



# Councillor: Sale of golf course may not be illegal - but it is 'immoral'



Bridlington Golf course, looking from seafront on Belvedere Road.'Picture by Paul Atkinson.

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**Selling off a Bridlington golf course for “agricultural property prices” may not be illegal but is “immoral”, a councillor told a committee.**

The East Riding Council’s audit committee was asked by Coun Ros Jump to scrutinise the 2014 deal between the council and its cash-strapped tenant Belvedere Golf Club.

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Coun David Robson

The deal, according to club minutes, involved it being sold the freehold for £750,000 and then it selling the 16th hole to a developer for £1.65m, who would build 22 houses and a hotel to give the club a new income stream. The committee heard the original options agreement over the sale of the 116-acres had expired, but negotiations were continuing.

Once they reach a conclusion the terms will be put to the District Valuer “to confirm or otherwise if they achieve best value.”

Coun Jump asked why the council had not thought of terminating the lease and using the club as an extension to its existing chalet park, bringing in income and “keeping the land safe.”

She added: “It might not be illegal, but it is immoral to sell off council property at agricultural property prices of £750,000 and then find the owner sells off a small piece of land for £1.65m or more, that’s why we should be keeping control of that land and benefitting from that.”

But estates manager John Read said missing occasional rent payments were not sufficient grounds to terminate the long lease.

The committee agreed, bar Coun Jump, who abstained, to accept a report, which said all decisions had been taken in line with council procedures.

The District Valuer and external auditors had been satisfied the council was getting best value.

Afterwards ward councillor David Robson said it was impossible to say it was a good deal without seeing the District Valuer’s report.

Coun Robson, who has been refused sight of the report, said: “We just relied on verbal comments from officers that everything was above board. I suspect no one will ever know whether it is good value.”