

Lorn & The Inner Isles



Argyll and Bute Council
Development Services

LANGUAGE TRANSLATION GUIDE

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Cantonese

本文件可以翻譯為另一語文版本，或製作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要傳譯員的協助，請與我們聯絡。

Gaelic

Ma tha sibh ag iarraidh an sgrìobhainn seo ann an cànan no riochd eile, no ma tha sibh a' feumachdainn seirbheis eadar, feuch gun leig sibh fios thugainn.

Hindi

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

Mandarin

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Punjabi

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Urdu

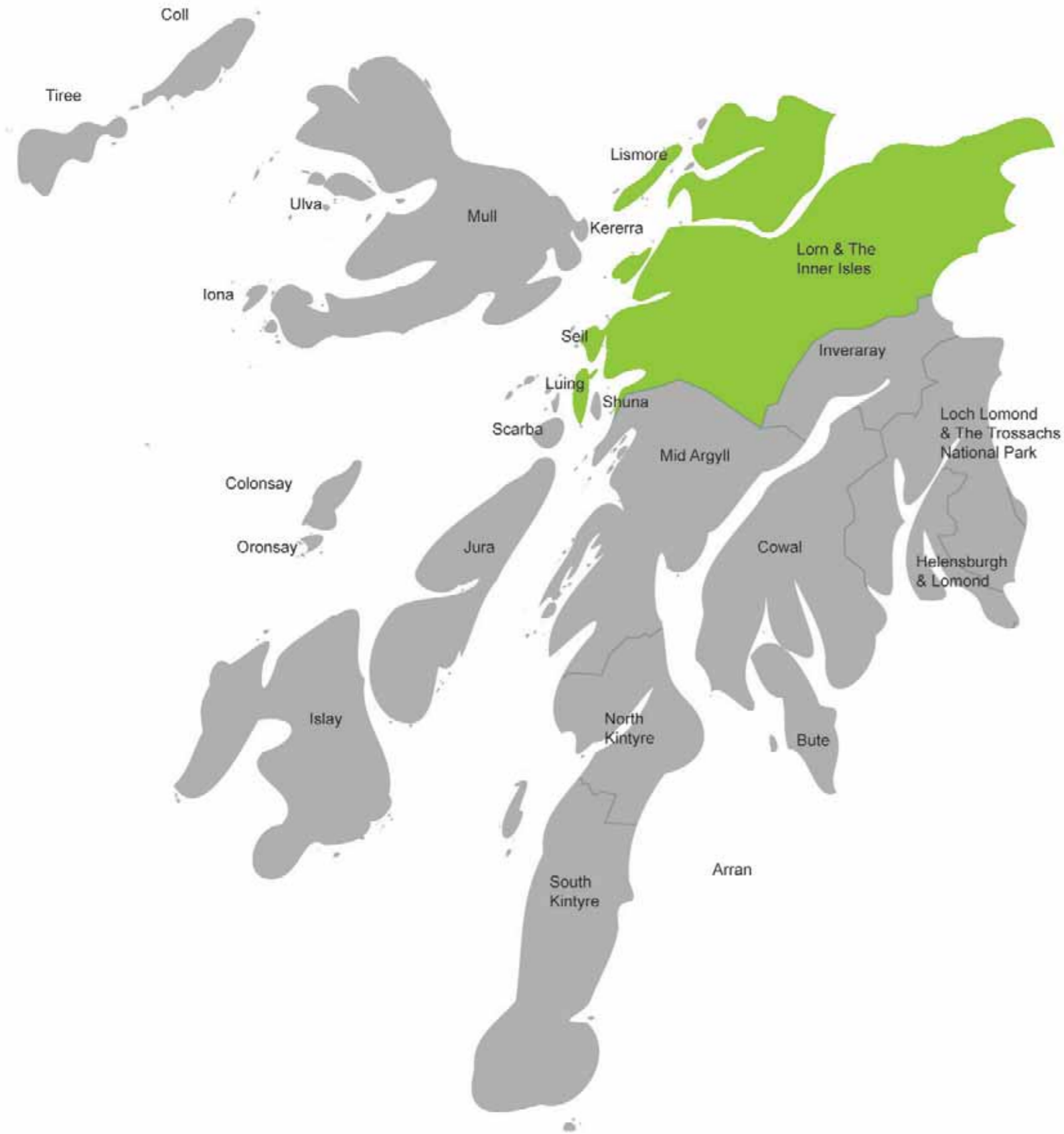
یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

Polish

Jezeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymaO ten dokument w innym języku lub w innym formacie albo jeeli potrzebna jest pomoc Uumacza, to prosimy o kontakt z nami.

Angus J Gilmour
Planning Services, Kilmory PA31 8RT





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Purpose

The principal objective of this study is to provide a robust set of documents that will clearly identify the capacity, in landscape terms, for development within the Rural Opportunity Areas (ROAs) identified in the Local Plan.

The Argyll and Bute Local Plan contains development control zones which are mapped planning policy designations. One of these development control zones is the ROA designation which carries a particular policy stance towards development in the Plan. This policy stance is positive towards many small scale development types, and in particular, positive towards small scale housing development, with a general presumption in favour of up to 5 new houses (subject to design, siting, development pattern etc.).

Much of Argyll and Bute is covered by National Scenic Areas (NSA) and Areas of Panoramic Quality (APQ - former Regional Scenic Area) designations, which are detailed within the Plan. Many of the ROAs are located within these NSAs and APQs.

The Plan was subject to Public Local Inquiry and one of the issues identified was that of potential conflict between ROA designation and NSA or APQ designation. The Council has taken the view that this potential conflict should be addressed through the production of landscape capacity studies (such as this) that look closely at how new developments could be assimilated into such valued landscapes.

These Landscape capacity studies have been undertaken by appropriately qualified consultants and cover all of the ROAs located within NSAs and APQs located in Argyll and Bute (with the exception of Jura and part of the Mull NSA as studies in these areas have already been completed).

This document is consistent with all current national and local planning policy and will help support, and be consistent with, the Corporate Strategy and the Development Plan for Argyll and Bute (ie. both Structure and Local Plan) in meeting their aims of strengthening the economy; creating sustainable and vibrant communities in the area; and protecting and enhancing the environment.

This study is one in a series of documents which will provide the Council and the public with a clearly defined set of guidelines for development within these areas.

Methodology

To ensure a consistent and robust approach to the collation and presentation of the study, the methodology of assessing and recording the landscape qualities, sensitivities and capacity to accommodate development has been based upon the accepted industry standards for landscape character assessment and has been prepared with reference to the following documents:

Methodology

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2nd Edition 2002;
- SNH Landscape Character Assessment (Guidance for England and Scotland), 2002;
- PAN 44: Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape

The GLVIA relies on an appreciation of the existing landscape, its sensitivity to change, a thorough understanding of the development proposals and the magnitude of change that would result from these changes.

The SNH Landscape Character Assessment documents set out the principles and processes of describing the character and characteristics of the landscape and the elements and features that make up the landscape.

PAN 44 offers suggestions to help planners, developers and local communities achieve residential developments which are in harmony with their landscape setting.

ROA Assessment

The format for assessing each ROA has involved the following:

- A desk based study to review statutory landscape designations and sites of historical importance;
- A review of the Argyll and Bute Local Plan to understand the context within which the ROA's have been designated;
- Review of the SNH landscape types as defined in the Argyll and Firth of Clyde Landscape Character Assessment (Scottish Natural Heritage Review No. 78, Environmental Resources Management 1996);
- Site appraisal identifying key landscape features, characteristics and views to and from each ROA;
- Defining the opportunities and constraints of each ROA by analysing and, where applicable, providing recommendations for specific locations for development; and
- Identifying locations where development would not be advisable due to potential adverse effects on the landscape quality, character, setting, and/or views due to inappropriate scale of development, visual prominence, additional development resulting in over development or insertion of development in currently undeveloped areas.

Landscape Character Assessment

To assist with the understanding of the capacity of the landscape to accommodate development it is essential to understand the characteristics and qualities of the landscape.

Scottish Natural Heritage, in conjunction with partner Councils, undertook in the late 1990's a detailed review and classification of various

landscape areas and types of Scotland. The Landscape Character Types, for Argyll and Bute, are covered by Environmental Resources Management 1996: Landscape Assessment of Argyll and the Firth of Clyde, Scottish Natural Heritage Review No 78.

Landscape assessment identifies areas which are particularly sensitive to change and this understanding can determine which areas have a greater capacity to accommodate change, thereby ensuring that future change can be guided and managed in a positive way.

In order to set the context for the Rural Opportunity Areas (ROA), a summary of the key characteristics of the relevant Landscape Character Types (LCT's) will be set out, including any appropriate landscape guidelines. A more detailed description of local landscape characteristics for each individual ROA will follow.

This information will then enable an assessment to be made of the scenic quality of the ROA, its sensitivity to change and its capacity to accommodate development.

Scenic Quality

Scenic Quality relates to the intrinsic aesthetic appeal demonstrated by a character area, zone, feature or component within the landscape, including the importance of any views experienced from and looking back at the ROA.

An established form of categorisation ranks Scenic Quality between Exceptional and Damaged. However as we are considering landscapes that have already been considered to have particularly outstanding qualities, this assessment has compared areas relative to each other and ranked the Scenic Quality of the ROA's as follows:

High

- Strong landscape structure, with attractive characteristics, pattern and a balanced combination of landform and land cover;
- Many distinct features worthy of conservation;
- Variety and sequence of dramatic, panoramic and framed views;
- No or minimal development, discreetly accommodated.

Medium

- Good landscape structure, with pleasing characteristics, pattern, balanced combination of landform and land cover;
- Distinct features worthy of conservation;
- Variety and sequence of panoramic and framed views;
- Minimal development which does not detract from the overall composition or views.

Low

- Limited patterns, colour, features and combinations of landform;
- Some features worthy of conservation;
- Generally self-contained or limited views;

Methodology

- Development forms a significant part of the overall composition or view.

Determining Sensitivity of the Landscape

The assessment considers the sensitivity of the environment that could be affected, the scenic quality and value and the ability of the landscape to accommodate change.

Sensitivity to Change

Sensitivity to change considers the extent to which the landscape can accommodate and tolerate the type of proposed change. Although all the ROA's are either within an Area of Panoramic Quality or National Scenic Area, there are still differing qualities within these areas and differing capacities to tolerate change. Sensitivity has therefore been ranked as High, Medium or Low.

High Sensitivity

- where the landscape would be susceptible to relatively small changes by development;
- where there are little or no landscape features with which to set development into the landscape;
- where landscape features or slopes would need to be excessively modified to accommodate development;
- where the changed landscape is an important element in a wider view.

Medium Sensitivity

- where the landscape would be reasonably tolerant of changes by proposed development;
- where there are some existing landscape features with which to set development into the landscape;
- where some change to features or slopes would need to be undertaken to accommodate development;
- where the changed landscape is a moderately important element in a wider view.

Low Sensitivity

- where the landscape would be tolerant of changes by proposed development as existing features could be utilised/enhanced to set development into the landscape;
- where the changed landscape would not feature as part of a wider view.

Capacity to accommodate development

Having considered and assessed the scenic quality and sensitivity to change of the landscape, the ability of each ROA to accommodate development has been determined; this has been done by assessing the ROA's as follows:

Good Capacity to Accommodate Development

New development would not:

- detract from the overall existing landscape quality, features and characteristics of the ROA;
- adversely affect the setting of historic or distinctive features;
- compromise existing views or be highly visible within an important view;
- affect the sense of place and could be appropriately integrated with existing landscape features;
- cause a perception of coalescence between existing settlements.

New development could:

- be set successfully into the landscape by utilising existing landscape form or features;
- in itself, provide a positive feature or a focus.

Limited or No Capacity to Accommodate Development

New development would:

- detract from the overall landscape quality, features and characteristics of the ROA or could not relate to the landform;
- affect the setting of historic, distinctive features and/or sites of ecological value;
- compromise existing views;
- affect the sense of place;
- be exposed visually and physically;
- require excessive earthworks or tree felling;
- not benefit from landform or vegetation with which to 'anchor' it into the landscape;
- cause coalescence between existing settlements or linear development.

When considering whether the ROA's could potentially accommodate development, it is important to recognise that it is not just whether a property itself, for example, could be sensitively sited and located, but also the accompanying infrastructure needed to support that development all need to be taken into account when determining the capacity of the landscape to accommodate development. i.e.:

- Access roads or tracks;
- Gates and wheelie bins located along the principal roads;
- Services and in particular overhead electricity lines;
- Lighting from development at night time; and
- Ornamental lawns and garden plants which can be highly visible amongst the more muted natural colours.

In addition, the following issues also need to be considered:

- Views back to development from surrounding areas;
- Separation of developed areas;
- Avoiding a perceived coalescence between larger settled areas;
- Retaining 'wilder', unsettled areas between areas of development.

Findings

The assessment results will report on the ability, or otherwise, of each ROA to accommodate development.

Each ROA has been assessed in detail and areas with potential to accommodate development have been identified in orange and areas with limited or no potential have been identified in red.

The supporting rationale for identifying these areas is given in the description of each ROA.

The report should be used as part of a series of tools to guide Argyll and Bute Council, in considering specific applications and in conjunction with the recommended guidelines will allow the Council to determine whether it would be appropriate to consider new development and prioritise locations for new development.

Landscape Character Assessment

Lorn and the Inner Isles

Lorn and the Inner Isles are described in the SNH Landscape Character Assessment under broad Landscape Character Areas of Central Argyll, Lower Grampians and Benderloch.

Central Argyll Landscape Character Area covers the area between Loch Fyne and the west coast. It lies between the lower Grampians, to the north and Knapdale, to the south. Upland moor is the main vegetation cover, but extensive conifer plantations create large-scale mosaics on the largely inaccessible upland plateaux. The wild and natural character extends down to rocky cliffs and indented coastlines, which include irregular patchworks of fields on the edges of the moorland and within the glens.

The Grampians Landscape Character Area which extends north of Oban and Loch Fyne is characterised by large-scale mountains with bare rock, scree slopes and u-shaped valleys.

Benderloch Landscape Character Areas lies to the west of the lower Grampians and to the north of Loch Etive, and includes the long narrow island of Lismore. A strong landform pattern is clearly evident along the coast where islands follow long, narrow, ridge arrangements, particularly evident in the north and west. An area of peaty moss lies to the south, at the mouth of Loch Etive, whilst a craggier upland landscape with a more amorphous character occurs to the north of the Strath of Appin.

Part 3 of the Argyll and the Firth of Clyde Landscape Character Assessment document divides the area into 25 Landscape Character Types (LCT). It provides a description of the specific characteristics and sensitivities relevant to each landscape type and outlines detailed aims, guidance notes and suggestions on how to conserve or enhance the landscape through appropriate sensitive land use, management or development.

There are seven LCT's covering Lorn and the Inner Isles:

- LCT 2: High Tops
- LCT 4: Mountain Glens
- LCT 7: Craggy Upland
- LCT 18: Lowland Ridges and Moss
- LCT 20: Rocky Mosaic
- LCT 24: Slate Islands

In order to set the context for the Rural Opportunity Areas (ROA), a summary of the key characteristics of the relevant LCT's will be set out, including any appropriate landscape guidelines. A more description of local landscape characteristics for each individual ROA will follow.

Landscape Character - Lorn

This information will enable an assessment to be made of the Quality, Value and Sensitivity of each ROA. A judgement can then be made on the degree (or magnitude) of change and therefore the capacity of each ROA to accommodate development, by determining the significance of effects caused by development. It should be noted that effects can be beneficial as well as being adverse and this distinction will be noted as part of this study.

High Tops LCT

The key characteristics of this landscape character type, relevant to the study, are:

- Rugged, steep sided mountain ranges with a massive scale;
- Diverse landform with gullies, scarp slopes and rocky scree;
- Striking exposed rock faces, with scrubby birch-oak woodland in gullies;
- Relatively wide glens between mountain ranges;
- Fast-flowing burns, waterfalls and small upland lochs are attractive, distinctive features;
- Extensive conifer plantations on some lower slopes;
- Inaccessible and relatively uninhabited;
- Dramatic mountain scenery.

The main landscape issues that need to be considered, with regards to the proposed type of development, within this landscape type are:

- Conserve the special wild character of this nationally important mountain landscape – development should be strictly controlled;
- Generally there is no scope for new built development in upland areas and the conversion of derelict buildings should only be permitted in valleys where there is an existing road and sufficient natural vegetation to integrate associated infrastructure elements;
- Much of the area is inaccessible with limited opportunities for the public to experience the landscape. Key views should therefore not be marred by development.

Mountain Glens LCT

The key characteristics of this landscape character type, relevant to the study, are:

- Flat valley floor of narrow, linear mountain glens with a sharp break of slope at valley sides;
- Ribbon lochs in lower valley; glacial moraine creates uneven landform with small, rounded lochs on floor of upper valleys;
- Mudflats and winding creeks at loch heads and mouths of glens;
- Meandering rivers fringed with groups of trees which contrast with rectangular pastures drained by straight ditches;
- Small blocks of woodland and some conifer plantations;
- Linear settlements stung out along lanes at the foot of steep sides slopes;

- Castles and country houses are important local landmarks.

The main landscape issues that need to be considered, with regards to the proposed type of development, within this landscape type are:

- Utilise the mature woodland trees to screen and integrate infrastructure and development;
- The meandering rivers, with bankside trees, small woodlands and remnant water meadows are important visual foci and should be conserved;
- Changes which could affect the traditional juxtaposition of fields, woodlands and wetlands should be discouraged;
- The mouths of rivers where the valley floor becomes a maze of creeks, pastures and mudflats is particularly sensitive and built development should be strictly controlled;
- Conserve the landscape setting of historic landmarks i.e. castles and parkland landscapes;
- Avoid development which would disrupt important well-known views along the valley.

Craggy Upland LCT

The key characteristics of this landscape character type, relevant to the study, are:

- Upland moor with irregular, rather amorphous landform;
- Rounded knolls, rock outcrops and numerous lochs in low-lying hollows;
- Open moorland predominates, but extensive conifer plantations camouflage the landscape pattern in some areas;
- Isolated farmsteads and small villages in sheltered sites within glens;
- Numerous archaeological remains, often concentrated on rounded knolls on lower slopes; and
- Historic, irregular landscape pattern in valleys.

The main landscape issues that need to be considered, with regards to the proposed type of development, within this landscape type are:

- Development should be strictly controlled in upland valleys and along coastlines;
- Should development be applicable in coastal areas, utilise existing woodland or incorporate new broadleaf planting to ensure development is integrated sensitively into the landscape;
- Conserve the setting of archaeological sites; and
- Consider opportunities to renovate traditional farm buildings, currently in disrepair.

Lowland Ridges and Moss LCT

The key characteristics of this landscape character type, relevant to the study, are:

Landscape Character - Lorn

- Coastal lowland with low ridges separating narrow, linear glens or flat areas of moss;
- Ridges form low, narrow peninsulas enclosing small, horseshoe-shaped bays;
- Rocky ridges are densely wooded and linear glens are a patchwork of marginal pastures;
- Shoreline and off-shore islands have a more undulating landform and a more open character;
- Some relatively large houses in sheltered coves; scattered newer development elsewhere.

The main landscape issues that need to be considered, with regards to the proposed type of development, within this landscape type are:

- Avoid linear development along the edges of coves and coasts;
- Built development should be clustered rather than sporadic and associated with stands of native tree planting and stone walls to integrate it with the surrounding landscape;
- The special character of the indented, sheltered coastal landscapes should be carefully conserved;
- Respect variations in local field patterns in the small-scale farmland landscape of the lowland areas;
- Conserve the locations and landscape settings of archaeological sites.

Rocky Mosaic LCT

The key characteristics of this landscape character type, relevant to the study, are:

- Uneven, hummocky landform with rocky outcrops and narrow glens;
- Raised beaches, cliffs and distinctive rounded knolls;
- Rocky, indented coastline with offshore islands and sandy bays;
- Relatively small-scale landscape with a diverse mix of colours and textures;
- Scattered, isolated farm buildings and small villages in sheltered sites; and
- Archaeological sites.

The main landscape issues that need to be considered, with regards to the proposed type of development, within this landscape type are:

- New built development should generally be small in scale so that it can be integrated within the surrounding, diverse landscape;
- Built development should always be associated with planting and/or landform to shelter and screen buildings;
- Conserve the characteristics of the diverse, small-scale landscape pattern; and
- Conserve the landscape setting of important archaeological sites.

Slate Islands LCT

The key characteristics of this landscape character type, relevant to the study, are:

- Undulating low moorland with low coastal cliffs and distinctive dark ledges of slate, jutting into the sea;
- Deeply indented coastline, with peninsulas and chains of rocky off-shore islands;
- Open rocky moorland predominates with pockets of pasture on more fertile land, near villages;
- Few trees, except near settlements;
- Distinctive slate stone walls.

The main landscape issues that need to be considered, with regards to the proposed type of development, within this landscape type are:

- Built development should be limited, especially in sensitive coastal locations;
- New buildings should be relatively small in size, simple in architectural style and built in loose clusters to be in keeping with traditional arrangements;
- Stone walls are particularly important near settlements as they help to integrate development by reflecting the irregular, historic pattern of small enclosures;
- The visual impacts of new developments from ferry crossings and adjacent views need to be carefully considered.

