



**NPAC MEETING  
6<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**23/00580/FUL  
GOLF AT COUL LINKS  
RESULT: AWARD OF PLANNING PERMISSION**

This is a serious disappointment but not unexpected. Nor is it the end.

*Not Coul* members have campaigned since 2016 against this development. That is more than 7 years of opposition to a scheme which will significantly harm ground within a highly protected site at Loch Fleet in Sutherland.

Worldwide, National and Local issues of Nature are often hard to see clearly, even in the cold light of day.

Today, NPAC as a whole failed to achieved that clarity, voting 8 against 6 to approve development. Overall, it has ignored the policies set out in Scotland's new leading edge Planning Framework, NPF4. That puts Climate and Nature at the front. It's not an option but part of the law.

Today, an NPAC majority ignored the law and the Recommendation of its Senior Planning Officer, granting planning permission for this golf development.

Opposition does not stop here. NPAC made the same decision in June 2018, 15 votes to 1. It is now likely that the planning application will be called in by Scottish Ministers because NatureScot has maintained an objection. *Not Coul* will be part of an all-Scotland call-in campaign.

One outcome could be a second Public Local Inquiry, like the lengthy one over four weeks in early 2019. If that happens, *Not Coul* will be a party opposing again and expecting the same result as February 2020: the Scottish Government refusing planning permission.

And even then, when golf will be finally defeated, Nature at Coul will need sympathetic change. The >1400 species there will need an extended SSSI and Ramsar protection. A long-term management plan will be needed to cover new protected boundaries and enhanced access, to the satisfaction of all stakeholders and favourable condition for site biodiversity.

The funds to achieve all that are available now. *Not Coul* is willing to be part of that process.

*Not Coul* can be contacted via [www.notcoul.org](http://www.notcoul.org)