

Balliemeanoch Pumped Storage Hydro

Environmental Impact Assessment
Report

Volume 5: Appendices
Appendix 16.2: Workers Housing
Strategy – Preliminary Draft
Report

ILI (Borders PSH) Ltd

July 2024

Quality information

<u>Prepared by</u>	<u>Checked by</u>	<u>Verified by</u>	<u>Approved by</u>
John Daly Associate Director	Kerry Parr Associate Director	Gayle Adams Technical Director	David Lee Technical Director

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This draft Workers Housing Strategy is a preliminary report intended to inform the socio-economic chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment and accompanying planning statement for Balliemanoch Pumped Storage Hydro (PSH), (referred to throughout as the 'Development') under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (the 'Act') (the "Section 36 Application")., which will be submitted to Argyll and Bute Council (ABC) in July 2024.
- 1.2 The Development is described in *Chapter 2: Project and Site Description (Volume 2: Main Report)* of the Balliemanoch Pumped Storage Hydro Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

Objective

- 1.3 The objective of the draft Workers Housing Strategy (hereafter 'Strategy') is to demonstrate a range of plausible options for accommodating construction workers employed by the Development during the seven year (approx.) construction period of the Development. These options can then be developed into a detailed strategy with specific housing options that would be acceptable to ABC and meet the operational requirements of the scheme. It is anticipated that a requirement for a detailed Workers Housing Strategy will be a condition of any direction deeming planning permission to be granted under Section 57(2) of the Town and County Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 issued in relation to the Development.
- 1.4 Drawing on the available evidence and stakeholder engagement to date, this preliminary Strategy presents a range of plausible scenarios that could be worked up further. This report does not identify a preferred option or options. A detailed strategy for workers housing will need to be developed and tested through further engagement with a range of stakeholders, including local communities. Some options may need their own separate planning consent under the Planning Act and, as such, will be subject to their own statutory planning assessments.

Approach

- 1.5 At the time of preparing the draft Strategy there was no guidance on, or indeed established template for, preparing a Workers Housing Strategy. However, the decision¹ for the Cruachan upgrade project featured a planning condition requiring a Worker Housing Strategy. This may inform future works on the detailed strategy for Balliemanoch, inform discussions with ABC, or act as a basis for further engagement with industry partners.
- 1.6 The approach to this draft Strategy is based on:
 - Details of scheme's construction workforce to understand the potential scale of demand for accommodation for the duration of the construction and any relevant scheme details which would influence the nature of accommodation requirements.
 - Planning context: the national and local policy and guidance relevant to this Strategy.
 - Relevant evidence and data analysis which helps to inform the development of plausible options:
 - Geography – settlements and locations within 30 and 60 minutes drive of the construction scheme.
 - The housing market in Argyle & Bute.
 - Hotel / tourist accommodation data and studies.
 - Stakeholder consultation: to identify any known sites, buildings or opportunities that could be used for workers accommodation and to understand stakeholder views on different scenarios and their likely impacts.
- 1.7 Drawing on these elements, AECOM has developed some broad options that for workers housing. All of the options will require the development of a detailed strategy to identify which options which will be

¹ Cruachan Upgrade Project, Scottish Government Energy Consent Unit Reference: ECU00004537

implemented. The draft Strategy has therefore identified some actions and next steps in order to further develop the plausible scenarios.

Report Outline

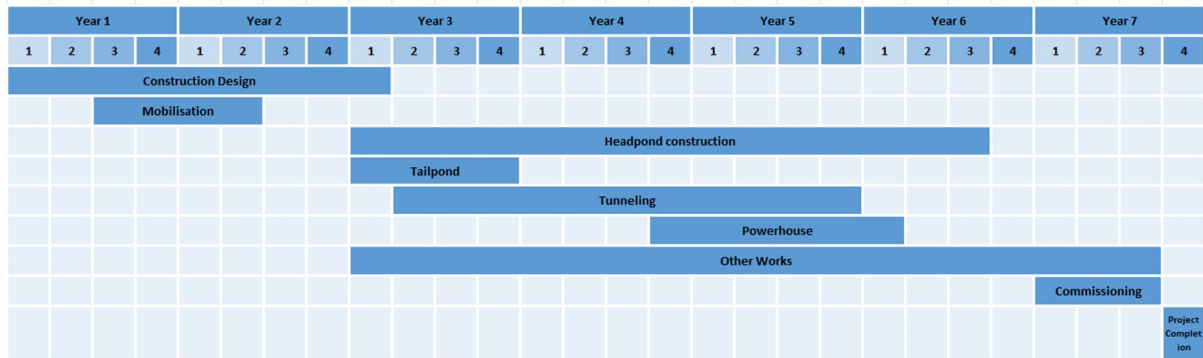
1.8 The rest of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 2: Construction Workforce and Scheme Details
- Section 3: Planning Policy
- Section 4: Study Area
- Section 5: Existing Accommodation: Local Housing Market and Tourist Accommodation
- Section 6: Stakeholder Engagement
- Section 7: Workers Housing Options
- Section 8: Conclusions and Next Steps

2. Construction Workforce & Scheme

2.1 Balliemanoach PSH will be a major construction project, and construction will take approximately seven years from obtaining consent. The figure below shows an indicative construction programme.

Figure 1 Indicative Construction Programme



2.2 The construction programme will have different phases, with variation in the on-site workforce. Years 3 to 6 are predicted to be the peak construction years. It is anticipated that there will be an average of 600 to 800 workers on-site during this period. Reduced numbers will be required during the construction design and mobilisation period in Years 1 and 2 and numbers will reduce in Year 7 as the Development nears completion.

2.3 Although there is no firm start date for construction, and this depends on achieving Section 36 consent, the scheme is working towards connection to the National Grid in 2035. As such, a working assumption for the start of construction is 2027 with the construction period lasting seven years.

2.4 Further details on the construction programme and workforce, including the split between home and non-home based workers will become available in future phases of the Development and will inform the development of the detailed Workers Housing Strategy.

3. Planning Policy

Introduction

- 3.1 A full assessment against NPF4 and the Local Development Plan is included in the accompanying planning statement, an overview of the key planning policies and spatial strategy designations relevant to the Strategy are outlined below.

National Planning Framework 4

- 3.2 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) identifies eighteen National Developments which are significant developments of national importance. Balliemanoch PSH falls under National Development 3 'Strategic Renewable Generation and Transmission infrastructure' and is considered to have in principle support under NPF4 as a national priority. Of particular relevance are NPF4 policies 11 and 25.

- 3.3 The intent of Policy 11 Energy is 'to encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development onshore and offshore'. Part C is considered to be particularly relevant as it outlines that:

'Development proposals will only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities'.

- 3.4 The intent of Policy 25 is 'to encourage, promote and facilitate a new strategic approach to economic development that also provides a practical model for building a wellbeing economy at local, regional and national levels'. Part A of the policy outlines that proposals that contribute to local or regional community building strategies and consistent with local economic priorities will be supported.

Local Development Plan 2

- 3.5 Argyll and Bute Council adopted Local Development Plan 2 (ABLDP2) in February 2024. ABLDP2 sets out a settlement strategy and spatial framework for Argyll and Bute and sets the following vision:

- 3.6 *"Argyll and Bute is an economically diverse and successful area based on sustainable and low carbon development. It has a growing population with high quality, well connected places where people are able to meet their full potential without prejudicing the quality of life of future generations. It benefits both economically and socially from its outstanding natural, historic and built environment whilst protecting those very same special qualities that make Argyll and Bute a place that people choose to be".*

- 3.7 The spatial strategy identifies the Tobermory – Dalmally growth corridor, where energy is identified as one of the key growth sectors for Argyll and Bute. It also identifies Tourism Development Opportunities including areas centred on Oban and Inveraray as areas for sustainable growth in the sector.

Policy Response

- 3.8 Planning policy sets the following broad requirements which have been considered and informed the assessment of options outlined in this strategy:

- Maximising economic impacts, including local and community socio-economic benefits
- Supporting a wellbeing economy
- Supporting the key energy sector and avoiding impacts on tourism and housing stock.

4. Study Area

- 4.1 The purpose of this section is to clarify the broad geographical area from which workers can reasonably be drawn. This enables a systematic approach to be taken towards the identification of any sites or locations as options for housing workers, particularly in terms of geographical proximity and access.
- 4.2 Whilst the construction scheme is likely to benefit most from workers accommodation located in close proximity to the site, to reduce delays at the start of the day associated with travel for example, the scheme is located in a remote rural area with only small villages nearby. These may not be suitable for housing all of the workforce. It is useful, therefore, to consider a reasonable catchment area within which it is possible to travel to the construction site on a daily basis.
- 4.3 This draft Strategy has applied a 30 and 60 minute drive time (utilising private car or staff travel via shuttle buses etc) from the Development site (using a north and south entry point). This is considered to be a reasonable and maintainable journey for workers and is consistent with approaches taken in other schemes, including the Peterhead Low Carbon CCGT Power Station Project².
- 4.4 The travel time has been informed by statistics from the Construction Industry Training Board's 'Workforce Mobility and Skills in the UK Construction Sector 2022 Scotland Report' (2023). This sets out that construction workers typically travel 12 miles between a workers' current residence (taking into account temporary residences which is used by 6% of the construction workforce in Scotland) and a construction site.
- 4.5 It is notable that the Workforce Accommodation Strategy³ for the Wylfa Newydd Nuclear Power Project identified a 90-minute Daily Construction Commuting Zone for home-based workers. This was due in part to the rural location of the project. Given the rural location of the Balliemeanoch PSH Development site and distance from large population centres a greater journey time may be appropriate to adopt in the detailed Workers Housing Strategy.
- 4.6 Widening the journey time would increase the pool of available workers from the large urban settlement of Glasgow who can commute to the site and would, therefore, reduce the need for workers' housing. However, further consideration of the recruitment strategy for the site, transport arrangements and managing the well-being of non-home-based workers would be required (if adopted as part of a detailed Workers Housing Strategy), alongside opportunities to maximise local and community socio-economic benefits.
- 4.7 Drive Time Analysis Plans are contained in Appendix A. These show which settlements are captured within 30 and 60 minutes of the site:
- Within 30 minutes drive, there are a number of smaller population centres in Argyll and Bute, including the settlements of Inveraray and Dalmally
 - Within 60 minutes drive, there are a number of larger settlements including Oban and Helensburgh and the administrative centre of Argyll and Bute – Lochgilphead.
- Note that two different entry points to the site have been modelled given uncertainty about the exact location that workers will need to travel to. However, there is very little difference between the area captured by the two entry points. At the margins, Dumbarton on the edge of Glasgow may be reachable in 60 minutes from the southern entry point.
- 4.8 Table 1 provides population figures and the number of people who are unemployed within the 30 and 60 minute drive time areas. The construction stage would provide opportunities for work for some of those currently unemployed and, in turn, would reduce the need for accommodation since these potential workers already live in the area. The scope for bringing those who are unemployed back into the workforce is likely to be limited in number but nevertheless could make a small contribution to the workforce on site and reduce the need for additional accommodation.

² Peterhead Low Carbon CCGT Power Station Project, Appendix 17A – Workers Accommodation Assessment, SSE Thermal

³ Wylfa Newydd Project, 8.4 Workforce Accommodation Strategy, Horizon Nuclear Power (2008)

Table 1: Population and Unemployment Numbers within 30 and 60 minute Drive Times

Drive Time Area (minutes)	Population (2022)	Unemployed (number)
North Entry Point : 0 – 30	3,013	45
North Entry Point : 0 – 60	57,181	1,028
South Entry Point : 0 – 30	3,282	46
South Entry Point : 0 – 60	101,030	2,078

Source: Michael Bauer Research GmbH

4.9 The drive time analysis also provides a list of settlements within each area. AECOM has filtered these lists to illustrate the range of 'larger' settlements that exist within the study area. The filter lists:

- Include only those settlements larger than Inveraray since this is the nearest settlement to the scheme and is relatively small in terms of population (580 people in 2022). There are around 600 locations or settlements within 60 minutes of the site, however the vast majority have limited populations and so have been excluded from the drive time analysis.
- Remove villages on the edge of the 60 minute drive time area since these are unlikely to be viable to accommodate a large number of workers given their size and distance from the site. These include Killin (population of 770 people, 55 mins drive time and within the Loch Lomond National Park), Sandbank, Balloch and Rhu (all with populations of 1,000 - 2,000, on the edge of the 60 minute drive time and/or connected to a larger settlement that is included already).

4.10 Note that the GIS drive time modelling identifies some settlements that may be on the margins of 60 60-minute drive, and in practice, this may differ day by day depending on incidents on the roads, weather conditions, etc.

4.11 Table 2 shows the settlements that remain once the above filtering exercise has occurred.

Table 2: Settlements (filtered) within 60 minutes of Development Site

Settlement	Pop.	Distance (Mins)	Location Notes	Transport Nodes	Public Services	Amenities	Other
Inveraray	580	10			School	Shop, hotel, restaurants, golf club, cafes	Location of temporary jetty for the PSH scheme
Taynuilt	800	40			School	Shop, pub, GP, café, golf club	
Oban	8,490	50		Rail, airport, buses	Schools, hospital	Shops, restaurants, Sports facilities/clubs	
Dunbeg	610	45	nr. Oban		School	Shop	
Lochgilphhead	2,300	45	Administrative centre of ABC	Bus station	Schools, college, hospital	Shops, restaurants, banks, swimming pool, golf course	Army cadet base
Bridgend	810	50	nr. Lochgilphhead		School	Pub	
Ardrishaig	1,290	50	nr. Lochgilphhead				
Tarbet	1,150	60			Fire station	Hotels, pubs, café, shop	Ferry terminal on south of Loch Fyne
Eastfield	970	60	nr. Tarbet				
Helensburgh	13,640	60	nr. Glasgow	Rail, bus	Schools, GPs, dentists	Shopping centre, sports and leisure including pool, cinema	HMNB Clyde submarine base; Garelochhead training camp nr.
Garelochhead	3,700	60	nr. Helensburgh	Rail, bus		Shops, pub, community buildings	HMNB Clyde submarine base; Garelochhead training camp nr.
Dunoon	7,830	60		Ferry, bus, rail	Schools, University of Highlands and Islands college	Shops, pubs, community buildings, leisure	Rail at Gourock Pier

						facilities including stadium	
Alexandria	6,860	60	nr. Glasgow	Rail, bus	Schools, hospital	Shops, pubs, restaurants, leisure facilities	West Dunbartonshire
Dumbarton	21,030	60	nr. Glasgow	Rail, bus	Schools, hospital	Shops, restaurants, hotels, leisure and art facilities	West Dunbartonshire

Note: Locations in italics are close to other major settlements and may be considered as effectively an extension of those locations with similar access to services and facilities. Yellow highlighted cells indicate where drive time is at the margin of 60mins or where the settlement is small (albeit larger than the threshold applied).

4.12 A number of observations that can inform the location of workers housing in the detailed Strategy can be made from this filtering exercise:

- Most of the larger towns are 60 minutes drive from the site and this time may be increased depending on time of day, season and weather conditions. These locations (Helensburgh, Dunoon, Alexandria and Dumbarton) are substantial towns with a range of services and amenities and generally good transport connections to Glasgow.
- Those within 30 minutes drive from the site are small, with only Inveraray providing a reasonable range of services and amenities albeit with a very small local population. Taynuilt (population around 800) is around 40 minutes drive with a small number of services and amenities.
- Lochgilphead is a reasonable distance from the site (around 45 minutes) and has a reasonable sized population plus adjoining villages such as Bridgend and Ardrishaig which may provide additional opportunities. Lochgilphead has a good range of services and amenities as the administrative centre of Argyll & Bute. It is also where ABC is located.
- Oban is the largest town that sits comfortably within the 60 minute drive time and has a large range of services and amenities than Lochgilphead. It is also well connected in terms of strategic transport with an airport, railway station and bus services.

5. Existing Accommodation

Introduction

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the existing accommodation, in terms of the housing stock and hotel and other visitor accommodation, within Argyll and Bute.

Argyll and Bute Housing Context

Housing Emergency

- 5.2 Argyll and Bute Council declared a Housing Emergency in June 2023 due to a stressed local housing system giving rise to increased homelessness and a lack of housing choice for key workers⁴. These stresses in the housing system are attributed to a shortage of new build private housing, the unavailability and affordability of private housing stock in part due to the number of houses being purchased as second homes, a stretched housing waiting list for social housing, demographic changes, including an ageing population and declining household size.

Housing Market

- 5.3 The Argyll and Bute Local Housing Strategy Annual Report for 2023⁵ outlines that there was a total of 48,971 dwellings in April 2023 of all tenures in Argyll and Bute. Within the housing areas closest to Balliemanoach there are 8,899 houses within the Lorn area (including Oban) and 5,714 in mid-Argyll (including Inveraray).
- 5.4 The housing stock is predominantly owner-occupied with 29,133 dwellings, 8,799 dwellings are social rented housing and 5,697 dwellings are privately rented. There are a further 5,225 dwellings that are defined as ineffective stock, i.e., not utilised as a household's main dwelling. These include second/holiday homes, empty homes and job-related homes. The ineffective stock rate for Lorn is 8% and Mid-Argyll 13% which is over three times the national average (4%)⁶.
- 5.5 Across the Argyll and Bute area, there were 1,822 property transactions in the year 2022/23, with the average property price being £219,245. This represented a decline in the number of transactions from 2,059 in 2021/22; however, the same period saw an 11.2% increase in the average property price, with the average price being £194,918 in 2021/22.
- 5.6 Across Argyll and Bute, there were a total of 5,822 properties in the private rented sector in 2020; within the Lorn area, there were 1,280 and mid-Argyll, 690. This represents an increase of 19% across Argyll and Bute since 2012, with local variations across the Council area, with Lorn seeing a 40% increase in private rented stock across this period and mid-Argyll 7%. The Local Housing Strategy, however, notes that the number of private rented homes is now reducing, potentially due to short-term (AirBnB type) letting.

Owner Occupation

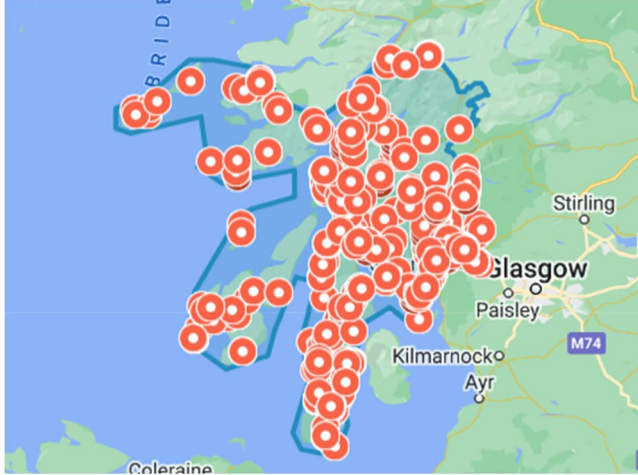
- 5.7 Based on an online review of houses for sale in May 2024 there were a total of 566 residential properties for sale. A range of property sizes were available from studios to 10 bedroom properties. Larger properties that could accommodate multiple workers numbered 297 3+ bedrooms and reducing to 75 properties with 5+ bedrooms. Sales were spread across the council area with concentrations of multiple house sales in urban areas (Dunoon, Helensburgh, Oban).

⁴ [Declaring an Argyll and Bute Housing Emergency \(committee paper - Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee\)](#)

⁵ [The Argyll and Bute Local Housing Strategy Annual Report for 2023](#)

⁶ [INTRODUCTION \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

Image 1 Houses for Sale across Argyll and Bute (May 2024)⁷

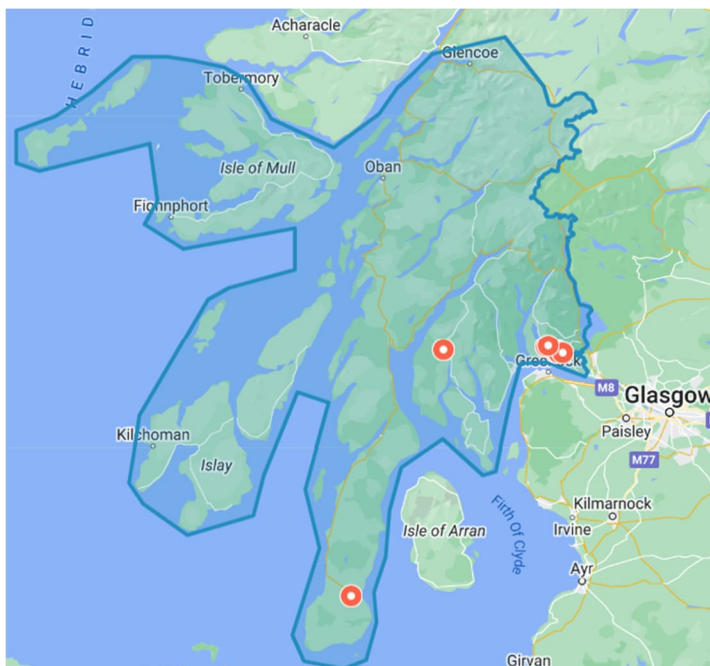


- 5.8 Given the geographical spread of houses, the inefficiencies of multiple property transactions agreements and the size of a house (no. of bedrooms) it is considered that the private purchase of owner-occupation properties does not represent a wholesale solution to housing the construction workforce.
- 5.9 The removal of housing stock for the local community would contribute to the rate of ineffective housing within Argyll and Bute and would add pressure to the existing housing market which is unaffordable for many residents.
- 5.10 Owner occupation may present a housing option for individual workers looking to settle on a permanent basis within Argyll and Bute, particularly those with an annual household income above the housing affordability ratio (4 times the household income). Based upon the average property price in Argyll and Bute this would be £54,811. This would contribute to reversing population decline in the area.

Private Renting

- 5.11 Based on a review of houses for rent in May 2024 there were a total of 13 residential properties for rent. The number of properties available for rent with 3+ bedrooms was limited to 1 house located in Rhu.

Image 2 Houses for Rent across Argyll and Bute (May 2024)⁸



⁷ [Properties For Sale in Argyll and Bute | Rightmove](#)

⁸ [Properties To Rent in Argyll and Bute | Rightmove](#)

5.12 Alongside the limited supply of houses for rent, the reasons outlined in Paragraphs 1.29 and 1.31 are also relevant. Similarly, the private rental sector may have a limited role for those that want to settle on a permanent basis.

Is Market Housing an Option to Accommodate Workers?

5.13 The Argyll and Bute Local Housing Strategy Annual Report for 2023 outlines that the current supply of housing in Argyll and Bute does not meet the demand, with waiting lists for social housing, mid-market and shared equity housing. Owner occupation is only affordable for 24% of local households according to this report.

5.14 Owner occupation / private renting may present a limited housing option for individual workers looking to settle on a permanent basis within Argyll and Bute. This would also help to address the declining population and demographic (ageing population) issues identified in the ABLDP.

5.15 Given the geographical spread of houses, the inefficiencies of multiple property transactions / private rental agreements and the typical size of a house (no. of bedrooms) it is considered that the private purchase of owner-occupation properties or private letting does not represent a wholesale solution to housing the construction workforce. It would also have the potential for significant impacts on housing supply for the existing population, particularly in the face of the recent housing emergency declared by Argyll and Bute Council.

Tourism and Visitor Accommodation

5.16 Tourism is a significant contributor to the Argyll and Bute economy, it represents 8.4% of the GVA and 15% of total employment in the council area⁹. Visitor accommodation has an important role in supporting the tourism sector through the provision of accommodation for domestic and international visitors staying longer than a day.

5.17 Table 3 provides an overview of the number of visitor accommodation units in Argyll and Bute with the total in Scotland as a comparator. The Drive Time Analysis Plans in Appendix A show the geographical spreads of hotels within Argyll and Bute within the 30 minute and 60 minute drive times.

Table 3: Number of Hotels, Guest Houses, B&Bs and Self-Catering Units on Valuation Roll

	Hotels	Guest Houses and B&Bs	Self-catering
Argyll & Bute	175	170	1,970
Scotland	2,380	1,465	15,815

Source: Scottish Government¹⁰

5.18 Table 4 shows the occupancy rate for Argyll and Bute across hotels, guesthouses and bed and breakfasts, and self-catering accommodation. The table shows that occupancy rates in Argyll and Bute are higher than Scotland as a whole, reflecting the importance of tourism for the Argyll and Bute economy.

Table 4: % Net Rooms Occupancy by Area and Accommodation Type

	Hotels (%)		Guest Houses and B&Bs (%)		Self-catering (%)	
	Argyll and Bute Region, 2019	Scotland, 2021/2022	Argyll and Bute Region, 2019	Scotland, 2021/2022	Argyll and Bute Region, 2019	Scotland, 2021/2022
January	62	40	37	19	43	20
February	64	55	48	33	50	30
March	67	44	34	36	54	30
April	76	67	45	60	55	42

⁹ [Tourism in Scotland: the economic contribution of the sector](#)

¹⁰ [Annex A: Background to the Tourism Industry in Scotland - Transient visitor levy: consultation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

	Hotels (%)		Guest Houses and B&Bs (%)		Self-catering (%)	
May	83	65	72	66	63	41
June	87	72	70	73	63	51
July	83	84	74	75	67	60
August	87	84	86	71	71	55
September	82	47	69	60	59	54
October	77	63	46	36	53	45
November	62	50	38	28	35	28
December	61	45	17	37	40	32
Annual average	74.3	59.6	53	49.6	54.4	40.6

Source: VisitScotland, 2023¹¹

5.19 Occupancy rates peak in summer months with August being the highest month for occupancy for all three accommodation types (86% hotel, 86% Guest Houses and B&Bs, and 71% Self Catering). December was the lowest occupancy for hotels (61%), and Guest Houses and B&Bs (17%), and November for (35%) for Self-Catering.

Visitor Accommodation as a Workers Housing Option

5.20 Occupancy rates for visitor accommodation peak in summer months with August being the highest month for occupancy for all three accommodation types (86% hotel, 86% Guest Houses and B&Bs, and 71% Self Catering). December was the lowest occupancy for hotels (61%), and Guest Houses and B&Bs (17%), and November for (35%) for Self-Catering.

5.21 The occupancy rates show that there is some surplus capacity within the visitor accommodation sector across the year, particularly in off-peak months. The headline figures suggest that there is some capacity which could accommodate construction workers and bring benefits to visitor accommodation owners, and benefit tourist industry workers who generally have a small window to make an income in the summer season.

5.22 While the headline figures suggest that there is some capacity, the seasonality of the capacity would limit the ability to utilise visitor accommodation for all workers throughout the year. Bookings for workers housing that extend into the high season have the potential to displace tourists that would otherwise contribute to the local economy¹², and would affect the ability of visitor accommodation providers to respond to high tourist demand. However, the provider would benefit from increased occupancy from construction workers as noted above, and there may be opportunities to co-ordinate visitor accommodation providers to minimise impacts on tourists in the high season.

5.23 Other considerations would be the potential for a change in the quality of accommodation and service offered to tourists if the focus shifted to accommodating long-stay construction workers, and conflicts between workers and tourist requirements, such as disruption from early morning shifts or dirt from clothes/boots.

5.24 Overall, visitor accommodation may offer an opportunity to fill low occupancy rates in off-peak months and support year-round employment in the visitor accommodation sector, but careful management and co-ordination would be required to avoid impacts on the tourist sector, particularly where residual occupancy within the sector is utilised in the high season.

5.25 The sector, as a whole, would not, however, offer a consistent supply of accommodation given the low availability in the summer peak.

Visitor Accommodation for Sale / Vacant

5.26 An online review of commercial properties (Hotels, Guest House / B&Bs and Self-Catering) identified 20 properties for sale within Argyll and Bute, 6 being within the 60-minute journey time and 4 within the 30-minute journey time of Balliemanoach.

¹¹ [2022 Scottish Accommodation Occupancy Survey \(final report\) \(2022\)](#)

¹² [Tourism concern over housing for Wylfa Newydd workers - BBC News](#)

Image 3 Visitor Accommodation for Sale (January 2024)¹³



- 5.27 Purchasing existing visitor accommodation(s) and using it for dedicated worker accommodation provides an opportunity to adapt an existing building(s) to meet the specific needs of workers. In addition, properties with surrounding land may provide opportunities to site additional temporary buildings to provide accommodation for additional works.
- 5.28 It is recognised that the use of visitor accommodation on the market as a 'going concern' would impact the supply of available visitor accommodation for visitors; however, vacant or slow-to-sell properties, such as the Dalmally Hotel, would allow the building(s) to be brought into/maintained in active use and returned to the market for visitor accommodation following the completion of construction (a legacy benefit for the Development).

¹³ [Commercial properties for sale in Argyll and Bute | Rightmove](#)

6. Stakeholder Engagement

6.1 The draft Strategy has been informed by consultation with a number of key stakeholders. The feedback has been considered and has informed the assessment of potential housing options in this strategy.

Table 5: Summary of Consultation

Consultee	Summary of Response
Argyll and Bute Council	Outlined ABC has declared a housing emergency. Noted the requirement for a draft Workers Housing Strategy as part of the planning application. Noted that other renewable energy developers within AB have been/will be required to make provision for workers housing.
Argyll Estate	ILI has engaged with Argyll Estate on their masterplan and identified an opportunity to construct 12 permanent houses on Argyll Estate land. Refer to Paragraphs 7.18 to 7.20 for further details.
Drax – Cruachan Power Station Expansion	Identified an opportunity for future discussion on workers housing, post consent, when construction timelines are further developed.
Glenorch and Innishail Community Group	Residents may be receptive to workers accommodation, subject to good consultation, consideration of impacts (particularly on the landscape), and delivery of local benefits (workers spending on local shops etc) and long-term legacy.

6.2 As outlined in the meeting with ABC there are a number of renewable energy developers operating within Argyll and Bute. Renewable Energy development is also a national priority under NPF4, and supported under the ABLDP and proposed ABLDP, there is therefore potential for additional development with a need for workers housing.

6.3 A key recommendation for taking this draft strategy forward will be further engagement with renewable energy and other major construction projects and adopting a ‘partnership approach’ to identifying worker accommodation solutions. This could include:

- Joint endeavours to identify sustainable workers housing options,
- Sharing sites,
- Collaboration on the timing of works to minimise workers housing demand.

6.4 To inform the Detailed Strategy, additional engagement should occur with ABC and local communities to inform the approach to workers housing, and the opportunities to maximise socio-economic benefits for local communities. Engagement with the tourism sector should also occur so that visitor accommodation utilisation supports the sector and the contribution that tourism makes to the Argyll and Bute economy.

7. Workers Housing Options

7.1 This section of the report considers the high level options for worker housing.

Worker Housing Locations

7.2 The following paragraphs consider the different types of location where workers housing could be located. These include Larger Settlements, Smaller Settlement and Locations Remote from Settlements. A park and ride facility is also considered as it may facilitate a greater range of worker housing locations and options.

Larger Settlements

7.3 Table 2 in Section 4 illustrates the range of potential locations where workers housing could be accommodated, with larger settlements viewed as having a greater potential to absorb an influx of temporary workers due to their size and range of services.

7.4 Larger settlements may also have a greater supply of vacant commercial buildings that have the potential to be converted to provide workers accommodation or have additional land available for use for the construction of temporary accommodation and the supporting services, including kitchens, study areas, social areas, wellbeing and recreational facilities.

7.5 A key issue for locating housing in larger settlements is their distance from the Development, which would require additional travel times for workers before and after their shifts. The economic benefits which come from workers spend will occur in the settlements further from construction works and not in the communities in closest proximity to the Development.

Smaller Settlements

7.6 Smaller settlements, particularly those in close proximity to the Development, would reduce the journey times for workers between the Development and their accommodation, supporting the wellbeing of workers and potentially supporting productivity.

7.7 Economic spend from workers will be maximised due to the availability of local shops and services, although the range of shops and services may be smaller compared to larger settlements.

7.8 Engagement with Glenorchy & Innishail Community Council involved discussion on the potential to site workers housing in smaller settlements within proximity to the Development site. This identified that:

- Residents in smaller settlements may be receptive to accommodating some workers housing, subject to the management of impacts and good community consultation.
- Residents would welcome the benefits from the temporary population, e.g. workers spending money in local businesses, but would also want to see a legacy post-construction, such as longer-term housing for the community or key workers (e.g. locum pharmacist).
- The Dalmally Hotel is a large vacant hotel, and unsuitable for use by the community at present. The community would be interested in proposals to redevelop the hotel, and there may be opportunities for community use in the longer term.

7.9 Informed by this feedback and the potential to deliver benefits for smaller settlements, smaller settlements (or sites in proximity to smaller settlements) have not been discounted as potential locations for worker housing. Further consideration of the potential impacts on smaller settlements alongside community consultation would be required to before finalising a detailed Workers Housing Strategy that includes options located in smaller settlements.

Locations Remote from Settlements (Temporary Compounds)

7.10 Remote locations, either within the Development site or on land in close proximity to the Development, would allow the developer to provide accommodation on self-contained temporary compounds with the amenities required to support the workforce. It would also reduce the potential travel time for workers between the Development and their accommodation.

- 7.11 This option would reduce the interaction between existing settlements and workers, and both the potential impacts and benefits from workers being located there. It may however require new utilities and services, and greater onsite amenities due to the distance from shops and services found in existing settlements.
- 7.12 Other considerations would be identifying sites large enough to accommodate the housing and with suitable topography, and transport links to local settlements and transport links to workers home locations.
- 7.13 Further consideration would need to be given to environmental and wider planning policy considerations as part of obtaining any necessary separate planning permissions required for such developments under the Planning Act.

Park and Ride Facilities to access Worker Accommodation Options

- 7.14 A park-and-ride facility would allow workers housing to be provided further from the Development and allow a greater range of housing options and solutions to be considered. This option may also reduce the number of non-home based workers by providing travel options to the Development from a larger workforce catchment, particularly where the pickup points are in a towns with larger populations, i.e. Oban (population 8,490) or Helensburgh (15,610) within Argyll and Bute¹⁴, or located on the edge of the 60-minute journey time outside of Argyll and Bute, e.g. Dumbarton (21,030)¹⁵.
- 7.15 Other benefits would be the ability to locate worker housing in settlements with a greater range of amenities and services to support workers, provide enhanced connectivity if located in proximity to rail or bus stations, and would avoid concentrating workers in any one area or in more rural and/or tourism focused areas. This may support community cohesion as workers may integrate more easily within larger population areas.
- 7.16 This option may be less attractive due to the additional journey times required to transport non-home based workers, particularly to location on the edge of the 60 minute drive time or where further connections to the worker housing is required. It would also transfer the economic contribution of construction worker spend to a wider area.

Example Workers Housing Options

7.17 The following paragraphs sets out initial options that have been considered in the preparation of this strategy. The options are presented here to further illustrate the feasible options that exist for housing, but additional options or a mix of options may exist, and these will be identified via the detailed workers housing strategy. The options are:

- 12 new homes (permanent) in Inveraray
- Temporary use of disused hotel at Dalmally
- Temporary Compound

Purpose Built New Homes

- 7.18 The applicant is currently in discussion with Argyll Estate in relation to the construction of 12 permanent homes to be located on a site within the Estate that is allocated for residential use within the ABLDP2. A masterplan prepared by Argyll Estate for the development of their land already exists.
- 7.19 The applicant is committed to providing 12 homes to be used to house senior workers (project managers, senior engineers, etc) during the construction phase. Post construction, the applicant would retain 3 houses for operation stage workers, with the remaining 9 retained by Argyll Estate with a view to these being made available for rent to local workers in industries such as care, catering, tourism, etc.
- 7.20 It is hoped that this contribution to permanent housing stock could act as a catalyst for the supply of new build accommodation in Inveraray and the realisation of the masterplan proposals. The Development cannot solve the temporary problem of housing workers by building permanent homes for the entire workforce, but this contribution adds to, rather than depletes, the existing housing stock.

¹⁴ [Population: Where We Live | Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁵ [National Records of Scotland: Settlements and Localities 2020](#)

Vacant Visitor Accommodation (or other vacant commercial buildings)

- 7.21 Engagement with ABC and the Glenorchy and Innishail Community Council, and a review of visitor accommodation for sale has identified the Dalmally Hotel as a potential option for temporary accommodation.
- 7.22 The Dalmally Hotel is a large and currently vacant 99 bedroom hotel in Dalmally with additional staff accommodation located within 3 acres of land. The site has existing on-site facilities including a commercial kitchen and dining area and is somewhat self-contained. The site is in close proximity to the services and amenities located within Dalmally. The Dalmally Train Station is also nearby with multiple daily services to Glasgow. These factors, alongside the benefits of bringing a vacant hotel back into active use and the economic benefits that housing workers would bring Dalmally, make this a good option for further consideration as part of the detailed strategy.
- 7.23 It is understood that other renewable developers are currently looking at the Dalmally Hotel as a housing option for construction workers, and there is therefore an opportunity to partner with other developers. The applicant has already made approaches to some. This would ensure the building was in longer term use and would extend the local economic benefit for the community, while reducing pressures elsewhere.
- 7.24 Alternatively, should the Dalmally Hotel not be available, then other vacant commercial buildings within the study area may be a suitable option for housing workers. This will depend on the availability of other commercial buildings, being adaptable to house workers. The applicant is also aware of a new hotel at an early stage in planning which could be adapted for use as workers accommodation before returning to use as a hotel – thereby supporting the commercial viability of that project.

Temporary Workers' Compound

- 7.25 A temporary workers' compound would allow the developer to provide a self-contained compound for housing workers that provides both the accommodation and supporting facilities. This could be one facility that accommodates the peak number of workers, or a number of suitably located compounds.
- 7.26 The specific locations will be developed post-consent and set out in the detailed Workers Housing Strategy, noting that additional permissions may be required under the Planning Act for the construction of the compound.

Options Matrix

7.27 Tables 6-8 summarise the advantages and disadvantages of each accommodation option.

Table 6: Existing Housing Market (Owner occupied and private rented sectors)

Location	Advantages	Disadvantages	Initial assessment
Local Area (within 30 mins of site) e.g. Inveraray, Glenorchy & Innishail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenient for construction site and workers • Reduces risk of delays associated with travel • Positive impact of spending in local shops, cafes etc • Potential in-migration of younger workers/ families, supporting schools in area, countering depopulation. • Accommodation can be provided on a long-term basis. • Offers good quality accommodation for workers. • Potential for upgrades to the housing stock to bring accommodation up to standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing emergency, limited capacity in existing housing stock, additional demand without new supply could push up prices/rents. • Disparate housing locations add complexity to travel planning and the management of staff. • Impact on traffic/parking of additional population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not provide a complete solution but may be an option for some workers/families choosing to relocate to Argyll and Bute permanently, thereby making some positive contribution.

<p>Satellite location (c.45 mins from site) e.g. Oban, Lochgilphead towns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenient for construction site and workers • Reduces risk of delays associated with travel. • Wider range of facilities for workforce. • Positive impact of spending in local shops, cafes etc. • Local public services and leisure facilities available for workers. • Accommodation can be provided on a long-term basis. • Offers good quality accommodation for workers. • Potential for upgrades to the housing stock to bring accommodation up to standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing emergency, no capacity in existing housing stock, additional demand without new supply could push up prices/rents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not provide a complete solution but may be an option for some workers/families choosing to relocate to Argyll and Bute permanently, thereby making some positive contribution.
<p>Towns 60 minutes from site e.g. Helensburgh, Alexandria, Dumbarton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater capacity in housing stock in some locations (would need to be confirmed through some further analysis). • Ability to draw on existing workforce in these areas (additional accommodation not needed). • Local public services and leisure facilities available for workers. • Accommodation can be provided on a long-term basis. • Onward connections/ travel from these locations easier. • Ability to draw on a wider labour market area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel distance from site may have knock on impacts on construction if delays. • Multiple property transactions / rental agreements required. • Public transport from locations to site unlikely to be an option (bus only) • Travel cost for workers (or developer if providing transport) • Shifts beneficial spend on local amenities away from local area near Development site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential solution for some workers if travel distances are considered appropriate. • Could be linked to a 'park and ride' option

Table 7: Existing Visitor Accommodation (Hotels etc)

Location	Advantages	Disadvantage	Initial Assessment
<p>Local Area (within 30 mins of site) e.g. Inveraray, Glenorchy & Innishail</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to fill unoccupied accommodation and support the sector in off-peak months. • Avoids/reduces the need for construction of new accommodation. • Positive impact of spending in local shops, cafes etc. • Positive impact on demand for local public services and leisure facilities • Flexible option, particularly for short stay or infrequent worker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal variations mean occupancy is not consistent throughout the year. • Potential to result in displacement of tourist visitors. • Potential for conflicts between the needs of tourists and workers, reducing tourist spend. • Multiple visitor accommodation units required (if only using unoccupied rooms) requiring ongoing booking and travel planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not suitable for year round housing option in areas with the highest occupancy rates, but may be an option for short term / ad hoc accommodation, particularly in the off season. • Avoiding adverse impacts on tourism is a key consideration, further engagement with the tourism sector required when

			developing the detailed Housing Strategy.
Satellite location (c.45 mins from site) e.g. Oban, Lochgilphead towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to fill unoccupied accommodation and support the sector in off-peak months. Likely to have greater capacity to absorb additional numbers in these towns. Avoids/reduces the need for construction of new accommodation. Positive impact of spending in local shops, cafes etc Positive impact on demand for local public services and leisure facilities Local public services and leisure facilities available for workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonal variations mean occupancy is not consistent throughout the year. Potential to result in displacement of tourist visitors. Potential for conflicts between the needs of tourists and workers, reducing tourist spend. Multiple visitor accommodation units required (if using only using unoccupied rooms) requiring ongoing booking and travel planning. Distance from site would require transport (e.g. shuttle buses) or workers to drive with potential impact on traffic/parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not suitable for year round housing option in areas with the highest occupancy rates, but may be an option for short term / ad hoc accommodation, particularly in the off season. Avoiding adverse impacts on tourism is a key consideration, engagement with the tourism sector required when developing the detailed Housing Strategy.
Towns 60 minutes from site e.g. Helensburgh, Alexandria, Dumbarton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to fill unoccupied accommodation and support the sector in off-peak months. Likely to be greater capacity to absorb additional numbers in these towns. Avoids/reduces the need for construction of new accommodation. Positive impact of spending in local shops, cafes etc Positive impact on demand for local public services and leisure facilities Local public services and leisure facilities available for workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance from site would require transport (e.g. shuttle buses) or workers to drive with potential impact on traffic/parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential solution if travel distances considered appropriate. Engagement with the tourism sector required when developing the detailed Housing Strategy. Could be linked to a 'park and ride' option.

Table 8: Temporary Accommodation (Temporary Compound)

Location	Advantages	Disadvantage	Initial Assessment
Local Area (within 30 mins of site) e.g. Inveraray, Glenorchy & Innishail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive solution with potential to accommodate all or most workers on same site. Avoids impacts on existing housing and visitor accommodation stock. Could make use of vacant buildings or sites (e.g. Dalmally hotel). Easy to manage workers because of proximity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up costs likely to be high. Limited supply of available buildings. Would require need to provide comprehensive facilities on site, e.g. if in remote location, which would reduce positive impacts to community of spend in shops/ restaurants etc. Workers may be more likely to leave/return home at weekends due to limited facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependent on site/ opportunity but likely to present a good opportunity to house workers. Potential for legacy benefits to community if improving existing building or site. Further consideration required regarding integration with existing communities in remote locations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential local spend if based in proximity to a local community. 		
<p>Satellite location (c.45 mins from site) e.g. Oban, Lochgilphead towns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive solution with potential to accommodate all or most workers on same site. Avoids impacts on existing housing and visitor accommodation stock. Could make use of vacant buildings or sites - there may be more options in these towns. Potential for legacy benefit e.g. bring building or site back into use. Less need to provide all facilities on site because of wide range of services and facilities in town. Positive impact of spending in local shops, cafes etc Local public services and leisure facilities available for workers. Wider range of facilities for workers and potential to stay weekends/ bring families etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up costs likely to be high. Unknown supply of available buildings or site. Transport from satellite location required either through shuttle buses or workers driving. Potential impact on traffic/parking if workers drive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dependent on site/ opportunity but likely to present a good opportunity to house workers. Potential for legacy benefits to community if improving existing building or site. Further consideration required regarding transport from satellite location when developing the detailed Housing Strategy.
<p>Towns 60 minutes from site e.g. Helensburgh, Alexandria, Dumbarton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive solution with potential to accommodate all or most workers on same site. Avoids impacts on existing housing and visitor accommodation stock. Could make use of vacant buildings or sites - may be more options in these towns. Potential for legacy benefit e.g. bring building or site back into use. Positive impact of spending on shops, cafes etc, but in wider area Local public services and leisure facilities available for workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May impact on ability to attract and retain workers due to distance from site and temporary nature of accommodation. Long distance travel to site each day. Bus/coach service to be provided or workers to drive with impact on traffic. Likely higher costs of providing both accommodation and transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May impact on ability to attract and retain workers due to distance from site and temporary nature of accommodation.

8. Conclusion and Next Steps

Introduction

- 8.1 This section of the report sets out the next steps in terms of developing a detailed workers housing strategy post consent.

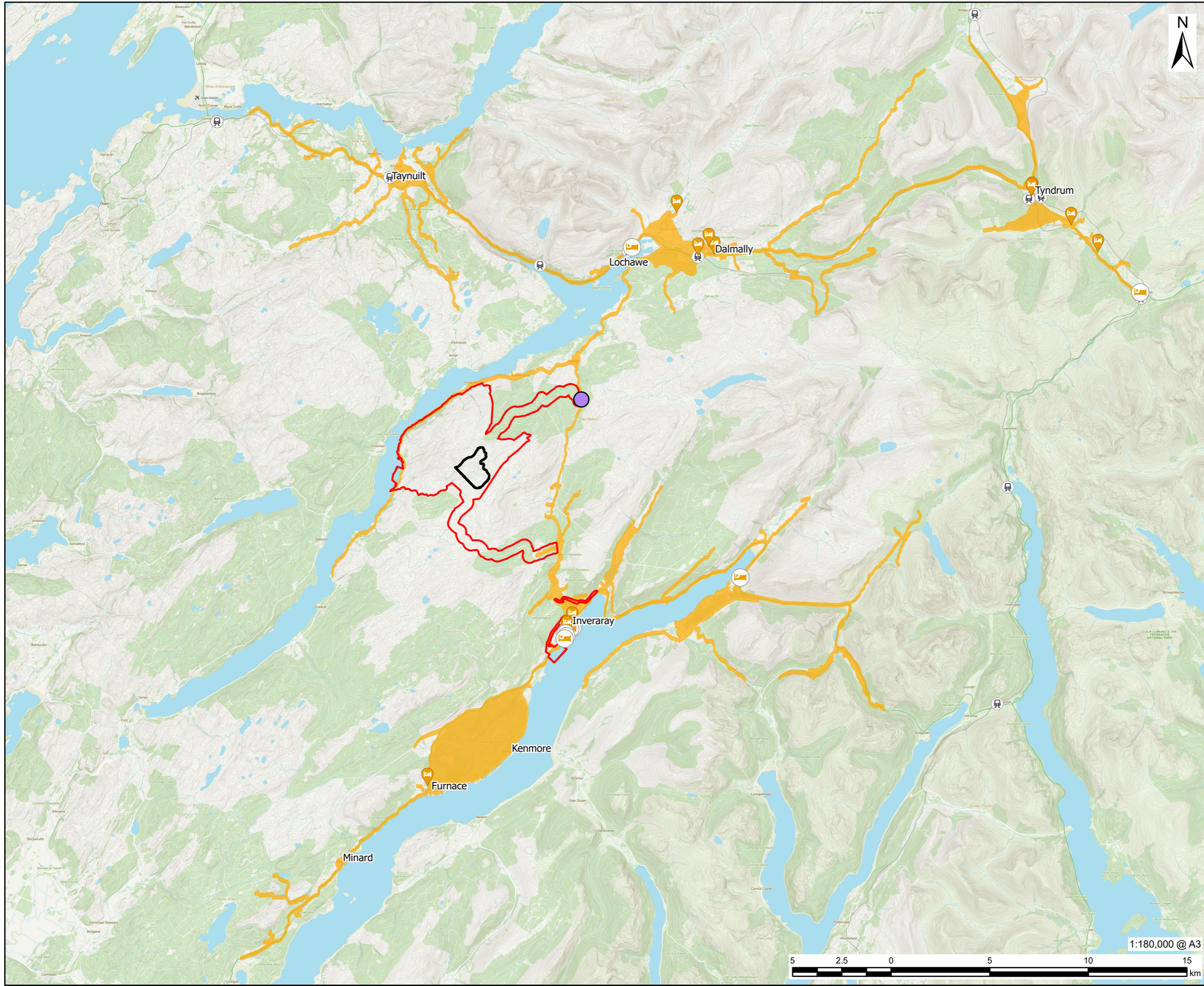
Conclusion

- 8.2 It is considered that this draft preliminary strategy demonstrates that there are a range of feasible options and locations that exist for the provision of workers housing. These include either a single site or an appropriate mix of housing options and location. Examples include:
1. Hybrid solution 1: small scale development of new homes at Inveraray (plus potentially other sites), small scale permanent in-migration of workers to existing settlements (limited to avoid significant impacts on housing supply for residents), use of some low season hotel capacity plus the development of temporary accommodation in a satellite settlement with a pickup and drop off bus service to transport workers between workers housing and the Development site.
 2. Hybrid solution 2: small scale development of new homes at Inveraray, small scale permanent in-migration of workers to existing settlements, location of workers in 60 minute towns in existing housing/accommodation with transport provided from a park and ride in same town. Park and ride can be used by those living there as well as those travelling in from further afield e.g. Glasgow.
 3. Temporary Workers' Compound: A self-contained compound would allow all workers housing to be provided on a single site or split between a number of sites. This option would allow housing to be located in proximity to Balliemanoach, but would require additional facilities and local transport links, particularly if remote from surrounding settlements.
 4. Additional Options: The use of very low capacity or vacant hotels, such as the Dalmally Hotel, or other suitable commercial buildings may provide an option for adaption into worker housing. Visitor accommodation has been identified as having some capacity throughout the year. Utilising this capacity, particularly in the peak season, would require engagement with the visitor accommodation sector.

Next Steps

- 8.3 The applicant is committed to identifying and developing a detailed Workers Housing Strategy at the appropriate time that will support the Development's delivery, provide quality accommodation for the non-home-based workforce and be an appropriate option which does not adversely impact local communities, the local housing market or the visitor accommodation and tourism sector.
- 8.4 The strategy should be developed in consultation with:
- ABC, local communities and the tourism/visitor accommodation sector to identify options that will not adversely impact the communities where workers housing will be located or be in close proximity to or the availability of visitor accommodation for tourists.
 - Third party energy and other major construction projects that require workers housing to identify opportunities for collaboration.
 - Engagement should also occur with ABC, local communities, the visitor accommodation sector and other relevant stakeholder to identify opportunities to maximise local and community socio-economic benefits from workers housing.

Appendix A Drive Time Analysis Plans



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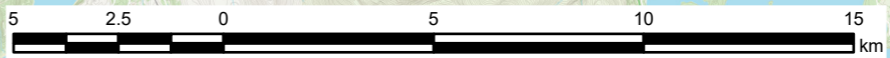
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- LEGEND**
- North Entry Point
 - Hotel
 - Hostel
 - Guesthouse
 - Railway Stations
 - Drive Time Area**
 - 0 - 30 min
 - Headpond Waterbody
 - Proposed Development Boundary

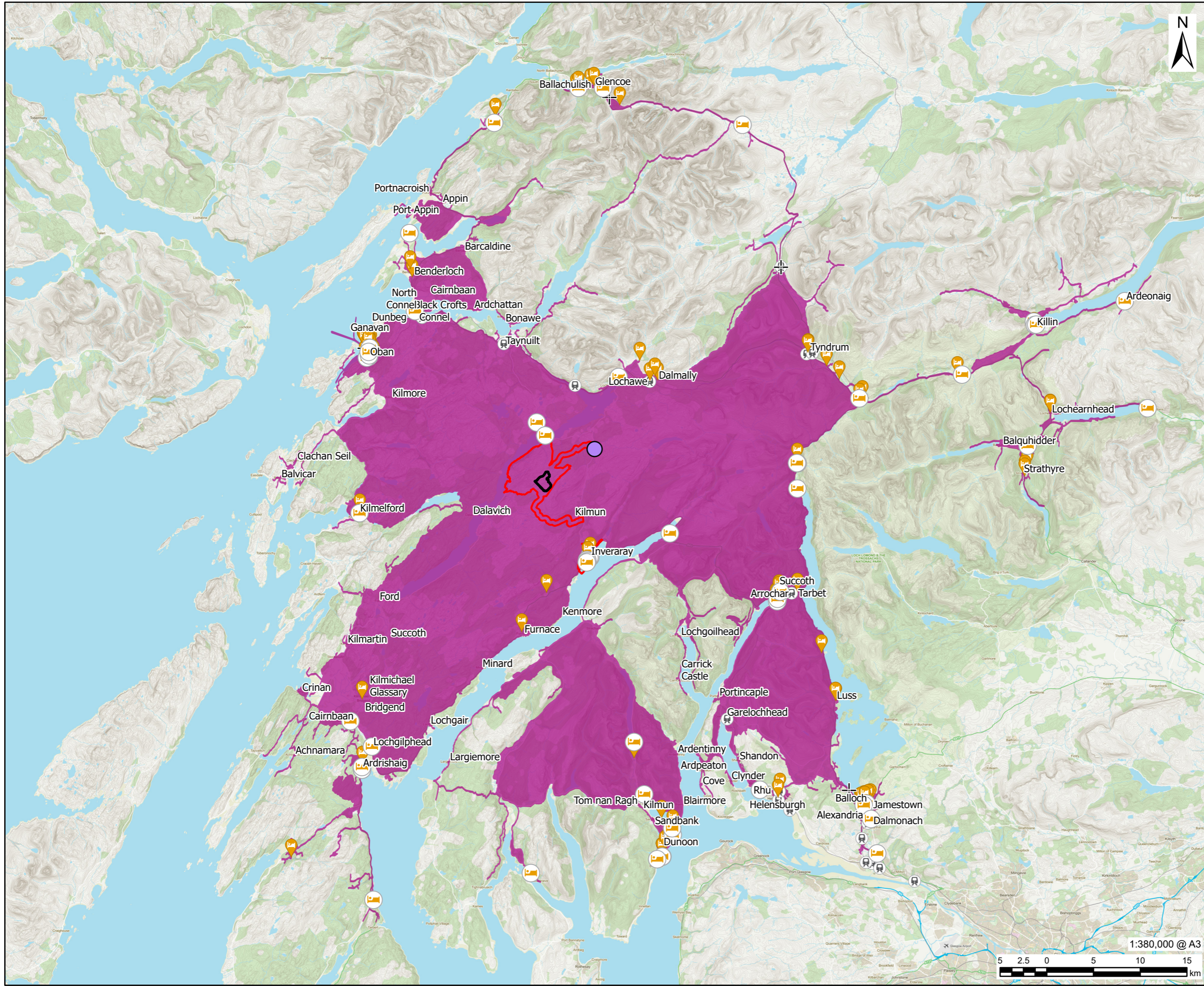
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FIGURE TITLE
 Drive Time Analysis - 30 min
 North Entry Point
 (Sheet 1 of 4)



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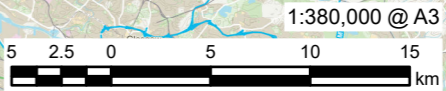
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- LEGEND**
- North Entry Point
 - Hotel
 - Hostel
 - Guesthouse
 - Railway Stations
 - Drive Time Area**
 - 0 - 60 min
 - Headpond Waterbody
 - Proposed Development Boundary

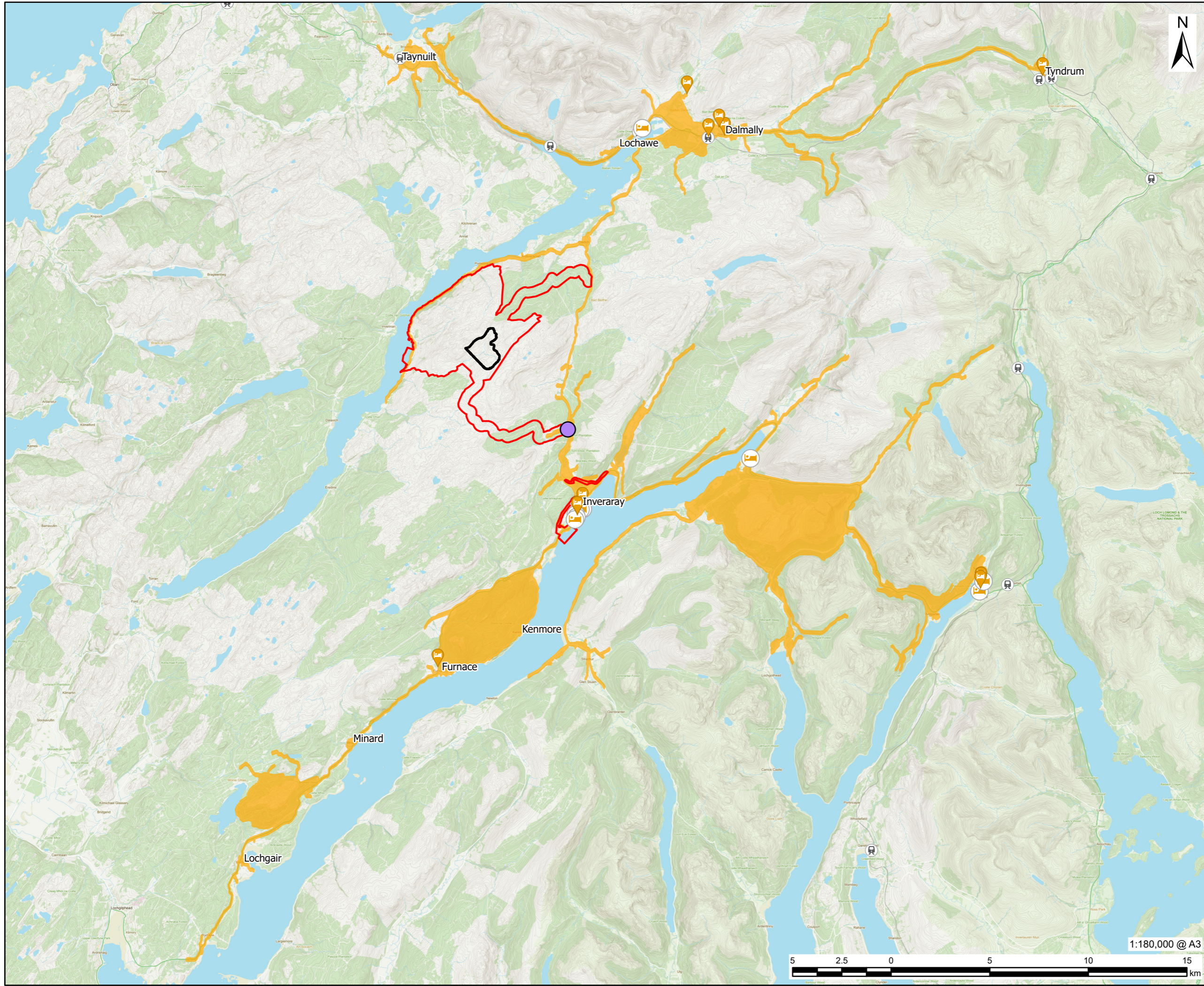
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FIGURE TITLE
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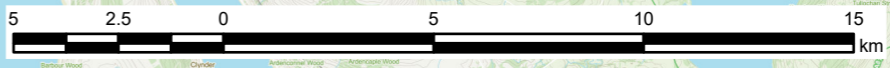
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- South Entry Point
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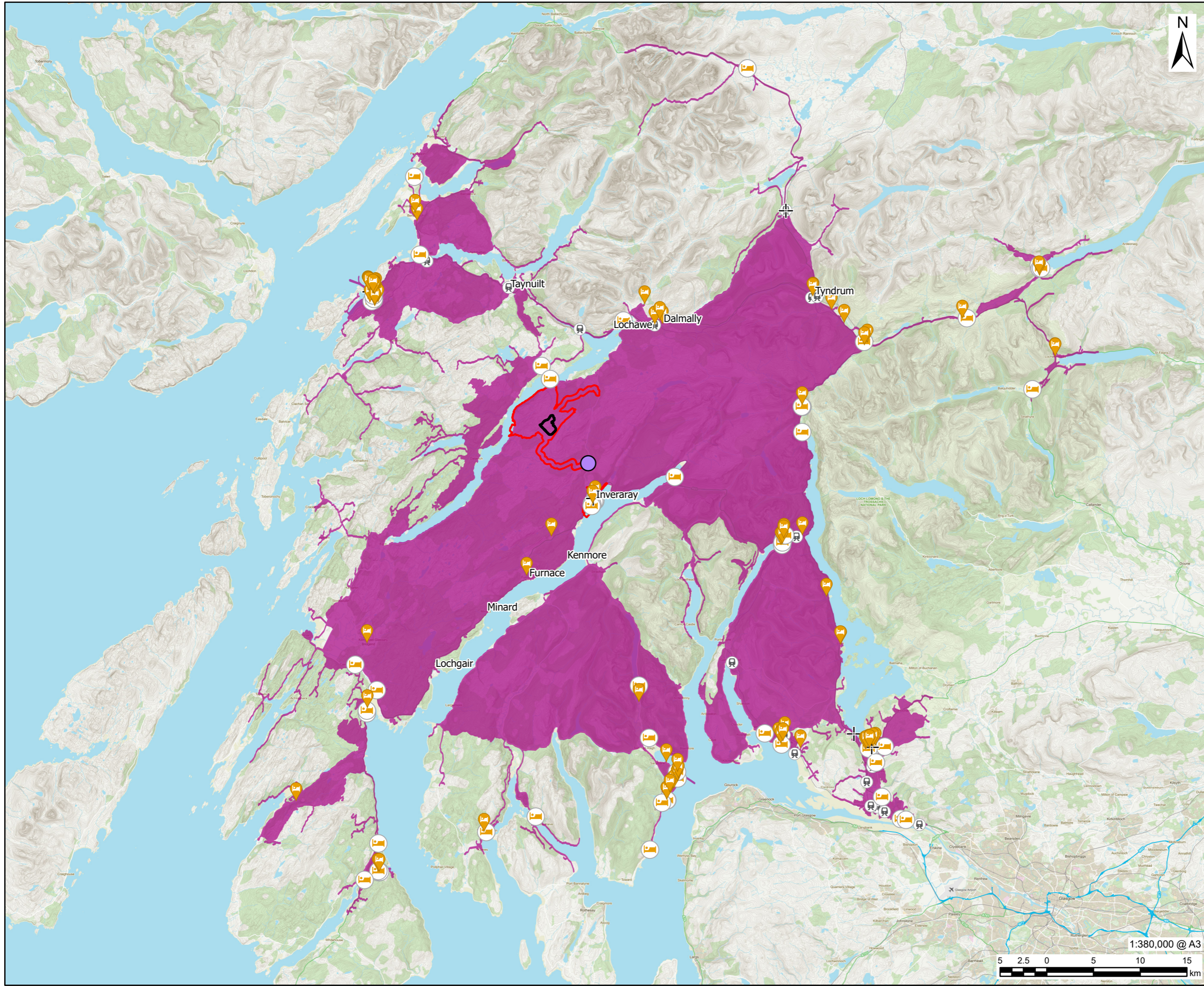
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FIGURE TITLE
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 - 0 - 60 min
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FIGURE TITLE
 Drive Time Analysis - 60 min
 South Entry Point
 (Sheet 4 of 4)

