

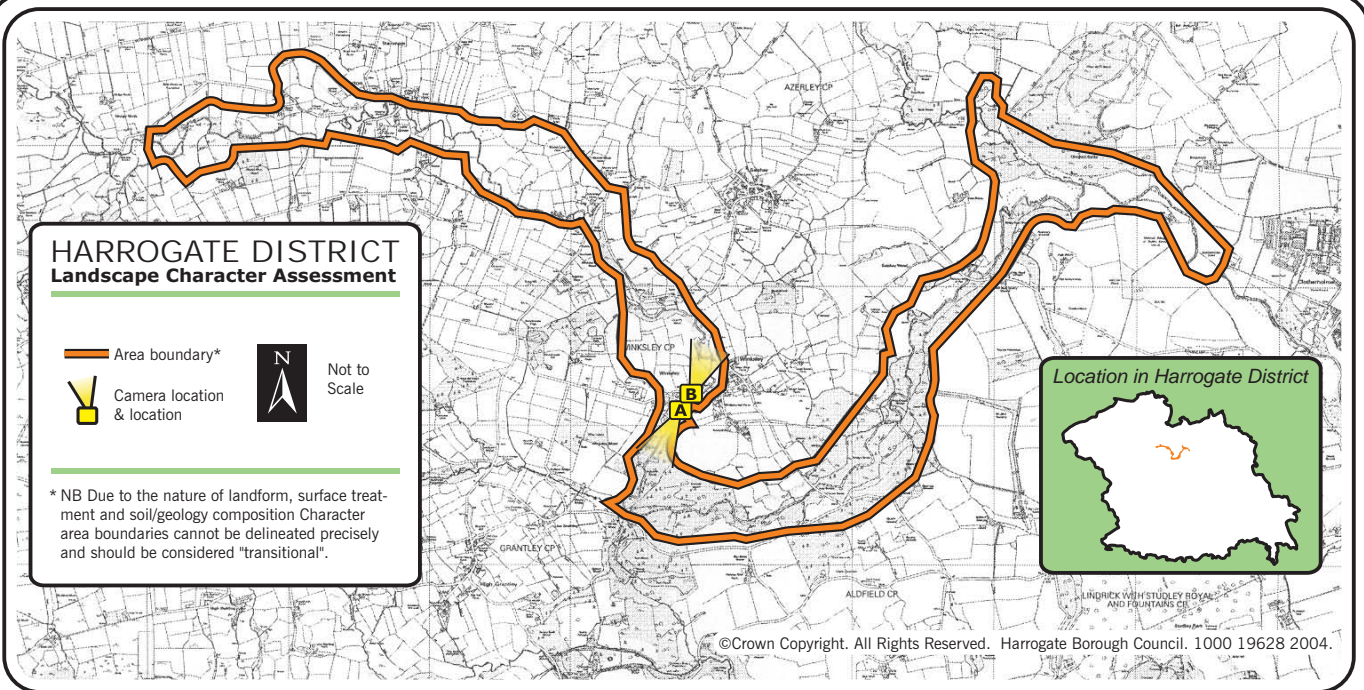
AREA 33

Approved
Feb 2004

A Looking south from Winksley Bridge



River Laver Corridor



Description

This is a sinuous, linear Character Area outlining the flat valley floor of the River Laver from Hedge Nook at the western end to the urban edge of Ripon (Clotherholme) in the east. The area is approximately 4.8km².

The distinctive river corridor takes on many transformations along its course as it descends towards Ripon from 150m AOD at Hedge Nook to 50m AOD 11km along its course east at Clotherholme Farm. The valley is relatively shallow with gently sloping sides at its upper end where there is little woodland. West of Winksley the riverbanks become more densely wooded. Beyond Winksley the valley tightens becoming slightly steeper and very densely wooded before finally broadening out again and becoming open on its approach to Ripon. This river valley is a distinct area through the surrounding intensively farmed grassland and is within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for much of its course.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Solid geology of Millstone grit becoming Magnesian limestone near to Ripon.
- Drift geology of till and alluvium overlain with a combination of brown and surface water gley soils, grade 3 and 4 agricultural (grass)land.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Valley landform follows the meandering river. The valley floor begins at 150m AOD gradually sloping eastwards to 50m AOD.
- Springs and small streams feed the river.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Improved and semi-improved grassland.
- Field pattern is irregular and is probably a result of a mix of early and parliamentary enclosure alongside the river.
- Field size becomes larger downstream.
- Small areas of woodland upstream contrast with dense woodland downstream. Large areas of mixed conifer and deciduous woodland and plantations. A large area of this woodland is Ancient Semi-Natural woodland.
- Cow Myers is an SSSI.
- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation: (neutral grassland) at Laver Banks Wood, Ellington Banks Wood and Winksley Field.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

Settlement, built environment and communications

- ▶ Main settlements are the villages of Winksley and Laverton on the boundary of the Character Area.
- ▶ Buildings scattered along the valley floor include farmsteads and house plus two mills.
- ▶ Traditional building materials are local sandstone and stone slate or blue slate roofs.
- ▶ Bridges over the river at Laverton, Gate Bridge, Winksley, Ings Bridge, and Galphay Mill Bridge. There are also several footbridges and fords.
- ▶ Although there is no footpath running the length of the area there is a good network of footpaths crossing the valley.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- ▶ The distinctive character of this corridor relies upon the nature of the river (and the landform that has resulted as it flows eastwards across the Millstone grit geology of the Nidderdale AONB). As a result the area is sensitive to changes in the nature of the river and any man-made structures within the corridor. Existing crossings tend to be low-key and built form in the valley is limited.
- ▶ Flooding problems in Ripon have led to pressure for a flood alleviation scheme involving a dam in this area.
- ▶ Extensive conifer plantations impact upon the character of woodland and tree cover here.
- ▶ There is limited public access with few public footpaths.
- ▶ Loss of wooded corridor character upstream of Winksley Bank Road.
- ▶ Loss/neglect of river corridor heritage features.

Guidelines

Aim: To maintain the distinct transitional nature of this river corridor as it makes its way east to Ripon.

- ▶ Flood defences for Ripon must be appropriate to landscape character and respect the river corridor geomorphology. Avoid large engineered structures and ensure that design respects the unique character of this river corridor.
- ▶ Where development is permitted appropriate mitigation measures will look at habitat creation and management as well as design, building materials and tree planting to mitigate landscape impact.
- ▶ Encourage management of woodlands to promote deciduous edges to conifer plantations and promote appropriate tree planting.

Aim: To maintain river crossings and their character that contributes to the distinctiveness of the valley.

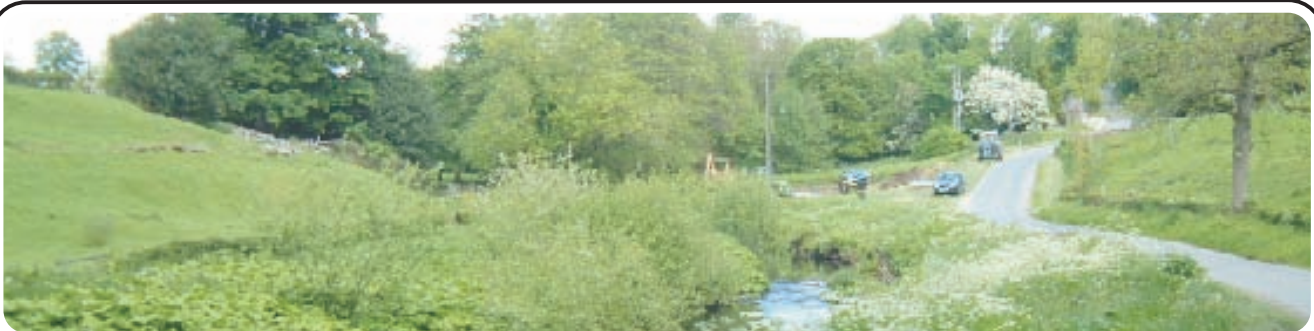
- ▶ The bridges, fords and paths across the river contribute to the heritage of this river corridor and should be maintained to retain their character.
- ▶ Information regarding the history of river crossings along the Laver and their development over time would help in understanding the landscape.

Aim: To protect heritage features which are not 'designated'.

- ▶ Identify heritage features on the river corridor and develop a strategy for their protection in consultation with the Environment Agency and local landowners.
- ▶ There are several disused mills along the corridor that have contributed to small scale rural industry in the past.

Aim: To protect and enhance the biodiversity of the river and its corridor.

- ▶ Encourage less intensive grassland management along the river corridor.
- ▶ Promote water quality in consultation with landowners, the Environment Agency, local wildlife groups and anglers.
- ▶ Refer to the Harrogate District Biodiversity Action Plan when prioritising projects.



B Looking north from Winksley Bridge