

# **Green belt lodges at South Melville get go ahead**

**Plans for 11 luxury holiday golf lodges have been given the go ahead despite failing to secure support from the course next door.**

Haddington-based developer David McMillan appealed after planners initially rejected his proposal for the holiday homes on green belt land at South Melville.

Described as 'golf lodges' the case for the holiday housing was made on the assumption that a relationship would be built up with the local course.

However a report to councillors said Melville Castle Golf Club had supported planners decision to refuse permission and one local member who regularly plays the course added it was not likely to attract an international market.

Councillor Douglas Bowen told fellow elected members he was a long time patron of the course.

He said: "I am quite cynical about the approach that this is going to attract golfers particularly to golf at Melville, because much as I like golfing at Melville it is not really going to attract American or Japanese tourists to play it, unless they are complete beginners I suppose."

A report to Midlothian Local Review Body this week revealed planners had initially refused permission for the holiday lodges because it was on green belt land.

However an appeal to the review body described the site as green belt 'in name only' and questioned what other use the area could have.

Councillor Derek Milligan raised concerns that allowing the building on the green belt was against the local authority's policy and said he could find no reason to support the appeal.

He was backed by Councillor Dianne Alexander who voiced concern allowing the holiday homes could lead to more permanent housing on the site in the future.

However Councillor Bowen and Councillor Colin Cassidy, argued the field in question offered very few alternative uses describing it more as a place where 'things have been burned and dumped.'

Councillor Cassidy said: "The land does not look as if it could be used for much else."

The review body supported the appeal allowing the lodges to be built by a majority of four to two.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter