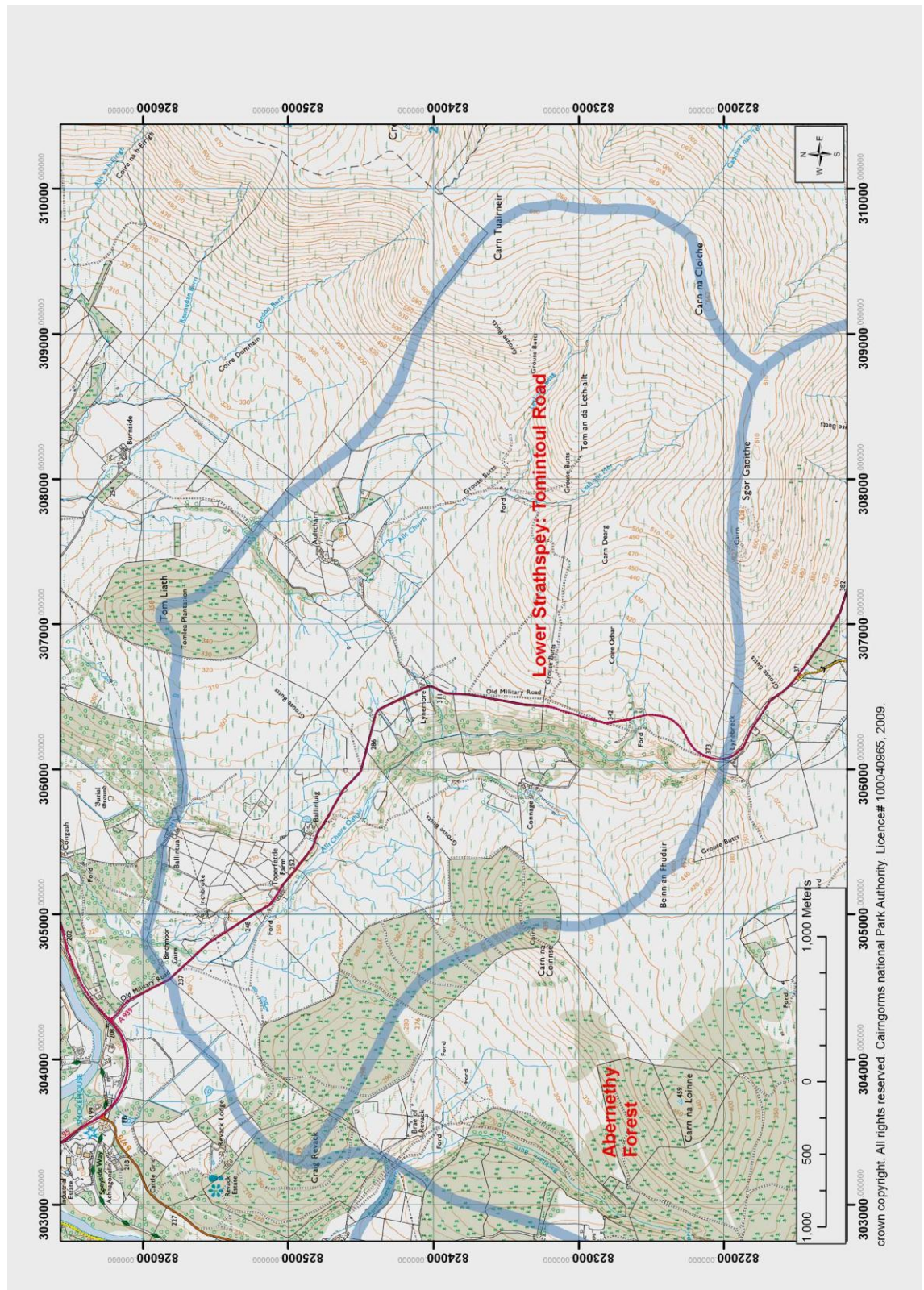


I.1 Lower Strathspey: Tomintoul Road



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

This shallow basin faces north west, elevated above a steeply incised gorge with low ridges to the east and west providing subtle containment, and the steep flanks of the Hills of Cromdale forming a dramatic enclosure to the south

This an older valley, which has been left elevated above Strathspey by glacial erosion deepening the trench of the main strath as the ice flowed from Grantown northwards across Dava Moor

The side slopes are gentle and elevated, with occasional, small, drier ridges sitting slightly above shallow bowls of poorly drained wet heath

The gorge of the Allt Choire Odhair becomes steeper and more incised towards the watershed where it has incised a well defined and dramatic steep sided pass, a former melt water channel, at Lynebreck,

The upper reaches of the gorge are hidden within dense broadleaved woodland

Conifer woodland is located on some of the low summits which contain the bowl, reinforcing the subtle enclosure

There is widespread woodland regeneration, extending up tributary watercourses from the Allt Choire Odhair, and across the moorland at the head of the glen

In addition, there are a few small stands of Scots pine, largely associated with farm buildings, which form slightly overgrown shelter woods

Late 18th/19th century farmsteads with associated straight-edged improved fields are located on free draining ridges along the upper edge of the river valley, although Aultcharn is perched at a higher level

Each patch of fields is bright green, a contrast to the heather moorland

The two lane A939 sits east of the gorge, set back from the immediate edge, partially following the line of the old Military road

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

There is a dramatic sense of arrival when reaching the narrow pass at Lynebreck, when travelling in either direction along the A939

The sense of ascent and descent up and down the A939 through this basin is emphasised by the continuous, even gradient of the road

There are panoramic views over Strathspey and north to the Strathdearn Hills when descending the A939

Outwith the deep, steep-sided river valley, the shallow glen seems open and expansive

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This shallow glen is a threshold between the expanse of Abernethy and the rounded, convex slopes of the hills to the south and the approach to Strathspey to the north.

1.1.4 *Assessment of distinctiveness*

Settlement is largely limited to the individual farmsteads, which form a clear pattern sitting within bright green improved fields on drier ridges, contrasting with the heather. There is a strong sense of drama which builds up as a traveller approaches the pass at Lynebreck, and the views either north or south are suddenly revealed.



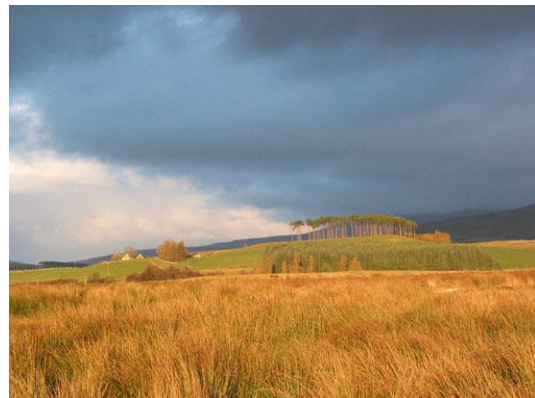
The wide shallow basin of the valley, with the Hills of Cromdale in the background



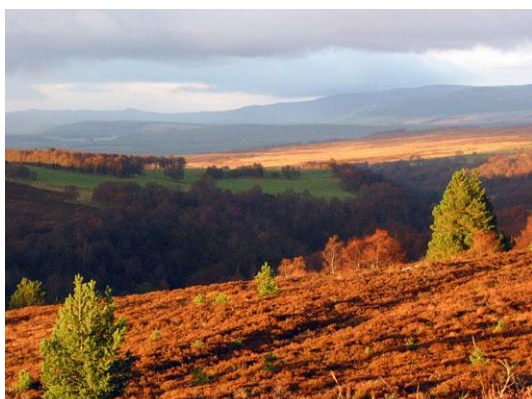
The dense broadleaved woodland in the gorge



Extensive conifer woods across the upper slopes to the west of the gorge



The farm at Aultcharn, on a drier ridge, with a shelter wood of pine above late 18th/19th century improved fields



Regenerating pine in the foreground of the view north at the dramatic pass at Lynebreck. Green fields perched on the edge of the gorge in the middle distance

