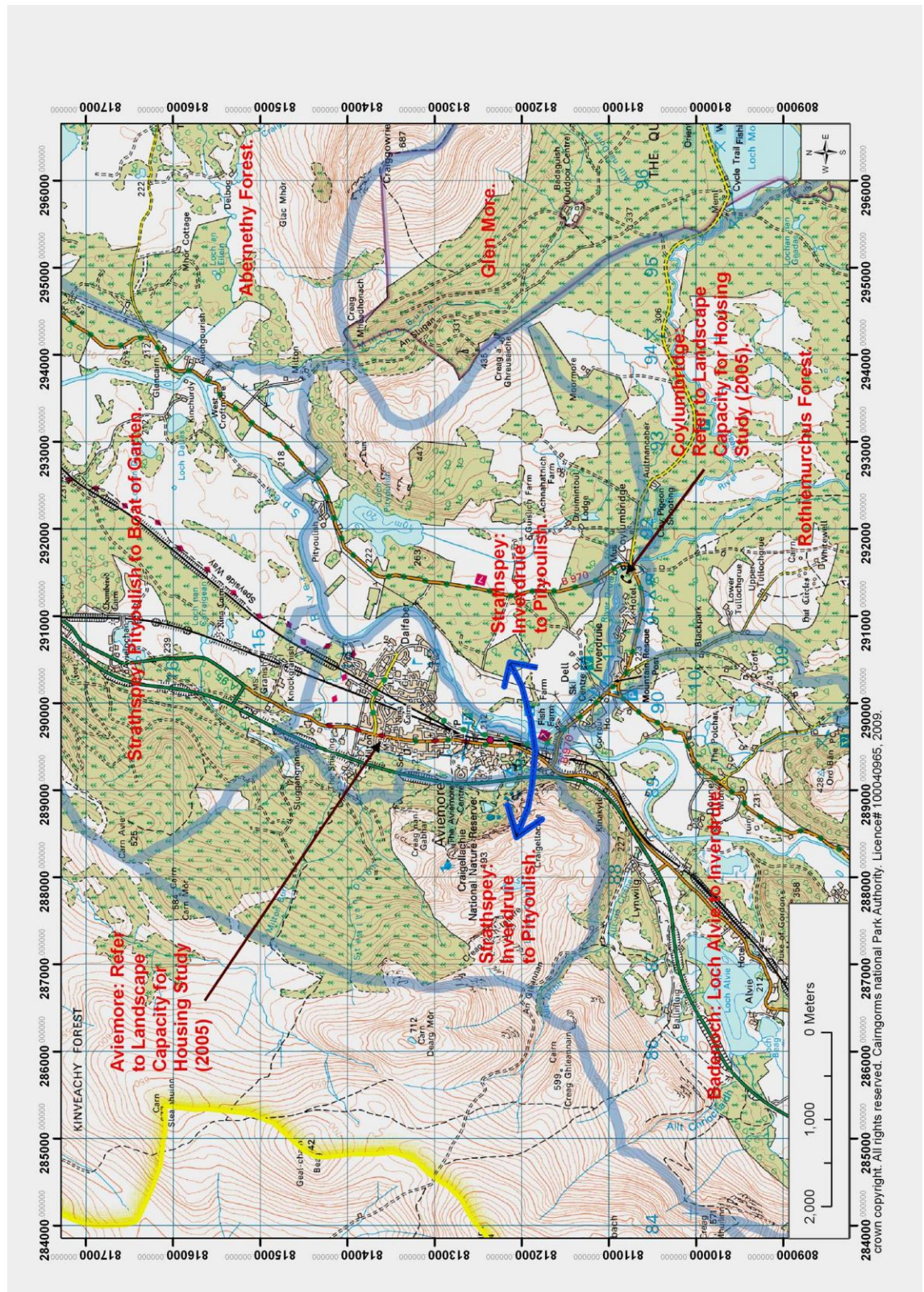


## I.1 Strathspey: Inverdrue to Pityoulish



### 1.1.1 *Landscape character*

This character extends across Strathspey and includes the setting of Aviemore. It is contained by the steep, craggy wooded slopes of Craigellachie, an ice-roughened schist ridge, to the west and Pityoulish Hill to the east, both of which have proved resistant to erosion

The Spey forms wide meanders across the slightly undulating floor of the strath. Well-drained, glacial-fluvial terraces extend along either side of the strath floor

Extensive low and fertile flats, associated with the Spey at the Dell, and extending south from Loch Pityoulish, are contained by steep-sided river terraces and hummocky terrain of glacial-fluvial deposit

Between these, there is a raised, undulating gravelly terrace occupied by moorland and pine woodland at An Camus Mor

Regularly shaped, straight edged, late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century improved fields are located on the flat splay of alluvial deposit at the confluence of the Spey and the Druie, along the elevated terrain below Pityoulish and on the terraces and slopes east of the B970

Conifer woodland extends over much of the undulating floor of the strath and the hill slopes north of Craigellachie, partially fragmented by heather moorland

Hummocky deposits north of Aviemore, some close to the edge of the settlement, are covered with birch woodland which contrasts with more open level grazing land

Loch Pityoulish nestles at the foot of steep slopes, its deeply indented form fringed by policy woodland and wetlands. Purple beech and oak woodlands together with occasional groupings of ornamental conifers occur around the well-screened estate buildings. The pronounced knoll of Callart Hill further contains the Loch.

Aviemore is located on a terrace west of the Spey, and has been extended to the north and onto low terraces near to the river

More recent development has extended under the A9 onto the lower slopes of Craigellachie

Clusters of linear settlement and commercial development, set within woodland, sit along much of the length of the B970 between Aviemore and Coylumbridge.

The elevated A9 is largely hidden within cuttings and woodland, and uses a slot-like glacial valley to pass through the ridge of Craigellachie

The narrow B970, east of the Spey, travels through a sequence of enclosed woodland and open space of moor and farmland.

Although few formal footpaths and recreational facilities are evident in the eastern part of this area, Craigellachie National Nature Reserve

and the River Spey are important recreational resources easily accessible from Aviemore.

#### 1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

The eastern part of this character area appears 'tucked away' and relatively quiet, contrasting with the bustle of nearby Aviemore which is largely screened from the B970 by the raised landform of An Camus Mor and woodland, and is separated by the river.

A 'pinch point', where the River Spey comes close to Pityoulish Hill, is further reinforced by Loch Pityoulish and policy woodland which marks the threshold into this landscape in the north at Pityoulish estate

The twisting, narrow B970 accentuates the intimate scale and scenic qualities experienced in this area

The B970 offers striking long views towards the Cairngorms massif

There are limited views of the mountains from the A9 in this area, but Craigellachie looms into view when travelling south

On arrival to Aviemore from the north, there is a fine view of the massif which is partially obscured by trees and recent development

#### 1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This character area is fairly contained with only brief glimpses of the northern face of the Cairngorm massif.



#### 1.1.4 Assessment of distinctiveness

This landscape combines the bustle, activity and infrastructure of Aviemore and satellite settlements on the 'ski road', with a quiet and less developed landscape to the east of the Spey. The mix of extensive woodlands, moorland, policy features and farmland, set against the dramatic local features of Craigellachie, Callart Hill, Loch Pityoulish and the Spey and combined with occasional views of the Cairngorms massif, form a fine setting to these developments.



*The raised, slightly undulating terrace with woodland of diverse age structure at An Camus Mor hides Aviemore in views from the B970*



*Steep sided Callart Hill on the left, with a low lying, level plain of farmland framed by river terrace in the foreground, leading to Loch Pityoulish*



*A low lying fertile flat of farmed land, with hummocky terrain in the background*



*Loch Pityoulish framed by trees and hills*



*The A9, within cuttings and further enclosed with woodland, and Craigellachie looming into view*



*Northern edge of Aviemore, with birch on hummocky deposits*