

## Should developers pay towards infrastructure?

Written by Eddie Power

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{comments on}



Is it time the Isle of Man Government looked at bringing in a levy on developers who plan to build anywhere on the Island, considering the effect development can have on the local infrastructure?

Some time ago Westminster brought in a Community Infrastructure Levy, which meant that builders have to pay £55 per square metre of residential homes, nothing for a small business premises and £200 per square metre for a supermarket or similar. Within the UK levy the money is paid upon receiving planning permission and before construction begins. The money is given to the local authority to be used for upgrading or building new roads and where need to ensure schools etc can cope with the influx of new residents and traffic to the effected area.

We have already had an independent Inspector stating in his recommendations for the Southern Area Plan, that Ballasalla needs a bypass if the planned construction in the South of the Island takes place, and he said that the Isle of Man Government should apply a levy to the developers to pay for the road. Also the Independent Inspector for the Kirk Michael new development, said a by-pass would be required, was he considering a levy to pay for the road? We don't know! But as an inspector living in the UK, was he assuming we already have a levy?

The moaning and groaning from developers can already be heard at this suggestion, but everyone should consider how their actions here affect life on this island. Lets look at some approximate figures; an estate of 50 residential houses could introduce an average of 100 children, if they were all to be accommodated in a primary school, going on an average class size of 25, 4 new classes would be needed. As for vehicles if the average cars per households is 2, that's another 200 cars daily using local roads.

The next obvious moan would be 'it would put up house prices', to that there is a simple answer, 'our house prices are considerably higher here than in the UK and the UK charge a levy'.

The levy would not need to be brought in the same way as it was in the UK, they applied it as a

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tax, and I am told by those that know that it could be applied here under Section 18 of Planning.

In short we are all aware that our infrastructure is groaning under the strain, you only have to look at the state of many roads, roads which were built sometime ago and not designed to carry the number of vehicles we have here, our population has gone up and, I doubt if it will drop in the near future. We are all aware that the government don't have the money to spend as they did before. This scheme would money into government coffers to improve life here.

We are being told the construction industry needs help, if we give them help it may reduce unemployment and what that costs, but construction adds costs to infrastructure again paid for by government, plus if government help the construction industry will we see house prices come down?

Ballasalla and District Residents Association have already written to the Treasury Minister asking him to consider this levy, it is to be hoped that others will do likewise and encourage our government to bring this in as soon as possible, to ensure that the taxpayer does not have to foot the bill when development means new roads, repairs to existing roads, replacement of existing roads and expansion in schools.

- [UK Government Document 'Community Infrastructure &nbsp;Levy'](#)
- [Swindon Advertiser report on the UK levy](#)