

# New £100m hotel gets the go-ahead

PLANS for a £100m five star hotel at Flaxby, near Knaresborough have been given the go-ahead.

Up to 650 new jobs will be created in the area after Harrogate Borough Council's planning committee approved plans for the multi-million pound development at the Flaxby Golf and Country Resort on Tuesday.

Though an agreement still needs to be signed between the developers and the highways authorities to cope with the increase in traffic, the decision in effect ends the long-running planning saga which dates back to 1992.

The Skelwith Group, who are the developers, expect to start work very soon and say there will be more than 250 construction workers on site at any one time. When fully operational, the project will provide a massive boost to the local and regional economy.

Group managing director



**The flag at the top of the golf course at Flaxby Golf and Country resort.**

Paul Ellis said: "The contractor is signed up, we have a first class hotel operator on board and funding secured. This is the last piece in the jigsaw to bring this fantastic development to fruition and to make it a reality."

The Flaxby Country Resort will include bars, restaurants, a luxury spa, restaurants and

boutiques. The 240,000 ft development will be set around the existing 27-hole golf course.

Opening is expected by the end of 2011 and Wafes Construction has been signed up as the main contractor.

The course is in the running for the 2022 Ryder Cup and Lee Westwood has been signed up as the course professional from 2011 onwards, Mr Ellis added.

Planning officials say the hotel will inevitably draw some trade from existing hotels, spa and conferencing facilities, but due to the nature, location and proposed pricing of the Flaxby hotel it is not considered that this will be significant.

Figures suggest it will bring nearly £30m of new trade and a major jobs boost to the area, where more than 12 per cent of jobs are tourism related.

Harrogate planning officer Neville Watson said the site normally would not be consid-

ered for a hotel because its location breached Government policies to protect the countryside and concentrate such development in town centres.

But consent had already been granted for a hotel on the site to complement the golf course and the proposed development would boost local tourism and bring in visitors from outside the region.

"Although it will draw some trade from existing competing facilities, the proposed development is unlikely to undermine the vitality and viability of the district's centres," said Mr Watson.

"It will support the conference and business tourism industry through the provision of new modern conferencing space and additional good quality accommodation."

There would also be knock-on benefits for local services and suppliers, as well as a large number of jobs created.