

NEWS

Farmer fights to get £27k back for form mistake



SIMON BROAD | Simon Broad said he was given a Community Infrastructure Levy bill by Sevenoaks District Council

Jacob Panons
BBC News, South East
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9 hours ago

A farmer has said he is fighting to be reimbursed after "one little bit of paper" cost him more than £27,000 due to a mistake with building forms.

Simon Broad said he was given a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) bill by Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) because he failed to submit the correct commencement notice form when he was building his family home in Penshurst.

Mr Broad, who built the three-bedroom home on his farm, said: "There's no logic to this. It's very poorly thought out and it's being seized on by councils."

SDC said while it sympathised with Mr Broad, the requirements were set out in law and had to be followed.

A Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a fee meant for large-scale developers which is used to fund local improvements including new roads and facilities.

Mr Broad said although he told the council he was starting work on his home in February 2017, he received the bill for not using the right form and decided to pay after fighting for "a year or two".

He now wants his money back after West Berkshire Council leader Jeff Brooks said he had reimbursed residents who were accidentally charged in his authority's area.

SDC said the government has changed the law since Mr Broad's application was approved, so exemptions are no longer lost if a commencement notice is not served in time.



SIMON BROAD | Mr Broad said a group of people who had received similar bills were looking to fight the issue nationally

However, this change only impacted developments that had permission granted after 2019 and could not be applied retrospectively, the council said.

Mr Broad has told the council to "stop hiding behind the legislation and do the right thing".

The farmer said a group of people who had received similar bills were looking to fight the issue nationally.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Governments (MHCLG) said householder developments, including extensions and self-builders, were able to get a CIL exemption before a development started.

It added: "Councils are ultimately responsible for their own charging and enforcement decisions in line with regulations and guidance, and we expect these to be carefully considered.

"We are committed to improving the system of developer contributions so it is as clear and effective as possible and will set out further details in due course."

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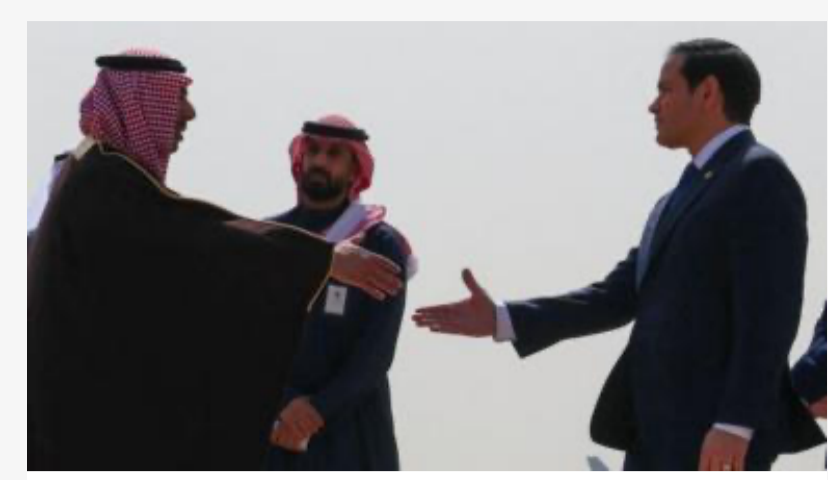
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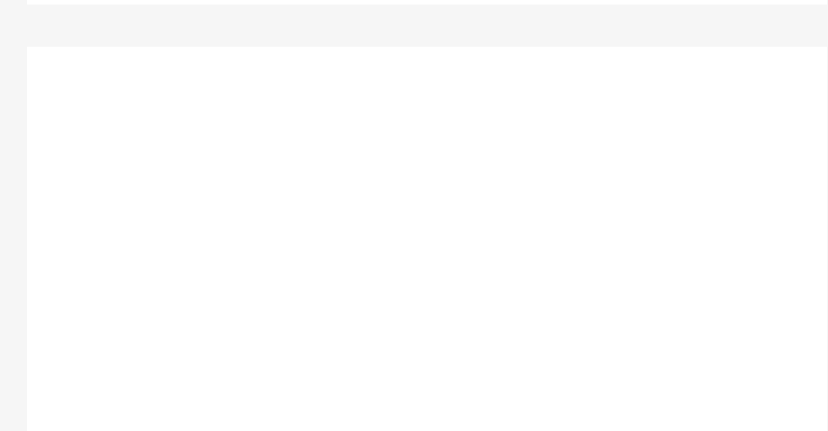
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