

22 July 2019

Ms Lucy Prins
Planning and Building Standards
The Highland Council
Achintore Road
Fort William PH33 4RQ
eplanning@highland.gov.uk

Dear Ms Prins

Planning application 19/02766/FUL: Two pairs of zip wires, launch platform, 2 landing platforms, container style reception building, 2 floating jetties, access path to the launch platform, mini bus turning area | Land 780M West Of Mamore Lodge Mamore Kinlochleven

Ramblers Scotland would like to send comments on the above proposal. We are concerned about the intrusive visual impact of this development and believe that the applicant's Visual Impact Appraisal (VIA) fails to assess the full impact it would have in an area of national landscape significance.

We are the representative body for walkers in Scotland, recognised by **sportscotland** as a governing body of sport. We help everyone, across Scotland, enjoy walking and protect the places we love to walk. We are a membership organisation with 54 local walking groups in Scotland, running 3,500 group walks a year which are led and organised by 1,200 volunteers. We have a local group based in Lochaber & Lorn.

This application is located within an area which is highly valued for its natural heritage and landscape quality, and as a world-class setting for outdoor recreation, particularly walking, with the West Highland Way passing through the village and numerous Munros and Corbetts in the surrounding area providing iconic viewpoints along Loch Leven.

We acknowledge that the area around Kinlochleven features existing development, but this application would introduce a new aspect into the landscape, with the zipwire running north-south across an east-west lying loch. This would have a highly intrusive effect on the current views down the loch, as well as introducing an element of noise pollution, both from the sound of the zipwire in operation and any exclamations from those taking part. This sound is likely to be amplified by the acoustics of the loch and steep sides of the glen.

We note that as a National Scenic Area (NSA) (Ben Nevis and Glen Coe), [Scottish Planning Policy](#), para 212, states that development that affects the special qualities of a NSA should only be permitted where:

- the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the area will not be compromised; or
- any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits *of national importance* (our italics)

The special qualities of Loch Leven within the NSA are [stated](#) as:

Loch Leven is a fjord-like sea loch which strikes deep into the upland of the NSA's core. The wooded slopes of the north shore, the peak of the Pap of Glencoe and the forested southern valley sides provide a

sense of enclosure ... The expanse of calm waters affords a far brighter light to pervade than across the moor or within the Glen, and this glistening reflection, particularly in early or evening hours adds a magical air to the place.

The buildings associated with the application (landing points, jetties, reception building) appear to be in keeping with their surroundings. However, the VIA claims that the wires are only likely to be visible at close distances of 100-200m. We are not convinced that there is evidence for this assertion and would welcome more comparison with similar developments in areas where zipwires cross open water. As well as the wires themselves, people will be regularly crossing the loch on the wires giving a moving object for the eye to follow. Similarly, the quality of light across Loch Leven is particularly remarked upon in the NSA description, and at certain times of the day, or in particular weather conditions, sun rays may hit the wires in a way which makes them very visible. We note too that the Defence Infrastructure Organisation has made a submission which stipulates that if the zipwire goes ahead, it would need to be fitted with aviation warning lights, adding to the sense of intrusion from the wire in this location.

As an additional point, we note the comments from the council's access officer with regard to impact on public access, particularly with regard to core paths LO14.11 and LO14.04 and support his suggestion of a commitment to draw up an access management plan in conjunction with the local authority in order to safeguard and enhance public access.

In conclusion, we have concerns that a private development will cause significant adverse impact on the enjoyment of the general public who are visiting the area particularly to experience the nationally important landscape.

We hope the comments above are useful and would be happy to discuss them further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen Todd".

Helen Todd
Campaigns & policy manager