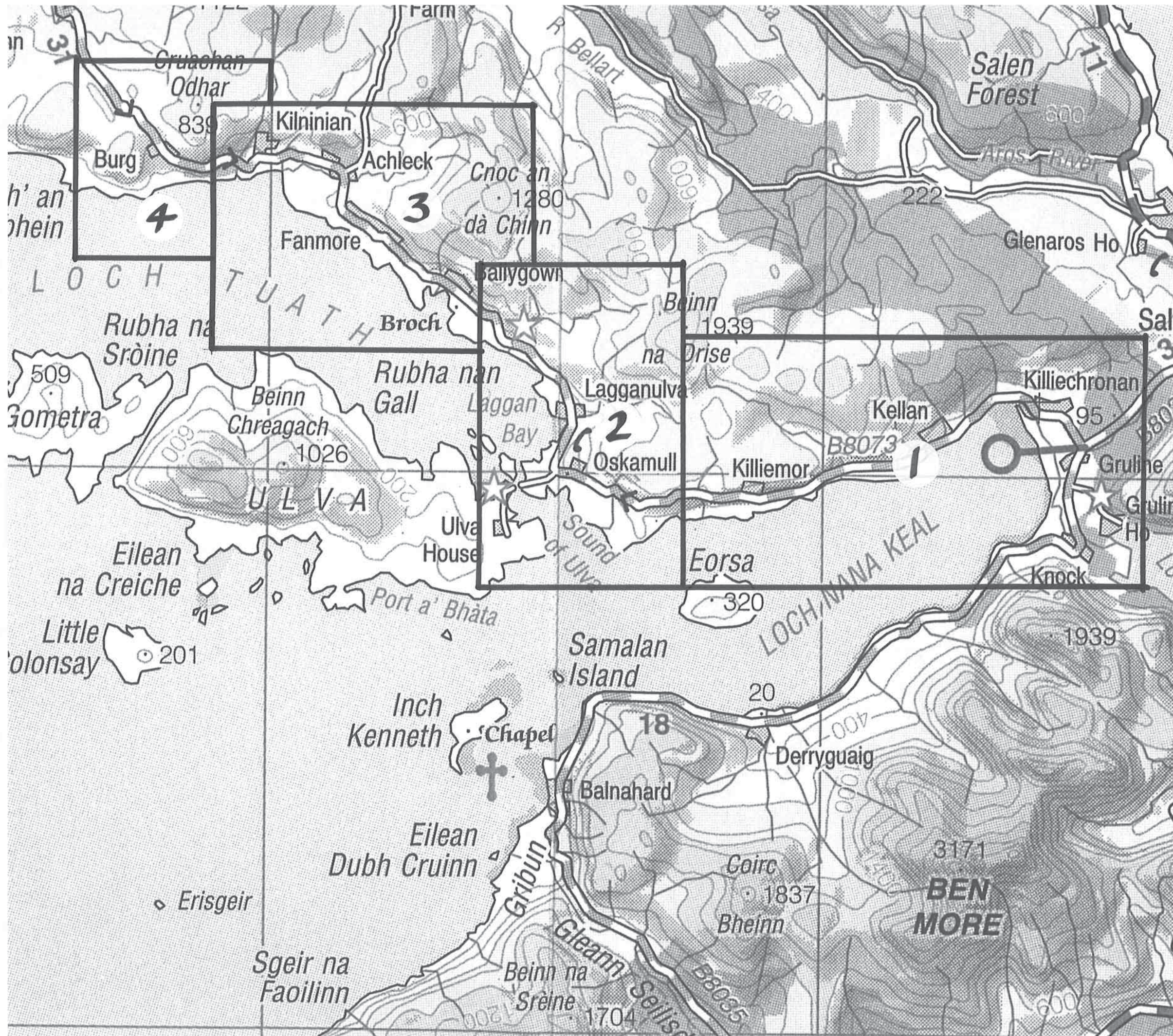


## **5 Loch na Keal NSA: Identifying Study Areas**

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

## **9.1 Outer Loch Tuath Strategy Areas**

One strategy area was identified associated with Outer Loch Tuath. It 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 area is indicated on the survey map which follows and is called:

- Complex Ridges and Slopes

### **9.1.1 Complex Ridges and Slopes**

The dramatic dips and crests in the road within this section of the NSA reflect the complex landform which it has to negotiate.

The series of knolls, ridges and varying gradients create an irregular and complex landform, where sheltered wooded gulleys alternate with steep rocky ridges and occasional platforms of more level land.

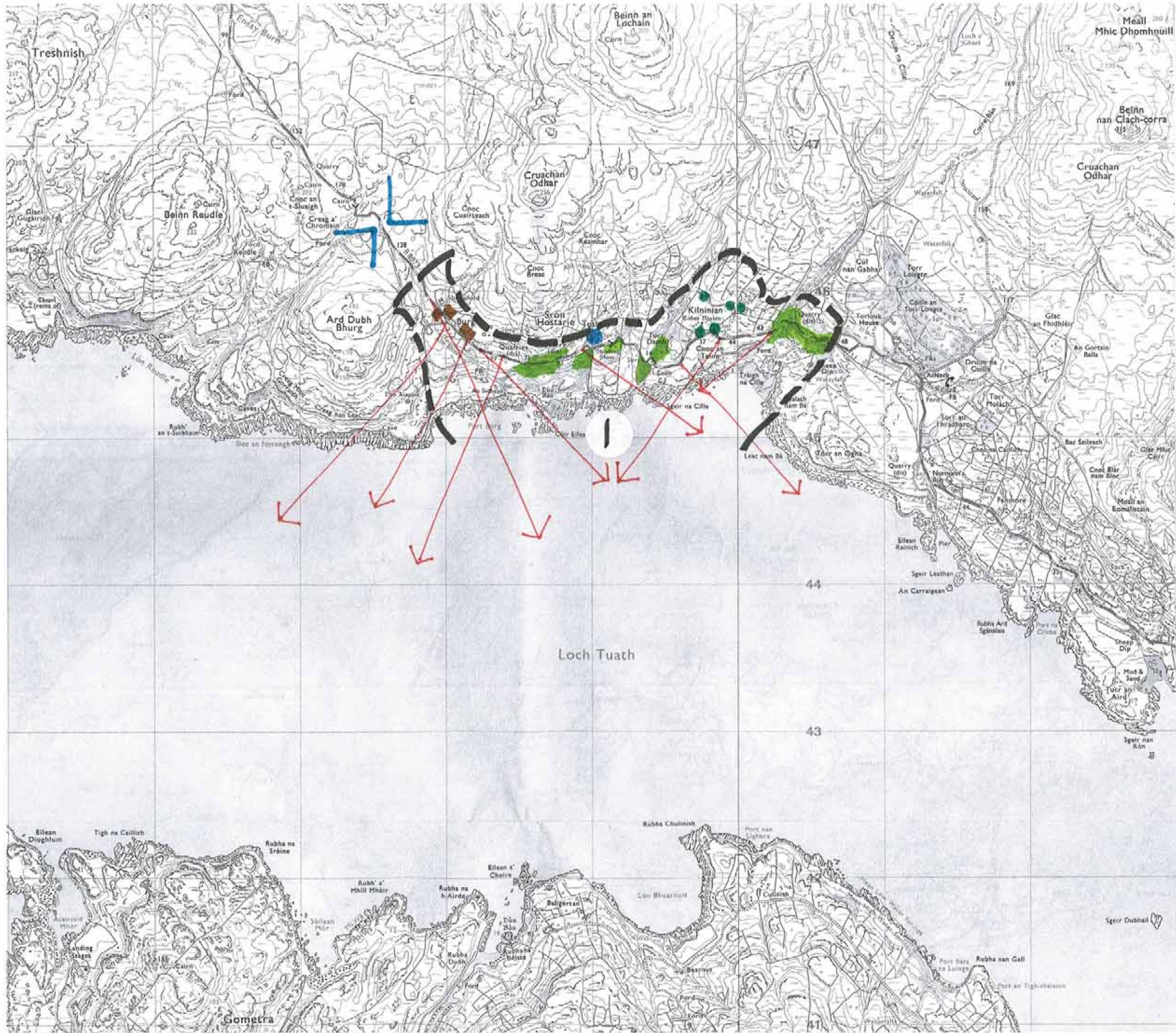
On the seaward side of the road, many slopes are very steep, and the vegetation is largely semi natural, with rough grazing, bracken and wetland accompanied by extensive swathes of native woodland which tend to focus around the gulleys and steep slopes.

Inland, while unimproved grazing dominates, there are occasional grazing fields and remnants of earlier enclosures which reflect the increased opportunities for improved grassland on more accessible slopes.





Views from the road, existing houses and any tracks which traverse this landscape are panoramic and spectacular, with extensive views to the distant islands of the west, to southern Mull, and inland to Ben More. The experience of the views from the road is enhanced by the way the road crests to reveal panoramas, then is enclosed by woodland before once again traversing more open land. This alternating sequence enhances the experience of the NSA for the traveller.




The sense of arrival at the NSA is reinforced by a significant sequence of ever more extensive panoramas, gradually revealing the length of Loch Tuath and more distant views.

Existing settlement falls into three distinct sites, firstly the dispersed buildings associated with the church at Kilninian, secondly the nearby tight cluster of houses at Tostary, and finally the tiny scattered linear settlement at Burg.



Island of Mull  
**Outer Loch Tuath Strategy Areas**  
**Site Analysis and Observations**

- Strategy Areas:**
-  Complex Ridges and Slopes
  -  Loose cluster of buildings associated with Kilninian Church
  -  Tight cluster of buildings at Tostary
  -  Loosely linear pattern of development at Burg

- Key Views from Public Road**
-  'Gateway' to NSA, where a succession of panoramas reveal more extensive views on approach to the NSA from the north
  -  Panoramic views across the NSA from the crests and corners along this winding road
  -  The enclosure created by this woodland reinforces the drama when panoramic views are suddenly revealed



Island of Mull  
 Outer Loch Tuath Strategy Areas  
**Landscape Opportunities and Constraints**

-  Strategy Areas
-  Complex Ridges and Slopes

**Opportunities**

At Kilninan, there are opportunities for development on level platforms which will contribute to the loose cluster which is focused around the church.

Any development should not impinge upon the immediate setting of the church, and should aim to be located where it can be tucked against the steeper slopes and rocky outcrops which are scattered across the area. Sites which are visually prominent from the road should be avoided.

At Tostary, any additional development should be sited where it will consolidate the existing cluster, and therefore maintain the pattern of development alternating with less developed land

At Burg, development is severely constrained on land to the west of the road and which is prominent in the views which contribute to the sense of arrival on the approach into the NSA, as the panorama of Loch Tuath is gradually revealed.

Development is also limited by steep slopes and woodland throughout this area, therefore no potential sites were identified within the assessment

**General Constraints**

No development should be located on the seaward side of the road, to retain the uninterrupted views and maintain the integrity of the improved pastureland.

Development should also avoid prominent horizons which are outlined against the sea, as well as intermediate ridgelines and knolls which create the succession of receding profiles in most coastal views