

SHORELINE PROJECT, BOWMORE, ISLAY -
PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN

Representations to Pre-Consultation on Main Issues Report
Argyll & Bute Council Local Development Plan



Prepared for Islay Estates Company
by Urban Animation and
Neil Sutherland Architects

March 2010



Bowmore Distillery from the Battery

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View west to Loch Indaal from the Battery, Bowmore

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1.0 Introduction

This Preliminary Master Plan has been prepared by Urban Animation and Neil Sutherland Architects, acting for the Islay Estates Company. The Estate wishes to consider the long term prospects for use of its land in and around Bowmore and has identified a preferred search area for new development to the south west of the village. This search area is referred to as the Shoreline Project site.

Like the other larger Islay villages, Bowmore was originally designed and constructed as a planned settlement. Much of the original urban form remains intact, although Bowmore has expanded significantly and suburbanisation has undermined its fringes and setting. The design and layout of modern development has not always been of a high standard, or appropriate to its context. There is an opportunity to establish a fully considered framework for development at the west of Bowmore and to put in place design guidance which can ensure that in future, expansion of the village achieves a higher standard than in recent times.

Sustainable principles must also be central to new development, ensuring that Bowmore and Islay have every opportunity to meet local needs through readily available resources and services. Taking a strategic, long term view of the future expansion of Bowmore can ensure that short term development initiatives do not compromise the longer term needs of the village and Islay as a whole.

Work on the Master Plan study is being undertaken at this time to meet Argyll & Bute Council's programme for preparation of its first Local Development Plan (LDP). The first stage in the LDP process is the publication of a Main Issues Report (MIR) by the Council. This Preliminary Master Plan has been submitted to the Council for consideration during preparation of the MIR. In following this course, the Islay Estates Company is seeking to influence the content of the MIR and ultimately the LDP.

In due course, the Council will publish the MIR for public consultation. Interested individuals, groups, businesses and public agencies will have the opportunity to comment on the MIR. The Council will then consider all representations and proceed with preparation of a Proposed LDP. As this process unfolds, work will continue to refine the Master Plan and adapt the proposals to take account of feedback received from the public, the Council and other relevant stakeholders.

All feedback from interested parties is welcome and will be fully considered as the Shoreline Project proposals continue to take shape. Project updates and the emerging Master Plan will be available to view online at www.urban-animation.com as the Project progresses.

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2.0 Islay Context

Location, Geography and Climate



Islay is one of the Inner Hebridean islands located off the coast of Argyll. It is about 20 miles from the coast of Northern Ireland. The island has an area of approximately 625 square kilometres and a diverse landscape, including moorland rising to nearly 500 metres above sea level in the south east of the island, sand dunes and machair, and bog and peatlands.

Other key aspects of the island's topography include the central location of Loch Indaal, the close proximity of Jura across the narrow Sound of Islay, the sandy bays and beaches of the west coast such as Machir Bay, and the many lochs situated throughout the island.

The Islay climate is relatively mild compared with many parts of Scotland due to the influence of the Gulf Stream, but the island is exposed to the prevailing westerly winds. Rainfall on Islay, as in all west coast Scottish locations, is relatively high at about 130 cms per year on low ground. Rain falls on about 50% of all days in the year.

Today, many people may regard Islay's location as remote, or peripheral, but historically its position in the sea lanes off Western Scotland, and between Ireland and Scotland has given it a great deal of importance.

History

Islay has been visited and inhabited since Mesolithic times. The island has a rich archaeological heritage, including many standing stones and hut circles from the Neolithic period and the Bronze Age.

Key aspects of Islay's history include: the early Christian missions to the island from Ireland (evidence of Celtic church influence on Islay includes the Kildalton cross), colonisation by the Norse, the establishment of the Lordship of the Isles (in the 14th century) and the development of Finlaggan on Islay as the centre of its power, the purchase of Islay by Daniel Campbell of Shawfield in the early 18th, and the island's role in the World Wars of the 20th century. The island's history continues to resonate and influence the nature of Islay today.

Islay's island environment supports a wide range of wildlife, including three species of deer (Red, Fallow and Roe deer), otters, hares, seals, and over 200 species of birds.

Birds which can be seen on the island include golden eagles, buzzards, hen harriers, lapwings, curlews and oyster catchers. Perhaps the birds most associated with Islay are wild geese. Approximately 50,000 geese of different species visit the island each Winter.

Population and Settlement Pattern

Islay's current population is approximately 3,500. The island's peak population was about 15,000 in 1831, which was during the time period 1831-41 when, – broadly speaking – the population of the Highlands and Islands as a whole reached its peak.

At the time of the 2001 Population Census Scotland had 54 inhabited islands. Islay had the seventh highest population of these islands after Skye, Arran, Bute, Mainland Orkney, Mainland Shetland, and Lewis and Harris.

The 2001 usually resident population of Islay's two largest settlements were as follows: Bowmore (862) and Port Ellen (819).

The island's settlement pattern has two main elements : the key villages (Bowmore, Port Ellen, Port Charlotte, Portnahaven, and Port Wemyss), and a generally dispersed population elsewhere on the island. This general settlement pattern has been in place for the last 150 or so years.

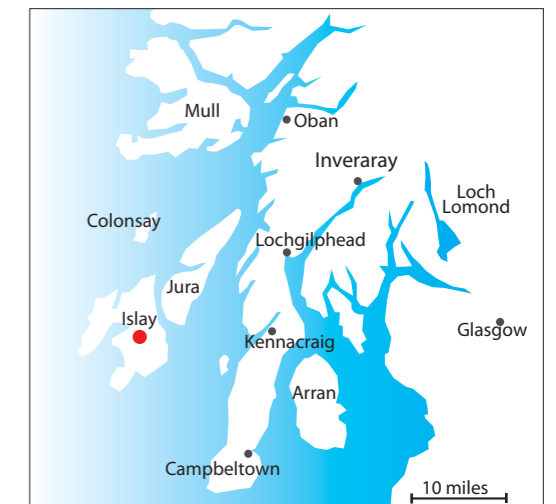
A key aspect of the settlement pattern is the planned character of the island's key villages. In the 1760s Daniel Campbell began to lay out and develop Bowmore. This was during a period of substantial new village development in Scotland. Portnahaven was redeveloped in the 1820s and four new villages (Port Ellen, Port Charlotte, Port Wemyss and Keills) were established in the 1820s and 1830s.

The Economy

The island's economy has always been substantially based on its natural resources; the land and surrounding sea. Land use on Islay is dominated by livestock (cattle and sheep) farming. In addition to the use of land for agriculture, Islay also has a natural peat resource which has been harvested through the generations and a number of large blocks of forestry planted by the Forestry Commission and private landowners.

A number of commercial fishing boats operate from the harbours of Islay concentrating on fishing for lobsters, crabs and scallops. Employment in fishing is both full and part-time.

Whisky distilling is the industry most associated with Islay. The island has the densest concentration of distilleries in Scotland apart from Speyside. There are currently 7 major distilleries in operation: Ardbeg, Lagavulin, Laphroaig, Bowmore, Bruichladdich, Bunnahabain and Caol Isla, together with a micro-distillery, Kilchoman Distillery. The re-opening of the Port Charlotte distillery is also planned.





Other manufacturing businesses on the island include other food and drink producers and a range of crafts makers.

The distilleries provide employment in whisky production and transport. In addition, they have become significant tourism attractions with integral visitor centres, eg. Bowmore distillery attracts approximately 10,000 visitors per year.

Tourism has been a significant component of the island's economy for many years. Visitors are attracted to Islay by its environment, wildlife, history and culture. Islay attracts many visitors to shoot and fish, and to bird watch and generally enjoy the island's natural environment.

Key tourism facilities include the Machrie Golf Course, whisky distilleries, Finlaggan and the many other historical sites on the island, and the RSPB centre at Loch Gruinart. Also increasingly important are the events and festivals organised on Islay, eg. the Islay Malt and Music Festival.

The future economic opportunities for Islay will continue to rest with key industries such as agriculture, whisky production and tourism. However, new industries and activities, such as renewable energy, are developing. There are a number of different projects (existing and proposed) based on the wave and tidal resource around the island and on Islay's biomass resources.

Digital communications also bring new opportunities to establish island-based businesses not significantly constrained by Islay's location.

Transport

As an island Islay is heavily reliant on the regular ferry services between Port Ellen and Port Askaig on Islay and Kennacraig and Oban on the mainland. There is also a ferry service between Port Askaig and Feolin on Jura.

Islay is also served by an air service, operated by Loganair on behalf of Flybe, between the island's airfield at Glenegedale and Glasgow Airport. The journey time is approximately 35 minutes and there are typically two flights daily.

The two main A roads on Islay are the A846 from Ardbeg in the south of the island to Port Askaig in the north, passing through Port Ellen, Bowmore and Bridgend; and the A847 between Bridgend and Portnahaven.

Housing Stock

At the time of the 2001 Population Census the effective housing stock (ie. housing occupied year-round) totalled 1,826 units. In addition, non-effective stock, including second homes/holiday accommodation (195 units), totalled 285 units.

The effective housing stock by tenure type in 2001 was as follows:

	No.	%
Owner Occupied	795	52
Private Rent	212	14
Tied Accommodation	56	4
Council Rent	412	27
RSL* Rent	50	3
Other	16	1
Total	1,541	100

Note: *RSL = Registered Social Landlord

Since 2001 the effective housing stock has increased through the construction of new private and housing association properties on the island.

Argyll and Bute Council has, since 2001, transferred its stock to the Argyll Community Housing Association. Two other housing associations operate on Islay : the West Highland Housing Association and the Trust Housing Association.

Public and Commercial Services

Islay's education and health services include a small hospital and a health centre in Bowmore, and a number of GPs based at other locations. The island has one secondary school – Islay High School – and a number of primary schools. Argyll College (part of the University of the Highlands and Islands) has a unit located within the Islay High School Campus. Ionad Chaluum Cill e Ile (the Columba Centre), located about a mile north of Bowmore, provides a range of Gaelic education and culture courses and other activities. There are a significant number of Gaelic speakers on Islay.

Islay's main retailing centres are Bowmore and Port Ellen. The island's only supermarket, operated by the Co-op, is located in Bowmore. Other services such as banks and Argyll and Bute Council offices are also found in Bowmore.

3.0 Bowmore Past and Present



Main Street,
Bowmore

Bowmore is located on the shore of Loch Indaal. It sits on a hillside which slopes in a general south-north direction from about 30 metres above sea level, at the village cemetery, to the seashore.

The village is the commercial and administrative centre of Islay and was classified as a key settlement in the Argyll and Bute Local Plan (2009). The village has a range of public and commercial services including shops, hotels, bank, public sector offices (including Argyll and Bute Council, and Scottish Natural Heritage), pubs and a swimming pool (located in an old whisky warehouse).

The village, as noted earlier, was established in the late 1760s by Daniel Campbell. The layout of the village is based on a geometric grid pattern. The key feature of the layout is the broad street (Main Street) running uphill with the harbour at the lower end and the church at the upper end. The round church (Kilarrow Parish Church), built in 1767, is Islay's most well known building and sits prominently at the top of Main Street. The church and the harbour provide Main Street with important terminating vistas.

Main Street acts as a central spine with intersecting roads running at right angles to it. The grid is most fully articulated to the east of Main Street. This central grid is formed by Main Street and Hawthorn Lane to the east; and by Shore Street to the north and High Street to the south with Jamieson Street in between them on the same alignment. The grid is also evident to the west of Main Street, but is less fully formed. If Main Street is regarded as the axis of the village, the western side is less highly developed and out of balance with the eastern side of the settlement.

The plot sizes within the grid are generous and were designed to provide people with the opportunity to grow some of their own food. To the south west of the village, larger allotments were rented to residents.

The buildings within the original village core are set directly onto the street (originally there were no pavements) with no front gardens. They are generally of one or 2-storey construction, with a mixture of detached and terraced buildings.

The grid filled in over time as houses and other buildings were constructed to create the urban form seen today. A notable feature of the central village today is the way in which the fronts of most buildings are painted white.

In the 20th century the village expanded significantly with substantial new house building. For example, in the post-Second World War period Argyll County Council built housing schemes to the east of Hawthorn Lane (where the historic grid pattern was not fully replicated and a series of cul-de-sacs were introduced) and at Stanalane. More recently both West Highland Housing Association and Trust Housing Association have built houses in the village. The West Highland Housing Association has built houses in Flora Street and on the eastern outskirts of the village along the A846, while the Trust Housing Association has constructed a small courtyard scheme – Donald Caskie Square.

The differences between the layout and buildings in the original planned village and recent developments is illustrated by comparing Shore Street (1.) with Ceol na Fairge (2.) at the east of Bowmore.

Shore Street has two and two and a half storey buildings arranged in terraces fronting directly onto footpaths. Parking is on street, although being the main vehicular route through the village this can cause traffic difficulties.

Ceol na Fairge has a suburban form with one and a half storey semi detached properties set back from the road, to allow parking on driveways in front garden areas. Pedestrians share the block pavior road surface which has a rounded, informal shape. The use of white walls, painted window surrounds and smooth grey roof tiles is an obvious effort to respond to the established character of buildings on Islay.

The grid provides a strong structure for the older part of village and the main road network. However, one particular weakness is the present lack of footpath access to the shore in the centre of the village. There is pedestrian access to the shore from the footpath starting in School Street next to the distillery. This path, and others, to the west of the High School give access to Battery Hill, a prominent viewing point between the school and the shore, and to the seashore itself.



1.



2.

The main vehicular through route is the A846 which runs from the south along Main Street and out of the village to the east along Shore Street.

Bowmore's sense of place is based on a number of factors, including:

- The location on Loch Indaal;
- The grid pattern;
- The dramatic vista of the church at the top of Main Street;
- The relatively uniform building form;
- The bright colour of the buildings (white, with window surrounds often painted in a contrasting colour);
- The vibrancy of a mixed use village, with a distillery complex at its heart.



Islay High School (1.) and Bowmore Primary School (2.) are located on the western outskirts of the village and form, along with the Stanalane houses and the whisky warehouses (3.), a ragged edge to the village. The architectural quality of these buildings does not match the village centre, although the whisky bonds do at least have a distinctive form and the typical whitewashed walls seen throughout the island.

On the eastern side of the village ribbon style development has taken place along the A846. There are a number of industrial and commercial properties on this approach to the village which are unkempt and the SSE power distribution depot is also located here.

The largest buildings in Bowmore are:

- Bowmore Distillery, which was founded in 1779, and has warehouses, kilns, etc grouped in a courtyard pattern between School Street and Loch Indaal. The distillery, with its pagoda roof, warehouses and other buildings, provides a working heart to the village;
- Islay High School (which currently has a roll of about 245 pupils) was originally built in 1876, and has been expanded in a number of phases from the 1960s onwards;
- Bowmore Primary School (which has a combined school and nursery roll of approximately 140);
- The hospital located on the southern edge of the village on Gortan Vogie Road;
- The Bowmore Distillery bonded warehouses at Stanalane alongside the A846 on the southern edge of the village.

The main public open space within the village is the square located at the intersection of Main Street with School Street and Shore Street. Argyll & Bute Council is promoting environmental improvements in the village centre with funding from the Scottish Government's Town Centre Regeneration Fund.

4.0 Issues and Opportunities

A great deal of information has been gathered in preparing this Preliminary Master Plan. The aim has been to gain a clear understanding of issues facing Islay and Bowmore, as well as investigating the potential of the site and its surroundings. Feedback from the community, local groups and agencies has been particularly useful. Analysis of the current planning policy context has also been undertaken, to assess the suitability of the Shoreline site and highlight issues and opportunities.

a. Community Consultation

Extensive information and opinion gathering was undertaken during 2009, beginning with a briefing for the Islay Community Council and culminating in a series of public consultation sessions. These were held at the Council's Service Point in Bowmore on Friday 27th and Saturday 28th November. A session for senior students at Islay High School also took place on 27th November. All sessions were hosted by the master planning team and representatives of Islay Estates Company also attended.

The consultation events were publicised in Islay's local newspaper, The Ilead, which ran front page and centre page coverage of the story. Press releases were sent to the Argyllshire Advertiser, Oban Times, Campbeltown Courier, Scotsman, Herald and a number of professional journals. The events were featured by forargyll.com, Islayblog.com, Islayinfo.com, scottishproperty.co.uk, urbanrealm.co.uk and argyllcommunities.org. BBC Alba filmed an interview with Urban Animation Director Richard Heggie and this was broadcast on the evening news programme 'An La' on 1st December 2009.

Project and consultation information was available at www.urban-animation.com, including event details and a copy of the questionnaire, which could be filled in online and emailed, or printed and posted. Copies of the questionnaire were also left with the Council's Service Point. Large display graphics and a power point presentation were used at the consultation sessions.

It was clear from informal discussions with numerous local people over the weekend of the events that there was good awareness of the Project amongst the population. The Ilead has been a particularly useful means of spreading information.

Public Consultation Sessions - Attendance and Response

Numbers attending public sessions	57
Numbers attending school session	20
Total	77

All who attended these sessions were asked to complete a questionnaire. Twenty-one of those responding live in the Bowmore area, with the remainder spread across Islay. Numbers returned were :

At public sessions	21
At school session	17
By post	9
By email	5
Total	52

Most people took significant time in responding to the questionnaire, which posed challenging questions. Most attending the sessions stayed for at least 15 minutes. Many stated for at least half an hour. Some for more than an hour. Most people participated in open discussion of the issues at hand, including a number of spontaneous round table debates that broke out between interested individuals. Following the events, several email queries and phone calls were received, asking about the Project. A Consultation Summary Report has been prepared. It is available to any interested party on request (see Contents page for contact details).

Approach to Information Gathering

The consultation exercise aimed to set the Project in the wider context, ensuring local people were aware of those matters the Project could control and others which might rely upon other private, public or community interests for action. It was important to illustrate knowledge of Islay, Bowmore and local issues to provide confidence that the proposals will be meaningful.

Accordingly, much time was devoted to preliminary discussions with Islay Community Council and local community leaders, business agencies and individuals before the events. As a result, many of the issues were already known. These were highlighted through display material, the questionnaire and the discussion sessions, providing an agenda for the events. This was important since there was no detailed development proposal on the table, reflecting the aim of achieving genuine consultation.

Review of Main Findings

There was a healthy mix of views concerning the likely benefits and threats the development might bring. Generally, people want a solution which meets local needs and enhances Islay life and there is concern that this might not be the case. These concerns may well be addressed if people can be given confidence in the scheme as the Project takes shape. Many who attended expressed appreciation at having the opportunity to comment in advance of proposals being produced. A few others may have found it easier to express their views if there had already been a proposal on paper.

Some doubted Islay Estates Company's commitment to a high quality scheme meeting local needs and benefiting Islay. Unrelated issues concerning other Estate activity may have some bearing on this view. However, the Estate is aware that improved communication might help foster mutual understanding of local needs and the potential of the Project to achieve solutions. Most understand that as a commercial development, a viable financial outcome is essential. However, there remains some concern that the character and qualities of Islay may be diluted, unless the Project meets local needs and is of an appropriate scale and design.

Some of the key findings were :

Broad support for affordable housing for local people, particularly the young and key workers;
 Competing views on need for a larger supermarket, favouring the protection of Main Street;
 Broad concerns over lack of car parking, poor road layout and road safety at Main Street;
 Competing views on need for new facilities, set against refurbishment or extension of existing;
 Various new facilities requested, including cyber cafe and permanent library;
 Mixed views on encouraging more visitors, some resistance to holiday homes;
 Range of opportunities identified as beneficial outcomes of scheme and fewer concerns raised.

In the school group, there was clear antipathy towards holiday homes and a fear that the island lifestyle may suffer due to increasing visitors. Improving existing facilities was favoured over the provision of new buildings such as community and leisure centres.

In general, the quality of feedback was well informed and open minded. Most people understood that some of the issues, particularly within the village centre, are complex and may need concerted effort by a number of partners to achieve progress.

A few points raised in discussion at the sessions were not mentioned in the questionnaires. These include dissatisfaction with the public square at Main Street, Bowmore, concerns over child safety on the road area between the schools and a willingness by local football clubs to share any new changing facilities or pavilion with other clubs using the pitches adjacent to the project site.

Conclusions

In responding to community views, the following criteria should be considered as **KEY DESIGN DRIVERS** in the preparation of the Shoreline development proposals -

- The development should seek to respond to local needs;
- Protect Main Street as the retail and commercial centre of Bowmore and Islay;
- Opportunities to promote partnership approaches with other agencies should be fully considered;
- Land uses, routes and building form should be designed to achieve integration with the village;
- Pedestrian and vehicular access routes should be carefully considered;
- Other parties should be encouraged to address parking and traffic issues in the village centre;
- Delivery of affordable housing opportunities for local people will be an important issue.

b. Planning and Other Policy Considerations

There are a number of detailed policies Argyll & Bute Council will apply at the planning application stage to control the form of any new development in and around Bowmore. However, this Preliminary Master Plan is concerned with broader policy issues which the Council will consider in assessing larger land allocation proposals of this type, through the Local Development Plan process.

The Council has adopted a Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) through a Community Planning Partnership (CPP) which seeks to support vibrant and forward looking communities living in an outstanding environment. The CPP enables local leaders to work with communities, the third and private sectors to develop the long term vision for Argyll & Bute and work towards that vision. The SOA will be used to guide Council planning policy to be set out in the forthcoming Local Development Plan and is therefore an important consideration for this Preliminary Master Plan.

This agreement between the Scottish Government and the CPP sets out how each will work in the future towards improving outcomes for local people in a way that reflects local circumstances and priorities, within the context of the Government's National Outcomes, with the following ambitions :

1. We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe.
2. We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
3. We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.
4. Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors, responsible citizens.
5. Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
6. We live longer, healthier lives.
7. We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
8. We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
9. We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.
10. We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
11. We have strong, resilient, supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
12. We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.
13. We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.
14. We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.
15. Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

In responding to these Outcomes and the SOA, the Shoreline proposals can adopt the following criteria as **KEY DESIGN DRIVERS** :

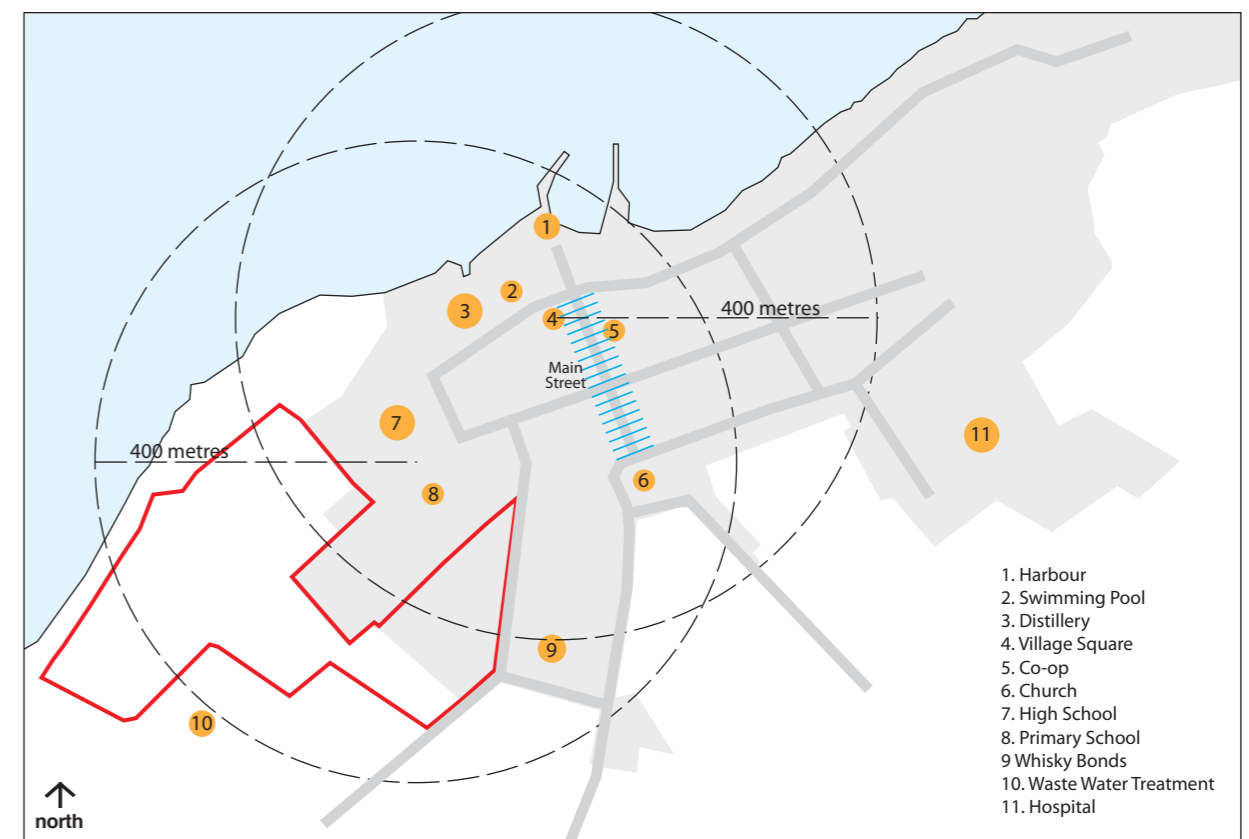
Criteria	Outcomes
Provide employment opportunities not available elsewhere	1, 2, 3, 7, 14.
A safe and attractive built and natural environment	1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12.
Meet general, affordable, elderly and special housing needs	5, 6, 7.
An attractive and usable public / civic realm	4, 5, 9, 11, 12.
Cooperate with Council / public agencies on health and education needs	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 15.
Access to open space, sport and recreation opportunities	4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12.
Convenient pedestrian and cycle access to local services	6, 10, 12.
Engage with community in preparing proposals	4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12.
Enhance the unique qualities of Bowmore and Islay	1, 4, 10, 12, 13, 14.
Identify sustainable development forms and renewable energy solutions	1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 12, 14.

National Planning Policy

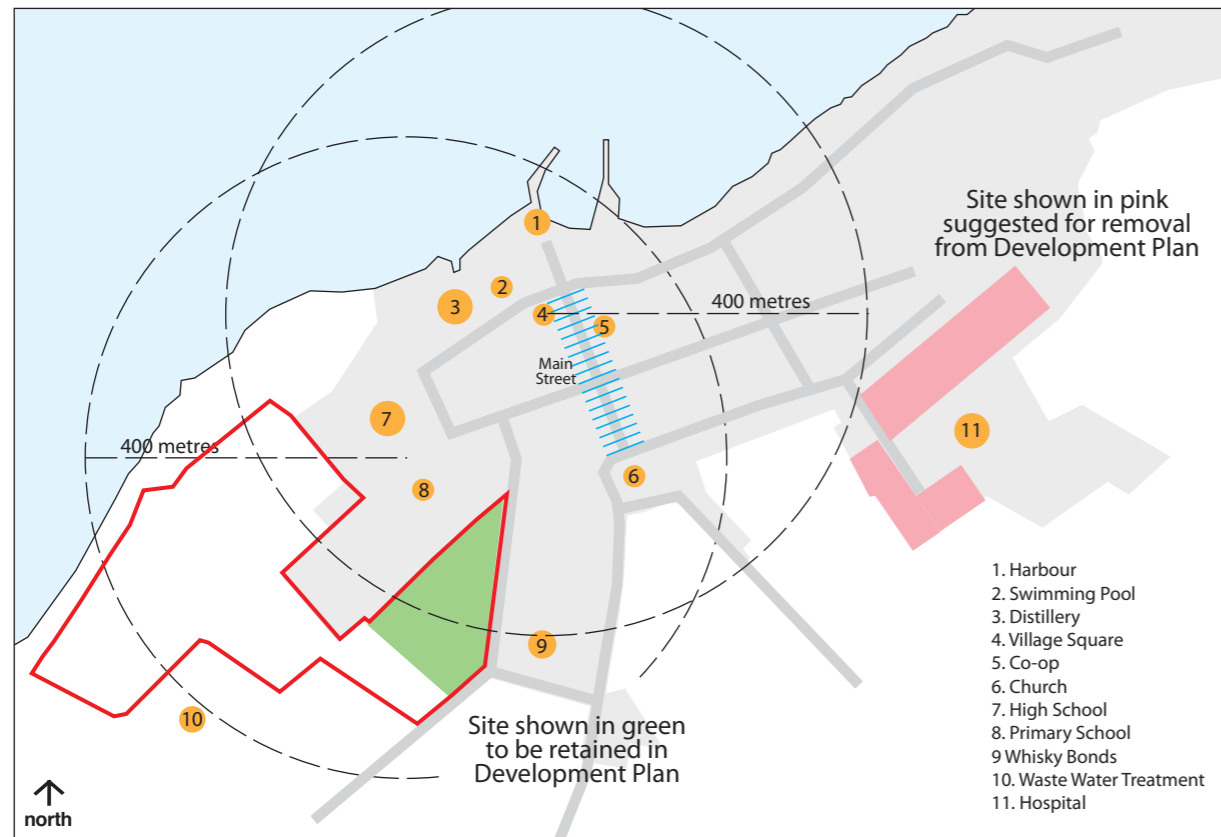
The Scottish Government is supporting sustainable development, quality design and place making through a number of recent policy and guidance statements, including :

- Designing Places - policy statement on design standards
- Building Our Legacy - policy statement on architecture
- Designing Streets - policy statement on streets and urban form
- PAN 68 'Design Statements'- Planning Advice Note requiring justification of design approach to development
- PAN 83 'Master Planning'- Planning Advice Note guiding the preparation of master plans such as this document

The Government has also promoted the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative, which seeks to encourage good practice in the design and layout of new development, and the 'Polnoon : Residential Streets Project' which is intended as an example of best practice. The Shoreline development aims to adopt best practice contained in all these documents and initiatives.



For example, creating walkable neighbourhoods is a central theme of the current agenda. The aim is to reduce the need for trips by car, encourage healthier lifestyles, make essential services available and convenient to all and build places which integrate housing and other uses into real neighbourhoods. The diagram above shows that almost all of the Shoreline site is within 400 metres of the Islay High School and Bowmore Primary School. Some of the site is also within 400 metres of the village centre. Assuming convenient pedestrian routes can be secured, the site can be described as well located for pedestrian access to essential services.



The sites shown pink on the above plan are currently allocated for development in the Argyll & Bute Local Plan and like the Shoreline site, are owned by the Islay Estates Company. These sites are more than 400 metres from the village centre and more than 600 metres from the schools. Vehicular access to the sites is substandard and the Local Plan recognises a need for traffic management improvements in the adjoining area. The environmental quality of the surrounding area is poor and the Local Plan also recognises this by identifying an 'Area for Action'. Most of the land is allocated for housing use but no developer interest has been shown in these sites, partly as a result of these factors.

In the longer term, there may be potential for an 'inner bypass' road route leading traffic from the south of Kilarrow Parish Church through these sites and other 'Possible Development Areas' to the west. Although this scenario is not deliverable at present, the Development Plan should not adopt proposals which would rule it out in future.

The area shown green is also currently allocated for development in the Local Plan. It lies in an accessible location and forms an important connection between the main Shoreline area and the village as a whole. It is proposed that this area should continue to be allocated for development as part of the Shoreline proposal.

During the latter part of the 20th Century, development of the schools and sports pitches has concentrated local facilities and services at the west of the village. Meanwhile, housing development has spread to the east. As a result, there is now an opportunity to rebalance the settlement by providing housing and other appropriate uses to the west of Bowmore. The Shoreline site is well located to achieve this through the creation of a walkable neighbourhood with good pedestrian access to the schools and village centre. This is consistent with the aims of current Scottish Government policy. Land to the east is further from the village centre and generally has a northerly aspect, making passive solar gain more difficult to achieve.

Argyll and Bute Council – Sustainable Design Guidance

The Council has embraced good practice in design and development through its Sustainable Design Guidance (SDG) and this was recently recognised through the Scottish Government's Awards for Quality in Planning. The SDG is an important document in shaping the preliminary Master Plan and the more detailed proposals which will follow.

The principal aims of the Sustainable Design Guidance with regards to larger developments are **KEY DESIGN DRIVERS** which should shape the Shoreline proposals :

- Developing a Design Framework which has the support of the community;
- Maintaining local character;
- Relating to the local landscape character;
- Public spaces are both a tourist and a local resource;
- Arrival and entry (to express an area's distinctive character).

The final design framework will contain information that addresses the Action Checklist set out in the SDG which lists a number of important points which should also be adopted as **KEY DESIGN DRIVERS** in shaping the Shoreline proposals:

1. Establish a 'PATTERN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT';
2. Consider the LANDSCAPE AND BUILT SETTING;
3. Design for LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY;
4. Design for ACCESSIBILITY;
5. Consider a SUSTAINABLE DESIGN FOR INFRASTRUCTURE, ACCESS, PARKING AND SERVICING;
6. DESIGN THE LAYOUT TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF SECURITY and provide SAFE PEDESTRIAN ROUTES;
7. Design to CREATE CHARACTER;
8. Consider the MASSING, PROPORTION AND SCALE of houses within the development. And consider MATERIALS and CONSTRUCTION DETAILS;
9. Carefully design WINDOWS AND OPENINGS;
10. Consider the use of PORCHES AND SUNSPACES;
11. GARDENS AND PLANTING – use landscape to integrate houses within the development; BOUNDARY TREATMENTS - where necessary use natural planting and hedges to buffer houses from roads.

c. The Shoreline Opportunity

The Shoreline Project presents an opportunity to plan for the long term growth of Bowmore at a scale which has not been undertaken since construction of the original planned village from the 1760s. By adopting a robust land use and access framework and a 'design code', it will be possible to secure a pattern for future development which is capable of adapting to changing circumstances. Long term planning will allow effective decisions to be taken on :

- Efficient infrastructure provision;
- Main pedestrian and vehicular access routes;
- Delivery of important facilities and services;
- Meeting tourism and visitor needs;
- Deliverable supply of good quality sites for affordable and market housing.

Above all, there is an opportunity to create a high quality development which can enhance the village of Bowmore and its surroundings, as well as bringing wider benefits to Islay as a whole, through enhanced employment options and improved services and facilities.

5.0 Site Analysis



View north across playing fields to schools

The Shoreline site lies to the south west of Bowmore. It is wholly owned by the Islay Estates Company. The site area amounts to approximately 13.5 hectares / 33.5 acres, although it is not envisaged that all this land would be developed. Approximately 2.0 hectares / 4.5 acres is currently allocated for Business and Industry uses in the Argyll & Bute Local Plan 2009. The remaining land is currently designated as 'Countryside Around Settlement'.

The shores of Loch Indaal bound the site to the north west, as far as the higher rocky ground at the Battery which is a well used rugged open space. The Islay High School and Bowmore Primary School buildings and playing fields lie to the north, with the Stanalane housing development and Bowmore Distillery Bonds to the east. The southern edge of the site meets open countryside and the edge of a recently constructed Waste Water Treatment Plant.

The land slopes down generally from east to west, with an overall fall of approximately 18 metres. The central part of the site is fairly flat. There is a distinct level change within the site at a raised beach set back approximately 100-150 metres from Loch Indaal and another between the High School and a small former quarry.

Like much of Islay, distant views are available to and from other parts of the island, in this case looking west and south west across Loch Indaal to Bruichladdich, Port Charlotte and the Rhinns.

Access and Routes

Preliminary discussions have been held with the Council's Transportation Officer on Islay. Feedback suggests the local road network has sufficient capacity to accommodate a development on the Shoreline site, with upgrading of relevant junctions as necessary. Detailed studies may be required at a later date, including a Transport Assessment.

Services

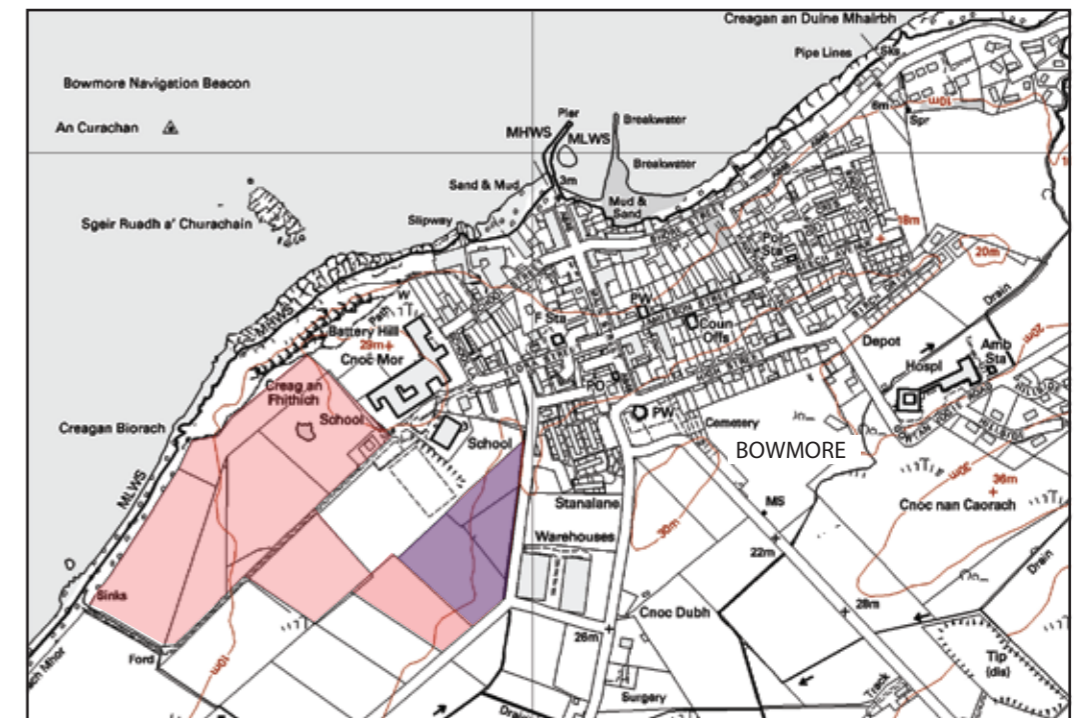
Scottish Water's new waste water treatment works utilises the proprietary Aerofac system to achieve odour-free processing of waste water from Bowmore and septic tank sludge from Islay and Jura. There is adequate capacity to cope with a significant amount of new development, although the works can be extended to achieve greater capacity if required.

There are known water supply constraints on Islay. To date, it has not been possible to clarify this matter with Scottish Water. It is envisaged that inclusion of the Shoreline proposal in the Council's Main Issues Report will lead to Scottish Water opening meaningful dialogue.

Discussions with SSE are proceeding and will be clarified as the potential power consumption for the development is clarified, taking into account any renewable energy solutions which can be integrated into the proposals.

Wildlife and Natural Environment

Scottish Natural Heritage's (SNH) Bowmore Officers have confirmed development at the Shoreline site would not compromise the Laggan Peninsula and Bay SSSI, or the significant numbers of geese which visit the area. No unacceptable impacts are envisaged by SNH on local wildlife or natural heritage.



Shoreline Project Site - main site shown pink, with Local Plan Business / Industry site in purple.

Built Heritage

No direct or secondary impacts are envisaged upon listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments or the Bowmore Conservation Area. The West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) has records of a ruined tower at the Battery but no physical evidence of this structure has been identified and it lies out with the Shoreline site. There may be buried remains of the tower but this would not constrain the development.

Development Exclusion Zones

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has provided details of development exclusion zones around Bowmore Distillery and the Bonds. Part of the eastern edge of the Shoreline site lies within safety zones around the Bonds but this will not have a significant impact upon the scheme, providing the layout of land uses follows the HSE's PADHI guidance.

Archaeology

WoSAS has recorded evidence of worked flint close to the southern edge of the Shoreline area, suggesting the presence of an industrial flint-working site in the vicinity. This would date to the Mesolithic (c.8000 – 4000 BC) or Neolithic period (4000 – 2500 BC) and could indicate potential for buried sub-surface deposits. WoSAS is likely to recommend archaeological assessment of parts of the site should planning permission be granted for development.

Ground Conditions

Site investigation works have been instructed, to confirm the porosity and bearing capacity of the ground.



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Design and Layout : Issues and Opportunities

Inspection and analysis of the Shoreline site suggest a number of important issues and opportunities to address through the layout and design of the development proposals. In addition to technical requirements relating to access and servicing, these should be considered as **KEY DESIGN DRIVERS** :

a. Relationship to Loch Indaal

Unlike the other Islay villages, Bowmore is not particularly well related to the shore, despite its setting. There is an opportunity to open out attractive views to Loch Indaal and achieve convenient access to the shore for walkers. However, care must be taken to ensure the development sits comfortably in its surroundings, since it will be visible across the water from the northern side of Loch Indaal and also from the shore itself. There is a natural change in level at a raised beach running north east to south west across the western part of the site and this would form a distinctive edge to the development, retaining a substantial area of open space between development and the shore.

b. Open Space

The development should include areas of open space internally, but site analysis and discussion with the community suggest retaining open space between the development and the shore would be important in protecting the walkers route running from the Distillery to the Battery and down to the beach. The Battery site offers dramatic views across the Loch and to Jura and might offer a unique location for a key use and building. However, it also has unrivalled qualities as an open space. Unless a suitable use emerges and community support is expressed, this open space should be protected. The Battery lies outside the Shoreline site but the Council may wish to consider environmental improvements to remove concrete hardstandings and perhaps provide a suitable memorial or monument recognising the significance of the site and its history.

c. Public Realm

The public realm in Bowmore consists of little more than a series of roadside footpaths and the Square off Main Street, which may be improved through the Council's current upgrading proposals and grant funding. There is an opportunity to enhance the public realm by creating convenient footpath links with attractive useable spaces, connected to a well defined network of open spaces.

The area between the schools was highlighted as a potential improvement area during community consultation. There is a perceived safety hazard with vehicles arriving in the morning and afternoon to drop off students and large numbers of children crossing the area on foot. This area is also of poor environmental quality and could be improved in part through investment in the exterior fabric of the schools and the spaces outside them. There is an opportunity to pedestrianise this area and form a safe, attractive public space with a main footpath route leading west into the Shoreline development. An alternative drop off area would be required and parking at the sports pitches would need to be relocated.

d. Connections

Closing the access road between the schools would result in the main road access to the Shoreline site being taken from the A840 and Stanalane. The Council's local Roads Officer has confirmed this is the preferred solution. The existing lane running east to west through the Shoreline site could provide a direct link to the village centre and connect at the west with the walkers path along the shore, forming a convenient pedestrian 'spine' for the development. Buildings could front onto this route.

e. Urban Form and Architecture

The development should provide a high quality layout and well designed buildings. The original planned village can provide a template for the form and design of the buildings and streets but it would not be appropriate to copy what was created over 200 years ago. The new development should be contemporary, meeting modern needs and standards, whilst respecting its context and consolidating the distinctive style of townscape, streets, building design and materials in Bowmore and on Islay. A design code should be adopted to ensure appropriate development form. More information on this matter is provided in the Development Proposals section.

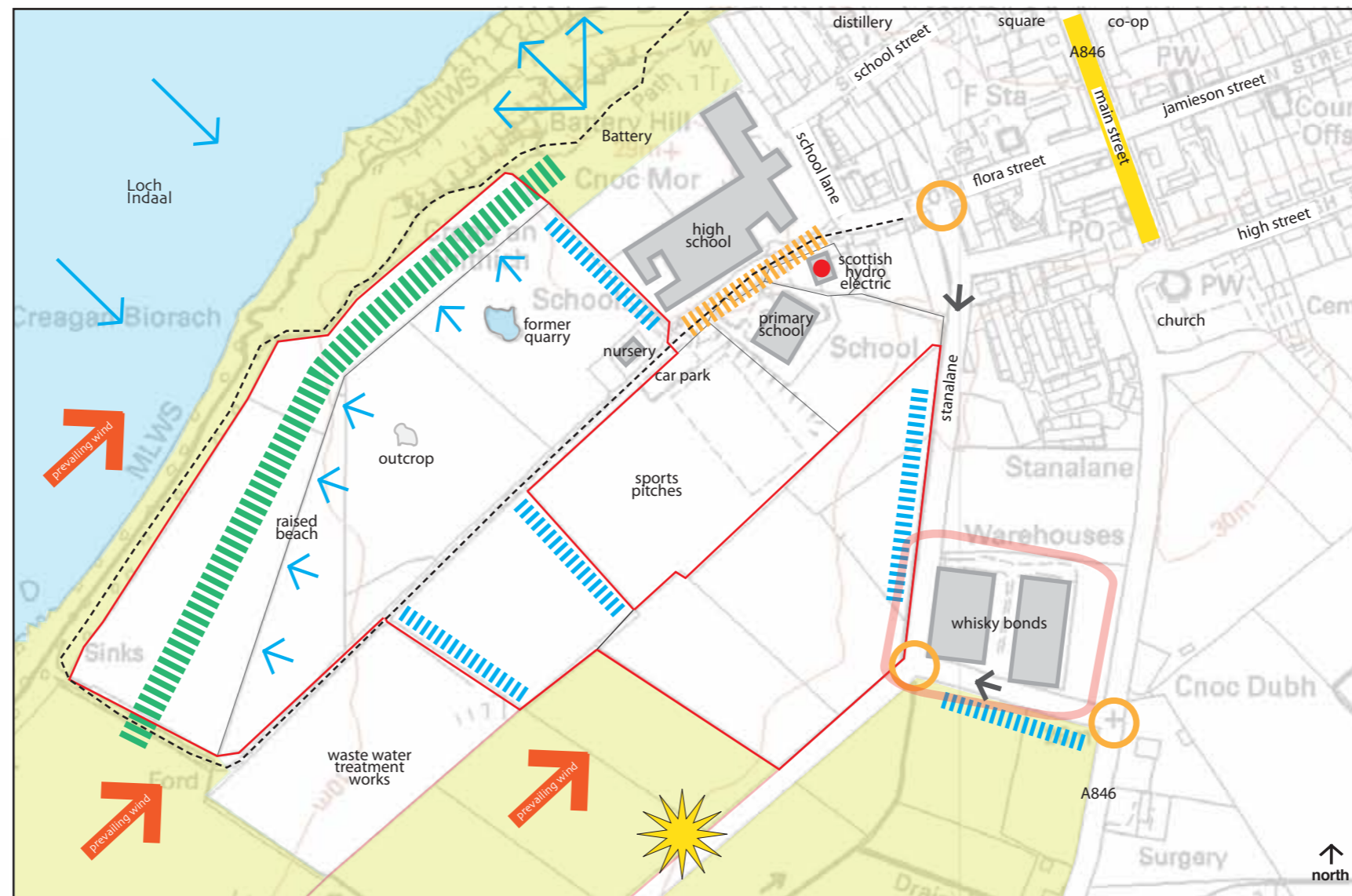
f. Land Uses

The development will be led by housing use but there are also opportunities to provide business and commercial space to meet the needs of Bowmore and Islay, supplementing existing provision. The industrial allocation currently in place for part of the site should be removed, since this use could be accommodated at Whinpark, where the Local Plan allocates an extension to the industrial estate. Other uses such as a hotel and other visitor facilities could also be accommodated at the Shoreline site. There has been a significant amount of feedback from the local community concerning supermarket and food shopping, with a majority preferring to see provision at Main Street adapting to meet demand. Development at the Shoreline site should avoid undermining Main Street and it is likely that providing a site for an edge of town supermarket would have a negative effect. It is therefore intended that any retail provision at the site should be limited and secondary to the village centre.

Community feedback suggests no significant demand for new leisure or sports facilities but an eagerness to see existing facilities improved. The Council is undertaking an audit of sports pitches and facilities and this may provide useful data on the availability, quality and use of existing provision. The existing children's nursery use on the site can be rehoused within the new development.

g. Site Edges

It is important that the development should achieve an effective relationship with its surroundings, including Loch Indaal, countryside to the south and west and the existing village. Visual screening and careful choice of land uses may be appropriate at the waste water treatment works, although the plant is odour free. There is an opportunity to improve the visual quality of the edges of Bowmore around the schools and at Stanalane and to improve the sense of arrival at the village from the approach on the A846.



h. Off Site Issues

The opportunity for pedestrianisation between the schools has already been mentioned. The Scottish Hydro Electric retail unit to the east of this area, next to the primary school, is in poor condition and has unkempt yards on either side. There may be an opportunity for relocation of this use to the village centre, or to a suitable space within the Shoreline development. The site might provide an appropriate location for a drop off point and car park for the schools.

There is clearly a significant amount of local concern that the village centre must remain the focus of commercial, retail, visitor and public activity for Bowmore and Islay. The Shoreline development must not undermine the viability of the village centre. However, it must also be said that users, businesses, building owners, community groups and public agencies must value the function that Main Street serves and play their own part in its future success. The Council's planned environmental improvements will not solve all issues relating to parking and access, pedestrian safety and visual quality. There is an opportunity to promote greater use of the village hall and place this at the heart of community life. There may be new uses such as a cyber cafe or library which could add to the range of services provided, possibly in conjunction with the village hall.

Some comments arising from community consultation suggested more retail space is required for food shopping, or that competition is required for the Co-op. However, it is known that a local baker's shop and the Islay Farmer's Market both closed for business recently. There may be an opportunity for a formal village centre action plan to address some of the issues and anticipate future requirements. This is out with the scope of the Preliminary Master Plan but there is benefit for all in maintaining a vibrant village centre. Co-ordinating developments at the Shoreline site with initiatives at the village centre would be in the wider interest.

i. Sustainable Development and Energy Use

The importance of the principles contained in the Council's Sustainable Design Guidance has already been noted. The layout, design and construction of the development will be arranged to maximise sustainability.

There is a specific opportunity to promote renewable energy use through the provision of a biomass heating system, consistent with the aims of the Carbon Neutral Islay project. It is known that the Council has an aspiration to adopt this form of heating at the High School and Primary School. Affordable housing will form an important part of the development proposals and the housing associations have been strong supporters of district heating systems. Other housing and commercial uses throughout the scheme could also be supplied from this system.

Further work is required to confirm the viability of such a scheme, particularly in establishing the required energy outputs and the availability of a satisfactory woodchip supply chain. The Islay Estates Company has extensive forestry resources which may provide a suitable source.

The layout of the development should maximise the use of passive solar gain and respond to the prevailing wind direction through the orientation of buildings and spaces.

6.0 Development Proposals

This section of the Preliminary Master Plan sets out indicative development proposals for the Shoreline site. At this stage, the proposals are intended only as a guide to :

- The form and layout the development might take;
- The kind of uses it might include, such as housing and commercial uses;
- The location of main areas of open space and access to these;
- How new development might integrate with the existing village;
- How road access can be achieved;
- How convenient pedestrian access can be provided within the development and to the village centre;
- How much development might take place and over what period.

Consultation with the local community and other interested parties will be undertaken by the Council's Planning Department following publication of the Main Issues Report (MIR). Assuming the Shoreline proposals are included in the MIR, this process will provide important feedback which can help to shape the proposals. Additional work will also be undertaken by the master planning team, including more discussion with the local community. The proposals will be adapted in response to the findings of these processes.

Main Elements of the Layout

There are a number of aspects of the layout which give it a distinct form suited to the site and its surroundings :

- Open space leading down to the shore and up to the Battery;
- Buildings positioned at the head of the raised beach, creating a bold frontage to Loch Indaal;
- A pedestrian spine linking the development to the village centre and the shore path;
- A green hub with biomass heating plant, social enterprises, allotments and live/work properties, positioned as a buffer to the waste water treatment plant;
- A layout of streets which is compatible with the typical pattern found in Bowmore;
- Land uses which will support Main Street as the primary commercial, retail and visitor centre for Bowmore;
- Opportunities for affordable housing to meet a pressing local need;
- A potential site for a hotel development adding to the visitor facilities available on Islay;
- Building design and materials which are compatible with the historic context at Bowmore.

Land Uses

It is envisaged that the main land use will be housing. A minimum of 25% of all housing will be provided by housing associations for affordable rent, shared-equity ownership or sale below market rates to qualifying purchasers. Any identified need for sheltered or supported housing can also be met through partnerships with the housing associations. Preliminary discussions indicate those active on Islay have a strong interest in delivering affordable housing solutions at the Shoreline site.

A full range of market housing is also proposed and this should include smaller flats, small houses, larger family housing and properties to suit elderly occupants. Commercial research to establish market demand is ongoing, although comparative examples are not common on Islay since the market is self-contained.

Different types and size of housing should be spread throughout the development to create a mixed community, with affordable housing indistinguishable from market housing. The site should be capable of accommodating in the region of 150-200 houses, to be constructed in numerous small phases over a 10-15 year period.

There will be a number of opportunities for commercial and business uses but at this time, no specific sites have been identified. These uses should be capable of locating in a typical residential area without causing local residents nuisance through noise, odours or visual intrusion. Appropriate uses might include small office spaces, businesses which can be operated from domestic scale properties such as a dentist, chiropractor, hairdresser, architect, accountant etc. Provision for these uses should be controlled to ensure the village centre remains the main location for commercial uses.

Additional commercial space might be provided in somewhat larger purpose built spaces to accommodate businesses with a need for space which is not available elsewhere. Development of this type should be compatible in scale with the generally residential character of the Shoreline development. No industrial uses are proposed as these can be accommodated at Whinpark, where an extension to the industrial estate is planned.

New accommodation and facilities for visitors could be provided. There is an aspiration to identify a suitable site for a new hotel and research is being undertaken to establish market interest and clarify the size and type of property which may be viable. The hotel might be best located at the west of the development, overlooking Loch Indaal, with direct access to the coastal path and open space network. A site at the end of the main access road into the Shoreline site is being considered for this use.

Heritage or visitor attractions have been considered as an appropriate use but to date, discussions with potential users have not identified a specific opportunity. There are a number of potentially suitable locations, perhaps overlooking Loch Indaal or a site well connected to the coastal path and the main footpath spine linking the Shoreline development to the village centre.

Green Hub

The term 'green hub' has been used to describe a group of potentially compatible uses which could act as a focus for sustainable development principles and community activity. Allotments are proposed as a useful community resource, on land historically in use for this purpose. These would be located to the east of the waste water treatment plant, forming a visual buffer.

A proposed biomass plant could be located adjacent to the allotments and space for social enterprises or other businesses with suitable credentials could be provided. There is an aspiration to provide opportunities for live/work space and this might also be located in the green hub.

This part of the development should not be seen as a token gesture towards environmental issues but as an important component of the scheme, which should meet high standards in sustainable layout, design and construction throughout.

Open Space and Public Realm

Approximately 3.2 hectares / 7.9 acres of the site (23.5%) has been set aside for open space adjacent to Loch Indaal, setting the development back from the shore and providing a number of footpath connections to the coastal path. It is envisaged that this open space would have a natural character in keeping with the Battery area. There may be scope to work with SNH to consider access options at the Laggan SSSI, as part of the wider open space and coastal path network.

Within the site, other open spaces are proposed at the end of the main access route into the site, at the former quarry and opposite the whisky bonds, where there is a development exclusion zone. These spaces could have differing character depending on adjacent uses. They should not be seen as left over land but as important spaces associated with pedestrian routes, contributing to the creation of an attractive and useful public realm. They may also provide appropriate locations for formal play facilities and equipment to meet Council standards, although use of natural features and access to the main open space at the shore would be encouraged as a more effective solution.

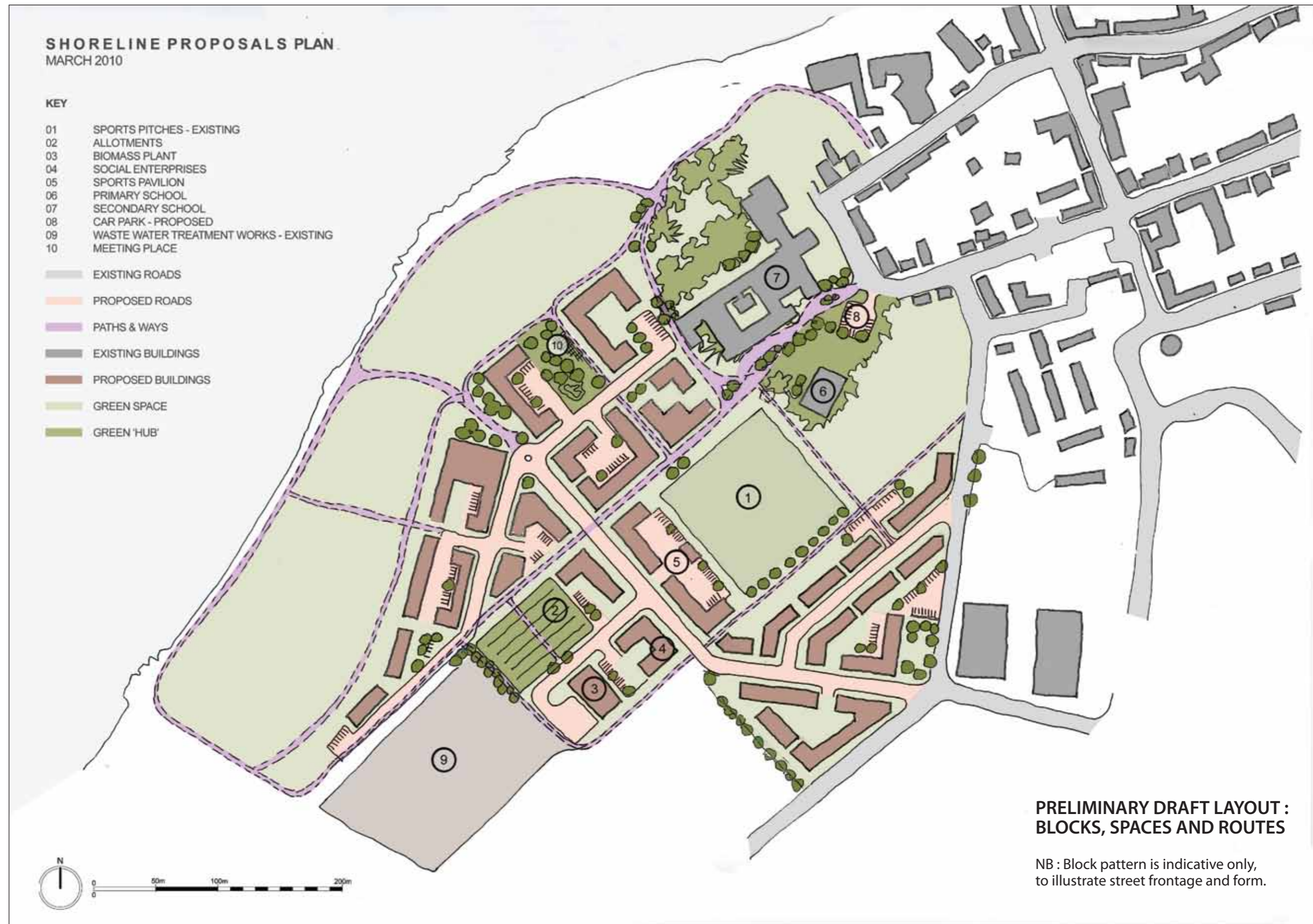
Creation of a hard landscaped pedestrian space between the schools will depend on Council action and support. This space could form an important part of the pedestrian and public realm, acting as a meeting place for young people and parents before and after school. It would also greatly improve the environmental quality in this area of the village.

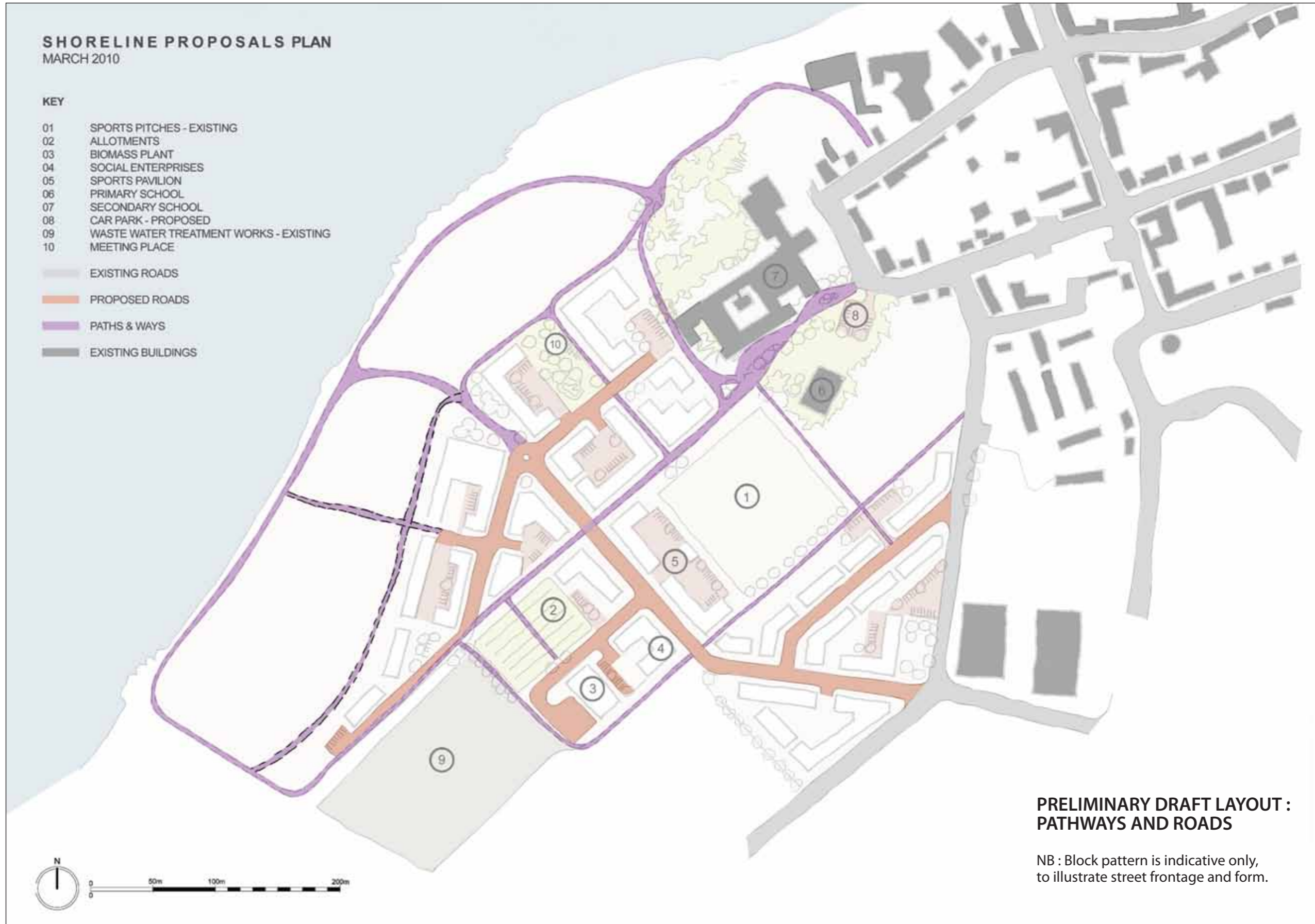
The proposals include a small amount of development at the west of the sports pitches, on land owned by Argyll & Bute Council. This should not compromise use of the pitches and will reduce exposure to the prevailing wind. Footpath routes can be provided around the sports pitch area, connecting into the wider network.

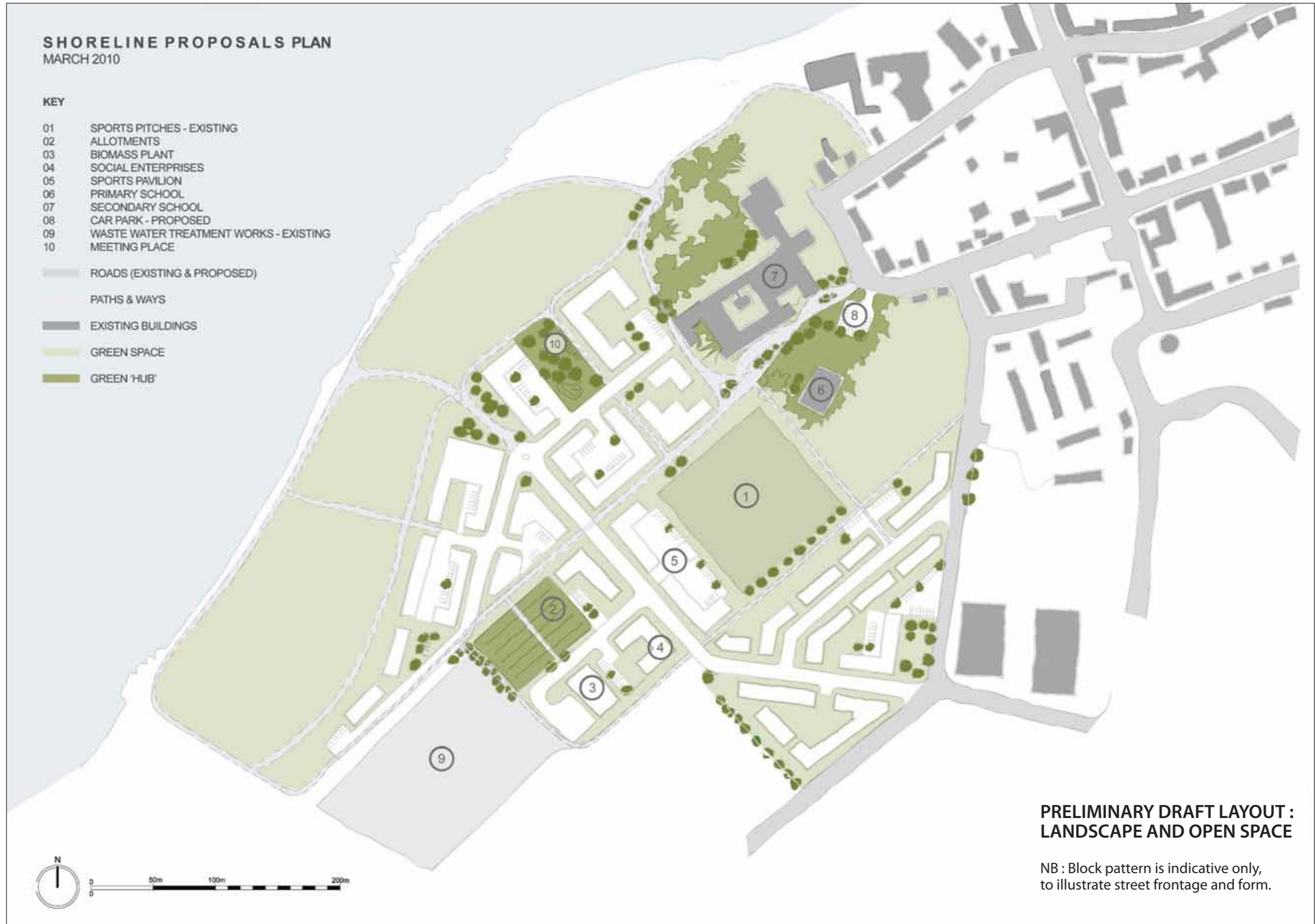
Routes

A convenient pattern of pedestrian routes is proposed and many of these could also be used by cyclists. The two main features are the east-west pedestrian spine and a series of routes connecting to the shore. Walkers currently follow a loop using the coastal path and the track which will form the pedestrian spine. This route would be protected and other options provided, with main routes connecting to the open spaces within the development to form a coherent network. Ideally, buildings should front onto the eastern part of the footpath spine to form a pedestrian street, possibly with some commercial uses.

Vehicular access will be from the A846 and Stanalane. The pattern of roads uses generally straight routes rather than informal curves, which would be characteristic of a suburban layout form. The layout minimises the need for pedestrians to cross main road routes. Design of roads will aim to avoid highly engineered solutions which might dominate the layout, aiming for solutions which are appropriate to local character and consistent with the Scottish Government's 'Designing Streets' publication.







Design Code

A Design Code will be developed for Shoreline as a practical means of implementing the Master Plan and guiding detailed design of streets, spaces and buildings. The code will guide the various builders, developers and agencies involved in implementing the Master Plan proposals.

The design code will provide guidance on the following key elements of building and streetscape design:

- Plot size, area and shape;
- Building footprint on the site (including size of footprint relative to the scale of the plot);
- Positioning of the footprint on the plot and the location of the building line;
- Positioning of garages and other ancillary buildings on the plot;
- Height of buildings – number of storeys, especially in relation to street width;
- Building form, eg. terraces and detached buildings;
- Width of streets, pavements and verges;
- Car parking areas, including back courts;
- Treatment of boundaries;
- Range of building and surface materials;
- Roof pitch;
- Internal and external provision for re-cycling;
- Planting species;
- Garden space;
- Window proportion and arrangement of glazing to maximise solar aspect.

The Code will not seek to impose strict controls on design but will set out guidelines which will apply throughout the development. It is anticipated that the Design Code will be formally approved in any planning permission in principle for the entire site.

As previously stated, it would not be appropriate to merely copy historical styles which are evident throughout the Islay villages. However, the characteristic architecture found in the original planned villages was derived from the local and regional vernacular and is well preserved. Buildings are typically well proportioned and there is a discernible palette of traditional materials found across the island. Islay is fortunate in having such a distinctive and abundant collection of buildings, streets and villages with such strong similarities and this character should be consolidated in the design of the Shoreline scheme.

Good examples of design and form are widely available on Islay and some are shown opposite. These should be used as a basis for a contemporary approach to design which can produce buildings which are appropriate to their context yet of their own time.

Good design can help to protect the distinctive qualities of Islay and Bowmore and will enable the Shoreline development to contribute towards the broader legacy provided by the original planned villages. There will be exciting opportunity for architects working on the scheme to devise appropriate design solutions within the local context, the terms of the Shoreline Design Code and the Council's Sustainable Design Guidance.



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1. Typical village centre house at Bowmore, two storeys with white walls, slate roof and coloured window surrounds. Buildings are close together and positioned close to the road with no front gardens.

2. Shore Street, Bowmore has buildings grouped closely together in terraces. Building height varies. Vertical emphasis and simple arrangement of window openings, again emphasised by coloured surrounds.

3. Terrace at Port Charlotte with open view down the sloping street to Loch Indaal. Relaxed road engineering standards (with maintenance now required). Definition of house width by roof copes.

4. Use of shared private space behind main street frontages creating a finer grain. Vernacular arrangement of upper windows beneath eaves. Use of roof sheeting and colour as well as slate.

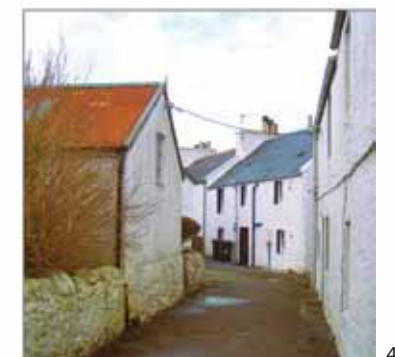
5. Main road at School Street, Bowmore. Informal engineering has road surface used by vehicles and pedestrians. Individual trees soften the building frontages which curve uphill with the school providing a focal point at the end of the street.

6. Port Charlotte Hotel makes good use of site levels to relate strongly to the shoreline. The massing of this larger building is broken up using gabled blocks and smaller extensions and the form sits comfortably with the scale of adjacent housing.

7. Housing adjacent to Port Charlotte Hotel has an equally bold relationship with the shore and Loch Indaal. Buildings at the Shoreline site would be set further back from the shore but with an equally direct relationship.



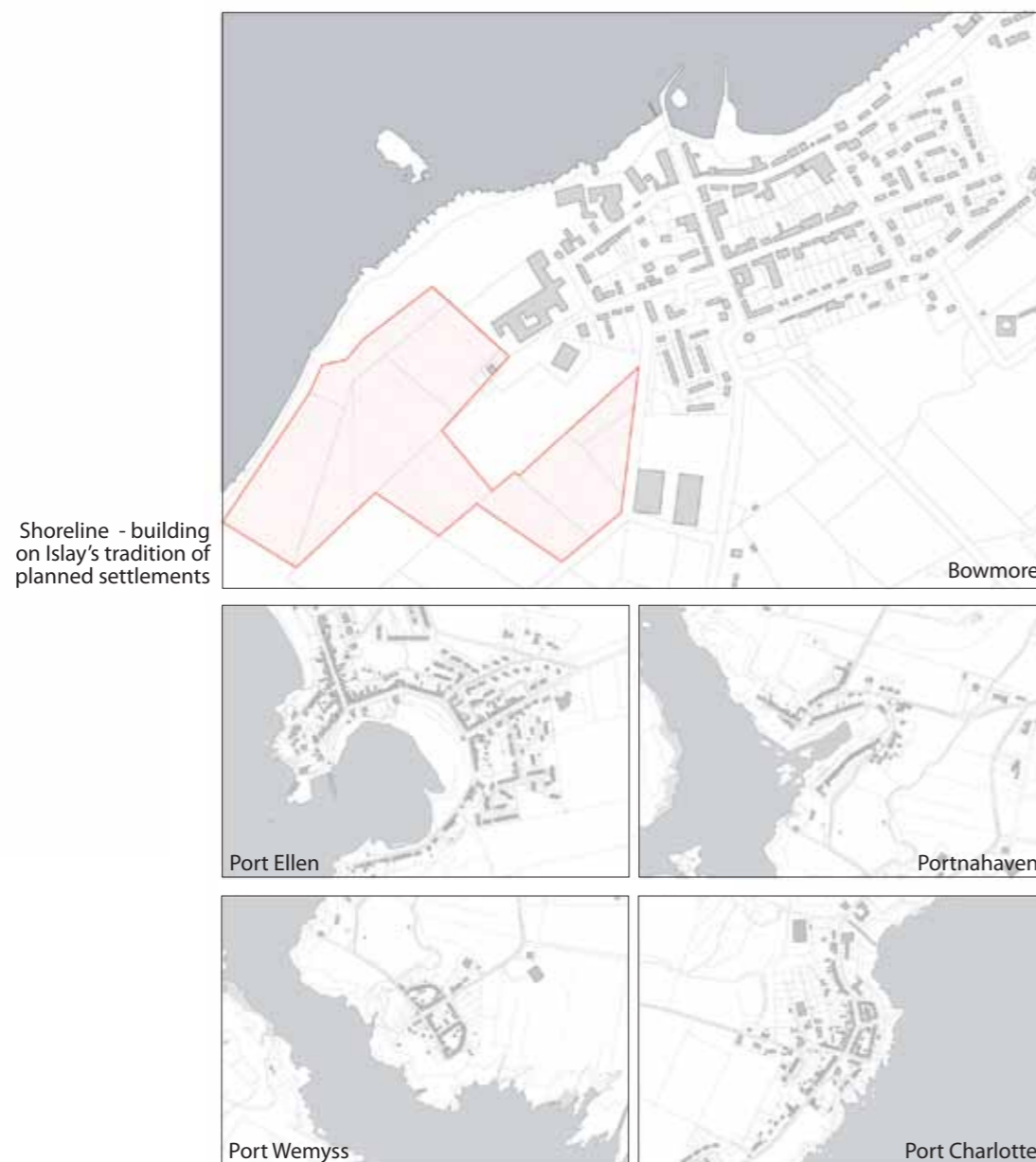
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7.0 Next Steps

This Preliminary Master Plan is just the first step in the allocation of land for development at the Shoreline Project site. It is intended that the Council will include the proposal as a development option in its Main Issues Report. The Master Plan proposals will then be adjusted and shaped in response to consultation with the local community and other stakeholders, undertaken by both the Council and the Islay Estates Company. Ultimately, it is hoped the entire site will be allocated for a phased development in the forthcoming Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan, due for adoption in 2013. Key dates are set out in the Council's Development Plan Scheme, which is available online at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk.

Discussions will continue with potential development partners, including Housing Associations, developers and any public agencies requiring sites in Bowmore. In the short term, the Islay Estates Company is bringing forward planning applications for housing on two sites at Keills and preliminary work will begin soon on proposals for housing at Newton and a potential extension to the Whinpark industrial estate.

As the major landowner at Bowmore, the Islay Estates Company wishes to play a more active role in facilitating future development at the village. There is a commitment to create a high quality development which consolidates the historic legacy provided by Bowmore and the other planned villages on Islay. An effective Master Plan framework and Design Code will put in place the mechanisms to manage the design and construction of a development which can achieve lasting value for Bowmore and Islay as a whole.

The diagrams on the left show the layout of the five main Islay villages. Each was built to a defined plan. Each has retained its distinctive and unique character. Each has seen the addition of developments in the modern era which do not follow a defined long term vision, or adequately reflect their local context. The Shoreline Project is an attempt to build on Islay's tradition of planned settlements, although what is now required is not another new village but a development which extends and rationalises Islay's 'capital'.