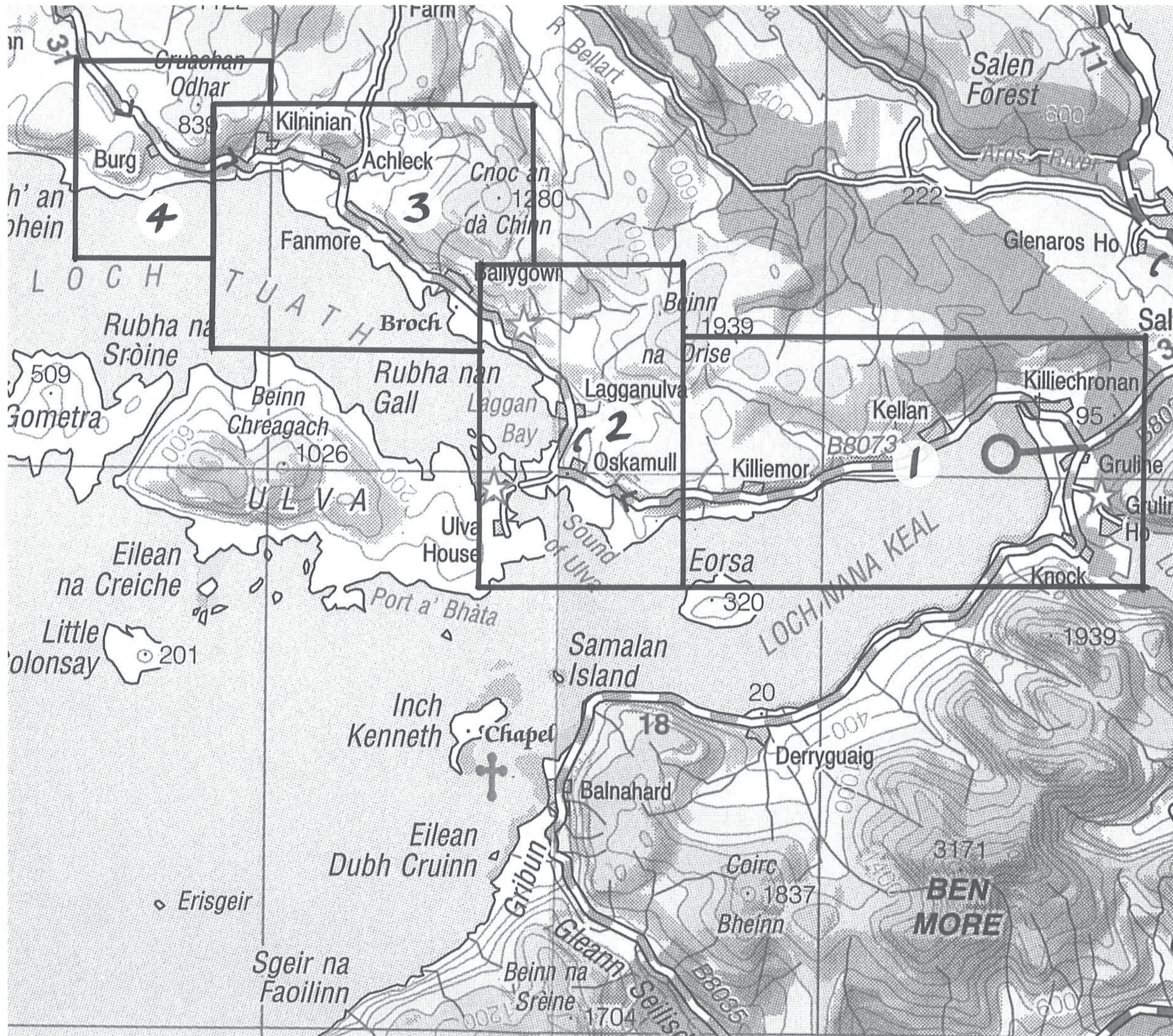


5 Loch na Keal NSA: Identifying Study Areas

Four main study areas were identified for Loch na Keal NSA:

- Inner Loch na Keal, which focuses on the inland reaches of the loch, where steep slopes give way to level land created by alluvial deposits
- Outer Loch na Keal, which focuses on the settlements overlooking Ulva and the scattered islands and skerries at the mouth of the loch
- Inner Loch Tuath, which focuses on the settlements along the inner northern shore of the loch
- Outer Loch Tuath, which focuses on the largely linear sporadic settlement at the very western end of the loch



Island of Mull
Loch na Keal NSA Study Areas

- 1** Inner Loch na Keal
- 2** Outer Loch na Keal
- 3** Inner Loch Tuath
- 4** Outer Loch Tuath

7 Outer Loch na Keal

This area embraces the stretch of road from Acharonich to just south of Kilbrennan.

The steep slopes which characterise the inner loch are here replaced by areas of relatively level terrain and alluvial deposits which extend upwards from the shallow bays of the sound of Ulva and Laggan Bay.

The coastline becomes very indented, with small islands adding to the interlock between land and sea. Ulva appears to be only just separate from the main island of Mull, with narrow waterways slipping between elongated islets.

The vegetation is dominated by semi natural vegetation of unimproved grazing, wetland and occasional willow scrub. More level, drier fields of bright green grassland are located adjacent to the farms.

The road winds its way along the edge of the steeper slopes, loosely linking the settlement and allowing a sequence of extensive panoramic views to be revealed at each crest and corner of its route.

The views of the inner islands, wider sea and distant Treshnish Isles dominate from the road and many of the houses. The fine scenic quality of the intricate relationship between land and sea is emphasised by the play of light on water, and the sheer expanse of the panoramic views.

Two strategic areas were identified in this area. The survey information and the opportunities and constraints for which have been mapped at 1: 25 000 scale on the following pages.

In addition, the settlement around the school is a potential foci for development, and the survey maps and opportunity and constraint maps for this area have therefore been undertaken at 1:10 000 scale.

In addition it was noted that the Island of Ulva is also inhabited and, although a site visit was not undertaken due to time limits, there appear to be opportunities for the restoration and redevelopment of houses and buildings which have fallen into disrepair.

7.1 Outer Loch na Keal Strategy Areas

Two strategy areas were identified in Outer Loch na Keal. Each has its own distinctive landscape and visual character, and the settlement opportunities and constraints have been identified to maintain and enhance the existing character. The two areas are indicated on the survey map which follows and are called:

- Low lying Headland
- Sheltered Fields

7.1.1 Low Lying Headland

One of the most populated areas of the island, this relatively low lying headland is slightly sheltered by the island of Ulva and rising land to the north.

The rugged terrain broken is by roughly linear outcrops of rocky cliffs and crags which reflect a generally north west/south east grain of landform which is extended to the orientation of nearby islands. Much of the vegetation is semi natural grassland, wetland and scrubby willow, but some fields of improved grazing occupy drier slopes and knolls.

Fine views from the road and tracks extend from the nearby scatter of islands along Loch Tuath and outer Loch na Keal to the distant horizon and distinctive silhouettes of the Treshnish Isles. The elevated peak of Ben More and the spectacular profile of the sea cliffs at Gruben all add to the visual drama.

Development in this area is limited to several small farms and a scatter of houses, all consistently tucked into the linear craggy outcrops. Shelter has clearly been a defining factor for the settlement pattern, with no development located on the exposed ridges and peninsulas which extend away from the containing rocky outcrops.

The area between Ulva ferry and Oskamull, focussed around the school, is the focus of a more detailed study at 1: 10 000 scale.

7.1.2 Sheltered Fields

Set against a backdrop of rugged, steeper slopes, this basin of gently sloping enclosed grazing fields is sheltered by the rugged knoll of Na Torranan to the west and woodland to the north.

The fields are defined by fences and the occasional dyke, with a distinct head dyke separating the more fertile enclosed grassland from the





unimproved grazing and semi natural woodland on the surrounding steeper slopes.

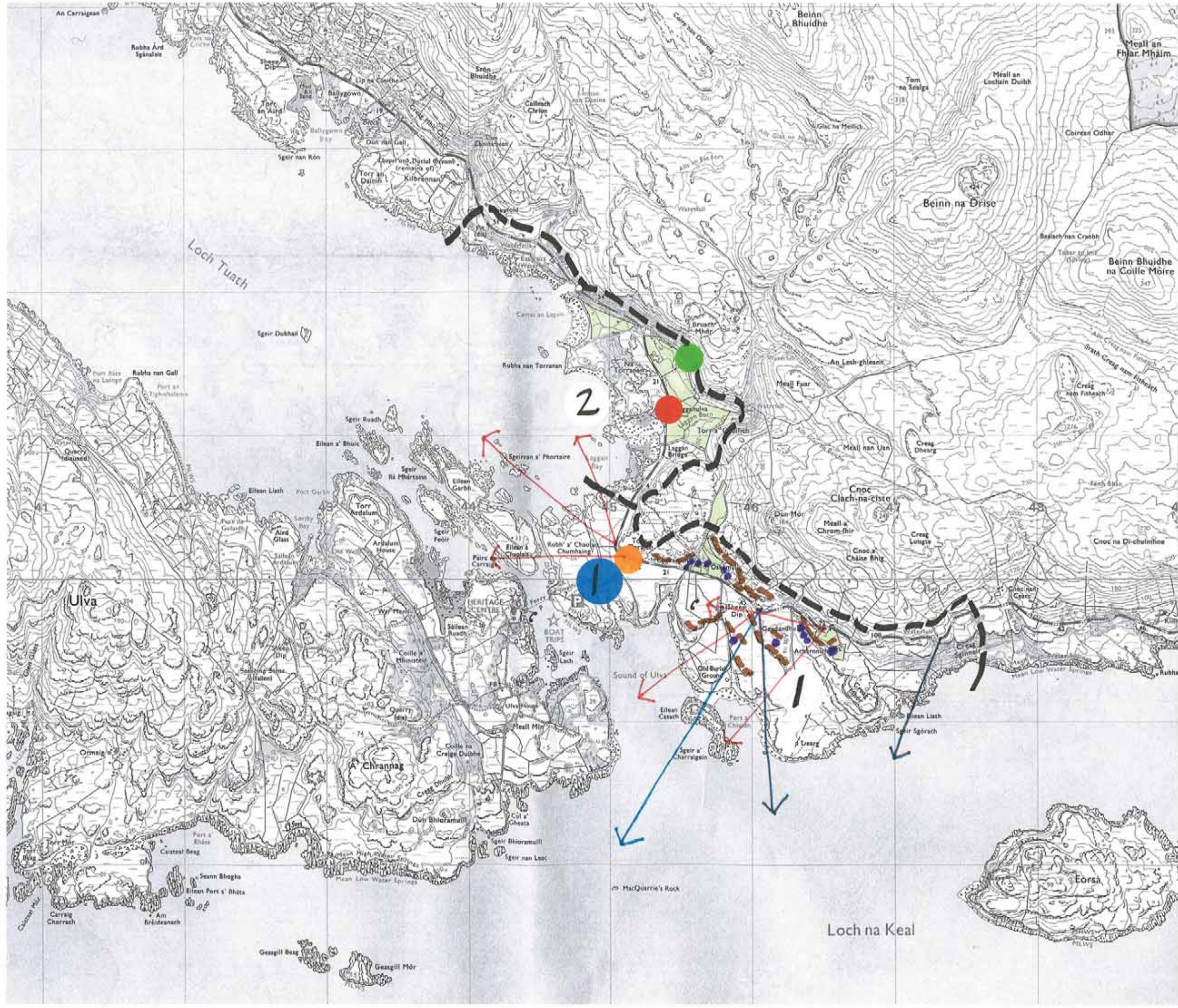
Existing settlement is limited primarily to the farm, which lies in the sheltered lee of Na Torranan, prominently located on a distinct rocky low ridge overlooking the farmland. In addition there is a further cottage which is elevated above the farmland, adjacent to the head dyke.

Settlement purposefully avoids the better quality grazing land and more even gradients, being sited adjacent to but not encroaching upon the most useful farmland.

Island of Mull
Outer Loch na Keal Strategy Areas
Site Analysis and Observations

- Strategy Areas:**
-  Low Lying Headland
 -  Linear cliffs and rocky knolls
 -  Existing development tucked into the crags and rocky outcrops
 -  The school, located at the road junction
 -  Small fields
 - 2** Sheltered Fields
 -  Lagganulva, located on a small rocky ridge
 -  Additional small cottage at the transition between improved grazing field and steep wooded slopes
 -  Grazed fields

- Key Views from Public Road**
-  Panoramic Views of the islands, coast and distant horizon from key points heading west
 -  Panoramic views of Ben More, the scattered skerries in the sound and the cliffs at the outer edge of south Loch na Keal
 -  Areas assessed in detail and included in this report at 1:10 000 scale
 -  School/Corkamull/Oskamull/Ulva Ferry



Island of Mull
Outer Loch na Keal Strategy Areas
Landscape Opportunities and Constraints



Strategy Areas



Low Lying Headland

Opportunities for additional housing development are limited to sites which are tucked against rocky outcrops and linear crags, or which are located on sheltered south facing bays. Sites occupied by existing ruins also offer possibilities.

Exposed ridges and open sites which do not relate to localised land form features, and sites which encroach upon key views should be avoided.

Additional development should use existing access tracks and new overhead lines should not be permitted in this highly scenic landscape.

Where possible, buildings should be modest in scale, reflecting the one and a half stories and narrow footprint of the existing buildings: clustered building forms could be appropriate.



Sheltered Fields

The existing development, particularly at Lagganulva, is a focal point within the landscape, particularly as viewed from the south. This visual composition contributes strongly to the scenic quality of this area.

Any new building should avoid disrupting this visual focus, therefore development opportunities are severely limited. Potential sites are therefore likely to be set into the woodland and knolls at the upper edge of fields at the northern end of this strategic area, where they are not visible within the view of Lagganulva from south of Laggan bridge.

Development is severely limited by the steep slopes and woodland along the roadsides to the north of Camas an Lagain



7.2 School/Corkamull/Oskamull/Ulva Ferry

While not a well defined settlement, this area is the focus of activity related to the school, pier and ferry, which provides a general focus for the settlement pattern in this area.

Key Characteristics

- The dispersed pattern of settlement reflects the importance of locating buildings on sheltered sites – this overrides and opportunity to create a traditional formal settlement structure
- With the exception of the school, the buildings are located to the lee of knolls, set back into the slopes of rising ground or, as in the case of the ferry terminal buildings, sited on low land, sheltered by neighbouring islands
- The school is located at the road junction, which is a focus for development, although the building does appear rather exposed.




General Guidance

- The key aim should be to consolidate the association between development and sheltered sites, with houses set back against rocky outcrops or lying in the lee of sheltering knolls.
- New building should avoid the relatively scarce improved grassland fields, which are a locally important resource and also add to visual diversity.
- New building should be orientated towards the coast, taking advantage of the views and south westerly aspect
- Development should generally avoid more exposed locations, although it is understood that there may be pressure for new housing to meet local needs on the exposed peninsula between the school or the pier. Should this go ahead, the preferred location is adjacent to the school, where a cluster could be formed associated with the road junction. However, any housing in this general location will not fit in with the existing settlement pattern and will be exposed to wind funnelling along the length of the lochs.

An alternative location would be to consider terraced housing or similar above the enclosed fields between Corkamull and Oskamull,

Site Analysis and Observations



Settlement Pattern

-  Buildings located in sheltered sites, back against the rising land and rocky outcrops, in the lee of a knoll
-  The School is located at a road junction, but is on an open and exposed site
-  Buildings associated with the pier are tucked into the shoreline



Land Use

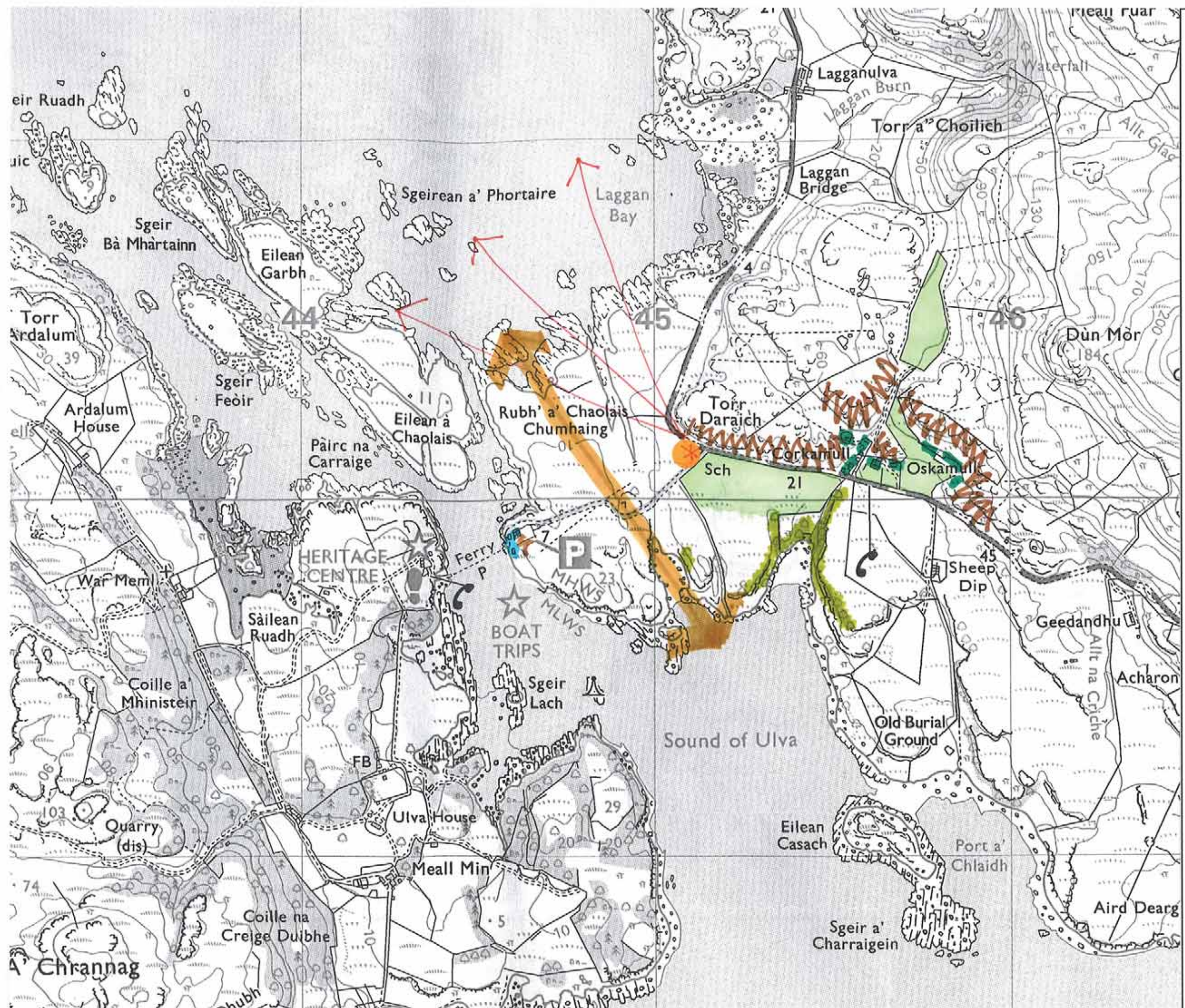
-  Improved grassland fields
-  Semi natural woodland

Landscape Survey

-  Peninsula appears very exposed, open to the westerly wind
-  Steeper slopes and rocky outcrops provide containment and shelter


Views/Approach

-  Panoramic view to the west revealed as the road corners after the junction and beyond the school
-  The school is the most visually prominent building, with other houses generally tucked away




Island of Mull
 School/Corkamull/Oskamull/Ulva Ferry
Landscape Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities


 Opportunity for development along these upper slopes, above the enclosed fields and located to take advantage of the relative shelter, fine views and southerly aspect; this is a possible site for affordable housing which is integrated into the settlement structure


Housing sites should allow for possible clusters of outbuildings, which are typical of many of the houses in this area


 If affordable housing need to be located on this exposed peninsula, the best location would be adjacent to the school, where it can be associated with the road junction

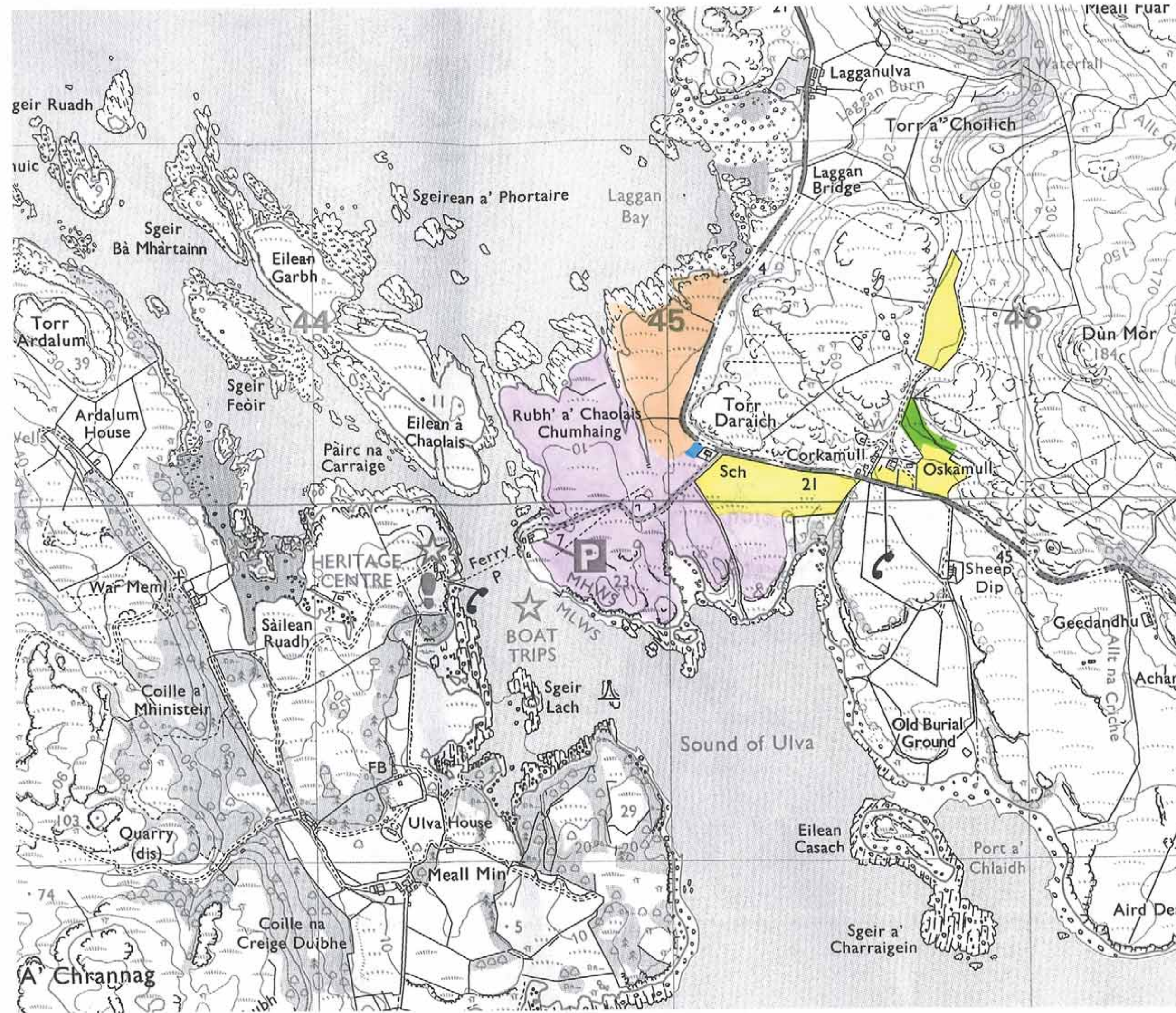
This site does not fit in with the pattern of housing elsewhere, and should only be used if no other more appropriate site is available, as it is exposed and any housing built on this location will appear detached from the main settlement due to the inconsistency of the settlement pattern

Constraints

 Development here is constrained by the physical exposure and visual prominence of this open peninsula, which contributes to the wider panoramas visible from higher elevation on the approach to the settlement from the east

 Development should not extend onto these small green fields which are characteristic of the area, and which add to visual diversity, as well as being relatively rare areas of more cultivatable land

 Development should not extend west along this road or the shoreline, as it would obstruct or intrude into the fine panoramic views which are revealed when traveling west along the road.



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where a south facing row of houses would take advantage of the views and fine aspect, while being located in a relatively sheltered location.

- Gardens associated with new housing should be small and enclosed by low stone or rendered walls. Detached houses should allow space for garages and outbuildings, which are commonplace features creating clusters of buildings associated with each site.