, 2013

A number of factors influence support or opposition to new homes

- Qualitative and quantitative research suggests the frame through which key voters engage with housing is their children's future, and their declining prospects for home ownership. **This remains the best starting point for winning support for new homes.**
- However, the following are vital to neutralising doubts or opposition:
 - **Infrastructure.** Voters need to know the homes are being accompanied by the appropriate infrastructure, including transport links, medical facilities, schools etc.
 - **Homes for whom?** It's essential that voters feel new homes are affordable and are going to benefit priced out young people in their local area.
 - **Employment opportunities.** Voters can also be persuaded of new homes by the jobs that building them can bring – especially in areas needing regeneration.



Case study: Medway

In July 2014, Shelter entered the Wolfson Economics Prize to design a Garden City.

We proposed a new Garden City on the Hoo Peninsula. Support from a corporate partner enabled us to undertake **extensive conversations with residents of Medway** on our proposal (x4 focus groups, polling and a day-long 'Citizens Jury'), to test national assumptions at a local level.

We found:

- **Broad engagement with the problem.** High house prices and the lack of affordable homes came up spontaneously, especially the social/personal consequences of young people not being able to buy. This was wrapped up in a broader concern for the future of young people in the area.
- **Support for the principle of a Garden City in the area.** 54% of Medway residents supported it, with 33% opposed.

However...



"The youngsters starting off haven't got a hope. Especially like my friend's son works in a supermarket and his wages are a pittance. There's no way he can afford to even rent anything."

Homeowner, 35-60,
Medway resident

"We can see that the consequence of not building more houses is that it will affect your family somewhere down the line. Maybe not your children your grandchildren."

Homeowner, 60+,
Medway resident

YouGov
What the world thinks

Britainthinks

Case study: Medway

There were some uncertainties:

- **Infrastructure.** Local concerns about the risk of flooding and transport infrastructure.
- **‘People like me’.** Worries that new homes would not be affordable or available to local people (this played in to anxiety around immigration and people moving in from nearby London).

However, once residents felt these issues addressed, the overwhelming majority supported our proposal.

The **following incentives worked** to encourage further support for the Garden City:

- Creation of new jobs and apprenticeships
- High proportion of homes affordable

The following incentives **didn’t**:

- Cash incentives
- Pension style investment opportunities



“I like the idea of building in this vast area because I do think we desperately need it and it does need to be affordable because the youngsters are not getting anywhere”
Homeowner, 60+,
Medway resident

“I have a friend in Maidstone who bought a house and they had made the the garages too small for people to park in so everyone parked on the kerb and there was only a single road.”

Homeowner, 60+,
Medway resident

YouGov
What the world thinks

Britainthinks

Conclusion: a political opportunity to fix the shortage of homes

- All of this adds up to an **once in a generation political opportunity to solve England's housing shortage**.
- Rocketing house prices and high rents are pushing the dream of home ownership out of reach for an entire generation. Concern at this is making housing **a top 5 issue for voters** at the forthcoming election.
- Crucially, **for the first time this anxiety is now matched by rising support for the solution**: building the homes we need. There is now widespread consent among all demographics for this. This does not mean there is no opposition. But it is now consigned to a vocal minority. Politicians who support building more affordable homes **can now be confident that they speak for the majority**.
- Polling suggests **no one party yet 'owns' the housing crisis in voters' minds**. There remains a huge opportunity to speak to the everyday aspiration to own a safe, affordable home of your own – and to win voter loyalty by being seen as the party that solved the problem once and for all.



'If no action is taken to build homes, by 2040 more than half of 20-35 year olds may be stuck living with their parents.'

- KPMG/Shelter report, 'Building the homes we need', 2014



"With almost half of residents in marginal constituencies saying they do not know which party they trust most to undertake initiatives to tackle the housing situation, there is scope for both major parties to persuade the electorate to trust them on housing policies. Policies on affordable housing could therefore be crucial to define votes in marginal constituencies."

- ComRes, July 2014

End notes

- If you would like more information on any of the research presented here, please contact Steve_Akehurst@shelter.org.uk
- In May 2014, Shelter and KPMG produced a five year policy programme for whoever forms the next government to build the homes we need. You can view this by visiting www.thehomesweneed.org.uk
- Shelter's proposal to the Wolfson Economics Prize for a Garden City in Medway received the runners up prize in the competition, beating hundreds of others. You can view our full proposal on our online policy library: http://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_and_research/policy_library/policy_library_folder/report_wolfson_economics_prize_2014

A video of the Citizens Jury we held in Medway – which included a cross representative sample of the Medway population - is also available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZM3RXJcVd8I>