

# ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 20

Supplementary Guidance

9

## ABERDEENSHIRE SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS



APRIL 2017

## **Executive Summary**

Aberdeenshire is renowned for its landscapes and scenic value. Therefore, it is important that we conserve, and where possible enhance landscapes, and to manage landscape change over time to protect against development which might adversely impact on our landscape, sense of place and quality of life.

Landscapes are built upon the relationship between the natural environment, cultural associations and the way in which people live within them. The landscape is a significant asset in terms of environmental, social and economic activity across the region. This Supplementary Guidance has been produced to introduce a local landscape designation into the Aberdeenshire local development plan area. Ten **Special Landscape Areas** have been identified across Aberdeenshire's rich and diverse landscape. These Special Landscape Areas cover a total area of 1305.57km<sup>2</sup>, representing approximately 26.7% of the Aberdeenshire LDP area.

The purpose of the Supplementary Guidance is to support Policy E2 "Landscape" of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017 (LDP2017). The Supplementary Guidance is to be used in the decision making process with regard to Development Management, but it may also provide guidance to communities and landowners in coming to decisions affecting the management and use of land within Special Landscape Areas.

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## Introduction

Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are a local landscape designation placed on an area that exhibits particular qualities and characteristics within them that are valued locally. SLAs complement the National Scenic Area (NSA) designation, which identifies those landscapes that are seen as nationally important owing to their unsurpassed scenery. The primary purpose of this Supplementary Guidance is to identify, safeguard and enhance the character and quality of landscapes which are important and particularly valued by local communities. The policy background supporting this Supplementary Guidance is outlined under **Appendix 1**.

Aberdeenshire's landscape is characterised by a unique mix of coast, farmland, moorland, forest and woodlands and river valleys. Within this broad pattern of landscape character, there are very important variations in local landscape character and quality. Individual glens, rivers, hills, lowland valleys, lochs and settlements have strong, distinctive and important relationships with neighbouring landscapes and areas.

In preparing the LDP2017 the need for a local landscape designation which is fit for purpose was discussed in the Main Issues Report and subsequently identified in the proposed Aberdeenshire LDP2017. A Local Landscape Designation Review (LLDR) provided an opportunity for Aberdeenshire Council to fully understand the key influences on landscape character and quality and how perception of these can change over time due to changes occurring in the surrounding area. In 2015 Aberdeenshire Council appointed Land Use Consultants (LUC), to undertake a LLDR for Aberdeenshire. A methodology for the LLDR was drawn from the "Guidance on Local Landscape Designations" published in 2006 by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Historic Scotland (HS) (now known as Historic Environment Scotland) and was further developed and refined based on the consultants experience in designation reviews. The outputs of the study were a series of SLAs. The study approach is further explained in **Appendix 2**.

The outcomes of the LLDR have informed this Supplementary Guidance. It is intended to be used by prospective developers and by the Council's Planning and Building Standards Service in assessing the potential impact of development on these "special" areas. Not only does this Supplementary Guidance guide decision-making on development proposals but it will also help those involved in the management of land to ensure that proposals made by them do not adversely affect the integrity of locally valued landscapes.

This Supplementary Guidance applies to the Aberdeenshire LDP area (i.e. the whole of Aberdeenshire, excluding that part in the Cairngorms National Park).

## Special Landscape Areas

Policy E2 Landscape of the LDP2017 outlines the Council's approach to development which may affect the landscape of Aberdeenshire (see **Appendix 1**). The aim of this policy is to ensure that SLAs are afforded adequate protection against inappropriate development and this Supplementary Guidance seeks to take this forward.

The Supplementary Guidance provides:

- Guidance to developers, land managers and decision makers on appropriate actions to ensure the qualifying criteria for each SLA is recognised for appropriate protection, management or enhancement; and
- Guidance to the Council with regard to decision making on proposals that may affect the special characteristics of these areas, commenting on land management proposals, and monitoring landscape change.

The role of the SLAs is part of an “all-landscapes approach”, as outlined in the SNH/HS Guidance. There are a number of principles underpinning the all landscapes approach:

- Both town and country – Landscapes do not stop at the edge of settlements, nor do they necessarily change at the boundary of local authority areas.
- Valuing landscapes – Views on what is important in a particular local landscape will vary and reflect personal responses as well as more objective assessments. Some landscapes are recognised to be of national importance but people will also value their local landscapes as the places where they live and work. All these views should be respected and should be used to inform the planning and management of local landscapes.
- Guiding landscape change – Landscapes are constantly changing and landscape planning and management at all levels should aim to facilitate positive change – be it the enhancement of existing qualities or the creation of new ones of equal or greater value. Higher standards in the planning and design of new development and management of land-use are essential components of such an approach.
- A shared responsibility – Responsibility for local landscapes does not rest with any one organisation or individual. Action for local landscapes should accordingly be broad-based, though local authorities have a particularly important role to play in developing consensus on the direction, nature and extent of landscape change and facilitating a more integrated and collective approach to their planning and management.

### Supplementary Planning Policies

In order for the Supplementary Guidance to be clear regarding the policy approach of Aberdeenshire Council with regard to decisions affecting local landscape designations it is necessary to set out supplementary policies. Three policies below allow for:

- Definition of the SLA and their boundaries;
- Ensure that the Statement of Importance can be used as a material consideration within SLAs to better evidence relevant development management decisions; and
- To help inform decisions on conservation and enhancement measures for management of the SLA.

**Policy A: Boundaries**

Aberdeenshire Council will apply the SLA boundaries as set out in this Supplementary Guidance in the implementation of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Policy E2 Landscape.

Following the study approach used by the Council and LUC, the process of review and evaluation undertaken means that the boundaries can be justified as being robust. However, the Council will monitor and update the boundaries, where necessary, through future LDPs. Detailed digital boundaries have been published on the Aberdeenshire website and paper copies are available on request from Planning and Building Standards Service.

**Policy B: Development Management**

Aberdeenshire Council will use the Statements of Importance supporting each of the Special Landscape Areas outlining the qualifying interests protected by Policy E2. Development will only be permitted if these are not being adversely affected or the effects of the development are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of at least local public importance.

The policy aims to ensure that the Supplementary Guidance is used in the development management process. In most cases it will be possible to use a precautionary approach to layout, siting and design to mitigate and minimise potential impacts.

**Policy C: Landscape**

Aberdeenshire Council will promote and encourage conservation and enhancement measures within the Special Landscape Areas that enhance appreciation of the special landscape or are measures that enhance the features identified in the Designation Statement contained in the Statement of Importance.

The policy encourages the treatment of the SLAs as being particularly “special” by the Council and other partners. All parties should act in a way that recognises, maintains and enhances those features which make it so.

**The Statement of Importance for Special Landscape Areas**

A Statement of Importance for each SLA has been developed in accordance with the SNH/HS Guidance. The Statement of Importance is broken in to four sections designed to clearly highlight the key landscape characteristics and qualities which underpin the SLA and outline possible threats to landscape and how decisions will be made to mitigate any impact arising as a result of development which should be referred to in any development proposal.

## **Statement of Importance**

**Location and Boundaries** – This section provides a description of where the area and importantly includes justification of the boundaries of that SLA.

**Designation Statement** – This section outlines why the SLA has been designated. This details the particular features that make the landscape special in an Aberdeenshire context. This information can better evidence any potential decision on development which may adversely affect the landscape.

**Forces for Change** – This section identifies potential threats which could result in an adverse impact on the SLA. This can be used by developers and the development management process to identify development types that would not be encouraged in the designated area. However they can also be used as indicators of how improvements could be made to counter the forces, for example through land management initiatives. The guidance provided is not meant to be universal or exhaustive. It is not limited to the types of development identified in the Statements of Importance and as such all development proposed within an SLA will need to consider the relevant Statement of Importance.

**Management Recommendations** – This section notes what “type” of landscape the SLA is situated within. Aberdeenshire’s SLAs represent a range of landscape types and development has potential to affect different SLAs in different ways and this is reflected in the Statement of Importance. This section also provides guidance on landscape management which will help to indicate what types of development may or may not be appropriate in the designated areas.

There are 10 SLAs in the Aberdeenshire LDP area. A Statement of Importance has been prepared for each of these and can be found in on the following pages. Maps showing the detailed boundaries of the SLAs are included alongside the relevant Statement of Importance.

# Statement of Importance: North Aberdeenshire Coast Special Landscape Area

## Location and Boundaries

This SLA extends along the north coast of Aberdeenshire, from Logie Head in the west to Fraserburgh in the east. The northern edge is defined by the coast; the western edge by the boundary with Moray. The southern edge of the SLA is defined by roads which run parallel to the coast and include (from west to east) the A98, B9139, A97, A947, B9031 and various minor roads. These boundaries contain the areas with a strong coastal influence. Although varying in distance from the coast, the road boundaries reflect the most suitable available boundary features. The SLA includes parts of the settlements of Banff and Macduff, being located on prominent headlands either side of the mouth of the River Deveron, but does not include the much larger fishing port of Fraserburgh.

Designation of this area distinguishes the high scenic value created by the juxtaposition of rugged coastal cliffs and headlands with traditional fishing villages nestling at the base of the cliffs. It also recognises the strong elemental qualities of this coast and the importance of expansive views across the North Sea from higher headlands and coastal roads. The many features of natural heritage present along this coastline. Designation protects the recreational value of the area and its function as a corridor for the movement of people.



*Crovie, from the Braes (Source: LUC)*

## Designation Statement

The North Aberdeenshire Coast is a narrow, self-contained strip of coastal farmland which is unified by its exposed, north facing orientation onto the North Sea and its rugged coastline of high cliffs, headlands and sandy bays. This is an area of geological importance with exposures of old red sandstone, conglomerate cliffs and features which demonstrate glacial process.



The coast is windswept, with few trees, although the Tore of Troup is a distinctive wooded glen which extends inland from the coast to the south of Pennan. The ecological value of the coast contributes to the landscape character, as well as being recognised as nationally and/or internationally important for nature conservation. Troup Head is an RSPB reserve and is the only mainland gannet colony in Scotland. The wave cut platforms formed by the rocks along the shore towards Fraserburgh are a distinctive feature.

There are frequent settlements along the coast, including traditional fishing villages nestled at the base of cliffs, many of which are Conservation Areas. There are numerous features of built heritage interest, including castle ruins situated on prominent headlands, such as Findlater Castle, Dundarg Castle and Pitsligo Castle at Rosehearty.

Sandy beaches at Sandend and Banff Links are popular for recreation and tourism, including surfing, and boat tours are available at Troup Head.

Despite being accessible and well settled, the influence of the sea and exposure to the elements means that qualities of wildness can be experienced.

The following aspects and features of this landscape are considered worthy of recognition through SLA designation:

- Abrupt land/ sea coastal edge with relatively long stretches of cliffs in comparison with other parts of Aberdeenshire.
- Rugged coastal cliffs and headlands, forming an intricate coast of inlets and rocky bays with important outcrops of rocks and fossils, e.g. the sandstone caves at New Aberdour beach.
- The accessibility to the wild sense of place felt in the area.
- Pristine beaches infrequently interrupt cliff edge.
- Settlement is defined by its relationship to the sea, with smaller villages running in a linear form parallel to the cliff edge and granite buildings, densely spaced with gable ends facing to the sea. Larger settlements tend to have a distinctive historic core, with granite cottages often in a network of narrow lanes.
- Traditional fishing villages are nestled at the base of cliffs, including Pennan and Crovie, distinguished by diminutive form and difficulty of access.
- Historic harbours such as Portsoy, Banff, and Macduff which epitomise the North East's trade and fishing heritage.
- Larger settlements such as Banff and Macduff retain characteristic links to maritime industry.
- The Tore of Troup is the largest example of the many coastal dens, a deep wooded ravine with its own distinct, tranquil character, linked to the north coast.
- Panoramic views from higher headlands, some of which can be appreciated from the A98 and B9031 coastal roads.
- Elemental qualities include experience of exposure, wildness and remoteness and drama associated with rugged cliffs.
- Nature conservation interest contributes to appreciation of this coastal landscape, with a focus for bird life around Troup Head, and extensive undeveloped coastlines.
- Fortified historic sites spread along the coast, including prehistoric promontory forts such as Cullykhan, and later castles such as Findlater and Pitsligo.
- Ancient and historic structures, such as the Bronze Age burial mound of Law of Melrose, ancient churches such as Inverboyndie and St John's Gamrie, the healing Red Well at Whitehills and Macduff War Memorial.
- A recreational coast, with beaches coastal paths enabling good access to the outdoors, as well as more formal recreation such as the Art Deco Tarlair outdoor swimming pool.
- Elemental qualities of the rugged north coast: a strong relationship with the sea and sky, offering an accessible experience of wildness.

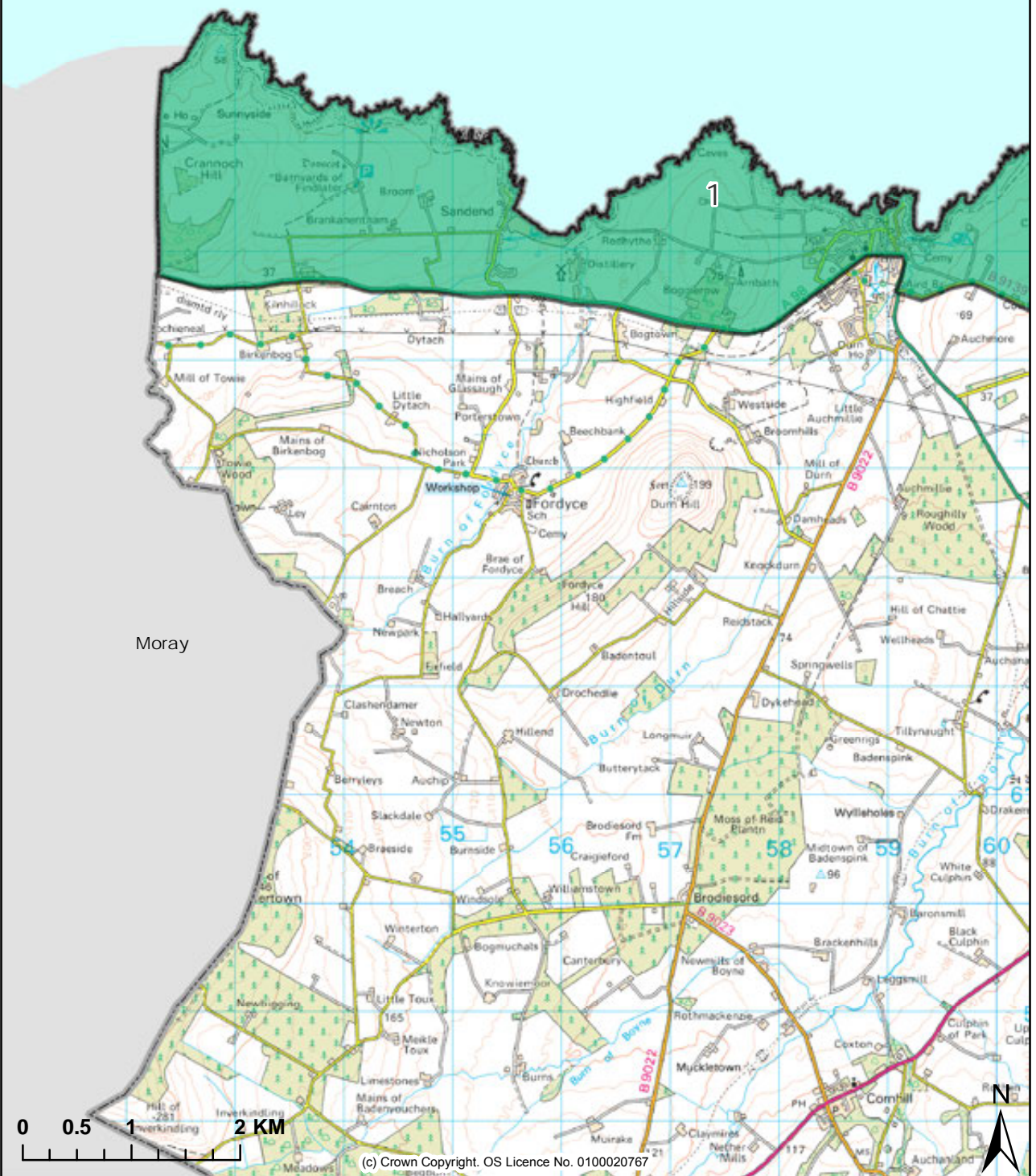
## **Forces for Change**

- Decline in fishing industry leads to erosion of coastal character associated with fishing towns and villages.
- Settlement expansion outwith the defined coastal setting.
- Development on or near coastal cliffs and headlands.
- Impact of development which may cause erosion of the coastal character experienced.
- Scattered and incremental development along the coastline e.g. single houses cause negative impact on sense of place.
- Development of renewable energy technologies (e.g. on and off-shore wind turbines, grid connection and associated infrastructure) affect views to and from the SLA.
- Impact of proposals which effect the integrity of natural and historic features within the SLA.
- Recreation and tourism provision e.g. footpath improvements, signage, car parks and development associated with caravans/ chalets.

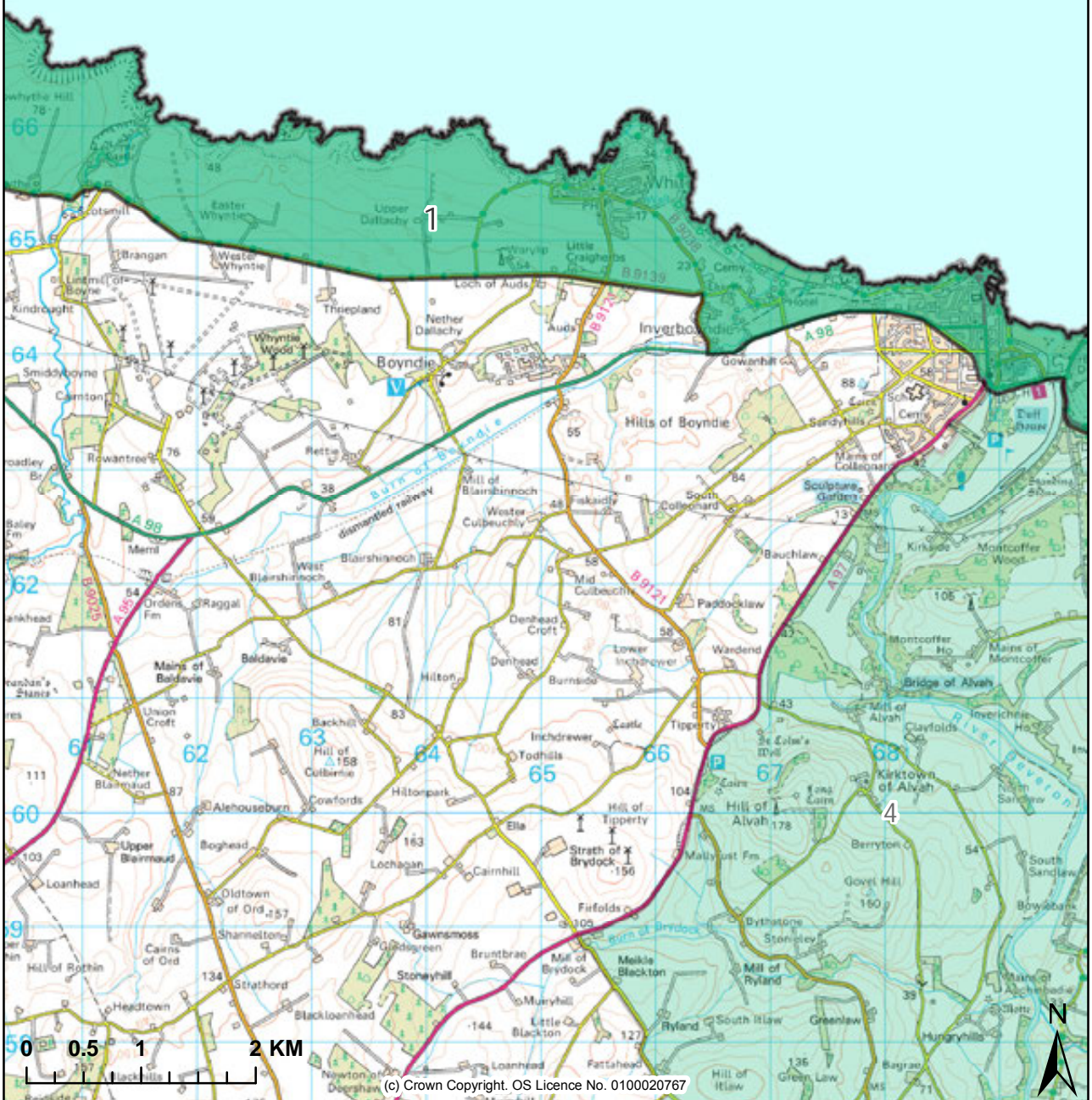
## **Management Recommendations**

- The North Aberdeenshire Coast SLA is classed as a coastal landscape type. As such emphasis should be to maintain the focus of development within existing coastal settlements in order to retain the character of the coastal area. Development should be contained within settlements and should be of scale and style that respects and complements their coastal character as well as reflecting the vernacular setting. The effects of development along the coastal edge and within the hinterland adjacent to the SLA should be carefully considered through a coastal character assessment.
- Development which impacts upon the rugged coastal cliffs and headlands should be carefully considered in order to ensure that the strong relationship with the sea and sky, offering an accessible experience of wildness are not negatively impacted upon.
- Panoramic views from higher headlands should be preserved. Views can be appreciated from the A98 and B9031 coastal roads. Development along these routes should be sensitive to the surroundings and no interrupt the panoramic views experienced.
- Settlements in this SLA are generally defined by its relationship to the sea, with buildings sited and oriented accordingly. Development proposals should reflect the character of traditional fishing villages which are nestled at the base of cliffs, including Pennan and Crovie.
- Larger settlements such as Banff and Macduff retain characteristic links to maritime industry. It is expected that much of the larger scale development will occur in and around these settlements, this is reflected by much of the new development already extending beyond the defined setting. Developers should seek early engagement with Council to determine what action can be taken to protect the characteristics associated with towns in this area.
- Proposals should seek to protect and where possible enhance historic monuments, such as castles at Pitsligo, ancient churches as at Inverboyndie, and other landmarks including the Macduff war memorial.
- To reflect the importance of the coast as an area for recreation with its beaches and coastal paths enabling good access to the outdoors, as well as more formal recreation such as the Tarlair swimming pool, proposals seeking to sensitively enhance such opportunities may be supported.

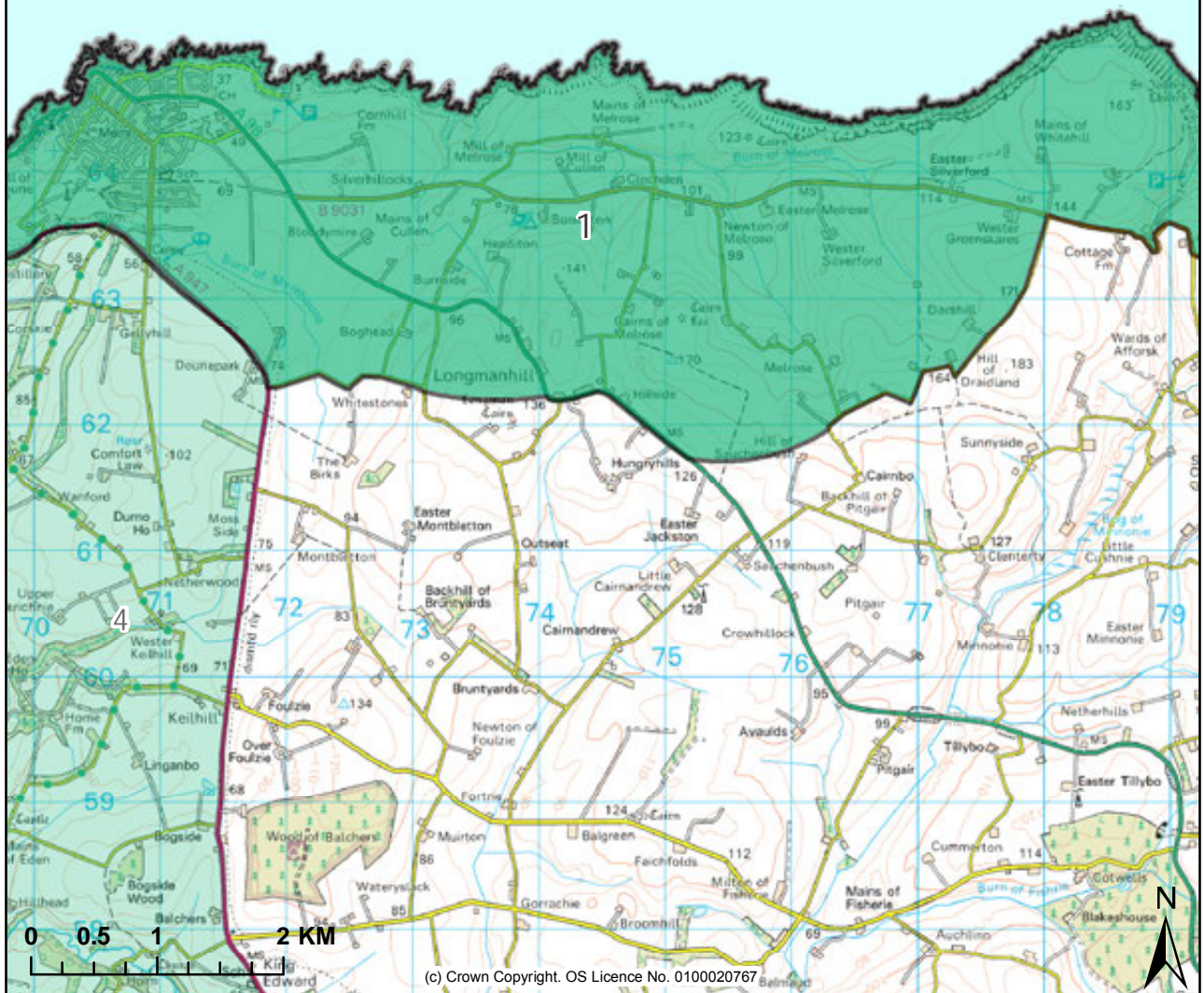






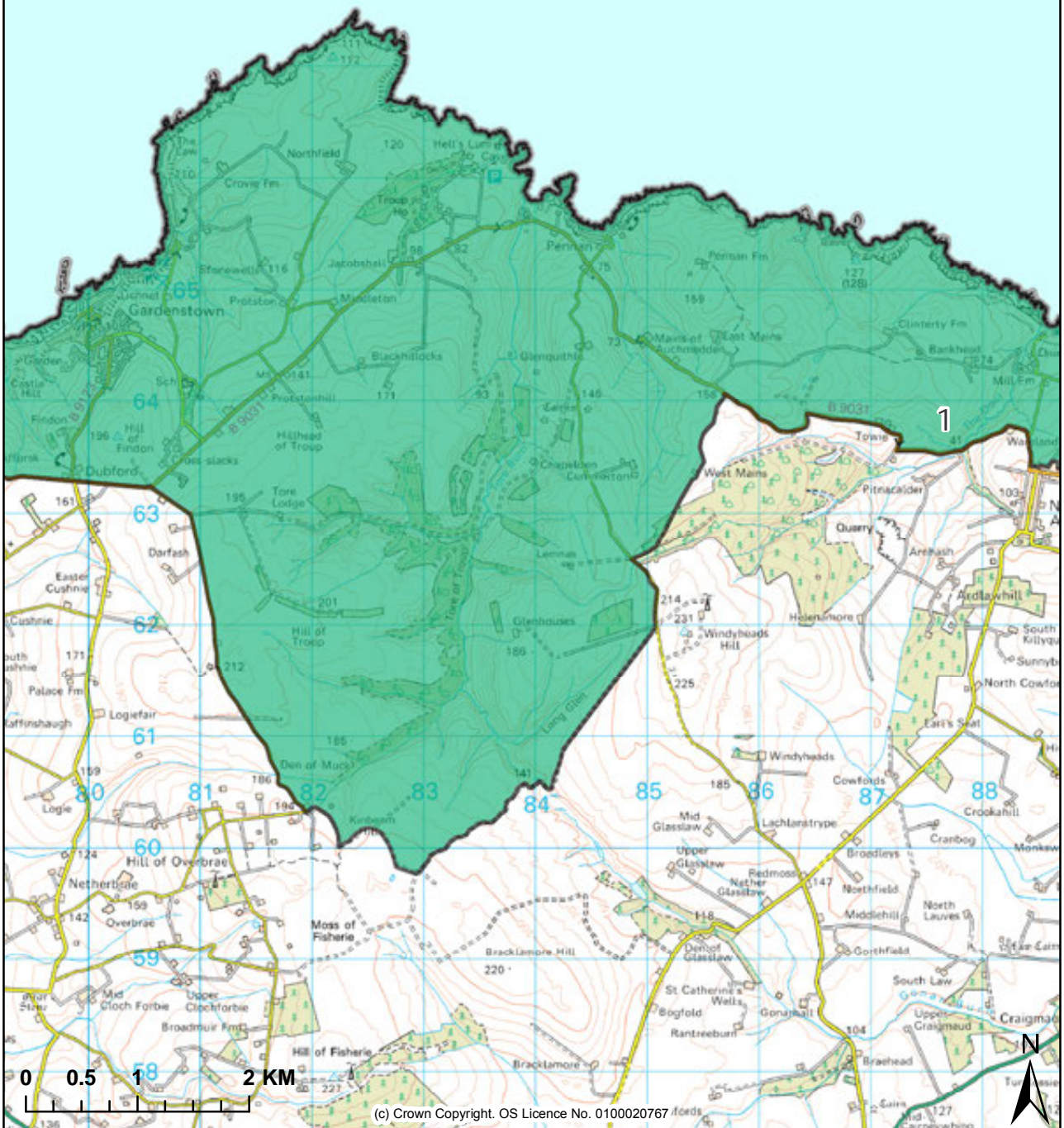


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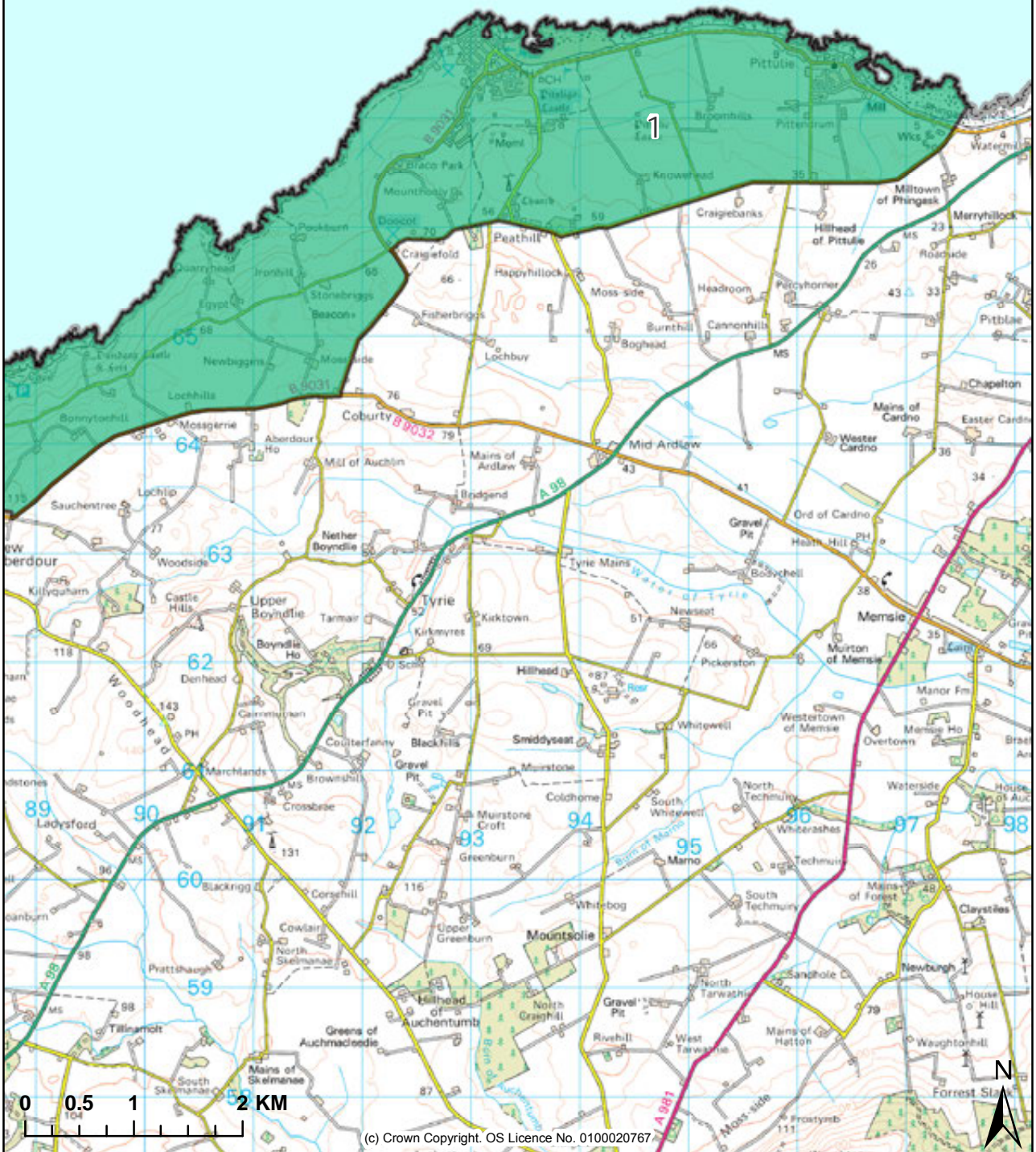


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# Statement of Importance: North East Aberdeenshire Coast Special Landscape Area

## Location and Boundaries

This SLA extends across two sections of the Aberdeenshire Coast: from Fraserburgh to Peterhead; and from Buchan Ness to Blackdog. Between Fraserburgh and Peterhead the boundary runs inland along the B9033 and A90. South of Buchan Ness at Boddam the boundary follows the A90, and then cuts in towards Cruden Bay along the A975. It crosses the River Ythan at Newburgh, and then re-joins the A90 at Rashiereive, following this road until the boundary with Aberdeen City at Blackdog. These long narrow areas cover a variety of coastal landscapes, and the boundary has been drawn to reflect the approximate extent of maritime influence, largely following roads which parallel the coast. The variation in breadth reflects topography, since in lower lying areas the influence of the sea is felt further inland, while high cliffs tend to screen the hinterland from the coastal edge. The large industrial town of Peterhead, and the developed coast immediately south, are excluded from the SLA.

Designation of this area distinguishes its strong sense of place, scenic qualities and uninterrupted views out to the North Sea. There are strong elemental qualities associated with this SLA and its dynamic character features tangible, remote and wildness qualities. This SLA has long stretches of sandy beaches, and a more gradual, less abrupt character of coastal edge. Designation also recognises the ecological value of the area's dune systems and other features that contribute to the landscape character, as well as being recognised as being nationally and/or internationally important for nature conservation. The importance of the coast to the setting of settlements and numerous built heritage assets such as castles, towers and churches. There are opportunities for formal and informal recreation, such as long distance walking routes, coastal paths and nature reserve at the Loch of Strathbeg.



*The Bullers of Buchan (Source: LUC)*

## Designation Statement

The North East Aberdeenshire Coast is a strip of coastal farmland with a strong sense of place. The SLA is unified by its east facing orientation onto the North Sea and wide sandy beaches backed by extensive dynamic dune systems with some outcrops of rugged cliffs. A collapsed sea cave, the Bullers of Buchan, is a notable geomorphological feature.

There are occasional pockets of scrubby woodland, but otherwise trees are limited in this windswept landscape. The Loch of Strathbeg, north east of Crimond, is a large inland loch and is an RSPB reserve. Forvie National Nature Reserve (NNR) east of Newburgh is a landscape of shifting sand dunes with patches of dune heath and marram grass. The Ythan Estuary runs along the edge of the NNR. The ecological value of the estuary and surrounds are recognised as being of national and international importance for nature conservation, as well as contributing to the landscape character of the area.

Settlements and industry have had a major impact on this landscape, most notably the St Fergus Gas Terminal. Elsewhere, traditional fishing villages have a strong relationship with the coast and are nestled into the sheltered landform. There are numerous features of built heritage interest along the coast.

The area is visible from the A90 and uninterrupted views out to sea are available from coastal paths including the clifftop walk at the Bullers of Buchan and the long distance Formartine and Buchan Way. Notable beaches include the expansive sands at Balmedie Country Park, and Cruden Bay. There are also numerous golf courses along the coast.

The following aspects and features of this landscape are considered worthy of recognition through SLA designation:

- Overriding horizontal composition, emphasised by low lying landform and “soft” gradual transition from land to sea.
- Expansive beaches backed by rolling dunes, views from beaches are typically directed out to sea or along the coast.
- Rugged and dramatic cliffs to the south of Boddam, with intricate landforms such as the Bullers of Buchan.
- Important nature conservation sites: Forvie National Nature Reserve covering an extensive area around the mouth of the Ythan; and the Loch of Strathbeg.
- Lighthouses such as Rattray form landmark features along the coast as by necessity they have prominent locations and colours, and a vertical form.
- A popular coast for visitors, with coastal paths, accessible dunes, golf courses and popular beaches.
- Prehistoric sites of national importance, including the Mesolithic landscapes at Sands of Forvie and Blackdog.
- Features of built heritage typically prominent in the open landscape.
- The iconic Slains Castle and its association with Bram Stoker.
- Remains of WWII anti-invasion defences along the beaches, in particular at the mouth of the Ythan River and around Rattray Head.
- Coastal settlement generally associated with small harbours, such as at Collieston and Cruden Bay. The siting and orientation of buildings can be highly distinctive, as seen at Inverallochy.
- Panoramic views out to sea from cliff tops and open beaches.

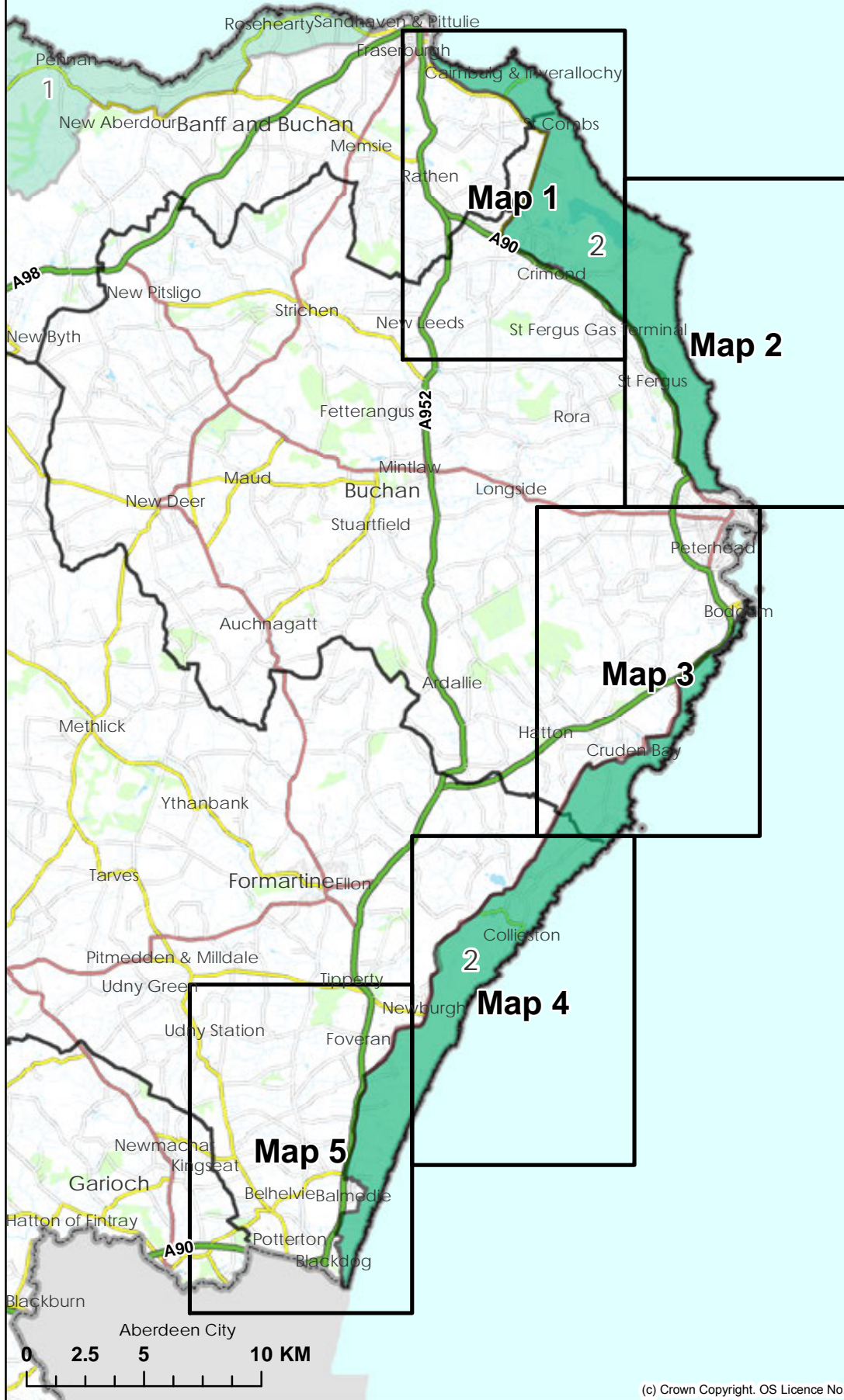
## **Forces for Change**

- Development on or near coastal cliffs and headlands impact on the sense of wildness felt or effect views out and from the sea.
- Expansion of recycling/ landfill developments around Blackdog negatively impact on the special features associated with this SLA.
- Development pressure for major residential and employment expansion as well as development within the Energetica area result in an unbalance between economic development and landscape conservation and enhancement.
- Increased growth associated with tourism such as golf, chalets and visitor centres.
- Continued development of renewable energy technologies (e.g. on and off-shore wind turbines, grid connection and associated infrastructure) affect views to and from the SLA.
- Potential for future development associated with carbon capture and storage result in damage or loss of features associated with the SLA.
- Impact of Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route in increasing the attractiveness of the area for development.
- Development proposals which effect the integrity of natural and historic features within the SLA, particularly development seeking to take advantage of sand dunes and beaches.

## **Management Recommendations**

- The North East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA is classed as a coastal landscape type. As such emphasis should be to maintain the focus of development within existing coastal settlements in order to retain the character of the coastal area. Development within settlements should be of scale and style that respects and complements their coastal character. The effects of development along the coastal edge and within the hinterland adjacent to the SLA should be carefully considered.
- Development which seeks to exploit the expansive beaches and rolling dunes, should be carefully considered in order to ensure that the dune network and panoramic views within are not negatively impacted upon.
- Development which may impact upon the dramatic cliffs to the south of Boddam, should only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the sense of place and wildness associated with the cliffs in this area will be unaffected.
- The setting of lighthouses and other landmark features along the coast should be protected.
- Care should be exercised to ensure that visitor facilities do not act to the detriment of the environmental geological, and historical qualities.
- Landscape and visual impacts of proposed developments in and around the edge of coastal settlements, should be clearly set out in a coastal character assessment, as to ensure that any impacts (both positive and negative) can be determined.
- The siting and orientation of buildings can be highly distinctive. Siting and design should be carefully considered to ensure development respects the vernacular heritage and sense of place felt in coastal settlements.

## 2 North East Aberdeenshire Coast

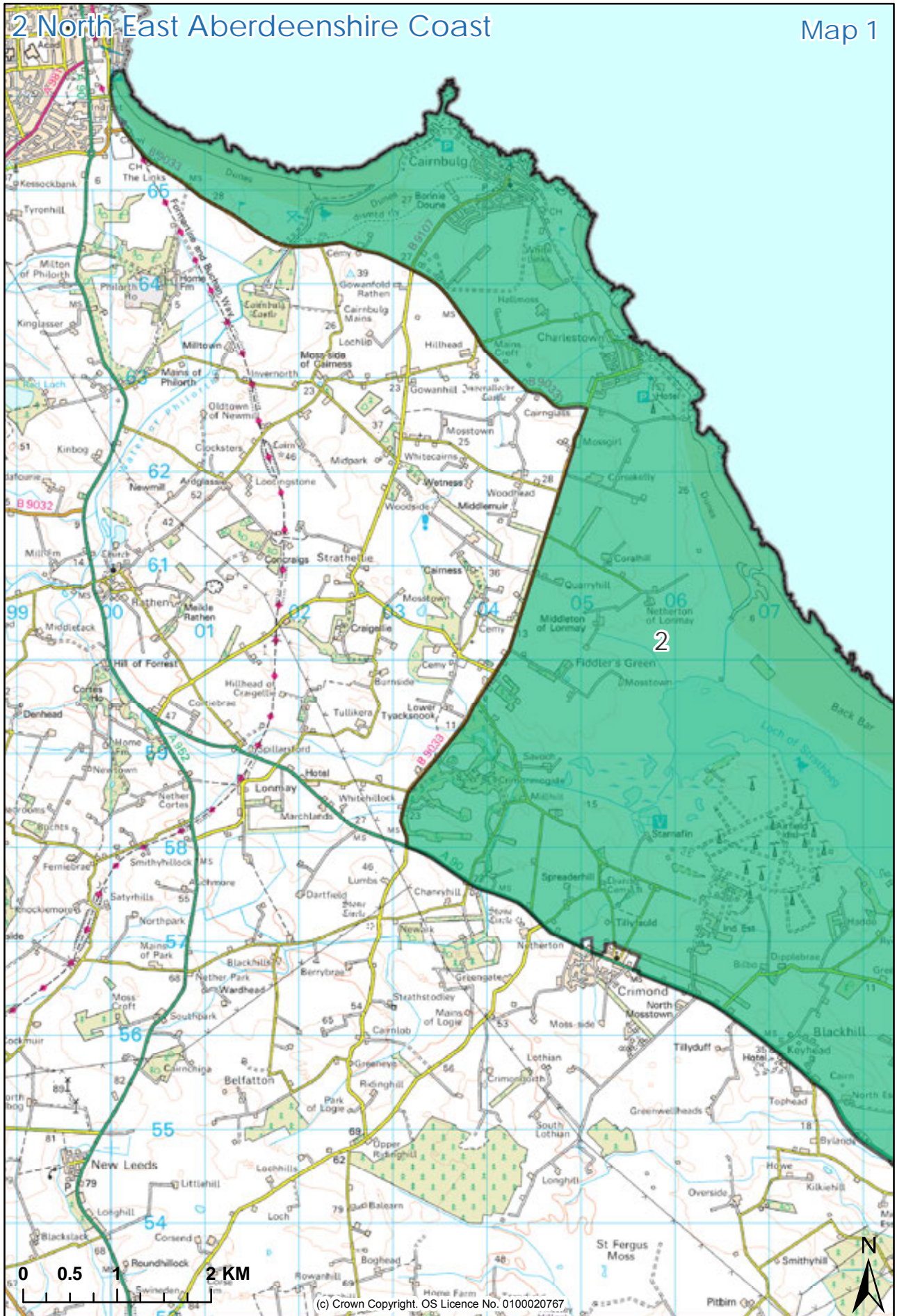


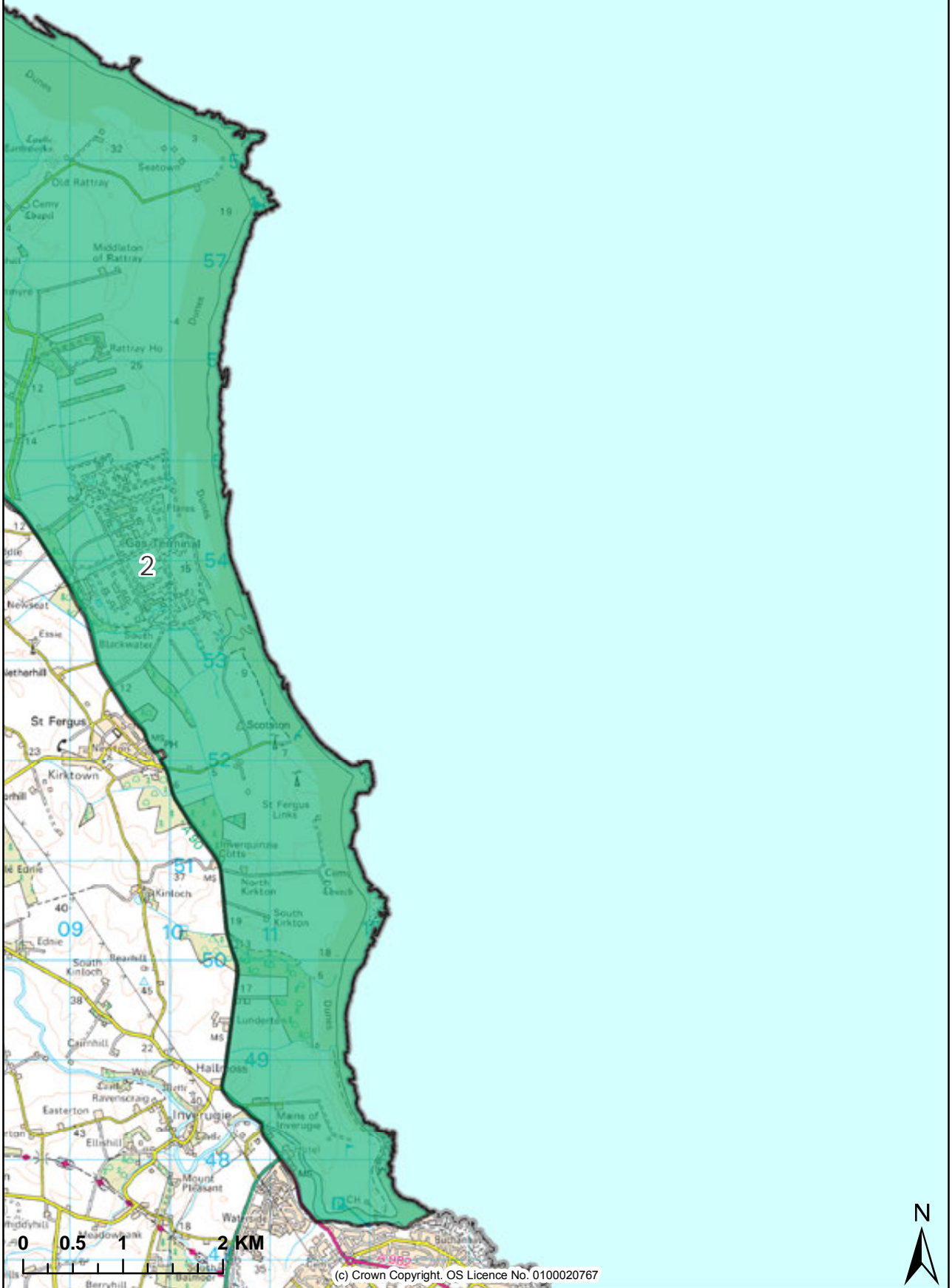
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# 2 North East Aberdeenshire Coast

Map 1

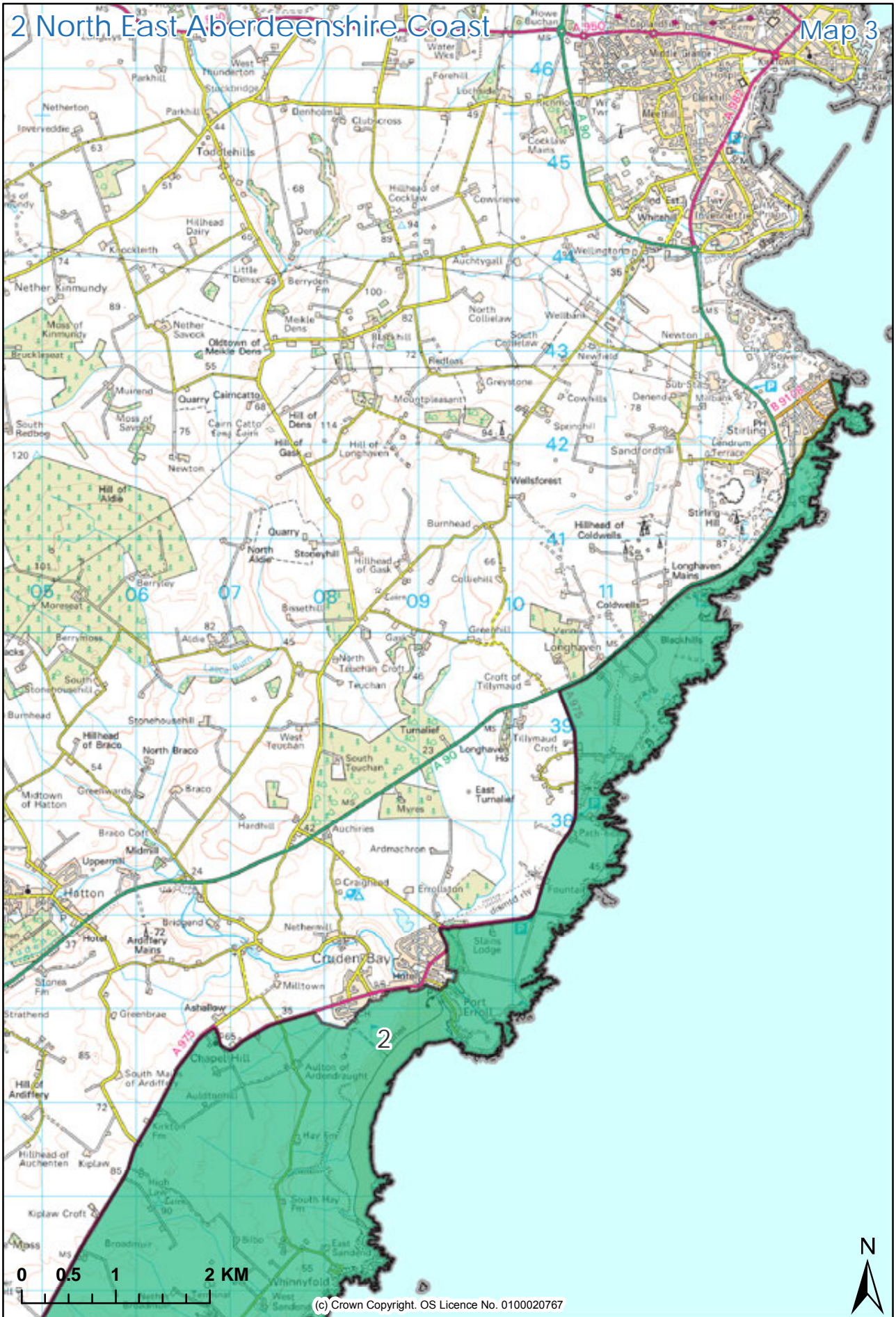






# 2 North East Aberdeenshire Coast

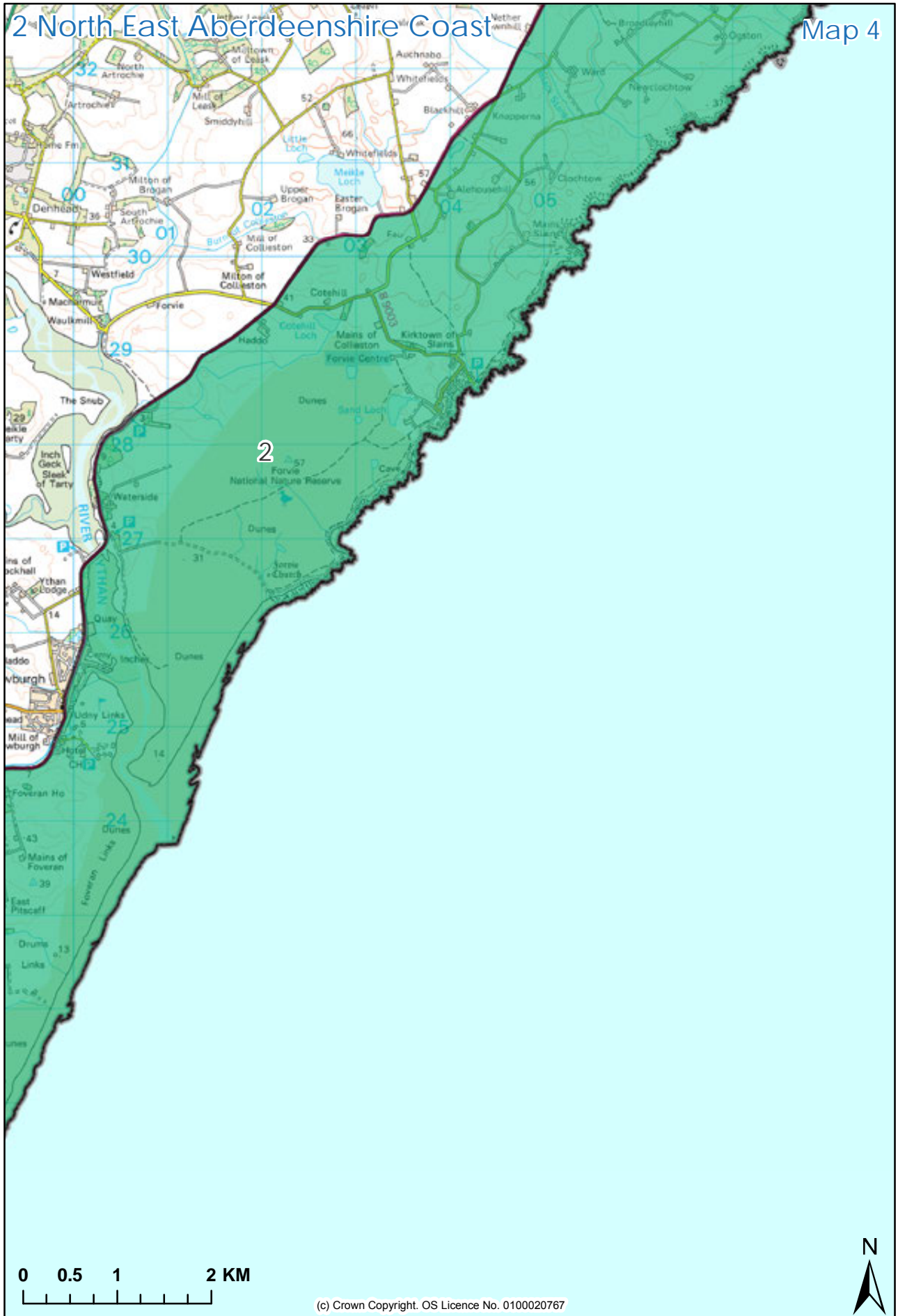
Map 3



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# 2 North East Aberdeenshire Coast

Map 4



2

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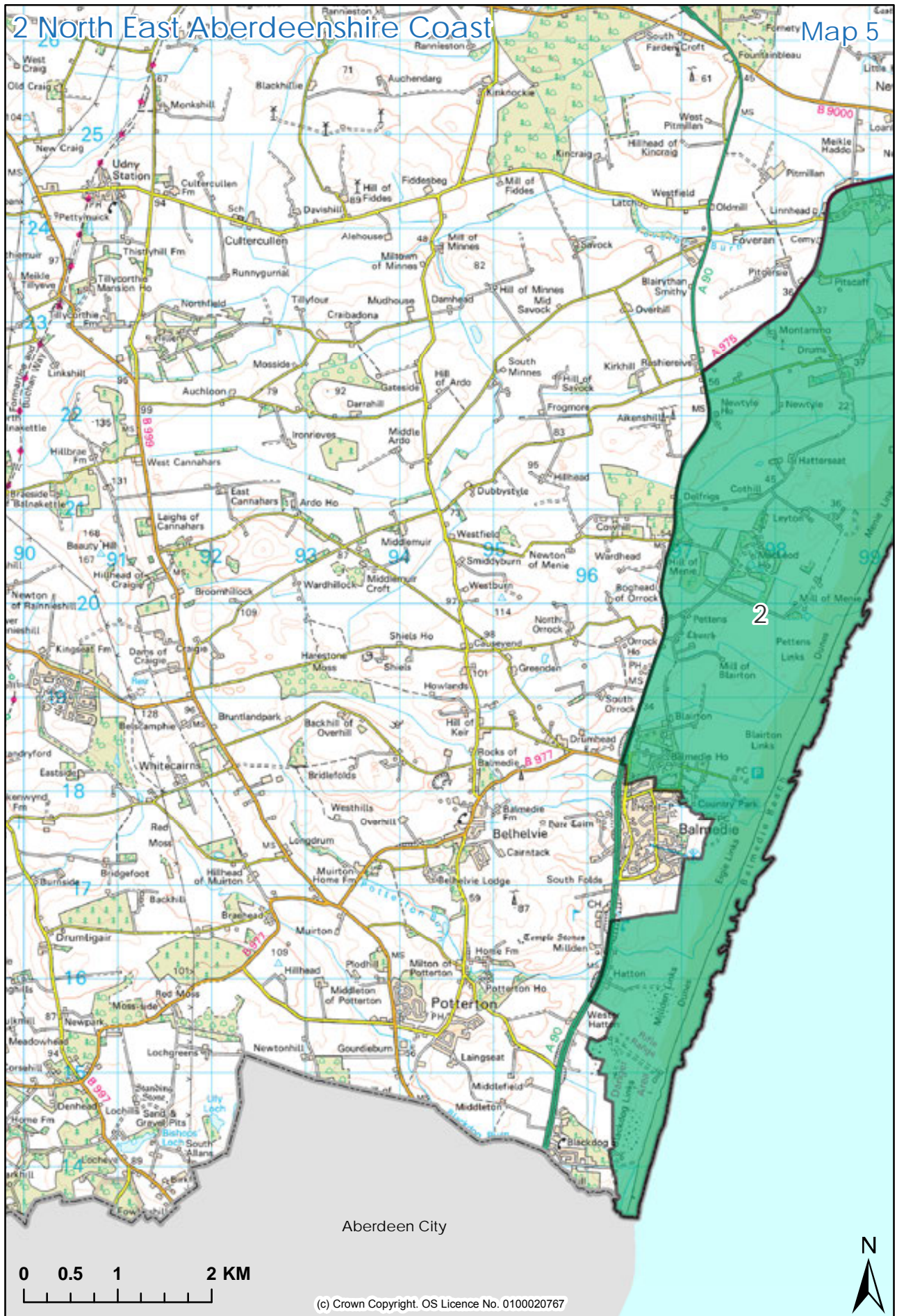
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# 2 North East Aberdeenshire Coast

Map 5



Aberdeen City

0 0.5 1 2 KM

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# Statement of Importance: South East Aberdeenshire Coast Special Landscape Area

## Location and Boundaries

This SLA covers the coast from the Aberdeen City Council boundary north of Portlethen, to the mouth of the North Esk in the south. Between Aberdeen and Newtonhill the boundary follows the railway line (except between Portlethen and Newtonhill where it cuts inland up to the A90), before joining the A90 south of Newtonhill until Stonehaven. It includes the eastern edge of the settlement before joining the A92 near Dunnottar Mains. It then follows the A92 until the boundary with Angus. This narrow but continuous strip has been defined to include areas with strong coastal influence, the landward extent of which is generally restricted due to the high cliffs that separate the hinterland from the sea.

Designation of this area recognises the importance of its rugged scenery of weathered coastal cliffs and atypical raised beach features, which form an important setting to the numerous coastal villages and towns as well as an important natural habitat. Designation also acknowledges the importance of the area for enjoyment, with its numerous coastal paths, beaches and long distance touring routes, providing connectivity for people as well as opportunities for expansive views out to sea.



*Newtonhill Bay (Source: LUC)*

## Designation Statement

The South East Aberdeenshire coast is unified by its general south east facing orientation onto the North Sea. North of Bervie Bay the coast is more rugged, with interesting features such as stacks and arches. South of Bervie Bay is a raised beach landscape and is backed by cliffs.

The windswept nature of this coastal landscape means that there are few trees. There is a broad sandy beach at St Cyrus, backed by cliffs and dunes which form part of a National



Nature Reserve. There is a clifftop seabird colony at Fowlsheugh which is an RSPB reserve and home to thousands of breeding birds. The ecological value of the area is recognised as being of national and international importance for nature conservation, as well as contributing to the landscape character of the area.

The SLA contains many settlements, the largest of which is Stonehaven, framed by cliffs and featuring a working harbour, and strong cultural elements such as the Art Deco outdoor swimming pool and annual Fireball Festival. Settlement also includes intact fishing villages located in sheltered coves or nestled on cliff tops, and larger coastal towns with extensive new development e.g. Inverbervie. Built heritage interests include the striking Dunnottar Castle, which can be approached via the coastal path from Stonehaven.

This area is visible from the A90 and A92 coastal routes, National Cycle Network Route 1, east coast railway and coastal footpaths, and sea views are fundamental to its character. Coastal landmarks include lighthouses e.g. at Todhead. Opportunities for recreation include beaches, sea kayaking and boat trips from Stonehaven harbour.

This landscape is farmed up to the coastal edge, and settlement and major transport corridors are ever present in views, however the open seas and exposure to the elements.

The following aspects and features of this landscape are considered worthy of recognition through SLA designation:

- Rugged and intricate scenery of weathered coastal cliffs and raised beach landforms, including sites of geological interest.
- The broad sweep of sand at St Cyrus, backed by dunes that form a National Nature Reserve.
- Iconic Dunnottar Castle, on a rocky headland south of Stonehaven is one of the most photographed and recognised castles internationally.
- The coast provides the immediate and wider setting for a number of larger settlements, including Portlethen, Newtonhill, and Stonehaven, framed by rising cliffs on either side.
- The Stonehaven War Memorial, which overlooks the town, is a landmark seen from the A90 and the coastal path.
- Intact traditional fishing villages with diminutive harbours including Gourdon and Catterline.
- Coastal routes include the A92, A90, east coast railway, footpaths and National Cycle Network (Route 1), all offering expansive views out to sea.
- Panoramic views out to sea from headlands and beaches and important views along the coast, including the view over the sands at St Cyrus, and views from Dunnottar.

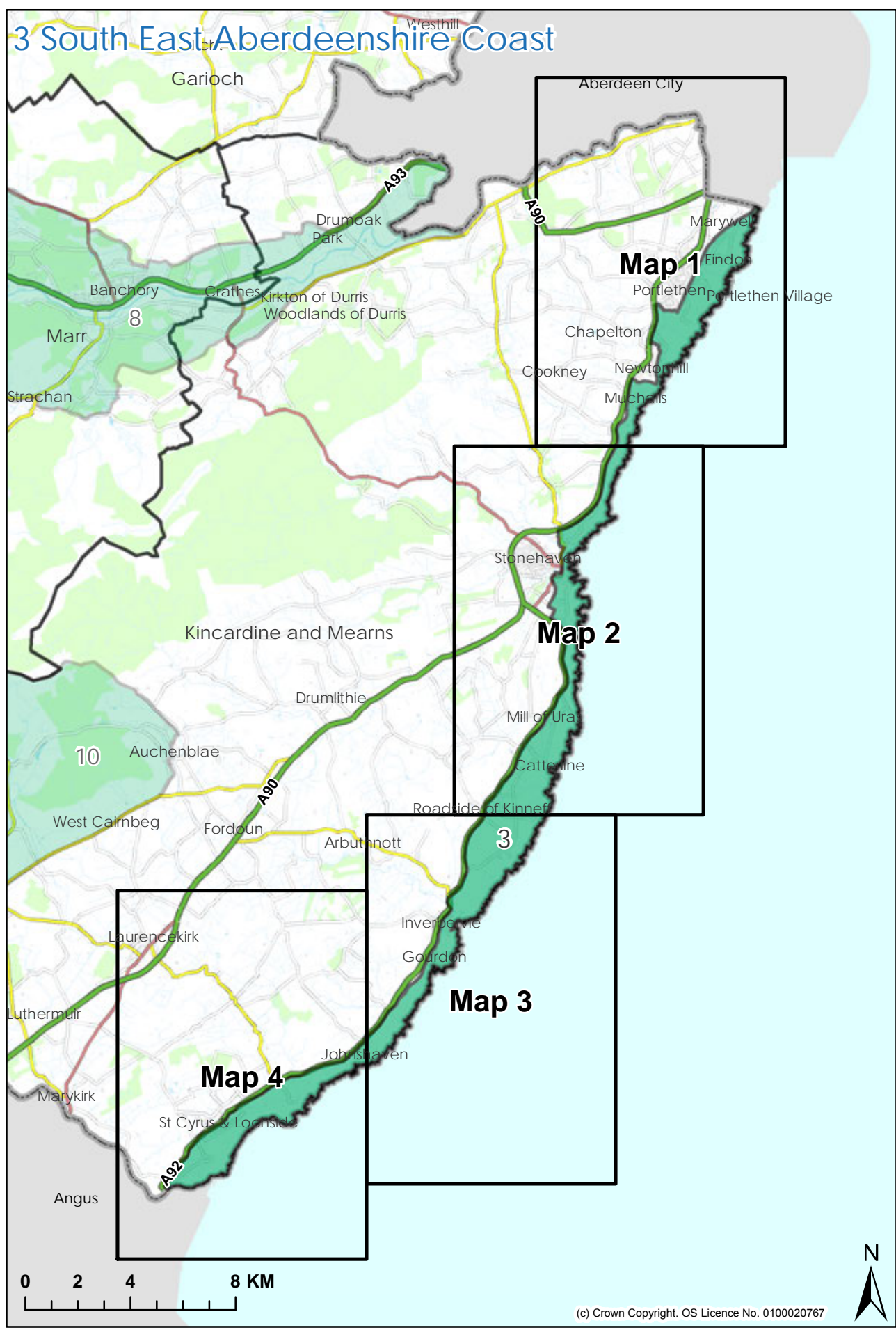
### **Forces for Change**

- Impact of proposals which effect the integrity of natural and historic features within the SLA, particularly development seeking to take advantage of sand dunes and beaches.
- Development on or near coastal cliffs and headlands.
- Development pressure for residential and employment expansion in and around towns and villages including Portlethen, Stonehaven and Newtonhill.
- Impact of Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route in increasing the attractiveness of the area for development.
- Increased recreation along coastal paths may lead to erosion.
- Development of renewable energy technologies (e.g. on and off-shore wind turbines, grid connection and associated infrastructure) affect views to and from the SLA.
- Recreation pressures, including ancillary development of signage, car parking etc. could have an impact on the qualities of wildness.

## Management Recommendations

- The South East Aberdeenshire Coast SLA is classed as a coastal landscape type. As such emphasis should be to maintain the focus of development within existing coastal settlements in order to retain the character of the coastal area. Development within settlements should be of scale and style that respects and complements their coastal character. The effects of development along the coastal edge and within the hinterland adjacent to the SLA should be carefully considered through a coastal character assessment.
- Development should only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the sense of place associated with the cliffs in this area will be unaffected.
- Development which may impact on the headlands, beaches and landmarks in the area should be carefully considered in order to ensure that the panoramic views within are not negatively impacted upon including the view over the sands at St Cyrus, and views from Dunnottar.
- Development should conserve the coastal characteristics associated with towns in this area.
- In smaller coastal villages design of development proposals should respect the vernacular heritage and sense of place that they provide.
- Assess the potential impact on the sea views from significant roads, paths and visitor sites, particularly seeking to ensure that the ragged and wild nature of the coastal cliff tops and open vista of St Cyrus Bay are maintained.

# 3 South East Aberdeenshire Coast

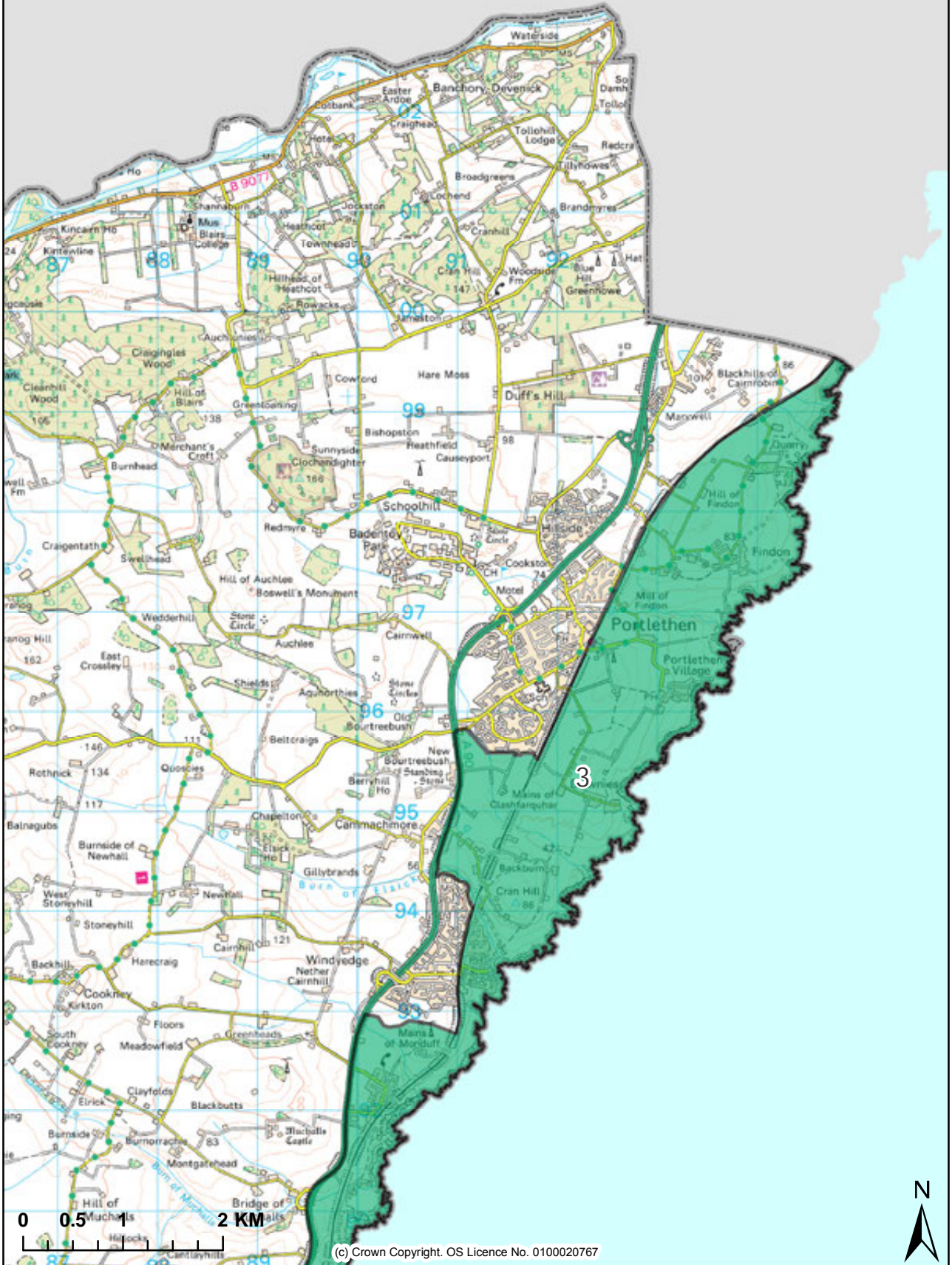




# 3 South East Aberdeenshire Coast

Map 1

Aberdeen City

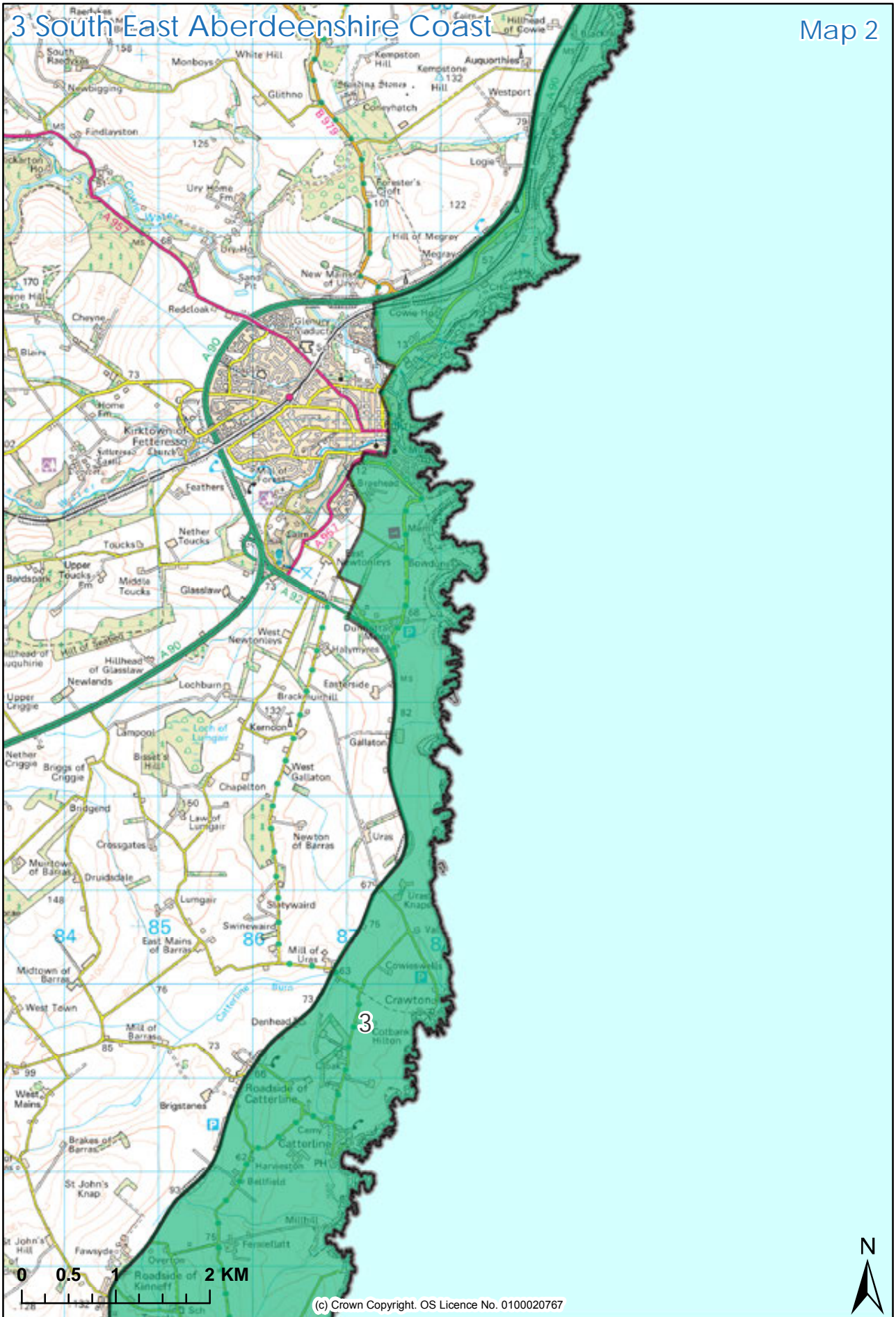


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# 3 South East Aberdeenshire Coast

Map 2



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# 3 South East Aberdeenshire Coast

Map 3



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# 3 South East Aberdeenshire Coast

Map 4



Angus

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