

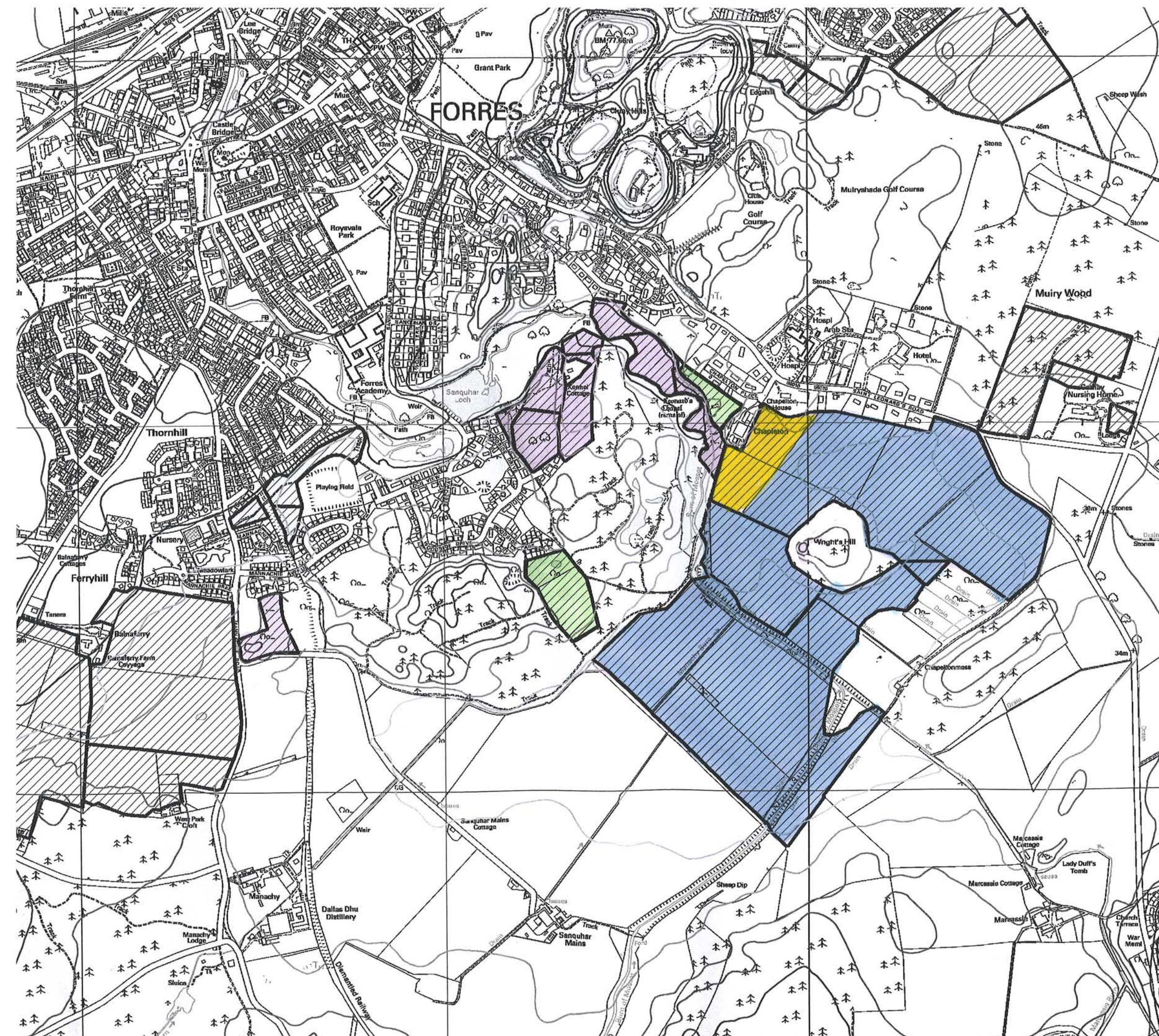
INTEGRATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT INTO
THE MORAY LANDSCAPE

Forres South 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
-  Development bids which lie within the proposed flood water storage area



8 FORRES SOUTH EAST: MITIGATION MEASURES AND ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

8.1 Forres South East: Identifying Positive and Negative Landscape Features

Sanquhar wood forms a key element of the setting of Forres. The mature woodland is managed as a community woodland, and is also well used for informal recreation. It separates the town from the level fields which extend south to a series of pronounced knolls. These fields lie within a contained and sheltered area which has been identified as a potential site for long term settlement expansion.

There is an extensive and well used access network, based around the woodland but extending out into the surrounding fields.

There were some opportunities for immediate settlement expansion identified in this area, within the woodland. It was recommended that most of the woodland be retained free from development, with much of it providing an undeveloped link between the existing town and new development to the south.

8.1.1 Existing Positive Characteristics and Features

- extensive mature Scots pine woodland, much of it located on higher ground, where it reinforces enclosure
- extensive access routes through the woodland and adjacent farmland
- Dallas Dhu distillery which is an attractive arrangement of buildings on the edge of the fields

8.1.2 Existing Negative Characteristics and Features

- Occasional neglected area of land, including the redundant railway and Wright's Hill which has been felled and not replanted

8.2 Landscape Change

The key pressures for change relate to modest development opportunities and the economics of the agricultural and forestry sectors. The area is considered appropriate for long term settlement expansion in landscape terms but this would require considerable masterplanning.

8.2.1 Features and Characteristics in Decline

- Mature trees, which are being managed and replaced within the larger areas of woodland are sometimes not being replaced elsewhere

8.2.2 Features and Characteristics in Ascendance

- Well managed path network
- Regeneration of trees and scrub along the railway line and a few small areas of unmanaged land.

Landscape Enhancement Opportunities



Approach to the town from Rafford in the south



- Footpath and access along the disused railway track



- Dallas Dhu distillery and the fields which contribute to its setting



- Low but pronounced hills which could be the focus for planting and open space

8.3 Forres South East: Opportunities and Objectives for Enhancement

8.3.1 Prominent Hills

These hills are already being managed to maintain their wooded character, and contain a network of well established paths. The long term objective should be to create a diverse woodland, preferably managed as continuous cover, with a variety of ages and species. Scots pine and beech dominate the forest trees, and both contribute to a sense of presence within the woodland. The management of all elements of the woodland, including the recreational facilities is likely to be supported under the existing SFGS.

New development should aim to establish and maintain this wooded character, by ensuring that similar species are planted within the development, so that it appears to grow out of the woodland. This approach would have to be secured through planning permission.

8.3.2 Level fields with Knolls

This area has been recommended for consideration for the long term expansion of Forres. Largely self contained in landscape terms, connections with the town would need to be enhanced by building on existing access routes and perhaps establishing a cycle route along the old railway.

While many of the existing landscape features can be used to contribute to the setting of a new neighbourhood, there are additional opportunities for enhancement. These include potential large scale wetland areas associated with the flood prevention initiative and increased planting on higher ridges to extend the sense of containment. Increased woodland would allow new development to be located within a wooded setting, with areas of less dense development ensuring that this character prevails.

Care should also be taken to maintain a generous open setting for the distillery, which is a key built element of the existing landscape.

While many of these proposals may not be established unless they are part of a master plan, the proposals which relate to wetland and flood management could be implemented in advance, with future recreation use in mind. This might include extensive riparian woodland but is also likely to include open water systems and wetland habitat.