

Edinburgh charity accommodation delay

An Edinburgh charity's temporary housing scheme relocation may yet get planning permission as councillors deferred a decision until after a hearing and a site visit are held.

Council officers have recommended that Social Bite be denied planning permission, due to their targeted site being on greenbelt land.

The charity has been eyeing a move about a half mile west for its Edinburgh Village project for months, as the land it is currently on is earmarked for a mixed-use development.

Josh Littlejohn, founder of Social Bite, said: "We're hopeful that, especially with the opportunity to visit the site and hear the full case, the various material factors will be relevant and it'll get support.

"We've been working with another part of the council over the best part of two years to identify this plot. We've been through the various options, and this is the one we want to be in."

Littlejohn has previously said that residents at the existing village had expressed their desire for the new site to be nearby.

Social Bite's village is currently sited adjacent to Granton

Castle, and is at the end of a lease on the land, which was donated by the council.

The site the charity is targeting is located east of the Gipsy Brae recreation grounds, on land also owned by the council.

It has expansive views of the Firth of Forth, as well as the Forth Bridges, and is surrounded on two sides by treelines.

The charity's move would see the village expand, with seven temporary single-bed homes and a new hub facility with shower, kitchen and laundry facilities built to join several existing homes that would be moved from the current site.

At full capacity, the site would support 16 residents – with the current village having helped over 100 people out of homelessness since its creation in 2018.

Allotments for the residents to maintain would also be built on site, replicating the arrangement at the current site.

At present, the land is used as an extension of the adjacent recreation grounds, and also is sometimes used by travelling communities.

Social Bite, founded in 2012, provides meals to and fundraises for people who are homeless, alongside the operation of their Edinburgh housing development.

Councillors will make a decision on planning permission for the village after the conclusion of the hearing and site visit, which have not yet had dates set.

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter