

Greens councillor says bigger driveways increase 'vehicle creep'

A bid to make developers build bigger driveways in a new housing estate has been rejected after a Greens councillor described it as 'vehicle creep'.

Planners added a condition demanding wider drives on the houses at the new town of Blindwells after East Lothian Council's roads department changed its guidelines.

Avant Homes, who are building more than 150 new houses, argued that the original plans were approved with their layout allowing for narrower drives, before the changes were put in place.

And a meeting of the council's planning committee heard officers agreed the new dimensions should not be enforced on the estate.

A report to councillors said that while the drives do not meet current standards they were approved at the time updates were being introduced.

It added: "As the site layout for this site was prepared using the relevant standards in place at the time of the submission of the application to the Planning Authority the Council's roads services raise no objection to the change to the wording of the condition."

Scottish Greens councillor Shona McIntosh welcomed the application to keep the driveway size down saying changes had been made to facilitate bigger cars.

She said: "Part of the reason, I assume, that road services updated this is that vehicles are getting bigger and that is like vehicle creep.

"It has an environmental impact and it has a road safety impact, so I am really happy to approve this change because I don't think we should be facilitating this vehicle creep by getting larger and larger driveways and I would like us to take that up in our next Local Development Plan."

The site layout has some single driveways measure 6 metres by 2,5 metres and double driveways of 5 metres by 6 metres or 3 metres by 11 metres.

The current guidelines from roads services demand single driveways are at least 6 metres by 3.3 metres with double driveways a minimum of 6 metres by 6 metres or 3.3 metres by 11 metres.

The committee unanimously agreed to change the condition to allow the smaller drives to remain.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter