

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR LOCH EISHORT:

Economic Benefits:

Any benefits of aquaculture employment must be considered alongside those accrued from other economic activities in the area such as commercial in-shore fisheries, tourism and recreation and any development should respect, not constrain or degrade the area's capacity.

- Commercial in-shore fisheries and shellfish: Loch Eishort provides safe and productive creel fishing grounds for local fishermen and a successful mussel farm operates at the head of Loch Eishort in shellfish protected waters as designated by the Scottish Government (there is no reference in Hjaltland's documents to this and therefore any effect has not been considered). In addition, the chemicals to be used in sea lice treatments, emamectin, cypermethrin and deltamethrin are harmful to crustaceans (lobsters and prawns) and molluscs (mussels, oysters, scallops).
- Local businesses in Tarskavaig, Tokavaig and Ord provide high quality holiday accommodation for the tourism market as well as employment opportunities for local people and financial support for local hotels, restaurants, shops and services.
- Recreation includes diving, fishing, kayaking businesses which operate in Loch Eishort.
- Several sites on the south shore of Sleat are regular photo-shoot locations for weddings and the area is frequently used for film and tv productions.

Crofting:

Highland Coastal Development Strategy Para 5.2.1 Agriculture and crofting are an important component of Highland identity, particularly in the north and west, both in socio-economic terms and natural heritage character.

Tarskavaig is a lively crofting township whose residents are very proud of its history, continuing to practice according to traditional values and connecting with their heritage.

- In-shore fishing plays an important part of the everyday life of some of the residents and aquaculture development would destroy significant areas of their fishing grounds.
- Seaweed gathering for garden fertiliser is common practice, not just in Tarskavaig but also in Tokavaig and Ord. Potential for contamination of the seaweed from fish farm solid waste and seal lice treatments might prevent the community safely making use of this resource.
- Cattle and sheep graze along the shoreline and potential pollution would give rise to concern.

Suitability of the Site:

Data provided by the applicant indicate the site is not considered to be high energy and therefore the tidal flow is insufficient to promote good dispersal and minimise organic loading on the seabed of solid waste i.e. waste food and fish faeces.

- Data for the Tarskavaig site indicates that each year 901 tonnes of solid waste will be released with 5% exported from the fish farm area. Therefore we would expect 859.75 tonnes of solid waste to be deposited under the fish farm each year.
- Data for Carn Dearg (north Eishort) site indicates that each year 676 tonnes of solid waste will be released with 7.28% exported from the fish farm area. Therefore we would expect 626.79 tonnes of solid waste to be deposited under the fish farm each year.
- It is not unreasonable to assume that pollution will be spread around the loch in varying degrees of concentration which could adversely impact on species and habitats, water quality (particularly important for the mussel farm), amenity value of our beaches and shoreline, wild fish populations and so the list goes on.

Environmental Impact on Habitats and Species:

- Kelp Forests.
- BAP Priority Habits: burrowed mud with seapens and other megafauna, intertidal under-boulder communities, maerl beds, seagrass meadows.
- Freshwater pearl mussels in the Ord river (there is no mention whatsoever in Hjaltdland's documents, indeed they mention Loch Slapin and River Snizort!).
- Wild Salmonids (salmon and sea trout).
- White tailed eagles, golden eagles, black- and red-throated and great northern divers.
- Seals, over 100 in Loch Eishort with seal haul outs near the fish farm sites.
- Shellfish protected waters.

All legally protected, in theory, but in practice this doesn't always happen.

Wild Fish Populations:

- Lochs Slapin and Eishort are two of several sites subject to a post-smolt sea lice survey funded by Marine Scotland to research the correlation between farmed fish and their impact on sea lice burdens on salmon and sea trout. The South Skye lochs are the only loch system on Skye with no active fish farms, it is suggested the area should be operated as a control site which would have the added benefits of nurturing the recovery of the wild salmonid population as well as acting as a firewall between other fish farm sites in the Skye and Lochalsh area. Marine Scotland Science advise that sealice at a fish farm can travel at least 14 kms from any farm site. Therefore it is likely that both fish farms could be compounded due to this fact.
- Sea trout are particularly important in the success of the freshwater pearl mussel population.

Landscape and Visual Impact:

- The views from the north coast of Sleat are considered to be some of the finest and most iconic in Scotland with uninterrupted vistas of the Cuillin ridge, Red Cuillin and Blaven, the Suisnish-Borreraig cleared villages, Strathaird Peninsula and, to the west, the Small Isles of Rhum, Eigg and Canna. Visitors come to this location to enjoy unparalleled coastline scenery both as holiday makers in the range of cottages along the coast as well as day visitors who come to enjoy the many walks and beaches which include Dunscaith Castle, Tarskavaig Point, "Coral Bay", Gillean, Tarskavaig, Tokavaig and Ord beaches. Together with hiking the iconic hills above Ord and Suisnish, photographers and artists come to capture these magnificent views which are equally enjoyed by the local residents.
- Aquaculture development in Loch Eishort will have an unparalleled negative impact on landscape and seascape views.
- In addition, noise from the generators, feed barge operation, service boats including well boats will be detrimental to the much valued tranquillity of the area resulting in diminished well-being of visitors and residents alike.

Amenity:

- The beaches located along the shores of Loch Eishort provide recreational amenity for local families and tourists alike. There are very few recreational venues in south Skye so these beaches must be protected against potential contamination and pollution from fish farm waste.
- Walking routes are enjoyed by local families and tourists alike both on the north and south shores of Loch Eishort. Specifically: Tarskavaig to Tarskavaig Point (fish farm will be visible) / Dunscaith Castle at Tokavaig Bay (fish farm will be visible) / Tarskavaig to Tokavaig cliff path (short-cut for locals) / Ord Loop to Coral Islands (fish farm will be visible) / Suisnish to Borreraig (fish farm will be visible)

The Suisnish track is classified as a **core path** from Camas Malag to Suisnish and it is planned to extend this from Suisnish Point to Borreraig. Also, it is proposed the Ord loop track also becomes a core path due to the outstanding natural beauty, tranquillity and views across Loch Eishort to Suisnish and the cleared villages of Suisnish and Borreraig. (Donald Kennedy, Highland Council Access Officer for Skye and Lochalsh).

These walks are featured in many recommended walk books and websites such as WalkHighlands as well as being featured on the Paths around Sleat leaflet (joint venture with the Highland Council, Sleat Community Council and Visit Sleat). The scenic and tranquil experience for visitors and locals alike will be compromised by any fish farm development.

Quality of Planning Documents submitted by Hjalatland:

The Sleat Community Council, with the aim of assisting those with an interest in the two proposals has extensively reviewed key documents in both Applications. The first, a review of Eishort 2, is already published online on the Council's e-Planning website and the review of Eishort 1 is expected to be published within the next two days. Both reviews have highlighted an array of omissions, errors, bad science and incorrect information. There appears to be a culture of 'copy and paste' throughout the Applications that have been submitted by Hjalatland Seafarms Ltd, and given that many of these documents have been recently revised it is even more extraordinary that the poor quality remains in such a tangible way. The Sleat Community Council has voiced its grave concern to the Highland Council that such poor presentations are not in any way assisting residents and other interested parties in making their own judgements on the two proposals.

Your views are important in the Planning process and so if you have a view on these proposals FOR or AGAINST, then you are strongly encouraged to make your comments to the Highland Council through the ePlanning website with the reference numbers:

14/02574/FUL for Carn Dearg (Eishort 1) north side of Loch Eishort before 20 November 2014

14/02577/FUL for Tarskavaig (Eishort 2) Outer Mouth of Loch Eishort before 7 November 2014

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT