

## POLICY ZONE P: GLENAN BAY TO RUBHA STILLAIG

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

Generally the landscape is a mix of grazed hilly moorland and flat coastal alluvial platforms. The upper slopes of the land are partially wooded and partially developed, but are more open along the steep slopes above Port Ghabhar and Rubha Stillaig.

### SEASCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

Set against a backdrop of an expansive part of the loch, this coastline is characterised by the semi industrial character of the modified coastline around Portavadie, and the simple regularity of the coast to the south of the town. The expansive sea and distant horizon emphasise the sense of space and openness. The coast is characterised by stone and shingle beaches changing to rocky foreshores to the south where steep headlands extend down to the coast. The area has two fish farms at present, one associated with the harbour and the other larger finfish farm along the coast at Port Ghabhar. The coastline is accessible, either from the town, or along well marked access routes. The coast is highly visible, both from low level viewpoints such as parts of the town and from the ferry to Tarbert, but also from elevated viewpoints towards Rubha Stillaig.



Looking west from Portavadie to Glenan Bay Salmon Farm and the island Eilean Buidhe



Elevated view of salmon farm at Rubha Stillaig

### ACCESS

Road access is from Tighnabruaich on the B8000 to Kilfinan. Ferry services operate from Tarbert to Portavadie, where the slipway provides access for the Cowal and Kintyre ferry connecting with Tarbert on the Kintyre peninsula to the west. The coastline can be accessed by foot along various tracks and paths. Public boat launching facilities are accommodated with 230 berths in Portavadie marina. The marina is a deep water man-made lagoon and is accessible at all states of the tide. Breakwaters and concrete wave attenuating pontoons ensure a sheltered haven, which can accommodate vessels of all sizes up to 70 ft, with no restriction on draft. Access is from the 3 m central walkway that leads to the generous 2.5 m wide piers, to which the berthing fingers are attached. Access for recreational and commercial divers, kayakers and anglers (small boat launch) is via the slipway that runs into the lagoon. Parking for cars and trailers is in close proximity to the slipway.



Ferry Terminal at Portavadie, looking across the loch to Tarbert



Coastal path from starting at Pollphail Village

## VISUAL AMENITY

There are numerous viewpoints from housing and coastal developments, such as the car park, picnic site, way-marked paths and from the ferry. The road offers elevated views, which tend to focus directly into the harbour and occasional wider seascape.



Headland of Eilean na Beithe, viewed from the picnic site just north of Portavadie



View of Portavadie from the coastal path, showing modified and developed coastal edge



Picnic site just north of Portavadie

## SETTLEMENTS

Once a fishing village, the small settlement of Portavadie is focussed around the developed harbour. During the 1970s a controversial and short-lived oil rig platform yard was constructed here, taking advantage of the site's deep water offshore. A ferry across the loch links the village with Tarbert on the Kintyre peninsula.

## CURRENT USES

*Refer to policy zone P map for locations of current activities.*

### Recreation

**Coastal paths** - A coastal path commences from the road beside Pollphail Village, south of Portavadie and passes through Low Stillaig (into Policy Zone Q) and back towards Stillaig Farm.

**Angling** - Shore, charter, and private small boat angling occurs throughout this policy zone.

**Sailing** - The development of Portavadie Marina was completed in July 2007, where facilities can now accommodate up to 230 berths and can accommodate vessels of all sizes up to 70 ft, with no restriction on draft. Services available at the pontoons include electricity, water, lighting and diesel is available from a fuel berth. This new marina is ideally located for Clyde Coast Sailing with easy access to Largs, Kip, Troon, Ardrossan, Arran and even Northern Ireland and the Inner Hebrides through the nearby Crinan Canal. In addition, Portavadie can be reached by road from Glasgow in less than 1 ½ hours.

### Aquaculture

Lighthouse Caledonia Ltd. currently operates two salmon farms in this policy zone, which are both serviced from a shore-base at Portavadie. A processing plant houses a portable and shore-based harvesting station.

Current Aquaculture Sites						
Location	Species	Consented Equipment	Maximum Biomass	Operator	Shore-base Location	Development Status
Glenan Bay	Salmon	14 x 80 m circular cages arranged 7x2	1356 tonnes	Lighthouse Caledonia	Portavadie	Developed/Active
Rubha Stillaig	Salmon	14 x 80 m circular cages arranged 7x2	1036 tonnes	Lighthouse Caledonia	Portavadie	Developed/Active

## Fishing

This is an important area for commercial fishing with scallop dredging occurring throughout most of the policy zone and trawling for prawns in the deeper water to the south of Portavadie. Creel fishing for velvet crabs also occurs adjacent to the coast, south of Portavadie.

## Commercial Shipping

Iggesund Forestry predominately operates out of Portavadie, using a private jetty adjacent to the Calmac slip for loading timber for sea transport. On average 35,000 tonnes of timber pass through Portavadie annually.

## Discharges

There are no discharges via sea outfalls within this policy zone.



Portavadie marina, with self catering cottages in the background



Salmon farm shore-base at Portavadie



Timber transhipment from Portavadie

## LOCAL PLAN & OTHER DESIGNATIONS

Refer to policy zone P map for areas covered.

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

- The coast surrounding the settlement of Portavadie is identified as 'Developed Coast' (a coastal area of Countryside Around Settlement).
- The remaining coastline to the north and south of Portavadie is identified as 'Undeveloped Coast' (a coastal area of Sensitive Countryside).
- The coastal hinterland of this policy zone is part of the Bute & South Cowal Area of Panoramic Quality.

### Other Designations

- The 'Loch Fyne Coastal Strip' Shellfish Growing Water extends throughout the length of the policy zone.

## WILDLIFE

The island of Eilean Buidhe is of ornithological interest. Nesting seabirds, such as Fulmars (*Fulmarus glacialis*) and shags (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*) are commonly associated with this region of Loch Fyne (Craik 2000). Migratory basking sharks (*Cetorhinus maximus*) are also commonly associated with this part of Loch Fyne.

## HISTORICAL FEATURES

There are standing stones at two locations just off the coastal path from Portavadie to Low Stillaig.

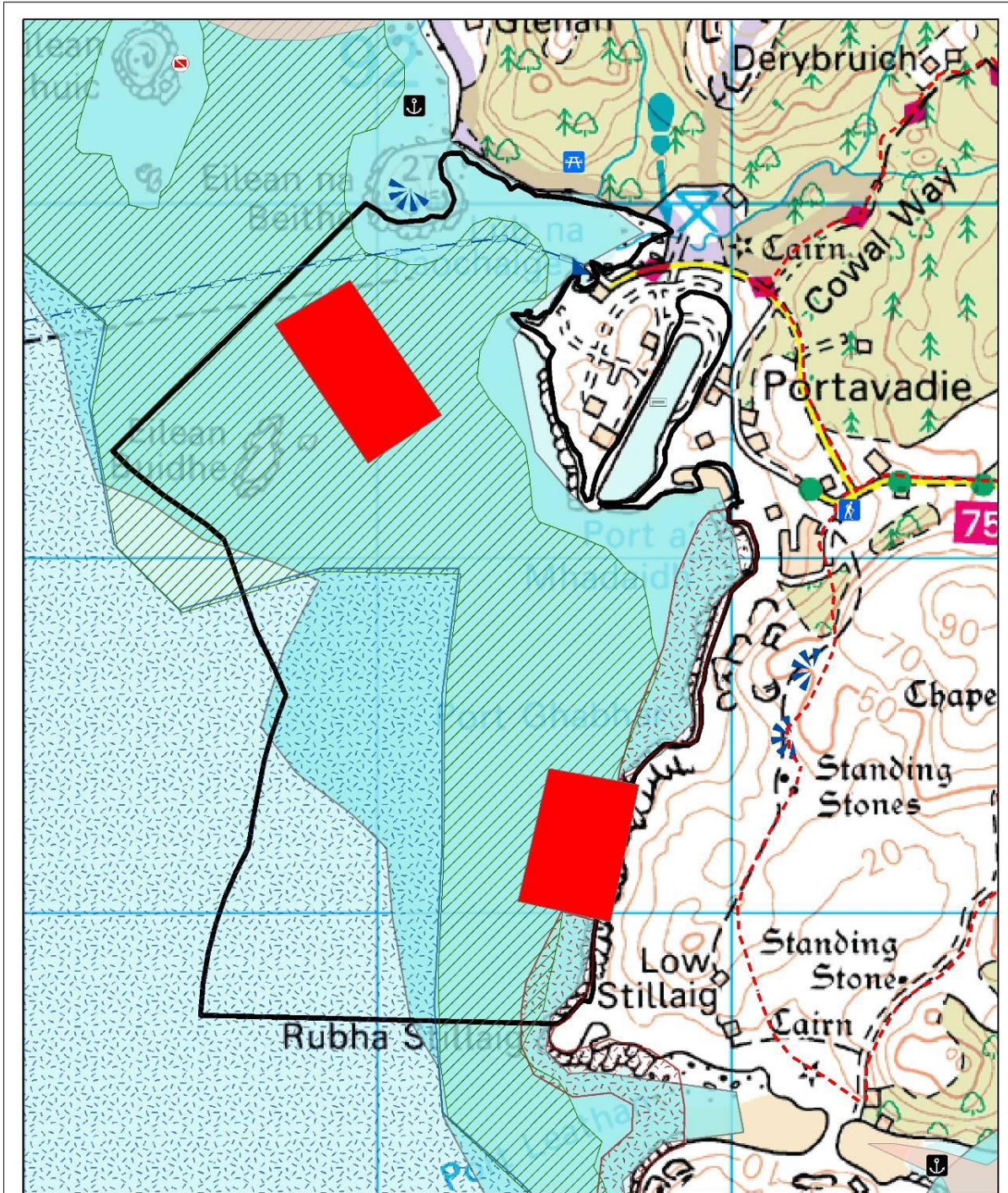


Coastal path leading to a standing stone near Low Stillaig









POLICY ZONE P MAP – Current Uses & Activities



Legend

Commercial fishing

-  Scallop dredging
-  Nephrops creeling
-  Nephrops trawling/creeling
-  Razorshell diving



Aquaculture

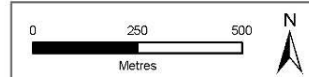
-  Finfish lease

Recreation & Tourism

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

Loch Access

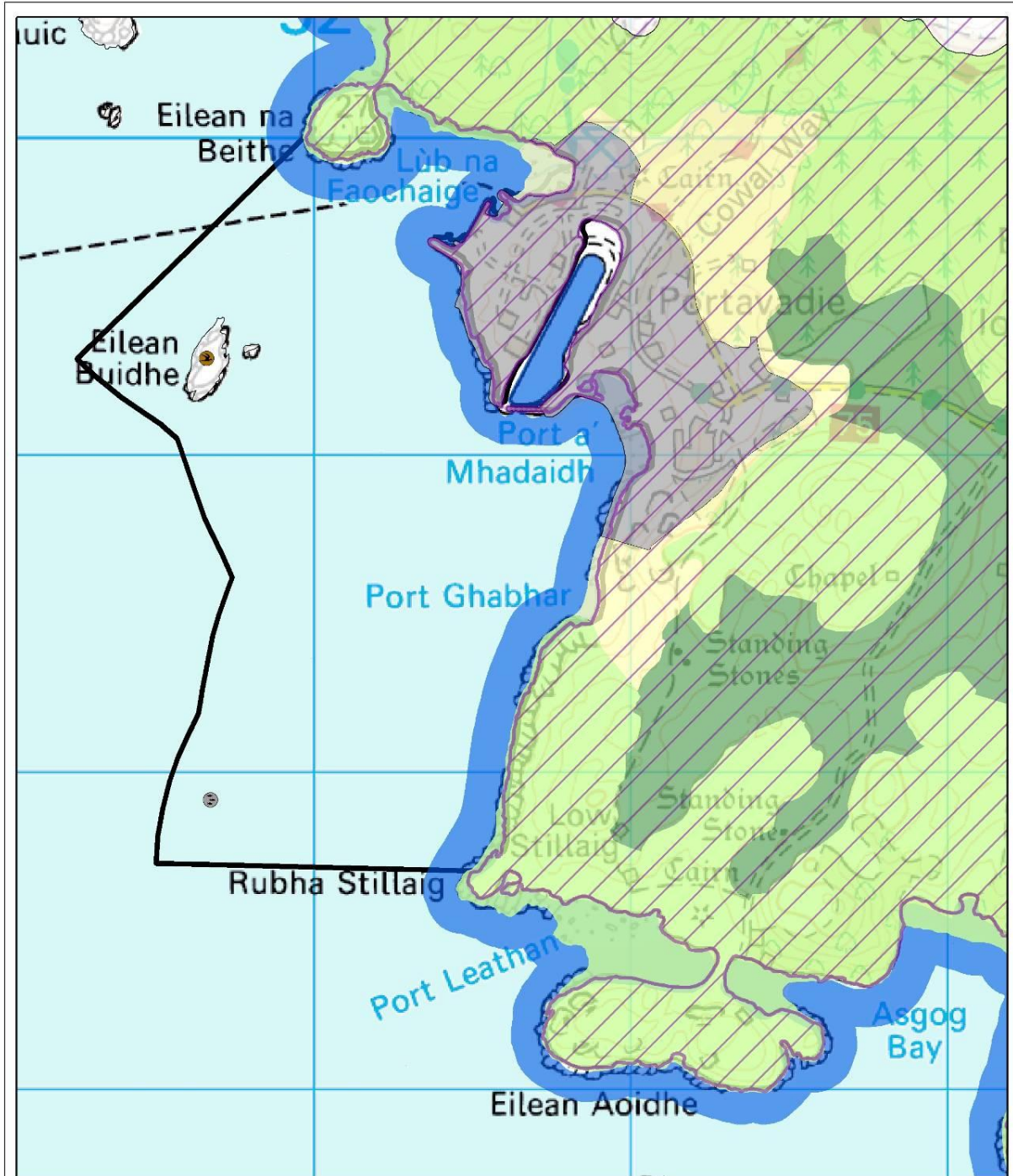
-  Public slipway
-  Berthing facilities
-  Anchorage
-  Ferries



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



Legend

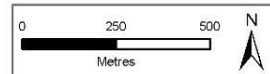
- Development Plan Designations**
- Countryside Around Settlement
  - Rural Opportunity Area
  - Sensitive Countryside
  - Very Sensitive Countryside
  - Settlement Zones
  - Areas of Panoramic Quality

- Other Statutory Designations**
- Shellfish Growing Water

- Wildlife Interests**
- Basking sharks
  - Nesting seabirds



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## OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS FOR FUTURE USE AND DEVELOPMENT

### Constraints

<i>Future use</i>	
<b>Areas sensitive to disturbance</b>	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).
<i>Development</i>	
<b>Landscape</b>	The area is overlooked, by residents, ferry users and walkers on the footpaths.
	The existing industrial development is in many places not particularly attractive, and any existing or new development should be well designed so as not to further detract from the visual amenity of the settlement of Portavadie.
	The simplicity of the open sea could easily be cluttered by over development.
<b>Existing Development</b>	The existing level of aquaculture development limits the potential for new development.
<b>Commercial Fishing</b>	Commercial fishing is important in this policy zone and new development or expansion of existing development could affect existing fishing grounds.
<b>Wild migratory salmonids</b>	Any increase in tonnage at existing sites may present a greater risk to the health and survival of wild migratory salmonids, due to an increase in the number of hosts, which in-turn may increase infection levels on wild fish.

### Opportunities<sup>1</sup>

<i>Future Use</i>	
<b>Coastal Infrastructure</b>	The second stage of development of Portavadie Marina, started in spring 2008 will further enhance the marine and leisure services provided and will include a restaurant, undercover storage ashore, workshop/engineering facilities, chandlery, brokerage and helicopter landing facilities.
	The major coastal infrastructure development and improvements at Portavadie will bring significant economic development opportunities to the area. Any increase in visitors to this part of Loch Fyne could provide economic benefits to the communities of other upper loch locations.
<b>Sailing</b>	A recent marine leisure assessment of sailing in the Clyde Estuary (MacKenzie Wilson Partnership 2006) has indicated that leisure boating is a growing sector and facilities need to be developed or improved for the Clyde area to benefit fully from this growth.
	The development of Portavadie marina provides the ideal link between the rest of the Clyde Estuary and Loch Fyne, and increases the potential to develop new facilities further up the loch to encourage recreational boaters to visit upper Loch Fyne.

<sup>1</sup> Opportunities identified are indicative, subject to obtaining the required consents, and do not preclude development applications and activities elsewhere.

## Development

### Aquaculture

The main opportunity in this policy zone is the possible expansion of existing salmon farm at Rubha Stillaig. This is an area where it is appropriate to site relatively large-scale structures, which can be absorbed into the scale of the seascape and can be aligned to reflect a relatively simple coastline.

There is potential for the buoys associated with scallop farming to be accommodated relatively easily along this busy stretch of coastline.

The existing marine activity and industrial development around the harbour at Portavadie make it easier to accommodate industrial type structures and activity associated with aquaculture.

## DEVELOPMENT POLICIES FOR AQUACULTURE<sup>2</sup>

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 PZP-1

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

##### Justification

- There is no capacity for new developments in this policy zone as additional developments would introduce clutter into a landscape, which is primarily characterised by its simplicity and large sweeping scale (Grant 2007).

#### Marine Finfish Development Policy PZP-2

There will be a general presumption against expansion to the cage surface area of the Glenan Bay farm, but presumption in favour of any proposed change of use from salmon to mussel, scallop or other finfish species, subject to no significant adverse impacts.

*See Table PZP for additional guidance*

##### Justification

- The existing finfish farm at Glenan Bay has recently been increased in size and no potential for further expansion was identified (Grant 2007).

#### Marine Finfish Development Policy PZP-3

There will be a general presumption in favour of expansion to the cage surface area of the Rubha Stillaig farm, or any proposed change of use from salmon to mussel, scallop or other finfish species, subject to no significant adverse impacts.

*See Table PZP for additional guidance*

##### Justification

- The existing fish farm is well accommodated into the seascape and although it is already a large-scale development, this is an area that could accommodate significant expansion (Grant 2007).

<sup>2</sup> 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 PZP-4

There will be a general presumption against any scale of new mussel or oyster farm development in this policy zone, but presumption in favour of up to medium-scale scallop farm development only, subject to there being no significant adverse impacts.

See *Table PZP* for additional guidance

#### Justification

- Development of mussel lines should be discouraged as they will introduce an additional highly visible element into the seascape, which will add to visual clutter especially at Portavadie. However, the buoys associated with scallop farming can be accommodated relatively easily along this busy stretch of coastline, as they are less visible (Grant 2007).

## ON-SHORE AQUACULTURE-RELATED DEVELOPMENT POLICY

### On-shore Aquaculture-Related Development Policy PZP-5

There will be a general presumption in favour of new aquaculture-related infrastructure developments within existing settled areas along the coast, subject to there being no significant adverse impacts.

#### Justification

- Landscape/seascape capacity study recommends that on-shore development should be located within the existing settlement of Portavadie, where existing marine activity and industrial development around the harbour make it easier to accommodate industrial type structures and activity associated with aquaculture (Grant 2007).
- Appropriately designed and located aquaculture land base facilities could potentially merge with the existing settlements (Marine and Coastal Development Unit 2009).

## SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE ON POTENTIAL AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENTS

**TABLE PZP - Guidance on location, scale and other considerations**

Development Type	Location	Suggested Maximum Scale	Comments
<b>Finfish Expansion</b>	Rubha Stillaig	Up to 80% increase in cage surface area	<p>Simple structures with an ordered layout and removal of visual clutter would help accommodate increased development while minimising visual intrusion.</p> <p>Additional cages could be accommodated in one group or in two groups, aligned in a linear sequence parallel with the coast.</p> <p>Any expansion of this site should be to the north to avoid affecting safe navigation around the point of Rubha Stillaig and give particular consideration to existing fishing activities.</p> <p>SEPA CAR consent would be required for any increase in production. Developers would need to demonstrate that lice management can be adequately controlled within levels dictated by best practice guidance prescribed in the Code of Good Practice for Scottish Finfish Aquaculture and on-going monitoring of wild fish health and survival.</p>



<b>Change of Use from Salmon to Mussel, Scallop or other Finfish</b>	Glenan Bay or Rubha Stillaig salmon farms	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.  Any increase in surface area would need to give consideration to effects on navigation and commercial fishing grounds.
<b>Scallop Farm</b>	Portavadie to Rubha Stillaig	Medium	The buoys associated with scallop farming can be relatively easily absorbed into this busy seascape and associated shoreline development.  Location should give particular consideration to effects on navigation and commercial fishing grounds.
<b>On-shore Aquaculture Development</b>	Portavadie	-	The settlement of Portavadie is 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.

#### Future relinquishment of existing developments

If either or both of the existing salmon farms were 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	Salmon Farm Expansion	New Scallop Farm	Change of Use	On-shore Aquaculture
Caledonian MacBrayne	✓	✓	✓	
Clyde Area Management Group	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clyde Fishermen's Association	✓	✓	✓	
Clyde Inshore Fisheries Group	✓	✓	✓	
Kilfinan Community Council	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lighthouse Caledonia	✓	✓	✓	
Loch Fyne Sea Farms	✓	✓	✓	
Portavadie Marina	✓	✓	✓	✓
Royal Yachting Association	✓	✓	✓	
Scottish Creelers and Divers Association	✓	✓	✓	
Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers	✓	✓		
Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network	✓	✓		