

Home owner says CCTV row has had 'horrendous toll' on health

A home owner who claims a neighbour's CCTV camera has pointed into her bathroom window for 14 months says the fight to remove it has had a 'horrendous toll' on her health.

East Lothian Council's planning committee ordered the owners of the camera to remove it in May this year after ruling it was intruding on their neighbour's privacy.

However a meeting of the committee this week heard that the camera remained in place as the owners applied for an alternative to be installed.

And members were asked to approve the replacement camera, which owners said would be fixed and unable to point at their neighbour's home.

Objecting to the new camera, the neighbour, who did not want to be named, told the committee the lack of action to remove the camera made it look "redundant".

She warned: "There have been nine objections to this camera being placed outside my window as it would set a precedent and mean anyone could place a camera on anyone's property, be denied permission and then exploit planning loopholes to keep the camera there.

"The committee is made to look redundant and vulnerable, isolated people who may not have my resources are made to suffer as I most certainly have."

She went on to tell the committee that the row over the CCTV camera, and publicity it received had impacted her health.

She said: "As a private citizen I am an innocent victim with my name, photos of my property and private life in the media.

"I am grateful they have publicised this appalling situation but I do ask for this privately, something this situation has denied me taking a horrendous toll on my health, due to the applicants refusal to remove the camera despite the harm it is causing."

Earlier this year the home owners who placed the camera as one of a number of CCTV security measures around their property, on Hummel Road, insisted it had a 'curtain' system which protected its neighbour's privacy.

However the planning committee meeting in May refused to allow the camera in question to remain ruling it was intruding on the neighbour's privacy.

Members were told that the owners had then applied for an alternative fixed camera to replace it and had not been pursued to remove the original camera while the applications were ongoing.

In a report to councillors, officers recommended the new camera is approved but ask for a condition to be added insisting the old one is taken down at the same time.

In May councillors heard from the neighbour of the property who said she first realised the security system had been installed when she stepped into her garden and heard an alarm announce 'you are being recorded'.

She told the committee she realised there was one outside her

bathroom when she went for a shower in it.

The owners of the CCTV system said the cameras were installed because of an increase in house break-ins in the area.

During this week's planning committee local ward councillor Jeremy Findlay said he had objected to the original camera but would support the replacement which he believed satisfied previous objections.

He said: "It is not the job of this committee to resolve the differences between two property owners.

"Six months ago when I objected to the first camera that was because it could and, indeed, would look into the bathroom. In my view the camera now proposed would satisfy the objections from last time round."

The committee unanimously approved the new camera with a condition it could not be replaced in the future with an alternative style.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter