

10 ANNEX ONE: THE PROJECT BRIEF

Moray Development Plan Integration of Proposed New Developments into the Landscape

Invitation to Tender

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Tenders are invited from professional suitably qualified consultants with relevant experience to assess the integration of proposed new developments in Moray's 5 main towns into the landscape.
- 1.2 The Moray Council is currently reviewing the Moray Development Plan and proposes to consult on a draft Local Plan in May 2005 with a view to having a new approved Local Plan by April 2007.
- 1.3 The Council have identified proposed development sites for inclusion within the draft Local Plan and in some locations have identified alternative options.
- 1.4 The total value of Phase 1 of the Project is in the region of £15,000 to £20,000 exclusive of vat. Phase 1 will assess the landscape impact and enhancement opportunities for development sites to be considered for the draft Development Plan. Phase 2 will be a follow up study subject to a separate tender process, which will assess sites for inclusion in the finalised version of the Development Plan.
- 1.5 The deadline for receipt of tenders is 8 December 2004 with anticipated Project start on 16 December 2004, submission of Interim Report on 28 January 2005 and submission of Final Report on 28 February 2005.
- 1.6 A shortlist of no more than three consultants will be invited to interview, if deemed necessary. The shortlist will be prepared on the basis of relevance, breadth and depth of experience, budget tender, timescales and proposed methodology.
- 1.7 It is anticipated that interviews will take place during the week beginning 6 December 2004.
- 1.8 The award of contract for this Project will not necessarily be on the basis of the lowest tender but to the Consultant who makes the best proposal based on the criteria in paragraph 1.6 and performance at the interview.

2 Purpose and Objectives

- 2.1 The purpose of this study is to identify the potential to integrate new development and enhance the landscape in and around the 5 main towns in Moray as part of the Local Plan Review.
- 2.2 The 5 main towns are;
 - Elgin
 - Lossiemouth
 - Buckie
 - Keith
 - Forres

- 2.3 The study objective is to evaluate the potential for landscape enhancement of each of the 5 main towns and to advise on integrating proposed new developments into the landscape. Specifically the study will;
- Identify features that are important to the setting of the 5 main towns in landscape/amenity terms
 - Identify any potential effects of the proposed development sites on the identified landscape features
 - Identify opportunities for landscape enhancement and mitigation in and around new site allocations and town 'gateways'. Identify new opportunities for woodlands in and around towns, enhancement of riparian corridors, increase greenspace, access/recreational corridors, wildlife areas. The study should also identify opportunities for site boundary treatments such as hedgerows, stone dykes and tree avenues.

11 ANNEX TWO: METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this report for undertaking the assessment of development bids and identifying landscape enhancement proposals is outlined in detail below. It is divided into three subsections, reflecting the arrangement of presentation

11.1 Survey and Analysis of Strategic Context

The first stage in this process requires survey work undertaken to ensure a thorough understanding of the settlement as a whole and its relationship with the surrounding landscape. The survey and analysis work is presented in four subsections with accompanying maps at 1:25 000 scale. The four subsections are explained in more detail below.

11.1.1 The Existing Settlement

In this assessment, the term 'settlement form' is used to describe the form and character of an individual settlement. The survey work includes an analysis of:

- any distinct relationship between the settlement location and form with topographical and other landscape features
- the character of the settlement, including its scale and the contribution made to character by existing buildings and townscape
- the relationship between built up areas, open space, general road alignment and landscape features which contribute to the existing internal pattern of the settlement

Analysing these issues can be used to inform how a settlement can expand while retaining or enhancing the existing settlement form, which contributes to its existing sense of identity. Analysing settlement form can also be used to consider the consequences of expansion on the existing settlement form.

11.1.2 The Settlement Edge

The settlement edge is the line where the built up area meets the wider landscape setting. In many areas, this is likely to be well defined, but sometimes the scattered pattern of outlying and unrelated buildings or neglected farm land blurs the distinction, creating a fragmented edge. The most coherent edges are those where the buildings have a strong relationship to topographical or vegetation features, reinforcing a sense of containment and clearly articulating the relationship between the settlement and its setting. The survey work includes an analysis of:

- the range of ways in which the settlement and the landscape interrelate
- the robustness of the existing definition of the settlement edge
- the degree of cohesiveness, or alternatively, fragmentation of settlement form, at the settlement edges

- the experience of the existing approaches to the town by road, including identifying where the existing sense of arrival is appreciated, and where there might be other opportunities to define this

Analysing these issues can be used to identify where the existing settlement edge emphasises the landscape setting and character of the settlement, and where a well defined edge enhances a strong sense of arrival. Alternatively, the analysis helps identify where a new settlement edge might contribute to the sense of arrival or enhance the relationship between a settlement and its setting.

11.1.3 The Landscape Setting

In this assessment the term 'landscape setting' recognises that the landscape adjacent to a settlement is used both as a physical and visual resource by those who live in the settlement. The term is used primarily to describe the visual interrelationship between the landscape and the settlement, but in this study also refers to physical resources, such as recreational facilities and areas of historic and ecological interest, all of which contribute to the experience of the landscape and quality of the settlement setting. The survey work includes an analysis of:

- the relative visibility of areas of landscape from specific locations within the town, which contribute to the sense of scale and relative compactness of the settlement
- the contribution made by areas of scenic, historic, ecological or recreational significance to the character and experience of the landscape within the visual envelope of the settlement
- the integrity of the landscape character and scenic quality of the landscape within the visual envelope of the settlement

11.1.4 Landscape Character and Strategic Visual Assessment

For the purposes of this study, landscape character assessment was used to identify areas of consistent landscape character type at a scale appropriate for the more detailed assessments. These areas are called 'study areas' and are the geographic basis for the more detailed assessments undertaken and presented at a 1:10 000 scale within this report. To assist in identifying these areas, the survey included an analysis of:

- aspects of geology, topography, vegetation pattern, land use and settlement pattern which contribute to the landscape character of the setting of the settlement
- the degree of cohesiveness, or alternatively, fragmentation of landscape character and scenic quality

Other landscape characteristics and features were also identified and used to inform the ability of a landscape to accommodate development. This survey therefore also included an analysis of:

- those factors which are most likely to be positive attributes for future development, such as south facing slopes, good views and strong physical links with the existing settlement
- elements of the landscape which are likely to assist in designing developments which have a strong sense of place, such as river crossings or mature trees
- elements which could be used to define, strengthen or contribute to new settlement boundaries, or which would enhance the sense of arrival when approaching new development
- built structures, such as fast roads and industrial estates, which could potentially act as a physical barrier between new development and the existing settlement
- landscape features which currently make an important contribution either to the setting of the settlement, or to the wider scenic quality of Moray and which might be adversely affected by development
- areas which are physically, visually and perceptually detached, or 'unconnected' from the main fabric of the existing settlement. This is a fine judgement, usually involving an assessment of orientation, perceived distance and subtle changes in landscape character as well as visual and physical connections with the existing settlement.

Visibility, in terms of prominence and intervisibility as well as the contribution made to the landscape by the visual relationship between landscape features, is assessed as part of this capacity study. It is integral to the assessments carried out above. However, the object of the study is not to identify locations where new development would be hidden from view. Instead, the assessment of visibility is used to identify visual relationships between new development and existing settlement form or landscape features. It is also used to identify key views which have an important scenic contribution to the appreciation of the landscape, the settlement itself, or its setting. The survey work therefore includes an analysis of:

- key views from within the settlement which might be affected by development
- key views to the settlement which might be affected by development
- areas of the landscape setting which contribute to views out of the settlement and views which emphasise the relationship between the settlement and its setting

- key visual features adjacent or areas of scenic quality adjacent to the settlement, which contribute to views and landscape quality more widely within Moray

11.1.5 Presentation

For the purposes of this report, survey and analysis at this strategic level was undertaken at 1: 25 000 scale.

11.2 Assessing the Development Bids in each Study Area

The strategic assessment of landscape character was used to identify appropriate 'study areas' within which detailed assessment was undertaken.

11.2.1 Survey and Analysis of Detailed Study Areas

Each study area was often further broken down into locally distinctive character areas. For each of these, more detailed site survey work was undertaken and analysed. This survey work built on the findings of the strategic assessment and often incorporated a more detailed analysis of the issues identified at a strategic level.

Table One, on the next page, lists the issues which were considered during the detailed analysis of the study areas. It was used as the on site checklist.

11.2.2 Presentation

For the purposes of this report, survey and analysis of the individual study areas was undertaken and presented at 1: 10 000 scale area based surveys. This Survey and Analysis stage is presented in map form with supporting text.

Table One: Site Checklist of Landscape and Visual Issues

Topic	Issues explored on site visit
Existing Settlement	<p>Scale and form of existing settlement</p> <p>Relationship to wider landscape including landform</p> <p>Key characteristics of townscape</p> <p>Internal settlement pattern, open spaces, road alignment etc</p> <p>Key buildings within settlement</p>
Settlement Edge	<p>General relationship with land form and landscape features</p> <p>Detailed relationship with landscape features</p> <p>Cohesiveness of settlement edge</p> <p>Physical links (footpaths, dens, treelines)</p> <p>Visual links</p> <p>Alternative opportunities for settlement edge</p>
Landscape Setting	<p>Extent of visual envelope</p> <p>Important containing ridges</p> <p>Areas of historic, scenic, ecological or recreational significance</p> <p>Integrity of landscape character/scenic quality</p> <p>Sense of arrival (current and potential)</p>
Landscape Character	<p>Description of character</p> <p>Boundaries between coherent character areas</p> <p>Containing ridges, south facing slopes, views, links with settlement, physical barriers</p> <p>Orientation, aspect, relationship with settlement core</p> <p>Key landscape features</p> <p>Landscape experience and degree of connectedness/detachment</p> <p>Scenic quality</p>
Visual Assessment	<p>Significant views from within the settlement</p> <p>Significant views to the settlement, or across the settlement</p> <p>Visual features, skylines, areas of landscape which contribute to wider views within Moray</p>

11.2.3 Assessment of Potential Impacts within Detailed Study Areas

The analysis leads to an assessment of the potential impacts of development on those aspects of the landscape and visual character which are likely to be most affected by settlement expansion. These aspects were called 'attributes' in this study and were identified as:

- Landscape Character, which includes the key characteristics of the surrounding landscape, and elements within the landscape which particularly contribute to the location and identity of the town.
- Settlement Form, which may be linear or compact, fragmented or a series of merged villages which now make up one settlement : the form can influence the character of the settlement and offer a pattern for future expansion
- Landscape Setting, which encompasses both physical setting and visual backdrop, and in this study includes assessment of the recreational and other resources which may be pertinent to how residents of the town use the settlement surroundings
- Sense of Arrival, which is the point on the approach roads where there sense of having arrived at a destination becomes most apparent, and often influences people's first impressions of a settlement
- Settlement Edge, which relates to settlement form, setting and sense of arrival, but particularly focuses on the specific interface between the built up area and the surrounding landscape
- Views and Visual Features, which includes considering the views from the town, as well as those from the surrounding landscape

Some of these attributes relate to physical character, and some to the experience of the landscape or townscape. The potential impacts were assessed in terms of 'positive', 'neutral' and 'negative' impact. 'Positive' impacts are where development will enhance the key attribute and 'negative' impacts are those which will detract from the existing positive experience of an attribute. 'Neutral' impacts will either not materially affect the appreciation of an existing attribute, or will replace the existing attribute with one of a similar character or experience.

These attributes were assessed as part of the analysis stage and contributed to the identification of opportunities and constraints for development. In the report they are presented in table form, one for each of the 1: 10 000 scale study areas included in this report.

11.2.4 Identifying Opportunities and Constraints within Detailed Study Areas

For the purposes of this study, the opportunities and constraints for settlement expansion within each study area are identified and refined as a result of the analysis of potential impacts.

In all cases, the emphasis was initially to identify sites which complemented the existing character of the settlement and its landscape setting while providing an attractive framework for future residential development.

However, the assessment also recognised that some areas were not appropriate for development which would fit within the existing settlement form and character, but may be appropriate for the creation of a new neighbourhood with suitable advance master planning. These areas were normally those which, while perceptually or physically detached from the existing settlement, nevertheless had potential in terms of their local landscape character, to accommodate settlement expansion. Such sites are likely to require advance master planning to create a landscape framework which gives an independent focus and coherence to the new neighbourhood. These sites are identified in the report as 'Long Term Options', recognising the need for advance planning which such sites are likely to require.

11.2.4.1. *Identifying Opportunities for Development*

For the purposes of this assessment the following landscape characteristics were generally identified as positive opportunities for siting new development adjacent to the settlements:

- areas where development would enhance or build on the existing relationship between the location of a settlement and a particular landform or landscape feature
- areas where it is possible to reinforce or create a strong sense of arrival by the expansion of a settlement: 'sense of arrival' can be created by a change in gradient (usually dropping down hill into a settlement), the appearance of an expansive view of the town on approach, or the way landform and vegetation combine to create a sense of a 'gateway'
- areas where there was potential to consolidate the edge of an existing settlement, by extending it to relate to a nearby landscape feature or landform which reinforces a sense of containment or definition of 'edge' characteristic of the settlement
- areas where development would be consistent with maintaining the form of many of the existing settlements, and its relationship with the landform and landscape character within which it is located
- minor road junctions, established footpaths or river crossings which create both visual and social focal points in the landscape and can provide a focus for a new neighbourhood within the settlement

- areas of concave land form, particularly on south facing slopes, which create natural containment and often quite subtle shelter
- areas where new development would not be perceptually detached from the existing settlement, but instead would be visually and physically accessible to the existing settlement and could share a common relationship with the setting and a consistency in settlement form

11.2.4.2. *Identifying Constraints on Development*

In addition to opportunities, some characteristics of both the landscape and the settlements are likely to be constraints in relation to siting new development. These include:

- areas which are physically separated from the existing settlements by natural or manmade barriers, such as rivers and roads
- areas where development would significantly alter the scale and form of an existing settlement, or its distinctive relationship with a particular landform or setting
- areas which are perceptually detached from the settlement. Perceptual detachment is encountered where land is orientated away from the settlement and usually visually and physically linked more strongly to an area of landscape character which is quite separate to those with which the settlement is associated. Such areas are never likely to 'feel' an integral part of the original settlement, although some may be appropriate for suburban, 'edge of settlement' living.
- areas where there are no landscape features which would provide the immediate setting and localised sense of place for a new neighbourhood. If appropriate, in some areas, landscape enhancement measures are identified to establish a structure which will provide a setting for future development.
- slopes which are both physically and visually highly exposed, except where they reflect a strong characteristic of the existing settlement form
- areas of very steep slopes where extensive earthworks would be required to create visually intrusive building platforms and access roads
- areas where views from roads, footpaths, public open space, historic features or views which contribute to the local setting of the settlement would be obscured by development or would affect people's appreciation of scenic quality
- areas where the existing land use, land form or vegetation pattern contributes significantly to a high quality existing landscape setting for the town and would be removed or significantly compromised by development

- landscapes which contribute to the broader scenic quality of Moray, and which would be removed or significantly compromised by development

In the report the Opportunities and Constraints are analysed for each 1: 10 000 study area and are presented in map form with supporting annotations and text.

11.2.5 Development Site Recommendations within Detailed Study Areas

The final stage in this process considers the potential of the individual bid sites lodged with the Council. An assessment of each bid site, taking into account the landscape opportunities and constraints identified in each study area is undertaken. Sites not already identified by developers are also considered.

The outcome of the assessment process is presented as recommendations for each 1: 10 000 study area. The sites are allocated a category which relates to the appropriateness of the site in relation to landscape criteria, and also takes into account those which might be appropriate for development in the future and after some landscape framework measures have been put in place. The categories are:

- Those areas that are capable of accommodating significant development in the near future, without adversely affecting the key landscape characteristics and visual qualities of the settlement and its setting
- Those areas that are capable of accommodating some development at a later stage, provided that landscape mitigation work and masterplanning is undertaken in advance of development
- Those areas where development is inappropriate because of its potential impact on the landscape character, scenic quality or visual attributes of the settlement and its setting.

The proposals are presented in map form, supported by explanatory text where appropriate.

11.3 Mitigation Measures and Enhancement Proposals

11.3.1 Identifying Positive and Negative Landscape Features

The survey stage includes an assessment of landscape characteristics and features which contributed positively or negatively to the quality of the landscape around each settlement. This assessment is required to identify where there is scope for enhancement, which generally implies creating more of the positive characteristics and trying to reduce the number of negative features.

This process uses the application of professional judgement, both to identify the characteristics and to assess their contribution to the landscape.

11.3.2 Landscape Change

Landscapes are constantly changing, but it is possible to distinguish between landscapes which are generally stable in character, and those which are in transition between one type of character, often between a land use which was previously economically buoyant, and another, new character driven by new economic or development needs.

As a result of change, elements in the landscape can be perceived as being in decline. These elements might be functionally redundant, such as hedgerows in cereal farmland, which are subsequently no longer managed. Elements might also be in decline because of additional pressures, such as increased development on neighbouring land or agricultural economics, which results in less viable land holdings and a sudden change in land use to a more intensive or more lucrative business, such as horticulture or livery stables. These new land uses require different infrastructures, and the previous landscape elements again become functionally redundant.

There are also elements in a landscape which can be perceived as being ascendant. There is a real danger that such features are often seen as negative, when they are simply an indication that the landscape is changing character to reflect new functional priorities. Examples include the change from unmanaged hawthorn hedges into rows of small hawthorn trees, new planting associated with new development, and the infrastructure associated with informal recreation use.

In the study, such changes are identified and are presented in text form.

11.3.3 Opportunities and Objectives for Enhancement

The survey and analysis informs the opportunities and the objectives for enhancement, which are presented in descriptive text and accompanied by annotated photographs which illustrate the type of opportunities which have been identified.

11.3.4 Enhancement Proposals

The purpose of landscape enhancement measures is to propose a framework for the landscape around the identified settlements which combines distinctive features of the existing landscape character with new features and characteristics which take into account landscape change. It is a particular requirement of this study that proposals should consider how best to accommodate new development and the future expansion of the settlements, and to create a positive sense of arrival for the individual towns. Proposals in this report have therefore been made with the following considerations in mind:

- the recommendations related to settlement expansion set out in the assessment of development bids
- the character of the existing landscape framework adjacent to the edge of the settlements
- the degree of landscape change, and how those changes are being promoted, around the settlements
- opportunities for enhancement which might relate to land and structures owned or managed by the council or other public bodies

The findings of the study are then presented in map form, showing the proposals, with an accompanying text which indicates the type of incentive or initiative which might be appropriate to encourage the proposed changes. Incentives and initiatives considered for the purposes of this report are outlined in more detail in Annex Four.

The proposals are accompanied by panoramic photographs of the existing landscape and panoramic sketches showing the proposed changes for reference, and include the recommendations of the development bid assessment.

In some areas, there were opportunities for far more radical change than in others. Generally, most opportunities for change were associated with areas where there are likely to be options for potential development under consideration, or where the local authority could take a lead in developing a new strategy for an area.

The areas perceived as being least likely candidates for new enhancement measures were those where there was evidence of a very stable character – often associated with estate management, long managed policy or commercial woodland and areas where there was evidence of well cultivated and apparently viable farming regime. Even in these areas, measures were however proposed, as the generally unpredictable nature of the current agricultural sector might mean that such areas will undergo change very rapidly in the future.

11.4 Conclusions and Long Term Strategic Options for the Settlement as a Whole

Finally, at the end of each report, the findings of all the individual study areas are brought together on one map at 1: 25 000 scale, to illustrate how the recommendations interact across the whole settlement. The conclusions summarise the findings of the detailed assessments, and also outline any long term options for settlement expansion identified during the study.

12 ANNEX THREE: EXTRACT FROM THE MORAY AND NAIRN LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Upland Farmland

Rural Development

The landscape has a dispersed pattern of settlement of small farms with few clustered settlements. The dispersed nature of existing settlement is reduced as newer buildings are often placed in close proximity along the roadside. The size and shape of recent housing is often quite different to the older traditional buildings, as is the use of modern materials in their construction, which contrasts with the naturally weathered stone.

New housing development in the countryside should be sensitively located away from prominent ridges and hills and where it *is* placed next to the roadside, it should be in close proximity to existing trees and woodland, which would help tie the building to the landscape. Where derelict or abandoned buildings can be reused, this should be encouraged through design guidance, as outlined in the Moray Local Plan - 'Housing in the countryside' (Moray District Council, 1993), and through the targeting of financial incentives.

13 ANNEX FOUR: CURRENT LAND MANAGEMENT INCENTIVES AND INITIATIVES

Enhancement proposals have to be considered within the context of changes likely to occur in the landscape more generally, many of which will not be controlled or managed through the planning system. Therefore take into account change brought about by land use more generally. Major landscape change can be brought about through:

- changes in land management, which are in turn influenced by the stability of economics and productivity, the accessibility of markets and financial incentives for non agricultural land use alternatives available to the farming and landowning communities
- changes in land use, primarily through development, which is also influenced by economics, but can be more proactively managed through the planning system

Changes in land management are the most difficult to predict. The economic stability of both agriculture and forestry is currently uncertain, and in addition, decisions which affect land made by an individual land owner may relate as much to the economic success of enterprises which lie outwith the main agricultural enterprise. Proposals in this report have therefore been made with the following considerations in mind:

- the rather uncertain outlook for Scottish farming, although the single payment scheme has just been launched, it is still difficult to predict the fall out from this new support mechanism, and the fact that it is being gradually withdrawn over the next ten years.
- the incentives available through the Rural Stewardship Scheme² and the Single Payment Scheme and the Land Management Contracts³
- the incentives available through the 2003 Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme⁴ (updated in 2005), which in Moray is supplemented by incentives available through additional Locational Premium payments
- the designation of Moray as a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone⁵
- the recent initiative to encourage the establishment of 'core path networks' as part of the access strategy linked to the recent legislation on Land Reform⁶

These initiatives are outlined in more detail below.

² Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department, 'Rural Stewardship Scheme Explanatory Booklet', 2001

³ Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department, 'Land Management Contracts, The LMC Menu Scheme', 2005

⁴ Scottish Executive and Forestry Commission, 'Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme' Applicants Booklet, January 2003

⁵ Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department, 'Guidelines for Farmers in Nitrate Vulnerable Zones', 2003

⁶ Scottish Executive, 'Draft Scottish Access Code', 23 July 2003, copy accessed from the internet.

13.1 Single Farm Payment Scheme

The single farm payment scheme includes a requirement to undertake basic environmental requirements under the cross compliance conditions of the scheme. This is in effect a 'Tier One' level of environmental management. The measures focus on soil management and animal welfare measures, but also require farmers to not damage or remove landscape features including drystone dykes, hedges and hedgerow trees. There is no requirement to create new features.

13.2 Land Management Contracts

While the Single Farm Payment Scheme secures a minimum level of environmental management, the Land Management Contracts (LMCs) will offer a further two tiers of environmental measures. Only the 'Tier Two' scheme has been released, and the measures include some which are similar to the current Rural Stewardship Scheme. In time, a 'Tier Three' scheme will also be issued, which will probably take over from the Rural Stewardship Scheme in due course.

'Tier Two' LMCs include payments related to the management of hedgerows and dykes, the management of rush pasture, retention of winter stubble and sowing of wild bird seed mixture. In addition, the scheme offers assistance for improving access and for some aspects of woodland management.

13.3 Rural Stewardship Scheme

This scheme 'provides assistance to encourage farmers...to undertake positive conservation measures and capital works in association with conservation management'⁷. The scheme requires a 'whole farm' audit, and a plan to be implemented over a five year period. Examples of measures which are supported and are relevant to the Moray landscape include:

- management of mown grassland for birds
- management of open grazed grassland for birds
- management of wet grassland for waders
- creation and management of species rich grassland
- management of wetlands, water margins, floodplains
- management of grass margin or beetlebank in arable fields
- management of conservation headlands
- management of hedgerows and extended hedgerows
- management of scrub

⁷ Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department, 'Scottish Agriculture: A Guide to Grants and Services', June 2002

- management of native or semi natural woodland
- management of archaeological site
- creation of a pond
- planting or replanting a hedge
- building or restoring walls
- erection of post and rail fencing to protect parkland trees in designed landscapes
- restoration of gate piers or ha has in designed landscapes
- amenity tree planting in designed landscapes

13.4 Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme

Introduced in June 2003, the SFGS aims to 'encourage the creation and management of woods and forests to provide economic, environmental and social benefits now and in the future'.⁸ Grants are available for the following new woodland types:

- establishing well designed productive woodland
- extending areas of native woodland, with a particular emphasis on the development of habitat networks
- improving riparian habitat
- improving the quality and setting of urban or post industrial areas
- improving the diversity of the farmed landscape

In addition, there are a series of stewardship grants which aim to encourage the continued management of woodlands to meet a wide variety of objectives, including improving landscape impact, providing recreation opportunities and enhancing biodiversity.

13.5 Grampian Forest Locational Premium⁹

There is also a Locational Premium which operates in Grampian, and provides additional payments, for the following types of woodland:

- Riparian and flood plain woodland
- Well designed productive conifer or broadleaved woodland
- Expansion of native woodland
- Establishing urban and urban fringe woodlands
- Establishing shelterbelts and roundels

⁸ Forestry Commission, Scottish Executive, 'Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme: Applicants Booklet', January 2003

⁹ Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry Grants scheme, 'Grampian Forest Locational Premium 2005 – 2006', April 2005

13.6 Farmland Premium

The Farmland Premium Scheme replaces the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme, and provides annual payments to farmers as compensation for income lost from the land which has been removed from agriculture and planted with trees. It runs in conjunction with the SFGS and the Locational Premium.

13.7 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones

All the settlements with the exception of Keith lie within a nitrate vulnerable zone, requiring farmers to manage the land to reduce the likelihood of nitrate runoff into watercourses. Most of these management requirements do not have a visual or landscape character consequence, however, the presence of a nitrate vulnerable zone may encourage the creation of more extensive areas of wetland management and riparian woodland establishment.

13.8 Core Path Networks

Local Authorities are likely to be expected to establish 'core path networks', which is expected to include 'all those paths needed to meet the needs of those living in or visiting the area for informal recreation and passage. Each local authority will need to identify the network for their area and then ensure that it is well-defined, accessible, protected and managed.'¹⁰

¹⁰ Scottish Executive, 'Draft Scottish Access Code', 23 July 2003, copy accessed through the internet.