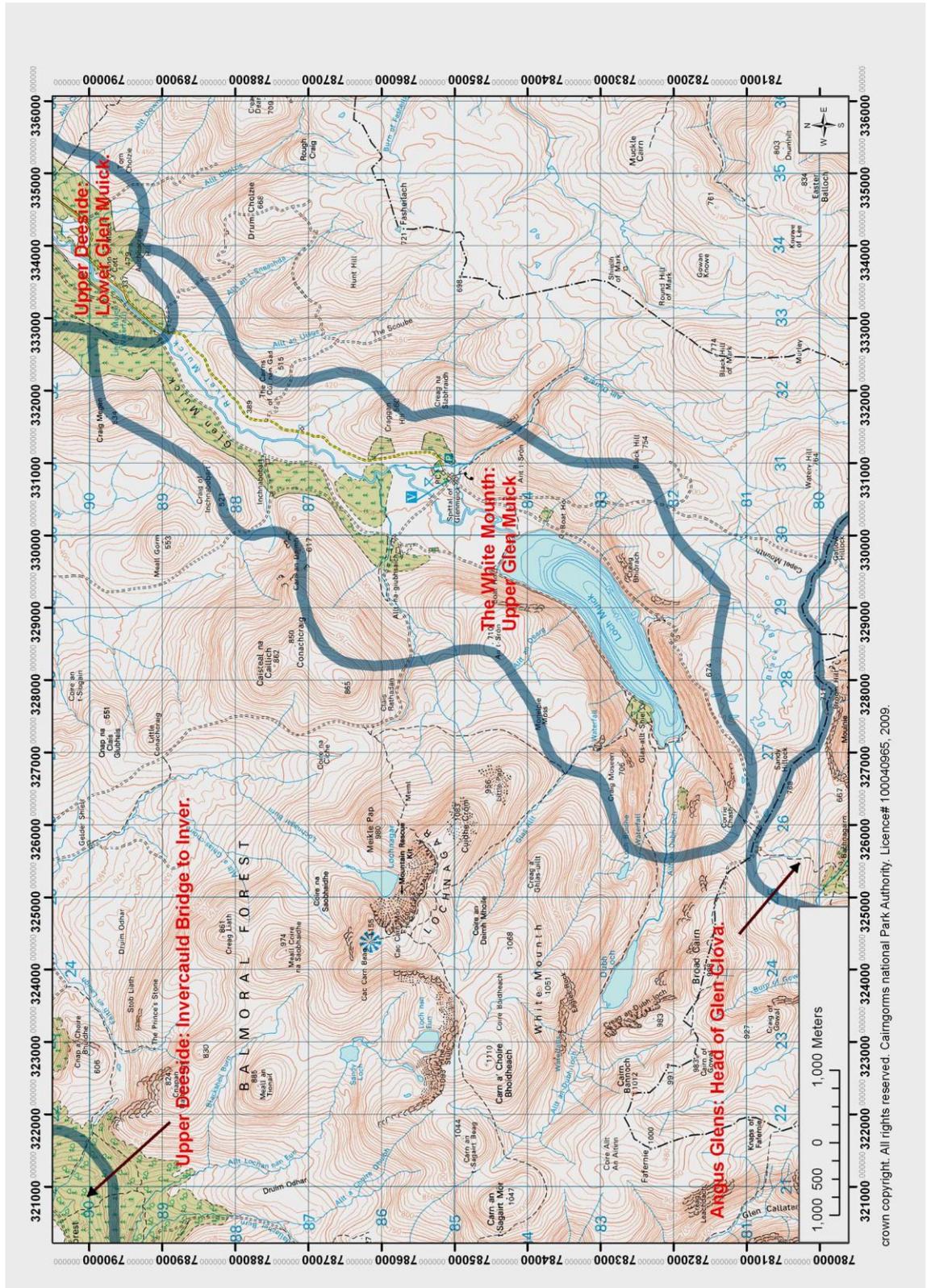


I.1 The White Mouth: Upper Glen Muick



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1.1.1 *Landscape character*

Glen Muick transforms from a densely wooded gorge at the Linn of Muick to a broad, open upland glen with flat valley floor contained by the shallow heather-clad flanks of rounded hills

In the upper reaches of the Glen, the hillsides steepen where Loch Muick fills a deep glacial trough, formed by ice which has moved eastwards from high up on the southern flanks of what is now the White Mounth

The simple form of Loch Muick is contained by sheer boulder-strewn slopes, steepened and roughened by glaciation below a rim of bulging crags

Deep erosion has left tributary valleys hanging at the surrounding high plateau, from where waterfalls drop into the trough of the loch and are a particular feature after heavy rain or following snow melt

The River Muick flows from the loch to the Dee in a channel which meanders tightly across the wide valley floor, filled with glacial deposit which has been partly worked flat by the river

Conifer woodlands of larch and pine on lower valley sides are arranged in long belts and isolated blocks on lower hill slopes. Mature native pine filter through these woodlands in places

The valley floor is mire and boggy unimproved pasture

This area is sparsely settled, with very occasional estate cottages and lodges largely sited on the south-east facing lower hill slopes at the mouths of side valleys, where there are small alluvial fans.

The lack of improved fields contrasts with many other glens and straths at this general height in the Park, but there are small areas of pre-improvement field systems with remnants of irregularly shaped, walled enclosures at each of these individual settlements

Glas allt Shiel lodge, located on the shore of Loch Muick and surrounded by woodland, has historical associations with Queen Victoria and provides an important visual focus

The Glen is a focus for recreation with a large car park and visitor centre located at the Spittal of Glenmuick. The public road is often busy, and it is therefore a very visible feature in this relatively open landscape

The Munros of Lochnagar and Broad Cairn are popular with walkers while tracks encircling the loch are used by both walkers and cyclists. The upland track of the Capel Road links Glen Muick with Glen Clova in the Angus Glens

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

There is a strong contrast between the contained wooded gorge of the lower glen, the expansive scale and openness of the middle

stretches of the glen and the drama of Loch Muick in its enclosed glacial trough

The steep hill sides enclosing Loch Muick can cast dense shadow, increasing the sense of drama

Views of the complex and dramatic mountains of the White Mounth are fully revealed and form a scenic backdrop to the upper glen

While this area is not generally secluded due to its popularity, a sense of naturalness can be experienced from the paths around Loch Muick and it provides easy access to a dramatic upland landscape

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This landscape forms a transition between the managed and settled landscape of Deeside and the dramatic, more remote uplands of the White Mounth.

1.1.4 Assessment of distinctiveness

The dramatic focus of the glacial trough of Loch Muick contrasts with the gentle, less containing side slopes of the middle stretches of Glen Muick. This glen offers an unusual opportunity to access the core of a mountain landscape, where a semi-natural character prevails, with relative ease.



The River Muick meanders tightly through rough pasture and mire



Linear woodlands on lower slopes and shelter woods on the glen floor



Public car park set amongst trees at the Spittal of Glen Muick



Loch Muick occupies a deep glacial trough



The granite domes and paps of Lochnagar seen from the plateau edge south of Loch Muick. The steep sides of the glacial trough are locally scree covered with cliffs along the upper slopes. The stream is deeply incised into glacial deposits before it drops into the trough floor