

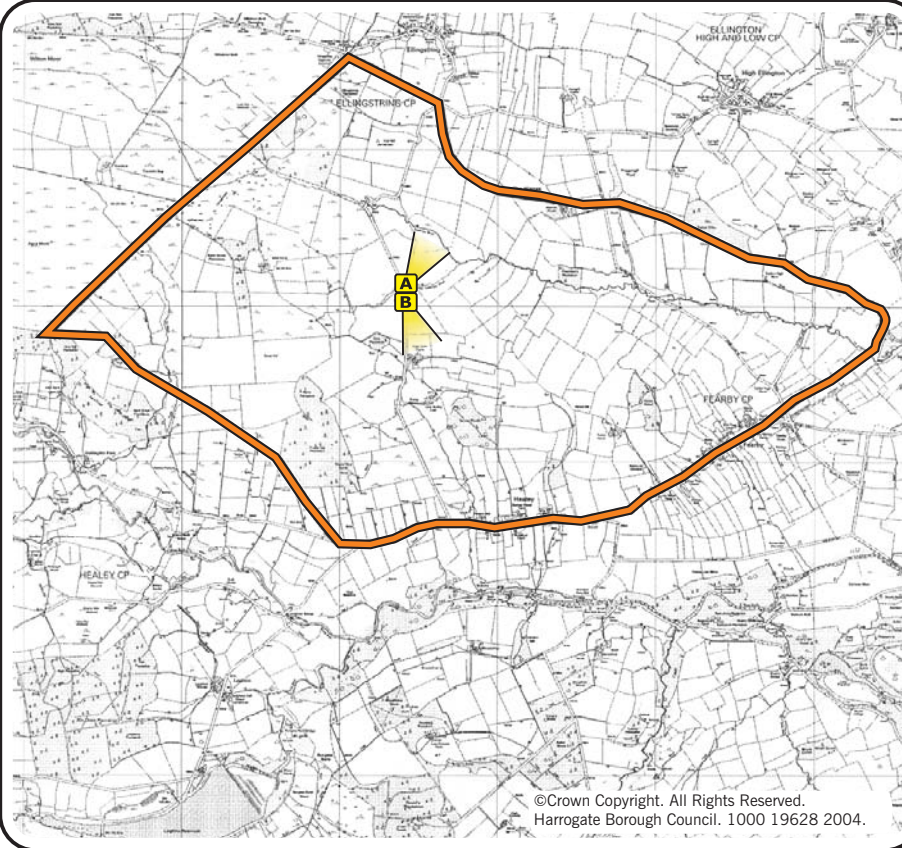
AREA 39

Approved
Feb 2004

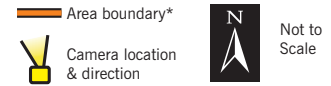
A North of High Cote Farm looking north east.



Ellingstring and Fearby upland fringe Grassland



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".



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Description

This is a large scale upland area covering nearly 9km² with a uniform appearance consisting of grass fields arranged in an organised and sometimes regular pattern. At the moorland fringe there are several conifer plantations and drystone walls to the field boundaries. The area becomes more diverse as it slopes gradually down southeastwards towards its boundary with Character Area 38: The River Burn Valley Farmland. Here fields become less regular, hedges begin to replace the stone wall boundaries and woodland becomes mixed.

There are several scattered farmsteads within the area and the villages of Healey, Fearby and Ellingstring are just outside this Character Area. Views are dispersed at lower elevations becoming more extensive on the higher open ground. This area, in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, has a tended appearance and is generally pleasant and interesting.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

- Millstone grit solid geology and till drift geology.

- Slowly permeable, seasonally-waterlogged, fine loamy and fine loamy over clayey upland soils with a peaty surface horizon.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Landform is undulating and slopes down from the moorland fringe in the west to the vale fringe in the east. (280m to 130m AOD)
- There are many springs and small streams.
- Swinney Beck flows west to east creating a narrow, shallow valley.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Land use is improved and semi-improved grassland for intensive livestock production.
- Average field size is medium but there is a mix of sizes from small to large in the area.
- Field boundaries are dry stone walls at higher elevations becoming hedges with some individual trees at lower elevations to the south and east.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

- Several straight edged conifer plantations punctuate the landscape. Spring Wood, north of Healey, is Ancient Semi-Natural woodland and a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- There are several scattered farmsteads but no significant settlement (Fearby, Healey and Ellingstring being just outside the Character Area).

Sensitivities & Pressures

- The diverse, transitional landscape is sensitive to changes which could result in the loss of key characteristics. Although pressures for change are low in this area, change could result from a decline in traditional farming practices and neglect of field boundaries.
- Development of farmsteads and introduction of modern farm buildings would impact on character particularly at higher elevations where the landscape is more exposed.
- There are few footpaths in the area, which may come under pressure as a point of access to the open moorland.
- There is a stark line between moorland and improved grassland and limited habitat diversity as a result of intensive farming practices.
- Knowledge of heritage features in the area is limited.

Guidelines

Aim: To preserve and enhance the transitional character of the area.

- Development on farms needs to be appropriately located and of a scale relevant to the landscape pattern, avoiding the skyline and respecting settlement pattern.

- New native woodland planting could be used to mitigate the impact of development where appropriate to landscape pattern particularly on the lower slopes.
- Less intensive management of grass fields on the moorland fringe would improve habitat diversity and enhance the transitional nature of the landscape from moorland fringe to upland valley in accordance with the Harrogate Biodiversity Action Plan.

Aim: To minimise the impact of access to areas of open country and common land.

- Opportunities for improving the footpath network to the open moor and creating entry points to the moor from this area should be considered.
- New facilities and signs to improve access to open access areas must respect landscape pattern and vernacular.

Aim: To protect features of historic importance in the landscape.

- Research heritage features in the area in consultation with local people.
- Promote the protection of historic features through appropriate designations and inform locals and visitors about the historic elements in the landscape.



B Modern farm buildings viewed from Cote Lane.