

East Lothian Council accused of 'lack of support' for affordable rural golf course

Scotland's 'Golf Coast' council has been accused of showing a lack of support for a rural course which has been described as a 'shining light' in its community.

The owners of Castle Park Golf Club, outside Gifford, in East Lothian, have lodged an appeal after they were refused permission to build a house next to the course so they could live and manage the business.

And they have criticised East Lothian Council over its promotion of their course, which is described as a 'genuine community facility' which offers 'good value golf'.

In an appeal statement due to be heard by the council's Local Review Body next month, the club's representative says: "The council's own website lists 19 golf courses in East Lothian. All but three are located on or close to the East Lothian coast (hence the Scotland's Golf Coast title) and close to local towns and villages.

"Whilst the council's webpage identifies Castle Park on the map of the county, it does not provide any further information.

"Even in this small way, there is a clear lack of support with the other courses each having a link to their details but not for Castle Park."

Castle Park Golf Club was established in the Nineties as a

nine-hole course which developed into a full 18 hole course on the Noughties.

It closed in 2014 but was bought by new owners the following year and according to the planning application for the six bed home has become a "great-value alternative to the coastal course".

Its owners had applied for the house as part of the golf club business providing accommodation for the owners and their family as well as staff who may need to stay over.

The appeal statement points out the course is in a rural 'isolated' area with live-on facilities a benefit to the business.

Planning officers refused permission for the house stating it had not been demonstrated it was 'necessary to support the sustainable management of a viable rural business, or that there is an essential need for a worker to live permanently at the site'.

However the applicants say the decision by officers was based on a report by a rural surveyor who 'doubted the viability' of the club's development plans.

In response they say: "Given other improvements and initiatives, the club is able to fund the development and its completion will be a significant boost to the ongoing operations at Castle Park helping attract and secure staff whilst also helping with early morning starts, late evening finishes and round the clock security."

And they add: "Castle Park Golf Club continues to be a shining light in providing an accessible, welcoming and affordable alternative option to the far more expensive courses and clubs elsewhere in East Lothian."

The appeal will be considered next month.

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter



Castle Park Golf Club