

# Argyll and Bute Council Green Belt Landscape Study



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यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको अनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

Hindi

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

Urdu

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਲਘਾਤ ਸਲਾਹਦਿੱਤ ਕਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਟਿੱਟਰਪ੍ਰਿੰਟਰ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Punjabi

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Mandarin

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# Executive Summary

Ironside Farrar has been appointed by Argyll & Bute Council to undertake a landscape assessment of land within the green belt in the Argyll & Bute Local Plan Area. Green belt policy as set out in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) sets out objectives for green belts and describes appropriate uses. The key objectives of green belt policy are to:

- **direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations and support regeneration;**
- **protect and enhance the quality, character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities; and**
- **protect and give access to open space within and around towns and cities.**

The overall objective of this study is to provide Argyll & Bute Council with the landscape justification in formulating its final position upon the extent of the green belt. The key aims of the study were:

- Assess the landscape value of the currently identified green belt
- Assess the landscape value and importance of the sensitive wedges identified in the review
- Identify the visual quality of key gateways into and out of urban areas
- To consider the appropriateness of the landscape features used to identify the boundaries of the green belt.
- Identify opportunities and constraints for development in landscape terms.
- To identify those measures required to improve the defensibility of the green belt boundary and landscape setting of the settlements within it.
- To provide a document which will inform the long term settlement strategy in the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

The study area was subdivided into smaller units for survey, analysis and evaluation, specifically addressing landscape value, sensitivity to change, nature and robustness of boundaries and scope for improvement or change. An assessment was made of the potential for development in specific locations and also for the inclusion or deletion of areas from the green belt.

The study shows that Helensburgh, the main town in the study area, is set within clearly identifiable landscape features on a broad hillside running down to Gare Loch. The twin peaks of Ben Bowie to the east and Tom na h-Airidh in the west form the broader setting to the town and a backdrop of open moorland and forestry. The town lies below a distinctive ridge line around the 100m contour and this together with the distinctive, linear Blackhill Plantation marks the upper boundary of the settlement. A clear undeveloped ridge above the town is significant in preserving Helensburgh's landscape setting.

The assessment has determined that the majority of the green belt is of a high landscape value and the main areas of the green belt between the border with West Dunbartonshire and Rhu meet the principal SPP objectives by providing a setting for the principal settlements, preventing coalescence and providing, to various degrees, a gateway to these settlements. In some cases we have indicated where potential problems lie and have made recommendations for changes or improvement to the green belt boundary. These are intended to reinforce the key areas and rationale of the green belt by focusing on its principal functions.

The proposed changes address the SPP objectives in the following ways:

- Protecting the approach to Helensburgh from the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and the setting of Helensburgh when viewed from across the Gare Loch by incorporating new areas between the A818 and the National Park Boundary.
- Improving the consistency and robustness of the green belt by rationalising its coverage to areas in which it can clearly meet core SPP development control objectives. In all cases these areas have been reassigned to other protective landscape designations more suited to their character and location. This has included:
  - exclusion of hilltop areas above Helensburgh that are of clear upland character (moorland or forestry), that are relatively remote from the settlements and unlikely to be developed, and re-designation as Very Sensitive Countryside or Sensitive Countryside;
  - exclusion of steeply sloped areas north of the West Highland railway line above Shandon and re-designation as Sensitive Countryside;
  - exclusion of inner green belt areas with no clear connection to the wider green belt and whose character has become urbanized and re-designation as Open Space Protection Areas
- Improving the robustness of the inner green belt boundary by making recommendations for improvement of existing boundary features.

- Providing a framework for the controlled expansion of settlements without damaging key green belt protective functions, by assessing inner green belt sites for potential release or continued green belt protection according to a hierarchy based on clear landscape criteria.

It is intended that this landscape study forms part of the information that will inform the Council's final position on the extent of the green belt in Helensburgh and Lomond. This will be combined with other information relating to natural and cultural heritage designations, access rights, recreational usage, development pressure and the results of public consultation. This will be used to develop an appropriate long term policy framework for the green belt in the Local Development Plan.



The Hill House 2.6km

Ailen Fruin 4.6km

Welcome to Duchess Wood  
Duchess Wood & the Hill House Reserve  
is a Special Reserve of the Scottish Natural Heritage  
and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest  
The wood is a rich and diverse habitat for  
many species of plants and animals  
It is a very special place and we hope  
you will enjoy visiting it  
Thank you  
Scottish Natural Heritage  
Duchess Wood & the Hill House Reserve  
Duchess Wood & the Hill House Reserve  
Duchess Wood & the Hill House Reserve

*Fingerpost in Duchess Wood*



*Reservoir No. 1 on hillside above Helensburgh*



# 1

# Introduction

Land that is designated as green belt in the development plan provides a long term development framework for settlements, preventing uncontrolled growth and coalescence. In association with wider networks of green space, green belt can also provide a number of benefits to the settlements it surrounds, including outdoor recreation opportunities and rural access for local people; enhancement of biodiversity and conservation of cultural heritage. Opportunities should be taken both to allow the controlled development of settlements and to protect and enhance the benefits of green belt land in a co-ordinated way.

Ironside Farrar has been appointed by Argyll & Bute Council to undertake a landscape assessment of land within the green belt in the Argyll & Bute Local Plan Area. The current green belt boundaries are shown in the Argyll & Bute Local Plan (Adopted Plan August 2009) (see Figure 1.1 of this report).

Following the Argyll & Bute Local Plan Inquiry, the Council has undertaken to carry out a review of the Council's green belt in accordance with *Scottish Planning Policy (SPP): Green Belts*. The outcome of the green belt review will identify the broad extent of future growth of the settlements in the Helensburgh and Lomond area. The landscape assessment will provide the 'tool' to ensure the asset is properly understood both at the site level and in terms of its context and relationship to surrounding areas. The results of the survey and assessment work will inform the green belt review by providing valuable supporting information to reinforce the process of identifying a sustainable green belt.

## 1.1 Scottish Planning Policy and Green Belts

The Scottish Executive guidance in *SPP: Green Belts* sets the context for green belts and their role in controlling unmanaged, unplanned urban expansion. This document sets out objectives for green belts and describes appropriate uses. Green belt policy as

set out in SPP is one of a range of mechanisms that can help to shape our towns and cities in a sustainable way. The key objectives of green belt policy are to:

- **direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations and support regeneration;**
- **protect and enhance the quality, character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities; and**
- **protect and give access to open space within and around towns and cities.**

The function of the green belt is to control, rather than prevent, development by managing the growth of settlements to achieve the above objectives. In particular prevention of coalescence of neighbouring settlements is often a key issue. Designated green belts should also be managed to enhance the quality of life for local people by providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, education and tourism, and for protecting and enhancing biodiversity, the landscape and the historic environment. Appropriate land uses within the green belt are considered to be:

- development associated with agriculture, including the re-use of historic agricultural buildings;
- woodland and forestry, including community woodlands;
- horticulture, including market gardening and directly connected retailing,
- recreational uses that are compatible with an agricultural or natural setting, and
- essential infrastructure such as electronic communications infrastructure and electricity grid connections.

## 1.2 Study Aims and Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to provide Argyll & Bute Council with the landscape justification in formulating its final position upon the extent of the green belt. The review should reinforce the sustainability of the strategic green belt and provide the landscape evidence to support this position at any subsequent public inquiry. The key aims of the study have been clearly set out in the brief as follows:

### Key Aims

- Assess the landscape value of the currently identified green belt
- Assess the landscape value and importance of the sensitive wedges identified in the review
- Identify the visual quality of key gateways into and out of urban areas
- To consider the appropriateness of the landscape features used to identify the boundaries of the green belt.
- Identify opportunities and constraints for development in landscape terms.
- To identify those measures required to improve the defensibility of the green belt boundary and landscape setting of the settlements within it.
- To provide a document which will inform the long term settlement strategy in the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

In pursuing these aims the overarching objective is to provide a landscape justification for the retention of the green belt or any revisions to it.

A number of related but more specific Issues for are also for consideration in the landscape assessment:

- Should the outer boundary of the green belt be extended eastwards to the boundary with the National Park, or does the current boundary appropriately reflect topography and landscape?
- The Landscape Assessment should evaluate the contribution the identified green belt makes to the character, landscape setting and identity of the settlements of Helensburgh, Cardross, Rhu and Shandon. The Landscape Assessment should identify any areas of the green belt which do not contribute to the character, landscape setting and identity of these settlements or if necessary identify any additional areas which may be required to secure these objectives.



The foreshore at Hill of Ardmore

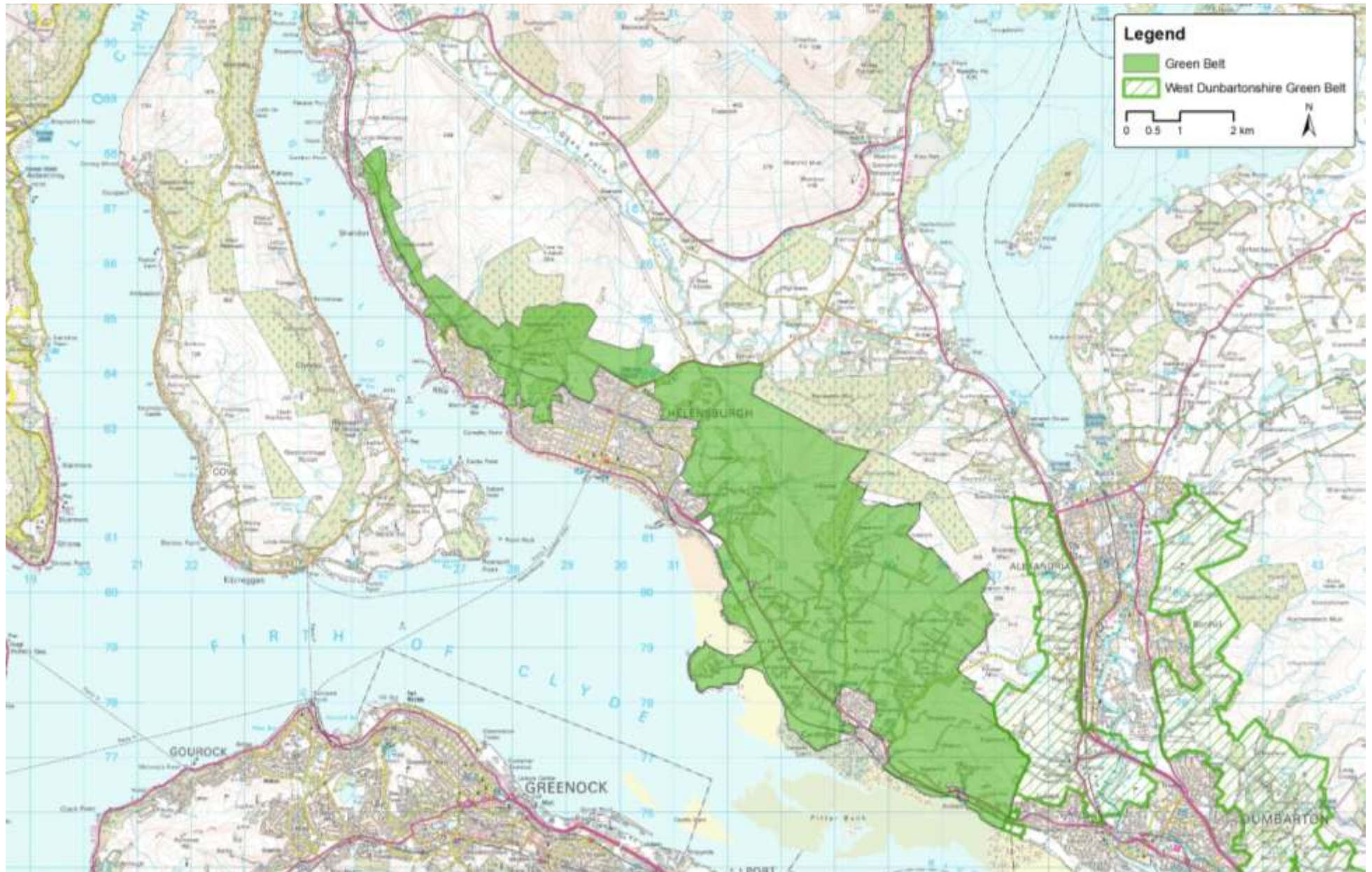


Figure 1.1: Area map showing Argyll & Bute Green Belt



*Arable land to the west of Cardross*

- The green belt boundary should be capable of being identified on site with regard to obvious landscape features, the landscape assessment should assess the appropriateness of the current boundaries and if necessary recommend alterations to the boundary where stronger boundary features are required.
- At the Public Local Inquiry in to the Argyll and Bute Local Plan a number of sites were proposed by objectors in order to meet future housing needs. In assessing these representations the Reporters have concluded that there may be merit in keeping a number of these sites under review to meet longer term needs should the need arise. The landscape assessment should therefore take these areas into consideration, and provide an assessment of the contribution of each, to the landscape character and setting of the adjacent settlement. The review should provide a ranking system in terms of the contribution that these sites make in order to inform a phasing scheme should the Council decide it is necessary to release any of these areas to meet longer term development requirements.
- The landscape assessment should evaluate the landscape value and contribution to the green belt of these sites individually and collectively as part of any group. Those sites which do not contribute to the local character, landscape setting and identity of any settlement should be assessed for their potential capacity for development.



A typical landscape of the area, farmland bounded by drystone dykes



*Semi-improved grazing land found at upper elevations—near Killoeter Hill. Part of Rolling Farmland with Estates LCA*

# 2

# Background

## 2.1 Geographical Context

Argyll and Bute lies on the western seaboard of Scotland with West Dunbartonshire to the east, Highland to the north and Stirling to the north east. It has a jagged coastline of long sea lochs and rugged mountains. The green belt is located in the Helensburgh and Lomond ward in the south-east of the local authority area. Geographically the principal features of this area are the estuary of the Clyde and the steep-sided sea loch, Gare Loch, enclosed by the long, thin Rosneath Peninsula, which runs north to south. The broad expanse of Loch Lomond and the Vale of Leven lie to the east and are separated from the coast by a broad ridge, which rises from the Carman Muir at 244m AOD, through Ben Bowie at 313m AOD to the mountains above Glen Fruin (with Beinn Tharsuinn at 656m AOD). Fertile lowland areas rise to open moorland above, with topography dictating that settlement developed along the coast. The main settlement is Helensburgh with a number of smaller villages such as Cardross, Rhu and Shandon strung along the shoreline.

## 2.2 Extent of Green Belt

The Argyll and Bute Council (ABC) green belt is a relatively a small area in the southern part of the Local Plan Area. A lowland and upland rural area which runs along the coast, south-east to connect with West Dunbartonshire's (WDC) green belt above the Clyde shoreline, and north-west to end at the edge of Faslane Naval Base on Gare Loch. The outer boundary abuts the WDC green belt above the Vale of Leven and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park at Ben Bowie. It encompasses and effectively frames the main settlement of Helensburgh as well as the smaller settlements of Ardoch, Cardross, Rhu and Shandon and bounds the western edge of Dumbarton. The inner boundary closely follows the built up area and in a number of locations the green belt extends into narrow undeveloped wedges between and within built up areas, preventing the coalescence of settlements.

## 2.3 Argyll and Bute Council Development Control Zones

In addition to the green belt there are two Development Control Zones which are adjacent to large parts of the green belt. They are Sensitive Countryside and Very Sensitive Countryside and are defined in the Structure Plan.

**Sensitive Countryside**—This area corresponds to most of the coastal perimeter of Argyll and Bute and to the transitional areas between low and high ground. It also embraces sensitive inland areas such as those associated with more substantial low-lying freshwater lochs. The sensitivities within this zone can vary considerably. Sensitive Countryside does not have a general capacity to successfully absorb development in the open countryside. The only locations within Sensitive Countryside with a general



Typical Rolling Farmland with Estates LCA—west of Cardross

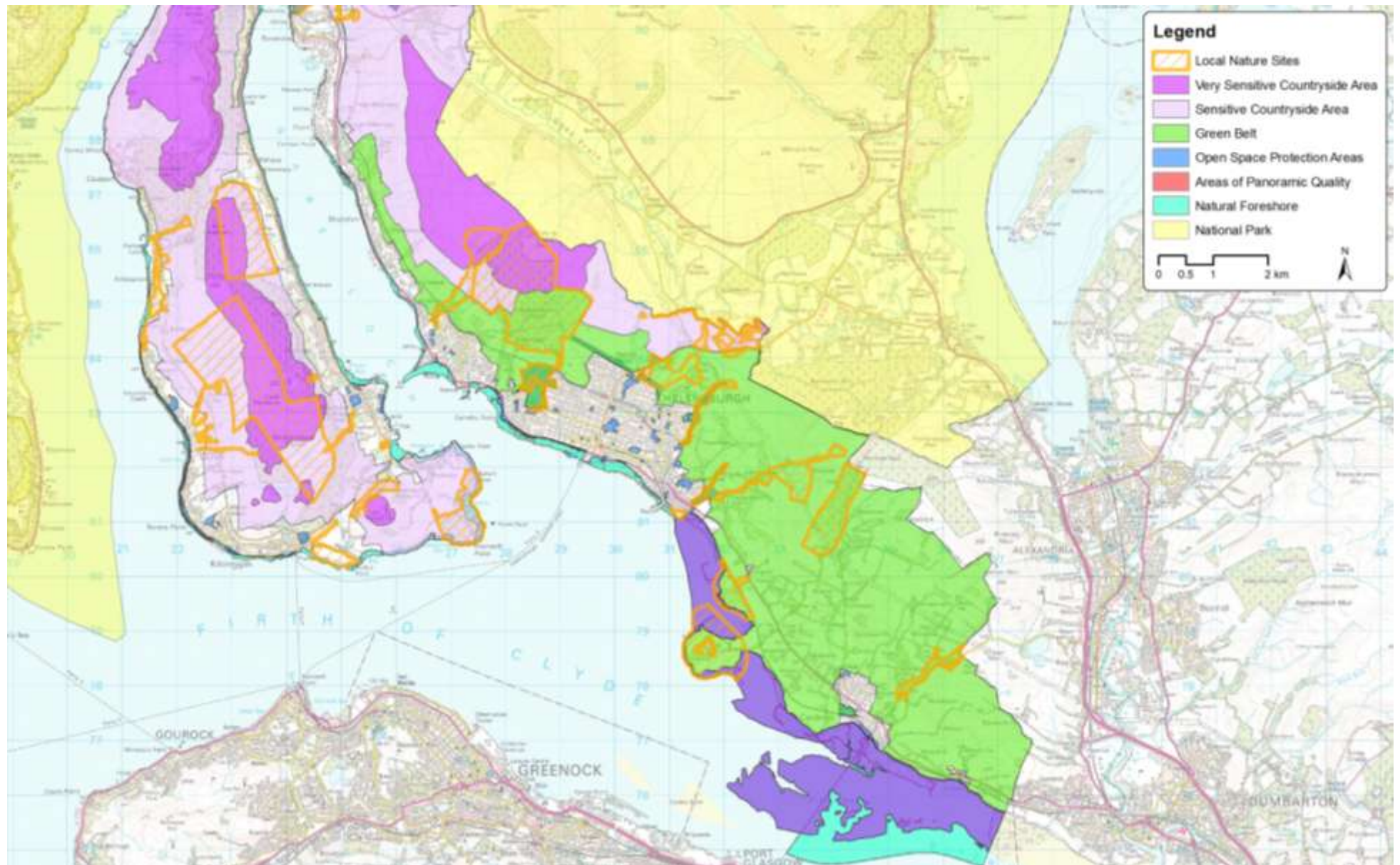


Figure 2.1: Argyll & Bute Local Plan— Landscape Planning Designations



capacity to successfully absorb development are where there are opportunities for sympathetic small scale infill, rounding-off, redevelopment or change of use of building development.

Very Sensitive Countryside—Corresponds to the countryside and coastal areas which are very vulnerable to adverse development impact and which have extremely limited capacity to successfully absorb development. This includes the wild and remote coasts of Argyll and Bute. It also includes upland and mountain areas and can embrace low-lying ground which contains extensive and concentrated conservation interests. Within this zone, the quality, sensitivity and extent of natural heritage resources is such that development requires strict control and land use requires particularly careful management. Development is considered generally to be incompatible with this Very Sensitive Countryside unless it is sympathetically focussed on existing buildings and land use or is directly associated with the natural resources of the area. The natural resources within these areas which subject to vary careful site selection, may successfully support specific development opportunities include: agriculture and forestry land; wind energy; and high ground for telecommunications and specialist tourist activity.

## 2.4 Regional and Local Landscape Character

Argyll and Bute is covered by SNH's national landscape assessment for Argyll and the Firth of Clyde (SNH 1996). There is one landscape character area, the Firth of Clyde Lowlands, which covers the area of the green belt and this is divided into three landscape character types. These are listed in Table 2.1 and their extents shown in Figure 2.2. Relevant aspects are discussed below.

SNH Ref.	Landscape Character Areas	SNH Ref.	Landscape Character Types Overlapping ABC Green Belt
1	Firth of Clyde Lowlands	Lowland - 13.	Rolling Farmland with Estates ( <i>Rolling Farmland in Figure 2.2</i> )
		Upland - 5.	Open Ridgeland ( <i>Open Upland Hills in Figure 2.2</i> )
		19.	Moorland Hills and Ridges – Broadly similar to Open Ridgeland LCT ( <i>defined as part of the SNH Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Landscape Character Assessment 1996</i> )

**Table 2.1: Landscape Character Areas from SNH Regional Assessment**

The Highland Boundary Fault crosses the study area in a south-westerly to north-easterly direction running along the valley of Camsail Burn north of the Gallow Hill on the toe of the Rosneath Peninsula and just north of Helensburgh on the lower slopes of Tom na h-Airidh. It divides the ancient Dalradian rocks of the Scottish Highlands from the younger Old Red Sandstone of lowland Scotland south of the fault. At the end of the last ice age the glaciers and their meltwaters left behind glacial deposits, and major changes in the position of the coastline led to the formation of extensive raised beaches.

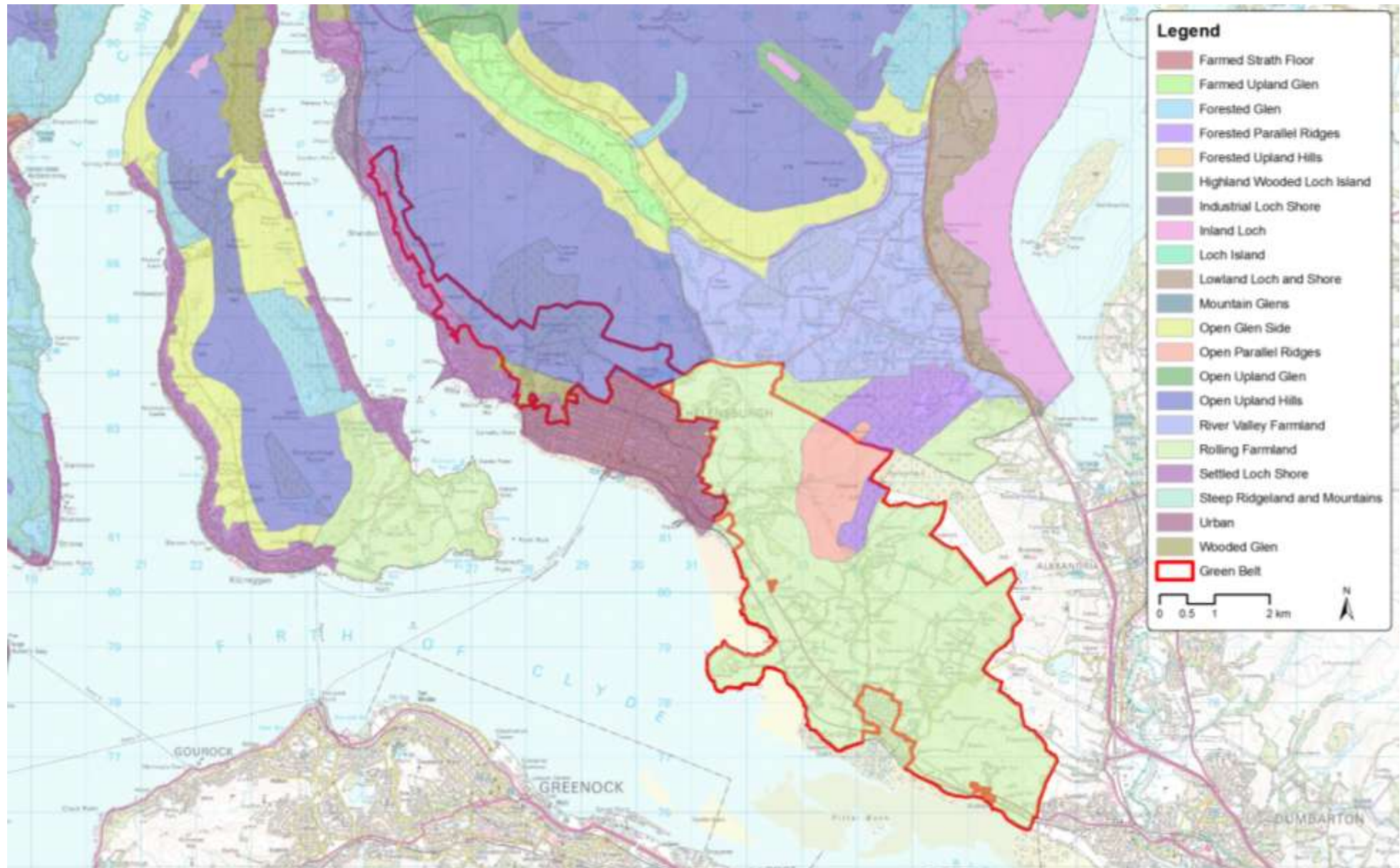


Figure 2.2: SNH Landscape Character Areas (SNH Database)

### Firth of Clyde Lowlands Landscape Character Area

This character area covers the whole study area. Its Key characteristics include:

- Old red sandstone hills with smooth slope profiles;
- Rolling farmland with estates
- Settlement and industry in shallow vales.

The Firth of Clyde Lowlands occur mainly on Old Red Sandstone. Gently rolling landform is a characteristic of this area and the hills have smooth profiles in contrast to the dramatic mountain ridges of the highlands to the north. The hills flatten out to shallow vales where settlement and industry proliferates, following the banks of the Rivers Leven and Clyde. To the south of the character area, flat sandy bays along the Firth of Clyde are enclosed by ancient raised beaches. To the north, low rolling farmland with large estates meets the shores of Loch Lomond. The upland ridges of the Glen Fruin area adjacent to the planned town, Helensburgh, have a more open wild character.

The following smaller landscape character types make up this broader character area;

#### Rolling Farmland with Estates Landscape Character Type (Rolling Farmland on Figure 2.1)

This type extends over enclosed farmland to the east of Helensburgh, below the headwalls, and extends along the coast to Dumbarton.

Its Key Characteristics include

- Broad, rounded ridges with occasional steep banks, knolls and conical upstanding hills.

- Flat coastal plain with sandy bays along the Firth of Clyde.
- Groups of fairly large, rectangular fields, enclosed by linear shelterbelts and blocks of mixed woodland.
- Stone walls, follies, beech hedgerows and estate policy woodlands.
- Numerous hedgerow trees, often forming avenues along lanes.
- Scattered large farmsteads in countryside.
- Urban development on coastal plain and broader vales.

This landscape lies on the Old Red Sandstone of lowland Scotland, immediately to the south of the Highland Boundary Fault. The coastal plain and sandy bays fringing the



Ornamental stone gateways and follies typical of Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT



Old Estate Policies typical of Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT



Mature hedgerow trees and wooded burn corridors subdivide grazing land—part of Rolling Farmland with Estates LCT

Firth of Clyde are enclosed by steep slopes, often marking the abrupt edges of ancient raised beaches along this part of the coast. It is a rolling verdant farmland landscape and it is covered by a regular patchwork of large fields partially enclosed by broadleaf woodlands and straight angular shelterbelts or stone walls. Lines of hedgerow trees in some of the hedgerows and along local roads give visual emphasis to the pattern of fields. But there are also hedgerows without trees and these allow expansive views across the rolling farmland framed by the woodlands and shelterbelts. The landscape becomes more open on the margins of more elevated land, such as the open ridge land of the hills above.

Many woodlands are estate policies and their stone walls, gatehouses, beech hedges and specimen trees add to the richness and diversity of the landscape. Small birch-oak woodlands, stands of mature beech trees and clumps of holly on the steep banks of the raised beaches are prominent local landmarks.

This is the predominant landscape character type within the green belt area. It includes large swathes of the landscape around Ardoch, Cardross, Hill of Ardmore and east and west of Helensburgh.

The SNH assessment identifies that it is a relatively enclosed farmland landscape and that it is important to maintain the overall balance between open farmland and woodland. The many historic landscapes in the area are inherently sensitive to change and merit conservation. It considers that the unspoilt character of rural roads is threatened by linear built development and the remaining undeveloped stretches of coastline along the Firth of Clyde are also sensitive to change.

It also states that there are some opportunities to accommodate change as the rolling

landform and structured woodland cover provide some scope to screen new development but that it should be carefully sited to be either framed by woodland or screened by trees and should closely relate to existing settlement patterns and linear development along roads would be inappropriate.

#### **Open Ridgeland Landscape Character Type (Open Upland Hills on Figure 2.1)**

This type extends over the open hillsides above and to the west of Helensburgh, including Tom na h' Airidh. It also includes the area around and above Rhu and Shandon.

#### **Key Characteristics**

- Broad even slopes form rounded ridges and occasional steep summits.
- Upper slopes are predominately open moorland with blocks of commercial forestry, patches of birch woodland and scrub.
- Marginal farmland confined to broader glens and loch fringes, with fields enclosed by stone walls and occasional shelter belts.
- Narrow strips of broadleaf woodland along burns and within steep, rocky gullies.
- Substantial dark grey retaining walls and beech hedgerows emphasise contours and help to integrate settlements on lower slopes.
- Built development concentrated along very narrow shoreline strip.

The open ridge land landscape lies on Dalradian metamorphic rocks of the Southern Highland Group, extending into the hills around Helensburgh, to the west of Gare Loch and to the north of the Highland Boundary Fault. The broad, rounded ridges are considerably lower than the steep ridgeland and mountains to the north and the profile of the slopes is relatively smooth. Rocky outcrops are limited to the upper moorland



Rough grazing land typical of Open Ridgeland LCT

summits, where the landform becomes craggy in places. The glens cut deep into the landform, creating wooded rocky gullies and some wider valleys such as Glen Fruin. The steep slopes generally become undulating at the edges of lochs.

There are extensive conifer plantations on the sides of the broad ridges, with rounded, open moorland tops. Smaller broadleaf woodlands are confined to the glens. Many of the trees on exposed slopes are stunted. Rough grazing predominates and fields are usually enclosed by post and rail fencing. Gorse is characteristic of the upland areas, as are stands of Scots pine. Despite the wooded character, there are many long, framed views and the landscape has an open, well-structured character. While the

meandering rivers and burns form soft, organic shapes in the landscape, rows of hedgerow trees and shelter belts stand out as strong geometric features. Field boundaries on the lower slopes of the moorland ridges are characterised by broken stone walls, post and wire fencing and sparse hedgerows.

On the loch edges, there is a gradual change to a smaller scale landscape, with wooded burns and a narrow, intermittent band of built development. Settlement is largely confined to loch edges. The houses are typically stepped up the slope on terraces. Beech hedges contrast with local stone walls, natural rock outcrops and mixed woodlands to create a richly varied local landscape.

Within the green belt this landscape character type lies above and around Rhu, Shandon and Faslane. It is identified as sensitive to change, with the strip of land by the loch side particularly sensitive as it is prominent in views from the opposite side of the loch and reflection increases the visual impact of built development on this shoreline landscape.

Elevated areas are larger in scale and more open, with long framed views, they are therefore particularly sensitive to change. Built development is generally concentrated along a narrow shoreline strip. This is not continuous and areas where the undeveloped landscape continues right down to the water's edge are important and merit conservation. Noticeable pressures include developments such as Faslane which are larger in scale than the surrounding landscape.

There is more opportunity to accommodate landscape change low in the valley, where tree cover is greater and views are reduced, than higher up. However the impact of any large developments would be significant on the small scale landscape of the valley floor.



Rough grazing land typical of Open Ridgeland LCT

#### **Moorland Hills and Ridges Landscape Character Type**

This character area is coincident with the green belt and covers the Muirs on the eastern edge of the study area from Carman Muir to Bannachra Muir. In contrast to other hills in the north west part of the study area, which tend to be underlain by resistant basalts which give rise to rugged moorland tops, these hills form the south western end of a broad band of Old Red Sandstone which extends across Scotland from the east coast and which lies immediately to the south of the Highland Boundary Fault. The softer nature of this rock is reflected in the hills' smooth, convex shape, and the absence of craggy outcrops and summits. The hills provide a comparatively undeveloped link between the Loch Lomond Hills and the Clyde.

Land cover includes improved pastures on the lower slopes, particularly on the shallower slopes, and rougher grassland and heather moorland on the summit. Hedgerow trees and farm woodlands are important features of the lower slopes whilst more extensive coniferous plantations are present on some of the higher slopes.

These hills would have provided an important defensive location overlooking the Clyde and the narrow valley leading from Loch Lomond and Highland areas to the north. Forts and cairns are found on the hill slopes. Modern settlement is confined to a scatter of farms around the mid and lower slopes.

This landscape may be subject to rural development pressures associated with farm amalgamation, rationalisation and the development of new agricultural buildings.

## 2.5 Landscape Character of the Green Belt

Within the wider regional context described above the green belt provides a setting for the settlements in the Helensburgh and Lomond area. Each of these settlements is distinctively different in character and these differences are emphasised by their surroundings. The following is a brief description of the green belt context for each of the settlements.

### Helensburgh

Helensburgh is by far the largest settlement and the only town within the area. It is set within clearly identifiable landscape features on a broad hillside running down to Gare Loch. The twin peaks of Ben Bowie to the east and Tom na h-Airidh in the west form the broader setting to the town and a backdrop of open moorland and forestry.

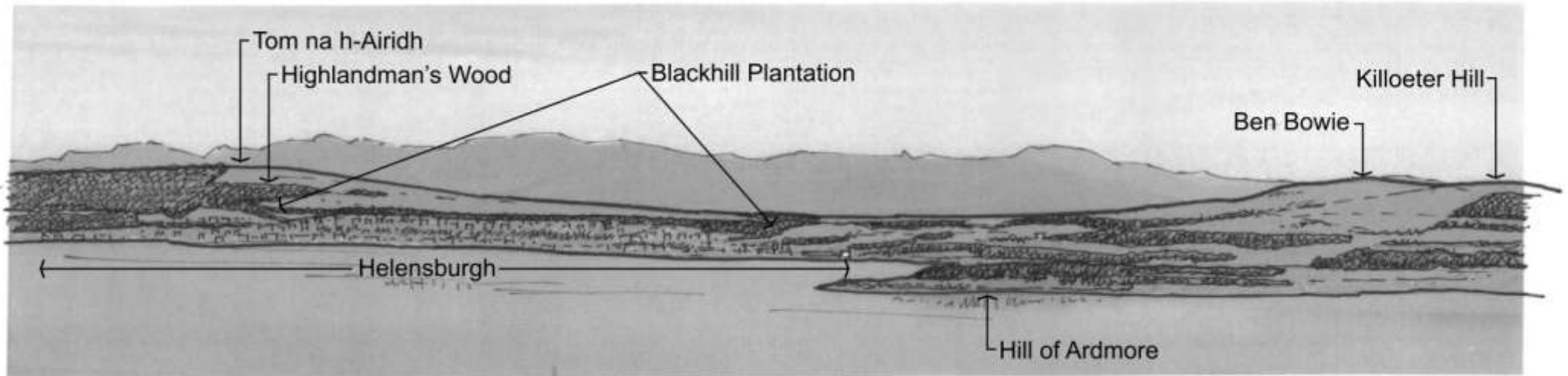
The town lies below a distinctive ridge line around the 100m contour, with the landscape character above the town an abrupt transition to a relatively wild and open landscape, comprising raised bogs, conifer woods and regenerating birch woodland. The distinctive, linear Blackhill Plantation marks much of the upper boundary, separating the built up area from the open land. One main road, the A818 to Loch Lomond, exits the town here and at this point lies a cluster of three reservoirs. Together with a derelict building owned by Scottish Water, a council roads depot and a civic amenity site, these are the only significant built developments north of the town.

Flanking the town to east and west, is rolling farmland with fields of medium scale, a mix of improved grazing land and arable cops, divided by densely wooded, incised burn corridors. Most of these areas are included within the green belt. Overall Helensburgh is set within a broad, large scale landscape which has capacity for additional areas of development.



Figure 2.3: 1920's Helensburgh clearly showing Blackhill Plantation as the northern limit of the towns development





Geographical Features

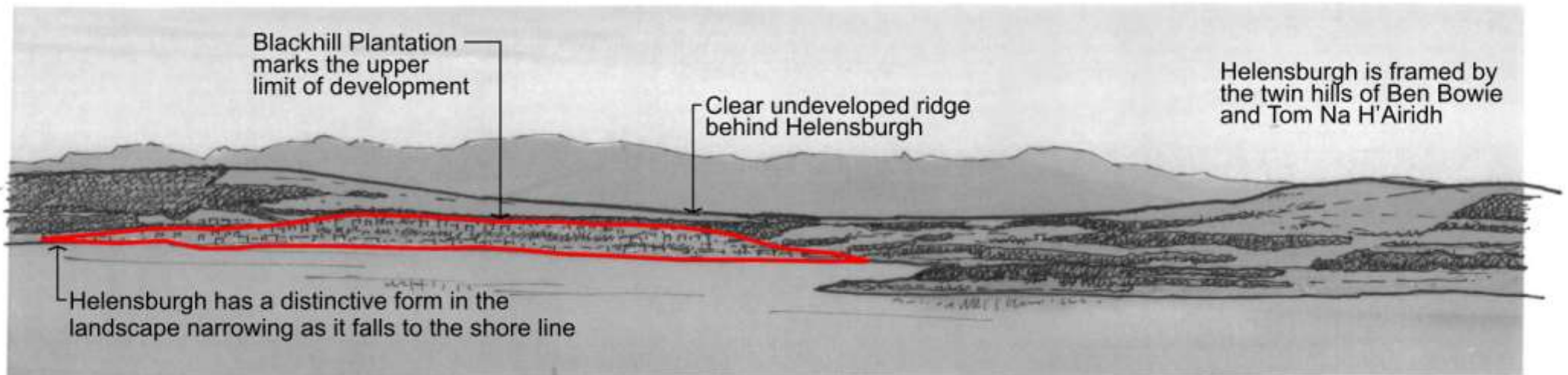


Figure 2.4: Important Elements in the Landscape Setting of Helensburgh

### Cardross

Cardross is a large village with extensive areas of modern development which lies in a rolling, undulating, wooded, farmland landscape, on a steep hillside running down to the Firth of Clyde. The village lies below the 50m contour surrounded by the heavily wooded valleys of the Kilmahew and Geilston burns. A range of Muirs: Carman, Milburn, Overton and Bromley rise to 300m forming the distant backdrop. The main road and railway run along a narrow coastal plain, a raised beach landform and the lower part of the village lies on this level ground. It is relatively unusual in that a golf course is centrally located within the village. The open farmland setting of Cardross limits the capacity of the landscape for further development outwith the current settlement boundaries.

### Rhu

Rhu is a large village which sits above a distinctive promontory, Rhu Point which is a narrowing of Gare Loch. Its northern boundary is the West Highland railway and houses have been built right up to the cutting. Fingers of dense woodland hide most of the housing on the hillside below giving little indication of the size of the settlement. Its form is predominantly detached houses in large grounds stepped up the steep hillside, with a small village centre on a level area by the shore. Above the railway, fields and the dark conifer plantations of Highlandman's Wood on the flanks of Tom na h-Airidh give it its wider landscape setting. The fields of Torwoodhill and west of Letrualt are both important in preserving the setting of the settlement and preventing coalescence with Helensburgh.

### Shandon

Shandon is, like Rhu, located on steep slopes below the railway and above the A814. It is a linear residential settlement forming a ribbon of low density housing above the loch and the A814. Dense tree cover defines the character of the area, which appears from a distance more like a strip of woodland running along the shores of Gare Loch, with few houses, than a village. The mature woodland within and surrounding Shandon significantly ameliorates the visual and landscape impact of the large houses on terraces stepping up the hillside. There is little to clearly differentiate the extents of the settlement visually on the ground but the residential estates and groups of houses do not breach the thin strip of open ground and woodland below the railway. Above the railway is a large expanse of hillside. Steep fields merge into the open rough pasture and scrub above and woodland cover gradually reduces up to the bare north-western ridge of Tom na h-Airidh. The outer green belt boundary lies in the fields and scrub above the railway but is not always marked by distinctive landscape features.

### Smaller Settlements

Ardoch is a cluster of houses set near the border with West Dunbartonshire. The setting is, like Cardross, open farmland, although set in a shallow hollow by the shore of the Firth of Clyde. Tree cover is limited to the grounds of the large detached houses, hedgerow trees and the burn corridor. The busy A814 and West Highland railway line cut through the settlement.

A smaller cluster of houses at Colgrain Farm on the A814 south east of Helensburgh is identified as a settlement. The green belt in this area is similar in character to the rolling farmland that surrounds the eastern edge of Helensburgh. North of this the land rises steeply to the open slopes of Killoeter. West of the A814 the land flattens out onto the coastal strip. In this area the rural character of landscape is compromised by the presence of a sewage treatment works and an industrial site.

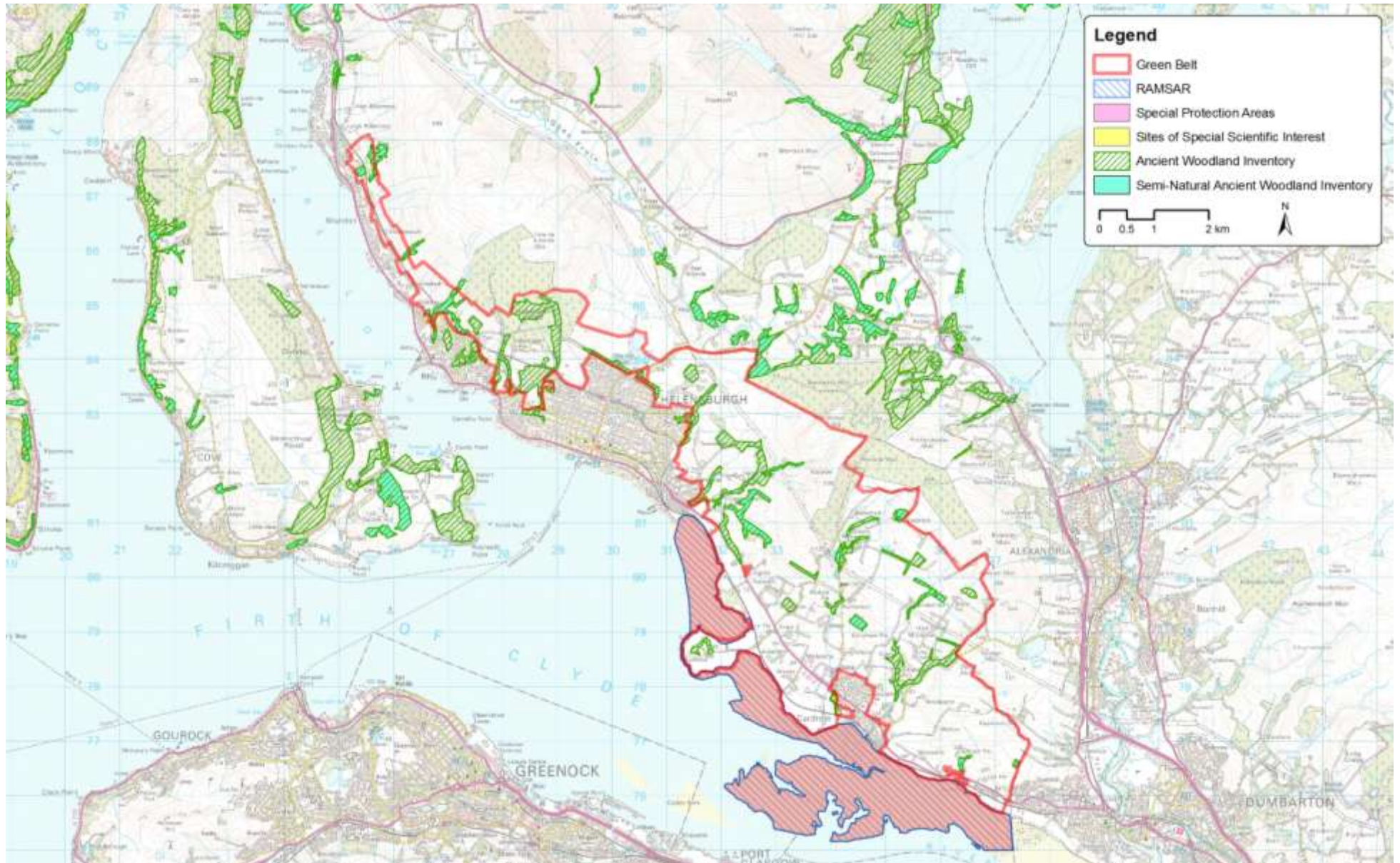


Figure 2.5: National Natural Heritage Designations (SNH Database)

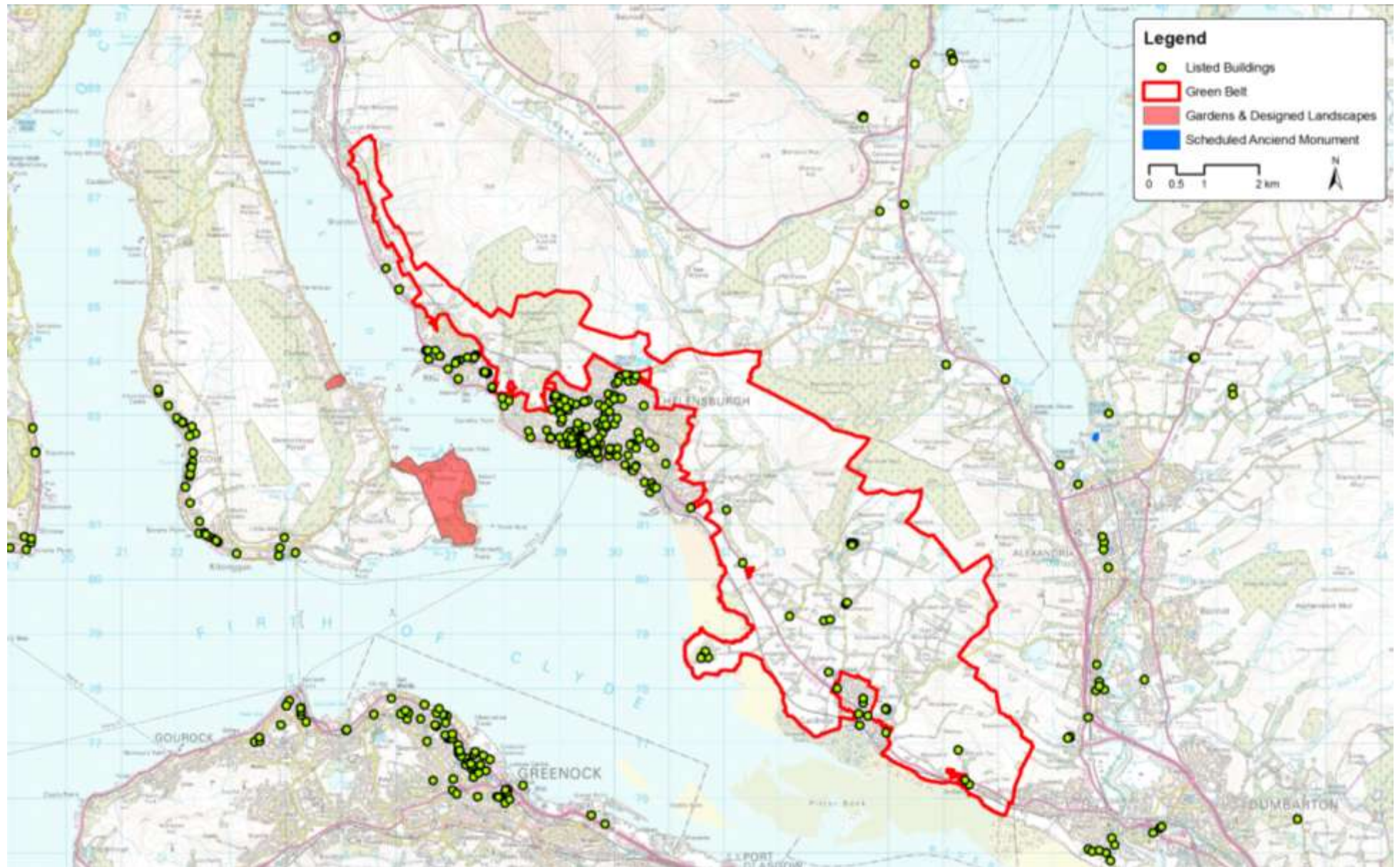


Figure 2.6: Cultural Heritage Designations (Historic Scotland Database)



Figure 2.7: Proposed Core Paths in Study Area



# 3

# Methodology

## 3.1 Scope of Assessment

The scope of the assessment is primarily to assess the degree to which the extent and landscape of the Helensburgh and Lomond green belt meets SPP green belt objectives and reflects appropriate land uses. This information and the recommendations that follow have the overall objective of identifying and justifying a sustainable green belt, including any additions or deletions from the current area. The assessment is primarily based on the landscape character, physical features and value of the area but also takes into account information on designations and usage contributing to landscape value and overall green belt objectives.

The assessment addresses both the key aims and specific issues detailed in the brief. The methodology is tailored to this by subdividing the study area into smaller units for survey, analysis and evaluation, specifically addressing landscape value, sensitivity to change, nature and robustness of boundaries and scope for improvement or change. An assessment is made of the potential for development in specific locations and also for the inclusion or deletion of areas from the green belt. The assessment is based on both documentary information (paper and electronic) and on site visits.

## 3.2 Assessment Area

The landscape assessment has been carried out on the following study area:

- Argyll & Bute green belt identified in the local plan review document
- Areas of land adjacent to the outer boundary of the green belt under consideration for inclusion in the green belt

The study area has been subdivided into smaller areas relating to the landscape character, topography and setting of settlements within the green belt. Each of these

areas has been named on the basis of their relationship to settlements or other features such as hills or farms.

The areas have been further subdivided into individual sites relating to smaller landscape units, each of which is numbered. The sites vary significantly in size depending on their criticality to the green belt and their proximity to settlements. Sites close to settlements and the inner green belt boundary are generally smaller and those close to the outer green belt in larger scale, more open landscapes are generally larger. In the case of some of the inner green belt sites these have been based on the objection areas submitted to the local plan review.

In all there are 56 individual sites comprising areas of land within and adjacent to the green belt, grouped into 12 main areas for assessment. The numbering and extent of each site and area is shown in Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1-3.3 and each area forms the basis for the detailed assessment in Chapter 4.



Panoramic photo of western part of the green belt area

AREA NAME	COMPOSITE SITES
ARDOCH	AR01
	AR02
	AR03
	AR04
	AR05
	AR06
CARDROSS EAST	CE01
	CE02
	CE03
CARDROSS NORTH	CN01
	CN02
	CN03
	CN04
CARDROSS WEST	CW01
	CW02
	CW03
	CW04
HILL OF ARDMORE	HA01
	HA02
	HA03
	HA04
KILLOETHER HILL	KH01
	KH02
	KH03
	KH04
DARLEITH & KILMAHEW	DK01
	DK02

AREA NAME	COMPOSITE SITES
HELENSBURGH EAST	HE01
	HE02
	HE03
	HE04
HELENSBURGH NORTH	HN01
	HN02
	HN03
	HN04
	HN05
	HN05
	HN06
	HN07
HN08	
HELENSBURGH WEST	HW01
	HW02
	HW03
	HW04
	HW05
	HW06
	HW07
RHU NORTH	RN01
	RN02
	RN03
SHANDON NORTH	SN01
	SN02
	SN03
	SN04
	SN05
	SN06

Table 3.1: Green Belt study Areas and Sites (see Figure 3.1 to 3.3)



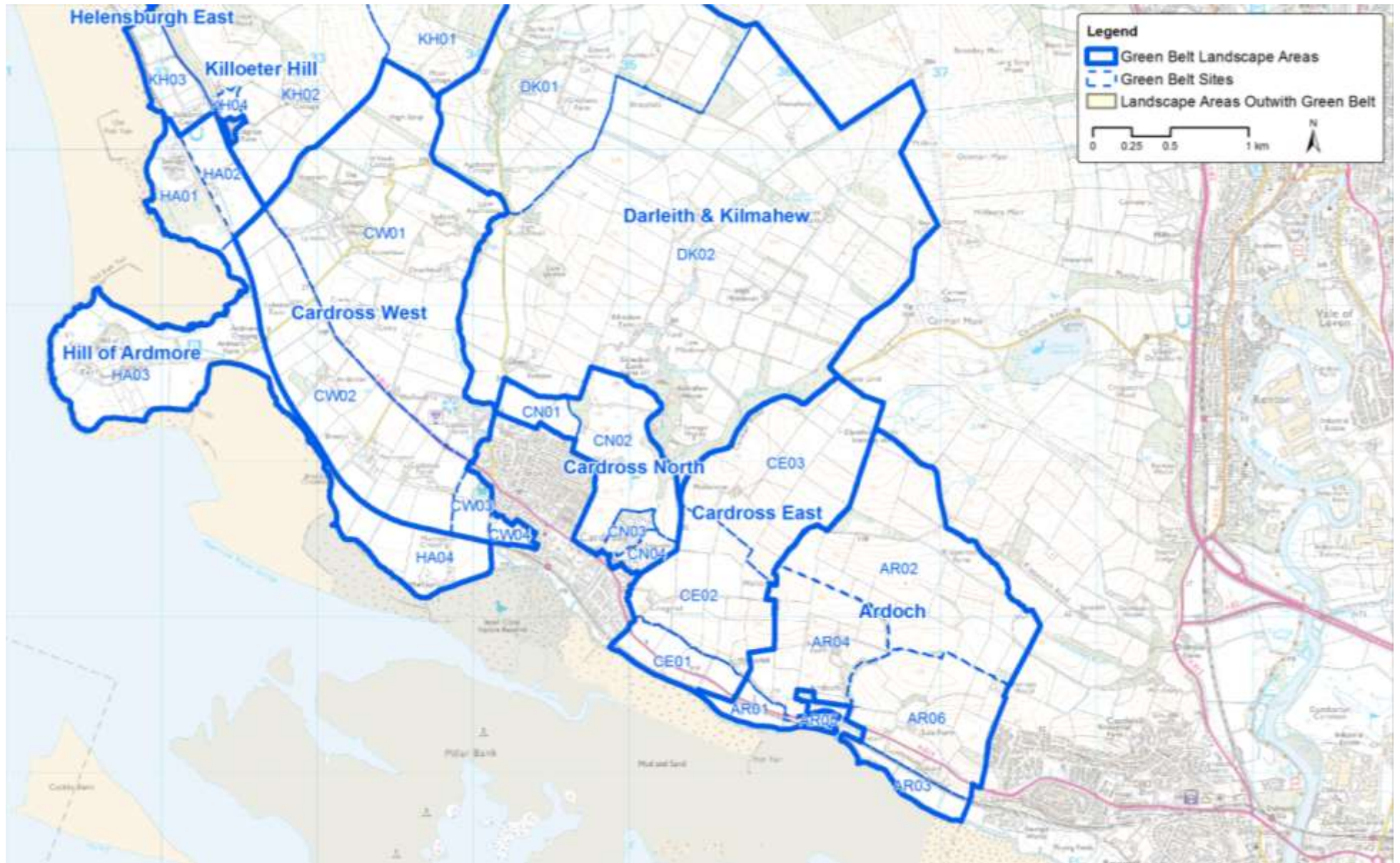


Figure 3.1: Green Belt Areas

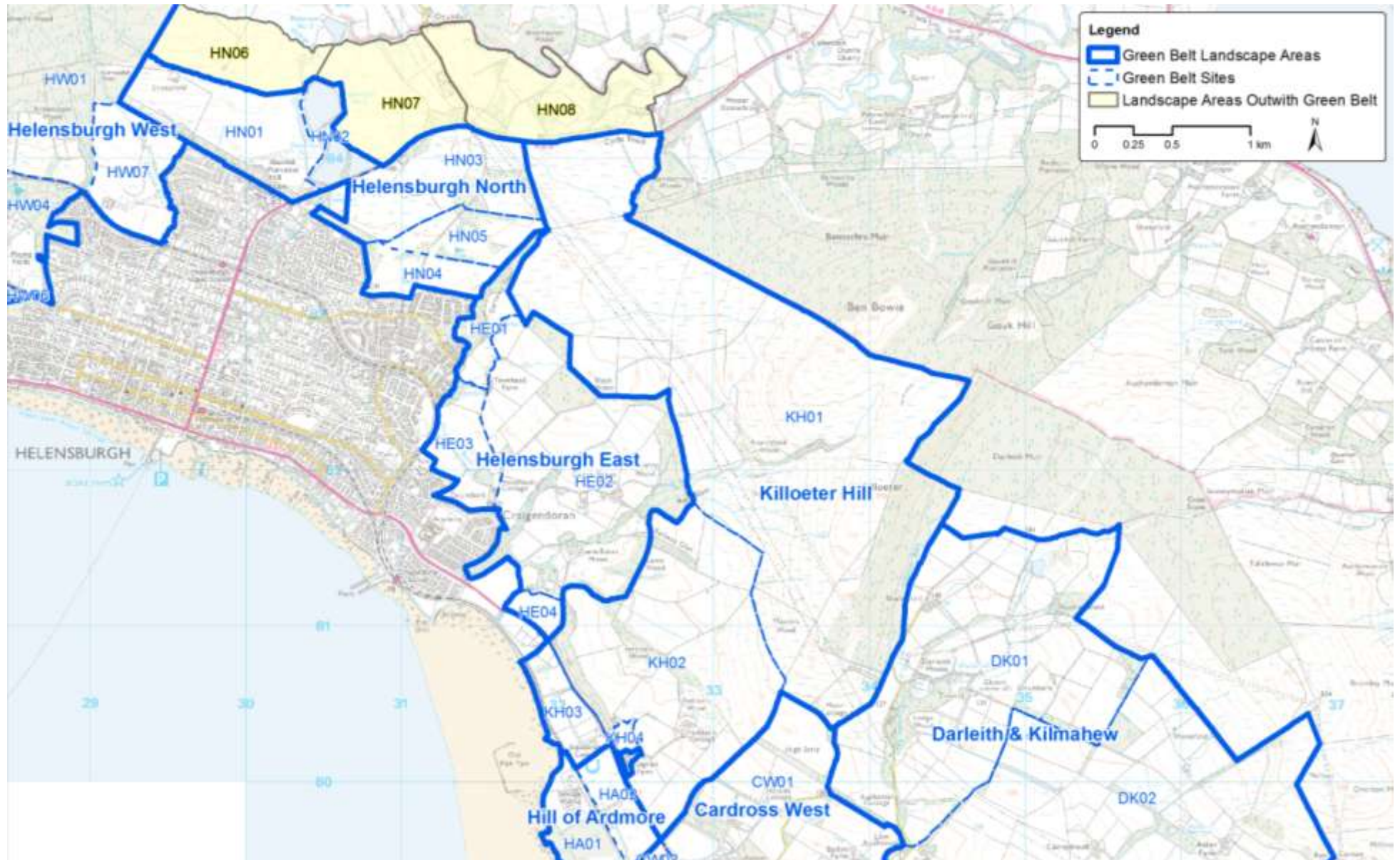


Figure 3.2 Green Belt Areas

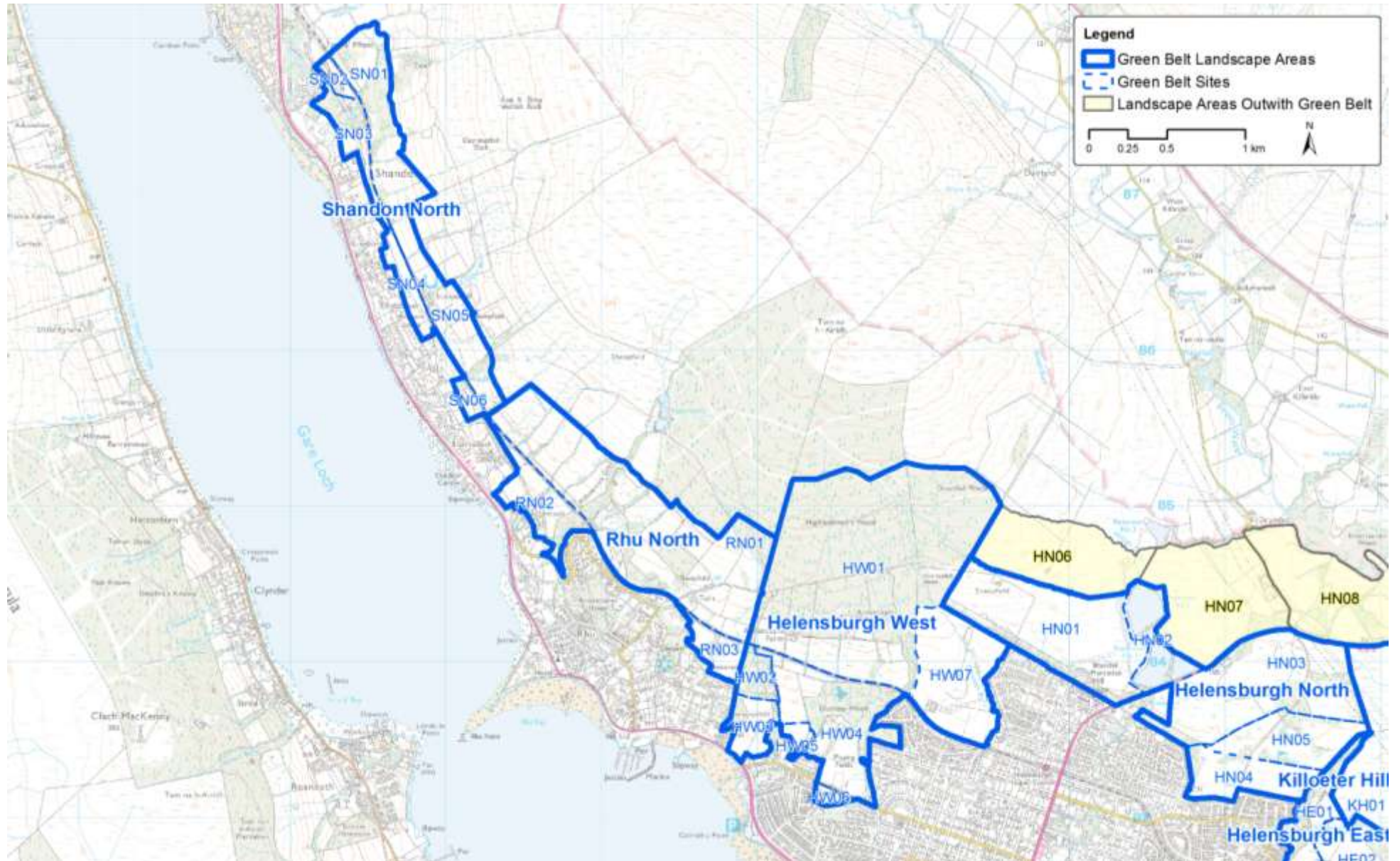


Figure 3.3: Green Belt Areas

### 3.3 Assessment Criteria

The criteria for this assessment are designed to address the key aims set out in Argyll & Bute's brief, described in Section 1.2 preceding.

As described in Chapter 1, green belts have a number of objectives and functions and can be considered, for example, in terms of landscape setting or separation of settlements or recreational use, access and agriculture. Given the key aims of this study, the assessment is based primarily on landscape character and sensitivity including the setting and separation of settlements.

The assessment of landscape value is based primarily on landscape character, scenic quality and contribution to the green belt objectives. It also includes other aspects considered to contribute to green belt objectives or general landscape value such as designations other than green belt or public access and usage, including:

- Topographical, geological and geomorphologic features;
- Archaeology, ancient monuments, gardens and designed landscapes, listed buildings, and conservation areas;
- Ecology including Ramsar, Natura 2000 sites, SSSI and Local Nature Conservation Sites;
- Recreational use including Core Paths, Rights of Way, Cycle Routes particularly in relation to links to the National Park.

The assessment of landscape sensitivity is based on the criteria in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management And Assessment (2002). Landscape sensitivity can be considered as a combination of landscape value and susceptibility to change.

Susceptibility to change is essentially a measure of the degree to which change would adversely affect the key defining characteristics of an area of landscape. In this case it is an assessment of the vulnerability of areas of the green belt to the type of change that development would bring. This is assessed by looking at the features, scale and character of the area as well as its visibility from surroundings and the role it plays in performing a green belt objective or function.

A highly susceptible site would therefore be one that is highly visible, located in a critical location between or adjacent to built up areas, has a high landscape quality, distinct features and character that would be lost. Conversely a site of low susceptibility would not be located in a critical location, not very visible, without distinctive character and with few features of interest.

Along with an assessment of value, this will help to identify where the most sensitive parts of the green belt are. Table 3.2 details the criteria taken into account in assessing value, susceptibility and sensitivity. The green belt landscape objectives are given the greatest weight in assessing green belt value. The physical and qualitative criteria in effect contribute to these objectives.

This has included applying a five-point scale assessment of each of the criteria in Table 3.2. for each of the 11 objection sites. These have been specifically assessed in more detail terms of their value to the green belt and sensitivity to change, to allow a comparative ranking as required by the brief. The points scale evaluates the criteria according to value and susceptibility to change, with the highest score indicating a high green belt value and susceptibility to change and the lowest score a low green belt value and susceptibility to change. It runs from the highest score of 5 to the lowest of 1 and can be categorised as follows:

HIGH GREENBELT VALUE/ SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE HIGHER CONSTRAINTS ON DEVELOPMENT		LOW GREENBELT VALUE/ SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE LOWER CONSTRAINTS ON DEVELOPMENT		
SCORE OF 5	SCORE OF 4	SCORE OF 3	SCORE OF 2	SCORE OF 1
<b>Green belt Landscape Objectives</b>				
Important in setting and character of a settlement		Not important in setting or character of a settlement		
Important in identity of a settlement		Not important in identity of a settlement		
Preventing coalescence between settlements		Not in a critical location preventing coalescence		
Gateway to a settlement		Not in a critical gateway location		
<b>Physical Criteria</b>				
Prominent/ easily visible/ higher than surroundings		Well hidden, low in landscape		
Well defined/ robust existing green belt boundary		Poor/ ill defined existing green belt boundary		
No clear alternative boundary		Clear alternative boundary		
Large area/ long boundary		Small area/ short boundary		
<b>Qualitative Criteria</b>				
High scenic quality		Poor scenic quality		
Strongly rural character		Indeterminate/ urban fringe character		
<b>Designations/ Other Criteria Contributing to Landscape Value</b>				
Landscape designations		No designation		
Biodiversity designations/ value		No designation/ low value		
Cultural heritage designations/ associations/ value		No designation/ associations/ low value		
Core paths, rights of way, cycle routes, recreational facilities/ use		No core paths rights of way, cycle routes, or recreational facilities/ use		

**Table 3.2: Landscape Criteria for Assessing Value to Green Belt, Susceptibility to Change and Constraints to Development**

- a score of 5 indicates that the site has a high green belt value and is most susceptible to change indicating it has the highest constraints on development
- a score of 3 indicates that the site has moderate green belt value, is moderately susceptible to change and therefore has moderate constraints on development
- a score of 1 corresponds to a site that has low green belt value, has low susceptibility to change and low constraints on development.

The scoring system has been used to support and inform the assessment process for each of the objection sites. The ranking of sites shown on the table in Appendix 2 is not an absolute measure but has been used to provide an informed approach for determining the relative value to the green belt of each site.

### 3.4 Assessment Process and Reporting Survey and Evaluation of Green Belt

Each of the areas and the component sites has been studied on a desk basis using maps, aerial photographs and background information. The sites have then been visited, with their key characteristics and green belt related features recorded and assessed for their value and suitability for inclusion in the green belt, including sensitivity to potential change (generally assumed to be residential, or occasionally commercial, development). The survey was carried out primarily on foot and by car, with the surveyors taking photographs and noting the characteristics of the area and sites and their compatibility with green belt criteria on a proforma. A copy of the proforma is included in Appendix 1.



*Area separating Shandon from Faslane SN03*

The assessment of each of the 12 areas covers the following:

- A general description of the area and individual sites within it.
- A description of the neighbouring areas outside the green belt and within the green belt.
- A description of the inner green belt boundaries (i.e. the edges of the sites where they adjoin non-green belt land).
- An assessment of landscape condition, value and potential sensitivity of the area to development.
- A statement on the landscape value of the area and sites and their sensitivity to change
- A statement on the contribution of the area to the green belt, particularly in relation to SPP objectives.
- A statement on the suitability of the area as green belt land and of the green belt boundaries including, if appropriate, recommendations for any changes to the boundary involving either removal of existing areas or inclusion of additional areas.
- Recommendations for improvements to the green belt boundary.

The conclusions of each area assessment are largely based on the results of the surveys. However, where appropriate, the conclusions have also taken account of other considerations within the context of the Local Plan, as advised by Argyll & Bute Council, including existing planning consents and strategic land use objectives.

### **Proposed Changes to the Green Belt Boundary**

The need to establish a robust and consistent boundary has led to our recommending proposed changes to the inner and outer green belt boundaries. This has led to the exclusion of existing areas from the green belt. These areas should be reclassified with a different protective designation: Open Space Protection Area, Sensitive Landscape or Very Sensitive Landscape Areas. These designations are considered to relate more closely to their landscape character, location and contribution to the landscape.

Equally, some new areas we recommend be added to the green belt to protect the approaches to Helensburgh and provide a boundary more consistent with SPP objectives. These decisions and the reasons behind them are stated in the area assessments and further summarised as an overall picture in the summary and conclusions.

### **Presentation of Findings**

The detailed survey information and recommendations are supplied in Chapter 4, in the form of illustrated survey sheets and maps for each of the areas. The findings are summarised in Chapter 6 and Table 6.1.





# Results of Green Belt Assessment

# 4

## 4.1 AREA NAME: Ardoch

### COMPOSITE SITES: AR01, AR02, AR03, AR04, AR05, AR06

#### 4.1.1 Description of Area

The most easterly area of the green belt, Ardoch is bound by Dumbarton to the east, and to the north the boundary with WDC below the broad rounded ridge that separates the Vale of Leven from the Firth of Clyde. To the west lies the area surrounding Cardross.

It is an area of rolling farmland mainly set to grazing land around the small settlement of Ardoch, separating it from Dumbarton. The area is interspersed with blocks of mature woodland and hedgerow trees which subdivide and semi-enclose the fields, and line some tracks and roads. Many field boundaries are well maintained hedges together with post and wire fences, but derelict drystone dykes are more common at higher elevations. The topography is varied and undulating but is predominantly a south facing hillside running from the limit of enclosed land at the headwall below Carman Muir (140 AOD) to the shores of the Firth of Clyde. It is medium in its scale, with a few narrow, wooded, incised burns running down the hillside. Farmsteads are dotted around the middle slopes, with the old stone steadings redeveloped for housing and new larger scale farm sheds erected to replace them.

Lower down, the area levels and opens out, following a raised beach landform. There is a narrow wooded escarpment dropping down to flat boggy semi-improved fields next to

the shoreline. It is in and just above this level area that the road and rail line run and the settlement of Ardoch has been built. The busy road and regularly spaced gantries carrying the power lines for the railway impinge on the rural landscape character of the area. The exposed rocky foreshore is clothed in scrubby woodland, bracken and gorse with stumpy trees shaped by the wind. There are a small number of mature estate trees and tall masonry walls associated with the large houses in Ardoch.

More suburban elements have encroached at its eastern boundary with the much larger town of Dumbarton. Small groups of houses, suburban in form and residential in character line the A814 as it leaves the bigger town, eroding the transition from urban to rural character.

The whole area has panoramic views across the 1.5 km wide Firth of Clyde to the steep hills and dock areas of Port Glasgow on the opposite bank, which creates a distant sense of enclosure

#### 4.1.2 Surrounding Areas

This area is at the eastern extent of the ABC green belt but it abuts the WDC green belt to the east, which runs around Dumbarton. The WDC green belt landscape is similar in character but with more urban fringe elements immediately adjacent to Castlehill. Within the ABC green belt to the west is Cardross East (CE01, CE02 & CE03) this area is predominantly a rolling farmland landscape of similar character.

Surrounded by the inner green belt boundary, Ardoch is a very small settlement, comprising a few large scale detached houses, some cottages and a row of smaller detached houses around the A814. The edge of Dumbarton to the east (outwith ABC) is much more urban in its form.

#### 4.1.3 Inner Green Belt Boundaries

The inner green belt boundaries that surround Ardoch are overall well defined, with the eastern boundaries along AR06, AR03 and AR04 next to houses and comprising elements in combination, such as masonry walls, lines of trees, roads, tracks, woodland and changes in slope. Southern boundaries between Ardoch and the green belt (AR03 & AR05) are either the railway, road or track. These are all very clearly defined. The weakest boundary is the east of AR05 around some cottages, which is only a garden fence.

The eastern edge of area AR03 is a hedgerow but this adjoins the WDC green belt, AR06 is a woodland belt next to a residential area of Dumbarton, forming a very robust boundary.

#### 4.1.4 Value and Sensitivity of the Area

The area has a moderate landscape value, with the areas of farmland around the middle slopes the highest value and AR05 lowest. This is due to a combination of factors natural heritage designations, condition, recreation value and scenic qualities.

Only two small areas of the woodland in this area are designated as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland, the Ardoch Burn corridor and Perrays Wood, however the unmanaged foreshore area will have a higher biodiversity value than the farmland above. The two right of way which run along the foreshore between Dumbarton and Ardoch, and through the area from Cardross to Dumbarton, give the area a moderate recreational value. Nearly all areas and boundaries are in good condition, with the common problem of landscape features such as drystone dykes falling into disrepair and replaced by post and wire fences. However along the foreshore and public right of



View of AR05 showing the green belt boundaries.

way from Ardoch to Dumbarton there is strong evidence of anti-social behaviour and large amounts of rubbish, mainly flotsam and jetsam from the Clyde.

The area is of moderate scenic quality, due mainly to the rolling topography, mature trees and panoramic views creating interesting compositions. The wooded escarpment, a raised beach, is very attractive but the visual dominance of the railway and road at lower levels reduces its perceived rural qualities. The scenic quality of the whole area is also reduced because it is a common landscape type locally.

Most of the area is moderately susceptible to development, however the level sites (AR01, AR03 & AR06) have an increased susceptibility of moderate to high. This is due to a number of factors: the existing development in AR06 which has reached a threshold

where any further built structures will erode the transition between urban and rural and result in a distinct urban fringe landscape character. Additionally these lower areas are important in physically and visually separating Ardoch from Dumbarton and as a transport corridor, are highly visible.

Overall the area is of moderate landscape sensitivity, with AR01, AR03 & AR06 of moderate to high landscape sensitivity due to their high visibility.

### Contribution of the Area to the Green Belt

The area meets SPP objectives in that it is very important in preventing ribbon development along the A814 and the coalescence of Dumbarton with Ardoch. It also forms the gateway to the settlements of Dumbarton and Ardoch for travellers along the A814 and the railway.

The area has typical green belt functions, with agriculture, horticulture, woodland and forestry and recreation uses compatible with an agricultural or natural setting.

### Suitability of Current Area and Boundaries & Proposed Changes

The area is suitable as green belt in that it contributes to both the wider setting of Dumbarton and Ardoch and it also acts as a gateway to them along the A814 and railway line. It also prevents ribbon development and visual coalescence between settlements and has typical green belt uses.

Most of the boundaries are well defined and suitable for the green belt edge, except at the locations listed below:

AR05—The eastern boundary around cottages in Ardoch is weak and thin, a more

robust boundary could be the railway along the southern edge of Ardoch. AR05 contained by the railway and A814 road on embankment near the centre of the village is of moderate to low landscape sensitivity, as it is of low landscape value and lies within the existing settlement pattern.



The wider setting of AR05 on the edge of Ardoch

# Ardoch

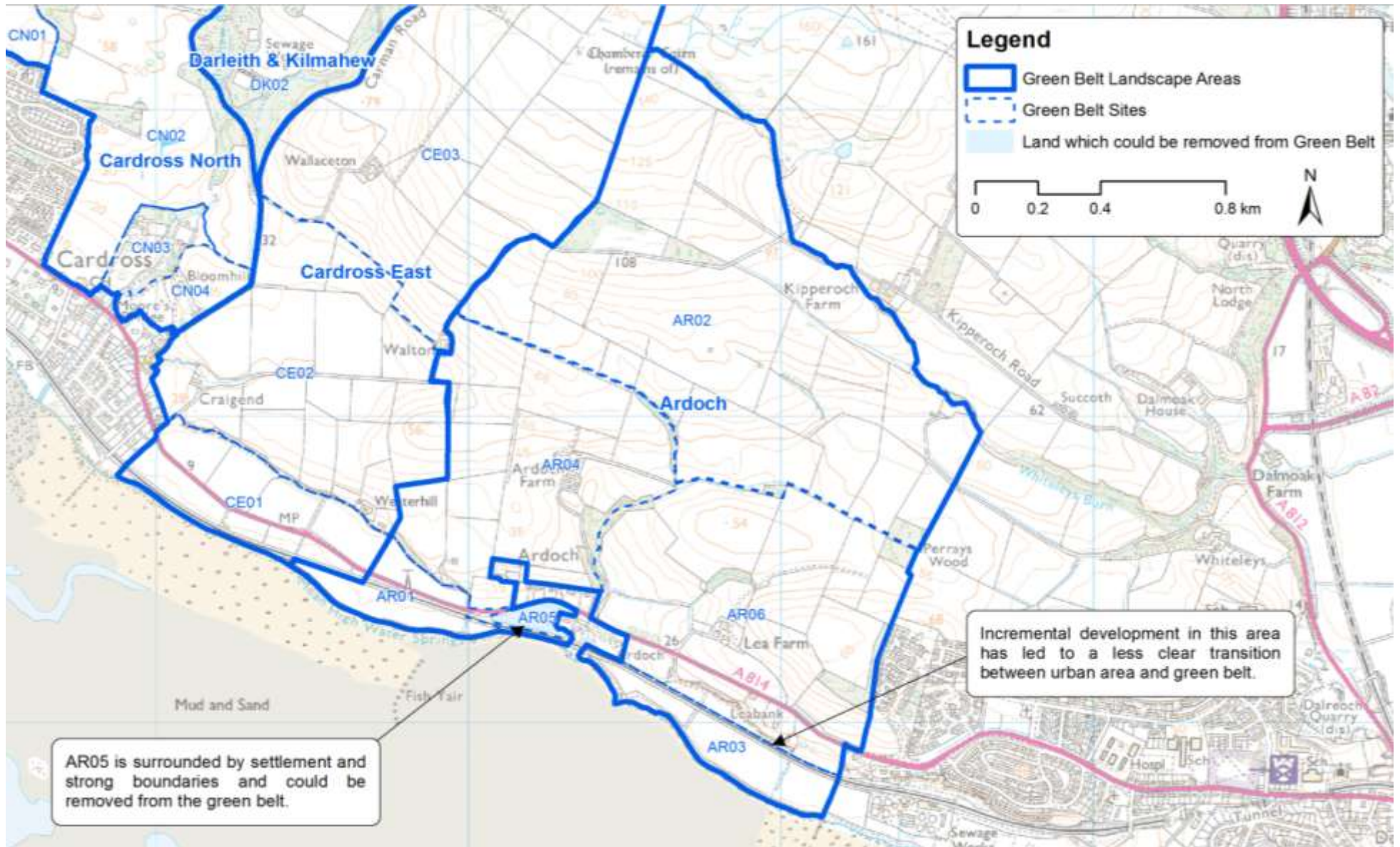


Figure 4.1 OS Map Ardoch

## 4.2 AREA NAME: Cardross East

### COMPOSITE SITES: CE01, CE02, CE03

#### 4.2.1 Description of Area

The area is located directly to the east of Cardross, on a hillside running along the edge of Carman Road. It is rolling farmland, set to grazing with mature hedgerow trees which subdivide and semi-enclose the fields, and line some tracks and roads. Many field boundaries are well maintained hedges together with post and wire fences, but derelict drystone dykes are more common at higher elevations. The area's topography is varied and undulating but is predominantly a west facing bowl-shaped hillside running from the limit of enclosed land at the headwall below Carman Muir (150m AOD) to the shores of the Firth of Clyde. It is moderate in its scale. Farmsteads are dotted around the middle slopes, with the old stone steadings redeveloped for housing and new larger scale farm sheds erected to replace them.

Lower down, the area levels and opens out, following a raised beach landform. There is a narrow wooded escarpment dropping down to flat boggy semi-improved fields next to the shoreline. It is in this level area that the road and rail line run. The busy road and regularly spaced gantries carrying the power lines for the railway impinge on the rural landscape character of the area. The exposed rocky foreshore is clothed in scrubby woodland, bracken and gorse with stumpy trees shaped by the wind.

The whole area has panoramic views across the 1.5 km wide Firth of Clyde to the steep hills and dock areas of Port Glasgow on the opposite bank, which creates a distant sense of enclosure

#### 4.2.2 Surrounding Areas

Within the green belt to the west is Cardross North (CN04 & CN02) with Darleith and Kilmahew (DK02) to the north-west, these together with this area form part of the wider setting of Cardross and are also a rolling farmland landscape.

Beyond the inner green belt boundary the eastern edge of Cardross is a village with a central older core of stone houses, shops, schools and churches (a Conservation Area), which has been extended over the 20th century with residential estates.

#### 4.2.3 Inner Green Belt Boundaries

The eastern edge of Cardross (along the western edge of CE01) is well defined, with a combination of masonry walls, tree lines, roads, change in slope and drystone dykes. These are very clearly defined on the ground, with some visual containment. The weakest boundary is by CE02 which is simply garden hedges and a few trees and does not visually contain the settlement.

#### 4.2.4 Value and Sensitivity of the Area

Overall the area has a moderate landscape value, with the areas of farmland around the middle slopes of the highest value. The area has no natural heritage designations



Rolling Farmland landscape in area CE02.

however the unmanaged foreshore area will have a higher biodiversity value than the farmland above. Nearly all areas and most boundaries are in good condition, with the common problem of landscape features such as drystone dykes falling into disrepair and replaced by post and wire fences.

The area is of moderate scenic quality, due mainly to the rolling topography, mature hedgerow trees and panoramic views creating interesting compositions. The wooded escarpment, a raised beach, is very attractive but the visual dominance of the railway and road at lower levels reduces its perceived rural qualities. Overall the scenic quality of the whole area is reduced because it is a common landscape type locally. The right of way which runs from Cardross to Dumbarton gives the area a moderate to low recreational value.

Most of the area is moderately susceptible to development, however the level area CE01 has an increased susceptibility of moderate to high. This is due to its increased visibility as a transport corridor.

Overall the area is of moderate landscape sensitivity, with CE01 of moderate to high landscape sensitivity.

#### 4.2.5 Contribution of the Area to the Green Belt

The area meets SPP objectives in that it is the gateway to the settlement of Cardross for travellers along the A814, the railway and Carman Road, and is very important in the setting of the village.

The area has typical green belt functions, with agriculture, horticulture, woodland and forestry and recreation uses compatible with an agricultural or natural setting.

#### 4.2.6 Suitability of Current Area and Boundaries & Proposed Changes

The area is suitable as green belt in that it has appropriate uses and it contributes to both the setting of Cardross and it also acts as a gateway to the village along the A814, Carman Road and railway line.

Most of the boundaries are well defined and suitable for the green belt edge, except at the locations listed below:

CE02 – The southern boundary is weak behind the houses and garage, a much stronger boundary could be the burn and then track leading to Craigend.

The southern part of CE02 is of moderate sensitivity however its boundary with the adjoining houses is relatively weak, a stronger boundary could be the burn and then track leading to Craigend. This small area could be considered for removal from the green belt.



Raised beach and flat coastal landscape in area CE01.

# Cardross East

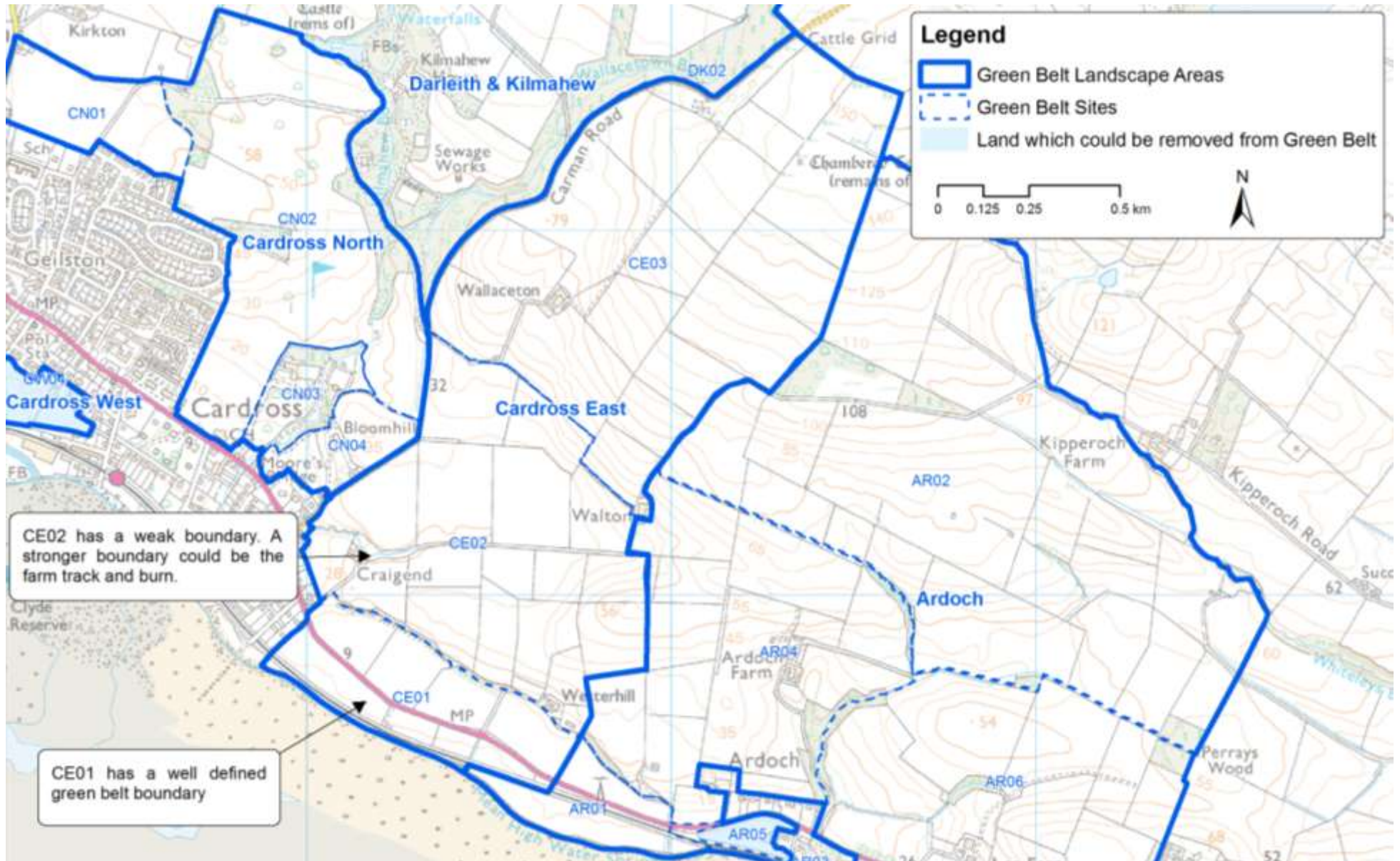


Figure 4.2 OS Map Cardross East

## 4.3 AREA NAME: Cardross North

### COMPOSITE SITES: CN01, CN02, CN03, CN04

#### 4.3.1 Description of Area

This part of the green belt encompasses farmland to the north of the village of Cardross between Carman Road in the east and Darleith Road to the west. It is a landscape of old country houses, and estate policies, with large blocks of mature woodlands planted around great stone houses. Some boundaries are tall stone walls, with impressive gateways, gatehouses and tree lined drives leading uphill to the distant houses and associated mews blocks. Remnants remain of the paraphernalia of extensive pleasure grounds, with follies, cast iron railings, kissing gates, bridges and overgrown ornamental plants, such as rhododendron and laurel.

The estates and houses of Bloomhill (CN04) and Auchenfroe (CN03) remain but Cardross House has been demolished and the site redeveloped with elements of its landscaped grounds remaining as part of Cardross golf course (CN02). A small area of relatively level farmland surrounded by a belt of trees lies to the north of the village (CN01). The whole area is a hillside which stretches from just above the village at 58m AOD down to the A814. Like most parts of the study area there are panoramic views of the Firth of Clyde and Port Glasgow 2.5km away across the water.

The large houses that remain in CN03 & CN04 are traditional stone Victorian villas, with slate roofs and are located high up the hillside. Although bounded by mature trees, they have small attractive paddocks to the front which line the approach drive and form the backdrop to the oldest parts of the village, the ruined church, manse (both SAMs) and Moore's Bridge. Both of these areas are part of the Cardross Conservation Area. The Kilmahew burn runs in woodland down through the area and is listed as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland.

#### 4.3.2 Surrounding Areas

Within the green belt to the east is rolling farmland (CE02 & CE03), directly to the north are the wooded valleys and farmland of Darleith and Kilmahew (DK01 & DK02).

Adjacent to the inner green belt Cardross is a large village, with a traditional core of stone houses and churches next to the main road (A814) and more modern estates around its edges. A very large flatted development in the centre of the village appears slightly out of character with the scale of the surrounding buildings.

#### 4.3.3 Inner Green Belt Boundaries

The southern boundaries of CN04, CN03 and CN02 are all moderate to strong and are elements or combinations of elements such as stone walls, hedges, lines of trees and woodland. In many areas these are strong to moderately diffuse visual barriers which effectively contain the adjacent built up areas

The southern edge of CN01 is thin and is a stone wall between Darleith Road and the track to Carniedrourth, and a garden hedge with occasional trees to the east of this. This hedge boundary is weak.

#### 4.3.4 Value and Sensitivity of the Area

Overall the area has a moderate to high landscape value and this is due to a combination of factors natural and built heritage designations, good condition, high recreation value and scenic qualities.





View of CN01 from Red Road showing the high visibility of the area east of the track to Carniedrouth.

The grounds of Bloomhill (CN04) and Auchenfroe (CN03) houses have the highest landscape value as part of the Cardross Conservation Area and as the backdrop to the oldest parts of the village: the ruined church, manse and bridge. CN02 is also of high landscape value with designated woodland and recreation value. CN01 is of moderate landscape value.

The large numbers of mature trees and woodland, together with good quality remnants of the policy grounds, such as stone walls give most of this area moderate to high scenic qualities (CN02, CN03 and CN04). The traditional estate grounds create a landscape that is attractive with cultural features clearly evident. The upper slopes are the most attractive parts of the golf course with the smooth, well tended greens contrasting with the rich textures of the woodland around the Kilmahew Burn. There are good views up to rounded Muirs above. CN01 has moderate scenic value.

All areas and boundaries are in excellent to good condition, apart from a small area of fly-tipping in an old quarry in the south-western corner of CN01. Excellent paths and quiet roads cross the CN01 linking residential areas in Cardross to the open countryside, across the Muirs to Loch Lomond.

CN04 is highly susceptible to development due to its importance as the setting for the oldest part of the village. It is also visible on the edge of the settlement and forms the gateway to Cardross for travellers along the A814 from the east and Carman Road from the north. CN03 is not as susceptible to development as CN04, with less visibility within the settlement as long as landscape features such as mature woodland are retained.

CN02 is moderately to highly susceptible to development due to visibility and importance in the identity of the settlement. CN01 is moderately susceptible to

development with few features and lower visibility (particularly the area west of the Carniedrourth track) and significance in the setting of Cardross. In conclusion;

CN04 – this area is of high landscape sensitivity, with a high value and high susceptibility to development.

CN03 – is of high to moderate landscape sensitivity as it has high landscape value and moderate to high susceptibility to the changes brought about development.

CN02 – has high to moderate landscape sensitivity with high landscape value and moderate to high susceptibility to the changes brought about development.

CN01 – is of moderate landscape sensitivity, because of its moderate landscape value and moderate susceptibility to development.



View Cardross Golf Course CN02

#### 4.3.5 Contribution of the Area to the Green Belt

Overall the whole area is important in the wider landscape setting for Cardross, it flanks the northern edge of the village and forms the gateway to the village (CN04) for travellers along the A814 and Carman Road. Additionally CN01 is the gateway to the village for the minor Darleith Road. The golf course is also important in the identity of Cardross.

The area has typical green belt functions, with both agricultural uses, woodland and forestry and recreation uses compatible with an agricultural or natural setting.

#### 4.3.6 Suitability of Current Area and Boundaries & Proposed Changes

The area is suitable as green belt in that it has appropriate uses and it contributes to both the wider setting of the village and parts of it (CN04 & CN01) act as gateway to Cardross along the A814, Carman Road and Darleith Road

Most of the boundaries are well defined and suitable for the green belt edge, except at the locations listed below:

CN01—The inner green belt boundary is weak and thin in the south-west.



The grounds around Bloomhill House are important in the setting of Cardross Village.

# Cardross North

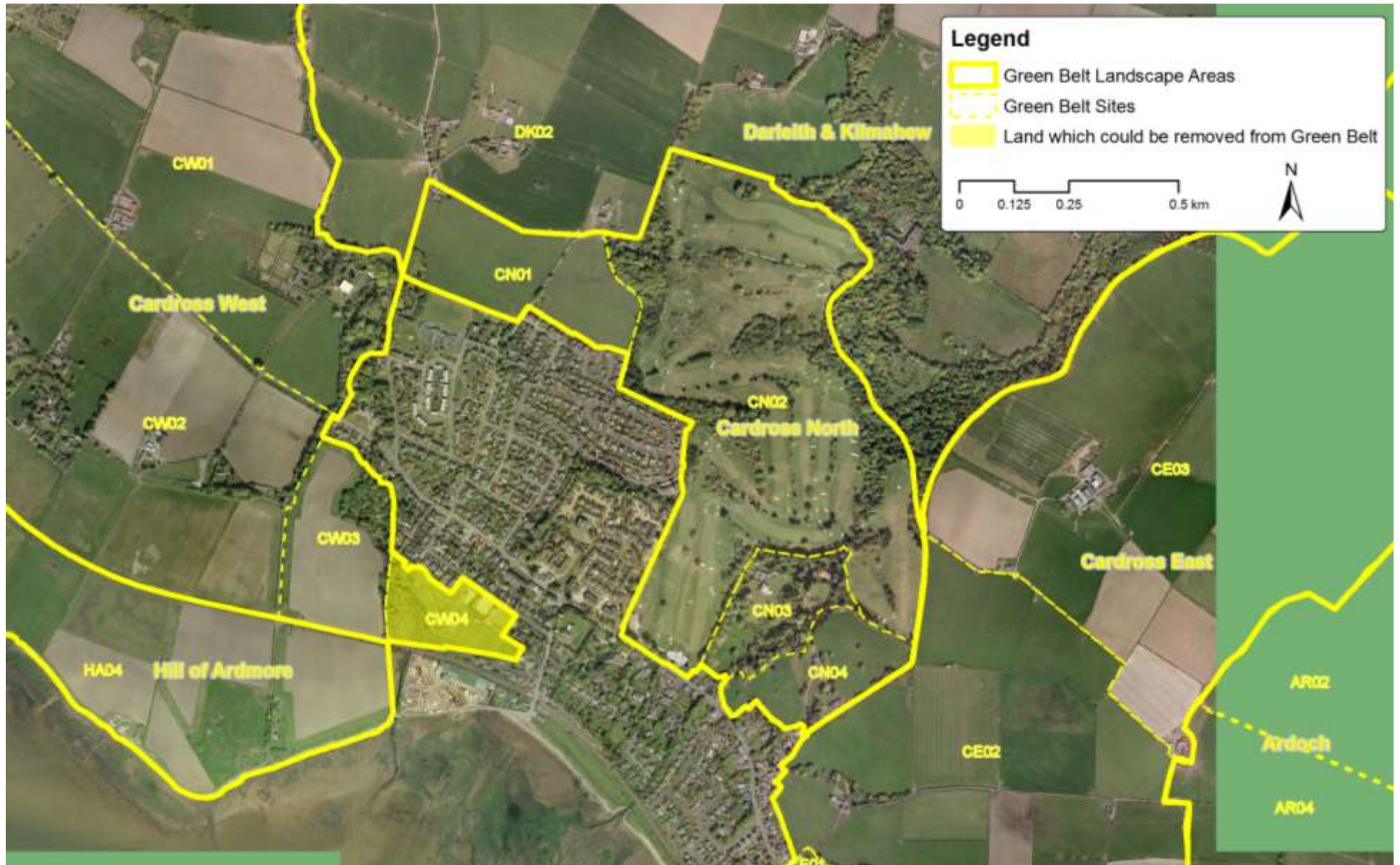


Figure 4.3: Aerial Photograph Cardross North

# Cardross North

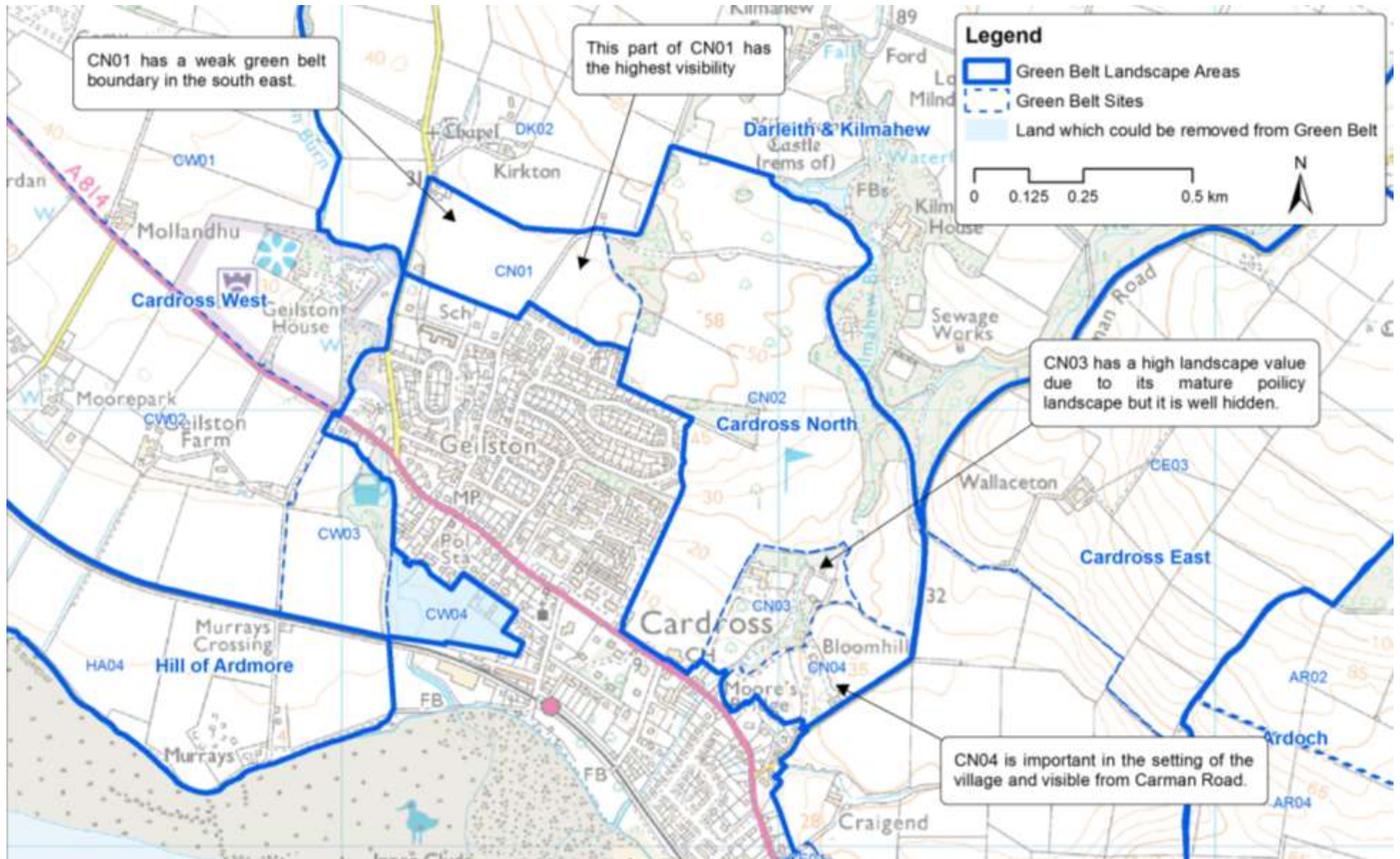


Figure 4.4: OS Map Cardross North

## 4.4 AREA NAME: Cardross West

### COMPOSITE SITES: CW01, CW02, CW03, CW04

#### 4.4.1 Description of Area

Situated on a broad ridge of land running down from Killoeter Hill, this area lies to the west of Cardross and Geilston Burn and around the single track Red Road. It runs from the railway line and encompasses the hillside above. It is rolling farmland, rising up to the headwall at the edge of enclosed land and is mainly laid to grazing, with occasional arable fields. Large blocks of woodland clothe incised burn corridors and surround estates and farms as policy woodlands, lining roads and access tracks. It is medium in scale and is semi-enclosed. At higher elevations shelterbelts have been planted across the slope. Well maintained hedgerows divide fields, with large numbers of drystone dykes adding character. The large white crematorium just above the busy A814, building stands out in the landscape. There are excellent views out down the south-west facing slope across the Firth of Clyde to Port Glasgow.

Lower down, south of the A814, the area levels out following a raised beach landform. It drops over a broad sloping escarpment, down to flatter arable fields next to the railway. Farmsteads line this rounded scarp in a distinctive settlement pattern, overlooking the broad sweep of the Firth of Clyde and large arable fields below. They are surrounded by mature trees to provide shelter in an exposed location and most have diversified, with increased ancillary buildings. But overall its character is rural with well managed hedges running down towards the coast. The only exception is the area CW04 which is a local park and as such has an urban landscape character, with football pitches, play area and amenity shrub planting.

Buildings are overall traditional in appearance with dressed stone or whitewashed rubble walls and slate roofs.

Tree species change from planted avenues around tracks and roads, Oak/Ash woodlands following the narrow burns, up to blocks of conifers and regenerating birch woodland next to the headwall. Two small woods, Lyleston Wood and High Strip are listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory. The woodland around the lower part of Geilston Burn (CW03) next to Cardross is the only SSSI within the green belt area.

#### 4.4.2 Surrounding Areas

Within the green belt to the south of the railway is the Hill of Ardmore (HA04, HA03 & HA02), to the north-east is the farmland of Darleith and Kilmahew (DK02 & DK01). To the west is the semi-improved land around Killoether Hill (KH01 & KH02).

Adjacent to the inner green belt Cardross is a large village, with traditional stone houses and churches next to the main road (A814) and more modern estates around its edges. Where the boundary runs along the western edge of the village lie the gardens of Geilston House, owned and run by the NTS.

#### 4.4.3 Inner Green Belt Boundaries

To the east of CW01, Darleith Road (plus hedge) and Geilston Burn in woodland form the inner green belt boundary which is very clearly defined on the ground. These are moderate visual barriers which effectively contain the adjacent built up areas. The eastern edge of CW03 comprises a ditch and woodland and in most places is fairly robust screen of nearby houses. CW04 surrounded by the village of Cardross on three sides, has very weak, poorly defined boundaries, mainly fences but in some areas there is no feature on the ground, in particular around the white hut and railway line.



CW02—Farmsteads line this rounded scarp in a distinctive settlement pattern



CW01 showing the large white building of Cardross Crematorium and Cemetery

#### 4.4.4 Value and Sensitivity of the Area

Most of the area has a moderate to high landscape value, with Cardross Park (CW04) of moderate landscape value. This is due to a combination of natural heritage designations, scenic qualities, condition and recreational values appropriate with agricultural or natural setting.

Small areas of woodland in this area are designated as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland and the woodland around Geilston Burn is a SSSI. The designed landscape around Geilston House also has a high value. CW01, CW02 and CW03 have relatively high scenic qualities, due to the combination of landscape elements such as estate walls, mature trees and drystone dykes as field boundaries. The grounds of Geilston House owned by the NTS add to its value. Particularly attractive is the raised beach landform, which is a distinctive shape in the landscape and distinctive development pattern, with mature trees planted around farmsteads.

Most areas and boundaries are in good condition, however at CW04 there is evidence of anti-social behaviour. A good network of informal and formal paths cross the area, CW04 has a high recreation value but not of a type compatible with an agricultural or natural setting.

Overall the area is moderately susceptible to development due to the rolling topography, with the lower slopes and raised beach areas being most susceptible. This susceptibility is due to the open character of the landscape, its greater visibility, and function as the gateway to Cardross. Therefore the area is of moderate landscape sensitivity, with CW02 of moderate to high landscape sensitivity because of its higher visibility and gateway functions.

#### 4.4.5 Contribution of the Area to the Green Belt

The whole area is important as the landscape setting for Cardross it abuts the western edge of the village and acts as the gateway to the village (CW01, CW02 and CW03) for road and rail travellers.

The area has typical green belt functions, with both agricultural and horticultural uses, woodland and forestry and recreation uses compatible with an agricultural or natural setting.

#### 4.4.6 Suitability of Current Area and Boundaries & Proposed Changes

Most of the area is suitable as green belt in that (it has appropriate uses and) CW01, CW02 and CW03 contribute to both the wider setting of the village and act as a gateway for travellers along the A814 and railway. Most of the inner green belt boundaries are well defined and suitable as the green belt edge.

However Cardross Park (CW04) has an urban greenspace character, is not important in the landscape setting of the village, has poorly defined boundaries and does not have a typical green belt use. It could be considered for removal from the green belt and its designation retained as Open Space Protection Area. A better green belt boundary for the west of Cardross would be the (eastern edge of CW03) woodland surrounding Geilston Burn SSSI, which is clearly discernable on the ground and visually contains the settlement.



# Cardross West

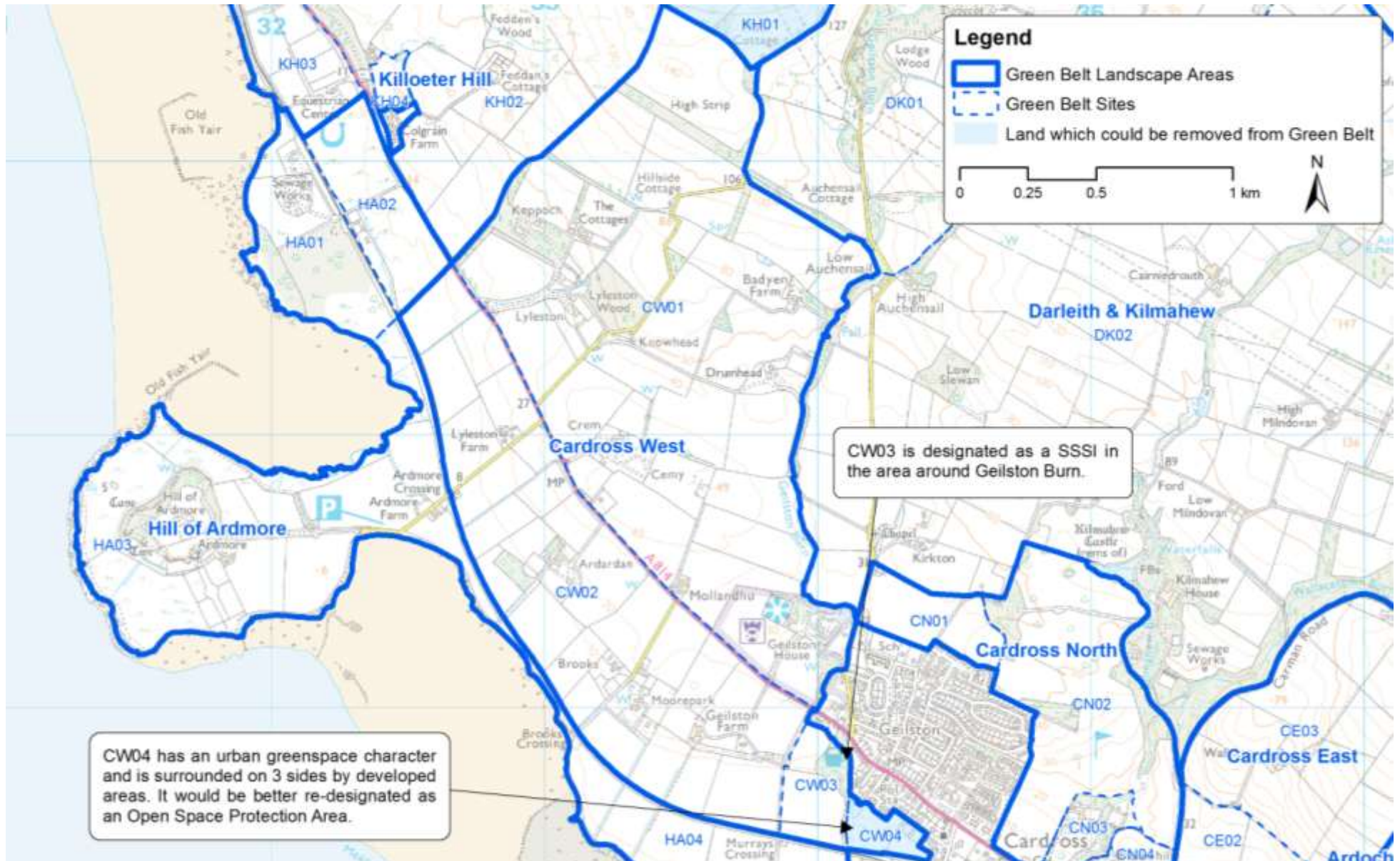


Figure 4.5: OS Map Cardross West

## 4.5 AREA NAME: Hill of Ardmore

### COMPOSITE SITES: HA01, HA02, HA03, HA04

#### 4.5.1 Description of Area

This area encompasses the flat land running along the coast of the Firth of Clyde between the eastern edge of Cardross and the approaches to Helensburgh in the west. Its northern boundary is in most locations the railway line. This area is one of the most distinctive landscape character areas in the study area; a large flat expanse of land backed by a low escarpment (CW02) formed by a raised beach landform. This strip of flat land is locally rare and its character is defined by proximity to the broad stretch of the Firth of Clyde. Its elevation varies between 4-6m AOD and 31m AOD on the top of the Hill of Ardmore.

The Hill of Ardmore (HA03) visually dominates the area, a peninsula connected to the 'mainland' by a thin, low strip of land. The highest part of the 'island' is crowned by a ring of wooded crags and Ardmore House with the remnants of a formal garden running to the shore. Mature trees surround the hill itself, with the lower exposed parts of the peninsula unmanaged scrubland. More sheltered areas are grazing land and arable crops. Field boundaries are predominantly post and wire fences. A footpath runs around the peninsula from a dedicated car park area.

The whole area is physically cut-off by the railway line on embankment, with limited crossing points. The landscape character of the low areas changes. Close to Cardross (HA04), the area has been drained and deep water filled ditches divide up large fields of arable crops. These well ordered fields contrast with the wild scrubby strips running along the foreshore and trees are wind sculpted. Towards Helensburgh the coastal landscape is unimproved, with boggy grassland, colonised by *Juncus* and scrubby willow (HA02) or regenerating birch woodland (HA01).

Built structures are varied, with Ardmore House, traditional farmsteads, cottages (HA04 & HA03) builders yards (HA01) and Helensburghs Waste Water Treatment (HA02).

The Hill of Ardmore (HA03) and the regenerated birch woodland in HA01 are both Local Nature Sites. The woodland around the crags at the Hill of Ardmore is also listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory.

#### 4.5.2 Surrounding Areas

Within the green belt, to the north the area is backed by a low escarpment (CW02) a raised beach landform and the rolling farmland below Killoeter Hill (KH02).

Inside the inner green belt there is a large timber yard part of the village of Cardross

#### 4.5.3 Inner Green Belt Boundaries

The inner boundary with Cardross is just a tall fence, with a few shrubs. This is a weak visual and physical barrier and it does not visually contain the timber yard.

#### 4.5.4 Value and Sensitivity of the Area

The overall landscape value of the area is moderate, but it varies between high for the Hill of Ardmore (HA03), moderate (HA01 & HA04) to moderate to low (HA02). This is due to a combination of natural heritage designations, scenic qualities, condition and recreational values.

The Hill of Ardmore (HA03) and the regenerated Birch woodland in HA01 are both Local Nature Sites. The woodland around the crags at the Hill of Ardmore is also listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory.



View along coast from HA03 towards the wooded promontory of HA01



The distinctive form of the Hill of Ardmore (HA03)

Scenic qualities vary across the area, with the Hill of Ardmore very attractive with the most distinctive sense of place in the study area. It is clearly distinguishable from both the road and railway above and there is a strong visual contrast between the water and peninsula. A popular footpath, serviced by its own parking area, runs around the peninsula along the foreshore. Of moderate to low scenic quality are the areas HA01 and HA02, due mainly to the WWTP and builders yards, which give the impression of an industrial wasteland. HA04 is of moderate scenic quality.

Many areas and boundaries are in good condition however HA01 is in poorer condition with waste dumps visible around the builders yards and WWTP

Most of the area is moderate to highly susceptible to development, with the Hill of Ardmore highly susceptible. This is due to the combination of level landform and high visibility, as evidenced by prominent new buildings next to the shore.

Overall the area is of moderate to high landscape sensitivity, with HA03 of high landscape sensitivity and HA02 moderate landscape sensitivity.

#### 4.5.5 Contribution of the Area to the Green Belt

Part of the area, HA04 is important in setting of Cardross village as it flanks the western edge and forms the gateway to the village for rail travellers.

The area has typical green belt functions, with both agricultural uses, woodland and forestry and recreation uses compatible with an agricultural or natural setting.

#### 4.5.6 Suitability of Current Area and Boundaries & Proposed Changes

The area is suitable as green belt in that it has appropriate uses and it contributes to the setting of Cardross. It is also the gateway to the village as well being part of the wider landscape setting for the Helensburgh and Lomond Area.

Most of the boundaries are well defined and suitable for the green belt edge, except at the locations listed below:

HA04—The eastern boundary is weak and thin, a more robust boundary could be the Geilston Burn.



HA04 showing the high visibility of new buildings in this flat landscape

# Hill of Ardmore

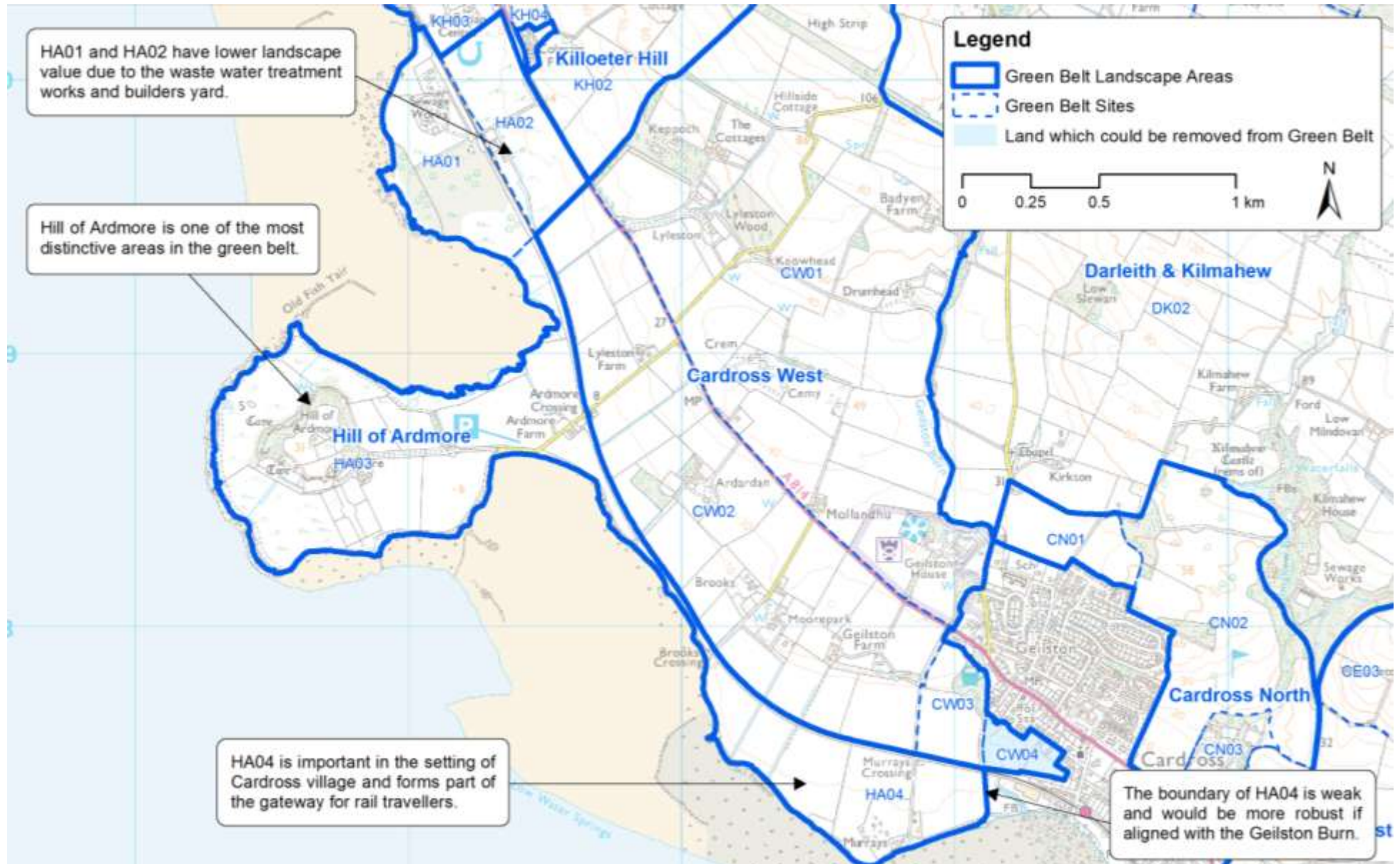


Figure 4.6: OS Map Hill of Ardmore

## 4.6 AREA NAME: Darleith and Kilmahew

### COMPOSITE SITES: DK01, DK02

#### 4.6.1 Description of Area

A large area of rolling farmland set between Killoeter Hill, Cardross and the boundary with WDC. Fields are interspersed with the policy woodlands of various large estates. It runs from the hillside above the village of Cardross at 58mAOD up to the headwall and limit of enclosed farmland at 210mAOD and is moderate in scale. At lower levels (DK02) it is predominantly grazing land, with occasional arable fields. Large blocks of woodland clothe the burn corridors, in particular around the ruins of Kilmahew castle and the derelict St Peters Seminary. There are smaller blocks of woodland around farms and houses, with well maintained hedgerows dividing up the fields. Scattered farmsteads and cottages are built of stone with slate roofs.

Higher up the hillside (DK01) below Killoeter hill around the upper reaches of Geilston Burn, the farm land changes to rough pasture. The valley around the burn is well wooded and steep in places. The steep valley around the burn levels out into the poor pastures above. Gorse and *Juncus* have colonised the fields and there are fewer hedges with a large number of derelict drystone dykes. These define the character of the landscape as an upland farming area. There are clear views of the moorland and conifer plantations above. Buildings are traditional in form, stone and slate set in hollows within the exposed landscape. Fields run up and merge with the moorland vegetation above. Policy woodlands at Darleith House stretch up to patches of alders and birch at Achinabreck

Large areas of the woodland in this area are designated as either Local Nature Sites and/or are listed as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland or in the Ancient Woodland Inventory. In particular the Wallacetown Burn corridor, Kilmahew Burn corridor, Geilston Burn woodland and the policy woodlands around Darleith House.

#### 4.6.2 Surrounding Areas

This area is at the outer limit of the green belt and runs up to the ABC/WDC boundary. The Boundary lies below the ridge which separates the Firth of Clyde from Loch Lomond/Vale of Leven. The outer boundary is the headwall. Within the green belt to the north-west is the open hillside of Killoeter Hill (KH01). To the east is the rolling farmland of Cardross East. South is Cardross North, and west Cardross West.

This area is remote from settlement and does not have any inner green belt boundaries.

#### 4.6.3 Outer Green Belt Boundaries

The outer green belt boundaries are usually defined by drystone dykes, separating the enclosed land from open hillside. These are often in poor repair.

#### 4.6.4 Value and Sensitivity of the Area

Overall the area has a moderate to high landscape value, with the wooded burns and policy woodlands of the highest value. This is due to a combination of natural heritage designations, scenic qualities, condition and recreational values.

Large areas of the woodland in this area are designated as Local Nature Sites and/or are listed as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland or in the Ancient Woodland Inventory. In particular the Wallacetown Burn corridor, Kilmahew Burn corridor, Geilston Burn woodland and the policy woodlands around Darleith House. The area is of high scenic quality, due to its varied topography, strong well defined boundaries and the compositions created by the mix of mature woodland with traditional farmsteads. This rough enclosed grazing land contrasts with the heather and bracken covered hills above. Pylons cross the upper parts of the area but are insignificant features compared to the scale of the hillside.



View down to Geilston Burn and policy woodland around Darleith House



Typical upland landscape—view up the right of way towards Blackthird

All areas and most boundaries are in good condition, with the common problem of landscape features such as drystone dykes falling into disrepair and replaced by post and wire fences. Extensive colonisation by rhododendron is also a problem in the woodland areas. Antisocial behaviour, evidenced by vandalism is also a problem in and around the derelict St Peters Seminary.

Overall the area is highly susceptible to development as it is high ground, highly visible with a strong rural character. In conclusion Darleith and Kilmahew is a highly sensitive landscape.

#### 4.6.5 Contribution of the Area to the Green Belt

The area is part of the wider landscape setting of Cardross (DK01) and forms the gateway to the village for travellers along Carman Road and on footpaths from Loch Lomond.

The area has typical green belt functions, with both agricultural uses, woodland and forestry and recreation uses compatible with an agricultural or natural setting.

#### 4.6.6 Suitability of Current Area and Boundaries & Proposed Changes

The area is suitable as green belt as it has appropriate uses and contributes to the wider setting of Cardross. Additionally, together with Cardross East, it acts as a gateway to village along the Carman Road.



Looking up Darleith Road towards High Auchensail, showing the improved grazing land found at lower elevations



# Darleith & Kilmahew

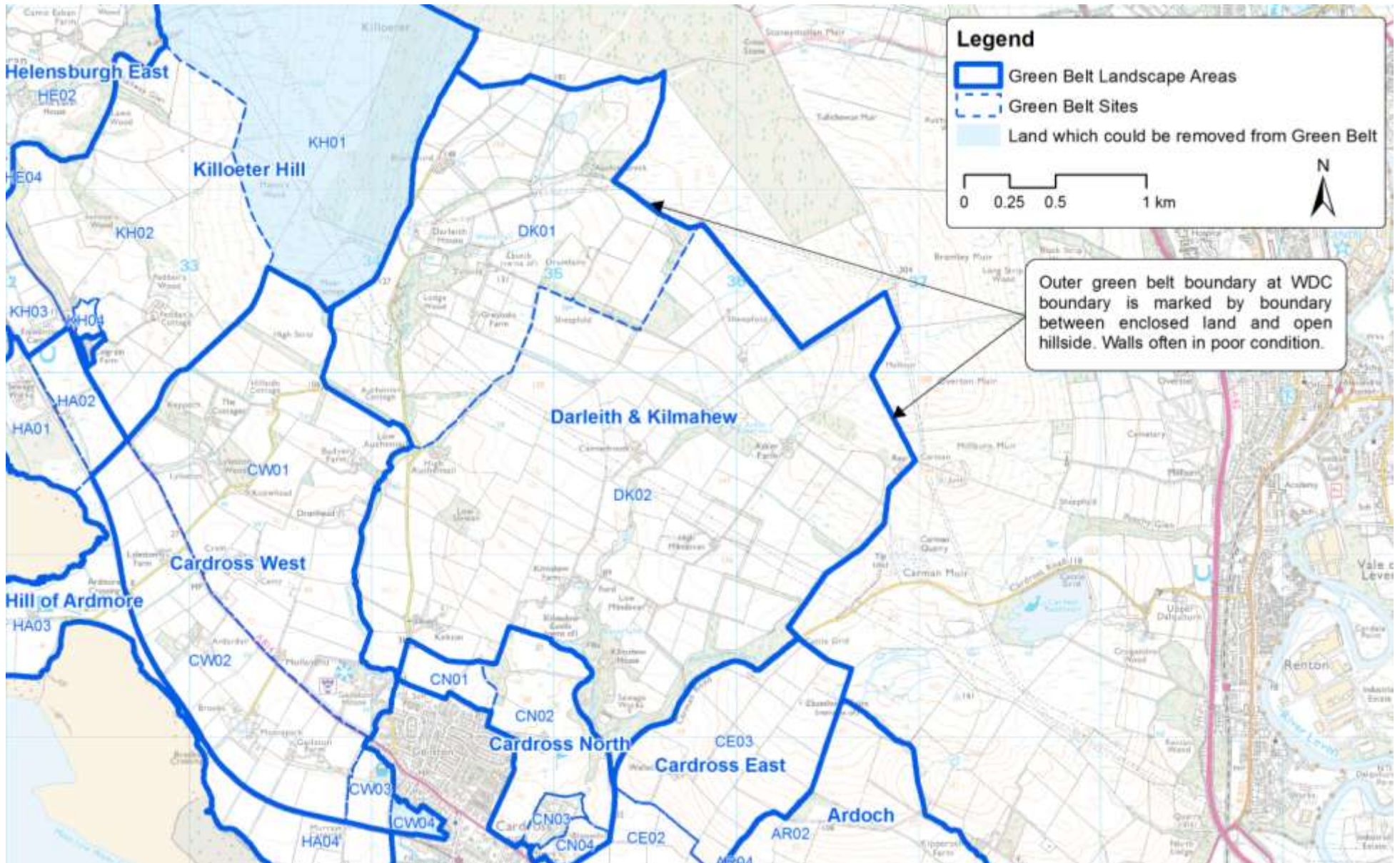


Figure 4.7: OS Map Darleith & Kilmahew

## 4.7 AREA NAME: Killoeter Hill

### COMPOSITE SITES: KH01, KH02, KH03, KH04

#### 4.7.1 Description of Area

This area runs from a level area on the shores of the Firth of Clyde up to the open hillsides of Killoeter Hill (298m) and Ben Bowie (313m), the wider landscape setting for the eastern edge of Helensburgh. The hills are distinctive in shape and in this upland area (KH01) there are few trees. Extensive areas of heather, bracken and small crags characterise the hilltop and create a rough textured landscape. Remnants of drystone dykes mark the boundaries between rough pasture and open moorland. A double line of pylons crosses the lower slopes, with small areas of regenerated Birch woodland around their base. The scale of the landscape and hills significantly reduces the visual impact of these pylons. Conifer plantations are limited within the area but there are large blocks visible outside the green belt. The area slopes down to the A818, the main approach to Helensburgh from Loch Lomond.

The lower areas (KH02, KH04 & KH03) are sloping farmland, mainly managed for grazing. Blocks of woodland run across the hillside, part of the Camis Eskan policy woodland. The landscape is medium in scale and slightly open in character. Well maintained hedgerows divide up some fields with large numbers of drystone dykes adding character at upper elevations. There are excellent views out down and across the Firth of Clyde. Next to the shore is a flat area of grazing land, with small areas of scrubby woodland around the edges.

Traditional stone and slate roofed farmsteads are located on the hillside, with the residential redevelopment of some farm buildings, evidence of the proximity to Helensburgh. Some parts of the woodland in this area are listed as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland or in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, in particular Services Wood.



Killoeter Hill, open moorland above rolling farmland

#### 4.7.2 Surrounding Areas

This Killoeter Hill area physically contains the north and eastern edges of Helensburgh, with the areas Helensburgh North and Helensburgh East within the green belt boundaries below. These areas have a rolling farmland landscape character. To the south lie the areas Hill of Ardmore, the east Cardross West and Darleith and Kilmahew. These are again areas that are predominantly farmland in character.

Beyond the inner green belt the eastern edge of Helensburgh is made up of residential areas with the large scale buildings of both the old derelict and new Hermitage Academy contrasting with small houses. Two large fields next to the A814 are scheduled for development. The main west coast railway snakes its way along the southern boundary of the town.

The group of buildings around Colgrain Farm are not part of the green belt and comprise a developed steading, some cottages and the farmstead itself. It is isolated next to a remnant of old road, bypassed by the new A814.

Outside the outer green belt boundaries of this area lies the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. To the north-west across the A818 is an area around Daligan farm designated Sensitive Countryside .

#### 4.7.3 Inner Green Belt Boundaries

To the west of KH03, the inner green belt boundary with Helensburgh is partially defined by a farm access track, a row of trees and a fence. This is a fairly diffuse visual barrier.

KH02 and KH04 which surround the small settlement of Colgrain Farm have well defined boundaries with a combination of elements such as change of slope, hedges, woodland, roads and drystone dykes.

#### 4.7.4 Value and Sensitivity of the Area

The area is of moderate landscape value, with the open hillside of Killoeter Hill (KH01) of moderate to high value. This is due to a combination of natural heritage designations, scenic qualities, condition and recreational values



**KH03—Level fields sub-divided for equestrian uses**

Some areas of woodland in this area are Semi-natural Ancient Woodland or in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, in particular Services Wood. Areas KH01 and KH02 are of moderate to high scenic quality, with the rolling smooth farmland contrasting with the rougher textured open moorland above, pylons cross the area and although not visually dominated do detract from the landscapes 'wild' appearance. However farms, cottages and drystone dykes give the impression of a rural area that hasn't changed. The area around the Equestrian Centre is of lower scenic quality (KH03), with its jumble of sub-divided fields.

All areas and most boundaries are in good condition, with the common problem of landscape features such as drystone dykes falling into disrepair, replaced by post and wire fences. Extensive colonisation by rhododendron is also a problem in the woodland areas. Formal and informal paths cross the area linking residential areas to the open countryside.

Overall the area is moderate to highly susceptible to development. This is due to the visibility of all parts of the area and quality of the landscape features at higher elevations. The lower area (KH03) next to the A814 is particularly sensitive due to its high visibility. Therefore the whole area has moderate to high landscape sensitivity.

#### **4.7.5 Contribution of the Area to the Green Belt**

The area is part of the wider landscape setting of Helensburgh, and Killoeter Hill together with Ben Bowie forms the backdrop to the town. The lower slopes (KH03 & KH02) form part of the gateways to Helensburgh, from the east for travellers along both the A814 and railway line and from the north along the A818.

The area has typical green belt functions, with both agricultural uses, woodland and forestry and recreation uses compatible with an agricultural or natural setting.

#### **4.7.6 Suitability of Current Area and Boundaries & Proposed Changes**

The area is suitable as green belt in that it has appropriate uses and it contributes to the wider landscape setting of the town. However the upper slopes and open ground of Killoeter Hill are not a typical landscape character type for green belt designation. Although the open hillside is important in the wider setting of Helensburgh it is unlikely

to face the same type of development pressures as land close to the town. A rational new boundary could be (like WDC green belt and most of the rest of ABC green belt) the headwall or limit of enclosed farmland. Most of Killoeter Hill could be re-designated Very Sensitive Countryside, which is a more suitable type of protection for the area whilst still retaining the lower slopes adjacent to the A818 to protect the gateway to Helensburgh.

The green belt boundary with Helensburgh along the western edge of KH03, is not well defined. Visual and physical containment of the settlement could be significantly improved with additional tree planting along this boundary, when the area is finally developed.



KH02 and KH01 with the transition between enclosed farmland and open moorland evident



Killoeter Hill from the west

# Killoeter Hill

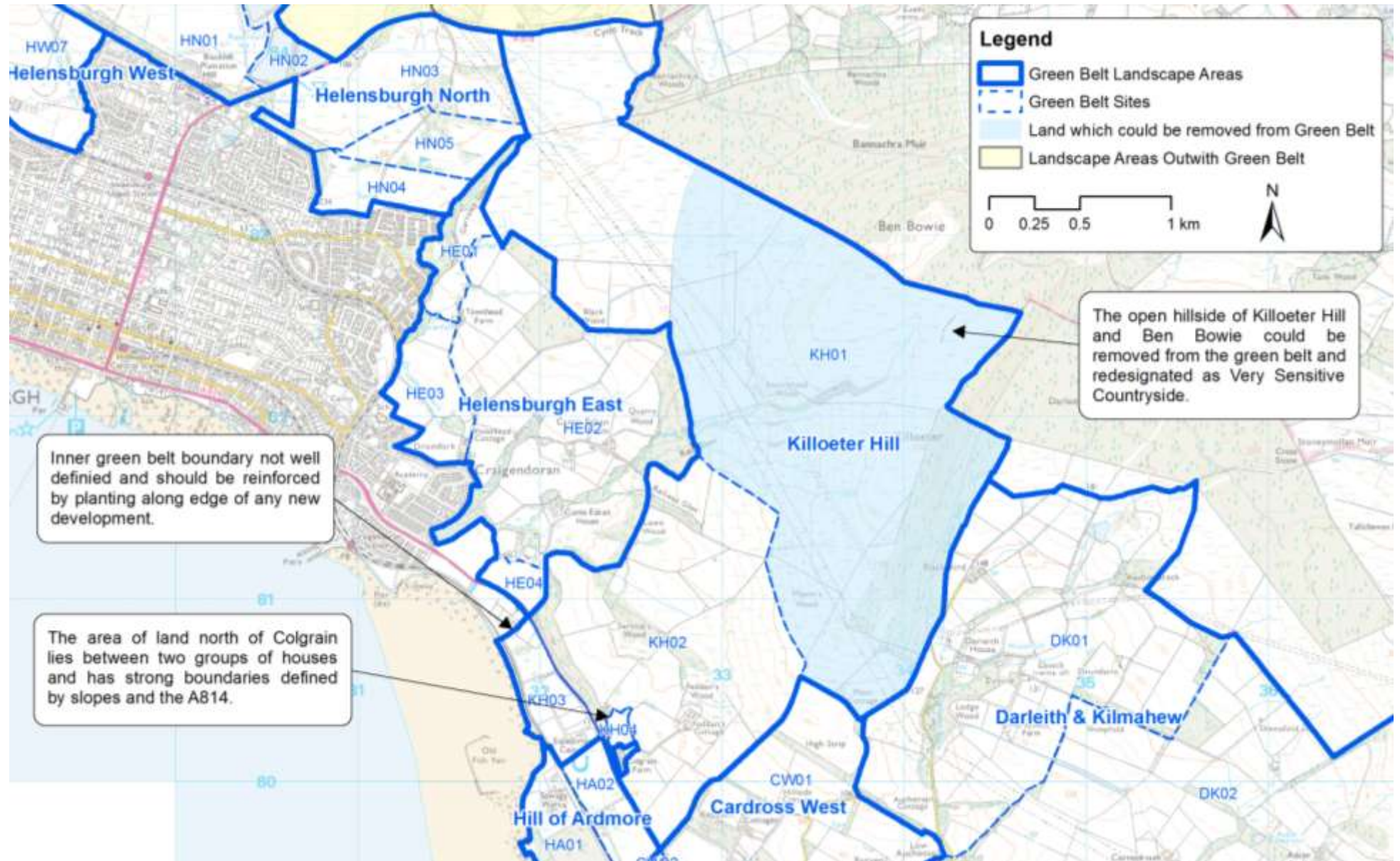


Figure 4.8: OS Map Killoeter Hill

## 4.8 AREA NAME: Helensburgh East

### COMPOSITE SITES: HE01, HE02, HE03, HE04

#### 4.8.1 Description of Area

An area of rolling farmland on the lower slopes of Ben Bowie, which encircles the eastern edge of Helensburgh. The hillside extends from 120m, the limit of enclosed land, down to the A814 and the Firth of Clyde and is moderate in its scale.

Incised wooded ravines such as the Garraway and Red Glens carry burns down from the hills above and divide up the hillside. The fields between are a mix of semi-improved grassland with some arable crops. The attractive old policy woodlands around Camis Eskan House enclose some fields and original features, such as stone Doocotes and railings are hidden amongst the rhododendrons in the woods.

Traditional stone and slate roofed farms are located high up the hillside, at about 50m on level steps, with associated larger scale modern outbuildings nearby. Smaller whitewashed and stone cottages are dotted around. Tracks fan out across the area from the eastern edge of Helensburgh, and field boundaries lower down are well maintained hawthorn hedges which change to drystone dykes at upper elevations, together with the ubiquitous post and wire fence.

Tree species change from planted Lime avenues around Camis Eskan, Oak/Ash woodlands following the narrow burns, up to blocks of conifers at Black Wood and regenerating birch woodland next to the headwall. These upper woods encircle the lower slopes of Ben Bowie. Large areas of the woodland in this area are designated as either Local Nature Sites and/or are listed as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland or in the Ancient Woodland Inventory. In particular the Red Burn corridor, Craigendoran Burn corridor, Garraway Glen, Black Wood and Quarry Wood.

#### 4.8.2 Surrounding Areas

Within the green belt to the north east is Killoeter Hill (KH01) which together with Ben Bowie forms part of the wider setting of Helensburgh. Directly east is the steeply rolling farmland (KH02) above Colgrain Farm. This area has fewer trees, rougher grazing land and more drystone dykes.

Beyond the inner green belt the eastern edge of Helensburgh is predominantly residential areas with the large scale buildings of both the old derelict and new Hermitage Academy contrasting with the small houses. The main west coast railway snakes its way along the eastern edge of the town.

#### 4.8.3 Inner Green Belt Boundaries

To the west of HE01, the houses and flats of Winston Road are separated from the site by the heavily wooded ravine of Garraway Glen, which is very clearly defined. The glen also extends down to form, with the railway embankment, the western edge of site HE03. These are strong visual barriers which effectively contain the adjacent built up areas. The southern edge of HE03 is thin and fairly transparent wooden garden fences.

HE02 and HE04 which bounds the northern edge of Craigendoran residential area and surrounds the new Hermitage Academy building and grounds, is very well defined, by a combination of elements such as change of slope, hedges, woodland, roads and burn.

#### 4.8.4 Value and Sensitivity of the Area

Most of the area has a moderate to high landscape value, with the wooded burns of Garraway Glen and policy woodlands of Camis Eskan House of the highest value and HE04 of moderate to low value. This is due to a combination of natural heritage designations, scenic qualities, condition and recreational values.



Showing the edge of Helensburgh from north-eastern corner of HE04. The fields on the far side of the A814 (on embankment) are to be developed



HE03 from the track leading to Townhead Farm. A train is visible on the railway embankment, part of the inner green belt boundary in this area



Large areas of the woodland in this area are designated as either Local Nature Sites and/or are listed as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland or in the Ancient Woodland Inventory. In particular the Red Burn corridor, Craigendoran Burn corridor, Garraway Glen, Black Wood and Quarry Wood. HE01 and HE02 are of moderate to high scenic quality, due to the contrast of wooded ravines with the smoother fields above, and the slightly bowled landform which offers shelter from the rough hillside above. Farms, cottages and drystone dykes give the impression of a rural landscape that hasn't changed. HE04 and HE03 are of moderate to low scenic quality although they have a strong rural character.

All areas and most boundaries are in good condition, with the common problem of landscape features such as drystone dykes falling into disrepair and replaced by post and wire fences. Extensive colonisation by rhododendron is also a problem in the woodland areas. Formal and informal paths cross the area linking residential areas to the open countryside.

Overall the area is moderately susceptible to development. This is due to the combination of landform and the strips of woodland following the burns and crossing slopes. The higher slopes above Camis Eshan House have greater visibility from a wider area, than those closer to the town at lower levels, so have a higher susceptibility to the changes brought about by development.

Therefore the area is of moderate landscape sensitivity, with the upper slopes and wooded areas (HE01, HE02) of moderate to high sensitivity.

#### 4.8.5 Contribution of the Area to the Green Belt

Overall the whole area is important in the wider landscape setting for Helensburgh, it flanks the eastern edge of the town and forms the gateway to the town (HE04) for travellers along the A814.

The area has typical green belt uses, with both agricultural uses, woodland and forestry and recreation uses compatible with an agricultural or natural setting.

#### 4.8.6 Suitability of Current Area and Boundaries & Proposed Changes

The area is suitable as green belt in that it has appropriate uses and it contributes to both the wider setting of the town and part of it (HE04) acts as a gateway to Helensburgh along the A814.

Most of the boundaries are well defined and suitable for the green belt edge, except at the locations listed below:

HE03—The southern boundary is weak and thin, a more robust boundary could be the Drumfork Burn along the southern edge of Drumfork Woods and the western edge of the track to Townhead Farm.

# Helensburgh East

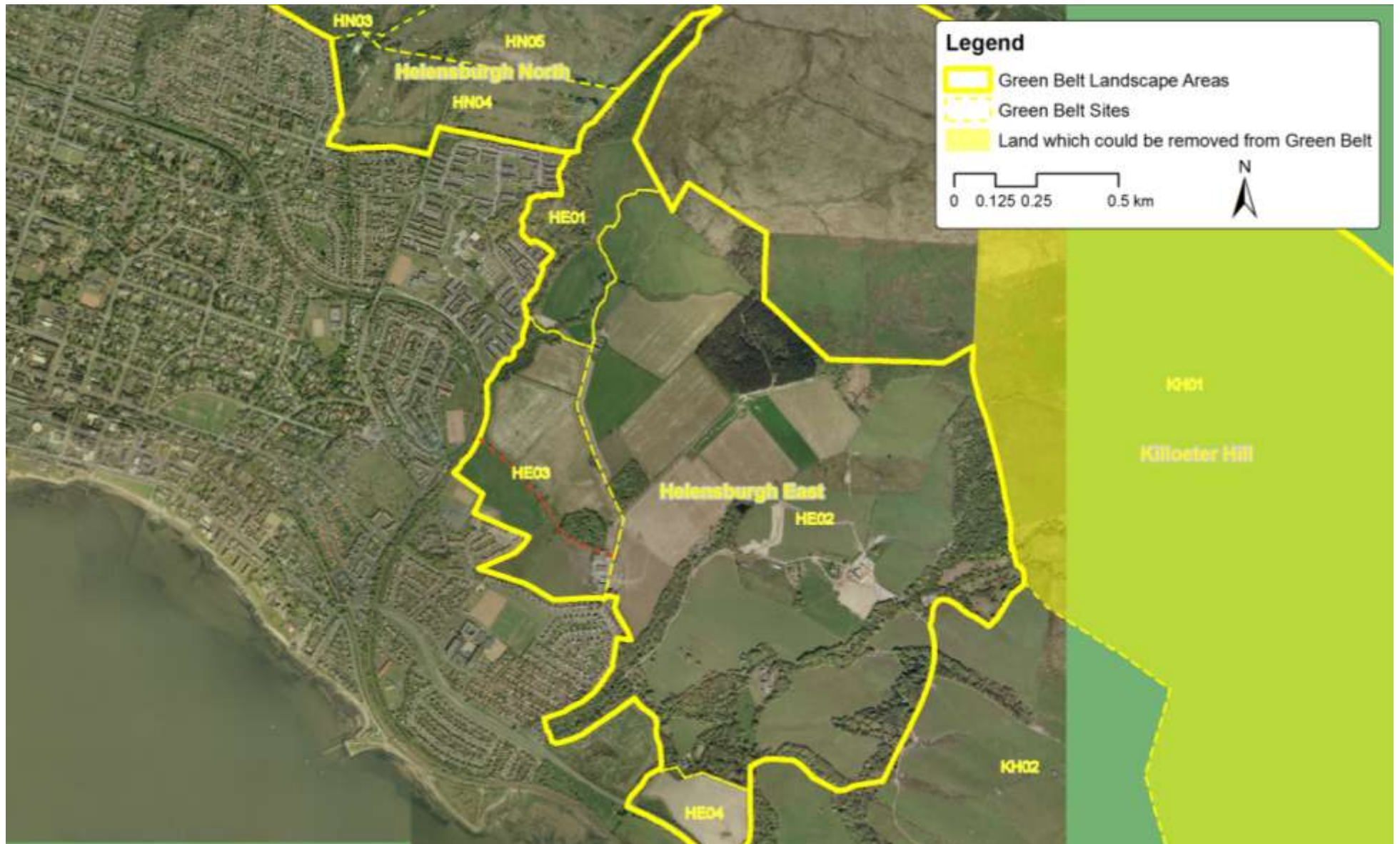


Figure 4.9: Aerial Photograph Helensburgh East

# Helensburgh East

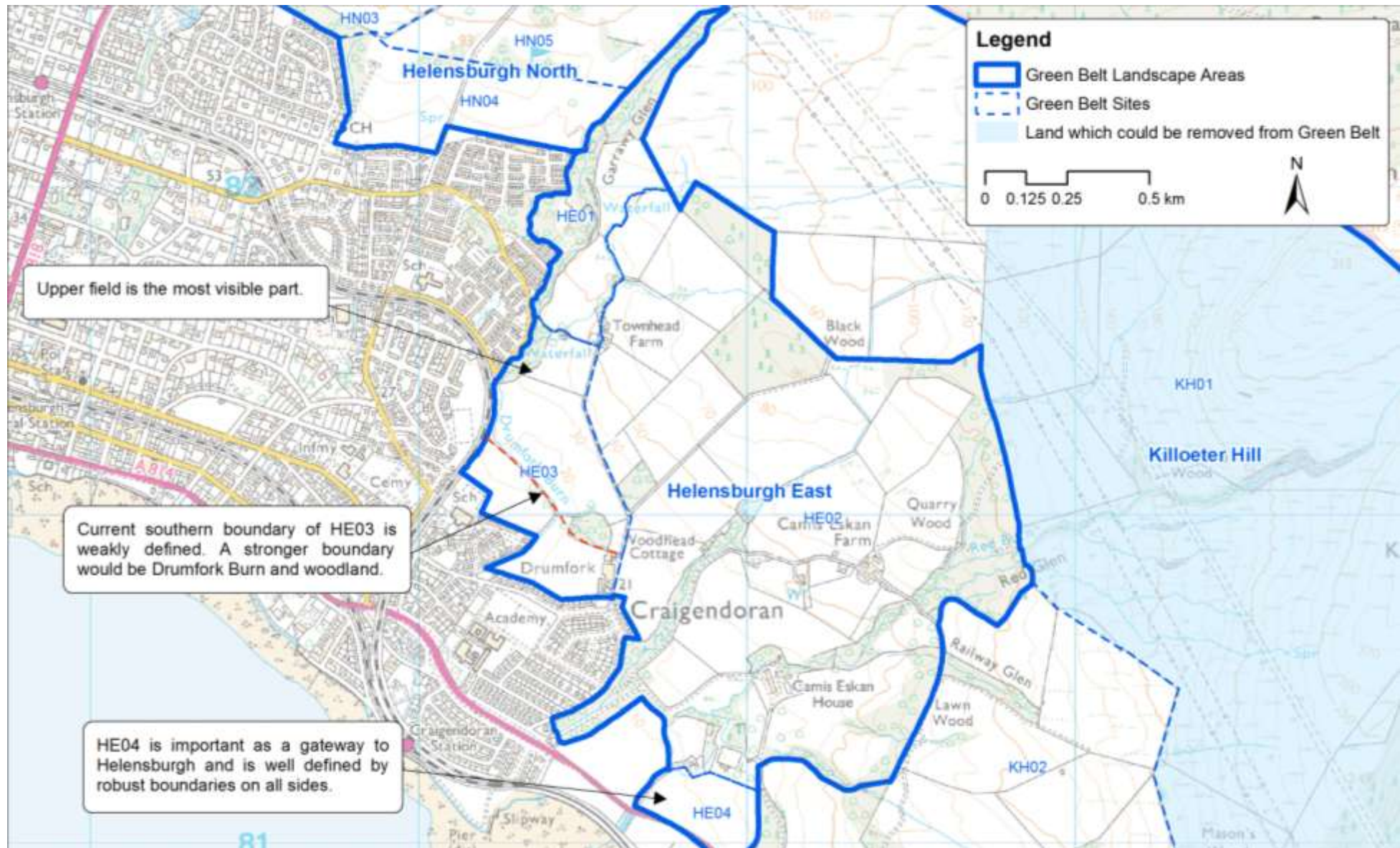


Figure 4.10: OS Map Helensburgh East

## 4.9 AREA NAME: Helensburgh North

### COMPOSITE SITES: HN01, HN02, HN03, HN04, HN05

#### 4.9.1 Description of Area

Located mostly on the plateau above Helensburgh, this thin strip of land surrounds the A818 the main route from Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park to Helensburgh. It lies below the twin peaks of Ben Bowie to the east and Tom na h-Airidh in the west and is bounded by an area of Sensitive Countryside running along the local authority boundary.

Helensburgh lies below a distinctive ridge line around the 100m contour. The distinctive, linear Blackhill Plantation marks the upper boundary, separating the built up area from the open land, with the landscape character above the town an abrupt transition to a relatively wild and open landscape. It is an area characterised by unimproved land (HN03) with raised bogs and regenerating birch woodland. Caledonian pine trees, with blaeberry growing underneath occupy a mound between unimproved rough boggy grassland and the golf course. The rough moorland is slowly being colonised by woodland, field boundaries are drystone dykes or post and wire fences. A line of pylons crosses the landscape in this location, but the large scale of the landscape diminishes their visual impact

A group of three redundant reservoirs (HN02), Helensburghs old water supply, are slowly being colonised by nature, silting up, with the lower area, surrounded by trees and large evergreen shrubs, providing a sense of enclosure that is relatively rare in this exposed landscape. The upper water body is open to the hillside above and there are excellent views towards the hills above Glen Fruin and down to Loch Lomond, from this windswept spot. Relics from its past remain, such as sluices and old railings and the sound of running water screens the noise from the busy road below.

The golf course gradually slopes up to the ridge (HN04) at around the 100m contour and then slowly levels out onto the plateau above (HN05). Patches of semi-mature and



HN01—Golf Course from right of way leading up to the A818 and Glen Fruin

mature woodland semi-enclose the space but there are panoramic views out over the Firth of Clyde and down to the Hill of Ardmore. An old sunken track (a right of way) crosses the course and HN03 to connect with the Glen Fruin road and cycle path along the A818.

HN01 mainly lies above Blackhill Plantation, which is a 70m wide strip of deciduous trees that have been stunted by the wind. It is a large expanse of purple moor grass, that stretches up and around the lower slopes of Tom na h-Airidh towards Glen Fruin.

There are very few built structures in this area a council roads depot and a civic amenity site the only major built developments north of the town. These together with the derelict Scottish Water building appear incongruous within a relatively 'wild' landscape and conflict with the long established settlement pattern of Helensburgh, blurring the boundaries between urban area and green belt.

To the north of the A818 and east of the reservoirs, lies an area of land outwith the existing green belt (HN06, HN07 & HN08). It is bounded to the north by the Milligs Burn, lower part of the Green Burn and Fruin Water corridors which is also the local authority boundary with the National Park, and to the north-west by the headwall below Drumfad Wood. The whole area is designated Sensitive Countryside.

Its landscape character matches areas that are within the green belt. HN06 and HN07 are indistinguishable in their landscape character with that of HN01 and HN03. These are a large expanse of purple moor grass, and close to the A818 and Glen Fruin Road, areas of regenerating birch woodland with occasional blocks of conifer trees.

As the landscape gradually drops from the broad ridge, down towards Loch Lomond, the landscape character of HN08 is a mix of regenerating woodland around the road corridor and heavily wooded ravines with small sloping, semi-improved fields. This is similar to the part of Killoeter Hill (KH01) which is adjacent to the A818.

Large areas of the woodland and open land in this area are designated as either Local Nature Sites and/or are listed as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland or in the Ancient Woodland Inventory. In particular the Blackhill Plantation, Blackhill Mires, most of the area around Daligan.

#### 4.9.2 Surrounding Areas

Within the green belt to the east is Killoeter Hill (KH01) which together with Ben Bowie forms part of the wider setting of Helensburgh. Directly east is the steep, wooded ravine of Garraway Glen. To the south and east are Helensburgh West areas HW01 and HW07.

Beyond the inner green belt the northern edge of Helensburgh comprises a mix of residential areas, varying in scale and age, from modern to the internationally important Hill House designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, which directly backs onto the green belt. Overall the scale of the urban form is small, with buildings following a very distinctive grid pattern.

#### 4.9.3 Inner Green Belt Boundaries

The houses of Helensburgh are separated from the moorland above by a strip of woodland 70m wide, the Blackhill Plantation. This boundary is very clearly defined and is a strong visual and physical barrier containing the buildings below. The eastern boundaries of HN01 and HN02 are stone walls and the main road (A818) and is also very well defined.

The inner green belt boundary of HN03, behind the houses of Crawford Drive is also the Blackhill Plantation. However the boundaries around the council roads depot are poorly defined. In particular the boundary that runs along the main access road to the depot and the boundary that cuts off the triangle of woodland around the Milligs Burn waterfall.

The western edge of HN04 is the Blackhill Plantation, and is well defined however most of the southern boundary is weak with garden fences and a small section around the right of way undefined on the ground.

#### 4.9.4 Value and Sensitivity of the Area

Overall the area has a moderate to high landscape value with the golf course (HN04) of moderate value. This is due to a combination of natural heritage designations, scenic qualities, condition and recreational values.

Large areas of the woodland and open land in this area are designated as either Local Nature Sites and/or are listed as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland or in the Ancient Woodland Inventory. In particular the Blackhill Plantation, Blackhill Mires, most of the area around Daligan. Most of the area is of moderate to high scenic quality, due to the 'wild' character of the landscape and its proximity to Helensburgh. However the civic amenity site, council roads depot and derelict Scottish Water building on the edge of Helensburgh locally reduce this to moderate to low. Additionally the golf course area (HN04) is of moderate to low scenic quality.



HN03— Weak boundary next to the council roads depot

All areas and most boundaries are in good condition, with the common problem of landscape features such as drystone dykes falling into disrepair and replaced by post and wire fences.

Overall most of the area (HN01, HN02, HN03, HN05) is highly susceptible to development, this is due to its importance to the setting and approach to Helensburgh as an undeveloped ridge above the town. Development has not traditionally occurred above the 100m ridge line and Blackhill Plantation. It is a highly visible area where development (civic amenity site and council roads depot) has fairly recently spilled out of the established landscape framework of the town. However the lower golf course area (HN04) is moderately susceptible to development due to its location below the Blackhill Plantation and its reduced visibility.

Therefore HN01, HN02, HN03, HN05 and areas outwith the green belt have a high landscape sensitivity. HN04 is of moderate landscape sensitivity.

#### 4.9.5 Contribution of the Area to the Green Belt

Overall the area is extremely important in the landscape setting of Helensburgh, it forms the broad undeveloped ridge above the town (see figure 2.7) and a gateway to the town along the A818. Travellers along the A818 and cycle path experience a very clear journey across a distinctive pass between Loch Lomond side and Helensburgh.

There is a very clear transition through a progressively changing landscape. It starts low down, in the farmland around Loch Lomond and the road steadily climbs through semi-improved fields up onto the pass between the hills of Ben Bowie and Tom na h-Airidh. Levelling-off the road travels through the rough textured, upland landscape on the ridge above Helensburgh before travellers drop down into the town itself, where



HN02—Reservoir No. 1 is a more enclosed part of this landscape

there is a sudden clear vista through houses, to the glittering waters of the Firth of Clyde down below.

The area has typical green belt functions, with both agricultural uses, woodland and forestry and recreation uses compatible with an agricultural or natural setting.

#### 4.9.6 Suitability of Current Area and Boundaries & Proposed Changes

The area is suitable as green belt in that it has appropriate uses and it contributes to both the wider setting of the town and acts as a gateway to Helensburgh along the A818. However the current green belt covers land only on only one side of the road, the southern edge. The countryside around the road/cycle path is very important as the gateway to Helensburgh from the National Park and both sides of the road face the

same development pressures. Therefore both sides of the road should be designated green belt (HN07 & HN08). Additionally the green belt area HN01 does not fully extend to the ridgeline/sightline above the town so an additional area of Sensitive Countryside should be added to the green belt (HN06).

Most of the boundaries are well defined and suitable for the green belt edge, except at the locations listed below:

HN04 - The southern boundary is weak and thin.

HN03 - The boundaries around the council roads department are poorly defined, in particular the eastern side and the boundary that cuts off the triangle of woodland around the Milligs Burn waterfall.



HN03 open ground above Helensburgh with good views across Glen Fruin

# Helensburgh North

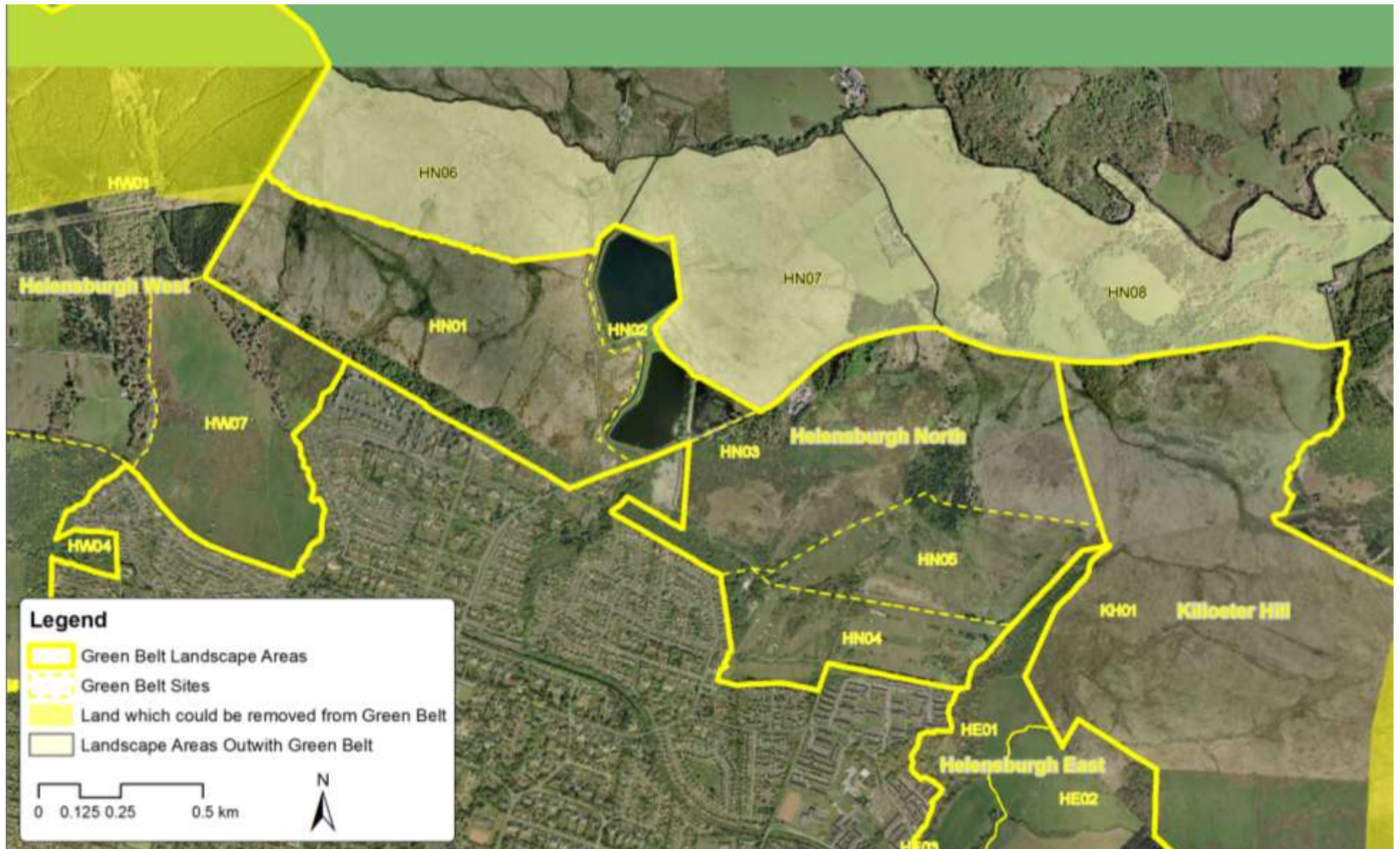


Figure 4.11: Aerial Photograph Helensburgh North



# Helensburgh North

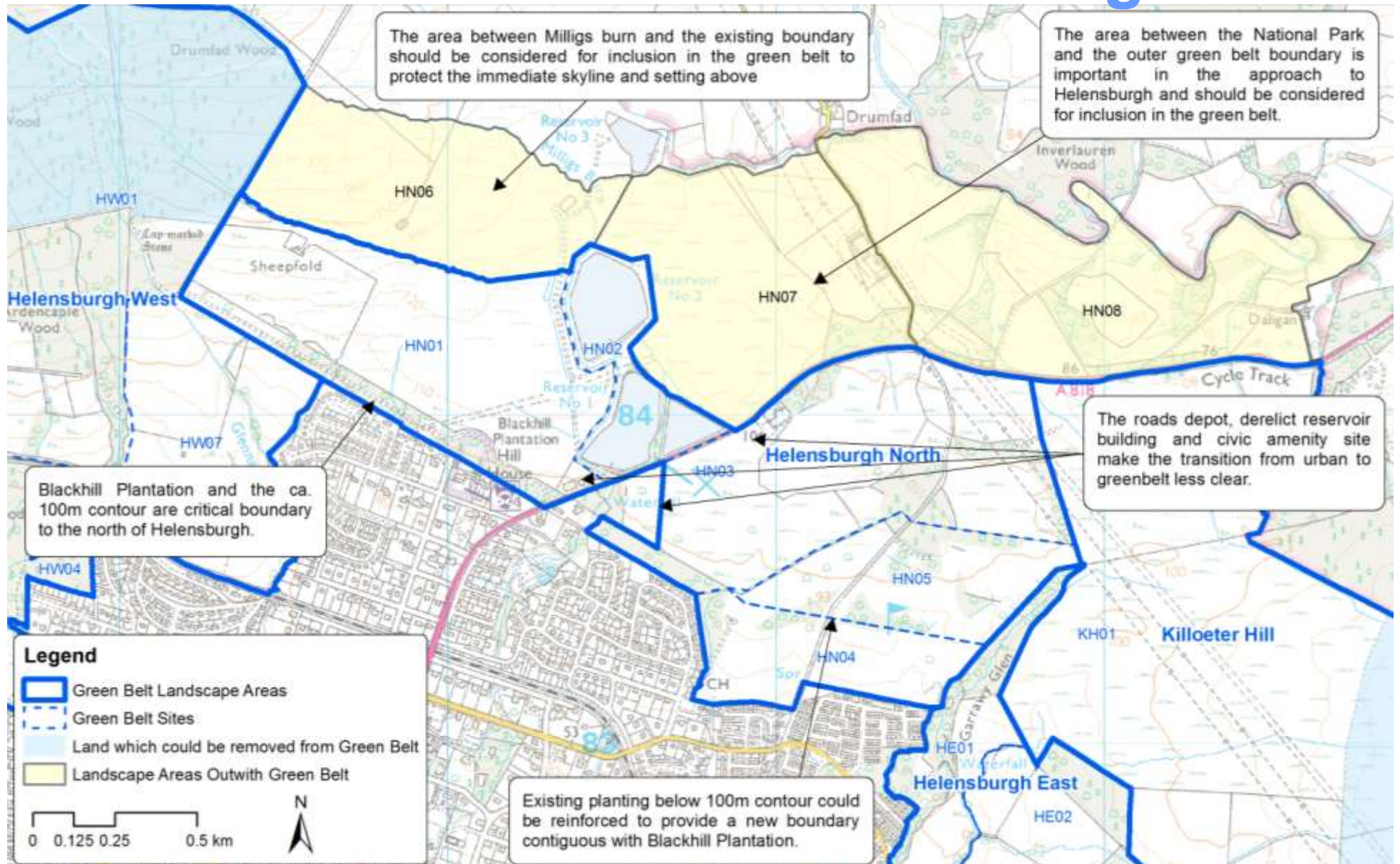


Figure 4.12: OS Map Helensburgh North

## 4.10 AREA NAME: Helensburgh West

### COMPOSITE SITES: HW01, HW02, HW03, HW04, HW05, HW06, HW07

#### 4.10.1 Description of Area

A broad sweep of hillside running down from the upper reaches of Tom na h-Airidh, (the hill above the western edge of Helensburgh at 240m AOD) to the coast road (A814) and foreshore. The West Highland Railway line physically divides the area in half. Helensburgh West physically separates the settlements of Helensburgh and Rhu.

It is a heavily wooded area, with a number of different character areas, but is essentially of medium to small scale, and semi-enclosed. The upper hillside has a large conifer plantation Highlandman's Wood running down and merging with the deciduous Ardencaple Wood. Further down the hillside a thin strip of semi-improved grazing land borders the north side of the railway around Ardencaple Farm and is managed for equestrian use (HW01). Incised wooded burn corridors divide up the hillside below the farm. On the lower slopes Duchess Wood (HW05), a large area of deciduous trees borders the western edge of Helensburgh. Above Duchess Wood is an area of rough grazing land (HW07) which is surrounded by a strong framework of woodland and contains a small substation.

Further west the old and derelict gardens and policy woodlands around demolished Glenoran House (HW02), together with the fields below HW03, physically separate the settlements of Rhu and Helensburgh. The overgrown grounds around the demolished mansion contain original features and exotic plants, with ornamental features hidden amongst the rhododendrons in the woods.

The lower areas within Helensburgh are more like urban greenspace, with a heavily developed sports area (HW06) and rugby pitches with club building below Duchess Wood (HW02) next to West Montrose Street. With additional rugby pitches hidden amongst, and surrounded by the mature woodland of Duchess Wood.

Traditional stone and slate roofed farms are located high up the hillside, with associated larger scale modern outbuildings nearby. Tracks and footpaths cross the area from the western edge of Helensburgh. Field boundaries vary with well maintained hawthorn hedges at lower elevations and drystone dykes further up, together with the ubiquitous post and wire fence.

#### 4.10.2 Surrounding Areas

Within the green belt to the north and east is Blackhill Plantation, open hillside and the reservoirs (HN01&HN02) which together with Tom na h-Airidh forms part of the wider setting of Helensburgh. Directly west is the steep semi-improved farmland above Rhu and this area is bisected by deeply incised and wooded burn corridors. It has rougher grazing land and more drystone dykes.

Beyond the inner green belt the western edge of Helensburgh is predominantly residential areas with small scale buildings, following a grid pattern. Rhu has a strong wooded framework within the settlement, with mature trees surrounding the large detached houses. It has a less dense settlement pattern than Helensburgh with house plots on terraces running across the steep hillside and a more organic informal road network.

#### 4.10.3 Inner Green Belt Boundaries

The western edge of Helensburgh is very clearly defined with combinations of landscape elements such as burns, woodland, railway line on embankment and roads in areas HW07, HW04, HW06 and HW05. Most of these visually contain the settlement edge.

HW03 is the most important wedge of green belt in the study area in that it prevents the coalescence of Helensburgh and Rhu. Therefore the inner boundaries are very



HW03 viewed from the A814. The most important wedge of green belt in the study area preventing visual and physical coalescence between Rhu and Helensburgh



HN03 viewed from above with weak boundaries along the western edge of Helensburgh do not visually contain the edge of the settlement in this very important location



HW01 looking across to western edge of Helensburgh from the track to Ardencaple Farm. HW07 is clearly visible.

important in this very narrow wedge. However HW03 has one of the weakest boundaries in the green belt, with just hedges and garden fences defining the edge of Helensburgh. These fail to visually contain the settlement edge in this important location.

However the edge of Rhu is moderately strong, with fences, hedges, woodland and trees, and it is the mature trees which manage to visually contain the settlement edge in this critical, very narrow, wedge of green belt.

#### 4.10.4 Value and Sensitivity of the Area

Overall the area has a moderate to high landscape value, with Duchess Wood (HW04) and the lower parts of HW01 around Ardencaple Wood and Farm of the highest value. HW06 is of low landscape value. Landscape value results from an assessment of a combination of natural heritage designations, scenic qualities, condition and recreational values.

Large areas of the woodland and open land in this area are designated as either Local Nature Sites and/or are listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory. In particular Duchess Wood, Ardencaple Woods the whole hillside north of Ardencaple Farm and Torwood Hill. All areas and most boundaries are in good condition, with Duchess Wood in particular managed well. There is the common problem of landscape features such as drystone dykes falling into disrepair and replaced by post and wire fences.

The areas HW01, HW07 and HW04 are of high scenic value, due to their interesting and divergent character, with mature woodland surrounding smaller areas and fields, and the sound of running water nearby. An excellent network of formal and informal paths cross the area linking residential areas to the open countryside. HW06 does have a high recreation value but not of a type compatible with an agricultural or natural setting.

Overall the area is moderately to highly susceptible to development. With some areas highly susceptible, such as HW04, HW02, HW03 and the upper parts of HW07 due to their visibility and importance in the setting of and separation of Helensburgh and Rhu. In conclusion the area is of high landscape sensitivity.

#### 4.10.5 Contribution of the Area to the Green Belt

Overall the whole area is very important in the landscape setting for Helensburgh and Rhu, it flanks the western edge of the town and physically separates the two settlements.

Most of the area has typical green belt functions, with both agricultural uses, woodland and forestry and recreation uses compatible with an agricultural or natural setting. However HW06 is primarily urban greenspace, and although of high recreation value, of a type that is not compatible with an agricultural or natural setting

#### 4.10.6 Suitability of Current Area and Boundaries & Proposed Changes

The area is suitable as green belt in that it has appropriate uses and it contributes to both the setting of the town and prevents the physical coalescence of Rhu and Helensburgh. However HW06 has an urban greenspace character and does not have a typical green belt use. It could be considered for removal from the green belt and its designation retained as Open Space Protection Area. A better green belt boundary could be West Montrose Street, which is clearly discernable on the ground.

However the upper slopes of Highlandman's Wood (HW01) although part of the backdrop to the town are not a typical landscape character type for green belt designation. It is also unlikely to face the same type of development pressures as land close to the town. A rational new boundary could be (like W.DC green belt and most of the rest of ABC green belt) the headwall or limit of enclosed farmland. The upper part of Highlandman's Wood could be re-designated Sensitive Countryside, which is a more suitable type of protection for the area whilst still retaining the lower slopes adjacent to Ardencaple Farm as green belt.

Most of the boundaries are very well defined and suitable for the green belt edge, except at the locations listed below:

HW03—The eastern boundary is weak and thin, with no visual containment of the settlement edge.



HN06—More of an urban greenspace in its landscape character

# Helensburgh West

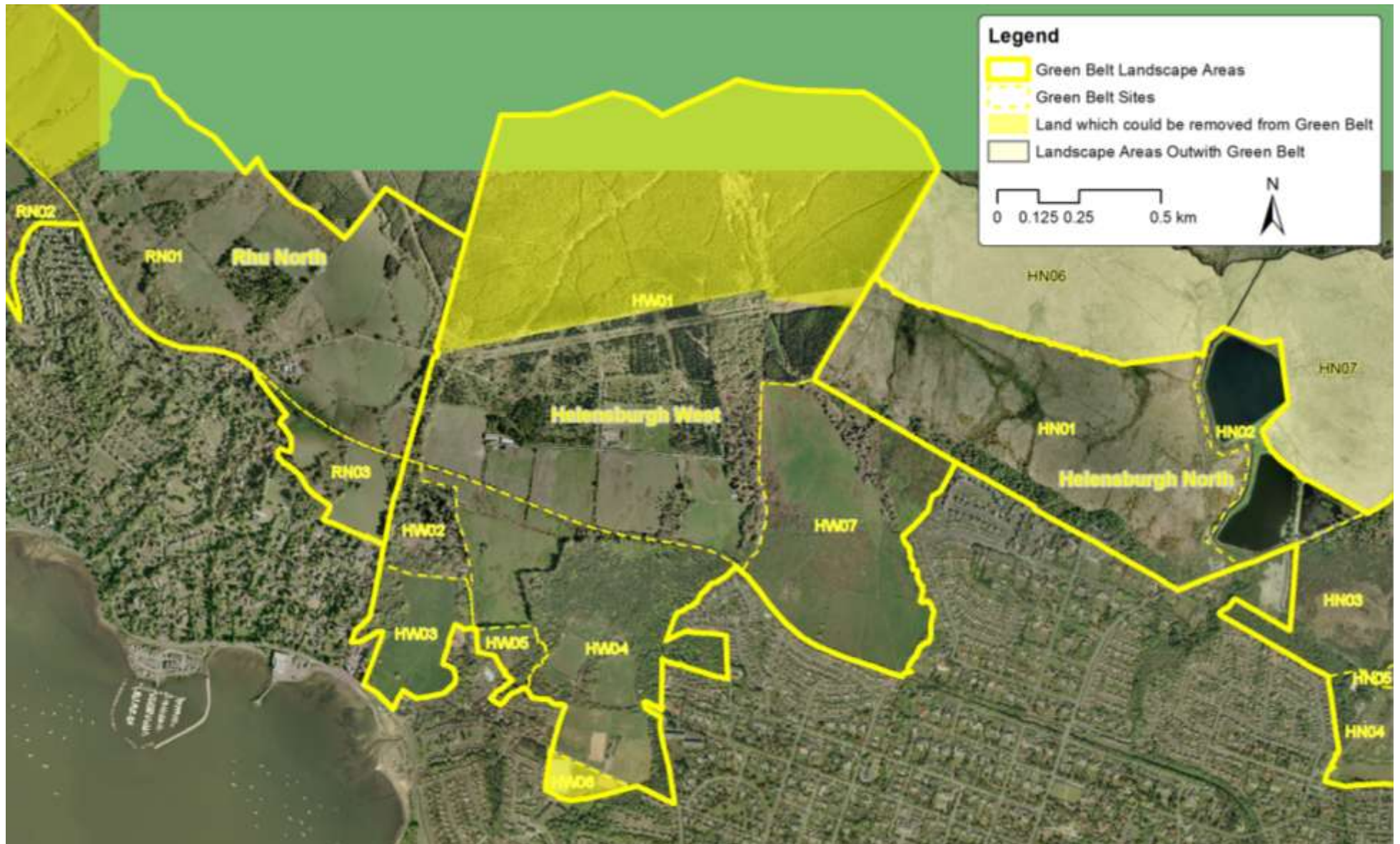


Figure 4.13: Aerial Photograph Helensburgh West

# Helensburgh West

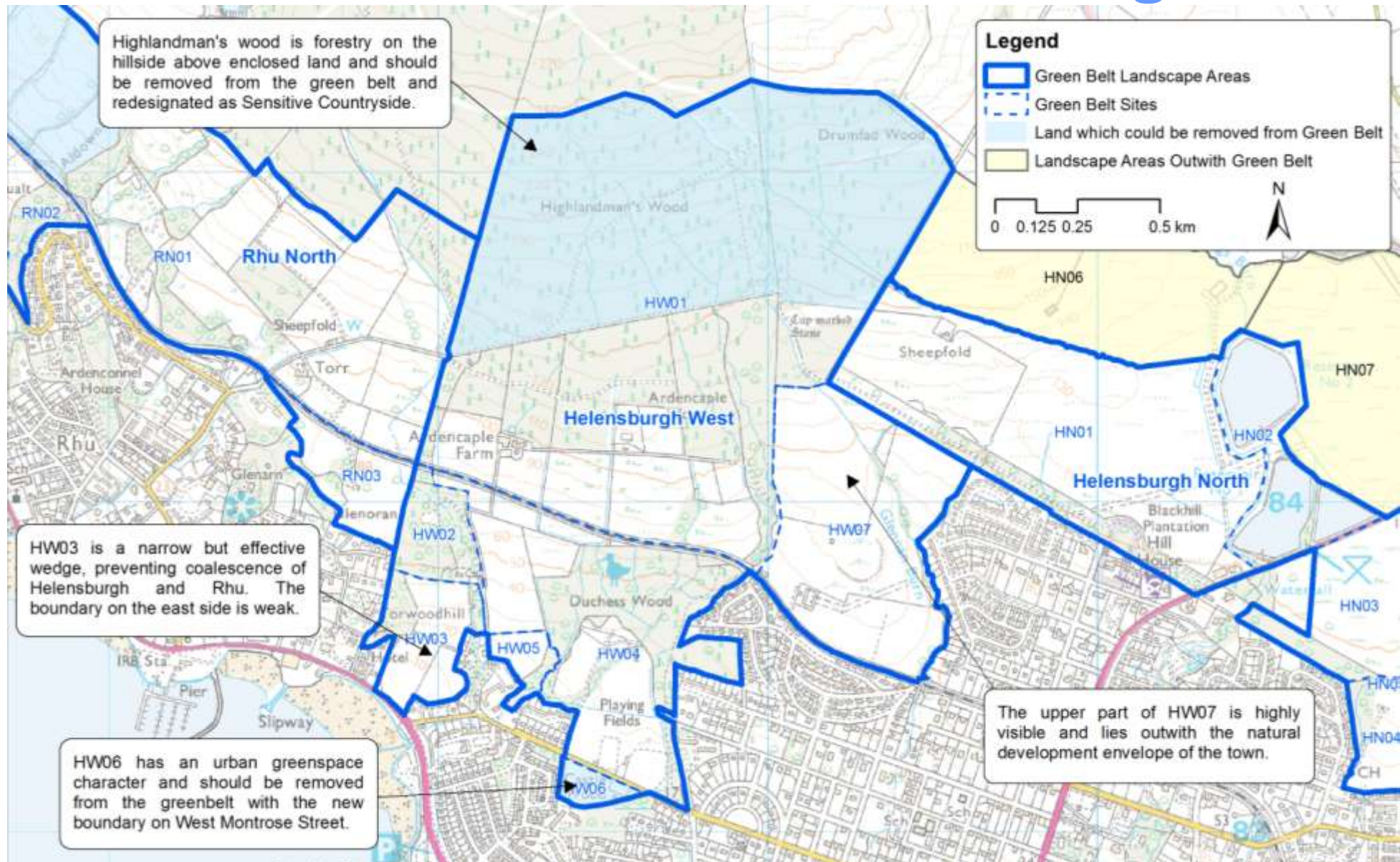


Figure 4.14: OS Map Helensburgh West

## 4.11 AREA NAME: Rhu North

### COMPOSITE SITES: RN01, RN02, RN03

#### 4.11.1 Description of Area

Located directly above the settlement of Rhu, sandwiched between the dark conifer woods on the upper slopes of Tom na h-Airidh and the coastal road (A814), the West Highland Railway cuts the area in half. The slopes are steeper here than to the east and the Rosneath Peninsula gives a distant sense of enclosure across the Gare Loch narrows.

The area is a mix of woodland and rough grazing, field boundaries are characterised by broken stone walls, post and wire fencing and occasional sparse hedgerows. Gorse is characteristic of the upland areas, with small broadleaf woodlands in the steep ravines around the burns. Many of the trees on exposed slopes are stunted. Lower down, the policy woodlands around large old mansions such as Glenoran and Glenarn screen the edge of Rhu and make it difficult to determine the settlement edge.

The railway is in cutting through most of the area and this together with gradient appears to have significantly limited the growth of Rhu and houses have been built right up to the edge of the line. The fields of Torwoodhill and west of Letrualt are both important in preserving the setting of the settlement and preventing coalescence with Helensburgh. North of the Railway the farmland around Torr and above Letrualt is rough grass with large areas of bracken and *Juncus*.

Traditional stone and slate roofed farms are located high up the hillside, with associated larger scale modern outbuildings nearby. Smaller stone cottages are dotted around. Tracks fan out across the area from the few railway crossing points.

Tree species change from planted lime and beech avenues, oak/ash woodlands following the narrow ravines, up to blocks of conifers and regenerating birch woodland next to the headwall. Large areas of the woodland in this area are designated as either Local Nature Sites and/or are listed as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland.

#### 4.11.2 Surrounding Areas

Within the green belt to the east are HW01& HW02. Directly west is the steep farmland above Shandon and this area is broadly similar to Rhu North in landscape character.

Beyond the inner green belt in Rhu the houses are typically stepped up the steep slope on terraces with access roads winding up the hillside.

#### 4.11.3 Inner Green Belt Boundaries

Most of the boundaries with Rhu, the south of RN03, RN01 and east of RH02 are very well defined on the ground. They are; change in slope, woodland, masonry wall, railway line in cutting/on embankment, fence, track and hedge, often in combination.

The weakest boundaries are immediately to the south of Letrualt Farm and these are not very clearly defined.

#### 4.11.4 Value and Sensitivity of the Area

Overall the area is of moderate to high landscape value, with the area above the railway RH01 of the highest value. This is due to a combination of factors natural heritage designations, condition, recreation value and scenic qualities.

Several areas of the woodland in this area are designated as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland or listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, in particular the Aldownick Glen corridor and woodland above the railway. Rights of way and informal paths give the area a moderate recreational value. Nearly all areas and boundaries are in good condition, with the common problem of landscape features such as drystone dykes falling into disrepair and replaced by post and wire fences.

The area is of moderate to high scenic quality, with the steep topography, mature woodland and panoramic views creating interesting compositions.

Overall the area is moderately to highly susceptible to development. With some areas





RN03 showing a mosaic of rough grazing land and woodland



RN01 with Torr Farm in the right hand corner of the photograph. It shows that the settlement of Rhu is well hidden by a thick belt of trees

highly susceptible, such as RN02 due to their visibility and importance in the setting of and separation of Rhu and Shandon. Overall the area is of moderate to high landscape sensitivity.

#### 4.11.5 Contribution of the Area to the Green Belt

Overall the area is important in the landscape setting and backdrop for Rhu and Shandon, it lies above the town of Rhu and physically separates the two settlements.

The area has typical green belt functions, with agricultural uses, woodland and forestry and recreation uses compatible with an agricultural or natural setting.

#### 4.11.6 Suitability of Current Area and Boundaries & Proposed Changes

The area is suitable as green belt in that it has appropriate uses and it contributes to the wider landscape setting of the town. However the very limited access across the railway and steepness of the ground in the western edge of RN01 make it unlikely to face the same type of development pressures as land below the railway, close to Rhu. A rational new boundary would be the railway. The upper area could be re-designated Sensitive Countryside, which is a more suitable type of protection whilst still retaining the lower slopes adjacent and directly above Rhu (RN01 east of Aldownick Glen, RN02, and RN03) to protect the setting of the settlement.

Most of the boundaries are very well defined and suitable for the green belt edge, except at the locations listed below:

RN02—The weakest boundaries are immediately to the south of Letrualt Farm which are not clearly defined as they do not tie in with existing features. We recommend moving the green belt boundary to follow the track and change in slope, to the rear of the farm buildings

# Rhu North

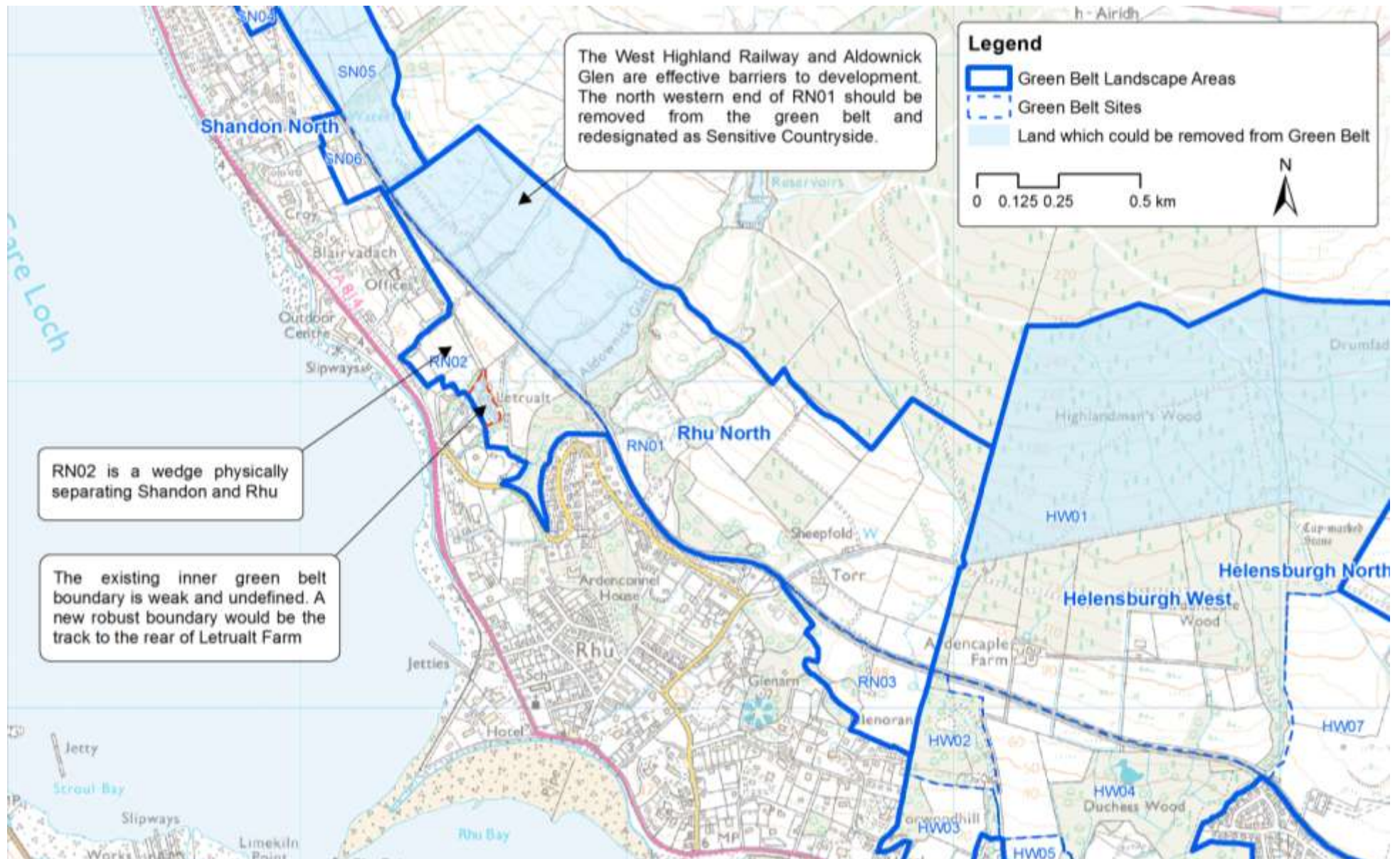


Figure 4.15: OS Map Rhu North

## 4.12 AREA NAME: Shandon North

### COMPOSITE SITES: SN01, SN02, SN03, SN04, SN05, SN06

#### 4.12.1 Description of Area

A thin strip of land on the steep slopes above Shandon. It runs from the council offices at Blairvadach to the outer limit of the green belt (east of the Faslane Naval Base). This area does not connect physically with the main road (the A814), but is however bisected by the West Highland Railway line. The slopes are steeper here than to the south and the Rosneath Peninsula gives a distant sense of enclosure across the Gare Loch narrows.

The area is heavily wooded in particular above and along the settlement edge. The trees screen the large houses from the railway, and the green belt area is relatively inaccessible, however a myriad of hidden, informal footpaths run up from the residential areas below. The woodland appears relatively unmanaged and is scrubby in character, with large areas entirely colonised by rhododendron shrubs.

The strip of farmland above the railway is smaller in extent than in any other location in the green belt, with often just one steep field before the headwall and open hillside above. Consequently the fields are very rough grazing, with field boundaries broken drystone dykes. Gorse, bracken and juncus, with few areas of grass are characteristic of these boggy fields. Burns in small ravines cut through the bedrock and run down the hillside. Many of the trees on exposed slopes are stunted

The railway together with gradient appears to have significantly limited the growth of Shandon to the north, mainly due to the limited number of crossing points. A disused railway on embankment runs parallel to the main railway and has been cleared of woodland for parts of its length (from Stuckenduff farm access to the track leading to Laigh Balernock) to provide access. Woodland areas to the north of the area are listed as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland.

#### 4.12.2 Surrounding Areas

Within the green belt to the south is RN01. Directly north, outside the green belt is the steep farmland above Faslane Naval Base, this area is broadly similar to Shandon North in landscape character, but the naval base buildings are much larger in scale and modern in design than any others in the study area.

Beyond the inner green belt in Shandon the houses are typically stepped up the slope on terraces. They are large and surrounded by mature woodland which screens the extent of development in the area. Roads mostly run directly up the hillside and are often private or dead end.

#### 4.12.3 Inner Green Belt Boundaries

Most of the boundaries with Shandon, the south of SN06, SN04 and part of SN03 are very well defined on the ground. They are; change in slope, woodland, masonry wall, wooded ravine, fence, old rides and hedges, often in combination.

The weakest boundaries are; the western edge of SN06 and the southern edge of SN03 above the old St Andrews school which are not clearly defined.

#### 4.12.4 Value and Sensitivity of the Area

Overall the area is of moderate to high landscape value. This is due to a combination of factors natural heritage designations, condition, recreation value and scenic qualities.

Several areas of the woodland in this area are designated as Semi-natural Ancient Woodland. Rights of way and informal paths give the area a moderate recreational value. Nearly all areas and most boundaries are in good condition, with the common

problem of landscape features such as drystone dykes falling into disrepair and replaced by post and wire fences and colonisation of rhododendron in woodland areas. The area is of moderate to high scenic quality, with the steep topography, mature woodland and panoramic views creating interesting compositions.

Overall the area is moderately to highly susceptible to development. With some areas highly susceptible, such as SN06 due to their visibility and importance in the setting of Shandon. The area is of moderate to high landscape sensitivity.

#### **4.12.5 Contribution of the Area to the Green Belt**

The whole area is important in the landscape setting for Shandon, it lies above the settlement and physically separates it from the Faslane Naval Base.

The area has typical green belt functions, with agricultural uses, woodland and forestry and recreation uses compatible with an agricultural or natural setting.

#### **4.12.6 Suitability of Current Area and Boundaries & Proposed Changes**

The area is suitable as green belt in that it has appropriate uses and it contributes to the wider landscape setting of the town. However the very limited access across the railway and steepness of the ground in SN05 and SN01 make it unlikely to face the same type of development pressures as land below the railway, close to Shandon. A rational new boundary would be the railway. This upper area could be re-designated Sensitive Countryside, which is a more suitable type of protection whilst still retaining the lower slopes adjacent to Shandon (SN06, SN04, SN03 and SN02) to protect the setting of the settlement.

The green belt boundary along the northern edge of SN06 and southern boundary of SN03 above the old St Andrews school is not well defined. Visual and physical containment of the settlement could be significantly improved with additional tree planting along this boundary.

# Shandon North

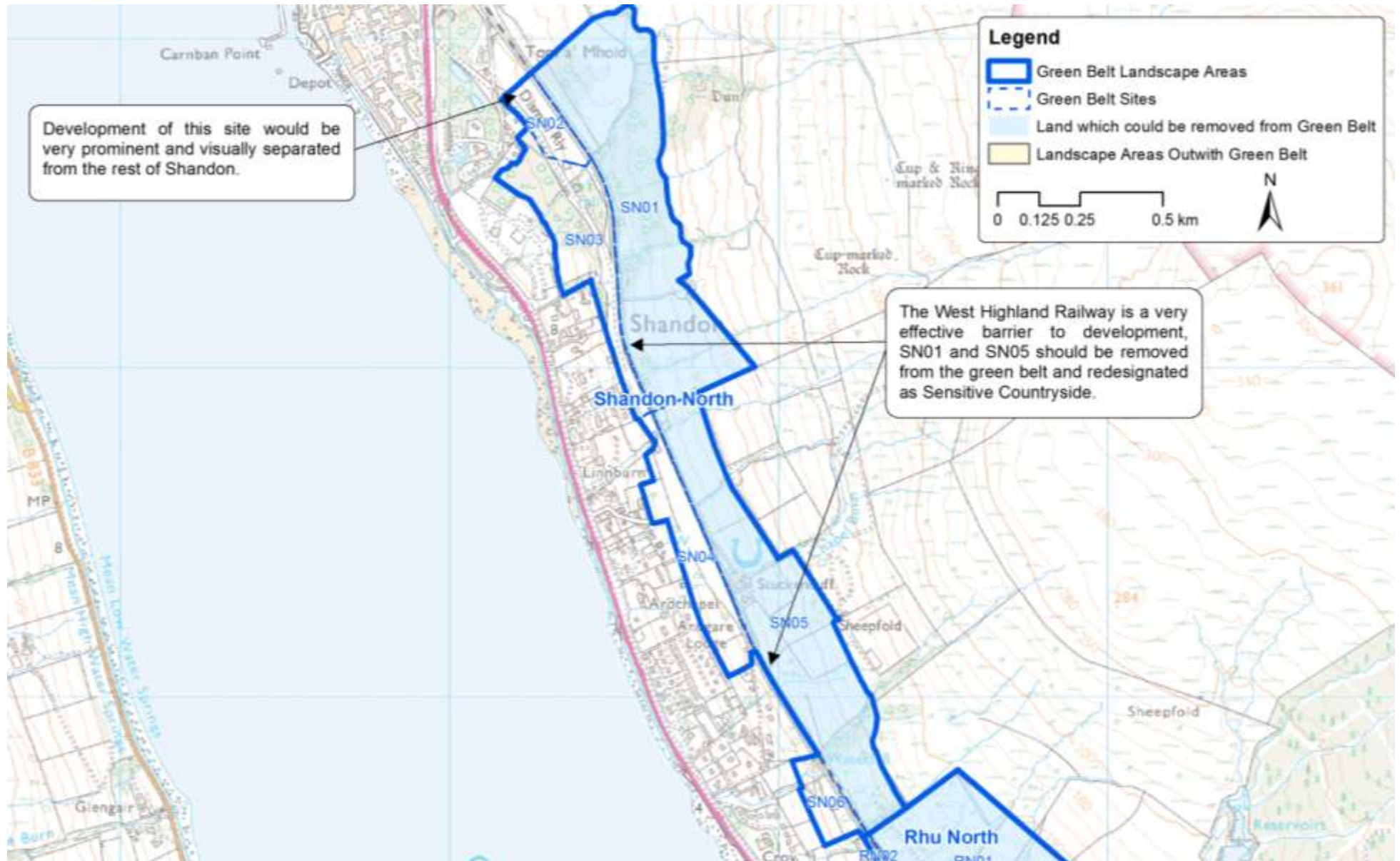


Figure 4.16: OS Map Shandon North



*Red Road near Cardross*

# 5

## Assessment of Objection Sites

The 11 objection sites have been specifically assessed in more detail terms of their value to the green belt and sensitivity to change, to allow a comparative ranking as required by the brief. This has included applying a five-point scale assessment of each of the criteria in Table 3.2.

The table details the criteria taken into account in assessing value, susceptibility and sensitivity. The green belt landscape objectives are given the greatest weight in assessing green belt value. The physical and qualitative criteria in effect contribute to these objectives but are analysed to give more information in the assessment process.

The points scale evaluates the criteria according to value and susceptibility to change, with the highest score indicating a high green belt value and susceptibility to change and the lowest score a low green belt value and susceptibility to change. It runs from the highest score of 5 to the lowest of 1 and can be categorised as follows:

- a score of 5 indicates that the site has a high green belt value and is most susceptible to change indicating it has the highest constraints on development
- a score of 3 indicates that the site has moderate green belt value, is moderately susceptible to change and therefore has moderate constraints on development
- a score of 1 corresponds to a site that has low green belt value, has low susceptibility to change and low constraints on development.

The scoring system has been used to support and inform the assessment process for each of the objection sites. The ranking of sites shown on the table in Appendix 2 is not an absolute measure but has been used to provide an informed approach for determining the relative value to the green belt of each site.

HIGH GREENBELT VALUE/ SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE HIGHER CONSTRAINTS ON DEVELOPMENT		LOW GREENBELT VALUE/ SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE LOWER CONSTRAINTS ON DEVELOPMENT		
SCORE OF 5	SCORE OF 4	SCORE OF 3	SCORE OF 2	SCORE OF 1
<b>Green belt Landscape Objectives</b>				
Important in setting and character of a settlement		Not important in setting or character of a settlement		
Important in identity of a settlement		Not important in identity of a settlement		
Preventing coalescence between settlements		Not in a critical location preventing coalescence		
Gateway to a settlement		Not in a critical gateway location		
<b>Physical Criteria</b>				
Prominent/ easily visible/ higher than surroundings		Well hidden, low in landscape		
Well defined/ robust existing green belt boundary		Poor/ ill defined existing green belt boundary		
No clear alternative boundary		Clear alternative boundary		
Large area/ long boundary		Small area/ short boundary		
<b>Qualitative Criteria</b>				
High scenic quality		Poor scenic quality		
Strongly rural character		Indeterminate/ urban fringe character		
<b>Designations/ Other Criteria Contributing to Landscape Value</b>				
Landscape designations		No designation		
Biodiversity designations/ value		No designation/ low value		
Cultural heritage designations/ associations/ value		No designation/ associations/ low value		
Core paths, rights of way, cycle routes, recreational facilities/ use		No core paths rights of way, cycle routes, or recreational facilities/ use		

**Table 3.2: Landscape Criteria for Assessing Value to Green Belt, Susceptibility to Change and Constraints to Development**

As part of this assessment the landscape setting and identity of each of the main settlements has also been examined in section 2.4. To define the setting and character of a settlement involves defining the key landscape characteristics in terms of scale, landform etc. around a town and identifying whether development in a particular area would conflict with these. It also involves identifying the existing settlement pattern, i.e. does the existing settlement form follow key patterns or landscape features and would development in this area conflict with this pattern.

Please note that not all criteria have equal weight in the selection of suitable sites. In some instances changes in the proportion of area released/boundaries may reduce constraints to development.

### **AR05 Ardoch: The Paddock (16.3.2)**

The objection site comprises a small field between the A814 and the railway line on the western edge of Ardoch.

#### **Green Belt Landscape Objectives:**

The area is technically part of the gateway to Ardoch along the A814 and railway, however its location and elevation create the impression that it lies within the existing settlement pattern.

#### **Physical Criteria:**

The area is low within surrounding landscape and its eastern boundary is weak.

#### **Qualitative Criteria:**

The area is of low scenic quality and has a weak rural character.

#### **Designations/Other:**

The area has no designations but a rights of way passes next to its eastern boundary.

#### **Summary:**

This area is of low to moderate importance within the green belt.



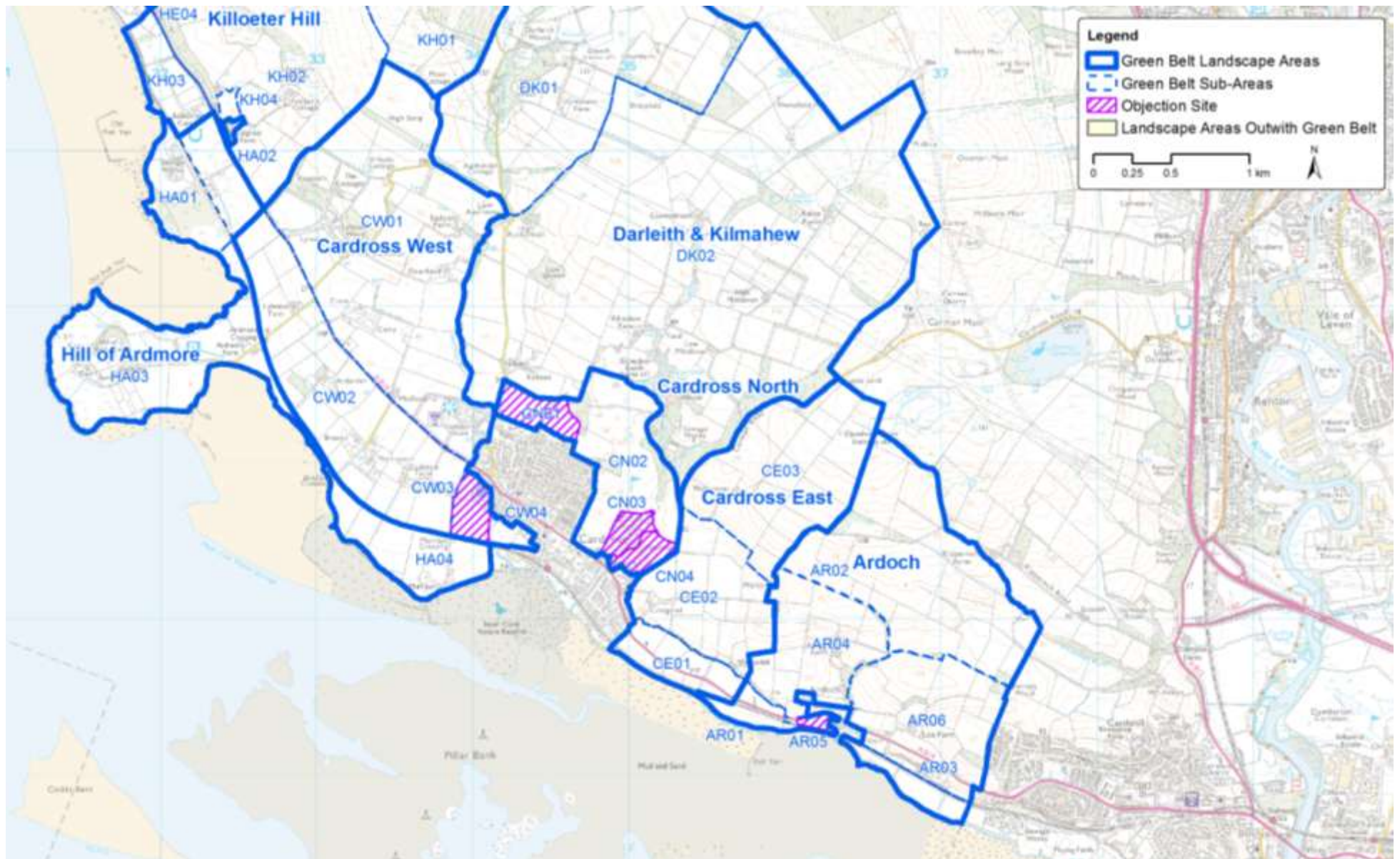


Figure 5.1: Green Belt Areas—Showing Objection Sites

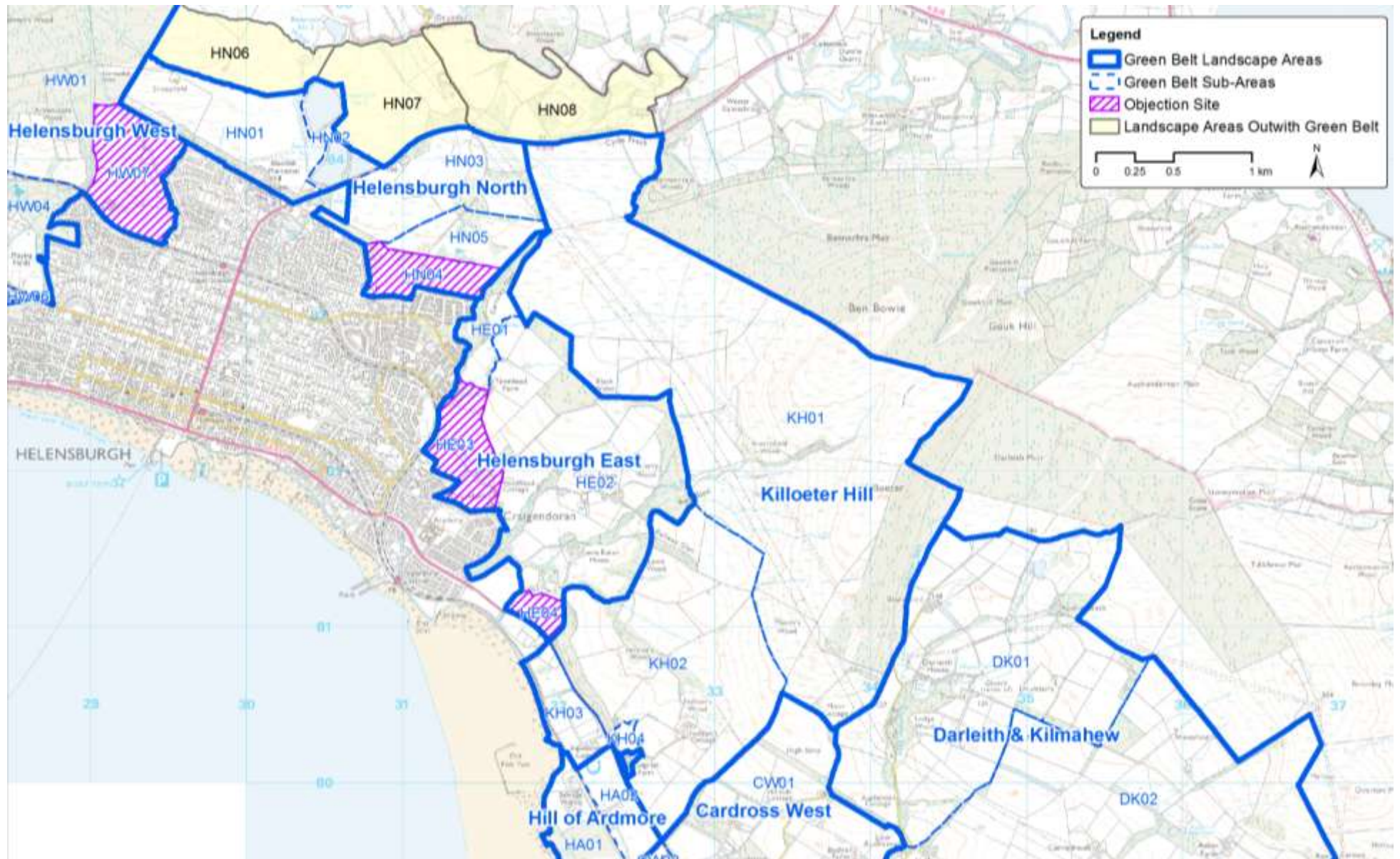


Figure 5.2: Green Belt Areas—Showing Objection Sites

### **CN04 Cardross: Bloomhill (16.2.2)**

The objection site comprises the house and estate grounds of Bloomhill and is part of Cardross conservation area with CN03

#### **Green Belt Landscape Objectives:**

An area which acts as both a gateway to the village along the Carman Road and the A814 and also as part of the setting of the village. It forms the rural backdrop to some of the oldest parts of the village, the ruined church, Moore's bridge and manse (SAM).

#### **Physical Criteria:**

The area is visible from the A814 and Carman Road in the village and although small has robust well defined green belt boundaries.

#### **Qualitative Criteria:**

The area is of high scenic quality and has a relatively strong estate character.

#### **Designations/Other:**

CN04 is part of Cardross Conservation Area (together with CN03) and its woodland and less intensively managed grazing land give it relatively high biodiversity value.

#### **Summary:**

This area is of high importance within the green belt.

### **CN03 Cardross: Auchenfroe (16.2.1)**

The objection site comprises the house and estate grounds of Auchenfroe House and is part of Cardross conservation area with CN04

#### **Green Belt Landscape Objectives:**

An area which is part of the setting of the village, but is less important than CN04. It is a small part of the rural backdrop to the oldest parts of the village, the ruined church, Moore's bridge and manse (SAM).

#### **Physical Criteria**

The area is partially visible from the A814 within the village but is more hidden than CN04, due to landscape features such as mature woodland, and, although small, has robust well defined green belt boundaries.

#### **Qualitative Criteria**

The area is of moderate to high scenic quality and has a relatively strong estate character.

#### **Designations/Other**

CN03 is part of Cardross Conservation Area (together with CN04) and its woodland and less intensively managed grazing land give it relatively high biodiversity value.

#### **Summary**

This area is of moderate to high importance within the green belt. The mature trees that surround the site would allow some development but only within the existing woodland framework and at very low density.

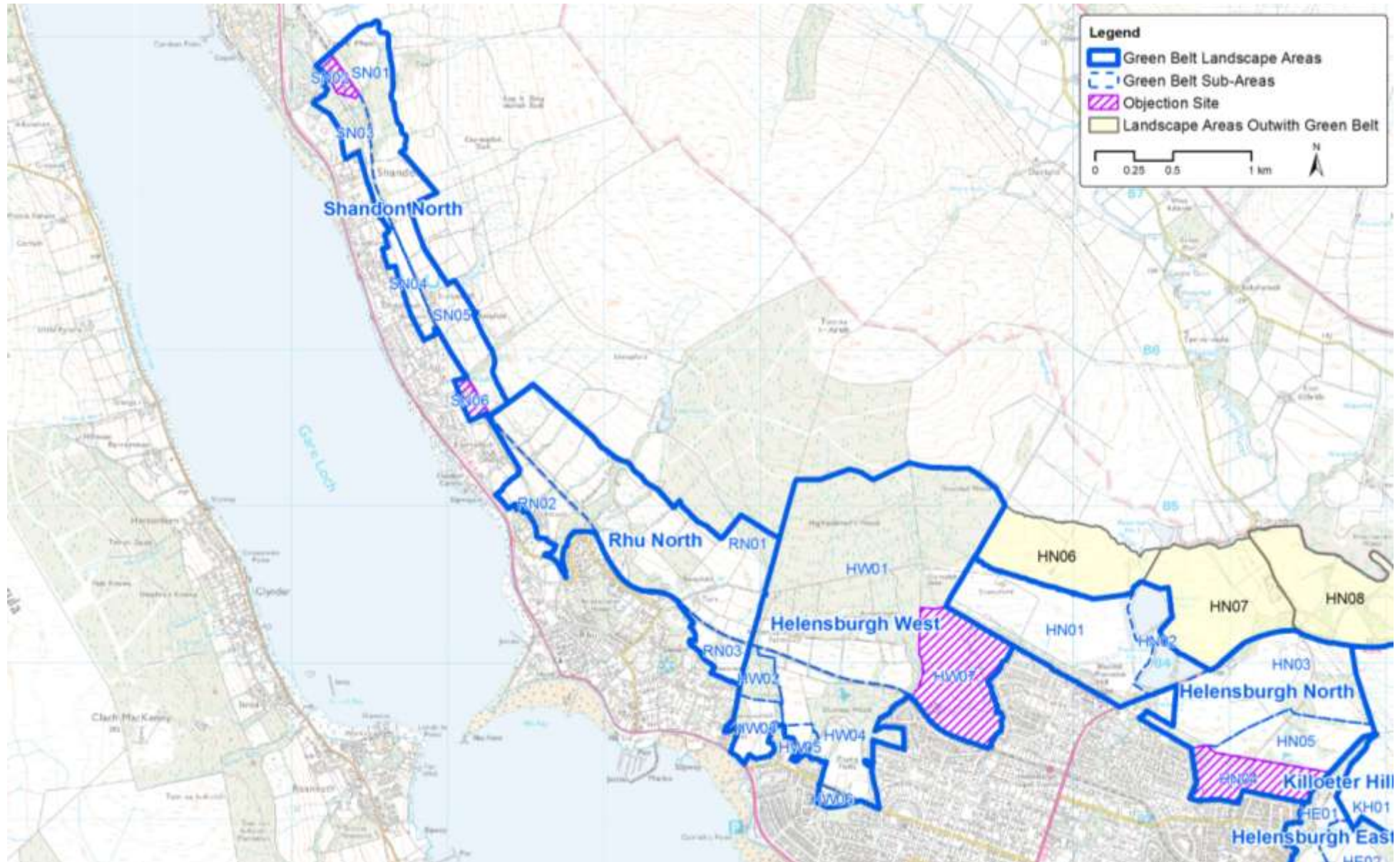


Figure 5.3: Green Belt Areas—Showing Objection Sites

### CN01 Cardross: Kirkton Farm (16.2.4)

This area of farmland is located on the edge of the village between 35 and 50 m, where the hillside levels off behind the village.

#### **Green Belt Landscape Objectives**

It forms the gateway to Cardross along the minor Darleith Road and also for walkers along the RofW past Kilmahew Farm. It is also part of the wider setting of the village

#### **Physical Criteria**

The highest parts of the area, the eastern field and boundary with the wood, have the highest visibility, from the north in particular. It has moderate to weak green belt boundaries and the alternative boundary, if the area were released is also relatively weak, just a hedge line.

#### **Qualitative Criteria**

The area is of moderate scenic quality and has a rural character.

#### **Designations/Other**

The area has no designations but two rights of way pass through it to the wider countryside beyond.

#### **Summary**

This area is of moderate importance within the green belt. The visual prominence of the eastern field means that any development should be limited to the western field. If this area were released the new green belt boundary (a hedge) would have to be strengthened with woodland planting to improve visual containment of the settlement.

### CW03 Cardross: Geilston Farm (16.2.3)

This area of farmland is located on the western edge of the village, straddling a rounded scarp, part of a raised beach landform,

#### **Green Belt Landscape Objectives**

CW03 contributes to both the wider setting of the village and acts as a gateway to Cardross particularly for travellers along the railway.

#### **Physical Criteria**

The landform limits visibility with the lower slopes above the railway, most visible and only the small area immediately behind the housing relatively hidden. It has moderate to strong green belt boundaries. The alternative boundary if the area were released is also strong.

#### **Qualitative Criteria**

The area is of moderate to high scenic quality and has a strong rural character.

#### **Designations/Other**

The site is of high biodiversity value with the woodland around the Geilston Burn a SSSI (the only one in the study area) and the lower areas next to the railway developing into reed beds. The western boundary is a very attractive RofW bounded by mature trees.

#### **Summary**

This area is of moderate to high importance within the green belt. Buildings in this area (and in CW02) have been traditionally sited above the scarp (part of a raised beach landform). Any development should also be located above this, reducing visual impacts for rail travelers and linking with the existing settlement pattern. The SSSI would also significantly reduce the developable area.

### HE04 Helensburgh: Camis Eskan (16.1.9)

This area of farmland is located on the eastern edge of the town, surrounded by the old policy woodlands of Camis Eskan

#### **Green Belt Landscape Objectives**

This is a prominent gateway site on the approach into Helensburgh along the A814

#### **Physical Criteria**

The area is highly visible and has strong green belt boundaries. The alternative boundaries, if the area were released, are also strong.

#### **Qualitative Criteria**

The area is of moderate to low scenic quality but has a strong rural character.

#### **Designations/Other**

The area has no designations and no rights of way .

#### **Summary**

This area is of moderate to high importance within the green belt and is a prominent gateway site on the approach into Helensburgh along the A814.

### HE03 Helensburgh: Drumfork Farm (16.2.12)

An area of farmland located on the eastern edge of the town, surrounded by rolling farmland and wooded glens.

#### **Green Belt Landscape Objectives**

It is not significant in the setting of the town due to the broad scale of the landscape around Helensburgh

#### **Physical Criteria**

The upper fields are very visible but the lower fields are slightly hidden within the rolling farmland landscape of the eastern edge of Helensburgh. The southern green belt boundary is weak in this area. A strong alternative boundary could be either the Drumfork Burn or the track leading up to Townhead Farm.

#### **Qualitative Criteria**

The area is of moderate to low scenic quality but has a rural character.

#### **Designations/Other**

The area has no designations and no rights of way .

#### **Summary**

This area is overall of moderate importance within the green belt. The woodland around Garraway Glen is most sensitive and would need to be excluded and as are the upper slopes above the woodland due to visibility. In terms of development the areas to the south of the burn are well hidden within the landscape, and have fewer constraints.



*Fields above Camis Eskan House*

### HN04 Helensburgh: Golf Course (16.1.16)

Part of a golf course to the north of Helensburgh which lies below the traditional northern limits of development.

#### **Green Belt Landscape Objectives**

It is not significant in the setting of the town due to the overall broad scale of the landscape around Helensburgh. It sits below the level of the 100m contour and the trees above create a visual continuation of Blackhill Plantation, the traditional northern landscape boundary to Helensburgh.

#### **Physical Criteria**

Although it is visible it is of no more than moderate to low importance in the setting of the town. The southern green belt boundary is weak in this area and the alternative boundary, if the area were released is moderately well defined with existing woodland as a visual continuation of the Blackhill Plantation.

#### **Qualitative Criteria**

The area is of moderate to low scenic quality and not of a rural character.

#### **Designations/Other**

The woodland in the north-eastern corner is designated, and a right of way passes through the middle of the site in a sunken lane. The area also has a high recreational value as a golf course.

#### **Summary**

Although of relatively high physical, access and biodiversity value, this area is of moderate to low importance within the green belt in terms of SPP objectives. The woodland around the end of Blackhill Plantation is sensitive and would need to be avoided. Development should be kept below the ridgeline in the north of HN04.

### HW07 Helensburgh: Woodend Farm (16.1.+2)

A large area of farmland to the west of Helensburgh.

#### **Green Belt Landscape Objectives**

The upper part of the site is very important in the setting of Helensburgh. A proportion of the site sits below the 100m contour and Blackhill Plantation, the traditional northern landscape boundaries to Helensburgh.

#### **Physical Criteria**

The upper part of the site above the Glennan Burn and the central ridge is highly visible and forms part of the setting of Helensburgh. The area is highly visible and has strong green belt boundaries. The alternative boundaries, if the area were released, are also strong.

#### **Qualitative Criteria**

The area is of moderate to high scenic quality and strong rural character.

#### **Designations/Other**

The area has no designations and no rights of way .

#### **Summary**

This area is of moderate to high importance within the green belt due to its location and physical characteristics. Any development would need to be kept well below visible areas, adjacent to the railway line and new robust boundaries created in order to maintain the current settlement pattern.



### SN06: Shandon: N of Blairvadach (16.2.16)

An area above the northern edge of Shandon

#### **Green Belt Landscape Objectives**

The site is important in the setting of Shandon/Rhu, where residential estates and groups of houses do not breach the open ground and woodland below the railway. It also to a limited extent forms part of the approach to Shandon for rail travelers.

#### **Physical Criteria**

It lies above the current edge of the settlement and would be highly visible due to the lack of tree cover on the site. It has moderate green belt boundaries, with the northern edge quite weak. The alternative boundaries including the railway, if the area were released, are strong.

#### **Qualitative Criteria**

The area is of moderate to high scenic quality and strong rural upland-fringe character.

#### **Designations/Other**

The area has no designations and no rights of way .

#### **Summary**

This area is of moderate importance within the green belt.

### SN02: Shandon: East of Railway (16.2.4)

A remote area between Shandon and Faslane.

#### **Green Belt Landscape Objectives**

Located within an important wedge of woodland and green belt which visually separates the settlement edges of Faslane and Shandon. It lies above the current edge of the settlement, outwith the existing settlement pattern for Shandon.

#### **Physical Criteria**

It would be visible from areas remote from the settlement due to the lack of tree cover on the site. The area has strong green belt boundaries. The alternative boundaries, if the area were released, are also strong.

#### **Qualitative Criteria**

The area is of moderate to high scenic quality and strong rural upland-fringe character.

#### **Designations/Other**

The area has no designations and no rights of way.

#### **Summary**

Development in this area would be remote from the existing pattern of settlement in the landscape around Shandon and risk visually linking with Faslane. This area is of moderate to high importance within the green belt.



*HW04—The playing fields around Duchess Wood*

# 6

## Summary

The overarching objective of this study is to provide a landscape justification for the retention of the existing green belt and for any revisions to it. In terms of the brief this includes addressing a number of key objectives and issues.

The following section summarizes the findings of the detailed survey in terms of these objectives and issues including:

- landscape value of the green belt;
- contribution of the green belt to the setting of settlements (including separation of settlements and gateways to settlements);
- appropriateness of current boundary features (both inner and outer);
- recommended changes to the green belt (removing existing areas or incorporating new areas);
- identifying opportunities and constraints to development in Local Plan objection sites and other areas.

The issues are summarized in relation to the appropriate scale of areas under consideration: the green belt as a whole; the setting of individual settlements; green belt landscape areas or individual sites.

### 6.1 Overall Landscape Value of Current Green Belt

Overall across the study area most of the green belt is of medium to high landscape value, with very few lower value areas. Landscape value has been determined by

- Local or national designations relating to natural heritage or cultural associations.

- It is also related to the condition of the landscape elements and features and the way they contribute to the areas character.
- The recreational value of the area for activities that are compatible with an agricultural or natural setting (e.g. golf courses, equestrian uses, fisheries, non-motorised cycling facilities, walking etc.).
- Relative rarity at a local level.
- Scenic quality or 'sense of place'.

### 6.2 Contribution of Green Belt to Landscape Setting of Settlements

The contribution the identified green belt makes to the character, landscape setting and identity of settlements has been evaluated across the study area. Areas which do not contribute, or if necessary additional areas which may be required to secure these objectives, have also been identified. These are summarised below in relation to each settlement and its landscape setting and settlement pattern.

#### 6.2.1 Helensburgh

Helensburgh is by far the largest settlement and the only town within the area. It is set within clearly identifiable landscape features on a broad hillside running down to Gare Loch. The twin peaks of Ben Bowie to the east and Tom na h-Airidh in the west form the broader setting to the town and a backdrop of open moorland and forestry.

The town lies below a distinctive ridge line around the 100m contour, with the landscape character above the town an abrupt transition to a relatively wild and open landscape, comprising raised bogs, conifer woods and regenerating birch woodland. The

distinctive, linear Blackhill Plantation marks much of the upper boundary, separating the built up area from the open land. The green belt directly to the north of the town protects this clear undeveloped ridge and Blackhill Plantation (see figure 2.4), however recent encroachment by the council roads department and civic amenity site is adversely affecting this important part of the setting of Helensburgh.

Helensburgh has a distinctive form, narrowing and spreading outwards across the hillside as it reaches the shore. Flanking the town to east and west, is rolling farmland with fields of medium scale, a mix of improved grazing land and arable cops, divided by densely wooded, incised burn corridors. Most of these areas are included within the green belt. However overall Helensburgh is set within a broad, large scale landscape which has capacity for additional areas of development.

Recommended removal from green belt;

- Removal of most of Killoeter Hill (KH01) and upper part of Highlandman's Wood (HW01) from green belt and re-designation as Very Sensitive Countryside and Sensitive Countryside to bring green belt boundary down the hill to the headwall (limit of enclosed/improved farm land). Although the open hillside is important in the wider setting of Helensburgh it is unlikely to face the same type of development pressures as land close to the town. A rational new boundary could be (like WDC green belt and most of the rest of ABC green belt) the headwall or limit of enclosed farmland. New boundary of KH01 would be field boundary at junction with Red Glen, to protect the approach to Helensburgh along the A818.

- A small area recently redeveloped as a sports grounds (HW06) has an urban character does not contribute significantly to the setting of the town, consider removal from the green belt. Revised boundary would be West Montrose Street.

Recommended inclusion in green belt;

- The green belt area HN01 does not fully extend to the ridgeline/sightline above the town so an additional area of Sensitive Countryside should be added to the green belt (HN06).
- Additional areas along the A818 from Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park (see 6.6)

### 6.2.2 Cardross

Cardross lies in a rolling, undulating farmland landscape, on a steep hillside running down to the Firth of Clyde. The village lies below the 50m contour surrounded by the heavily wooded valleys of the Kilmahew and Geilston burns. A range of Muirs, Carman, Milburn, Overton and Bromley rise to 300m form the backdrop. The main road and railway run along a narrow coastal plain, a raised beach landform, with the lower part of the village on this level ground. It is relatively unusual in that a golf course (CN02) is centrally located within the village. The open farmland setting of Cardross limits the capacity of the landscape for further development outwith the current settlement boundaries.

Recommended removal from green belt;

- Cardross Park (CW04) has an urban greenspace character, is not important in the landscape setting of the village, has poorly defined boundaries and does not have a typical green belt use. It could be considered for removal from the green belt and its designation retained as Open Space Protection Area. A better green belt boundary for the west of Cardross would be the (eastern edge of CW03) woodland surrounding Geilston Burn SSSI, which is clearly discernable on the ground and visually contains the settlement.

### 6.2.3 Rhu

Rhu is a large village which sits above a distinctive promontory, Rhu Point which is a narrowing of Gare Loch. Its northern boundary is the West Highland railway and houses have been built right up to the cutting. Fingers of dense woodland hide most of the housing on the hillside below giving little indication of the size of the settlement. Its form is predominantly detached houses in large grounds stepped up the steep hillside, with a small village centre on a level area by the shore. Above the railway, fields and the dark conifer plantations of Highlandman's Wood on the flanks of Tom na h-Airidh give it its wider landscape setting. The fields of Torwoodhill and west of Letrualt are both important in preserving the setting of the settlement and preventing coalescence with Helensburgh.

Recommended removal from green belt;

- The West Highland Railway and Aldownick Glen are effective barriers to development, so the north western end of RN01 should be removed from the green belt and re-designated as Sensitive Countryside.

### 6.2.4 Shandon

Shandon is, like Rhu, located on steep slopes below the railway and above the A814. It is a linear residential settlement forming a ribbon of low density housing above the loch and the A814. Dense tree cover defines the character of the area, which appears from a distance more like a strip of woodland running along the shores of Gare Loch, with few houses, than a village. The mature woodland within and surrounding Shandon significantly ameliorates the visual and landscape impact of the large houses on terraces stepping up the hillside. There is little to clearly differentiate the extents of the settlement visually on the ground but the residential estates and groups of houses do not breach the thin strip of open ground and woodland below the railway. Above the railway is a large expanse of hillside. Steep fields merge into the open rough pasture and scrub above and woodland cover gradually reduces up to the bare north-western ridge of Tom na h-Airidh. The outer green belt boundary lies in the fields and scrub above the railway but is not always marked by distinctive landscape features.

Recommended removal from green belt;

- The very limited access across the railway and steepness of the ground in SN05 and SN01 make it unlikely to face the same type of development pressures as land below the railway, close to Shandon. A rational new boundary would be the railway. This upper area could be re-designated Sensitive Countryside, which is a more suitable type of protection whilst still retaining the lower slopes adjacent to Shandon (SN06, SN04, SN03 and SN02) to protect the setting of the town.

#### 6.2.4 Smaller Settlements

Ardoch is a cluster of houses set near the border with West Dunbartonshire. The setting is, like Cardross, open farmland, although set in a shallow hollow by the shore of the Firth of Clyde. Tree cover is limited to the grounds of the large detached houses, hedgerow trees and the burn corridor. The busy A814 and West Highland railway line cut through the settlement.

- AR05 contained by the railway and A814 road on embankment near the centre of the village is of moderate to low landscape sensitivity, as it is of low landscape value and lies within the existing settlement pattern. It does not significantly contribute to the setting of Ardoch.

A smaller cluster of houses at Colgrain Farm on the A814 south east of Helensburgh is identified as a settlement. The green belt in this area is similar in character to the rolling farmland that surrounds the eastern edge of Helensburgh. North of this the land rises steeply to the open slopes of Killoeter. West of the A814 the land flattens out onto the coastal strip. In this area the rural character of landscape is compromised by the presence of a sewage treatment works and an industrial site.

- A small area (KH04) does not significantly contribute to the landscape setting of Colgrain.

### 6.3 Sensitive Green Belt Wedges Identified in Review

The exit from Dumbarton and entry in Argyll and Bute (AR06) - This is an important edge to the much larger settlement of Dumbarton and an area where encroaching

development, suburban in character is eroding the rural landscape character and blurring the edge/approach to Dumbarton.

Between Helensburgh and Rhu (HW03) – The most important “wedge” in the study, a single field acting as a wedge preventing the physical and visual coalescence of Helensburgh with Rhu.

Between Rhu and Shandon (RN02) – Another important area preventing the physical coalescence of Rhu with Shandon, less visually apparent due to the belt of trees bounding the A814, but clear from the water and Rosneath Peninsula.

Between Shandon and Faslane (SN02 & SN03) – An important wedge of green belt visually separating the western edge of Shandon from the eastern edge of Faslane. The dense woodland in this area, combined with the well wooded surroundings of the houses at the western edge of Shandon (outwith the green belt) creates a definite wedge visually separating the settlements.

## 6.4 Identify the visual quality of key gateways into and out of urban areas

### 6.4.1 Dumbarton

A814 into/out of Dumbarton—see 6.3

### 6.4.2 Cardross

A814 from the East – A clearly defined and attractive eastern approach to Cardross,

abruptly changing between the level farmland and the large detached houses of the village.

Carman Road from the north east – Clear journey from open moorland (within WDC) down through farmland and woods to the less developed policy grounds around Bloomhill House before finally entering the edge of the village next to the A814.

A814 from the West – A well defined transition between fields and the wooded western edge of Cardross. The grounds of Geilston House, avenues of trees along nearby farm access tracks and the wooded Geilston Burn are attractive precursors to the village.

### 6.4.3 Helensburgh

A814 from the east – The approach has been significantly affected by the very large scale new academy building which creates an abrupt change in character from rural to urban form, without the traditional transition of smaller scale domestic buildings. It possibly requires a more graduated edge/redesigned gateway.

A814 from the west – The narrow wedge HW03 (& HW02) is attractive with strong rural landscape character but the transition between urban to rural and then urban typography is constrained by the areas size and the highly visible houses around its eastern boundary. However there are clear views directly up through the area to the farmland and woods of Ardencaple.

A818 from LLT National Park – Overall a clearly readable approach through the landscape into Helensburgh from Loch Lomond, up a narrow valley into regenerating birch woodland on a broad level ridge framed between hills, before dropping down into the town. The immediate approach to the town has been degraded by the new civic

amenity site and the derelict Scottish Water buildings. Helensburgh has spilled out from the very well defined historic landscape boundary of Blackhill plantation and change in slope around the 100m contour line.

- The countryside around the road/cycle path is very important as the gateway to Helensburgh from the National Park and both sides of the road face the same development pressures. Therefore both sides of the road should be designated green belt (HN07 & HN08).

### 6.4.4 Rhu & Shandon

Along A814 from the east - The narrow wedge HW03 appears larger on the approach to Rhu, due to the significantly stronger eastern edge to the settlement. This comprises of a group of mature trees and dense conifer hedge which screen the houses of Rhu.

Along A814 from the West – From Garelohead to the western edge of Rhu, development has evolved into the classic ribbon development pattern, with an almost continuous strip of detached housing running along the lower slopes between the railway line and the A814. For road travelers on the A814 there is little in landscape terms to differentiate the settlement edges of Rhu/Shandon and Faslane. However when viewed from the water and the Rosneath Peninsula distinct wedges of land do separate the settlements.

Both rail and footpath users approaches into all settlements have also been considered as part of the study, but issues have not been significant.

## 6.5 Consider the appropriateness of the landscape features used to identify the boundaries of the green belt and if necessary recommend alterations where stronger boundaries are required.

In most areas the inner green belt boundary is robust and easily identifiable on the ground. Good examples include;

- The northern and western edges of Helensburgh HN01, HW04 and HW07, which are either woodland, incised burns, the railway and tree belts.
- Some boundaries around Cardross in particular CE01, CN02 and CW01. CE01 is a combination of stone wall, hedge and tree belt. CN02 is bounded by mature trees and a masonry stone wall, road and trees to the south.

Areas of concern include;

- AR05—The eastern boundary around cottages in Ardoch is weak and thin, a more robust boundary could be the railway along the southern edge of Ardoch.
- CE02 – The southern boundary is weak behind the houses and garage, a stronger boundary could be the burn and then track leading to Craighend. This small area could be considered for removal from the green belt.
- CN01—The inner green belt boundary is weak and thin in the south-west.
- Western boundary of Cardross HA04, which is simply a tall mesh security fence consider moving green belt boundary to Geilston Burn or supplementary woodland planting around corridor.

- The green belt boundary with Helensburgh along the western edge of KH03, is not well defined. Visual and physical containment of the settlement could be significantly improved with additional tree planting along this boundary, when the area is finally developed.
- The southern boundaries of HE03 is weak, with simply garden fences. Consider change in boundary to Drumfork Burn and wood.
- HN04 - The southern boundary is weak and thin, existing planting contiguous with the Blackhill Plantation and the 100m contour could be reinforced with new planting to create a new boundary.
- HN03 - The boundaries around the council roads department are poorly defined, in particular the eastern side and the boundary that cuts off the triangle of woodland around the Milligs Burn waterfall.
- HW03 is the most significant wedge of green belt. Its eastern boundary is very weak and transparent with just low hedges and fences. Additional planting is required to visually contain Helensburgh western edge.
- RN02 - The weakest boundaries are immediately to the south of Letrualt Farm which are not clearly defined as they do not tie in with existing features. We recommend moving the green belt boundary to follow the track and change in slope, to the rear of the farm buildings.
- The green belt boundary along the northern edge of SN06 and southern boundary of SN03 above the old school is not well defined. Visual and physical containment of the settlement could be significantly improved with additional tree planting along this boundary.



## 6.6 Should the outer green belt boundary be extended eastwards to the boundary with the national park or does the current boundary reflect topography and landscape?

Travellers along the A818 and cycle path experience a very clear journey across a distinctive pass between Loch Lomond side and Helensburgh. There is a very clear transition through a progressively changing landscape. It starts low down, in the farmland around Loch Lomond and the road steadily climbs through semi-improved fields up onto the pass between the hills of Ben Bowie and Tom na h-Airidh. Levelling-off the road travels through the rough textured, upland landscape on the ridge above Helensburgh before travellers drop down into the town itself, where there is a sudden clear vista through houses, to the glittering waters of the Firth of Clyde down below.

The whole area acts as a gateway to Helensburgh along the A818. However the current green belt covers land only on only one side of the road, the southern edge. The countryside around the road/cycle path is very important as the gateway to Helensburgh from the National Park and both sides of the road face the same development pressures. Therefore both sides of the road should be designated green belt (HN07 & HN08). Additionally the green belt area HN01 does not fully extend to the ridgeline/sightline above the town so an additional area of Sensitive Countryside should be added to the green belt (HN06).

## 6.7 Summary of contribution of site to SPP landscape objectives

The table 6.1 summarises the recommendations of the study. The contribution of each site to the SPP landscape objectives has been categorised as follows:

- **Area performing positive green belt landscape function**
- **Lesser contribution but still required**
- **Area where boundary adjustment is needed to make green belt more effective**
- **Additional area required to make green belt more effective**
- **No green belt landscape function**

The justification for the recommended changes have been included in the table in the comments section.



Approach along the A818 and cycle track towards Helensburgh from ABC boundary

Site Information		Report Conclusions	
Area Name	Composite Sites	Assessment of Contribution of Site to SPP Landscape Objectives	Comments
ARDOCH	AR01	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	AR02	Lesser contribution but still required	
	AR03	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	AR04	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	AR05	No green belt landscape function	Contained by the railway and A814 road on embankment near the centre of the village is of moderate to low landscape sensitivity, as it is of low landscape value and lies within the existing settlement pattern. It does not significantly contribute to the setting of Ardroch.
	AR06	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	This is an important edge to the much larger settlement of Dumbarton and an area where encroaching development, suburban in character is eroding the rural landscape character and blurring the edge/ approach to Dumbarton.
CARDROSS EAST	CE01	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	CE02	Area where boundary adjustment is needed to make green belt more effective	The southern boundary is weak behind the houses and garage, a stronger boundary could be the burn and then track leading to Craigend. This small area could be considered for removal from the green belt.
	CE03	Lesser contribution but still required	
CARDROSS NORTH	CN01	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	The inner green belt boundary is weak and thin in the south-west.
	CN02	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	CN03	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	CN04	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
CARDROSS WEST	CW01	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	CW02	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	CW03	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	CW04	No green belt landscape function	Cardross Park has an urban greenspace character, is not important in the landscape setting of the village, has poorly defined boundaries and does not have a typical green belt use. It could be considered for removal from the green belt and its designation retained as Open Space Protection Area. A better green belt boundary for the west of Cardross would be the (eastern edge of CW03) woodland surrounding Geilston Burn SSSI, which is clearly discernable on the ground and visually contains the settlement.
HILL OF ARDMORE	HA01	Lesser contribution but still required	
	HA02	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	HA03	Lesser contribution but still required	
	HA04	Area where boundary adjustment is needed to make green belt more effective	Western boundary is simply a tall mesh security fence consider moving green belt boundary to Geilston Burn or supplementary woodland planting around corridor.

Table 6.1: Summary of contribution of site to SPP landscape objectives

Site Information		Report Conclusions	
Area Name	Composite Sites	Assessment of Contribution of Site to SPP Landscape Objectives	Comments
KILLOETHER HILL	KH01	Area where boundary adjustment is needed to make green belt more effective	Recommend removal of most of Killoether Hill from green belt and re-designation as Very Sensitive Countryside to bring green belt boundary down the hill to the headwall (limit of enclosed/improved farm land). Although the open hillside is important in the wider setting of Helensburgh it is unlikely to face the same type of development pressures as land close to the town. A rational new boundary could be (like WDC green belt and most of the rest of ABC green belt) the headwall or limit of enclosed farmland. New boundary of KH01 would be field boundary at junction with Red Glen, to protect the approach to Helensburgh along the A818.
	KH02	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	KH03	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	The green belt boundary with Helensburgh along the western edge, is not well defined. Visual and physical containment of the settlement could be significantly improved with additional tree planting along this boundary, when the area is finally developed
	KH04	No green belt landscape function	This small area does not significantly contribute to the landscape setting of Colgrains .
DARLEITH & KILMAHEW	DK01	Lesser contribution but still required	
	DK02	Lesser contribution but still required	
HELENSBURGH EAST	HE01	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	HE02	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	HE03	Area where boundary adjustment is needed to make green belt more effective	The southern boundary is weak, with simply garden fences. Consider change in boundary to Drumfork Burn and wood. This small area could be considered for removal from the green belt.
	HE04	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
HELENSBURGH NORTH	HN01	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	HN02	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	HN03	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	The boundaries around the council roads department are poorly defined, in particular the eastern side and the boundary that cuts off the triangle of woodland around the Milligs Burn waterfall. Visual and physical containment of the settlement could be significantly improved with additional tree planting along this boundary.
	HN04	Area where boundary adjustment is needed to make green belt more effective	The southern boundary is weak and thin, existing planting contiguous with the Blackhill Plantation and the 100m contour could be reinforced with new planting to create a new boundary.
	HN05	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	HN06	Additional Area required to make green belt more effective	The green belt area HN01 does not fully extend to the ridgeline/sightline above the town so an additional area of Sensitive Countryside should be added to the green belt.
	HN07	Additional Area required to make green belt more effective	The countryside around the road/cycle path is very important as the gateway to Helensburgh from the National Park and both sides of the road face the same development pressures. Therefore both sides of the road should be designated green belt
	HN08	Additional Area required to make green belt more effective	The countryside around the road/cycle path is very important as the gateway to Helensburgh from the National Park and both sides of the road face the same development pressures. Therefore both sides of the road should be designated green belt

Site Information		Report Conclusions	
Area Name	Composite Sites	Assessment of Contribution of Site to SPP Landscape Objectives	Comments
HELENSBURGH WEST	HW01	Area where boundary adjustment is needed to make green belt more effective	Removal of upper part of Highlandman's Wood from green belt and re-designation as Sensitive Countryside to bring green belt boundary down the hill to the headwall (limit of enclosed/improved farm land). Although the open hillside is important in the wider setting of Helensburgh it is unlikely to face the same type of development pressures as land close to the town. A rational new boundary could be (like WDC green belt and most of the rest of ABC green belt) the headwall or limit of enclosed farmland.
	HW02	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	HW03	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	The most important "wedge" in the study, a single field acting as a wedge preventing the physical and visual coalescence of Helensburgh with Rhu. It is the most significant wedge in the green belt. Its eastern boundary is very weak and transparent with just low hedges and fences. Additional planting is required to visually contain Helensburgh western edge.
	HW04	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	HW05	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	HW06	No green belt landscape function	A small area recently redeveloped as a sports grounds it has an urban character does not contribute to the setting of the town, recommend removal from the green belt. Revised boundary would be West Montrose Street.
	HW07	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
RHU NORTH	RN01	No green belt landscape function	The West Highland Railway and Aldownick Glen are effective barriers to development, so the north western end of RN01 should be removed from the green belt and re-designated as Sensitive Countryside.
	RN02	Area where boundary adjustment is needed to make green belt more effective	Another important area preventing the physical coalescence of Rhu with Shandon, less visually apparent due to the belt of trees bounding the A814, but clear from the water and Rosneath Peninsula. The weakest boundaries are immediately to the south of Letrualt Farm which are not clearly defined as they do not tie in with existing features. Recommend moving the green belt boundary to follow the track and change in slope, to the rear of the farm buildings.
	RN03	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	

Site Information		Report Conclusions	
Area Name	Composite Sites	Assessment of Contribution of Site to SPP Landscape Objectives	Comments
SHANDON NORTH	SN01	No green belt landscape function	The very limited access across the railway and steepness of the ground in make it unlikely to face the same type of development pressures as land below the railway, close to Shandon. A rational new boundary would be the railway. This upper area could be re-designated Sensitive Countryside, which is a more suitable type of protection whilst still retaining the lower slopes adjacent to Shandon (SN06, SN04, SN03 and SN02) to protect the setting of the town.
	SN02	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	An important wedge of green belt visually separating the western edge of Shandon from the eastern edge of Faslane. The dense woodland in this area, combined with the well wooded surroundings of the houses at the western edge of Shandon (outwith the green belt) creates a definite wedge visually separating the settlements.
	SN03	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	An important wedge of green belt visually separating the western edge of Shandon from the eastern edge of Faslane. The dense woodland in this area, combined with the well wooded surroundings of the houses at the western edge of Shandon (outwith the green belt) creates a definite wedge visually separating the settlements. The green belt boundary along the southern boundary above the old school is not well defined. Visual and physical containment of the settlement could be significantly improved with additional tree planting along this boundary.
	SN04	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	
	SN05	No green belt landscape function	The very limited access across the railway and steepness of the ground in make it unlikely to face the same type of development pressures as land below the railway, close to Shandon. A rational new boundary would be the railway. This upper area could be re-designated Sensitive Countryside, which is a more suitable type of protection whilst still retaining the lower slopes adjacent to Shandon (SN06, SN04, SN03 and SN02) to protect the setting of the town.
	SN06	Area performing positive green belt landscape function	The green belt boundary along the northern edge of SN06 above the old school is not well defined. Visual and physical containment of the settlement could be significantly improved with additional tree planting along this boundary.



*The lower slopes of Killoeter Hill*

# 7

## Conclusions

In accordance with the brief, this green belt assessment has concentrated on the landscape character and qualities of the Argyll & Bute green belt. In addressing this aspect in relation to the key SPP objectives and the specific aims and issues of the assessment the majority of the green belt has been retained and recommendations made to improve existing boundaries. Nevertheless, a number of significant changes are recommended which are intended to reinforce the key areas and rationale of the green belt by focusing on its principal functions.

The assessment has determined that the majority of the green belt is of a high landscape value. In particular the main areas of the green belt between the border with West Dunbartonshire and Rhu meet the principal SPP objectives by providing a setting for the principal settlements, preventing coalescence and providing, to various degrees, a gateway to these settlements. In some cases we have indicated where potential problems lie and have made recommendations for changes or improvement to the green belt boundary.

The proposed changes address the SPP objectives in the following ways:

- Protecting the approach to Helensburgh from the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and the setting of Helensburgh when viewed from across the Gare Loch by incorporating new areas between the A818 and the National Park Boundary.
- Improving the consistency and robustness of the green belt by rationalising its coverage to areas in which it can clearly meet core SPP development control objectives. In all cases these areas have been reassigned to other protective landscape designations more suited to their character and location. This has included:

- exclusion of hilltop areas above Helensburgh that are of clear upland character (moorland or forestry), that are relatively remote from the settlements and unlikely to be developed, and re-designation as Very Sensitive Countryside or Sensitive Countryside;
- exclusion of steeply sloped areas north of the West Highland railway line above Shandon and re-designation as Sensitive Countryside;
- exclusion of inner green belt areas with no clear connection to the wider green belt and whose character has become urbanized and re-designation as Open Space Protection Areas
- Improving the robustness of the inner green belt boundary by making recommendations for improvement of existing boundary features.
- Providing a framework for the controlled expansion of settlements without damaging key green belt protective functions, by assessing inner green belt sites for potential release or continued green belt protection according to a hierarchy based on clear landscape criteria.

It is intended that this landscape study forms part of the information that will inform the Council's final position on the extent of the green belt in Helensburgh and Lomond. This will be combined with other information relating to natural and cultural heritage designations, access rights, recreational usage, development pressure and the results of public consultation. Which will be used to develop an appropriate long term policy framework for the green belt in the Local Development Plan.





# Appendices



# Appendix 1

## Landscape Assessment Pro-Forma



Argyll & Bute Landscape Study			
Area Information			
Area Number:		Date:	
Photo Ref:		Surveyor:	
Area Description			
Main Features	Main Uses	Character	Aesthetic Quality
Flat topography <input type="checkbox"/>	Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>	Rural/Semi-natural <input type="checkbox"/>	Small scale <input type="checkbox"/>
Varied topography <input type="checkbox"/>	Forestry <input type="checkbox"/>	Rural/Managed <input type="checkbox"/>	Large scale <input type="checkbox"/>
Trees / shrubs <input type="checkbox"/>	Woodland <input type="checkbox"/>	Urban greenspace <input type="checkbox"/>	Open <input type="checkbox"/>
Woodland / shelter belt <input type="checkbox"/>	Moorland <input type="checkbox"/>	Urban fringe <input type="checkbox"/>	Enclosed <input type="checkbox"/>
Water (burn/ ponds/ river) <input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation <input type="checkbox"/>	Suburban <input type="checkbox"/>	Diverse <input type="checkbox"/>
Man-made features <input type="checkbox"/>	Access paths <input type="checkbox"/>	Derelict <input type="checkbox"/>	Uniform <input type="checkbox"/>
Buildings <input type="checkbox"/>	Not in use <input type="checkbox"/>	Partly-derelict <input type="checkbox"/>	Welcoming <input type="checkbox"/>
Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed <input type="checkbox"/>	Threatening <input type="checkbox"/>
			Managed <input type="checkbox"/>
			Wild <input type="checkbox"/>
Describe the area layout, landscape character, features and use:			
Describe the character of adjacent settlements and/or connecting landscape(s). Outside the Greenbelt:			
Inside the greenbelt, beyond the area (list area codes):			

Argyll & Bute Landscape Study								
Greenbelt Boundaries								
Greenbelt Boundary	Inner	Outer		Inner	Outer		Inner	Outer
River/ burn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Railway line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Body of water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Main road	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Narrow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ridge line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Garden boundary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thin structure (eg fence)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change in slope	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No Feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Tree belt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Physical Barrier</b>			<b>Visual Barrier</b>		
Wall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strong / well defined	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strong / screen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ditch/ Embankment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate / defined	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate / diffuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hedge line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Weak / partly defined	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Weak / transparent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describe the boundaries and their ability to physically and visually contain areas adjacent to the built up areas:								
Contribution to Greenbelt Objectives								
Designations: Either within the Greenbelt or Contiguous to it (tick as appropriate)								
Listed Building	<input type="checkbox"/>	Area of Archaeological interest	<input type="checkbox"/>	AGLV	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Conservation Area	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wildlife area	<input type="checkbox"/>	Garden & DL	<input type="checkbox"/>			
SAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	TPO	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Comment on the scenic value of the area, giving reasons (composition/balance, cultural features, perceived values, rarity, distinctiveness):								
Note the condition of the area and boundaries i.e. state of repair, vandalism and litter etc:								
Describe connectivity to surroundings - path routes, other open spaces or National Park:								
Comment on the recreation and biodiversity value of the area, giving reasons:								

Argyll & Bute Landscape Study						
Condition		Landscape Susceptibility		Landscape Value		
Excellent / well managed	<input type="checkbox"/>	High	<input type="checkbox"/>	High	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Good / properly managed	<input type="checkbox"/>	High to medium	<input type="checkbox"/>	High to medium	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Average / adequately managed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poor / poorly managed or little managed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium to low	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium to low	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Very poor / unmanaged or neglected	<input type="checkbox"/>	Low	<input type="checkbox"/>	Low	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Summary Assessment</b>						
<b>Does the area have typical SPP uses?</b> <span style="float: right;">(circle)</span>						
• Development associated with agriculture, including the re-use of historic agricultural buildings				Yes	No	
• Woodland and forestry, including community woodlands				Yes	No	
• Horticulture, including market gardening and directly connected retailing				Yes	No	
• Recreational uses that are compatible with an agricultural or natural setting (eg. golf courses, equestrian uses, fisheries, non-motorised cycling facilities, walking)				Yes	No	
• Essential infrastructure such as electronic communications infrastructure and electricity grid connections				Yes	No	
<b>Is the current use typical of the Greenbelt?</b>						
				Yes	No	
Comments:						
<b>Does the area form the Gateway to a settlement/ National park/ Other?</b>						
				Yes	Partially	No
Comments:						
<b>Does the area contribute to the setting of a settlement?</b>						
				Yes	Partially	No
Comments:						
<b>Does the area prevent coalescence of settlements (physically/visually)?</b>						
				Yes	Partially	No
Comments:						
<b>Are the area boundaries robust/ appropriate?</b>						
				Yes	Partially	No
Comments:						
<b>Are the adjacent land uses / areas / boundaries more/ equally appropriate?</b>						
				Yes	Partially	No
Comments:						
<b>Are improvements required to strengthen boundaries?</b>						
				Yes	Partially	No
Comments:						

# Appendix 2

## Ranking of Objection Sites

Site Information	Assessment Criteria					
Site ID	Landscape Objectives					Overall Ranking
	Importance in setting and character of a settlement	Importance in the identity of a settlement	Prevents coalescence between two settlements	Gateway to a settlement	Score	
CN04 Cardross: Broomhill (16.2.2)	5	4	1	4	14	1#
SN02 Shandon: East of Railway (16.2.17)	4	3	4	3	14	1#
HE04 Helensburgh: Camis Eskin (16.1.9)	3	3	1	5	12	3
CW03 Cardross: Geilston Farm (16.2.3)	4	2	1	4	11	4#
HW07 Helensburgh: Woodend Farm (16.1.+2)	5	3	1	2	11	4#
CN01 Cardross: Kirkton Farm (16.2.4)	4	2	1	3	10	6#
SN06 Shandon: N of Blairvadach (16.2.16)	4	3	1	2	10	6#
CN03 Cardross: Auchenfroe (16.2.1)	3	4	1	2	10	6#
AR05 Ardoch: The Paddock (16.3.2)	2	2	1	3	8	9
HE03 Helensburgh: Drumfork farm (16.2.12)	2	2	1	2	7	10
HN04 Helensburgh: Golf Course (16.1.16)	2	2	1	1	6	11

**NOTE: The ranking reflects the importance of the site to the green belt in landscape terms, with 1 being most important. Scores out of 5 - 5 equates to High, 4 High to medium, 3 Medium, 2 Medium to Low and 1 Low**



Site Information															
Site ID	Physical Criteria					Qualitative Criteria			Designations/ Other					Total Overall Score	Overall Ranking
	Prominent/easily visible/higher than surroundings	Well defined/ robust existing green belt boundary	No clear alternative boundary	Large area/ long boundary	Score	High scenic Qualities	Strong rural character	Score	Landscape designations	Biodiversity designations/ value	Cultural heritage designations/ association/ value	Core paths, rights of way, cycle routes, recreational facilities/ use	Score		
CN04 Cardross: Broomhill (16.2.2)	3	4	1	2	10	5	3	8	1	4	5	1	11	29	1#
CW03 Cardross: Geilston Farm (16.2.3)	3	4	1	3	11	4	4	8	1	5	1	3	10	29	1#
HN04 Helensburgh: Golf Course (16.1.16)	2	3	4	4	13	2	2	4	1	5	1	5	12	29	1#
CN03 Cardross: Auchenfroe (16.2.1)	2	5	1	2	10	4	3	7	1	4	5	1	11	28	4
HW07 Helensburgh: Woodend Farm (16.1.+2)	4	5	1	5	15	4	4	8	1	1	1	1	4	27	5
HE03 Helensburgh: Drumfork farm (16.2.12)	4	3	1	5	13	2	3	5	1	5	1	1	8	26	6
SN02 Shandon: East of Railway (16.2.17)	3	4	2	1	10	4	4	8	1	2	1	1	5	23	7#
HE04 Helensburgh: Camis Eskan (16.1.9)	5	5	1	2	13	2	4	6	1	1	1	1	4	23	7#
CN01 Cardross: Kirkton Farm (16.2.4)	3	3	1	3	10	3	4	7	1	1	1	3	6	23	7#
SN06 Shandon: N of Blairvadach (16.2.16)	4	2	2	1	9	3	3	6	1	3	1	1	6	21	10
AR05 Ardoch: The Paddock (16.3.2)	2	3	1	1	7	1	2	3	1	1	1	2	5	15	11

**NOTE: The ranking reflects the importance of the site to the green belt in landscape terms, with 1 being most important.**

Scores out of 5 - 5 equates to High, 4 High to medium, 3 Medium, 2 Medium to Low and 1 Low