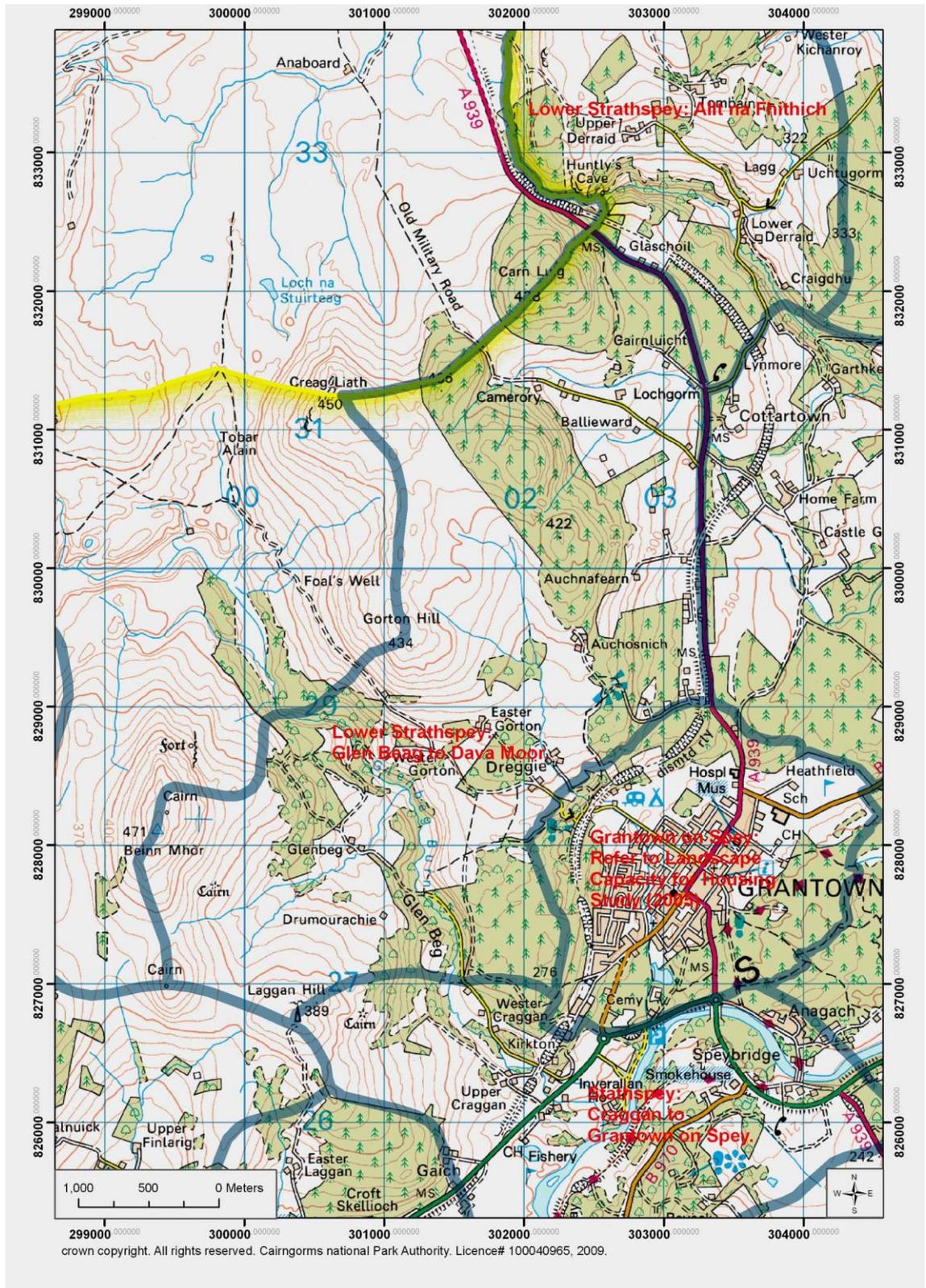


# I.1 Lower Strathspey: Glen Beg to Dava Moor



### 1.1.1 *Landscape Character*

These elevated, eastern orientated slopes and shallow valleys are part of the more complex surrounding landscape of undulating terrain, ridges and occasional steep sided gulleys which extend across the lower slopes of the Strathdearn Hills north of Grantown on Spey

Undulating valley floors and better drained slopes are covered by relatively thick glacial deposits and are contained by low hills to the west, but slope downhill to lower Strathspey to the east

Conifer woodland extends downhill from containing ridges and hills, often fragmenting into shelter woods and more extensive scattered broadleaved woodland between the individual farms

More extensive broadleaved woodland in upper Glen Beg is established on steeper slopes and along watercourses between grazed fields

The pattern of rectilinear, late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century improved fields is still very evident on better drained slopes, although in places the fields are reverting to rough grazing or disappearing under regenerating woodland

The valley floors are often poorly drained, with previous pasture and fields sometimes reverting to wetland punctuated by loose clumps of woodland or even individual trees

Across the whole area are dispersed late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century farmsteads, located on slightly higher ground or at the edge of drier farmed land, often surrounded by improved fields.

Some of these farms have now been replaced with new houses occupying the same sites, and several have also been abandoned, especially where access is difficult

There is a row of more recent housing, associated with small fields which may have been former small holdings, along the base of the glen, parallel to the A939

Access, apart from the A939 which skirts the eastern edge of this area, is limited to narrow public roads and a network of farm tracks

The embankment and structures associated with the former railway line which continues north over Dava Moor are a feature in the floor of the glen

### 1.1.2 *Landscape experience*

The area is elevated and 'upward facing', and as a result feels relatively detached from Grantown which lies in the strath below

Views from these elevated slopes focus east to the Hills of Cromdale and are panoramic, as there is very little topographical containment

More enclosure, created partly by woodland and partly by the embankments of the railway line, is experienced when travelling along the lower slopes on the A939

The arrival into the Park from the north along the A939 is reinforced by the sense of enclosure created by the low wooded hills which form the southern edge of Dava moor

1.1.3 *Relationship to adjacent character areas*

This area offers panoramic views to the east and south. The backdrop to these panoramas are hills from more distant, mountainous character areas. Travelling into the Park from the north, the sense of arrival is further emphasised by the contrast between the enclosed woodland and small scale field pattern of this character area relative to the wide, open expanse of moorland across Dava Moor.

#### 1.1.4 Assessment of distinctiveness

This area is strongly influenced by the agricultural improvements of the late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> centuries, which have informed the distribution of farms and shapes of the fields. However, former fields are in places reverting to wetland and new houses are replacing small farmsteads.



*Improved fields interspersed with areas of birch woodland on steeper slopes and along burns at the top of Glen Beg*



*Houses on farm sites set on higher, drier ground above pasture which is reverting to wetland*



*Farms located on upper slopes, and conifer woodland extending down from the containing hills*



*From across these elevated slopes there are panoramic views east to the Hills of Cromdale*