

POLICY ZONE H: UNION BAY TO FURNACE

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

Minard Castle is located on a relatively flat area of land, backed by a coniferous forestry plantation. Northeast of the castle, the woodland skirts the shore around Brainport Bay towards Minard, eventually meeting the A83. The road from Minard to Furnace runs immediately parallel to the shore with two exceptions at Crarae and Quarry Point. In general, there is a narrow band of mixed vegetation between the road and the foreshore. To the west of the road, the land becomes steeper and is mostly wooded. Higher up on the hillside the landform is hummocky with a few rocky outcrops.



Shoreline looking north from Union Bay

SEASCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

Heading northeast from Minard Castle, both Minard and Brainport Bays, which are composed of bedrock, boulders, sand and mud, are well-defined and have relatively large intertidal shores. Around Minard, the islands of An Oitir and Eilean Aoghainn provide an additional sense of enclosure. Both the indented coastline and offshore islands contribute to scenic quality by providing a diverse foreground to wider views of the loch. Beyond this, the coast from Minard to Furnace is simple and relatively regular with subtle bays defined by occasional small promontories. There is seawall protection at Minard, and a manmade breakwater has been constructed at Quarry Point. The increasing variation in the channel width on this stretch of the upper loch creates a sense of expansiveness, particularly at Furnace and at Minard, where the sea channel is at its widest.



Minard Bay

ACCESS

The loch shore can be accessed at a number of points in this policy area. On foot there is access through the grounds of Minard Castle and from a path leading to Brainport Bay. There is a thin concrete ramp leading onto Minard Bay from the Minard Castle grounds, which is only appropriate for foot access, and there is a similar ramp at Minard. At Minard, Cumlodden and Furnace there are opportunities to park and access the shore in addition to other points along the A83. Access to the water in this policy zone is somewhat limited. There is no jetty or slipway access at Minard, and the slipway at Quarry Point is commercial, servicing the fish farm shore-base. However, divers are known to enter the water from the breakwater at this location. At Furnace there is a large breakwater with berthing for commercial vessels on the inside, but public access is restricted and potentially dangerous through the quarrying operations which are located here. Moorings along this coast are accessed by launching small tenders from the shore where they are tied up whilst not in use.



Shoreline at Cumlodden



Pebble beach at Minard Castle

VISUAL AMENITY

Views from the road are extensive, looking along the length of the loch, but taking particular advantage of the expanded width of the water surface at Minard and Furnace. Views to the open, sculptural topography of the Kilbride/Lachlan headland on the opposite shore offer a contrast to the woodland and more regular topography of much of the coast. The islands of An Oitir and Eilean Aoghainn are a particular focus in views to

the south from Crarae, and from the roadside café. Parts of the mountain bike trail above Minard overlook the southern end of this policy zone. From Crarae to Furnace, views from the road are intermittent through the band of vegetation between the road and foreshore. However, this is more open in the winter.

SETTLEMENTS

Furnace and Minard are the two main settlements adjacent to this policy zone. Furnace is located on land created by river deposits from the Leacann Water, and is quite industrial in character as a result of the quarrying operations which are ongoing on the northern outskirts of the village. The coast is also relatively well-settled along a narrow strip of accessible land on the landward side of the road towards Minard.



Minard



Furnace, with quarry in background and the green poly tunnels of the salmon smolt production facility

CURRENT USES

Policy zone H is a high use area lying adjacent to two of the main settlements on the coast of Loch Fyne.

Refer to policy zone H map for locations of current activities.

Recreation

Angling

This is a popular area for angling and charter boats. Small boat angling is an important recreational activity throughout this policy zone and shore angling also occurs along this stretch of coast, in particular at Furnace.

Boating/Watersports

Minard Bay and the sea area in front of Minard village host numerous private boat moorings, and both locations are chartered anchorages. Windsurfing and jet-skiing occurs south of An Oitir and Eilean Aoghainn.

Diving

There are six scenic dive sites in this policy zone. The islands of An Oitir and Eilean Aoghainn are popular sites, as are Quarry Point, and the pier at Furnace. Divers can park, get something to eat or drink, and use the toilet facilities at the café across the road from the disused Crarae Quarry.

Coastal Paths

The Minard Community Woodland Trust manages 170 hectares of coniferous and broadleaf forest around Minard Castle and south of the village. Paths lead throughout the woodland and also to the Brainport solar alignment where there are views over the loch.

Aquaculture

Aquaculture is dominant in this policy zone with a large salmon farm at Quarry Point and another at Furnace just to the north of the policy zone. The Quarry Point farm is serviced by a shore-based feeding system and has an adjacent shore-base. Lakeland Marine also has a salmon smolt production facility at Furnace.



Pier at Furnace



Salmon Farm (Quarry Point)

Current Aquaculture Sites						
Location	Species	Consented Equipment	Maximum Biomass	Operator	Shore-based Location	Development Status
Quarry Point	Salmon	14 x 80 m circular cages arranged 7 x 2	1344 tonnes	Lighthouse Caledonia	Crarae	Developed/Active

Fishing

Commercial prawn trawling and creeling predominantly occur along the outer edge of the policy zone in deeper water. At Furnace, fishing activities come closer to the shore.

Coastal Industry

Rock extraction and crushing operations are ongoing at Furnace giving an industrial look to the coast. The pier is utilised for various commercial activities, and by recreational anglers.

Discharges

There is a local authority outfall at Blackstone Bay and two consented discharges at Furnace.

DESIGNATIONS

Refer to policy zone H map for areas covered.

Argyll & Bute Development Plan (Structure and Local Plan) Designations

- The area around Minard Castle is designated as 'Undeveloped Coast' (a coastal area of Sensitive Countryside).
- Between Minard and Furnace, the majority of coastline is designated as 'Developed Coast' (a coastal area of Countryside Around Settlement), with the exception of a short stretch of coast adjacent to Blackstone and Whitebridge Bays' that are designated as 'Undeveloped Coast' (a coastal area of Sensitive Countryside).
- Crarae Garden and Crarae Point are identified as Potential Development Areas for tourist facilities and for water-based recreation.
- The coastal hinterland is part of the West Loch Fyne Coast Area of Panoramic Quality.

Other Designations

- Crarae is a Designated Garden and Designed Landscape.
- The 'Loch Fyne Coastal Strip' Shellfish Growing Water extends throughout the length of the policy zone.

WILDLIFE

The focal points for wildlife in this policy zone are the islands of An Oitir and Eilean Aoghainn and their associated skerries. These islands indicate the location of one of the two sills that transect the upper loch, and tidal currents are significant. An Oitir sits in relatively shallow water with a sea bed composed of boulders, coarse gravel, and sand to a depth of 17 m.

To the east of Eilean Aoghainn, the sill ends and abedrock cliff drops steeply to a muddy seabed at 50 m. The narrows at the Minard sill result in greater tidal flow and courser sand shell substrate. Seals are common on the Minard Islands as are seabirds.

The Leacann water flows into Loch Fyne at Furnace and is known to host wild salmon and trout populations. This river has historically supported recreational fisheries and is part of the Loch Fyne river restoration programme.



The islands of An Oitir and Eilean Aoghainn

HISTORICAL FEATURES

- Brainport solar alignment (and quern quarries) at Minard Bay are scheduled ancient monuments of archaeological and cultural interest. This site may have been associated with the summer solstice for 3000 years.
- The remnant parkland and the castle at Minard are a significant feature to the south of this policy zone.
- Crarae Garden, which is listed in the Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes, is a visitor attraction promoted by the National Trust for Scotland.
- Crarae Lodge, long cairn is a scheduled ancient monument.
- Minard Castle Hotel is a category B listed building. Dated 1848. John T. Rothead, Glasgow.
- Minard Cross, Free Church Manse is a scheduled ancient monument.
- Furnace Iron works, listed as a scheduled ancient monument was one of the largest and, at its peak in productivity, most successful charcoal iron establishments in the Scottish Highlands.
- Lorne Furnace Jetty (Kelly's Quay) is a category B listed 18th century building.

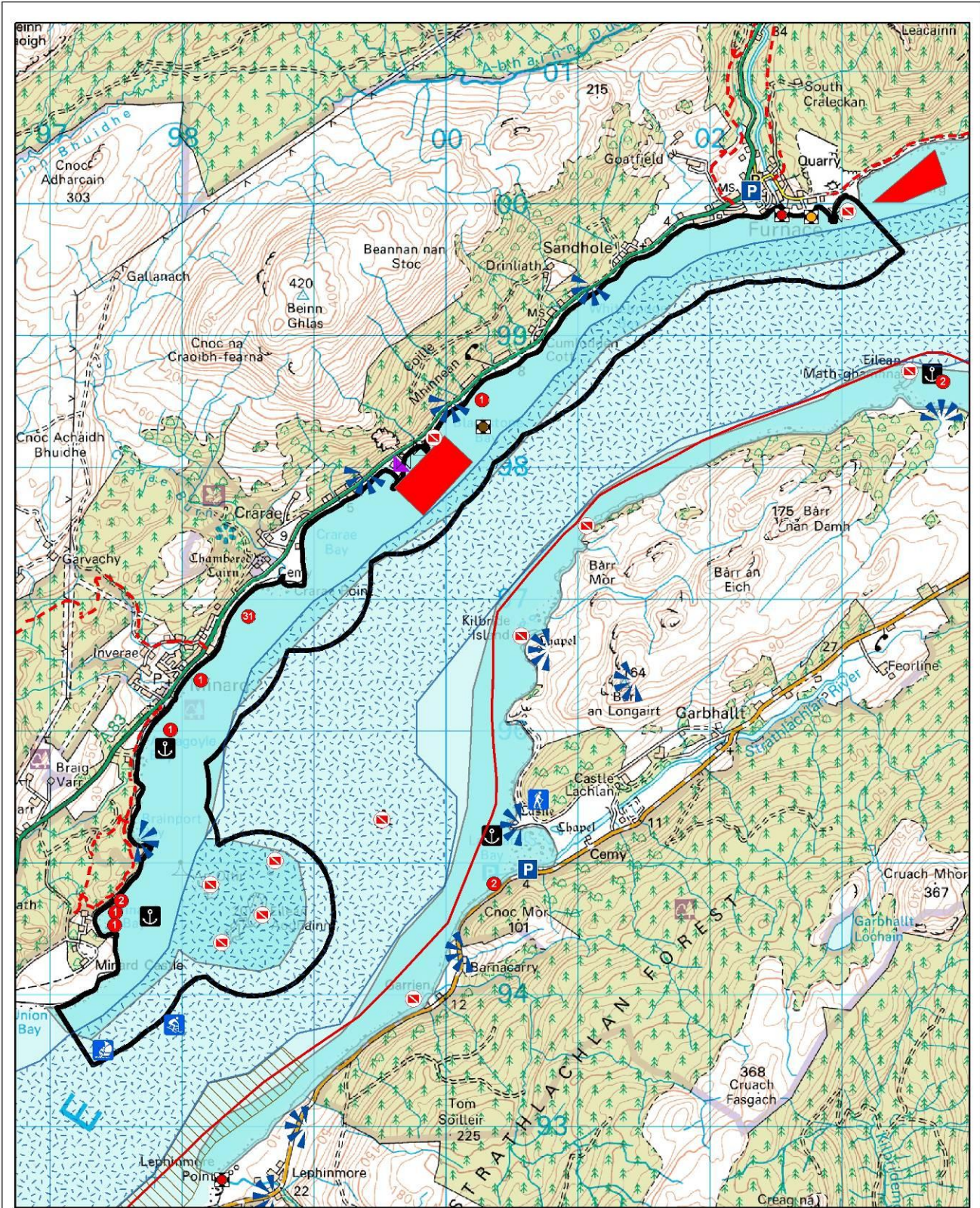


Minard Castle



Brainport solar alignment and view on to Brainport Bay.

POLICY ZONE H MAP – Current Uses & Activities



Legend

Commercial Fishing

- Nephrops trawling/creeling
- Previous queen scallop fishery

Aquaculture

- Finfish lease

Infrastructure: subsea telephone cable

- Subsea telephone
- Commercial outfall
- Local authority outfall
- Sewage/waste water treatment

Loch Access

- Pier
- Private slipway
- Anchorage
- Moorings

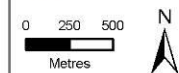
Recreation & Tourism

- Preferred angling areas
- Proposed core path
- Coastal path location
- Dive sites

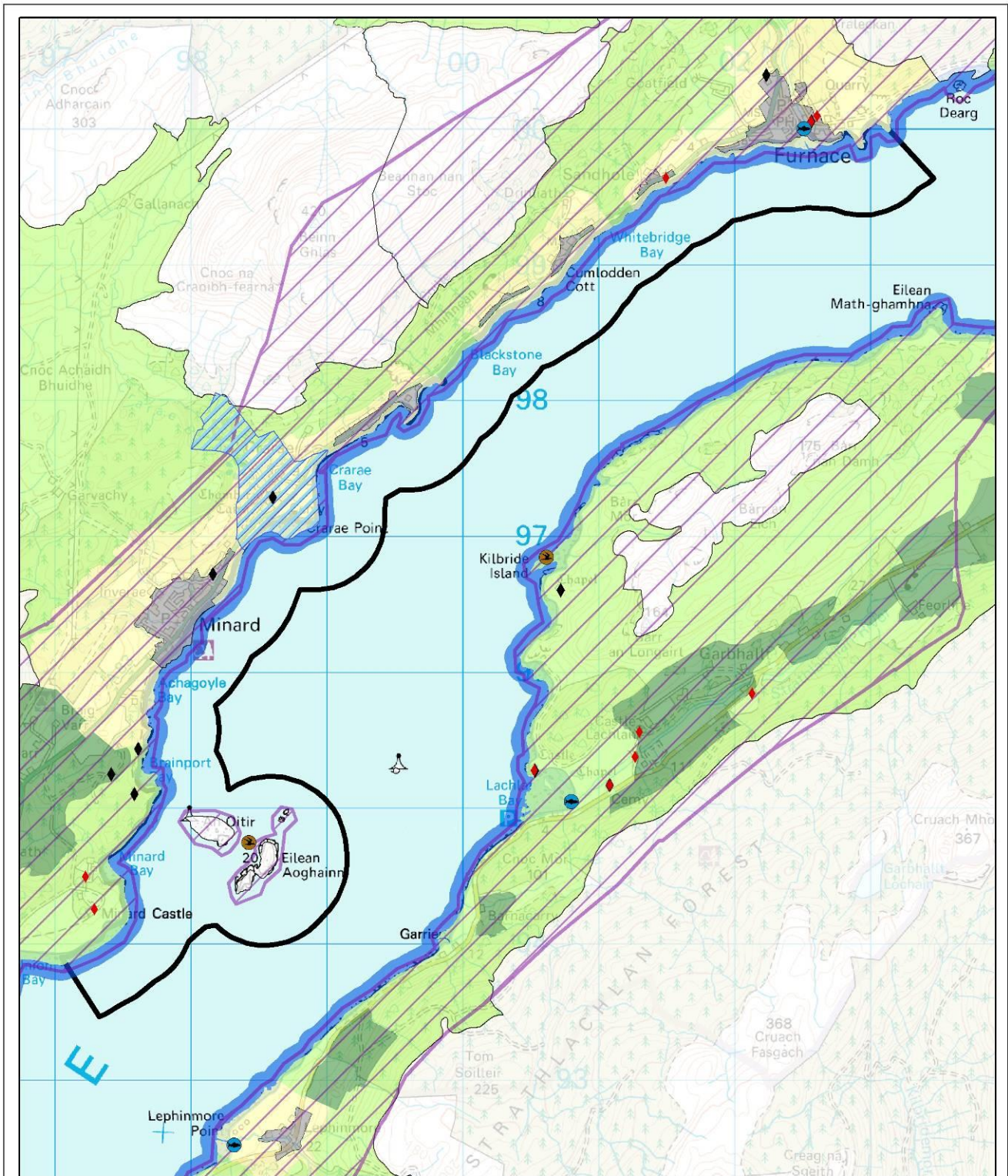
- Jet skiing
- Windsurfing
- Viewpoint
- Parking



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POLICY ZONE H MAP – Designations, Wildlife Interests & Historic Features



Legend

Development Plan Designations

- Countryside Around Settlement
- Rural Opportunity Area
- Sensitive Countryside
- Very Sensitive Countryside
- Settlement Zones
- Areas of Panoramic Quality

Other Statutory Designations

- Gardens & Designed Landscapes
- Shellfish Growing Water

Wildlife Interests

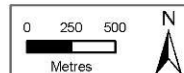
- Nesting seabirds
- Wildfish restoration rivers

Historic Environment

- Coastal Listed Buildings
- Coastal Scheduled Ancient Monuments



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OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS FOR FUTURE USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Constraints

Future Use

Areas sensitive to disturbance	High speed motorised water-sports and other water craft should avoid disturbance to islands/skerries that are important for seabirds and seals, particularly during sensitive periods such as breeding seasons (see SMWWC – Appendix VII).
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Development

Landscape	<p>The islands of An Oitir and Eilean Aoghainn are focal points in views looking south, and aquaculture development should avoid intruding into their setting.</p> <p>Views along the coast and up the loch from way-marked recreation routes at Minard are sensitive to marine and coastal development.</p> <p>This policy zone would be sensitive to any additional industrial development, as it is looked upon by both the A83 and the settlements of Minard and Furnace, with very little foreshore screening.</p> <p>The Brainport solar alignment, Minard Castle and offshore islands are all locations which are sensitive to development within their setting.</p>
Commercial/ Recreation	Existing commercial and recreational activity within and adjacent to this policy zone limits the potential for further aquaculture development.

Opportunities¹

Future use

Timber Transhipment	The existing breakwater and docking facilities at Furnace could be utilised for transportation of timber as well as quarry extracts, with limited impact on this already industrialised area. Any improvements to or redevelopment of the existing pier at Furnace should take account of the existing recreational use and needs identified by the Loch Fyne ICZM group.
Tourism/ Recreation	The Argyll and Bute Development Plan (Structure and Local Plan) identifies Crarae Garden and Crarae Point as Potential Development Areas, both for tourist facilities, and Crarae Point for water-based recreation.
Improved Loch Access	The A83 trunk road is close to the shore adjacent to this policy zone, therefore access to the loch could be improved easily. Furthermore, existing and new shore facilities such as village shops, bars and restaurants could benefit from such development at Minard and Furnace.

Development

Recreation	The Loch Fyne ICZM Group identified the need for improvements to recreational facilities at Minard, including improved car parking, tidying up of the existing slipway and new visitor moorings. The need for a new slipway/pier at Furnace for local boat owners and visiting day boats was also identified.
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¹ Opportunities identified are indicative, subject to obtaining the required consents, and do not preclude development applications and activities elsewhere.

Marine Access	There is an opportunity to improve access to the water for recreational users as part of any new coastal infrastructure development proposals. Such proposals could explore the potential for allowing tour boat operators, boaters/kayakers, divers and anglers to access any proposed infrastructure or to provide additional parking, dedicated launching points or toilet facilities.
On-shore Aquaculture	Existing settlements, and the generally settled character of the coastline, provide opportunities for siting aquaculture shore-bases to reflect existing character.
Aquaculture	From a landscape perspective, the stretch of coast between Blackstone Bay and Furnace offers potential for new scallop farm development. The conditions in this area however, may not be suitable for scallop cultivation. The 'Loch Fyne Coastal Strip' Shellfish Growing Water extends throughout the length of the policy zone and coastal water quality should be maintained at an appropriate standard for shellfish growing.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES FOR AQUACULTURE²

Where the following development policies indicate presumption in favour of development, this will be subject to any development proposal being consistent with relevant policies within the Argyll and Bute Development Plan (Structure and Local Plan).

MARINE FINFISH DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Marine Finfish Development Policy PZH-1

There will be a general presumption against any scale of new finfish aquaculture development in this policy zone.

Justification

- No further sites for finfish farms were identified, largely due to the sensitivities associated with the setting of the islands, the proximity of settlements, and the visual amenity associated with views to the Kilbride/Lachlan headland (Grant 2007).
- There is no scope for additional developments, as any other sites are likely to intrude upon the more intimate scale of the bays south of Minard, or into the setting of sensitive features such as the Castle and solstice site at Minard (Grant 2007).

Marine Finfish Development Policy PZH-2

There will be a general presumption against any expansion of the existing finfish site, but presumption in favour of any proposed change of use from salmon to mussel, scallop or other finfish species.

See Table PZH for additional guidance

Justification

- The existing fish farm at Quarry Point is not considered appropriate for significant expansion, as when viewed from the north, it intrudes upon the visual setting of the more distant islands of An Oitir and Eilean Aoghainn (Grant 2007).

² Policies do not preclude the submission of applications for shellfish or finfish development in areas where presumption against development has been identified.

MARINE SHELLFISH DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Marine Shellfish Development Policy PZH-3

There will be a general presumption against any scale of mussel or oyster farm development in this policy zone, other than the change of use identified in Policy PZH-2.

Justification

- No further sites for mussel lines were identified, largely due to the sensitivities associated with the setting of the islands, the proximity of settlements, and the visual amenity associated with views to the Kilbride/Lachlan headland (Grant 2007).
- High recreational use of broadest areas of intertidal shoreline limits oyster farm development (Grant 2007).

Marine Shellfish Development Policy PZH-4

There will be a general presumption in favour of scallop farm development between Blackstone Bay and Furnace, subject to there being no significant adverse impacts.

See Table PZH for additional guidance

Justification

- Medium-scale scallop development, if conditions are appropriate, could be accommodated along this stretch of coast, adjacent to but not directly in front of stretches of settled coast (Grant 2007).

ON-SHORE AQUACULTURE-RELATED DEVELOPMENT POLICY

On-shore Aquaculture-Related Development Policy PZH-5

There will be a general presumption in favour of small scale expansion of existing shore-base facilities at quarry point or new facilities at Furnace linked with the already industrialised quarry operations, subject to there being no significant adverse impacts.

See Table PZH for additional guidance

Justification

- Existing settlements, and generally settled character of the coastline, provide opportunities for siting shore bases to reflect existing character (Grant 2007).

SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE ON POTENTIAL AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENTS

TABLE PZH - Guidance on location, scale and other considerations

Development Type	Location	Suggested Maximum Scale	Comments
Scallop Farm	Blackstone Bay to Furnace	Medium	Most appropriate locations are likely to be adjacent to, but not directly in front of settlements, where buoys can be associated with other marine-based activity. Any developments should give particular consideration to existing fishing grounds.
Change of use from salmon to mussel, scallop or other finfish	Quarry Point Salmon Farm	Current surface and seabed area of existing salmon farm	For shellfish development, a larger surface area may be acceptable on landscape grounds, if it can be shown that the visual impacts are no greater than the existing salmon farm. Consented discharges may affect water quality for shellfish development at this location.

On-shore Aquaculture Development	Quarry Point or Furnace	Any expansion to the existing Quarry Point shore-base should be small-scale	<p>These settlements are designated as an area of 'Developed Coast' in the Argyll and Bute Development Plan (Structure and Local Plan) and any development proposals would need to be consistent with Local Plan Policy LP CST 1, and any other relevant Development Plan policies.</p> <p>New facilities at Furnace should be linked with the already industrialised quarry operations.</p>
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Future relinquishment of existing developments

If the existing salmon farm at Quarry Point is relinquished in the future, new finfish, mussel or scallop development may be appropriate in this policy zone.

CONSULTATION FOR AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENTS

As part of the development process, potential developers (during pre-application development scoping) and Argyll and Bute Council Planning Officers (during assessment of applications) are encouraged to consult with the following individuals and organisations in addition to the normal statutory consultees (see Appendix VI). Contact details for statutory and non-statutory consultees are provided in Appendix XI.

Consultees	New Scallop	Change of Use	On-shore Aquaculture
Argyll Fisheries Trust		✓	
Clyde Area Management Group	✓	✓	✓
Clyde Fishermen's Association	✓	✓	
Clyde Inshore Fisheries Group	✓	✓	
Furnace Community Council	✓	✓	✓
Lakeland Marine	✓	✓	✓
Lighthouse Caledonia Scotland Ltd	✓	✓	✓
National Trust for Scotland		✓	✓
Royal Yachting Association	✓	✓	
Scottish Creelers and Divers Association	✓	✓	
Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers	✓	✓	
Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network	✓	✓	
Strachur Community Council	✓	✓	✓
The Lochgair Association	✓	✓	✓
West Lochfyne Community Council	✓	✓	✓