

AREA 85

Approved
Feb 2004

A East of Norton-le-Clay looking south east.



Thornton Bridge drained, low lying arable farmland

Description

This low lying, flat Character Area is situated north of the confluence on the River Ure with the River Swale north east of Boroughbridge and covers around 14km². The landform is generally below 20m AOD. The area is well-drained for agricultural use with small areas prone to occasional flooding at Cundall Beck, Main Goit and Soppa Gutter. Woodland and tree cover is intermittent with the best of the tree cover concentrated to the east along the boundary with Character Area 84: Cundall/Asenby Ridge farmland. Elsewhere tree cover is limited to a few small woodlands and individual trees.

The land is intensively-farmed for arable production. Field size is large and a result of the amalgamation of smaller fields over the years. Traditional field boundaries are hedged with drainage ditches. Some hedges are fragmented or have been lost but others remain in good condition. The intensive farming practices means that wildlife habitats are limited and landscape pattern simple with limited diversity.

The main settlements are Norton-le-Clay and Milby (both on the western edge of the Character Area). Elsewhere settlement is sparse and consists of well-spaced scattered large farmsteads.


There are few roads and public rights of way across the area making it relatively isolated.

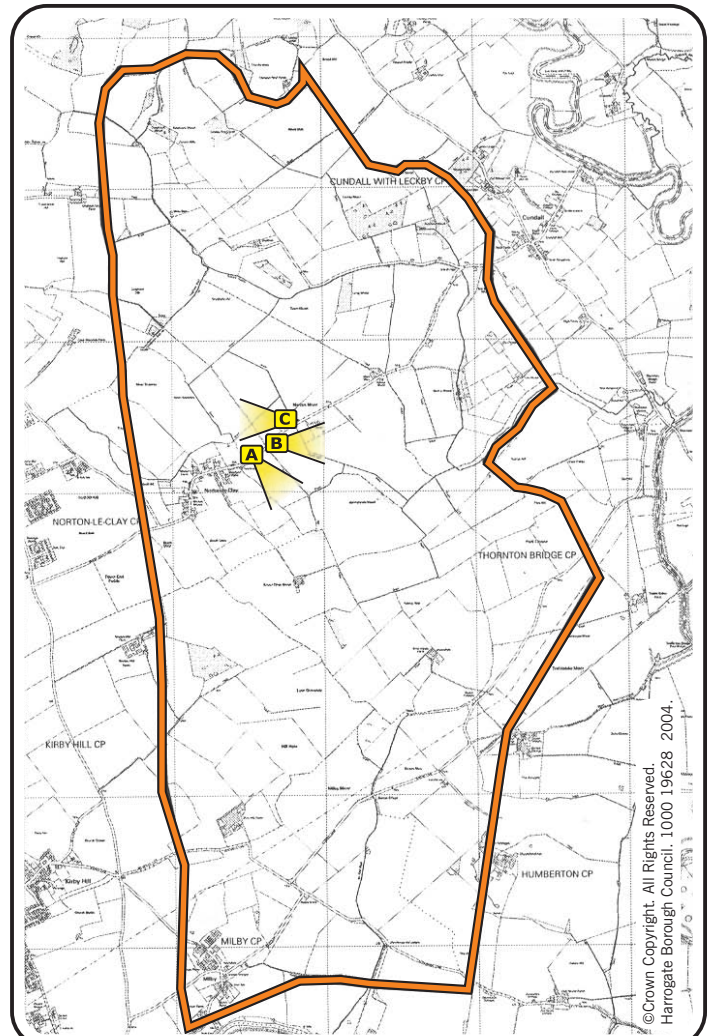
The deserted medieval village of Humberton is situated on the edge of the floodplain to the south east of this Character Area on the boundary with the Swale/Ure Corridor. This indicates the area has a long history of settlement and farming.

The area is distinct from the neighbouring Character Area (81: Dishforth and Surrounding Farmland) to the west, as tree and hedge cover overall is greater and field pattern less varied. Views are not as extensive and the whole area is less open in appearance. It is also less easily accessible having only three minor roads crossing it and the A1 corridor does not influence the character of the area. Nevertheless this is a large-scale arable landscape, which does share many characteristics with its neighbour.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage



-  Sherwood sandstone solid geology overlain with silt and clay drift geology.



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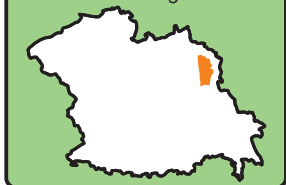
HARROGATE DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment

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".



B Communications masts east of Norton-le-Clay.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

- Slowly permeable, seasonally-waterlogged, stoneless, clayey and fine loamy over clayey surface water gley soils.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Flat landform below 25m AOD.
- Cundall Beck and its associated floodplain, Main Goit and a network of ditches drain the area eastwards into the River Swale.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Land managed for arable production, grade 3 agricultural land.
- Large to very large fields bound by hedges, some of which are now fragmented or have disappeared. Hedges along roads and tracks tend to be in good condition.
- Few small mixed and deciduous plantations and shelterbelts, no large areas of trees.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- The main settlements are Norton-le-Clay and Milby plus sparsely scattered farmsteads.
- Humberton is a deserted medieval village on the edge of the flood plain.
- Minor roads cross the area east to west and farm tracks provide access to fields and farmsteads. The extent of public rights of way is limited.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- This relatively quiet rural area has limited capacity to accept change without detriment to the landscape character. Development that would result in new buildings and increased traffic movements would change the relatively peaceful nature of this arable landscape.
- Due to the less accessible nature of this area it does not suffer from the same pressure for large-scale development as Character Area 81: Dishforth and Surrounding Farmland.
- Pressure on farm businesses is likely to lead to changes in land management and diversification of farm businesses. Over time, this will impact upon character.

- Loss and neglect of vernacular buildings and historic features may further impact on landscape character.
- Telecommunications and other types of mast can be prominent in such an open landscape.
- There are very few public rights of way and access to the riverbank through this area is limited.

Guidelines

Aim: To maintain and enhance the landscape pattern and views.

- Maintain the large-scale field system by supporting the management and restoration of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Several field boundaries that trace parish boundaries tend not to be straight. Hedges along these lines may be considered important under the Hedgerow Regulations criteria. In any event they are important to the historic fabric of the landscape and deserve protection.
- New large woodland blocks may impede upon views and openness. Proposals for new woodland should be designed so as not to impact upon the open characteristics of the landscape.
- Research historic buildings and features and their contribution to landscape character.

Aim: To integrate development.

- Ensure that telecom masts and similar structures are allowed only when they are absolutely necessary and located appropriately to minimise impact.
- The appearance of new and existing buildings in the landscape could be improved by the use of native planting appropriate to the character of the area.



 The eastern edge of Norton-le-Clay.