

Concern over storm sees fence appeal thrown out

Concern over the impact of Storm Eowyn saw the owner of woodland lose his bid to put a 6ft fence between it and a main road.

East Lothian councillors refused to overturn a decision by officers to refuse permission for nearly 100 metres of wooden fencing along the land on the edge of Carberry, in Whitecraig.

And they said the red weather warnings issued with the storm highlighted the dangers of having high fencing next to a busy road.

A meeting of the council's Local Review Body on the eve of the storm, last Thursday, heard the owners of a cottage at Carberry wanted to replace an existing wire fence with a six ft high timber one.

The applicants argued it would safeguard the woodlands which were at the bottom of their garden and provided a buffer between their home and a recycling plant.

However planning officers had rejected the proposal saying it would create a 'harmfully imposing feature' at the entrance to the community.

The Local Review Body was told the landscaping officer had suggested the applicants consider a wire and post fence which would have less of an impact on the area.

Councillor Donna Collins, review body member, raised concerns about the method of installing a timber fence and whether concrete would be used for the posts.

She said it could become a hazard on high winds pointing to the impending storm as an example.

Councillor Collins said: "It is quite a wet section and just thumping the posts in, given what is happening tomorrow, with a red alert, with that height of fence next to a very fast road.

"We get bad winds and stuff, that is just going to topple if it is not anchored properly."

Her concerns were supported by review body chairperson Councillor Andy Forrest, who said: "If the fence is going up it would be closing the road in, with the weather we get it is there to be blown over."

Fellow review body members also pointed out that an alternative had been offered to the applicants but did not appear to have been accepted.

Councillor Neil Gilbert told the meeting: "To me because of the height and construction of the fence it would be a dominant and intrusive feature on the landscape changing the entrance to the community entirely."

The review body unanimously voted to refuse the appeal and back officers recommendation to reject the application.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter