

Tweed Valley Forest Park – Land Management Plan Landscape Input

1. Introduction

This document is a commentary on Tweed Valley Forest Park which comprises, Cademuir, Glentress, Cardronna, Traquair, Caberston, Elibank, Thornylee and Yair. It is intended to be a working document to help review the landscape context of these forest blocks; identify any issues to address within the LMP and make design/management suggestions. The report covers the following topics:

- Landscape context
- Landscape character
- Landscape designations
- Summary of key issues

2. Context

The Tweed Valley Forest Park is located along the Tweed Valley between Peebles in the west and the confluence of the Tweed Valley and the Ettrick Water to the east. Diagram LA_01 shows the 8 FLS Forest Blocks within the Tweed Valley.

There are a varied mix of landscape elements within the Tweed Valley with forestry, woodland, open hillsides and pastoral farmland all in close proximity. The valley floor has a diverse land use of towns/villages, scattered settlement, farm steadings, woodlands, pasture and estates. Woodland is a significant feature in the Tweed Valley with a mix of woodland belts, farm woodlands, policy woodlands and forestry. Forests on valley slopes and adjacent summits are a typical feature. A series of estate landscapes give visual diversity to the Tweed Valley which include historical woodland plantings.

The flat valley bottom is wider to the west and narrows after Innerleithen through to Yair before widening again. Small and medium scale rounded hills close to settlement with woodland cover contrasts with the relatively flat pastoral valley. These hills provide a backdrop to the settlements and a sense of enclosure within the valley.

Above the valley sides large scale smooth rounded summits and ridges are dissected by steep sided valleys. The plateau landform beyond consists of a series of level-topped hills and ridges.

There is a changing sense of enclosure as the viewer travels along the valley. At times there is strong enclosure by the valley sides and uplands which visually enclose the valley floor contrasting with some open views across and along the valley floor to summits beyond.



The view from Caerlee Hill showing the Tweed Valley at Innerleithen, showing the diverse mix of land use and landscape.

3. Landscape Designations

UPPER TWEEDDALE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

The south west boundary of Cademuir forest meets the Upper Tweeddale NSA. (Diagram LA_002) While the forest itself is not within the NSA a review of the special qualities of the NSA was made to identify any potential effects proposed forest management might have on these qualities.

The special qualities of the Upper Tweeddale National Scenic Area relevant to Cademuir Forest are:

- *Diverse scenery of great charm and soft beauty*
- *Green, intimate pastoral valleys*
- *Expansive, open hills with panoramic views*
- *The variety of woodlands and trees*
- *Tranquil riverine landscapes*

At the boundary of the NSA with Cademuir Forest, there is a mix of open hill, wooded slopes and pastoral valley; all experienced within a short distance. This diversity contributes to the scenic quality and should be retained. Given the recreation interest and scenic qualities of Cademuir, careful consideration should be given to an appropriate replacement for Larch.

Special Landscape Area (SLA)

Scottish Borders Council (SBC) supplementary planning guidance (SPG) 'Local Landscape Designations' (August 2012) gives detail on reasons for SLA designation and inclusion in the Local Development Plan. These designations aim to identify, enhance and protect the distinctive character and special qualities of the designated landscape areas.

The Tweed Valley Forest Park overlaps with 3 SLAs; the Tweedsmuir Uplands, Tweed Valley and the Tweed, Ettrick and Yarrow confluences (Diagram LA_03).

SLA1 Tweedsmuir Uplands:

The south east edge of Cademuir, southern half of Cardrona and southern half of Traquair fall within this SLA. The area of the Tweedsmuir Uplands focuses on the hills and reservoirs around Broad Peak, Harts Hill, St Mary's Loch and Talla reservoir. For the Tweed Valley LMP the Minch Moor summit overlooking the Tweed Valley is important.

The relevant designation statements relating to the southern edge of Cademuir, southern half of Cardrona and southern side of Traquair are:

- *Steep rolling landform, with deep valleys and rounded peaks of glacial origin.*
- *This is a highly scenic area of dramatic landform, and has a significant degree of wildness.*
- *Key summits include Minch Moor overlooking the Tweed.*
- *The uplands are well used for recreation, with the Southern Upland Way among many signposted routes in the area.*

SLA2: Tweed Valley

SLA2 is relevant to the Forest blocks; Cademuir, Glentress, Cardronna, Traquair, the west half of Elibank and Thornylee. The designation statements relevant to these Forest blocks are from SBC SPG are:

- *Strong sense of place with certain views instantly recognizable.*
- *Varied mix of landscape elements is highly representative with forestry, woodland, open hillsides and pastoral farmland all juxtaposed.*
- *The landscape unfolds as the viewer follows the river through the valley presenting new vistas dominated by forestry as around Walkerburn or by the steep rocky slopes above Innerleithen.*

- numerous opportunities for enjoying this landscape, including the cycle routes at Glentress and elsewhere, golf courses, equestrian centres, and walking routes.
- Well-designed forestry actively contributes to this visual experience in places.
- Time depth is evident in estate landscapes.

SLA3: Tweed, Ettrick and Yarrow confluences

Yair and the eastern half of Elibank are covered by SLA3 the SBC SPG. The designation statements relevant to these Forest blocks are:

- *The enclosing uplands and upland fringes offer contrast and an attractive wider setting and enable views across the valleys.*
- *East of Thornylee (note Thornylee itself is in the Tweed Valley SLA), the Tweed flows in to a narrower section winding between steep valley sides which are often densely forested.*
- *The southern upland way follows the ridge between tweed and yarrow, offering views across the area. (three Brethren).*
- *A series of estate landscapes give visual diversity to these valleys.*

Craig Hill is the dominant feature in the Yair Forest Block within this SLA, consider any changes to the view of Craig Hill and the impact of different management types.

4. Landscape Character

Landscape Character Types (LCTs) are described by the 'NatureScot' National Landscape Character Types (2019). The Tweed Valley Forest sits within the - NatureScot Landscape Character Types listed below:

- 90 Dissected Plateau Moorland
- 93 Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest – Borders
- 103 Undulating upland Fringe
- 113 Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor
- 116 Upland Valley with Woodland
- 118 Settled Fringe Valley

The majority of the forest blocks as viewed from the Tweed Valley floor sit within 3 of these LCTs; the **Upland Valley with woodland, Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest and Dissected Plateau Moorland**. The Southern half of Cademuir sits within the **Upland Valley Pastoral Floor** (Diagram LA_04).

Dissected Plateau Moorland is a dominant influence for the Forest above the northern valley slopes and into the Moorfoot Hills to the north. This LCT extends into the upland plateau landscape with large scale smooth rounded summits dissected by steep sided valleys. Leithen Water adjacent to Caberston being typical of these steep sided valleys.

Southern Uplands with Scattered Forest – Borders is a dominant influence for the Forest above the southern slopes of the Tweed valley and extends into the Southern Uplands land mass to the south where the landscape is large scale with rolling hills. Generally of heather and grassland with some locally large scale areas of Forestry esp. Traquair and Elibank and the southern half of Cardronna.

Upland Valley with woodland LCT. This LCT covers the Tweed Valley floor and the lower slopes along the valley. The lower slopes of several forest blocks sit within this LCT. There is strong enclosure by the valley sides and uplands which visually enclose the valley floor. Sometimes open with views across and along the valley floor to summits beyond and other times the valley floor narrows creating strong enclosure and restricting views. Woodland is a significant feature of this LCT with a mix of woodland belts, farm woodlands, policy woodlands and forestry.

Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor LCT . This LCT is characterized by flat valley bottoms with pasture, enclosed by steep sided valleys which merge with heather and forest above.

Summary of key landscape issues

In terms of landscape and visual issues, the key change to the landscape within the LMP timeline will be: **Felling to the small scale hills and lower slopes of the Tweed Valley especially area next to towns and villages.**

Key issues to be addressed by the LMP are:

- The sensitive areas along the front facing slopes of the Tweed Valley where clearfell is the only current option for management. What are these coupe shapes and how can the proposed restock respect landscape setting?
- Areas along the front facing slopes of the Tweed Valley which can be managed as some form of continuous cover.
- Areas of Larch which are difficult to access/work and review for pre-emptive felling and review the alternatives for restock.

The most sensitive areas are the small scale hills that enclose and provide a backdrop to settlements along the Tweed Valley. Design work should focus most attention to

these areas. Mitigation could be achieved by a change in shape/size/scale, land cover and/or management type.

Review the management type within these sensitive areas and explore options. These areas may benefit from some form of permanent tree cover if this fits with the existing landscape character and is practical given issues with access and steep slopes.

Identify the key views and where change will happen, these views are likely to be from settlements along the valley floor. Review the felling shapes for these areas and change felling shapes where possible to reflect land form, scale and diversity. Steep slopes and harvesting practicalities will mean that in some locations felling shapes follow straight lines up/down the line of slope. In these cases examine restock options and explore possible changes to coupe size/shape to mitigate against this being repeated in future felling patterns.

On the medium scale mid slopes and hills of the Tweed Valley the wooded slopes contribute to the character and enclosure of the Tweed Valley. Aim to retain this character and review design to reflect landform.

Consideration should be given to the transition between different landscape areas (for example between SLA 1 Tweedsmuir Uplands and SLA 2 Tweed Valley). The forest blocks bridge the transition from the simple open upland landscape and the settled smaller scale farmed landscape in the Tweed Valley. This change in scale from upland to lowland should be reflected in the forest design.

Remember to consider upland areas that provide distant and panoramic views such as from Minch Moor and Dunslair Heights.

Diagram LA_005 shows the different landscape scale along the Tweed Valley between the smaller scale valley floor to the large scale upland areas.

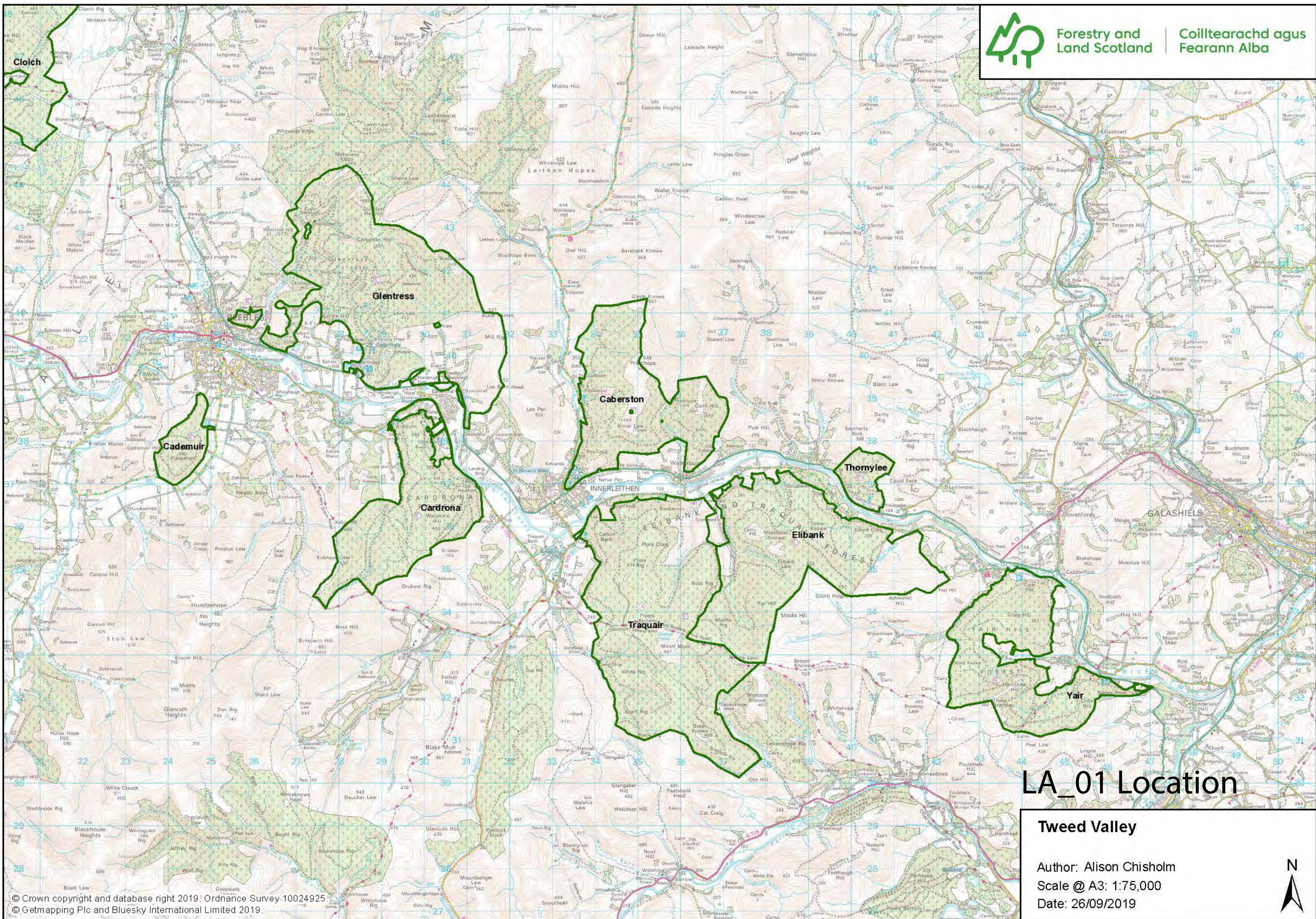
For each block analyse the scale and enclosure provided by landform and enhance/respect through careful coupe design.

Diagram LA_06 summarises the key issues to address for each of the Tweed Valley FLS forest blocks



Forestry and Land Scotland

Coilltearachd agus Fearann Alba



LA_01 Location

Tweed Valley

Author: Alison Chisholm
Scale @ A3: 1:75,000
Date: 26/09/2019



LA_02 National Scenic Areas

Landscape Designations


Author: Alison Chisholm

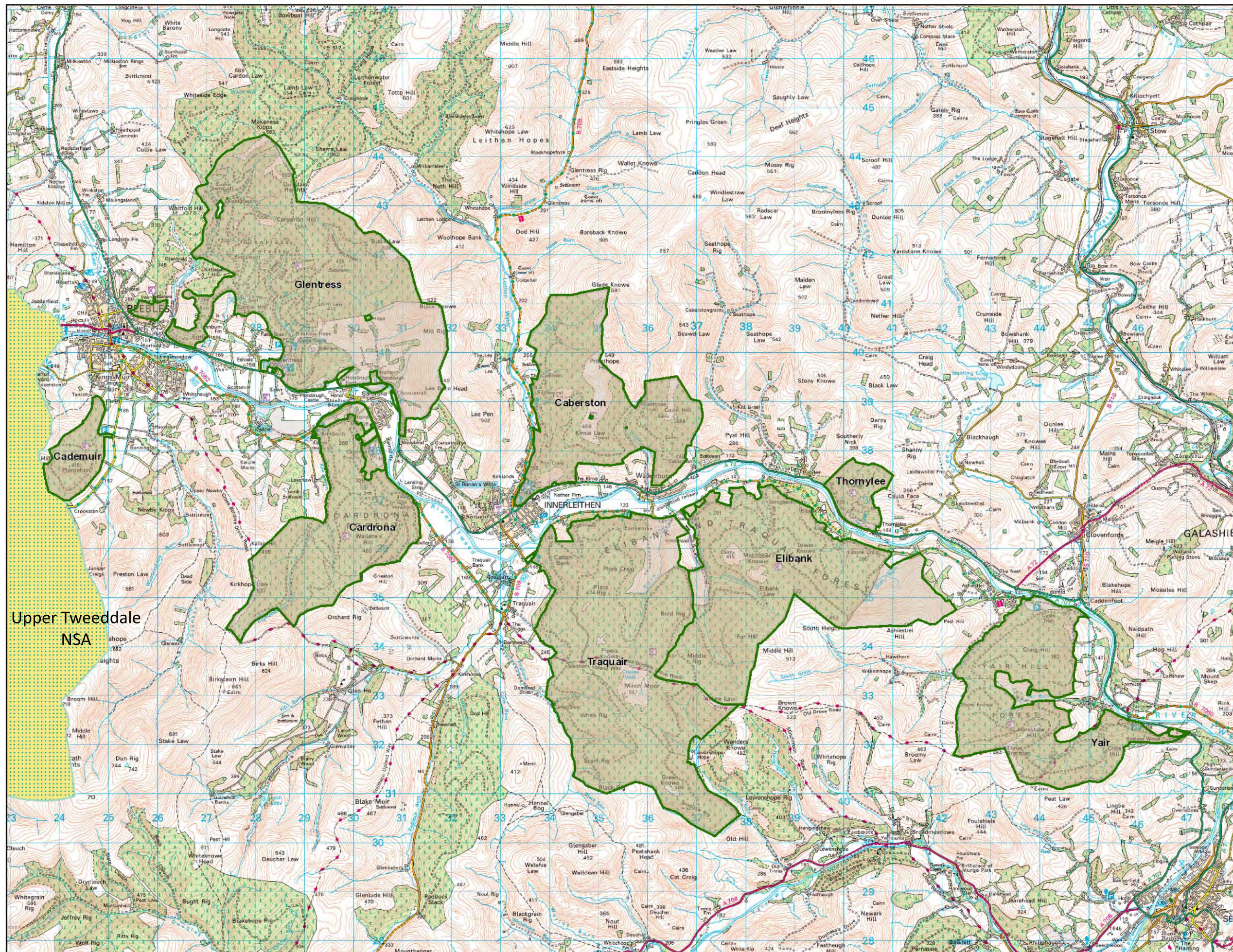
Scale @ A3: 1:75,000

Date: 27/09/2019

Legend

National Scenic Areas (Scot.)

-  National Scenic Areas (Scot.)



0 0.35 0.7 1.4 2.1 2.8 km



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UK Woodland
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LA_03 Special Landscape Areas

Landscape Designations


Author: Alison Chisholm

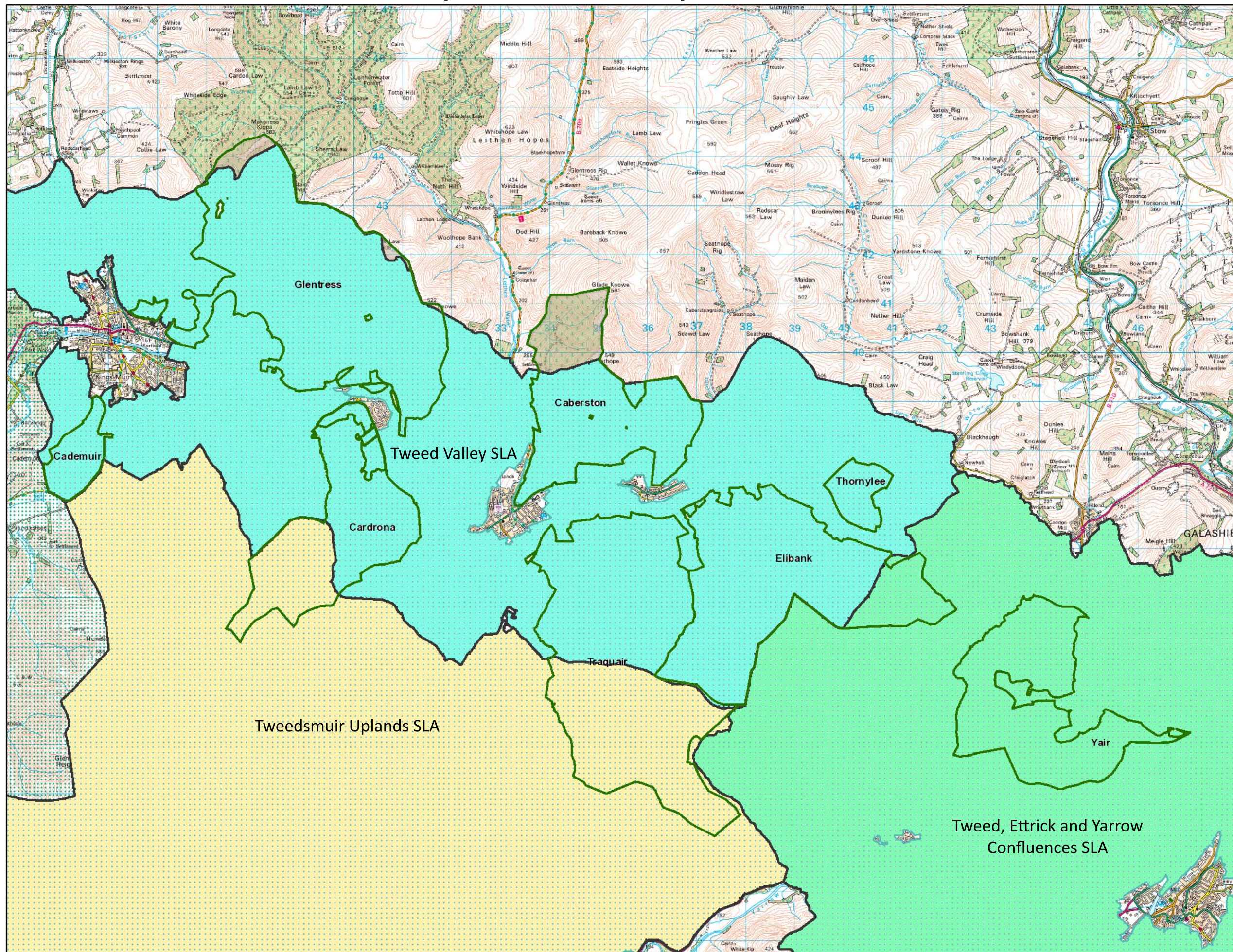
Scale @ A3: 1:75,000

Date: 27/09/2019

Legend

Local Landscape Designations

 Special Landscape Areas

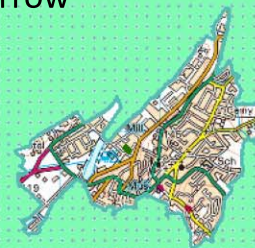


0 0.35 0.7 1.4 2.1 2.8 km



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LA_04 Landscape Character Types

SNH Landscape Character Types

Landscape Character

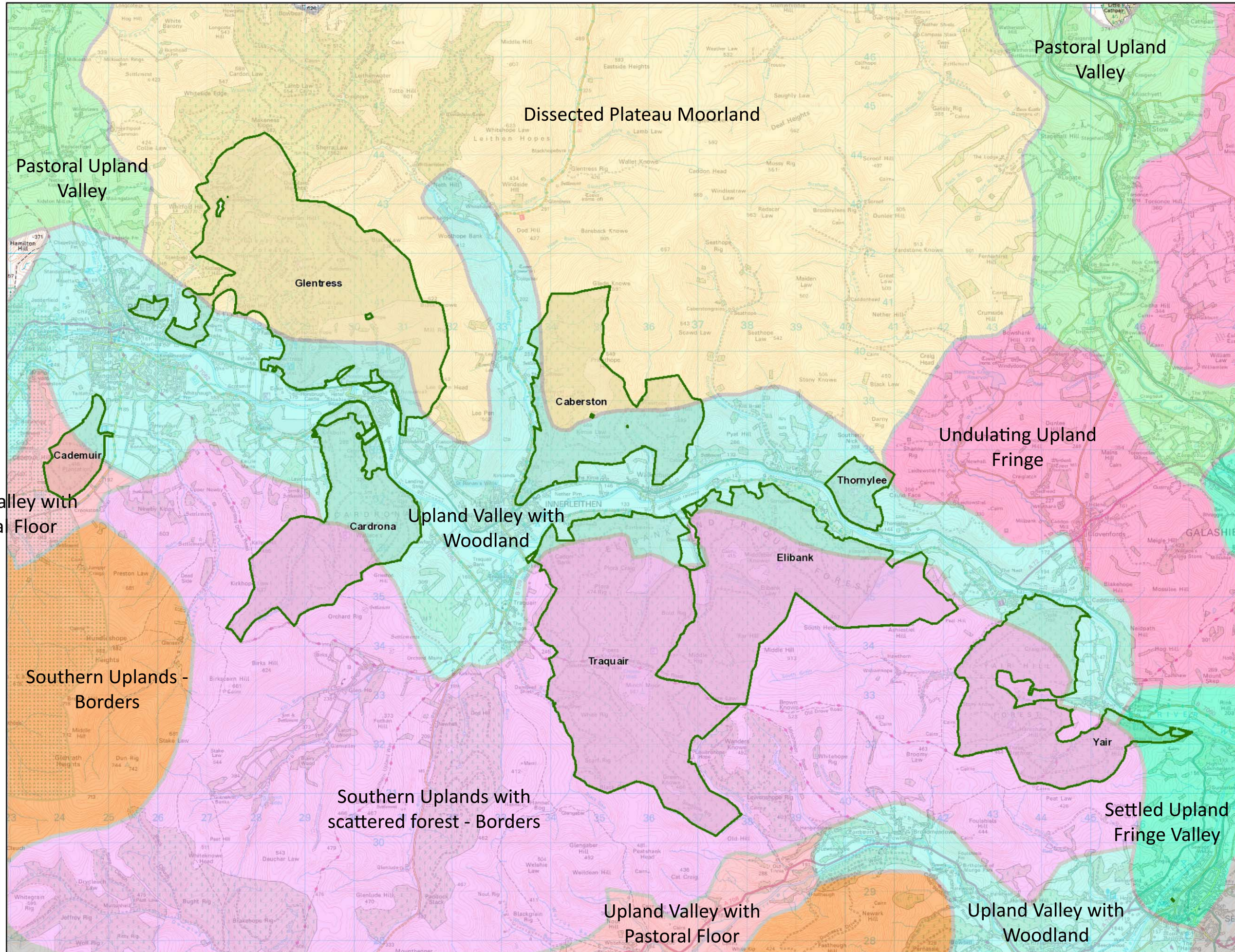
Author: Alison Chisholm

Scale @ A3: 1:75,000

Date: 27/09/2019

Legend

LCA_SCOTLAND



0 0.35 0.7 1.4 2.1 2.8 km



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Small Scale Landscape

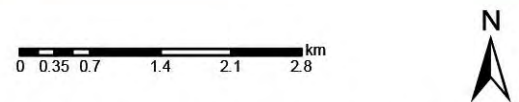
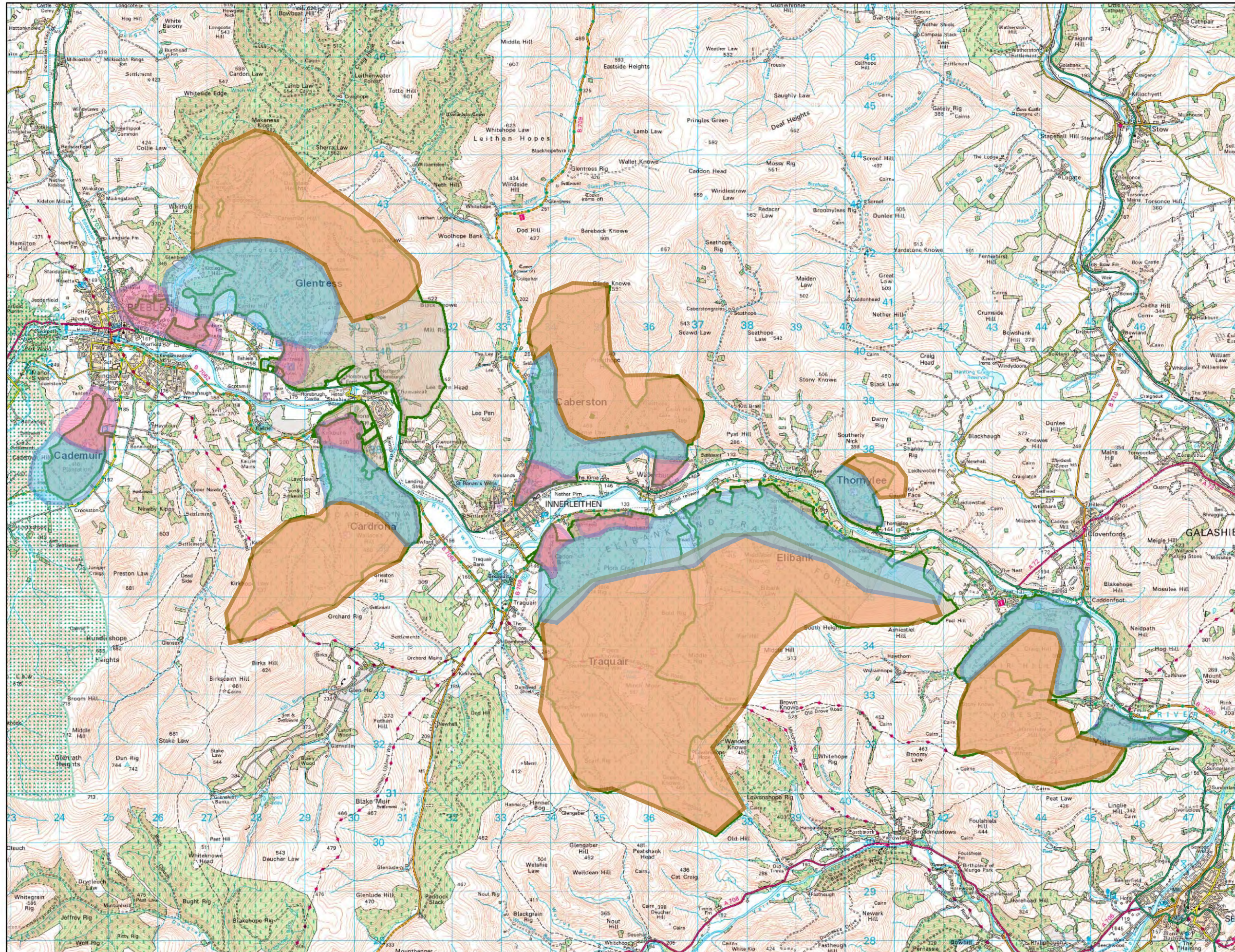
Sensitive slopes close to settlement that create enclosure of towns, villages and the river valley. Design will reflect the form and diversity of the adjacent enclosure-patterns, landform, land use and woodland type.

Medium Scale Landscape

The visible lower and mid slopes of larger scale hills. Use landscape lines of force to influence design. Identify opportunities to break up 'banding' across slopes using landscape features such as gullies and ridges to influence forest design.

Large Scale Landscape

Large scale ridgelines and summits which enclose the Tweed Valley. Larger scale hills and ridges form a simple backdrop to the Tweed Valley. Review shapes and size of coupes and re-work where practical to reflect the large scale landscape.



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Glentress

Review the landform along these ridgelines and summits. Coupe size and scale should reflect the large scale nature of the landform. Redesign any out of scale /geometric shapes.

Front face of Glentress along the Tweed Valley is valued and to be retained.

Welcome gateway for visitors to the Forest is a changing view with proposals to move the path to the east side of Eshiel's Burn, review coupe shape and potential larch viewed by visitors.

Caberston

Review the landform along these ridgelines and summits. Coupe size and scale should reflect the large scale nature of the landform. Redesign any out of scale /geometric shapes.

Review front facing slopes of Caberston onto the Tweed Valley design a sensitive felling pattern that reflects the landform as much as possible.

Thornylee

Review the planting along the A72 at the south side of Thornylee. Steep slope working and restock with permanent cover Upper coupe shapes to be reviewed and designed to reflect the hill summit.

Key issues to explore further for each forest block are:

Analyse the scale and enclosure provided by landform and use forest design to enhance/respect.

Review land form to valley slopes using landscape lines of force to influence design.

Coupe design to reflect the landscape scale within forest.

Larch – identify threats opportunities and potential areas for pre-emptive felling.

Interface with the proposed FLS Tweed Valley visitor services recreation strategy.

Review the interface of the Forest blocks with other landscape elements within the Tweed Valley recognizing the reduction in diversity from valley floor to uplands.

Cademuir

A review should be made of the planting success on top of Cademuir Hill. What are the long term plans?

Cardrona

Review potential Larch felling on slopes facing the Tweed Valley, identify any opportunities.

Retain large scale coupes to Wallace Hill and Kirkhope Law and contrast to the smaller scale forest along the valley sides and above Cardrona village.

Traquair

Review the landform along these ridgelines and summits. Coupe size and scale should reflect the large scale nature of the landform.

There is a complex overlay between MTB trails, access and harvesting on steeper slopes. Felling shapes will be visible from Innerleithen. Explore how Cadon Bank can be harvested with minimal disruption to recreation, reducing the visual impact as much as possible while choosing practical shapes for harvesting logistics.

Plan for the expansion of Plora Wood up from the existing Woodland Trust site.

Caberston

Thornylee

Elibank

Review the landform along these ridgelines and summits. Coupe size and scale should reflect the large scale nature of the landform. Redesign any out of scale /geometric shapes.

Review the experience from the Southern Upland Way and identify key areas, nodes, changing in land cover which could be used to enhance the visitor experience.

Yair

The east side of Yair sits well within a context of a designed landscape and historical policy plantings. Review the mix of woodland types, especially in the context of the Designed Landscape of Fairmile.

Review the view of Craig Hill from the A72 and Clovenfords in the context of nearby woodland and the division between clear fell and group selection management types.

Tweed Valley LA_06 Issues

Author: Alison Chisholm

Scale @ A3: 1:75,000

Date: 26/09/2019

