

# Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

November 2014





Awarded to individuals and organisations whose vision leads the way in creating innovative and dynamic landscape

## Winner

This award is presented to

**HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

in the category of

**LANDSCAPE POLICY & RESEARCH**

for

**Green Infrastructure Guide  
(Draft May 2013)**

President

*Susan E. Allman.*

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*Philip Mumby*

**Landscape  
Institute**  
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*The Draft Green Infrastructure Guide was awarded "Winner" of the Landscape Institute Awards 2013 held in London. This is a highly prestigious national award and the judges commented that: "The guide clearly sets out the case and opportunities for green infrastructure in a way that will be accessible to developers."*

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# 1. What is 'green infrastructure'?

1.1 Harrogate district contains a wide variety of green assets. Some of these, like nature conservation sites, green wedges, parks, allotments and public rights of way are designated. We also have undesignated green assets such as river corridors and woodlands. Some green assets are unintended consequences of other kinds of planning such as railway embankments and roadside verges. Until recently, these assets have generally been looked at individually. However, it is now widely recognised that by looking at our green assets as a connected network of multifunctional 'green infrastructure' we can deliver many more benefits for the economy, environment and the community.

1.2 The following are definitions of green infrastructure:

## **Natural England:**

'Green Infrastructure (GI) is a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green Infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens.'

## **Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)(2012):**

Green Infrastructure is: 'a strategic network of multifunctional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life in sustainable communities.'





## 2. What is the purpose of the Green Infrastructure SPD?

- 2.1 The council's Core Strategy and National Planning Policy Framework set out the importance of protecting and enhancing networks of green infrastructure.
- 2.2 The overall aim of this SPD is to help applicants and developers to ensure that proposals for development across the district make the most of opportunities to improve existing and create new green infrastructure. To achieve the overall aim this SPD seeks to:
- make clear the importance and benefits of green infrastructure
  - provide guidance on the requirements of planning policy
  - show how good quality green infrastructure can be achieved on a range of development sites
  - provide more detailed guidance on how good quality green infrastructure can be achieved within the main urban areas and on large greenfield urban extensions
- 2.3 This SPD has been prepared with input from the council's Landscape Architect, Rural Strategy Officer, Senior Drainage Engineer, Conservation and Design Officers and Planning Policy Officers. Early discussion also took place with representatives from Natural England and North Yorkshire County Council.



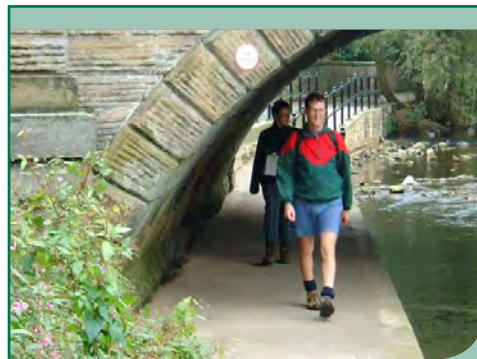
## 3. Why is green infrastructure important?

3.1 By looking at our green assets as a connected network of green infrastructure (instead of individually) there are many more benefits for our district's economy, environment and community. A piece of open space on a development site has the ability to provide many functions if careful consideration has been given to the opportunities for creating or improving green infrastructure early in the design process. For example, one carefully designed piece of open space

might provide a link to an existing Public Rights of Way (PROW), provide flood mitigation, encourage activity and enjoyment, provide an attractive setting for local business and help to conserve a protected species.

3.2 These are the main benefits of green infrastructure that proposals for development within this district should seek to achieve:

### Green Infrastructure Benefits



Ripon canal

#### Connecting green spaces and routes

Better links between green assets can increase accessibility, leisure and recreation opportunities, improve links for biodiversity, increase tourism and make better use of urban green spaces. Improved access for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders can help to reduce the need to travel by car and improve links for tourism, recreation, leisure and employment.

### Examples of How the Benefits can be Achieved

- Physical connections
- Visual connections
- Pleasant and safe pedestrian and cycle routes
- Improvements to rights of way network
- Consideration and improvement of radial routes
- Use of the shared space
- Tree lined streets
- Multi-function streets
- Landscape buffer zones
- Provision of linear park



## Green Infrastructure Benefits

## Examples of How the Benefits can be Achieved



Swinsty reservoir

### Improving the setting and quality of place

Using the natural environment to create high quality living and recreational environments can help to increase land and property values and stimulate further economic investment. A high quality natural environment can inspire higher productivity amongst the workforce. Green infrastructure can help to improve the tourism 'offer' by improving the setting, functionality and accessibility of key destinations.

- Increase social gathering spaces
- Enhance landscape setting
- Responding to the site context and local landscape character
- Providing street trees
- Drawing up a maintenance/management plan for long term success of scheme



Birk crag

### Encouraging activity and enjoyment

By increasing access to green space and routes people are more likely to walk, run, cycle and play. This can have real benefits for people's health, enjoyment and social interaction. Links between good quality green infrastructure and improved mental and physical health are well established.

- Providing places for meeting and events such as a community park
- Providing shelter
- Provision of areas for natural play
- Education and interpretation opportunities
- Sports facilities
- Seating
- Cycle storage



Unity allotments, Harrogate

### Adapting to changes in climate, flood risk and growing food locally

Well-planned green infrastructure can help us mitigate and adapt to climate change by encouraging the north-south migration of habitats and species and helping urban cooling. Tree planting can help with natural air cooling, collecting nitrogen oxides and absorption of carbon dioxide.

- Flood mitigation measures and sustainable drainage systems such as wetlands, green swales, balancing ponds, ditches and ponds
- Tree planting
- Green roofs
- Ground cover plants on steep slopes to reduce run off and erosion
- Permeable surfaces and paving



## Green Infrastructure Benefits

Permeable surfaces and open spaces can be used to reduce the risk of flooding from rivers and surface water run off and to incorporate sustainable drainage e.g. through flood water storage, tree planting, and protection of river corridors.

Creating space for food production, allotments, community gardens and orchards and connecting the local community to these assets via footpaths and cycle ways can benefit local communities in terms of improved health, social interaction, education and a more sustainable supply of food.

## Examples of How the Benefits can be Achieved

- Soakaways as an alternative method of water retention
- Reedbeds and rainwater harvesting system
- Allotments and community orchards
- Schools and food projects



Ripley

## Protecting and enhancing nature

Well connected green assets can benefit biodiversity by facilitating the migration of species and providing and using land improvements to deliver biodiversity gain. The creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity, including local sites and semi-natural habitats is particularly important.

## Heritage

Well planned green infrastructure can help to protect and enhance the setting of our heritage assets. The Conservation Area Appraisals (CAAs) for the 53 Conservation Areas within the district are an important source of information for identifying open spaces and heritage assets important to the local community.

- Development relates to local character and safeguarding of existing views
- Good integration of existing and proposed features
- Opportunities to create new views and vistas
- Protection and enhancement of key priority habitats and species
- Alleviate pressure on existing sensitive wildlife sites through provision of alternative access to nature
- Improvement of species movement
- Community involvement and participation in habitat creation and on-going maintenance and management
- Design planting areas to create beneficial microclimate and to minimise maintenance requirements
- Undertake soil survey to allow for planting of appropriate species

3.3 Each development site will present different opportunities dependent on its characteristics. Case study examples of how green infrastructure can be incorporated into different types of development sites are included in section 6.

3.4 It is important to note that seeking to address these benefits

through the provision of good quality green infrastructure proposals for development will help to achieve all of the council's corporate priorities, for example, improving the attractiveness of the business environment, improving health, adapting to climate change and improving the environment and quality of life.

Harrogate town centre



4.1 This section provides an overview of current and emerging planning policy relating to green infrastructure. Current policy recognises that the provision of green infrastructure is not just an environmental matter; there are wide ranging benefits for the economy and society as well. Green infrastructure should be seen as an integral part of planning from the earliest stages in the design process, as with other types of infrastructure.

## National Planning Policy Framework

4.2 In March 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published, which sets out the government's planning policies for England. The focus of the NPPF is to help to achieve sustainable

development. 'Sustainable' is defined as 'ensuring that better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations'.

4.3 There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF makes clear that, 'These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent. Economic growth can secure higher social and



*environmental standards, and well-designed buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities. Therefore, to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. The planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions.'*

- 4.4 With reference to green infrastructure the NPPF makes clear that, *'Local planning authorities should set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure'* (paragraph 114).
- 4.5 In relation to climate change Paragraph 99 of the NPPF recognises the important role that green infrastructure plays in reducing vulnerability: *'Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.'*

## Harrogate District Core Strategy

- 4.6 The Core Strategy was adopted in February 2009 and forms part of the development plan for the district. It sets out broad policies for development and conservation, including a sustainable strategy for growth. The vision for the district seeks to achieve the following by 2021:



- *'the residents of Harrogate district will enjoy an exceptionally high quality and diverse environment, a prosperous urban and rural economy, and better access to affordable homes, community facilities, including public open space and sport, and public transport and other facilities to encourage walking, cycling and less travel by car;*
- *the special character of the district's natural and built assets will be protected and enhanced, particularly through increased wildlife, increased woodland, more locally distinctive and high quality designed buildings, fewer historic buildings at risk, and more resource efficient development which minimises energy consumption, waste production and maximises renewable energy;*
- *the urban and rural economies of the district, including town centres will be more buoyant, more diverse, more complementary with neighbouring economies and more 'environmentally friendly'.*

- 4.7 Taking into consideration the benefits of green infrastructure set out in section 3, it is clear that green infrastructure has a key role in helping to realise the Core Strategy vision for the district.
- 4.8 Core Strategy policies that are relevant to this SPD include:
- Policy SG4: Settlement Growth: Design and Impact
  - Policy TRA1: Accessibility
  - Policy EQ1: Reducing Risks to the Environment
  - Policy EQ2: The Natural and Built Environment and Green Belt
  - Policy C1: Inclusive Communities

## Harrogate Local Plan

- 4.9 A Local Plan is currently being prepared and is scheduled for adoption in 2018. It will contain development management policies and site allocations and cover the period up to 2035.

4.10 The Local Plan will set out the council's approach to integrating high quality green infrastructure as part of all proposals for development.

4.11 You can view the Local Plan at:  
[www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/LDF.aspx](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/LDF.aspx)



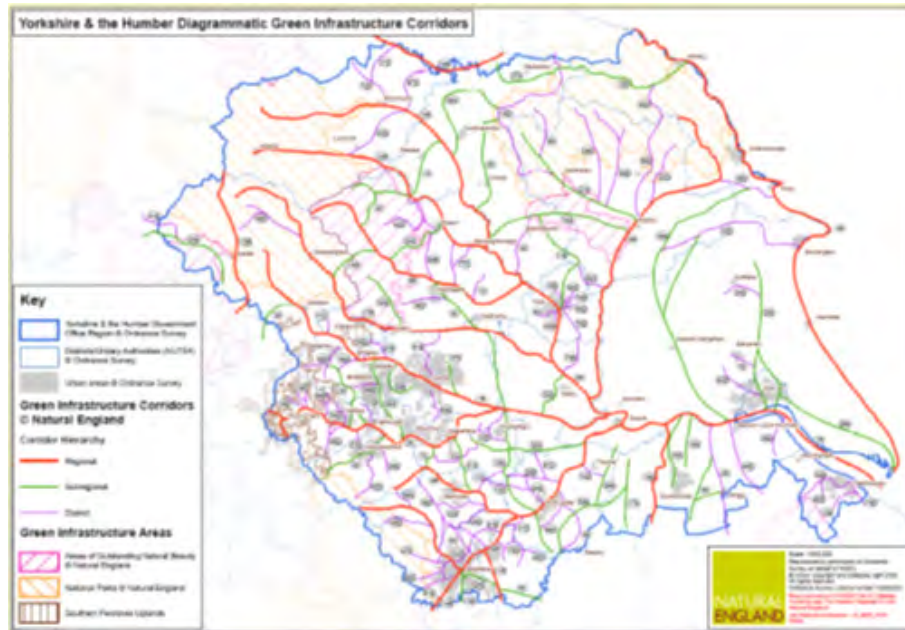
Sandwith Moor, Norwood





## 5. What other green infrastructure work is happening within the region?

### Yorkshire and the Humber Green Infrastructure Mapping Project (2009)



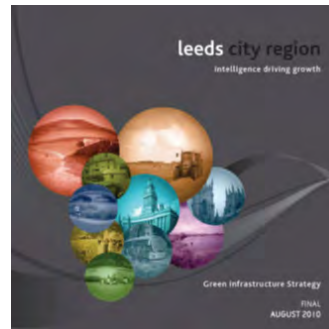
- 5.1 Natural England carried out this project, in consultation with local authorities, to produce a strategic evidence base to help local authorities protect and create green infrastructure. This project used 600 different data sets obtained from diverse sources including Harrogate Borough Council, other local authorities, wildlife trusts and major landowners such as Yorkshire Water and the National Trust. Over 130 green infrastructure corridors have been identified and placed in a hierarchy based on 15 green infrastructure functions. All the green infrastructure corridors have associated descriptions which identify their key functions.
- 5.2 This evidence base provides a starting point for more detailed and localised green infrastructure work. With regard to Harrogate district, work with Natural England highlighted the need to further explore opportunities for improving green infrastructure in the main urban areas.
- 5.3 The findings of the Yorkshire and Humber Green Infrastructure Mapping Project have been considered when drafting sections 6 to 8 of this SPD. This information should be used as a starting point in

order to identify whether a site is located within a green infrastructure corridor and if so, how it can contribute towards the characteristics/ functions of that particular corridor.

- 5.4 You can view the results of the green infrastructure mapping project at: [www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/yorkshire\\_and\\_the\\_humber/ourwork/yandhgreeninfrastructuremappingproject.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/yorkshire_and_the_humber/ourwork/yandhgreeninfrastructuremappingproject.aspx)

## Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Strategy (August 2010)

- 5.5 This strategy has been prepared by consultants in partnership with the Leeds City Region Secretariat, Natural England and local authorities within the Leeds City Region. It has a strong focus on how green infrastructure can benefit the economy. It recognises that the economy is dependent on a high quality environment in order to attract investment and to ensure a happy and efficient workforce. It makes clear that:



*'In the midst of an economic recovery, competition for public sector funds as well as the short term viability of regeneration schemes could pose a risk to investment in a high quality natural environment. However, we know the green infrastructure is a value generator, not a costly add-on. Investing in green infrastructure will not only help the city region out of recession in the short term; it will also support our ambitions to become a low carbon, sustainable economy and continue to attract quality businesses and create jobs for many years to come.'*

- 5.6 The strategy is intended to shape the future economic, social and environmental success of the Leeds City Region by harnessing the potential of existing environmental resources to promote sustainable economic growth and to tackle climate change. The strategy identifies a number of investment programmes, strategic projects, and supporting projects. The programmes and projects relevant to Harrogate district are:

- IP1 Urban Green Adaptation
- IP2 Greening our Economic Potential
- IP3 Carbon Capture
- IP4 Woodfuel
- IP5 Rivers for Life
- SP2 Cure Landscape Project
- Green Hub (supporting project)
- LCR Eco Skills Audit (supporting project)
- Water Cycle Study (supporting project)

- 5.7 Find out about about the Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Guide at: [www.the-lep.com/](http://www.the-lep.com/)

## Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs)

- 5.8 In its Natural Environment White Paper the government recognises that partnership working is key to delivering our ambitions for the natural environment. The White Paper sets out a vision for Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs).

- 5.9 On 17 July 2012, the government announced the 41 successful bids for LNP status, this was followed by a further seven successful bids in October 2012. There are



successful bids in October 2012. There are three LNPs that fall within the boundary of Harrogate district:

- North West Yorkshire LNP
- North Yorkshire and York LNP
- Northern Upland Chain LNP

- 5.10 The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) website provides the following description of the purpose and scope of LNPs:

*'The ambition for LNPs is that they will help their local area to manage the natural environment as a system and to embed its value in local decisions for the benefit of nature, people and the economy. To do this effectively they will need to be self-sustaining strategic partnerships of a broad range of local organisations, businesses and people with the credibility to work with and influence other local strategic decision makers. There are currently 48 LNPs across England:*

*The overall purpose of an LNP is to:*

- *Drive positive change in the local natural environment, taking a strategic view of the challenges and opportunities involved and identifying ways to manage it as a system for the benefit of nature, people and the economy.*
- *Contribute to achieving the Government's national environmental objectives locally, including the identification of local ecological networks, alongside addressing local priorities.*
- *Become local champions influencing decision-making relating to the natural environment and its value to social and economic outcomes, in particular, through working closely with local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Health and Wellbeing Boards.'*

- 5.11 LNPs will help to deliver green infrastructure for the benefit of the environment, people and the economy, for example through the development of local ecological networks. A partnership approach with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) demonstrates recognition of the economic benefits of green infrastructure. The Yorkshire West LNP is using the information within the Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Strategy (see section 4) to help make a positive contribution to the economy of the city region.

## White Rose Forest Partnership

- 5.12 Harrogate Borough Council is one of many stakeholders that have signed the White Rose Forest Agreement to be a member of the White Rose Forest (WRF) Partnership.

- 5.13 The WRF was set up to be a delivery partnership. It does this through its working parties, which are made up of specialist officers from a wide range of organisations who collaborate to identify, develop and deliver projects on the ground. The working parties also attend the WRF steering group to share information and build up a co-ordinated approach to green infrastructure.

- 5.14 The partners of the White Rose Forest Partnership carry out activities to help manage and improve the environment, attract resources and help shape policies. You can find out more about the White Rose Forest Partnership and its current projects by visiting: [www.whiteroseforest.org.uk/](http://www.whiteroseforest.org.uk/)



## Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

- 5.15 Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) is currently developing an ecological network approach to rebuilding biodiversity by championing links between its nature reserves, other protected sites and nature corridors through the wider countryside so that whole landscapes and ecosystems may be restored, resulting in abundant and flourishing wildlife that everyone has access to through wildlife-rich green-spaces.
- 5.16 Living Landscapes identified in Harrogate district include the River Ure Corridor, Nidderdale Moors and Knaresborough Nidd woodlands. Harrogate Borough Council will work with YWT and other partners to maximise biodiversity enhancement, including the living landscapes identified by the YWT. See [www.ywt.org.uk/living-landscapes](http://www.ywt.org.uk/living-landscapes)





- 6.1 This section provides case studies to help demonstrate how the council expects applicants to consider green infrastructure within the design process. The case studies show how different types and scale of development can improve and create good quality green infrastructure. All of the case studies have been identified as potential allocations for residential development in work undertaken to inform the preparation of the Local Plan:
- **Summerbridge:** large greenfield site for housing within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
  - **Boroughbridge:** large brownfield site for housing
  - **Melmerby:** greenfield employment site
  - **Staveley:** small greenfield site for 100% affordable housing
  - **Bishop Thornton:** small scale greenfield site for 100% affordable housing
- 6.2 For each of the case studies a green infrastructure opportunities map is provided along with contextual information. The opportunities map is accompanied by text to explain how green infrastructure can be incorporated into the design of the development in order to contribute to the benefits of green infrastructure set out in section 3.
- 6.3 Proposals for development of these sites will be expected to assist with the delivery of the opportunities identified within this guide subject to viability and deliverability.



# Case Study

## Large greenfield site for housing in the Nidderdale AONB, Summerbridge

### Site:

Land south of  
Whinbush Lane,  
Summerbridge

### Site size:

2.68 ha

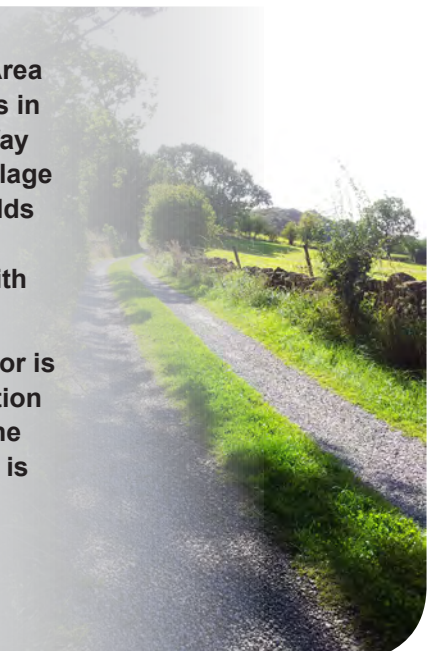
### Proposed use:

The site is considered suitable for a mix of market and affordable housing with a yield of approximately 49 dwellings.

### Site Characteristics:

Summerbridge is a small village situated approximately 2.5 miles to the southeast of Pateley Bridge. The area is highly valued and lies within the designated Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Summerbridge is one of the main settlements in the area and there is a strong network of public footpaths including the Nidderdale Way in the surrounding area. The site comprises a medium sized grassland field at the village edge that is currently used for grazing and its northern boundary adjoins the Whinfields residential development, which is separated from the site by Whinbush Lane. There are dry stone walls enclosing the western and eastern boundaries and a hedgerow with mature trees borders the southern boundary.

The wider landscape comprises the broad valley of the river Nidd where the valley floor is well-wooded and the sides rise gently away to where the site lies at a prominent location on the approach to the settlement. The site topography slopes to the west towards the B6165 meaning the site is higher than the main road and the Whinfields housing area is viewed across the site from the B6165. Whilst the edge of the housing estate is fairly exposed, there are some mature trees along the southern edge which provide some screening and trees along the top of the field, outside the site boundary, which also provide a soft backdrop.



### Connecting green spaces and routes:

There is potential to provide better connections across the site to link with the existing public rights of way network and to enhance links between Brimham Rocks and the River Nidd corridor. There is already good existing footpath provision to serve this site but scope exists for new pedestrian linkages

incorporating cycle routes and circular footpaths, including historic trail opportunities. The routes could follow the high concentration of existing footpaths that lie to the east and northeast of the site ultimately to link with Brimham Rocks. These routes could build upon the variety of landscape characteristics including woodlands, old quarry sites, ancient semi-natural woodland, rock outcrops, hedgerows and water bodies in this area.

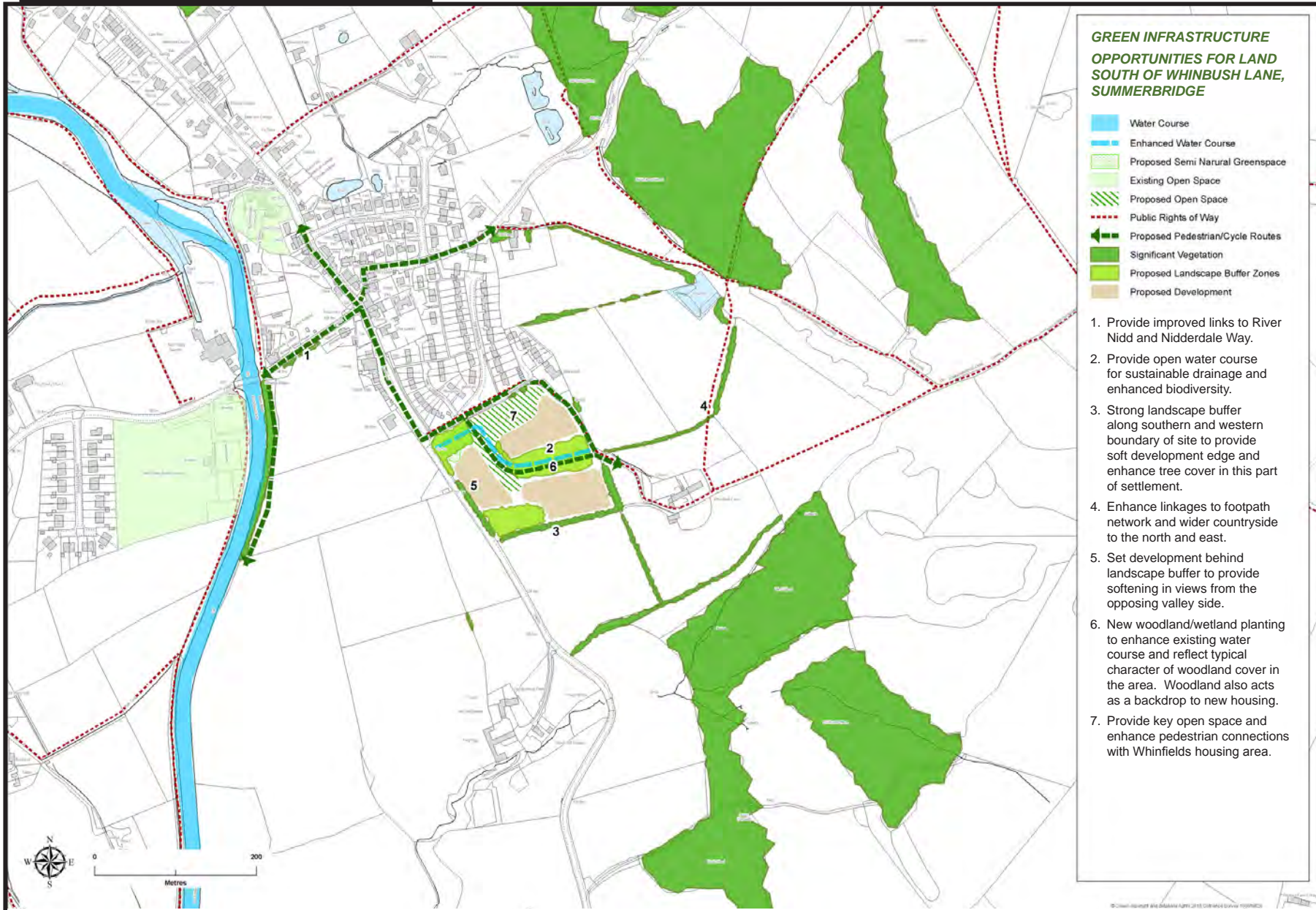


### Improving the setting and quality of place:

This site has the potential to build upon the existing environmental character of the area and restore elements of this character by following the guidelines of the Harrogate District Landscape Character Assessment (2004). The Nidderdale AONB has also published a Management Plan



# Opportunities plan





2014-2019, which sets out a vision for the AONB and includes a set of measurable actions as a framework for everyone with an interest in protecting the natural beauty of the AONB. The plan identifies forces for change and the special qualities of the AONB and any opportunities for this site could build on the aims and objectives of this management plan.

If well designed, development of this site has the potential to improve the current views towards the edge of the settlement. Stone walls and hedgerow boundaries exist and the road verge alongside Whinfields has medium sized trees. Although not typical of the village character, these trees soften the view of the existing housing estate; however, the new scheme has the potential to provide generous areas of structure planting. The creation of an area of native woodland as mitigation to the B6165 south western boundary of the site could also help to create an appropriate edge to the settlement.



Summerbridge, Nidderdale

With the benefit of the new woodland planting, the wooded setting of the settlement could also be enhanced in views from the opposite valley side.



### Encouraging activity and enjoyment:

The site size offers potential to provide a safe, attractive and high quality environment for local people with better access to the countryside and open space. The site has a public right of way along the northwest and northeastern boundaries and there is scope for better linkages into the public right of way network and to enhance cycle routes across the area. Improved access along the main street could also be explored with opportunities to improve the streetscape, since there are limited areas of open space within the village. The highway street frontage is therefore a valuable part of the village public open space network for Summerbridge.

The site offers the opportunity to provide enhanced linkages from the village to the site and into the surrounding countryside and there may be scope to divert the existing public right of way through the site to avoid the unwelcoming environment of Whinfields Lane.



### Adapting to changes in climate, floodrisk and growing food locally:

Green infrastructure has the potential to help with the management of surface water on this site. There may be the opportunity for a small sustainable urban drainage scheme (SUDs), wetland or wet woodland to be located along the northwestern

boundary of the site, perhaps in association with the marked spring. There is a spring near the northwest corner of the site and another one northeast of the site and a further spring runs through the central part of the site. There is scope for a series of open ditches and off line balancing ponds that could follow the natural alignment of the springs on site and new public open space and planting could also be provided in these areas. Planting could be focussed on the higher parts of the site to provide a soft back drop and prevent run off and erosion from the higher areas of land outside the site.

There may also be opportunities to create a new flood outfall from the site on land outside the area to the west to provide improved drainage. There may be potential to work with the Dales River Trust (DRT), an organisation developed from a need for local involvement in river management and restoration. The DRT helps in engaging local communities, farmers and landowners in conservation and restoration and identifies that the River Nidd has problems left by the industrial past and that bank erosion is serious in places and that much of the upstream riverbank is dominated by Alder. There may be scope for better management of the river corridor through measures off site relating to this development, building on the ideas of the DRT. The constraint of limited access to the eastern side of the river corridor from the settlement could also be addressed through measures on this site.



## Protecting nature and heritage:

There are no heritage assets within or near to the site however, good quality green infrastructure in this location has the potential to retain and improve linkages for wildlife and ecology and wider linkages to the Nidd corridor and Brimham Rocks.

Summerbridge generally benefits from a generous woodland cover at its northern end but the southern part is sparser. The new development could help to redress this balance and build upon the existing woodland cover that lies to the northeast of the site including the ancient semi-natural woodlands of Birch, Braisty and West Woods. These are currently connected by field boundaries which still retain many trees, although the 1st Epoch OS map shows that woodland cover was previously more extensive in this part of the village and that field boundaries were more heavily treed in the past.



Summerbridge, Nidderdale

# Case Study

## Large brownfield site for housing, Boroughbridge

### Site:

Riverside Sawmills

### Site size:

3.96 ha

### Proposed use:

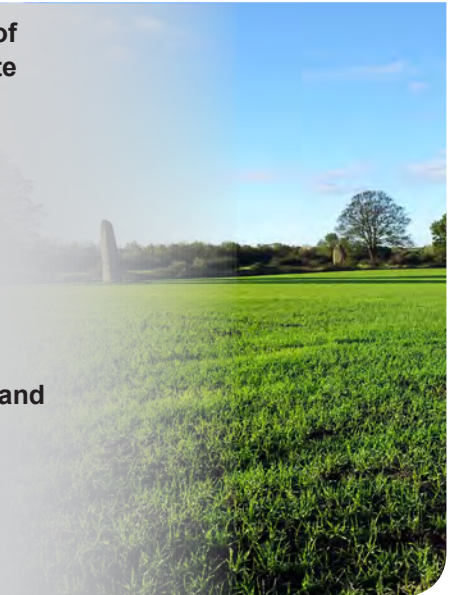
The site is considered suitable for a mix of market and affordable housing with a yield of approximately 83 dwellings.

### Site Characteristics:

Boroughbridge is a small town located approximately nine miles to the northeast of Harrogate within the River Ure corridor. The Riverside Sawmills is a brownfield site located towards the northwestern edge of the settlement off Valuation Lane and comprises a range of commercial buildings associated with the Sawmills. The southern boundary is formed by a wire mesh fence with perimeter planting and residential development beyond.

Detached residential properties are also located to the east and to the north is the River Ure with a small marina and to the other side of the river is The Maltings development, a listed Grade II building now converted to residential use from the former Anchor Brewery. The wider landscape to the west comprises the linear floodplain of the River Ure as it flows in an easterly direction between Newby Hall and Boroughbridge, eventually flowing into the Humber before entering the North Sea. To the north the outlying landscape comprises the large-scale arable farmland of Dishforth and the A1(M) is a dominant feature to the east where it crosses the River Ure, effectively cutting off the countryside to the west from the town.

Devil's Arrows, Boroughbridge



### Connecting green spaces and routes:

The site is within an important sub-regional green corridor in the Leeds City Region Strategic Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010, known as the River Ure corridor. The City Region project aims to direct green infrastructure to capture the significance of the valley landscapes as well as the rural hinterland. Particular emphasis is given to historic sites within and fringing the main settlements (including

Boroughbridge) where an enhanced landscape setting could help to attract people and business to the area.

The green infrastructure assets at Riverside Sawmills include opportunities to enhance the riverside setting, to open up views of the marina, improve waterside leisure provision and improve access to the towpath. Development could also make use of what is a largely under-utilised part of the town and improve connections between the town centre and existing facilities along the river corridor.

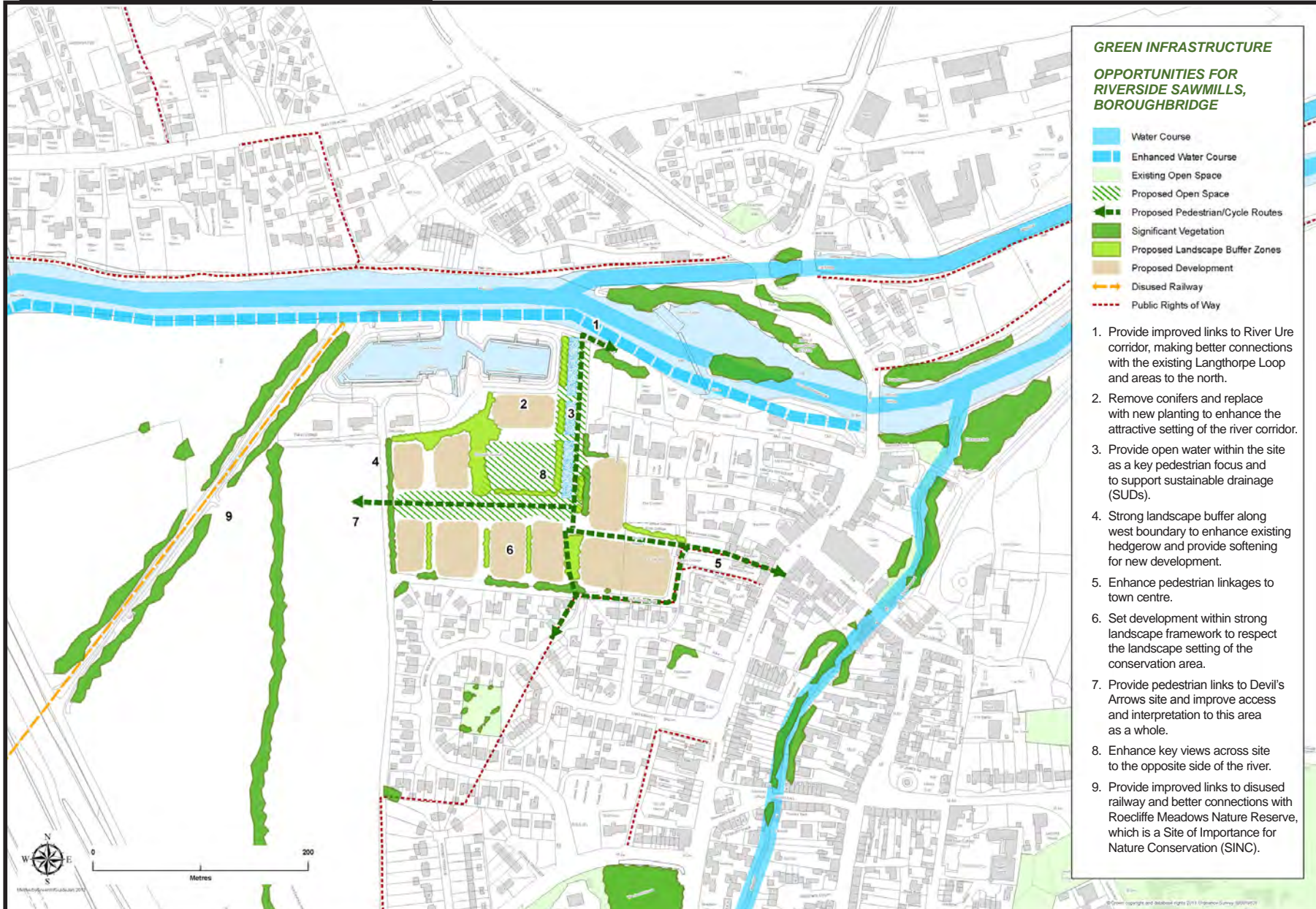


### Improving the setting and quality of place:

To fulfil the site's function as a green infrastructure corridor the site layout and design could take advantage of the close proximity of the site to the town centre and draw more people towards the riverside. Site boundaries could be designed so as not to inhibit views across the area and to encourage people to pass through the site and access the riverside. Enhancements to the site



# Opportunities plan



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boundary could significantly improve the setting of the conservation area and the boundaries of the site could be interspersed with outward looking buildings and structure planting, which could help connect the site with surrounding areas. Removal of the conifer belt to the site's north boundary would also assist with integration.

The Devil's Arrows Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) is a line of three 'menhirs', or standing stones, believed to have been erected in the Bronze Age and located in close proximity to the site off Bar Lane. The new proposals could enhance potential linkages and there may be opportunities to improve the setting of the Devil's Arrows and also provide better signage and interpretation. The Arrows currently occupy two sites where the third stone stands on a site amongst trees on the west side of Roecliffe Lane. It is almost certain there were once four stones, or possibly more, standing in a line and what can be seen today is possibly only a fraction of what used to exist.



### Encouraging activity and enjoyment:

Improving access across the river could be a long term strategic opportunity in particular to build upon cycling and walking routes in the area and to make better connections to the north with Littlethorpe, Langthorpe and Milby. There is scope to provide an improved circuitous footpath via Kirby Hill and Langthorpe. Close to Boroughbridge is the village of Aldborough, once the site of a Roman settlement known as Isurium Brigantum and links could also be improved to connect this Roman settlement more directly with the river corridor and make better connections with the town centre.

Links along the river corridor to the southwest also exist to provide an opportunity to make better connections with the site at Roecliffe Meadows, which was a former clay pit and is now designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The site at Brickyard Farm Fields also lies along this corridor and provides an important connection between the Sawmills site and Roecliffe Meadows. Potential for a circuitous route around Low Fields and Lowfield Lane could be explored in this area and the disused railway is an important asset which provides more direct links between Roecliffe Meadows and the wider countryside to the southwest.

The local lanes are used for dog walking especially Valuation Lane and this is a relatively quiet part of the town allowing direct access to open countryside and the Devil's Arrows sites. Maintaining the attractive rural setting of the river corridor for recreation purposes and links to the Langthorpe Loop circular walk could be a key priority.



### Adapting to changes in climate, floodrisk and growing food locally:

A small part of the site is within the floodplain of the River Ure and although already developed for commercial use, site redevelopment would have to take this into consideration. Green infrastructure is a good approach for managing flood risk and the northern part of the site extends down to the edge of the river. There is an opportunity to retain this part of the site as a key open green space to minimise the risk of flooding and possibly introduce water features/attenuation to provide a link with the waterfront.



Boroughbridge sawmills

Development of natural floodplain habitats on land upstream to the east of the site could be a key opportunity to offset any flooding impact on Boroughbridge with potential for sustainable urban drainage (SUDs) enhancements. This could be done as part of a scheme to enhance wildlife habitats and biodiversity in this area as well as improving the setting of the Devil's Arrows as a green infrastructure priority.



### Protecting nature and heritage:

The north part of the site is within the Boroughbridge Conservation Area and development of this site has the potential to enhance this part of the town. The Conservation Area Appraisal will be a useful tool in the design process for this site.

The River Ure at Boroughbridge has particularly high biodiversity significance, with water vole, otter





Boroughbridge marina

and depressed river mussel. A number of other Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority fish species are likely to be associated with the River Ure and the river is an important spawning ground. The area of river immediately below the weir forms an important spawning area for sea lamprey.

A number of mature sycamore and lime trees divide the open areas of the site to the east from the warehouse type buildings. Retention of these sycamores that run along the centre of the site could be a priority (providing the trees are deemed healthy and suitable for retention). Enhancement of the hedgerow along the western boundary, which is covered by a Tree Preservation Order, could also be a key objective of any development as the hedgerow could be valuable for wildlife, especially since it is composed mainly of native species. There are likely to be nesting birds associated with all the trees, hedgerows and possibly the buildings on site and just off-site a number of protected species are likely to be associated with the River Ure including kingfisher.

Boroughbridge has a limited amount of accessible open space and footpaths and connections to the open countryside are restricted in some areas in the

urban hinterland. The main asset at Boroughbridge is its river corridor and this is a key opportunity to re-engage with the river, increase access and improve landscape and ecology through the development of the site as a key riverside space.



River Ure, Boroughbridge



# Case Study

## Greenfield employment allocation to the south of Melmerby

### Site:

Land at Melmerby  
Business Park

### Site size:

4.09 ha

### Proposed use:

This site is considered  
suitable for employment.

### Site Characteristics:

Melmerby is a small village located approximately 3.5 miles northeast of Ripon and altogether this is a pleasant area with interesting villages in an attractive rural setting. The site consists of agricultural land and adjoins the existing Melmerby business park forming a small neat triangular parcel of land.

To the east of the site is Melmerby Green Lane, elsewhere the site is bounded by agricultural land divided by hedgerows, woodland areas and straight access tracks. Some of these tracks are public rights of way and many are located to the north of the area and link the business park with the village.

The wider landscape is large scale and open and development is scattered and diverse. Tree cover and hedgerows are intermittent affording long distant views extending to the Kilburn White Horse on the edge of the North York Moors National Park in the east and to the Nidderdale Moors in the distance to the west.

Melmerby Business Park



### Connecting green spaces and routes:

There is potential to provide better connections across the site to link with the existing public rights of way network and to the woodlands both to the north and the south of the area. The existing woodland areas to the north are an important landscape feature and could be enhanced to improve the landscape character of the area and aid the transition from settlement edge to open countryside. Retention and enhancement of these woodlands could also help to improve visual and

physical connections between the business park and the village edge.



Melmerby wider landscape

There are existing woodlands and plantations to the south of the site and although public access may be limited to these areas, there could be opportunities to develop biodiversity interests by encouraging more green connections between these woodlands. The existing woodlands and tree cover make a valuable contribution to the rural setting of the villages in this area.

Towards the east the existing A1(M) severs the potential of any connections through the landscape and public access to the countryside is limited. Opportunities to link with the River Swale at



# Opportunities plan





Baldersby St James however could be explored. This river landscape is recreationally important in this area and the River Ure is identified as a regionally important corridor in the Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010.

The outlying landscape has a limited number of public rights of way and there could be more linkages in particular to promote links to the west to make better connections with Norton Conyers, Nunwick and beyond to Ripon and Hutton Moor.



Melmerby business park



### Improving the setting and quality of place:

The site occupies an open countryside location but the existing woodland to the north provides an effective backdrop and helps with integration of the business park into the wider landscape. Existing structure/screen planting around the site boundaries also currently soften views from the south and the west.

The settings of the villages in this area are important to the diversity of the landscape and they are sensitive to change resulting from development.

There is an opportunity to promote the maintenance and management of hedgerows and new planting close to the existing village boundary could be very beneficial in providing a softer edge to the settlement.

Careful layout, massing, scale and design of the employment buildings could also provide an opportunity to help to merge the development into the wider countryside and help with visual integration near the southern boundary. Colour of buildings is critical to their successful integration.



### Encouraging activity and enjoyment:

An opportunity exists to improve the setting of the current business park and these improvements could contribute to encouraging more activity and enjoyment of the wider area as well as making the area more attractive for business investment.

The surrounding landscape is open and sensitive with little woodland cover. There are long distant views from the site towards higher ground to the south and the existing screen planting provides softening, but there is an opportunity to provide more tree planting to ensure that the extensive rooflines remain camouflaged.

The site also offers the potential to provide wider linkages to the dismantled railway line formerly linking to Ripon. Until the late 1950s the village was the site of a major railway junction situated on the main Harrogate to Northallerton railway line via Ripon. A branch line ran westwards from Melmerby towards the small market town of Masham, famous for brewing. Improved footpath links to the former railway corridor could be explored to provide a

circuitous route around the village connecting with the other areas of open space and public rights of way as well as linking through the planted wooded area to the north of the site. Cycle and pedestrian access could also be enhanced and maintained along the dismantled railway.



Countryside around Melmerby

There is the potential to enhance the green space linkages between the site and the River Ure corridor to the west and the villages of Nunwick and Hutton Conyers to the southwest and links to the former WWII air base to the south could also be enhanced.



### Adapting to changes in climate, flood risk and growing food locally:

Sustainable urban drainage (SUDs) could be proposed in the form of blocking ditches on the edges of the site. The ditches could link to the open storage ponds and proposed woodland could enhance areas of retained planting with areas of wetland habitat. There is scope to explore improvements to drainage off site and provide management plans for existing ponds and drainage ditches to help with wider flood attenuation.

In particular the site at Salmist Beck Carr is a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) and includes existing wetland habitats within the service yard of the adjacent business facility and the aim could be to protect and enhance the nature conservation value of the SINC. Opportunities could also include gapping up of existing hedgerows, new native hedgerow and tree planting, grassland management to increase biodiversity and habitat management for amphibians in this area.



### Protecting nature and heritage:

The site comprises an open arable field with existing screen planting to the south and the western boundaries. There are earth mounds to the southwestern part of the site supporting a diverse range of wildflowers, which may hold some ecological value and these assets could be enhanced and retained.

There are no heritage assets within immediate range of the site however there may be an opportunity to improve potential linkages to the henges site at Hutton Moor. The Thornborough Henges are an ancient monument complex that includes three aligned henges and are thought to have been part of a Neolithic and Bronze Age 'ritual landscape'



Melmerby business park

between 3500 and 2500 BC and have been called 'The Stonehenge of the North'. The henges could benefit from improved signage and interpretation and this could be explored through improvements around Melmerby business park. There are also less recognised structures around Melmerby and Hutton Moor that could benefit from enhancement within the green infrastructure framework for this area.

The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust Living Landscapes project offers significant opportunity as a forum for improvements in this area. This project is aimed at restoring, recreating and reconnecting wildlife-rich species in rural and urban areas by working in partnership with local communities, landowners, schools and businesses.



# Case Study

## Small scale greenfield site for affordable housing, Staveley

### Site:

Land between Minskip Road and Lowfield Lane.

### Site size:

0.44 ha

### Proposed use:

This site is considered suitable for affordable housing with a yield of approximately nine dwellings.

### Site Characteristics:

Staveley is a small village situated approximately four miles north of Knaresborough and near the A1(M) motorway. The village has a pond known as Martin's Pond at the end of Lowfield Lane, a disused railway line and a Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) nature reserve that stretches beyond the edge of the village.

The site consists of agricultural land and is located directly adjacent to Minskip Road. The west of the site is bordered by an existing inter-war housing estate comprising Spellow Grove and Spellow Crescent and to the south and east the site is bounded by agricultural land including Martin's Pond and Lowfield Lane, which is a public right of way. The wider landscape comprises moderate to large-scale arable fields where hedgerows are managed to various heights and bushiness and they have considerable impact, compensating for lack of tree cover. Tree cover is moderate and patchy, partially enclosing the landscape in places and framing extensive views elsewhere.

Staveley site looking north



### Connecting green spaces and routes:

There is potential to provide better connections via the site to link with the existing public rights of way network, in particular the disused railway line formerly linking Knaresborough and Boroughbridge, which has been unused for many years. There could be better linkages to Martin's Pond to the south and although public access could be constrained in the interests of maintaining biodiversity, other improvements to the local footpath network could also be considered

with wider linkages promoted to the north to the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust managed Staveley Nature Reserve.

Links between Martin's Pond and the nature reserve could help enhance the wider north-south linkages across the area by creating an almost joined up 'greenway' around the eastern fringes of the village. Improved cycle and pedestrian access along Minskip Road could also be encouraged to link to the nature reserve car park.

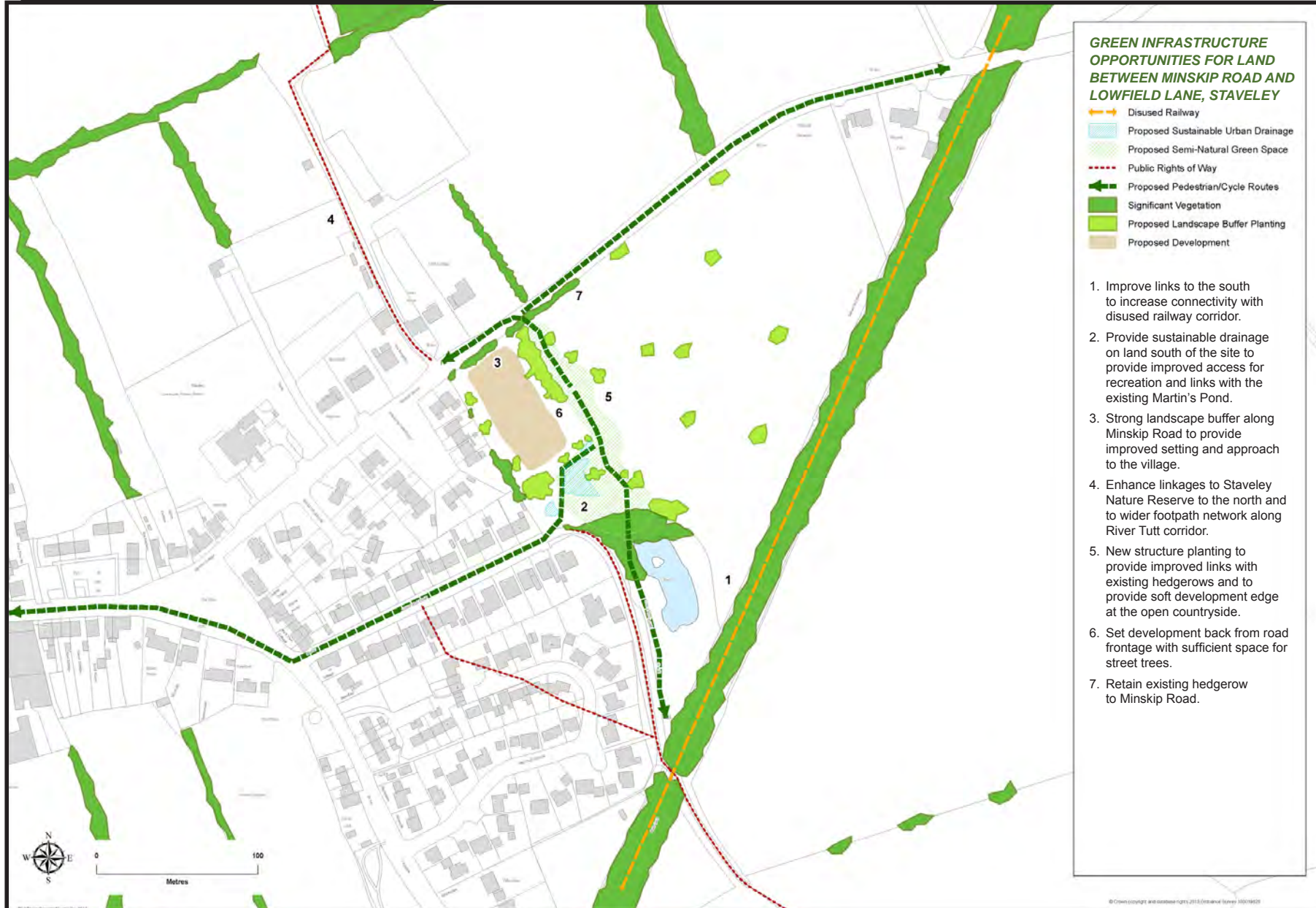


### Improving the setting and quality of place:

The setting of the villages in this area is important to the diversity of the landscape and would be sensitive to change from development. The proposals could explore the possibility of promoting the maintenance and management of hedgerows and the planting of hedgerow trees, particularly close to the existing village boundary.



# Opportunities plan







Staveley site RL1113(1)

The site is visually contained by the tall hedgerow along Minskip Road to the northwest and the housing to the southwest also provides some visual containment. The existing hedgerows may, however, conflict with the site requirements for highway visibility splays. The site will form a new developed edge to the village and give an opportunity for new structure planting to help integrate the development into the settlement edge.

There is an opportunity to protect and retain a large ash tree that is located in the southwest corner of the site. Any development should respect the rural approach to the village and the wooded character of Minskip Lane and scope exists for further structure planting to be provided in the open field to the east with isolated groups of field trees. The area between the site and Martin's Pond to the south could also be promoted as an area of new woodland and open space to provide green connections between the site and the pond environs.



### Encouraging activity and enjoyment:

There is potential to provide improved recreational opportunities and to enhance the green space linkages between the River Tutt corridor to the north and the villages of Staveley and Ferrensby to the south as this site could provide linkages to the dismantled railway line.

There are a limited number of public footpaths in the area and this is a key opportunity to explore the option of closing the links to provide a circuitous route around the village connecting its three green infrastructure assets - Martin's Pond, the nature reserve and the railway line.



### Adapting to changes in climate, floodrisk and growing food locally:

Sustainable urban drainage (SUDs) could be an option for this site and blocking ditches on the lower southern and eastern boundary and linking

to Martin's Pond and the nature reserve wetlands could be beneficial. There may be an opportunity to provide SUDs in association with Martin's Pond to enhance the overall biodiversity and nature conservation value of this asset.



### Protecting nature and heritage:

There are no heritage assets within or near to the site. However, good quality green infrastructure in this location has the potential to retain and improve linkages for wildlife and ecology and close the linkages between the three key green infrastructure assets within the village.

The site makes a valuable contribution to the rural setting of the village and there is an opportunity to provide additional planting to enhance the landscape character of the area and aid the transition from the housing edge to open countryside.



# Case Study

## Small scale greenfield site for affordable housing, Bishop Thornton

### Site:

Land south of West Grove,  
Bishop Thornton

### Site size:

0.49 ha

### Proposed use:

This site is considered suitable for affordable housing comprising approximately eight dwellings.

### Site Characteristics:

Bishop Thornton is a small village that is located approximately seven miles north of Harrogate. The village has two churches and two schools and a cricket pitch. The outlying countryside is criss-crossed by several public rights of way, lanes and tracks with a few scattered farmsteads.

The site consists of agricultural land, which is situated directly off a small cul-de-sac (West Grove). Cut Throat Lane defines the east boundary and to the north lies a small housing estate comprising a neat and organised arrangement of interwar housing. To the east on the far side of Cut Throat Lane is Thornton Grove Farm and Thornton Grove House.

The wider landscape is moderate scale, undulating but becoming almost flat around Bishop Thornton. Land use is a mixture of muted grassland and arable fields intensively managed for grazing livestock and cereal crop production. Hedges and ditches enclose the fields and they are often fragmented with post and wire fencing.

Bishop Thornton site



### Connecting green spaces and routes:



A green lane, Bishop Thornton

The site lies adjacent to the Development Limit and there is potential to enhance the linkages between the edge of the village and the outlying countryside. There are public rights of way at the edge of the village including a footpath just outside the west boundary to which linkages could be promoted including strategic linkages with the Nidderdale Way.



### Improving the setting and quality of place:

The open agricultural fields provide a unifying characteristic and attractive setting to the village and there are also distinctive farm buildings on land

immediately east of the site comprising Thornton Grove Farm and Thornton Grove House. It is therefore important to retain this attractive landscape setting and distinctive approach to the village.

There is scope to ensure the design of the scheme is sensitive in terms of scale with appropriate landscape mitigation where possible to help provide an attractive setting to the settlement. This site has scope to provide generous structure planting with ultimately large trees, which could improve current views towards the village. The development could allow for gaps between the dwellings to enable



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'in curtilage' parking to be set back and screened from the street frontage. Careful design of the houses could also help merge the development into the streetscene and the existing hedgerow on the north boundary could be retained to help integrate any development.

There is also an opportunity to include tree planting in the form of groups adjacent to the southeast and southwest corners of the site, whilst individual trees could also be planted at intervals along the line of the public right of way that runs to the west.



### Encouraging activity and enjoyment:

The site has the potential to enhance the green space linkages within the village as well as the connections to the open countryside. Better connections to Cut Throat Lane will offer more scope for a circuitous route heading north to St. John's Church and then cutting back across open fields in a southwest direction towards St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School. The possibility of a circuitous walk between Bishop Thornton and the adjacent village of Shaw Mills could also be explored. Shaw Mills is a pleasant village with a small attractive bridge leading over Thornton Beck and links to Thornton Beck and the disused Mill Race and Mill Dam could also be a possibility.



### Adapting to changes in climate, floodrisk and growing food locally:

Sustainable urban drainage (SUDs) offers scope for managing ditches on the southern boundary to



Bishop Thornton Church

retain a wetland area and there may also be scope for wetland development using SUDs either to the east or west of the new dwellings.



### Protecting nature and heritage:

The southern boundary fronts onto the open agricultural fields and could be planted with a mixed species native shelterbelt to provide a soft edge to the open countryside in keeping with village character. Retention of the existing hedgerow and hedgerow trees along the north boundary will also assist with integration of development at the street frontage. Two small woodland blocks could also be provided to the southwest and southeast corners of the site as mitigation.

There are a number of mature trees including sycamore and ash and also an established hawthorn hedge along the site frontage that could be retained;

and there is potential for gapping up of other hedgerows especially the boundary hedge to the east along the main highway to assist with visual integration from the south.

This is a distinctive landscape characterised by agricultural land use and consideration could be given to optimising structure planting and by providing sustainable urban drainage (SUDs), which could provide more opportunity for wildlife and nature conservation. The important hedgerows (especially roadside) mostly hawthorn, including the roadside ash trees towards the east could also be retained. Other scattered field boundary trees (including ash) could also be incorporated into the new scheme.



Landscape around Bishop Thornton





7.1 This section includes an assessment of the opportunities for green infrastructure on sites around the towns of Harrogate and Knaresborough:

- **North of Skipton Road, Harrogate**
- **North of Penny Pot Lane, Harrogate**
- **Cardale Park West, Harrogate**
- **Manse Farm, York Road, Knaresborough**

7.2 Due to the scale of these sites, their characteristics, proposed use and their location they are considered to present significant opportunities for incorporating good quality green infrastructure, particularly in terms of establishing important links to the town centre and the open countryside.

7.3 Proposals for development of these sites (i.e. the main urban extensions) will be expected to contribute to the delivery of the opportunities identified within this SPD.

# Urban extension

## Northwest of Harrogate

### Site:

Land north of Skipton Road

### Site size:

14.05 ha

### Proposed use:

The site is considered suitable for a mix of market and affordable housing with a yield of approximately 290 dwellings and a range of recreational facilities including land for new outdoor sports provision.

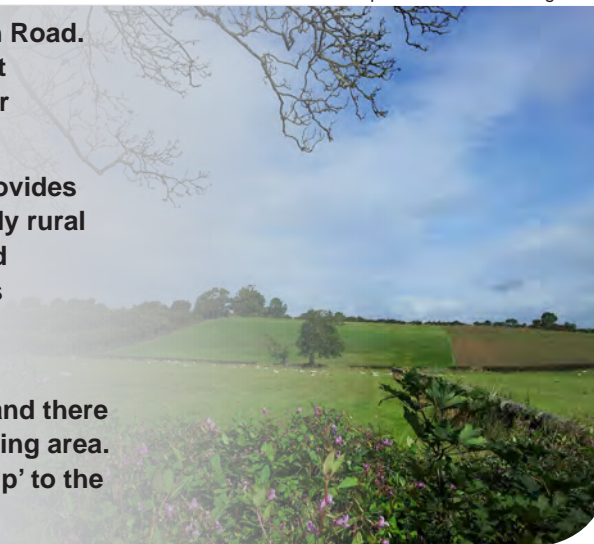
### Site Characteristics:

The land is situated northwest of the town centre, off Skipton Road. It is located within Character Area 24 of the Harrogate District Landscape Character Assessment (2004) known as the Lower Nidderdale Valley north west of Harrogate.

The surrounding landscape is of high quality and as such provides an attractive setting for the settlement. The site is prevalingly rural in character despite its close proximity to the urban edge and supports a high level of tree cover. The topography provides local interest where the fields fall gently towards the A59 and to the east towards Cow Dyke Beck.

The site is bordered by suburban development to the south and there is a strong visual relationship between the site and this housing area. The site is distinctive in that it brings the countryside 'right up' to the edge of the town.

Skipton Road site looking north



### Connecting green spaces and routes:

The site is one of three large urban extension sites to the west of Harrogate. There is potential to enhance the physical linkages between all three sites to improve cycle and footpath connections around the western edge of Harrogate.

The site is located within an important corridor on the Harrogate Green Infrastructure Opportunities Map (section 8) described as Corridor 3: Skipton Road to Haverah Park set out in the urban extension

section of this SPD. To fulfil this 'corridor' role there is potential to enhance the site connections to the town centre via Skipton Road, Ripon Road and Coppice Drive.

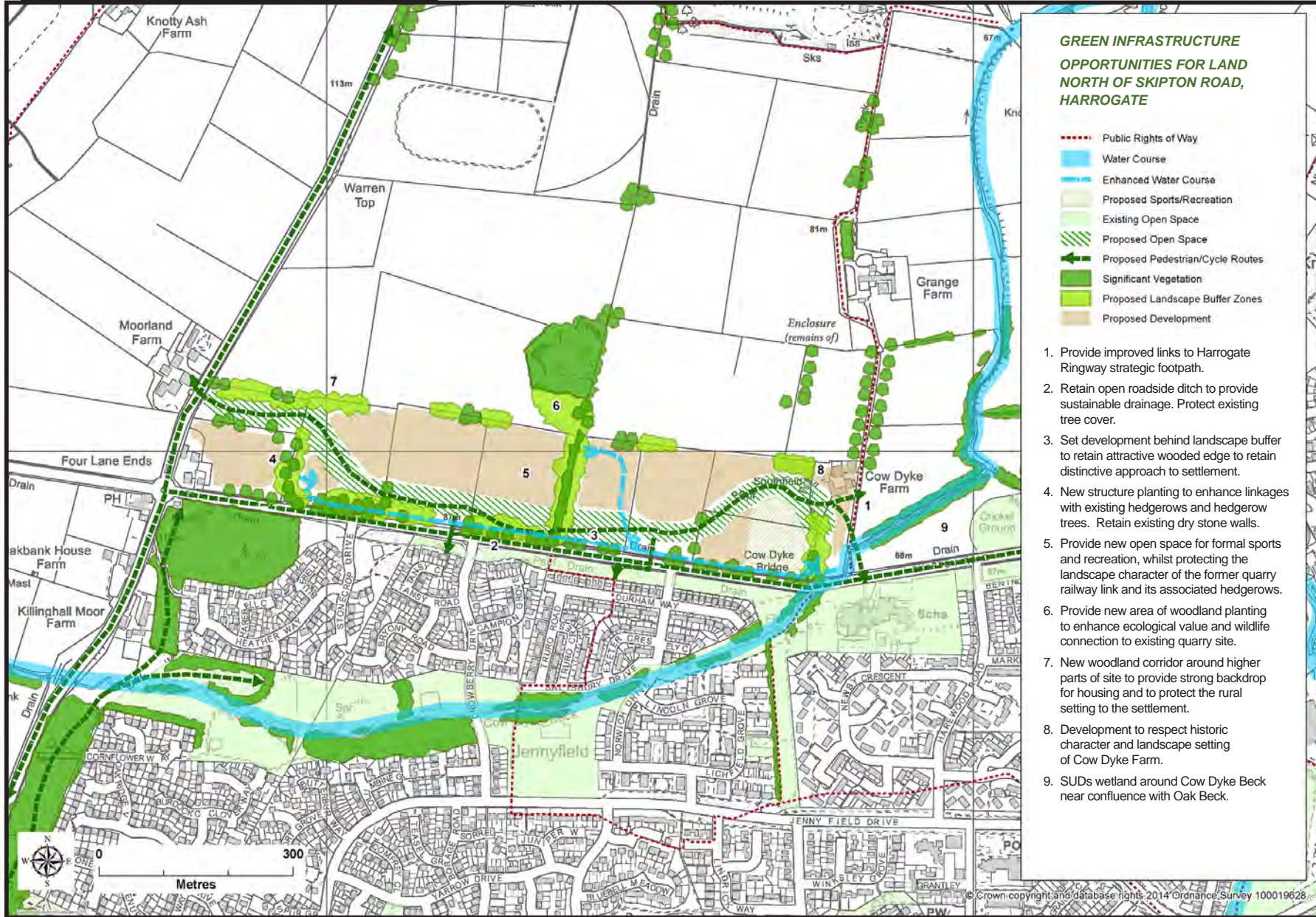
Opportunity exists to enhance the area around Coppice Drive to improve linkages via Oak Beck and the former gas works site. The de-canalisation of the water course and new planting with improved footways and dedicated space for cycling could significantly enhance the landscape character and biodiversity value in this corridor.

There are also opportunities to develop linkages from this site south via the Jennyfields open space to the nearby site at Penny Pot Lane. There are a number of important open spaces within this corridor and there is scope for significant improvement to encourage the community to make better use of them and improve connections to the outlying countryside.

The site presents a significant opportunity to link to the Harrogate Ringway footpath that follows the



# Opportunities plan



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eastern boundary. From the site there are also potential linkages to the AONB to be explored via Hampsthwaite by creating improved links to the south of Killinghall via High Warren Farm and Lund Lane.



### Improving the setting and quality of place:

The landscape setting and the perceived character on the approach to Harrogate is a major factor to be considered in taking forward development on this site. The careful blending of the existing residential areas with the proposal to respect the building line on the south side of Skipton Road will require a robust and mature landscape framework.

The upgrading of existing hedgerows is a key opportunity to provide robustness and maturity, particularly along the highway frontage. There is also scope to place new landscape buffer zones to the rear of the site to provide a wooded backdrop for any new areas of housing, particularly where development is likely to breach the skyline in the western portion of the site.

Cow Dyke Farm, located just outside the eastern boundary of the site, is a traditional farmstead constructed with predominant materials of local sandstone and slate and the site contributes to the rural setting of this group of buildings. The access track serving the farm from the highway is tree lined and the fields to the south of Cow Dyke Farm are attractive and offer potential to be retained to preserve the rural setting of the farmstead.



Skipton Road site looking north

The hedge and tree-lined ditch along the A59 forms a significant corridor and the field boundaries link into the ditch, which in turn ties in with the adjacent network of small scale fields. Even though the internal hedges are generally poor there is an opportunity to improve them since their restoration and management could offer considerable value to the site and provide a landscape framework.

The well-vegetated track (the former rail access to the redundant quarry) is an attractive tree-lined feature and there is an opportunity to retain this as a key element of linkage within the site. The disused quarry retains a relatively rich mix of habitats and is a valuable local wildlife resource. This area could be supplemented with a new woodland belt to provide a valuable wildlife link between the quarry and the site. This woodland could also provide some visual mitigation for the new sports pitches that may occupy the central portion of the site.

There may be potential to provide off-site planting to the northern boundary to improve integration and free up more open space within the development as the site is partially constrained by its elongated and narrow shape, which is not compatible with open space connections.



### Encouraging activity and enjoyment:

The River Nidd passes to the north and east of Harrogate and is part of a wider regionally important corridor (R8). There is the potential to improve access to the Nidd corridor from this site by making better connections to the Harrogate Ringway footpath. This strategic path provides links to the north of Harrogate passing via semi-natural public open space at Grange Quarry to the small settlement of Knox, ultimately linking with the River Nidd at Nidd Banks. This area also includes the disused railway corridor and provides links ultimately to the waterfront of urban Knaresborough. Potential also exists to explore links from this area to the Nidderdale Way, which starts and finishes at Ripley village.

Enhanced connections to the primary school on the south side of Skipton Road offer significant opportunities to improve the crossing points over this busy road and provide dedicated cycle and pedestrian routes along the entire road corridor to improve links via Penny Pot Lane to the wider AONB.

Links with the existing sports facilities at Killinghall Moor offer opportunities to improve the existing Jennyfields open space network.





### Adapting to changes in climate, floodrisk and growing food locally:

There is an opportunity to explore the possibility of a sustainable drainage system for this site, which could include green swales, balancing ponds, wetland areas and reedbeds.

The potential for off-site drainage improvements also exists in this area with the possible use of land to the east of Cow Dyke Farm as water management for use as wetlands or open balancing ponds.

There may also be potential where Cow Dyke Beck joins Oak Beck to utilise the open landscape areas on the south side of Skipton Road for water storage and retention or drainage swales.



### Protecting nature and heritage:

There are multiple opportunities on this site to integrate habitat provision and improve access to nature as the landscape is dominated by the

presence of the Oak Beck valley and its woodlands. The area supports distinct topographical features where the land rises to form a local ridge and the woodlands associated with the Oak Beck and Skipton Road serve to emphasise the topographical prominence of the landscape in this area.

These existing features provide a range of habitats including woodland/scrub, acid/neutral grassland, tall ruderal vegetation, bare ground and rock faces off site, which are locally valuable habitats for invertebrates and nesting birds. Opportunities for new hedgerows, new woodland, water areas and grassland exist to build upon the existing ecology. For example the adjacent disused quarry retains a relatively rich mix of habitats and is a valuable local wildlife resource. The area to the east between Cow Dyke Beck and Oak Beck has the potential to be developed as semi-natural public open space linked to Grange Quarry that lies further to the east.



Skipton Road site looking north east



# Urban extension

## West of Harrogate

### Site:

North of Penny Pot Lane, Harrogate

### Site size:

22.93 ha

### Proposed use:

The site is considered suitable for a mix of market and affordable housing with a yield of approximately 600 dwellings, a new primary school, neighbourhood centre, local retail facilities and health centre, car parking, bus terminus and a range of recreational facilities.

### Site Characteristics:

Harrogate town occupies a plateau and the peripheral land descends to the valleys of Oak Beck, Crimple Beck and Star Beck. The site forms part of the plateau landscape adjoining the Oak Beck valley and is agricultural land. The outlying landscape comprises a simple landform that is large scale and lack of woodland cover means that the area remains open with extensive views.

In parts the site appears an isolated and remote landscape with very little influence from the urban area despite the distractions of Penny Pot Lane and the B6161 (Oaker Bank). To the west of Oaker Bank the land is occupied by the Hildebrand Barracks and directly to the east of the site is Queen Ethelburga's, a recently developed residential estate. To the south on the opposite side of Penny Pot Lane is an attractive tract of land, which is high quality landscape that is designated 'Special Landscape Area' status and protected within the emerging Harrogate District Local Plan.

Penny Pot Lane site looking north east



### Connecting green spaces and routes:

Penny Pot Lane is one of three large urban extension sites to the west of Harrogate. There is potential to enhance the physical linkages between all three sites to improve cycle and footpath connections around the western edge of Harrogate.

This site is located within an important corridor on the Harrogate Green Infrastructure Opportunities Map (section 8) described as Corridor 3: Skipton

Road to Haverah Park set out in the urban extension section of this SPD. To fulfil this 'corridor' role there is potential to enhance the site connections to the town centre via Skipton Road to the north or via Valley Gardens, which is located to the south within the adjoining Corridor 4: Valley Gardens to Beckwithshaw.

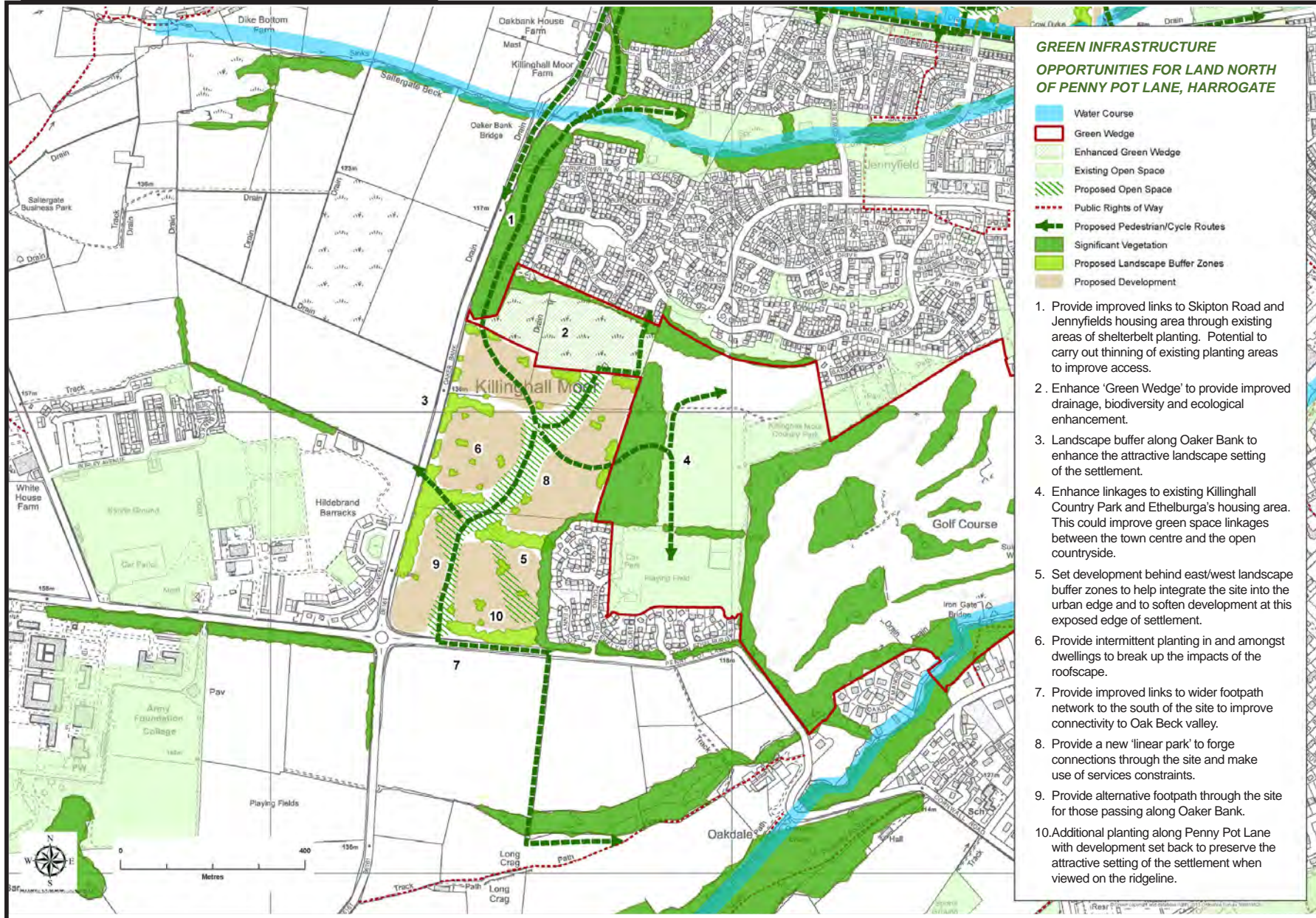
The 'Green Wedge' to the north boundary is a valued local asset and is to be maintained. It serves the purpose of extending land from the open countryside into the town centre via the

country park south of Jennyfields along Cow Dyke Beck and via Oakdale Golf Course to the Oak Beck valley.

There are opportunities to enhance this 'Green Wedge', which includes Killinghall Moor SINC, as semi-natural open space with improved biodiversity and ecological enhancement. Public access would need to be limited in this area in the interests of maintaining biodiversity. This part of the site however could help safeguard the open, natural character of the area, link the town centre with the



# Opportunities plan



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Penny Pot Lane site looking east

open countryside and prevent coalescence between the adjoining housing areas.

North south linkages across the Oak Beck valley between the higher ground at Penny Pot Lane to the north and Moor Park to the south could benefit from significant enhancement. Opportunities exist to provide better connections between the western edge of Harrogate and the AONB. In particular there is scope to explore improved cycle linkages across and along the Oak Beck valley.

There are also opportunities to enhance the north south linkages across the area and provide improved links with Cow Dyke Beck and the Jennyfields housing area to the north. This link has the potential to ultimately connect to land north of Skipton Road.

Linkages to the south could also be improved to provide better connections to the Oak Beck valley and Birk Crag Local Nature Reserve ultimately enhancing linkages with Haverah Park, which is an important landscape on the boundary of the AONB.

Connections to the south to Harlow Carr could also be improved via Harlow Hill Slack that runs through the botanic gardens.



### Improving the setting and quality of place:

The site makes a very valuable contribution to the views towards the edge of Harrogate from higher land to the south and the west, some of which comprises 'Special Landscape Area'. The unifying characteristic of the 'Special Landscape Area' and in particular the nearby Duchy estate and Ethelburga's housing estate is the enclosure of these areas with large, or ultimately large, trees, which reduce some of the visual impact of the development from the countryside.

These trees however fail to break up the views of the adjacent Jennyfields estate from higher land, which show it to be an almost unbroken sea of roofs. This is at odds with the prevailing views of the Harrogate urban edge (which presents itself more as buildings amongst trees) and there is an opportunity to improve this scenario by providing extensive areas of structure planting within this development site.

There is an opportunity to provide landscape buffer areas running across the contours of the site that could act as a heavily planted backdrop for the new development. These areas could comprise woodland shelter belts, which could soften and potentially screen the development from many views to the north and west. These areas could also act as a 'greenway' with access for recreation. These east/west blocks of tree planting could be

substantial. Significant structure planting along the site boundaries could also help to integrate the development into the landscape and link with the east/west blocks of planting.

The development could retain visible open or planted gaps between the buildings along the site ridgeline to the south to enable better integration with the surrounding topography and the adjoining urban environment. Careful layout, massing and design of the houses and appropriate use of materials could also help to merge the development into the ridgeline.



### Encouraging activity and enjoyment:

The site has the potential to provide improved integration with the urban environment by exploring recreational opportunities and enhancing the green space linkages between the town centre and the open countryside via Valley Gardens and Oak Beck. There is scope to incorporate a range of open spaces into the development including allotments, community orchards and gardens.

Scope exists to create footpath links through the east/west woodland blocks connecting with the other areas of open space including the central road corridors and tree lined boulevards. The provision of circuitous routes for residents could also encourage more walking within the site.

The site offers potential to improve pedestrian connections to the Jennyfields housing area through the planted wooded area that runs adjacent to Oaker Bank to the north of this site and this provision could link well with the other open space along Cow Dyke Beck.





Penny Pot Lane site looking north east

Improvement to the footpath across Killinghall Moor Country Park could also be promoted, which will link into the site from spaces locally including the recreation ground at Ethelburga's and the playing pitches and the country park.

Better linkages across the B6161 Oaker Bank and beyond to Burley Bank Road could also be explored. Better linkages to the fields to the west to connect with the Hildebrand Barracks could be beneficial, in particular to enhance connections to the new primary school on site from the barracks.



### Adapting to changes in climate, floodrisk and growing food locally:

Infiltration methods of drainage are unlikely to be successful on this site given the ground conditions in this area. There is however an opportunity to explore sustainable urban drainage (SUDs) methods, since there are many landscape features that offer scope for drainage enhancement. Managing ditches on the lower slopes to retain wetland could be beneficial and there may be scope for wetland development or balancing ponds

including more water retention on the 'Green Wedge' land. The area could include boardwalks to improve access for viewing, education and interpretation.

There may also be an opportunity to explore off-site flood attenuation in the lower parts of the Oak Beck Valley to the south and make improved wildlife linkages with the areas of mixed evergreen and deciduous woodland at Birk Crag. Potential also exists for flood storage potential in the wider areas to the north of the site around the Skipton Road area, where marshy land around Cow Dyke Beck could be used for flood storage and habitat creation.



### Protecting nature and heritage:

There are no heritage assets within or near to the site, however, good quality green infrastructure in this location has the potential to retain and improve linkages for wildlife and ecology, in particular the 'Green Wedge' land to the north. This is a distinctive parcel of land that lies close to the urban edge and consists of open grassland with concentrations of scattered scrub and occasional scattered broad-

leaved trees of some significance and some dry stone walls.

The site includes marshy grassland at Killinghall Moor SINC to the north and may, with suitable management (including grazing), offer potential to recreate some of the mosaic patterns of lowland acid grassland and heath which characterised Killinghall Moor until relatively recently. This management might allow restoration of a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat and also (through retention and enhancement of the 'Green Wedge') could help to reinforce the area's very distinctive historical character and provide a valuable extension to the Killinghall Moor Country Park. There may also be scope to encourage succession to native woodland higher up the slope within the east/west woodland belts. However, some of the existing shelterbelt planting is very dense and could be thinned.

Consideration could be given to integrating potential off-site green infrastructure and this could include links (for people and wildlife) to Killinghall Moor Country Park and also potential links towards Birk Crag Local Nature Reserve that is located to the south of the area within the Oak Beck valley, as linkages south towards Birk Crag are particularly poor from this site.

The important hedges (especially roadside) mostly hawthorn, include a line of roadside ash trees towards the southwest, which could be retained and other scattered field boundary trees (including ash) could also be incorporated into the new scheme to enhance the wildlife and nature conservation value of the development site.





# Urban extension

## West of Harrogate

### Site:

Land at Cardale Park West

### Site size:

32.4 ha

### Proposed use:

The site is considered suitable for a mix of market and affordable housing with a yield of approximately 680 dwellings, a neighbourhood centre, primary school, local retail and community facilities.

### Site Characteristics:

Harrogate town occupies a plateau and on the periphery the land descends to the valleys of the Oak Beck, Crimple Beck and Star Beck. The character around Harrogate is therefore influenced by the presence of high quality and attractive landscape features associated with these river valleys.

The site forms part of the Oak Beck valley that includes Birk Crag and Cardale woodland and provides a strong rural edge to the settlement and an attractive approach to the town because of its abundance of tree and hedgerow cover. The Cardale business park is located directly to the east of the site and to the northeast lies the RHS Garden Harlow Carr and both these areas contribute to the enclosed wooded character of the area: elsewhere the site is surrounded by open countryside.

Cardale site looking west



### Connecting green spaces and routes:

Cardale Park is one of the three large urban extension sites to the west of Harrogate. There is potential to enhance the physical linkages between all three sites to improve cycle and footpath connections around the western edge of Harrogate.

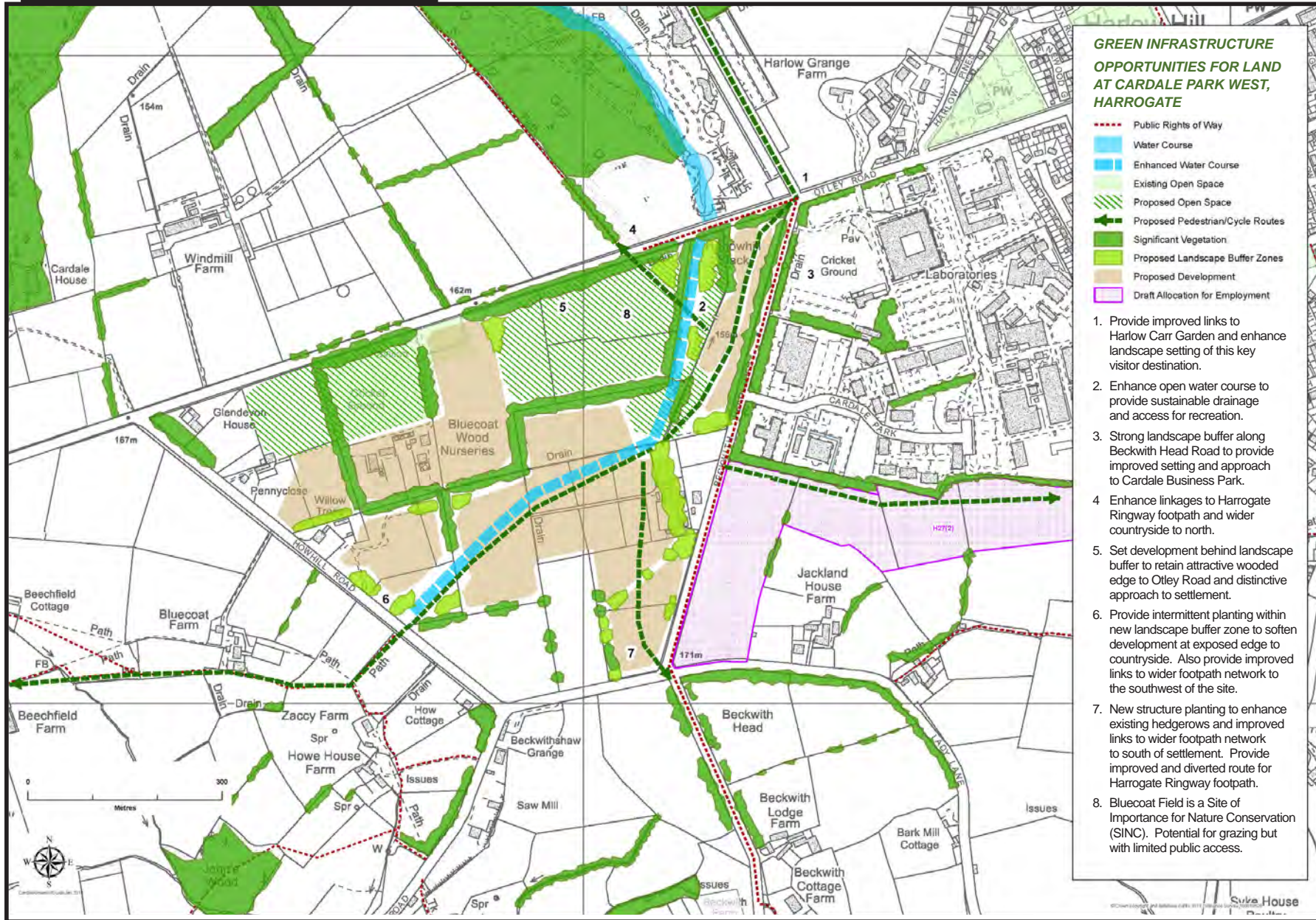
This site is located within an important corridor on the Harrogate Green Infrastructure Opportunities Map (section 8) known as Corridor 4: Valley Gardens to Beckwithshaw set out in the urban

extensions section of this guide. To fulfil this 'corridor' role there is potential to enhance the site connections to the town centre via the Pinewoods and Valley Gardens.

There are also opportunities to enhance the north south linkages across the area and provide improved linkages with the Oak Beck corridor by enabling safer connections across the Otley Road to link with the Harrogate Ringway footpath to the north. This could in turn improve links to Corridor 3: Skipton Road to Haverah Park shown on the Harrogate Green Infrastructure Opportunities Map.

The development site also offers potential to enhance linkages between the town centre and Beckwithshaw via a northeast to southwest link across the site that could follow the course of Harlow Hill Slack. The slack is a small water course that forms a watershed in the fields close to the 'Horticap' nursery in the south west part of the site. This corridor could connect the site to the wider public right of way network that leads to Beckwithshaw and then beyond to Moor Park, ultimately linking with Haverah Park which is an important landscape with a rich network of habitats.

# Opportunities plan



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Cardale site looking north east

Other potential connections exist from Beckwithshaw to the north via Cardale and Pot Bank woodland to Corridor 3 linking at Pot Bridge, which is an historic bridge crossing the Oak Beck. This corridor provides the potential to ultimately link to land north of Penny Pot Lane. The site also provides an opportunity for potential linkages extending to the upper Crimple Valley to the south via the wider pedestrian and cycle network.

There is potential for the site to provide more direct links for cycling and walking to the town's secondary schools. There is scope to the east for linking to Whinney Lane at Pannal Ash as a cycle route. This could in turn enhance connections to the wider corridor at Pannal which comprises the grounds of two secondary schools (Harrogate Grammar School and Rossett School) and Ashville College and the Rossett Local Nature Reserve (LNR).



### Improving the setting and quality of place:

The character of the southwest portion of the site is distinguished by individual dwellings and farmsteads scattered across a well-wooded landscape and this character could be respected in any new proposals for the site. Dwellings could be interspersed with new tree planting along Howhill Road and Howhill Quarry Road, retaining drystone walls and important hedgerows and trees to complement the wooded character of the area to soften the built form where it forms the new settlement edge.

The scheme could make provision for additional planting along the site boundaries to consolidate existing vegetation and ensure that the development is set behind a wooded edge, particularly on the approach to Harrogate along the Otley Road. This new planting could provide a more distinctive approach to the settlement and create a robust wooded structure for the site.

Harlow Carr is one of Harrogate's key tourist attractions and this is an opportunity to retain the rural character of Otley Road and for the development not to intrude upon or compete with the approach to the settlement or the gardens and their rural setting.



### Encouraging activity and enjoyment:

There is potential to improve access to the open countryside from this site and encourage more activity and enjoyment through cycling and walking.

The local road network is currently used for informal recreation and some public rights of way rely on public highways and lanes in the local area. There is an opportunity to divert the Harrogate Ringway in a loop through the site to take advantage of the attractive site features and to provide a more interesting route.

The site at Cardale Park has the potential to offer areas of new public space and due to its close proximity to the Cardale business park, there is potential to encourage access for the users of the business park. The site provides an opportunity to provide a strong landscape buffer along Beckwith Head Road to enhance the public right of way, but also improve the setting to Cardale business park on approach from Otley Road.



### Adapting to changes in climate, flood risk and growing food locally:

This site provides an opportunity for improved drainage and enhanced surface water storage. Harlow Hill Slack is the main watercourse passing through the site, which could be utilised in a positive way. There is scope to divert the watercourse to provide a more meandering alignment coupled with on line storage ponds that could improve the ability of the site to retain surface water.

A sustainable urban drainage system (SUDs) could remove the need for underground water storage on site. Careful design of SUDs is essential to redress flooding and enhance wetland habitats: the site's existing landscape features could be used as a basis for the design. These features include tree





View from Howhill Road

and hedge lines and ditches and these could be enhanced to create a more coherent network.

Retention and enhancement of open drainage ditches could also help to conserve the wildlife and nature conservation value of the site as well as promoting sustainable drainage solutions. The site falls to a low point, or watershed, in the southwest corner and this area could provide an opportunity for flood attenuation ponds or water storage in the form of swales.

The dominant site feature is a belt of mature oak, ash, beech and sycamore which runs south along the western edge of the cricket pitch and 'Horticap' nursery and then extends east eventually linking in with the Otley Road tree belt. The remainder of the field boundaries are mostly a mixture of managed and unmanaged mature hawthorn dominated by hedgerows with scattered mature ash and oak,

which are important features in providing a good site framework. There is potential for the site to support allotments and encourage links to the existing 'Horticap' nursery, should the business choose to remain on site.



### Protecting nature and heritage:

There are no heritage assets within or near the site, however, good quality green infrastructure in this location does have the potential to retain and improve linkages for landscape, wildlife and ecology, especially in that the site supports a proposed SINC. In order to ensure the successful integration of new development at this location a high proportion of planting is advised so that the development is softened.

The site supports an intimate landscape and offers potential for wildlife and nature conservation, especially along the existing hedgerows and peripheral areas of woodland, in particular Otley Road and along Harlow Hill Slack, where new areas of structure planting could be provided to enhance the existing tree cover. The tree belt lining the Otley Road is an important landscape feature and connections into Cardale woodland to the west could be enhanced through this wooded corridor.

The screen planting around Cardale business park to the east is also an important feature and could be improved.

The incorporation of the unimproved marshy grassland SINC site at Bluecoat Field and maintaining its integrity is a key priority. The proposed SINC includes valuable grassland to the west of the field, with less sensitive areas to the east and a small strip along the southern boundary. There is potential for a thin strip to be used as amenity space but this would need careful management to preserve the overall botanical quality of this area. The western area could be fenced for protection. This proposed SINC offers potential for possible educational links between the new on site school and RHS Garden Harlow Carr through appropriate access education and interpretation projects.

# Urban extension

## East of Knaresborough

### Site:

Manse Farm, York Road, Knaresborough

### Site size:

41.9 ha

### Proposed use:

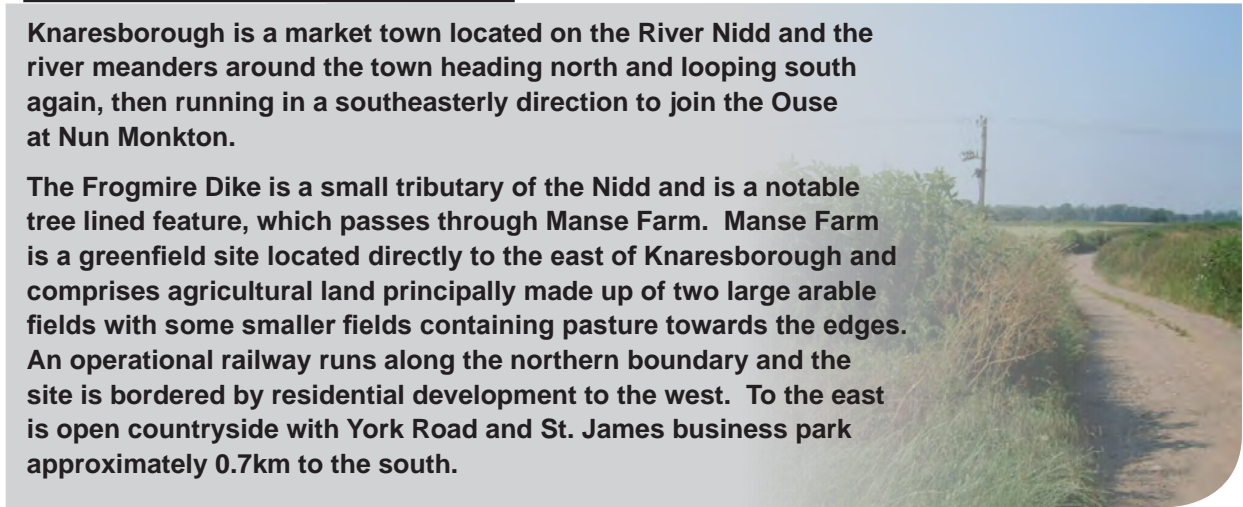
The site is considered suitable for a mix of market and affordable housing with a yield of approximately 600 dwellings as well as a neighbourhood centre to include a primary school, local retail facilities, food store, community uses, together with 2.5 hectares of employment land, a new rail station and car park.

### Site Characteristics:

**Knaresborough is a market town located on the River Nidd and the river meanders around the town heading north and looping south again, then running in a southeasterly direction to join the Ouse at Nun Monkton.**

**The Frogmire Dike is a small tributary of the Nidd and is a notable tree lined feature, which passes through Manse Farm. Manse Farm is a greenfield site located directly to the east of Knaresborough and comprises agricultural land principally made up of two large arable fields with some smaller fields containing pasture towards the edges. An operational railway runs along the northern boundary and the site is bordered by residential development to the west. To the east is open countryside with York Road and St. James business park approximately 0.7km to the south.**

Manse Farm



### Connecting green spaces and routes:

This area has been identified as an important green corridor and part of the Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010 within the network linking the Ure and Ouse river corridors. There is potential to enhance this site to improve green linkages around the north and eastern fringes of Knaresborough.

This site is also located within an important corridor (identified within the urban areas section of this study) on the Knaresborough Green Infrastructure

Opportunities Map (section 8) known as Corridor 3: Knaresborough Lakes. To fulfil this important green corridor role there is scope for wildlife enhancement and also the promotion of its use for recreation.

There are opportunities to retain the Frogmire Dyke and build upon this feature as a significant green infrastructure link to enhance the drainage capacity of the site. There is also potential to retain the field to the south of the existing Manse Farm free of development to protect the watercourse and also to retain some open areas that could provide improved linkages to the River Nidd that lies to the south.

Links with the River Nidd to the south are also a key opportunity for this site as riverside land to the south of York Road offers the potential to be used as public open space. The development also offers potential to provide a central linear park that could extend north to south across the site and enhance links to Hay-a-Park in the north ultimately joining with Scriven and Scriven Park, including a potential cycle trail.

This linear park could also be utilised for allotments, growing food and community orchards and could serve as a place for people to come together as a





# Opportunities plan



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Manse Farm site looking west

focal point for community activities. The orchards could provide a valuable habitat for beneficial insects such as bees, ladybirds, hoverflies and lacewings. Shelters could be built to attract slug-eating slow worms and hedgehogs. The orchards could include a small pond to attract amphibians such as frogs and toads with paths winding between the fruit trees.



### Improving the setting and quality of place:

The prevailing character of the local area is distinguished by low lying arable fields skirting the town, which provide an attractive rural setting to Knaresborough. Tree cover combined with gently rising landform including views of the spire of Holy Trinity Church gives this area its own distinct and attractive character.

There is potential for this scheme to make provision for a well-designed transition from the high density urban areas to open countryside to the east. Retaining links with the local community, whilst protecting the landscape setting of the settlement

and the quality of place and overall heritage assets, which are valued both by locals and visitors, is key.

The development has the potential to enhance the approach to Knaresborough from the major road network from the east as there is potential for the site frontage to be set back behind a landscape buffer to create a 'soft' appearance to ensure the approach to Knaresborough remains suitably attractive. Open areas and appropriate landscape design throughout the site could be implemented to ensure that there is a soft edge to all development parcels. There is potential for the new employment areas to be approached by a well-designed avenue or boulevard that is separated from housing areas by intervening open space.

Development of Manse Farm could be informed by 'Home Zone' principles and the spaces in and between the new built development have the potential to provide for many different activities providing they are correctly located, carefully designed, welcoming and managed and maintained in a responsible way. There is the potential for the creation of larger public spaces within the site



Manse Farm looking north east

itself, typically fronted by the school and community buildings and the creation of residential character areas could also form part of the project.

Areas along the Frogmire Dike could be left open for recreation and amenity purposes and for their nature conservation value. These areas could be particularly important in defining the character of the new adjoining residential areas as well as maintaining links to the Eastfield housing estate to the west.



### Encouraging activity and enjoyment:

There is potential to provide good north-south linkages across this site so that walking and cycling in the area could be expected to increase. In terms of cycle connectivity there are potential links with Knaresborough and the town centre. The wider network could be improved by providing a cycle link between York Lane and Chain Lane and there could be better connections between Manse Farm and the adjacent Eastfield housing estate. There is also an opportunity to consider potential cycle route linkage with Abbey Road to the south via St James business park (via a new bridge over the Nidd) and better links to the Knaresborough Waterside.

Cycle connections to the north could also be explored through opportunities to link to the existing tunnel under the railway line. Cycle connections from the new Halfpenny Lane housing area could also be enhanced and linkages improved to the existing sports fields belonging to the Knaresborough Rugby Club to the north.





Manse Farm looking south

The site frontage offers significant opportunity to incorporate a generous pedestrian/cycle link set back behind a landscape buffer along York Road and there is also scope for the main access roads within the development to be tree lined avenues, which could be attractive and could be wide enough for segregated pedestrian and cycle links.

Walking is a viable option from Manse Farm to the town centre as well as nearby employment areas and the provision of safe well lit pedestrian routes offers significant scope for enhancement. For example, the proposal could include the integration of the existing footpath along the western site boundary within the Eastfield estate and residents at Eastfield could be encouraged to use the new areas of open space.

Linkages from the site to the outlying countryside to the east also offer opportunity for improvement. There is scope to improve links to Goldsborough and create a circular route closing the gaps in the existing footpath system by improving signage, connections and accessibility where needed.



### Adapting to changes in climate, floodrisk and growing food locally:

The site has the potential to promote the use of sustainable drainage systems (SUDs), which could remove the need for underground storage on site. This could include rainwater harvesting, swales, surface storage ponds and cellular storage, which could all be sustainable methods of retaining surface water within the landscape at Manse Farm.

The general slope of the site falls from the northeast to the southwest and most of the surface water currently drains into Frogmire Dike. Careful design of SUDs offers the opportunity to allow water run off to find its natural position on the site, which could then become an asset in the landscape. There is potential to increase biodiversity in these areas as well as reducing the incidence of flooding.

A system of linked ponds and attenuation areas could convey water into Frogmire Dike upstream of York Road and could be designed to complement their landscape setting as well as contributing to biodiversity. Opportunities for wetland habitat creation in association with SUDs could also be explored in the low-lying land to the south of the site between the Manse Farm and the York Road boundary.

There is also potential to utilise the areas within the linear park for drainage to provide wetland habitats, absorb run off from the site and offer overflow capacity from Frogmire Dike. Land off site to the north of the railway line could also be utilised for beneficial drainage and to capture run off before it reaches the site.



### Protecting nature and heritage:

The Hay-a-Park Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) forms part of the area known as Knaresborough Lakes and is a 45ha site of national importance for breeding birds and numbers of wintering wildfowl, in particular goosander. The site is of local conservation interest for a range of other wildfowl. There is local enthusiasm for the 'Knaresborough Lakes' project to promote the link between the SSSI and the River Nidd corridor by building upon the strategic north-south links across this site.

This SSSI is currently classified as in 'unfavourable' condition possibly due to disturbance so any development could consider the opportunity of on-site open space provision to reduce further pressure on the SSSI. Sensitive links would need to be made from the site via the SSSI to prevent damage to the nature conservation interests at Hay-a-Park.

Any loss to biodiversity associated with birds or arable farmland might be offset by improving field margins to the east of the site. There is also an opportunity to consider the heritage value of the buildings at Manse Farm, including the stone footbridge, which make a positive contribution to the historic character and setting of the settlement. It would be beneficial to ensure that this redundant farmstead is appropriately integrated.



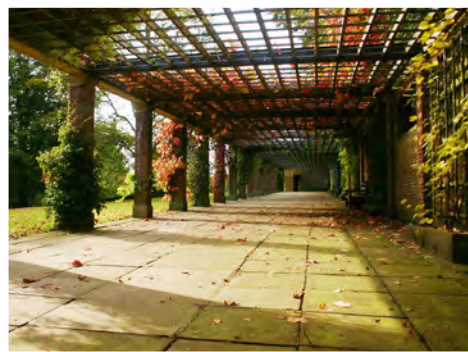
## 8. MAIN URBAN AREAS:

**What opportunities are there for improving green infrastructure in the main urban areas of Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon?**

- 8.1 Through work with Natural England and adjoining authorities on green infrastructure mapping in 2009 (see section 5) it became clear that more detailed work on green infrastructure opportunities within the main urban areas of Harrogate district was required.
- 8.2 This section includes an assessment of the main urban areas of Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon. The opportunities maps provide information about the key characteristics of the settlements and indicate green infrastructure opportunity areas and important green corridors. The accompanying text explains how development within the urban areas can contribute to enhancing green infrastructure.
- 8.3 The majority of key opportunities within the main urban areas are focussed on the need to strengthen links between the town/city centre and the open countryside for access and biodiversity, to improve the setting of key tourist attractions and heritage assets, improve the shopping and business environment and to help to attract more inward investment.
- 8.4 The guide does not identify specific projects, however it provides a starting point for applicants and developers that can underpin proposals for development. Applications for development within Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon will be expected to contribute to the delivery of the opportunities identified within this section.



# Green Infrastructure Opportunities in the Main Urban Area of Harrogate



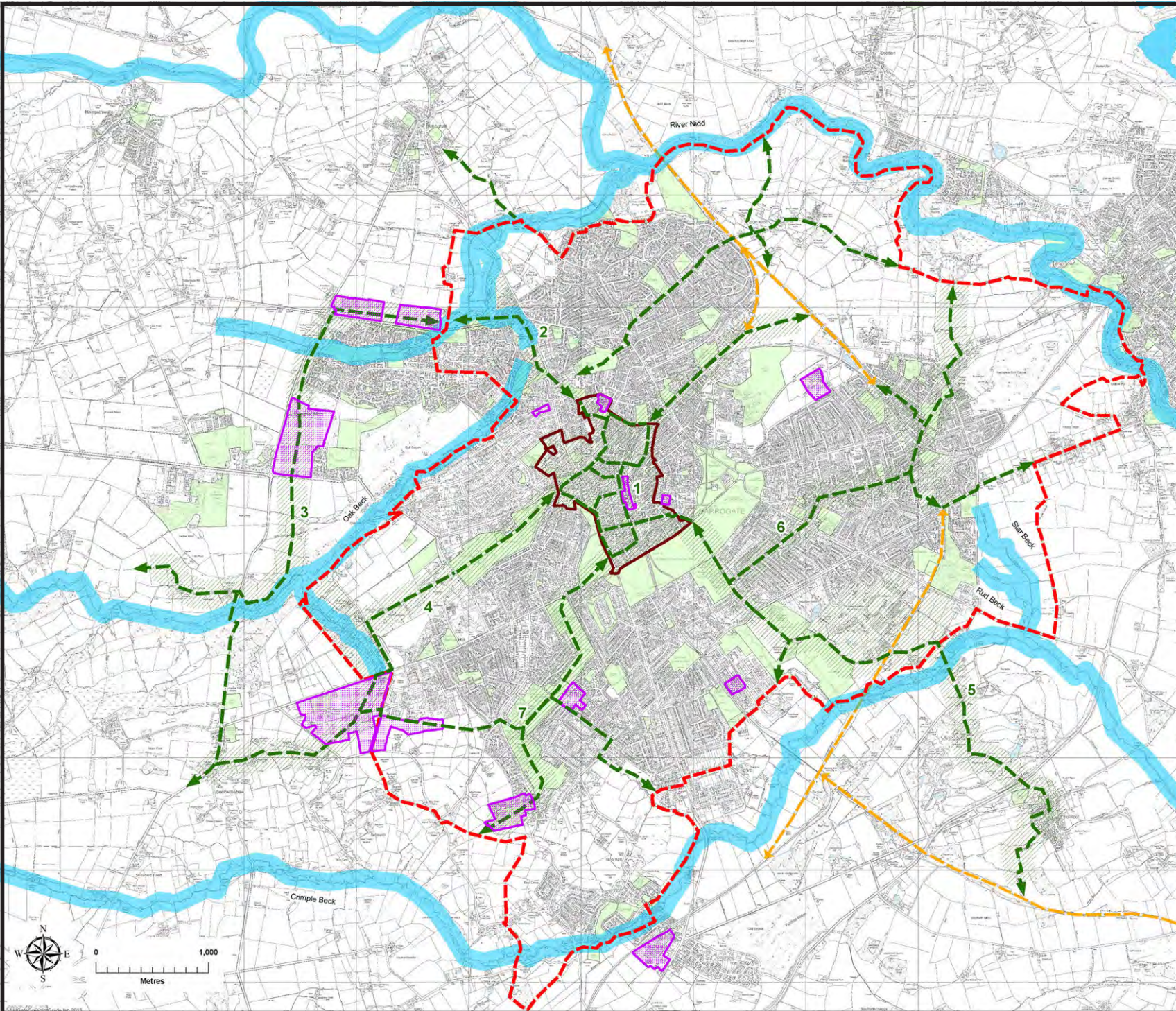


# GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES

## HARROGATE

-  Town Centre
-  River Corridor
-  Existing Open Space
-  Harrogate Ringway Walk
-  Disused Railway
-  Site Considered For Future Development
-  Green Infrastructure Corridors
-  Green Infrastructure Opportunity Areas

1. Harrogate Town Centre
  - \* Station Parade
  - \* International Conference Centre
  - \* Bower Road
  - \* West Park
2. Coppice Drive to Skipton Road
3. Skipton Road to Haverah Park
4. Valley Gardens to Beckwithshaw
5. Station Parade to Follifoot
6. The Stray to Starbeck
7. West Park to Pannal



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## Context:

Harrogate's gardens and green spaces are an important component of the quality environment within the area and they give the town its own distinctive identity. These areas help to create an attractive setting, which has benefits in terms of attracting tourists, shoppers and investment to the town as well as promoting accessibility, healthy living and important links for biodiversity.

Harrogate occupies a large plateau which descends to the valleys of the Oak Beck to the north, northwest and west, the Crimple Beck to the southwest, south and southeast and Star Beck to the east. The Crimple Valley, which is part of the wider regionally important corridor rises to the southwest of Harrogate, adjacent to the Haverah Park area. It runs south of Harrogate and via Spofforth to join the Wharfe corridor at Wetherby. This river corridor links into The Stray in the centre of Harrogate via Hookstone Beck and its associated green wedge at Hornbeam Park. The river corridor comprising Star Beck and Rud Beck also forms important linkages to the north of the area and lies in close proximity to the Harrogate Ringway footpath.

The River Nidd passes to the north and east of Harrogate and it is part of the wider regionally important River Nidd corridor, which originates in the uplands of the Nidderdale AONB and passes close to lower dales villages such as Hampsthwaite, Ripley and Nidd before passing

through the Nidd Gorge northwest of Harrogate and via the town of Knaresborough then meandering eastwards, ultimately joining the River Ouse at Nun Monkton.

The Harrogate bypass acts as a barrier to the connectivity of the Crimple Valley corridor to Spofforth and the landscape to the southeast of Harrogate, but the green wedges cut into the urban area at Oak Beck, Oakdale Golf Course and Valley Gardens to the west and provide good access between town and country. To the east lies the green wedge at the Bilton Triangle and to the south at Hornbeam Park the green wedge links into central Harrogate via The Stray.

The town is bordered by The Stray that extends in a great arc to the southeast and southwest of Harrogate and this plays an important part in providing a highly attractive setting and approach to the settlement. The Stray and Valley Gardens were important in the historical development of the town, as were the Turkish Baths, Health Spa and the Royal Pump Rooms.

Two important focal points for tourists in the town are the area around the roundabout in Low Harrogate, framed by the Crown Hotel, Royal Parade and the bottom of Montpellier Hill, and Prospect Square dominated by the War Memorial and surrounded on three sides by St Peter's Church, Cambridge Crescent, and Prospect Crescent.

## Priorities:

The following green infrastructure priorities have been identified for Harrogate town taking into consideration the characteristics of the settlement and other green infrastructure work undertaken at the regional and sub-regional level:

- Improved linkages between the town centre and open countryside;
- Better connectivity between the retail and conference areas from Station Parade;
- Quality of place and transformation of the public realm;
- Enhancement of the historic environment; and
- Enhanced green infrastructure corridors for biodiversity and accessibility.

Taking into consideration these priorities the following green infrastructure opportunity areas have been identified on the Harrogate Green Infrastructure Opportunities Map:

1. Harrogate Town Centre
  - Station Parade
  - International Conference Centre
  - Bower Road
  - West Park
2. Coppice Drive to Skipton Road
3. Skipton Road to Haverah Park
4. Valley Gardens to Beckwithshaw
5. Station Parade to Follifoot
6. The Stray to Starbeck
7. West Park to Pannal Ash



Further information about these opportunities is provided below:

## 1) Harrogate Town Centre

There are many opportunities in Harrogate to plan public realm improvements to enhance the natural and built assets and help to improve links for biodiversity. There is also scope to plan for improvements to the streets and open spaces that are directly related to the shopping potential of the town as well as its civic and tourism role.

In relation to pedestrianised areas, the most successful streets are those where landscape treatment and green infrastructure is simple and uncluttered and where human activity provides the life and vitality.

Street tree planting is important to provide softening and to frame key views across the shopping areas and to provide shelter and shade. There is a lack of new tree planting in this part of Harrogate to succeed existing planting and new tree planting will help improve the setting of buildings and diversify the age structure of trees in the area.

Tree planting in combination with street furniture can provide a high quality alfresco experience with planting for cover and can encourage an attractive and inviting setting where people can make informal use of the space and interact with each other.



Station Parade, Harrogate

### Station Parade:

Station Parade between Bower Road and York Place presents a key opportunity for creating and improving green infrastructure that enhances the setting and connectivity of this key gateway to the town for those arriving by bus, rail, bike or car. This may also bring positive benefits in terms of encouraging investment.

The improvement of green infrastructure in this key area could then be expanded to include routes linking to key locations to help direct visitors and commuters efficiently to key places of interest such as the shopping areas, conference venue and office and business areas. The following are considered to be key opportunities within this area:

- Linking the town centre to the open countryside e.g. via open space and key cycle routes;

- Providing better connectivity to the retail and shopping areas;
- Improving connections to the conference centre; and
- Creating an attractive approach to the office and business areas e.g. West Park and Victoria Avenue.

Any green infrastructure opportunities for the Station Parade area would need to be considered alongside other relevant aspirations and priorities, for example, the land at Station Parade Development Brief approved by the council as Supplementary Planning Guidance (May 2005).

There are numerous historic and spatial focal points within this area, which offer opportunities for enhancement to encourage better open space connections. The Harrogate Conservation Area Appraisal arrives at a like-minded conclusion with regard to visual connections across the area and notes that:

*'A new 'point de vue' opposite the end of Cambridge Street would benefit the townscape.'*

Victoria Gardens provides an opportunity to reinvent this formal civic space. The square could benefit from a more pared down scheme to increase the feeling of space which may help to maximise its use and encourage more social interaction. The introduction of a focal point such as a water feature in this area could give emphasis to the importance of Harrogate as a Spa town.



Harrogate International Centre

### **International Conference Centre:**

Harrogate International Centre is a key asset of the town. Creating an environment that enhances this asset through good connections within the public realm and high quality open spaces will help to secure the continuing prosperity of Harrogate as an international conference destination.

The public realm around the Conference Centre comprises Crescent Gardens framed by the council offices, St. George Hotel, the Royal Hall, Hall M, the Royal Baths and the long terrace on the south side of Crescent Road. There are a number of opportunities within the outdoor spaces to inject more design coherence and to improve linkages to the shopping and tourism destinations around Montpellier Hill and Parliament Street in particular. For example, a simple landscape enhancement project using a pallet of high quality natural materials and street trees could give a much stronger identity to the area.

One of the most significant open spaces within the town centre is Crescent Gardens and this open space plays a vital role in bringing the business and tourism trade together into one combined area. There is an opportunity to provide better linkages between Crescent Gardens and the Royal Pump Room and to improve interpretation of the Spa history for visitors as well as tourism generated from business events. Green infrastructure improvements to this area could help to enhance Harrogate's role as an events destination as well as a leading Spa town.

The Montpellier area was some time ago a typical 'backland' area to the town, however the recent rebuilding of the Royal Baths II and repaving of the streets and ginnels with natural stone setts and flags have complemented the historic character of this area. The Montpellier area, now known as the Montpellier Quarter provides a very attractive and welcoming environment for tourists but its ability to assist with wider key linkages from Crescent Gardens to West Park Stray has not been fully explored.

The junction with Parliament Hill is the place in the town where the shopping experience crosses over with the conference trade. This junction with its many safety barriers, traffic lights and signage provides a key opportunity for improvement in order to be more welcoming for shoppers and visitors to the conference centre and to create better links along Crescent Gardens, to the Valley Gardens, the Pump Rooms and Montpellier Hill.

This area does provide scope to become a key focal or 'point de vue' within the town.



Bower Road, Harrogate

### **Bower Road:**

A greater part of this area to the north of the town is in residential use, although it includes hotels and guesthouses. It is bisected by the Harrogate-York railway line, which is crossed by two roads (Bower Road and Skipton Road) and two footpaths (one an underpass and the other a footbridge from the southern end of Grove Road).

There are some impressive streets coupled with visually important buildings and a number of significant local views with many street trees that maintain an attractive consistency of character. However in some areas there are opportunities to improve the setting of commercial buildings, garages and entrances to supermarkets and car parking areas.

Bower Road provides an opportunity to create linkages across the railway line to the town's



additional parking areas as the railway is embanked and carried by a bridge over Bower Road and Bower Street. There are other car parks within the town particularly at the cinema, the coach park behind Asda and on the corner of East Parade, that would benefit from green infrastructure improvements to improve their setting.

Many visitors walk through this area to reach their destination at the conference centre or the shopping and tourist areas. Retaining a high quality environment should be a key priority in this part of town to improve the overall arrival experience for visitors.



Montpellier Hill, West Park, Harrogate

### **West Park:**

This area contains a varied mix of uses including high quality shops centred on the Montpellier Quarter, 'Prince Albert Row', James Street, West Park and Parliament Street. There is also a wide variety of other uses in the 'back land' areas and to the south of Victoria Avenue

including commercial, educational, residential and professional establishments.

The area supports some major hotels around Prospect Square and Low Harrogate with a number of interspersed churches and chapels. The most impressive and distinctive buildings are the three convex crescents comprising Cambridge Crescent, Prospect Crescent and Royal Parade. These buildings conceal the more modest streets behind.

A key attribute of this area is that it stretches between Prospect Place and the Prince of Wales roundabout and is considered to be the 'quintessential' part of the town. This area plays 'centre stage' in the heart of the Harrogate tourist area as it defines the highly prestigious image of Harrogate. With well-designed shopfronts using quality materials this is an elegant part of the town and represents an import 'gateway' to Harrogate for those travelling from Leeds.

The area mostly fronts on to the West Park Stray with its open expanse of grassland. There are many distinctive and mature trees with impressive views across The Stray towards the attractive backdrop of Beech Grove. Some of the buildings face onto The Stray and have front gardens, some quite long, bounded with low walls or hedges with many trees giving the buildings a greater presence in the street scene.

The area provides an attractive 'promenade' concealing the narrow streets of terraces and parking areas that lie in the 'backland' areas

bordered by Station Parade to the northeast. This area is home to a number of businesses and there is an opportunity for improvement by creating green infrastructure to improve the townscape, in particular to the open car park.

The businesses in this area have the benefit of the West Park Stray but there are also key spaces within the 'backland' area that play a valuable contribution in terms of wider connectivity to the station and the town centre. A better physical connection with the library could also be beneficial in terms of future potential for this area. The small square to the east of the library is attractive and there is scope for better quality green infrastructure in order to improve the use of the space and the setting of the library building and the western side of the square. Another attractive open space is the small area between Albert Terrace and Station Parade.

The West Park Stray closely links with Valley Gardens via the sweep of attractive buildings forming Montpellier Hill and also provides links with the attractive civic space framed by Cambridge Crescent, St. Peter's Church and Betty's opposite.

Links between West Park and Valley Gardens are one of the most important opportunities to explore to ensure that there is good open space connectivity to the shopping areas in the Montpellier Quarter. Visitors to West Park Stray are likely to be drawn towards the Montpellier Quarter for a simultaneous shopping and visitor experience.



Portland Crescent, Harrogate

## 2) Coppice Drive to Skipton Road

The area around Coppice Drive offers key linkages to Skipton Road, via Oak Beck and the former gasworks site. The former gasworks site is a key wildlife corridor with an ecologically rich water course and the open beck provides an important wooded corridor in the area. New planting and better access in this area could improve links for biodiversity and for local residents.

Measures could be explored, as part of any future proposals for development within this area, to help to enhance existing green infrastructure and the de-canalisation of the watercourse. New planting with improved footways would be one opportunity to enhance landscape character and biodiversity in this corridor.

There are a number of open spaces that contribute to the character of the overall area

including the well-treed open space on the corner of Kings Road and Coppice Drive, formerly the grounds of Brandreth House. This open space could be made more attractive with the provision of more under-storey planting and seating areas. The small grassed and treed areas at the junction of Alexandra Road and Kings Road, and of Bower Road and East Parade are also important open spaces. Overall, these spaces offer scope for improvement in order to encourage the community to make better use of them and improve connections across the area.

The area to the south is dominated by the Holiday Inn and to the north the notable landmark building is the attractive St. Luke's Church on Kings Road. There is potential to enhance the lower parts of Kings Road at the junction with Alexandra Road and to make better links between Coppice Drive, Kings Road and the conference area.



The Hydro swimming pool, Harrogate

## 3) Skipton Road to Haverah Park

Haverah Park is mostly owned by Yorkshire Water and there are three reservoirs in the upper reaches of the two valleys: Beaver Dyke Reservoir along Oak Beck and Scargill and Ten Acres Reservoir. There is a good network of footpaths across the corridor and parts of Haverah Park and the Forestry Commission owned Stainburn Forest are open access.

This area is part of the ancient deer park of Haverah, site of John of Gaunt's Castle and originally one of the royal parks of the forest of Knaresborough. The valley has a rich network of habitats including ancient woodlands, open water and wetlands. This is an attractive area and its connection with Harrogate makes it an important rural to urban link valued by both local residents and tourists.

The Oak Beck forms part of the Haverah corridor, which is part of the wider regional corridor and is centred on the valleys of Scargill Beck and Oak Beck, which flow eastwards from the edge of the Nidderdale AONB towards Harrogate. The Haverah corridor is one of district importance, since it connects the Washburn Valley corridor in the west with the Nidd and Crimple corridors in the east and sits between the raised plateau of Forest Moor to the north and Sandwith and Stainburn Moors to the south.

The Oak Beck corridor lies at the urban fringe and there are important green wedges



which extend right into the heart of Harrogate. Oak Beck runs at the foot of Birk Crag Local Nature Reserve, alongside Oakdale Golf Course and into green space near the Hydro in the urban area.

In turn Killinghall Moor Country Park south of Jennyfields links into open space through that estate along Saltergate Beck, which in turn feeds Oak Beck. Killinghall sports ground has potential to provide improved opportunities and extended access to sport for the local community with the potential to bring wider health benefits to the area.

This corridor provides a vital link with the countryside and the wider AONB. There is an opportunity to enhance physical linkages between the western urban edge of Harrogate and Haverah Park to provide better accessibility for the local community and visitors.

There are three sites around the west of the town that are considered suitable for urban extension. Further information about the green infrastructure opportunities for these sites is set out in the urban extension section of this SPD.

#### 4) Valley Gardens to Beckwithshaw

Valley Gardens is an important registered park within this corridor protruding from the urban edge. The gardens significantly contribute to the setting of the town and provide valuable links with the countryside.

Links with RHS Garden Harlow Carr from the Valley Gardens are a key tourist draw. RHS Garden Harlow Carr links in from open countryside to Harrogate through the Pinewoods and Valley Gardens in turn linking with The Stray at Low Harrogate and the Montpellier Quarter.

There are opportunities to improve habitat as well as pedestrian connectivity in this area to explore access, recreation, wildlife corridors, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and landscape character to ensure that these functions complement each other and act as a network of green infrastructure.

The enhancement of this corridor could also improve links to Nidderdale from Harrogate.

RHS Garden Harlow Carr, Valley Gardens and Moor Park all have a key influence on the character of the area and the attractive landscape setting of these important assets could be enhanced and maintained.

The Cardale business park lies to the southeast of the corridor and there are opportunities to make better connections for people working and living in the area. Improvements to access and screen planting to help the business park integrate with existing woodland and trees at the urban edge could be of benefit to the landscape setting of the settlement and improve the attractiveness of the working environment.



Valley Gardens, Harrogate

#### 5) Station Parade to Follifoot

There is potential to provide linkages from Station Parade via the green wedge at Hornbeam Park, since southwards from the town there are links across The Stray via Hookstone Drive. The area is drained by Hookstone Beck which emerges from the ground at Hookstone Road and which links into the green wedge to the southeast and joins Crimple Beck. To the south of Hookstone Road a bridlepath connects Oatlands Drive to the Crimple Valley corridor and the Yorkshire Showground. The Yorkshire Showground includes the Yorkshire Events Centre and the site is expansive offering space for large scale events with large areas of car parking and views across the Crimple Valley.

The corridor follows Oatlands Drive and serves as a key green route to the town centre from the Crimple Valley, since it is essentially tree lined

over most of its length. Trees bordering the railway line which forms a triangle with Rayleigh Road and Hookstone Road are landmark trees that also contribute to the quality of this green infrastructure corridor and Hookstone Road is an old road traversing the Royal Forest of Knaresborough.

Two schools lie within the area: St Aidan's C of E High School and St John Fisher Catholic High School and their open playing fields contribute to the character of this green infrastructure corridor. The former Convent of the Holy Child and Gate Lodge is also in close proximity to this corridor and is set in extensive wooded grounds, which contribute to the attractive character of this area.

There are also extensive views of The Stray from this corridor in particular from the northern part of Oatlands Drive. Apart from the Stray there are no significant open spaces in the character area except the bowling green on the eastern side of Tewit Well Road. There are no strategic pedestrian routes across the area, but the wooded railway corridor provides a valuable corridor for biodiversity.

The viaducts are important features in the Crimple Valley landscape and views framing them are critical to preserve the attractive and distinctive landscape character of the area. Views of these features on approach to the settlement are particularly important as well as views to other historic buildings within this valley.

Another linear corridor providing a key part of green infrastructure is the disused railway line linking Harrogate to Wetherby. Between Spofforth and Wetherby the track forms part of the National Cycle Network 67, however there is no public access along the track between Spofforth and Harrogate. There are opportunities to link this cycle network into the town centre to enable better cycle connectivity to the north ultimately linking with the Bilton to Ripley disused railway corridor.

Better connectivity in this area could also ultimately enhance linkages with the Nidd via Plompton Rocks to join the Nidd with the Crimple via Birkham Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the north.



The Stray, Harrogate

## 6) The Stray to Starbeck

This area provides scope to enhance the physical environment and assist with social well-being through improvements to green infrastructure.

Opportunities exist within Starbeck to create new spaces to revitalise previously underused areas and to attract new visitors and investment to the area and also improve the quality of life for those living there.

There are potential links from The Stray to Starbeck via the Bilton Triangle and the disused railway tracks within the Nidd Gorge, which could help increase accessibility from the urban fringe into the wider countryside. For example a bridleway is being created along the disused railway between Bilton and Ripley, which links north to the Ripon railway corridor. There may be further opportunities to improve access to the gorge on the north bank near Knaresborough from Starbeck and there are opportunities to provide landscape improvements around Bilton Lane to enhance linkages to the Harrogate Ringway and Knaresborough Round public footpaths also linking to schools in the area.

Improved cycleway access through the Bilton Triangle could be a key initiative to enhance linkages into the centre of Harrogate from Starbeck. Footpaths and cycleways could be improved to provide all year round usage.

There is also an opportunity to enhance the wooded character of the Bilton Triangle and urban edge at Starbeck, with improved woodland management, infilling of hedgerows and the planting of new trees along the field boundaries. Parkland trees within fields could also enhance



the landscape setting of the settlement and biodiversity. Improvements to the quality of footpaths/green lane surfaces on Bilton Hall Drive and Bilton Lane to make it accessible to all users and finding improved links through to the new Bilton to Ripley Cycleway are key opportunities to build upon.



The Stray, Harrogate

There is also scope for green infrastructure to enhance the public realm in Starbeck. The high street is directly connected to the rail network and many opportunities exist to make the area an increasingly attractive place to live and work.

## 7) West Park to Pannal Ash

The West Park Stray provides an area of valuable recreation open space as well as a highly distinctive setting for this part of town, including sports use for the nearby schools. This part of The Stray also acts as a significant green corridor linking the centre of Harrogate to the countryside since the area provides linkages to key residential areas on the southwest side of Harrogate linking to Rossett and Pannal Ash. The area is virtually co-joined to the outlying countryside by this sinuous green corridor, which links ultimately with the former Police Training Centre (a site considered suitable for a mix of market and affordable housing).

The open character of The Stray in this part of town is particularly important to those arriving from Leeds and Otley. Not only does the openness contribute to the character of the area, but it also allows the attractive buildings at the edge of town to be viewed at a distance. These are perhaps the most iconic views of Harrogate

and make the area the most important in terms of 'sense of arrival' to the town centre from the outlying countryside.

This green corridor is cut through and constrained by main roads through the town (especially Leeds Road and Otley Road) but the area is reinforced by street trees and footpaths and cycleways that are generally tree lined. Suburban gardens also provide substantial greening.

There are opportunities to improve this link as a significant wildlife corridor by enhancing land alongside playing fields at Harrogate Grammar School, Rossett School, Rossett Acre Primary School, Ashville College and the Police Training Centre, incorporating the Rossett Nature Reserve and the SINC north of Whinney Lane. There are potential opportunities with North Yorkshire County Council (as local education authority) in linking to school activities.

# Green Infrastructure Opportunities in the Main Urban Area of Knaresborough





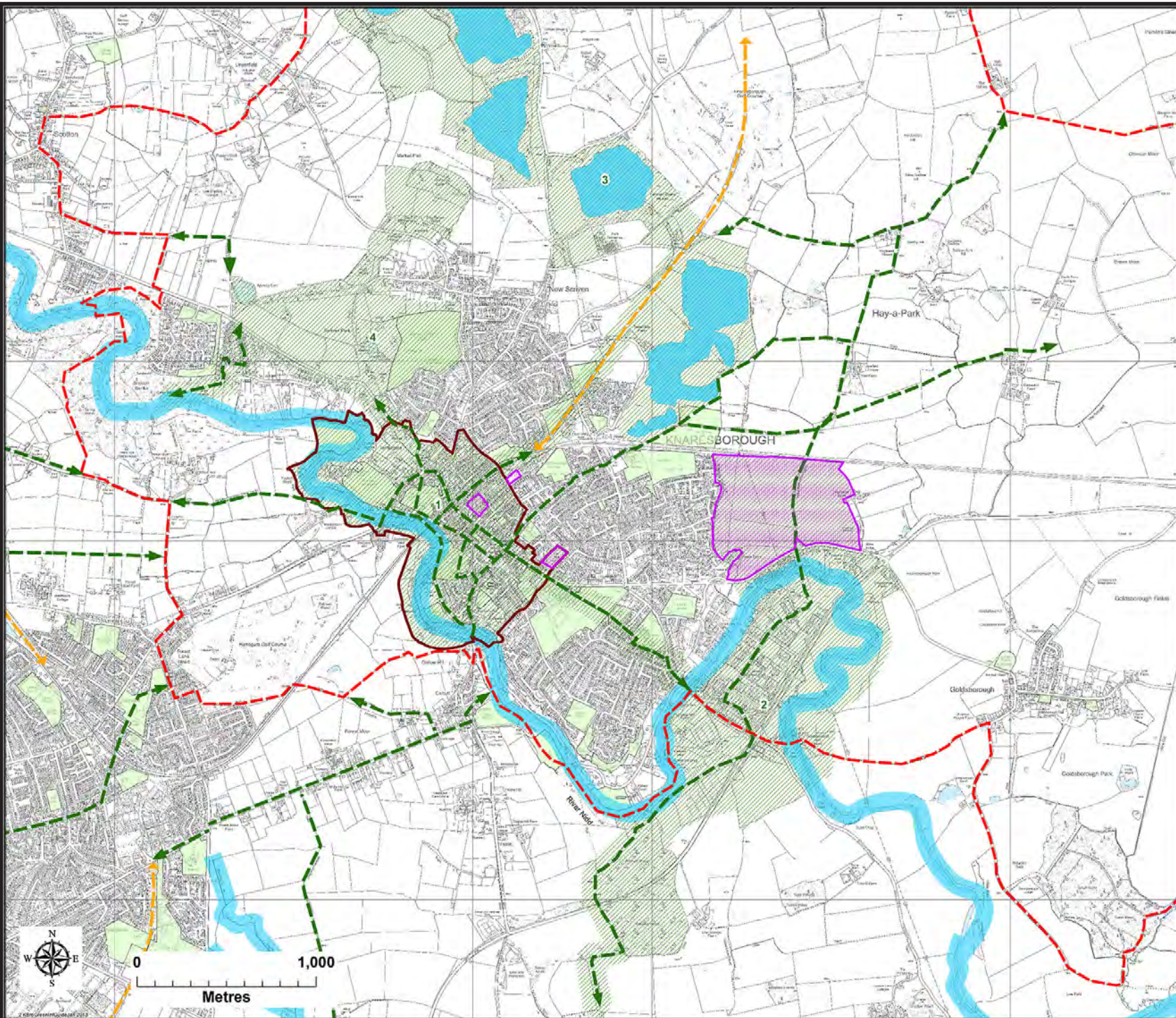
## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES

### KNARESBOROUGH

-  Town Centre
-  Water & River Corridors
-  Existing Open Space
-  Knaresborough Round Walk
-  Disused Railway
-  Site Considered For Future Development
-  Green Infrastructure Corridors
-  Green Infrastructure Opportunity Areas

1. Knaresborough Town Centre
  - \* Railway Station
  - \* Bus Station
  - \* Castle and Bebra Gardens
  - \* Tentergate and Waterside
  - \* High Street
2. Market Place to Goldsborough
3. Knaresborough Lakes
4. Riverside to Scriven Park

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Ordnance Survey 100019628



0 1,000  
Metres



## Context:

Knaresborough has a strong cultural heritage including the Castle, a beautiful riverside setting and views and can be largely divided into four distinct character areas that give the town its special qualities:

- The Castle Environs;
- The Market Place;
- The High Street; and
- The Riverside.

The Nidd is a regional corridor originating within the AONB and one of the key functions of this strategic green infrastructure corridor (R8) is to promote economic growth and tourism.

The key green infrastructure functions of this corridor include recreation, education and accessibility including the promotion of access to the Knaresborough Round. The new Bilton-Ripley bridleway also lies within this corridor and follows the section known as the Beryl Burton Cycleway that passes along the disused railway and connects Knaresborough to Ripley. There are aspirations to continue this route up to Nidderdale and this corridor also highlights numerous sites for biodiversity enhancement and flood alleviation/mitigation.

The River Nidd passes to the south and east of Knaresborough, it originates in the uplands of the Nidderdale AONB and passes close to lower dales villages such as Hampsthwaite,

Ripley and Nidd before passing through the Nidd Gorge northwest of Harrogate via the town of Knaresborough before meandering eastwards, ultimately joining the River Ouse at Nun Monkton.

The river enters Knaresborough at the Nidd Gorge as it cuts steeply through limestone and sandstone sediments. The heart of the Nidd Gorge is marked by dramatic viaducts at Bilton and Knaresborough. These are separated by ancient and plantation woodland (owned by the Woodland Trust) and by the grounds of Conyngham Hall. The river corridor provides an important means of access to the countryside for the urban populations of Bilton, Starbeck and Knaresborough.

The River Nidd corridor combined with the attractive towns of Harrogate and Knaresborough make the whole area a popular destination. The waterfront of urban Knaresborough is dominated by the viaduct and Castle which is raised above steep cliffs, Mother Shipton's Cave, the Long Walk and St Robert's Cave with its Medieval heritage.

Knaresborough is surrounded by far reaching countryside to the north and the east where the surrounding land use is dominated by a mixture of intensive arable farming. The settlement is bound to the west by the villages of Scotton and Scriven and it is also fringed by attractive villages such as Farnham and Staveley.

## Priorities:

The following green infrastructure priorities have been identified for Knaresborough taking into consideration the characteristics of the settlement and other green infrastructure work undertaken at the regional and sub-regional level:

- Improved links between Knaresborough town centre and the river corridor;
- Increased biodiversity by wider enhancement of the river corridor;
- Improved attractiveness of the area for tourism and investment;
- Increased recreational cycling and walking; and
- Encourage people to linger longer in the outdoor spaces.

Taking into consideration these priorities the following green infrastructure opportunity areas have been identified:

1. Knaresborough Town Centre
  - Railway Station
  - Bus Station
  - Castle and Bebra Gardens
  - Tentergate and Waterside
  - High Street
2. Market Place to Goldsborough
3. Knaresborough Lakes
4. Riverside to Scriven Park

Further information about these opportunities is provided below:



## 1) Knaresborough Town Centre

Knaresborough presents a wealth of opportunity for enhancement and improvement to the streets and squares. There is a major opportunity to reinforce the heritage and cultural quality of the town by improving the setting of the buildings and by giving each area an independent and distinctive 'sense of place'. The town centre is a dense urban area where the scope for green infrastructure may be limited, but the outlying areas have a wide range of green assets and linking these assets to the town centre could be a key priority.



Knaresborough Station

### **Railway Station:**

The key opportunity here is to improve green links to and from the existing station. The relationship between the bus and rail stations offers an opportunity to enhance these connections to improve the visitor and tourism experience. Navigation from the railway station is a key issue and there is an opportunity to

improve pedestrian access to the Market Place, Knaresborough Castle and riverside in particular.

Knaresborough has a number of important tourism assets and by improving green infrastructure around and between these assets there is potential to improve their setting, which may increase visitor numbers and footfall in the retail area.

There are many opportunities to raise awareness of the cultural and historic associations of the town and there are some buildings and key features that go unnoticed. A high quality, more attractive and functional streetscape is a key aspiration as well as a good way finding system. Better links to the Castle, Market Place and riverside will lift the quality of experience for visitors to the town and encourage people to make better use of the outdoor spaces, which will have a positive influence on the vitality of Knaresborough as market town.



Market Place, Knaresborough

### **Bus Station:**

The bus station is situated in a busy location on the High Street. There is much scope here to use green infrastructure to create a good first impression for people arriving by bus and to improve accessibility and provide a more attractive environment through improvements to green infrastructure.

There is potential to enhance the appearance of the bus station with a series of streetscape improvements, which may help to make the bus stops and shelters more appealing for passengers. There are also opportunities to improve the safety and security of the passengers entering and exiting the area by creating better pedestrian links to the shopping areas through a series of public realm and environmental improvements. This may include tree planting, which could help frame views and add to the overall attractiveness of the area. Trees in the carriageway could also have the added function of calming traffic as the carriageway would appear narrower. Street trees would also provide a good sense of enclosure and 'sense of place' and help provide a 'depth of time' to these areas.

### **Knaresborough Castle and Bebra Gardens:**

Knaresborough Castle is a significant feature of the town's history. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the grounds surrounding it are open as a public park. The connections between the Castle and riverside are constrained by the



Knaresborough Castle

intervening cliffs, woodlands and residential areas that significantly hinder permeability.

The Castle lies at the heart of the area and has major benefits because of its prominent position high on the cliff; it is the focal point in the town. The links to Market Place and Castlegate/Cheapside are generally flat and level, but immediately below there is an almost vertical drop to Waterside and it is these diminished connections that provide opportunities for further exploration.

There is a good network of footpaths across the wider area including large sections of the Knaresborough Round and there is potential to improve linkages between the Castle and these routes as well as offering benefits for wildlife connectivity. At present the connections from the Castle to this walking trail are limited and the existing Millennium walking trail is limited to the town centre only. There is potential to promote a

wider circular walking trail from Conyngham Hall and Waterside car parks which could encourage visitors to explore both the gorge and the town.

Bebra Gardens is a small attractive park, nestling at the foot of the Castle and the area provides an oasis from the busy parts of the town. Bebra Gardens were named in honour of the town's links with Bebra in Germany, but were formerly known as Moat Gardens because of their proximity to Knaresborough Castle moat.

Bebra Gardens present significant opportunity for improved linkages and enhancements to this area; they could extend and improve the appeal of the Castle and broker a better relationship between the Castle and the riverside. A landscape master plan already exists and proposes the removal of some trees and the opening up of selected views. The adjacent Castle grounds offer stunning views across the Nidd and although the gardens provide an area of established trees and conifers there is scope to plan and selectively cut back some trees to provide better visual connectivity between the Castle and riverside. There are also opportunities to open up views of the Castle and frame views through management of the wooded area that lies between the Castle and the river corridor.

The entrances to Bebra Gardens could be more welcoming to raise its profile. The site offers the potential to construct a bridge across the moat to Bebra Gardens and there is also an opportunity

to restore the circular path through the moat, which was lost with the removal of the cliff edge path by providing new steps at a point near the War Memorial.

The biodiversity and geological value of the cliff edge at Knaresborough is also a key green infrastructure asset. Historically, the cliffs at the Nidd Gorge were a habitat for notable limestone flora and much has been lost since the C19th. This may be an opportunity for restoration of the cliff habitats to enhance the nature conservation value of the area.

By improving the quality of Bebra Gardens, this could encourage more use as well as an increased experience of the river corridor as a key recreational asset to the town.



Waterside looking towards the castle

### **Tentergate and Waterside:**

Waterside is located on the western edge of Knaresborough and the length of the river from High Bridge to Waterside car park including



Conyngham Hall is the key arrival point and tourist draw for visitors in the area. Access to Waterside is restricted by the steep sides of the gorge, limiting the main access points to either end, one end being the area around Tentergate. This limited access is also a constraint for those wishing to access woodland areas along the river corridor. These woodland areas are managed by the Woodland Trust and improved access could enable better management and surveillance in these areas.

The Tentergate area, including High Bond End, lies at a gateway to the town having crossed over the River Nidd from Harrogate. The road rises quite steeply and the open and attractive character of the river corridor changes quite abruptly. There are buildings and high stone walls to each side at Bond End and High Bond End, which provide a general impression of visual and physical constraint. This area could benefit from improvements to the public realm and some tree planting to improve first impressions on approach to Knaresborough. Connections from this area leading to the town could benefit from improvement to better complement the pedestrian approach to the settlement. Green infrastructure improvements in this area are likely to bring benefits to the year round tourist and shopping experience.

Although the area is dominated by Conyngham Hall and associated parkland, its open character and attractive wooded areas are not readily recognisable nor appreciated from the public

highway. The relationship of this area with the river corridor is poor. Nominally, the Nidderdale Way starts and finishes at Ripley village and there is an opportunity to improve links to Knaresborough. Potential exists to explore the possibility of links so the Nidderdale Way starts and finishes in Conyngham Hall car park and that better use is made of the Beryl Burton Cycleway to enhance these links. A pedestrian bridge would have to be provided across the Nidd into Conyngham Hall at Horseshoe Field. Both Conyngham Hall and the Henshaws Arts Centre provide key cultural opportunities in this area of the town.

Overall the Tentergate and Waterside areas could be re-invigorated to link the upper and the lower parts of the town and the Waterside car park is a significant arrival point for many visitors.

It occupies a pleasant riverside site fringed by mature trees. The car park lies between the carriage drive to Conyngham Hall and the river and there is opportunity for enhancement to provide more softening with tree planting and improved biodiversity.

There are potential ecology enhancement measures for the river corridor including creative ideas for interpretation of the unique biodiversity of the gorge and possibly limestone grass habitat creation.

There is already a popular round recreational walk between the two bridges (Grimbald Bridge and Low Bridge) using Abbey Road (which

has vehicle access for residents only) and on the north side of the river footpaths alongside the River Nidd (Crag Top) could be enhanced. Opportunities also exist for improved pedestrian and cycle links across the river to the Harrogate Road cycle link and to the Beryl Burton walking/cycling leisure route to the northwest of the river. The western approach to Waterside over High Bridge for cyclists and pedestrians could also benefit from improvement by creating a more user friendly arrangement of shared surfacing.

Knaresborough's key assets, although within close proximity, are divided between Waterside and the town centre and connectivity of green infrastructure between the two is likely to enhance the environment for visitors and shoppers.



High Street, Knaresborough

### **High Street:**

The High Street in Knaresborough is the primary route through the town with little priority given to

pedestrians. The focus of the area is shopping, business and retail, however passing vehicles and parked cars also dominate the street frontage.

A key opportunity exists to enhance the attractiveness of High Street. There is scope to improve the streetscape through use of surface materials, street furniture and tree planting.

The High Street currently severs key linkages from Market Place to the east to the town's main residential areas. Pedestrian linkages could be improved with a positive range of green infrastructure measures to enhance these routes and encourage better use of them.



Woodlands

## 2) Market Place to Goldsborough

St James business park lies at a strategic meander in the River Nidd to the southeast of Knaresborough. The River Nidd meanders

through the landscape to the east of the settlement through an intensively farmed, mostly arable, lowland area that provides an attractive rural setting for the settlement.

Flooding is an issue to the east of Knaresborough and the area to the east of the business park in particular provides positive opportunities for flood mitigation/attenuation whilst at the same time improved recreation and links to the River Nidd could be explored. Land at Manse Farm is considered suitable for a mixed use development. Further information about the green infrastructure aspirations for this site is set out in the urban extension section of this SPD.

High quality green infrastructure has an important role to play in encouraging investment and in contributing to quality of the workplace environment for both communities and workers. St James business park presents a key opportunity for the retrofitting of green infrastructure to ensure that the high quality of the environment continues to play a positive role in people's high perceptions of the area. There is scope to invest in a series of landscape improvements that could significantly help to retain the high quality landscape commensurate to the calibre of business and retail investment within St James business park, whilst respecting the semi-natural setting of the river corridor.

Landscape improvements to the area could also maximise the potential for wildlife

enhancement and sustainable drainage. There are opportunities to improve the management of the Nidd Gorge woodlands by thinning conifers, improving access and interpretation for education to extend the ideas put into practice by the Woodland Trust along the Nidd corridor. There may be scope for new planting within land to the east of the settlement to help connect isolated groups of trees; and new trees in hedgerows to help create and enhance wildlife corridors and to assist with flooding issues.

There are opportunities to integrate The Lido caravan and camping site better within the landscape setting of the settlement and improve views from the public rights of way, in particular from the Knaresborough Round public footpath. Encroachment of domestic uses onto the landscape setting of the river corridor is a key issue and there could be scope to enhance and restore the rural setting of the river corridor in some areas and draw out the importance of the key geophysical features within it.

The links and the close proximity of Knaresborough to Harrogate could also be explored through the development of better linkages between the two settlements. Public footpaths to Birkham Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on the south side of Knaresborough could be promoted as links to Harrogate, Rudding Park and Spofforth.





Farnham South Lakes, from Farnham

### 3) Knaresborough Lakes

There is an opportunity to maximise the potential of the former gravel pit sites and surrounding area for biodiversity, access and recreation for local residents and tourists to provide a more congenial surrounding in which to live and work. The landscape to the north and east of Knaresborough incorporates elements such as Hay-a-Park gravel pits and Manse Farm that fall within the regionally important River Nidd corridor (R8). The reclaimed gravel pits are a very prominent feature of the landscape and are a key green infrastructure asset. Some of the gravel pits are primarily managed for wildlife (Hay-a-Park SSSI, Farnham South Lake and a little further north, the recently extended Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) owned Staveley Nature Reserve). Others are managed for fishing and water sports, Farnham Gravel Pit for water skiing and Farnham North Lake for sailing.

A key opportunity for this part of the town could be to improve the links between the Nidd corridor and the reclaimed gravel pits (referred to as the 'Knaresborough Lakes'). Formal public access to the lakes is limited and improved access could provide scope to promote a better quality of life for all those who live and work in Knaresborough. There is also scope to improve the management of this land for wildlife, where extensive margins of scrub, wetland and unimproved grassland could be introduced to encourage a wider range of habitats to develop.

The lakes also have potential to be used as an educational resource to increase public awareness on flood water management, biodiversity and wetland creation by providing outdoor classrooms or 'learning stations' that could offer a whole range of skills and events.

Most of these areas are no longer in active quarrying use and there is potential to work with landowners to identify potential initiatives. These initiatives could not only be of particular benefit to local residents but could also raise the profile of the market town of Knaresborough. Opportunities exist to significantly improve the tourism offer with water-based recreation activities focussed on fishing, walking and bird watching.

There are opportunities to strengthen the existing landscape character of the area and help integrate the edge of settlement into

the countryside, which could include tending overgrown hedges and improving the distribution of trees along field boundaries to improve the overall character and setting of Scriven.



A veteran oak in Scriven Park, Knaresborough

### 4) Riverside to Scriven Park

Other notable heritage and landscape assets in Knaresborough include Scriven Park and the Jacob Smith Park, at Scriven, which is noted primarily for its veteran trees. This is an important (unregistered) parkland area located right at the urban edge, which significantly contributes to the setting of the town and provides key links with the surrounding countryside.

There are many opportunities at Scriven to implement a range of historic management objectives in light of recreation pressures on the area. There is scope to explore historic and landscape character with the ambition of providing landscape enhancements to benefit the

overall setting of the settlement; this in turn could help protect its wider parkland setting.

There are also opportunities to enhance the linkages and bridge crossing between Scriven Park and the Nidd corridor; however this would require a new point of access on the north bank to link Horseshoe Fields to the north bank of the Nidd. There is a proposal to extend the 53-mile circular route of the Nidderdale Way to start and finish at Conygham Hall Car Park and this adds significant weight to the recommendations for green infrastructure improvements in this area. The opportunity exists to draw users of the Nidderdale Way into the centre and riverside areas of Knaresborough through Scriven and this could be helped by the new signage, interpretation, and improvements to the car park and gateway areas to the town to the northeast. Opportunities also exist to enhance the Woodland Trust Ripley Road car park, which is an important access point for the Nidd Gorge woodlands.



Conygham Hall, Knaresborough





# Green Infrastructure Opportunities in the Main Urban Area of Ripon





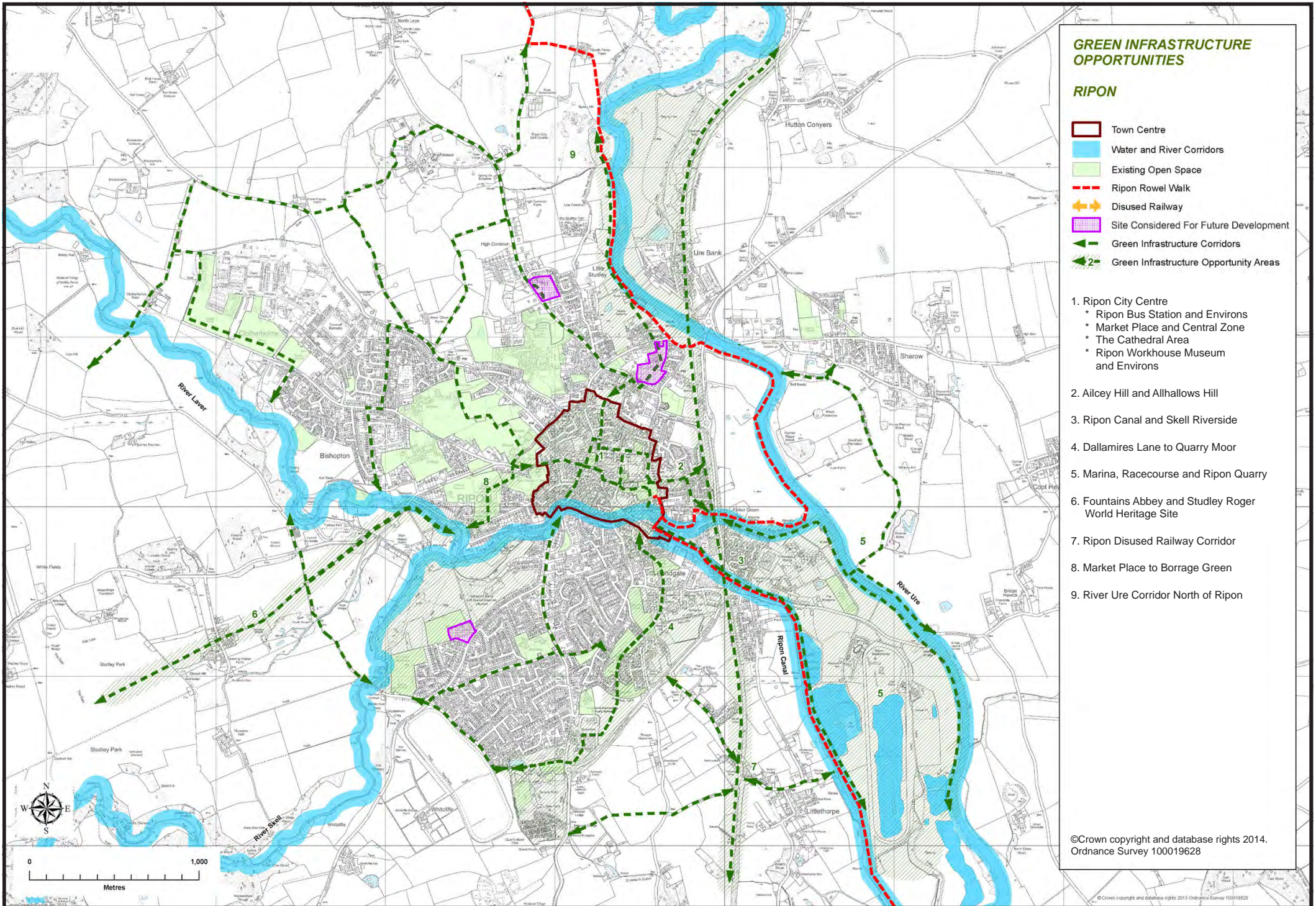
## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES

### RIPON

-  Town Centre
-  Water and River Corridors
-  Existing Open Space
-  Ripon Rowel Walk
-  Disused Railway
-  Site Considered For Future Development
-  Green Infrastructure Corridors
-  Green Infrastructure Opportunity Areas

1. Ripon City Centre
  - \* Ripon Bus Station and Environs
  - \* Market Place and Central Zone
  - \* The Cathedral Area
  - \* Ripon Workhouse Museum and Environs
2. Ailcey Hill and Allhallows Hill
3. Ripon Canal and Skell Riverside
4. Dallamires Lane to Quarry Moor
5. Marina, Racecourse and Ripon Quarry
6. Fountains Abbey and Studley Roger World Heritage Site
7. Ripon Disused Railway Corridor
8. Market Place to Borrage Green
9. River Ure Corridor North of Ripon

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## Context:

The city of Ripon stands on a low, narrow limestone ridge running north-south from County Durham to Nottinghamshire. Overlying this solid geology is a series of glacially deposited sands and gravels forming a number of mounds and ridges which characterise the rolling landscape fringing the city. The historic core of the city containing the Cathedral stands on one of these ridges above the Rivers Laver, Skell and Ure.

The people of Ripon place a great importance on preserving the city and its historical heritage including the three rivers, which provide an outstanding landscape setting for the city.

Within the city there are a variety of landscapes and cityscapes of differing character and the Cathedral and the landscape of these river corridors provide a significant tourism draw as 'gateway to the dales'.

The three rivers comprise the Laver, the Skell and the Ure. The River Laver forms a well wooded river corridor to the northwest of Ripon, eventually linking into the Nidderdale AONB. It is part of a wider corridor of district importance (D42) which originates in the moorland west of Kirkby Malzeard, following Dallow Gill and Carlesmoor Beck, forming the River Laver. The River Laver flows into the River Skell (which is also shrouded in woodland) at Ripon.

The River Skell, which flows into Ripon from Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site is part of the wider Skell and Brimham corridor (S23) of sub-regional importance, which ultimately links the Nidd corridor south of Pateley Bridge with the Ure at Ripon. The Skell is joined by the Laver to the west of Ripon and flows through the urban area just south of the city centre, parallel to the Ripon Canal and on to its confluence with the Ure to the east of the city. Despite the river being heavily canalised through the city centre, the banks are well treed with wide verges along much of the length of the northern banks which forms a significant wildlife corridor and greenway reaching into the heart of the urban area. Recent works undertaken by the Environment Agency to replace Alma Weir have served to soften this section of river.

The River Ure as it runs through Ripon is part of a regionally important corridor (R16) which originates high in Wensleydale, eventually becoming the Ouse in the Vale of York. There is a belt of sand and gravel resources along the Ure Valley, extraction of which has created lakes at Ripon racecourse as well as Marfield, Nosterfield and Bellflask upstream of the city. The area incorporates several important nature conservation sites including Ripon Parks Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) just to the north of Ripon.

Public accessibility to the three rivers is already fairly good but improvements could be a key

priority in Ripon by building upon the already popular local riverside footpaths, Ripon Rowel Walk, Sustrans and National Byway Cycle route that run near to the area. Accessibility onto the Ripon Rowel Walk is a key issue and a network of footpaths and bridleways throughout the area could be improved and enhanced to address better connectivity. Several footbridges and fords across the river provide good access, but better connections could be established where poor access exists.

More could be made of the riparian setting of Ripon as a visitor attraction. At present it is possible to walk between the three rivers and there is potential to enhance this as a green infrastructure asset. It is possible to walk from the Laver at Mallory Park to the meeting with the Skell (which you can also follow upstream to Hell Wath) right down to the confluence with the Ure where there are already footpaths north and south on both sides.

The river corridors create an intimate setting for riverside activities and the strong network of public footpaths makes the area accessible. The character of the river corridors is distinct due to the extent of woodland cover, the valley landform and the high concentration of recreational use in close proximity to the city centre. The landscape is well tended and managed to a high standard and the riparian assets make the character of Ripon both interesting and appealing to tourists.



## Priorities:

The following green infrastructure priorities have been identified for Ripon taking into consideration the characteristics of the settlement and other work undertaken at the regional and sub-regional level:

- Development of a greener core within the city;
- Improvement to the quality of existing civic spaces, public places and access routes; and
- Better connections from the built up area to the outskirts of the city and surrounding countryside.

Taking into consideration these priorities the following green infrastructure opportunity areas have been identified on the Ripon Green Infrastructure Opportunities Map:

1. Ripon City Centre
  - Ripon Bus Station and Environs
  - Market Place and Central Zone
  - The Cathedral Area
  - Ripon Workhouse Museum and Environs
2. Ailcey Hill and Allhallows Hill
3. Ripon Canal and Skell Riverside
4. Dallamires Lane to Quarry Moor
5. Marina, Racecourse and Ripon Quarry
6. Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site
7. Ripon Railway Corridor
8. Market Place to Borrage Green
9. River Ure Corridor North of Ripon

Further information about these opportunities is provided below:

### 1) Ripon City Centre

There are a wide range of isolated green infrastructure opportunity areas within the city. The key aim of green infrastructure is to address the fragmented character of these areas and to pull them together into a more coherent and connected network.

In Ripon green infrastructure has the potential to enhance the city's historic assets through better connectivity with the river corridors. The rivers, the Cathedral, Market Place and the core shopping areas do comprise an open space network but there is a significant opportunity to draw them together and provide more greening as well as raising the awareness of the extensive cultural offer this important city can provide.

There is also an opportunity for incorporating more green infrastructure into the public realm within the city centre along with quality surface materials and street furniture to provide a more coherent streetscape for visitors, shoppers, workers and residents. Opportunities for green infrastructure within the city centre are mostly small scale but important and there are opportunities to use green infrastructure to improve key arrival points to the city, especially for those visiting Market Place and the Cathedral.



Ripon bus station

### Ripon Bus Station and Environs:

There is potential to build upon links between the bus station and the historic core of Ripon to promote more walking through the city centre. Environmental improvements to the bus station and to its immediate environment is one of the key opportunities. The bus station and the car park opposite Victoria Grove are perceived as the main entry point to the city and green infrastructure could help to enhance the visitor experience with more tree planting and public realm improvements. The car park off Moss Arcade could also benefit from more tree cover to break up the impact of the area and the car park to the rear of Minster Hall off St Agnesgate could also benefit from environmental improvements.

Opportunities exist for the provision of a linear greenway leading from the bus station to introduce more green space within the heart of the city. A number of mature trees clothe

the slopes to the south of the Cathedral and are a feature of the large gardens of this area; however the central part of the city could benefit from more green space. The area around the bus station provides scope for improvement to develop a key green feature. The small area attached to the Court House is between the bus station and the Cathedral and is crossed by several asphalt paths and informal tracks. This area could benefit from a range of environmental improvements including path resurfacing, seating, tree and shrub planting and new lighting to help improve connections across the area.



Ripon Market Place

### **Market Place and Central Zone:**

The Market Place is the largest open space in the historic core area, although it incorporates little soft landscaping. The whole area was refurbished some time ago and the recently planted trees on the market square are a good example of what can be achieved even in this densely urban area.

However an opportunity still exists to provide additional public realm improvements and there is scope to carry out a series of improvements to the east and the west of Market Place. The extent of soft landscaping is limited and fragmented in these areas and although there is tree cover on the outer edge, more trees could make a significant contribution to landscape quality.

A number of paths and yards connect the Market Place to the main car parks to the east and there are significant opportunities to improve the condition of the paths and yards to encourage people to use them night and day. The importance of improving pedestrian links between west of Market Place and Market Place is a key opportunity and to the west lies the recent development at Booths. Although complete this area does provide further opportunities to retrofit green infrastructure to better link the Market Place to North Street. There is also scope to improve green infrastructure links between the Market Place and the Cathedral via Kirkgate, including the rear of Kirkgate and linking to the bus station to encourage better use and accessibility.

### **The Cathedral Area:**

The Cathedral is the strategic focus for the city, in terms of visual impact, as a place of culture and festivals and the aim should be to continue to provide an exemplary urban setting for this building.



Ripon Cathedral

Future events focussing on art, literature and music will always need to rely on good quality outdoor public and civic space that can support Ripon's cultural gatherings and these spaces should be able to adapt to the cultural demands of the future. Kirkgate, linking the market place and the Cathedral, could be further developed as a pedestrianised space for cultural events and a 'street café' atmosphere.

There are some public spaces with soft landscape and trees in this area which offer opportunities for improvement and better connections with the river corridor (and, in particular, better links with the River Skell). The largest of these areas is the playground containing the electricity sub-station between Bondgate Bridge and New Bridge at the foot of Bedern Bank, which has close connections with the river.



The C19th graveyard to the east of the Cathedral with distinctive gravestones could also benefit from enhancement and repair and also provides links between the Cathedral and the River Skell.

Car parking to the east of the Market Place is well used and serves visitors to the Cathedral. There are, however, opportunities to enhance the appearance of the parking environment and to make connections between the parking areas and the Cathedral more attractive.

The outlying landscape surrounding Ripon affords important views towards Ripon of the Cathedral and Fountains Abbey and these view corridors should be protected and enhanced as much as the immediate (urban) setting of the Cathedral. Lighting on Boroughbridge Road industrial estate could be improved so as not to over dominate the subtle Cathedral lighting when entering the city from the A1 south.



Ripon Workhouse Museum

### Ripon Workhouse Museum and Environs:

The Museum Gardens, including an area of undeveloped land to the rear leading down to Tower Street, provide a valuable area of green space within the city. The museum and its surrounding open space lies detached from Market Square and the Cathedral and there are opportunities to provide better linkages and strengthen its presence in the city. Off Allhallowgate, hidden behind the BT telephone exchange, is a small garden created from a former chapel burial ground which could also be enhanced and incorporated into linkages across this area.

The museum could be used as an education opportunity to increase public awareness of green infrastructure. Particular emphasis could be given to interpreting the significance and value of the river corridors and their importance to Ripon, especially as a tourist asset. The museum could develop initiatives for improved access to landscapes, features and buildings of historic importance within the city.

There are also opportunities to improve pedestrian links between the city centre/ Allhallowgate and area to the north.

### 2) Ailcey Hill and Allhallows Hill

The Saxon burial ground at Ailcey Hill is a key feature within the city and opportunities exist for enhancement in this area. The hill lies 200 metres to the east of the Cathedral and is a large tree covered glacial mound. There



Allhallowgate, Ripon

is documentary evidence the mound was landscaped around 1825-1850, with a pathway spiralling to the seat or the summit, where a prospect of the Cathedral and city could be enjoyed. Few if any traces of the landscaping survive but the hill remains covered in trees and shrubs. Ailcey Hill is the subject of a number of local traditions and has been identified as a barrow or a motte linking it with a Dark Age monastery or a Dark Age battle.

Allhallows Hill is the name given to another mound nearby, like the motte of a castle keep. This stands behind the bishop's palace to the east of the bus station. The positions of each 'hill' mean that they are sited opposite the field of view of the other and they are important landmarks within the city as a precedent for way finding and interpretation. There is a key opportunity to use the opportunities at Ailcey Hill and Allhallows Hill as a means of providing key linkages to the east of the city.



Ripon canal basin

### 3) Ripon Canal and Skell Riverside

The canal is fed from the Skell at the canal basin and flows through the fringes of the city from the southeast. The terminal basin is situated a few hundred metres south of the Cathedral and this is an exciting opportunity to improve the visitor experience and proposals could seek to connect the areas by the canal and riverside to the historic core of the city.

The Ripon canal basin is a brownfield site that comprises the canal warehouse (Grade II) built around 1770-3; this stone warehouse with attached manager's house and stores buildings, all enclosed by a high wall, forms an interesting group of C18th canal buildings. This was a key wharf area for the city but with the declining use of waterways the area has become underused. The canal basin was redeveloped in the 1980s but there are current opportunities for environmental improvements in this area.

The historic city centre stands on a bluff overlooking the River Skell and roads from the Market Place descend fairly steeply down to river crossings. There are opportunities to enhance the canal and river crossings and their particular characteristics that contribute to the historic and cultural distinctiveness of Ripon's medieval industries, such as milling and tanning, which are clustered near the Skell in Waterskellgate, Skellgate and across the river in Bondgate. There are several disused mills that have contributed to the small scale river industry in the past that could be put back into beneficial use.

A waterfront area and linear park could be designed as a gateway providing opportunities to establish wider linkages from the edge of the city to the east eventually linking with the River Ure corridor. There would need to be sensitive graduation between the urban waterfront and the semi-natural wetlands of the River Ure-canal triangle. This linear park could significantly improve pedestrian connections whilst enhancing the conservation, recreation and biodiversity value of the area. Environmental improvements to traffic routes leading to canal and riverside areas could also provide an opportunity for enhancement.

### 4) Dallamires Lane to Quarry Moor

Hungry Hill is an important undeveloped area of land that lies between the edge of settlement and the bypass bounded by Dallamires Lane to the north and Knaresborough Road to the west. This



Dallowmires Lane Business Park

area includes former quarry workings at Gallows Hill to the south, which has now developed into secondary woodland. This part of Ripon presents a key opportunity to enhance access to open space for recreation and improve levels of health with better sports participation.

There is potential to provide improved linkages from the residential areas around Hungry Hill to outlying open space to the south, west and north of the city for football, other sport uses or informal recreation. There are also opportunities to create a new publicly accessible cycleway that could allow the residents to gain improved access to the wider countryside beyond the bypass, along the canal and to the River Skell. Access between these residential areas and Quarry Moor to the south could also be explored as a wider cycle strategy for the city as access to open space is more limited here.



The original C18th industrial area around the Ripon canal basin spread southwards towards Dallamires Lane and the bypass creating an undistinguished area of commercial activity comprising large sheds, storage areas and yards with little in the way of effective tree planting or landscaping. Dallamires Lane offers potential for landscape biodiversity enhancements with many sites that offer scope for improvement. These enhancements could provide a better setting to the employment buildings and improve the approaches to the city from the racecourse and marina to the east.

The bypass provides an effective edge to the eastwards expansion of the city and the structure planting along the verges of the bypass is a valuable wildlife link. This is an opportunity to improve the wooded character at the edge of the settlement and to add to the biodiversity value of the area by the introduction of additional tree planting along this road corridor.

### 5) Marina, Racecourse and Ripon Quarry

Direct access between the city, the racecourse and marina is hindered by the bypass which runs between and opportunities exist to provide better linkages. There is also scope for further greening of the key transport routes into the city in this area, including an opportunity for greening the east of Ripon urban area to improve the business and working environment for investors and staff.



Woodland path, North Yorkshire

There is scope to enhance the employment areas in Ripon generally by utilising green infrastructure to shape the identity of their surroundings and improve the quality of the environment for investors and the appearance of the approaches to the city.

This is an opportunity to develop a landscape enhancement programme within the mineral workings area once the successful extraction of gravel has ceased. After-use restoration plans for Ripon city quarry include an important new Yorkshire Wildlife Trust nature reserve.

There are key opportunities to facilitate a better recreational, wildlife and landscape asset for the city through the exploitation of the River Ure corridor which provides an important north-south link to the east of Ripon. There is a network of footpaths and bridleways within this area and along the riverside and canal towpath, but parts

of the corridor are not totally accessible and there is scope to create a continuous and secure green path (foot/cyclepath) along and linking to the river.

There is scope for more walking and cycling opportunities around Ripon and to create 'branded' footpaths and cycle paths. On a larger scale, the corridor presents an opportunity to promote recreation for residents and visitors to the city and raise the profile of water-based recreation and to improve the tourism offer. The racecourse attracts significant numbers of visitors and there is an opportunity to provide improvements to enhance the connections between the historic core and the marina and racecourse. Scope also exists to improve the approaches to the racecourse and to raise the profile to this whole area as a 'gateway' to Ripon.

The river and canal corridors have the potential to be used as an educational resource or the creation of a 'living laboratory' through the support of research in floodwater management, climate change adaptation and habitat creation. Opportunities to enhance the wildlife value of the floodplains could also be taken where possible, permitting seasonal flooding in some areas and the introduction of appropriate management. There are opportunities for 'outdoor learning' that could offer skills events attached to various sustainable urban drainage solutions.



Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site

## 6) Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site

Biodiversity is very important in the River Skell corridor, including the species rich grassland at Quarry Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and grassland, scrub and riparian woodland at Hell Wath Local Nature Reserve. These sites connect the urban fringe with the wider countryside including the Studley Royal and Fountains Abbey World Heritage Site.



Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal World Heritage Site

## 7) Ripon Railway Corridor

The disused Ripon railway corridor is a key feature in the landscape in this area. It is designated as a grassland Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) although is becoming heavily scrubbed and wooded. Parts have been developed and this railway corridor forms the basis of a connection of district-wide importance (D50) between Ripon and Harrogate. It passes close to Quarry Moor, the bypass and the linear settlement of Littlethorpe and the railway corridor and offers an opportunity for a strategic north-south link to the east of the city providing improved connections to the Ripon canal-Ure triangle. There is scope to develop an improved woodland network along the railway linking existing tree blocks whilst retaining views across the area.



North Ripon wider landscape

## 8) Market Place to Borrage Green

Key links from the west of the Market Place are also a primary consideration in particular to

the Spa Park area, which has potential to link ultimately with Borrage Green, Whitcliffe Quarry and Hell Wath.

There are significant areas of open green space to the west of Ripon including Spa Park, the grounds of the Spa Hotel and the playing fields of several schools and associated undeveloped land off Kirby Road, Kirby Road allotments and the cemetery. Spa Park and Spa Gardens are defined by closing belts of trees and specimen planting and the adjacent Spa Hotel garden is also distinctive. To the west are open areas in sports use bounded by trees and from here views of the Cathedral can be had.

This corridor contains the main parks and sports grounds in the city and provides valuable linkages to the wider area including Borrage Green, the former Whitcliffe Quarry, Hell Wath and beyond to the World Heritage Site at Fountains Abbey. There is an opportunity to improve the quality of the existing parks and open space in this part of the city including school ground projects and sports pitch enhancement measures to improve biodiversity and enhance the landscape character of the area. Projects such as allotment improvement and enhancement could also be considered.

These wider linkages enter the city to the west via the new retail development to the west of Market Place (Booths) and there is a need to improve connectivity between this new retail



development and Market Place. The area could benefit from more tree planting and areas of high quality open space. The potential for more green landscape in these areas has not been explored fully.



West Ripon wider landscape

## 9) River Ure Corridor North of Ripon

The open grazing land on each bank of the River Ure provides the setting for Ure Bank Terrace, a detached Victorian suburb, associated with the former railway station. Parts of the riverside are owned by Harrogate Borough Council and there may be opportunity for wetland enhancement and grassland improvement. There is also scope to

provide better connections between the caravan/camping site at Ure Bank with the centre of the city and potential to re-create a circular footpath around the riverside and disused railway.

Further towards the city, open fields and paddocks (including a SINC at Little Studley) provide open relief amongst the road frontage development. Previous flooding in Ripon led to the construction of a flood alleviation scheme involving embankments at North Bridge.



Ripon wider landscape

There are further opportunities along the river corridor associated with the flood mitigation measures and the disused railway (and with land left undeveloped because of gypsum hollows) that could be explored including tree planting, the creation of wildlife corridors, and habitat creation.



## 9. How can improvements to green infrastructure be delivered off site?

### Current context

- 9.1 The council already has a mechanism for providing new and enhancing existing off site green infrastructure and uses this mechanism when approving planning applications for residential development. This is the council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) entitled 'Provision of open space in connection with new housing development'.
- 9.2 Approved in June 2006 (and updated in 2014) this SPD sought to achieve the outcomes set out in PPG 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation. These outcomes and the seven different types of open space that the SPD seeks improvements to are:
- Parks and Gardens
  - Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace (including urban woodlands)
  - Outdoor Sports Facilities
  - Amenity Greenspace (including green corridors)
  - Provision for Children and Young People
  - Allotments and Community Gardens
  - Cemeteries, Disused Churchyards and other Burial Grounds

- 9.3 Where 'on site' open space under any one of the above types is not appropriate and the quality of nearby off site open space is deficient then the SPD allows the council to require developer contributions to fund improvements to these off site open spaces. This situation occurs on a regular basis and monies have been received by the council for these purposes. For outdoor sport the monies are sent to local sports clubs for enhancement of sports facilities. For the majority of the other types of open space monies go the council for enhancement of its public open space, woodlands and local nature reserves. Subject to safeguards these developer contributions could be used on third party land for green infrastructure improvements such as public rights of way on private land.

### Emerging context

- 9.4 The council is working towards the introduction of the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Once adopted, the CIL will replace the council's current policy of requiring developers to pay commuted sums towards off-site green infrastructure and open space requirements resulting from a residential development. The council's Regulation 123 list will enable pooled CIL funds collected across the district to be used to provide and/or enhance off-site open space. In addition,



parish and town councils will receive a proportion of CIL funds to be spent on infrastructure in line with local community priorities. In Harrogate, where no local council exists, Harrogate Borough Council will consult with residents on how to spend the neighbourhood funds collected in the town. On-site open space requirements directly related to the development will continue to be delivered by way of planning obligations.

## Partnership Working

- 9.5 There may be potential green infrastructure projects outside of the planning system that can be delivered through partnership working e.g. with the Local Nature Partnerships and the White Rose Forest Partnership such as those highlighted in the Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Strategy. Community groups may also wish to take forward a green infrastructure project. Through partnership working, funding opportunities may be explored to help to deliver such projects e.g. lottery funding.

# 10. The Green Infrastructure Checklist:

## What does the council expect applicants to consider when designing proposals for development?

10.1 This section provides a checklist for applicants and developers to show how the council expects proposals for development to integrate high quality green infrastructure from the earliest design stage. The following process sets out the key steps and this is followed by more detailed guidance.

- Step 1:** Consider the opportunities that the proposed development could bring
- Step 2:** Identify the characteristics and green assets within and near to the site
- Step 3:** Consider existing evidence base, plans and local community aspirations
- Step 4:** Use information from steps 1, 2 and 3 to identify opportunities for creating/improving green infrastructure
- Step 5:** If the application is significant carry out pre-application community involvement
- Step 6:** Carry out pre-application discussion with Harrogate Borough Council
- Step 7:** Submit the planning application

### Step 1: Consider the opportunities that the proposed development could bring

10.2 The nature of the proposed development will help to determine the priorities and opportunities for green infrastructure on a particular site. For example, for housing development, there may be opportunities to create open space to encourage activity and social interaction, footpath links to local shops and services and allotments to encourage locally grown food. For economic development there may be opportunities to create an attractive setting for investors and the workforce including opportunities for recreation, and links to the cycle network to encourage cycling to work. It is important to consider the characteristics of the development and who will use the site and benefit from its development.

### Step 2: Identify the characteristics and green assets within and near to the site

10.3 The next step is to look at the existing green infrastructure characteristics and features within and surrounding the site. The following list provides some examples of characteristics



and features to consider:

- Is there a watercourse?
- Is part of the site within a flood zone or does the site suffer from surface water flooding?
- Are there any heritage designations or assets?
- Is there an existing Public Right of Way (PROW), cycle route or bridleway to link to?
- Are there any nature conservation designations (such as a SINC, SSSIs or nature reserve)?
- Are there any opportunities for protecting, linking and enhancing habitats and species?
- Is the site within a retail or employment area with potential to improve the shopping experience or business environment?

### Step 3: Consider existing evidence base, plans and local community aspirations

- 10.4 If the site is included as a case study, urban extension or is within the main urban areas identified within sections 6, 7 or 8 of this SPD, you will need to ensure that the design of the proposed development contributes to the delivery of the case studies and opportunities that relate to the site.
- 10.5 You should also consider relevant information contained within any Neighbourhood Plan, Parish Plan and Village Design Statement affecting the site.
- 10.6 For sites within or near to a Conservation Area, the Harrogate District Conservation Area Appraisals are a useful source of information to show how the council wishes to see the setting of our heritage assets.
- 10.7 You should also consider whether the site is affected by a project in the Leeds City Region Green Infrastructure Strategy or whether it falls within one of Natural England's Green Infrastructure corridors.

- 10.8 You can view up to date information about flood zones on the Environment Agency website. More detailed information about flooding, including surface water flooding, is set out in the council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 1).

### Step 4: Use information from steps 1, 2 and 3 to identify opportunities for creating/improving green infrastructure

- 10.9 Taking into consideration the information collated in steps 1 to 3 you will need to consider the opportunities for delivering the following green infrastructure benefits:



Connecting green spaces and routes



Improving the setting and quality of place



Encouraging activity and enjoyment



Adapting to changes in climate, flood risk and growing food locally



Protecting nature and heritage

- 10.10 The key consideration here is to think about green infrastructure as multifunctional. This policy is not necessarily about providing more green infrastructure, it is about being creative and seeking to deliver as many benefits as possible for the local community, economy and environment.

## Step 5: Pre-application community involvement for ‘significant’ applications

- 10.11 Pre-application community involvement is encouraged for all ‘significant’ development. A significant development is described as:
- Major<sup>2</sup> developments within or adjoining residential areas
  - Major departures from the Development Plan
  - Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development
  - Applications which require notification to the Secretary of State
  - Other proposals that are likely to attract significant community interest
- 10.12 For significant development it is important to engage with the community during the design process before a planning application is submitted. This provides an opportunity to invite feedback about the location, type and scale of green infrastructure proposed and how it could benefit the local community.
- 10.13 To find out more about the requirements for pre-application community involvement please refer to the council's latest Statement of Community Involvement.

## Step 6: Carry out pre-application discussion with Harrogate Borough Council

- 10.14 The council encourages applicants and developers to engage with the council before a planning application is submitted. This allows for confidential feedback and advice regarding the scope of the development and the proposed design and layout.

- 10.15 A pre-application enquiry can be made - details of this service including the current cost and a form that you will need to use are available via the council's website at: [www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/New%20Plan/Can-I-have-pre-application-advice.aspx](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/New%20Plan/Can-I-have-pre-application-advice.aspx).

## Step 7: Submitting the planning application

- 10.16 Ensure that the design of the development has made the most of opportunities for green infrastructure and taken into consideration the comments made by the community, stakeholders and the council during the pre-application stage.
- 10.17 Include information within the planning application e.g. within the Design and Access Statement to demonstrate how green infrastructure has been addressed and cross refer to any drawings.

*2. Major developments are defined as follows: For dwellings: where 10 or more are to be constructed (or if number not given, area is more than 0.5 hectares). For all other uses: where the floorspace will be 1000sq. metres or more (or site is one hectare or more). Area of site is that directly involved in some aspect of the development. Floorspace is defined as the sum of floor area within the building.*



# 11. Useful documents and links

## **NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

Ecosystems Knowledge Network on Green Infrastructure: <http://ekn.defra.gov.uk/resources/tools-guidelines/green-infrastructure/>

English Heritage on Streets for all:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/advice-by-topic/planning-and-transport/streets-for-all/regional-documents/>

Environment Agency: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/)

Landscape Institute on Green Infrastructure: [www.landscapeinstitute.org/policy/GreenInfrastructure.php](http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/policy/GreenInfrastructure.php)

Natural England on Green Infrastructure: [www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningdevelopment/greeninfrastructure/default.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningdevelopment/greeninfrastructure/default.aspx)

Susdrain on SuDS: [www.susdrain.org/delivering-suds/using-suds/design-guidance/green-infrastructure.html](http://www.susdrain.org/delivering-suds/using-suds/design-guidance/green-infrastructure.html)

## **NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS**

DEFRA, (2010), Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network:

<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf>

DEFRA, (2011), Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services)

Forestry Commission, (October 2010), Benefits of Green Infrastructure Report to DEFRA and CLG:

[www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/urgp\\_benefits\\_of\\_green\\_infrastructure\\_main\\_report.pdf/\\$file/urgp\\_benefits\\_of\\_green\\_infrastructure\\_main\\_report.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/urgp_benefits_of_green_infrastructure_main_report.pdf/$file/urgp_benefits_of_green_infrastructure_main_report.pdf)

RTPI, Briefing on Green Infrastructure: [www.rtpi.org.uk/media/499964/rtpi\\_gi\\_task\\_group\\_briefing\\_final.pdf](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/499964/rtpi_gi_task_group_briefing_final.pdf)

Town & Country Planning Association, The Wildlife Trusts (July 2012) Planning for a Healthy Environment - Good Practice Guidance for Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity: [www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/TCPA\\_TWT\\_GI-Biodiversity-Guide.pdf](http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/TCPA_TWT_GI-Biodiversity-Guide.pdf)

DCLG, (March 2012) National Planning Policy Framework: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) (2004)

## **SUB-REGIONAL PUBLICATIONS**

North Yorkshire County Council, (May 2011), North Yorkshire and York Landscape Characterisation Project:  
[www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/25431/Landscape-character-assessment](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/25431/Landscape-character-assessment)

Living Landscapes; Yorkshire and the Humber, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, 2009: [www.ywt.org.uk/living-landscapes](http://www.ywt.org.uk/living-landscapes)

## **DISTRICT POLICY AND PUBLICATIONS**

Harrogate Borough Council, (February 2004), Harrogate District Landscape Character Assessment:  
[www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/Landscape-Character-Assessment.aspx](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/Landscape-Character-Assessment.aspx)

Harrogate Borough Council, (2006), Harrogate District Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): [www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/SCI.aspx](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/SCI.aspx)

Harrogate Borough Council, Harrogate District Conservation Area Character Appraisals (there are 53 separate appraisals):  
[www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/Conservation-Areas.aspx](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/Conservation-Areas.aspx)

Harrogate Borough Council, (February 2009), Harrogate District Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD):  
[www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/harrogate-district-local-plan.aspx](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/harrogate-district-local-plan.aspx)

Core Strategy Policy EQ1: Reducing Risks to the Environment

Core Strategy Policy EQ2: The Natural and Built Environment and Green Belt

Harrogate Borough Council, (2014), Provision for Open Space in Connection with New Housing Development SPD:  
[www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Documents/planning-guidance/2014-provision-open-space-spd.pdf](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Documents/planning-guidance/2014-provision-open-space-spd.pdf)

Harrogate Borough Council, (2012), A Strong Local Economy Strategic Action Plan 2012/2015:  
[www.harrogate.gov.uk/edu/Documents/HBCStrongLocalEconomyStrategicActionPlanFINAL.pdf](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/edu/Documents/HBCStrongLocalEconomyStrategicActionPlanFINAL.pdf)

Harrogate District Biodiversity Action Plan (2012): [www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/Biodiversity-Harrogate.aspx](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/Biodiversity-Harrogate.aspx)

Review of Local Landscape Designations: Special Landscape Areas (September 2011)

Harrogate Borough Council, (Draft), Heritage Management SPD: [www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/Heritage-SPD.aspx](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/plan/Pages/Heritage-SPD.aspx)



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