

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Setting and context

The plan for North Mull combines existing full plans for Ardmore and Quinish, and adds the Aros block which was only covered by an indicative plan. Combining the plans is part of a wider strategy of efficiency savings, linking areas where there are shared values and adopting a more strategic view of forest management. The adjoining Aros Park woodland is not included as it has a significantly different set of management objectives, focusing on recreation and amenity rather than timber production. None of the plans have been particularly affected by the introduction of the Mull Strategy planning document in 2004. The strategy is now dated and will not be replaced, although some of the guiding principles remain valid. The Ardmore FDP had a 10-year approval until March 2011 but has since been extended until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. The Quinish FDP expires on 31st March 2012. The indicative plan for Aros was drawn up in 2005 and expires on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

The Quinish block lies between the Quinish and Glengorm Castle estates and backs onto the village of Dervaig. It shares part of Loch an Torr as its boundary with the Glengorm Castle estate and there is a right of access through the estate to the wood. A short section bounds on the short sea loch of Mingary, at the northern end of the block and of Mull. The B8073 from Tobermory to Dervaig runs close to the southern edge of the block. From the forest access an Loch an Torr onto the B8073, there are links into the Lettermore block and into the Aintuim block immediately to the south-east. The woodland straddles Glen Gorm and the Mingary Burn. A number of fragments of land left over from the sale of the FC plantations to the west of Dervaig to the North-west Mull community have been included in the plan. Ownership of these pieces of ground is unclear, however.

The Ardmore block occupies the north-eastern corner of the island of Mull and overlooks the Sound of Mull. It is separated from Tobermory to the south by agricultural land, partly contained within the Aros Park plan. It straddles the minor public road to Glengorm Castle, south of which the forest has more of an inland character, seen also in the Aros block. There is a minor access route off the minor road through the Glengorm Castle estate, at the north-western corner of the block. The Glengorm Castle estate lies to the west. The southern boundary is defined by the B8073, south of which are the picturesque Mishnish Lochs and the Aros block beyond. The B8073 is an important tourist route.

The Aros block has no coastal fringe. Its south-western boundary is the march fence with the open hill ground contained within the Lettermore block. To the south is an area of open hill ground, beyond which is private woodland. The A848 to Tobermory forms the eastern boundary, with Aros Park on the other side of the road. The woodland stops short of the outskirts to Tobermory, although recent housing developments have reduced this distance to a couple of hundred meters. The

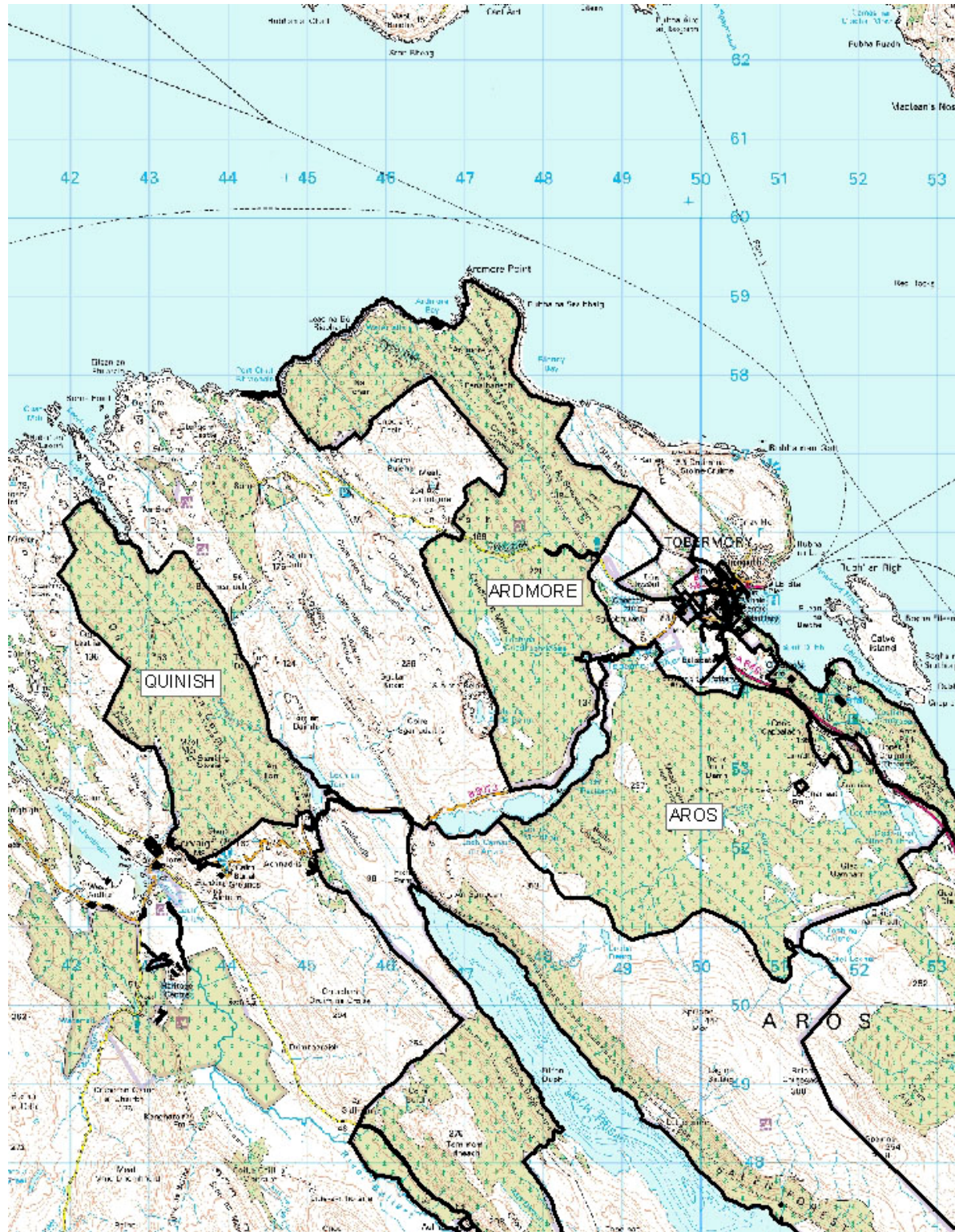
woodland contains several areas of open space, including a croft and an amenity area around Loch na Guailne Duibhe.

SNH and Argyll & Bute Council are the Forest District's statutory consultees. Community Councils have been made aware of the plan revision proposals. Historic Scotland is routinely consulted regarding the scheduled ancient monuments in the plan area. The RSPB are also consulted due to the various bird sensitivities in the area. The Consultation Record provides a summary of all formal correspondence, issues raised and FD responses (see appendix).

The woodlands are managed primarily for timber production, but there are increasing environmental and social pressures influencing management. Key plan objectives from the design brief can be summarised as follows: -

- Commercial timber production.
- Full PAWS restoration.
- Development of habitat networks.
- Landscape improvement.
- Enhancement and protection of habitats benefiting key species, notably raptors and to 'support important salmonid populations'.
- Incorporate review of open space prescriptions.
- Construction of new forest roads.
- Protect and enhance water features, fisheries and water supplies.
- Protect and enhance cultural heritage assets.
- To comply with UKWAS guidance for certification.





1957 and 1967. Felling commenced in 1997, but was suspended in 2003 due to marketing constraints. It resumed again more recently. Aros was planted between 1973 and 1977. Significant areas of LP failed and most were either beaten up or replanted in 1990, although there remains a sizeable area of failed crops within the wood. A couple of stands dating from 1925 border the A848 and relate, along with some less common mature conifers, to planting in Aros Park across the road. No felling has taken place within the wood to date. No thinning has taken place in any of the blocks. Some windblow of South Coastal provenance Lodgepole pine (LP) has occurred, related to the poor provenance selection. *Dothistroma* has been recently identified in the forest, although not yet causing serious damage. Further monitoring for the disease and for *Phytophthora ramorum*, also recently found on Mull, is ongoing.

Remnants of Ancient Semi-natural Woodland (ASNW) persist particularly in the Aros block, where there are sizeable tracts of birch woodland of no great age, and much older oakwood remnants along the Abhainn Loch nan Mìol. Remnants of old hazel woods occur in the Quinish block and in north Ardmore.

A significant number of new recreation trails and facilities have been introduced into the plan area over the last 10 years, although Aros Park remains the core area for recreation provision, given its close associations with Tobermory. A couple of carparks have been created through partnerships with other bodies/estates.

## 1.2 History of plan

Ardmore was acquired in two parts, Ardmore and Erray. Ardmore was planted between 1954 and 1961, whilst Erray was planted between 1970 and 1990. Felling commenced in the late 1990's. Restocking followed, but a fallow policy was in place from 2008. Restocking is due to resume in 2012. Quinish was planted between