

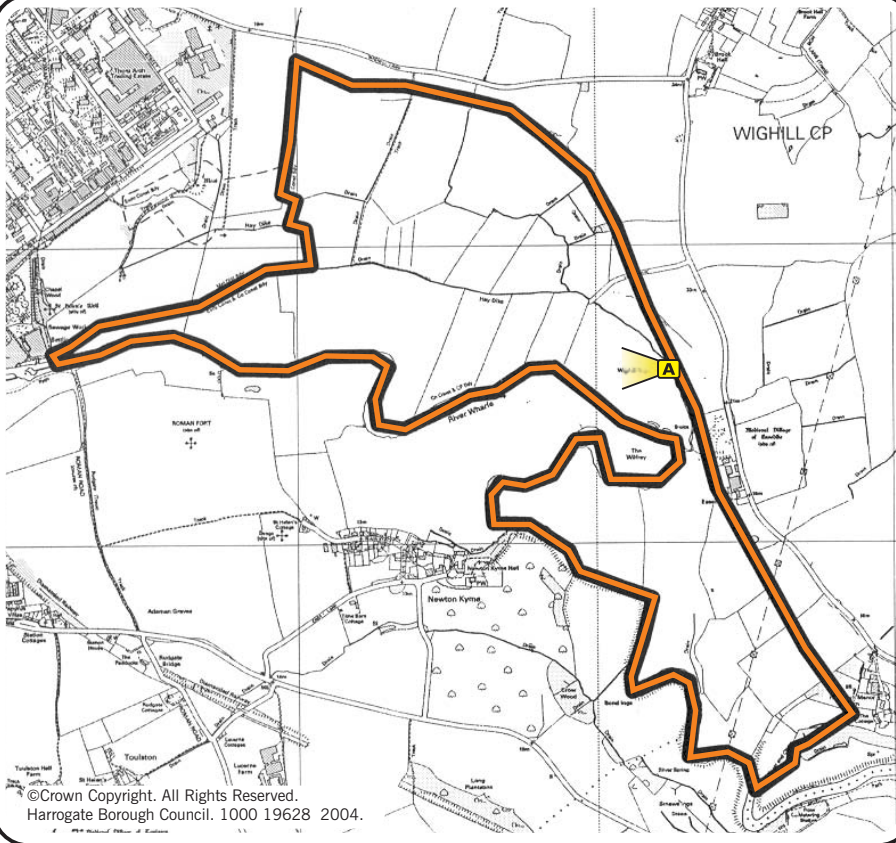
AREA 106

Approved
Feb 2004

A View west over Wighill Ings and the River Wharfe.

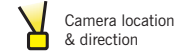


River Wharfe Floodplain Farmland (Thorp Arch to Tadcaster Reach)



HARROGATE DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment

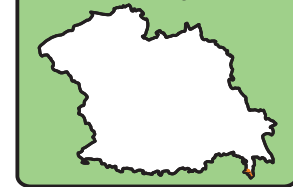
— Area boundary*



Not to
Scale

* NB Due to the nature of landform, surface treatment and soil/geology composition Character area boundaries cannot be delineated precisely and should be considered "transitional".

Location in Harrogate District



Description

This is a simple Character Area of the River Wharfe floodplain which extends between Thorpe Arch and Tadcaster. It covers 1.8 km² within Harrogate District and is bound to the north by Wighill Ridge and to the south by River Wharfe (which also represents Harrogate District's southern boundary). The character continues south to encompass both sides of the river.

The flat river corridor is a mixture of tenced grassland fields, drained by a network of ditches, contrasting with the neglected appearance of open floodplain meadow.

Deciduous woodland cloaks the Wharfe, channelling views and providing an intimate setting for riverside walks. Elsewhere, trees grow along field boundaries and outgrown hawthorn hedgerows enhance the well-wooded appearance of the area and disperse views.

This is a harmonious landscape that feels remote despite being easily accessed by public footpath and relatively close to large settlement. Telegraph poles cross the area but are well camouflaged by the trees and therefore have less detrimental impact. This is a beautiful area of great interest with stunning riverside scenery.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Transitional geology of Magnesian limestone in the west to Sherwood sandstone in the east all overlain with alluvium drift geology.
- Deep, permeable, fine loamy brown soils.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Flat river floodplain below 10m AOD.
- The River Wharfe indicates the southern boundary of the Character Area in Harrogate District.
- Hay Dike, a tributary of the Wharfe, plus a network of associated drains and ditches along field boundaries.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Improved grassland and meadow (ings) grade 3 agricultural land.
- Open flood meadow and large field enclosures.
- Post and wire fencing for livestock control plus many fragmented and overgrown hedges with trees.

Key Characteristics

- Deciduous clumps of woodland along river corridor plus individual trees along field boundaries (sycamore, alder, ash and willow).

Settlement, built environment and communications

- There are no settlements within this area in Harrogate District.
- Parkland at Newton Kyme, a village on the south side of the river at the edge of the floodplain and the site of a Roman fort are important historic features within the corridor.
- The southern side of the river is well-served by a public bridleway.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- The River Wharfe corridor contrasts with the surrounding agricultural landscape and neighbouring large-scale trading estate. Parkland at Newton Kyme south of the river and outside the District provides further contrast.
- Much of the area is in floodplain and unlikely to come under pressure from development within. However, Thorp Arch Trading Estate does encroach visually and the area is sensitive to its expansion.
- Water quality and river bank diversity, which give rise to the unique character of this area, could be threatened by development activities in adjacent Character Areas.
- The pastoral river corridor character would be significantly altered if more intensive farming methods were adopted close to the river.
- Potential conflicting landscape strategy and concerns between the two neighbouring authorities.

Guidelines

Aim: To conserve the intimate pastoral character of the river corridor.

- The management of existing woodland and trees will ensure long term maintenance of tree cover along the river corridor.
- New woodland planting in the area should be limited to the boundaries with the trading estate to maintain the open nature of the grass fields along the river corridor.
- Individual tree planting in hedgerows is appropriate to maintain and enhance diversity.
- Promote less intensive management of grassland to reintroduce and improve meadow characteristics of the area.

Aim: To conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the riverbank and corridor.

- Monitor water quality in the area and ensure that run off from development does not impact upon quality.
- Liaise with anglers and landowners to protect the water quality of the river.
- Liaise with neighbouring local authority regarding landscape guidelines and future development to ensure that sustainable drainage schemes are implemented as part of any development and that the development edge is integrated with the countryside.