

East Lothian councillor warns county hospitality at 'tipping point'

Golf clubs and restaurants around North Berwick are feeling the impact of changes to short term lets in East Lothian, councillors have been warned.

A meeting of East Lothian Council's Local Review Body saw elected members throw out an appeal by a holiday let owner to carry on operating the property on North Berwick High Street.

However Councillor Donna Collins, who represents the Dunbar and East Linton ward, supported the appeal after warning the county was at 'tipping point' when it comes to holiday accommodation.

Councillors heard the flat in North Berwick High Street had been operating since 2015 as a holiday let with no reports of any incidents.

Councillor Collins said: "This property has been running as a short term let for nine years and there have been no complaints or objections. I think with all these Airbnbs we are getting to a tipping point.

"Golf clubs and restaurants in the area are beginning to feel it."

Changes to the law introduced in 2022 mean short term holiday lets need to be licensed and, in many cases, need to apply for

planning permission for a change of use.

East Lothian Council has refused permission for many flats which share stairwells or entrances with other residents.

In the North Berwick appeal, the application was for a second floor flat with communal stairwell and access and officers said it was "incompatible with and harmful to the amenity of the occupants of other flatted properties used as residential dwellings."

Councillor Norman Hampshire, chairing the Local Review Body, said while the county needed accommodation for holidaymakers it should not be at the expense of residents.

He said: "We have no control over who lives in these flats. We could have a situation where a young female is living in their on her own and that stairwell has a lot of people moving around in it. It could be intimidating to those living there.

"We want to ensure we have accommodation for visitors to the area but that cannot be to the detriment of people living here."

The review body voted by three to one to refuse the appeal.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter