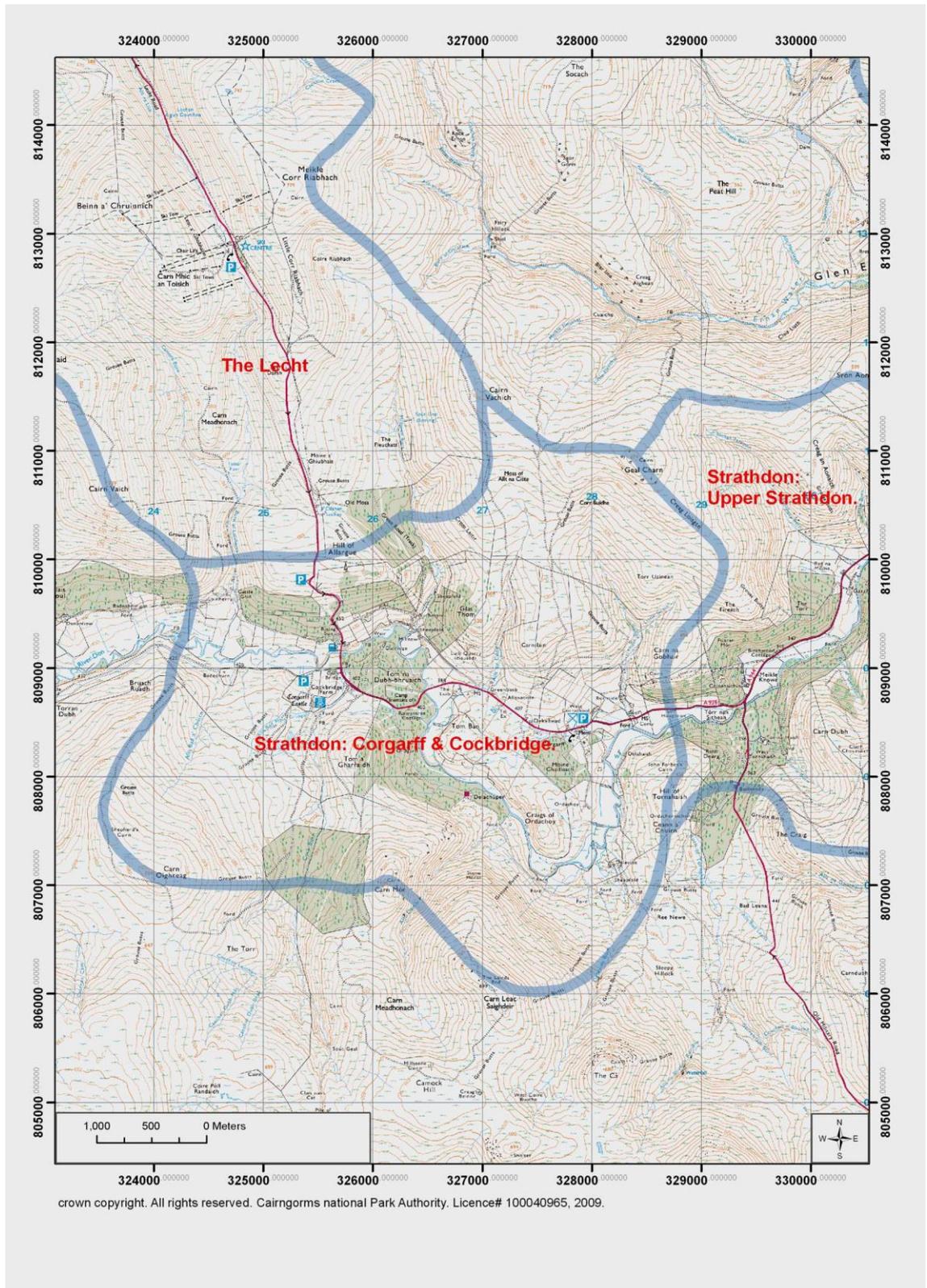


I.1 Strathdon: Corgarff and Cockbridge



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

This wide, shallow, elevated glen is contained by steep hills with rounded summits and narrow side valleys

The very meandering River Don winds across a narrow, flat floodplain, but this sits within a wider valley floor of extensive undulating glacial-fluvial deposit which has been eroded to form smooth ridges

The landscape is relatively open, but there are some large areas of conifer woodland at the western end of the character area, particularly on steeper side slopes which frame the lower valley

Heather moorland, with patches of burnt heather, and upland grassland extend over the unplanted hillsides, with rough grazing even on lower slopes and along the floor of the glen

Small groups of trees are associated with the farms and other buildings, and there is the occasional conifer shelter wood

Late 18th/19th century improved fields, fenced and grazed, are interspersed with rough grazing and fields which are reverting to wetland and unimproved grassland. These tend to be on the south facing slopes in places well above the river

Farms and individual houses are dispersed across the farmed land, on the terraces or higher ground above the floodplain

The white painted Corgarff castle is a landmark building at the conjunction of Strath Don and the pass to the Lecht. It sits on an alluvial fan, surrounded by bright green improved fields

From the east, the A939 sweeps through this landscape in long curves undulating with the gentle curvature of the landform before striking uphill in a series of switch back bends to the high pass at the Lecht

The A939 in part strikes well away from the winding river, deviating from the route of the old military road

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

This landscape feels marginal in terms of agriculture, as many of the fields are interspersed with rough grazing, and former improved land is not being intensively farmed

The striking colour contrast between the white painted Corgarff castle and its setting of bright green fields reinforces its 'pivotal' location within the valleys and its role as a landmark feature

There are dramatic views of the strath from the elevated A939 where it begins to climb up to the pass towards the Lecht

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This area forms a 'transition' between the more diverse and fertile lower reaches of Strath Don and the upland areas and high pass at the Lecht, and therefore has characteristics which reflect both these neighbouring character areas.

1.1.4 Assessment of distinctiveness

The mixture of enclosed fields and rough grazing alternating across the floor of parts of the strath reflects its location as a transition between upland and lowland areas. The strategic placement of Corgarff castle at the conjunction of the strath and the pass to the Lecht within its setting of green fields, combine to create a striking landmark feature.



Fields on more gentle slopes, with heather moorland on the upper slopes



There is more woodland to the west of this character area



Corgarff castle surrounded by green fields



The road sweeps through the undulating land form. The farms are often sheltered by small groups of trees