

INTEGRATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT INTO THE MORAY LANDSCAPE
Keith South West
 DEVELOPMENT SITE RECOMMENDATIONS

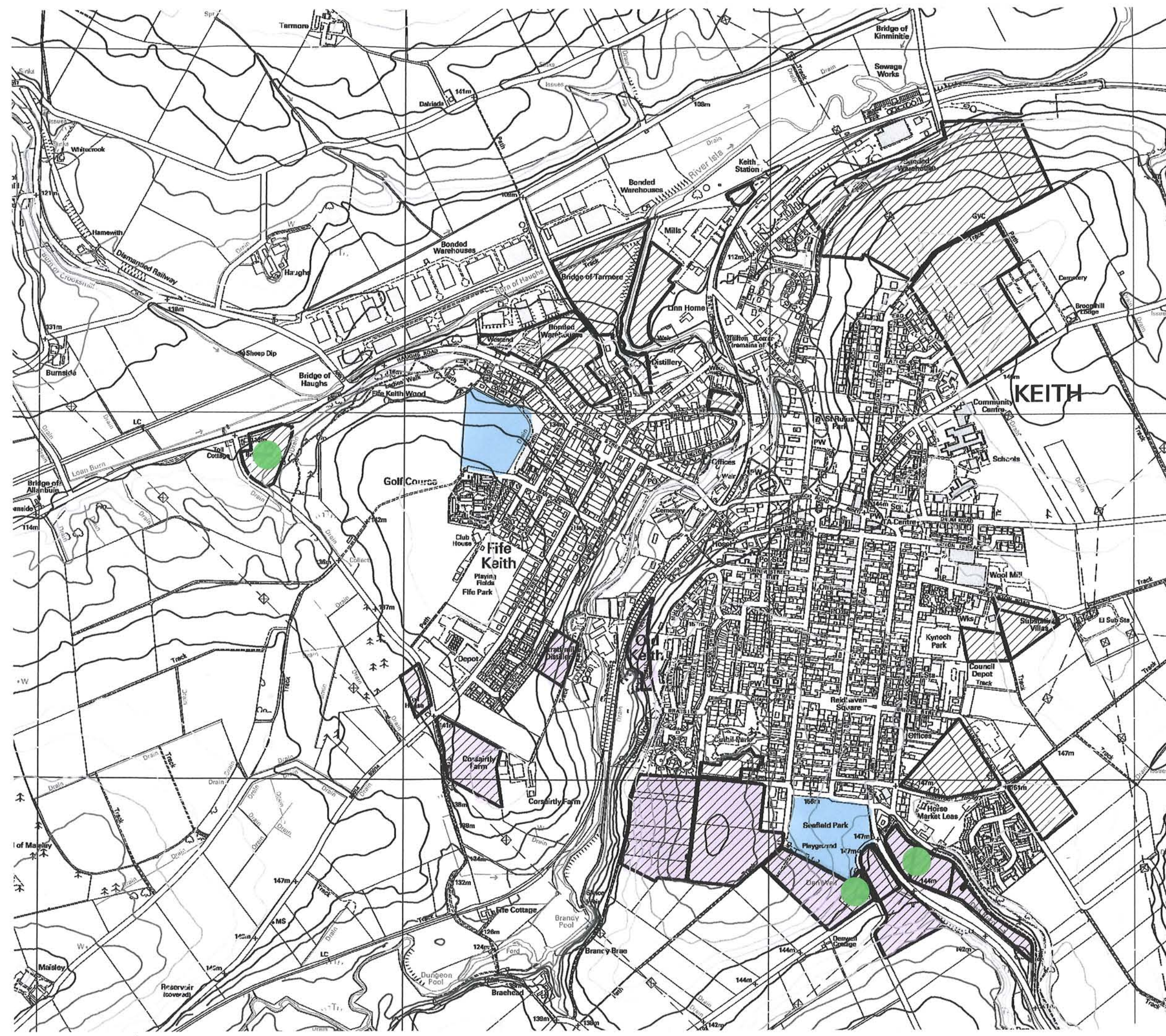
Scale 1:10 000

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 development in landscape terms
-  Potential sites for high quality business use within generous landscape grounds



8 KEITH SOUTH WEST: MITIGATION MEASURES AND ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

8.1 Keith South West: Identifying Positive and Negative Landscape Features

The steep sided ridges and pronounced river valleys which radiate out from the town create a dramatic setting for the town to the south and west. Woodland is related to the incised river valleys and trees associated with the park, golf course and some farms and other built development. There are few existing landscape features across the relatively open farmland, with no hedges and field trees to define the field pattern.

There is an extensive and well used access network, some of which has been recently upgraded by a local path management group.

There were some opportunities for immediate settlement expansion identified in this area, and potential sites for prestigious business sites which would require generous landscape works to maintain the high quality setting of the town.

8.1.1 Existing Positive Characteristics and Features

- steep sided dens extend up from the rivers, creating contained valleys often further enclosed by mature woodland
- the mature broadleaves associated with the Distillery and farms are a prominent feature
- extensive access routes across the surrounding fields and woodland link to the town
- extensive views from footpaths and the edge of the settlement across the surrounding landscape

8.1.2 Existing Negative Characteristics and Features

- the pylon line which lies to the south west of the town
- the large grain storage buildings adjacent to the B9014 dominate the sense of arrival from the south west
- some areas of less well managed grassland within the dens

8.2 Landscape Change

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

8.2.1 Features and Characteristics in Decline

- Mature trees, in particular adjacent to Seafield Park and associated with farms are not currently being replaced

8.2.2 Features and Characteristics in Ascendance

- Well managed path network
- Wetland associated with low lying land

Landscape Enhancement Opportunities



- Mature woodland adjacent to the Kelty Burn



- Footpath and access gates require management



- Steep slopes offer opportunity for planting along steep sided river valleys



- Riparian woodland could be associated with the watercourses



- Old hedges could be managed and enhanced



- Excellent new footpath could benefit further from increased definition, with hedge or feature trees

8.3 Keith South West: Opportunities and Objectives for Enhancement

8.3.1 River Valleys

These narrow valleys contribute positively to the character of the town, and care should be taken with any development located in or near them. Enhancement proposals should aim to manage existing woodland and expand woodland along the narrow dens, focussing on the steeper slopes.

There are opportunities for increasing the additional planting, as well as management of the existing woodland, much of which is mature. Additional planting should focus on the steeper, less accessible slopes and areas of unmanaged grassland. The focus should be on establishing Scots pine and forest broadleaves, such as beech, oak and ash, rather than small ornamental trees. The SFGS could provide support for an initiative which could link new riparian woodland to the use of the woodland by the community.

Two potential sites for prestigious office buildings were identified adjacent to the river valleys, and advance planting to reinforce the sense of gateway along the A96 would assist in integrating any such development. In addition, any new development should be within a generous wooded setting, the scale of which is indicated on the proposals map. Additional planting associated with the potential for new development sites should be established in advance at least in part, with supplementary landscape works required as part of the planning permission.

8.3.2 Convex Ridge

The key opportunities for enhancement of this prominent ridge relate to planting associated with the settlement edges and to provide shelter on the exposed upper slopes.

The footpath network is well established, but at times exposed. Hedges or the occasional single tree would help define the route of the path and create long term landscape features. In addition, there are opportunities for wetland management along the valley floors and increased riparian woodland associated with the burns which surround the ridge.

Enhancement proposals should aim to building the network of footpaths, perhaps by planting single trees at key points as part of environmental enhancement through the RSS. This scheme could also support the management of wetland and pond creation along low lying land, as well as management of permanent grassland to enhance biodiversity interests.

8.3.3 Domed Ridges

These domed ridges frame the approach to Keith on arrival from Dufftown. The farmland is relatively featureless, and the key elements of the landscape are areas of low lying wetland and mature trees associated with the farms and the golf course.