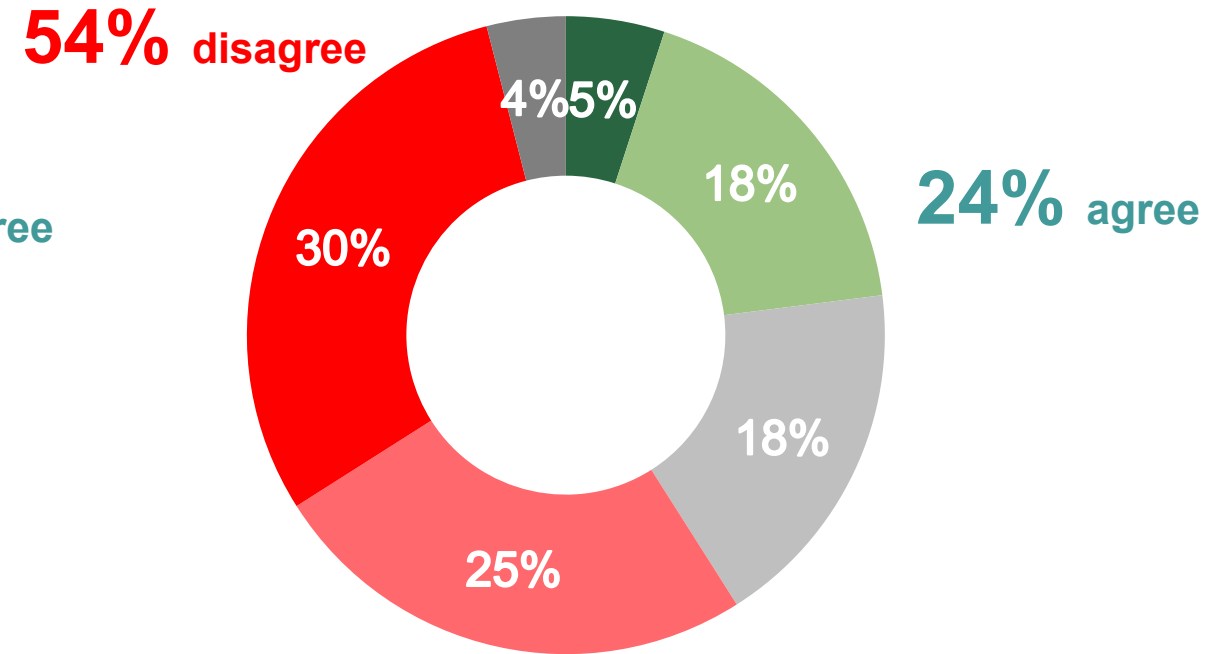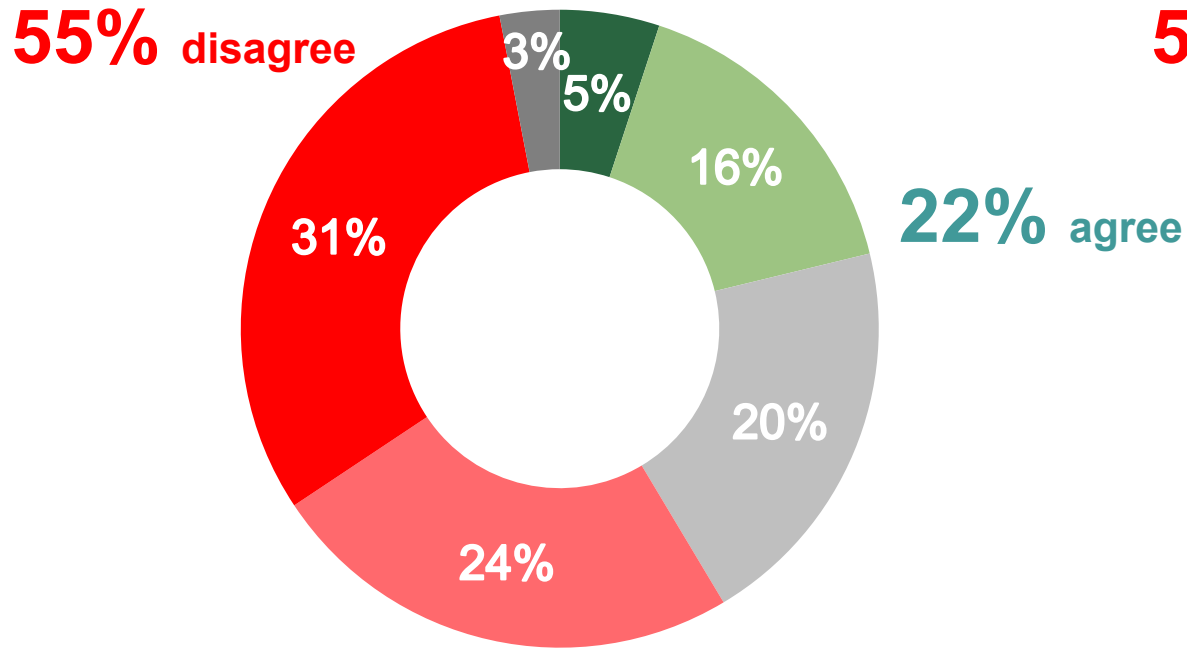# Ipsos and The Economist

Housing and the Green Belt

July 2023

A majority of people in Britain disagree that housing is affordable for them, nationally and locally

Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements…?

Housing is affordable in Britain for people like me

55% disagree

22% agree

- 3%
- 5%
- 16%
- 20%
- 24%
- 31%

Housing is affordable in my local area for people like me

54% disagree

24% agree

- 4%
- 5%
- 18%
- 18%
- 25%
- 30%

STRONGLY AGREE

TEND TO AGREE

NEITHER

TEND TO DISAGREE

STRONGLY DISAGREE

DON'T KNOW

Ipsos

Many Britons make the link between supply and affordability, but many don't or are unsure

Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...?

We will not make housing more affordable <u>in Britain</u> unless we increase the number of new homes being built every year

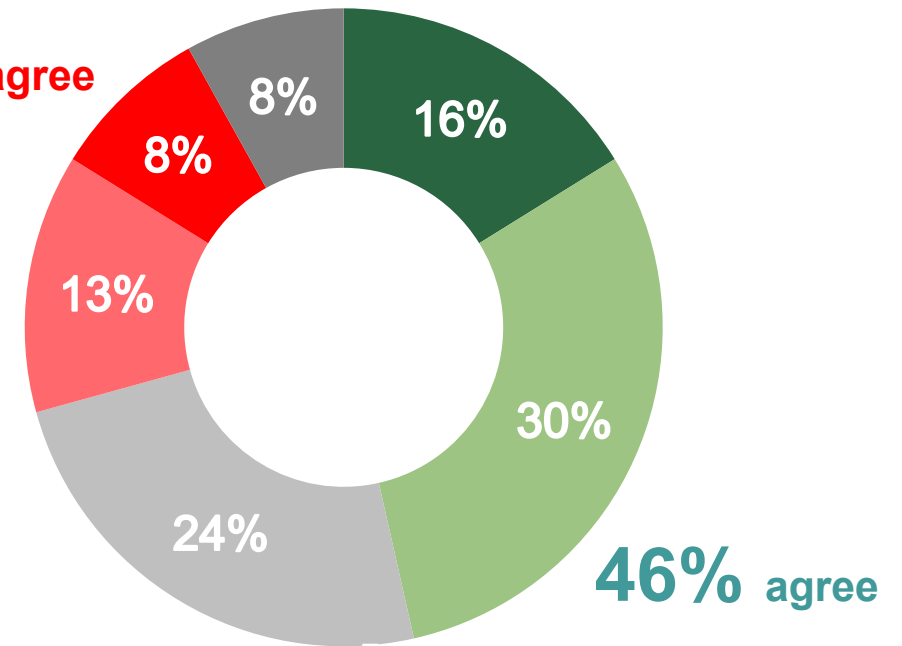**20%** disagree

9%

18%

8%

32%

12%

22%

50% agree
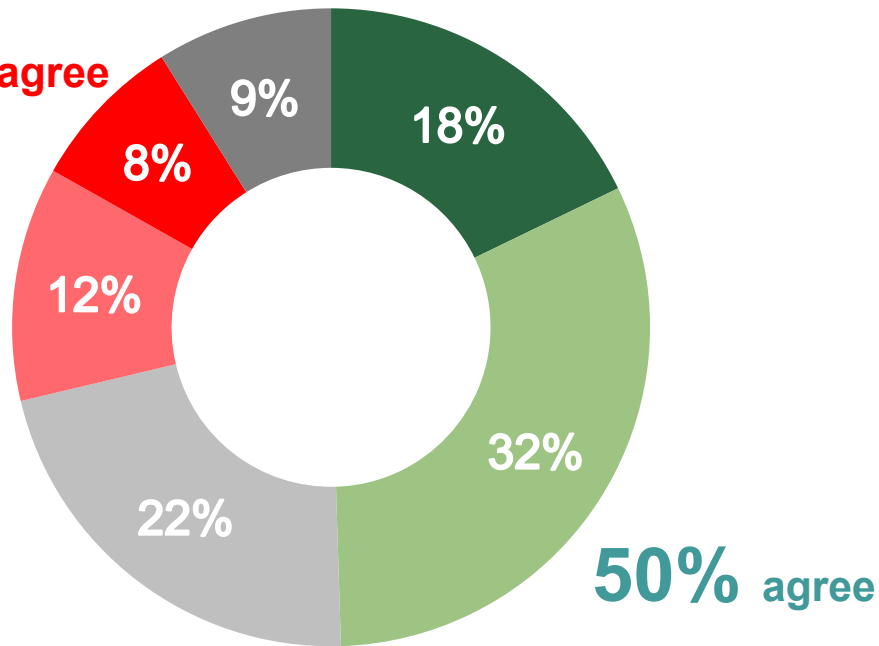
We will not make housing more affordable <u>in my local area</u> unless we increase the number of new homes being built every year
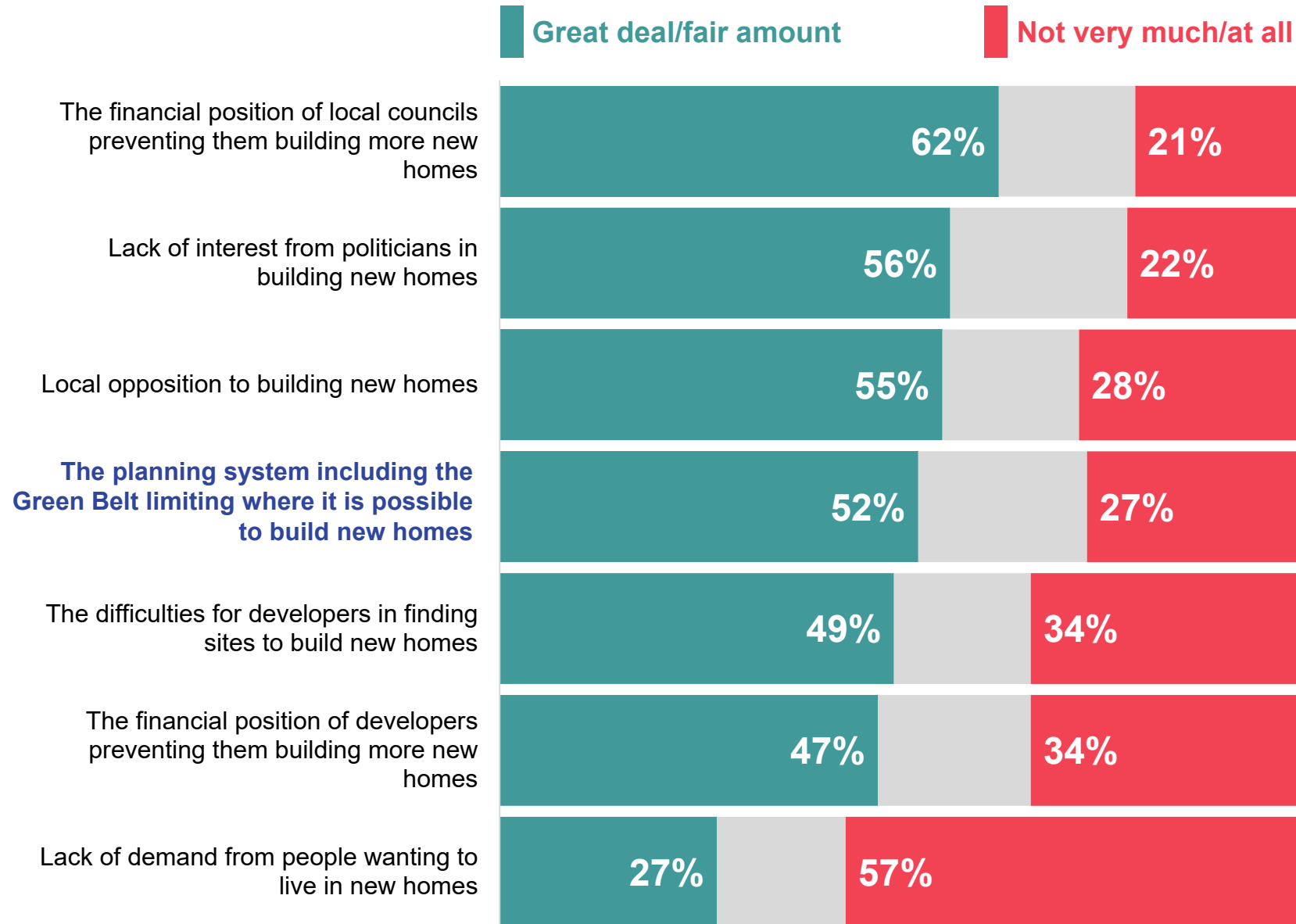
21% disagree

8%

16%

8%

30%

13%

24%

46% agree

STRONGLY AGREE	TEND TO AGREE	NEITHER	TEND TO DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW

Ipsos

A restrictive planning system features among reasons for under-supply, but other factors are more salient

As you may know, Britain is currently building fewer homes per year than the Government has said it wants to see built.

How much, if at all, do you think each of the following have contributed to this?

■ Great deal/fair amount   **■ Not very much/at all**

Statement	Great deal/fair amount	Not very much/at all
The financial position of local councils preventing them building more new homes	62%	21%
Lack of interest from politicians in building new homes	56%	22%
Local opposition to building new homes	55%	28%
The planning system including the Green Belt limiting where it is possible to build new homes	**52%**	**27%**
The difficulties for developers in finding sites to build new homes	49%	34%
The financial position of developers preventing them building more new homes	47%	34%
Lack of demand from people wanting to live in new homes	27%	57%

In Britain, a plurality support building more homes locally

Q3. To what extent would you support or oppose more homes being built in your local area?
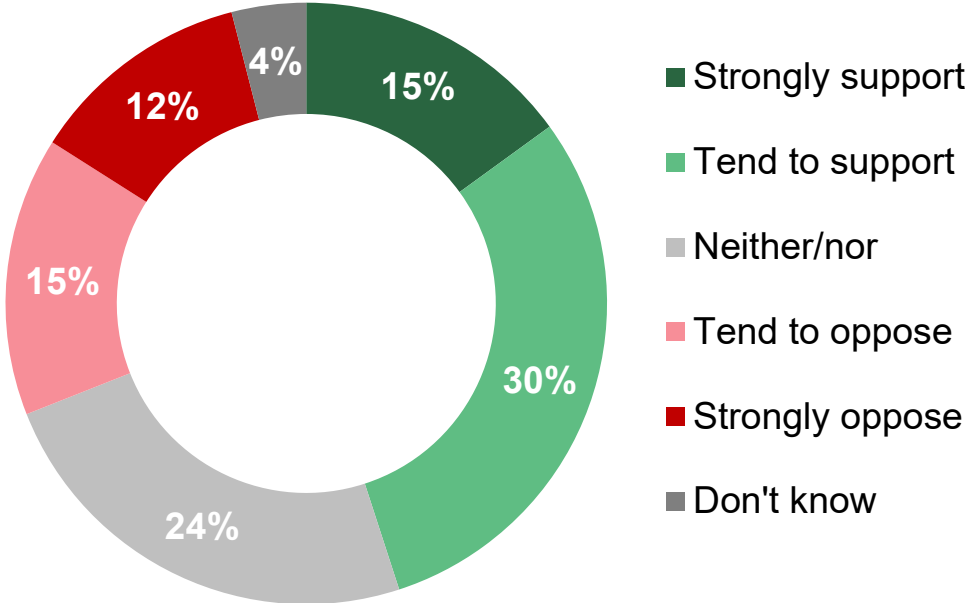
Donut chart:
- Strongly support: 15%
- Tend to support: 30%
- Neither/nor: 24%
- Tend to oppose: 15%
- Strongly oppose: 12%
- Don't know: 4%

Support	45%
Oppose	27%

	Support	Oppose
Tenure		
Owner (859)	41%	33%
Mortgage (621)	40%	32%
Private rent (321)	60%	15%
Social rent (272)	51%	17%
2019 GE vote		
Conservative (608)	39%	38%
Labour (529)	55%	21%
Lib Dem (190)	54%	21%
Others (267)	49%	26%

Ipsos

Support has fallen back to levels seen in 2020 but remains higher than it was a decade ago

Q3. To what extent would you support or oppose more homes being built in your local area?

●— Support   ●— Oppose
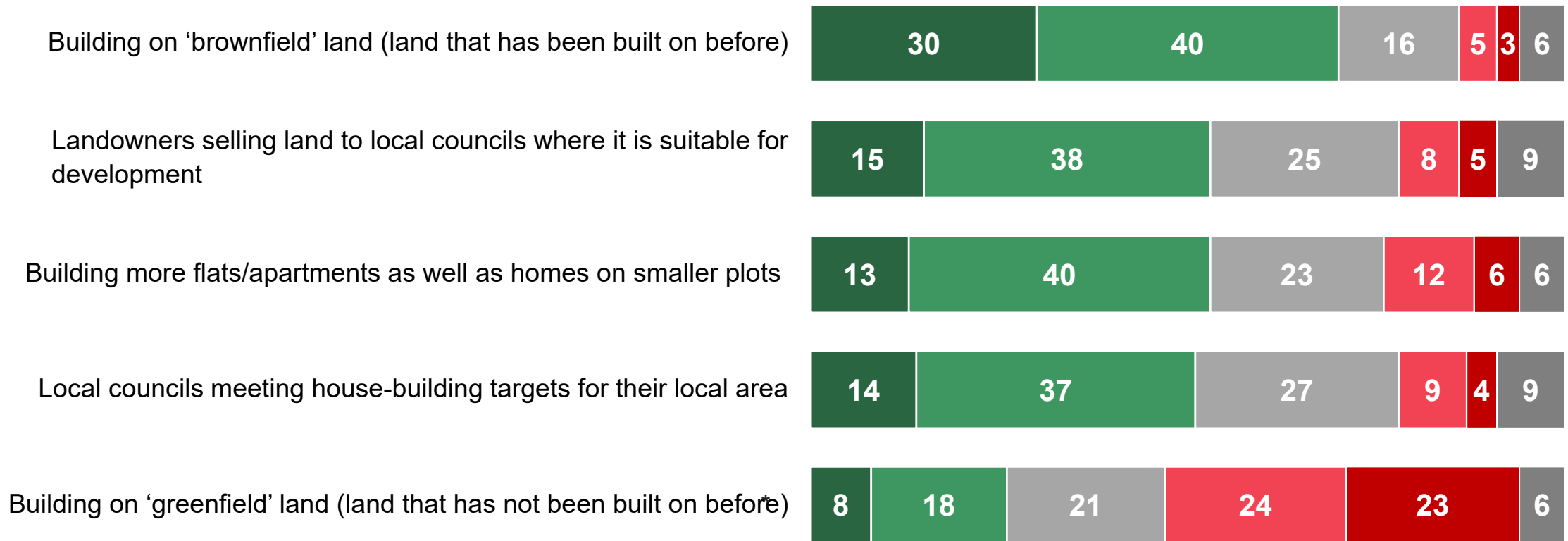

Support: 40% (2014), 52% (2019), 46% (2020), 49% (2022), 45% (2023)
Oppose: 28% (2014), 22% (2019), 27% (2020), 22% (2022), 27% (2023)

2014   2019   2020   2022   2023
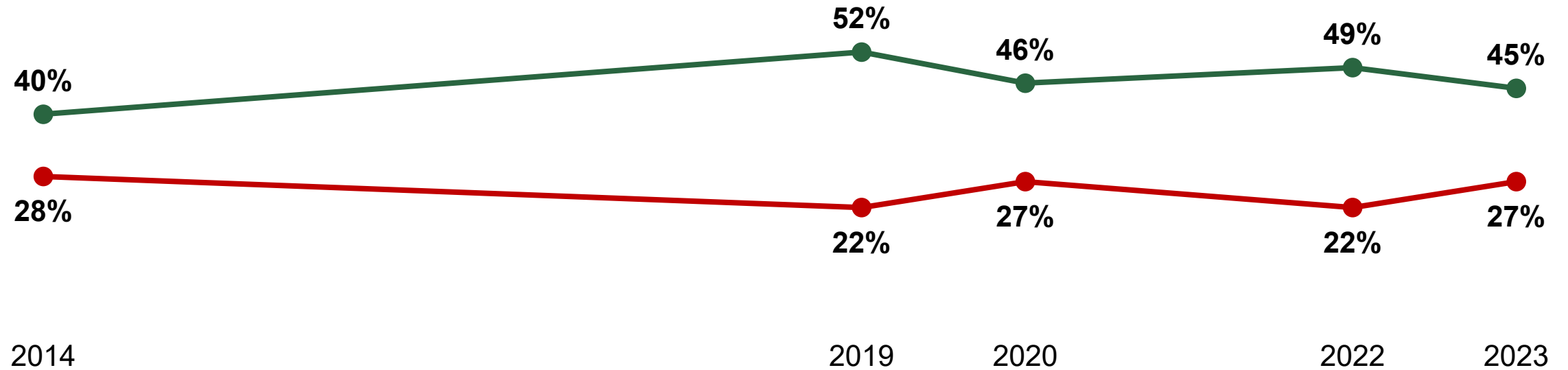
Source: Ipsos
Base: c.2,000 GB adults aged 16-75 or 18-75

Ipsos

Support is conditional - it is stronger for brownfield development, weaker for greenfield

Q4. Here are some of the possible options for increasing the number of new homes being built every year in Britain. In principle, to what extent would you support or oppose the following in your local area…

■ % Strongly support ■ % Tend to support ■ % Neither/nor ■ % Tend to oppose ■ % Strongly oppose ■ % Don't know

	Strongly support	Tend to support	Neither/nor	Tend to oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know
Building on 'brownfield' land (land that has been built on before)	30	40	16	5	3	6
Landowners selling land to local councils where it is suitable for development	15	38	25	8	5	9
Building more flats/apartments as well as homes on smaller plots	13	40	23	12	6	6
Local councils meeting house-building targets for their local area	14	37	27	9	4	9
Building on 'greenfield' land (land that has not been built on before)	8	18	21	24	23	6

Ipsos

In England, people significantly over-estimate the extent of past development

Q5. 'Developed land' is defined by national statistics as land that has been built on and is occupied by a permanent structure such as a building or a road, a path or pavement, a railway line. What percentage of land in England do you think is currently developed?
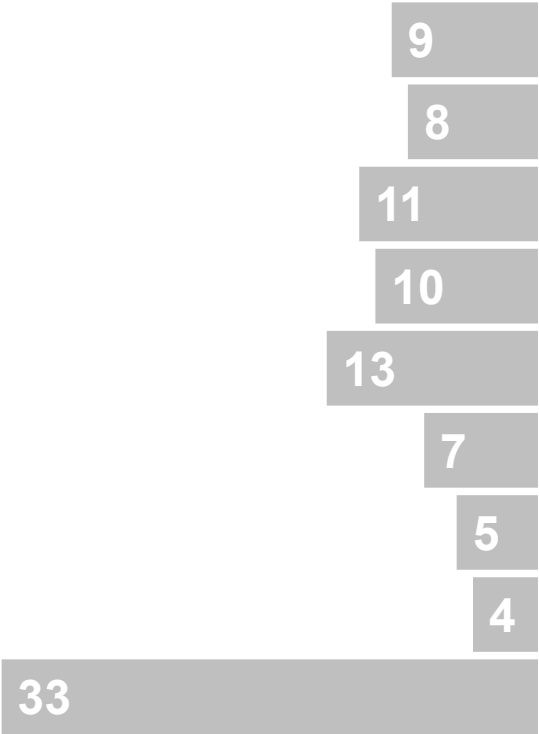
% answering in range

Range	Q5	Q6
0 to 10	5	9
11 to 20	7	8
21 to 30	8	11
31 to 40	9	10
41 to 50	11	13
51 to 60	10	7
61 to 70	8	5
71-100	10	4
Don't know	32	33
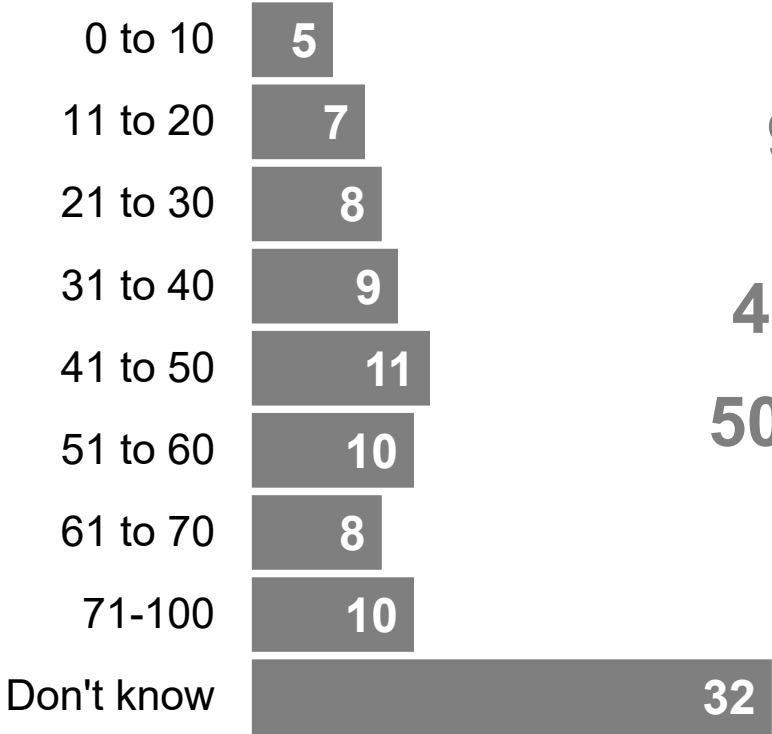
Q6. What proportion of land in England do you think is covered by residential buildings that is people's homes (excluding homes above shops and homes' gardens)?

Please indicate your answer out of 100 percent where 100 is all land in England, 50 is half of it, 0 is none…

9% = actual* = **2%**

47% = mean = **39%**

50% = median = **40%**

As at April 2022: 8.7% of land in England is of developed use, with 91.1% of non-developed use and the remaining 0.2% being vacant (source: ONS]. Ordnance Survey data suggests that all the buildings in the UK - houses, shops, offices, factories, greenhouses - cover 2% of the total land surface in England (via BBC).

Ipsos

8

A higher proportion of people in England would prioritise retention of the Green Belt over housing needs than vice versa

Q7. In England, 13% of land is classified as Green Belt, which is undeveloped land around or between large urban areas on which building is not allowed. Some people argue that this should be retained to prevent large urban areas from spreading out or merging and protect agricultural and 'greenfield' land. Others argue that it contains some 'brownfield' land suitable for building and not building on the Green Belt means we cannot meet housing needs. Please indicate whether you agree more with Statement A, or more with Statement B, if either.

STATEMENT A

We need to retain the current Green Belt, even if it restricts the country's ability to meet housing needs

STATEMENT B

We need to place more focus on meeting the country's housing needs, even if this comes at the expense of some Green Belt land

60% statement A

21% statement B

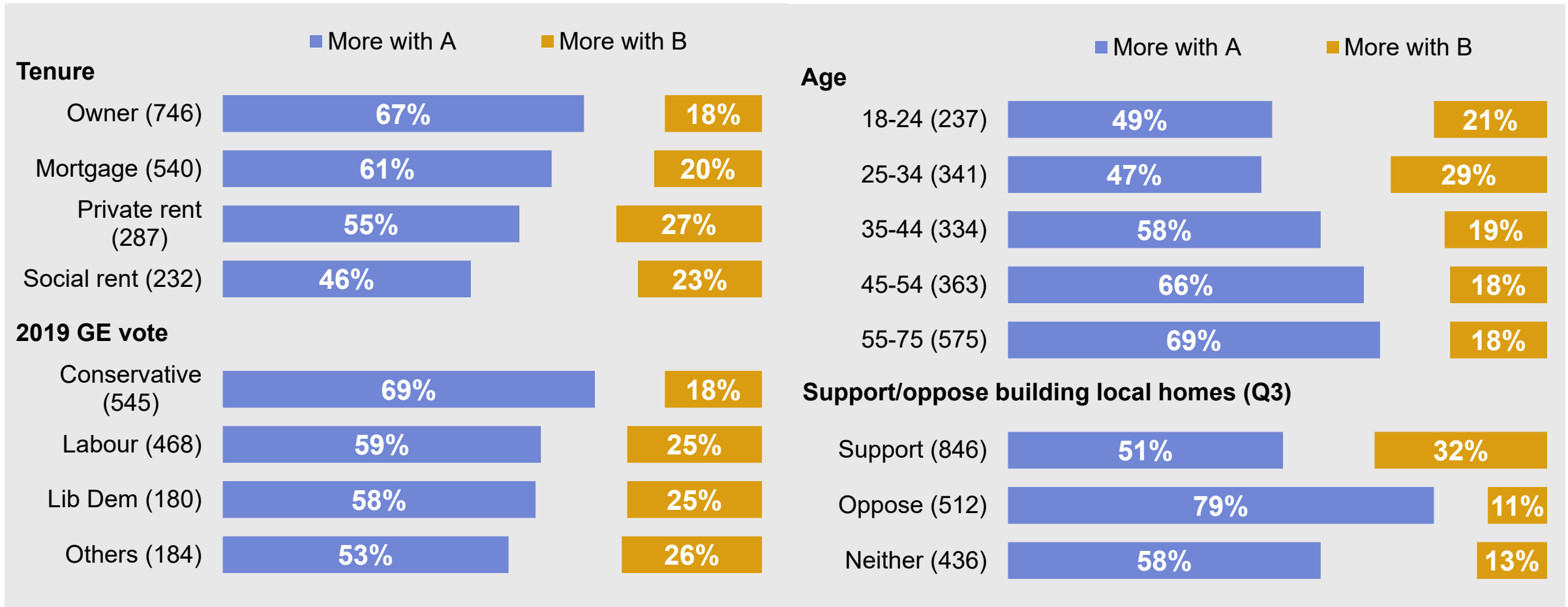| 30	29	11	17	4	9

- ■ % Strongly agree with statement A
- ■ % Tend to agree with statement A
- ■ % Agree with neither A nor B more
- ■ % Tend to agree with statement B
- ■ % Strongly agree with statement B
- ■ % Don't know

Source: Ipsos   Base: 1,850 adults in England aged 18-75, 14-17 July 2023

Ipsos

At least a plurality among all groups prioritise the Green Belt over housing need but the size of the gap varies

Q7. … Please indicate whether you agree more with Statement A, or more with Statement B, if either.

■ More with A ■ More with B

■ More with A ■ More with B

Tenure

	More with A	More with B
Owner (746)	67%	18%
Mortgage (540)	61%	20%
Private rent (287)	55%	27%
Social rent (232)	46%	23%

2019 GE vote

	More with A	More with B
Conservative (545)	69%	18%
Labour (468)	59%	25%
Lib Dem (180)	58%	25%
Others (184)	53%	26%

Age

	More with A	More with B
18-24 (237)	49%	21%
25-34 (341)	47%	29%
35-44 (334)	58%	19%
45-54 (363)	66%	18%
55-75 (575)	69%	18%

Support/oppose building local homes (Q3)

	More with A	More with B
Support (846)	51%	32%
Oppose (512)	79%	11%
Neither (436)	58%	13%

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The Economist
Housing and the Green Belt Survey

For more information

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