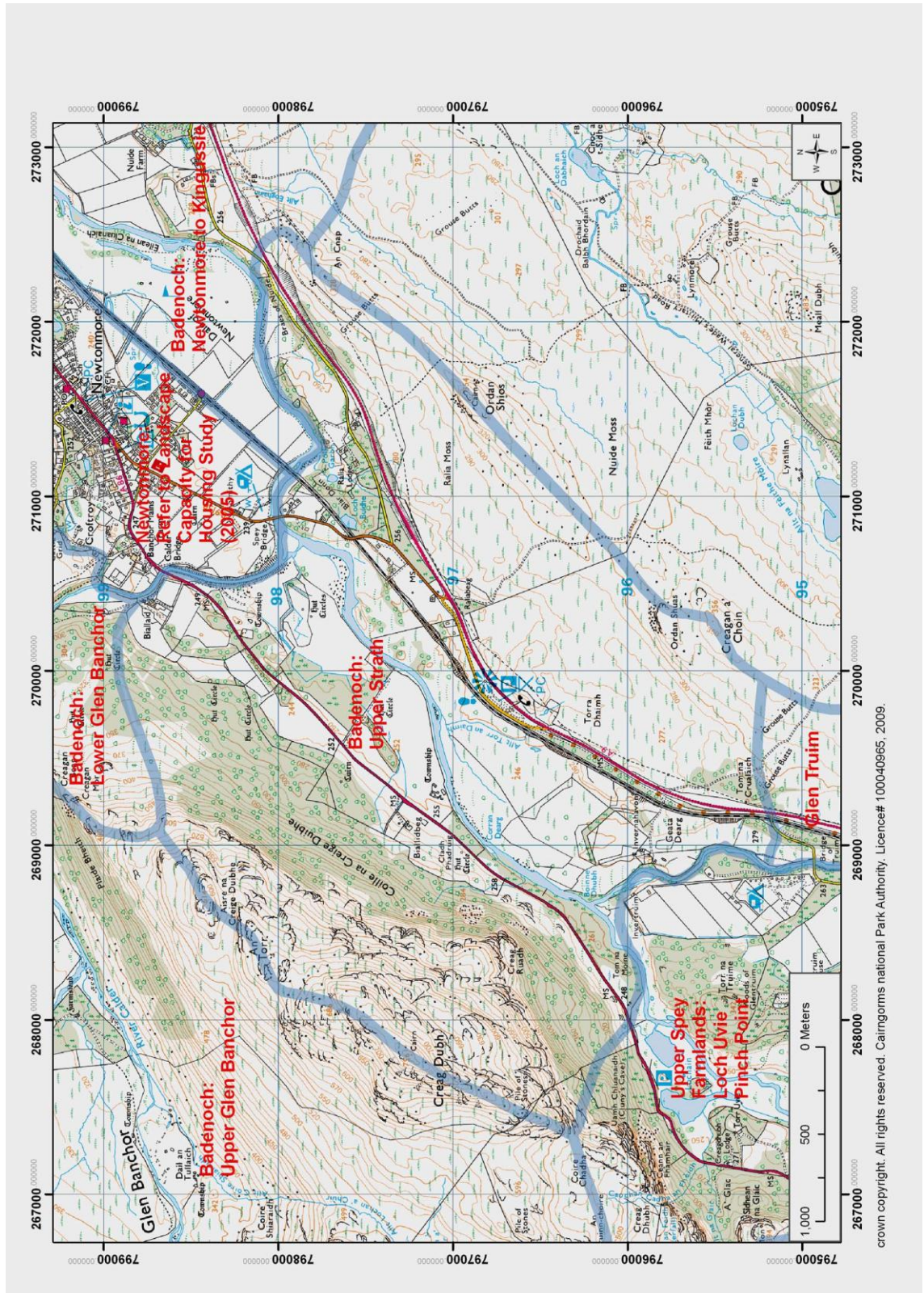


I.1 Badenoch: Upper Strath



1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

- This fertile strath of extensive well drained fluvial deposits, worked relatively level by the River Spey, is contained by well drained glacial-fluvial terraces and hummocks which extend along the edges of the strath floor
- Beyond this to the south east, the strath is only loosely contained by undulating moor and striking streamlined rock ridges with crags at their northern ends which are evidence of a glacier exiting north eastwards through the strath
- Behind these features lies the very distinct trough of the Erich-Laidon fault and steep slopes which form the edge to extensive low, rounded hills, the foreground to views to the high Cairngorm mountains
- To the north west, the steep, rocky summit and ridgeline of Creag Dubh, rising above rock falls, forms a well-defined enclosure to the strath
- The River Spey forms subtle bends across the strath, its line sometimes reinforced by riparian woodland
- The floor of the strath is grazed, with some straight sided, late 18th/19th century improved fields, and extensive areas of rough grazing punctuated by scattered semi-natural broadleaved woodland and possibly wood pasture
- The fenced, improved fields extend northwards onto the numerous hummocks and gentle slopes below Creag Dubh
- Very extensive native broadleaved woodland clothes the steeper slopes of Creag Dubh, regenerating across less accessible slopes and screes
- Planted conifer shelter woods are located along the floor of the strath
- There is extensive and readily visible evidence of pre-improvement settlement and agriculture, some with extant remains of earlier, medieval and/or prehistoric farms, associated with gravelly river terraces
- Contemporary buildings are limited to the farm at Baillidbeg and scattered buildings associated with the old A9, which are tucked into woodland on the hummocky terrain and terraces along the south eastern edge of the strath
- The A9, railway line and pylon line extend along the southern side of the strath, which is a major communication corridor, on slightly elevated ground, often hidden within hummocky terrain and visually screened by extensive semi-natural, birch dominated woodland

1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

- The area is experienced as relatively open from the A86, despite the woodland, because of the extensive, unobstructed views south and east across a variety of topography to the Cairngorm mountains
- In contrast, the A9 is relatively enclosed and views out are limited
- There is a sense of arrival associated with leaving either Glen Truim or the Laggan area from the south and arriving at this more open, less defined strath of the River Spey

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

There are views to the much more extensive, and relatively distant, mountain areas to the south and east.

1.1.4 *Assessment of distinctiveness*

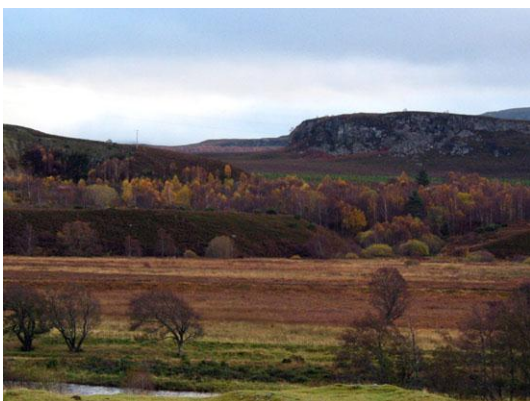
Although well contained by steep, craggy slopes to the north-west, the sense of openness dominates across the strath despite extensive woodland around the A9. This is because low relief to the south east of the strath allows long views to the massive bulk of the Cairngorm mountains. In addition, there are extensive areas of historic settlement and land use, which are evident as lumps, bumps and shallow depressions in the now improved field system.



Steep craggy slopes with woodland regenerating onto scree above hummocky terrain, occupied by the road and farm



Gently undulating strath floor, largely grazed but with woodland hiding the A9 in the distance



Streamlined rock ridge with crags at its northern end



Evidence of pre-improvement agriculture is very visible