

EAST LOTHIAN: Developers to pay £1.3m towards education for new houses

Developers building a new housing estate in an East Lothian village will pay £1.3 million towards additional primary and secondary school accommodation, under an agreement with the council.

Bellway Homes was initially granted planning permission for 86 houses and four flats on the western edge of Elphinstone in December.

The application came back to East Lothian Council's planning committee this week after council officers reviewed conditions under new national guidelines adopted under the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework (NPF4).

And councillors approved attaching conditions which include a £1.322million contribution to schools, nearly £27,000 towards the refurbishment of the existing changing pavilion at the Elphinstone Playing Field and £15,753 for transport improvements.

During the meeting councillors heard a public representation against the application from Meghan Houchin.

She told the committee the new houses failed to meet a number of NPF4 policy conditions including one which said developments should reflect the local community and blend in.

She said: "I don't see how this development adheres to that at all.

"Every single building is two storey, the majority of houses in Elphinstone are either single storey or one and a half storey buildings.

"For this development to fit in they need to lower the roofing lines."

And she asked if developer contributions towards transport could be used to upgrade a footpath which links the village to neighbouring Wallyford train station.

Planning convenor Norman Hampshire said the path upgrade between the site is "certainly something which I can ask officers to have a look at and see whether it can be upgraded."

However he said there was little that could be done over the size of the new houses.

He said: "The footprint for a three bedroom two storey building compared to a three bedroom single storey is far smaller.

"It is up to the developer to build for the market place."

The new estate, which is part of a larger area of land set aside for housing in the village, will be made up of 67 private houses for sale ranging from two to four bedroom homes and 23 affordable housing units include four two-bedroom flats.

Councillors unanimously agreed to approve the revised planning application.

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

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How the new housing at Elphinstone could look pic East Lothian Council planning portal