

## POLICY ZONE J: RUBHA NAM FRANGACH TO STRONE POINT

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

The hinterland is characterised by gentle slopes and some alluvial deposition associated with the mouths of the Douglas Water and the River Aray. It includes open fields and a golf course, all on more level land, with a partially wooded foreshore linking inland to areas of semi-natural woodland and commercial forest. Loch Shira is surrounded by the interlocking forms of individual summits, which rise to form a contained hinterland. For the most part, the wooded hinterland does not extend to the foreshore, except along the eastern side of the loch, which is fringed with semi-natural woodland.

### SEASCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

The enclosed water surface is characterised by the even width of the narrow water channel, which encourages the visual focus along the length of the loch. Gentle indentations create a perceptible series of bays defined by subtle promontories which limit views along long lengths of the coastal edge. The immediate foreshore is largely made up of shingle and small stony beaches.

For Loch Shira, the tidal reach is limited to a shingle foreshore. The even, smooth coastline is a long, consistent loop with no fragmentation or particularly distinct indentations. The A83 hugs the shoreline, except at the head of the loch where mature trees line the coast adjacent to the old road. The confined space of the water surface is relatively sheltered, creating opportunities for reflections when the water is calm.

### ACCESS

The shoreline is highly accessible and consistently overlooked from within the settlements, from the A83, and from access paths associated with the Argyll Caravan Park. There are a number of points along the coast where the loch can be accessed:

- Concrete slipway and jetty at Argyll Caravan Park;
- South of the caravan park, off the path that leads to Kenmore, there is a ramp that runs onto an extensive intertidal area;
- Two access points at Newtown Bay - an opening directly off the A83 onto the shore where boats could be launched from trailers, and a pontoon which is utilised by a charter boat business;
- Inveraray has a large wooden pier, currently closed to the public because it is in a poor state of repair;
- Inveraray also has a stone pier with a small slip attached. The Maritime Museum and other vessels of interest are often tied up here, including the 'Vital Spark' Clyde Puffer;
- To the south of the stone pier there is a narrow slip onto a shingle beach; and
- Along the seawall there are stepladders onto an intertidal stretch of shore.



Ramp access and intertidal area at the mouth of the River Douglas



Argyll Caravan Park



Stone Pier and Slipway at Inveraray



Seawall at Inveraray with shore access via step ladder



Narrow slipway leading onto shingle beach at Inveraray



Wooden Pier at Inveraray



Maritime Museum, Inveraray

## VISUAL AMENITY

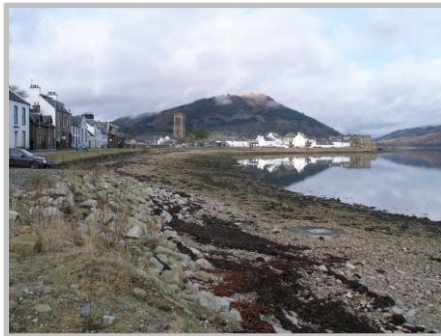
To the south of the policy zone there are no views from the trunk road until north of Dalchenna. However, views from the caravan park are open to the north, east and south and have significant value to park visitors. Generally, views focus along the length of the loch to both the north and south, with a particular emphasis on low-level views from the public road and the various coastal developments. There is some visual drama in views to the north, where higher mountain peaks form a more rugged backdrop. Around Loch Shira, views from the A83 focus down the loch, and Inveraray, with its cluster of white buildings, is a focal point. Additional viewpoints include the old bridge at the head of the loch, the watch tower associated with Inveraray Castle, a lay-by off the main road on the west of Loch Shira and various viewpoints in Inveraray itself.



Inveraray and Newtown from the Watch Tower



East shore of Loch Shira



Newtown and Inveraray from the south



Bridge over the mouth of the River Aray on the west shore of Loch Shira with Watch Tower in the background

## SETTLEMENTS

The coastline and adjacent hinterland are well-developed, with the town of Inveraray merging into Newtown, which is linked to the extensive recreation development along the coast at Dalchenna Point by the busy lochside road, which is a recognised tourist route. The coastal character is one of a relatively developed and busy shoreline, with a focus on residential and recreation use.



Inveraray

## CURRENT USES

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

### Recreation

The main uses of the sea area and coast in this policy zone revolve around recreation with focal points at the Argyll Caravan Park and Inveraray.

#### Boating/Water-sports

The caravan park is particularly busy in the summer months and the 40+ moorings located in the bay in front of the park secure a number of leisure and angling boats. Jet-skiing is discouraged along the coastal stretch in front of the caravan park, and launching of personal watercraft at the slip is not permitted.

There are a variety of private moorings and public slipways along the coast of this policy zone and the area north east of the Inveraray pier is a chartered anchorage. Cruise ships visit Inveraray during the summer months and can be seen anchored at the mouth of Loch Shira.



Argyll Caravan Park

#### Diving

Inveraray Pier is occasionally used as a scuba diving site and diving is common at Strone Point. The caravan park is one of the main launch points for visiting dive boats providing other services such as scuba tank refills and gear maintenance on site.

#### Angling

Angling from the shore is not common on the stretch of coastline although it does occur at Inveraray and the caravan park.

### Aquaculture

There is no aquaculture development in this policy zone.

### Fishing

Both commercial trawling and creeling occur along the coast, but mostly outside the policy zone except for Loch Shira. A voluntary agreement has been in place since 2006, where the Clyde Fishermen's Association have agreed not to trawl in water depths shallower than 20 m in Loch Shira. This was an agreement made to protect biodiversity interests in Loch Shira, namely the dense populations of the fireworks anemone, (*Pachygerianthus multiplicatus*).

### Marine Infrastructure

Two in-service subsea telephone cables transect the loch between St. Catherine's and Inveraray and a trial cable crosses into Loch Shira around Strone Point.

### Ministry of Defence (MOD)

All the sea area of the policy zone south of Inveraray is within an MOD exercise area. The area is used for the running and turning of submarines and other MOD vessels, involved in testing within the smaller MOD hydrophone area on the east side of the loch.

### Discharges

There are a number of discharges via sea outfalls, including two commercial outfalls at Lùib Iomaire Mhóir, one consented SEPA discharge south of Creagan nan Caorach, and a local authority outfall discharge at Newton from the Inveraray sewage works.

## DESIGNATIONS

Refer to policy zone J map for areas covered.

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

- The majority of coastline, with the exception of land adjacent to Inveraray and Newtown, is classified as 'Undeveloped Coast' (a coastal area of Sensitive Countryside).
- Land adjacent to Inveraray and Newton is classified as 'Developed Coast' (a coastal area of Countryside Around Settlement).
- There are two Rural Opportunity Areas that run along and close to the coast, these include: the mouth of Loch Shira and inland from the Wildlife Park.



- The majority of Inveraray is a Conservation Area.
- The surrounding countryside of Inveraray and Loch Shira is an Area of Panoramic Quality.

### Other Designations

- The surrounding countryside of Inveraray and Loch Shira, encompassing Inveraray Castle, is a Designated Garden and Designed Landscape.
- Upper Loch Fyne, from Dalchenna to the head of the loch, is a Marine Consultation Area.
- The 'Loch Fyne Coastal Strip' Shellfish Growing Water extends throughout most of the policy zone, except for the coastline from Newtown to 1 km north of Inveraray.
- Inveraray town centre and waterfront has been identified as an Area For Action.

### WILDLIFE

Marine Nature Conservation Review surveys carried out in Loch Shira have identified eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) although it is relatively sparse in its coverage. Also found in Loch Shira is the nationally scarce fireworks anemone (*Pachycerianthus multiplicatus*) which is present in some of the highest recorded densities in Britain. Recent surveys have recorded the anemone in highest abundances along the east of the Loch Shira in depths up to 30 m. Loch Shira is also an important nursery area for salmon and sea trout and is part of the Loch Fyne Marine Consultation Area.

Three important salmon and sea trout rivers flow into this policy zone, the Douglas, the Aray and the River Shira, which are all part of a loch wide wildfish restoration project. The mouth of the River Douglas presents a relatively large intertidal estuarine habitat which is inhabited by a diversity of wading birds.

### HISTORICAL FEATURES

Points of historical interest adjacent to this policy zone include:

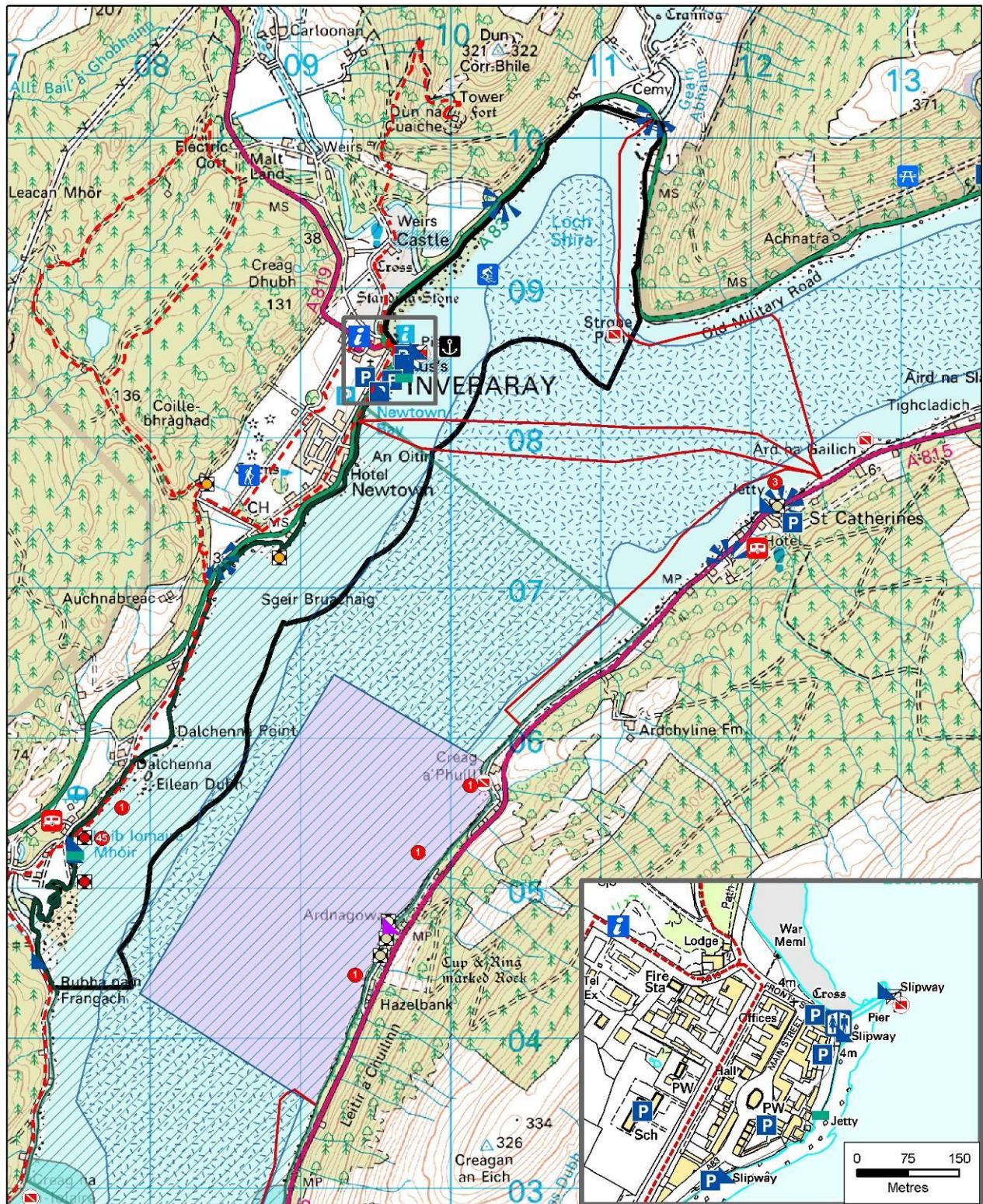
- The town of Inveraray;
- Two scheduled ancient monuments - Inveraray Castle, Cross and Inveraray, Cross, Front Street;
- Garron Bridge, a listed building which is also a scheduled ancient monument known as Shira Bridge;
- The Garron screen wall running along the top end of Loch Shira;
- Inveraray Pier, a category B listed building; and
- The shipwreck Niparound which lies approximately 300 m north east of Inveraray Pier.



Garron Bridge over the River Shira, and Garron screen wall at the head of Loch Shira



## POLICY ZONE J MAP – Current Uses & Activities



### Legend

#### Commercial Fishing

Nephrops trawling/creeling

#### Loch Access

Jetty  
 Pier  
 Private slipway  
 Public slipway  
 Anchorage  
 Moorings

#### Infrastructure & Discharges

Subsea telephone cable  
 M.O.D. Cable area  
 M.O.D. Submarine/vessel movement area  
 Outfall other  
 Commercial outfall  
 Private outfall  
 Sewage/waste water treatment

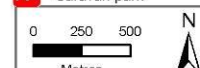
#### Recreation & Tourism

Preferred angling areas  
 Proposed core path  
 Coastal path location  
 Dive sites  
 Jet skiing  
 Viewpoint

P Parking  
 Picnic sites  
 Public Conveniences  
 Tourist information  
 Caravan park

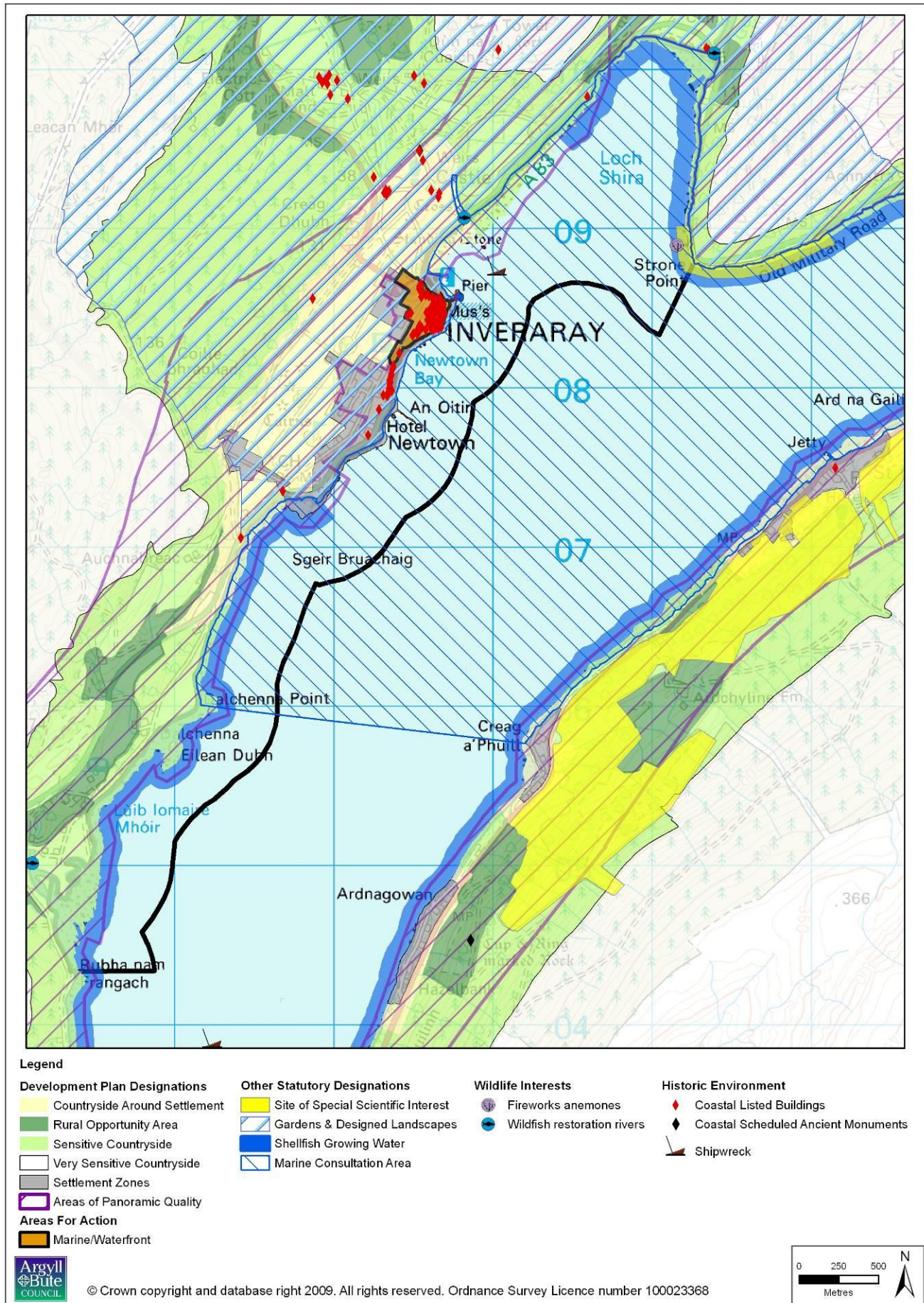


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## POLICY ZONE J MAP – Designations, Wildlife Interests & Historic Features



## OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS FOR FUTURE USE AND DEVELOPMENT

### Constraints

<i>Future Use</i>	
<b>Character &amp; Tourism</b>	The historical character and high tourist value of Inveraray and Newtown make adjacent coastal areas sensitive to high-speed or noisy water recreation activities.
<b>Infrastructure</b>	The in-service and out of service telecommunications cables in this policy zone could be damaged by trawling or anchoring of commercial and recreational vessels.

<i>Development</i>	
<b>Landscape</b>	In Loch Shira, the narrowness and relatively small-scale of the loch would be quickly dominated by aquaculture structures located on the water surface
	Much of the seascape is overlooked by land occupied by residential, tourism-based or recreation-based activities, which are more likely to be sensitive to semi-industrial developments.
	The settings of historic features such as the bridges associated with the designed landscape, and the setting of Inveraray itself, are all sensitive to poorly located development of a more industrial character. Any additional infrastructure or buildings in this area could affect the setting of listed buildings and the Designed Landscapes.
	Aquaculture development should avoid the foreground of views along the length of the loch from key viewpoints.
	The coast is highly visible from the road along the western shore.
<b>Wildlife Interests/ Biodiversity</b>	The Rivers Douglas, Aray and Shira are of significant importance for wild salmon and sea trout. New salmon or trout finfish farm development would therefore increase the potential for wild and caged salmonid interaction.
	Benthic marine habitats and species of national importance, present in Loch Shira are sensitive to physical damage or disturbance from mobile gear fishing and aquaculture development. Eelgrass beds would also be sensitive to anchoring and mooring development.
<b>Water Quality</b>	In terms of water quality, discharges from sea outfalls limit the potential for shellfish farming in much of this policy zone.
<b>Activities</b>	Finfish or shellfish development is not appropriate within the MOD exercise area, as any equipment situated in the water has potential to interfere with sound measurements in the MOD hydrophone area and present a recreational hazard to MOD vessels.
	This part of Loch Fyne is relatively busy for recreational and commercial boating, and developments may present navigational hazards.
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Subsea telecommunications cables could be damaged by new moorings or the anchoring/mooring of new finfish or shellfish farms.
	Aquaculture development or new moorings would not be permitted directly over or immediately adjacent to the in-service cables running from St. Catherine's to Inveraray.
	Aquaculture, mooring and onshore development should avoid where these cables come ashore at Inveraray, as this location needs to remain unobstructed to allow for maintenance.
	The subsea telephone cable in Loch Shira is not in service but is of scientific interest and development proposals in this area should be discussed with BT.



## **Opportunities<sup>1</sup>**

### ***Future Use***

<b>Recreation</b>	Opportunities could be created for visitors to access the loch on scenic boat charters or angling trips.
	Strategic coastal infrastructure development and improvements would bring significant economic development opportunities to the area.
	There is an opportunity to improve access to the water for recreational users as part of any new coastal infrastructure development proposals. Such proposals could explore the potential for allowing tour boat operators, boaters/kayakers, divers and anglers to access any proposed infrastructure or to provide additional parking, dedicated launching points or toilet facilities.
<b>Shellfish Ranching</b>	An opportunity for scallop ranching at Dalchaenna was identified by the ICZM stakeholder group. Any proposal for scallop ranching at this location would need to be discussed in detail with the MOD.

### ***Development***

<b>Recreation</b>	The Loch Fyne ICZM Group identified that Inveraray would benefit from new recreational facilities and improvements to existing infrastructure. The main wooden pier could be repaired and facilities provided for leisure boats, such as visitor moorings, a facility to tie up tenders when visiting the town, and additional car parking.
<b>Onshore Aquaculture</b>	There is potential for shore-base developments to be accommodated on the outskirts of the existing settlements, in locations where design would fit with local character.

## **DEVELOPMENT POLICIES FOR AQUACULTURE<sup>2</sup>**

**Where the following development policies indicate presumption in favour of development, this will be subject to any development proposal being consistent with relevant policies within the Argyll and Bute Development Plan (Structure and Local Plan).**

### **MARINE FINFISH DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

#### **Marine Finfish Development Policy PZJ-1**

**There will be a general presumption against new finfish development within this policy zone.**

#### **Justification**

- No potential to accommodate finfish farm development between South Dalchenna and Inveraray was identified, largely due to the potential effect of development on the visual amenity associated with the settlements and recreational developments which are strongly related to the coast (Grant 2007).
- There is no potential to accommodate aquaculture development in Loch Shira due to the small-scale of the loch, which would be easily dominated by large structures. There is also a need to maintain a fine setting for the historic features of the main town, as well as the quality of views around the loch, particularly those from the head of the loch down to Inveraray and along the length of the loch (Grant 2007).
- Biodiversity interests in this policy zone are of national significance and should restrict development, along with the increased potential for wild salmon and caged salmon interaction if development were permitted (Marine and Coastal Development Unit 2009).

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

<sup>2</sup> Policies do not preclude the submission of applications for shellfish or finfish development in areas where presumption against development has been identified.



## MARINE SHELLFISH DEVELOPMENT POLICY

### Marine Shellfish Development Policy PZJ-2

There will be a general presumption against any scale of new shellfish development within this policy zone.

#### Justification

- Although the landscape capacity assessment identified that some degree of small-scale shellfish farming could be accommodated between South Dalchenna and Inveraray, this part of the policy zone is within the MOD exercise area and is therefore not appropriate for development (Marine and Coastal Development Unit 2009).
- There is no potential to accommodate shellfish development in Loch Shira due to the small-scale of the loch, which would be easily dominated by large structures. There is also a need to maintain a fine setting for the historic features of the main town as well as the quality of views around the loch, particularly those from the head of the loch down to Inveraray and along the length of the loch (Grant 2007).
- High recreational use of the shoreline limits oyster trestle development (Grant 2007).
- Biodiversity interests in this policy zone are of national significance and should restrict development (Marine and Coastal Development Unit 2009).

## ON-SHORE AQUACULTURE-RELATED DEVELOPMENT POLICY

### On-shore Aquaculture-Related Development Policy PZJ-3

There will be a general presumption in favour of shore-base developments on the outskirts of the settlements of Newton and Inveraray, subject to no significant adverse impacts.

#### Justification

- Shore-base developments could be accommodated on the outskirts of the existing settlements, only where design would fit with local character, and odours and noise would not be emitted from the development (Grant 2007).

## SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE ON POTENTIAL AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENTS

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

Development Type	Location	Suggested Maximum Scale	Comments
<b>On-shore Aquaculture Development</b>	Outskirts of Newton or Inveraray	-	These settlements are designated as an area of 'Developed Coast' in the Argyll and Bute Development Plan (Structure and Local Plan) and any development proposals would need to be consistent with Local Plan Policy LP CST 1, and any other relevant Development Plan policies.

## CONSULTATION FOR AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT

As part of the development process, potential developers (during pre-application development scoping) and Argyll and Bute Council Planning Officers (during assessment of applications) are encouraged to consult with the following individuals and organisations in addition to the normal statutory consultees (see Appendix VI). Contact details for statutory and non-statutory consultees are provided in Appendix XI.

Consultees	On-shore Aquaculture
<b>Clyde Area Management Group</b>	✓
<b>Inveraray Community Council</b>	✓
<b>Ministry of Defence</b>	✓