

TITLE: PROPOSED FINAL LOCH FYNE INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. SUMMARY

This report presents the Proposed Final Loch Fyne Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Plan, which will require approval from the Executive Committee and Council to be adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

The Proposed Final Plan (*Annex 1*) has been amended in light of the public consultation at the end of 2008. Full details of the comments received and the Council response to these are set out in the Consultation Report (*Annex 2*).

Argyll and Bute Council has been developing an ICZM Plan for Loch Fyne in collaboration with local stakeholders and regulators. This plan is non-statutory and provides guidance for local authority planners, regulators and stakeholders on the future use and development of the marine waters and surrounding coast of Loch Fyne. Development policies and guidance on scale and location of new aquaculture development will be used by Argyll and Bute Council as supplementary planning guidance and will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for new or modified aquaculture developments.

As the proposed final plan is considerable in length, a one page summary is provided in Annex 3 of this report. A single hard copy of the plan is available to view in the Members Room, along with the Consultation Report. Additional copies of these documents can be made available on CD and can be viewed or downloaded from the Argyll and Bute Council website (www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/lochfyne).

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Area Committee is asked to:

- Consider the Proposed Final ICZM plan in light of the Consultation Report and feedback from public stakeholder meetings (provided on the day); and
- Recommend to the Executive Committee that the proposed final Loch Fyne ICZM Plan is approved and adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

3. BACKGROUND – Aims & plan development process

Given recent development pressures on Argyll's coastal areas and the competition for space between sectors such as fishing, aquaculture, recreation and tourism, there is a need for a more integrated approach to deliver the sustainable use of our marine resources. There is also a need to take fuller account of the socio-economic characteristics of the coastal area and provide a framework for the promotion of local economic development.

The Argyll and Bute Council Structure Plan 2002 outlines the Council's objectives for coastal planning and emphasises the necessity of working with all the relevant sectors to fully harness the productive capacity of the marine and coastal area whilst safeguarding its unique environmental qualities, through sustainable development. In addition policy LP AQUA 1 of the modified Finalised Draft Local Plan recognises the potential of the evolving ICZM process to further inform the assessment of marine fish farming within our area.

In recognition of the importance of our coastal and marine environment the Council sought and secured funding in July 2004 to initiate the Loch Fyne ICZM project as a means of accomplishing the sustainable management of this significant marine area.

3.1. Aims

The aim of the ICZM project was to develop a coastal zone management plan with broad community input and support, which will guide and advise local authority planners, regulators and stakeholders on future use and development, and secure the long-term sustainable use of the marine resources within Loch Fyne. The plan has been designed to complement Argyll & Bute Council's Development Plan (Structure and Local Plan) and will assist decision-making in relation to development proposals, help minimise conflicts of interest and guide future investment.

Given the Council's new responsibilities for aquaculture, the plan focuses, in particular on developing policies to help guide future aquaculture development to appropriate areas by taking account of other activities and environmental sensitivities.

The plan also identifies potential conflicts of interest between activities and highlights broader issues for the attention of the relevant agencies in the form of recommendations.

3.2 Plan development process

In summary, the development of the Loch Fyne ICZM plan has involved the following:

- Collection of available spatial data from regulators, local authority and scientific sources;
- Assessment of use of marine and coastal resources in the area and identification of management issues;
- Identification of existing local management agreements/ procedures;
- Identification of future development opportunities and collaborations between stakeholders;
- Landscape/Seascape capacity study for Aquaculture;
- Development of planning guidance and map-based marine spatial plan to guide future aquaculture development; and
- Draft plan public consultation.

The entire process has involved extensive consultation with local stakeholders, communities and relevant and competent authorities through public meetings, one to one meetings and correspondence. A contact group with a broad community and stakeholder composition has been kept informed of progress and invited to attend stakeholder meetings.

4. DRAFT PLAN CONSULTATION

Following an eight week public consultation on the draft Loch Fyne ICZM plan at the end of 2008, comments received during the consultation process have been collated by the Marine & Coastal Development Unit and analysed and considered along with other available evidence to develop a final draft of the Loch Fyne ICZM plan. Full details of the individual comments received during the consultation and the Council's response to these are set out in the Consultation Report – *Annex 2* of this report.

The Proposed Final Plan and Consultation Report have been made available to all stakeholders who have been involved in the plan process or responded to the consultation. Public meetings will be held in Strachur and Lochgilphead on the 30th September and 1st October respectively, to present the changes made to the final plan as a result of the public consultation. Feedback from these meetings will be presented to the Area Committee for their consideration in addition to the Final Plan and Consultation Report, but due to the timing of these public meetings this feedback will have to be provided on the day of the Committee meeting.

4.1 Consultation overview

The public consultation on the draft Loch Fyne ICZM plan ran for 8 weeks, from 24 October to 19 December 2008. A contact list of over 140 individuals and organisations (Loch Fyne ICZM Stakeholder Group) that had been involved in the development of the plan were sent details of the consultation and the draft plan. This information was also sent out to additional members of the public following the public advertisement of the consultation. In addition, all Community Councils bordering Loch Fyne were consulted by letter.

A total of 31 written consultation responses were received, comprising over 280 individual comments. The full individual responses can be viewed on the Council website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/lochfyne.

4.2 Summary of main comments

The preparation of the plan and its objectives were generally welcomed. The plan was felt to be comprehensive and well researched with the appropriate level of detail to allow it to be used as guidance on the future use and development of Loch Fyne. Despite its size, the plan was considered to be well structured, easy to navigate to the relevant section, and easy to read.

The main points raised by the public consultation related to concerns from wild migratory salmonid interests about development potential for aquaculture; specific comments on the aquaculture policies and background information in Policy Zone L (Creggans to Newton); comments about the methodology used to develop aquaculture policies; concerns about the influence of landscape as a constraint to development potential for aquaculture; and concerns about mobile gear fishing in upper Loch Fyne.

The Consultation Report (*Annex 2*) provides a summary of the main comments from the consultation and the main changes made to the plan as a result of these responses, in addition to full details of the individual comments received during the consultation and the Council's response.

5. CONCLUSION

The Loch Fyne ICZM plan could be a significant piece of guidance in the use and development of the coastal zone of Loch Fyne over the next five years and has been designed to complement the Argyll & Bute Development Plan. It aims to aid the evaluation of development proposals, help minimise conflicts of interest and guide future investment.

The consultation process and detailed responses from a wide range of interests has further developed and shaped the Loch Fyne ICZM Plan resulting in improved guidance for future management, use and development of Loch Fyne.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Policy: The final ICZM plan will act as guidance to help inform the application of approved local plan policies with regard to future development proposals for aquaculture and coastal infrastructure. Development policies for aquaculture will be a material consideration in the Council's determination of planning applications for new or modified aquaculture developments.

The Argyll and Bute Structure Plan recommends the development of coastal framework plans for seven coastal areas, including Loch Fyne.

A Sustainability Assessment has been prepared as part of the development of the Loch Fyne ICZM plan. No comments were received on this document during the public consultation.

Financial: There may be financial implications for the Council in the implementation of the Loch Fyne ICZM Plan but it should be noted that this plan is non-statutory. The Proposed

Final Plan now includes an Action Plan (Section 8 of plan) which identifies that the resources required for the majority of actions are Council officer time from the Marine and Coastal Development Unit, and for some actions the Outdoor Access and GIS team. Several actions will require small amounts of funding from partners but there is no requirement for the Council to make any contribution to these partner actions.

Personnel: See comments under financial above, in terms of staff resources.

Equal Opportunity: An Equality Impact Assessment identified both potential positive and negative impacts that will be addressed in the development of the Loch Fyne ICZM Plan. Actions include:

1. The final plan will make comment and include recommendations on improved access for recreational activities, including consideration of access that is suitable for all users.
2. Meeting adverts for public stakeholder meetings will encourage anyone who wishes to attend, to inform the M&CDU of any particular disability requirements, i.e. disabled access, induction loop.

No comments were received on this assessment during the public consultation on the draft plan.

For further information contact:

Mark Steward
Marine & Coastal Development Manager
Tel. 01631 567 972 Email mark.steward@argyll-bute.gov.uk

ANNEX 1 – Proposed Final Loch Fyne ICZM Plan (available in Members room and at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/lochfyne)

ANNEX 2 – Loch Fyne ICZM Plan Consultation Report (available in Members room and at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/lochfyne)

ANNEX 3 – Summary of the Proposed Final Loch Fyne ICZM Plan

- 1) Draft plan developed through extensive consultation with local stakeholders and regulators;
- 2) Plan is non-statutory, providing guidance on future use and developers, for local authority planners, regulators and stakeholders. Individual development proposals will however, still require detailed, site-specific appraisal;
- 3) Plan will be used as supplementary planning guidance for aquaculture and coastal infrastructure development proposals. Development policies for aquaculture will be a material consideration in the Council's determination of planning applications for aquaculture.

Plan contents

Site Description

Background to the geology, oceanography and wildlife, biodiversity, landscape and historic interests of Loch Fyne.

Current Activities and Interests

Comprehensive overview of activities and interests, including socio-economics, existing management and controls, future development, local issues and agreements and recommendations on future management, use and development.

Policy Zone Section – Area policies and guidance

Main section of the plan where Loch Fyne is split into 19 policy zones, providing area specific policies and guidance for future use and development.

Policy Zone format

Area description - Landscape & seascape characteristics, visual amenity, access, settlements, current uses, designations, wildlife and historical features.

Policy zone maps - Information presented in two maps, one showing current uses and activities and another showing wildlife & historic interests, Argyll and Bute Development Plan designations and statutory designated sites for nature conservation and landscape.

Constraints and opportunities - Policy considerations, in terms of constraints and opportunities for future use and development are presented in tables.

Guidance on aquaculture development – This is the supplementary planning guidance for future aquaculture development and comprises of:

- Development policies for finfish, shellfish and on-shore aquaculture development;
- Guidance on location and scale if development potential identified; and
- Individuals/organisations to be consulted by developers and Argyll and Bute Planning Officers, should development potential be identified.

Development Opportunities

Summary of opportunities for future use and development identified in the policy zone section, including: finfish and shellfish aquaculture; development of new or improved coastal infrastructure e.g. jetties; and opportunities for improved access or development of dedicated access for recreational activities such as boating, diving and angling.