

Musselburgh racecourse accused of acting like a 'law unto itself'

Musselburgh racecourse has been accused of acting like a 'law unto itself' after it applied for planning permission for a portable cabin which had been operating on the site without approval for years.

A meeting of East Lothian Council's planning committee this week heard that a retrospective application for permission for the staff cabin was lodged after the local authority's enforcement officer reported it.

The course came under fire after it was revealed there were additional buildings in the site which had also been identified as not having permission, with retrospective applications for them still due to come before councillors.

The racecourse has been criticised over the years for failing to apply for permission before making alterations on the site.

Ten years ago Musselburgh and Inveresk Community Council criticised the course after it was revealed five of nine applications for work had been submitted after the changes had been made.

At Tuesday's planning committee Councillor Colin McGinn said

local residents were concerned by the continuing issue which he said had to stop.

He told the committee: "A number of local residents have raised concerns with colleagues time and time again that it does feel like they are a law unto themselves.

"We cannot continue to have retrospective planning applications coming forward for this site. There is a general feeling this needs to stop."

Musselburgh councillor Shona McIntosh encouraged the racecourse to hold a meeting with planners to go over the application process adding it would not only improve relations with the council but would "undoubtedly improve the perception of the racecourse among some local residents."

The cabin, which the committee heard was for the welfare of staff received one objection from a neighbour concerned by how close it was to their property and was granted planning permission by the committee.

Philip Duncan, from the racecourse, said the Portacabin had been on the site for around six years ago but added comments about issues over late planning application had been "taken on board".

Mr Duncan said: "We are looking at ways to smarten up the planning application process."

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter