

East Lothian dog park plans face local objections

Plans to create a new dog park on land behind cottages at Meadowmill, in East Lothian, have sparked objections with protesters claiming it would bring unwanted smells and vermin to their doors.

Applicant Margaret Firth applied for permission to turn agricultural land behind Meadowmill Cottages into three enclosed fields with parking for dog owners to book for private use.

Dog parks have become increasingly popular across Scotland as places where owners can let their pets off lead in secure environments.

Ms Firth said the new dog park would have a member of staff available throughout opening hours to support customers with rules of use on display for all visitors.

The plans, which are being recommended for approval by East Lothian Council planners when it goes before elected members next week, drew 16 letters of representation – 11 objections were lodged by six people with five representations from three people in support.

Objectors raised concern about safety on the quiet road accessing the site, noise and light pollution as well as smells and vermin attracted by its use.

One protesters objected to dog poo waste being put out for collection kerbside next to their home while another said they were concerned it would lead to the site being expanded into kennels.

A report to next week's planning committee also said there was support for the dog park venture which was welcomed by some as a place they could walk their dogs safely and good use for land described by some as an 'eyesore'.

Recommending the application is given the go ahead, planners said: "The application site is currently an area of unmanaged agricultural land located at Meadowmill within the countryside.

"The provision of a dog walking facility is a leisure use that requires an area of land large enough to facilitate that use. Such an area of land is unlikely to be found within an existing settlement and therefore requires a countryside location being a rural business.

"The proposed dog walking facility would not result in the loss of a significant area of prime agricultural land. Furthermore, if this planning application was granted, it could, at a later date, be reversed and the land easily returned to agricultural use given there is minimal new development proposed."

Councillors will be decide whether to approve the application at a meeting on Tuesday (January 14).

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter