



National Planning Framework 4 Early Engagement – Policies

**SUPPORTING AQUACULTURE**

Scottish Planning Policy (2014)

**Development plans** should make positive provision for aquaculture developments and consider Marine Scotland's locational policies when identifying suitable areas. Plans should also set out the issues that will be considered:

- impacts on, and benefits for, local communities;
- economic benefits of the sustainable development of the aquaculture industry;
- landscape, seascape and visual impact;
- biological carrying capacity;
- effects on coastal and marine species (including wild salmonids) and habitats;
- impacts on the historic environment and the sea or loch bed;
- interaction with other users of the marine environment (including commercial fisheries, Ministry of Defence, navigational routes, ports and harbours, anchorages, tourism, recreational and leisure activities); and
- cumulative effect on all the above factors.

**Planning applications** should be supported, where necessary, by sufficient information to demonstrate:

- operational arrangements (including noise, light, access, waste and odour) are satisfactory and sufficient mitigation plans are in place; and
- the siting and design of cages, lines and associated facilities are appropriate for the location. This should be done through the provision of information on the extent of the site; the type, number and physical scale of structures; the distribution of the structures across the planning area; on-shore facilities; and ancillary equipment.

*There is a presumption against further marine finfish farm developments on the north and east coasts to safeguard migratory fish species.*

**What has changed since 2014?**

- The Government's Programme for Scotland 2019-20 confirms that farmed salmon is Scotland's most important food sector.
- Publication of Planning Circular 1/2015: relationship between the statutory land use planning system and marine planning and licencing.
- Publication of the Independent Review of Scottish Aquaculture in July 2016.
- Joint Ministerial statement on supporting aquaculture growth and protecting Scotland's environment in March 2017 recognised the need to ensure planning and consenting processes are responsive, accessible and proportionate.

- Research by Ironside Farrar into the effectiveness of existing policies raised issues around the lack of clarity over the role of planning in relation to marine fish farming and the need for guidance to assess impacts on the marine environment.

**Proposed key objective of NPF4:** To support the sustainable growth of the finfish and shellfish sectors to ensure that the aquaculture industry is diverse, competitive and economically viable and that new development is guided to coastal locations that best suit industry needs with due regard to the marine environment.

### Issues to consider

- How can the planning system help to support the sustainable growth of the aquaculture sector?
- How can we ensure that the planning system works with other statutory bodies to ensure an effective regulatory framework?

## Get Involved

For more information and other resources



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