



Greg Clark MP

Our responsibility as a Government is to the next generation.

Families are all about one generation being devoted to the next.

In all our families we want the next generation to have the chances we had – and more besides.

Throughout the years, that's what the Conservative Party has been about, too.

Thirty years ago, Margaret Thatcher said in her conference address:

“Our concern to create a property-owning democracy is a very human concern.

It is a natural desire of Conservatives that the privilege of owning a family home should not be restricted to the few”

During the years that followed we made that dream come true for millions.

8 million families bought a home for the first time.

And when they turned the key in the front door of their first home, they knew the Conservatives were on their side.

Under Labour – the enemies of aspiration - that dream has been shattered.

Their Shadow Secretary of State described home ownership as “the English disease”.

Under Labour the number of first time buyers fall to the lowest level since records began.

Young people now say that they don’t expect to be able to own a home for as far ahead as they can see.

Indeed, we used to think of first time buyers as young, but they’re becoming middle-aged – some studies say the average age is now nearly 40 without help from parents.

It’s destroying family life in so many ways.

How can a family put down roots if they’re on 6 months notice to quit on a buy-to-let?

Young parents are having to spend more of their earnings on rent, and less on their children.

Living in tiny flats and houses without the gardens they played in as children.

Leading isolated lives, miles from where their children’s grandparents and other relatives are.

The causes are complex, but the bottom line is this:

Labour built fewer homes per year than any Conservative Government since the war.

We can’t let this go on.

To do so would be to tell young families that Margaret Thatcher’s vision of a property-owning democracy was for our generation – but not for yours.

That's not the party we've ever been, and it's not the party we're going to be.

Like any family, we will always want the next generation to have more chances than we had, not fewer.

This is reason we're making reforms to our planning system.

Yes, we're going to build more homes – but in the right places, and of the right quality.

We are stewards of a matchless countryside.

We want our children – and their children – to be as proud of it as we are.

And believe me,

there is no charity,

no campaign,

no concerned citizen

who feels more strongly about cherishing our countryside than we do.

So of course, we'll make use of brownfield land before greenfield land;

we'll insist on excellent design not legotowns;

and we'll make sure that planning decisions are taken by local people who know and love where they live

not by those regional bureaucracies or visiting inspectors.

The best way to protect the countryside is to make our towns and cities great places to live.

And great places to work too.

Our biggest cities are home to two thirds of our jobs, two thirds of our fastest growing businesses, and most of our top universities.

Britain won't prosper unless our cities prosper.

Not just London. But all the great cities of the United Kingdom.

And a key to that is to restore what made our cities great in the first place.

My role as Minister for Cities is to give power away from Whitehall and Westminster and put it in the hands of local people.

This our mission as a Government -- and as a Party too.

The Conservative Party.

The Party of one nation.

City, town and country.

The party of the next generation.

