

ROTHES & VILLAGE STATEMENTS

THE PLANNING BACKGROUND

Rothes has experienced only modest development in recent years. Since the Moray District Local Plan was prepared in 1993 improvements to the A941 junction, and to Seafield Square have taken place.

An outline planning application for 9 houses on site R1 was refused as it failed to include the upgrading of Spey Street as required by the previous Local Plan.

Parts of Rothes suffered extensive damage from flooding events in 1997 and 1998.

CHARACTER OF THE TOWN

With 5 distilleries and associated warehouses and its dark grains plant, Rothes presents itself as a working town with its amenity areas hidden from view. While the entrance to the town from the north is attractively tree lined, in the south, the potential impact of the Castle is lost by the appearance of the ill-drained field and harsh built-up edge of the Land Street housing on the other side of the road.

High Street and Seafield Square have been greatly improved by recent rehabilitation and landscaping works, and similar schemes would benefit New Street where buildings, hard up against the footpath, have been blackened by distillery and traffic pollution.

West of New Street/High Street Rothes' character alters greatly, with houses and distillery buildings interspersed in the wooded slopes of the Back Burn and Rothes Burn valleys. On the east side the flat valley floor accentuates the large distillery complexes and the housing appears more densely packed and exposed.

OBJECTIVES

- (i) To upgrade the overall environment of the town, especially to the east and south.
- (ii) To promote investment in new building in the town by releasing one new green field site.

POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

In addition to the site specific requirements identified below and in development briefs, all developments must meet the terms of the Implementation policies (L/IMP1-8) in Chapter 8 (relating to siting, layout and design, character impact, landscaping, drainage, environmental and traffic impact). Subject to the scale of the development having a measurable impact on local community facilities, amenities or infrastructure, funding policies L/F1 Developer Contributions and L/F2 'Commutated Payments' in Chapter 7 may also apply.

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

The Local Plan policies for business development are contained in Chapter 1 'Economic Development'.

Rothes remains restricted in available land for commercial/industrial use, despite the extensive areas of distillery operations in the town. Some of these premises may have surplus land and could readily accommodate distillery - related operations (13 designations below). The Structure Plan commits the Council to a search for an industrial estate to serve all of Speyside, up to 5 ha in extent.

Industrial Estates (L/ED2, L/ED3)

I1 North Street

The Designation of this site for industrial use is continued. The site currently has outline consent for development as a cooperage. The trees along the road frontage are protected by a Tree Preservation Order and therefore must be retained. Previously affected by a road improvement proposal, the new road line has been re-located and the site is now free to be developed. Wastewater sewers are available.

Established Business Areas (L/ED4)

I2 Back Burn

This piece of ground lies between two former railway lines and is unused rough ground at present. Although the access requires improvement, the route is in use at present, and it could serve as a lorry park, there being problems with lorries parked overnight around the town. Further investigations are required before this area could be formally designated and signposted as a lorry park.

I3 The Distilleries

These areas at Glenspey, Glenrothes, Capperdonich, Glengrant distilleries and at the dark grains plant area are reserved for the use of the distilleries, and related business uses.

I4 Reserve Land Rear of Dark Grains Plant

A field in occasional agricultural use, which is expected to remain as farmland. It may be required for distillery warehouse expansion in the longer term.

Mixed Use Business Area (L/ED5)

I5 Station Yard

This site comprises the area of the former station yard, most of which has been developed for various industrial activities over the years. Part-owned by the Moray Council, a section of the site has had consent for further advance factory units, and would be suitable for business use, the planned land use for the area being industrial/commercial, in terms of policy L/ED5. A wastewater sewer is available although some upmaking between levels may be required.

Opportunity Sites

Opportunity Sites are sites which have the potential for redevelopment for a range of possible uses. The governing local plan policy is L/ED6 in Chapter 1. Other policies may apply pending the nature of the redevelopment proposal.

OPP1 Greenfield Farm Steading

Once the plot development at Spey Street is completed, the steading will have residential use on three sides. Should for any reason the farm steading and yard no longer be required, redevelopment for housing would be most appropriate.

OPP2 Kirk Place Farm Buildings

These buildings are located in an area which would make their redevelopment for housing appropriate, if and when such an opportunity arose. Given that part of the buildings are listed, a conversion/restoration project would be the most appropriate course of action.

OPP3 New Street

This is the site of a former car showroom and could be developed for residential or commercial use.

LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

The policies for the maintenance and enhancement of the environment are found in Chapter 2 (Environment).

The principal policies for the local environment are L/ENV10 'Settlement Boundaries' and L/ENV18 'Public Amenity and Open Spaces' in Chapter 2, and L/IMP1 'Development in Built Up Areas' in Chapter 8.

Under the terms of policy L/ENV18 (Public Amenity and Open Spaces) a number of spaces have been identified which contribute to the environment and amenity of the town. The purpose of policy L/ENV18 is to protect the integrity of these spaces from inappropriate development and to ensure that their contribution to the amenity of the built up area is not compromised.

ENV1 Former Railway Line

The route of the former railway line running south between Spey Drive and Land Street. Previous suggestions that this be considered as a spur route to the Speyside Way have not been supported by Scottish Natural Heritage. The site does however serve as a useful amenity as a walking route, and the Council will ensure that it remains as such, and where possible carry out repairs and maintenance. It may however be difficult to control the historical use of the line by vehicles for providing access to the rear of Land Street properties.

ENV2 Castle

The Council is owner of the ruins of Rothes Castle, and thereby has assumed responsibility for its repair and maintenance. As an extension to this obligation, the surrounding grassed areas and play park will be given appropriate treatment to ensure that this area, which serves as a superb viewpoint, remains managed as a public open space. The paths and walks through the woodland are included in this designation and a programme of replanting/underplanting of trees will be prepared. Some interpretation boards would be a useful facility.

ENV3 Public Park

Although unlikely to be under any serious threat of being lost to development, there may be pressures to extend car parking areas into the park (e.g. for adjacent coppersmiths business; in connection with Rothes FC football ground; or general park related provision). Should this be the case, then any land taken should be compensated for by the addition of an equal amount from an adjoining field. This may require a section 75 agreement to be put into effect. The Council will carry out tree planting as appropriate within the park.

ENV4 North Street

Trees fronting the I1 industrial site and the dark grains plant, are already covered by a Tree Preservation Order which prevents unauthorised lopping or felling. These trees are important in assisting the transition from country to town on the northern approach.

ENV5 Elgin Road

As with ENV4 above, the trees and shrubs in these areas make valuable contribution on the approach down the hill into the town, and help screen industrial buildings. It is recognised that some of the trees may be lost as part of the proposed road realignment and junction improvement, but felling will be kept to a minimum.

ENV6 High Street, South

The green area at the south end of High Street, maintained as open space will be retained as such, and there will be a presumption against development on this site. Consideration will also be given to 'softening' the appearance of the Local Authority housing scheme opposite with some landscaping.

ENV7 The Back Burn/GlenGrant, Rothes Burn/Glen Rothes

The setting of the distillery buildings and related uses in the wooded valley is a major amenity attraction of Rothes, and its unique "orchard" like character should be retained. The distillery operations are an important element of both the local economy and the tourist industry, and it is recognised that there may be a need to expand these operations in the future.

ENV8 Agricultural Fields at The Football Ground and at Rear of Dark Grains Plant

To be kept as such, within the town. Subject to I4 at the Dark Grains Plant and R2 at the Football ground.

ENV9 High Street/Seafield Square

Although only a small area of grass, this site provides a valuable open space at an important location in the townscape. Development on this site (including any proposals to site telephone kiosks; post boxes; or any other public utility) will be strongly resisted.

There are wider environmental designations relating to areas of local, national and international scientific importance and to areas of high scenic and landscape quality which in most cases may relate to areas just beyond the settlement boundary. Where sites of scientific importance are found within settlement boundaries, these are designated as ENV in the Proposals Map.

SINS The town is surrounded by a Site of Interest to Natural Science designation in the Spey Valley for its geomorphological importance.

Detailed maps of all the above are held by The Moray Council.

HOUSING

The main governing local plan policy for new housing developments is L/H3 in Chapter 3 (Servicing and Layout of new Housing Developments). Policy L/H7 in Chapter 3 (Affordable Housing provision) may also apply pending on the size and location of the development.

The level of demand for housing has increased in the last few years. This demand can be accommodated in the sites previously identified with an amendment to R2 which releases a small greenfield area. Moreover, it is a specific objective to try and create development opportunities and investment in the existing built-up area, to upgrade the environment of the town. The survey of such sites proposed in the previous Local Plan is reinstated as a proposal and included in the programme of implementation.

R1 Spey Street

This site comprises an area of agricultural land which fronts onto the south side of Spey Street. The site has been increased in size from the site previously designated in the Moray District Local Plan, and now extends to 2.11 hectares, capable of accommodating approximately 28 houses.

Access can be taken from the existing access point to the south west of Spey Street, in which case the following requirements will apply:-

(i) Development along the Spey Street frontage should be set back to allow for future widening, and a landscaping strip provided.

(ii) No individual access, vehicular or pedestrian, to houses from Spey Street will be permitted across this strip.

(iii) An emergency access should be taken from the new development onto Spey Street, in a position to suit the overall layout and phasing of the site. This will be 3m wide and have 'knock over' bollards to prevent vehicular traffic. Any proposal to utilise the narrow section of Spey Street to provide access to the site will require improvements to be carried out including widening to 5.5m; the provision of 1.8m footpaths and a turning hammerhead.

The layout of housing should have a 'clustered' form to try and avoid the linear pattern along Spey Street. A public sewer crosses the site.

Allowance should be made for access to the fields to the south so that future development in this location is not jeopardised. This site is within a wider area considered to be at risk from flooding and proposals for development will be assessed in terms of their compliance with policy L/ENV26 (Control of Development in Flood Risk Areas), in particular with regard to arrangements for surface water disposal.

R2 Field Adjacent to Football Ground

In agricultural use at present, this area is enclosed by development. Poor access restricts its development, as do overhead electricity wires. If however access was improved to site I2, this area would have development potential, most suitably for housing, by extension of the 6m access road to I2 and a new bridge over the burn. For the duration of the Plan the bulk of the field is expected to remain as farmland and is designated as such (ENV8). Possible pressure on this area may also come from additional parking space in connection with the football ground. Wastewater and surface water sewers cross this site imposing a constraint upon development. These will require to be accommodated or diverted onto new routes.

ROAD PROPOSALS

Traffic congestion is a problem in the main streets of the town due to the heavy volume of through traffic. The Council will investigate possible solutions to resolve this situation.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The governing local plan policy for community facilities is L/CF1 in Chapter 5.

There is currently only limited leisure provision in Rothes. There is considerable existing pressure on indoor facilities and the net increase in population resulting from the proposed new developments may put additional pressure on existing resources, which may require upgrading in line with policy L/F1 (Developer Contributions).

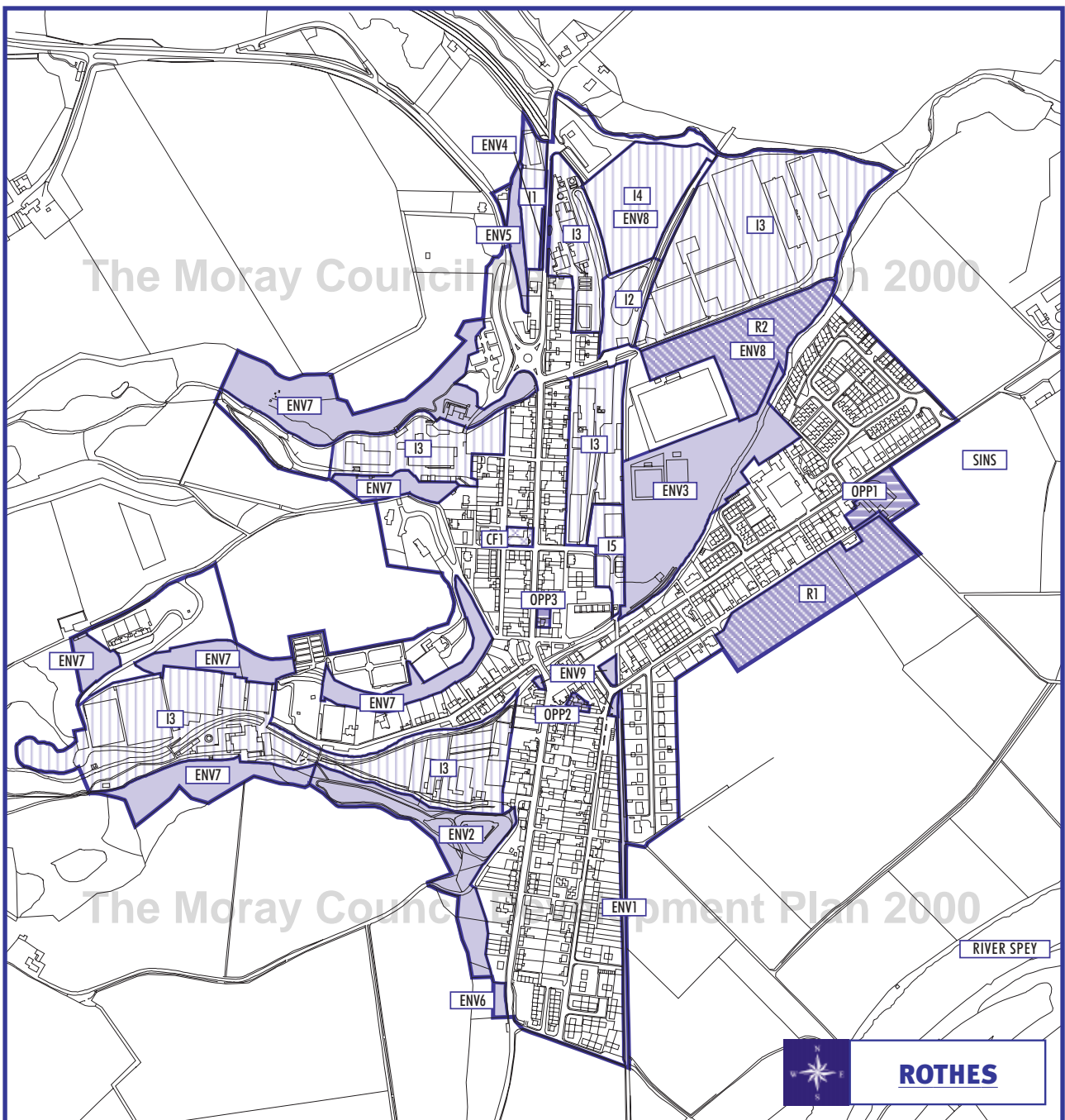
CF1 Community Hall
Improvements may be sought under the terms of policy L/F1 to the community hall to improve access and extend the range of activities that can take place.

FLOOD PREVENTION

The Moray Council will pursue the preparation of a Flood Prevention Scheme for Rothes under the terms of the Flood Prevention (Scotland) Act 1961 as amended. This scheme will be prepared in line with statutory process under the Act, require extensive hydrological research and will be subject to public consultation and environmental assessment.

WASTE WATER TREATMENT

The present operation of the Works is satisfactory, with recent improvements, and extensions to cater for increased loading from the distilleries.



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