



Bute and Cowal



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

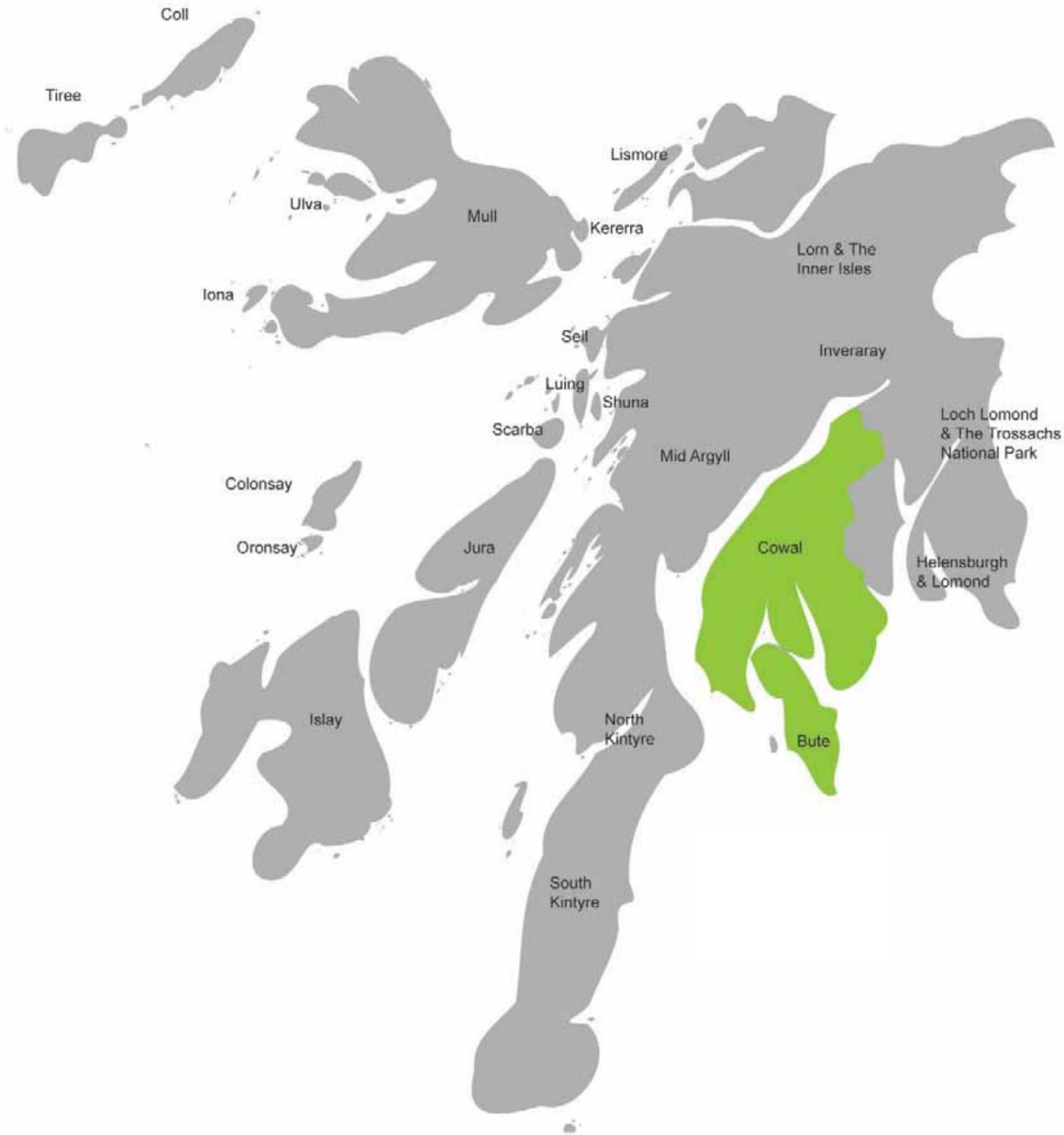
یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

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

Bute and Cowal Landscape Character Assessment

Bute is divided by the Highland Boundary Fault with an area of craggy upland to the north, which borders the Kyles of Bute, creating a distinctive mottled, wild, moorland appearance, when viewed from the mainland. This craggy slope profile gives way to broad open slopes with smoother profiles which extend down to the Highland Boundary Fault.

South of the fault, the landscape has a rolling, lowland character. Verdant farmland comprises large fields which are enclosed by shelterbelts or stone walls and sandy bays are backed by flat, open coastal plains. The southern part of Bute is more inhabited than the wilder north and includes the port at Rothesay and the designed house and gardens of Mount Stewart.

The Cowal area is divided into two broad areas of relatively consistent and distinctive character: Cowal Ridges; and Loch Fyne.

The Cowal Ridges extend from the Kyles of Bute in the south to Crianlarich in the north, covering the eastern section of the Cowal peninsula. The scale of the landscape is large and increases as the landscape extends north. Dramatic mountain ridges have steep slopes with rocky outcrops; there are some areas of commercial forestry; and open moorland covers large areas of the ridges. Glens contain narrow flood plains with meandering rivers or narrow lochs.

Loch Fyne is a large scale patchwork of forestry plantation and wild, open moor which dominates the hills surrounding the loch. The area extends along the edges of the loch, from the loch head at Glen Fyne down to Lochgilphead on the western edge, and down to the Kyles of Bute on the eastern shore. Large forestry plantations cover the hillsides, which contrast with wild and open moorland. Development is concentrated around the edges of the loch and views across the sheltered loch are stunning enhanced by castles and other large estate properties.

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.

Within the Bute and Cowal areas the following are applicable to this landscape capacity study:

- LCT 1: Steep Ridgeland and Mountains
- LCT 5: Open Ridgeland
- LCT 7: Craggy Upland
- LCT 13: Rolling Farmlands with Estates

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- LCT 17: Basalt Lowlands
- LCT 19: Coastal Plain
- LCT 20: Rocky Mosaic

Steep Ridgeland and Mountains LCT

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

- Dramatic mountain ridges with steep, plummeting slopes and numerous rocky outcrops;
- Ribbon lochs and meandering rivers on narrow flood plains from dramatic contrasts to the surrounding slopes;
- Extensive conifer plantations on lower slopes;
- Open moorland or bare rock faces on upper slopes and summits; and
- Settlement confined to narrow strips along loch edges and concentrated in small bays and heads of lochs.

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

- Avoid built development on mountain ridges, on lower slopes with distinctive landform and on valley bluffs which would form part of prominent views;
- Concentrate new built development at the foot of slopes, avoiding ribbon development;
- Ensure that any new development respects traditional settlement patterns and styles;
- New built development should always be set within a framework of woodland, to integrate with the wider landscape – plant native trees to screen, if required;
- Retain the open character of river floodplains and dramatic contrasts with surrounding steep mountain ridges.

Open Ridgeland LCT

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

- Broad, even slopes form rounded ridges and occasional steep summits;
- Upper slopes are predominantly open moorland;
- Marginal farmland confined to broader glens and loch fringes;
- Built development is concentrated along very narrow shoreline strip.

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

- Retain strong contrast in scale and character of landscape on upper slopes and small-scale, more diverse landscape pattern within valleys;

- Conserve and extend existing broadleaf woodland within gullies on valley slopes to strengthen visual links between landform and landscape pattern;
- Conserve natural character of sensitive, undeveloped shoreline landscapes and give careful consideration to the impact of any new built development on views from the opposite shores of narrow ribbon lochs or long peninsulas;
- Ensure that all new development is associated with broadleaf planting and that property boundaries with an ornamental character do not extend onto the upper moorland slopes;
- New development and infrastructure should follow existing practices of having buildings built into slopes to help 'anchor' the buildings into the landscape.

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, particularly the shorelines of the Kyles of Bute;
- 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.

Rolling Farmlands with Estates LCT

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

- Broad, rounded ridges with occasional steep banks, knolls and conical upstanding hills;
- Flat coastal plain with sandy bays along the Firth of Clyde;

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- Groups of fairly large, rectangular fields, enclosed by linear shelterbelts and blocks of mixed woodland;
- Large estate houses with estate policy woodlands;
- Scattered large farmsteads;
- Urban development on coastal plain and broader valleys.

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

- Estate policy woodlands have historic and visual importance and should be protected, restored and managed;
- Give particular attention to key views from local roads and public rights of way;
- Traditional hedgerows are essential element in the visual structure and should be conserved;
- Linear development along roadsides should be avoided;
- Built development should be associated with woodland planting or shelter belts.

Basalt Lowlands LCT

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

- Indented coastline – low headlands have a distinctive stepped profile;
- Open moorland broken by rocky outcrops and ledges;
- Diverse, patchy mosaic of woodland, bog and marginal pasture on lower fringes of moor;
- Scattered small-holdings and cottages on edge of moor;
- Small estates influence the landscape character in some sheltered coastal bays.

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 carefully sited, taking guidance from existing settlement patterns and vegetation structure;
- Buildings should be sheltered by distinctive terraced ridges and rocky outcrops;
- Excessive earthworks should be avoided, particularly the construction of raised platforms;
- Traditional buildings and stone walls should be conserved and restored;
- Take opportunities to restore / convert derelict buildings.

Coastal Plain LCT

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

- Completely flat, linear coastal plain, backed by a coastal road;

- Straight, angular field patterns and lanes;
- Open, exposed character;
- Isolated farmsteads and some development along the coastal road.

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

- Sprawling linear development along the coast road should be avoided;
- Built development should be carefully sited, taking account of long views from the coastal road as well as views from adjacent elevated land.
- Development should always be associated with low, scrubby planting, stands of trees and stone walls to integrate it with the surrounding landscape;
- Attention should be given to the massing and silhouette of any new buildings;
- Development in particularly open, visually sensitive areas should be restricted.

Rocky Mosaic LCT

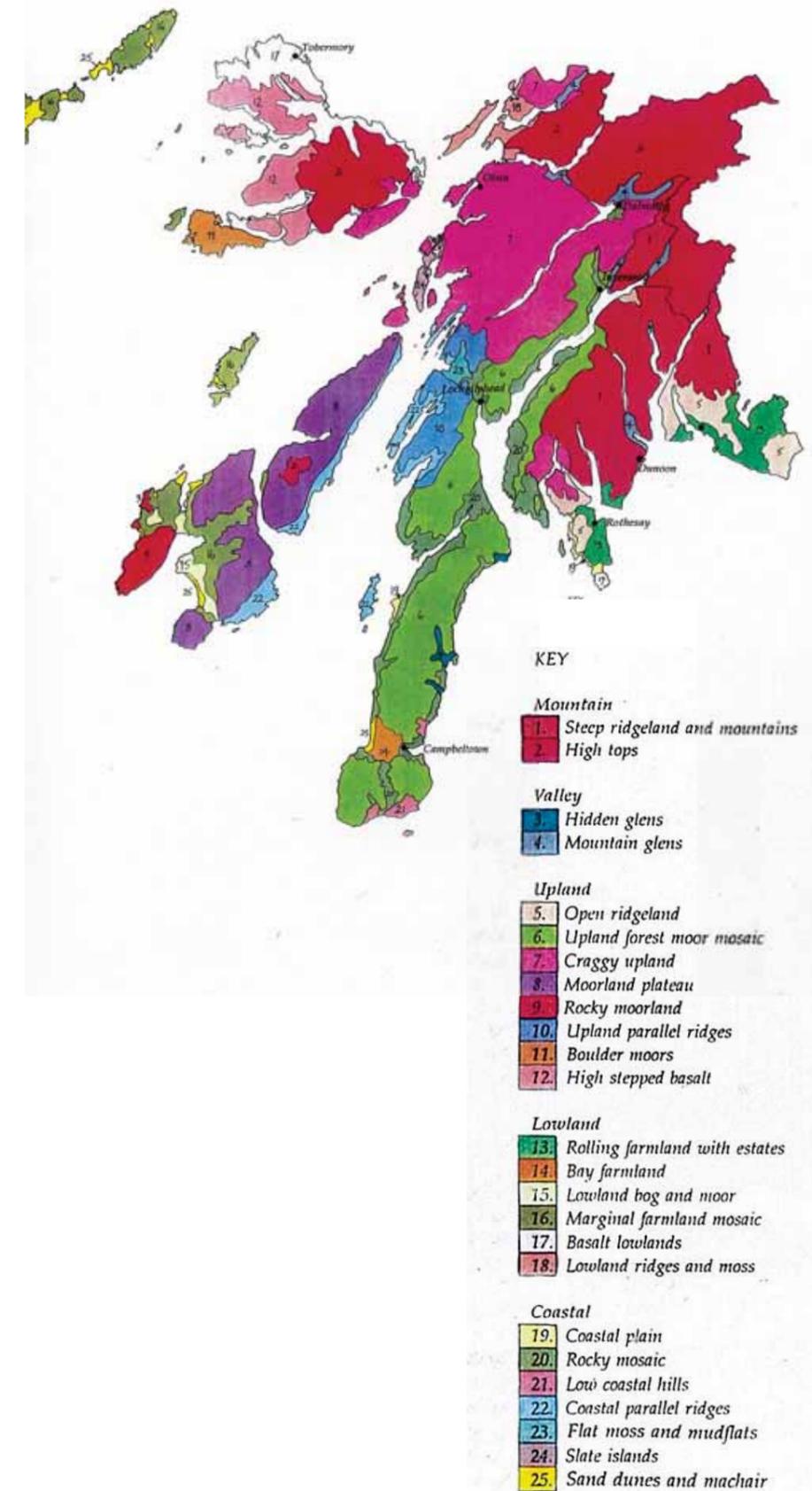
The key characteristics of this landscape character type, relevant to the study, are:

- 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.

Argyll and Bute Landscape Capacity Study



Extract from Landscape Assessment of Argyll & The Firth of Clyde (SNH Review number 78, Environmental Resources Management, 1996)