

23 May 2018

Phone: 0131 472 7006

Head of Planning and Building Standards  
The Highland Council  
Glenurquhart Road  
Inverness IV3 5NX  
[epanning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:epanning@highland.gov.uk)

Email [scotland@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:scotland@ramblers.org.uk)  
[www.ramblers.org.uk/scotland](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/scotland)

Dear Sir or Madam

**Further comments on planning application: 17/04601/FUL – Development of 18 hole golf course, Coul Links**

Ramblers Scotland is writing to confirm that we wish to maintain our objection to this application, despite the welcome further information provided through the updated Recreation and Access Management Plan (RAMP) and related documents.

Our original letter of objection dated 14 November 2017 sets out our concerns relating to the impacts on informal public access and also the natural heritage of the area, in particular the wild characteristics of the coastal dune landscape. We remain concerned that the new RAMP continues to underestimate the impact on the current levels of informal access taken on the site. In particular, there is insufficient care taken to address the recreation which is enjoyed in the area directly to the north of Embo. This is currently well used but will be transformed by the construction of holes 14 and 15. In addition the existing desire lines noted in the RAMP and running through the dunes will be severed by the construction of holes 16, 17 and 18. We welcome the introduction of a new 2.9km circular walking route, but suggest that this does not provide a suitable alternative to these coastal paths which provide a circular route back to Embo after people have walked along the beach.

We also continue to be concerned that the layout of the golf course shows that seven holes will be played across the line of the existing core path. We believe this is an unacceptable level of risk for walkers using that route. While we note that the current usage of that path is not high, we reiterate that this is the route of the [John o'Groats Trail](#) which is currently in development and already attracting UK and international walkers despite not yet being fully completed. We believe this trail has the potential to be a significant tourist attraction for the north-east of Scotland and it is already being promoted through its own website and on the [Walkhighlands](#) website. The trail has even been praised at the Scottish Parliament, in a [motion](#) raised by Gail Ross MSP. It is imperative that those using the path are not subject to the risk of having to get across seven separate fairways, which would make it very hard for them not to interfere with play.

We would be happy to meet the local authority or the developer to discuss these issues further.

Yours faithfully

Helen Todd  
Campaigns & policy manager

¶ Convener: → Alison Mitchell → → → → → → → → The Ramblers' Association is a registered charity ¶  
President: → Ben Dolphin → → → → → → → → \*\*\*England & Wales no 1093577, Scotland no ¶  
Director: → Jess Dolan → → → → → → → → → SC039799 and a company limited by guarantee, ¶  
registered in England & Wales (no 4458492), ¶  
Registered office: 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Camelford House, ¶  
87-90 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TW ¶