

INTEGRATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT INTO
THE MORAY LANDSCAPE


Elgin East
DEVELOPMENT SITE RECOMMENDATIONS

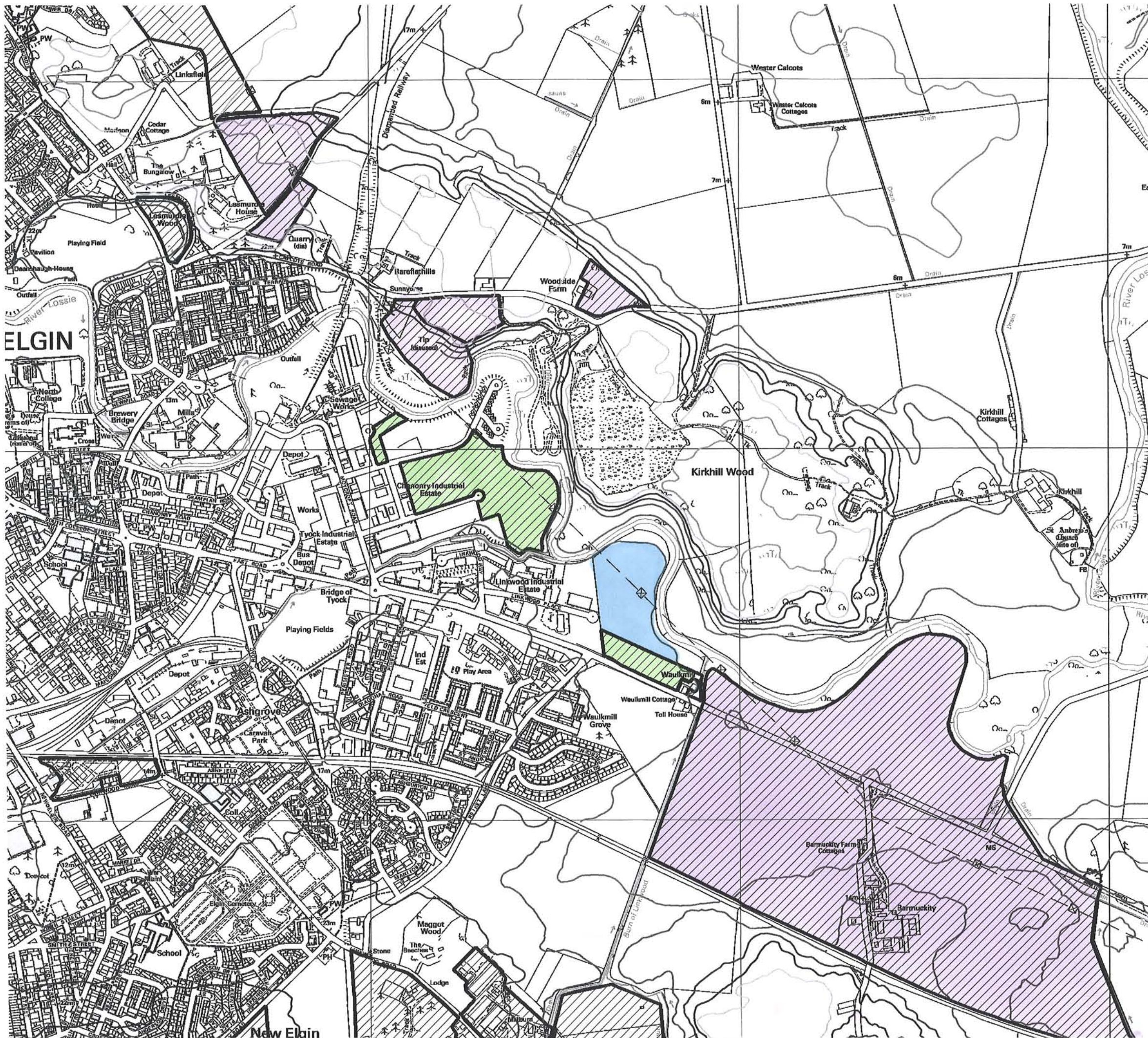
Scale 1:10 000

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

-  Additional land, not subject to a development bid, which has been identified as appropriate for immediate development in landscape terms



8 ELGIN EAST: MITIGATION MEASURES AND ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

8.1 Elgin East: Identifying Positive and Negative Landscape Features

This area of diverse character is dominated by the elevated plateau and steep slopes to the north of the River Lossie. This old tip site is partially wooded, with some fine stands of mature Scots pine. Elsewhere, other than the trees associated with watercourses and buildings, there are few existing landscape features across the low lying farmland, with no hedges and field trees to define the field pattern. The redundant railway viaduct over the river is a prominent built feature at the edge of the town

The most potential is associated with the River, which is wide and meandering but surrounded on all sides by unmanaged grassland and overgrown vegetation. Much of this area, beyond the well cultivated agricultural fields, has an uncared for appearance.

There were some opportunities for immediate settlement expansion identified in this area, particularly associated with the expansion of the industrial site adjacent to the river. Expanding development to the immediate east of the town offers opportunities to enhance the sense of arrival and approach, which is currently cluttered and fragmented by the industrial estate.

8.1.1 Existing Positive Characteristics and Features

- the mature Scots pine woodland of Kirkhill, which while used recreationally as a car and motorbike rally course, is also a positive contribution to the setting of the town more widely
- the wide meanders of the River, which although rather lost in the fragmentation and neglect of the flood plain nevertheless are emphasised by the partially wooded banks
- other, less prominent water courses also have some trees and vegetation along their banks
- the mature Scots pine woodland at Waulkmill Grove

8.1.2 Existing Negative Characteristics and Features

- the overhead power lines
- the unmanaged grassland adjacent to the town between the River Lossie and the tip site
- noise from the A96
- the fragmentation and clutter associated with the industrial sites on either side of the A96, which create a poor impression on arrival to Elgin from the east

8.2 Landscape Change

The key pressures for change relate to development opportunities and the economics of the agricultural and forestry sectors. A creative approach to new development on the edge of town could provide opportunities to enhance the sense of arrival from the east.

8.2.1 Features and Characteristics in Decline

- Mature trees, in particular along watercourses, have a limited life span and are not easy to replace

8.2.2 Features and Characteristics in Ascendance

- Regeneration of trees and scrub (particularly whin) across the modified land forms associated with the disused railway, tip and quarry
- The widespread neglect of grassland along the less accessible river flood plains, particularly adjacent to the industrial sites
- Noise and traffic movement along the A96 is likely to be on the increase
- Industrial development, possibly associated with the proposals to create an industrial/business use park south of the A96 and west of Barmuckity

Landscape Enhancement Opportunities



- Desire line across land allocated for development indicates need for accessible informal recreation



- Overgrown grassland associated with the tip and River Lossie



- Watercourses are the focus of informal play



- Regeneration of scrub and woodland across the tip could be supplemented with planting



- Access to the River Lossie is limited



- Industrial estate at the edge of the town on approach from the east

8.3 Elgin East: Opportunities and Objectives for Enhancement

8.3.1 Elevated Plateau

This area contributes to the setting and back drop of Elgin due to its steep, elevated slopes which are visible over a wide area and provide a robust settlement edge to the town. The existing Scots pine woodland at Kirkhill is a notable feature which provides a positive contribution, but the disused tip and quarry largely offer opportunities for further enhancement.

Long term management of the existing woodland is desirable, although this may be complicated by the use of Kirkhill for motor sports. Opportunities for extending planting along the steeper slopes, with forest scale trees to supplement the regenerating birch, would enhance the setting of the town.

In all areas, new planting should build on existing regeneration, focussing on supplementing the existing trees with species such as Scots pine, oak and other large headed broadleaved trees as appropriate. The current SFGS promotes woodlands around towns which would be an appropriate initiative for this type of planting.

The main objective for this area is to reinforce its role as a wooded and well defined setting for the north east corner of the town.

8.3.2 Lossie Meanders

This area focuses on the banks and level fields immediately adjacent to the river, and is characterised by largely unmanaged grassland, although the river itself is emphasised by mature willow and other broadleaved trees.

Key opportunities relate to creating a more positive and cared for character in this area. This does not necessarily mean over zealous 'tidying' up, but the river offers recreational opportunities and could be the focus for more generous riparian woodland to stabilise riverbanks and enhance flood plain habitat. Removal of giant hogweed should also be undertaken.

Creating a more positive setting for the river is likely to involve an extension of the riparian woodland across level land either side of the river, which would also help bank stabilisation. Current SFGS grants include a premium for riparian woodland which could be used to encourage woodland expansion, while the level site also offers the opportunity for increased recreation use, some of which could also be encouraged under SFGS grants and through core path network initiatives.