

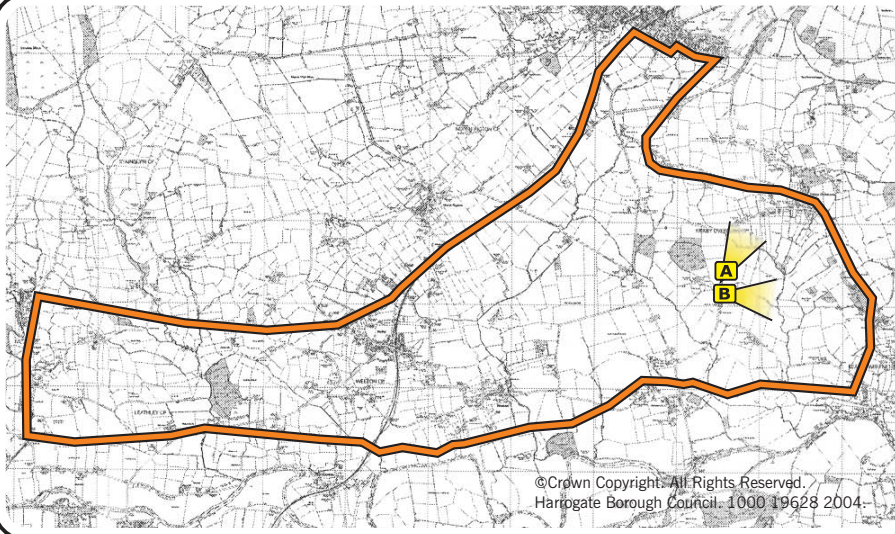
AREA
62

Approved
Feb 2004

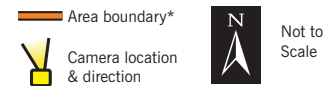
A Kirkby Overblow.



Wharfe Valley Side Farmland



HARROGATE DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment



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".



Description

This is a moderate to large-scale area and is the broad and hummocky valley side of the Wharfedale Valley from Leathley in the west to Barrowby in the east and extending north along Swindon Beck to the southern edge of Pannal. The area covers approximately 22km² of farmland. The eastern extent is defined by a scarp slope that is heavily-wooded partially enclosing the area and dispersing views. The village of Kirkby Overblow is situated at the top of the scarp slope and overlooks the Character Area. Land use is simple and harmonious with medium-sized grassland fields bound by hedges and fences in places for horse and livestock control.

The area is important to the setting of Harrogate as it separates the town from the conurbation of Leeds.

Despite evidence of centuries of human activity, there are no scheduled monuments in this area.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Millstone grit solid geology and glacial till drift geology deposited by glacial meltwater giving rise to rounded moraine deposits.
- Largely slowly-permeable, seasonally-waterlogged, loamy over clayey soils with patches of well-drained coarse loamy soils over rock.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Gently rolling, hummocky landform generally below 100m AOD.
- Small becks heading south to the River Wharfe drain the area.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Agricultural land managed as grassland fields.
- Little notable woodland except for medium-sized blocks at Riffa Wood (Ancient Semi-Natural) and Swindon Wood.
- Individual trees along boundaries and scattered within fields at Barrowby.
- There is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation along Riffa Beck.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- Main settlements are Huby, Weeton, Leathley and Kirkby Overblow. The latter two have village Conservation Areas. Kirkby Overblow appears in the Domesday Book and its name may derive from Kirkby "ore blowers" (or iron smelters).
- The name Leathley means "cultivated land on a slope" in Anglo Saxon. The church dates from the 12th century.
- A network of footpaths crosses the area.
- The A61 Harrogate Leeds road and the A658 southern bypass are major features.
- Part of the area is within the boundary of The Royal Forest of Knaresborough, a former medieval hunting park, and contains boundary stones.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- ▶ There are extensive views across this area from Barrowby lane at the top of the scarp slope to the east and from Kirkby Overblow. With such extensive views, and due to the fact that built form is relatively sparse with few woodland blocks, the area has a limited capacity to accept built development without detriment to character.
- ▶ The area is wholly within the West Riding Green Belt and as such has a measure of protection against inappropriate development.
- ▶ Field pattern and hedge boundaries make an important contribution to the distinctiveness of the area. The area is therefore sensitive to the general decline in hedgerows which are becoming fragmented through neglect.
- ▶ The area has long been settled and some of the field boundaries are likely to be of historic importance. However, information on this is scant.
- ▶ Overhead power lines and communication masts and wires are visible detractors in the open landscape.

Guidelines

Aim: Maintain the characteristic land use and landscape pattern.

- ▶ Promote traditional land use in this agricultural area and the retention, repair and sensitive management of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- ▶ Promote native woodland planting to respect and highlight landform and landscape features. In particular stream corridors and small valleys would become more influential in the landscape if tree planting were to be used to enhance the corridors.
- ▶ Native woodland and tree planting around existing farmsteads and large scale buildings to respect landform and location i.e. avoiding straight lines, will help to integrate building in the landscape.
- ▶ Protect and manage Ancient Semi-Natural woodland.
- ▶ Encourage overhead communications to be placed underground when the opportunity arises.

Aim: To enhance the prominence of important vernacular buildings and historic features.

- ▶ Churches are important buildings in the landscape and their towers are important landmarks. Improving views will increase their influence on landscape character.
- ▶ Views of important vernacular buildings and settlements should be maintained and enhanced. This may be done through appropriate planting to channel views and avoiding development and tree planting which would impact upon views.
- ▶ Protect historic features and settlements and their settings from development and damaging land management practices.



B View south east from south of Kirkby Overblow.