

Golfer objections over new parking charge plans rejected

Members of North Berwick Golf Club have appealed to East Lothian Council to make them exempt from parking charges due to be introduced on the streets around their club.

A report to councillors next week sets out the results of a consultation into plans to introduce new charges in the seaside town, with on street and off street parking fees.

The proposals also include residents permits which will allow some parking in zoned areas of the town.

A report into the consultation revealed members of North Berwick Golf Club had called for their own free parking permits saying it was unfair they would have to pay to park.

And they were not alone in asking for exemptions with the report revealing tennis club members who live in surrounding villages had also asked to be given special permits to park outside their regular sports venue for free.

However council officers were not impressed by the arguments of the private club members saying it would create a 'disparity' between them and other residents and businesses as well as putting too much pressure on demand.

In the report officers say concerns were raised by members of the North Berwick Golf Club who said the cost of parking was too high.

Officers said they had amended the maximum stay restrictions on the parking order to allow for a round of golf, estimated as up to five hours, to ensure the fee would be a standard £5.

However golfers had said this would mean that if they played two rounds a week it would cost up to £520 extra a year.

The club recently closed its waiting list to male applicants due to the high number of those already on it although it will still accept female applications. A round of golf for visitors costs up to £285 in green fees.

The report on the parking charges consultation says the club is a business and issuing permits to players could be considered the same as providing them to customers on the High Street.

And they said a call from local members living in the proposed new 'east zone' of the town to allow their permits to extend to cover parking at the golf club had also been dismissed because they could walk.

It says: "The maximum walk distance from the east zone to the golf club is approximately 1.6km, a walk time of 18 to 22 minutes.

"This when considered against the walk distance for a round of golf being 6 to 8km and a potential 5 hour play time, does not appear to be overreaching acceptability for those within walking distance to consider a mode change to visit the Golf Club."

The report reveals that there had also been calls from people living outwith the town to have permits.

It said: "These requests have been particularly for users of the tennis club in the east zone and those undertaking regular trips to the town.

"The allowance of additional permits for the wider community is likely to place a higher demand on streets with residential parking which would disadvantage residents of those streets which the scheme looks to give priority."

The full proposals and amendments following the consultation

will be considered by councillors at a meeting next week.

The report is available to read on the council website.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter