

Topic Paper 03: Landscape

Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section:

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) Section 15(5):

- *The principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.*
- *the principal purposes for which the land is used.*
- *the size, composition, health and distribution of the population district*

NPF4 requirements for LDP:

NPF4 Policy 4: Natural Places

LDPs will identify and protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important natural assets, on land and along coasts. The spatial strategy should safeguard them and take into account the objectives and level of their protected status in allocating land for development. Spatial strategies should also better connect nature-rich areas by establishing and growing nature networks to help protect and restore the biodiversity, ecosystems and natural processes in their area.

Links to Evidence:

National Reports and Guidance

- Scotland's Landscape Charter (endorsed by the Scottish Government, NatureScot, Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Land Commission and Architecture and Design Scotland, 2025)
- SNH Commissioned Report No. F03 AA307 Overview of Scotland's National Programme of Landscape Character Assessment - (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2003)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 34 – Steep Ridges and Mountains (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 35 – Rugged Mountains (Nature Scot, 2019)

- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 36 – Coastal Glens (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 37 – Upland Glens – Argyll (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 38 – Open Ridges (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 39 – Plateau Moor and Forest - Argyll (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 40 – Craggy Upland - Argyll (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 41 – Plateau Moorland - Argyll (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 42 – Rocky Moorland - Argyll (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 43 – Upland Parallel Ridges - Argyll (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 44 – Boulder Moors - Argyll (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 45 – Stepped Cliffs and Terraces - Argyll (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 46 – Rolling Farmland with Estates - Argyll (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 47 – Bay Farmland (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 48 – Lowland Bog and Moor (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 49 – Island Mixed Farmland (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 50 – Stepped Rocky Coastlands (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 51 – Lowland Ridges and Moss - Argyll (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 52 – Coastal Plain - Argyll (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 53 – Rocky Coastland - Argyll (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 54 – Low Coastal Hills (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 55 – Coastal Parallel Ridges (Nature Scot, 2019)

- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 56 – Flat Moss and Mudflats (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 57 – Craggy Coast and Islands (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 58 – Sand Dunes and Machair (Nature Scot, 2019)
- SNH National Landscape Character Assessment: Landscape Character Type 253 – Straths and Glens (Nature Scot, 2019)
- Landscape Character Assessment - Argyll & Firth of Clyde - Landscape Evolution and Influences (Nature Scot, 2021)
- SNH Commissioned Report 374 – The Special Qualities of National Scenic Areas (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2010)
- Special Landscape Qualities – Guidance on Assessing Effects)Nature Scot, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, and Cairngorms National Park Authority, 2025)
- Guidance on Designating Local Landscape Areas (Nature Scot and Historic Environment Scotland, 2020)
- Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance (Nature Scot, 2022)
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013) (not available online)
- Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations (Landscape Institute, 2021)
- Description of Wild Land Area: Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017)
- Description of Wild Land Area: Ben Lui (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017)
- Description of Wild Land Area: Ben More, Mull (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017)
- Description of Wild Land Area: Breadalbane-Schiehallion (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017)
- Description of Wild Land Area: Jura, Scarba, Lunga and the Garvellachs (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017)
- Description of Wild Land Area: Loch Etive Mountains (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2017)
- Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas – Technical Guidance (Nature Scot, 2023)
- People, Place and Landscape – A Position Statement from Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Environment Scotland (Nature Scot and Historic Environment Scotland, 2019)
- Valuing our Environment – The Economic Impact of Scotland’s Natural Environment (Scottish Natural Heritage, no date)

- Developing the contribution of the natural heritage to a healthier Scotland (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2009)

Local Studies and Guidance

- Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2 Technical Note (TN) 21 VII and LVIA (Light) (Argyll and Bute Council, 2023)
- Argyll and Bute Landscape Capacity Study: North and South Kintyre (Gillespies for Argyll and Bute Council, 2009)
- Argyll and Bute Landscape Capacity Study: Mull (Gillespies for Argyll and Bute Council, 2009)
- Argyll and Bute Landscape Capacity Study: Iona (Gillespies for Argyll and Bute Council, 2010)
- Argyll and Bute Landscape Capacity Study: Lorn and the Inner Isles (Gillespies for Argyll and Bute Council, 2010)
- Argyll and Bute Landscape Capacity Study: Mid Argyll and Inveraray (Gillespies for Argyll and Bute Council, 2010)
- Argyll and Bute Landscape Capacity Study: Islay (Gillespies for Argyll and Bute Council, 2010)
- Argyll and Bute Landscape Capacity Study: Bute and Cowal (Gillespies for Argyll and Bute Council, 2010)
- Landscape Capacity for Housing: Island of Jura – Final Report (Alison Grant Landscape Architect, 2007)
- Landscape Capacity for New Housing: Island of Mull – Loch na Keal NSA – Final Report (Alison Grant Landscape Architect in association with Carol Anderson Landscape Architect, 2006)
- Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study Volume One (Carol Anderson Landscape Associated, 2017)
- Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study Volume Two – Detailed Sensitivity Assessments (Carol Anderson Landscape Associated, 2017)
- Isle of Tiree Sustainable Design Guidance (Argyll and Bute Council, 2007)
- Isle of Coll Sustainable Design Guidance (Argyll and Bute Council with SNH, 2007)

Datasets

- NatureScot [Landscape Character Assessment | NatureScot Spatial Data Hub](#)
- NatureScot [Landscape Character Types map](#)
- GIS layers – Wild Land (Nature Scot), NSA's (Nature Scot), LDP2 layers including LLA's (Argyll and Bute Council)

Summary of Evidence

Introduction

Landscape is about the relationship between people and place. The term does not mean just special or designated landscape and does not only apply to the countryside. It results from the way that different components of our environment – both natural and cultural– interact together and are perceived. It includes geological factors, habitats, historical and cultural elements as well as visual qualities.

Landscape is not limited to countryside but also includes:

- Villages and towns where the built environment is dominant, but also includes the relationships between buildings and open spaces (townscapes)
- Marine and coastal landscapes (seascapes)

Nature Scot set out that landscape character is the “*distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a specific type of landscape*”. They highlight, among other things, that our landscapes:

- underpin our tourist industry
- influence perceptions of many of our products and services
- provide inspiration for the arts
- contribute to our identity
- provide the distinctiveness and sense of place that we value and enjoy
- is fundamental to people’s prosperity, particularly through farming, fishing, forestry, tourism and renewables sectors.
- makes an important contribution to people’s physical and mental health and well-being

Whilst NPF4 Policy 4 covers habitat designations as well as landscape designations, due to the notable differences between the two, as well as the vast extent of natural designations within Argyll and Bute, it is considered more appropriate to assess these as two separate topics. Therefore this Topic Paper covers landscape designations only (NSA’s, LLA’s and Wild Land). Special Areas of Conservation (SAC’s), Special Protection Areas (SPA’s), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI’s), (National Nature Reserves (NNR’s), Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS’s) and Ramsar sites are included in Topic Paper 02: Biodiversity, Woodland and Forestry, and Soils. Additionally, the Green Belt has been considered separately within Topic Paper 18, and Gardens and Designed

Landscapes (GDL's), along with other historic asset designations, have been discussed within Topic Paper 04: Historic Assets.

That said, nature and landscape designations are closely linked, often overlapping in geographical area, and are integrated in that the ecosystems within nature designations, as well as peatlands, form a mosaic of interconnected habitats within the landscape. Additionally, built heritage forms a close link with the landscape as buildings are physical, living records of human interaction with the environment over centuries, defining the cultural identity and sense of place. This connection integrates natural and cultural history, where structures are shaped by local materials, topography, and land-use traditions. Therefore nature designations, peat, and built heritage designations are considered in brief in setting out some key characteristics and notable features within the Local Landscape Areas.

This Topic Paper focuses on summarising the characteristics, and Development Plan policy protecting these landscape designations. Policy areas focusing on development within the landscape: renewables, rural development, and coastal development, are covered within Topic Papers 6, 19 and 13 respectively.

Topic Papers which have a particular level of interlinkage with this paper are:

- Topic Paper 2: Biodiversity, Woodland and Forestry, and Soils
- Topic Paper 4: Historic Assets
- Topic Paper 6: Energy (Renewables)
- Topic Paper 8: Housing
- Topic Paper 11: Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Topic Paper 13: Flood Risk and Water Management and Coastal Development
- Topic Paper 17: Minerals
- Topic Paper 18: Green Belt
- Topic Paper 19: Rural Development and Tourism

The National Policy Context

Scotland's Landscape Charter

This charter is about promoting awareness of the critical contribution of the landscape to all our lives and to promote the action required to maximise the many benefits they bring now and for the future.

The Charter refers to the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which is the first international treaty dedicated to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. It provides the basis as the recommended approach to landscape, recognising that all landscapes matter and they provide an essential shared resource from which everyone should benefit.

The ELC, in 2000, defined landscape as *“an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”*.

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

NPF4 Policy 4 (Natural Places) requires LDP's to identify and protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important natural assets, on land and along coasts. The spatial strategy should safeguard them and take into account the objectives and level of their protected status in allocating land for development.

The policy intent is to protect, restore and enhance natural assets making best use of nature-based solutions.

The expected outcomes are that natural places are protected and restored, and that natural assets are managed in a sustainable way that maintains and grows their essential benefits and services.

Other relevant policies that link to wider landscape considerations are NPF4 Policy 7(o) (Historic Assets and Places) and NPF4 Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place)

Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report F03 AA307 - Overview of Scotland's National Programme of Landscape Character Assessment

This report provides a critical review of the Scotland-wide programme of Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). This clarifies that (as set out by Swanick's 2002 Character Assessment Guidance) *“Landscape Character Assessment is primarily concerned with landscape character, rather than with landscape quality or value”*, and sets out the following definitions:

Term	Definition
landscape character	The distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from one another.
landscape character assessment	A process that addresses both characterisation i.e. identifying, mapping, classifying and describing landscape character, and making judgements based on landscape character to inform a range of different decisions.
landscape quality	Condition of the landscape, based on judgements about its physical state and intactness, from visual, functional and ecological perspectives.
landscape value	Relative value attached to different landscapes. A landscape may be valued by different communities of interest for many different reasons.

Figure 01: Key terms in landscape character assessment (source: Swanick (2002) within SHN Report)

The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) programme was initiated in 1994 by SNH (now Nature Scot). It aimed to classify and describe the character of Scotland's landscapes, i.e. what makes one area different or distinct from another, by examining the various component parts of the landscape and the physical, ecological and cultural processes that interact to affect the landscape.

The Landscape Character Types (LCT's) within Argyll and Bute are shown on the Maps in Figures 03 – 06 and noted within the Landscape Character section of this Topic Paper. The LCT's within each National Scenic Area (NSA) and Wild Land are referenced within those sections. Additionally, the character assessments were used within the Wind Energy Capacity Study (reference) (albeit prior to the 2019 updates) which is considered within the Local Landscape Area (LLA) section.

Landscape Character Assessment - Argyll & Firth of Clyde - Landscape Evolution and Influences

This document provides information on how the landscape of the local authority area has evolved. It complements the Landscape Character Type descriptions of the 2019 dataset.

It cites contemporary changes to the landscape being as a result of extensive ribbon development along the Clyde and Gare Loch, and Loch Long which have defined these landscapes along with substantial infrastructure. Commercial forestry has also brought sweeping changes to the contemporary landscape, accounting for more than 30% of Argyll and Bute's landcover (this statistic includes the area of Argyll and Bute within the LLTNP). More recent changes due to subsidies has led to a slight increase in deciduous planting. The document recognises the changes wind farms are having on the landscape, with more recently consented schemes of higher turbines largely visible from settled loch edges and coasts.

There appears to be an error in the document where it states that Argyll and Bute has 5 National Scenic Areas – one of those mentioned in North Arran which is not in Argyll and Bute, and Loch Na Keal and Lynn of Lorn are omitted (as well as Ben Nevis and Glen Coe which is only partially within the region).

SNH Commissioned Report 374 – The Special Qualities of National Scenic Areas

National Scenic Areas (NSA's) are designated to identify and protect the country's finest landscapes. There are 40 in Scotland.

In the period 2007-09 staff from Scottish Natural Heritage (now Nature Scot) visited the NSA's and undertook a detailed assessment of the special qualities of each one, using a standard methodology. The result of that work is the Report (374), incorporating mapping and details of each NSA.

The Special Qualities of each NSA in the Argyll and Bute planning authority area are included later in this Topic Paper.

Special Landscape Qualities – Guidance on Assessing Effects

This guidance sets out how to assess effects on Special Landscape Qualities of NSA's (and National Parks which are not relevant to Argyll and Bute planning authority). The guidance has been prepared by Nature Scot, the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority and the Cairngorms National Park Authority.

The guidance has been prepared to assist people in three ways:

- by describing the sequence of steps to follow in a SLQ assessment
- by demonstrating how the SLQs can be used to influence the siting and design of a proposal
- by explaining why and how this information is required to inform judgements on effects in relation to planning and land use policies

The assessment would be undertaken by a Landscape Architect for a development proposal and the scope of which should therefore be discussed and agreed with the planning authority.

Guidance on Designating Local Landscape Areas

This guidance has been produced jointly by Nature Scot and Historic Environment Scotland to assist planning authorities in their approach to local landscape designations. It draws on the experience from existing local landscape reviews, as well as considering ways for more community involvement in the process.

The guidance notes that existing designations may need revision due to, for example:

- new development
- subsequent other local designations
- new reasons or emphasis for designation – such as the historic environment, natural heritage or health and well-being
- the need for a clearer statement of the qualities and values of the LLA that provide the basis for their designation

It is noted that landscape contributes to many local authority objectives including:

- health improvement and education
- urban regeneration and rural development
- community planning and social inclusion
- promotion of recreational opportunities

It sets out a recommended approach to use when establishing or reviewing LLA's. This approach aims to establish a systematic and transparent process that should be easily understood and allows identified areas to be clearly justified for inclusion or exclusion.

It sets out that consideration should be given to the advantages and disadvantages of undertaking a review in parallel with the Local Development Plan process, or progressing it separately when capacity may be greater. NatureScot and HES can contribute to the local landscape designation process. Both organisations can advise on the scope and brief for a designation project, the process to be applied, and any research or technical studies on special qualities.

Argyll and Bute do not currently have Citations for the numerous and extensive LLA's within the planning authority area. Consideration therefore needs to be given to undertaking a review in line with this Guidance, and also TN02/21 (Assessing Landscape Value outside National Designation) by the Landscape Institute. .

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance

This guidance, by Nature Scot, explains that sensitivity is a measure of the ability of a landscape to accommodate change arising from specified development types or land management. It combines judgements of the susceptibility of the landscape to change, and the values attached to the landscape.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessments are strategic appraisals of the relative sensitivity of landscapes to development types or land use changes. They are an important tool to help guide development to less sensitive locations. However, whilst providing a baseline, they do not replace the need for a site specific LVIA and/or Environmental Assessment for a particular proposal.

A sensitivity assessment will draw on a Landscape (or Coastal) Character Assessment and should consider land-use scenarios such as housing, business and industry, woodland creation, fin-fish or shell-fish farms, or wind farms.

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third edition (GLVIA3)(not available online)

This guidance is aimed at practitioners carrying out an LVIA, either as part of an EIA or informally, to contribute to the appraisal of development proposals. The guidance clarifies the meaning and importance of landscape. It also, for each of landscape and visual factors, sets out the process of establishing the baseline, predicting and assessing the significance of effects, and assessing the overall significance of these effects.

Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations

This technical guidance provides information in terms of making judgements about the value of a landscape (excluding NSA's which are nationally designated). It is applicable to the whole of the UK planning systems. It does not seek to provide an evaluative methodology, but to supplement existing guidance including that by Nature Scot.

The guidance sets out the term “landscape qualities” to be characteristics / features of a landscape that are valued, then the “landscape value” – the relative value or importance attached to different landscapes by society on account of their landscape qualities. The guidance notes: *“Landscape value at the local authority or neighbourhood level can be assessed and mapped spatially, i.e. through identifying areas for local landscape designation. Studies to support spatial designations should identify the landscape qualities of each area of landscape proposed for designation”*

People, Place and Landscape

This is a joint position statement from Scottish Natural Heritage (now Nature Scot) and Historic Environment Scotland. The shared vision is:

All Scotland's landscapes are vibrant and resilient. They realise their potential to inspire and benefit everyone. They are positively managed as a vital asset in tackling climate change. They continue to provide a strong sense of place and identity, connecting the past with the present and people with nature, and fostering wellbeing and prosperity.

Managing Change Guidance Note on Place and Landscape (emerging)

Historic Environment Scotland is starting work on a new Managing Change Guidance Note on Place and Landscape, which will form part of HES's Managing Change in the Historic Environment series, which provides practical advice to support good decision-making about the historic environment. It responds to a growing demand for practical guidance on managing change that transforms whole places and landscapes, rather than individual sites or assets and will promote a holistic approach to the environment, recognising the interrelationship between cultural and natural values. An early engagement workshop was held on 26th May which Argyll and Bute Council attended.

Valuing our Environment – The Economic Impact of Scotland's Natural Environment (Scottish Natural Heritage, no date)

This publication summarises research which was carried out in relation to the natural environment and economy. Without a date within the publication, the statistics are meaningless, however the general findings that Scotland's natural environment is fundamental to the prosperity of its peoples is relevant to this Paper even without specific statistics backing this up. The key sectors that rely on the environment are farming, fishing, forestry, tourism and renewables, all of which are present in Argyll and Bute.

Developing the contribution of the natural heritage to a healthier Scotland (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2009)

This publication sets out that natural heritage makes an important contribution to people's physical and mental health and well-being through physical activity and contact with nature outdoors, as well as through accessible, high quality greenspace, path networks and attractive landscapes close to where people live, work and learn.

Local Policy Guidance

Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2

Argyll and Bute Council's second Local Development Plan (LDP2) covers development on all countryside zones (whether covered by a designation or not) within Policy 02. Additionally, development within a National Scenic Area, Local Landscape Area, or on Wild Land must adhere to policies 70, 71 and 72 respectively.

Policy 02 takes a flexible approach to development with the Countryside Area but balances this with an onus on the applicant to demonstrate that there will be no unacceptable adverse effects (either individually or cumulatively) on natural heritage resources, built and/or cultural heritage resources, and landscape and visual amenity. In cases where a major development is proposed, or for any development where there is preliminary evidence that there may be such adverse effects (and where a formal EIA is not required), a landscape and visual impact assessment may be required.

The policy requirements for Remote Countryside Areas are also contained within Policy 02 but are less flexible than that for Countryside Areas. Within these, only specific categories of developments on appropriate sites will generally be supported.

Policy 02 also includes requirements for proposals within the Helensburgh and Lomond Green Belt. This is considered in detail within Topic Paper 18.

LDP2 also contains policies covering National Scenic Areas, Local Landscape Areas and Wild Land (policies 70, 71 and 72) which only supports limited development in these areas. Proposals on NSA's and LLA's generally require to be supported by an LVIA and proposals on Wild Land must be supported by a Wild Land Assessment.

Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2 Technical Note (TN) 21 VII and LVIA (Light)

This Technical Note details the LVIA requirement set out in LDP2 policies 02, 70 and 71. On the basis of information provided to the planning authority within a Sustainability Checklist, one of the following options will be required:

- No further information required in terms of landscape or visual impacts
- Visual Impact Illustrations (VII) are required
- A simplified version of a Landscape and Character Impact Assessment (LVIA Light) is required

- A full Landscape and Character Impact Assessment (LVIA) is required as per the Landscape Institute's guidelines.

It is suggested that the following be used as a guide to determine which level of landscape assessment will be required:

No further information required in terms of landscape or visual impacts:

- In a settlement area where there is no preliminary evidence that the scale or siting would raise concerns in terms of either the landscape character or visual amenity
- In a countryside area however, there is no preliminary evidence that the scale or siting would raise concerns in terms of either the landscape character or visual amenity

Visual Impact Illustrations (VII):

- In a countryside area and the landscape character has been sufficiently addressed through the Sustainability Checklist and appended information, raising no concerns in terms of landscape character. However visualisations are required due to one or more of the following:
 - The scale of the development
 - The development's perceived prominence within a landscape
 - Sensitivity of receptors to the development (e.g. historic assets)
 - Siting impacting upon a gateway location in the landscape (i.e. where the landscape transitions from one character to another)
- In a LLA where there is no preliminary evidence that the scale or siting would raise concerns in terms of the landscape character. However visualisations are required due to the moderate sensitivity of the landscape designation

Note: This simplified process should not require to be carried out by a Landscape Architect.

Simplified Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA Light):

- In a LLA due to one or more of the following:
 - The scale of the development
 - The development's perceived prominence within a landscape
 - Sensitivity of receptors to the development (e.g. historic assets)
 - Siting impacting upon a gateway location in the landscape (i.e. where the landscape transitions from one character to another)
- In an NSA where there is no preliminary evidence that the scale or siting would raise significant concerns. However due to the high sensitivity of the landscape designation an LVIA (Light) is required.

Note: This simplified process should not require to be carried out by a Landscape Architect.

Full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (full LVIA):

- EIA development
- In an NSA due to one or more of the following:
 - The scale of the development
 - The development's perceived prominence within a landscape
 - Sensitivity of receptors to the development (e.g. historic assets)
 - Siting impacting upon a gateway location in the landscape (i.e. where the landscape transitions from one character to another)

Note: This is defined by the Landscape Institute and forms part of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. It is expected that a Landscape Architect would be required to carry out this assessment. Refer to GLVIA.

A Visual Impact Assessment (VII) is expected to be a primarily visual document including visual baselines. In addition there should be a description of the study area and project, technical methodology, and details of mitigation and/or enhancement.

An LVIA (Light) requires an additional assessment of the landscape baseline, through both desk and field study.

Samples of LVIA / VII studies undertaken as required by this guidance can be found by entering the planning reference numbers from these tables into Public Access:

- [NSA's](#)
- [LLA's](#)

Note that for LVIA's undertaken within an NSA, reference should also be made to Nature Scot's Guidance on assessing effects on Special Landscape Qualities - [Special Landscape Qualities - Guidance on assessing effects | NatureScot](#)

Landscape Capacity Studies

Most of these studies were carried out by Gillespies for Argyll and Bute Council in 2009 and 2010 and cover the areas that were, at the time, designated as Rural Opportunity Areas within Oban, Lorn and the Isles, Mid Argyll and Kintyre, and Bute and Cowal. A Rural Opportunity Area was a designation within the 2015 LDP, though was not carried forward into the current LDP (LDP2). These were areas wherein there was considered to

be a general capacity to successfully absorb small scale development (including development in the open countryside).

In addition to the 2010 Gillespies studies, further work was undertaken by Alison Grant, Landscape Architect in 2006 for the Loch na Keal NSA on Mull (in association with Carol Anderson, Landscape Architect) and in 2007 for Jura.

The principal objective of these studies was to undertake a detailed assessment of the landscape character and scenic quality, and then outline the opportunities and constraints for (predominantly) new housing development. The studies focus entirely on the capacity of the landscape in terms of its character, the scenic qualities, and the potential opportunities provided by the landscape for appropriate new development. They do not consider infrastructure or archaeological interests.

These studies are considered further in the Local Landscape Areas section of this Topic Paper.

Argyll and Bute Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study Volumes One and Two

This Capacity Study assesses the sensitivity of landscape character types and National Scenic Areas (NSA's) to different sizes of wind turbine development. The aim of the study is to inform strategic planning for wind energy development and to provide guidance to be used when considering specific development proposals. The study was originally undertaken in 2012 but revised and updated in 2017.

While the assessment in terms of capacity for wind turbines falls within the scope of Topic Paper 06: Energy (Renewables), the study also includes sensitivity assessments of landscape character types which are considered within the Local Landscape Areas section in order to assist with the understanding of these areas in the absence of full Citations.

Overview of Landscape in Argyll and Bute

Argyll and Bute is designated within LDP2 as follows:

- 297,619 ha as Countryside Areas (45.20%)
- 351,207 ha is designated as Remote Countryside Areas (53.34%)
- 6,756 ha as Settlement Areas (1.03%)
- 2,882 ha as Green Belt (0.44%)

Landscape designations within Argyll and Bute comprise National Scenic Areas (NSA's), Local Landscape Areas (LLA's) and Wild Land. These can be seen in Figure 2 overleaf, and make up the following areas within Argyll and Bute:

- NSA's – 186,310 ha total, of which 87,473 ha is land* (13.28%)**
- LLA's – 269,141 ha (40.87%)**
- Wild Land – 83,451 ha (12.67%)**

Notes:

*NSA's in many cases extend into sea areas

** Wild land overlaps NSA's or LLA's so its percentage should not be added to the others

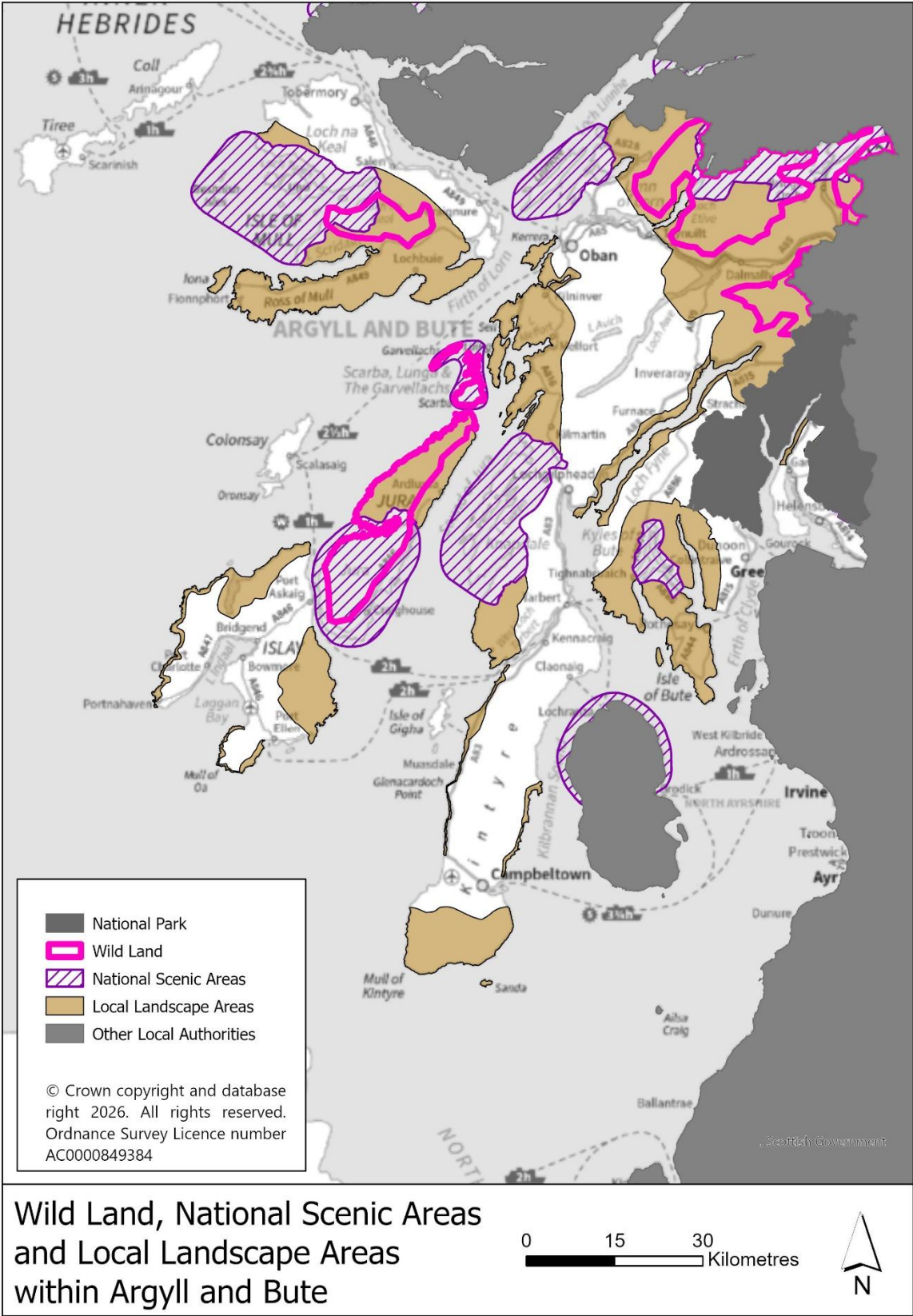


Figure 02: Map showing Wild Land, National Scenic Areas, and Local Landscape Areas within the Argyll and Bute planning authority area

Landscape Capacity Studies were carried out by Alison Grant (and Carol Anderson), Landscape Architect(s) (2006 and 2007) for Mull and Jura, however the following Opportunities and Constraints, extracted from these documents, may be applicable to potential development in most landscapes:

Identifying Landscape Opportunities for Housing - The following landscape attributes generally create positive opportunities for siting new domestic scaled development:

- areas where there were opportunities to create strong visual and physical links with natural features, such as watercourses, bays or rocky outcrops
- areas of concave land form, particularly on south facing slopes, which created natural containment and often quite subtle shelter
- significant road junctions or river crossings which create both visual and social focal points in the landscape
- areas of distinctive landscape character where the existing settlement pattern contributed to the distinctiveness, and where this characteristic could be maintained or enhanced. These were usually areas of dispersed croft buildings, or a linear settlement pattern which was associated with a landscape feature.
- areas where the land use pattern, or the infrastructure associated with it, was still visible enough to contribute to the landscape character, and where the pattern could be emphasised with carefully sited new development
- areas where there was potential to consolidate the edge of an existing village, by extending it to relate to a nearby landscape feature or land form which reinforced a sense of containment or definition of 'edge'
- It is important to consider the needs of future inhabitants. Therefore sites which were south facing, sheltered, had opportunities for extensive views and which were clearly likely to become an integral part of the physical fabric of the settlement and by association therefore, where the inhabitants were likely to feel part of that community, would be a preferred.
- 'one off' houses built on the platforms of existing, but ruined, buildings, or new buildings which contribute to an existing group.

Identifying Landscape Constraints to New Housing - In addition to opportunities, some characteristics of the landscape were likely to be constraints in relation to siting new development. These include:

- convex slopes, which are generally outward facing and both physically and visually exposed

- areas where new building would intrude on extensive panoramas, iconic vistas or important 'slot' views when encountered along a public road, stretch of accessible coastline or access track
- areas of very steep slopes where earthworks would be required to create building platforms and access roads. Such earthworks are likely to be visually intrusive.
- areas which are exposed and physically inhospitable due to their location
- areas which are relatively remote in character and inaccessible, where development and its associated infrastructure would diminish the sense of remoteness and introduce visual clutter into a relatively and sparse simple landscape
- areas where there were no landscape features which would provide the immediate sense of setting and localised sense of place
- areas where the existing settlement pattern was clearly associated with a landform or landscape feature and where the expansion of additional development would compromise this association
- areas which were physically or psychologically detached from the existing settlements, where there would be a danger of creating an area of development forever 'in limbo' and never quite part of the main settlement
- areas where the existing land use, land form or settlement pattern contributed significantly to the wider landscape character and scenic qualities of the islands, and where these qualities would be significantly compromised by development
- It is also recognised that extensive nature conservation designations and significant archaeological sites are likely to be a severe constraint on development

Landscape Character

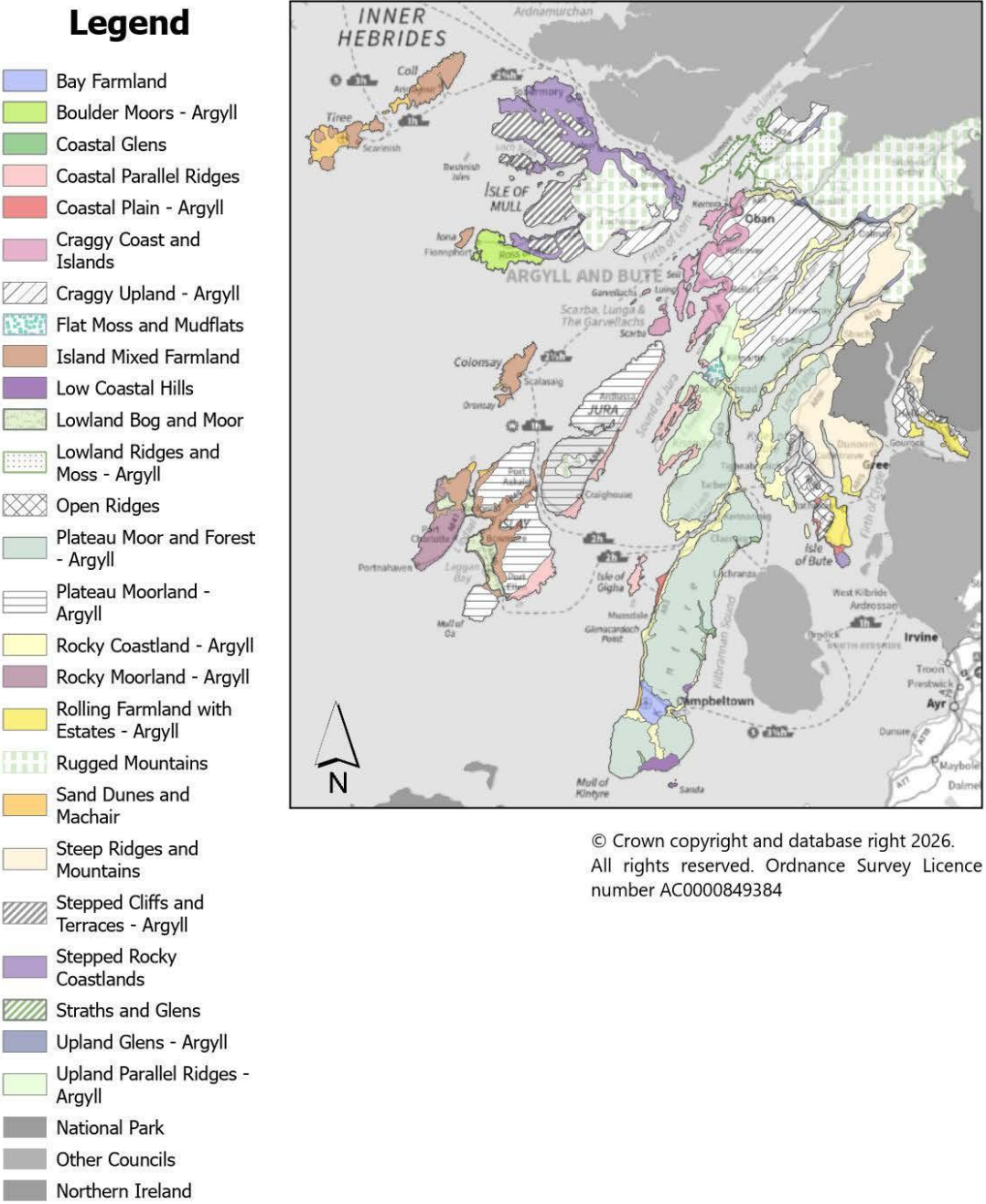


Figure 03: Landscape Character Types across the Argyll and Bute planning authority area as defined by Nature Scot

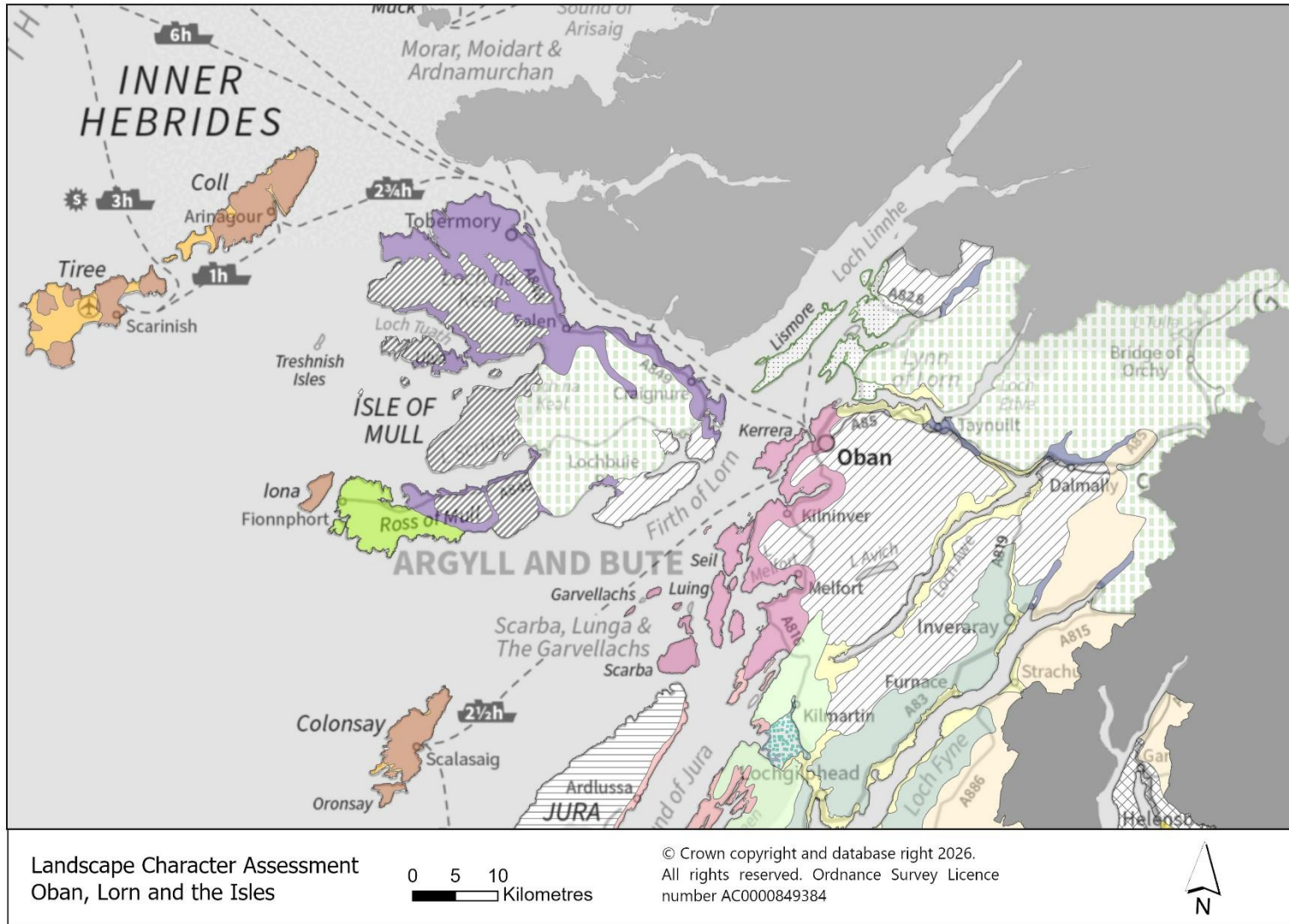


Figure 04: Map showing Landscape Character Types in Oban, Lorn and the Isles (OLI) – refer to legend in Figure 03

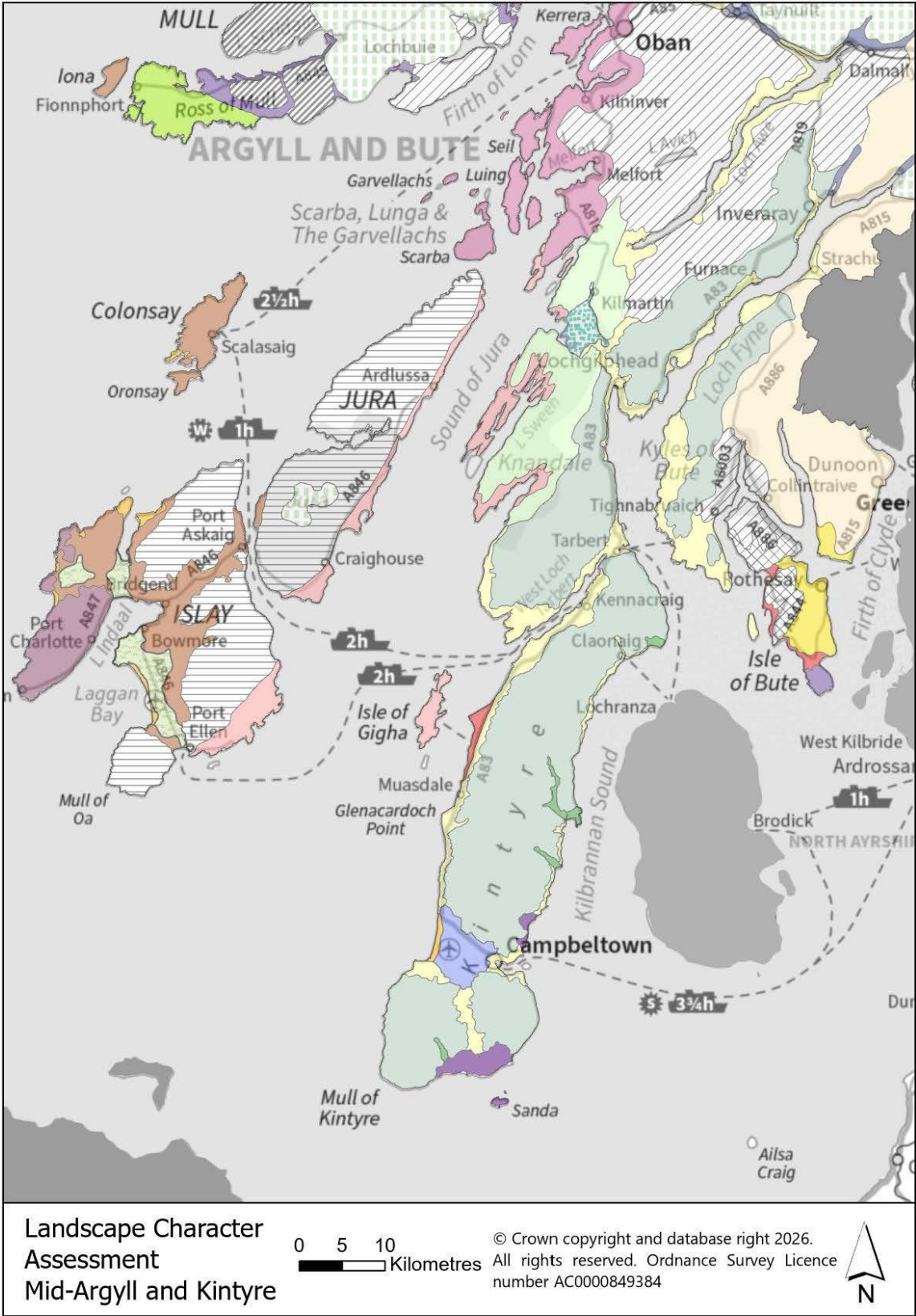


Figure 05: Map showing Landscape Character Types in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay (MAKI) – refer to legend within Figure 3

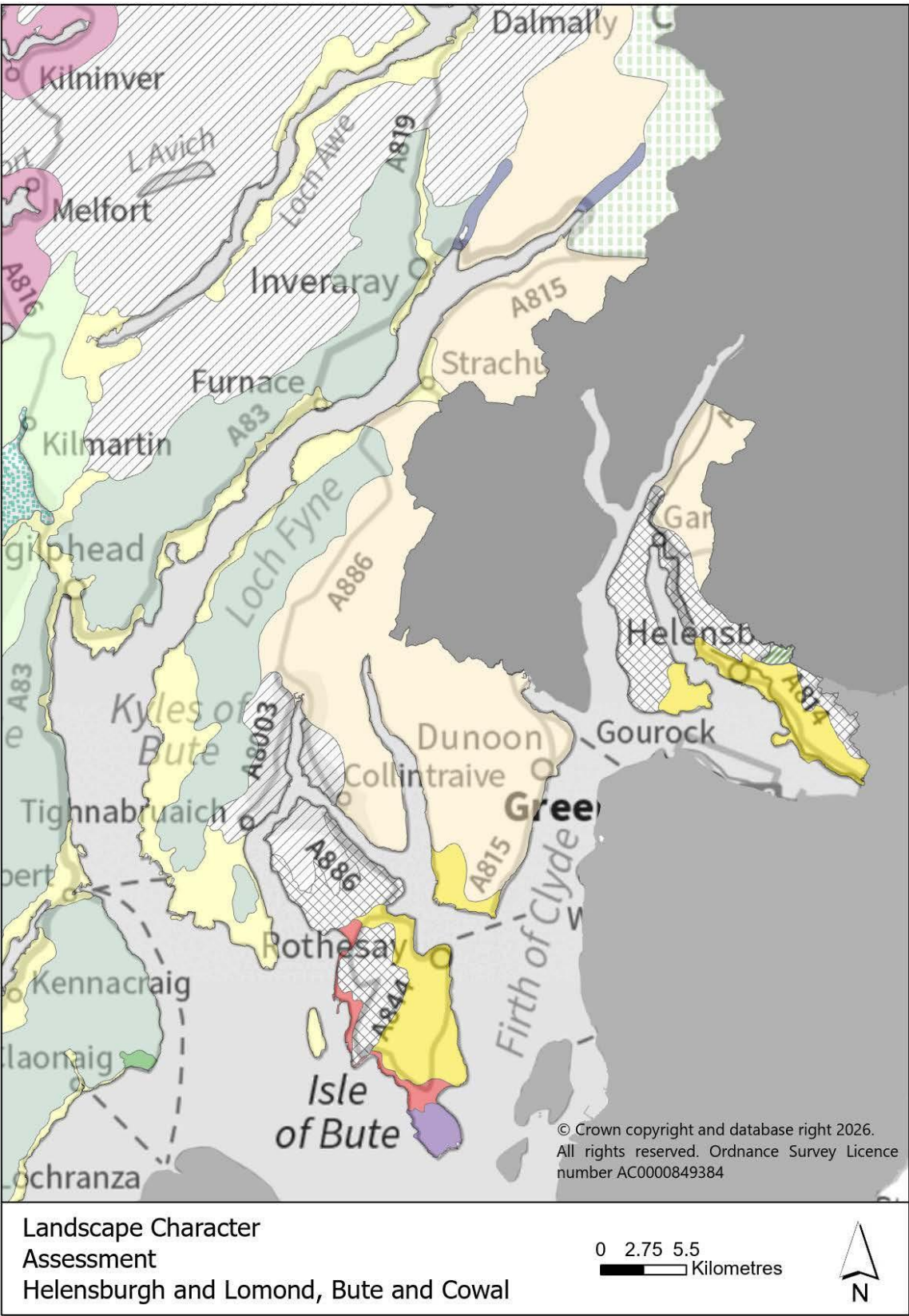


Figure 06: Map showing Landscape Character Types in Helensburgh and Lomond (H&L) and Bute and Cowal (B&C) – refer to legend within Figure 03

Full descriptions of each Landscape Character Type (LCT) are detailed with the Nature Scot Assessments that are included as core documents. Additionally, those which intersect with landscape designations are referenced within those sections of this Topic Paper.

National Scenic Areas (NSA's)

NSA's were first established in 1980, under planning legislation, by order of the Secretary of State. In December 2010, NSAs were designated under new legislation. Part 10 of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 gave NSAs a statutory basis. The Town and Country Planning (National Scenic Areas) (Scotland) Designation Directions 2010 then brought this into force. The legislation defines NSAs as areas “*of outstanding scenic value in a national context*”, for which special protection measures are required. (source: [National Scenic Areas: background, guidance and policy | NatureScot](#))

Of the 40 National Scenic Areas in Scotland, 6 are wholly within the Argyll and Bute planning authority area, and part of the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA also sits within the planning authority area. These are shown on the map in Figure 07 overleaf:

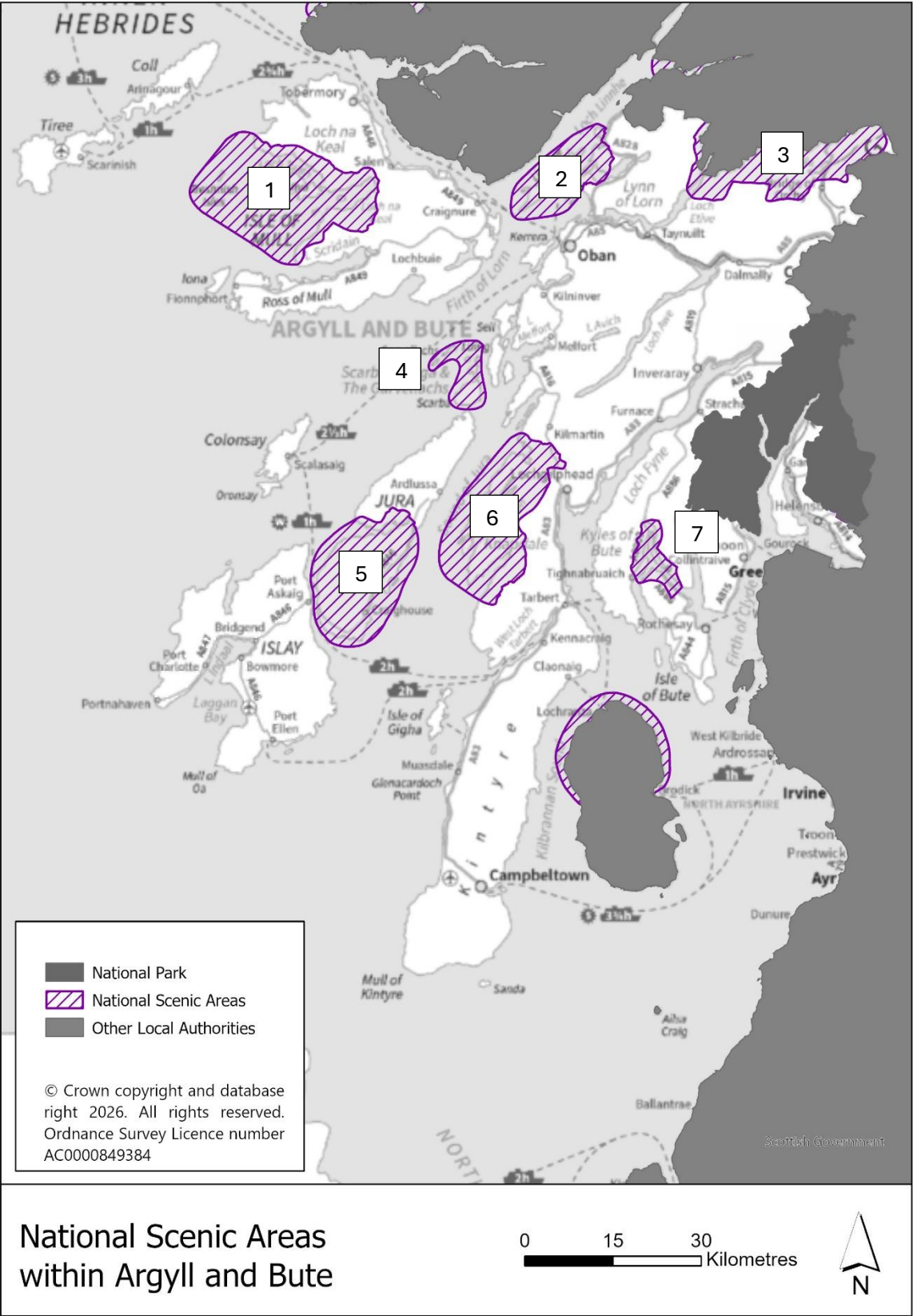


Figure 07: National Scenic Areas within the Argyll and Bute planning authority area

Individual maps and detailed descriptions of each are included within SNH's Commissioned Report 374 – *The Special Qualities of National Scenic Areas*. The Special Qualities of each (as set out in the Report) are noted below, along with details of any Allocations, PDA's, AFA's and Strategic Masterplans within the countryside areas of each NSA (i.e. excluding areas defined as settlement areas within LDP2).

1. Loch na Keal, Isle of Mull (13,510ha)

Landscape Character Type – Stepped Cliffs and Terraces (LCT45) with Stepped Rocky Coastlands (LCT50)

Special Qualities:

- Highly distinctive seaways and shores
- A voyage from enclosed sea loch to the open Atlantic
- Dramatic coast of basalt terraces and cliffs
- Views of an island-studded sea
- Islands and islet groups of astonishingly varied character
- A vast natural world, dwarfing human settlement
- World famous Staffa and Fingal's Cave
- The horizontal Treshnish Isles
- The instantly recognisable Dutchman's Cap

A study was carried out by Alison Grant and Carol Anderson, Landscape Architects in 2005 and 2006 (included as a core document) which was commissioned by Argyll and Bute Council with additional support from Scottish Natural Heritage (now Nature Scot). This provides a detailed assessment of the landscape character and scenic quality within the NSA and outline the opportunities and constraints for new housing development.

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within the Loch Na Keal NSA.

2. Lynn of Lorn (5,640ha)

Landscape Character Type – Lowland Ridges and Moss (LCT51)

Special Qualities:

- A long-inhabited, green oasis
- A small scale, low-lying landscape within a vast highland backdrop

- A landscape strongly orientated northeast-southwest
- The coastline of great variety and diversity
- A strategic location, rich in history
- A place of retreat and seclusion
- Castle Stalker, one of Scotland's iconic romantic images

The following Allocations, PDA's and AFA's are within the countryside are of the Lynn of Lorn NSA:

- Potential Development Area P4031(Lismore - Northern Ferry Point) 0.2ha for Leisure/Tourism/Transport Infrastructure. There has been one recent application granted consent within the PDA boundary:
22/02587/PP - Erection of single storey building consisting of an environmentally sensitive, non-residential retreat hub for supporting and creating wellness tourism - Approved. Nature Scot advised on 10/05/23 that they would not offer formal comment on the proposed development as it does not meet their criteria for consultation purposes.
- Area for Action A4003 - Actions to improve the ferry services between Port Appin and the north end of Lismore; To consider land use and access implications on both sides of Lynn of Lorn. The Port Appin side is within a settlement area; the Lismore side is within countryside area.

3. Ben Nevis and Glen Coe

Landscape Character Type – The portion of the NSA within Argyll and Bute is Rugged Mountains (LCT35), sitting immediately south of the Mountain Massif at Lochaber.

Special Qualities:

Note: whilst the majority of this NSA, including some of its key features, is outwith Argyll and Bute, it is considered still worthwhile to include the Special Qualities within this Topic Paper as the Argyll and Bute portion contributes to the wider landscape and overall designation.

- A land of mountain grandeur
- A land of classic highland vistas
- Human settlement dwarfed by mountain and moorland
- The expansive Moor of Rannoch
- The spectacular drama of Glen Coe
- The wooded strath of lower Glen Coe
- The narrow and enclosed Loch Leven
- The impressive massif of Ben Nevis

- The wild Mamores and secretive Glen Nevis
- The fjord-like upper Loch Leven
- Long and green Glen Etive
- The dark heritage

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA.

4. Scarba, Lunga and the Garvellachs (2,140ha)

Landscape Character Type – Craggy Coast and Islands (LCT57)

Special Qualities:

- Uninhabited, remote, wild islands
- A seascape of distinctive and contrasting island groups
- Solitude, sanctuary, reflection and retreat
- Exceptional marine life
- The notorious Corryvreckan and the Grey Dogs
- The pyramidal island of Scarba
- The irregularly-shaped Lunga, and its attendant islands and reefs
- The low-lying slate island of Belnahua
- The sloping and rocky Garvellachs

The whole NSA is also covered by a Wild Land designation. There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within the Scarba, Lunga and the Garvellachs NSA.

5. Jura (21,070ha)

Landscape Character Type – Mainly Plateau Moorland (LCT41) with Rugged Mountains (LCT35) in the centre. Coastal Parallel Ridges (LCT55) along the east coast, and a small area of Island Mixed Farmland (LCT49) to the west coast.

Special Qualities:

- The distinctive Paps of Jura
- Human settlement on the margins of a vast moorland terrain
- A continually varying coast

- Large tracts of wild land
- The raised beaches of the west coast
- An island of deer
- An island close yet remote
- The inaccessible Loch Tarbert

A study was carried out by Alison Grant, Landscape Architect in 2007 (included as a core document) which was commissioned by Argyll and Bute Council with additional support from Scottish Natural Heritage (now Nature Scot). This provides a detailed assessment of the landscape character and scenic quality within the NSA and outline the opportunities and constraints for new housing development.

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within the countryside area of the Jura NSA.

6. Knapdale (20,820ha)

Landscape Character Type – Mainly Upland Parallel Ridges (LCT43) with Coastal Parallel Ridges (LCT55). Flat Moss and Mudflats (LCT56) at Mòine Mhòr. Some Rocky Coastland (LCT53) runs between Kilmichael Glassary and Cairnbaan.

Special Qualities:

- Distinctive ridges and loch-filled trenches
- A landscape of skylines
- A clothing of oak woodland over the ridges and hollows
- A profoundly evocative, ancient place
- Ever-changing patterns of colour, sound and smell
- In the north, dramatic juxtaposition of ridges and volcanic plugs arising from the flat expanse of Mòine Mhòr bog
- A centre of parallel ridges and secret lochans
- Long, slow journeys to the sea
- Dramatic sea views in the south
- The Crinan Canal

The following Allocations and PDA's are within the Knapdale NSA:

- Potential Development Area P3011 (immediately outwith the settlement of Carsaig – Inchjura) 0.7ha for tourism uses. No applications have been received on the site within the past 5 years.

7. Kyles of Bute (4,720ha)

Landscape Character Type – Craggy Upland (LCT40)

Special Qualities:

- The drama of the Kyles
- Verdant woodland on the enclosing hills
- Rocky outcrops punctuating the wooded slopes
- Small fields between the water and the woods
- The juxtaposition of human settlement and a wider undeveloped landscape of sea and hills
- A peaceful landscape of constant movement
- The ever-changing vistas
- The gradual transition from land to sea in Loch Ruel

The only PDA within the countryside area of the Kyles of Bute NSA is:

- Potential Development Area P1001 (North Bute) 7.8ha for tourism/recreation (included in SM1001 Strategic Masterplan Area). There are no applications within the past 5 years on this site.

Policy

NPF4 Policy 4c) only gives support to a proposal in an NSA where:

- The objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised; or*
- Any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.*

LDP2 Policy 70 resists any development in, or affecting, National Scenic Areas (NSA's) *that would compromise the objectives of their designation and the overall integrity of the area either individually or cumulatively, or that would fail to safeguard the Special Qualities* of the area unless it is adequately demonstrated that:*

- Any significant adverse effects on the landscape quality for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance; and*
- The proposal is supported by an LVIA and has taken into account the content of any relevant Argyll and Bute Landscape Capacity Assessment.*

**As detailed in [NatureScot Commission Report 374: The Special Qualities of the National Scenic Areas Argyll and Bute Landscape Capacity Studies](#)*

LDP2 adds to the NPF4 policy with the requirement for an LVIA and consideration of any Landscape Capacity Assessments. LDP2 does however somewhat duplicate the LVIA requirement within Policy 2.

NatureScot must be consulted on [certain categories of development](#) within NSAs: Activities requiring a planning application and consultation with NatureScot [SDD Circular 9/1987]:

- Schemes for five or more houses, flats or chalets except for those within towns and villages for which specific proposals have been made in an adopted local plan
- Sites for five or more mobile dwellings or caravans
- Erection of buildings and structures over 12m high
- All non-residential developments requiring more than 0.5 hectares of land

Additionally, permitted development rights are more limited than elsewhere.

Under NPF4 Policy 11 (Energy) “*development proposals for wind farms in National Parks and National Scenic Areas will not be supported*”. This blanket ban on wind farms increases the risk of pressure on landscape areas without a national designation, including Local Landscape Areas.

Management strategies:

A management strategy for an NSA lists its special qualities and summarises the action needed to safeguard these. Strategies are produced in full consultation with the people who live and work in the relevant NSA. Argyll and Bute does not currently have any Management Strategies for the NSA's within the planning authority area.

Renewable Energy:

The Wind Energy Capacity Study carried out by Carol Anderson Landscape Associates in 2017, includes a summary of the sensitivity of each NSA for wind turbine development. However as NPF4 Policy 11 (Energy) imposes a blanket ban on wind farms within the NSA's, this section of the Capacity Study is not applicable in this regard, but may be a useful reference when assessing applications for other types of development.

Monitoring

Planning applications within the countryside areas (i.e. excluding settlement areas) of the NSA's were extracted for a 2 year period from the date of adoption of LDP2 (28th February 2024 to 28th February 2026). The data was filtered to only include erection of dwellinghouses (excluding demolition and rebuild / reconstructions) which are considered to be the most common application type involving a new structure on the landscape that does not have a locational operational need such as agricultural buildings on existing farms, or telecoms. Renewals of permissions granted prior to the 2 year monitoring period are also excluded.

Note that pre-apps are not included in these statistics as these are not in the public domain. There may therefore be cases where an applicant was advised at pre-app stage that the proposal would be contrary to Development Plan policy, in which case the number of applications that are withdrawn or refused may have been reduced by such.

Across all of the NSA's within this period the data shows that there were 13 dwellinghouses granted consent, 1 withdrawn* and 1 refused. Details of these applications can be found on public access, with the reference numbers as follows:

1. Loch Na Keal NSA:

- 24/00458/PP
- 25/02117/PP

2. Lynn of Lorn NSA:

- 25/01327/PP
- 24/00715/PPP
- 19/00201/PPP

6. Knapdale NSA:

- 22/02409/PPP
- 23/02183/PP (withdrawn)

7. Kyles of Bute NSA:

- 22/02620/PP
- 23/02026/PP
- 24/02340/PP
- 22/02164/PP
- 22/00273/PP (2 units)

- 22/02161/PP
- 22/01729/PP (refused)

* Note: other applications were withdrawn but subsequently followed by an amended application which was approved, so these applications are excluded to avoid double counting.

These applications are all for either 1 or 2 units which does not meet the threshold for Nature Scot consultation.

The highest area of pressure appears to be within the Kyles of Bute NSA, which is one of the smallest NSA's by overall area yet has 6 applications for dwellinghouses granted consent within the 2 year period.

Of the 12 consented applications:

- Both applications in Loch Na Keal NSA included submission of an LVIA
- 1 of the 3 applications in Lynn of Lorn NSA included submission of an LVIA
- The application in Knapdale NSA did not include submission of an LVIA
- Of the 6 applications in Kyles of Bute NSA only 1 included submission of an LVIA

NSA	Number of applications granted consent for dwellinghouses	Number of these applications including an LVIA	% of these applications including an LVIA	Reference numbers of applications containing an LVIA
Loch Na Keal	2	2	100%	24/00458/PP (within Design Statement) 25/02117/PP
Lynn of Lorn	3	1	33%	24/00715/PPP
Knapdale	1	0	0%	-
Kyles of Bute	6	1	17%	23/02026/PP

Figure 08: Table showing planning applications within NSA's which included submission of an LVIA or VII

Local Landscape Areas (LLA's)

There are the following Local Landscape Areas (LLA's) within the Argyll and Bute planning authority area:

1. Central, South and West Mull (48,337ha)
2. North Argyll (69,811ha)
North Argyll (20,616ha)
North Argyll (361ha)
3. North West Argyll – Coast (1,799ha)
4. Knapdale / Melfort (31,980ha)
5. Jura (15,953ha)
6. North and West Islay – Coast (8,899ha)
7. South and East Islay (11,130ha)
8. South West Islay (1,162ha)
9. West Loch Fyne – Coast (4,572ha)
10. East Loch Fyne – Coast (3,049ha)
11. Bute and South Cowal (31,921ha)
12. Loch Long – Coast (594ha)
13. Loch Lomond (58ha)
14. West Kintyre – Coast (2,094ha)
15. East Kintyre – Coast (1,177ha)
16. Mull of Kintyre (15,678ha)

These are shown on the map in Figure 09 overleaf.

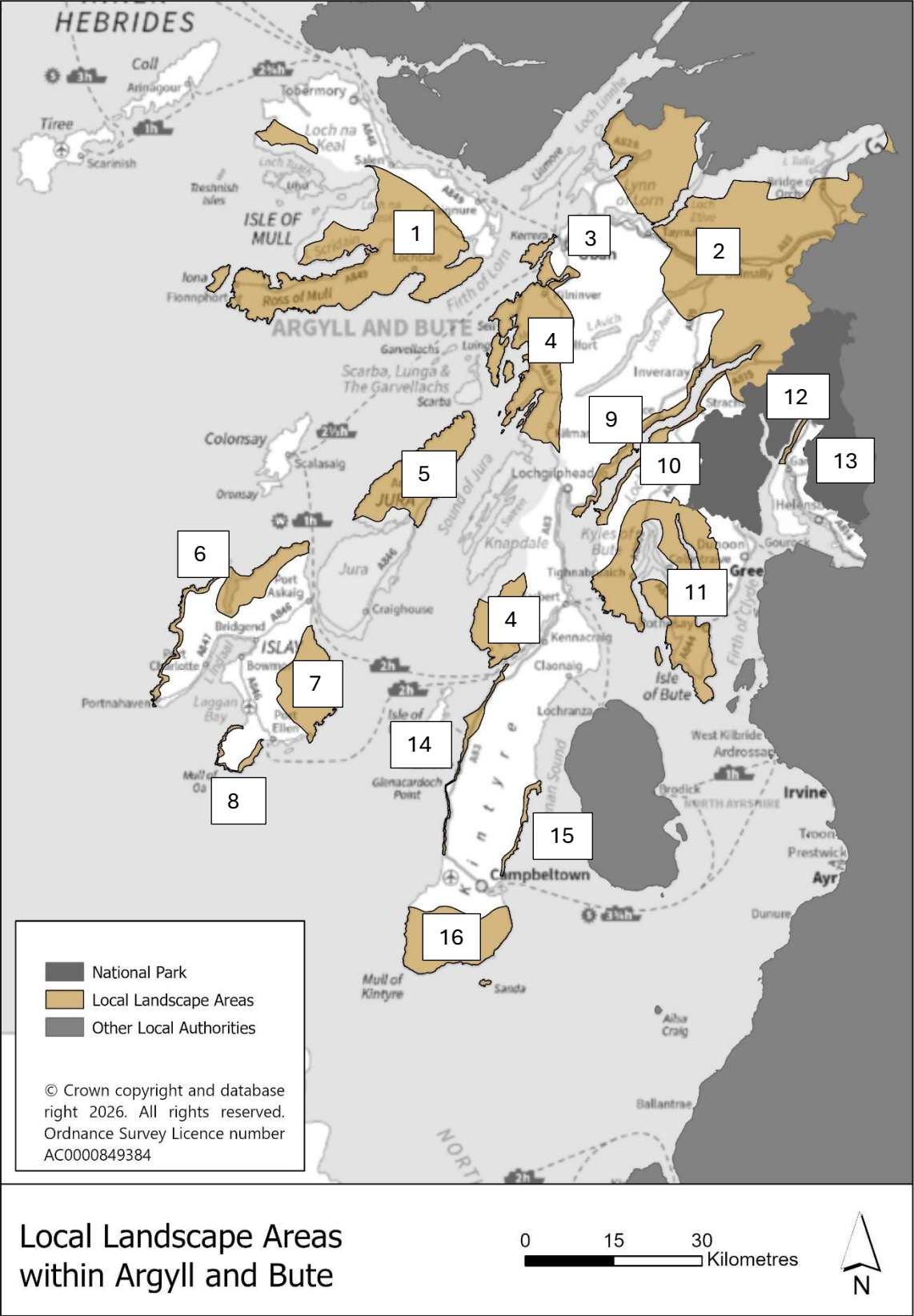


Figure 09: Local Landscape Areas within the Argyll and Bute planning authority area

Nature Scot and HES's Guidance on designating Local Landscape Areas clarifies that *"NSA's focus on scenic value. In contrast LLA's may be based on a wider set of values"*. The Guidance promotes:

- *Better understanding of the relationships LLA's have with other heritage and landscape designations*
- *Greater recognition and integration of the historic environment components of landscape*

The Guidance further sets out that *"LLAs may overlap other international, national or local designations not specifically aimed at landscape protection. Most of these form a different function, but where they have a strong landscape dimension LLAs can support their management."*

Supporting this Nature Scot Guidance is the Landscape Institute's TN02/21 (Assessing Landscape Value outside National Designations). Table 1 within this sets out a range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value in any of the contexts described above. It also includes examples of potential indicators of value.

There are no Citations for LLA's in the Argyll and Bute planning authority area. Additionally, these designations (formerly Areas of Panoramic Quality – APQ's) are historic, having derived from the former Strathclyde Structure Plan and as such prior to current local authority boundaries. Therefore, not just Citations, but a full review of their boundaries as part of the same process, would be beneficial. This would require engagement with Nature Scot and Historic Environment Scotland.

Nature Scot and HES's Guidance on designating Local Landscape Areas notes that LLA's *"reflect the values that communities attach to their local places and the huge social, economic and environmental assets they provide"*. Any review of the LLA's, or simply the development of Citations, should be subject to appropriate community engagement to reflect this. As also noted in this Guidance, Local Place Plans are an additional mechanism of gathering community views on the value they attach to their local landscapes. Any information pertaining to landscapes within LPP's thus far received is included in the Local Place Plans section of this paper.

. In the absence of a review at this point, desk-based analysis has been carried out to inform the evidence report. As no field survey has been carried out, there are no photographs to support the written information.

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) identifies, describes, classifies and maps what is distinctive about our landscapes. This established approach is widely used to inform development plans and land management plans. It provides an excellent starting point

to identify an area's characteristics, and helps in distinguishing what makes one place different from another (source – guidance for designating LLAs)

The descriptions of the LLA's which follow include key details of each LCT. Full details of each are included as a core document. The descriptions have been put together based only on desk-based study using the LCT's which provides some, but limited value. As mentioned, there would be benefit in developing full Citations to fully understand the qualities of each LLA.

As noted within the Introduction to this Topic Paper, nature and landscape designations are closely linked, often overlapping in geographical area, and are integrated in that the ecosystems within nature designations, as well as peatlands, form a mosaic of interconnected habitats within the landscape. Additionally, built heritage forms a close link with the landscape as buildings are physical, living records of human interaction with the environment over centuries, defining the cultural identity and sense of place. This connection integrates natural and cultural history, where structures are shaped by local materials, topography, and land-use traditions. Therefore nature designations, class 1 and 2 peat, and built heritage designations are also considered in brief in setting out some key characteristics and notable features within each Local Landscape Area.

Note that the Wind Energy Capacity Study has been used as a source extensively throughout this section, however this document refers to the previous Landscape Character Type (LCT) descriptions which have subsequently been renumbered, renamed and updated by Nature Scot. The sections which follow use the up to date numbers and names from the 2019 Nature Scot descriptions.

The Gillespies Landscape Capacity Studies (2009) considered sensitivities and opportunities within former "Rural Opportunity Areas" in Local Landscape Areas (identified as Areas of Panoramic Quality – APQ's). Rural Opportunity Areas were not carried forward into LDP2, instead being replaced with the more flexible Policy 02 governing development in the countryside. Reference should be made to the Gillespies document for full details of these assessments and areas identified, but consideration must be given to any development subsequent to the 2009 study which would further limit any potential for development owing to cumulative effects.

Note that where "Ancient Woodland" is referred to within the LLA summaries, this also includes areas of "Semi Natural Ancient Woodland".

As per the NSA section, details of any Allocations, PDA's, AFA's and Strategic Masterplans within the countryside areas of each LLA is also included (i.e. excluding areas defined as settlement areas within LDP2).

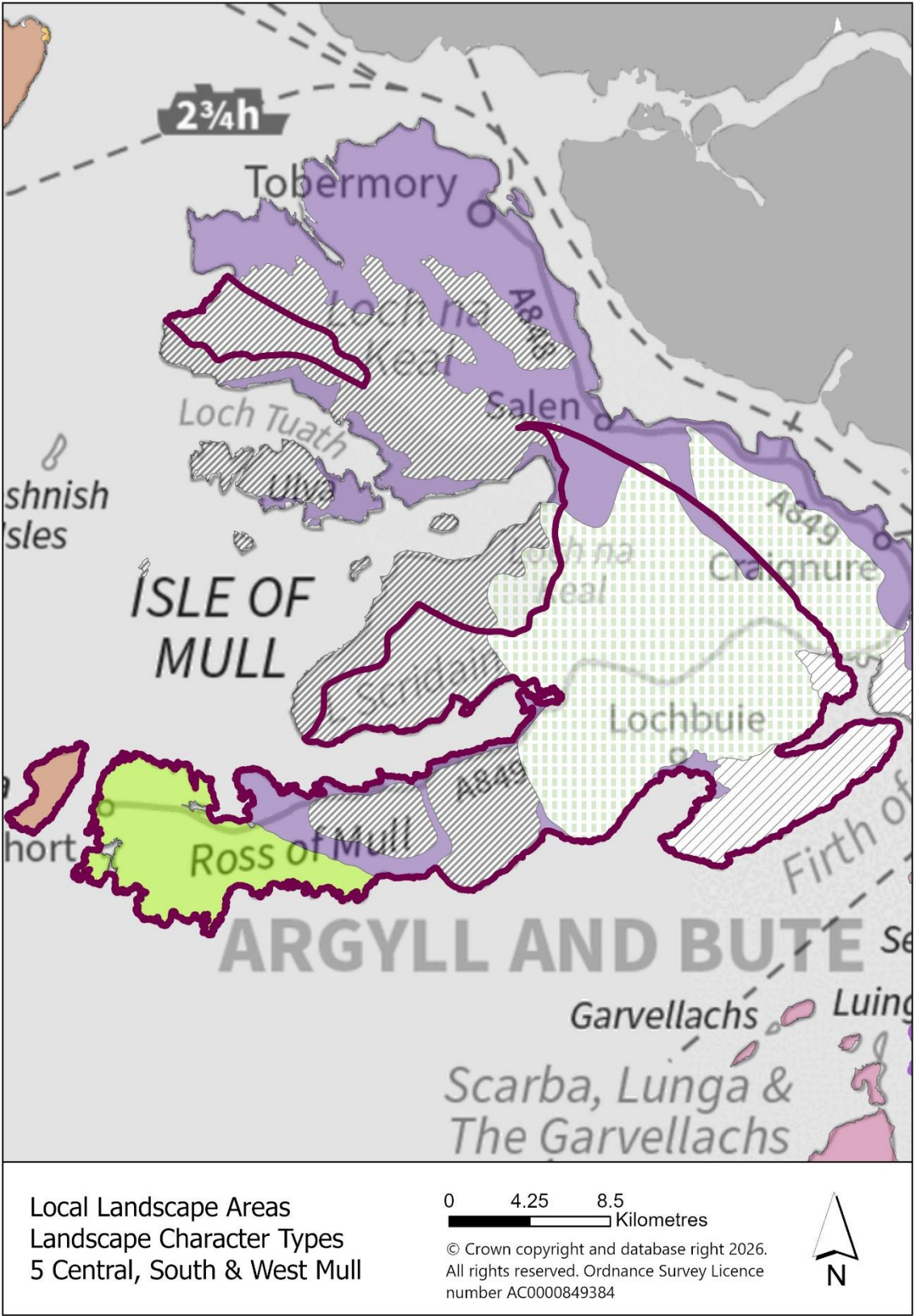


Figure 10: Central, South and West Mull Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

1. Central, South and West Mull (Figure 10)

This LLA includes a large area covering the central and southern area of Mull, as well as a small separate area to the north of the Loch Na Keal NSA, and the island of Iona.

Iona is entirely Island Mixed Farmland (LCT49). This is an undulating, uneven landform with machair and sandy beaches. Baile Mor on Iona has a Conservation Area containing 3 Scheduled Monuments (the Abbey, the Nunnery, and McLean's Cross), 2 A listed buildings (the Abbey and Replica of St John's Cross) and 2 further B listed buildings. The Abbey dominates the coastline on the approach from the Ross of Mull. Across the wider island area there are further Scheduled Monuments around the coastal area. There are 4 Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS's) around the coasts on the southern half of the island.

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within the Iona part of the LLA.

The majority of the inland area of the Mull part of the LLA is Rugged Mountains (LCT35), forming the central upland area of the island, including the eastern slopes of Ben More. *"These form a highly scenic backdrop to many of the lower, more settled coastal fringes of Mull. These mountains have a massive scale and often complex landform of steep rocky slopes, well-defined summits and ridges"* (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson). This study also notes that this landscape has strong qualities of wildness and is highly visible however lower hill slope areas might have a lower sensitivity.

An area of Wild Land overlaps part of the Rugged Mountains area (and extends into the Stepped Rocky Coastland area of the adjoining Loch Na Keal NSA).

South of Loch Uisg, the peninsula is Craggy Upland (LCT40). *"The landform is generally complex with steep rocky slopes and craggy knolls (...). Policy woodlands and buildings of architectural interest are associated with Loch Uisg. This is a sparsely settled area with few roads; the exposed coast against the Firth of Lorn is difficult to access and has a strong sense of wildness"* (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson).

To the west of the Rugged Mountains area (both on the Ross of Mull and north of Loch Scridain), as well as the northern area around Ensay, is Stepped Cliffs and Terraces (LCT45). These areas are characterised by steep upland summits with a distinctive stepped profile. *"This landscape generally has a medium to large scale and is very sparsely populated"* (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson).

Bordering the areas of Stepped Cliffs and Terraces, as well as between the Rugged Mountains and Craggy Upland, are small areas of Stepped Rocky Coastland (LCT50).

The tip of the Ross of Mull is Boulder Moor (LCT44). This is the only location where this LCT occurs in Argyll and Bute. This is a “*low-lying landscape, with a distinctive coarse-textured landform of frequent rocky knolls which outcrop over areas of flat moorland*” (source; Nature Scot). “*It has a distinctive coarse-textured landform of frequent small rocky knolls which outcrop over areas of flat moorland (...) The openness of this landscape allows extensive views from the well-used A849 and from settlement. This landscape also forms the foreground to views of the wider seascape including Iona, Staff and the sheer cliffs of the Ardmeanach Peninsula*” (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderdson).

There are large areas of Class 1 and 2 peat across the LLA.

The north west (separate) portion features few overlapping designations and notable features other than 2 Scheduled Monuments and some small bands of Ancient Woodland near the coast.

Wild Land (Ben More) overlaps the edge of the LLA and the Cruic Agus Cladach Mhuile Special Protection Area (SPA) covers a large part of the LLA.

The Ross of Mull, and the areas around Loch Uisg and Loch Spelve are peppered with bands of Ancient Woodland, and at the latter areas there is also the Ardura-Auchnacraig SSSI. There are numerous other SSSI's across the LLA including Ardmeanach, Ben More-Scarisdale, Cruach Choiredail, and South Mull Coast. The Mull Oakwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is split with part around Loch Ba and part around Lussa River / Loch Spelve. The Caladoir Bog SAC is at the head of Aird of Kinloch, and part of the Ardmeanoch SAC intersects the LLA.

There are various Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) around the coasts of the Ross of Mull along with Torr nan Clach and Loch Beg in central Mull.

B and C listed buildings are scattered across the LLA, mainly along the road edges, but groupings are also notable around Loch Uisg.

The following Allocation is within the countryside area of the Mull part of the Central, South and West Mull LLA:

- Tourism Allocation T4001 sits in the countryside area between the 2 settlement areas making up Pennyghael. This is for a campsite. Planning applications have been approved on the site for a change of use to camping and caravan site (21/02305/PP). Further applications have been approved outwith the tourism allocation, within the countryside area, for the siting of 18 holiday pods (22/01929/PP and 24/02169/PP).

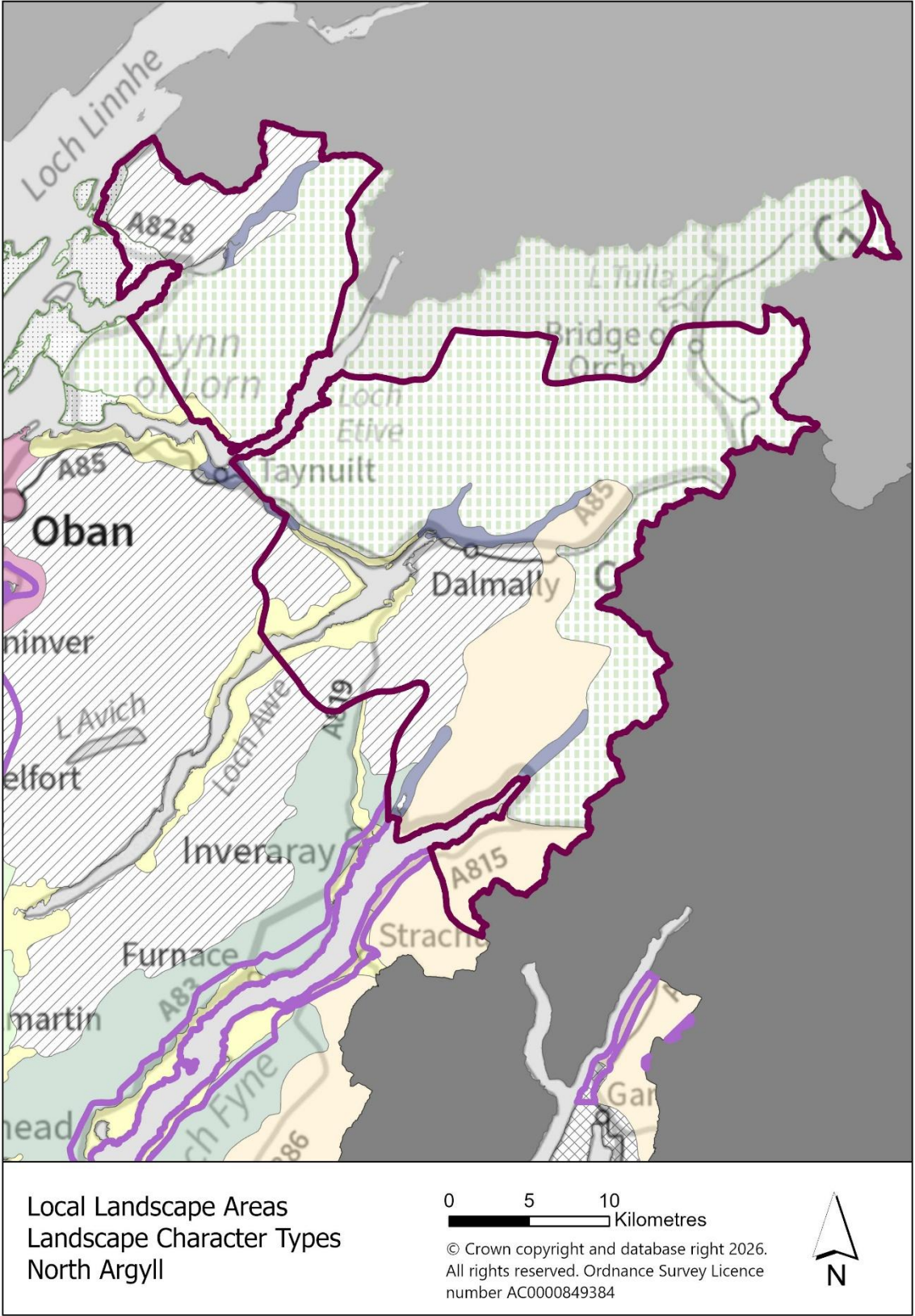


Figure 11: North Argyll Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

2. North Argyll (Figure 11)

The North Argyll LLA is in three separate areas, with the two larger areas split by Loch Etive, and the smaller north eastern segment separated by the Perth and Kinross Planning Authority area.

Much of this LLA is Rugged Mountains (LCT35). This includes the whole of the small area to the north, as well as vast sections to either side of Loch Etive. This is an extensive mountainous area which extends in both directions into the neighbouring planning authority areas (Highland and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park). *“This forms a high scenic backdrop to many of the more settled loch shores and coastal landscapes of Argyll and Bute”* (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson).

The other predominant LCT in this LLA is Craggy Upland (LCT40) which covers the area north of Loch Creran (as well as a small patch near Glasdrum). At this location the Craggy Upland forms *“an important scenic backdrop to the lower settled coastal fringes and the wider seascape of the Lynn of Lorn and Loch Linnhe. These hills also form a visual extension of the higher mountains”* (LCT35) (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson). LCT40 also covers the scenic basin at the head of Loch Awe. This is an irregular upland plateau. *“The plateau forms the backdrop, and is often visible as a skyline, from small scale low-lying, settled landscape types. It also forms the foreground in views to the steep sided, massive bulk of Ben Cruachan and other mountain areas. This landscape is also highly visible from Ben Cruachan and from roads, settlements, the loch and the railway as well as from key historic features”* (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson).

The edges of Loch Awe as well as the area around Bonawe on Loch Etive, are Rocky Coastland (LCT53). Rocky Coastland is a varied character type, found across the whole of Argyll and Bute. Around Loch Awe, this is a *“small scale valley set within adjacent upland areas”* (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson).

Around Strat Appin is a small area of Lowland Ridges and Moss (LCT51), although most of this LCT sits within the adjoining Lynn of Lorn NSA.

There are small strips of Upland Glens (LCT37) running through the larger 2 areas – at Glen Creran in the north, as well as stretching into the LLA from Inveraray and the Head of Loch Fyne. A very small area of Plateau Moor and Forest (LCT39) creeps in around Inveraray.

The Glen Etive and Glen Fyne Special Protection Area (SPA) as well as the Loch Etive Mountains Wild Land, intersects a large area bounded roughly between Bridge of Orchy, Taynuilt and the Lynn of Lorn. These designations extend north into the Highlands planning authority area. A further portion of the Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA, as well as the Ben Lui Wild Land, intersect the area north of Cairndow and extend eastwards into the LLTNP. The Breadalbane- Schiehallion Wild Land intersects the LLA at its north east extents. There is a National Nature Reserve at Glasdrum Wood.

SSSI's and SAC's are also prolific across the LLA:

- Lynn of Lorn: Glen Creran Woods SSSI and Glen Creran Woods SAC, Bonawe to Cadderlie SSSI, Kennacraig and Esragan Burn SSSI, and Loch Etive Woods SAC (split with parts south of Loch Etive)
- South Coast of Loch Etive – Barran Dubh SSSI
- Off the A85 at the Falls of Cruachan – Coille Leitre SSSI
- Glen Orchy – Allt Broighleachan SSSI
- North of Tyndrum – Allt Coire Chailein SSSI
- Ben Lui – Ben Lui SSSI, Ben Lui SAC
- North of Inveraray – Glen Shira SAC
- Glen Kinglas – Beinn an Lochain SSSI
- Hells Glen – Hells Glen SSSI encroaches on the southern edge of the LLA only

There are bands of Ancient Woodland, particularly around loch edges. Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments are scattered across the areas outwith the Wild Land areas and include A listed Ben Cruachan Hydro Scheme Turbine Hall as well as A listed Falls of Cruachan Railway Viaduct, A listed St Conans Church at Lochawe and A listed Glenorchy Kirk at Dalmally. Scheduled Monuments include Kilchurn Castle at Loch Awe.

Further groups of A listed buildings sit in the Inveraray Castle area and at Cairndow. The Inveraray Castle Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL) extends into the LLA from the adjacent West Loch Fyne – Coast LLA.

The following Allocations and PDA's are within the countryside areas of the North Argyll LLA:

- Tourism Allocation T4003 for a holiday park at Appin
- PDA P4029 for marine-related industrial, business and storage use sits adjacent to the settlement of Barcaldine and within a Strategic Economic Investment Location (SEIL).
- Housing Allocation H1003 for 13 units in the countryside area at Ardkinglas. The Delivery Programme notes the sensitivity of this area, given it is not only within

the LLA, but also within the Ardkinglas and Strone GDL. Consent was given in 2010 for 15 units on the site with only 2 being built. In 2021 consent was given for an amended siting and design on Plot 1 (21/02666/PP) – HES were consulted but did not make comment.

- There are 2 Minerals Allocations within the LLA – M4004 (hard rock at Bonawe) and M1004 (hard rock, sand and gravel at Cairndow-Clachan)

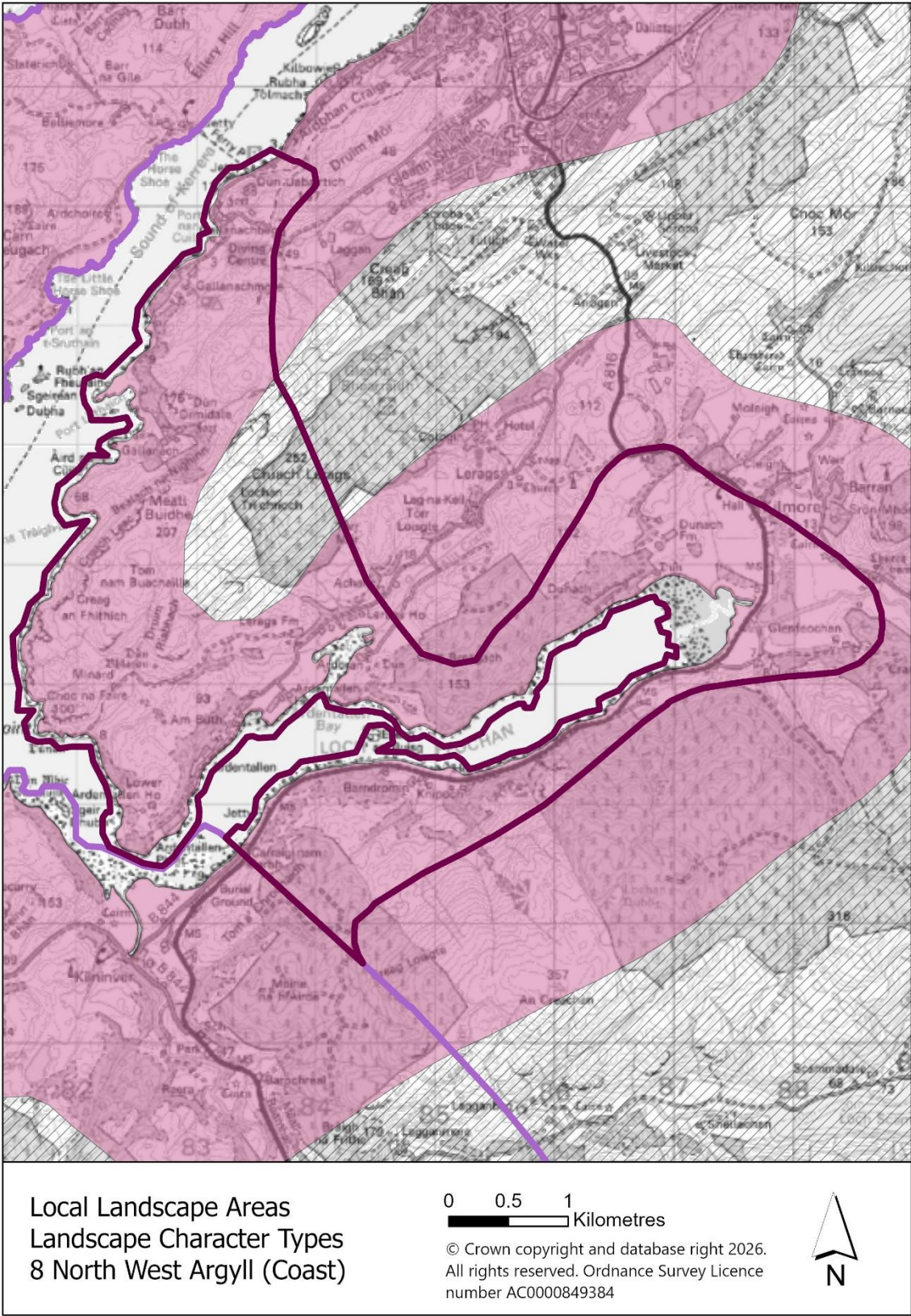


Figure 12: North West Argyll Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

3. North West Argyll – Coast (Figure 12)

This directly abuts the northern boundary of the Melfort LLA and covers the area surrounding Loch Feochan. Like the Kerrera and northern mainland sections of the Melfort LLA the LCT's within the North West Argyll Coast area are Craggy Coast and Islands (LCT57) with open rocky moorland around the sea and sea-loch context. The inland portion is Craggy Upland (LCT40), forming an irregular upland plateau.

The LLA contains the following:

- areas of Class 1 and 2 peat.
- a Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS) – Eilean An Ruisg – at Loch Feochan.
- 5 B-listed buildings and various scheduled monuments across the area.
- South Kerrera and Gallanach SSSI (which is only 80ha).
- stretches of Ancient Woodland around the coastal areas (i.e. on the Craggy Coast and Islands portion).

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within this LLA.

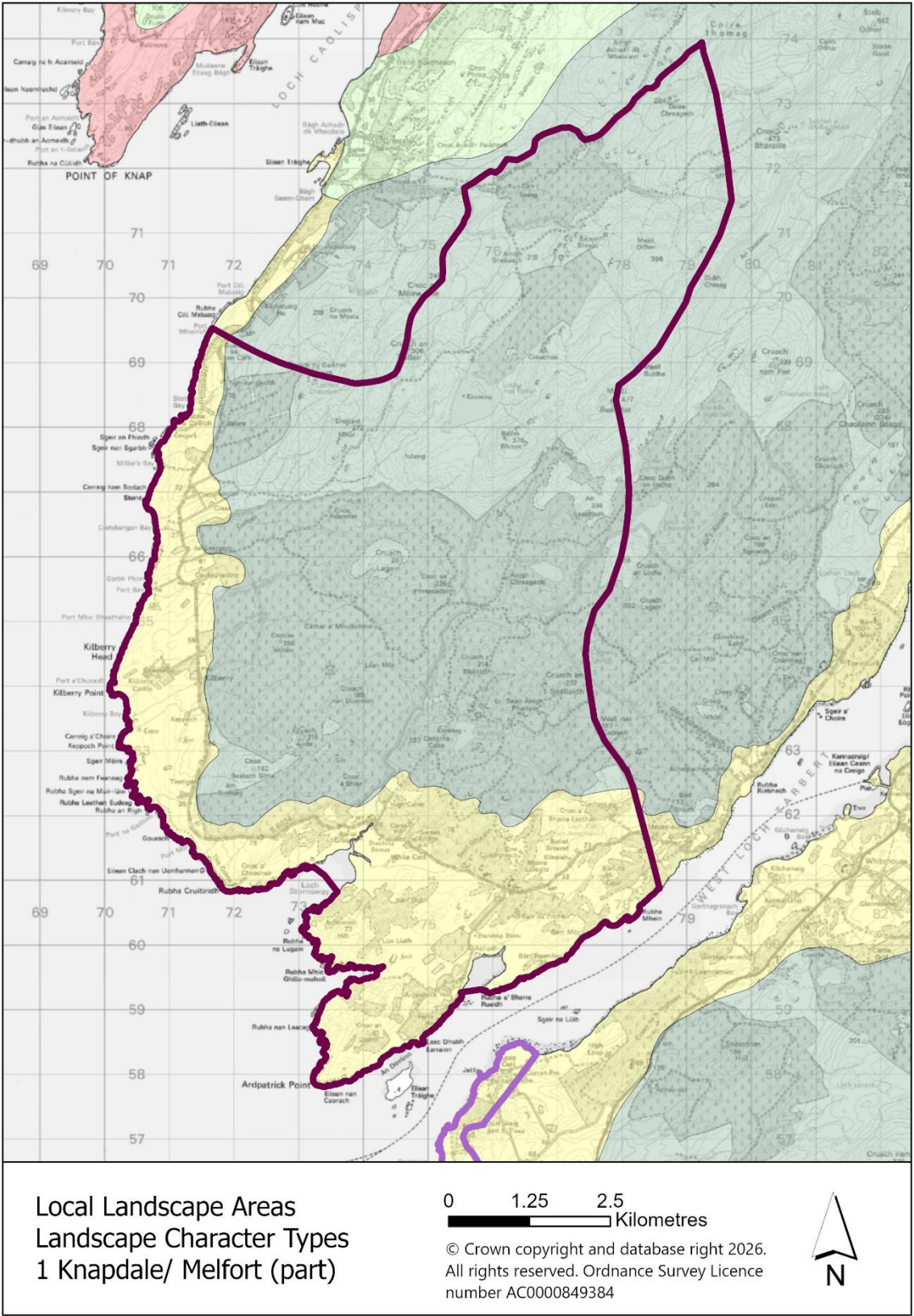


Figure 13: Knapdale Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

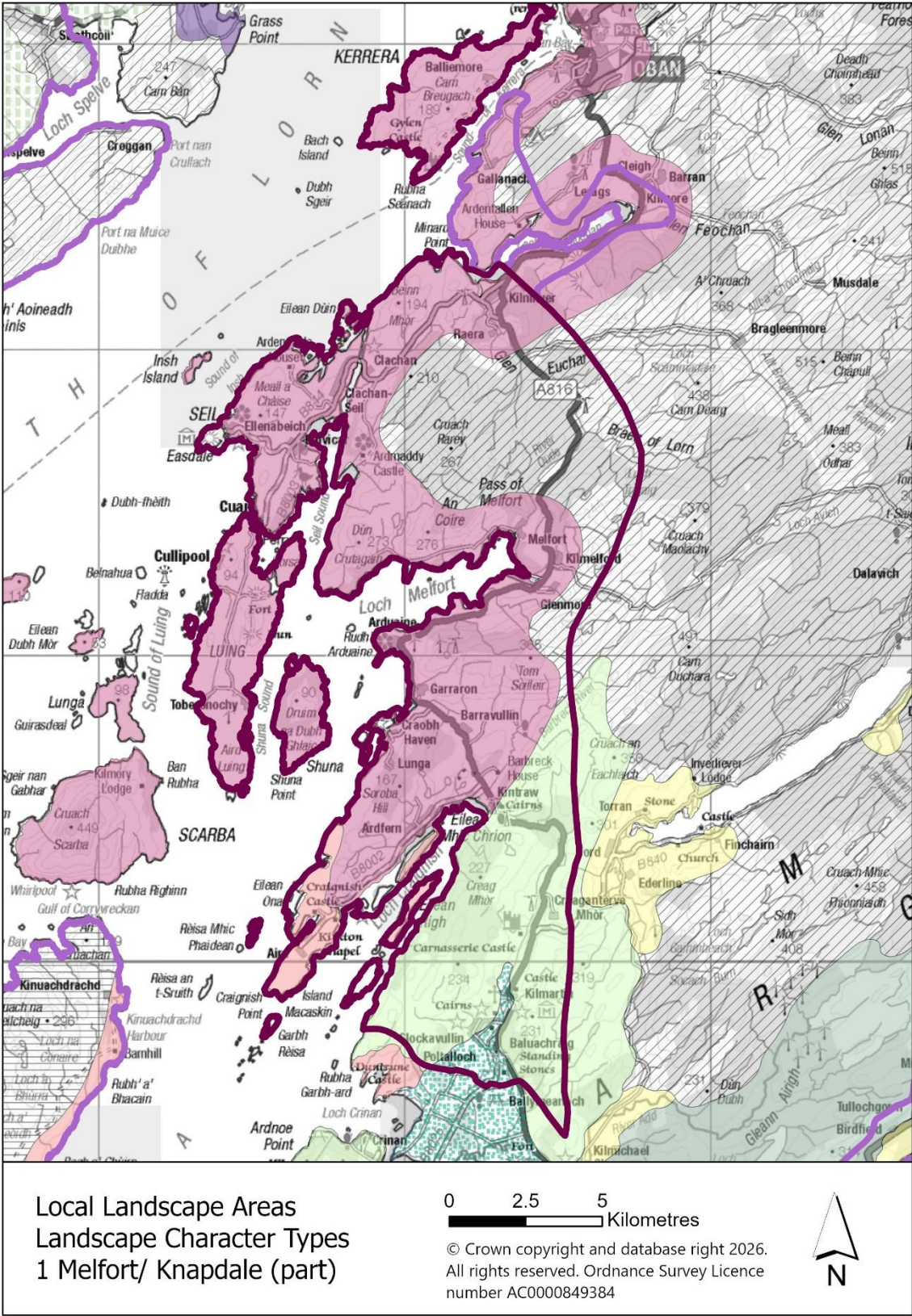


Figure 14: Melfort Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

4. Knapdale / Melfort

The Knapdale/Melfort LLA comprises two separate and distinct areas – one at Knapdale area in North Kintyre, and the other in the Melfort area in OLI.

Knapdale (Figure 13)

The majority of the Knapdale part of the LLA is Plateau Moor and Forest (LCT39). This is a “*gently undulating plateau-like landform with smooth even slopes*” (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson). This is “*an irregular and often complex craggy landform with pronounced ridges and occasional high, more defined summits, although some limited areas of slightly smoother and gentler hill slopes also occur, mainly in the south west*” (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson). Much of the landscape is coniferous forestry.

The coastal area is Rocky Coastland (LCT53). This has an expansive seaward context and includes the small settlements of Kilberry and Carse against an expansive seaward context. Scattered farms can be found around the area, although agricultural land around Kilberry has recently been planted with native broadleaf trees.

The southern tip (Rocky Coastland) contains bands of Ancient Woodland, an area of Class 1 peat, as well as the Tarbert Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC). There is a scattering of Category B and C listed buildings, mainly along the B8024 road, including Kilberry Castle. There is also one Scheduled Monument in the vicinity of the castle. The Kilberry Coast SSSI runs from Loch Stornoway to near Coulaghailtro. The inland area contains the Knapdale Lochs SSSI and Knapdale Lochs SPA.

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans in the Knapdale part of this LLA.

Melfort (Figure 14)

The Melfort LLA covers coastal mainland, as well as island areas, including Kerrera, then from Kilninver in the north, down to Kilmartin and Craignish Point in the south. The area around Loch Feochan is covered by a separate LLA (North West Argyll-Coast) Craggy Coast and Islands (LCT57). Outcrops of slate have produced a distinctive coastline and islands (slate islands of Luing and Seil). *“The complex landform of this character type is complemented by extensive broadleaved woodland, small settlements, farmland and policy landscape which feature on more sheltered sections of coast. It is a small scale and richly diverse landscape which makes a strong contribution to the wider seascape character when seen in conjunction with Mull and Jura. This coastal landscape is relatively well-settled and is a popular destination for tourism and recreation. Panoramic views from the A816, from minor roads and settlement and from the sea”* (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson).

Further inland there is an area of Craggy Upland (LCT40), forming an irregular upland plateau.

The tip of the Ardfern Peninsula, towards Craignish Point, are Coastal Parallel Ridges (LCT55). This LCT features *“narrow rocky ridges with a strong south-west/north east alignment which break down to form chains of rocky islands at the coast”* (source Nature Scot). There is a horse-shoe bay around Loch Beag.

The southern part of the LLA are Upland Parallel Ridges (LCT43) with a small section of Flat Moss and Mudflats (LCT56) encroaching at the south.

The Upland Parallel Ridges are *“a distinctive series of linear ridges aligned in parallel with the south-west/north-east grain of the coast”* (Nature Scot). *“This landscape comprises a distinctive series of linear ridges aligned in parallel with the south-west/north-east grain of the coast. Craggy-topped hills and ridges have a rugged character accentuated by the mosaic of heather, grass and scrub across rocky hill slopes (...) The coastal edge against Loch Craignish is particularly rough and impenetrable and access is difficult throughout most of this character type”*. (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, carol Anderson). The study also notes the increased sensitivity of this area due to its setting of the archaeological rich landscapes within Moine Mhor and the glens of Kilmartin and Kilmichael and also the wider seascape around Loch Craignish.

The small Flat Moss and Mudflats area is part of the open plain of Kilmartin Glen which is *“one of the most important prehistoric, ritual, archaeological landscapes in Scotland, largely uncovered during peat clearance from the 19th Century. Occasionally described as a linear cemetery, it is comprised of an alignment of cairns, standing stones, stone*

settings, stone circles and a henge, highly unusual for western Scotland, along the floor of the valley.” (source: Nature Scot – Landscape Evolution and Influences)

Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments are scattered across the area, including group listings at the Slate Islands where there are also 4 Conservation Areas and the A Listed Clachan “Bridge across the Atlantic” towards these. A further notable grouping is around Kintraw (including A-Listed Barbreck House) which sits at the transition between the Craggy Coast and Islands and the Upland Parallel Ridges. Scheduled Monuments and Ancient Woodland are particularly prolific around the Upland Parallel Ridges of the Kilmartin Glen area. There is a Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL) at Arduaine.

Ancient Woodland is also present on the Isle of Shuna.

The LLA also includes a separate portion at Kerrera where there is the South Kerrera and Gallanach SSSI to the south.

The following Allocations, PDA’s and AFA’s are within the countryside area of the Melfort part of the LLA:

- Minerals Allocation M3010 (sand and gravel at Kilmartin)
- PDA P4012 on Kerrera for mixed use development at the Kerrera Ferry Landing. This was historically a Rural Opportunity Area and as such, the previous development here offers the opportunity to consolidate a small established grouping.
- PDA P4008 sits between areas of Kilmelford settlement area and offers the opportunity for development of community facilities, but with the added constraint of there being a Scheduled Monument within the PDA boundary.
- PDA P3014 is for low density affordable housing near Croabh Haven to replace 5 caravans previously on the site. Proposals have been coming forward on the site in a piecemeal manner for individual houses.
- PDA P3017 for tourism, residential caravan park and housing includes and surrounds the small settlement of Lunga. This is covered by a Masterplan approved for the area in 2014 (13/02859/MPLAN).
- Area for Action A3003 aims to resolve issues with the extensive village backlands with a comprehensive approach. The AFA sits immediately adjacent to the settlement area of Ardfern.



Figure 15: Jura Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

5. Jura (Figure 15)

The Jura LLA covers the northern half of the island, largely intersecting with the Jura, Scarba, Lunga and Garvellachs Wild Land designation. For that reason, Nature Scot's Description of Wild Land should be referred to as a starting point to understand the area.

The majority of the LLA (including the whole part that intersects with the Wild Land) is Plateau Moorland (LCT41) where relatively inaccessible hill ranges form a backdrop to the lower, more accessible, landscape at the east coast. *"The hills are irregular and interlocking, divided by glens, narrow river valleys and corries and saddles which often contain lochans. (...) The vegetation is dominated by moorland and wet heath. Much of the area is unsettled, relatively inaccessible, exposed, semi-natural and often remote. The sense of remoteness and relative naturalness, emphasised by the inaccessibility and lack of settlement and the topographical diversity are key sensitivities"* (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson).

The coastal edge (which is outwith the Wild Land area) are Coastal Parallel Ridges (LCT55) forming the gradual transition from the coast to the uplands. This area contains some scattered buildings (including B and C listed) as well as small areas of Ancient Woodland.

Most of the LLA is covered by the Jura, Scarba and the Garvellachs Special Protection Area (SPA).

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within the Jura LLA.

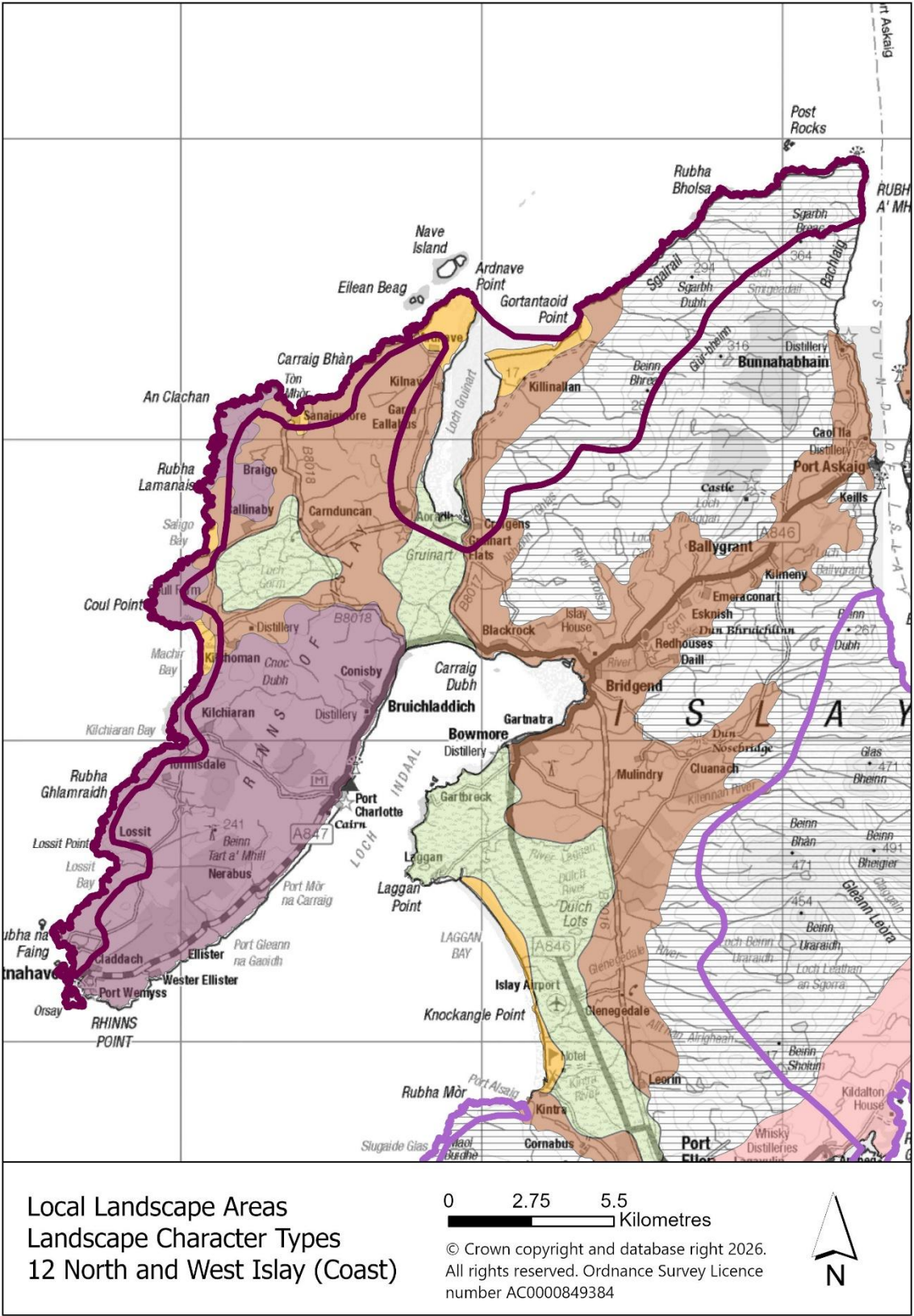


Figure 16: North and West Islay (Coast) Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

6. North and West Islay – Coast (Figure 16)

This LLA runs around the west coast of Islay, from Portnahaven in the south to Ruvaal to the east.

Much of the coast of the Rinns of Islay is Rocky Moorland (LCT42) which is a steep, rocky upland plateau sloping down towards the east coast of the Rinns peninsula, where *a wide band of farmed coast surrounds the interior moorland* (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson).

The Rocky Moorland is intersected with smaller areas of Sand Dunes and Mahair (LCT58) which are open, windswept bays, and Island Mixed Farmland (LCT49) which is the farmed fringes of the uplands, characterised by its low relief. The Wind Energy Capacity Study notes that “*most of this type is relatively complex and small scale*”.

South of Loch Gruinart is Lowland Bog and Moor (LCT48) which is an extensive low-lying bog found only on Islay. The part of the deeper LLA to the east forms the edge of an area of Plateau Moorland (LCT41) which forms the uplands and highest hills of the island.

This LLA, particularly the deeper northern section, contains large areas of primarily Class 1 peat, as well as some Class 2.

The RAMSAR Wetlands of International Importance: Gruinart Flats, intersect with a large section of the LLA around Loch Gruinart. The same area is designated as a SSSI. There is a further SSSI to the north (Rubh’ a’ Mhail to Uamhannan Donna Coast). Additionally, the huge (8.8ha) Rinns of Islay SSSI covers much of the southern part of the LLA. The (split) Rinns of Islay RAMSAR Wetlands of International Importance site overlaps this as well as the adjacent smaller Glac na Criche SSSI (and the Glac na Criche Special Area of Conservation (SAC)). The Rinns of Islay SPA also covers most of the southern and central parts of the LLA.

There are a few listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments within the LLA, including the A Listed Rinns of Islay Lighthouse.

While the Portnahaven / Port Wemyss Conservation Area is outwith the LLA, its positioning between the southern tip of the mainland portion and the small uninhabited island of Orsay, means the relationship between the 2 designations must be acknowledged.

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within this LLA.

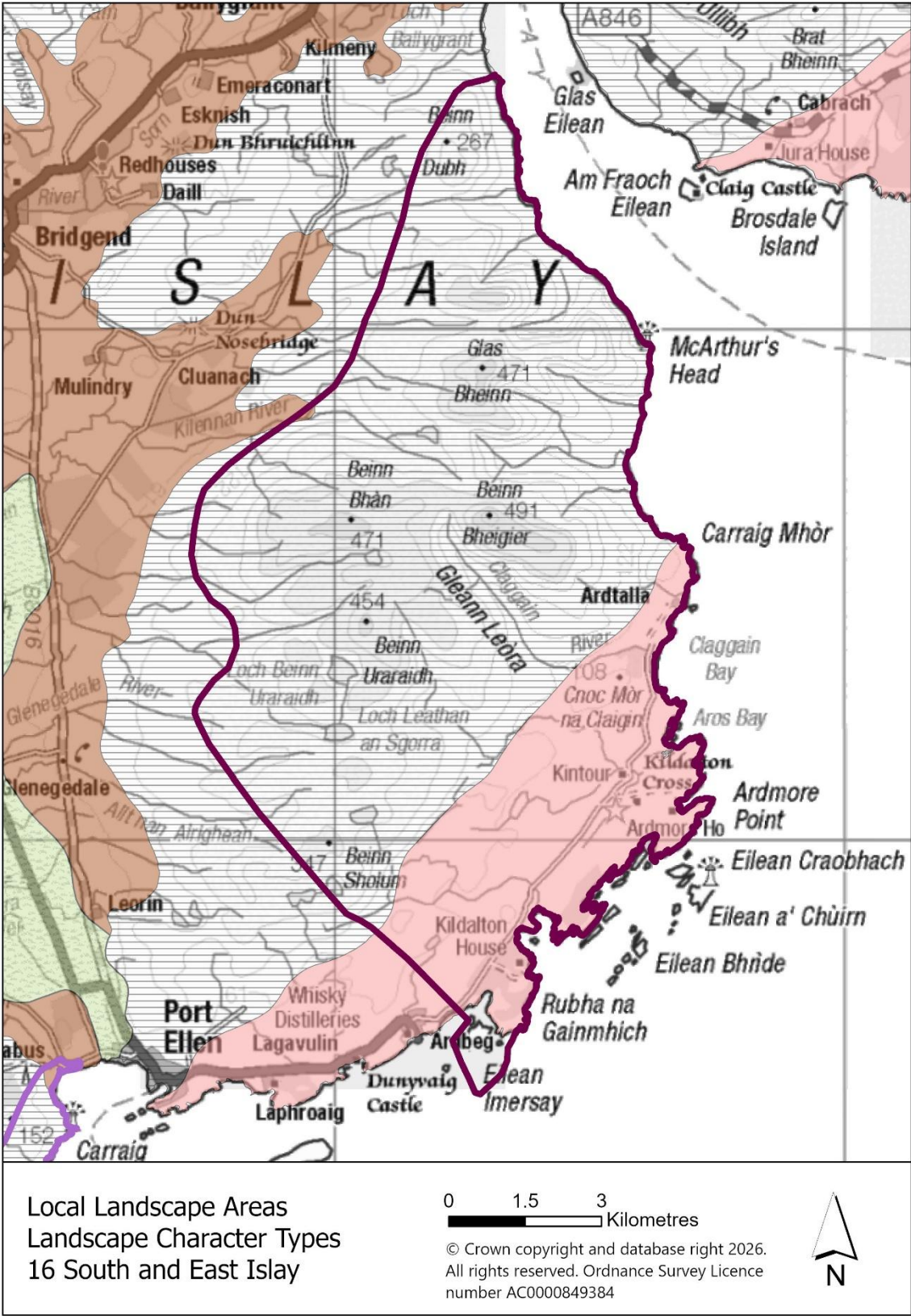


Figure 17: South and East Islay Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

7. South and East Islay (Figure 17)

The South and East Islay LLA covers a relatively large area, with coast as well as inland peaks and lochs.

The majority of this LLA is Plateau Moorland (LCT41) which forms the uplands and highest hills of the island. This part of the island is fairly remote and inaccessible. *“The hills are irregular and interlocking, divided by glens, narrow river valleys and corries and saddles which often contain lochans. (...) The vegetation is dominated by moorland and wet heath. Much of the area is unsettled, relatively inaccessible, exposed, semi-natural and often remote. The sense of remoteness and relative naturalness, emphasised by the inaccessibility and lack of settlement and the topographical diversity are key sensitivities”* (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson).

The southern section is Coastal Parallel Ridges (LCT55) forming the gradual transition from the coast to the uplands. This area contains strips of Ancient Woodland as well as Scheduled Monuments and B Listed Buildings. Within the small uninhabited island off the south coast is the lighthouse at Eilean a Chuirn. Although not part of the LLA itself, this will form the wider setting and part of the key seascape views.

There are large areas of Class 1 and 2 peat across the LLA.

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within this LLA.

Figure 18: South West Islay Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

8. South West Islay (Figure 18)

This relatively small LLA covers the coastline around the Oa which is entirely Plateau Moorland (LCT41). This LCT forms the uplands and highest hills on Islay and Jura.

The Oa is an RSPB nature reserve with dramatic sea cliffs towering some 100m over the sea containing natural caves. The prominence of the cliff profiles make this area particularly visually sensitive.

“The coastline of The Oa is characterised by rocky cliffs, small exposed headlands, bays, indentations and islands. It is relatively secluded, and has a sense of naturalness which is reinforced by its exposed setting” (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson).

Most of the LLA intersects with The Oa Special Protection Area (SPA). There is an A listed building – the American Monument – at the Mull of Oa. There are 6 Scheduled Monuments within the LLA, including the Lurabus Township and farmsteads. Areas of Class 1 and Class 2 peat cover large parts of the LLA.

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within this LLA.

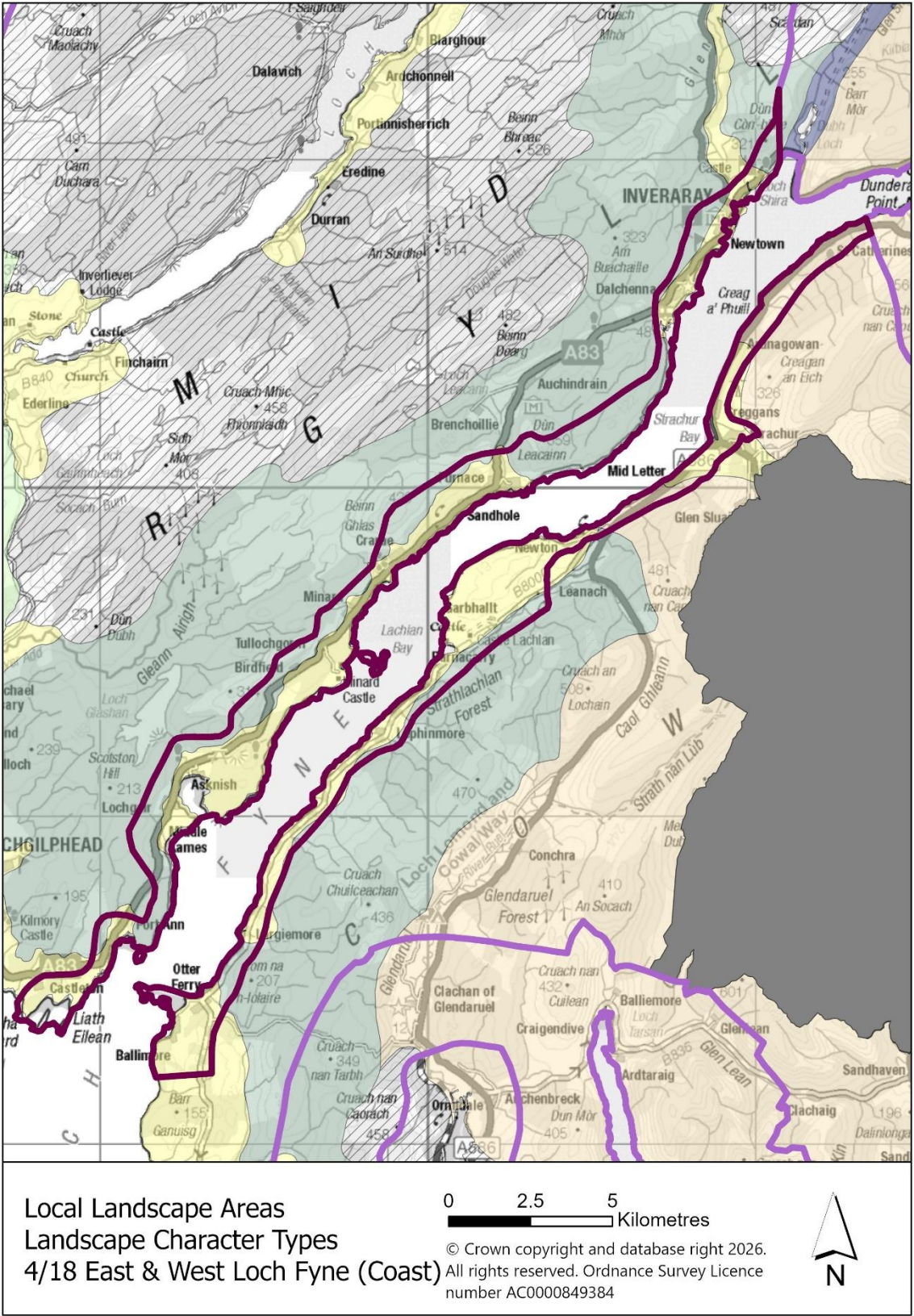


Figure 19: East and West Loch Fyne (Coast) Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

9 and 10. East Loch Fyne – Coast and West Loch Fyne – Coast (Figure 19)

Both edges of Loch Fyne comprise a patchwork of two LCT's - Rocky Coastland (LCT53) and Plateau Moor and Forest (LCT39). The Rocky Coastland features the "*small scale and often rolling landform, a well-settled character and the backdrop provided to these low-lying linear loch fringes and valleys by more expansive upland landscapes*" (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson). LCT39 is a transitional landscape between the loch fringe and the more extensive Craggy Uplands (source: Gillespies).

There is a small area of Steep Ridges and Mountains (LCT34) on the north of the east coast between St Catherines and Ardnagowan. The A83 runs through much of the LLA on the west coast with settlements along the route, including Inveraray within its designed landscape to the north (Inveraray Castle GDL). Inveraray also contains a conservation area and a high density of listed buildings (many of these category A, including the castle).

The Ardinglas and Strone and Ballimore GDLs sits within the East Loch Fyne – Coast LLA, and the Crarae GDL sits within the East Loch Fyne – Coast GDL.

Both LLA's contain scatterings of Ancient Woodland, Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings, many of the latter being within the settlement areas.

There is a Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS) within the East Loch Fyne LLA at Creggans, Strachur

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplan areas within the countryside area of the East Loch Fyne Coast LLA. Within the countryside area of the West Loch Fyne Coast LLA there is the following:

- Minerals Allocation M3002

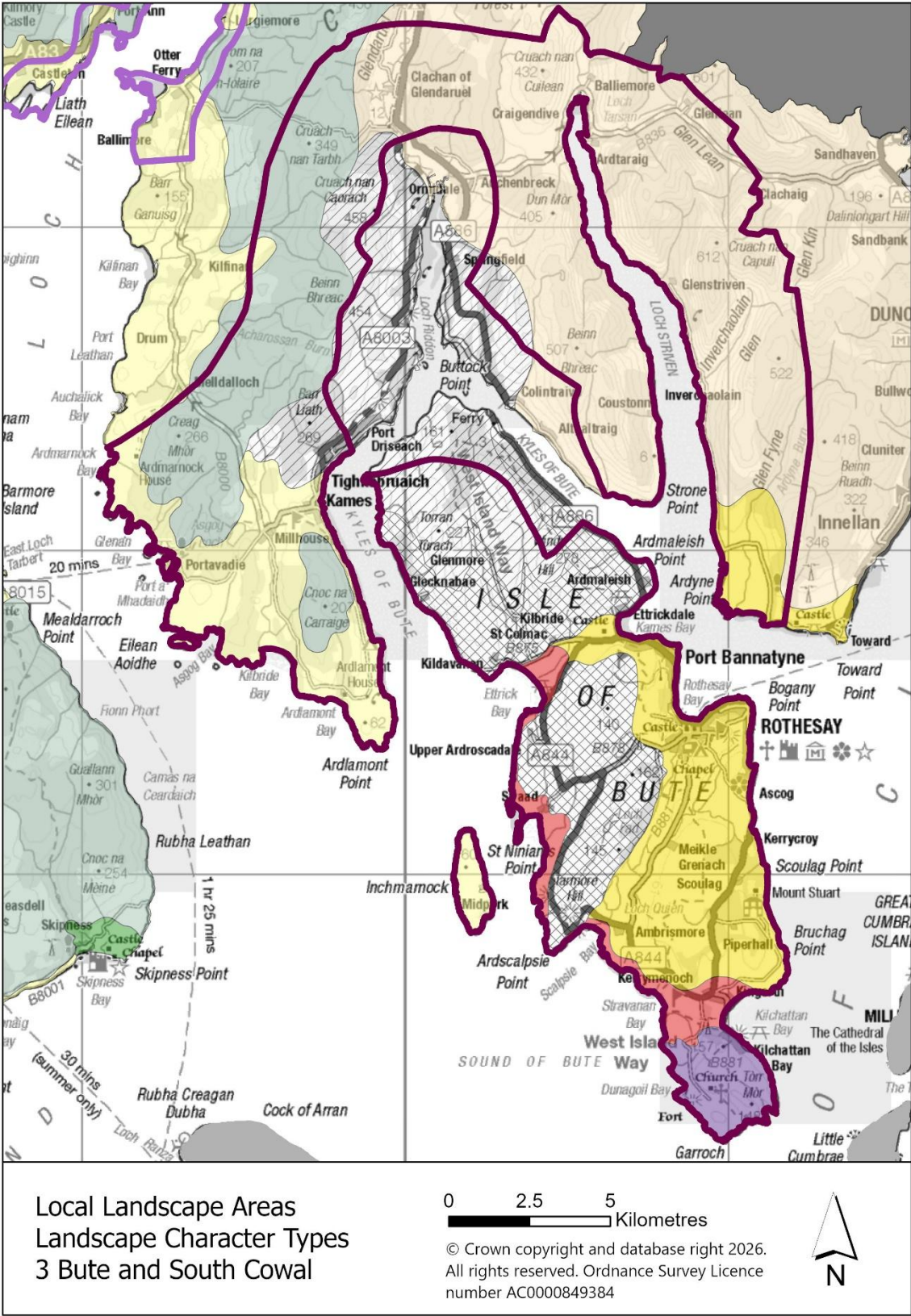


Figure 20: Bute and South Cowal Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

11. Bute and South Cowal (Figure 20)

This LLA comprises the majority of Bute (with the exception of the northernmost portion) and a band at the south of Cowal from Portavadie in the west, to Clachan of Glendaruel and Balliemore at the north, round to Ardyne Point in the south east.

Bute contains large areas of Open Ridges (LCT38) to the north and west of the island, which *“features steep-sided and well defined hills in the north and lower rounded hills and undulating upland plateau in the south. The higher ground of this character type is open and is covered with rough pasture and moorland while small farms and enclosed pastures fringe lower hill slopes. These relatively low but open ridges and hills are important in the contribution they make to the overall diversity and landscape found on the Isle of Bute. The north-eastern hills also provide a wider scenic backdrop to the Kyles of Bute NSA. These landscapes are visually prominent from Bute but also from the Cowal and Firth of Clyde area and also from Arran”* (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson).

There is Craggy upland (LCT40) at the far north comprising an irregular plateau on the upland cliffs of the Kyles of Bute. The majority of the craggy upland however is within the adjoining NSA rather than this LLA. The wider area around the main town of Rothesay is Rolling Farmland with Estates (LCT46) around the Rothesay area and where Mount Stuart is considered to be one of the best examples of an 18th and 19th century designed landscape.

There is an area of Stepped Rocky coastland (LCT50) at the southern tip where the underlying basalt originated from volcanic eruptions on the Isle of Arran (source: Nature Scot) – this has resulted in slopes with steps of flat terraces divided by low vertical rock faces. *“It is sparsely settled but forms the setting for Kilchattan and also features rich archaeology. This landscape is highly visible in views to the north on Bute where it presents a distinct contrast with more low-lying and managed farmland and makes a strong contribution to the highly scenic character of the west coast of the island”* (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson).

Bute also includes strips of flat Coastal Plain (LCT52) to the west of the island, as well as immediately north of the stepped rocky coastland. *“These flat, open coastal areas are highly visible from roads and settlement which are often elevated above them and beaches and other coastal areas are also popular for recreation”* (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson).

This is the only LLA to contain a Main Town (Rothesay) within which (and adjacent Port Bannatyne) there is an extensive Conservation Area and a large number of A, B and C

listed buildings. Whilst the highest concentration of Listed Buildings is along the developed coast, there are also clusters inland as well as Scheduled Monuments and Ancient Woodland. There is a further Conservation Area at Kerrycroy and a Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL) at Mount Stuart.

The large North End of Bute SSSI intersects with the north of the LLA and a further, smaller, SSSI (Central Lochs) sits near the centre of the island. There is an LNCS – West Quien Hill.

Within the countryside area of the Bute part of the LLA there are the following Allocations:

- Mineral Allocations M1001 (sand and gravel at Kingarth) and M1002 (hard rock at Kingarth-Ambrose)

South Cowal comprises a small area of rolling farmland with estates (LCT46) in the Toward area where there is a designed landscape. The eastern portion of South Cowal is mainly Steep Ridges and Mountains (LCT34) – this is an upland landscape of “*steep-sided, craggy topped mountains and sharp ridges deeply cut by the long narrow sea lochs of Cowal*” (source Nature Scot). The western portion comprises Plateau Moor and Forest (LCT39) with Rocky Coastland (LCT53) to the south. There are small areas of Craggy Upland (LCT40) however the majority of the craggy upland is outwith the LLA designation and in the adjacent NSA designation instead.

The Island of Inchmamock is included within the LLA and is Rocky Coastland (LCT53).

The South Cowal portion is less settled, with only a handful of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments across it. There is a GDL at Castle Toward. Bands of Ancient Woodland are mainly to the coastal areas, but more prolific around Portavadie.

Within the countryside area of the Cowal part of the LLA there are the following Allocations, PDA's and AFA's:

- PDA P1005 is immediately adjacent to the Tighnabruach settlement area for a community forest and croft project
- AFA A1006 to support environmental improvements of the former oil platform construction site and, along with PDA P1007, develop marine/leisure facilities. This area has been subject to a masterplan (15/02001/MPLAN). Minerals Allocation M1003 (sand and gravel) sits within this masterplan area.
- PDA P1010 is not only partially within the LLA, but also fully within the Castle Toward GDL. The site use set out in the Delivery Programme is mixed use,

including tourism, education, leisure, housing and business. A masterplan was approved in 2016 (16/02356/MPLAN)

- PDA P1003 sits partially within countryside area and partially within remote countryside. It has been identified as a potential site for forest crofts and/or enterprise centre. The Delivery Programme notes that a Masterplan / comprehensive approach is required. No recent applications have been on the site although a scoping application (24/00944/SCOPE) is pending consideration.

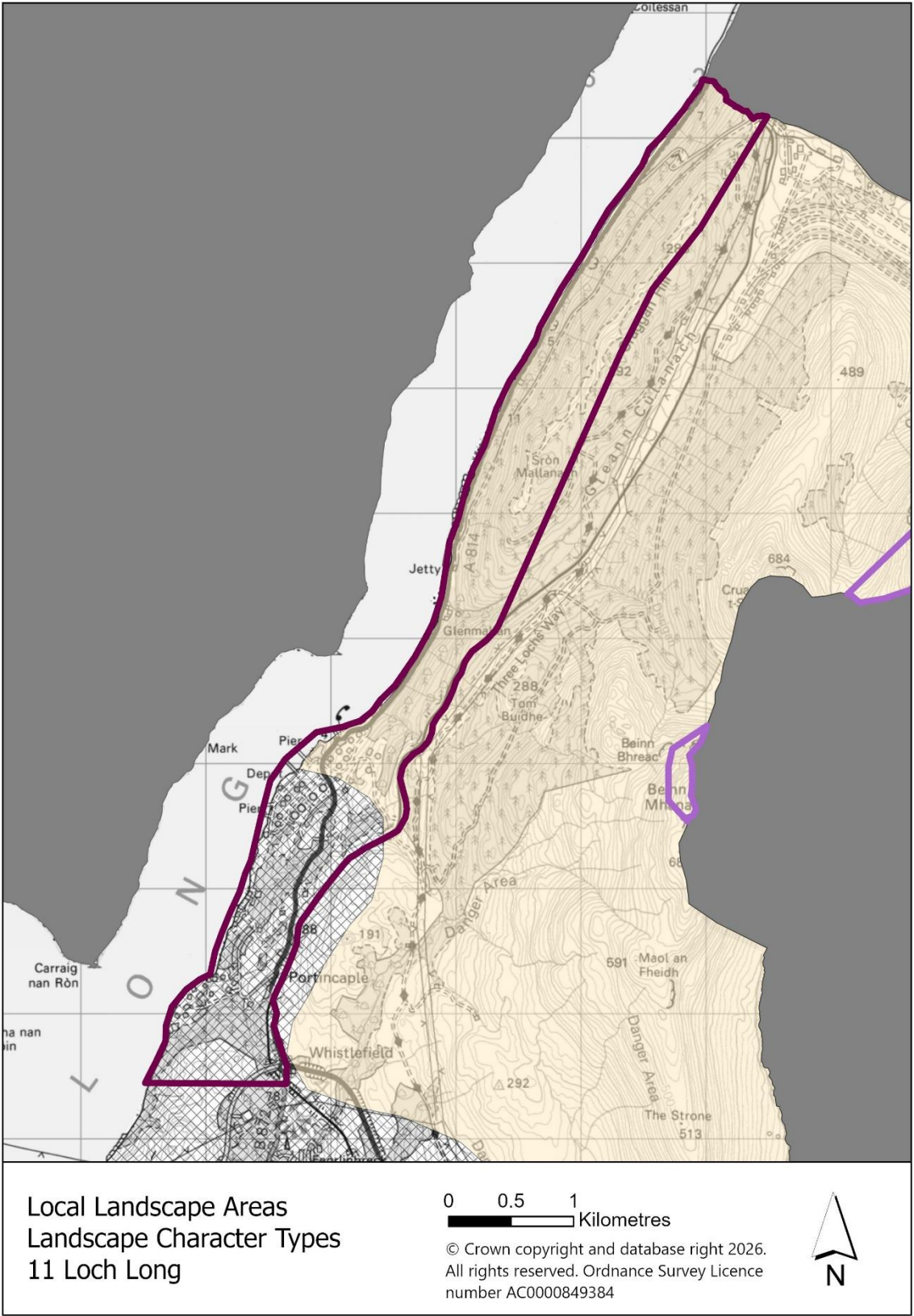


Figure 21: Loch Long Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

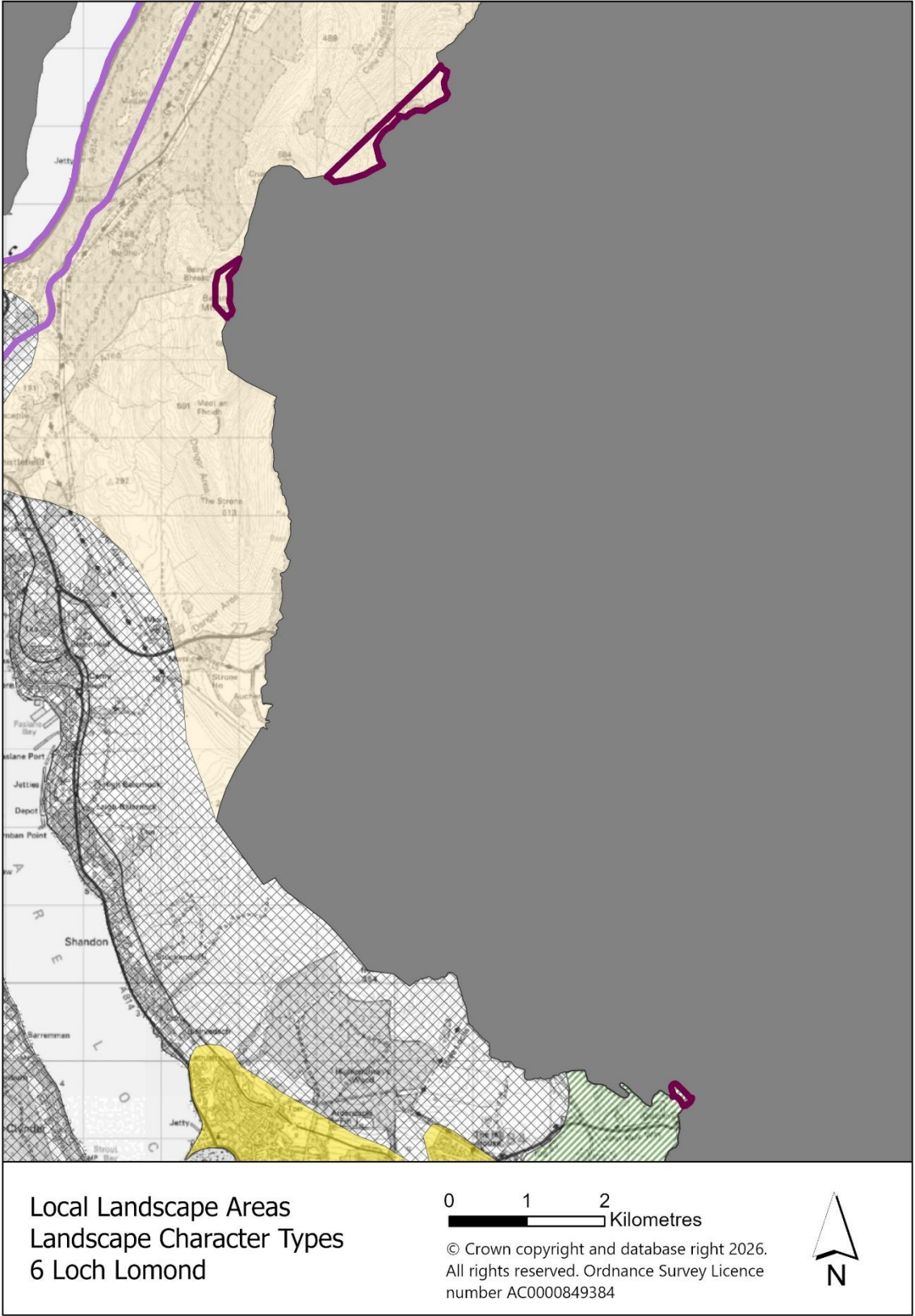


Figure 22: Loch Lomond Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

12. Loch Long – Coast (Figure 21)

The majority of the LLA is Steep Ridges and Mountains (LCT34). According to the Wind Energy Capacity Study, this “*upland landscape comprises steep-sided, craggy-topped mountains and sharp ridges deeply cut by the long, narrow sea lochs of Cowal*”. The A814 runs along the coast of this LLA, with slopes upwards to the ridge of Sron Mallanach.

The southern portion of the LLA, around Portincaple, is Open Ridges (LCT38) where broad, rounded ridges are considerably lower than the Steep Ridges and Mountains to the north. There is extensive tree cover (including Ancient Woodland), with built development (including listed buildings) at the settlement of Portincaple and a substantial oil depot.

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within this LLA.

13. Loch Lomond (Figure 22)

Two very small areas (58ha total) of land bordering the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park is defined as the Loch Lomond LLA. This (unlike the Steep Ridges and Hills LCT within the LLTNP area itself) is Steep Ridges and Mountains (LCT34). Given the proximity to the LLTNP, as well as the topography of this area, it is unlikely that development would be proposed within this LLA - council records only show 2 historic applications intersecting these areas, both for Forest Plans. There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within this LLA.

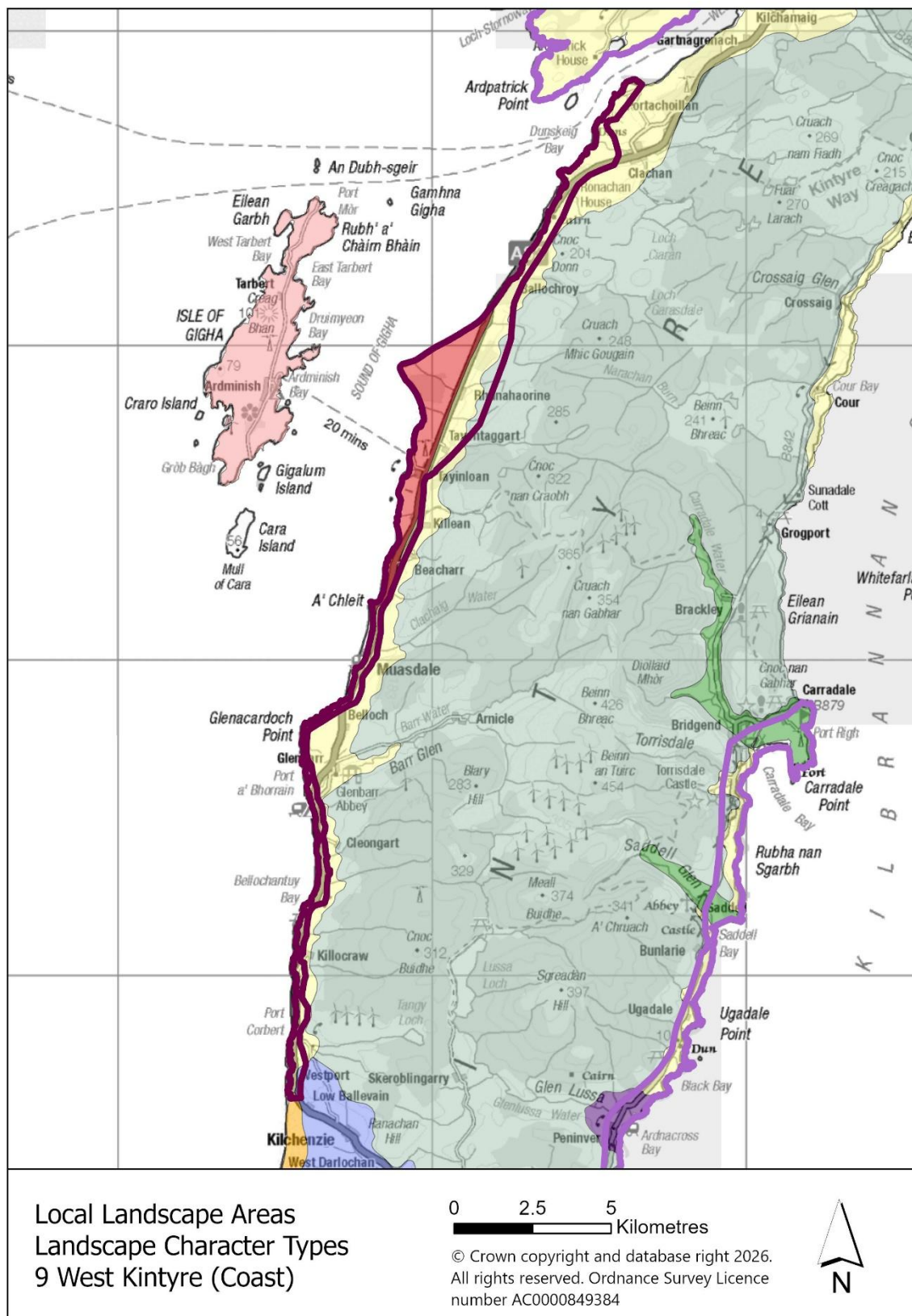


Figure 23: West Kintyre (Coast) Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

14. West Kintyre – Coast (Figure 23)

This LLA runs down the majority of the western coast of Kintyre. The majority of the strip is Rocky Coastland (LCT53). This is an uneven rocky landform with a relatively small landscape and a wide variety of archaeological sites. The A83 runs almost the full length of this strip from Clachan southwards, with the exception of at Glen Barr when the roads veers away from the coastline.

There is a wider section of LLA directly opposite Gigha, where there is an area of Coastal Plan (LCT52). This is a flat area with an open, exposed character, widely visible from the A83. *“Highly scenic views over the sea to low-lying Gigha, focussing on the distinctive profile of Jura, area a key feature”* (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson).

There is a Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS) at Bellochantuy Bay and another further north at Ronachan. There are 2 SSSI's wholly or largely within the LLA – Rhunahaorine Point and Glenacardoch Point, as well as the Machrihanish Dunes and the Ballochchantuy and Tangy Gorges SSSI's which overlap only at very small sections. There are numerous Scheduled Monuments along the LLA as well as A-listed buildings – the Killeen and Kilchenzie Parish Church, and the Dolls' Houses at Killeen. Other B and C listed buildings, and ancient woodland are scattered along the LLA.

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within this LLA.

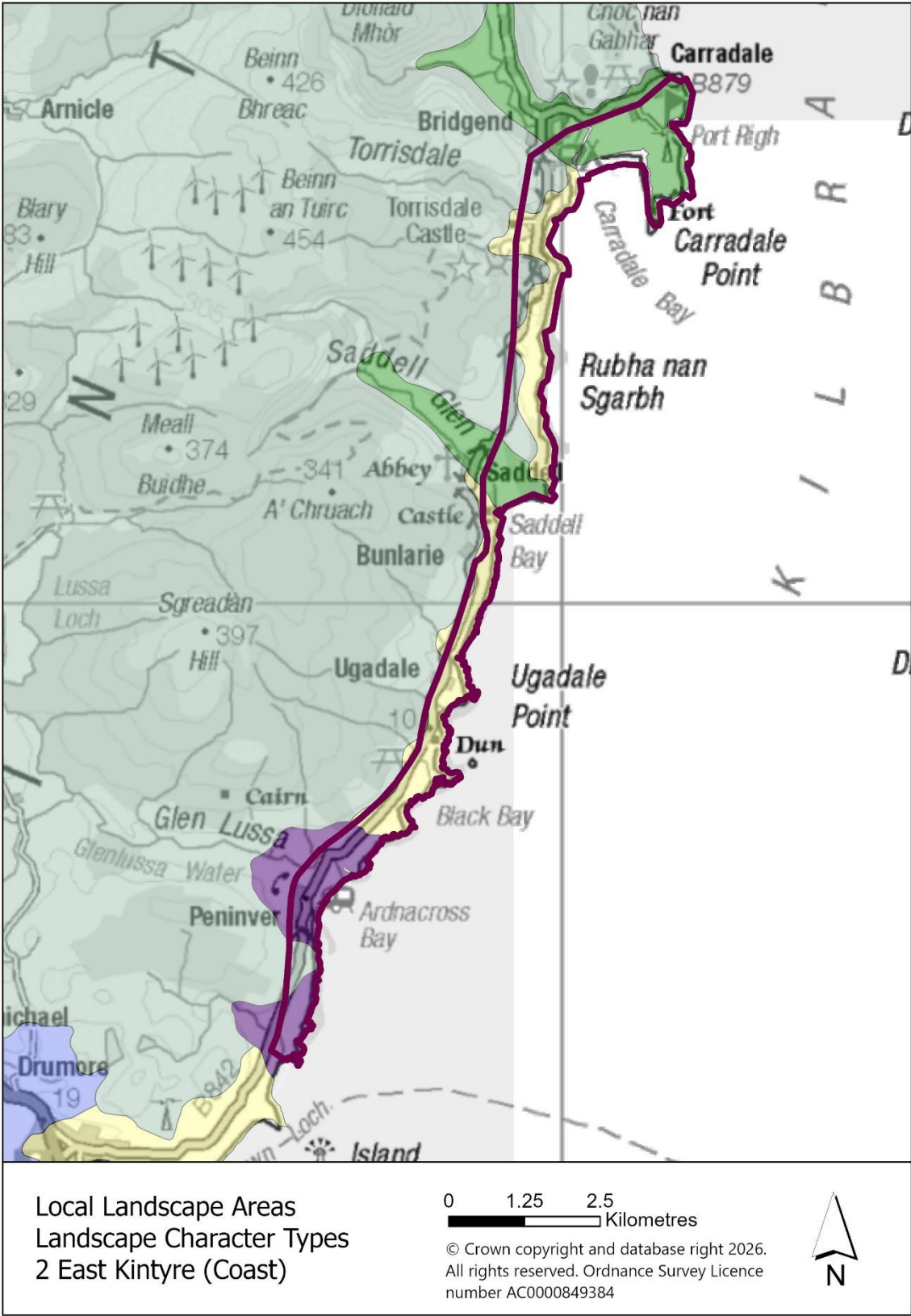


Figure 24: East Kintyre (Coast) Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

15. East Kintyre – Coast (Figure 24)

Much of the coastal area is classed as Rocky Coastland (LCT53). There are Coastal Glens (LCT36) around the Carradale and Saddell areas, and Low Coastal Hills (LCT54) in the Peniver area. The inland edge of the LLA is Plateau Moor and Forest (LCT39). This LLA is a well-settled area, with the B842 running through it. Numerous listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments can be found within this strip including A-listed Saddell Castle. There are views outwards towards Arran across the seascape.

LCT53 features a low-lying “*expansive seaward context*” (Wind Energy Capacity Study). Characteristics, according to the Wind Energy Capacity Study, include a small scale, rolling landform and a well-settled character. This is a transitional landscape against the backdrop of expansive upland landscapes. The area contains bands of Ancient Woodland and a SSSI.

Again, LCT36 forms a contrasting edge to the upland landscape (LCT39). These differ from LCT53 however as they form the areas around the larger settlements of Carradale and Saddell with a relatively flat floor with sheltered sandy bays and meandering rivers.

Peniver sits within LCT54, and contains Housing Allocation H3011 as well as an LNCS. This landscape character type is mainly found to the south of the Mull of Kintyre. It is a coastal landscape of rounded low hills and shallow valleys.

These 3 LCT’s (53, 36 and 54) are set against the backdrop of LCT39 – Plateau Moor and Forest which makes up small segments along the interior of the Mull of Kintyre peninsula. This is an extensive, large-scale mosaic of open moorland and forestry with smooth even slopes.

There are no Allocations, PDA’s, AFA’s or Strategic Masterplans within the countryside area of this LLA.

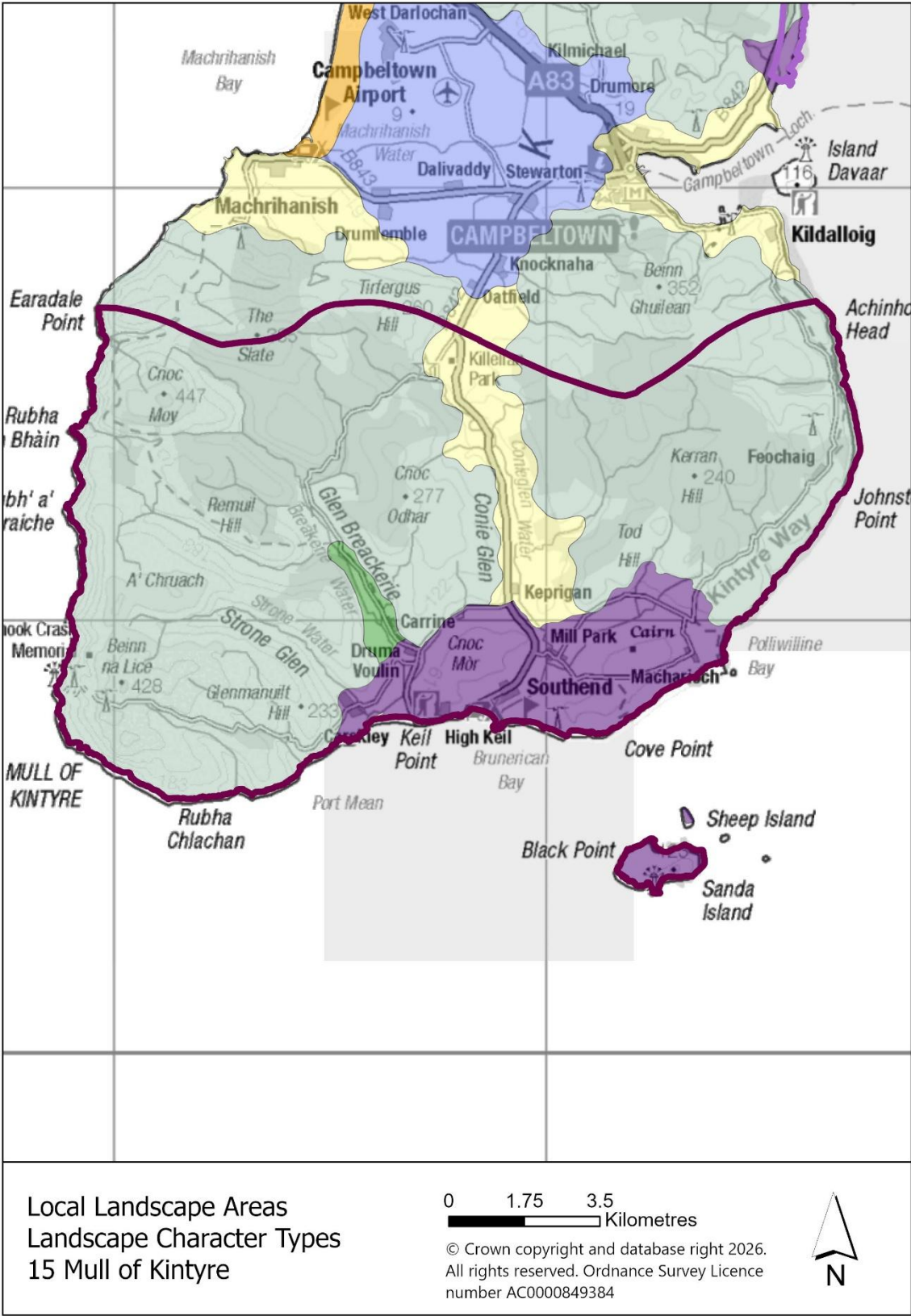


Figure 25: Mull of Kintyre Local Landscape Area – refer to Figure 03 for LCT legend

16. Mull of Kintyre (Figure 25)

Plateau Moor and Forest (LCT39) forms the majority of the LLA area, with two areas directly abutting the sea, forming “*dramatic wild coastlines*” (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study, Carol Anderson). The landscape is “*a large scale mosaic of forestry and open grass and heather moorland*” and sparsely settled, with isolated farms on lower hill slopes. The Wind Energy Capacity Study assesses this character type to be “*a relatively simple rolling plateau of densely forested hills at its core, contrasting with individual summits, such as Bein Ghuilean, and a more diverse and rugged landform along the coast. The western coast and Mull of Kintyre have strong qualities of wildness*”. The edge hills of this LCT are highly visible from the settled lowland landscapes of the Rocky Coastland, Bay Farmland and Low Coastal Hills, however views from this LCT are very limited. The Wind Energy Capacity Study considers there to be a pronounced Wild Land character close to the coast (away from the forestry, roads and access tracks).

Rocky Coastland (LCT53) forms a sliver of land between the two areas of Plateau Moor and Forest. Despite its name, at this location this is an inland areas, forming a smaller scale valley set within the adjacent upland areas. The rolling landform is likely to provide strong containment, making an important contribution to the wider scenic context. The Wind Energy Capacity Study sets out that the “*small scale, complex landform and pattern and roll in the wider landscape increases sensitivity*”. This includes the B842 running between Campbeltown and Southend, with small settlements along the route.

Low Coastal Hills (LCT54) occurs at this location where “*an outcrop of Devonian sandstone has created a farmed landscape which contrasts with the more extensive upland moors and forestry occurring to the north*” (source: Wind Energy Capacity Study). It is a coastal landscape of rounded low hills and shallow valleys, forming part of the wider seascape. The Wind Energy Capacity Study further sets out that “*the irregular, rolling landform of the landscape provides strong containment and the presence of small woodlands, fields and settlement reinforces its predominantly small scale. This landscape makes an important contribution to the wider scenic context, the small scale diverse and settled character of hinterland farmland, sandy beaches, rocky cliffs and islands contrasting with the dramatic rugged backdrop of the steep-sided and high hills of the Mull of Kintyre*”. There are numerous listed buildings scattered across this LCA (in addition to scheduled monuments which are present across the majority of landscape areas). Coastal views are important within this landscape type, and whilst the higher ground of LCT 39 (Plateau Moor and Forest) is more distinctive in long views from Arran, Antrim and Ayrshire, this area nevertheless contributes to the setting of the Isle of Sanda.

Coastal Glens (LCT36) form a very small portion of the LLA. This type of landscape is generally an enclosed, narrow area, contained by steep sides. A band of Ancient Woodland runs within this LCA.

The Wind Energy Capacity Study considers that key special qualities of this LLA are likely to be the diverse coastal scenery comprising sandy bays, cliffs and islands – including the contrast between the settled farmed southern coast and the rugged wild coast – and panoramic views over sea and to distant land.

There are large areas of Class 1 and 2 Peat across the LLA. There are a number of SSSI's within the LLA including the islands of Sanda, Dun Ban (to the west coast) and Balnabrand Glen (to the east coast). There are 4 Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS's) – 3 near Southend (Brunerican Bay, Dunavwerty Bay and Carskey Bay) and one to the east coast (The Bastard, Learside).

Listed buildings are mainly within the Southend area (category B and C), however the A listed Mull of Kintyre Lighthouse sits at the south west headland, and A listed Sanda Lighthouse sits on the small islands of Sanda. Scheduled Monuments are widely distributed across the LLA.

This LLA contains the start of the long distance walking route – The Kintyre Way.

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within the LLA.

Policy

NPF4 Policy 4d) only gives support to a proposal with an LDP landscape area where:

- i. *Development will not have significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been identified; or*
- ii. *Any significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of at least local importance.*

However, as noted earlier, this policy forms part of the Natural Places policy, and does not recognise or integrate the historic environment components of landscape that is [promoted within the Nature Scot Guidance](#). NPF4 Policy 7(o) can be used to ensure the historic environment is sufficiently recognised.

LDP2 Policy 71 resists development in, or affecting, a Local Landscape Area (LLA) *where its scale, location or design will have a significant adverse impact on the character of the landscape. All development proposals in or affecting an LLA must demonstrate that:*

- a. *Any significant adverse effects on the landscape quality for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, economic or environmental benefits of community wide importance;*
- b. *The proposal is supported by an LVIA and has taken account of the content of any relevant Argyll and Bute Landscape Capacity Assessment; and*
- c. *The location, scale, design, materials and landscaping would be of a high standard and would safeguard or enhance the special qualities and character of the LLA.*

LDP2 adds to the NPF4 policy with the requirement for an LVIA and consideration of any Landscape Capacity Assessments. LDP2 does however somewhat duplicate the LVIA requirement within Policy 2. However, the grouping of the landscape policy within the Natural Places policy (4) of NPF4 appears to overlook that LLA's may be designated on a wider set of values than NSA's, including cultural. LDP2 on the overhand, includes a wider set of considerations within Policy 2:

Development proposals will also be required to demonstrate that there will be no unacceptable adverse effects (either individually or cumulatively) on natural heritage resources, built and/or cultural heritage resources, and landscape and visual amenity.

Should any particular LLA be considered to have a specific character or quality requiring a more specific, tailored approach then the planning authority could give consideration

to the development of technical guidance for individual LLA's, however this would only be possible if Citations were also produced.

Monitoring

Planning applications within the countryside areas (i.e. excluding settlement areas) of the LLA's were extracted for a 2 year period from the date of adoption of LDP2 (28th February 2024 to 28th February 2026). The data was filtered to only include erection of dwellinghouses (excluding demolition and rebuild / reconstructions) which are considered to be the most common application type involving a new structure on the landscape that does not have a locational operational need such as agricultural buildings on existing farms, or telecoms. Renewals of permissions granted prior to the 2 year monitoring period are also excluded.

Note that pre-apps are not included in these statistics as these are not in the public domain. There may therefore be cases where an applicant was advised at pre-app stage that the proposal would be contrary to Development Plan policy, in which case the number of applications that are withdrawn or refused may have been reduced by such.

Across all of the LLA's within this period the data shows that there were 48 applications for dwellinghouses granted consent (totalling 59 dwellinghouses), 5 withdrawn* and 2 refused. Details of these applications can be found on public access, with the reference numbers as follows:

1. Central, South and West Mull

Iona

- 24/01700/PP
- 24/00739/PP

Mull

- 25/00693/PP
- 24/00588/PP
- 25/01148/PP
- 25/00123/PP
- 24/01983/PP
- 24/00908/PP
- 24/02214/PP
- 24/01746/PP
- 24/02213/PP

- 24/01520/PP
- 24/01102/PP
- 24/02215/PPP

Note: whilst outwith the scope of this Monitoring exercise, it was noted that there were 8 applications consented within the countryside area of the Central, South and West Mull LLA for holiday units (including pods), indicating a pressure in this regard.

2. North Argyll

- 25/01129/PP
- 24/00767/PP
- 25/01534/PP
- 25/01324/PPP
- 24/00785/PPP
- 25/01876/PPP
- 23/02375/PP (withdrawn – 3 units)

3. North West Argyll – Coast

- 25/00040/PP
- 24/02296/PPP

4. Knapdale / Melfort

Knapdale – none

Melfort:

- 23/02102/PP
- 23/01006/PP
- 25/01474/PP
- 23/01416/PP (5 units)
- 24/02104/PP
- 24/02140/PP (3 units)
- 24/02234/PP
- 25/00724/PP
- 24/00975/PPP
- 24/01101/PPP (withdrawn)
- 24/01442/PPP (withdrawn)
- 25/00365/PP (withdrawn)

5. Jura - none

6. North and West Islay – Coast

- 23/00877/PP
- 23/00790/PPP (refused)

7. South and East Islay - none

8. South West Islay

- 22/01170/PPP

9. West Loch Fyne – Coast

- 24/01606/PPP (withdrawn)

10. East Loch Fyne – Coast

- 24/00807/PP
- 25/00371/PP
- 23/00905/PPP (2 units)
- 23/01956/PPP

11. Bute and South Cowal

Bute

- 24/02055/PP
- 23/02396/PP (4 units)

Cowal

- 23/01784/PP
- 23/01585/PP
- 20/01429/PP (refused)

12. Loch Long – Coast - none

13. Loch Lomond - none

14. West Kintyre – Coast

- 23/02263/PP
- 24/00819/PP
- 25/01796/PP

15. East Kintyre – Coast

- 24/00413/PP

16. Mull of Kintyre

- 23/01777/PP (2 units)
- 25/01706/PP
- 25/01132/PP

* Note: other applications were withdrawn but subsequently followed by an amended application which was approved, so these applications are excluded to avoid double counting.

Of these consented applications those which included submission of an LVIA or VII (Visual Impact Assessment) are included in the table overleaf. In some cases the LVIA or VII is incorporated within the Design Statement.

LLA	Number of applications granted consent for houses between 28/2/24 and 28/2/26	Number of these applications including an LVIA or VII	% of these applications including an LVIA	Reference numbers of applications containing an LVIA
Central, South and West Mull	14	4	29%	24/02214/PP 24/02213/PP 24/01520/PP 24/02215/PPP
North Argyll	6	2	33%	25/01129/PP 24/00785/PPP
North West Argyll - Coast	2	0	0%	-
Melfort	9	5*	56%	23/01006/PP 25/01474/PP 24/02104/PP 24/02140/PP 24/02234/PP
North and West Islay - Coast	1	0	0%	-
South West Islay	1	0	0%	-
East Loch Fyne - Coast	4	3	75%	24/00807/PP 25/00371/PP 23/00905/PPP
Bute and South Cowal	4	0	0%	-
West Kintyre - Coast	3	0	0%	-
East Kintyre - Coast	1	0	0%	-
Mull of Kintyre	3	0	0%	-

Figure 26: Table showing planning applications within LLA's where an LVIA or VII was submitted

* Note: It appears that an LVIA was requested by the Planning Officer for 23/01416/PP (5 units) but it was deemed by Applicant (via email available on Public Access) as “*not an essential requirement*”. Additionally, the Development Policy response was that this is not a suitable siting or scale.

Wild Land

[Nature Scot](#) notes that “large areas of Scotland – chiefly in the north and west – have largely semi-natural landscapes that show minimal signs of human influence. These may be mountains and moorland, undeveloped coastline or peat bog.” These are not, however a statutory designation.

NatureScot considers that wildness depends on the presence of four physical attributes:

- perceived naturalness of the land cover
- ruggedness of terrain
- remoteness from public roads, ferries or railway stations
- visible lack of buildings, roads, pylons and other modern artefacts

There are 42 areas of Wild Land in Scotland, following a detailed analysis by Nature Scot in 2014. Of these, 6 are either wholly or partially within Argyll and Bute. These are:

- Ben More, Mull (8,720ha)
- Loch Etive mountains (partially within Argyll and Bute) (total area 50,764ha of which 33,941ha is in Argyll and Bute)
- Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder (partially within Argyll and Bute) (total area 118,042ha of which 420ha is within Argyll and Bute)
- Breadalbane – Schiehallion (partially within Argyll and Bute) (total area 44,840ha of which 4,551ha is within Argyll and Bute)
- Ben Lui (mostly within Argyll and Bute planning authority area) (total area 14,497ha of which 7,955ha is in the Argyll and Bute planning authority area, with the remainder in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park)
- Jura, Scarba, Lunga and Garvellachs (27,862ha)

These are shown on the map in Figure 27 overleaf.

There are no Allocations, PDA's, AFA's or Strategic Masterplans within any of the Wild Land areas.

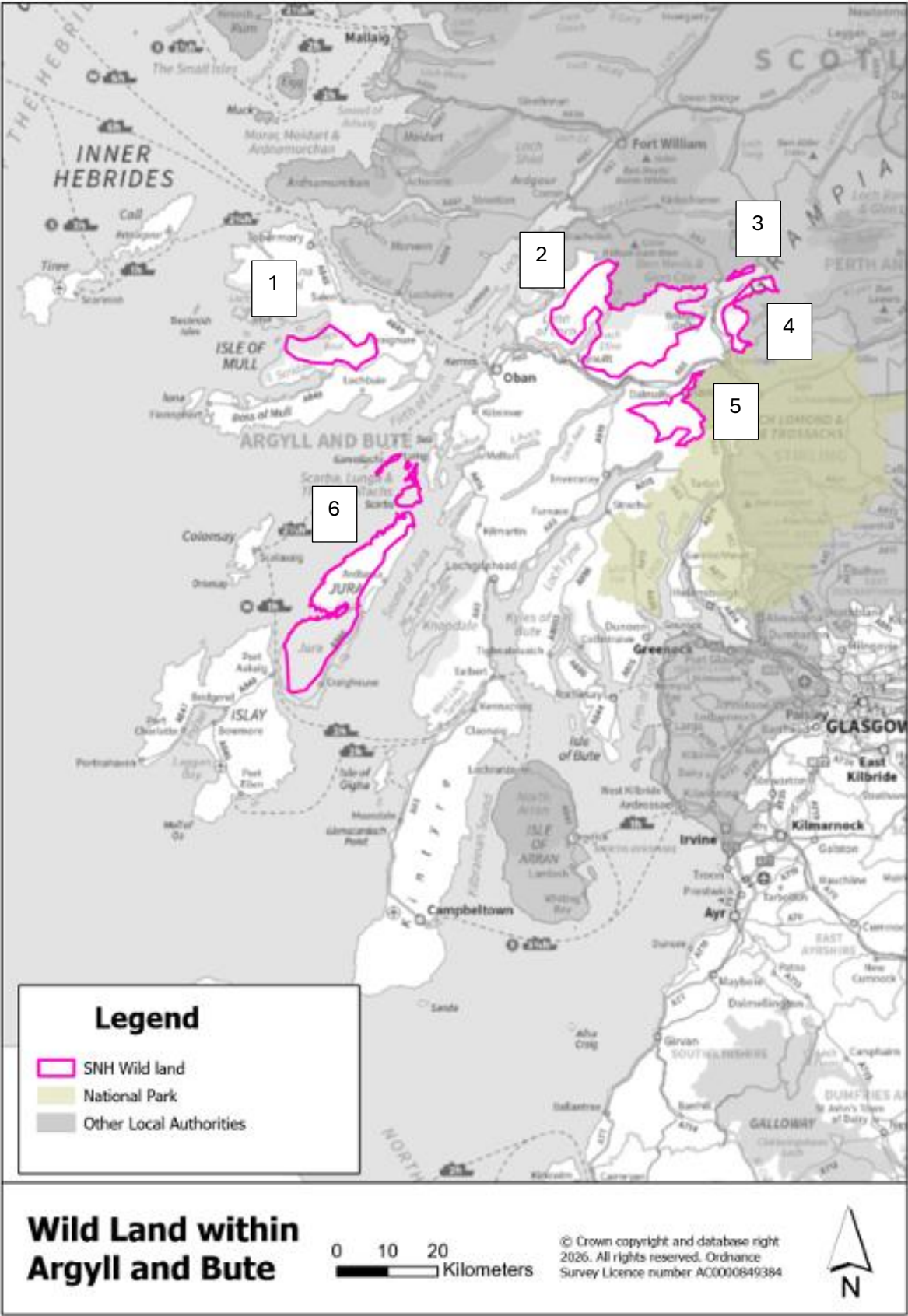


Figure 27: Wild Land within the Argyll and Bute planning authority area

Nature Scot provide descriptions of each of these areas of Wild Land which are included as core documents. A summary of each is included below, along with a note of the Landscape Character Types (LCT's) and overlapping landscape designations (NSA's and LLA's) within the area:

1. Ben More, Mull

This relatively small WLA (area of 87 km²), one of 11 island WLAs, is located in the mountainous heart of the Inner Hebridean Isle of Mull. Elongated in shape, the WLA stretches east and west of the distinctive peak of Ben More, the only island Munro outwith those found on Skye. Unusually for an island WLA it is not defined by the coast, although the sea strongly influences the qualities of the area with the 12km long north-west boundary less than 1km from the sea.

It overlaps the Central South and West Mull Local Landscape Area (LLA) to the east, and the Loch Na Keal National Scenic Area (NSA) to the west.

Landscape Character Type: Rugged Mountains (LCT35) to the east, and Stepped Cliffs and Terraces (LCT45) to the west.

Key attributes and qualities:

- A landscape which is well defined where the dominant Munro of Ben More accentuates the rugged and remote interior
- Rugged summits sweeping down to steep, dramatic cliffed and scree covered hill slopes result in a surprising high sense of remoteness within relatively small extent of area
- A range of distinctive geological features contribute to a high sense of naturalness, distinctiveness and sense of awe
- A secluded yet open interior with a strong sense of naturalness and sanctuary
- The influence of the sea is striking contributing to remoteness and perceived naturalness and awe

2. Loch Etive mountains (partially within Argyll and Bute)

More than half of this large Wild Land area is within Argyll and Bute. This area contains a range of high and rugged mountains, divided by steep glens. It is largely uninhabited, although there are a few isolated estate buildings within some of the glens. The area can be viewed from parts of the A85 and A82 but views to the interior are limited due to the

screening of slopes. Within the whole Wild Land area (including that in the Highlands planning authority area) there are 22 Munros and 8 Corbetts.

It overlaps the North Argyll LLA to the south, and Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA to the north.

Landscape Character Type: Rugged Mountains (LCT35)

Key attributes and qualities:

Note: whilst part of the Wild Land, including some of its key features, is outwith Argyll and Bute, it is considered still worthwhile to include the key attributes and qualities within this Topic Paper as the Argyll and Bute portion contributes to the wider landscape and overall designation.

- Arresting, steep, high mountains with precipitous rocky tops and ridges that offer panoramic views of elevated tops continuing far into the distance
- A series of deep glens carved through the mountains, with arresting side slopes and spectacular geological features that contribute to a strong sense of naturalness
- A high number of visitors that seek different wild land qualities and are able to experience a wide range of remoteness, risk and physical challenge

3. Rannoch – Nevis – Mamores – Alder (partially within Argyll and Bute)

Only a very small portion of the overall Wild Land area is within Argyll and Bute (0.4%), which stretches to the Cairngorms National Park in the east.

It overlaps the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA.

Landscape Character Type: Rugged Mountains (LCT35)

Key attributes and qualities:

Note: whilst the significant majority of the Wild Land, including most of its key features, is outwith Argyll and Bute, it is considered still worthwhile to include the key attributes and qualities within this Topic Paper as the Argyll and Bute portion contributes to the wider landscape and overall designation.

- Mountain ranges and glens of varying landform, but all arresting, with towering, steep and rugged slopes and striking physical features
- A strong contrast of wide open peatland, lochs and steep-sided mountains that highlight the visibility and awe-inspiring qualities of each

- An extensive and remote mountain and peatland interior with a strong sense of sanctuary, appearing even larger due to distant views to surrounding wild land areas
- A large area which is visited by many people to experience wild land qualities in different ways, whilst maintaining a sense of remoteness, sanctuary, challenge and risk
- An extensive pattern of lochs, lochans, burns and bog that highlight the ruggedness of the landform, limit access and contribute to the sense of naturalness

4. Breadalbane – Schiehallion (partially within Argyll and Bute)

Just over 10% of the Wild Land area is within Argyll and Bute, with the majority being in Perth and Kinross, and Stirling. It consists of steep, high hills, generally higher in the west. The West Highland Way skirts the western boundary, following the route of the railway line between Tyndrum and Bridge of Orchy and providing dramatic views of the western hills.

It overlaps the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe NSA to the north, and the North Argyll LLA to the south.

Landscape Character Type: Rugged Mountains (LCT35)

Key attributes and qualities:

Note: whilst the majority of the Wild Land, and its key features, is outwith Argyll and Bute, it is considered still worthwhile to include the key attributes and qualities within this Topic Paper as the Argyll and Bute portion contributes to the wider landscape and overall designation.

- An extensive range of massive, high hills with some steep rocky peaks and ridges, including the distinctive peak of Schiehallion
- The extent of the WLA is not always obvious and the higher slopes provide panoramic views to adjacent wild land areas that seem to form a continuous mountain landscape
- Few human elements within the WLA but adjacent forest plantations and hydro infrastructure are visible from the upper slopes and tops
- Rugged and highly natural mountains, penetrated by long and deep glens that are more influenced by estate management and human artefacts
- Comparatively remote in parts, despite the accessibility and popularity of the hills

5. Ben Lui (mostly within Argyll and Bute planning authority area)

Just over half of this Wild Land area sits within the Argyll and Bute planning authority area, with the rest in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. It consists of a complex range of steep, high and sometimes craggy hills. The area is readily accessible from the Central Belt and none of the Wild Land area lies over 10 km from a public road. Private tracks follow most of the larger glens, including Glen Fyne, which lies outside the Wild Land area to the south of Inverchorachan. The area is uninhabited, although it contains shielings in some more sheltered areas such as upper Glen Fyne.

It overlaps the North Argyll LLA.

Landscape Character Type: Craggy Upland (LCT40) to the west, Steep Ridges and Mountains (LCT34) in the centre, and Rugged Mountains (LCT35) towards the border with the Stirling planning authority area.

Key attributes and qualities:

Note: whilst almost half of the Wild Land, including some of its key features, is outwith Argyll and Bute, it is considered still worthwhile to include the key attributes and qualities within this Topic Paper as the Argyll and Bute portion contributes to the wider landscape and overall designation.

- Contrast between the more massive and remote hills in the south-west and the arresting, more visible and popular hills to the north-east
- Rugged and highly natural mountains, penetrated by steep-sided glens that contain well-used routes and provide arresting views
- A landscape that generally well-defined by surrounding human elements in views from higher slopes
- Few human artefacts within much of the upland area, in contrast to some of the glens where hydro development is a recurring feature

6. Jura, Scarba, Lunga and Garvellachs

This is the second largest of the 11 island WLAs with a total area of 279 km². It includes some 70% of Jura, and all of the island of Scarba, north of the Gulf of Corryvreckan, together with the smaller islands of Lunga and the Garvellachs which form a chain stretching to the north west. Jura is the only populated island, although with fewer than 200 inhabitants (2011 census), one of the least densely populated Scottish islands. All require time to reach from more populated centres, but only Jura is served by public ferry, the others requiring a private boat to access.

It overlaps the Scarba, Lunga and the Garvellachs NSA, the Jura NSA, and the Jura LLA.

Landscape Character Type: Craggy Coast and Islands (LCT57) at Scarba, Lunga and Garvellachs. Most of Jura is Plateau Moorland (LCT41) with some Rugged Mountains (LCT35) to the centre, Coastal Parallel Ridges (LCT55) to the east, and a small area of Island Mixed Farmland (LCT49) to the west.

Key attributes and qualities:

- All-pervading influence of the sea and sense of being perched on the edge of the land
- Inaccessible and remote, with a strong sense of solitude, despite the proximity to the mainland
- Dramatic mountains, cliffs, islands, and tidal currents emphasise a sense of nature being in control
- Most signs of human activity are focussed within the southern part of the WLA, with few human artefacts or contemporary land use further north

Policy

NPF4 Policy 4g) only gives support to development proposals on wild land where the proposal:

- will support meeting renewable energy targets; or,*
- is for small scale development directly linked to a rural business or croft, or is required to support a fragile community in a rural area.*

All such proposals must be accompanied by a wild land impact assessment which sets out how design, siting, or other mitigation measures have been and will be used to minimise significant impacts on the qualities of the wild land, as well as any management and monitoring arrangements where appropriate. Buffer zones around wild land will not be applied, and effects of development outwith wild land areas will not be a significant consideration.

LDP2 Policy 72 only supports development on Wild Land where the proposal:

- will support meeting renewable energy targets; or,*
- is for small scale development directly linked to a rural business or croft, or is required to support a fragile community in a rural area.*

All such proposals must be accompanied by a wild land impact assessment which sets out how design, siting, or other mitigation measures have been and will be used

to minimise significant impacts on the qualities of the wild land, as well as any management and monitoring arrangements where appropriate.

LDP2 policy largely duplicates NPF4 policy with the only difference being that NPF4 policy adds that no buffer zones will be applied.

Monitoring

There were no applications for the erection of dwellinghouses determined on Wild Land over a 2 year period between 28th February 2024 (date of adoption of LDP2) and 28th February 2026.

Non-designated Landscape

Of Argyll and Bute's 658,464 ha land area, the area not covered by an NSA or LLA designation, or by Wild Land, is 301,850 ha (45.84%).

Within the Argyll and Bute planning authority area, there are 26 LCT's across the non-designated landscape. These are shown on the map in Figure 3.

Non designated areas of landscape in the Argyll and Bute planning authority area (as can be seen from the map in Figure 2) are:

- the islands of Coll and Tiree
- the north of Mull from Craignure to Tobermory
- the inland area south of Oban, including the majority of Loch Long, to Inveraray
- the island of Colonsay
- the central area of Islay
- most of Kintyre, excluding the mull and narrow coastal strips
- the east of Knapdale between Lochgilphead and Tarbert
- North Cowal and the Dunoon area
- The Helensburgh and Lomond areas (much of this is however covered by a Green Belt designation which is considered separately in Topic Paper 18)

Of the non-designated landscape areas, the only specific guidance available is for the islands of Tiree and Coll which each have their own unique landscape character. In

terms of the LCT's defined by Nature Scot, both islands are a mix of Island Mixed Farmland (LCT49) and Sand Dunes and Machair (LCT58). Design Guides were put together for each island in 2007 (Coll's in participation with SNH, now Nature Scot).

Coll The Design Guidance considers 4 areas across the island – North Coll, Mid Coll, South Coll and Arinagour.

North (East) Coll is a “*small-scale enclosed landscape*” - *This is the location for rugged outcrops and raised machair, where hillocks and hollows form a series of small-scale, enclosed spaces. These often act as a frame to views of spectacular sandy beaches nearby. This is an unusual and very attractive landscape setting, where built form comes second and landscape character dominates.*

Mid Coll – “*larger farms sit back from road in a flatter more open landscape*”. - *Here the rocky knolls which characterise the North (East End) of Coll give way to an expansive area of more level farmland located southwest of Arnabost. This is the location for a more open landscape with level areas of cultivated and grazed machair. Towards the coast are headlands and bays and extensive dunes. To the East this area is constrained by undeveloped rocky moorland. There are long views across this distinctive open landscape, and settlement is sparse.*

South Coll – “*range of properties, farming landscape*” - *Travelling towards Arinagour from the south of the island, the road crosses an area of elevated moor consisting of heather, lochans and small scale rocky hummocks. This part of Coll is relatively flat and offers long views across countryside – often all the way to Arinagour.*

Arinagour – “*low density settlement*”

Tiree's landscape is particularly flat and open, with housing scattered sporadically across the island, rather than focusing on settlement groups. For this reason, all buildings are clearly visible within and as part of the landscape and must be of a suitable scale, siting and design to fit well within its surroundings. The guidance sets out that:

Tiree's landscape is unique among the Inner Hebrides. It is significant in terms of its scenic qualities - big skies, beautiful beaches and machair, but it is also an important agricultural resource for its crofting community, which has been based on Tiree for many generations. Both landscape and settlements on Tiree have been continuously shaped to a significant extent by their crofting history. Tiree's unique and important heritage is

the marriage between crofting and the environment. The island's built form manifests for the most part a balanced and unified historical and cultural tradition which new development needs to respect.

Whilst the Guidance refers to Tiree being a Special Built Environment Area, this is not a designation that was carried forward into LDP2.

Strategic Development Frameworks

Argyll and Bute Council are carrying out two Strategic Development Frameworks (in Oban and Helensburgh) as set out within Proposals A and B of LDP2. These Frameworks do not formally allocate land for development but will provide part of the Evidence Base for LDP3, as well as subsequent LDP's. The Helensburgh Strategic Development Framework (HSDF) is within the Green Belt which has its own Topic Paper (18).

The Oban Strategic Development Framework (OSDF) offers the opportunity to further strengthen the landscape baseline data. Work is being carried out by Consultants, and allows consideration of landscape and townscape character as well as opportunities to maintain and enhance biodiversity and build climate resilience.

Policy

Given the large percentage of countryside area protected by national or local designations, the LDP must ensure that there are still appropriate mechanisms of ensuring development in non-designated countryside is appropriate, as these areas are likely to be subject to additional pressure.

As noted earlier within this paper, LDP2 Policy 02 takes a flexible approach to development within the Countryside Area but balances this with an onus on the applicant to demonstrate that there will be no unacceptable adverse effects (either individually or cumulatively) on natural heritage resources, built and/or cultural heritage resources, and landscape and visual amenity. In cases where a major development is proposed, or for any development where there is preliminary evidence that there may be such adverse effects (and where a formal EIA is not required), a landscape and visual impact assessment may be required.

The policy requirements for Remote Countryside Areas are also contained within Policy 02 but are less flexible than that for Countryside Areas. Within these, only specific categories of developments on appropriate sites will generally be supported.

Although NPF4 refers to landscape in Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place) (see overleaf), this, along with NPF4 Policies 17 (Rural Housing) and 29 (Rural Development) are policies supporting development rather than seeking to protect the landscape.

NPF4 Policy 4 is silent on non-designated landscapes.

Policy 14 – Design, Quality and Place:

- a) *Development proposals will be supported where they are consistent with the six qualities of successful places,*

Appendix D details these, which include:

2. Pleasant: Supporting attractive natural and built spaces

Designing for (amongst other bullet points):

- *connecting with nature including natural landscape, existing landforms and features, biodiversity and eco-systems, integrating blue and green infrastructure and visual connection*

4. Distinctive: Supporting attention to detail of local architectural styles and natural landscapes to be interpreted into designs to reinforce identity

Designing for (amongst other bullet points):

- *sense of place including design influences, architectural styles, choice of materials and finishes, detailing, landscape design, active frontages and cultural context*

With a Housing Emergency declared in Argyll and Bute in 2023, along with the supportive nature of NPF4 Policies 17 (Rural Housing) and 29 (Rural Development), landscape in Argyll and Bute, particularly the areas without the protection of a designation, is likely to face development pressure. For example, of the 85 new houses approved outwith the designated landscapes between 28th February 2024 and 28th February 2026, 51% of these were in settlement areas, **49% in Countryside, 0% in Remote Countryside** and 0% in the Helensburgh and Lomond Green Belt – see full stats and exclusions within the Monitoring section [here](#).

Note that Rural Development is covered in more detail within Topic Paper 19, however on the basis of the above, consideration should be given to the continuation of a policy with the intent of balancing the rural development pressures with the requirement to protect the extensive non-designated landscape in LDP3.

Argyll and Bute has a suite of sustainable design guides which are technical documents to guide good design, and which are referenced more fully within Topic Paper 8: Local Living, and Design, Quality and Place. The Coll and Tiree guides are referred to within the non-designated landscape section of this paper only insofar as they describe the landscape qualities of each island.

Monitoring

Planning applications within each of the countryside and remote countryside areas (i.e. excluding settlement areas and Green Belt) of the Argyll and Bute planning authority area not covered by landscape designations (NSA, LLA and Wild Land) were extracted for a 2 year period from the date of adoption of LDP2 (28th February 2024 to 28th February 2026). The data was filtered to only include erection of dwellinghouses (excluding demolition and rebuild / reconstructions) which are considered to be the most common application type involving a new structure on the landscape that does not have a locational operational need such as agricultural buildings on existing farms, or telecoms. Renewals of permissions granted prior to the 2 year monitoring period are also excluded.

Note that pre-apps are not included in these statistics as these are not in the public domain. There may therefore be cases where an applicant was advised at pre-app stage that the proposal would be contrary to Development Plan policy, in which case the number of applications that are withdrawn or refused may have been reduced by such.

Countryside:

Between 28th February 2024 and 28th February 2026 there were 50 applications determined for dwellinghouses in the non-designated countryside. Some of these are for multiple (up to 6 units). Of these 42 were approved, 6 were withdrawn and 2 were refused.

Note: whilst outwith the scope of this Monitoring exercise, it was noted that there were 13 applications determined within the non designated countryside area for holiday units (including pods), indicating a pressure in this regard. Of these 10 were approved, 2 were withdrawn and 1 was refused.

Remote Countryside:

There were no applications for the erection of dwellinghouses.

Comparison of Designated vs Non Designated Landscape Consents

Land type	Area (ha) of countryside and remote countryside areas within the designation	Number of dwellinghouses granted consent over 2 years	Number of dwellinghouse per 10,000 hectares of countryside area over 2 years
Wild Land	83,449 ha (note – overlaps NSA and LLA areas)	0	0
NSA – EXCLUDING area covered by Wild Land designation	55,526ha	13	2.341
LLA – EXCLUDING area covered by Wild Land designation	218,049ha	59	2.702
Non designated – countryside	162,338 ha	42	2.587
Non designated – remote countryside	133, 109 ha	0	0

Figure 29: Table showing numbers of dwellinghouses granted consent within countryside areas

These above figures show that, after removing the dual designation of Wild Land, more dwellinghouses have been granted consent per hectare in Local Landscape Areas than in non-designated countryside. It also shows that, after removing the dual designation of Wild Land, almost as many dwellinghouses have been granted consent per hectare in National Scenic Areas than non designated countryside. This appears to indicate that Policies 70 and 71 are not wholly effective at protecting the more sensitive landscapes. The LVIA/ VII overall submission rate for each of the designation types was as follows:

- LLA: of 48 applications approved for dwellinghouses, 14 of these included an LVIA or VII = 29%
- NSA: of 12 applications approved for dwellinghouses, 4 of these included an LVIA or VII = 33%

The application of the LVIA technical guidance will therefore need to be considered further to understand why its uptake is so low.

Under NPF4 Policy 11 (Energy) there is a blanket ban on wind farms in National Parks and NSA's which is likely to increase the pressure on non-designated landscape, particularly in Kintyre. As the LLA's are around the low lying coast of Kintyre, the majority of s36 applications are not within the LLA's but, although within non-designated countryside, may be visible from LLA's.

- 15 no. S36 applications have been received since 28th February 2021 within Argyll and Bute.
- Argyll and Bute Council objected to 12 of these, didn't object to 1, and are considering 2.
- 3 of these have been granted consent by the ECU
- 1 was refused by the ECU
- 9 are pending consideration (8 by the ECU and one by the DPEA)

These are:

ABC reference	ECU reference	ABC decision	ECU decision
23/00795/s36	ECU00004781	Object	Under consideration
22/00445/s36	ECU00003421	Object	Refuse
25/00036/s36	ECU00006023	Object	Under consideration
25/00043/s36	ECU00002224	Object	Under consideration
25/00600/s36	ECU00004767	Object	Under consideration
25/00984/s36	ECU00004961	Object	Under consideration
23/02230/s36	ECU00004507	Object	Under consideration
22/00613/s36	ECU00002103	Object	Consent
24/01541/s36	ECU00004927	Object	Under consideration by DPEA: WIN-130-11
22/00385/s36	ECU00003230	Object	Consent
24/02242/s36	ECU00004841	Object	Under consideration
24/00053/s36	ECU00003291	No objection	Consent
25/01342/s36	ECU00005007	Object	Under consideration
25/01286/s36	ECU00003231	Under consideration	-
24/02160/s36	ECU00004517	Under consideration	-

Figure 30: Table showing s36 applications received within 5 year period

Local Place Plans

Luing

Notes the island has “*an active, working landscape with a unique heritage*”. The community vision includes:

- 1A: Access to Luing’s landscape and history - *The landscape, built heritage and wider history of Luing is highly valued by its community as a source of pride, wellbeing and identity. Any development on the island must be carried out with particular regard to respecting and enhancing existing historic, natural and heritage environments.* This is detailed through Potential Project 3.1.
- 3B – Renewable Energy – Luing forms part of the Melfort LLA, referred to by its previous title of APQ within Potential Project 3.3.
- 5A: Slate project – detailed within Potential Project 3.5.

Cove and Kilcreggan

The Cove and Kilcreggan LPP notes the beauty of the area’s coastline and seeks to explore ways to enhance safe access to this for everyone, including those with a disability.

Ford (not yet validated)

The Ford LPP sets out 7 priorities. One of which is directly relevant to landscape:

- A green community that protects and sensitively develops our natural assets

Gigha

The Gigha LPP describes the landscape in detail, including the geology, topography, coastline and watercourse, land use and boundary treatments, archaeological features and artefacts, and presence of Scheduled Monuments.

Helensburgh

Landscape is noted as being of significance within the Green Belt – this is covered in Topic Paper 18.

Summary of Engagement

On 29th May 2026 v0.4 of the Landscape Topic Paper was sent to Officers within Development Management. The identification of the potential need for Local Landscape Citations was supported by the Major Applications Team. No changes were suggested by Development Management.

The Topic Paper was also emailed to Nature Scot and Historic Environment Scotland on the same date, allowing 6 weeks for feedback (by the 26th June 2026).

Nature Scot emailed comments on 23rd June 2026. The full feedback along with Argyll and Bute Council's response to individual points will be included in the Evidence Report. In summary, various references were suggested for addition which Argyll and Bute Council feel are outwith the scope of this particular Topic Paper. These references include the National Marine Plan, The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, NPF4 Policy 6 and 15, and Nature Networks and Nature- Based Solutions. The National Parks (Scotland) Act is excluded from the paper as the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park have a separate planning authority – Argyll and Bute Council therefore have no remit in terms of LDP evidence gathering and preparation within the Park. The other references mentioned **are** relevant to the evidence gathering and LDP preparation by the Argyll and Bute planning authority, however are covered within other Topic Papers, with these interlinkages mentioned within the Introduction to the Landscape Topic Paper. Given the need to keep the evidence as streamlined as possible these have not been duplicated in the Landscape paper.

Nature Scot also suggested evidence which has been added to the Topic Paper. This includes reference to the Strategic Development Frameworks (although the HSDF is within the Green Belt which has its own Topic Paper). Further Core Documents have been added, summarised and referenced in relation to health, economy, Assessing Effects on Special Landscape Qualities of the NSA's, and Assessing Landscape Value outwith National Designations.

Historic Environment Scotland welcomed the recognition that landscape includes cultural heritage and the historic environment, as well as the importance of the interaction between different components of landscape, both natural and cultural, and further agree that it would be beneficial to develop citations for the LLA's. HES noted that they would be happy to contribute to any review of the LLAs within Argyll & Bute and recommend that the process outlined in Figure 2 of the Guidance on Designating Local Landscape Areas document is followed, and would welcome early consultation in this regard.

HES note that the existing LDP2 policies relating to landscape include requirements for LVIA and VII for some types of development and suggest it may be worth considering whether in some cases a historic environment assessment may also be required to support applications in sensitive areas – it is worth clarifying that LDP2 Policy 2 already includes provision for “built and/or cultural heritage assessment”.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

On the basis of the evidence set out in this Topic Paper, consideration should be given to reviewing the Local Landscape Area boundaries as well as developing Citations for these. This is particularly important given the pressure for wind farm development in Argyll and Bute (and particularly Kintyre).

Thereafter, consideration could be given to the development of technical guidance tailored specifically for individual Local Landscape Areas based on their unique character and special interests.

The Oban Strategic Development Framework (OSDF) offers the opportunity to consider landscape and townscape character as well as opportunities to maintain and enhance biodiversity and build climate resilience.

This Topic Paper has identified that while Wild Land and non-designated remote countryside have not been the subject of any housing applications, there is pressure for housing development and tourism development within non-designated countryside as well as within some of the designated areas (NSA's and LLA's).

On the basis of the supportive nature of NPF4 policies on rural housing and rural development, it is unlikely that Argyll and Bute could rely on these NPF4 policies alone. Therefore LDP2 Policy 02 will require to be carefully reviewed and updated to ensure the aims of LDP3's spatial strategy are met.

Additionally, while Policies 02, 70 and 71 all set out requirements in terms of LVIA (and which is detailed within Technical Note TN21), the take-up on this requirement has been low. Consideration should be given to ensuring that LVIA/VII policy requirements and guidance are robust and deliverable. Consideration should be given to further identifying rural areas of particular pressure to determine whether a tailored (and stricter) policy approach is required.