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ROOMS FOR DEBATE

Polling on the housing crisis, green belt, and planning system

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Methodology and summary of findings



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Methodology: polling

J.L. Partners polled two audiences: a nationally representative sample of the **general public** in England and a representative sample of **mortgage holders** in England.

- Fieldwork dates of 4th-11th August 2023
- Sample of 1,001 for general public, 1,000 for mortgage holders
- Quotas were added to ensure representative data for each sample:
 - To gender, age, region and 2019 general election vote
- Each sample was weighted back to its own representative population using ONS data
- Sample collected using online panel
- 10-minute duration
- Margin of error: 3.1% for both mortgage holders and general public





Key findings and conclusions

People believe there is a housing crisis. All demographics agree that there is a housing crisis nationally, whilst all but over 65s and those who own their home outright agree there is a crisis locally. The view is most prominent in London but is widespread across the country too (with the exception of the East of England). Unsurprisingly it is young people and renters who are most likely to say there is a housing crisis. Alongside this, there is a widespread view that there is **not enough affordable housing**, with more than half of the public agreeing.

Arguments that work best to persuade people of more housebuilding include:

-  Making local housing more affordable
-  Younger people being unable to get onto the housing ladder
-  Countering rising homelessness
-  Countering dramatic house price increases (and for mortgage holders, threat of rising mortgages)
-  Talking about 'homes needed' rather than 'large numbers'

Arguments that do not persuade people:

-  Pollution worsening
-  Growth and stability of the economy being threatened
-  Construction industry being slowed
-  Talking about "large numbers" or sweeping amounts of homes

There is support for housebuilding, including in local areas. There is net support for new homebuilding in the local area, support which is boosted by compensation in the form of increased infrastructure investment. Building large numbers of new homes in the local area has a solid level of base support amongst younger demographics whilst mid to lower levels of new homes is supported by every demographic. Building on brownfield sites also garners strong support.

Key findings and conclusions

But – as a principle, housing on Green Belt land faces opposition. The Green Belt is seen by many as protected and not to be built on; **to most people Green Belt land symbolises natural and green spaces rather than controlling urban growth.** All demographics and age groups initially oppose using Green Belt land for housing developments. Talking about building on Green Belt land with **compensation for local residents** does leave around a third of people open to the idea, especially younger people.

A purchase policy initially has 27% in support, 36% opposed, and 37% uncommitted. Young people and renters are the most supportive but no group sees a majority in opposition. Though it does not have plurality support, there is a group in the middle who can be won over. The greatest activators of support for the policy are:

- **Compensation for the local resident:** this boosts support to 43% with only 30% opposing. The exact level of compensation may not matter too much; though one-third say this should be above market value, 38% say it should be at or below the market rate. Nevertheless the overall expectation is a median amount of £2,250
- **This need not be direct monetary compensation - it can also be increased infrastructure spending:** Both are equally tied as the most effective incentives
- **An argument focused on creating more affordable homes** polls best with 60% choosing this in their top three most convincing arguments; closely followed by **more investment in local budgets/communities, and more investment in schools and the local area**

Overall despite challenges – especially on existing perceptions of the Green Belt – there is a landing ground for a policy which is focused on compensation/infrastructure spending ('giving back') with direct consequences for affordable homes and the local community.

Setting the scene

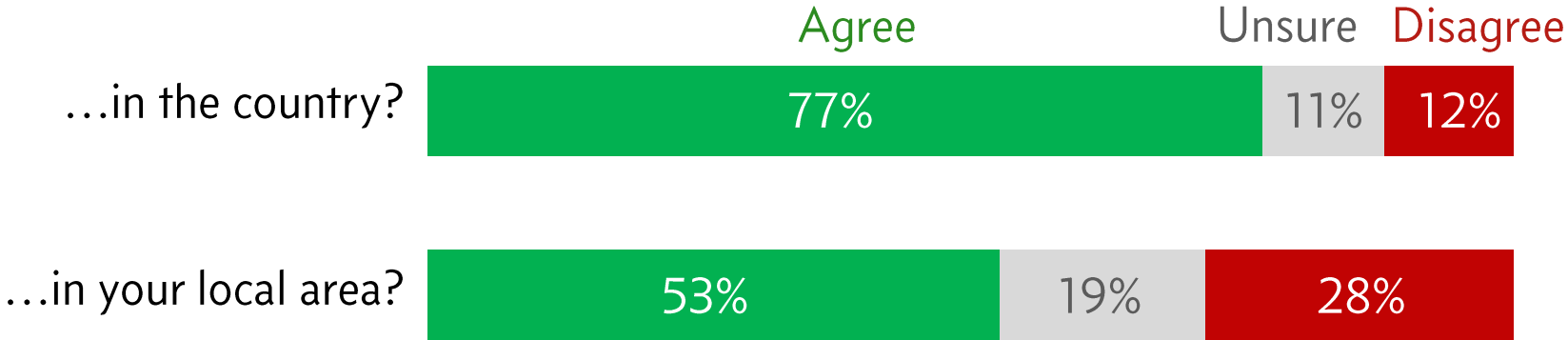


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3 in 4 people say that there is a national housing crisis, and more than half say there is one locally

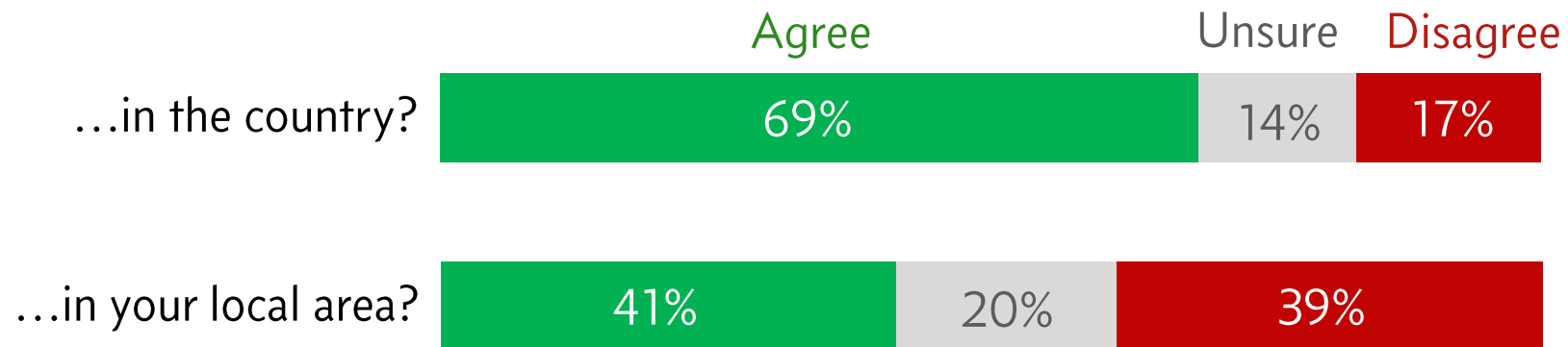
How strongly do you agree or disagree that there is a housing crisis...



Q9. How strongly do you agree or disagree that there is a housing crisis in the country? Q10. How strongly do you agree or disagree that there is a housing crisis in your local area? (Asked to general public).

Mortgage holders are slightly less inclined to agree that there is a housing crisis

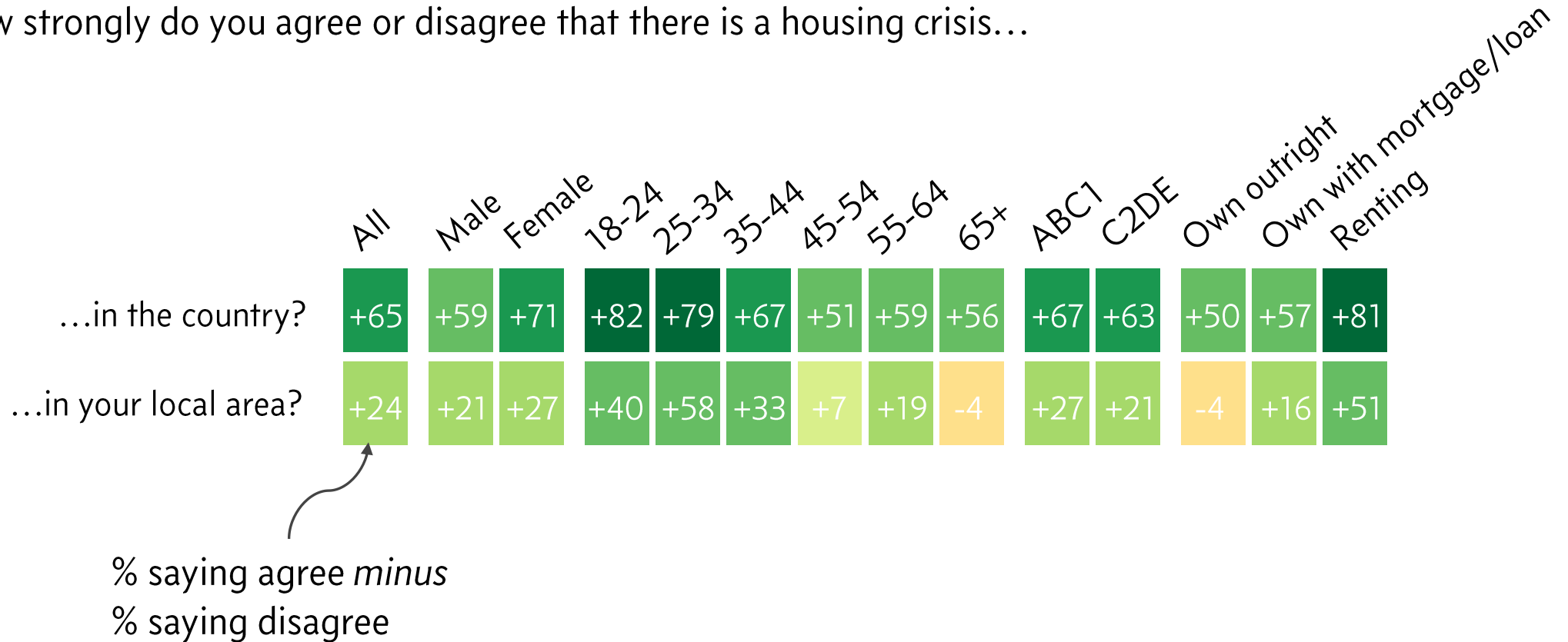
How strongly do you agree or disagree that there is a housing crisis...



Q9. How strongly do you agree or disagree that there is a housing crisis in the country? Q10. How strongly do you agree or disagree that there is a housing crisis in your local area? (Asked mortgage holders only).

Young people and renters overwhelmingly agree that there is a housing crisis

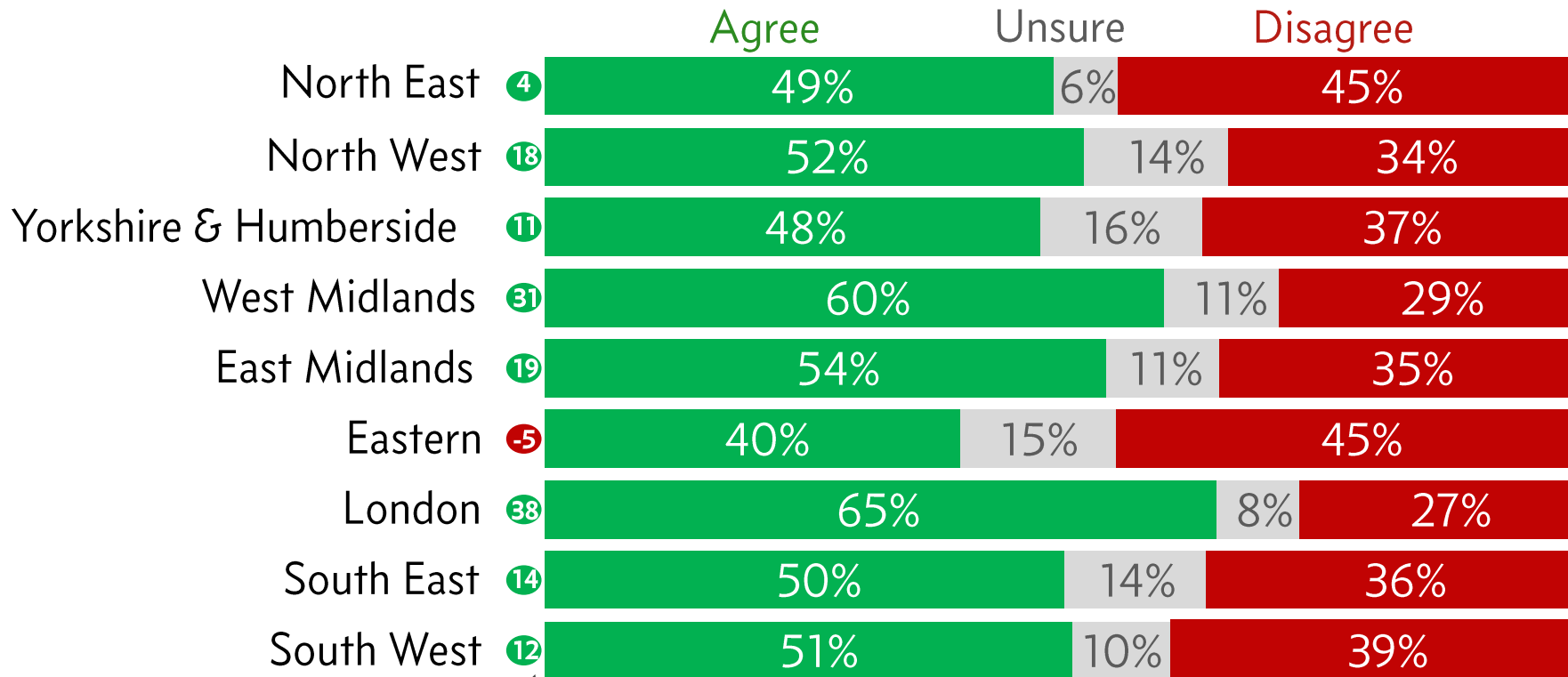
How strongly do you agree or disagree that there is a housing crisis...



Q9. How strongly do you agree or disagree that there is a housing crisis in the country? Q10. How strongly do you agree or disagree that there is a housing crisis in your local area? (Asked to general public).

The housing crisis is not just confined to London - all regions but one agree that there is a crisis in their local area

How strongly do you agree or disagree that there is a housing crisis in your local area?

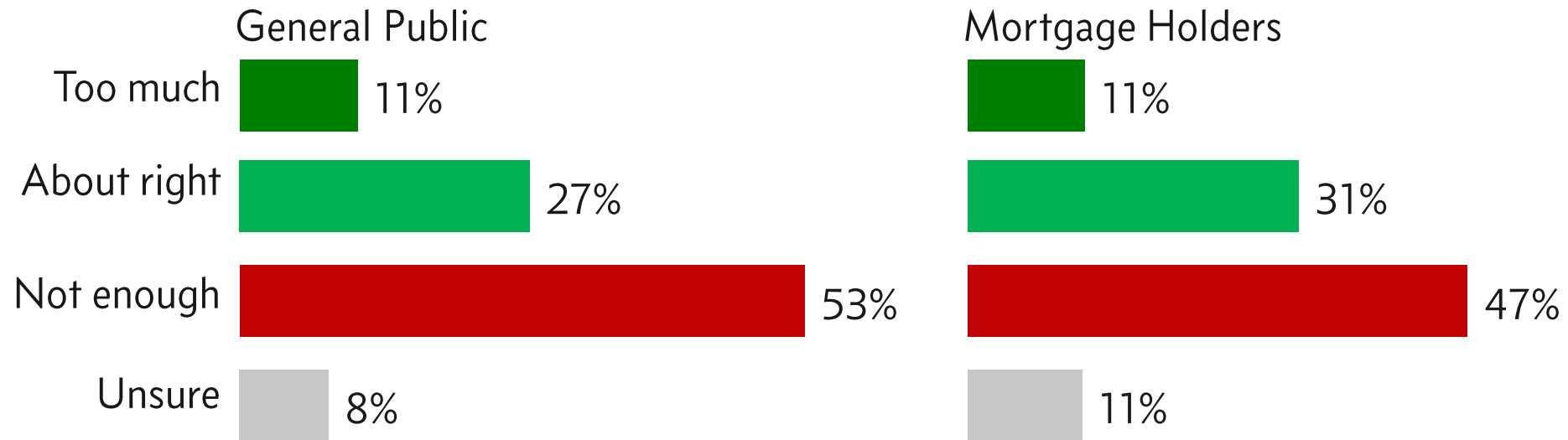


% saying support *minus* % saying oppose

Q10. How strongly do you agree or disagree that there is a housing crisis in your local area? (Asked to general public).

More than half of the general public say there is not enough affordable housing in the local area

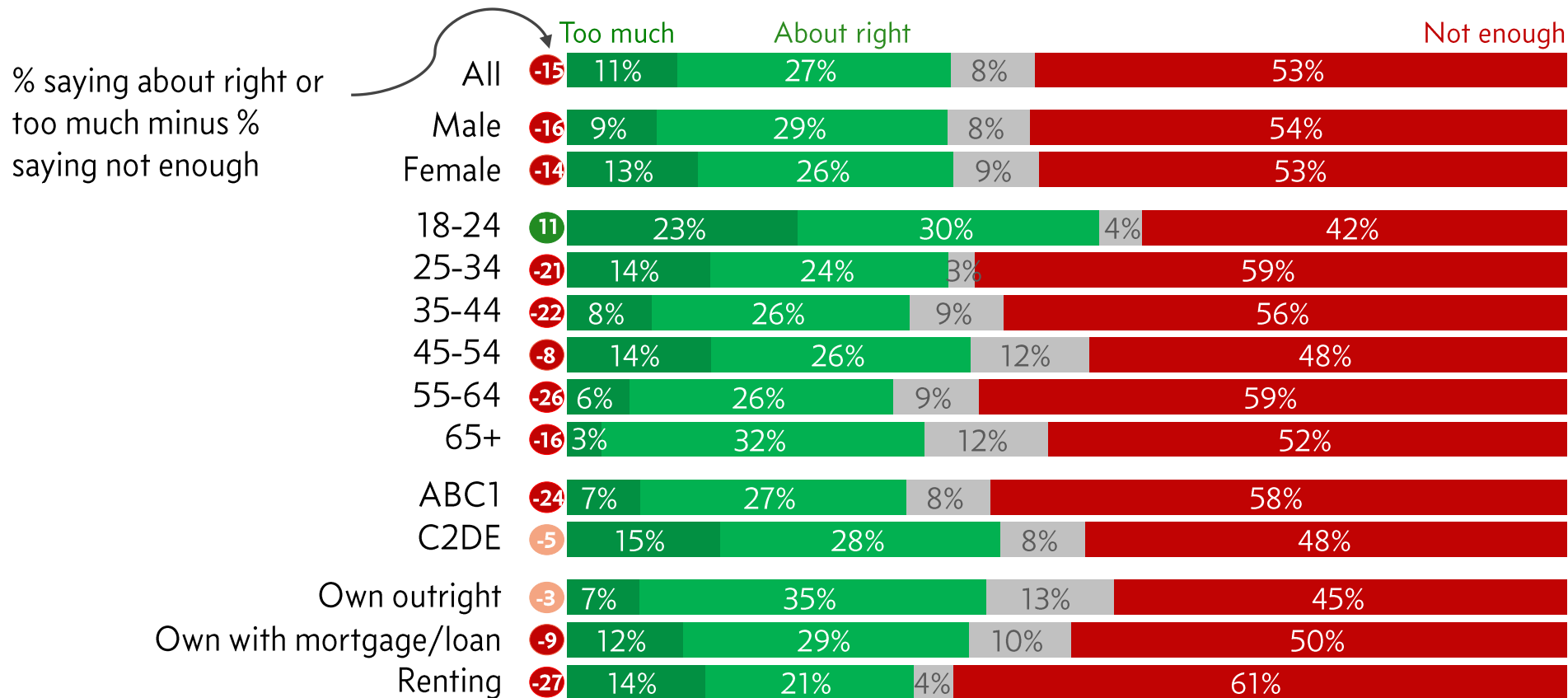
Is the availability of affordable housing in your local area about right, too much, or not enough?



Q11. Is the availability of affordable housing in your local area about right, too much, or not enough?

6 in 10 renters agree that there is not enough affordable housing

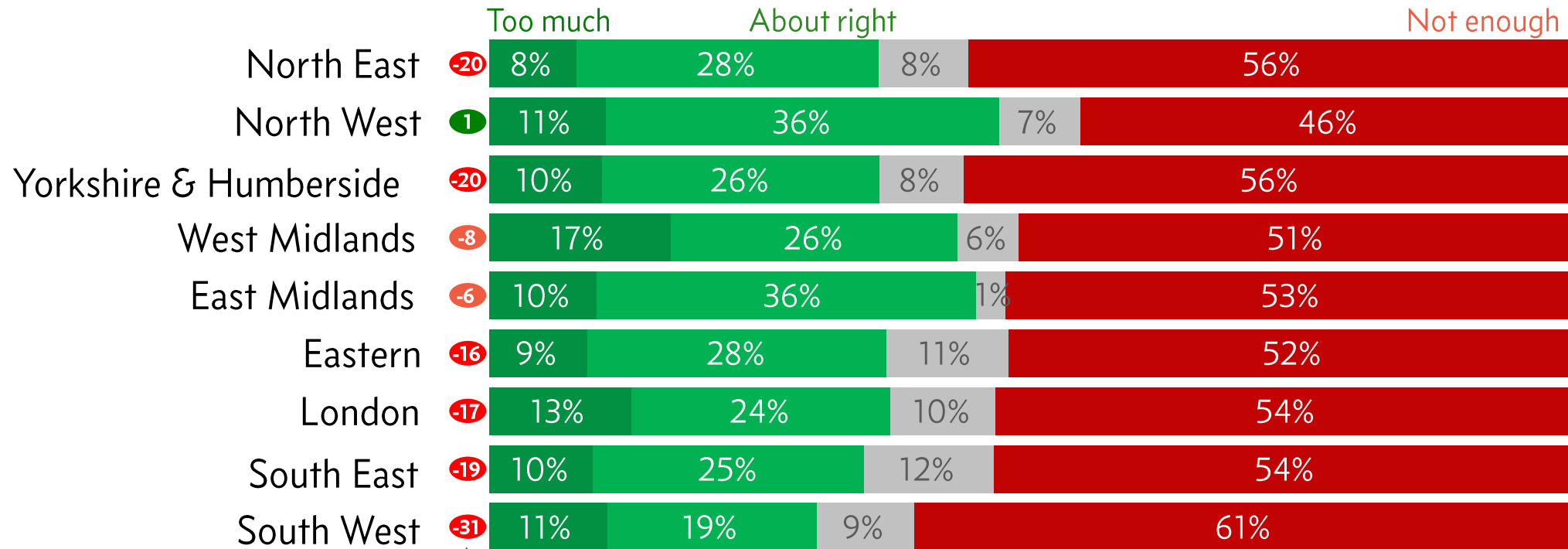
Is the availability of affordable housing in your local area about right, too much, or not enough?



Q11. Is the availability of affordable housing in your local area about right, too much, or not enough? (Asked to general public).

More than half of those polled say there is not enough housing in almost every area of England

Is the availability of affordable housing in your local area about right, too much, or not enough?

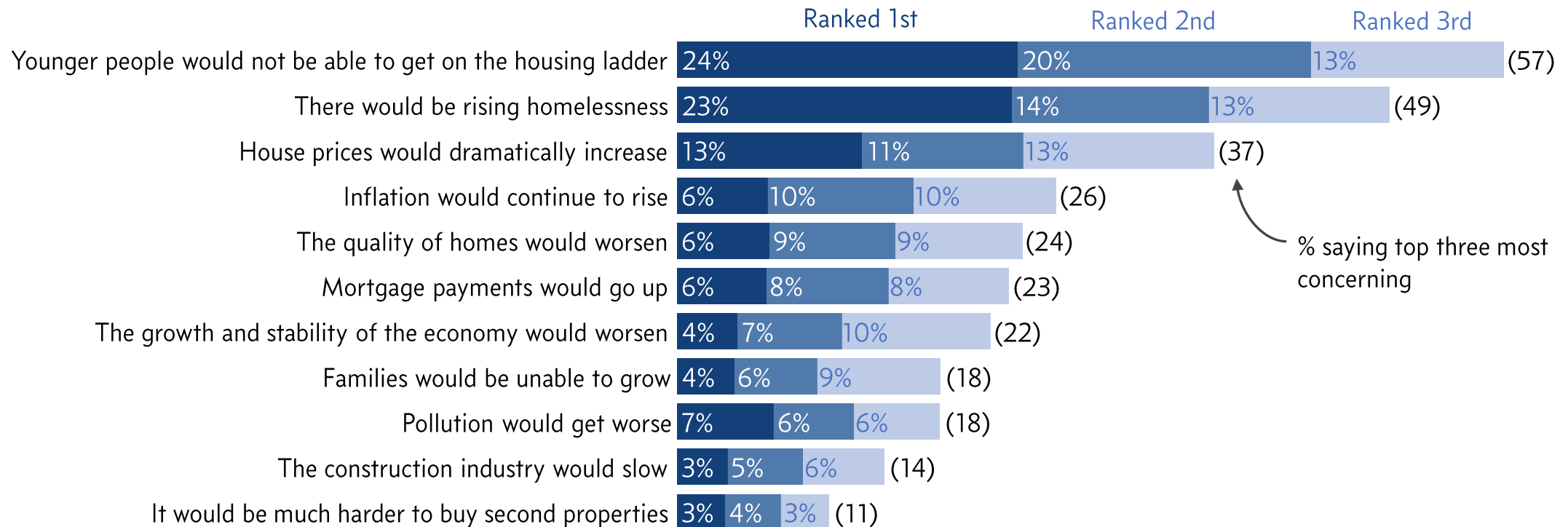


% saying about right or too much
minus % saying not enough

Q11. Is the availability of affordable housing in your local area about right, too much, or not enough?

Young people being unable to own their own home is the greatest concern of the general public

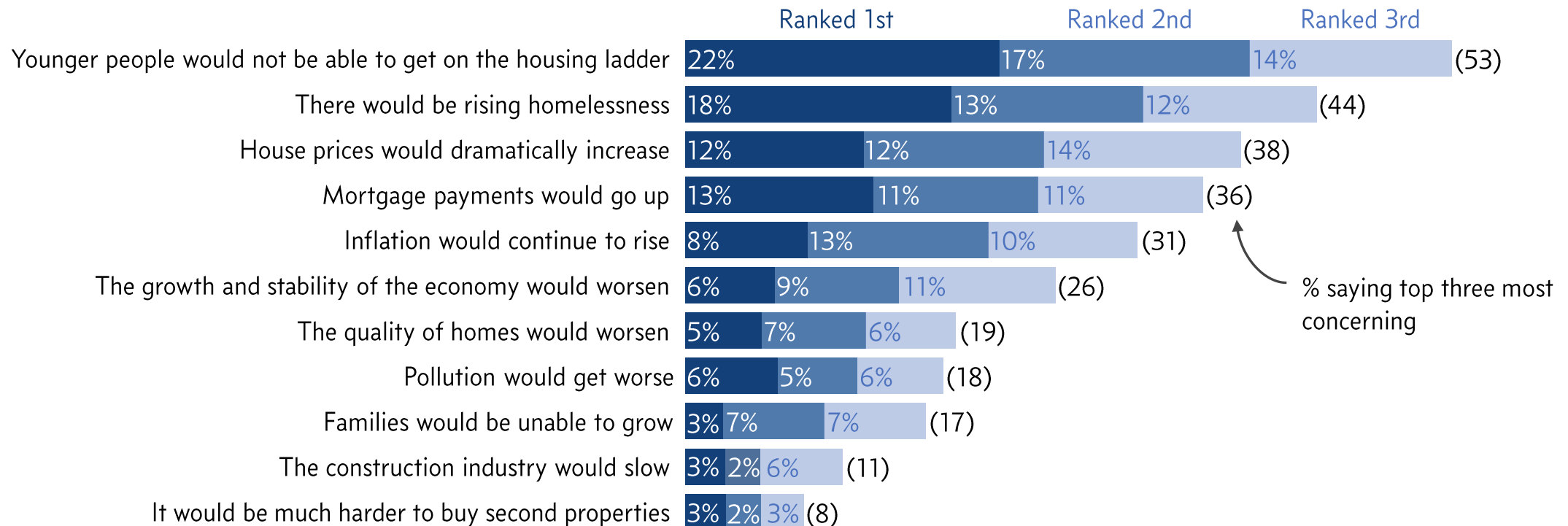
If enough houses are not built over the coming years, some say there are a number of consequences that could take place. Please rank, in order of concern, the three potential consequences that would concern you most.



Q21. If enough houses are not built over the coming years, some say there are a number of consequences that could take place. Please rank, in order of concern, the three below potential consequences that would concern you most. (Asked to general public).

Mortgage holders have similar concerns to the General public, but are slightly more worried that mortgage payments may go up

If enough houses are not built over the coming years, some say there are a number of consequences that could take place. Please rank, in order of concern, the three potential consequences that would concern you most.



Q21. If enough houses are not built over the coming years, some say there are a number of consequences that could take place. Please rank, in order of concern, the three below potential consequences that would concern you most. (Asked mortgage holders only).

Attitudes to housebuilding

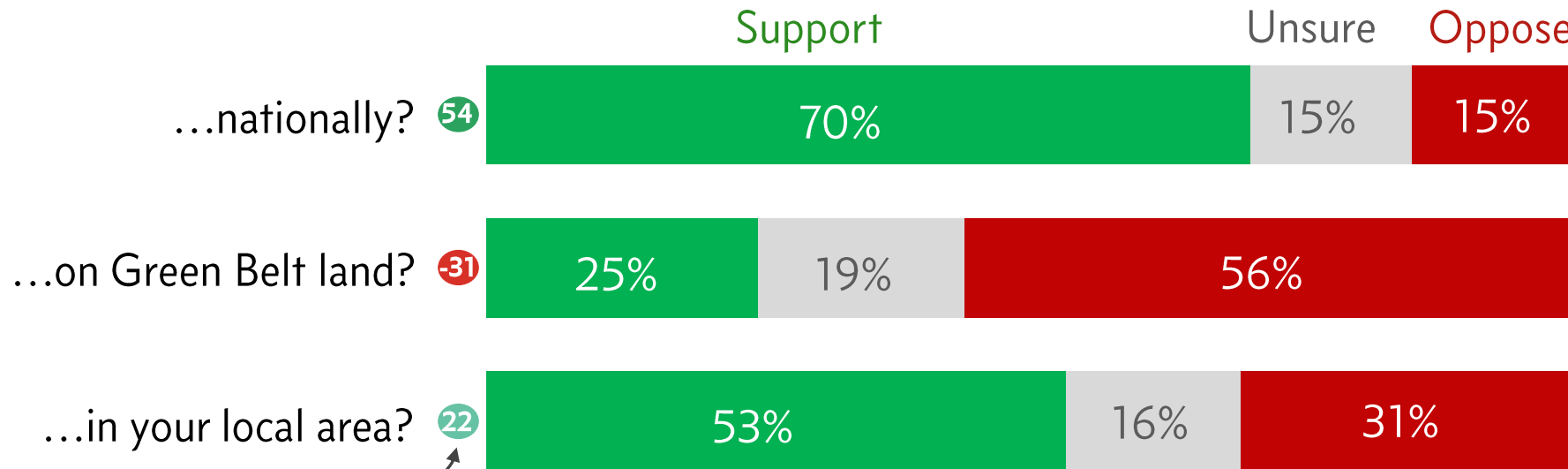


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Most people support more housing being built locally and nationally, but only 1 in 4 support more housing built on Green Belt land

Would you support or oppose more housing being built...

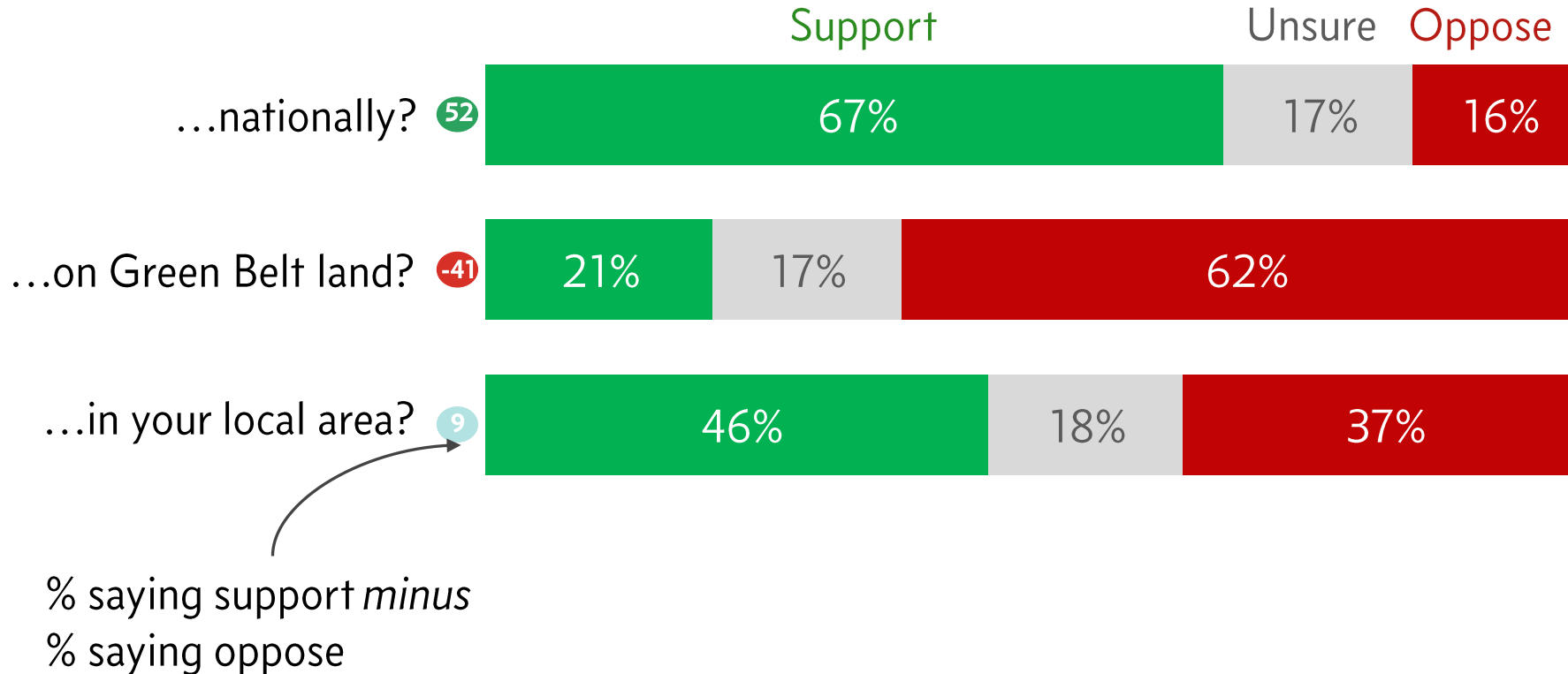


% saying support *minus*
% saying oppose

Q1. Would you support or oppose more housing being built nationally? Q2. Would you support or oppose more housing being built on Green Belt land? Q3. Would you support or oppose more housing being built in your local area? (Asked to general public).

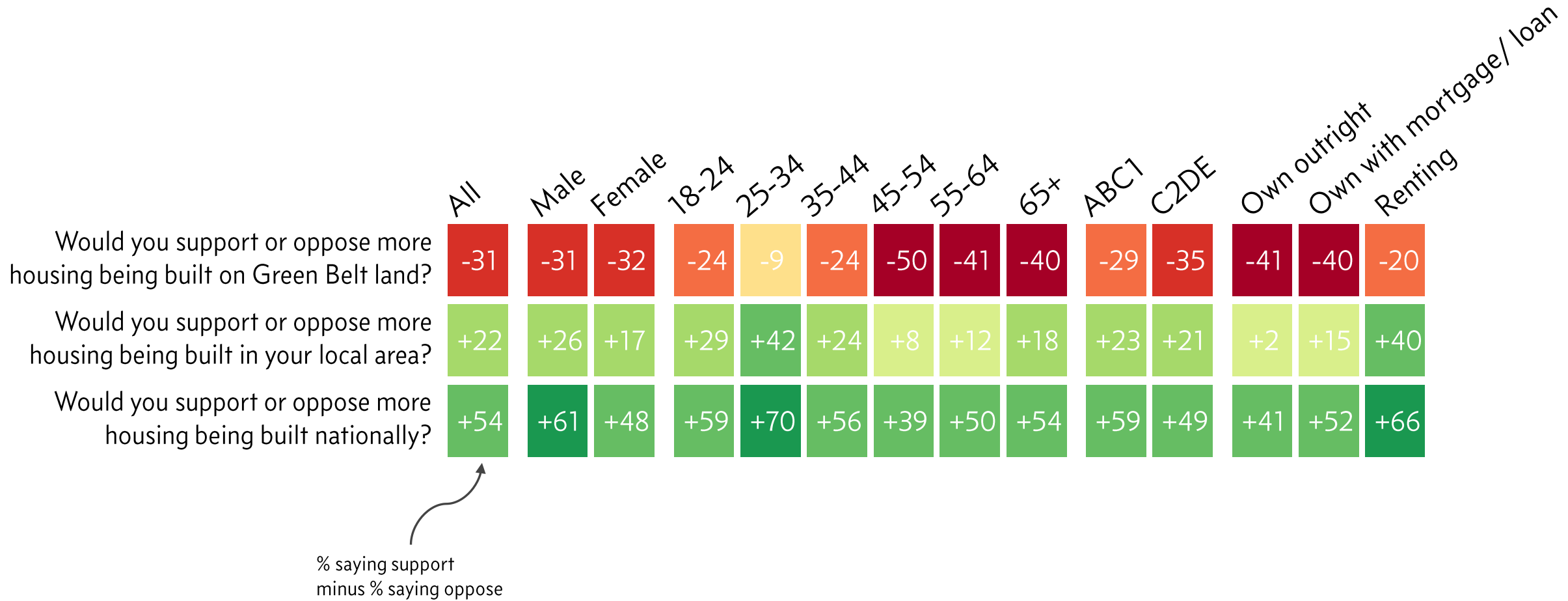
Mortgage holders are slightly less supportive of more housing being built

Would you support or oppose more housing being built...



Q1. Would you support or oppose more housing being built nationally? Q2. Would you support or oppose more housing being built on Green Belt land? Q3. Would you support or oppose more housing being built in your local area? (Asked mortgage holders only).

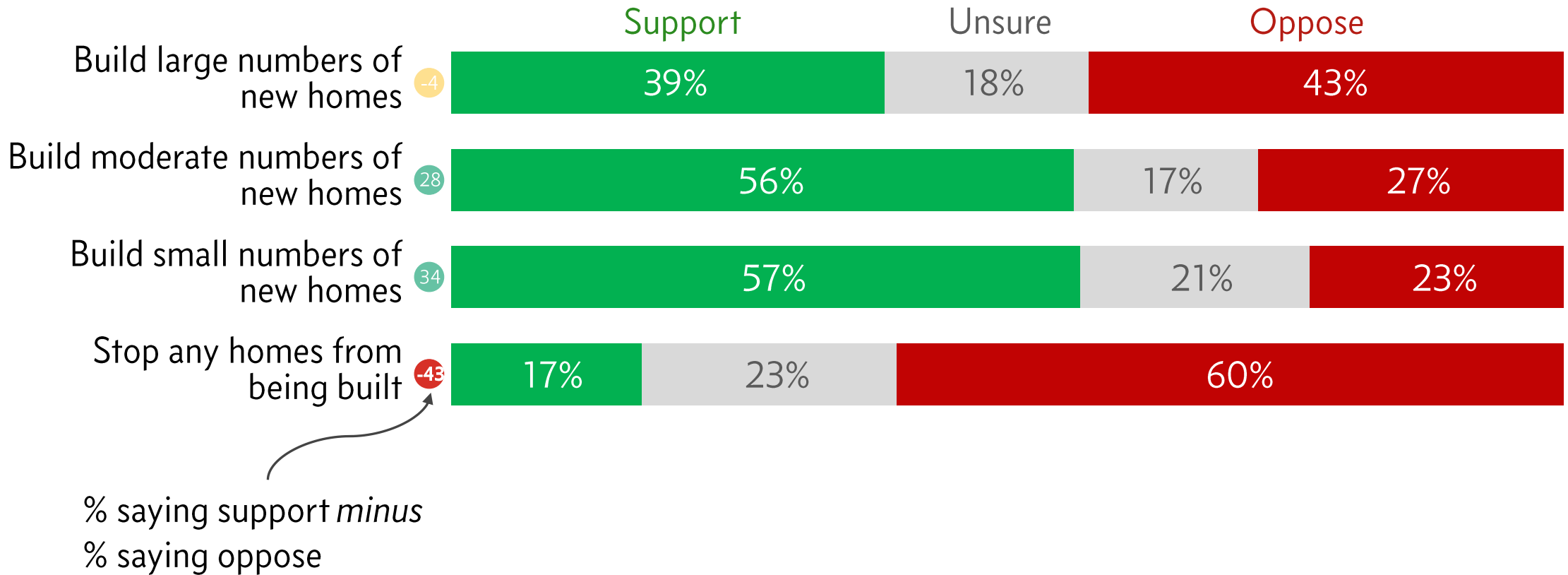
25-34 year olds and renters are the most supportive of more housing being built



Q1. Would you support or oppose more housing being built nationally? Q2. Would you support or oppose more housing being built on Green Belt land? Q3. Would you support or oppose more housing being built in your local area? (Asked to general public).

There is an appetite for new homes, but speaking of a large number brings more resistance

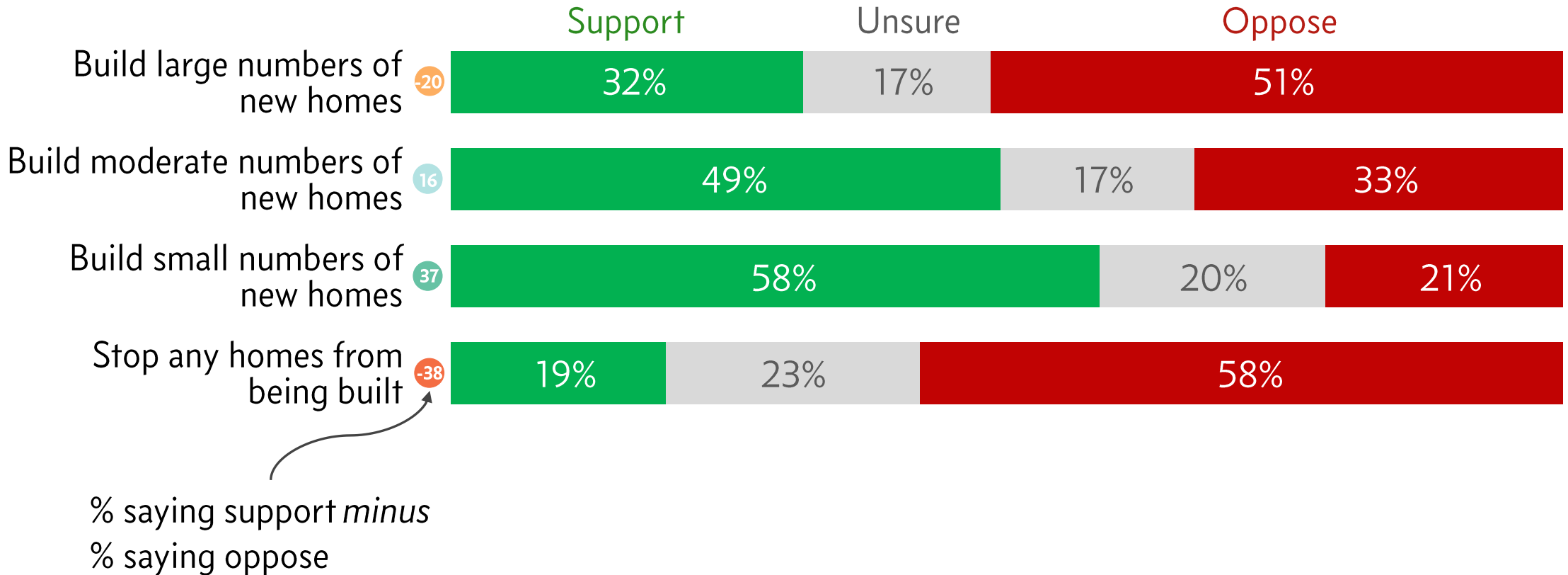
Thinking about your local area, to what extent would you support or oppose the government attempting to?



Q4. Thinking about your local area, to what extent would you support or oppose the government attempting to? (Asked to general public).

Mortgage holders prefer small and moderate numbers of new homes in their area over larger numbers

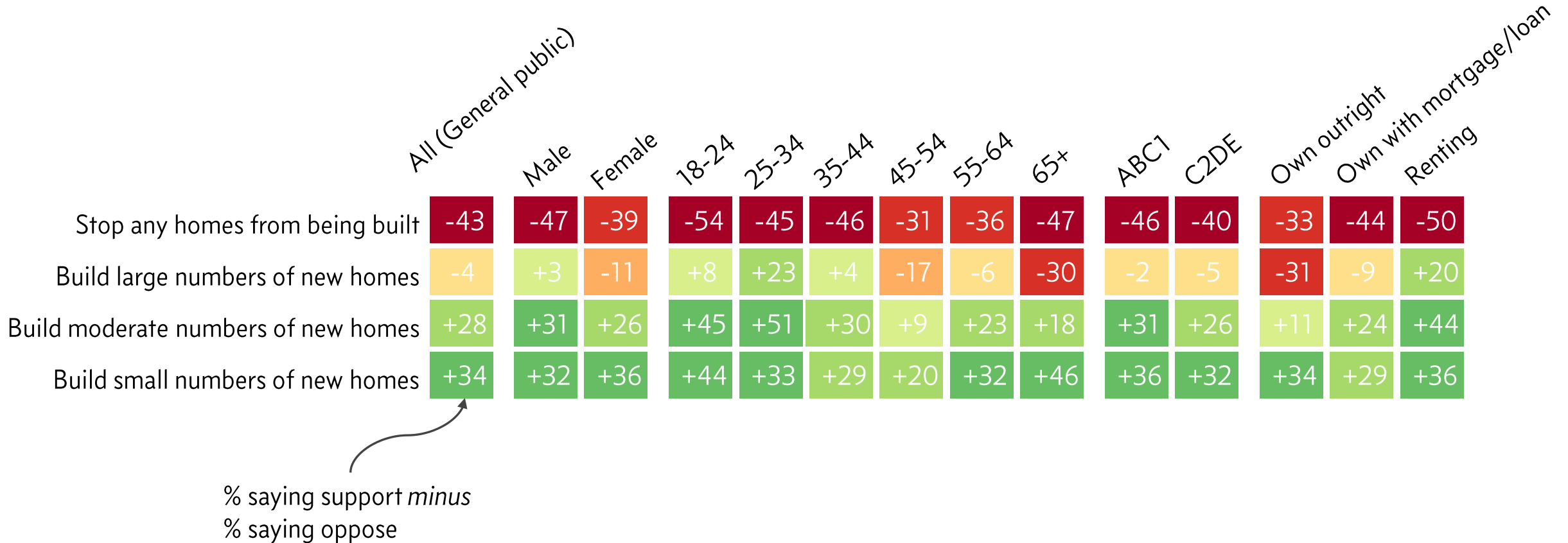
Thinking about your local area, to what extent would you support or oppose the government attempting to?



Q4. Thinking about your local area, to what extent would you support or oppose the government attempting to? (Asked mortgage holders only).

The main opponents to new homes being built in large numbers are over 65s and homeowners, whereas renters and younger people are more supportive

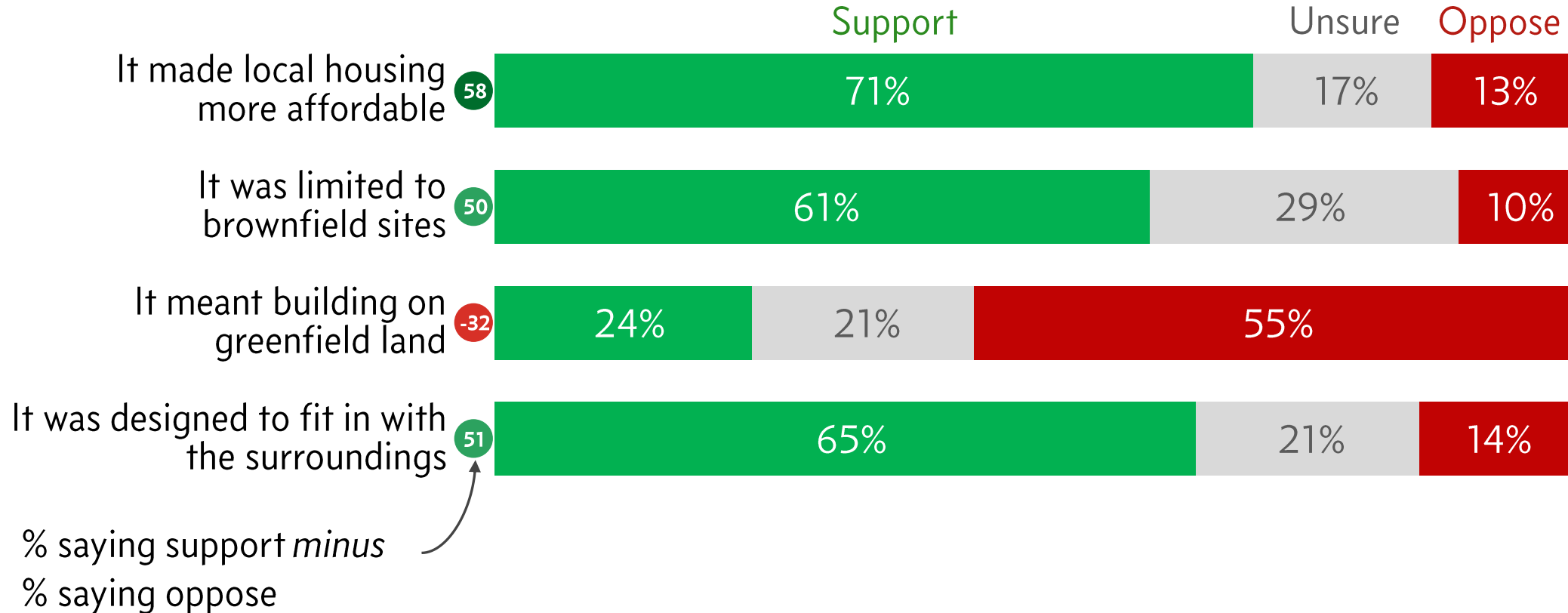
Thinking about your local area, to what extent would you support or oppose the government attempting to...



Q4. Thinking about your local area, to what extent would you support or oppose the government attempting to...

There is support for new housing, with the right design and in the right place, if it makes local housing more affordable

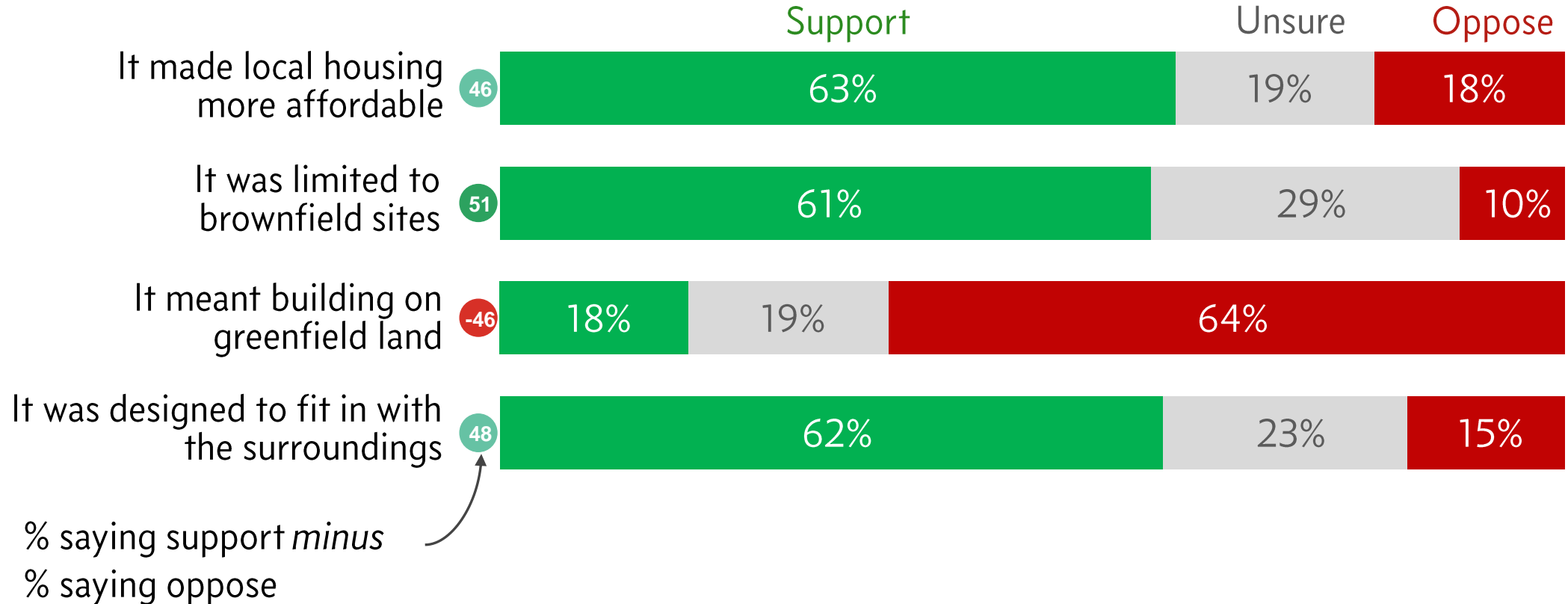
How much would you support or oppose building new housing in your local area if...



Q12. How much would you support or oppose building new housing in your local area if it... (Asked to general public).

Mortgage holders are less supportive but 6 in 10 still support more housing in brownfield sites, provided it fit in or if it made local housing more affordable

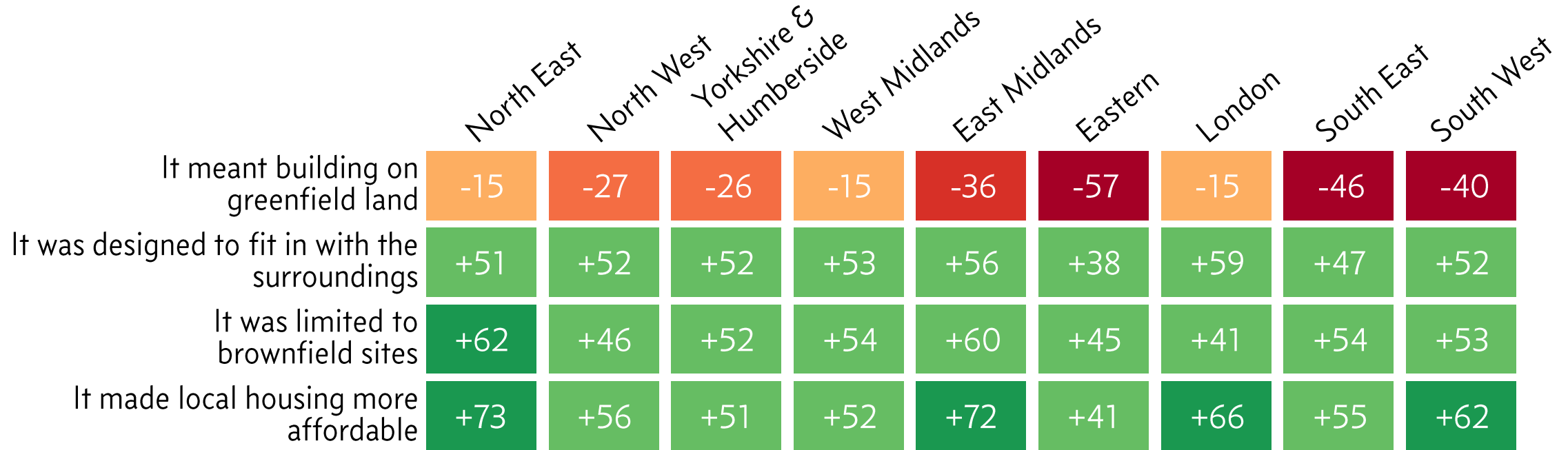
How much would you support or oppose building new housing in your local area if...



Q12. How much would you support or oppose building new housing in your local area if it... (Asked mortgage holders only).

Building on greenfield land is opposed in every region; however there are high levels of net support for building on brownfield sites

How much would you support or oppose building new housing in your local area if...



% saying support *minus* % saying oppose

Q12. How much would you support or oppose building new housing in your local area if it... (Asked general public).

Navigating the Green Belt



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Green Belt land is more closely associated with nature and the countryside than with controlling urban growth

What do you think Green Belt land is?



Q5. What do you think Green Belt land is? Describe it in a sentence or two. (Asked to general public).

People believe Green Belt land is for protecting nature/wildlife habitats rather than controlling urban growth

What do you think Green Belt land is? Describe it in a sentence or two.

Land that is protected from most forms of development

Protected land of wildlife

Land that should be free from the threat of building, protected for wildlife

Land untouched with trees, grass, natural habitats etc

Fields and forests

Land that has not previously been built on and could be considered part of the public realm for all to enjoy

It is land designated officially as green belt, i.e. it is protected to ensure separation between urban areas.

Green Belt land is land that has been designated so to provide protection against extensive property development and to give animals and humans space to live and breathe.

Green space i.e. fields or forest which is an area of beauty or protected

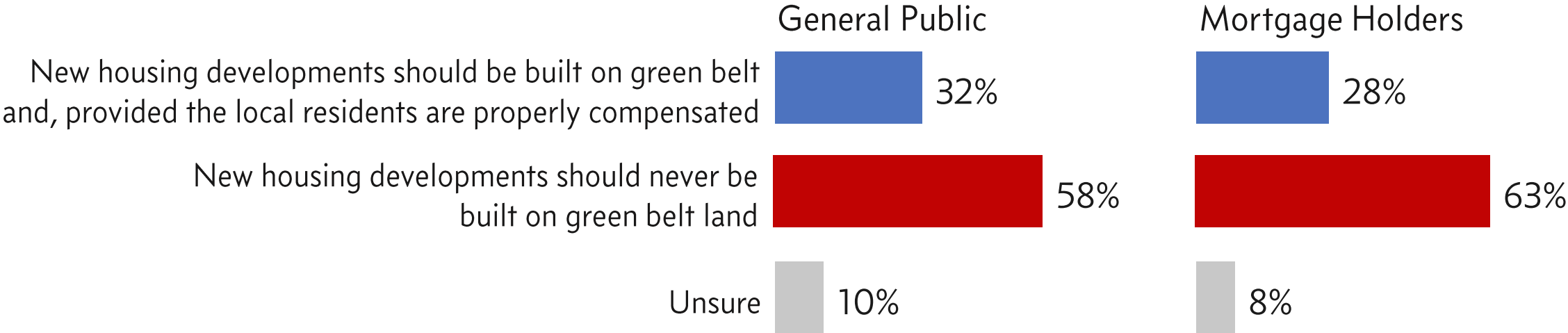
To protect from urban sprawl and stop towns effectively joining up

Countryside and local parkland and nature reserves

Q5. What do you think Green Belt land is? Describe it in a sentence or two.

A third of the public are open to new housing development on Green Belt land if compensation plays a role

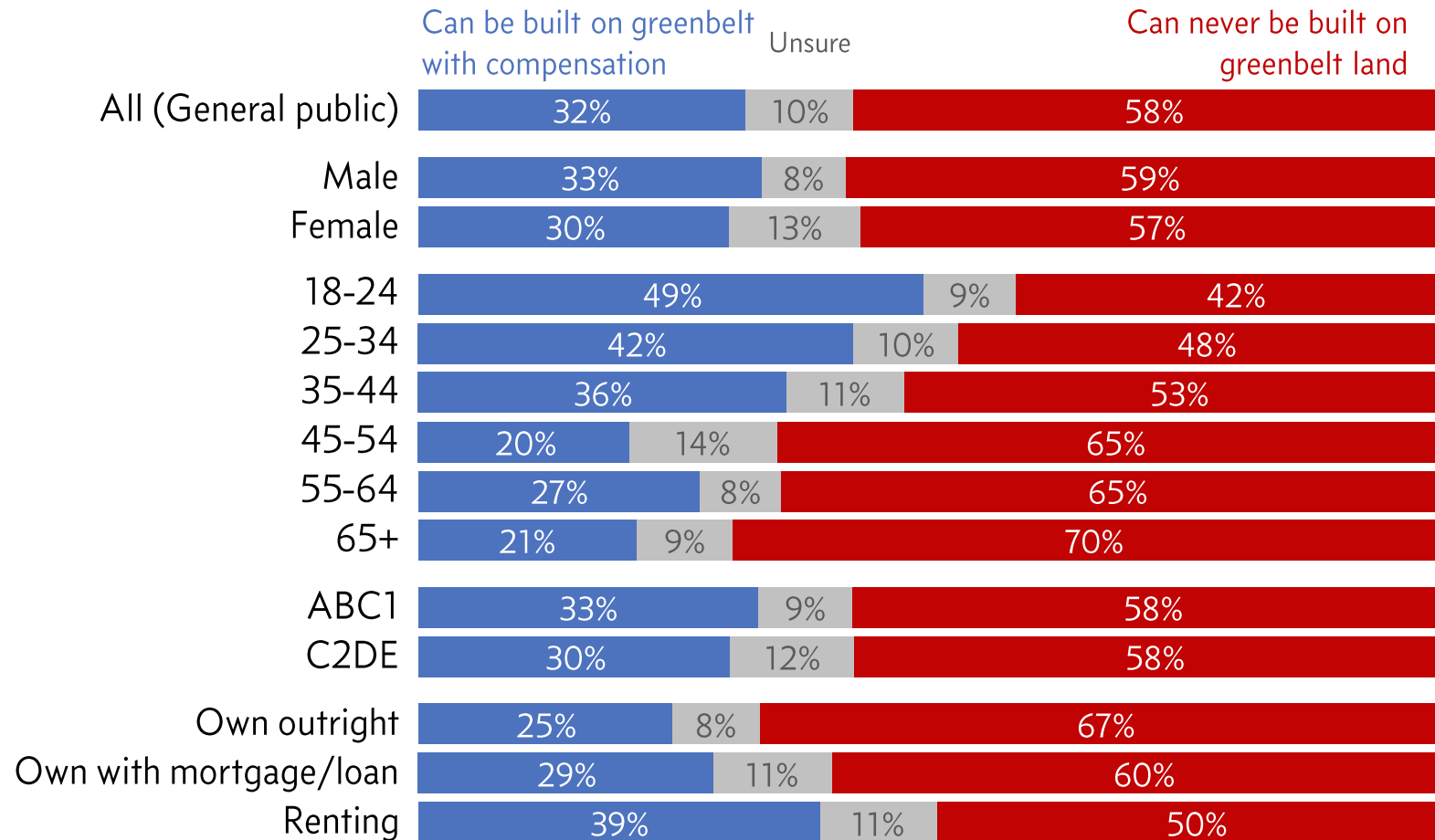
Which of the following statement is closest to your view?



Q15. Which of the following statement is closest to your view?

18-24 year olds are most open to building on Green Belt land

Which of the following statement is closest to your view?



Q15. Which of the following statement is closest to your view?

Navigating planning permission

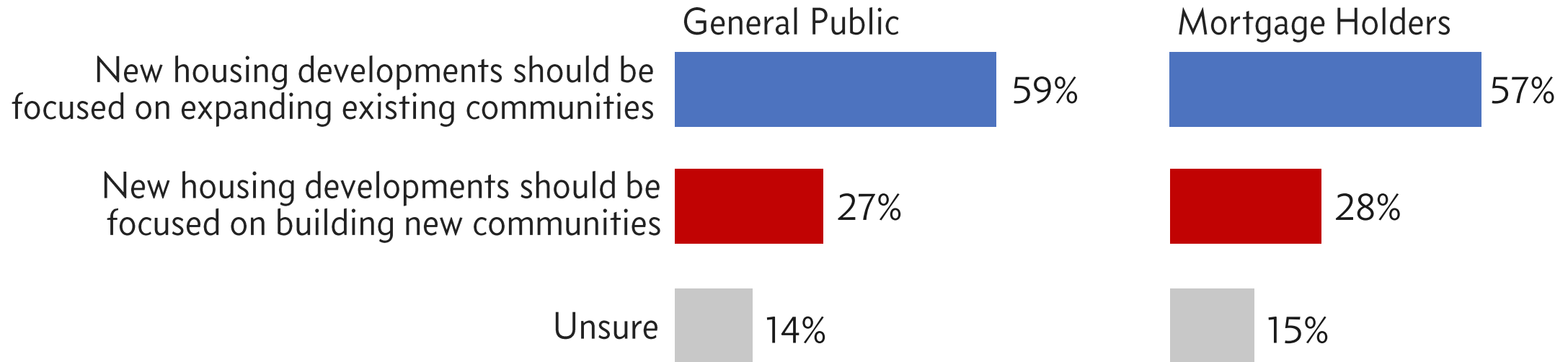


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People prefer to expand existing communities over building new communities

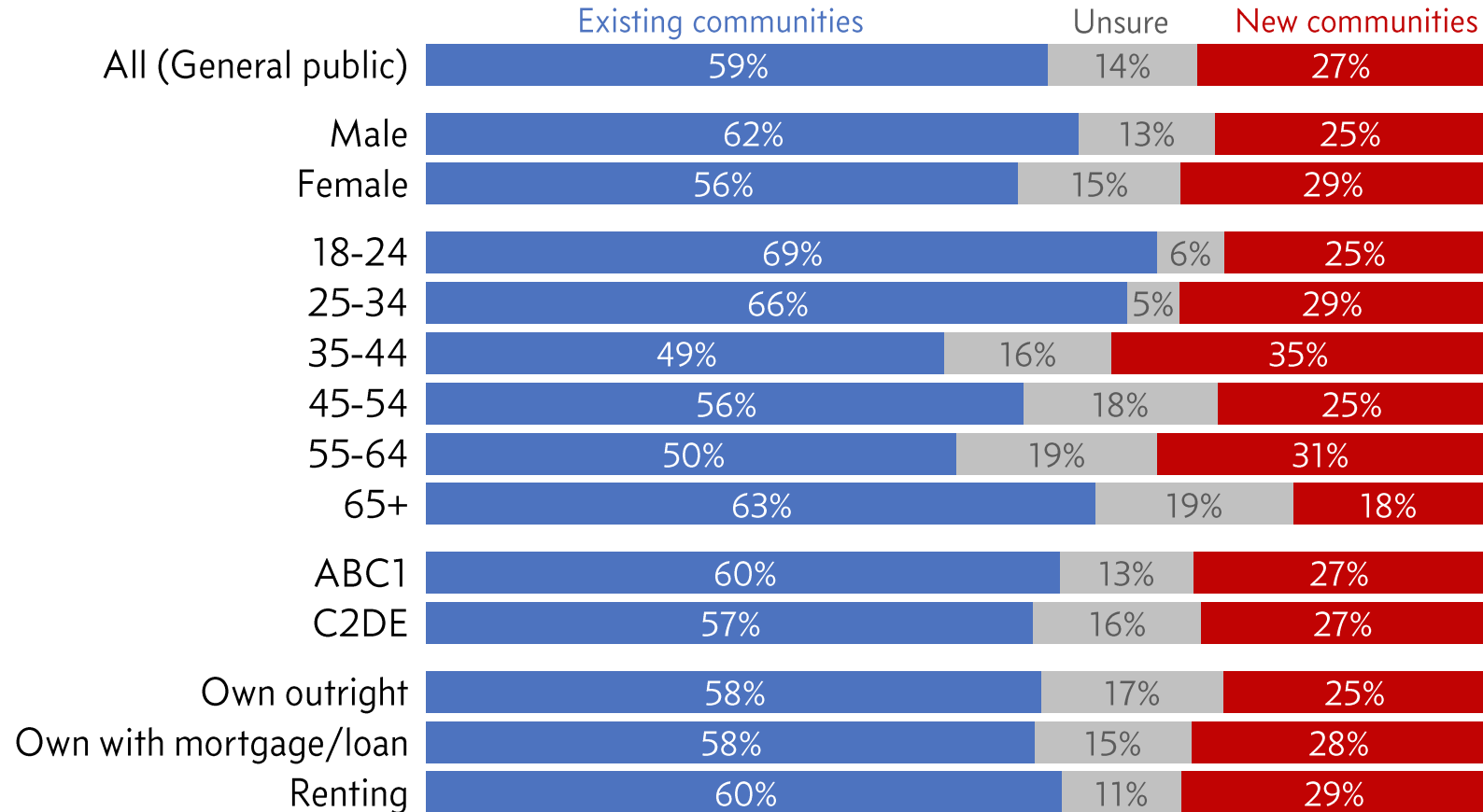
Which of the following statement is closest to your view?



Q17. Which of the following statement is closest to your view?

Young people are the most supportive of expanding existing communities, suggesting a desire to find affordable housing in their local community

Which of the following statement is closest to your view?



Q17. Which of the following statement is closest to your view?

Developing on the Green Belt

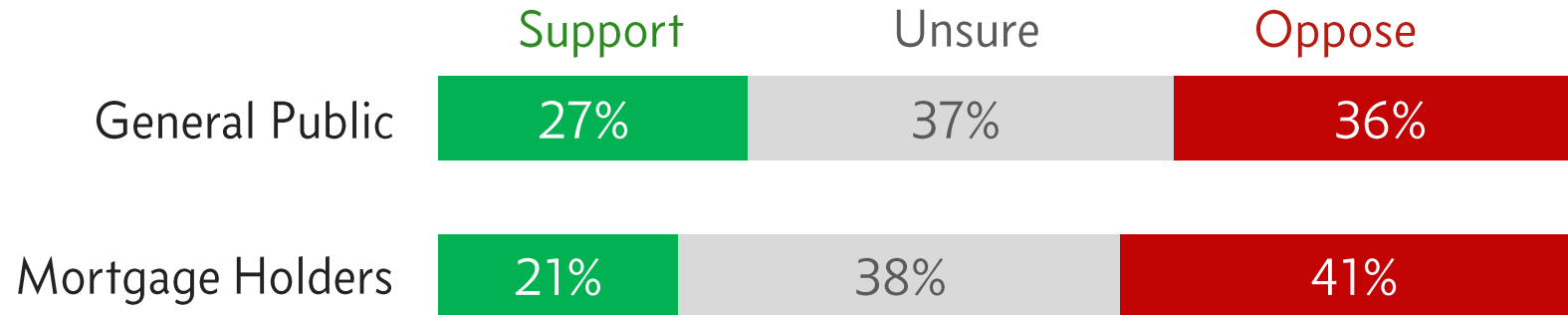


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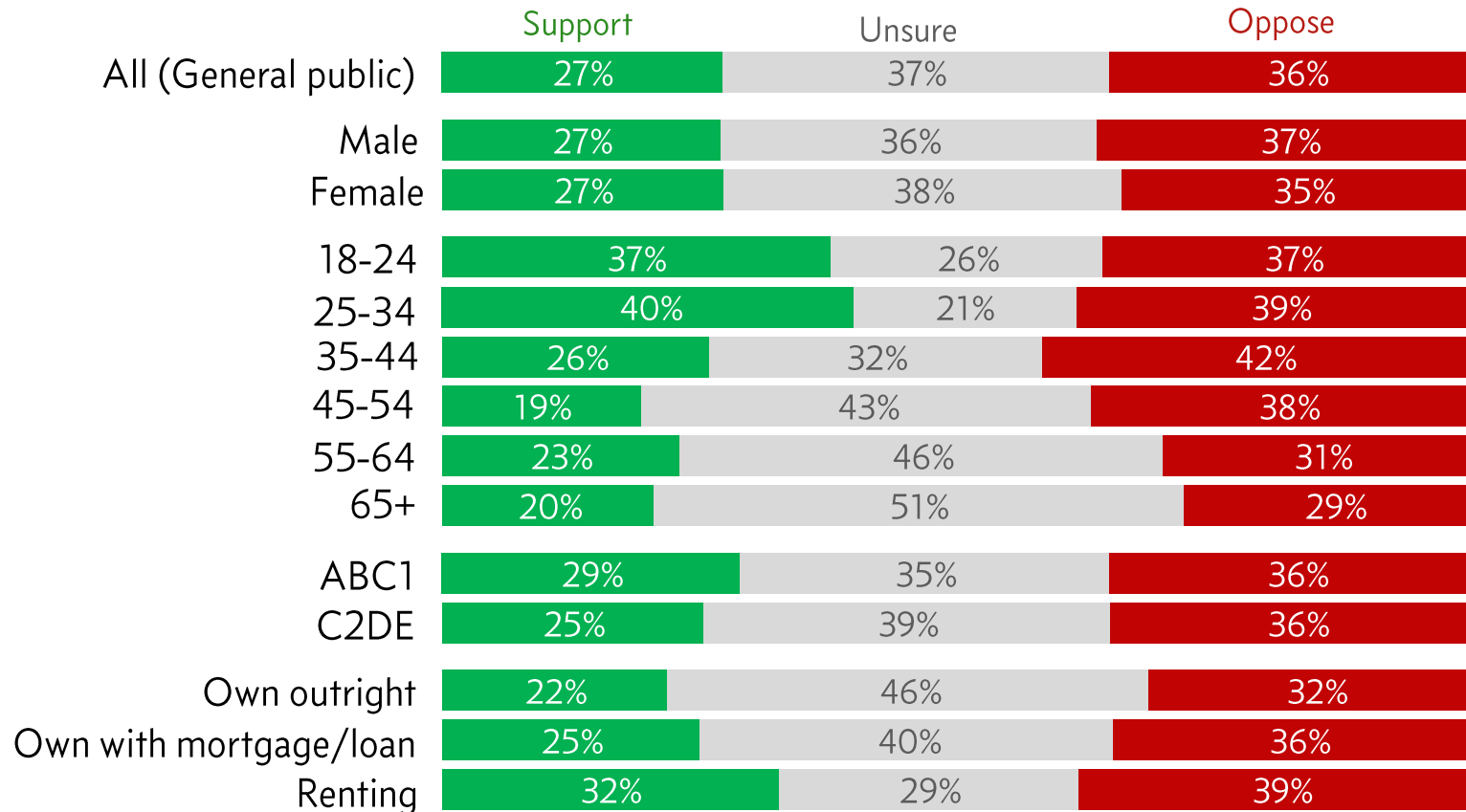
Only 36% of the public oppose the government buying and developing Green Belt land, if shares are distributed afterwards

Some people have suggested that Metropolitan Green Belt land should be purchased by the government with shares distributed to developers, local government, local residents, landowners and the Treasury to accelerate development and build more housing. Would you support or oppose such a policy?



Q6. Some people have suggested that Metropolitan Green Belt land* should be purchased by the government with shares distributed to developers, local government, local residents, landowners and the Treasury to accelerate development and build more housing. Would you support or oppose such a policy?

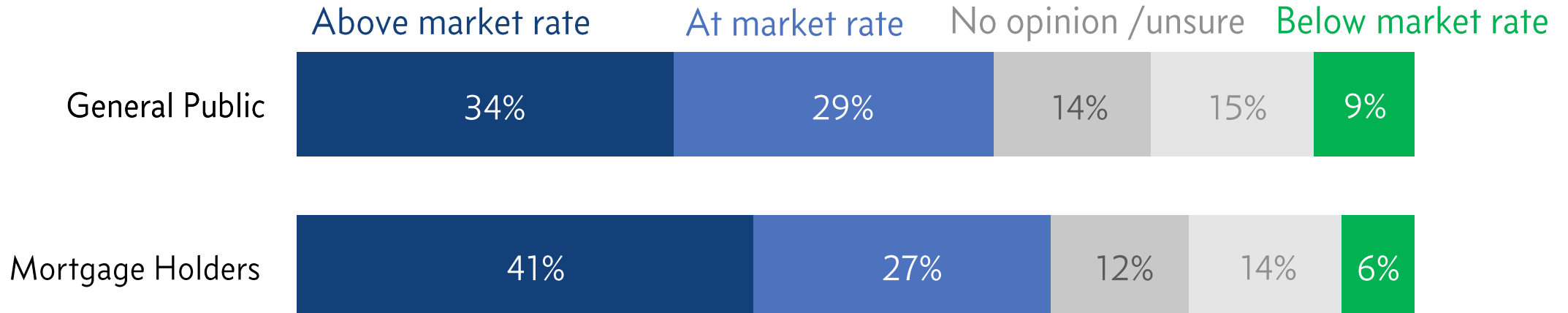
Younger people and renters are more supportive of the policy, with those in middle age driving the opposition



Q6. Some people have suggested that Metropolitan Green Belt land should be purchased by the government with shares distributed to developers, local government, local residents, landowners and the Treasury to accelerate development and build more housing. Would you support or oppose such a policy?

Over a third say that compensation for local people should be above market value

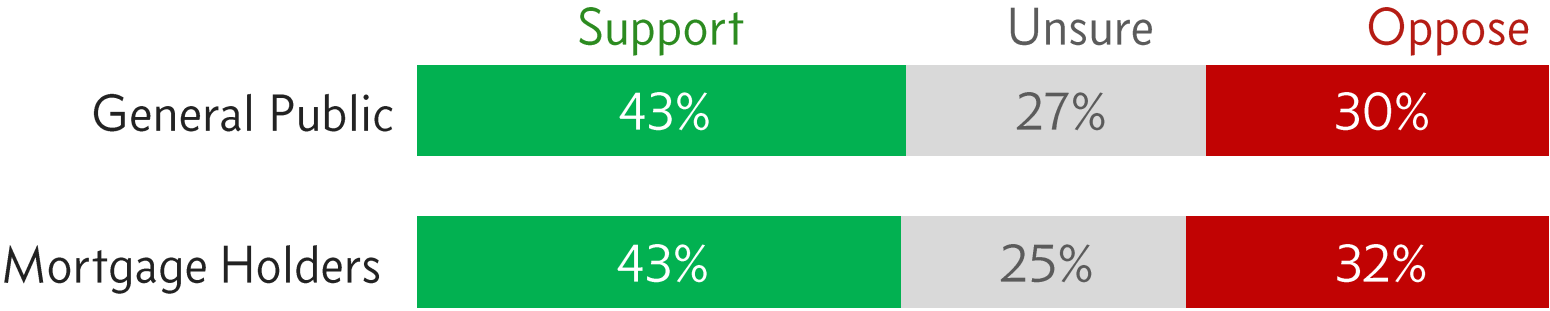
How much do you think it is appropriate to pay each local resident for the land?



Q7. Some people have suggested that Metropolitan Green Belt land* should be purchased by the government with shares distributed to developers, local government, local residents, landowners and the Treasury to accelerate development and build more housing. How much do you think it is appropriate to pay each local resident and for the land?

A policy where a proportion of the profits from developed Green Belt land is given back to the local community has net support with less than a third opposing the scheme

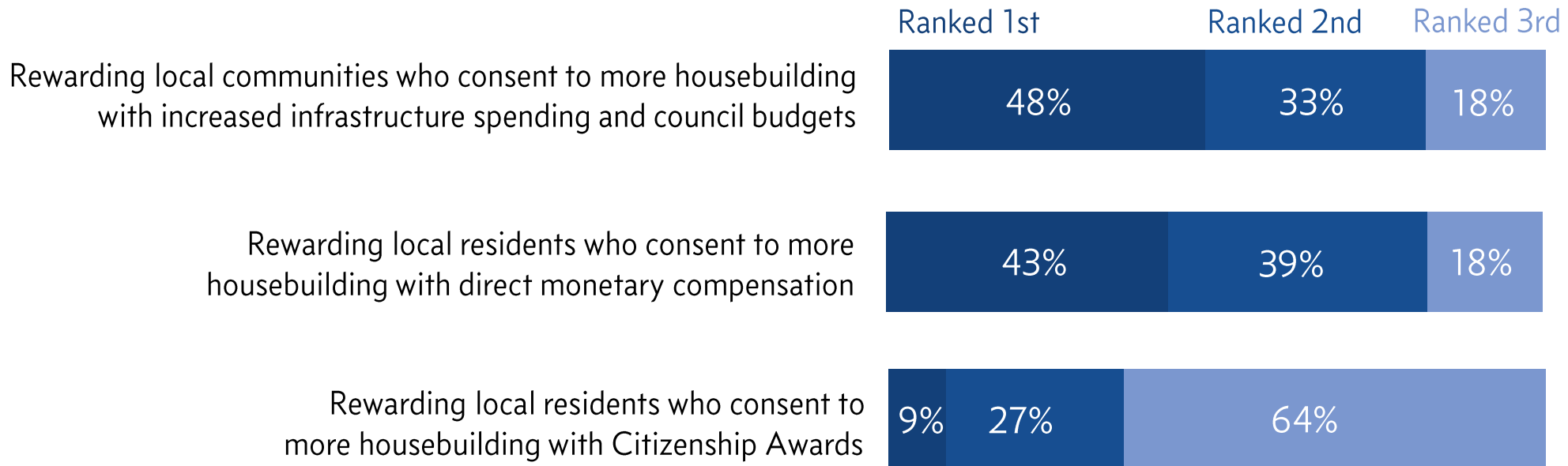
Would you support or oppose the government purchasing Metropolitan Green Belt land for development if a proportion of profits were given back to the local community and residents?



Q8. Would you support or oppose the government purchasing Metropolitan Green Belt land for development if a proportion of profits were given back to the local community and residents?

Increased infrastructure spending or monetary compensation are ranked as the most effective incentives for those who consent to more housebuilding

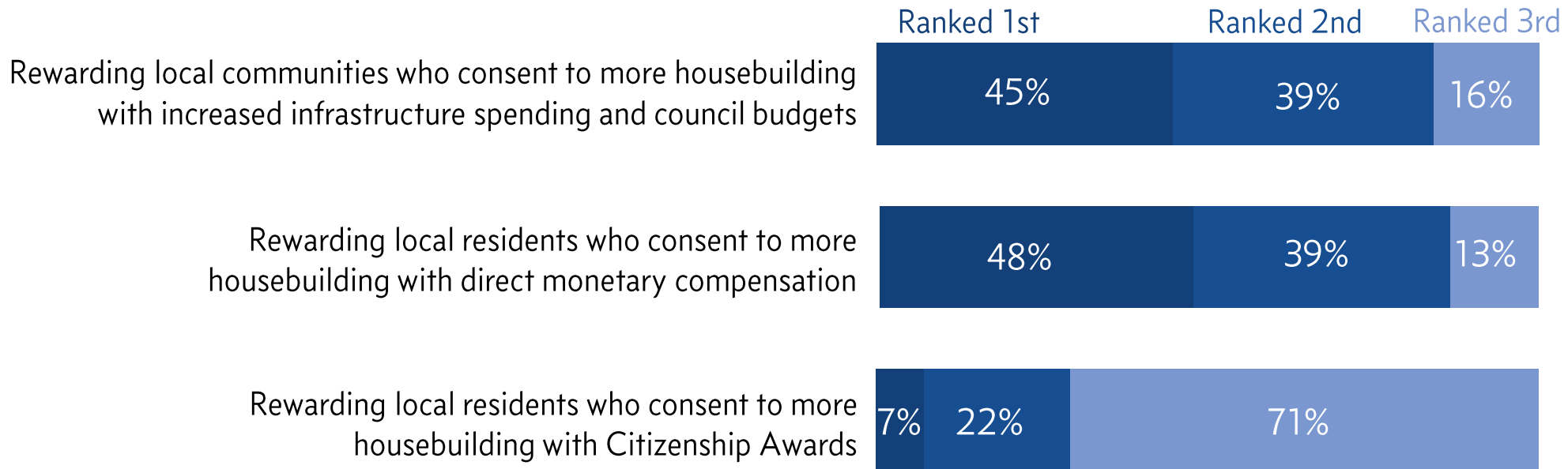
Which of the following do you think would be most effective, if at all, in your area?



Q13. Some have suggested providing incentives for those who consent to more housebuilding in their area. Which of the following do you think would be most effective, if at all, in your area? (Asked to general public).

Mortgage holders are slightly more likely to opt for monetary compensation

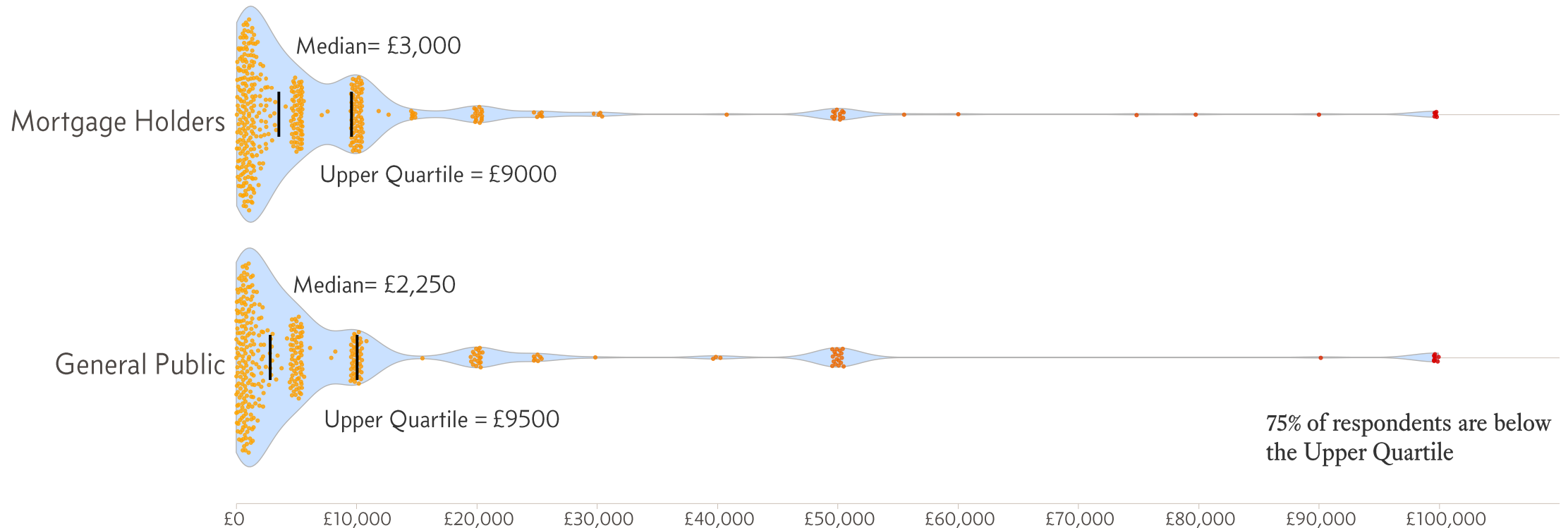
Which of the following do you think would be most effective, if at all, in your area?



Q13. Some have suggested providing incentives for those who consent to more housebuilding in their area. Which of the following do you think would be most effective, if at all, in your area? (Asked mortgage holders only).

More than three quarters of people think the compensation should be below £10,000 with half of the General public saying it should be below £2,250

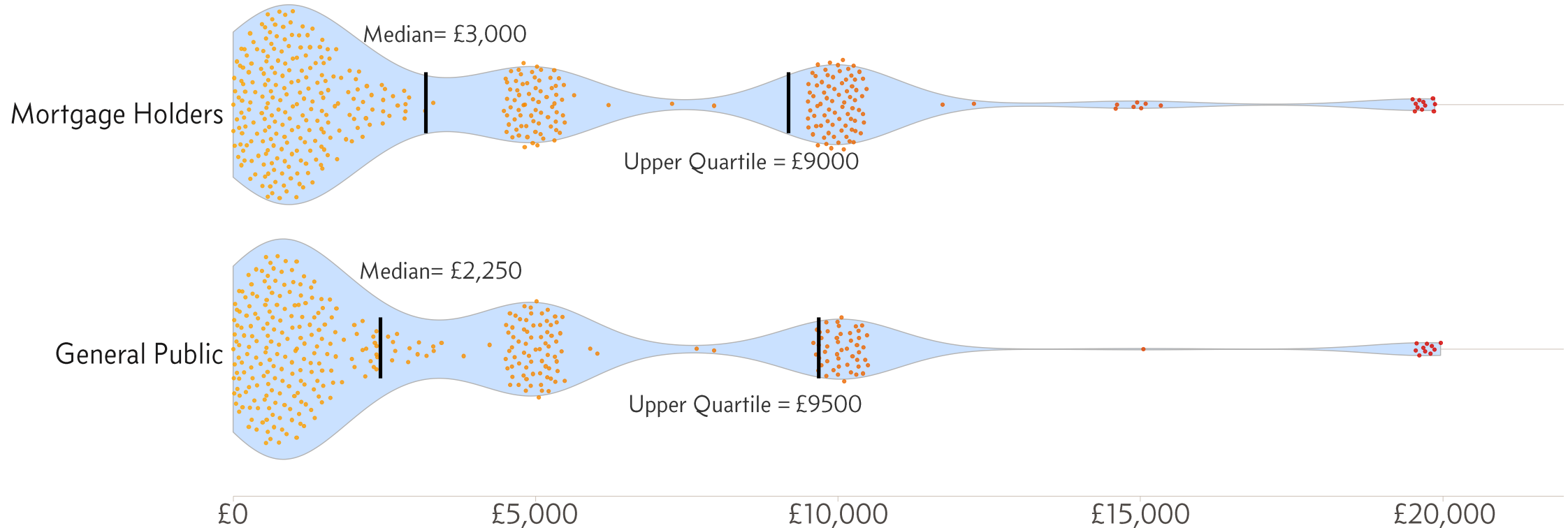
Imagine that local residents were directly compensated in areas where more house building were to take place. How much do you think this compensation should be?



Q14. Imagine that local residents were directly compensated in areas where more house building were to take place. How much do you think this compensation should be? (Top 6 responses removed as outliers)

Zoomed in view

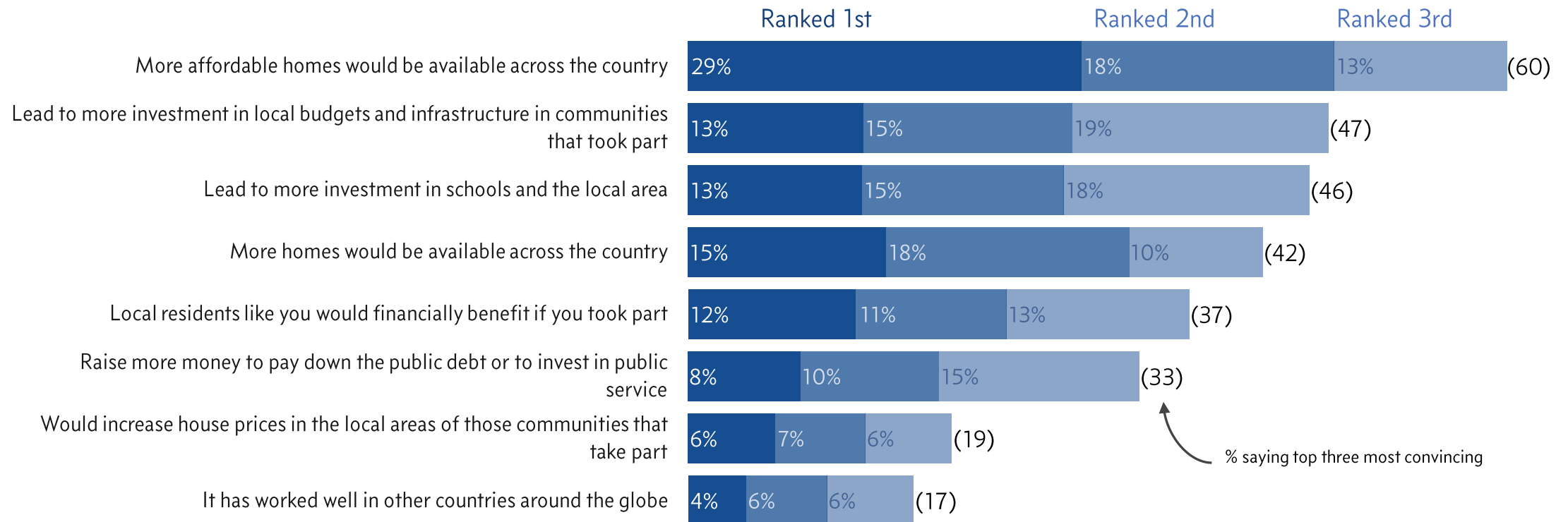
Imagine that local residents were directly compensated in areas where more house building were to take place. How much do you think this compensation should be?



Q14. Imagine that local residents were directly compensated in areas where more house building were to take place. How much do you think this compensation should be? (Showing only those between £0-£20,000)

Creating affordable homes and increased investment in local infrastructure are the two most convincing arguments to back the scheme

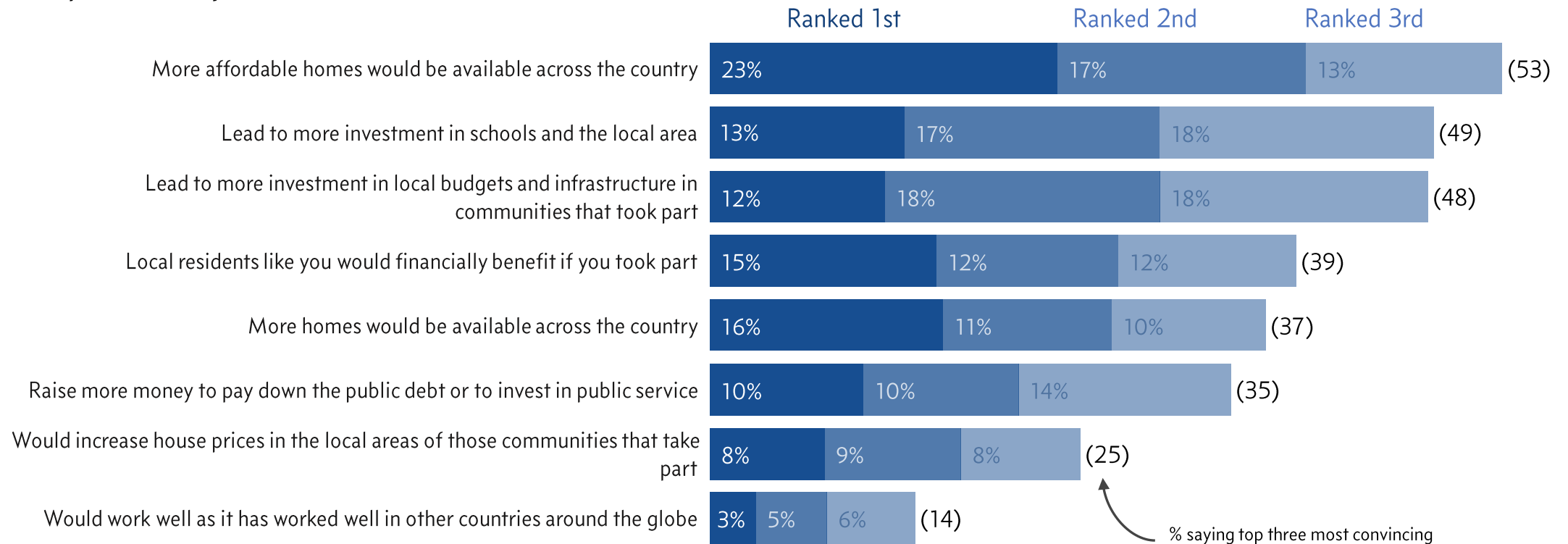
Of the following arguments, which do you find most convincing and least convincing in terms of what would most persuade you to back the scheme?



Q19. Of the following arguments, which do you find most convincing and least convincing in terms of what would most persuade you to back the scheme? (Asked to general public).

Increasing house prices is not seen as a convincing argument to those who own their own home

Of the following arguments, which do you find most convincing and least convincing in terms of what would most persuade you to back the scheme?



Q19. Of the following arguments, which do you find most convincing and least convincing in terms of what would most persuade you to back the scheme? (Asked mortgage holders only).

Increasing investment and affordable homes are convincing arguments for all age groups and renters

Of the following arguments, which do you find most convincing and least convincing in terms of what would most persuade you to back the scheme?

| | All | Male | Female | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | ABC1 | C2DE | Own outright | Own with mortgage/loan | Renting |
|---|-----|------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|------|------|--------------|------------------------|---------|
| More affordable homes would be available across the country | +40 | +35 | +46 | +39 | +36 | +45 | +33 | +45 | +44 | +40 | +41 | +33 | +34 | +49 |
| Lead to more investment in local budgets and infrastructure in communities that took part | +22 | +25 | +19 | +9 | +17 | +30 | +13 | +18 | +38 | +31 | +11 | +33 | +28 | +10 |
| Lead to more investment in schools and the local area | +21 | +18 | +23 | +26 | +18 | +17 | +18 | +11 | +33 | +26 | +14 | +32 | +32 | +6 |
| More homes would be available across the country | +11 | +13 | +10 | +5 | +10 | +12 | +2 | +16 | +22 | +10 | +13 | +9 | +0 | +19 |
| Local residents like you would financially benefit if you took part | -2 | -3 | -1 | +0 | +7 | -1 | +7 | +16 | -36 | -10 | +7 | -17 | -2 | +9 |
| Raise more money to pay down the public debt or to invest in public services | -3 | +0 | -5 | +13 | -10 | -12 | +3 | -14 | +7 | -2 | -3 | -3 | -6 | -2 |
| Would increase house prices in the local areas of those communities that take part | -42 | -43 | -42 | -55 | -41 | -46 | -28 | -37 | -48 | -50 | -33 | -34 | -40 | -50 |
| Would work well as it has worked well in other countries around the globe | -47 | -44 | -50 | -36 | -37 | -44 | -49 | -55 | -60 | -45 | -50 | -55 | -46 | -42 |

↖ % saying top three most convincing minus % bottom three most convincing

Q19. Of the following arguments, which do you find most convincing and least convincing in terms of what would most persuade you to back the scheme? (Asked to general public).

Extra crossbreaks to increase support



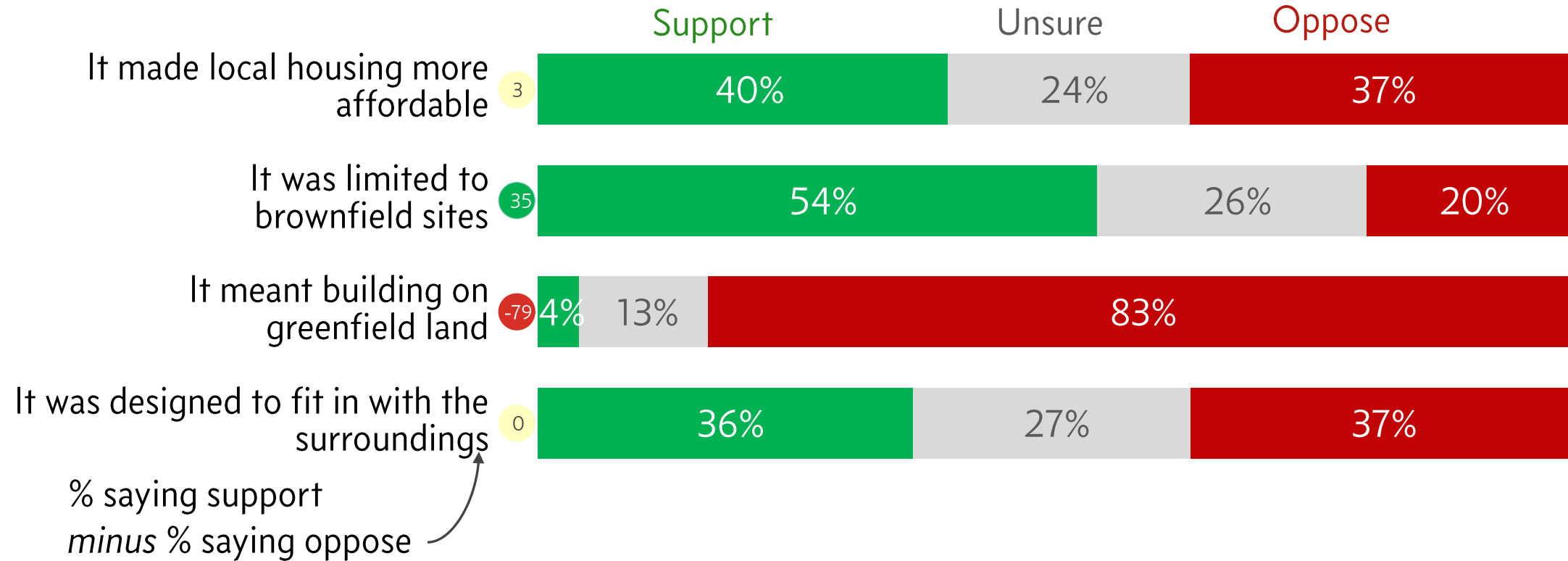
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Those who oppose housebuilding in the local area generally may be won over by limiting housebuilding to brownfield sites and making local housing more affordable

How much would you support or oppose building new housing in your local area if...

Those who oppose housebuilding in the local area

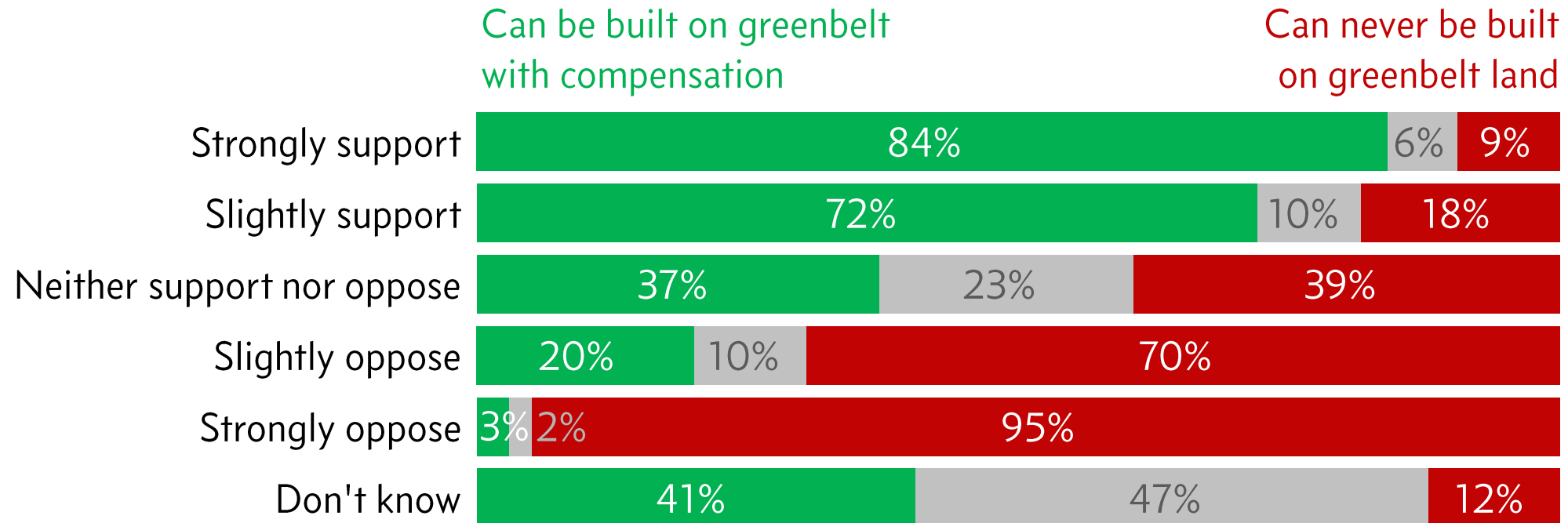


Q12. How much would you support or oppose building new housing in your local area if it... Q3. Would you support or oppose more housing being built in your local area?

Those who don't know or who are unconvinced about building on Green Belt land are often won over with compensation

Which of the following statement is closest to your view?

Based on whether they support or oppose building on greenbelt land

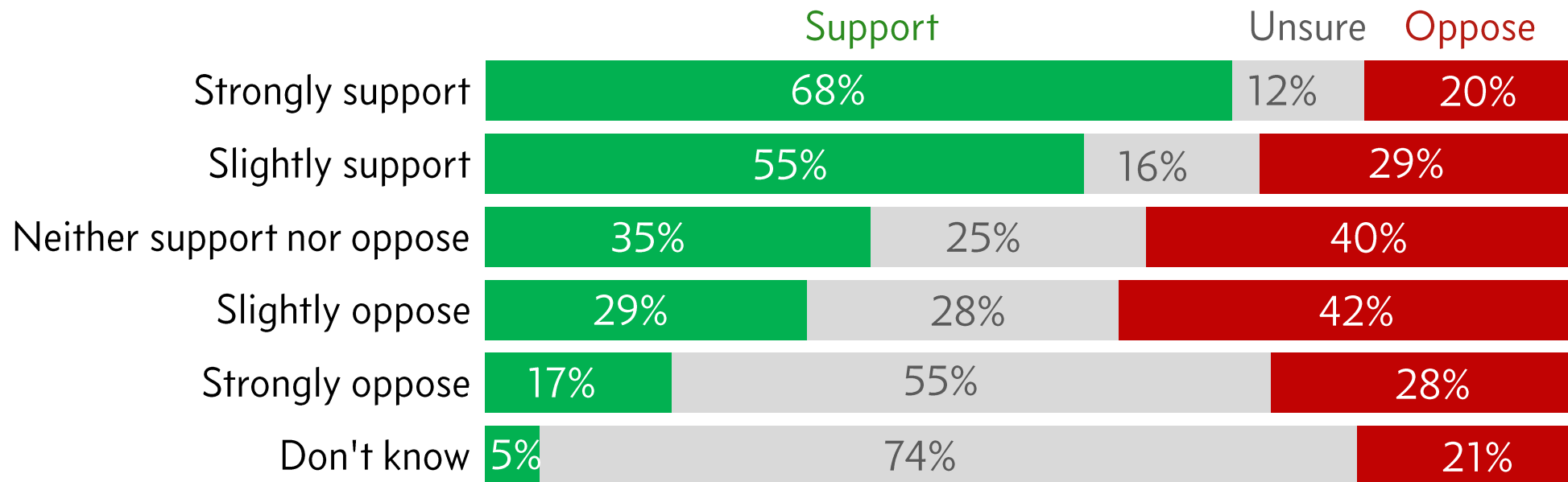


Q15. Which of the following statement is closest to your view? Q2. Would you support or oppose more housing being built on Green Belt land?

Purchasing Green Belt land for development is supported by 1 in 3 of those who slightly oppose building in the local area

Would you support or oppose the government purchasing Metropolitan Green Belt land for development if a proportion of profits were given back to the local community and residents?

Based on whether they support or oppose building in the local area

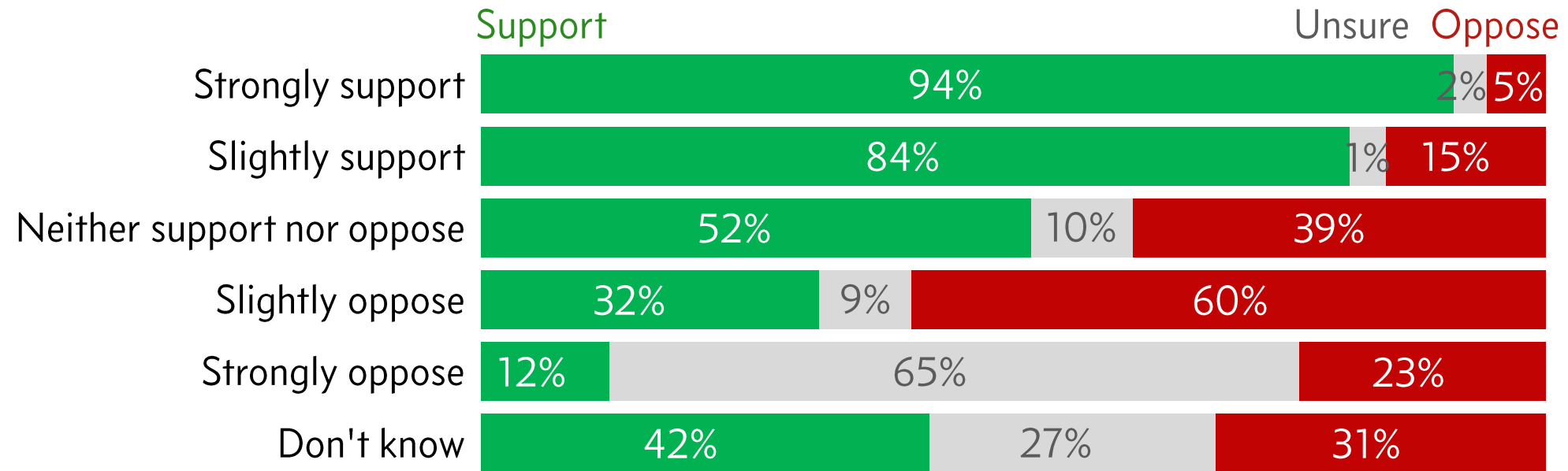


Q8. Would you support or oppose the government purchasing Metropolitan Green Belt land for development if a proportion of profits were given back to the local community and residents?

Giving back a proportion of profits garners more support by groups who are hesitant to support purchasing Green Belt land for development

Would you support or oppose the government purchasing Metropolitan Green Belt land for development if a proportion of profits were given back to the local community and residents?

Based on whether they support or oppose the distribution of shares scheme



Q8. Would you support or oppose the government purchasing Metropolitan Green Belt land for development if a proportion of profits were given back to the local community and residents?

Q6. Some people have suggested that Metropolitan Green Belt land* should be purchased by the government with shares distributed to developers, local government, local residents, landowners and the Treasury to accelerate development and build more housing. Would you support or oppose such a policy?