

**Cabinet Meeting: Monday, 10 February 2025**

**Question from: Councillor Monteith**

**Question to: Councillor Patient**

The infrastructure to support the delivery of the Garden Communities Report claims that 379 indirect jobs will be created as a result of the project. If the Council makes the bad decision to cancel the Primary Schools, then the job figures are very likely to be overstated. However, my question relates to the Reports use of Consultants to advise on the economic impacts. Please advise how much was spent to these Consultants, and whether or not they were tasked with providing sensitivity analyses to support their estimated cost benefit figures.

### **Response**

The advice that the Council received assumed that the schools would be built, and it did not therefore sensitivity test the ramifications of not building the schools. As explained in the Cabinet report, the need for new schools has now been reviewed in the light of *Children and Young People's Services Directorate Planning of School Places 2023*.

It is important to stress that not building the schools significantly reduces the overall cost and financial risk of infrastructure delivery. A reduction in jobs benefits must therefore be weighed against the associated reductions to public cost and risk, before concluding whether an investment represents good value for money.

Inclusive of VAT, the cost of advice on the economic benefits of development in Southeast Calderdale was £32,850.

Delivery of the Garden Communities is essential to ensuring that the Council can meet its obligations to deliver sufficient homes and supply of housing land. If the Council cannot fulfil these obligations, it will quickly become vulnerable to speculative and piecemeal development in the Green Belt on land that has not been identified in the Local Plan.