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F.A.O. Iain Davies
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North Ayrshire Council
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9 November 2020

Dear Sir

COAST Objection to Revised Planning Application Ref: 19/00609/PPM: Installation and operation of an Atlantic Salmon Fish Farm comprising 12 x 120m circumference fish pens and an accompanying feed barge to the east of Millstone Point, North Arran

The Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST) submitted an objection last year to the initial application for this proposed fish farm. Despite revisions to the application, we maintain a strong objection to this proposal and trust that you will be taking full account of the comments we submitted previously.

In support of our continued objection to the revised application we have a number of further comments we would like to make which are set out below.

1. The reductions in the number of cages from 20 to 12 and maximum stocking biomass of salmon from 5000 tonnes to 2300 tonnes do not remove the significant adverse impacts that this development would have on Arran's environment and natural beauty, the island's tourism industry and associated economy.

We note that the SeaQure/Seaspine innovative technology that was so prominent in the original planning application has now been completely removed from the proposal, making it clear as was suspected with the original application, that this is a standard, open cage salmon farm with all the well-documented environmental impacts such as polluting waste and toxic chemicals, noise, visual impact and sea lice plumes affecting wild salmon.

The overall site area for the development is little changed and raises questions around potential future expansion of the development and also whether the procedures regulating this would provide opportunity for public scrutiny and comment.

2. The proposed development is contrary to a number of national and regional policies and legislation. We have described these in detail in Annex 1 which is provided at the end of this letter, but in summary they are:
 - a. Scotland's National Marine Plan
 - i. Paragraph 4.28
 - ii. Aquaculture Policy 5
 - iii. General Policy 9
 - b. Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c. Regulations 1994 (as amended) / The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
 - c. Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment (EiUA) (Scotland) Regulations 2017
 - i. Regulation 5 and Schedule 4
 - d. North Ayrshire adopted LDP2 policies

- i. Strategic Policy 1
- ii. Detailed Policy 8
- iii. Detailed Policy 15
- iv. Detailed Policy 16
- v. Detailed Policy 22
- vi. Detailed Policy 24
- vii. Detailed Policy 25

3. The economic case:

- a. The economic case made in favour of the development and in support of the argument that the economic benefits outweigh the impacts is invalid. There are fewer jobs required for the farm development and, as with the original proposal, the benefit of these is hugely outweighed by the value of the visitor and tourism economy to Arran which relies so heavily on the quality of Arran's environment and natural beauty. With 400,000+ visitors in a year creating £60m+, if the impact of the farm on visitor spending to Arran is only 2.5% this would equate to a loss of visitor spend of £1.5 million.
- b. There is no proper cost-benefit assessment of the proposal, an issue that relates to the salmon farming industry as a whole. This is a key issue in relation to claims of economic benefits of the proposal. We refer the Council to a report commissioned by Salmon and Trout Conservation and the Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust which was published in January this year ('The economic contribution of open cage salmon aquaculture to Scotland: A Review of the available economic evidence'¹), which addresses this issue. A peer review² of this report by Bridge Economics concludes, amongst other things, that the economic argument for expansion of the salmon aquaculture industry cannot be substantiated because of issues to do with relevant industry key performance indicators and also because the net effects of the industry's operation have not been assessed at all.
- c. The proposed fish farm application undermines the potential for Community Wealth Building (CWB) on Arran and, consequently, works against the Council's CWB Strategy. The natural assets of Arran (landscape, natural beauty, seabed health and productivity, marine wildlife etc) are part of the community's economic assets supporting a wide range of businesses. If these assets are damaged or degraded this reduces the opportunities to develop businesses on the island that rely on these assets and undermines the aspiration of CWB to ensure that wealth is locally owned and benefits local people.

4. Landscape and visual impact

- a. Despite a reduction in the size of the farm, the landscape and visual impact assessment continues to recognise that there will be a significant adverse impact on landscape and visual amenity. However, overall the assessment of the revised application continues to dismiss the severity of this impact saying that it "is characteristic of a coastal location and the receiving landscape is of such a scale that it has the capacity to absorb a development of this nature." This is not an accurate or defensible conclusion; the statement is simply trying to justify why one of Scotland's iconic natural areas can be degraded by this proposal. The landscape and seascape of this undeveloped and isolated Natural Scenic Area will clearly be adversely impacted. Importantly, the effect of lighting on the farm structures does not seem to have been addressed in the assessment of visual impact of this development. There will be considerable human activity around the farm and the intrusion of this and associated noise have not been adequately addressed in the assessment.

¹ <https://www.salmon-trout.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Riddington-Radford-Gibson-Economic-Contribution-of-Salmon-Aquaculture-to-Scotland.pdf>

² <https://www.sift.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Peer-Review-Economic-Contribution-of-Salmon-Aquaculture-to-Scotland.pdf>

5. Impact on wild Atlantic salmon

- a. Wild Atlantic salmon are a protected species under international and national legislation³. The population of wild salmon is rapidly declining.

The catches of wild salmon and sea trout on the west coast of Scotland are at an all-time low. While there will be multiple factors contributing to this, open cage fish farms are widely acknowledged to be contributing to this decline.

- b. The smolts of both wild salmon and sea trout are particularly vulnerable to sea lice. Adult sea trout are also particularly vulnerable to sea lice as they spend much of their lives in coastal waters. Other threats to wild salmon are from disease transferred from farmed fish to adult salmon and interbreeding with escaped farmed fish.
- c. The recent incident in August of this year of the damage to the MOWI open cage salmon farm at Carradale and the release of nearly 50,000 farmed salmon into the environment, highlights the vulnerability of these structures in higher energy areas and the severe risk that they pose to the depleted, and endangered wild salmon population in Scotland. The escaped farmed fish from Carradale have turned up in rivers as far afield as Cumbria demonstrating how easily escaped farmed fish can intermingle with the wild salmon stock and the severity of potential dilution of the genetic robustness of the wild salmon population. The Carradale event is not an isolated incident - there is a recent history of escaped farmed salmon, particularly from farms located in more exposed areas. The North Arran location, while sheltered from south westerly and westerly winds is extremely exposed from all directions from the north round to almost south. The claim that the farm structures will meet necessary technical standards is no reassurance – such was the situation with the farms where escapes have occurred. Further, who pays the cost of degradation of the wild salmon population by such escapes?
- d. There is a very significant risk to wild salmon from sea lice plumes as a result of open cage salmon farms. The North Arran proposed farm will produce widespread plumes of sea lice which can travel over large distances and parasitise and kill the salmon smolts as they migrate through the Clyde region. The risk from the sea lice plumes from the North Arran farm are significantly magnified when the cumulative sea lice plumes from this and other farms are considered.

Recent research⁴ from a range of rivers in Ireland is relevant to the revised application; this research found that in years following peak biomass in nearby fish farms, the reduction in numbers of returning salmon associated with lice infestations can be as high as 46% (mean value 33%).

The holding response from SNH (now NatureScot) to the original application made this risk very clear and that there was a likely significant effect to Atlantic salmon that are a qualifying interest of the Endrick Water Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

SNH/NatureScot provided advice on the information required to inform a Habitats Regulation Appraisal (Appropriate Assessment) of the fish farm proposal that North Ayrshire Council, as a competent authority, is required to undertake; the assessment being undertaken in view of the conservation objectives for the Endrick Water SAC. The conservation objectives for the SAC include maintaining the genetic types for the wild salmon which is clearly at risk from escaped farmed salmon.

The purpose of the HRA is to show beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the plan or project that is being assessed will not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC.

A key part of SNH/NatureScot's recommendation was for a model of sea lice dispersion in order to consider the potential connectivity of the North Arran proposal to the Endrick Water SAC, and for the assessment to consider the impacts both from the North Arran proposal on its own as well as in

³ Atlantic Salmon are listed in: Annex III of the Bern Convention and Annex II of the EC Habitats Directive; the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), the Scottish Biodiversity List and the IUCN Red List of threatened species. Sea trout are also listed as a BAP species. Both species are Scottish Government Priority Marine Features.

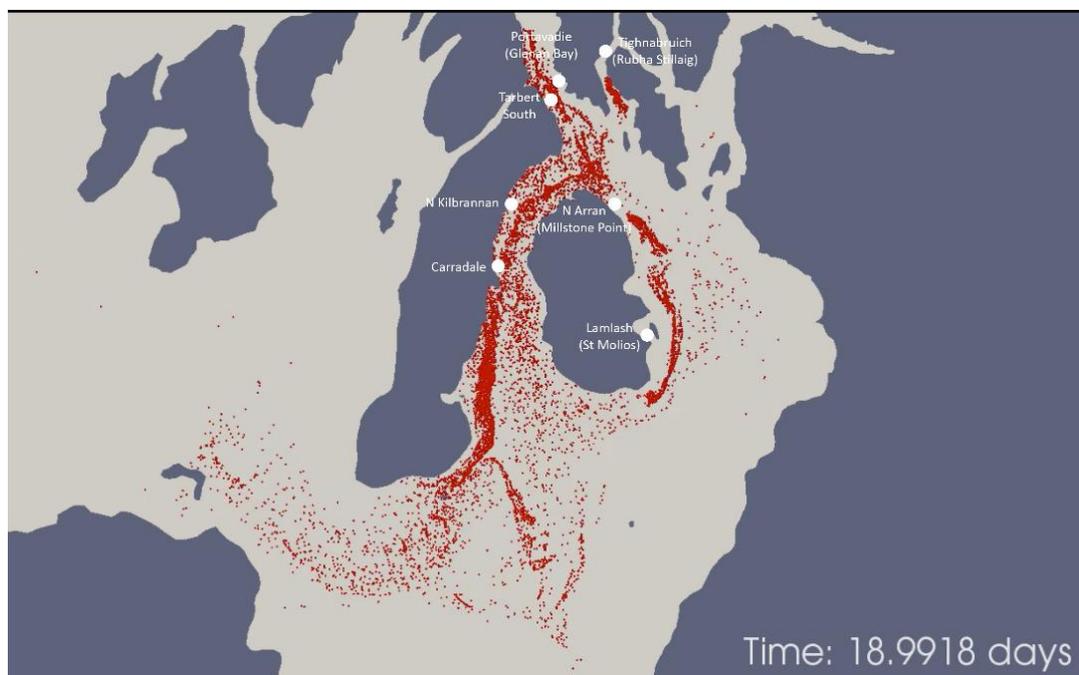
⁴https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342846410_Wild_Atlantic_salmon_exposed_to_sea_lice_from_aquaculture_show_reduced_marine_survival_and_modified_response_to_ocean_climate

combination with other developments that could contribute to a cumulative impact. The revised application has not provided this information; instead, it simply reiterates the findings of desktop study which is wholly inadequate to inform the appropriate assessment. This, together with a failure to submit the necessary environmental and species-specific information, means that there is not a sufficient basis to allow NAC to undertake a competent HRA.

- e. In the absence of any specific modelling of sea lice dispersion by the Scottish Salmon Company, the Clyde communities (including Friends of Millstone Point and COAST) commissioned a specialist hydrodynamic modelling company to study sea lice dispersion from North Arran.

The modelling uses a validated TELEMAC model of the Firth of Clyde that accurately reproduces the tidal range and speeds measured at tidal gauge locations in and beyond the Firth of Clyde. The modelling method was based closely on the research used by Marine Scotland Science when developing its own sea lice modelling work.

The image below shows the cumulative sea lice particle dispersion modelling from 7 salmons in the Clyde Region around the Isle of Arran; two of these farms are the newly proposed farms at North Arran and North Kibrannan Sound). Most sea lice larvae are in the top few metres of water, so the TELEMAC model treats them as buoyant particles. Sea lice larvae are first released as nauplii which, after four days (3.63 days) mature into infectious lice (copepodids) which can attach to, parasitise and kill migrating wild salmon smolts.



Dispersion of particles representing sea lice larvae (red dots) from seven farms (existing and proposed) in the Firth of Clyde, scaled in proportion to biomass, over a 19-day period.

The migration route for salmon smolts from the Endrick Water SAC is not known. There is a significant risk to the population of salmon breeding in the SAC because these smolts may pass through areas where infectious sea lice larvae from North Arran and other farms would accumulate. Strong winds are known to have a significant effect on water movement and westerly and south westerly winds can disperse the sea lice plumes further east across the Firth of Clyde.

The model outputs over a 19-day period can be viewed as a model animation via the following links:

- Sea lice particle dispersion modelling of 7 salmon farms in the Clyde region around the Isle of Arran where sea lice nauplii are shown in blue and the infectious copepodid stage in red: <https://vimeo.com/477173422>
- Sea lice particle dispersion modelling of 7 salmon farms in the Clyde region around the Isle of Arran where the sea lice output of each farm is shown in a different colour: <https://vimeo.com/477173521>

The proposed farms around the Cumbraes are not included in this modelling and would have an even greater impact on the sea lice plumes around those islands and down into the Firth of Clyde. With the modelling, sea lice mortality is included at 1% per hour. The particles representing sea lice are released at each farm location in numbers proportional to that farm's actual (existing farms) or proposed biomass. In this run of the model the discharge stops at day 14 to allow all nauplii to mature. The rate of sea lice maturation depends on sea temperature; the model has assumed typical temperature/rates for the west coast in May, the peak time for smolt migration. The dates of the model run (for freshwater inflow and weather) are 1-19 May, the period of peak smolt migration.

6. Impact on seabed habitats and marine wildlife: the assessment conclusions of no significant adverse impact on both seabed habitats and marine wildlife cannot be substantiated based on the limited surveys that have been undertaken. We have detailed our comments on this in a separate objection letter.
7. Waste and toxic chemicals:
 - a. The revised application relies on an open cage farm system that allows untreated, polluting emissions to be discharged freely into the sea with adverse environmental impact that affects the seabed habitats, marine life and sea users.
 - b. Even with a reduced maximum stocking density, the daily effluent from untreated salmon waste that will discharge into the sea is equivalent to a town of around 6000 people.
 - c. Along with the salmon effluent, toxic chemicals are used as an integral component of the farming system. These are also discharged untreated into the sea. Some of the chemicals used, such as azamethiphos, can kill crustaceans which includes species such as lobster, crab and prawn that are key species for local fisheries. There is also the issue of the health risk of such chemicals to sea users on the coast and in the areas around the proposed farm which has not been addressed in the application.
8. The use of interim and draft reports as part of the application:
 - a. We have already alerted you to our concerns about the use of interim and draft reports as part of the suite of documents submitted with the application and errors within the application summary document and with referencing in the visual survey report:
 - i. The Environmental Management Plan ('19_00609_PPM-ENVIRONMENTAL_MANAGEMENT_PLAN-940947') is a draft document
 - ii. The modelling report '19_00609_PPM-MODELLING_REPORT-940955' is an interim report
 - iii. The application summary document ('19_00609_PPM-APPLICATION_SUMMARY_PDF-940990') still refers to 20 x 120 circumference pens, with the pens held in two groups of 5 x 2
 - b. We would expect the documents submitted with such a significant development proposal to be the final reports and for the basic details of the application to be accurately represented in them, but this is not the case with this revised application.

We consider that many aspects of this application and the accompanying assessment documents are flawed or inadequate and we urge North Ayrshire Council Planning to reject this application which is so clearly contrary to the Council's policies.

Yours faithfully,



Lucy Kay
Marine Protected Area Project Officer
For and on behalf of Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST)

Annex 1: Regulations and Policies that are contravened by the Scottish Salmon Company's amended, North Arran salmon farm planning application 2020, 19/00609/PPM

Policies in the North Ayrshire Council Local Development Plan (LDP2) are addressed in detail below the comments on Scotland's national statutory policies and regulations.

Scotland's National Marine Plan (2015)		
Requirement of the statutory plan.		How the proposals contravene National Marine Plan policies
Paragraph 4.28	<p>Development and use that affect National Scenic Areas, National Parks and World Heritage Sites should only be permitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will not adversely affect the integrity of the area or its special qualities for which it has been designated; or • Any such adverse effects are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance. 	<p>The application states that there will be 'significant effects of a substantial and adverse nature'. We disagree strongly with their conclusions that these effects will be of 'limited geographical extent' as the infrastructure will extend for more than 800m along the shore.</p> <p>The fixed infrastructure and lighting will be visible, and the sound of the acoustic deterrent devices, automated feed barge operation will be heard, for several kms by land and marine users and of course by our wildlife.</p> <p>Landscape and seascape will clearly be adversely impacted in this National Scenic Area and the proposed job numbers (6 FTE) and economic benefits do not outweigh this.</p>
Aquaculture Policy 5	<i>"aquaculture developments should avoid and/or mitigate adverse impacts upon the seascape/landscape and visual amenity of an area"</i>	The applicant's Additional Environmental Information Report identifies that there will be 'significant effects of a substantial and adverse nature' on the landscape/seascape and visual amenity.
General Policy 9	<i>"development and use of the marine environment must protect and, where appropriate, enhance the health of the marine area and not result in significant impact on Priority Marine Features"</i>	<p>The proposed development does not protect or enhance the health of the marine area. The development will discharge waste and toxic chemicals into the marine environment.</p> <p>The survey and data are insufficient to determine the extent and distribution of PMFs within the development footprint and therefore significant impact on PMFs cannot be ruled out.</p> <p>The EIA and Additional Environmental Information (AEIR) reports are dismissive about the presence of seabed PMFs and conclude no significant impacts on these interests; the seabed habitats and species in the footprint of the proposed development are described as being "dominated by habitats and species of low conservation priority". In light of the shortcomings of the survey work that has been</p>

		undertaken and failure to properly investigate the presence of PMFs in the development area this conclusion cannot be substantiated.
Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 as amended or, for reserved matters, The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 - Endrick Water Special Area of Conservation (SAC)		
<p>The proposed development is a risk to wild Atlantic salmon which are a qualifying interest of the Endrick Water Special Area of Conservation (SAC); both through sea lice infesting migrating smolts and exotic salmon escapees denuding the wild salmon gene pool. North Ayrshire Council (NAC) is required to consider the effect of the proposal on the SAC before it can be consented. There is only a desktop study presented in the application with no modelling of sea lice dispersion (cumulative or single farm based) and no new data presented on the smolt migration pathways within the Clyde system.</p> <p>The work advised by SNH, in their holding objection, to inform a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (Appropriate Assessment) by NAC has not been undertaken by the applicant and it is therefore not valid for the application to conclude that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on site integrity and the conservation objectives of the SAC either alone or in combination with other developments. Under such circumstances an Appropriate Assessment cannot be undertaken by NAC and a precautionary approach to protect the conservation objectives of the SAC is required and the application cannot be granted planning permission.</p>		
Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)) (Scotland) Regulations 2017		
Section	Requirement of the legislation	How the proposal fails this requirement
Regulation 5 (2)(d) Paragraph 2, Schedule 4	<i>Consideration of alternative options.</i>	<p>Failure to fully assess all alternative options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternative sites were considered but it is unknown to what degree they were fully evaluated as this data and interpretation are not presented. Three of the alternative sites were rejected on grounds of visual/landscape impact. - Other technological options such as enclosed or land-based Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) are not considered at all; this is a standard open cage salmon farm proposal with an archaic environmental management plan.
Regulation 5	<i>Assessment of cumulative impacts.</i>	<p>Cumulative effects of many aspects of the operation and siting of the proposed farm in the context of the existing and planned farms in this marine region have not been accounted for with appropriate data and modelling within the EIA or the new AEIR and any risk has been dismissed out of hand.</p> <p>SNH in their holding objection to the original application recommended that the applicant provided sea lice dispersal modelling and that NAC ensure that cumulative effects are taken into account and mitigated in the HRA Appropriate Assessment. The submitted "Report to Inform an Appropriate Assessment" (dated January 2020) in the application is a desktop study and does not provide the relevant information to allow the Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken competently. This application does not ensure that there will be no damage to wild Atlantic salmon in the Clyde region. No modelling of cumulative impact of sea lice on wild salmon smolts and, specifically, the Atlantic salmon as a feature of</p>

		the Endrick Water SAC is included. It is not known which routes the salmon smolts take to migrate oceanward through the Clyde region and thus there is a risk to the wild Atlantic salmon and the conservation objectives of the SAC.
Regulation 5(3)	<i>Planning authorities must also ensure, where a scoping opinion or direction has been issued, that the EIA report is based on that opinion or direction.</i>	The EIA and AEIR for the North Arran application has not fulfilled all the requirements of North Ayrshire Council's scoping opinion or additional directions from SNH and SEPA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No extended benthic baseline survey (the benthic baseline survey report was only made available 3 days before the deadline for public comments) - The hydrodynamic and in-feed chemical treatment modelling is presented as an interim rather than a final model and is based on a flat rather than the known steeply sloping seabed, which could result in gravity flow and resuspended and deposited lobes of seabed pollution exceeding environmental standards to accumulate over a larger area downslope. SEPA has not received any new modelling files from the applicant to support their conclusions in the modelling report and has requested in their current holding objection to this amended application that they be delivered. - The sea lice dispersion modelling work advised by SNH (NatureScot), in their holding objection to the original application, to inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appropriate Assessment) by NAC on the wild Atlantic salmon, Endrick Water SAC conservation objectives has not been undertaken.
Regulation 5(3) Part 6, 26(2)	<i>All information that may reasonably be required to reach a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the development on the environment needs to be provided...</i>	Several elements of the EIA are based on very limited data, e.g. extent of seabed survey, impact of sea lice on wild Atlantic salmon
<i>Under EIA regulations it is North Ayrshire Council's responsibility to ensure that the submitted EIA report contains the information specified in Regulation 5(2) and, where relevant, Schedule 4 to the Regulations.</i>		The assessment documents submitted with the SSC application has not complied with the EIA regulations in a number of respects (see the comments above in first row of this section).
North Ayrshire adopted Local Development Plan (LDP2) 2019		
Policy no.	Policy requirements	How the proposal fails the policies.
Strategic Policy 1 Detailed Policy 8	<i>Proposals need to be appropriate to the location and will be supported where they have demonstrated a sequential approach to site selection...</i>	No detail of the site selection process and the alternatives, which demonstrates the required sequential approach, is presented in the application and why the North Arran National Scenic Area is the chosen site for their development. Alternative options have not been addressed or investigated (only five location options listed in summary and no consideration of fully-enclosed or land-based sites and Recirculating Aquaculture System technology addressed).

<p>Strategic Policy 1 & The Coast Objective under Strategic Policy 1</p>	<p>Proposals should avoid damage to coastline particularly undeveloped or isolated coastal areas, unless economic benefits arising from the proposal outweighs the environmental impact.</p>	<p>The applicants own assessment concludes "...that there would be significant landscape and visual effects of a substantial adverse nature for an adverse visual and landscape impact" for a number of landscape receptors.</p> <p>The assessment dismisses the severity of this impact saying that it "is characteristic of a coastal location and the receiving landscape is of such a scale that it has the capacity to absorb a development of this nature." This is not an accurate interpretation. Landscape and seascape will clearly be adversely impacted in this undeveloped and isolated National Scenic Area and the proposed (not guaranteed) job numbers (6 FTE) and economic benefits do not outweigh this. No cost analysis of the site specific and cumulative environmental damage to Arran, North Ayrshire and the Clyde Region has been undertaken in the economic report within the application.</p>
<p>Strategic Policy 1 & The Coast Objective under Strategic Policy 1</p>	<p>Development proposals will be supported where they are consistent with Policy 24: Alignment with Marine Planning Policy</p>	<p>The proposed development is not consistent with Policy 24 and therefore should not be supported (see comments re. Policy 24 below)</p>
<p>Detailed Policy 8: Business development on Arran and Cumbrae</p>	<p>We will support developments that will have a positive impact on the vitality, vibrancy and viability of the island and avoid unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment, amenity or the tourism offer of the area.</p> <p>Proposals will be supported where they have demonstrated a sequential approach to site selection</p>	<p>The proposal will have an adverse impact on landscape and amenity value of the undeveloped coast, negatively affecting the tourism appeal of this area.</p> <p>There is no evidence of a sequential approach to site selection for this proposed development (see comments in relation to assessment of alternatives under Strategic Policy 1)</p>
<p>Detailed Policy 15: Landscape and seascape</p>	<p>Supports development that protects and/or enhances North Ayrshire's landscape/seascape character and avoids unacceptable adverse impacts on designated and non-designated landscape areas and features.</p>	<p>The proposal does not protect or enhance North Ayrshire's landscape/seascape character AND will have an unacceptable adverse impact on landscape areas and features.</p> <p>The assessment seeks to dismiss the severity of this impact saying that it "is characteristic of a coastal location and the receiving landscape is of such a scale that it has the capacity to absorb a development of this nature."</p> <p>This is not an acceptable conclusion and is contrary to the applicants own assessment document that identifies there are significant adverse visual and landscape impacts.</p>

		<p>It should be noted that the effect of lighting (navigation markers, lights in the cages and on the feed barge) do not appear to be addressed in the landscape/seascape assessment even though these will be a prominent aspect of the visual impact of this development.</p>
<p>Detailed Policy 16: Protection of our Designated Sites</p>	<p>We will support development which would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on our valuable natural environment</p>	<p>Impacts from this site will damage seabed habitats and marine species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on wild salmon - sea lice, gene pool dilution due to escapes • impact of waste toxic chemicals • in-water noise – deliberate disturbance of marine mammals • light pollution <p>EIA and AEIR based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very limited desktop study which does identify nature and scale of presence of marine mammals • very limited seabed survey which dismisses presence of PMFs even through species typical of certain PMFs present within the survey area. No expansion of survey to look at these in more detail. • No modelling of cumulative impact of sea lice on wild salmon smolts and, specifically, the Atlantic salmon as a feature of the Endrick Water SAC is included. It is not known which routes the salmon smolts take to migrate oceanward through the Clyde region and this there is a risk to the wild Atlantic salmon. Sea trout populations will also be affected. <p>The application documents fail to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adequately describe the abundance and distribution of habitats and species • identify the scale and nature of the impacts from the site therefore, the conclusion of “no adverse environmental impacts” is invalid and unsubstantiated
<p>16: a)</p>	<p>Nature Conservation Sites of International Importance Where an assessment is unable to conclude that a development will not adversely affect the integrity of a site, development will only be permitted where: - there are no alternative solutions; - there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest; and suitable compensatory measures are</p>	<p>The ‘Report to Inform an appropriate assessment’ does not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that there will not be an adverse effect on site integrity of the Endrick Water SAC, in the required HRA Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken by NAC Planning.</p>

	provided to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura Network is protected.	
16: f)	<p>Protected Species</p> <p>Development likely to have an unacceptable adverse effect on;</p> <p>i) European Protected Species (see Schedules 2 & 4 of the Habitats Regulations 1994 (as amended) for definition); Birds, Animals and Plants listed on Schedules 1, 5 and 8 (respectively) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); or badgers, will only be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that a species licence is likely to be granted.</p>	<p>The use of 24 Acoustic Deterrent Devices (ADDs) will have an adverse effect on marine mammals listed as European Protected Species, e.g. porpoise, which are known to feed directly off Millstone Point. The severity of this impact is not addressed and there is no attempt to demonstrate that a European Protected Species Licence will be applied for or granted.</p>
Detailed Policy 22: Water Environment Quality	<p>Development will be required to ensure no unacceptable adverse impact on the water environment by:</p> <p>Protecting and enhancing the ecological status and riparian habitat, natural heritage, landscape values and physical characteristics of water bodies (including biodiversity and geodiversity).</p>	<p>The applicant has presented a very limited seabed survey which dismisses the presence of PMFs even though species typical of certain PMFs are present within the survey area. No appropriate expansion of the survey to look at these in more detail thus there is uncertainty over the PMFs present, and their distribution, and therefore a risk to the development damaging unmapped PMFs and the biodiversity.</p> <p>The hydrodynamic and in-feed chemical treatment modelling is presented as an interim rather than a final model and is based on a flat rather than the known steeply sloping seabed, which could result in gravity flow and resuspended and deposited lobes of seabed pollution exceeding environmental standards to accumulate over a larger area downslope. SEPA has not received any new modelling files from the applicant to support their conclusions in the modelling report and has requested in their current holding objection to this amended application that they be delivered.</p> <p>SNH in their holding objection to the original application recommended that the applicant provided sea lice dispersal modelling and that NAC ensure that cumulative effects are taken into account and mitigated in the HRA Appropriate Assessment. The submitted "Report to Inform an Appropriate Assessment" (dated January 2020) in the application does not provide the relevant information to allow the Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken competently. This application does not ensure that there will be no damage to wild Atlantic salmon in the Clyde region. No modelling of cumulative impact of sea lice on wild salmon smolts and, specifically, the Atlantic salmon as a feature of the Endrick Water SAC is included. It is not known which routes the salmon smolts take to migrate</p>

		oceanward through the Clyde region and thus there is a risk to the wild Atlantic salmon and the conservation objectives of the SAC.
<p>Detailed Policy 24: Alignment with Marine Planning</p>	<p>We will, in principle, support developments with a marine component or implication where they are within a recognised developed coastal location and provided they are consistent with Scotland’s National Marine Plan and the emerging Regional Marine Plan for Clyde Marine Region.</p> <p>All marine proposals should identify environmental impacts and mitigate against these to ensure there are not any unacceptable adverse impacts.</p> <p>Developments on coastal areas with significant constraints will be supported, in principle, only where they would also contribute to the economic regeneration or well-being of communities whose livelihood is dependent on marine or coastal activities.</p> <p>Developments on undeveloped sections of coast which possess special environmental or cultural qualities, such as wild land will generally be resisted unless there would be a significant economic value of the development and that environmental impact issues can be satisfactorily addressed.</p>	<p>The proposal fails to meet any of the requirements under this policy.</p> <p>Application fails to fully identify the scale and nature of the environmental impacts and, as a result, the conclusion of no significant adverse effect from the development is invalid</p> <p>The proposal will have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment which is a vital asset to the economy of Arran. These impacts cannot be satisfactorily addressed.</p> <p>The economic benefit of the proposal is hugely outweighed by the economic value of the natural environment to the existing visitor and tourism economy of Arran.</p>
<p>Detailed Policy 25: Supporting Aquaculture</p>	<p>Proposals for new development will be supported where there is no unacceptable adverse impacts (including cumulatively) on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Landscape, seascape and visual amenity</i> - <i>The protection and enhancement of the wider physical environment and amenity</i> - <i>Coastal and marine species (including wild salmonids) and habitats</i> - <i>The seabed</i> 	<p>Landscape, seascape and visual amenity: Failed on various levels; notably the visual impact will be far greater than presented in the AEIR which fails to simulate, represent and interpret accurately all structures and operations that will be present. The simulated 3D viewpoint visualisations illustrate this point; no viewpoints are presented from Millstone Point itself or from the shore or coastal path directly opposite the farm, most simulated viewpoints are presented from the seaward rather than the landward side, the landward views (apart from one) are presented from several kms away, viewpoint colourisation and shading are not true to life when compared with the known visual effect of operating farms, large surface buoys are absent, cages/pens are shown from distant viewpoints to diminish their effects and flatten the surface infrastructure, no viewpoints are shown with the proposed maintenance, wellboat and treatment boat operations ongoing.</p>

- *Other users of the marine environment (including tourism, recreational and leisure activities...)*

- *Sustainability:*

The protection and enhancement of the wider physical environment and amenity: the proposal does not protect or enhance the wider physical environment and amenity. The proposal has an adverse impact on the amenity value of the coastal area.

Coastal and marine species (including wild salmonids) and habitats:

- Atlantic salmon and Sea trout are statutory designated Priority Marine Features (PMFs). Waters around Arran are some of Scotland's highest sensitivity areas for wild salmon and sea trout interaction and infection from farmed salmon. The applicant does not present any evidence that there will be no adverse impact on Endrick Water SAC.
- Assessment of impacts from the proposed site does not include up-to-date survey data for many iconic species such as cetaceans, pinnipeds, basking sharks and otters; many observations of which aren't formally recorded so focussed surveys over time are required to fully understand their use of the location.
- The assessment fails to present evidence or an appropriate risk assessment and an awarded license to install 24 Acoustic Deterrent Devices, unlicensed use and disturbance of European Protected Species is an offence under Scottish law and EU habitats directive:

The seabed:

Insufficient survey to adequately describe the seabed habitats and presence, extent and distribution of PMFs. Consequently, cannot substantiate conclusion of no adverse effect

Other users of the marine environment (including tourism, recreational and leisure activities...):

There will be a negative impact on the tourism and leisure value of this most isolated and unspoilt coastal area on Arran.

Sustainability:

Claims that open cage salmon farming is sustainable are undermined by the findings of the REC and ECCLR committee reports which highlight a range of problems. The salmon farm proposal does not address these known impacts and therefore on many levels cannot be seen as a sustainable development.

Cumulative impacts

The cumulative impacts, e.g. in relation to Endrick Water SAC, have not been addressed as required to be addressed in the NAC HRA Appropriate Assessment.

