

## POLICY ZONE C: AIRD NAN RÒN TO STRONDOIR BAY

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

The landscape is predominately an upland plateau with rounded ridges and rocky outcrops. There is an extensive large-scale mosaic of open moorland and forestry plantations.

### SEASCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

The south end of this policy zone has a comparatively wide boulder shore at low tide indicating a gently sloping intertidal and subtidal seabed. The coast is open with little indentation and is potentially quite exposed to southerly and south-easterly winds.

### ACCESS

The main A83 trunk road runs parallel to the loch shore from Aird nan Ròn to Strondoir Bay. There is only one point of access to the loch, at the Sloc nam Fearna lay-by, where it is possible to launch small boats from trailers. This access to the loch lies adjacent to an old concrete jetty which is in a state of ruin.



Shore access from lay-by at Sloc nam Fearna



A83 trunk road going north and running parallel to Loch Fyne shore



Shore access at Sloc nam Fearna with remains of old jetty to the right

### VISUAL AMENITY

From the trunk road, which is very close to the loch shore, views are broad, open, distant, mostly uninterrupted and generally unremarkable over to the rolling hills of Cowal, which are dominated by forestry plantation. There are no paths adjacent to this area, but there are a few lay-bys along the road side with open views to the loch. At Clach an Easbuig, there is a view point with a roadside picnic table. Views at Sloc nam Fearna are dominated by the Meall Mhor salmon farm, which lies particularly close to shore.



View south from Sloc nam Fearna towards Barmore Island and Stonefield Castle



Meall Mhor salmon farm site at Sloc nam Fearna



General view across Loch Fyne to the low rolling hills of Cowal

### SETTLEMENTS

Dwellings are sparsely distributed along the roadside. No communities or settlements adjoin this policy zone.

## CURRENT USES

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

### Fishing

Creel fleets are regularly deployed in the area and trawling activity occurs quite close to shore in the area between the Meall Mhor fish farm and Strondoir Bay. Scallop dredging occurs across the length of this policy zone from 40 m depth towards the shore. Diving for King scallops also occurs to the north of the policy zone.

### Aquaculture

Lighthouse Caledonia Ltd. has a large salmon farm site at Meall Mhor. Fish farm boats regularly sail back and forth between Meall Mhor and Strondoir Bay, where there is a shore-base facility.



Meall Mhor salmon farm site at Sloc nam Fearnna showing feed barge

#### Current Aquaculture Sites

Location	Species	Consented Equipment	Maximum Biomass	Operator	Shore-base Location	Development Status
Meall Mhor	Salmon	16 x 70 m circular cages arranged 8 x 2	900 tonnes	Lighthouse Caledonia	Strondoir Bay	Developed/Active



Small angling boat left on shore at Sloc nam Fearnna

### Recreation

#### Sailing

Boating activities such as sailing occur to the east of the policy zone. Small angling boats are on occasion launched at Meall Mhor, and small boats can be seen lying on the shore next to the loch access at Sloc nam Fearnna (Houston 2004).

#### Diving

There are two scenic dive sites in this policy zone: Erines (Offshore, East of Erines) and South Rudha Mhinide Beg (coastal dive, 500 m north of Nead an Fhithich).

## Discharges

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

## DESIGNATIONS

Refer to policy zone C map for areas covered.

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

- Coastline classified as 'Undeveloped Coast' (a coastal area of Sensitive Countryside).
- Meall Mhor to just north of Erines is designated as a Rural Opportunity Area.

### Other Designations

- Artilligan and Abhain Strathain Burns Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is designated for upland oak woodland.
- Tarbert Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is designated for western acidic oak woodland.
- The 'Loch Fyne Coastal Strip' Shellfish Growing Water extends throughout the length of the policy zone.

## WILDLIFE

Harbour porpoise and common seals are seen regularly in this area. Surveys of benthic communities in this policy zone are limited, but at the transition of this policy zone to policy zone D, Marine Nature Conservation Review surveys indicate sheltered steep or narrow, intertidal rock, and mixed substrata with dense seaweed including bladder wrack, toothed wrack, spiral wrack and kelp. In deeper water, the seabed is composed of sheltered sublittoral mixed sediments with sparse horse mussels and the tube anemone *Cerianthus lloydii*. The River Artilligan supports migratory salmonid populations and is part of the loch-wide wild fish restoration project.



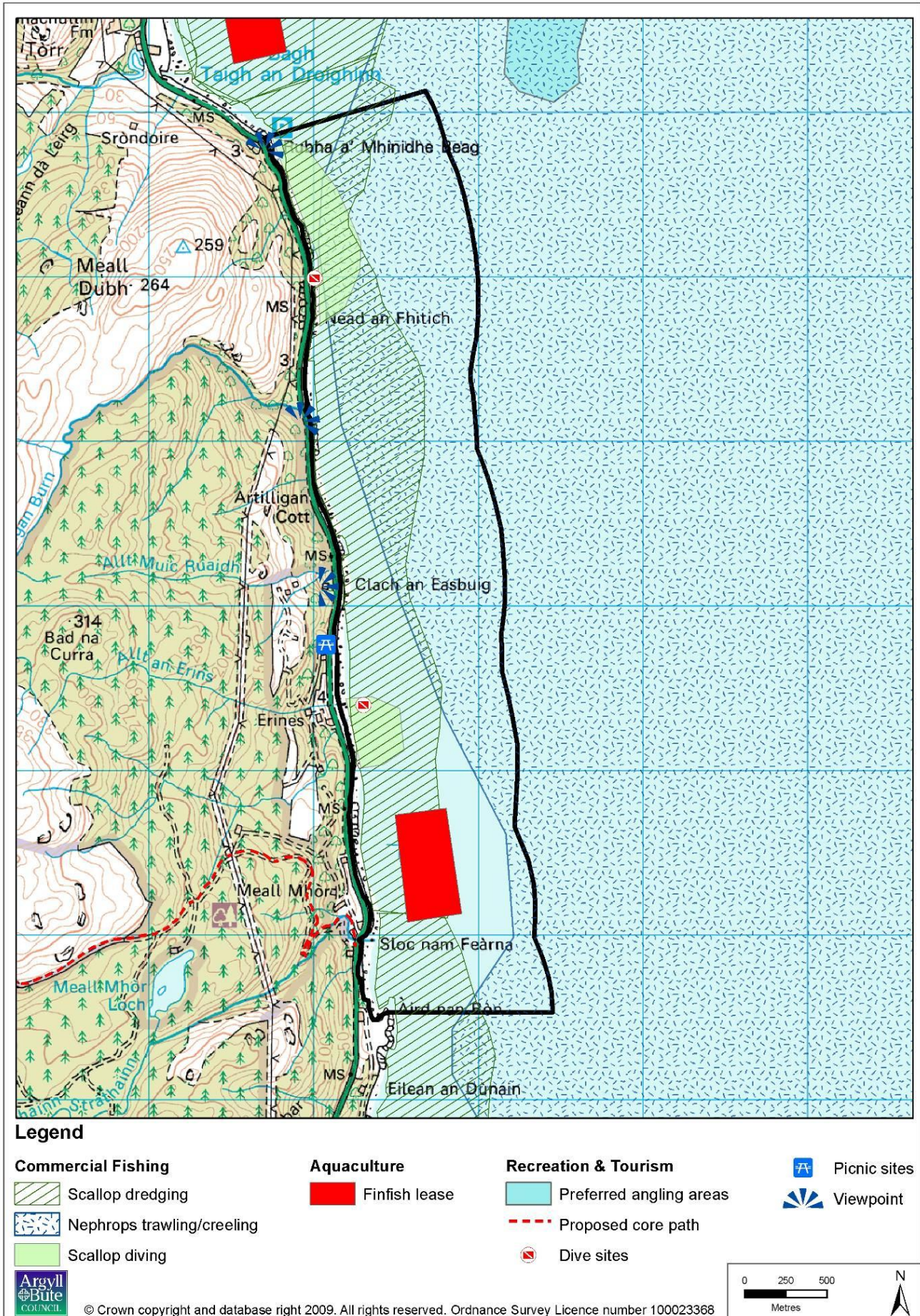
The Abhain Strathain Burn flowing onto the shore at Sloc nam Fearn

## HISTORICAL FEATURES

- Erins House, a Scots Baronial style Category B listed building was previously a domestic mansion of the Furlongs, but is now converted to flats.

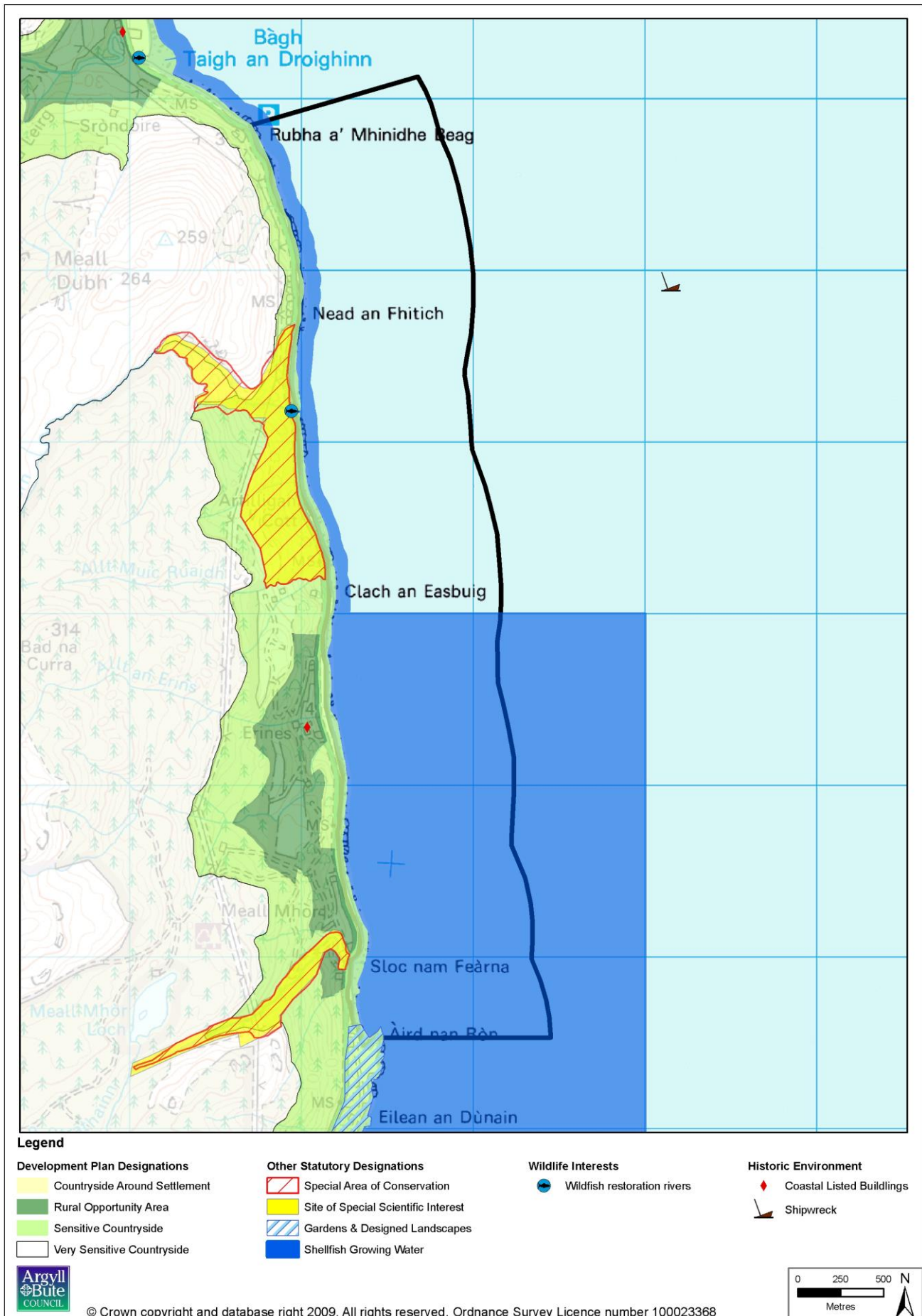


# POLICY ZONE C MAP - Current Uses & Activities





# POLICY ZONE C MAP – Designations, Wildlife Interests & Historic Features



## OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS FOR FUTURE USE AND DEVELOPMENT

### Constraints

<i>Development</i>	
<b>Aquaculture Servicing</b>	No opportunities exist for aquaculture shore based development. Servicing for shellfish development would need to be from Tarbert or Ardrishaig which are a significant distance away.
<b>Fishing</b>	This is an important area for creeling, trawling and scallop diving. Correspondence with the fishing industry show that trawling tracks in this policy zone appear to skirt around the existing fish farm indicating that this development resulted in lost fishing ground when the site was developed. Further development may therefore meet with opposition from the mobile fishing sector.
<b>Landscape</b>	The cumulative capacity based on visual amenity and seabed utilisation may be maximised in this stretch of the coastline with two existing salmon farm sites in relatively close proximity: Meall Mhor fish farm in this policy zone and Strondoir Bay fish farm in policy zone D.
	The trunk road runs parallel to a very open shoreline and further developments may receive objections based on visual amenity.
<b>Finfish Aquaculture</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>Marine Access</b>	Loch access could be improved at Sloc nam Fearn and the ruined jetty rebuilt if there were demand. Parking in the large lay-by could also be enlarged to allow vehicles to reverse boat trailers onto the shore more safely.
<i>Development</i>	
<b>Aquaculture</b>	There is potential to expand the Meall Mhor farm in this policy zone without adversely affecting the landscape character.
	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 or ranching.

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

## 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 POLICIES

#### Marine Finfish Development Policy PZC-1

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

##### Justification

- Landscape/seascape capacity study indicates that due to the presence of existing fish farms in policy zones C and D, any further developments in this stretch of coastline would create negative cumulative visual impacts from the A83 (Grant 2007).
- Commercial fishing occurs in much of this policy zone (Loch Fyne ICZM Group).

#### Marine Finfish Development Policy PZC-2

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

*See Table PZC for additional guidance*

##### Justification

- There is some limited scope for additional cages to be added to the existing development with no effective impact on existing visual capacity (Grant 2007).

### MARINE SHELLFISH DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

#### Marine Shellfish Development Policy PZC-3

There will be a general presumption against any scale of new shellfish farm development within this policy zone, other than the change of use detailed in Policy PZC-2.

##### Justification

- Landscape/seascape capacity study indicates that due to the presence of the existing fish farm, any new aquaculture developments in this stretch of coastline would create negative cumulative visual impacts from the A83 (Grant 2007).
- Commercial fishing occurs in the majority of this zone (Loch Fyne ICZM Group).

### ON-SHORE AQUACULTURE-RELATED DEVELOPMENT POLICY

#### On-shore Aquaculture-Related Development Policy PZC-4

There will be a presumption against on-shore aquaculture-related developments in this policy zone.

##### Justification

- Landscape/seascape capacity study indicates that onshore developments should be located within existing settled areas outwith the policy zone (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.

## SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE ON POTENTIAL AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENTS

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

Development Type	Location	Suggested Maximum Scale	Comments
<b>Expansion of existing fish farm</b>	Meall Mhor Fish Farm	Up to 20% expansion in water surface area	<p>New cages should extend existing development parallel with the coast.</p> <p>The design of the development should aim for consistently simple structures in an ordered layout with minimal visual clutter.</p> <p>Expansion of this farm is likely to result in further loss of fishing grounds and agreement would need to be reached with mobile gear fishing interests.</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>	Meall Mhor Fish Farm	Current surface and seabed area of existing salmon farm	<p>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.</p> <p>Any increase in the seabed area of this site may further restrict commercial trawling ground and agreement should be reached with fishing interests.</p>

### Future relinquishment of existing developments

If either of the existing fish farms in policy zones C or D were relinquished, 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	Finfish Expansion	Change of Use
Ardishaig Community Council	✓	✓
Argyll Fisheries Trust	✓	✓
Clyde Area Management Group	✓	✓
Clyde Fishermen's Association	✓	✓
Clyde Inshore Fisheries Group	✓	✓
Lighthouse Caledonia Scotland Ltd	✓	✓
Royal Yachting Association	✓	✓
Scottish Creelers and Divers Association	✓	✓
Tarbert and Skipness Community Council	✓	✓