

1.1.1 *Landscape character*

- This broad, open strath with its extensive floodplain, low terraces and shallow sloped sides is loosely contained by low wooded ridges to the north and south
- Terraced and occasionally rolling landform of glacial-fluvial deposit is evident on the edge of the floodplain, and distinct outcrops of gravelly deposit stand above the floodplain. These are occasionally quarried
- The wide River Spey forms a key focus within the open, farmed strath floor, its gently meandering alignment accentuated by flood embankments along much of its route
- Commercially managed pine woodlands cover the gently rounded hills containing this area to the north-west while the extensive Abernethy Forest lies to the south-east in a less visible gently sloping basin.
- Occasional small conifer shelter woods and ribbons of broadleaves are located on the strath floor
- Some riparian woodland fringes the Spey, especially at the south-western end of this area, where it coalesces to give the appearance of a well-wooded landscape in places
- Large, regularly shaped late 18th/19th century improved fields of drained and fenced pasture and some arable land, as well as areas of haugh and wetland, occupy the floodplain and low terraces.
- The field size tends to decrease on the more elevated side slopes and well drained terraces at the edge of the strath
- Grazing land extends up onto the lower north-western hill slopes, above the A95, where fields are occasionally enclosed by stone dykes
- Although there are a number of prehistoric standing stones and burial cairns on the floodplain, settlement consistently avoids this area
- Dispersed individual farms and dwellings are sited on knolls and terraces, clearly set above the floodplain at the very edge of the strath
- North of the A95, individual farms and houses are dispersed, located on subtle individual hummocks and ridges across the elevated slopes
- Smallholdings at Skye of Curr, partially in-filled with housing to create a linear settlement, lie along the length of the minor road south from Dulnain Bridge, the fields contained by conifer woodland

- The A95 is elevated above the strath, its long straights alternating with sweeping curves through forest and overlooking the strath floor
- In contrast, the B970 winds its way along the very edge of the strath floor, raised on the terraces and linking access roads to the many houses and farms located on this free draining terrain
- An electricity transmission line and associated sub-station are located on the south-eastern edge of the strath. The Cairngorms Steam Railway line is located above the Spey, often on embankments.

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

- The farmed landscape and occasional wetland maintains openness across the floodplain, which allows views across this landscape and to the dramatic backdrop of the Cairngorms massif.
- Side light along the strath picks out the clusters of hummocky deposits
- Panoramic views are a particular experience from the elevated A95

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This area is largely self-contained although the Cairngorm massif forms a backdrop to views from the A95. The extensive farmland and open views across the floodplain of the strath contrast with some of the more enclosed landscape character areas experienced within the wider Strathspey area.

1.1.4 *Assessment of distinctiveness*

The extent of fields and enclosures form a regular pattern across the whole breadth of the floodplain. This pattern is further emphasised by the lack of settlement or major infrastructure across the floodplain. The dimpled hummocks of gravelly deposit are a particular feature, visible across the open strath.



The wide expanse of farmed strath. With long, low wooded ridges providing some containment



Distinct dimpled hummocks of gravelly deposit above the floodplain



Settlement, perched along the well drained terraces and hummocks along the edges of the strath floor



The wide river Spey, and associated riparian woodland, is occasionally visible from the road – more so when in flood