

Making stewardship happen: a process guide for Councils

Summary of stages in online guide
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Community Stewardship Solutions

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The Lady Margaret
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About the TCPA

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) works to challenge, inspire and support people to create healthy, sustainable and resilient places that are fair for everyone. To this end we aim to improve the art and science of planning in the UK and abroad and work to secure fresh perspectives on major issues, including planning policy, housing, regeneration and climate change. Informed by the Garden City Principles, the TCPA's strategic priorities are to:

- Work to secure a good home for everyone in inclusive, resilient and prosperous communities, which support people to live healthier lives.
 - Empower people to have real influence over decisions about their environments and to secure social justice within and between communities.
 - Support new and transform existing places to be adaptable to current and future challenges including the climate crisis.
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Introduction to the guide

The TCPA has produced '*Making stewardship happen a process guide for councils*'. The guide is an online resource which forms part of the TCPA's [Online Toolkit for Stewardship in new communities](#). This document is a downloadable summary of the key stages outlined in the process guide. It should be read alongside the online guide.

Long-term stewardship is an approach to delivering and managing developments that can ensure they remain places which enable people and the environment to flourish, in perpetuity. Stewardship is one of the core [Garden City Principles](#) and the right approach provides an opportunity to create places which people will be proud to live in for years to come.

Elsewhere in this toolkit you can find a wealth of information about long-term stewardship and what it means.

There is no 'one size fits' all stewardship approach for new developments. The right stewardship solution is unique to every site and project; and sufficient time, resources and enthusiasm are required to find the right solution. This process guide draws on the experience from the TCPA's publications and networks, to provide an indicative guide to the process of developing a stewardship strategy. The guide is available at: tcpa.org.uk/making-stewardship-happen-a-process-guide-for-councils/

The guide is intended to assist local authorities, their private sector delivery partners, and interested stakeholders to understand what questions might need to be addressed when considering stewardship of a new community, and what can be realistically and appropriately expected from the developers or their agents. This is to inform discussion within the local authority and with delivery partners and other stakeholders. It is also intended to help local authorities identify where external expertise is needed, and to become an 'informed client' when seeking legal, financial, or other expertise. **Its questions and processes are prompts only and should be adapted to specific needs and circumstances of each place and project as part of a stewardship strategy.**

This resource should be read alongside the TCPA's practical guidance on long-term stewardship and other 'live' resources on the [TCPA's website](#).

Summary of stages

This guide is divided into seven stages. These are designed to be useful regardless of the planning and delivery stage your project is at. Depending on your circumstances, you might approach these stages in a different order, and some might overlap or run in parallel. This approach assumes that a stewardship strategy will be created as part of the process.

Stage 1: Understanding your ambition and project status:

At the outset it is important to take a moment to understand what your starting point is, and the implications of this for your stewardship strategy. This means reflecting on your understanding and ambitions as a local authority when it comes to stewardship. At this stage you should also seek a basic understanding of the ambition and commitments of the promotor/developer in relation to stewardship, and the status of the project in design and planning. This will help to identify key opportunities and challenges at an early stage and help you to be realistic about what might be achieved on the site or project. You might set up an initial stewardship working group at this stage. The group might draft a statement of intent and programme for your strategy including a list of key stakeholders and moments of public engagement on stewardship options.

This stage includes consideration of:

- The council's understanding of stewardship
- The council's ambition for stewardship across the authority and on specific sites - including as expressed in existing in policy and practice
- Any commitments or intentions that have been expressed by the landowner/developer/promotor or local stakeholders e.g. Parish or Town Council/s , including in Neighbourhood Plans
- The opportunities and constraints presented by the status of the project in planning and design
- The resources available within your authority to progress work on stewardship
- Establishing a stewardship working group within your team and drafting a statement of intent

The guide contains a downloadable worksheet for Stage 1.

Stage 2: Taking stock of project details and opportunity:

The aim of this stage is to get a clear understanding of the constraints and opportunities in relation to the stewardship of the project or place. From this you can create an evidence base to inform your thinking and to help understand what external expertise is necessary to progress the stewardship strategy. This involves gathering key information about existing circumstances, what is proposed in the development/s and what roles and responsibilities the stewardship organisation might have. The list of considerations outlined below incorporates those set out in the [Homes England Garden Communities Toolkit](#)¹, and those gathered from research and

¹ [Garden communities toolkit - Legacy - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674247/garden-communities-toolkit-legacy-guidance.pdf)

project experience. At this stage the stewardship working group could create a written evidence base to form the basis of options testing and public engagement on stewardship.

This stage includes:

- i. Evidence gathering on:** Assets/Remit/Governance/Land ownership/Finance/Legal options
- ii. Creating a long list of options:** Using the evidence base gathered, create a shortlist of which legal and organisational forms the stewardship body might take.
- iii. Consultation and public engagement:** This may be a suitable time to consult with relevant stakeholders, such as Town and Parish Councils, on potential (governance) models for the stewardship body

The guide contains a downloadable worksheet for Stage 2.

Stage 3: Testing options

The aim of this stage is to test your list of options to see which is most likely to meet your needs and to seek to identify some preferred options and approaches. It can also be used to inform engagement with stakeholders to provide a transparent decision-making process. Drawing on experience from the TCPA's project partners, a set of decision-making criteria is included to inform your testing process.

From this you can identify a short-list of options, including establishing whether any land and/or other assets are to be adopted by the Local Authority or if there is preference for a third-party management approach to be used for all or part of the project. Depending on whether you are a local authority taking a proactive approach to determining your preferred approach, or understanding approaches proposed by landowners/developers/promoters, the testing of financial and legal implications of the options may be done 'in-house' or you may seek external expertise to review and test costs on your behalf.

Stage 4: Financial analysis and legal clarification

Having undertaken a high-level assessment of your long-list of options, it is necessary to undertake more detailed calculations of your shortlisted options, and to understand in more detail the financial and legal implications of the shortlisted models. Ideally, your stewardship working group would include internal colleagues with legal and financial expertise to inform **Stage 3**. If the expertise is not available within your local authority, you may wish to appoint external support.

Where land or assets are to be adopted, the legal and financial circumstances will be available to the local authority. Where a developer is proposing a specific stewardship model, they will be responsible for providing this information to the local authority. At this stage it is necessary to ensure the proposed models are suitable legally and financially. Encourage the developer to work proactively with you on sharing this information. This stage is about ensuring you have confidence in the proposed models before signing them off.

Stage 5: Securing through planning (policy and developer contributions)

Securing adopted policy which outlines your expectations and standards around stewardship is one of the strongest tools councils have to encourage high quality and viable stewardship arrangements. Developer contributions secured through the planning consent process remain a crucial means of securing capital (and sometimes revenue) for stewardship arrangements and maintenance. This section touches on what might be included in Development Plan policy and developer contributions.

The guide contains a sample list of Heads of Terms for a Section 106 agreement on stewardship.

Stage 6: Implementation

A robust approach to implementation of the stewardship strategy is an essential tool to ensure your stewardship ambitions and commitments are realised on site. The implementation programme is usually brought together through a timetabled Implementation Plan to be approved as a planning condition. Implementation will commence long before the first occupation, and depending on the triggers for developer contributions/Section 106 agreements, implementation may even start before formal commencement.

Stage 7: Monitoring and review

Long-term stewardship is an ongoing and evolving process. Stewardship strategies may be reviewed and updated in line with key phases in the project delivery plan, and through Local Plan review stages.