

MASTERPLAN REPORT 20/00804/MPLAN

ISE OF ULVA COMMUNITY MASTERPLAN

(A) INTRODUCTION

The Isle of Ulva was subject to a successful community buyout on the 21st June 2018 under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 by North West Mull Community Woodland Company (NWMCWC). The aim of the purchase is to bring about the social and economic development of Ulva for the benefit of the community and a key objective is the repopulation of the island.

A community masterplan has been prepared as the circumstances of Ulva and its community have materially changed subsequent to preparation of the adopted Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan (LPD) 2015 which no longer meets the development aspirations of the community. The masterplan provides a framework for delivery of development in a format which the Council can consider and adopt as a further material consideration in the determination of future planning applications.

The masterplan vision for the Isle of Ulva is to provide sustainable benefits for the community, including the repopulation and regeneration of the island in the short, medium and long term. To achieve this the following actions are proposed:

- improve housing stock and other buildings
- improve infrastructure
- revitalise and expand agriculture
- manage woodlands sustainably and seek opportunities for creating further broadleaf woods
- unlock the very large tourism potential largely untapped at present
- care for and promote the cultural heritage of the island
- enhance biodiversity and conserve sensitive habitats and species
- safeguard natural habitats of the isolated associated islands and skerries
- support marine industries, fishing and aquaculture
- ensure the island remains accessible for visitors and residents

The Scottish Government defines Masterplans as:

'a plan that describes and maps an overall development concept, including present and future land use, urban design and landscaping, built form, infrastructure, circulation and service provision. It is based upon an understanding of place and it is intended to provide a structured approach to creating a clear and consistent framework for development' (PAN 83).

The Scottish Government endorses the use of Masterplanning in general, but considers that it is especially useful for large sites and in areas/sites which are going to undergo substantial change, have multiple uses, or are sensitive in environmental or landscape terms such as is the case here.

(B) RECOMMENDATION

It is considered that the components of the proposed Masterplan are appropriate for the sustainable development of the island.

It is recommended that the masterplan be approved and shall form a material consideration in the determination of future planning applications. The masterplan should be updated as necessary in the event that developments are approved at the site in conformity with the masterplan which prove to have implications for the delivery of development within the remainder of the site.

(C) CONSULTATIONS

Area Roads Authority

Any future roads consultation for development on the island will reflect the unique circumstances of the island, however the C44 Ulva Ferry Road may be impacted during the phased construction works and the increased demand on parking as the island population grows potentially causing extra demand on parking spaces as the residents require mainland parking and to facilitate extra visitors. A Traffic Management Plan will be required to show estimated movements over the C44 public road during the construction phases and a projection of estimated extra car parking required along with the expansion plans for the Ulva Ferry Car Park to facilitate any further future parking requirements. Plans will be required to show how refuse will be stored and collected from the island as the population grows, a bin storage area will need to be identified. Report dated 11th June 2020.

SEPA

No objection. Would also like to be consulted on future planning application for marine industries. Letter dated 3rd June 2020.

Scottish Natural Heritage

No objection and welcome the proposals. Letter dated 29th May 2020

Environmental Health

Environmental Health have advised that they can provide advice relating to licensing, food hygiene and health and safety. They have not raised any objections regarding any of the specified developments. Standard planning conditions are likely to be required to ensure the quantity and quality of private water supplies serving the developments at the planning application stage. Responses dated 21st and 25th May 2020.

Core Paths Team

No response at time of report and no request for an extension of time.

Biodiversity Officer

No objections. Advice and information provided for the applicant to inform potential additional information requirements for future planning applications. Letter dated 2nd June 2020.

(D) PUBLICITY

The masterplan has been advertised in the Oban Times – publication date 21st May 2020, expiry date 11th June 2020. One letter of support has been received.

(E) REPRESENTATIONS

One expression of support has been received from Joan Hepburn, 11th June 2020.

The points made are summarised as follows:

- Masterplan is well thought out and takes account of the island's infrastructure and natural and cultural heritage.

Comment: Noted.

Full details of this representation can be viewed on the Council's website www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

(F) ASSESSMENT

1. List of all Development Plan Policy considerations taken into account in assessment of the masterplan

Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2015

LDP STRAT 1 – Sustainable Development
LDP DM 1 – Development within the Development Management Zones
LDP 3 – Supporting the Protection Conservation and Enhancement of our Environment
LDP 4 - Supporting the Sustainable Development of our Coastal Zone
LDP 5 - Supporting the Sustainable Growth of Our Economy
LDP 8 – Supporting the Strength of our Communities
LDP 9 – Development Setting, Layout and Design
LDP 10 – Maximising our Resources and Reducing our Consumption
LDP 11 – Improving our Connectivity and Infrastructure

Supplementary Guidance

SG LDP ENV 1 – Development Impact on Habitats, Species and our Biodiversity (i.e. biological diversity)
SG LDP ENV 6 - Development Impact on Trees / Woodland
SG LDP ENV 11 - Protection of Soil and Peat Resources
SG LDP ENV 12 - Development Impact on National Scenic Areas (NSAs)
SG LDP ENV 16(a) - Development Impact on Listed Buildings
SG LDP ENV 20 - Development Impact on Sites of Archaeological Importance
SG LDP BUS 2 - Business and Industry Proposals in the Countryside Development Management Zones
SG LDP BUS 5 - Economically Fragile Areas
SG LDP TOUR 1 - Tourist Facilities and Accommodation, including Static and Touring Caravans
SG LDP TOUR 3 - Promoting Tourism Development Areas
SG LDP RET 4 - Retail Development within Countryside Development Management Zones
SG LDP HOU 1 – General Housing Development including Affordable Housing
SG LDP HOU 2 - Special Needs Access Provision in Housing Developments

SG LDP BAD 1 - Bad Neighbour Development
SG LDP BAD 2 - Bad Neighbour Development in Reverse
SG LDP SERV 1 – Private Sewage Treatment Plans & Wastewater Systems
SG LDP SERV 2 – Incorporation of Natural Features/Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
SG LDP SERV 5(b) - Provision of Waste Storage and Collection Facilities within New Development
SG LDP SERV 6 - Private Water Supplies and Waste Conservation
SG LDP SERV 7 - Flooding and Land Erosion – The Risk Framework for Development
SG LDP TRAN 1 - Access to the Outdoors
SG LDP TRAN 3 - Special Needs Access Provision
SG LDP TRAN 4 - New and Existing, Public Roads and Private Access Regimes
SG LDP TRAN 6 - Vehicle Parking Provision

Sustainable Siting and Design Principles

2. List of all other material planning considerations taken into account in the assessment of the masterplan

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 2014
Planning History
Planning Advice Note 60: Natural Heritage
Planning Advice Note 72: Housing in the Countryside
Planning Advice Note 83: master planning
Planning Advice Note 1/2011: Planning and Noise
Planning Advice Note 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology
Proposed Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2 (November 2019)

3. Settlement Strategy

In terms of the adopted Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan (LDP) 2015, the Isle of Ulva consists of two development management zones; the Countryside Zone primarily to the north of the island and Very Sensitive Countryside to the south of the island.

In the Countryside Zone, planning policy LDP DM 1 gives encouragement to acceptable forms of appropriate small scale development as infill, rounding-off, redevelopment and changes of use of existing buildings. In exceptional cases development in the open countryside of up to and including large scale may be supported on appropriate sites if this is supported by an accepted claim of an 'exceptional case' (usually on the basis of an overriding locational or operational need, and often in the interests of promoting or sustaining economic growth) and where such development accords with an 'area capacity evaluation' (ACE).

Within Very Sensitive Countryside encouragement will only be given to specific categories of development on appropriate sites. These comprise:

- i. Renewable energy related development
- ii. Telecommunication related development.
- iii. Development directly supporting agricultural, aquaculture, nature conservation or other established activity.
- iv. Small scale development related to outdoor sport and recreation.

The vast majority of development proposed by the Ulva Masterplan is contained within the countryside zone and a large proportion of this is the redevelopment of existing buildings. The majority of this development is concentrated at the eastern end of the island.

The local development plan defines redevelopment as “a *development of new buildings involving significant demolitions; or the extension of a building involving more than a doubling of the cubic volume of the building but not exceeding three times the cubic volume (less than a doubling being treated as a building extension and more than a trebling, as new build).*”

Therefore, a significant proportion of the new development proposed within the Ulva Masterplan can be delivered within the current local development plan framework.

Policy LDP 3 assesses applications for their impact on the natural, human and built environment with Policy LDP 9 seeking developers to produce and execute a high standard of appropriate design and to ensure that development is sited and positioned so as to pay regard to the context within which it is located.

Policy LDP 4 is supportive of onshore works for sustainable development in our coastal zone. This policy recognises the significant economic potential of the coast and promotes the sustainable development of the coastal zone. The coastal zone continues to provide a focus for economic activity, recreation and tourism.

Policy LDP 5 recognises that the success of our local economy is fundamental to Argyll and Bute’s future prosperity, helping to retain population and attract new people to the area.

Policy LDP 8 supports new sustainable development proposals that seek to strengthen communities.

Policy LDP 11 supports all development proposals that seek to maintain and improve internal and external connectivity by ensuring that suitable infrastructure is delivered to serve new developments. Supplementary Guidance SG LDP TRAN 4 and SG LDP TRAN 6 expand on this policy seeking to ensure that developments are served by a safe means of vehicular access and have an adequate on-site parking and turning area.

4. Location, Nature and Design of Proposed Development

The Isle of Ulva is located off the west coast of the Isle of Mull, separated by a narrow strait and access is via a small passenger ferry. The Isle of Gometra is located to the west of Ulva and the two are connected by a small bridge. The island is approximately 12km long by 4km wide and has an area of around 2,000 hectares.

There are two high peaks on the western side of Ulva, Bein Eolasaray and Beinn Chreagach, with 313 metres above sea level being the highest point on the island. Ulva mostly comprises moorland, grassland and native woodland along with an extensive, largely rocky, coastline and intertidal area. There are no metalled roads on the island but there are a number of existing paths and single tracks.

Ulva has suffered significant population decline since the 1800s. In 1837 it had a resident population of 604 in 16 villages. By 1841 the combined population of Ulva and the neighbouring island of Gometra had been reduced to 150 due to evictions during the Highland Clearances and the effects of the Highland Potato Famine. By 1889 Ulva’s population had dropped to 53. The resident population has fluctuated over recent decades; increasing from 13 in 1981 to 30 in 1991 before declining to 16 residents in 2001 and 11 in 2011. It currently stands at just 6 people, two of whom are primary school children.

One of the main priorities is to repopulate the island and reverse the long-term population decline. In order to achieve this, a combination of renovations, redevelopments and new developments are proposed. The aim is to achieve a diverse range of occupancy provision including leases at affordable rents, owner-occupation with the opportunity of self-build, service leaseholds and service occupancies as appropriate. In order to achieve the vision and aims of the community the following is proposed:

Renovation of Existing Residential Properties

- The Manse
- Fisherman's Cottage
- The Ferry House
- 1 Bracadale
- 2 Bracadale
- 3 Bracadale

Renovation and Redevelopment of Ulva House and Ardalum House

Ulva House: It is proposed to convert the building into a heritage and cultural resource centre occupying around 2/3 of the building alongside a high quality holiday letting self-catering unit in the remaining third which would provide financial support for the heritage centre. It is unlikely that the building will be permanently occupied by an Ulva resident, though it would provide employment opportunities both in the self-catering and the heritage centre part of the building.

Ardalum House: It is proposed to bring Ardalum back into use to provide hostel or guest house accommodation, which could incorporate a self-contained flat for the manager/proprietors. Alternatively, the building could be converted back into a large domestic dwelling.

Redevelopment of Derelict Buildings

Bracadale Farm: This has potential for 2 houses in a "courtyard" arrangement accompanied by workshop / small business studios for example.

The Hill Steadings: This has potential for holiday accommodation or alternatively commercial activity with or without an associated house.

Ted's Shed: This is an old workshop which could accommodate 1 house or possibly a pair of semi-detached houses.

Ardalum Byre: This has potential to be either a holiday let or staff accommodation for hostel / campsite. Or campsite facilities such as showers and washing.

Manse Byre: This has potential to be holiday accommodation or a workshop.

Sheila's Cottage: This has potential to develop visitor facilities (WCs etc.).

Cragraig Bothy: This is to be retained as self-catering bothy holiday accommodation. Lack of services to the site limit its potential as a permanent dwelling.

Bearnis Bothy: This may be able to be brought back into use as self-catering holiday accommodation. Lack of services to the site limit its potential as a permanent dwelling.

None of the above projects are considered likely to raise any substantive planning issues and all of them are capable of being delivered as 'redevelopment' and/or 'change of use' opportunities within the provisions of planning policy LDP DM 1.

New Build Housing

The sites described below have been identified as potentially suitable for new build housing. These are all located in the eastern part of the island within the countryside zone:

Site 1 – Between Ardalum House and the Church (2 dwellinghouses)

This site does not present any immediate opportunities for infill, rounding-off, or redevelopment and therefore development would, normally, require an 'exceptional case' argument and be underpinned by an ACE in order to comply with planning policy LDP DM 1. In this case, it is considered that this site is suitable for inclusion within the community masterplan for two modest and well-designed dwellinghouses spaced apart to maintain the dispersed pattern of development. The sites are set down from the road and the topography and tree coverage in background and foreground will assist in integrating the buildings into the landscape.

Site 2 – North-west of Ardalum House (1 dwellinghouse)

This site does not present any immediate opportunities for infill, rounding-off, or redevelopment and therefore development would, normally, require an 'exceptional case' argument and be underpinned by an ACE in order to comply with planning policy LDP DM 1. In this case, it is considered that this site is suitable for inclusion within the community masterplan for a single dwellinghouse again designed to reflect the existing building and dispersed pattern of development. This site may also be suitable for a small campsite.

Site 3 – South-east of the Manse (up to 2 dwellinghouses)

This site is not classed as infill, rounding-off or redevelopment however it is considered suitable for the development of one, possibly two, well designed dwellinghouse spaced to maintain the local settlement pattern and to respect the setting of the adjacent Category B listed church. This site can be included in the community masterplan.

Site 4 – South-east of Fisherman's Cottage (1 dwellinghouse)

This site does not present any immediate opportunities for infill, rounding-off, or redevelopment and therefore development would, normally, require an 'exceptional case' argument and be underpinned by an ACE in order to comply with planning policy LDP DM 1. In this case, the site is considered to be suitable for development for a single dwellinghouse. This site is flat and well contained and will not cause any significant adverse impacts to the existing cottage.

Site 5 – North of Junction above Ferry House (1 dwellinghouse)

This site does not present any immediate opportunities for infill, rounding-off, or redevelopment and therefore development would, normally, require an 'exceptional case' argument and be underpinned by an ACE in order to comply with planning policy LDP DM 1. In this case, this site is considered to be appropriate for development for a single dwellinghouse with the plot orientated to a north-west/south-east axis.

Site 6 – South of Junction above Ferry House (1 dwellinghouse)

This site does not present any immediate opportunities for infill, rounding-off, or redevelopment and therefore development would, normally, require an 'exceptional case' argument and be underpinned by an ACE in order to comply with planning policy LDP DM 1. In this case, the site is set-down from the track and this will help to root the development into the landscape and provides a suitable backdrop.

Site 7 – South of Ted's Shed (1 dwellinghouse)

This site does not present any immediate opportunities for infill, rounding-off, or redevelopment and therefore development would, normally, require an 'exceptional case' argument and be underpinned by an ACE in order to comply with planning policy LDP DM 1. In this case, it is considered that this area is suitable for one dwellinghouse within or around the area of the now demolished shed.

Site 8 – West of Bracadale (1 dwellinghouse)

This site does not present any immediate opportunities for infill, rounding-off, or redevelopment and therefore development would, normally, require an 'exceptional case' argument and be underpinned by an ACE in order to comply with planning policy LDP DM 1. In this case, this site is set on flat grazing land with an open outlook to the west. A single dwellinghouse in this location would be appropriate as there is a suitable backdrop to root the development into its surroundings and it would maintain the dispersed pattern of development.

It is considered that the wider economic growth and repopulation aims of the Ulva community would constitute an appropriate 'exceptional case' argument and landscape capacity evaluation in respect of all of the eight specific development opportunities summarised above. Whilst these developments will still require the submission and proper assessment of a planning application (or applications), it is recommended that this Masterplan be approved and given material weighting to be used in the assessment of such planning applications.

Building Design and Materials

The applicants have advised that it is not intended to set out a unified "Ulva style" for new building. Instead, detailed design of all new buildings will be tailored to the specific location in compliance with the Argyll and Bute Council Planning Guidelines.

5. Natural Environment

Supplementary Guidance SG LDP ENV 1 aims to give stronger protection, and where appropriate, seek enhancement to habitats and species, even when they are not associated with specifically designated nature conservation sites.

Ulva is not subject to any ecological designations, however some of the proposed works may have an impact on natural heritage. Consultation with the Council's biodiversity officer has been carried out and she has provided further advice for the applicant to inform future planning application submissions. For example, work to redevelop existing buildings should be inspected for breeding birds and bats and ecological survey work may be required.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) advises that the presence (or potential presence) of a legally protected species is an important consideration in decisions on planning applications. If there is evidence to suggest that a protected species is present on site or may be affected by a proposed development, appropriate steps must be taken to identify, assess and, where appropriate, mitigate the development impact upon such

concerns. The level of protection afforded by legislation must be factored into the planning and design of the development and any impacts must be fully considered prior to the determination of any planning applications.

Ulva is within the Loch Na Keal National Scenic Area (NSA) and therefore Supplementary Guidance SG LDP ENV 12 is applicable. This states that development will not be supported where it would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the area or would undermine the special qualities of the area. In all cases the highest standards in terms of location, siting, design, landscaping, boundary treatment, materials and detailing will be required for developments within a NSA.

A large number of the proposals consist of the redevelopment of existing buildings where the landscape impacts are expected to be low. New dwelling houses on more open sites are proposed, however they are to be sited in appropriate locations which conform to the local settlement pattern and would successfully integrate into the landscape. It is not considered that any of the highlighted future development proposals will likely have a materially adverse impact on the NSA. Furthermore there has been no 'in principle' objections from SNH in this regard, either on ecology or landscape terms.

6. Environmental Health and Bad Neighbour Development

Some of the proposals, such as the campsite (discussed below), has the potential to cause noise and odour nuisance. Environmental Health have advised that they can offer the applicants advice regarding these matters as well as licencing, food hygiene and health and safety matters. The principle of a campsite is considered to be acceptable and there is no indication that this stage that such a use would be incompatible with the surrounding area. Planning applications would be subject to consultation with environmental health and assessment under Supplementary Guidance SG LDP BAD 1 and other applicable supplementary guidance.

7. Economic Development

Policy LDP 5 confirms the presumption established in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) in favour of developments which contribute to the aims of sustainable development.

The supporting statement advises that the main industry currently on Ulva is tourism with an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 visitors to the island during the 2018 season based on ferry usage and approximately 7,000 visitors in 2019. Additionally, the island is an attraction for those visiting by yacht, kayak and smaller cruise ships. The Boathouse, an award-winning, independently operated licensed restaurant is located near the slipway. Agriculture, forestry and fishing are also important industries to the local area. The following information is taken from the submitted masterplan:

Tourism

Tourism is already well established on Ulva with an increase to around 7,000 day visitors per annum following the Community buy-out. Most visitors come to walk and experience Ulva's unique natural heritage. The island diaspora also returns in search of ancestral roots. Others cross the ferry simply to enjoy lunch in unique circumstances at the Boathouse restaurant.

There is scope to extend the Boathouse to the rear to meet the increasing demand and improve facilities generally whilst retaining the iconic front elevation.

Officer Comment: This small scale development opportunity is welcomed and is considered deliverable under the provisions of the current LDP.

Limited accommodation is available at present in two bothies at Bearnus and Craigaig. It is planned that accommodation (either as guesthouse or hostel) and an associated campsite will be established at Ardalum in 2020.

B&B/guest house development and further self-catering options as well as pod or hut accommodation will all be considered for development in the coming years.

Stòras Ulbha is an ambitious and far reaching project centred on repurposing most of Ulva House as a heritage centre. Funded mainly by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Scottish National Cultural Heritage Fund, it will tell the story of Ulva as a microcosm of the Highlands through the stories of its people throughout millennia right up to the present day. This project will also provide interpretation and information sensitively across the wider island, and virtually to a wider audience.

A self-catering apartment will form part of Ulva House renovations, and this is expected to be up and running in 2021.

The paths network will be expanded, and where appropriate, sensitive directions and interpretation, will be provided.

Other tourism developments may include, but are not necessarily limited to, provision of further accommodation and dining establishments, cycle hire, pony trekking, ranger/wildlife guiding services, water based activities such as kayaking, sailing, rowing, windsurfing, water taxis etc., bush craft and survival skills, field schools and historical and genealogical research support.

Ulva Church has great potential as a multi-use community space hosting concerts, exhibitions and social events, including occasional services.

Ulva is part of discussions in the wider Mull area with a view to attaining 'Dark Sky' status and it is hoped to achieve this in the coming years. This will extend the season for tourism as most astronomy tends to occur outwith the summer months.

There is currently a lack of basic facilities for visitors, including and possibly most acutely in relation to public conveniences. To the north of Sheila's Cottage, close to the ferry slipway there is potential to provide a detached building to provide such facilities and also a visitor shelter on the footprint of the ruins of what was once a terrace of 5 or 6 cottages.

Agriculture

One of the main objectives for Ulva is to re-establish agriculture on the island. At the time of the Community purchase there was just a small flock of rather wild Hebridean sheep and a few feral goats out at the west end.

A 5 year Agri-Environment and Climate scheme (AECS) for Ulva received Scottish Government funding approval in February 2020. A key part of the plan is to establish a herd of highland cattle, starting with around 35 weaned calves. These were brought to the island in late 2019.

Each piece of enclosed farmland has been assessed for its potential not only for agriculture but also in terms of biodiversity and an appropriate management plan assigned in each case. So, for example, some fields will be managed to encourage re-establishment of corncrakes, whilst others will target waders, or the enhancement of species-rich wildflower meadow. One priority of the proposals is to bring the old township grazing and field systems along the north side back into productive use. This

ground which had been cleared, drained, de-stoned and largely cultivated over countless generations is now smothered with bracken which started to take hold about 20 years ago when the level of grazing by sheep and cattle was reduced. A new fence is proposed below the Gometra road creating a large enclosure in which the bracken will be substantially removed, and the land then managed as extensive grazing within a habitat mosaic.

Initially, the Community Company will be running the above scheme itself, but during the 5-year programme which has been mapped out, important decisions will be required regarding the long term future of agriculture on Ulva. Key decisions will be how best to divide the land – how many farm “units”, what the tenancy arrangements will be and so on.

These decisions will need to respect and enhance the remarkable natural, cultural and scenic heritage of the island. To that end a series of habitat and vegetation surveys have been carried out. These will feed into an Integrated Land Management Plan that will provide the framework for future land management.

Coastal Business Development

There is potential to accommodate a number of small scale coastal businesses on Ulva. Plans are in hand to reinstate and expand the oyster farm in Soriby Bay on the north side.

The slipway on Ulva and the pier at Ulva Ferry are crucial infrastructure supporting the local inshore fishing industry. The structures have recently been repaired with funding assistance from Marine Scotland. There is potential to further improve and enhance these facilities for the benefit of fishermen and the local community alike.

In the more sheltered parts of Ulva Sound there may be potential to establish haul-out and maintenance facilities for small vessels – something lacking at present on Mull.

Supplementary Guidance SGLDP TOUR 1 promotes tourist development, however tourism must not destroy those very qualities that bring tourists to the area in the first place. Tourist related development must therefore be carefully located, sited and designed to provide high quality facilities that fit successfully into the environment. Recognising the key environmental sensitivities, existing use and the significant economic potential of the coast, Supplementary Guidance SG LDP CST 1 promotes the sustainable development of the Argyll and Bute coastal zone by setting out how the Council will consider coastal development proposals and where such development is most likely to be acceptable.

Supplementary Guidance SG LDP BUS 2 note that With the exception of small scale business and industry development, the preferred location for business/office and industrial proposals is within existing settlements, as this strengthens their viability and vitality, reduces transport costs and makes use of existing infrastructure and public investment. However, Argyll and Bute has a number of indigenous and emerging industries that are not suited to a location within an existing settlement. The special needs of the fragile economic areas are also recognised. There may also be business opportunities arising from farm, croft or estate development programmes. Therefore, where an applicant can clearly demonstrate that their proposal requires a location in the countryside, permission will normally be granted, providing that redundant buildings and brownfield sites are used where possible.

Supplementary Guidance SG LDP RET 4 states that the Council aims to support the viability and vitality of the town centres, by requiring larger scale developments to

locate in these centres, but recognising that small-scale retail development can be developed at other locations without adverse impacts on the core shopping functions of town and village centres. Smaller scale retail developments in the countryside, particularly where these relate to farm diversification schemes, tourist related development and specialist niche marketing of quality Argyll and Bute products, support the aims of promoting a diversified rural economy.

Conclusion

The proposed developments contained within the masterplan will support the local tourism industry, agriculture industry and the food and drink industry, which are recognised as main growth sectors in terms of Policy LDP 5, as well as others. The masterplan will create economic opportunities for the area and will support sustainable economic growth. Subject to developments of an appropriate location, scale and design, the proposal will comply with Policy LDP 5 of the LDP.

8. Servicing

New developments are to be served by private drainage systems. The proposal falls below the threshold for consultation with SEPA however all of the proposals within the Ulva Masterplan are considered likely to comply with SEPA standing advice for small scale private drainage systems.

Policy SG LDP SERV 1 - Private Sewage Treatment Plants and Wastewater (i.e. drainage) Systems mirrors national legislation and policy with regard to private waste water drainage systems. It recognises that within rural areas septic tanks and small wastewater schemes are essential for development. The aim of this policy is to ensure that septic tanks and other private foul drainage arrangements where permitted, are properly sited and have no adverse effects on the surrounding area. Systems in areas adjacent to shellfish protected waters should discharge to land rather than water where possible.

Ulva is not within an area of 'cumulative drainage impact'.

Loch Tuath and Loch Na Keal are designated as a shellfish protected area as per the Water Environment (Shellfish Water Protected Areas: Designation) (Scotland) Order 2013 which is overarched by the Water Environment and Water Services Act (Scotland) 2003 which deals with the protection of the water environment.

The proposed private drainage systems can be assessed at the detailed application stage. They will also be regulated under the building standards to ensure that they are capable of being provided to a safe, effective and appropriate technical standard. SEPA are responsible for authorising and regulating discharges to watercourses and they will assess and control pollution, including any possible cumulative impact. At this stage there is no indication that any of the proposal will have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

The proposals within the Ulva Masterplan are considered likely to raise no material issues with regard to Policy LDP 11 and Supplementary Guidance SG LDP SERV 1 of the LDP as well as national policy.

The proposed developments will be served by private water supplies. Environmental Health have been consulted and they have not raised any objections subject to standard safeguarding measures to ensure that any new private supplies are sufficient in terms of quantity and quality being applied at the application stage.

The proposals within the Ulva Masterplan are considered likely to raise no material issues with regard to Policy LDP 11 and Supplementary Guidance SG LDP SERV 6 of the LDP.

9. Road Network, Parking and Associated Transport Matters

Ulva does not have modern standard metalled roads. The masterplan states that it is the intention to preserve this unique island feature and a bespoke transport policy has been devised as summarised below:

1. Vehicles

- a. There will be a strong presumption in favour of small electric vehicles for domestic and light business use on the island. The intention is to establish charging points at strategic locations powered as far as possible by renewable energy generation.
- b. The only “normal” vehicles such as quad bikes, vans, pick-ups, tractors, excavators etc. which will be permitted are those deemed essential to support agriculture, land management and maintenance, and their number will be kept to a minimum. Vehicles on Ulva will not be licensed for use on public roads.
- c. Use of cycles by residents and visitors will be encouraged by providing storage shelters and including charge points for electric bikes.
- d. Movement of construction vehicles during renovation and building works will be carefully managed to ensure safety and minimise potential adverse interactions with Ulva’s residents and visitors. The network of tracks at the eastern end of the island where all works are proposed will be maintained in a suitable condition to accommodate normal construction.

2. Roads

- a. The main vehicle routes serving existing and proposed buildings are confined to the eastern end of the island. These comprise the “Farm Circuit”, “Church Road” and the connection to the Boathouse and slipway. These core tracks will be upgraded by slight widening where necessary and resurfacing with compacted locally sourced gravel or rotten rock. These improvements will be carried out with a soft touch in order to preserve the general ambiance of the island. These tracks also form part of the way-marked pedestrian routes network.
- b. A new section of track may be required to avoid steep inclines on the present route and improve access from the slipway to the Church Road. This is the only new track route construction envisaged.
- c. Other vehicle tracks such as the Gometra road along the north side, and the track to Craigaig and beyond to the south will be maintained much as they are at present with regular attention to drainage and resurfacing as necessary to keep them in a reasonable condition.
- d. All vehicle track surfaces will be maintained to a standard compatible with bicycle use.

3. Speed and access restrictions

The track network will be used by large numbers of visitors – pedestrians, cyclists and potentially horse riders as well as the increasing numbers of resident and agricultural vehicles. To ensure safety and avoid conflict between the different users there will need to be speed restrictions. Where feasible (for example with electric vehicles) these will be incorporated into vehicle operating systems. More generally, advisory signage will be used and at key points physical speed restricting measures will be incorporated in the track surfaces.

As numbers of residents increases, access to the wider track network beyond the eastern end, for example towards Gometra and Craigaig may need to be reviewed. Increasing potential for adverse interaction with pedestrians and cyclists as well as wear of the road surface may argue for restriction to essential use.

4. Parking for residents' vehicles on Mull

The Ulva estate includes land on Mull at Ulva Ferry which provides parking spaces for residents. This car park has been in use for many years and its status was confirmed formally in a Certificate of Lawfulness issued by Argyll and Bute Council in 2019 (Ref. 19/01636/CLAWU).

5. Footpaths and cycle routes

The existing waymarked footpath network will be maintained, and additional paths established, for example providing access to Starvation Point and creating a loop return path from the popular walk out to Ormaig, the birthplace of Lachlan Macquarie.

All abilities routes will be established with resting places at intervals. The Farm Circuit track with link to the Gardens at Ulva House and the track to Ulva Church and Ardalum are likely to be the best options.

The route of the old track around the extreme western end of Ulva will be reinstated - initially as a waymarked footpath, but eventually as a route suitable for mountain bikes.

Signage will be used to distinguish between routes suitable for pedestrians only to avoid potential conflict with cyclists.

The area roads engineer has been consulted and has not raised any objections to this approach. They have advised that the situation will be continually reviewed as each of the phases/planning applications are brought forward with regard to the capacity of the exiting road network and available parking spaces at Ulva Ferry. A Traffic Management Plan will be required.

10. Historic Environment

Ulva has four listed buildings and three of these are proposed to be renovated. These are Ulva House (Category B Listed), The Manse (Category B Listed) and the Ferry House (Category C listed). Alterations of these properties will be subject to separate listed building consent applications.

In terms of the adopted Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan (LDP), Supplementary Guidance SG LDP 16(a) requires that all developments affecting a listed building, or its setting, shall preserve the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Historic Environment Scotland Policy (HESP) 2016 and associated Managing Change in the Historic Environment guidance seeks to protect listed buildings and their settings from inappropriate developments which would have a detrimental impact.

Ulva Manse has already gained listed building consent (our ref: 19/02511/LIB) on the 6th February 2020 for the demolition of an existing extension and erection of a new porch extension, installation of replacement windows and internal alterations to remove non-load bearing partitions.

The principle of alterations to the listed buildings is acceptable which will allow them to be brought into meaningful use. Matters relating to the historic environment would be assessed in detail at the planning application stage against Supplementary Guidance SG LDP ENV 16(a).

Ulva has a number of archaeologically sensitive areas, however no objections to the masterplan have been received from West of Scotland Archaeology Service. It is advised that, if the masterplan were to be approved, that it would be appropriate to address any archaeological sensitivity on a site by site basis in respect of individual applications for detailed planning permission – this approach would be consistent with the relevant provisions of SG LDP ENV 20.

11. Phasing

It is proposed to begin the renovations and campsite development as soon as possible; preferably within 2020 but acknowledging the current restrictions caused by the COVID 19 pandemic. Similarly, the new build development commencing in quarter 4, 2021.

Due to the dynamic nature of the overall proposals it is not possible at this stage to accurately determine when other aspects are likely to commence. It is expected that infrastructure improvements are carried out commensurately with the scale of development as each aspect progresses.

(G) CONCLUSION

The proposed masterplan is considered fit for purpose and gives appropriate consideration to settlement strategy policy, access requirements, landscape, infrastructure and compatibility between existing and potential future uses.

There are no objections from consultees and no objections have been submitted following the requisite public period for the masterplan.

A full assessment of the siting, design, access, water supply, drainage arrangements and landscaping for developments within the masterplan area will be assessed via future application(s) for planning permission.

It is therefore concluded that the masterplan document should be approved.

(I) IMPLICATIONS

Policy: None
Financial: None
Personnel: None
Equal Opportunities: None

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