

INTEGRATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT INTO
THE MORAY LANDSCAPE
Forres North East
DEVELOPMENT SITE RECOMMENDATIONS

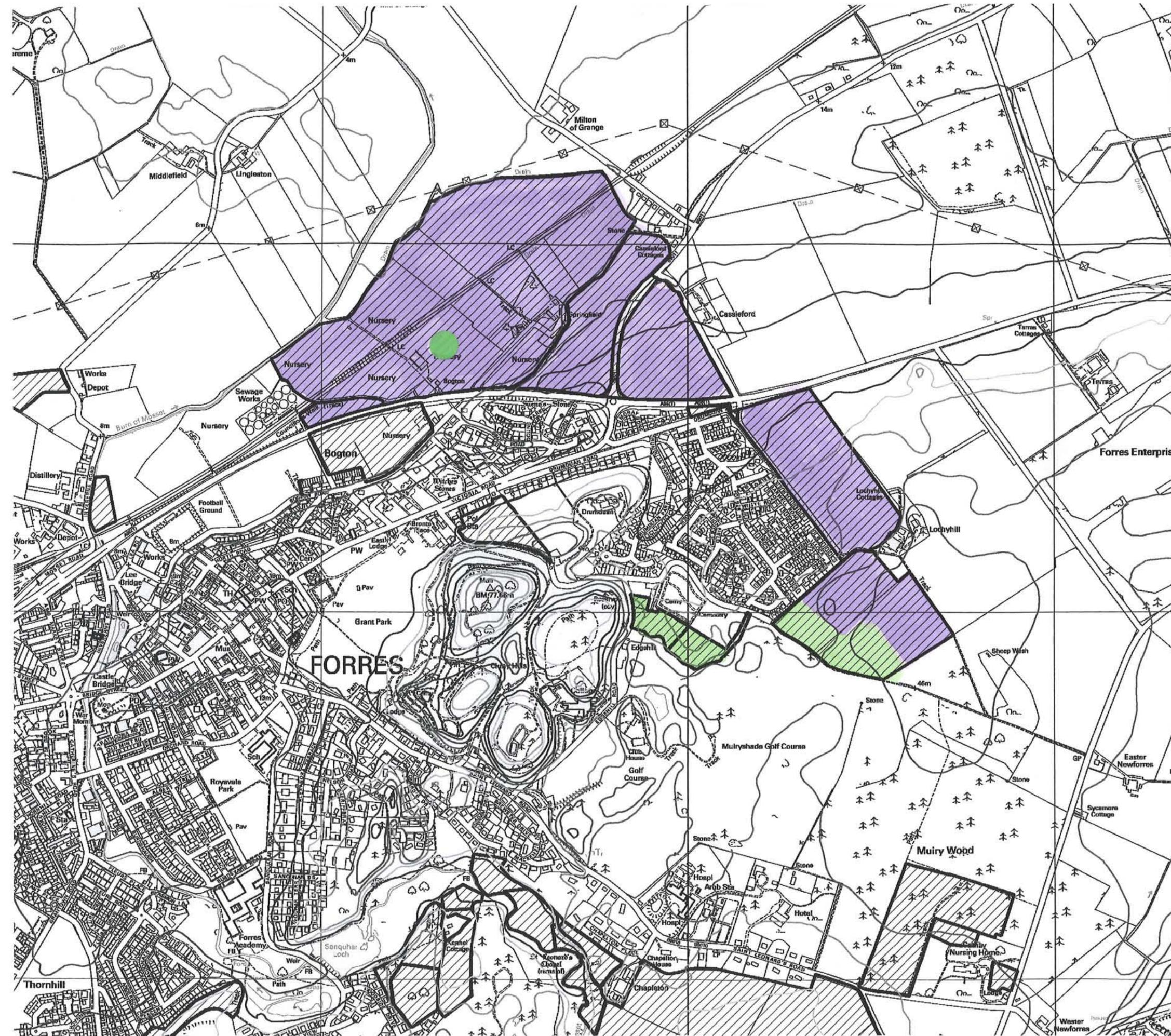
Scale 1:10 000

Assessment of Development Bids

-  Development bids appropriate for development in landscape terms
-  Development bids appropriate for future development in landscape terms once landscape mitigation measures have been established
-  Development bids not appropriate for development due to significant landscape constraints

Additional Opportunities

-  Potential site for industrial development. Any such development should be well screened from the A96 and should take advantage of the existing tree cover



6 FORRES NORTH EAST: MITIGATION MEASURES AND ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

6.1 Forres North East: Identifying Positive and Negative Landscape Features

The contrast between the plinth of relatively level and expansive plain north of the A96 and the intimate scale of the landform which creates the rolling undulations to the south contributes to the distinctive character of Forres.

The ridges and knolls which lie to the east of the town provide a robust containment to the town, and the A96 and the railway offer a robust settlement edge to the north. The farmland across the plain is open and expansive, with only the occasional line of trees associated with watercourses. The rising slopes and rolling landform to the east and south east support more woodland, much of it mature pine, but also some well established young mixed species shelterbelts.

Existing footpaths extend largely to the south east of the settlement, and take advantage of the woodland.

There were some opportunities for immediate settlement expansion identified in this area, within relatively enclosed areas of landform.

6.1.1 Existing Positive Characteristics and Features

- Some fine mature woodland which is located largely on elevated land to the south east of the town, or are associated with the farm steadings
- Younger planting, which is of mixed species, which will form belts which will reinforce the containment of the town from the east
- Watercourses, across the level plain, which are the focus for winding strips of willow and other riparian species
- Extensive access routes across the farmed land and within some of the woodland link the town to the surrounding countryside south of the A96
- The new cycle route from Forres to the coast

6.1.2 Existing Negative Characteristics and Features

- The sewage works north of the railway, while it is not particularly highly visible, there is some smell associated with the works
- The noise from the A96, particularly when it is elevated on embankments

6.2 Landscape Change

The key pressures for change relate to very modest potential development opportunities and the economics of the agricultural and forestry sectors.

6.2.1 Features and Characteristics in Decline

- Some mature trees are likely to have a limited life span

6.2.2 Features and Characteristics in Ascendance

- Woodland, particularly shelterbelts, which have been planted relatively recently and which will mature to become significant landscape features
- Noise from the A96, which is likely to increase if traffic numbers increase

Landscape Enhancement Opportunities



- Mature field trees are not being replaced



- Hillock could be further emphasised with planting



- Watercourse across the level plain could be the focus for more expansive riparian woodland

6.3 Forres North East: Opportunities and Objectives for Enhancement

6.3.1 Level Plain

This lowlying area contrasts with the rising land on which Forres is located. It offers a sense of expanse and is characterised by openness, which allows for far reaching views, particularly from the town to the coast.

Long term management of the existing riparian woodland is desirable, and could be expanded to create a more expansive riparian woodland across the flood plain. This could be supported by the SFGS, which has attractive grant assistance for the establishment of riparian woodland. These proposals could also form part of a wider flood plain management initiative, which could include more extensive wetland management with support provided for farmers under the RSS.

The area does lend itself to extensive flood plain management, which would require the cooperation of adjoining landowners, but would be supported by additional payments through the RSS.

New planting should be considered where it helps reduce the noise from the A96 and where it could be used to help screen the sewage works. Localised planting associated with industrial development, including some screening of the sewage works would largely have to be sponsored privately, perhaps led by the Council.

Additional planting, perhaps including hedges, should be considered to define and provide shelter for the cycle route, as well as reinforce its separation from the road. This would probably have to be a Council led initiative.

6.3.2 Rolling Ridges

These ridges create some containment for the town to the east and the folds in the landscape to the south east offer some opportunity for well contained development, which would appropriately be set in a wooded setting.

There are opportunities to create more shelter and extend the character of wooded knolls and upper slopes across the adjacent farmland. While this extensive woodland would be a positive feature across the upper slopes and knolls of this landscape, in the areas not associated with new development this may be difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, woodland across some of the steeper slopes and less accessible land could be supported by the SFGS and form part of a wider environmental initiative under RSS.

Some new planting would be associated with the land identified as being appropriate for new development, as the area is appropriate for less dense pattern of development, with houses located within a woodland setting. Woodland on these ridges adjacent to areas