

Delegated or Committee Planning Application Report and Report of handling as required by Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 relative to applications for Planning Permission or Planning Permission in Principle

Reference No: 12/02585/MFF
Planning Hierarchy: Local Development
Applicant: The Scottish Salmon Co.
Proposal: Formation of 16 cage fish farm and installation of feed barge
Site Address: Sgian Dubh, north of Strone Point, Loch Striven

DECISION ROUTE

Local Government Scotland Act 1973

(A) THE APPLICATION

(i) Development Requiring Express Planning Permission

- Formation of Marine Salmon Fish Farm comprising 16 No. 100m circumference cages, walkways, mooring grid and associated lines;
- Installation of feed barge;
- Installation of underwater lighting.

(ii) Other specified operations

- Servicing from existing shore base at Ardyne
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(B) RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to:

- i) the conditions and reasons listed in the report;
 - ii) the holding of a pre-determination local hearing having regard to the number of third party representations received in the context of a small community and the varied nature of the material considerations in this case.
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(C) CONSULTATIONS:

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (10.01.13) No objection on either benthic or nutrient enrichment grounds. CAR licence application under consideration which will control biomass and discharges of licenced medicines, hence planning conditions addressing these matters are not necessary.

Scottish Natural Heritage (14.01.13) – No objection. Survey evidence shows the burrowed mud habitat of the seabed to be degraded by past dredging, so despite its nature conservation value as a habitat, there will not be unacceptable impacts. The submitted predator control plan accords with best practice guidelines. Fish numbers in local rivers are low so there is unlikely to be a significant effect upon wild salmonids. The development will not affect the integrity of the Kyles of Bute National Scenic Area and SNH are content for the Council to address local landscape considerations.

Marine Scotland Science (11.01.13) – No objection. The proposal should not give rise to unacceptable benthic or nutrient enrichment impacts. Efficacious treatment options for sea lice should be available subject to SEPA licensing. Information provided in respect of equipment specification, management procedures and contingencies is acceptable.

Scottish Government (EIA) (19.12.12) – No objection from Transport Scotland.

Historic Scotland (21.12.12) – No objection.

Argyll & District Salmon Fishery Board (24.01.13) – Given the location and management arrangements proposed it is considered that the site is unlikely to have a significant impact upon wild salmonids. It will be important to secure synchronous management with existing sites in the same production area to ensure that this remains the case.

Scottish Wildlife Trust – No response.

Northern Lighthouse Board – No objection, navigational marking advice provided.

Clyde Fishermen's Association (10.01.13) – Object to the proposal on the grounds that Loch Striven is a valued nephrops, herring and sprat fishery and displacement will have financial consequences for existing fishing interests. Fish farming is a polluting and unsustainable activity involving the use of toxic chemicals and it must be established that cumulative impacts from multiple sites will not reach dangerous levels in the Firth of Clyde. .

Queen's Harbourmaster Clyde (17.12.12) – Site lies in waters outwith MoD jurisdiction, consultation with Clydeport recommended.

Clydeport Harbourmaster – No response.

Royal Yachting Association (07.01.12) – No objection.

Council's Marine & Coastal Manager (22.03.13) – No objection in terms of benthic, water column, predator, nature conservation or wild fish impacts. The development will have consequences for commercial fishing ground the significance of which will have to be considered in the light of the overall fishing ground available in the loch. There is unlikely to be significant impact on recreational commercial and MoD use of the loch provided that corner anchors are not buoyed as per normal NLB practice. The site is considered to be of lower landscape sensitivity than other parts of Loch Striven, due to the regular shape of the coastline and its wooded backdrop, where low profile structures can be in keeping with the simplicity of the landform. If granted in addition to existing sites, there would be limited potential cumulatively for additional fish farm development.

Council's Area Roads Engineer – No comment.

Council's Public Protection Service - No comment.

Colintraive & Glendaruel Community Council (21.01.13 & 14.01.13) – Object to the proposal on the grounds that the separation between existing and proposed sites conflicts with Scottish Government guidance, the recreational and amenity value of the loch would be eroded, and the proposal would increase the impact of the development upon the local community whilst accruing no benefit to that community. It is requested that the application be determined by means of a hearing to afford community views to be expressed to the committee.

(D) HISTORY:

No planning history relevant to this particular site. The applicants operate an existing salmon farm to the south of the site which is the subject of an application for an extension (12/02589/MFF) which appears elsewhere on the agenda.

(E) PUBLICITY:

The proposal has been advertised in both the local press and the Edinburgh Gazette (EIA Development) with the publicity periods having expired on 18.01.13.

(F) REPRESENTATIONS:

(i) Representations received from:

Objections to the proposal have been received from 12 third parties along with 35 supporters. Names and addresses of those having submitted representations are listed in Appendix B to the report. The grounds of objection and support are summarised below.

Support for the proposal

Comments in relation to the principle of marine fish farming

- Aquaculture is an important contributor to the economy of the more fragile and remote areas of Scotland, providing a ripple effect in terms of economic activity beyond that directly associated with farms – e.g. the applicant's processing facility at Cairndow;
- We should capitalise upon the demand for Scottish farmed salmon which is regarded as a premium product which is well regarded internationally and for which there is increasing domestic and export demand.

Comments in relation to the applicant's credentials

- The applicant's track record demonstrates that they adopt very responsible farming practices and have developed a sustainable ethos throughout the company;
- The Scottish Salmon Co. has an excellent record of environmental responsibility and for supporting and developing local community

initiatives through donations and sponsorship.

Officers' comment: The identity of the applicant is not a material planning consideration given that any consent would relate to the site rather than to a particular operator.

Comments in relation to employment and economic considerations

- The fish farming sector provides much needed business for a variety of service industries and suppliers and helps to support vulnerable rural services;
- Support should be given to local businesses which are willing to invest in Argyll & Bute in the current economic climate;
- Fish farms provide well paid long-term job opportunities rather than lower paid seasonal employment often encountered in rural areas. Rural employment is important and if we are to redress population decline in Argyll we need to be serious about taking every opportunity;
- There are Scottish Government targets for the expansion of the aquaculture industry and their stated expectations for the growth of this sector requires support;
- Fish farm businesses have a record of supporting local events and organisations which is of value to local communities;

Comments in relation to pollution and water quality

- The industry is highly regulated so as to ensure that it operates in an environmentally responsible manner;
- SEPA licencing and monitoring will ensure that discharges will be strictly measured and controlled to ensure compliance;

Comments in relation to wildlife interests

- It is proposed to adhere to national treatment strategies for sea lice control which will ensure that there will be minimal risk to wild fisheries.

Comments in relation to operational considerations

- The site can be serviced from the existing shore base at Ardyne, so has the advantage of not necessitating any additional on-shore infrastructure in order to service it.

Comments in respect of landscape and visuals effects

- Farms are designed nowadays to have a low visual impact so that from a distance away they are barely noticeable.

Comments in response to views expressed by objectors

- Objections received are either ill-informed or are not material planning considerations.

Objections to the proposal

Objections in relation to the principle of marine salmon farming

- Fish farming is an unsustainable activity which contributes to CO₂ emissions and is harmful to the local environment.

Officers' comment: The farming of salmon in cages in the marine environment is considered by the government to be a legitimate activity subject to appropriate regulation and the avoidance of particularly sensitive receiving environments or those locations where the carrying capacity of receiving waters is at, or close to, capacity. Accordingly, whilst it is appropriate for Members as decision-makers to have regard to material considerations in respect of the acceptability or otherwise of particular locations, and particular scales of development, it would not be legitimate to seek to resist this proposal on the grounds that marine salmon farming ought to be deemed an unacceptable form of development, regardless of its scale and location.

Objections founded on planning policy considerations

- The proposal would spoil an area designated as one of scenic beauty.

Officers' comment: The site is located within a local plan designated Area of Panoramic Quality which accords the locality regional status as a scenic resource. Such designations do not preclude aquaculture development; indeed many consented sites lie within National Scenic Areas. The requirement is to give landscape considerations particular weight in the assessment into the acceptability or otherwise of the development.

Objections in relation to conflict with government advice and previous decisions.

- The development is closer to shellfish farms, fishing grounds, vulnerable wildlife and residential property than recommended by the Scottish Government;
- Scottish Executive guidance issued in 1999 gave the Crown Estate indicative separation guidelines, which have not been revised. These indicated for example recommended separation to other finfish farms of 8km, to shellfish 3km and 0.8km to dwellings which are not being adhered to in this case;
- The Crown Estate has previously refused a less polluting shellfish operation on this site given proximity to an existing shellfish farm and to dwellings.

Officers' comment: Government advice issued in 1999 suggested recommended separation distances. This was updated by SEERAD in 2003 and those distances were not re-stated. That document states:

"The indicative separation distances introduced by the Crown Estate some 13 years ago were necessarily arbitrary, without a sound scientific basis. Indeed, in order to minimise adverse interactions

between neighbouring farms, a separation distance in the region of 14km would be required for areas with tidal velocities of one knot. In practice, many farms are now well within this distance. Therefore, the emphasis should lie with area-wide mitigation of disease interactions such as inter-site production management agreements and maintenance of disease firebreaks, rather than solely on a site specific basis”.

Neither the Council’s development plan nor government advice currently recommends the use of specific separation distances.

Objections in respect of pollution and marine and nature conservation interests

- The proposal will generate inappropriate levels of effluent which will be harmful to the water environment and the wildlife it supports and will have unwelcome consequences for fishing, shellfish farming and tourism interests.
- Adverse implications for local salmon rivers;
- Dunoon & District Angling Club consider that sea lice and pesticide and chemical use present an unacceptable risk to wild migratory fish stocks;
- A ‘total containment’ operation where waste can be processed and damage to the environment avoided would be a preferable option.

Officers’ comment: Consultation has been undertaken with Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Marine Science Scotland and the Argyll & District Salmon Fishery Board in order to seek advice in terms of water quality, benthic conditions and the conservation interest of habitats and species. None of these consultees have raised objection to the proposal. Pollution control in respect of the site would be by way of a Controlled Activities Regulation consent (CAR licence) issued by SEPA. Due to the existence of this separate control regime, the pollution implications of the development (other than implications for wild fish, which is a matter outside SEPA’s remit) are not material planning considerations.
<mailto:proposal.@Appropriate>

Objections in relation to landscape, cumulative impact and visual and amenity considerations

- The loch is already subject to salmon and shellfish production and additional aquaculture is unwelcome;
- The cumulative impact of the proposed site and the Strone site will dominate the landscape of the western side of Loch Striven.
- The fish farm would be visible from within the dwellings at both Coustonn (600m) and Braingortan (400m);
- The closest residents will be subject to visual impact and noise from service vessels operating up to 48hours at a time;

- Neighbouring properties will be adversely affected by noise and by light pollution at night;
- Adverse implications for property values.

Officers' comment: The siting of marine fish farms is influenced by a range of factors of which landscape considerations are but one. The need to avoid exceeding the carrying capacity of water bodies and to avoid developments in unsuitable locations due to nature conservation interests are amongst those factors which are very influential in the identification of potential sites. In this case it is not considered that the presence of a further fish farm will erode landscape character or prejudice the Area of Panoramic Quality to a point where, in terms of cumulative impacts, the development ought to be refused. Separation from the closest residential properties is such that residential amenity will not be seriously prejudiced. Lighting at night will be restricted to navigational requirements only, other than for intermittent use of underwater maturation lighting which would not be detrimental to residential amenity. Servicing by well boat will take place, but as an exceptional rather than a day to day occurrence. Property values are not material planning considerations.

Objections in relation to tourism interests

- The site lies on the tourist promoted Argyll Secret Coast where it will conflict with tourism interests and deter return visits to the area;
- Tour vessels and yachts visit the loch for its unspoilt wildness and the presence of fish farms devalues the experience.

Officers' comment: Marine fish farms are established widely across scenic coastal areas in the west of Scotland. Whilst it is acknowledged that the site should be regarded as a sensitive one, given the scenic qualities of the wider area with its wild land and wildlife dimensions, there is no evidence to suggest that tourists will be dissuaded by visiting the area provided that siting and design is not such as to impinge to an unacceptable extent on the qualities for which the area is valued, and provided that cumulative impact is not such as to render aquaculture a defining influence in the appreciation of landscape character.

Objections in relation to employment and economic interests

- The development will not bring any employment or payments to the local community and will only bring disadvantages rather than benefits;
- There do not appear to be any tangible benefits to the local community from fish farming already taking place;

Officers' comment: Whilst the development will bring some direct employment and will generate some spin-offs for the wider economy, and whilst the applicants have stated their intentions in respect of job creation and local recruitment, it is not possible to be conclusive as to how much local economic benefit might accrue from the development, either at its inception or in the future. In the decision-making process employment issues are material considerations, but they should not be used in the weighing up of competing interests as a reason to offset or to disregard otherwise unacceptable environmental shortcomings.

Objections in respect of navigation interests

- The site would pose an additional impediment to navigation beyond that already presented by the Strone site;
- A local fisherman has expressed concerns that the inshore location of the site will impose a further impediment to prawn trawling given the presence of the existing Strone site and the two operational mussel sites plus a and further consented site.

Officers' comment: The site is to be sited close inshore and parallel to the coast and will be marked and lit in accordance with Northern Lighthouse Board requirements. The Royal Yachting Association has not objected to the proposal. There is inevitable conflict with fishing interests arising from the introduction of equipment which places a restriction on navigation, so it is necessary to consider in the context of the loch as a whole whether that in combination with other consented aquaculture sites might prove so prejudicial as to threaten fishery viability and in turn existing livelihoods. The Clyde Fishermen's Association has raised objection in terms of conflict with fishing interests. Cumulatively with consented finfish and shellfish sites, the area of the seabed in the loch which would be restricted by the presence of aquaculture would be less than 10%, which is unlikely to be so prejudicial to fishing interests as to threaten existing livelihoods. Consequences for navigation will be assessed separately as part of the Marine Licence application process administered by Marine Scotland.

Objections in relation to access considerations

- A Strone fish farm employee already routinely parks in one of the passing places on the public road which can cause some obstruction. Other maintenance visitors also park where no formal parking facilities are available.

Officers' comment: This site will continue to be serviced by boat from the shore base at Ardyne and by visiting vessels. There is no new shore base proposed along the coast of Loch Striven. An employee of the Strone site commuting via the Portavadie ferry apparently parks on the single track road to Coustonn in order to access the farm. The Council's Roads engineers have been asked for a view on this particular matter and have commented that there are no waiting restrictions on passing places within the adopted road network. Parking in them does occur, albeit maybe not the same parking space on a daily basis. It could be construed as an obstruction on the carriageway but that would be unlikely. The enforcement of dealing with an obstruction in the road would be a police matter.

The U19 Couston Road has a weight restriction of 7.5t laden and maximum width of 7'6" – 2.28 metres. There should be no large vehicles along this road. The means of the servicing of the proposal was queried and it was advised that all operations would be initiated from Ardyne. It would not be possible to control where employees park. The current practice of parking in passing place was in advance of the planning application so is not a recent development and to date no objections had been received by Area Roads. There is no mention of the road being impassable due the parked vehicles. No comments can be made as to the parking of vehicles on passing places

outwith the adopted roads.

It should be noted that the unclassified dead end road in question, which has with no turning or public parking facilities, is a very lightly trafficked section of public road.

Applicant's response to representations

Separation distances between fish farms and other operations

- Reference has been made to Scottish Government indicative separation distances established in 1999. The 2003 revision of this guidance indicates that emphasis should be given to area wide management and mitigation. The sites at Sgian Dubh, Strone and Ardyne are all to be operated by the same company under farm Management Statements consistent with the SSPO Code of Good Practice. Nutrient enrichment and benthic impact calculations demonstrate that the loch has the carrying capacity to accommodate the development proposed satisfactorily. Separation distance from the nearest shellfish farm is 2.5km. Experience elsewhere is such that negative impacts are not expected for either operation, as shellfish and finfish production appears capable of co-existence without detrimental effects on either industry.

Impact on visual and recreational amenity

- New development has been designed in accordance with published SNH guidance. It is not considered likely that large numbers of tourists will visit the section of road beyond Colintraive, which finishes at a dead end without parking or turning facilities. Research undertaken by the Scottish Aquaculture Research Forum in 2008 failed to identify any negative relationship between aquaculture and tourism. The area is already subject to development in the form of the existing Strone fish farm, shellfish and forestry operations and the refuelling depot at Port Lamont plus some habitation, so this limits the feeling of remoteness in the loch.

Interaction with community infrastructure

- Whilst concern has been raised over parking along the road to Coustounn the site has been operated by the applicants for 6 years without complaint and by another operator for 10 years before that. One staff vehicle is parked in a passing place during the day and occasional contractors will access the site from the road. This parking does not cause obstruction on the road although the applicants would be please to discuss any issues residents may have with use of the road and parking. Servicing of the site will be carried out by sea and every effort will be made to ensure that the existing staff vehicle is used for any additional journeys from the Colintraive direction.

Impacts on commercial fishing

- The overall area of the loch to be occupied by the moorings for the new site and the extended site together amounts to 5.9% of the total loch area, although it is acknowledged that not all of the remainder will be suitable for fishing. The surface equipment area will only occupy 0.19% of the total. Creel fishing could be carried out within the moorings area. The applicants will

endeavour to keep moorings as short as practicable and to keep fishermen updated about mooring placements. The developments will safeguard 7 existing jobs (Strone and Ardyne) and create at least 3 new jobs (Sgian Dubh), and the company welcome applications from suitable local candidates.

NOTE: Committee Members, the applicant, agent and any other interested party should note that the consultation responses and letters of representation referred to in this report, have been summarised and that the full consultation response or letter of representations are available on request. It should also be noted that the associated drawings, application forms, consultations, other correspondence and all letters of representations are available for viewing on the Council web site at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

(G) SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Has the application been the subject of:

(i) Environmental Statement: Yes

The Environmental Statement sets out the details of the proposal, site selection process; identifies the main characteristics, nature and scale of the impacts of the development and includes assessment of the impact of the proposals and necessary mitigation measures in respect of:

- Benthic Impacts
- Water Column Impacts
- Interaction with Predators
- Interaction with Wild Salmonids
- Impacts Upon Species or Habitats of Conservation Importance, including Sensitive Sites
- Navigation, Anchorage, Commercial Fisheries, other Non-Recreational Maritime Uses
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Noise
- Marine Cultural Heritage
- Waste Management (non-fish)
- Socioeconomic, Access and Recreation
- Traffic and Transport

(ii) An appropriate assessment under the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994: No

(iii) A design or design/access statement: No

(iv) A report on the impact of the proposed development eg. Retail impact, transport impact, noise impact, flood risk, drainage impact etc: No

(H) PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

Is a Section 75 agreement required: No

(I) **Has a Direction been issued by Scottish Ministers in terms of Regulation 30, 31 or 32:** No

(J) **Section 25 of the Act; Development Plan and any other material considerations over and above those listed above which have been taken into account in the assessment of the application**

(i) **List of all Development Plan Policy considerations taken into account in assessment of the application.**

'Argyll and Bute Structure Plan' 2002

STRAT DC 7 – Nature Conservation and Development Control

STRAT DC 8 – Landscape and Development Control

'Argyll and Bute Local Plan' 2009

LP ENV 1 – Impact on the General Environment

LP ENV 2 – Impact on Biodiversity

LP ENV 6 – Impact on Habitats and Species

LP ENV 10 – Development Impact Areas of Panoramic Quality (APQ's)

LP ENV 12 – Water Quality and Environment

LP ENV 19 – Development Setting, Layout and Design

LP BAD 1 – Bad Neighbour Development

LP CST 2 – Coastal Development on the Undeveloped Coast

LP AQUA 1 – Shell Fish and Fin Fish Farming

Expresses general support for fish farming subject to there being no significant adverse effect on a range of specified considerations; those relevant in this instance being:

1. Communities, settlements and their settings;
2. Landscape character, scenic quality and visual amenity;
4. National Scenic Areas and Areas of Panoramic Quality;
5. Statutorily protected nature conservation sites, habitats or species, including priority species and important seabird colonies along with wild fish populations;
6. Navigational interests
7. Areas of Isolated Coast (coastal area of 'very sensitive countryside')

- 8. Sites of historic or archaeological interest and their settings
- 9. Recreational interests
- 11. Existing aquaculture sites
- 12. Water quality

In the case of marine fish farming this support is further conditional on the proposals being consistent with the other policies of the Development Plan and Scottish Executive Strategic Framework Guidelines.

Appendix A – Sustainable Siting and Design Principles

(ii) List of all other material planning considerations taken into account in the assessment of the application, having due regard to Annex A of Circular 4/2009.

Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 2011

Scottish Planning Policy (2010)

Circular 1/2007 'Planning Controls for Marine Fish Farming'

'Marine Fish Farming and the Environment' (SEERAD 2003)

Scottish Executive – 'Locational Guidelines for the Authorisation of Marine Fish Farms in Scottish Waters' (2003 and updated June 2009 and December 2012)

'A Fresh Start – the Renewed Strategic Framework for Scottish Aquaculture' (2009)

'Guidance on Landscape/Seascape Capacity for Aquaculture' (SNH 2008)

'Siting & Design of Marine Aquaculture Developments in the Landscape' (SNH 2011)

'Argyll & Firth Of Clyde Landscape Character Assessment' (SNH 1996)

'Firth of Clyde Marine Spatial Plan' (Scottish Sustainable Marine Environment Initiative) 2010

(K) Is the proposal a Schedule 2 Development not requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment: No – ES submitted.

(L) Has the application been the subject of statutory pre-application consultation (PAC): No

(M) Has a sustainability check list been submitted: No

(N) Does the Council have an interest in the site: No

- (O) **Requirement for a hearing (PAN41 or other):** Although the balance of representation is in support of the proposal, 12 objections have been received from local interests along with objection from the community council. The community council has indicated that the decision to object was the unanimous view of all community councillors and members of the public present at the meeting, and a request has been made by them for the matter to be determined by way of a hearing. In view of the matters raised in the context of a small community, it is recommended that a discretionary pre-determination hearing be convened.
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(P) **Assessment and summary of determining issues and material considerations**

The proposal seeks permission for the installation of a marine finfish development of 16 (No.) 32m diameter cages and a feed/service barge to be utilised for the production of farmed salmon.

The application site is located off the west coast of Loch Striven approximately 3km north of Strone Point. There is currently one existing salmon farm operated by the applicants within Loch Striven just to the north of Strone Point and that site is currently the subject of a separate application for extension. The applicants operate a third site off Ardyne, by Toward, at the entrance to the loch where their shore base is located.

Scottish Natural Heritage has no objections to the proposal on nature conservation or landscape grounds. There have not been any objections from Marine Scotland or the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency in terms of the carrying capacity of the water body, nor have there been objections from wild fish interests. Remaining consultees are satisfied with the proposal with the exception of the Colintrave & Glendaruel Community Council and the Clyde Fishermen's Association who have objected.

There have been 37 individual expressions of support plus 12 objections.

Scottish Planning Policy indicates the national importance of aquaculture in the context of rural areas and that fish farming should be supported in appropriate locations, subject to environmental considerations being assessed. Carrying capacity, landscape, natural environment, historic environment and potential for conflict with other marine users, including fishing and recreational interests, and economic factors will be material considerations in assessing acceptability. However, Planning Authorities are cautioned not to duplicate controls exercised by SEPA and Marine Scotland in their assessment of proposals.

Notwithstanding the third party concerns and the position of the community council, the application has been recommended for approval on the grounds that there remains capacity for the addition of a second finfish farm in Loch Striven without exceeding the carrying capacity of the water body, without compromising navigation, fishing or other marine users, without any significant consequences for nature conservation interests, and without the presence of the equipment compromising the landscape character or the value of the loch as a scenic recreational resource to a point which would warrant refusal of the application.

The recommendation to approve this proposal has had regard to the associated application for the extension of the existing fish farm at Strone and the cumulative consequences in the event of both applications being permitted.

In such circumstances and in the absence of the identification of environmental considerations sufficient to warrant otherwise, the advice to Planning Authorities in the government's Scottish Planning Policy is to presume in favour of development, a stance which is reflected in the Council's adopted local plan, which requires the criteria based analysis which has been conducted in this case.

(Q) Is the proposal consistent with the Development Plan: Yes

(R) Reasons why Planning Permission or Planning Permission in Principle Should be Granted:

The proposal has been assessed in the light of the presumption established in favour of aquaculture in coastal waters established by Scottish Planning Policy, whilst also having regard to the criteria based analysis of environmental and other marine considerations as set out in the Council's local plan policy for aquaculture. It has been found to be compliant with the requirements of Policy LP AQUA 1 and other relevant development plan policies, and there are no other material considerations, including the views expressed by third parties, which would warrant the application being determined other than in accordance with the provisions of the approved development plan.

(S) Reasoned justification for a departure to the provisions of the Development Plan

Not applicable

(T) Need for notification to Scottish Ministers or Historic Scotland: No

Author of Report: Richard Kerr

Date: 22nd March 2012

Angus Gilmour
Head of Planning and Regulatory Services

CONDITIONS AND REASONS RELATIVE TO APPLICATION 12/02585//MFF

1. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than wholly in accordance with the following plans and details unless previously approved in writing by the Planning Authority:

- Application Form;
- Admiralty Chart;
- Site Plan;
- Environmental Statement

received by the Planning Authority on 11.12.12 .

Reason: For the purpose of clarity, to ensure that the development is implemented in accordance with the approved details.

2. In the event that the development or any associated equipment approved by this permission ceases to be in operational use for a period exceeding three years, the equipment shall be wholly removed from the site thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to ensure that redundant development does not sterilise capacity for future development within the same water body.

3. In the event of equipment falling into disrepair or becoming damaged, adrift, stranded, abandoned or sunk in such a manner as to cause an obstruction or danger to navigation, the developer shall carry out or make suitable arrangements for the carrying out of all measures necessary for lighting, buoying, raising, repairing, moving or destroying, as appropriate, the whole or any part of the equipment.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

4. All lighting above the water surface and not required for safe navigation purposes should be directed downwards by shielding and be extinguished when not required for the purpose for which it is installed on the site.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

5. The finished surfaces of all equipment above the water surface including the feed barge and surface floats and buoys associated with the development hereby permitted (excluding those required to comply with navigational requirements) shall be non-reflective and finished in a dark recessive colour in accordance with colour schemes to be agreed in advance of development commencing in writing by the Planning Authority (by way of BS numbers or manufacturer's specifications) unless otherwise agreed in advance in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

6. The farm shall be operated in synchronous production and management with neighbouring salmon farms within Marine Scotland Management Area 9b at Strone and Ardyne.

Reason: In order to ensure management of the site in a manner which minimises the risks to wild salmonids, in the interests of nature conservation.

NOTES TO APPLICANT

- This permission shall only last for a period of **three years** from the date of this decision notice unless the development is started within that period.
- In order to comply with Sections 27A(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, prior to works commencing on site it is the responsibility of the developer to complete and submit the attached 'Notice of Initiation of Development' to the Planning Authority specifying the date on which the development will start. Failure to comply with this requirement constitutes a breach of planning control under Section 123(1) of the Act.
- In order to comply with Section 27B(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 it is the responsibility of the developer to submit the attached 'Notice of Completion' to the Planning Authority.

APPENDIX A – RELATIVE TO APPLICATION NUMBER: 12/02585/MFF

PLANNING LAND USE AND POLICY ASSESSMENT

A. Location, Nature and Design of Proposed Development

The applicant in this case is the Scottish Salmon Company who currently operate finfish farming sites in the general locality of the application site at Strone (987 tonnes with undetermined application to increase to 1,986 tonnes) and at Ardyne (1,198 tonnes), as well as in other locations across Argyll. This application is part of their portfolio of new and extended sites in order to increase their production capacity. There are a small number of consented shellfish sites in the upper part of Loch Striven, the closest of which is approximately 2km to the north of the site at Ardbeg.

The site is located off the west coast of Loch Striven, 3km north of Strone Point just beyond where the public road from Colintraive terminates at Coustonn. The equipment is to be aligned north-south close inshore and parallel to the coastline. Loch Striven is a sea loch extending approximately 12km in length north from the Firth of Clyde. It is approximately 1.3km wide in the vicinity of the application site. The character of Loch Striven is derived from its steep sides, its limited loch-side access and sporadic onshore development along the coastal margin. The loch itself is influenced by the presence of the large scale navy refuelling facility at Port Lamont, by some limited existing aquaculture development and by moorings and anchorages for boats, including large scale commercial shipping.

Loch Striven is a 'Category 3' sea loch in terms of Marine Scotland's Locational Guidelines '*where there are better prospects of satisfying environmental requirements*'. The proposed site would increase the influence of fish farming activities on the west coast of the loch by virtue of its cumulative impact with the existing farm at Strone, which would be inter-visible to the south of the site some 2km away. The site at Ardyne, although in the same general vicinity, is experienced primarily from the vicinity of Port Lamont on the east coast so does not share a close relationship with the proposed site.

The proposal is to establish a marine salmon farm some 3km north of Strone Point, approximately 200m off the west coast of Loch Striven, within a proposed mooring area of 44.5ha, and with a water depth up to 70m. The equipment proposed comprises 16 No. 100m circumference cages, each of which would be 32m in diameter. These would be contained within an 18 cell 60m x 60m mooring grid supported by floatation buoys with cables attached to the cage floatation rings with rock anchors used to secure the position of the grid relative to the seabed, producing an overall equipment surface area of 1.27ha. The farm would be laid out in two groups each of a 4 by 2 cage configuration, with two empty cells separating each of the cage groups, producing overall a rectangular unfragmented site. A 220 tonne service/feed barge would be located at the northern end of the cage group. This would measure 10.5m by 14m in area, its height above water level varying in accordance with the quantity of feed held. The barge will be finished in a recessive colour and comprises a landing stage, storage area, electricity generator, four food silos, a pneumatic feed system, air blowers, computer control systems and staff accommodation. The barge will enable the site to be run and managed on a daily basis independently of the company's onshore base at Ardyne. The generator will be installed within an acoustically insulated plant room intended to be barely be audible above ambient sounds at sea.

The cages comprise a polyethylene flotation ring from which nets a minimum of 8m deep are to be suspended. These are fitted with false bottoms (seal blinds) to deter predator attacks from below and are held in tension, again to resist predation. Top net polythene/nylon mesh to exclude piscivorous birds is to be suspended over the cages being supported by a horizontal 'hamster wheel' arrangement, to keep it clear of the surface and to avoid conflict with automated feed distribution within the cages

The intended maximum biomass (fish tonnage) for the overall site is 2,437 tonnes. The stocking density would be 19.1kg per m³ max. The production cycle of the farm would be 22 months with 2 months left fallow to allow for maintenance and to assist in benthic (sea bed) recovery. The site would be included with the company's other salmon farms within Marine Scotland's Management Area 19b (Kyles of Bute). Operation with other sites would enable single year class stocking, synchronous stocking, fallowing and sea lice treatment. Such an approach reflects industry best practice and this site would be operated in compliance with the Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation's '*Code of Good Practice Guidelines for Scottish Finfish Aquaculture*'. This sets out more than 300 main specific compliance points which cover all aspects of finfish good practice including:

- Fish Health – good husbandry and harvesting operations;
- Protecting the environment – including sea lice management and containment standards;
- Welfare and husbandry – breeding and stocking density;
- Detailed annexes giving further technical guidance on good practice, including the National Lice Treatment Strategy, Integrated Sea Lice Management, Containment, and a Veterinary Health Plan.

The site would also be operated in accordance with the principles of the former Firth of Clyde Area Management Agreement.

The site would be serviced by sea from the company's existing shorebase at Ardyne, by Toward, 7km away, with stocking, fed deliveries, grading, harvesting and sea lice treatments all being undertaken by boat. The site would support four full-time staff members

The feeding of the fish would be computer controlled from silos within the feed barge, underwater camera monitored and augmented by limited hand feeding. Grading of fish would take place 2 or 3 times during the production cycle using contracted well boats, which would also be used for final harvesting. Underwater lighting would be used to control maturation and maximise growth in the winter months every second year with 3 No, 1,000w lights being used beneath each cage. These would be powered by the feed barge generator and would produce a surface glow only visible at close quarters or from elevated vantage points. Other lighting on the site, with the exception of navigational requirements, would be restricted to essential requirements so as to avoid unnecessary illumination on the site.

The Environmental Statement also sets out specific husbandry practices for the site in respect of grading, harvesting, fallowing procedures, food and feeding, fish health, veterinary treatments and chemicals, containment and contingency escape policy and waste management. With regard to predator control, it is noted that the ES states that Acoustic Deterrent Devices (ADDs) would only be deployed in circumstances where the site becomes subject to persistent attempted predation. As a last resort in the event of these measures not preventing rogue seal activity, the shooting of seals may take place in accordance with licence obtained from the Scottish Government, although given the applicants experience with seal activity close to their other sites in the area, such an eventuality is considered by them to be unlikely.

B. Natural Environment - Fresh Water, Marine Environment and Biodiversity.

The provisions of policies STRAT DC 7, LP ENV 2 and LP ENV 6 would all seek to resist development which is considered likely to result in a significant adverse impact upon internationally, nationally or locally important habitats and/or species.

The site is not subject to any European or national marine or other conservation designations, and neither SNH nor SEPA have identified any habitats or species of particular conservation importance associated with or likely to be significantly affected by, the installation and operation of the site. The loch is frequented by seals and other marine mammals for which development of the type proposed could have consequences in terms of displacement or deterrence. Salmonid watercourses discharge into Loch Striven, so there are possible implications associated with the propagation of parasites from the farmed fish, as well as competition and genetic issues arising from any mass escapes.

Seabed (Benthic) Impacts:

The development will affect seabed conditions as a consequence of the deposition of organic matter in the form of faeces. Furthermore, although the industry has made advances in the reduction of waste food as a result of more sophisticated feeding regimes, waste food also contributes to seabed deposition. The quantity and the extent of deposition is influenced by the tonnage of fish held, hydrographic and bathymetric conditions. Seabed impacts are regulated separately by SEPA via the CAR licence process, which determines maximum biomass with regard to the carrying capacity of the particular site.

The Environmental Statement concludes that site is one which is moderately flushed. The tidal energy at this location is such that the site would have a localised depositional footprint. Modelling has been carried out to predict the quantity and the dispersion of organic matter on the seabed and to predict nutrient enrichment. It is predicted that organic and chemotherapeutant deposition would be restricted to an area below the cage group due to flushing rates resulting in localised benthic consequences from the operation of the site. The nutrient input combined with that associated with other operational sites (plus the intended increase in biomass at the existing Strone site) is predicted to be low relative to the carrying capacity of the loch and consequently the development is assessed to have a low overall water body impact. A CAR licence has not yet been obtained for the application site, but SEPA have indicated that an application has been received.

Survey evidence shows the burrowed mud habitat of the seabed to be degraded by past dredging, so despite its nature conservation value as a habitat, there will not be unacceptable impacts

SNH and SEPA are both content with the benthic surveys undertaken and have no objections to the proposal on the grounds of unacceptable benthic impacts.

Water Quality Impacts:

Enrichment of water by nutrients released from salmon farms can cause an accelerated growth of algae and higher forms of plant life to produce an undesirable disturbance to the balance of organisms and the quality of water. This is a particularly important consideration where development has potential to affect shellfish harvesting areas.

As a result of modelling, the Environmental Statement concludes that the development would not have unacceptable nutrient enrichment consequences either for the locality of the site, or in terms of the wider area, taking into account cumulative effects with existing fish farms and the overall carrying capacity of the water body. In accordance with industry good practice it is proposed to monitor feeding response closely in order to minimise unnecessary food waste at this site.

Neither Marine Scotland Science nor SEPA have raised objection to the proposal in respect of the predicted impact of the development upon water quality.

Interaction with Predators:

Salmon farm predators are generally piscivorous birds and seals with the latter tending to be the most frequently encountered predators on marine farms in Scotland. The presence of sea cages may attract higher concentrations of predators to the locality of the site, although good husbandry and hygiene procedures will help to reduce the attraction of predators. Tensioned netting on fish cages prevents and deters both seals and diving bird attacks, although regular maintenance of the nets is essential to maintain their integrity. Top nets are to be installed on the cages to avoid predation by birds from above the waterline. Bird nets require to be maintained to a high standard and properly tensioned eliminate the opportunity for birds to become entangled or to be able to enter the cage. The fish cages themselves are to be manufactured to current industry standards, with a net specification, tensioning arrangements, false bottoms and an installation, inspection and maintenance regime to meet the SSPO Code of Good Practice requirements. It is clearly in the operator's interest to ensure that equipment is specified and maintained in a manner to ensure containment of the farmed fish. Site specific equipment attestations have been supplied to confirm that, in the respective manufacturer's opinions, the equipment intended for use on this site is suitable and sufficiently durable to be deployed having regard to the characteristics of in the particular marine environment proposed.

The ES does not identify any major colonies of predators in the vicinity of the application site. Whilst seals frequent the area, the nearest haul out is 40km away. No licenced shooting of seals has been carried out to date by the company in respect of its existing operations at the sites at Strone or Ardyne. Given experience at nearby sites it is not envisaged that there would be cause to resort to the shooting of seals under government issued licence.

The Environmental Statement concludes that proposed use of good husbandry (mortality and moribund fish removal) and hygiene practices based on experience at other sites, coupled with the use of tensioned nets and top nets will be sufficient to deter predators at the proposed site. In the event of persistent predator activity, the applicants propose to deploy triggered Acoustic Deterrent Devices (ADD's) to scare away seals, although their use can have the unintended consequences of also displacing cetaceans, particularly within narrow water bodies such as sea lochs. In this case it should be noted that the incidence of cetaceans and basking sharks in Loch Striven is relatively rare. ADD technology has improved in recent years with devices available which are more effective than previous systems and are more localised and targeted in their impact. Boat traffic associated with the site is unlikely to lead to disturbance given that the loch is frequented by existing fish farm traffic, commercial, naval and recreational vessels.

Interaction with Wild Salmonids:

Farming of salmon in the marine environment can give rise to well-known consequences for wild fish as a result of disease transmission, sea lice propagation

and escapes which can lead to competition and inter-breeding, with consequences for the genetic dilution of native wild stocks. The potential for escapes (as with predator control) can be reduced by having an equipment specification determined by site specific wave and climate analysis so as to ensure that it is fit for purpose. An associated inspection and maintenance regime is then required to ensure on-going containment integrity. Predator control plans, and escapes contingency plans, as submitted by the applicant, are also important elements in risk management.

Although containment risks can be managed, they cannot however be eradicated and there remains a residual risk that an unforeseen event can propagate escaped farmed fish in large numbers into an uncontrolled marine environment. Escapes of farmed stock are generally low, but can occur through equipment failure, predation, operator error, severe weather or foul play. The applicants have indicated that there have been no recorded escapes from their existing site at Ardyne, and one escape event at Strone in 2009. By the installation of modern suitably specified equipment and adherence to the SSPO Code of Good Practice Guidelines, the applicant seeks to minimise the residual risk as far as is practicable. Likewise, via good husbandry practices, regular inspection and the administration of medicines in accordance with veterinary health plans, outbreaks of disease which could have consequences for wild fish can be managed.

The most intractable issue influencing the interaction between farmed salmon and wild fish species is that of sea lice transmission. Farmed fish are routinely hosts to parasitic sea lice, the numbers of which require to be controlled in order to assure the health of farmed fish and to avoid lice propagation into surrounding waters. The site is within influencing distance of salmonid rivers discharging into Loch Striven the most important being the River Ruel (17km), the Ballimore Burn (9km) and the Glentarsan Burn (8km). Wild salmon are exposed to sea lice from fish farms close to salmon rivers during their migration periods, whilst sea trout tend to remain in coastal waters throughout the year, so are potentially at greater risk. Scottish Natural Heritage have noted that generally salmonid fish numbers in the rivers of the area are low.

The applicant proposes to control sea lice in accordance with current industry practice, via the use of in-feed treatments and bath treatments, whilst adopting good management practices such as single year stocking and synchronous stocking, fallowing and sea lice treatment with other sites.

However effective the control measures are in practice, it is an inevitable consequence of holding fish in such quantities that significant numbers of sea lice will be propagated from the site. How these are dispersed will depend on local factors such as wind direction and residual current. The distribution of farm derived lice in the marine environment is not well understood although it is known that in favourable conditions they can travel considerable distances from source.

The conclusion of the applicant's Environmental Statement is that the site will not pose a risk of significance to wild salmonids provided that industry good practice is adhered to in the operation of the site in conjunction with other sites in Management Area 19b, all of which are controlled by the applicants. The Argyll & District Salmon Fishery Board concurs with this view and has not objected.

In view of the operator's intention to strictly adhere to the principles of the former Firth of Clyde Area Management Agreement and the SSPO Code of Good Practice which includes fish health, sea lice management and containment standards, neither Marine Scotland Science, nor Scottish Natural Heritage, nor the District Salmon

Fishery Board have objected to the conclusions of the applicant's Environmental Statement in respect of the potential risk to wild salmonids.

Impact upon Species and Habitats of Nature Conservation Importance:

The site is not subject to any marine or nature conservation designations and does not include any sensitive benthic habitats. Loch Striven is used by a number of European protected marine mammals from large cetaceans to smaller species including seals and otters. Acoustic Deterrent Devices (ADDs) used by fish farms to deter fish eating predators can elicit aversion responses in marine cetaceans up to several kilometres from the source.

The proposal as submitted sets out a position where the operator seeks to ensure predator prevention primarily by way of tensioned nets and seal blinds, and by management practices. However, the use of targeted ADD's should it prove necessary is not ruled out.

Scottish Natural Heritage has noted that the sea bed in the vicinity of the site has been degraded by past dredging/trawling and has not raised any objections to the proposal on nature conservation grounds.

Conclusion

The proposal is considered consistent with Local Plan Policy LP AQUA 1 (5 and 12) and other relevant development plan policies insofar as it would not significantly prejudice water quality and associated biodiversity interests.

C. Landscape/Seascape Character and Visual and Amenity Considerations

The application site is located on the western side of Loch Striven beyond the point at which the unclassified public road terminates at Coustonn. Beyond that there is only one dwelling set up above the coast and served by a private access, along with a footpath access along the shore. The site sits midway between dwellings at Coustonn to the south, and Braingortan to the north, parallel to the private access track serving the latter. Both lie some 500m from the nearest point of the surface equipment, although neither have a principal aspect over the site. The public road on the opposite coast extends past the site to serve the small settlement at Invervegan and the Glenstriven Estate beyond. There is a shoreside property at Inverchaolain facing over the loch directly towards site at a distance of around 1.1km from the surface equipment.

The land immediately adjoining the site is identified as 'sensitive countryside' by the adopted local plan, which in turn confers 'undeveloped coast' status on the coastline. Most of the lower loch lies within 'sensitive countryside' with some limited 'rural opportunity areas' reflecting the sporadically populated coastal margin. The wider area both sides of the loch falls within a local plan defined 'Area of Panoramic Quality' (APQ), which accords it regional status as a scenic resource. The site lies around 3km from the Kyles of Bute National Scenic Area and the proposed development would not be visible from within that designation. The status of the site relative to the APQ is such that landscape and visual implications of development have to be particularly carefully considered in view of what has to be regarded as a sensitive receiving environment in landscape terms.

The landscape character type surrounding the site is '*Steep Ridgeland and Mountains*' as identified in SNH's 'Argyll and the Firth of Clyde Landscape Character

Assessment'. This is one defined by steep sided, craggy topped mountains, deeply cut by long narrow sea lochs. Settlement is very limited and is confined to sporadic locations which are mainly lochside or are loch orientated. The coastline adjacent to the application site is comprises a gravel beach with rocky outcrops, with a private access track serving the last residential property at Braingortan, which is in part screened by intervening trees along the shoreline. Behind the site the land rises steeply where it blanketed overall with commercial forestry before reaching open moorland above 400m. In terms of settlement, the western side of the loch is largely uninhabited except for three loch orientated dwellings. The eastern side has longer, albeit dead end, public road access serving some small groups of buildings as well as individual dwellings, which are mainly lochside, but with a couple being more elevated in the landscape.

Fish farming is already present within, but has not become a defining characteristic of, this particular landscape character type. The applicants operate two fish farms in the locality at Strone (2.4km south and intervisible with the site) and Ardyne (5.6km and more related to locations on the opposite side of the loch). Shellfish farming is confined to the upper part of the loch. Despite the relative absence of built development, the loch itself is influenced by the presence of the large scale naval jetty and associated onshore infrastructure north of Port Lamont on the opposite side of the loch.

The applicants have submitted a Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) which addresses the implications of the development for landscape character, visual effects and cumulative impacts. It defines the coast adjoining the site as being '*Broadleaf Woodland Lochshore*' with some '*Settled Lochshore*' adjacent on the opposite side of the loch.

The development imposes change in terms of:

- Boat traffic during the installation and operational phases;
- Presence of equipment;
- Operational characteristics;

the order of impact being determined by variables including the location and nature of the development, temporary indirect effects, longer term indirect effects, and the employment of mitigation measures. The LVIA identifies mitigation arising from the use of recessively coloured equipment, the low lying nature of the above water structures, the alignment of the site close inshore and parallel to the shoreline and the restriction of lighting after dark to that required for navigational purposes.

The LVIA identifies that the effect of the development on the adjacent landscape character type and the 'Area of Panoramic Quality' as being '*locally moderate adverse*', but notes that there is limited visibility from within these areas as a whole and that there is a degree of screening provided by lochside tree cover. Although there would be a similar impact upon seascape, due to the mitigation identified, the farm would not become a dominant feature in terms of the appreciation of the loch as a whole. There would be some '*locally moderate adverse*' cumulative landscape impact given that there would be an element of intervisibility with existing aquaculture sites to the north (Ardbeg mussels 2.5km) and to the south (Strone finfish 2.4km).

In response to locations identified by the Council and SNH at the time of EIA scoping, seven viewpoints have been assessed by the applicants as part of their LVIA. From the majority of these locations it concludes that impacts will not be significant. Only at close quarters to the site, or from the three closest properties would the fish farm have more influence. Only two '*moderate adverse*' cumulative impacts are identified

due to combined visibility with the Strone fish farm. These are in respect of the loch itself and in respect of the dwelling known as 'Braingortan' which lies about 500m north of the site in an elevated location some 30m above the loch. The site would be passed at close quarters when taking access along the track from the termination of the public road at Coustonn, where despite the presence of some intervening trees along the shoreline, the equipment close inshore would be visible. There would therefore be some localised visual impacts upon the private access although this would be mitigated by the intervening lochside vegetation, and to a degree by the fact that the landscape is already influenced by afforestation. This access only serves the one property at Braingortan is not a location regularly visited by the public. Neither the dwellings at Coustonn nor Braingortan have a principal aspect over the site which is not visible at close quarters from public vantage points, other than from the loch itself.

The LVIA concludes that there would be some '*slight adverse*' visual effects upon the Broadleaf Woodland Shore local character area and upon the seascape of the loch as a whole. Some '*moderate adverse*' effects would be caused in respect of the sections of public road either side of the loch (dependant on visibility permitted by shoreside trees) and in respect of the local area of the site in terms of local boat traffic. There would be similar effects upon the dwellings at Coustonn (500m south of the site) Braingortan (500m north of the site) and Inverchaolain (1.1km opposite side of the loch). The very low ambient background noise levels in the area and the propensity of noise to travel across open water are such that activity associated from the operation of the farm is likely to be audible in the surrounding area. Despite low ambient noise levels in this rural location, these residential properties are sufficiently far removed from the site and are orientated such that they would not be affected to any significant degree by noise associated with the operation of the site. Noise can arise from the feed barge generator, the pneumatic feed distribution system, boat movements and personnel related activities at the site. Experience with this type of barge at existing sites indicates that the generator noise is generally only audible on deck and that it does not present a noise nuisance at a distance from the site. The loch is already subject to a range of boat traffic noise. More intense periods of activity and consequent noise will arise during well-boat servicing of the site, for the purposes of stocking, grading, harvesting and so on, although these visits are occasional rather than a day to day attribute of the operation of the site

In terms of views from the opposite side of the loch, the public road runs close to the shore from which the equipment would be visibly intermittently, as trees between the road and the shore allow. There are some shoreside dwellings and some more elevated properties which are orientated with aspects across the loch from which the site would be seen. However this would be at over 1km, a similar distance at which the existing Strone fish farm may be appreciated from the vicinity of Port Lamont. The equipment at that site is such that only the feed barge is readily apparent in most conditions, primarily due to its bulk and elevation above the water and also the fact that it has been painted an eye catching blue colour. The proposed site benefits from being back-dropped by a dark shoreline including lochside trees, and insofar as it will be visible it will not be a dominant feature, given that it will not be in foreground views and will be set against the scale of a mountainous and forested backdrop. It will be important to ensure that the barge at the proposed site is painted in a more recessive colour than that at Strone, and a condition to that effect is recommended.

The proposal will give rise to a localised impact of some significance on landscape, seascape and visual amenity, but in the overall context of Loch Striven and the wider Area of Panoramic Quality within which it is located, any adverse impacts will not be such as to seriously undermine landscape character or the recreational value of this scenic loch. Scottish Natural Heritage are content for the Council to reach its own

conclusions in the matter, given the absence of any impacts upon national landscape designations.

Conclusion

The proposal is considered consistent with Local Plan Policy LP AQUA 1 (1, 2, 4, 7 and 8) and other relevant development plan policies insofar as it would not significantly prejudice landscape character, visual amenity, the setting of historic assets, or the landscape setting of communities or their residential amenity.

D. Navigation and Other Marine Users

Marine fish farms may present an obstacle to commercial or recreational boat traffic and conflict with fishing. This may be through disruption of navigation routes, by depriving access to the area for recreational or commercial purposes or by increasing traffic at sea and in the vicinity of the farm.

Loch Striven is subject to a variety of marine traffic, including larger scale vessels. This comprises recreational and commercial shipping along with an MoD presence. The latter involves berthing of naval vessels at the Port Lamont installation, and there have also been instances of large commercial ships being laid up within the loch. Trawling and inshore fishing for prawns crab and lobster takes place, mainly creeling around the inshore shelf. Some recreational use is made of Loch Striven given its proximity to the Clyde and the accessible grandeur of its scenery. However, given the influence of the naval installation, the existing finfish farm at Strone and the mussel farms in the upper part of the loch, despite the extent of those areas with limited accessibility and the relative absence of habitation, the loch itself is not devoid of the influence of development.

The distances between existing and proposed aquaculture sites and their locations close inshore are such that they would not constitute a constraint on navigation in deeper water. The presence of moorings would displace trawling, although creel boats would be expected to be able to fish closer to the surface equipment. In the absence of information being made available on the value of particular areas within Loch Striven for fishing, it is difficult to be certain of the implications of the development of this site for fishing interests. However, cumulatively with consented finfish and shellfish sites, the area of the seabed in the loch restricted by the presence of aquaculture is less than 10%, which is unlikely to be so prejudicial to fishing interests as to threaten existing livelihoods.

It is not considered that there are navigational issues or conflicts with other established marine users that would warrant refusal of the application. Licencing of the site for the purposes of navigation would require to be obtained from Marine Scotland and navigational marking would be required to satisfy the Northern Lighthouse Board.

Conclusion

The proposal is considered consistent with Local Plan Policy LP AQUA 1 (6 and 9) and other relevant development plan policies insofar as it would not significantly prejudice safe navigation and other marine users.

E. Cumulative Impact

Aquaculture development in the loch currently comprises the existing finfish farm at Strone to the south of the site, and shellfish farms well to the north of the site in the upper part of the loch. A further finfish farm is situated at Ardyne at the mouth of the loch. At the same time as this application is being considered, a further application is also under consideration for the extension of the existing site at Strone from 987 tonnes to 1,986 tonnes (12/02589/PP). That application, which appears elsewhere on the agenda, is also recommended for approval.

The recommendation to approve this application has had regard to the prospect that the Strone site could be enlarged as proposed. It is not considered by consultees that the extension of the existing site plus the establishment of a further site would exceed the carrying capacity of the water body in terms of water column or benthic impacts. Similarly, it is not considered that the presence of this further site along with the extension of the existing site would give rise to significantly adverse consequences for the landscape locally, nor that it would undermine the integrity of the designated Area of Panoramic Quality, nor impinge unacceptably upon the character of Loch Scridan as a whole. However, the presence of an additional site on this scale would severely limit the potential for additional aquaculture development in terms of cumulative impact upon the carrying capacity of the landscape.

APPENDIX B TO APPLICATION 12/02585/MFF – LIST OF REPRESENTATIONS

Supporters

Mr Marnix Perquy	1 Burnside Cottages Arrochar G83 7AA	11/02/2013	S
Mr Steven Landsburgh	107 Alexander Street Dunoon PA23 7PY	31/01/2013	S
Mr Iain MacIntyre	11 Meadows Road Lochgilphead PA318AF	06/02/2013	S
Mr. John Lee Stirling	129 Bullwood Road Dunoon PA23 7QN	23/02/2013	S
Mr Iain MacArthur	14 Hillfoot Terrace Tarbert PA29 6TQ	07/02/2013	S
Mr Maris Lalins	15 McArthur Street Dunoon	13/02/2013	S
Mrs Fiona Mackenzie	2 Balure Ford by Lochgilphead	12/02/2013	S
Mr Robert Murdoch	26 Kingsland Drive Glasgow G52 2NE	13/02/2013	S
Mrs Mairi Macmillan	37 Crossbost Lochs Isle of Lewis HS2 9NP	18/02/2013	S
Mr Ross Currie	4 Park Avenue Dunoon PA23 7HS	12/02/2013	S
Mr Stuart Simon	4 Tigh-na-Cladach Bullwood Road Dunoon PA23 8QD	04/02/2013	S
Ms A M Maciver	46 Newvalley Isle Of Lewis	12/02/2013	S
Mr John Maciver	47 Morison Avenue Stornoway HS1 2HQ	20/02/2013	S
Ms Sandra Macrae	55 Newmarket Isle of Lewis HS2 0ED	18/02/2013	S
Mrs. Christine M Elvidge	59 A Mary Street Dunoon PA23 7EG	13/02/2013	S

Miss Lauren Wilson	6 Ballantyne Street Innerleithen EH43 6AB	13/02/2013	S
Mr Alan Brown	8 Achmore Isle Of Lewis HS2 9DU	18/02/2013	S
Mrs Samantha Bennett	8 Hydro Cottage Cairndow Argyll	12/02/2013	S
Mr Graham Stinson	Address Not Given	01/02/2013	S
Ardmaleish Boatbuilding Co Limited	Ardmaleish Port Bannatyne Isle Of Bute PA20 0QY	04/01/2013	S
Mr Alasdair Murray	Balgieholm 3 Wellington Street Dunoon PA23 7LB	31/01/2013	S
Mr William Hill	Cruachan Strathlachlan Strachur PA278BZ	11/02/2013	S
Mrs Dale Hill	Cruachan Strathlachlan Strachur PA278BZ	11/02/2013	S
Mr Iain Macdonald	Dalriada Gress Isle of Lewis HS2 0NB	18/02/2013	S
Mrs Judy Allan	Dalriada Toward PA23 7UG	18/02/2013	S
Mr Gavin Kerr	Drimdarroch Strathlachlan Cairndow PA27 8DB	08/02/2013	S
Miss Camilla MacDonald	Flat 1 106 George Street Oban PA34 5NT	27/02/2013	S
Mr Duane Coetzer	Inchlonaig Isle of Arran KA278LS	18/02/2013	S
Mrs Shona Anderson Geddes	Inverneill Farm Inverneill Lochgilphead PA30 8ES	12/02/2013	S
Fusion Marine	Marine Resource Centre Barcaldine By Oban PA37 1SH	14/01/2013	S
Ron Simon	No Address Given	19/01/2013	S

Otter Ferry Seafish Limited	Otter Ferry Tighnabruich Argyll PA21 2DH	04/01/2013	S
Dr James Treasurer BSc Mphil PhD	Research Manager Ardtoe Marine Laboratory Ardnamurchan PH36 4LD		
Master Andrew Campbell	The Bungalow Luss	01/02/2013	S
Dr Feyza Sanver	Scottish Salmon Co. Ardkinglas Estate Cairndow, PA26 8BH	12/02/2013	S
Ms Denise Ashwood	Tweedvale Mills East Walkerburn EH43 6AB	11/02/2013	S
		13/02/2013	S

Objectors

Mr Archibald Graham Clark	2 Ferry Bank Colintraive PA22 3AR	11/01/2013	O
Mrs Danielle De Bisschop	2 Gerry Bank Colintraive PA22 3AR	05/01/2013	O
Mr Calum Maclean	Couston Colintraive PA22 3AX	06/01/2013	O
Sara MacLean	Couston Colintraive PA22 3AX	14/01/2013	O
Mr Colin McArthur	Daisy Cottage St Ninians Bay Isle Of Bute PA20 0QF	19/01/2013	O
John Sutton	Gortan Colintraive PA22 3AR	16/01/2013	O
Mrs Eileen Sutton	Gortan Colintraive PA22 3AR	09/01/2013	O
Mr John Sutton	Gortan Old Road Colintraive PA22 3AR	15/01/2013	O
Dunoon And District Angling Club per Prof J J Sharp	Garfield Wyndham Road Innellan Dunoon PA23 7SH	03/01/2013	O
Mrs JL Mackenzie	The Beeches Colintraive Argyll PA22 3AS	10/01/2013	O

Mr RL Perry

Tigh Na Bheag
Colintrive
PA22 3AR

22/01/2013 O

Mrs NM Perry

Tigh Na Bheag
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