

Cabinet Meeting: Monday, 01 September 2025

Question from: Jason Carlton

Question to: Councillor Patient, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Action and Housing

QUESTION

The draft open space, sport and recreation SPD introduces a 'Stewardship Hub' model — in effect a Hidden Housing Levy on new housing developments over a certain size. Similar to the garden suburbs stewardship funding approach, this was never disclosed at the Local Plan Examination, never factored into the Council's viability assessments, and is absent from the Community Infrastructure Levy/Section 106 infrastructure proposals.

On what legal and evidential basis is Calderdale now attempting to impose this untested, perpetual financial burden on households through an SPD, and how can the Council justify introducing such a fundamental policy shift outside of public examination and the statutory infrastructure planning process?

Response

The assertions in the question that the stewardship hub model would impose a 'hidden housing levy' on new developments, or is being mandated, are wholly misconceived. Whilst the Council considers that the model potentially offers better value for money and benefits to residents compared to established models for managing open space (for further information about the shortcomings of the current model see page 115 of [Housebuilding market study final report](#)), the Cabinet report does in any case state at paragraph 4.13 that:

*"A Stewardship Hub is a not for profit, independent charity that takes ownership of POS and other public assets after a development has been completed. The hub employs expert part time directors and a small full time team, oversees managing agents and ensures regulatory compliance (for things like Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and Biodiversity Net Gain), provides a single point of contact for residents and is funded by a one off contribution by developers and modest annual payments by residents. **While the Council could not mandate that developers opt to join the Hub, we could actively promote it as a preferred option.** This approach aligns with strategic objective for placemaking, sustainability and resident wellbeing."*