

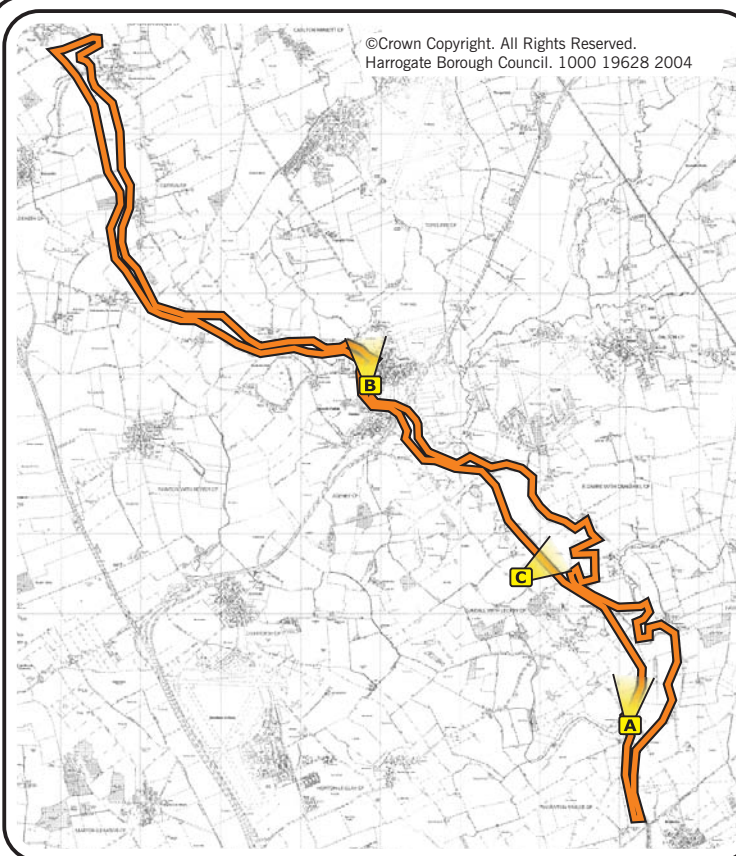
**AREA  
83**

**Approved  
Feb 2004**

**A** River Swale at Thornton.



## River Swale Corridor (Skipton on Swale to Brafferton Reach)



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### HARROGATE DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment

— Area boundary\*

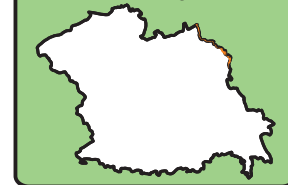
📍 Camera location  
& direction



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".

Location in Harrogate District



## Description

This moderate scale linear area covers 2.7km<sup>2</sup> in Harrogate District and follows the River Swale between Skipton on Swale and Brafferton as it flows in a generally south-easterly direction.

The river corridor is narrow and flat with patchy clumps of woodland that enclose the riverside and channel views with glimpses of the arable fields that surround it on both sides. This Character Area is on the edge of the District and extends over the Swale into Hambleton District.

The riverbanks, at risk of flooding, are mainly farmed as grassland and contrast with the surrounding monochrome arable fields that are bound by fragmented and neglected hedgerows, some of which have disappeared altogether leaving fields open.

The river is attractive and forms a meandering corridor that adds interest in an otherwise large scale uniform landscape.

This area can be viewed from points of crossing such as bridges and there are very few public footpaths providing access to the riverside.

## Description

### Geology, soils and drainage

- Sherwood sandstone solid geology overlain with alluvium drift geology.
- Deep, stoneless, permeable, fine loamy, coarse loamy and sandy, well-drained brown soils. Stoneless, clayey, fine silty and fine loamy ground water gley soils. Slowly-permeable, seasonally-waterlogged, stoneless, clayey and fine loamy over clayey surface water gley soils.

### Landform and drainage pattern.

- Flat river floodplain of the River Swale, below 20m AOD.

### Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Mixed land use of improved, rough grassland and arable, grade 3 agricultural land.
- Various sized fields either open or bound by hedges and/or fencing for stock control.
- Small field systems are evident close to settlement e.g. at Asenby and Cundal
- Wooded river corridor plus individual trees and clumps around settlement.



**B** River Swale at Topcliffe.

## Key Characteristics

### Settlement, built environment and communications

- The major settlements are Topcliffe and Asenby plus several small villages and scattered farmsteads along the riverside.
- Baldersby Park important to setting of river south of Helperby.
- Several roads cross the river.

## Sensitivities & Pressures

- This is a tranquil area with limited access except where roads cross the river. There is limited capacity for change and the area is sensitive to development. Where modern bridges have crossed the river, as at Asenby where the A168 trunk road crosses the river, the impact upon character is considerable.
- Road bridges also fragment the river corridor.
- Management of the river for flood defence purposes has impacted on character through the introduction of river banks to contain the water.
- Recreation facilities along the river e.g. caravan parks, may impact.
- The historic significance of the river and its use is not fully known. The presence of the Motte and Bailey at the confluence with Cod Beck on the north side of the river outside Harrogate District indicates the river has long been an important watercourse.

## Guidelines

**Aim: To maintain the tranquil character of this sinuous corridor.**

- Encourage appropriate landscape treatment at river crossings taking account of riverside vegetation and wildlife in accordance with the Harrogate District's Landscape Design Guide and Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Development proposals in the vicinity of the river need to take account of its distinctive characteristics and demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the importance of the river corridor.
- All flood defence proposals must result in benefit to wildlife and landscape.

**Aim: To promote the historic significance of the river corridor.**

- Research on the historic importance of the River Swale is required and should be conducted with the participation of local people.



**C** View of River Swale corridor from north edge of Cundall.