

# East Lothian house builder to reinstate controversial advertising sign

A housing developer which came under fire for putting a 'distracting' 12ft sign next to a play park without permission is set to put it back up after councillors gave it the green light.

Taylor Wimpey were forced to take the sign advertising their Belhaven Way housing, in Dunbar, down after complaints from local residents who said it could distract drivers when children were crossing the street.

East Lothian planners found the firm had not applied for permission to erect the sign, nor did they have the landowners permission.

At a meeting of the council's planning committee this week representatives of families living next to the sign, which was on the junction of James Kerr Way and Yosemite Park, said it was their land and they believed the sign put youngsters at risk.

They also pointed out the sign was advertising a development which was more than half a kilometre away.

Despite local ward councillor Donna Collins raising her own concerns about the safety of children going to and from the play park, the committee granted planning permission.

However Taylor Wimpey were advised to get permission from the land owners before moving ahead after fellow councillor Cher Cassini described their decision to erect it without asking "a bit rude".

Following the decision Taylor Wimpey said it planned to put the sign back up and had made an agreement with the the land owners. While local residents pay factor fees to maintain the site, it remains in the ownership of another house builder Persimmons.

Pauline Mills, Taylor Wimpey East Scotland's technical director, said: "We are pleased to have secured planning consent which will allow us to reinstate the signage for our Belhaven Way development at the junction of Yosemite Park and James Kerr Way.

"In noting the comments made on our proposals by some members of the committee, we have secured permission from the landowner, and this will allow us to put the sign back in position within the next few days. Again, we apologise for the inconvenience caused by our oversight in securing planning consent for this sign."

Jacquie Bell, who spoke on behalf of local residents objecting to the sign at the planning meeting, warned councillors that the streets where the sign was proposed had lorries using them because a nearby road which was supposed to be used has been closed for nearly two years.

Following Taylor Wimpey's confirmation of plans to reinstate the sign, she said: "The committee was told that this sign posed a risk to the safety of children on this road, which has no safe crossing for youngsters to and from the play park.

"I am disappointed that the committee chose to support the application and that Taylor Wimpey are going ahead with putting the sign back up.

“Persimmons have given permission without asking local residents who pay for the maintenance of it. The junction where it is going is dangerous.”

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter