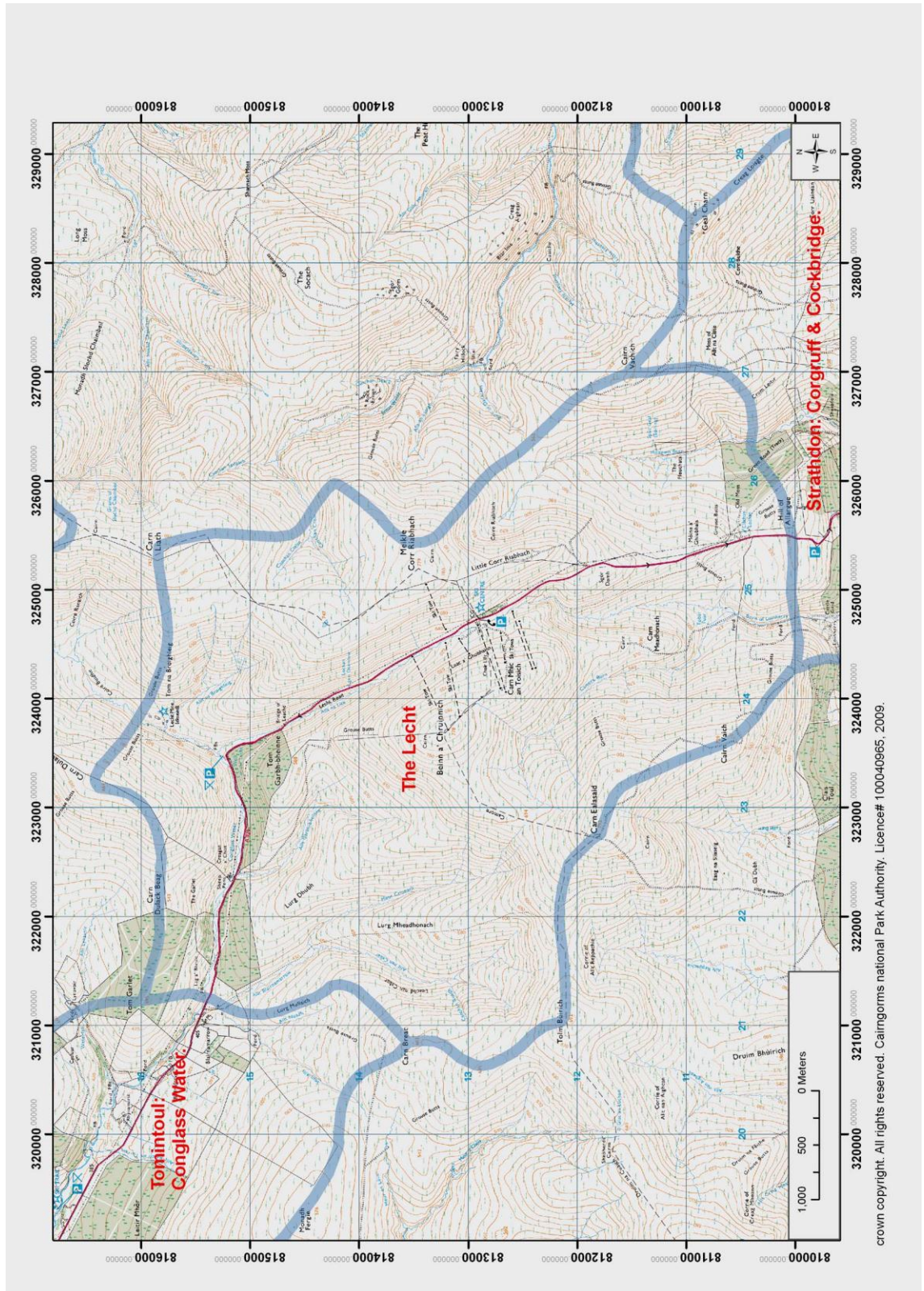


1.1 The Lecht



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

This high pass is formed by a deep, steep sided river valley which cuts through the bulky but rounded hill summits and long, smooth ridges of the Ladder Hills

The summits and upper slopes are a mosaic of heather, patches of burnt heather moor and swathes of pale upland grassland

To the north, the pass is further contained by conifer woodland as it narrows

The road, following the route of an old military way, climbs on a long even gradient along the upper edge of the deep river valley, elevated well above the valley, at times even perched on a ridgeline

The ski centre at the Lecht is close to the highest point on the road, and some of the lifts and other infrastructure are seen on the skylines of the long ridges

The cluster of buildings and carparks associated with the ski centre sit either side of the road, although they are focussed on a single stretch of road

The only other feature is the 'Well of the Lecht' and the old mines, which are accessible on foot from an associated carpark at the northern end of the pass

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

There is a sense of openness in this expansive and elevated landscape

The high road offers panoramic views and easy, vehicular access to a landscape of mountain and upland character

The landscape is still in essence simple and sparse, despite the woodland and ski centre as well as other infrastructure such as the overhead line

The upland hill forms are bold and formidable, creating a sense of solidity and 'bulk' in the landscape which dominates over the human interventions

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This upland, relatively sparse landscape is in marked contrast to the diverse valley landscapes in the glens and straths on either side.

1.1.4 *Assessment of distinctiveness*

The sense of openness, the semi-natural vegetation, the elevation, and the strong 'presence' of the formidable heft of the landform still dominates this upland landscape despite the infrastructure, ski centre buildings and the forestry.



Rounded hills, clad in moor mottled with burnt heather, enclose the deep river valley



The road sits on the edge of the valley, sometimes on an exposed ridge



Infrastructure associated with the ski centre, as well as the pylon line, clustered at a high point on the road



The Well of the Lecht, and the former mid-nineteenth century mine which was the largest manganese mine in Scotland



Conifer woodland at the northern end of the pass