

Attendees

Todd Warnock (Coul Links Ltd)
Bridget Campbell (ENFOR)
Keith Connal (NRD)
[Redacted] (NRD)

Mr Warnock delivered a presentation (see Annex A).

He advised that the owner of the site ([Redacted]) would make the land available in return for an equity share in the golf course and that the nearby village of Embo (represented by Embo Community trust) was enthusiastic and had raised funds to have an equity share as had 5 golf courses in the vicinity and Dornoch Community Trust. He cited further support from Dornoch Community Council, the University of the Highlands and Islands at Dornoch, the Dornoch Area Community Interest Company, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Visit Scotland, Jamie Stone MP and Gail Ross MSP.

Mr Warnock advised that his primary motivation was not personal profit. He thought Coul Links represented a significant economic opportunity for the area which would otherwise continue in economic decline. He envisaged a 3rd northern centre of golf in Scotland (to complement those in the east and west) and also considered that there would be a net benefit for the natural heritage interests of the site (including the SSSI, which currently lacks management but which we understand was under discussion between the landowner and SNH prior to the golf course proposal).

He thought Coul Links had potential as an iconic world-class golf course (top 30 in the world) which would draw and keep golfers in the area and redress the unexpected adverse consequence of the opening of the nearby Castle Stuart course which had encouraged a considerable number of golf tourists (who had previously stayed in the area) to reside in Inverness. There were no plans to build more hotel accommodation in the vicinity of Coul Links as the existing stock was under-utilised.

His presentation suggests that they have successfully addressed six of seven potential areas of natural heritage objection with the only outstanding issue being the impact on the dune heath feature of the SSSI. We note that SNH has yet to give a formal view and can only do so once the planning application is submitted. Mr Warnock relayed recent discussion with SNH such that it seemed likely that SNH would object because there was no certainty that their plans to mitigate the impact on the dune heath SSSI feature would be successful.

Mr Warnock outlined his intended timetable for progression towards submission of a planning application as follows:

WB 26 Sept : press release with planning application lodged 28 Sept
WB 23 Oct : 5th and 6th public consultation events
Mid Jan :Highland Council Planning Meeting at which a decision was expected

Annex A

Insert Powerpoint

Corrections

P 1 (entitled Coul Links Executive Summary)

Proposed timetable:

Week of September 26th – Press release and PA filing

Week of October 23th – 5th & 6th Public Consultation Events

Mid January – Highland Council Planning Committee Meeting

P 11 (entitled SNH Progress Report)

Optimized Course Layout

- **Total size of the SSSI: 1,232 ha**
- **Total size of course design: 23.1 ha (1.7%)**
- **Inside the SSSI: 14.4 ha, 35% net***
- **Outside the SSSI: 8.7 ha, 65% net***