

Family bid for homes on the edge of Elphinstone causes council split

A family bid to keep their business secure by building new housing to live in was rejected by a single vote at a meeting of East Lothian councillors this week.

Carol Auld launched a bid to build three houses on a paddock, next to her work buildings, on the edge of Elphinstone, for her and her daughters to live in.

She pointed to the approval of a new housing development on the other side of the road as 'changing the landscape' of her land, which was classed as in the countryside.

And her agent told a meeting of the council's planning committee that the houses would allow the family to continue their business and keep the site secure.

However planning officers recommended councillors refused the plans saying the paddock was a rural location and new homes would be against their countryside policy.

The meeting heard from Mrs Auld's agent that security at the site was a concern with police called to it five times over the last two years and having people living on it was important.

Local ward members Councillor Lee-Anne Menzies pointed to the Bellway housing development across the road from the paddock

where nearly 100 homes have been built.

She said: "I was vociferous in my objections to the Bellway development at the time and remain so, however it has been developed.

"The village is going to practically double in size and three homes of a self build from someone who has a family history in the village and the local school for over 100 years for me is nothing in comparison with the 180 homes Bellway plans for a site which is relatively two third bigger than this one."

Fellow local ward member Councillor Kenny MacLeod said the family involved were well know and well liked in the community and added it would enhance the entrance to the village given the housing across the road.

Planning officers recommended refusal of the application saying: "The erection of three houses on the application site would be new build housing development in the countryside of East Lothian on land which is not allocated for housing development."

And planning convenor Councillor Norman Hampshire said that the Bellway housing was on land which had been identified in the Local Development plan for future homes, while the land on the other side of the village main street was not.

The vote was split five for and five against with convenor Councillor Hampshire's casting vote refusing the application.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter