

AREA 28

Approved
Feb 2004

A Looking south west from Watergate Road.



Bishop Thornton Vale Fringe Farmland

Description

This is a moderate scale landscape, undulating and sloping eastwards, becoming almost flat around Bishop Thornton. The area is made up of around 14km² of farmland. Woodland cover is thin and consists of small plantations and clumps of trees, yet views remain enclosed due to the impact of denser woodland cover in neighbouring Character Areas.

Development pattern is a mixture of organised straight roads and rectangular fields in the east, becoming less formal with fewer winding roads and slightly more random field boundaries in the west.

Land use is simple with a mixture of muted grassland and arable fields intensively managed for grazing livestock and cereal crop production. In the lower lying fields a network of ditches drains the land into small streams that then flow southwards.

Hedges and ditches enclose the fields. They are often fragmented and reinforced with post and wire fencing. There are also localised areas of dry stone walls and post and rail fencing.

There is one major settlement in this otherwise sparsely inhabited landscape, which is pleasant and attractive with no notable detracting elements.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

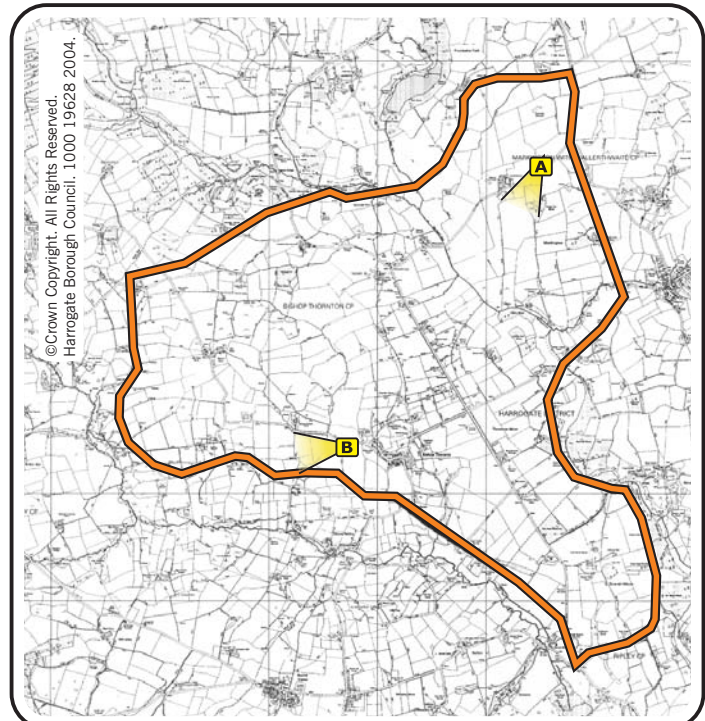
- Millstone grit solid geology.
- Slowly-permeable, seasonally-waterlogged, fine loamy over clayey soils with patches of well-drained, coarse loamy soils over sandstone.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Flat to gently undulating landform generally gradually falling eastwards.
- Colber Beck and several ditches drain the area in a generally south and east direction.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Medium to large sized fields of improved grassland intensively managed for livestock with areas of cereal crop production. Field pattern is largely regular parliamentary enclosure with some amalgamated early enclosure fields.
- Field boundaries consist of a few stonewalls, gappy hedges with ditches, plus post and wire and post and rail fencing.



HARROGATE DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment

Location in Harrogate District

- Area boundary*
- 📍 Camera location & direction



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".

- Individual trees along field boundaries occur irregularly.
- Woodland cover is intermittent with some deciduous tree clumps and small conifer plantations.
- There is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation at Drake Pits Wood.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- The main settlement is Bishop Thornton plus a few scattered farmsteads.
- Traditional building materials are local sandstone with stone and blue slate roofs.
- The area is criss-crossed by several public rights of way, lanes and tracks.
- Roads crossing the Thornton Moor area of parliamentary enclosure conform to the field pattern.



B West of Bishop Thornton.

Pressures & Sensitivities

- This transitional landscape between the upland grassland of Nidderdale and the lower lying mixed arable land of the A61 corridor is sensitive to the pressures upon the changing rural economy.
- Economies of scale and size of farm machinery has led to the amalgamation of fields resulting in a larger scale landscape particularly at lower elevations in the east.
- Large-scale farmsteads and buildings can impact upon the vernacular.
- Sparse woodland cover with few links to woodlands in the adjacent valley corridor character areas.
- Decline in frequency of hedgerow trees due to neglect and lack of replacement.
- Wildlife habitats in the area are limited and there is only one designated Site of Interest for Nature Conservation.
- Pressure for new residential houses in this picturesque area close to Harrogate, which has limited capacity to accept development without impact upon character.

- Caravan parks and other recreation facilities, which do not respect vernacular, should not be permitted or should be located to minimise visibility and designed to include appropriate native tree planting.

Aim: Enhance landscape texture and diversity.

- Promote land management for biodiversity to encourage wildlife and provide some visual interest.
- Promote the enhancement of existing wildlife corridors such as hedgerows and watercourses through less intensive management practices.
- Promote the creation of new wildlife corridors to link and improve existing.
- Liaise with DEFRA to explore opportunities to improve wildlife habitats appropriate to character as part of the agricultural grant schemes.

Guidelines

Aim: Enhance woodland and tree cover in the area.

- Explore opportunities to create woodland links in the area following landform and streams through the area (e.g. Colber Beck)
- Promote awareness of the Hedgerow Regulations to protect existing hedgerows and discourage further amalgamation of fields in the area.
- Promote the replacement of hedgerow trees.

Aim: Preserve scattered settlement pattern.

- Development must be of appropriate scale and relate to existing built form.
- New development in the area should be resisted where it will impact upon the rural character of the area and scattered settlement pattern.