

REPORT

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

CMAL SVRP Enabling Works

Client: Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd.

Reference: PC5424-RHD-ZZ-CV-RP-EV-1000

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Project related



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1 Introduction

1.1 Project background

Royal HaskoningDHV has been commissioned by Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd. (herein referred to as 'CMAL') to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the area surrounding Colintraive ferry terminal (National Grid Reference NS 03117 74536) (herein referred to as 'the Site'), ahead of their Small Vessel Replacement Programme (SVRP) enabling works.

The Small Vessel Replacement Programme (SVRP) is part of the broader Vessel Replacement and Deployment Programme (VRDP) initiated by Transport Scotland. The VRDP identified eight smaller vessels that were either beyond or approaching 30 years in service and close to the end of their operational life. The main objective of the SVRP is to provide new all-electric vessels for operation by CalMac Ferries Ltd (CalMac) on several routes. Importantly, the SVRP is expected to deliver a substantial reduction in carbon emissions compared to the older vessels being replaced, indicating a commitment to environmental sustainability. The project includes improving port infrastructure at various locations to accommodate the new vessels. These improvements will enable overnight charging for the vessels and enhanced terminal facilities.

The purpose of this PEA is to inform CMAL of the potential ecological receptors and constraints present within the Site, as well as those in close proximity to the Site that may be affected by proposed improvements to infrastructure. Identification of such ecological factors will allow for the development of appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures where needed, and for these to be incorporated into the proposed development. Additionally, the PEA identifies where further data collection on specific receptors may be needed.

1.2 Site description

Colintraive ferry crosses the Kyles of Bute, providing a transport route to Rhubodach on the Isle of Bute. The ferry terminal itself comprises mostly hardstanding roads, a car park and ferry slipways. The surrounding landscape comprises several areas well-established woodland as well as productive agricultural land. The area surveyed as part of this PEA is shown in **Figure 1**.

1.3 Policy and legislation

This report has been compiled with reference to the following relevant national and local nature conservation legislation, planning policy from which the protection of sites, habitats and species is derived in Scotland:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended);
- The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997;
- Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004;
- The Natural Environments and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006;
- The Planning Act 2008;
- Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011;
- Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended);
- Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR);
-

- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4);
- The Scottish Biodiversity List (SBL);
- Argyll and Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2015 - 2020; and
- Argyll and Bute Biodiversity Duty Action Plan 2016 – 2021.

Further details of the above policy and legislation are set out in **Appendix A**.

2 Methodology

2.1 Desk study

A desk study was carried out to identify potentially relevant nature conservation designated sites and notable habitats or species that could be affected by the proposed development plan. The data sources and extents of the search considered are summarised below in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1 Data used for the desk study.

Data source	Dataset(s)	Extents considered
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) (Defra, 2024).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory designated sites 	Within and up to 2 km of the Site for all receptors.
Argyll Biological Records Centre (ABRC) Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protected and notable species Non-statutory designated sites 	Within and up to 2 km of the Site, extended to 5 km for bird and bat species.
Habitat Map of Scotland (NatureScot, 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish Biodiversity List (SBL) habitats 	Within and up to 2 km of the Site for all receptors.

2.2 Field survey

The field survey was conducted on 07 November 2024, covering the extents shown in **Figure 1**. The PEA field survey followed the CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, and comprised the following components:

- UKHab habitat survey:** A baseline habitat survey of the Site was carried out using the UK Habitat Classification System (UKHab, UKHab Ltd., 2023). UKHab is a hierarchal system which comprises five-levels of primary habitat, as well as a list of secondary codes that allow the recording of additional information linked to primary habitats. For the purposes of this survey, all habitats were classified to a minimum of primary habitat Level 4, to ensure detailed habitat descriptions were collected. Abundance of plant species in each habitat within the survey area has also been recorded using the DAFOR scale, where D (Dominant) = 51 – 100% abundance, A (Abundant) = 31 – 50%, F (Frequent) = 16 – 30%, O (Occasional) = 6 – 15%; and R (Rare) = 1 – 5%.
- Protected and notable species:** Any field signs, sightings or suitable habitat for protected and notable species were also recorded during the survey of Site, in order to inform potential future ecological opportunities or constraints of the project. Invasive non-native species were also recorded where seen.

Weather conditions during the survey were favourable, being sunny with temperature highs of 13°C. The timing of the survey was outside of the optimal season for botanical surveys (April – September), nevertheless, identification of plants to species level and accurate habitat classification was still possible.

2.3 Limitations

The field survey only identified species and habitats observed during the survey period. There is potential that species present on the Site would not have been observed during the field survey and therefore not recorded.

In addition, areas of different habitats are dependent on data collected during the survey and transferred to Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The accuracy of these is approximate and would need to be verified by measurements on the Site where required for design or construction.

The field survey conducted does not provide an exhaustive list of plant species present on the site, however, enough information to classify habitats present on the Site was captured.

When considering the objective of the survey, the habitats present and the surrounding areas, it is considered that these constraints would not have a major impact on the findings of this report.

2.4 Technical competence

The field survey and reporting were led by Beth Millwater BSc (Hons) MSc, a terrestrial ecologist at Royal HaskoningDHV with four years' experience as a professional ecologist. Beth has experience leading and carrying out a variety of ecological surveys and reports on a range of different project sizes. Beth was supported in the field by Ruby Falcus BSc (Hons), an ecologist at Royal HaskoningDHV with two years' experience as a professional ecologist. Both Beth and Ruby are qualifying members of CIEEM and are therefore aware of and held to their professional code of conduct (CIEEM, 2022).

For quality assurance, this report was reviewed from a technical perspective by Leonardo Gubert PhD CIEEM CEnv, a principal terrestrial ecologist at Royal HaskoningDHV with 24 years' experience as a professional ecologist.

3 Results

3.1 Desk study

3.1.1 Designated sites

Table 3.1 provides detail of statutory designated sites for nature conservation within 2 km of the Site. No local or non-statutory designated sites were identified within 2 km of the Site.

The location and extent of the designated sites in relation to the Site are shown in **Figure 2**.

Table 3.1 Statutory nature conservation designated sites within 2 km of the Site.

Site name	Designation	Proximity to Site	Reason for designation
International and national statutory designated sites			
North End of Bute	Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI)	776 m south west	<p>The North End of Bute SSSI is designated for the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breeding bird assemblage – high diversity of moorland and woodland breeding birds. Over 70 breeding bird species have been recorded including red-throated diver <i>Gavia stellata</i>, hen harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>, merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i>, peregrine falcon <i>F. peregrinus</i> and golden eagle <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>; Upland assemblage - the upland habitats comprise a mix of dry heather moorland, wet heath and blanket mire, with areas of grassland dominated by purple moor grass <i>Molinia caerulea</i>; and Upland oak woodland - the woodland, at the north-eastern end of the site, supports a range of mosses, liverworts, lichens and ferns, characteristic of western oceanic oakwoods. Oak <i>Quercus</i> sp. and birch <i>Betula</i> sp. are dominant on acid soils, with scattered hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> and rowan <i>Sorbus aucuparia</i> in the understorey. Flushed areas are dominated by willows <i>Salix</i> sp. with ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> and wych elm <i>Ulmus glabra</i> occurring on the more base-rich soils. <p>The SSSI's breeding bird assemblage is in a favourable maintained condition, upland assemblage is in unfavourable declining condition, and the upland oak woodland is currently in an unfavourable condition.</p>

3.1.2 Scottish Biodiversity List habitats

Six SBL habitats were present within 2 km of the Site, as described in **Table 3.2**. The location and extent of these habitats in relation to the Site are shown in **Figure 3**. Several of the woodland SBL habitats identified below are classified as ancient woodlands, as shown in **Figure 2**. In Scottish Planning Policy ancient woodlands are cited as an irreplaceable resource and, along with veteran trees, are of high nature conservation and landscape value and should be protected from adverse impacts resulting from development.

Table 3.2 SBL habitats within 2 km of the Site.

SBL habitat	Proximity of closest parcel to Site	SBL habitat description
Lowland heathland	1.20 km southwest	UKHab (2023) describes lowland heathland as “a broadly open landscape of impoverished, acidic mineral and shallow peat soil, which is characterised by the presence of plants such as heathers

SBL habitat	Proximity of closest parcel to Site	SBL habitat description
		<i>and dwarf gorses, crowberry Empetrum nigrum and grass species such as bristle bent Agrostis curtisii and sheep's fescue Festuca ovina</i> . Lowland heathlands in the UK are generally found at altitudes of less than 300m, however, this altitudinal limit is lower at more northerly latitudes such as the highlands. These habitats are dynamic and have distinct successional stages, resulting in a mosaic of dwarf shrubs and acidic grassland, varying in height.
Lowland fen	1.61 km north west	UKHab (2023) describes lowland fens as “ <i>wetlands that receive water and nutrients from the soil, rock and groundwater, as well as from rainfall. Fens are also often associated with the accumulation</i> ”.
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	0.65 km northwest	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland is described in UKHab (2023) as “ <i>woodland growing on the full range of soil conditions, varying from very acidic to base-rich. It occurs largely within enclosed landscapes, usually on sites with well-defined boundaries, at relatively low altitudes, although altitude is not a defining feature</i> ”. This definition includes most established semi-natural woodlands in parts of Lowland Scotland, many of which are also classified as ancient woodlands.
Upland birchwood	1.32 km east	UKHab (2023) describes upland birchwood as “ <i>woodlands with abundant birch Betula spp., with constituents such as rowan Sorbus aucuparia, willow Salix spp., juniper Juniperus spp. And aspen Populus tremula. These woodlands differ from successional birch stands found within oakwoods and dwarf birch scrub</i> ”. Upland birchwood boundaries often change in response to constraints such as wild fires and grazing pressure, frequently resulting in a varied density of vegetation dependent on ground conditions.
Upland oakwood	164 m north	UKHab (2023) describes upland oakwood woodland as “ <i>acidophilous sessile oak Quercus petraea woods, with low-branched trees and many ferns, mosses, lichens and evergreen bushes</i> ”. This habitat is found throughout the north and west of the UK, particularly concentrated in Argyll, Lochaber, Cumbria, Gwynedd, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall.
Wet woodland	370 m east	Wet woodland is described in UKHab (2023) to occur “ <i>on poorly drained or seasonally wet soils, usually with Alder Alnus glutinosa, birch Betula sp., and willows Salix sp. as the predominant tree species, but sometimes including ash Fraxinus excelsior, oak, Scots pine Pinus sylvestris and beech Fagus sylvatica on the drier riparian areas</i> ”. Wet woodlands are often successional habitats for other wetland habitats, such as fens and bogs, as well as marginal features for standing and running water habitats.

3.1.3 Protected and notable species

3.1.3.1 Bats

Bat species in the UK are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 5 and in Scotland are protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations 1994, making it a criminal offence to deliberately disturb or harm bats and their roosts. The bat species recorded by ABRC within 5 km of the Site and their respective species designations and lists are detailed in **Table 3.3**.

Table 3.3 Protected and notable bat species with records within 5 km of the Site

Bat species	Number of records	Proximity to Site	Species designations and lists
Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	3	5 km west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitats Regulations Schedule 2 SBL Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 5

3.1.3.2 Birds

All wild bird species in the UK are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence to intentionally disturb or cause harm to birds or their nests. However, some species found within 5 km of the Site are afforded extra protection under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended). The Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) list also includes bird species that are of conservation priority in the UK, noting those of highest concern as 'red list' and those of moderate concern as 'amber list'. The global equivalent of the BoCC list is the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, which identifies bird species worldwide that are at risk of extinction and categorises them based on their conservation status.

The bird species recorded by ABRC within 5 km of the Site and their respective species designations and lists are detailed in **Table 3.4**.

Table 3.4 Protected and notable bird species with records within 5 km of the Site

Bird species	Number of records	Proximity to Site	Species designations and lists
Lesser redpoll <i>Acanthis cabaret</i>	4	5.00 km west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBL
Razorbill <i>Alca torda</i>	2	3.92 km east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) amber list
Greylag goose <i>Anser anser</i>	2	3.92 km east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BoCC amber list Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 1
Tree pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	13	2.50 km north west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BoCC amber list SBL
Barnacle goose <i>Branta leucopsis</i>	1	1.50 km north	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argyll and Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) BoCC amber list SBL
Black guillemot <i>Cephus grylle</i>	1	133 m east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BoCC amber list
Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	1	2.05 km north west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argyll and Bute LBAP NERC S41 BoCC red list SBL International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, vulnerable
Reed bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	6	5.00 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argyll and Bute LBAP BoCC amber list SBL
Shag <i>Gulosus aristotelis</i>	6	1.91 km north west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BoCC red list
Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	2	1.13 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BoCC amber list
Herring gull <i>Larus argentatus</i>	10	452 m south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argyll and Bute LBAP BoCC red list

Project related

Bird species	Number of records	Proximity to Site	Species designations and lists
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NERC S41 • SBL • IUCN Red List, endangered
Common gull <i>Larus canus</i>	3	2.09 km west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BoCC amber list
Great black-backed gull <i>Larus marinus</i>	1	4.21 km north east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BoCC amber list • IUCN Red List, endangered
Twite <i>Linaria flavirostris</i>	2	5.00 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute LBAP • BoCC red list
Grasshopper warbler <i>Locustella naevia</i>	4	5.00 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute LBAP • NERC S41 • BoCC red list • SBL
Red-breasted merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i>	1	2.28 km south east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BoCC amber list • IUCN Red List, vulnerable
Spotted flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	6	5.00 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute LBAP • NERC S41 • BoCC red list • SBL
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	9	5.00 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute LBAP • NERC S41 • BoCC red list • SBL • IUCN Red List, endangered
Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	2	299 m west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BoCC red list
Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	2	5.00 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) • BoCC amber list
Wood warbler <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	4	5.00 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute LBAP • NERC S41 • BoCC red list • SBL • IUCN Red List, vulnerable
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	1	1.78 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BoCC amber list
Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	1	1.78 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute LBAP • BoCC amber list • SBL
Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	7	5.00 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BoCC red list • IUCN Red List, near threatened
Eider <i>Somateria mollissima</i>	33	412 m south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BoCC amber list • IUCN Red List, vulnerable
Siskin <i>Spinus spinus</i>	1	412 m south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBL
Tawny owl <i>Strix aluco</i>	5	1.40 km south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BoCC amber list • IUCN Red List, near threatened
Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	1	3.91 km east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BoCC red list • NERC S41 • IUCN Red List, vulnerable
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	2	1.53 km north	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argyll and Bute LBAP

Bird species	Number of records	Proximity to Site	Species designations and lists
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BoCC amber list IUCN Red List, near threatened
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	1	1.77 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BoCC amber list
Barn owl <i>Tyto alba</i>	8	5.00 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBL Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 1
Common guillemot <i>Uria aalge</i>	2	2.43 km south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BoCC amber list
Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	2	3.92 km east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argyll and Bute LBAP NERC S41 BoCC red list SBL IUCN Red List, endangered

3.1.3.3 Fish

Certain fish species are listed under NERC S41 and also under Argyll and Bute LBAP to highlight them as a conservation priority nationally and locally respectively. Protected and notable fish species recorded by ABRC within 2 km of the Site and their respective species designations and lists are detailed in **Table 3.5**.

Table 3.5 Protected and notable fish species within 2 km of the Site.

Fish species	Number of records	Proximity to Site	Species designations and lists
European eel <i>Anguilla anguilla</i>	2	308 m east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NERC S41 OSPAR listed species SBL IUCN Red List, critically endangered
Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i>	1	897 m west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argyll and Bute LBAP NERC S41 OSPAR listed species SBL
Brown/ sea trout <i>Salmo trutta</i>	2	897 m west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NERC S41 SBL

3.1.3.4 Higher plants

Select higher plant species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations 1994. The SBL also lists more species of plants which are a conservation priority. The higher plant species recorded by ABRC within 2 km of the Site and their respective species designations and lists are detailed in **Table 3.6**.

Table 3.6 Protected and notable higher plant species with records within 2 km of the Site.

Higher plant species	Number of records	Proximity to Site	Species designations and lists
Wilson's filmy-fern <i>Hymenophyllum wilsonii</i>	16	1.16 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IUCN red list, near threatened
Killarney fern <i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>	1	1.16 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argyll and Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) Habitats Directive Annex II; SBL IUCN Red List, endangered
Arctic eyebright <i>Euphrasia arctica</i>	1	2.00 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IUCN red list, near threatened

Higher plant species	Number of records	Proximity to Site	Species designations and lists
Confused eyebright <i>E. confusa</i>	2	2.00 km south west	• IUCN red list, vulnerable
Slender eyebright <i>E. micrantha</i>	7	1.78 km south west	• IUCN red list, vulnerable
Bluebell <i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	18	1.14 km south west	• Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 8
Chaffweed <i>Lysimachia minima</i>	2	1.50 km south east	• IUCN red list, near threatened
Corn mint <i>Mentha arvensis</i>	2	512 m south west	• SBL
Mossy saxifrage <i>Saxifraga hypnoides</i>	2	1.81 km north east	• IUCN red list, vulnerable • SBL
Corn spurrey <i>Sprengelia arvensis</i>	3	1.14 km south west	• IUCN red list, vulnerable

3.1.3.5 Invertebrates

Certain invertebrate species are listed under the SBL, the NERC Act and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), to highlight them as a conservation priority. The invertebrate species recorded by ABRC within 2 km of the Site and their respective species designations and lists are detailed in **Table 3.7**.

Table 3.7 Protected and notable invertebrate species with records within 2 km of the Site.

Invertebrate species	Number of records	Proximity to Site	Species designations and lists
Edible sea urchin <i>Echinus esculentus</i>	15	762 m north west	• IUCN red list, near threatened
An ant <i>Formica aquilonia</i>	1	2.00 km north west	• IUCN red list, near threatened
A fly <i>Dicranomyia aquosa</i>	1	1.14 km south west	• Nationally notable
A fly <i>D. chorea</i>	1	1.14 km south west	• IUCN red list, rare
A fly <i>D. melleicauda</i> subsp. <i>complicata</i>	1	1.14 km south west	• Nationally notable
A fly <i>Idioptera pulchella</i>	1	1.14 km south west	• Nationally notable
A fly <i>Limonia trivittata</i>	1	1.14 km south west	• Nationally notable
A fly <i>Tipula alpina</i>	1	1.14 km south west	• IUCN red list, rare
Icelandic cyprine <i>Arctica islandica</i>	1	1.12 km south east	• OSPAR listed species
Dog whelk <i>Nucella lapillus</i>	5	133 m north west	• OSPAR listed species

3.1.3.6 Red squirrel

Red squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris* receive full protection in Scotland under Schedules 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), as well as listed on the SBL, Argyll and Bute LBAP, and NERC S41. ABRC held a total of 46 red squirrel records within 2 km of the Site, the closest being approximately 430 m to the east.

3.1.4 Invasive non-native species

Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) lists species of animals and plants that are established in the wild in Great Britain but are not native to the region. These invasive non-native species (INNS) can pose a threat to native wildlife and habitats. INNS recorded by ABRC within 2 km of the Site are detailed in **Table 3.8**.

Table 3.8 INNS within 2 km of the site.

INNS	Number of records	Proximity to Site	Species designations and lists
Himalayan cotoneaster <i>Cotoneaster simonsii</i>	1	2.00 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 9
Monbretia <i>Crococsmia aurea</i> x <i>C pottsii</i> = <i>C. x crocosmiiflora</i>	10	1.14 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 9
New Zealand willowherb <i>Epilobium brunnescens</i>	17	1.17 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 9
Garden yellow archangel <i>Lamiaeum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum</i>	1	1.23 km north west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 9
Japanese knotweed <i>Fallopia japonica</i>	3	1.39 km south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 9
Yellow azalea <i>Rhododendron luteum</i>	1	1.69 km north west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 9
Rhododendron <i>R. ponticum</i>	21	1.14 km south west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 9

3.2 Field survey

3.2.1 Habitats

Three different primary habitat types were recorded within the Site during the field survey. These habitats are summarised below in **Table 3.9** and **Table 3.10**, and their location and extent are shown in **Figure 4**.

Table 3.9 Habitats present on Site.

Habitat	UKHab primary code	UKHab secondary code	Area (ha)	SBL habitat
Modified grassland	g4	106, 516	0.007	-
Littoral sediment	t2	-	0.040	-
Developed land sealed surface	u1b	800, 815	0.113	-

Table 3.10 Baseline habitat descriptions

Habitat	Description	Photo reference (Appendix B)
Modified grassland	A small area of modified grassland was present on the north eastern edge of the Site, connecting to a wider modified grassland field present to the east of Colintrave ferry terminal. This field was actively managed, with grass length clearly mowed and maintained at a short height. Vegetative species present within this habitat included perennial ryegrass <i>Lolium perenne</i> (D), white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> (A), creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> (A), common dandelion <i>Taraxacum officinale</i> (O) and yarrow <i>Achillea millefolium</i> (O). The secondary codes mown (106) and active management (516) were applicable to this habitat.	2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8
Littoral sediment	The Kyles of Bute, the narrow sea channel that separates the northern end of the Isle of Bute from the Cowal Peninsula, is located to the west of Colintrave ferry terminal. A small area of	1, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18 and 19

Habitat	Description	Photo reference (Appendix B)
	littoral sediment was visible during the survey north of the ferry terminal's slipway and west of the ferry terminal wall. The survey was conducted one hour before high tide. Sediment sizes comprised a mixture of sand, pebble and cobble. A few opportunistic ruderal vegetation species had colonised dryer areas of the littoral sediment, including common hogweed <i>Heracleum sphondylium</i> (O), dock <i>Rumex</i> sp. (R) and common ragwort <i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i> (O).	
Developed land sealed surface	Developed land sealed surface was present throughout majority of the Site including the roads, car park, ferry terminal building, slipway and stilted structures in the water. No vegetation was present within this habitat. The secondary codes road (800) and commercial building (815) were applicable to this habitat.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16 and 17

3.2.2 Protected and notable species

Field signs of protected and notable species encountered during the field survey of the Site are detailed in **Table 3.11**.

Table 3.11 Protected and notable field survey observations

Protected and notable species	Species lists and designations	Field notes	Target note reference (Appendix C)
Herring gull	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argyll and Bute LBAP BoCC red list NERC S41 SBL IUCN Red List, endangered Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) 	Observed one individual adult herring gull flying overhead.	TN1
House sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BoCC red list NERC S41 SBL Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) 	Observed one individual adult house sparrow stood on the wall of the ferry terminal.	TN1
Carrion x hooded crow hybrid <i>Corvus corone x cornix</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) 	Observed one individual adult carrion x hooded crow hybrid walking around the ferry terminal car park.	TN1

No field signs of any other protected and notable species were observed during the field survey. Suitable habitat for select protected and notable species additional to those mentioned above were present, as summarised below in **Table 3.12**.

Additionally, no INNS were recorded during the field survey of the Site.

Table 3.12 Protected and notable species habitat suitability.

Protected and notable species	Habitat types	Notes on suitability
Nesting birds	Developed land sealed surface, in particular buildings.	There is low suitability for nesting birds to utilise the ferry terminal building and shipping containers present within the Site as nesting habitat. The flat roof spaces of the shipping

Protected and notable species	Habitat types	Notes on suitability
		containers in particular are suitable for nesting gull species, already known to be active in the area.
Other birds	Open water, Kyles of Bute	Other bird species have colloquially been cited to use the Kyles of Bute for foraging, including waterbirds and birds of prey. Even though foraging was not observed during the survey, bird activity on Site will likely be increased in the summer months.
Fish	Open water, Kyles of Bute	Several notable fish species have been cited to be present in the Kyles of Bute, as detailed in Section 3.1.3.3 .
Marine mammals	Open water, Kyles of Bute	Marine mammal species have colloquially been cited to be present in the Kyles of Bute, including seals Phocidae sp., porpoises Phocoenidae sp. and dolphins Delphinidae sp.
Otter	Open water, Kyles of Bute	Otters have colloquially been cited to use the Kyles of Bute for foraging, within shallower waters along the shoreline.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

No impacts are expected on designated sites, SBL habitats, or protected and notable species (other than birds). There is low potential, due to the coastal location of the Site and observed bird activity, that birds could be impacted by the development. Based on the findings of this PEA, some species and habitat specific mitigation measures are suggested due to the potential for such ecological receptors to be directly impacted by the proposed works, as set out in **Table 4.1**.

4.1 Mitigation recommendations

All works should follow the mitigation hierarchy set out by CIEEM (2018) in their Guidelines For Ecological Impact Assessment In the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. The hierarchy is as follows, starting with avoidance and as a last option use enhancement as mitigation:

- **Avoidance:** Seek options that avoid harm to ecological features;
- **Mitigation:** Negative effects should be avoided or minimised through mitigation measures, either through the design of the project or subsequent measures that can be guaranteed – for example, through a condition or planning obligation;
- **Compensation:** Where there are significant residual negative ecological effects despite the mitigation proposed, these should be offset by appropriate compensatory measures; and
- **Enhancement:** Seek to provide net benefits for biodiversity over and above requirements for avoidance, mitigation or compensation.

Table 4.1 Mitigation and further survey recommendations.

Ecological receptor	Mitigation measures
All wildlife	<p>Any clearance works should be carried out in a precautionary manner in relation to all wildlife present on Site. Any animals encountered should be allowed to move off of their own accord if disturbed, or, in the case of hedgehogs, be carefully moved to a safe location away from the works, if necessary. If works are to be undertaken outside daylight hours, a sensitive lighting scheme should be implemented to avoid indirect disturbance to foraging birds and small mammals that may be using the Site.</p> <p>Any excavations created on Site should have a ramp installed at the end of each workday to allow for any nocturnal wildlife that may become trapped in the excavation to escape. A suitable ramp would have adequate grip, be at least 30 cm wide and set at an angle of no greater than 45°.</p>
Designated sites	<p>In order to maintain the condition of nearby designated sites and SBL habitats, works should follow the mitigation hierarchy as set out by CIEEM (2018). Following the mitigation hierarchy ensures potential impacts on SBL habitats and designated sites are recognised early in development and can be addressed appropriately and proportionally. Best practice guidance should be followed to reduce siltation and sedimentation risk.</p>
SBL habitats	
Nesting birds	<p>Any proposed works should be undertaken outside of the of the bird nesting season (March - August inclusive, although weather dependant). If works are required on structures with nesting bird potential within the nesting bird season, then an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) should check the area for nesting birds a maximum of 48 hours prior to the commencement of works. Active nests and their associated vegetation must remain until young birds have left the nest. Additionally, works should aim to avoid the active bird nesting season where possible to minimise noise and light disturbance to nesting birds in close proximity to the Site.</p>
Fish	<p>Best practice, such as Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP) and SEPA's Engineering in the Water Environment guidance, will be followed to avoid effects on fish during the works. This will include prevention of pollution and sedimentation.</p>

Ecological receptor	Mitigation measures
INNS	<p>Spread of invasive non-native species could be potentially harmful to native floral and faunal species in the local area and therefore would require any invasive non-native species encountered during construction to be managed appropriately. For example, for invasive non-native plant species this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemical control; • Manual/mechanical control such as pulling or digging out live, dead or dying plants; • Burying plants (other than Japanese knotweed); and • Disposing of contaminated soil and plants off Site at suitable locations such as approved waste sites. <p>A pre-works walkover should be conducted to identify any invasive non-native species present on Site. If invasive non-native species are found, an Invasive Species Management Plan (ISMP) should be produced prior to any construction, detailing measures to be implemented to avoid the risk of spreading invasive non-native species as part of the operations.</p>
Marine mammals	<p>Several notable marine mammal species migrate or are more active at night, therefore works should avoid night working where possible. Seal species are active throughout the day but will likely be deterred from the area temporarily during works due to noise and will therefore not require additional mitigation. Any noise and vibration caused by the works should be avoided or minimised as far as practicable. Since the proposed works are temporary in nature, it is anticipated that any noise and vibration will not be long term, and such species should remain in the area post-development. If a marine mammal is encountered in close proximity to the works, works should cease until the animal has moved out of the area.</p>
Otter	<p>During construction, machinery should be checked at the start of the working day to ensure no otters or other animals are resting underneath. All excavations left open overnight include an escape ramp with adequate grip, at least 30 cm wide and set at an angle of no greater than 45°. A toolbox talk should be provided to contractors by an ECoW prior to works to explain what to do if an otter is encountered on Site. If an active otter hole is discovered in close proximity of the works, a NatureScot licence will be required.</p>

When implementing the recommendations outlined above in **Table 4.1**, including the presence of an ECoW, the proposed works will be delivered in accordance with nature legislation and policy, as well as without significant ecological concern.

4.2 Ecological opportunities

Ecological opportunities on Site are limited due to the ferry terminal needing to maintain its functionality.

Interventions could be carried out to improve the quality and species diversity of habitats present on Site. For example, implementing a simple management plan to promote plant species diversity in areas of modified grassland together with enhancement planting (by sowing an appropriate wildflower seed mix or using plug plants) would boost local biodiversity and provide foraging opportunities for pollinating species. If modified grassland habitats were to be subject to future management, the cuttings could be collected and removed off-Site, a method known as 'cut and collect', to promote diverse swards. Removing the cuttings prevents them from decomposing and gradually remove nutrients from the soil, as nutrient-rich soils favour more vigorous grasses and flowers that outcompete other species. In case of landscaping or Site reinstatement following any excavations, it would be preferable that this is completed with a layer of subsoil at the top by inverting the order excavated material is put back (e.g. topsoil at the bottom and subsoil on top). This would allow more diverse grassland swards to develop as most native grassland species thrive on nutrient poor soils.

Urban habitat interventions could also be carried out on areas of developed land such as green roof installation and placement of ground level planters.

Due to the suitability for nesting birds within the Site and surrounding area, bird boxes could be installed at locations such as buildings. Similarly, bat boxes could also be installed on buildings to increase roosting opportunities on Site, which are currently very limited. If carried out, the placement of both bat and bird boxes should be carefully considered, incorporating factors such as connectivity to the surrounding landscape, height, shelter and target species.

5 References

CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2022) Code of Professional Conduct. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

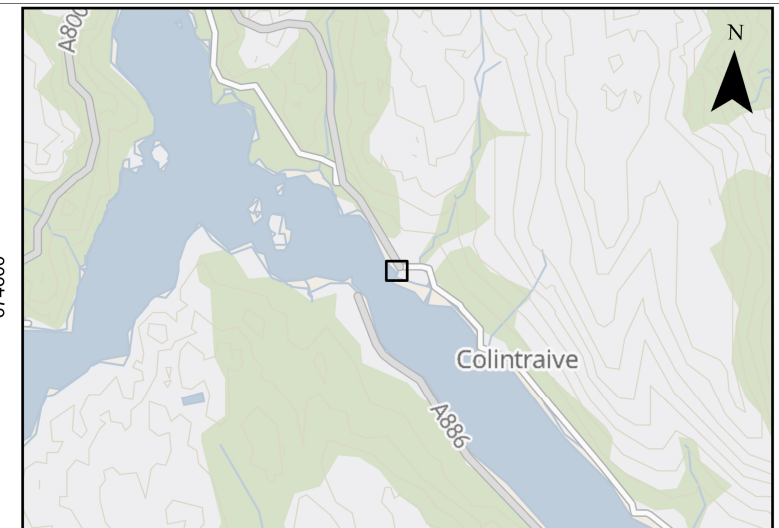
Defra (2024) Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside. Available at: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/home.htm> [Accessed 13 January 2025].

NatureScot (2015) Habitat Map of Scotland. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/landscapes-and-habitats/habitat-data-and-habitat-map-scotland> [Accessed 13 January 2025].

UKHab Ltd. (2023) UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0. Available at: <https://www.ukhab.org> [Accessed 07 November 2024].



6 Figures



Legend

Site Boundary

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Contains data from OS Zoomstack, World Imagery: Maxar, Microsoft

Client:	Project:
Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd.	CMAL SVRP Enabling Works

Title:
**Figure 1 -
Site red line boundary**

Figure: PC5424-RHD-XX-CV-D-EV-1000

Revision:	Date:	Drawn:	Checked:	Size:	Scale:
0	06/02/2025	JH	BM	A3	1:750

Co-ordinate system: British National Grid



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674500

674600

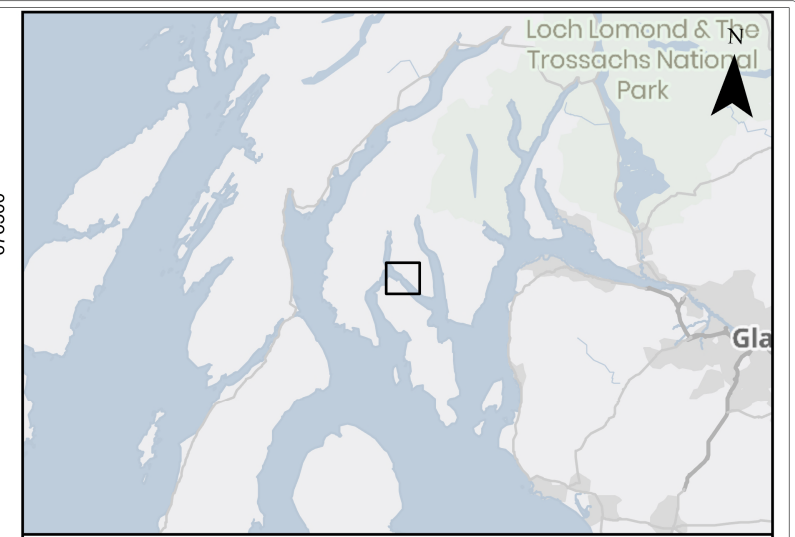
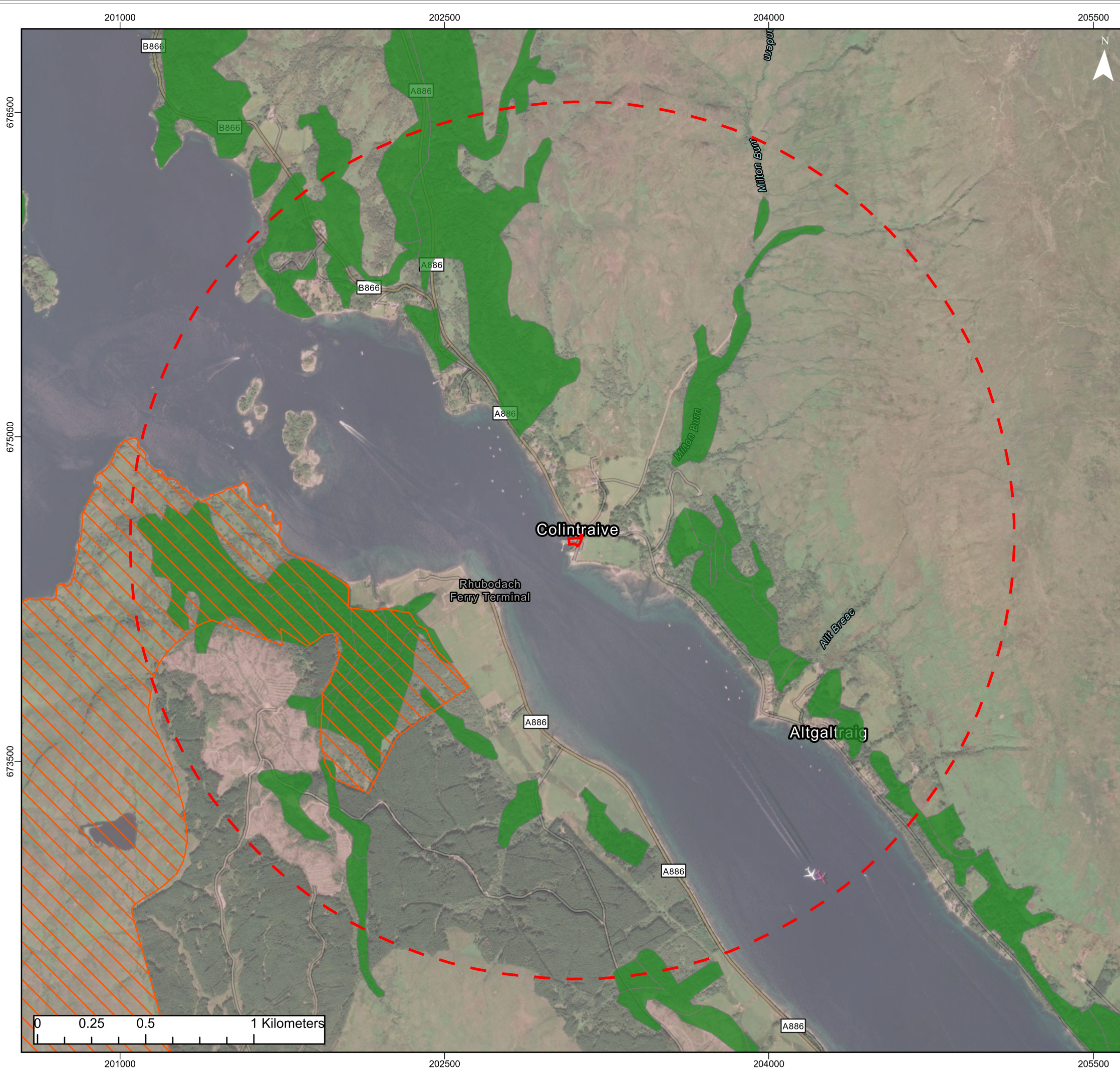
674500

203000

203100

203000

203100



Legend

- Site Boundary
- Site Boundary 2km Buffer
- North End of Bute Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Ancient Woodland

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 Contains data from OS Zoomstack, World Imagery: Maxar, Microsoft, Hybrid Reference Layer: Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS

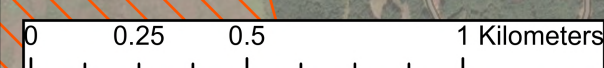
Client: Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd.	Project: CMAL SVRP Enabling Works
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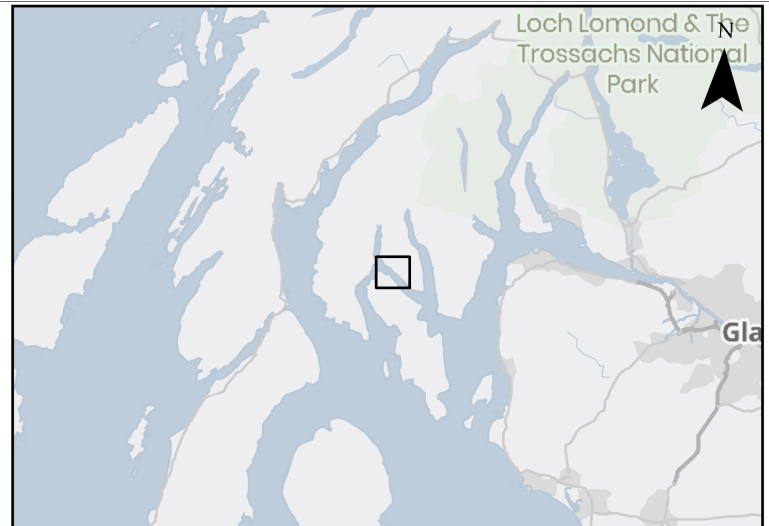
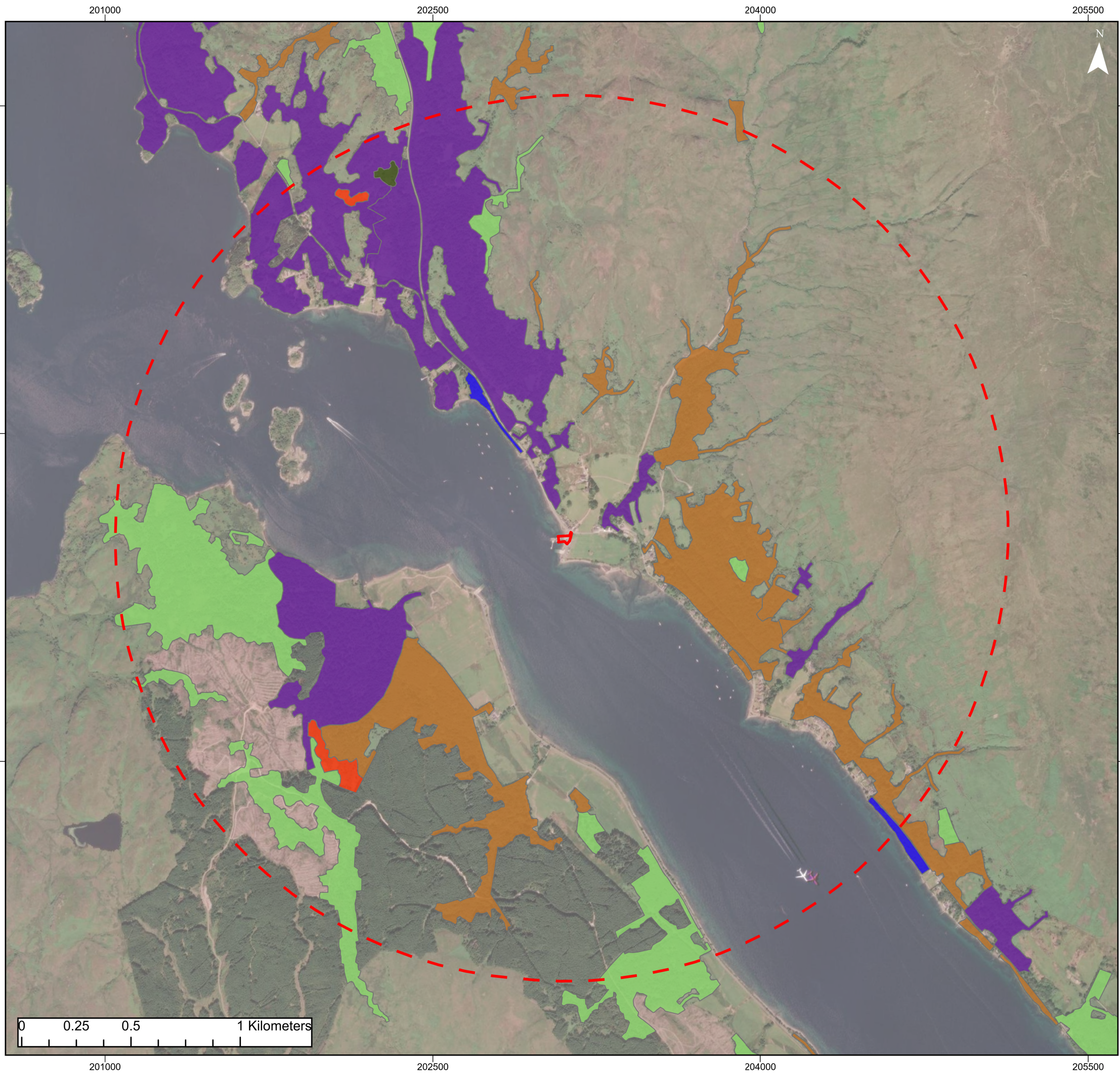
Title:
**Figure 2-
Designated sites and ancient woodlands plan**

Figure: PC5424-RHD-XX-CV-D-EV-1001

Revision:	Date:	Drawn:	Checked:	Size:	Scale:
0	06/02/2025	JH	BM	A3	1:17,500

Co-ordinate system: British National Grid





Legend

- Site Boundary
- Site Boundary 2km Buffer
- Native Woodland Survey**
- Lowland heathland
- Lowland fen
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Upland birchwood
- Upland oakwood
- Wet woodland

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Client: Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd.	Project: CMAL SVRP Enabling Works
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Title:
**Figure 3 -
Scottish Biodiversity List habitats
within 2km of the site**

Figure: PC5424-RHD-XX-CV-D-EV-1002

Revision:	Date:	Drawn:	Checked:	Size:	Scale:
0	06/02/2025	JH	BM	A3	1:17,500

Co-ordinate system: British National Grid





Legend

- Site Boundary
- Target note
- Primary Habitat**
- g4 - Modified grassland
- t2 - Littoral Sediment
- u1b - Developed land; sealed surface
- Secondary Habitat**
- 106 - Mown
- 800 - Road
- 815 - Commercial building
- 516 - Active Management

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Contains data from OS Zoomstack, World Imagery: Maxar, Microsoft

Client: Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd.	Project: CMAL SVRP Enabling Works
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Title:
Figure 4 - UKHab baseline habitat map

Figure: PC5424-RHD-XX-CV-D-EV-1003

Revision:	Date:	Drawn:	Checked:	Size:	Scale:
0	06/02/2025	JH	BM	A3	1:750

Co-ordinate system: British National Grid



Appendix A – Policy and Legislation

Legislation

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) (also known as the Habitats Regulations) transposed into UK law the land and marine aspects of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and elements of the Wild Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC) (known as the Nature Directives). The Habitats Regulations were amended in 2019 to retain the provision of the Regulations following the UK's exit from European Union (EU).

These regulations provide protection for specific habitats listed in Annex I and specific species in Annex II of the Habitats Directive. They set out the decision-making procedures for the protection of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which, following the 2019 amendment, now form the UK's National Site Network. Under the Habitats Regulations it is an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately capture, injure, kill, disturb, or trade in the animals listed in Schedule 2, or pick, collect, uproot, destroy, or trade in the plants listed in Schedule 4.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) was enacted to implement the Birds Directive and Bern Convention in Great Britain but has been amended and supplemented over the intervening decades. It contains four parts and 17 schedules which cover:

- Part 1: Wildlife – the protection of birds, animals, plants and measures to prevent the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to native wildlife;
- Part 2: Nature conservation – the countryside and National Parks (including the designation of protected areas);
- Part 3: Public rights of way; and
- Part 4: Miscellaneous provisions of the act.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) the country nature conservation bodies have a duty to notify any area of land which is 'of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, or geological or physiological features'. These sites are known as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) makes it a criminal offence to:

Intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird;

- To take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built;
- To take or destroy the egg of any wild bird;
- To intentionally kill, injure or take any animal listed in Schedule 5 of the act and protects occupied and unoccupied places used for shelter or protection by such animals;
- To intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant listed in Schedule 8 of the Act; or
- To plant or otherwise cause to grow any non-native, invasive species listed under Part 2 of Schedule 9 of the Act.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. It is an offence under the Act to:

- Wilfully taking, injuring or killing a badger;
- Cruelty to a badger;
- Intentional or reckless interference with a badger sett;
- Sale or possession of a badger; and
- Marking or ringing of a badger.

Interfering with a badger sett includes:

- Damaging or destroying a sett or any part of it;
- Obstructing access to a sett;
- Disturbing a badger while it is in a sett; and
- Causing or allowing a dog to enter a badger sett.

Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended)

The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended) (known as CAR) regulate certain activities in Scotland that could affect its water environment. The regulations cover rivers, lochs, transitional waters (estuaries), coastal waters groundwater, and groundwater dependant wetlands. To carry out activities near or in waterbodies, a CAR license may be required depending on the nature of the works.

The Natural Environments and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006

Section 41 of the NERC Act requires the Secretary of State to compile a list of UK habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England (herein 'priority habitats' and 'S41 species'). Decision makers of public bodies, in the execution of their duties, must have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, and the list is intended to guide them.

Policy and guidance

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

NPF4 is a long-term plan looking to 2045 that guides spatial development, sets out national planning policies, designates national developments and highlights regional spatial priorities. Policy 3 of the NPF4 supports development that helps to secure positive effects for biodiversity. The Policy states that development proposals should seek to “*conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks so they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention*”.

Research has since been carried out by the Scottish Government regarding the implementation of NPF4, Policy 3 (Scottish Government, 2023). The findings state that the Defra Biodiversity Metric could be adapted for planning and development use in Scotland.

Scottish Biodiversity List

The Scottish Biodiversity List (SBL) is a list of animals, plants and habitats that Scottish Ministers consider to be of Principal Importance for biodiversity conservation in Scotland (NatureScot, 2020). Habitats and species in this list are noted where appropriate herein.

Argyll and Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2015 – 2020

The Argyll and Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) outlines over 70 priority conservation projects to assess, maintain, and enhance various habitats and species. These projects, already funded and resourced, are organised into Ecosystem Work Programmes (Freshwater, Marine and Coastal, Lowland and Farmland, Woodland, Upland, and Built Environment) to foster integration and partnership. Each programme details the projects, outputs, schedules, targets, and partners. The LBAP focuses on habitats and species from the UK and Scottish Biodiversity Lists, including some of local importance, all of which are under threat and in decline.

Argyll and Bute Biodiversity Duty Action Plan 2016 – 2021

The Argyll and Bute Biodiversity Duty Action Plan outlines the council's activities to meet their Biodiversity Statutory Duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and contribute to the Scottish Government's Biodiversity Triannual Reporting under the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. It details how they fulfil these obligations using allocated budgets or in-situ resources at no cost. The council's biodiversity duty involves connecting people with and managing habitats and species, as well as protecting specific sites. This is achieved through various management and maintenance plans, including property and estate, roadside verges, graveyards, school grounds, planning and development, economic development, and community and staff engagement. The action plan helps gather information for the triannual report required by the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act.

Appendix B - Survey Photos


Photo Reference	Photo
1	
2	




Project related

3	
4	
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16	
17	

18



19



Appendix C – Target Notes

Target note numbers	Target note description	Photos
TN1	Observed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one individual adult herring gull flying overhead; • one individual adult house sparrow stood on the wall of the ferry terminal; and • one individual adult carrion x hooded crow hybrid walking around the ferry terminal car park. 	N/A