

4.4 Context: Landscape Character and Strategic Visual Assessment

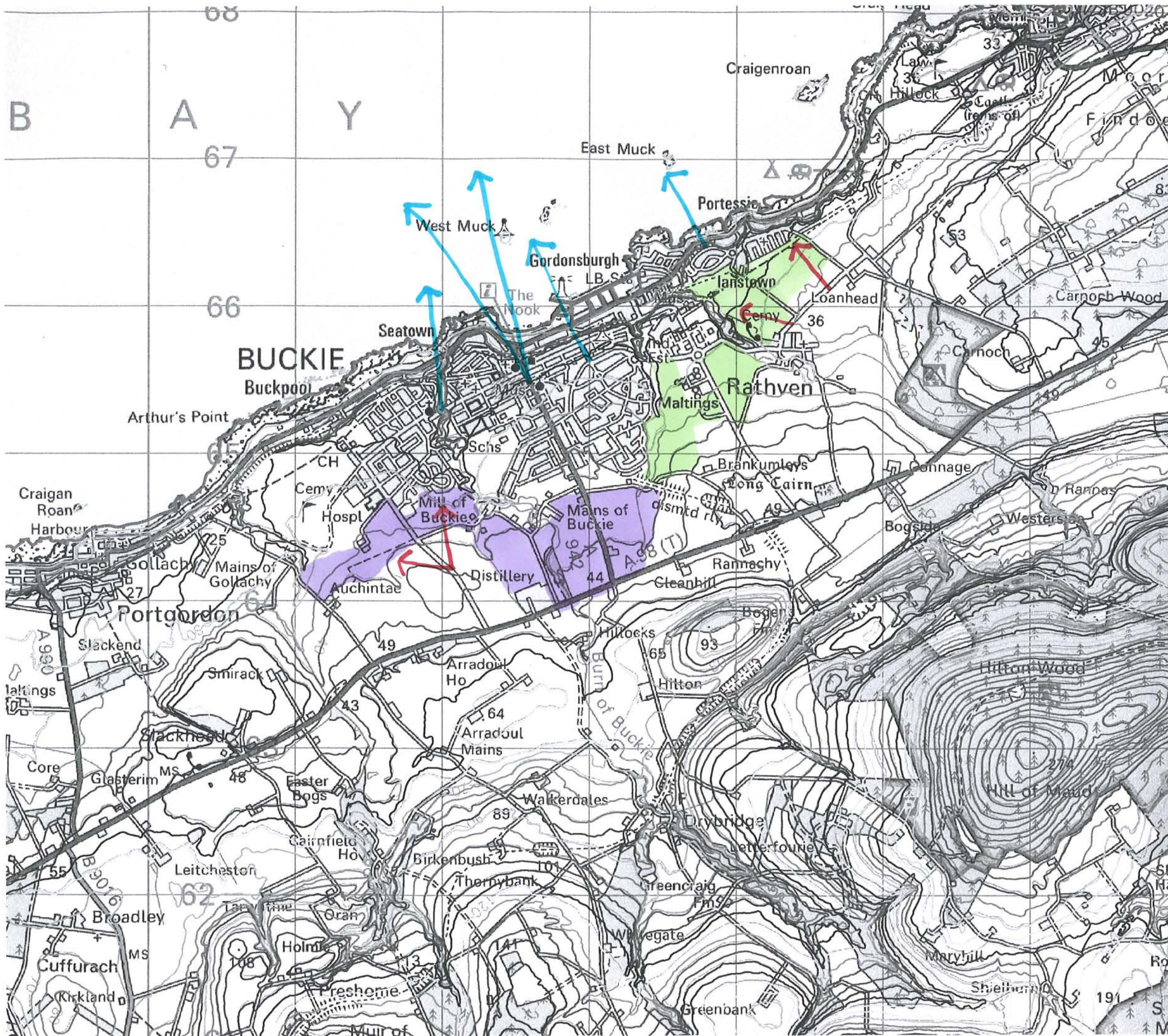
Buckie is located within the 'Hard Coastal Shore' character area as identified in the Moray and Nairn Landscape Character Assessment¹, and strategic advice on how best to accommodate urban expansion is included within the Assessment report. An extract is included in Annex Three. The more specific landscape character of the setting of Buckie was used to inform the extent of study areas which form the basis of the analysis and presentation of findings in the remainder of this report. The study areas around Buckie were identified as:

- Buckie East: a narrow sliver of the settlement extends eastwards to encompass lanstown and Portessie, while the main industrial estate extends onto the hinterland of gentle north facing slopes and the more recent housing is contained by the deep gulley associated with the Freuchny Burn
- Buckie West: the relatively level plain which extends either side of the A942 gives way westwards to more undulating rounded landforms which provide some enclosure to the settlement from the west

Apart from viewpoints along the coast, much of Buckie is not highly visible, due to its low lying profile and the subtle containment provided by the low ridges. However, where the settlement has extended onto gentle south facing slopes along the A924, the settlement can be seen from the A98. Views from the town extend northwards to the sea, and within more recent development, southwards across the coastal plain. Key visual characteristics of Buckie include:

- The prominence of the sea, which forms a backdrop to the town on approach from the south, and which is visible from within the town as the focal point to views along straight streets extending up from the shore
- It is difficult to get a view of the whole town, although the low profile of the settlement means that prominent spires create a distinctive skyline
- The settlement is visible as a feature from a distance along the coast, but is largely hidden by the gentle ridges from viewpoints to the south

¹ Moray and Nairn Landscape Assessment, 1988, Turnbull Jeffrey Partnership, Scottish Natural Heritage



INTEGRATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT INTO THE MORAY LANDSCAPE

Buckie

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Scale 1:25 000

Study Areas

- Buckie East: gentle north facing slopes
- Buckie West: the level land associated with the A942 gives way westwards to more undulating land form

Views

- Numerous views north to the sea from within the town take advantage of the grid like street pattern
- From surrounding roads, views across the settlement extend out to sea

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5 BUCKIE EAST: ASSESSING THE DEVELOPMENT BIDS

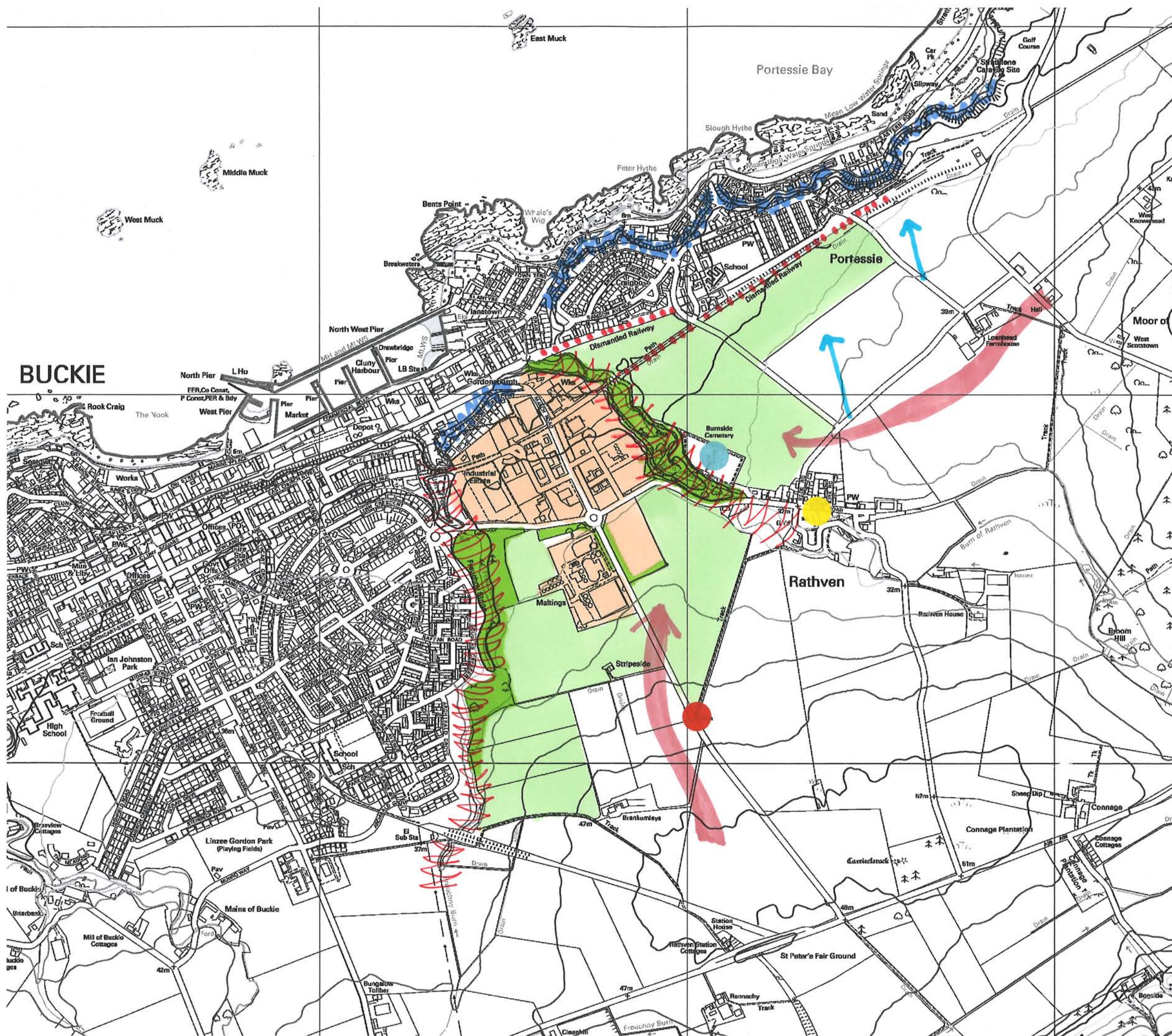
5.1 Buckie East: Landscape Survey and Site Observations

This study area has been retained as one landscape character unit. Buckie East is dominated by expansive gentle undulations, which largely maintain a north facing aspect, extending north from the A98. Key characteristics which influence settlement expansion include:

North Facing Slopes

- the expanse of long, slightly concave north facing ridges slopes extends down to the settlement from the A98, screening much of the town from the road
- the gradient becomes more level as it approaches Portessie and Ianstown
- incised gulleys, associated with the Freuchny Burn and the Rathven Burn subdivide the gentle slopes
- open, relatively featureless landscape of arable farm land and improved grassland, subdivided by post and wire fences, with the occasional bank of whin on less cultivated land
- trees are largely associated with the incised gulleys, houses and other buildings
- the settlement of Rathven lies within this character area, and at present is a distinct settlement
- while the low lying, more level land has strong visual and physical links with the existing settlement, the higher slopes and elevated ridges are perceptually more detached from the main settlement
- the original settlement focussed on the sea, while more recent development is orientated south
- edges of the settlement are relatively well defined by footpaths based on a disused railway line and the den of the Freuchny Burn
- long views across Portessie to the sea characterise the approach from the south, which culminates in the sense of arrival at the industrial estate
- the modified land form and dense planting of the industrial estate seems out of character with the gentle gradients and informal woodland of the surrounding landscape
- along the coast road, the sense of arrival is highlighted by a pinch point between the steep raised beach and the sea

INTEGRATION OF NEW DEVELOPMENT INTO THE MORAY LANDSCAPE
Buckie East
 SURVEY AND SITE OBSERVATIONS
 Scale 1:10 000



- Landscape Character**
- North Facing Slopes
- Landscape Survey**
- Long, gentle ridges
 - Steep sided den
 - Raised beach
 - Woodland
 - Paths and Tracks
 - Existing industrial estate
 - Cemetery
 - Village of Rathven
- Landscape Setting**
- Sense of arrival emphasised by ascent into settlement
- Visual Assessment**
- Long views across the settlement to the sea

BUCKIE

The Potential Effects of Built Development on Landscape Character: Buckie East

	North Facing Slopes
Landscape Character	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development in the low lying, relatively level land adjacent to the existing settlement edge would be well associated with the existing settlement and occupy areas of similar landscape character • Building on lowlying areas would benefit from the containment provided by the gentle north facing slopes • Care should be taken not to encourage coalescence between Buckie and Rathven
Settlement Form	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development on low lying land would continue the relationship between the settlement and the coast, and the north facing orientation of the town, without extending development further along the coastline
Landscape Setting	<p>Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional development could be accommodated on the low lying slopes without disrupting the long views to the sea which forms the key element to the settlement setting
Sense of Arrival	<p>Neutral/positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing sense of arrival from the south could be enhanced by well designed setting for development, which respected the natural gentle landforms characteristic of the area • Well sited development should ensure that the settlements of Ianstown and