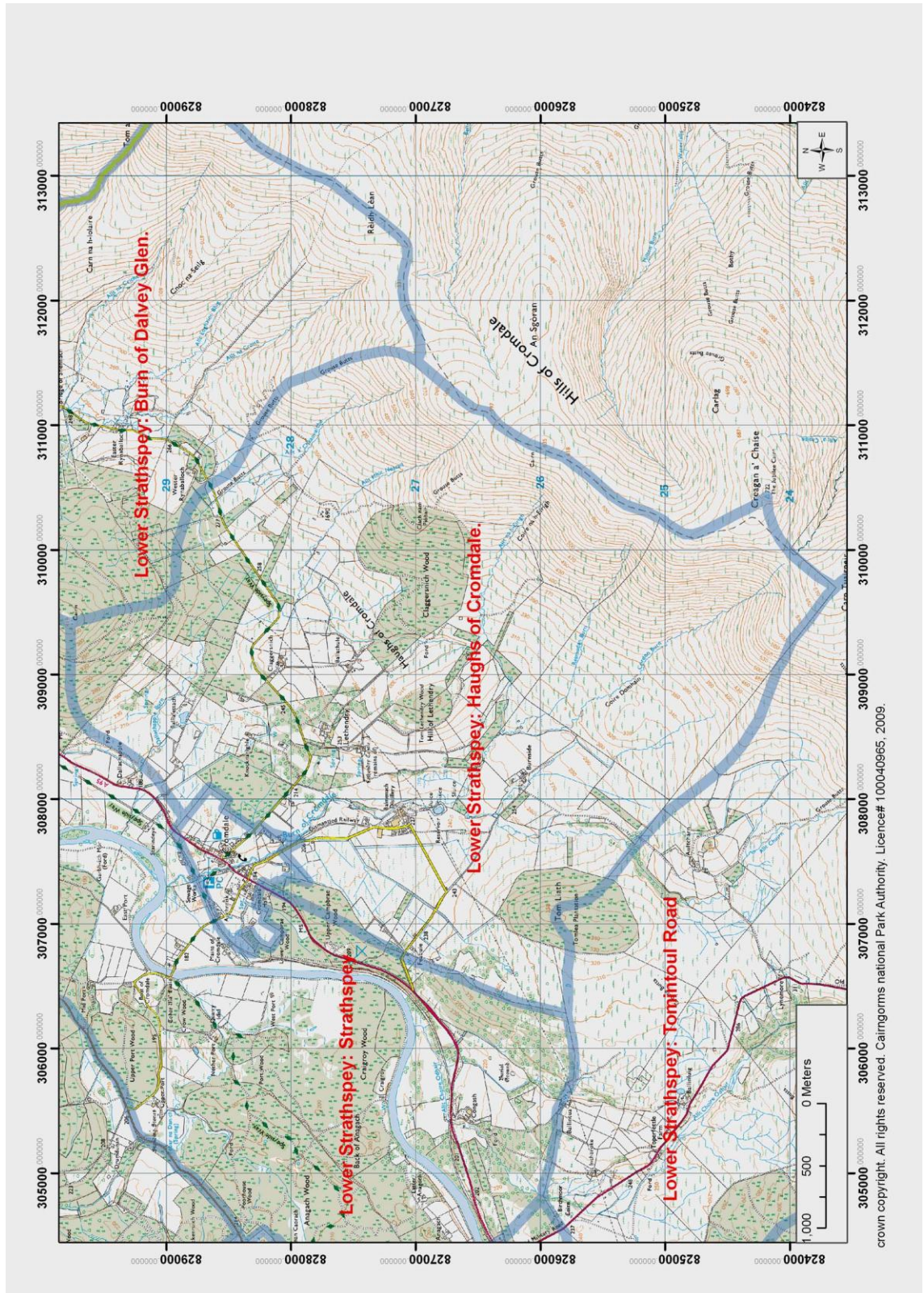


I.1 Lower Strathspey: Haughs of Cromdale



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

These two shallow side glens extend at right angles from the main valley of Strathspey in a south easterly direction, towards the lower slopes of the smooth, rounded ridges of the Hills of Cromdale

The glens are wide bowls, containing glacial till, flanked by low ridges and hills and drained by a series of small burns which flow into wet, boggy low lying basins at the mouth of each glen. They may well be an ancient floor of the River Spey

Conifer woodland occupies some of the low hills and ridges, but the steep, north west facing slopes of the hills of Cromdale are actively managed heather grouse moor

There are occasional conifer shelterbelts on the farmed land, and broadleaves, largely associated with Lethendry, where there are also remains of a castle and designed landscape

The late 18th/19th century improved fields are large and regularly shaped, located on drier sloping ground above the wetland, in a wide band along the sides of the glens

Grassland dominates, but there are also some arable crops, as well as signs of reversion to unimproved grassland and wetland on the less well drained slopes.

Settlement is in clearly defined clusters at Feabuie and the distillery, associated with drier ridges, although more recent development has strayed onto wetter land

The village of Cromdale, adjacent to the Burn of Cromdale, sits where the side glens meet Strathspey

Farms, including occasional abandoned farm sites, are dispersed across the drier slopes, often located above the pastures, overlooking the glens, with areas of pre-medieval/prehistoric farming even higher up-slope along the 300m contour

These slopes were the location for the Battle of Cromdale – the closing confrontation between Jacobite and Government troops in the first rising of 1689-90

The public roads are narrow, and skirt the edges of the wetland, linking the main settlements on slightly higher ground

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

This dramatic, steep, north western face of the Hills of Cromdale provides a formidable backdrop

The sparse woodland across the floors of the glens combines with the wetland to emphasise an open character, which is further reinforced by the lack of high enclosure to the north west

The reversion of fields to wetland creates an impression that the land is in transition, and slowly reverting to a more natural character

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This area is strongly influenced by the Hills of Cromdale, which are a powerful presence, and in contrast, the area is relatively open to the north, where views extend to the more distant landscape of the Strathdearn Hills.

1.1.4 *Assessment of distinctiveness*

The formidable backdrop of the Hills of Cromdale, as well as the sense of a landscape which is undergoing change – particularly reverting to a more natural, wetland dominated valley floor – are dominant characteristics.



The formidable flanks of the Hills of Cromdale rise above fields subdivided by occasional conifer shelterbelts



Wetland across lower lying slopes and the bottom of the basin, and views north across Strathspey to the Strathdearn hills



Settlement occupies very subtle ridges of higher land above the wetland



Arable crops, as well as grassland, are grown on drier slopes in this area