

East Lothian Council leader calls for sewage solution for residents

Problems at a new housing estate where homes remain without a link to a mains sewage system must be resolved quickly, East Lothian's council leader has said.

East Lothian councillors were being given an update on the situation at the Bellway housing estate, on the outskirts of Elphinstone, when Councillor Norman Hampshire made his comments.

Last month elected members delayed a decision on a further 100 homes being built at the site after they were told some homes had no connection to mains sewers.

Instead Bellway had to organise tankers to empty a local tank three times a week with raw sewage then pumped into connected public drains.

Bellway has said it is working to put temporary underground pumps systems in place to deal with the issue while a permanent solution is found but added it required permission from the 'Highways Department' to undertake roadworks to connect to main sewage in the village.

It said: "Regretfully we can only fully connect the sewer when granted permission to do so, that is outside of our control."

A meeting of the council's planning committee yesterday heard that talks between planners, Bellway and Scottish Water had been held and it was hoped an update could be provided by the next planning meeting in January.

Local ward councillor Colin McGinn, who called for the delay to a decision last month, said he was involved in setting up a

group to tackle the issues.

Councillor McGinn told the meeting: "What we have agreed is to set up a group with residents, with representatives from Bellway, Scottish Water and East Lothian Council to improve communication as we press ahead.

"I am pleased we are moving forward with some of the issues, I am concerned residents are still upset and they will not be happy until we have good communication and developments pressing ahead in a manner that does not disrupt residents."

Residents living next to the new housing told the Local Democracy Reporting Service about the disruption and concerns caused by the new housing in their village.

Villagers say the smell caused by the regular sewage collection trips is unbearable at times while the noise generated by the tankers can go on for hours.

Graham Drummond, whose home backs onto the collection site, said some Mondays the visits go on all day.

He said: "After the weekend, in particular, they make several trips and can be here from 9 in the morning til late afternoon pumping out the sewage.

"It can create a smell and is noisy, it makes using our garden impossible and we are concerned it will carry in until the summer as there seems to be no solution coming forward to solve the problem."

At this week's planning committee Councillor Norman Hampshire, planning convenor and council leader, said it was vital a solution was found quickly.

He said: "Norman: "Let's hope we can come to a resolution here because it is not satisfactory for anybody in this situation so hopefully we can get answers and this thing resolved as

soon as possible.”

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter