

East Lothian Council

FOI Ref: 2018/121(13236)

I would really appreciate knowing if East Lothian council have a policy on "no ball games" signs? If so, when did this policy come into force and are there any plans to review this policy?

East Lothian Council (ELC) does not have a formal documented and adopted policy with regard to the management of ball games on open space. In view of this, under Section 17(1)(b) of the Act, I must formally advise you that ELC has been unable to comply with your request as the information you require is not held.

Colleagues have, however, provided the following background information which may be of interest to you:

Traditionally, ELC used to erect "No Ball Games" signs on various areas, however, these were not supported by any legislation that the ruling could be enforced with. In recent years ELC has not been replacing any existing damaged signs or erecting any additional signs. In cases where ball games were seen to be causing detriment to quality of life or damage to property we have advised residents to deal with this via Safer Communities Team / Police intervention or have tried to design out local problems through adaptation of the landscape.

The latter approach has included changes to grass cutting regimes, planting of wild flower areas etc. to make areas less attractive for ball games. However, there needs to be a balanced approach towards such issues as our open spaces are there to be used and enjoyed by the whole community and we encourage active healthy living. Accordingly each discrete situation where problems are reported needs to be considered on its individual merits. The difficult decision is trying to determine if a nuisance exists or if the use and behaviours are appropriate and acceptable for the area and if the reported problems are down to a lack of tolerance.