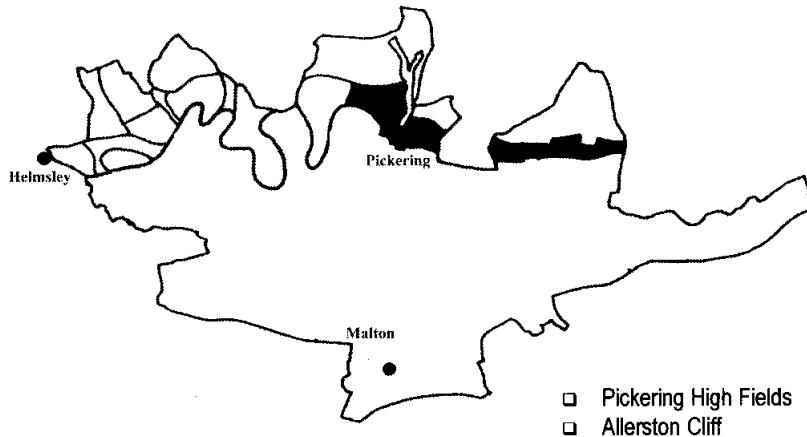


AREA F Linear Scarp Farmland**Key Characteristic Features**

- Panoramic views from the escarpment ridge out across the Vale of Pickering to the south.
- Attractive rural qualities with a medium to large-scale field mosaic containing prominent hedgerows and woodland blocks.
- Settlements concentrated along the foot of the slope.
- Dynamic, rhythmic quality to the undulating relief.
- North south orientated dry valleys and roads.
- Strong medieval field pattern around Pickering.

Landform and Context

Lying to the east of Wreton, *linear scarp farmland* extends to the boundary of Ryedale District at Snainton. The area occurs in three contiguous, yet separate units, due to the interrupting effect of Pickering and Newton Dale, and the National Park Boundary, which at Thornton-le-Dale extends south of the A170.

The *linear scarp farmland* is underlain by the limestones and calcareous gritstones of the Tabular Hills dip slope that extends southwards from the North York Moors towards the Vale of Pickering. East of Pickering the sloping terrain becomes much steeper near the A170 where Kimmeridge clay deposits have been brought in close contact with more resistant Middle Jurassic rocks along the line of the Helmsley - Filey fault. Lying between 40 and 120m AOD, these steeper slopes emphasise the boundary between the Vale of Pickering and the Fringe of the Moors.

The relatively open character of this sloping landscape makes the landform immediately to the north of the A170 impressive because trees do not camouflage its strong, smoothly undulating profile. The indented dry valleys, that cut through the slope give the topography dynamic rhythmic quality, which is emphasised during low light conditions.

Land Use and Landscape Pattern

The arable fields of the Vale of Pickering extend across the regional character boundary up onto the *linear scarp farmland*. Indeed, there is little in the way of land use or landscape pattern to emphasise the transition from the Vale of Pickering to the Fringe of the Moors regional character areas. Field size, shape and orientation all remain remarkably similar. Fields are generally of medium size and are bounded

by hedgerows with few hedgerow trees other than the occasional ash. What little woodland is present, tends to closely follow the landform and is linearly arranged along the dry valleys.

An important characteristic of the escarpment's field mosaic can be seen close to settlements, particularly around Pickering and east of Thornton-le-Dale. Here there is a pattern of long linear fields, which are orientated north south up the slope and are a relic of the open-field cultivation system. The overall effect of these smaller fields, which are defined by a strong network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, is to give the impression of a more enclosed and intimate landscape. However, an evaluation of aerial photographs and old OS maps reveals that this historic pattern is being progressively weakened through field enlargement and hedgerow removal. This is particularly the case close to Pickering.

Lanes cut across the escarpment farmland and tend to utilise the shallower gradients afforded by dry valleys. They are characterised by narrow grass verges and are enclosed by hedgerows with few hedgerow trees.

Settlement

The most significant settlement in the *linear scarp farmland* is the market town of Pickering, which is situated on Pickering Beck at the outlet of Gundaie and Haugh Dale. This town is built on a small delta of pro-glacial sands and gravel that were deposited by glacial waters discharging from the Newton Dale meltwater channel. It occupies a position on slightly rising ground and is set against the attractive backdrop of the Tabular Hills. Dating from Norman times, the town has played a vital strategic role located at the entrance of an important routeway through the North York Moors. It was particularly wealthy during the Saxon period. A castle dating back to the thirteenth century dominates the town, which has developed from an historic core, located alongside Pickering Beck. Much of this growth has been since the arrival of the railway in 1875 and has been focused to the south of the town, and in an east west direction along the A170. To the east of Pickering this road was diverted to make way for the park that was developed around Eberston Hall in the early eighteenth century. Weathered grey limestone and red pantile roofs are the typical building materials, although in places, newer development appears stark and incongruous against the undeveloped slopes of the Tabular Hills. The core of the town is attractive and popular to tourists who principally visit

the town, castle and the North York Moors Railway. Traffic in the town is congested, particularly in the summer. The centre of the town, including the castle, is designated as a Conservation Area.

To the north of Pickering is Newbridge quarry. This is the largest quarry in the area and is still active.

Subjective Response

At close quarters, the escarpment is a prominent landmark, however, when viewed from the south, and from a distance, it is less distinctive, merging with the more elevated, shallow sloping farmed landscape to the north. The escarpment has a pronounced sense of place, largely derived from the steepness of the slopes, the expansive outer views and proximity to the Vale of Pickering.

Sensitivity to Change

The south facing slopes of the open farmed escarpment are prominent in views across the Vale of Pickering. This landscape is therefore, extremely sensitive to change.

The elements of the escarpment landscape that are most vulnerable to change are the skyline of the escarpment ridge and the headlands created by the dry valleys that cut through the escarpment. It is important that skylines are uninterrupted by elements such as buildings, telecommunications masts and power lines and that their predominantly open character is retained. Elsewhere, modern farm buildings, pylons and badly sited fence lines can all detract from the natural qualities of this landscape. Changing patterns of land use on the escarpment should aim to minimise intensive arable farming and its associated hard edges and to encourage unified swathes of grassland. With its prominent eleventh century church spire and commanding thirteenth century castle overlooking the town, Pickering is visible across large parts of the Vale to the south. Any built development is likely to be visually intrusive across a wide area.



Source: Environment Agency

Area F Linear Scarp Farmland

North East of Pickering (GR 805 843)

Although trees and woodlands are present, there is a general sense of openness

Though locally undulating, this landscape is characterised by an escarpment location



View looking eastwards along Wilton Heights



Near Pickering



Wilton Heights

Landscape Guidelines

Landscape Strategy

This harmonious, steeply sloping rural landscape is dominated by views out across the Vale of Pickering. The character of the farmland derives from the historic field and hedgerow pattern and local variations in topography. Trees, woodlands and farmsteads are largely absent. Due to its visual prominence, the landscape strategy should seek to conserve and enhance landscape character and ensure that inappropriate development is strongly resisted. The visual structure of the landscape should be assessed from the Vale of Pickering to ensure that the relationship between the higher land and its adjacent landscapes is well balanced.

Land Management

An important visual characteristic of this landscape is the transition from a relatively large scale pattern of arable fields and shallow dry valleys typical of much of the slope, to a smaller scale, pre-parliamentary enclosure pattern of long linear, often pastoral fields near settlement fringes. The latter generally run in a north south orientation following the lie of the land. Management strategies should aim to strengthen this important characteristic and discourage further enlargement of arable fields particularly near the edges of settlement.

The conversion of arable fields to permanent pasture should be encouraged. Any re-seeding of arable land should use a suitable grassland seed mix, of local provenance where possible, which reflects the species found in unimproved grasslands within the local area. The well-managed rhythmic and 'smooth' appearance of this landscape should be maintained by avoiding land management practices that involve a long-term retention of unmanaged vegetation.

Newbridge quarry to the north of Pickering is the largest quarry in the area and is still active. Specialist studies that take full account of geological, nature conservation and aesthetic issues are required to determine the best approach to the restoration of this quarry to ensure the conservation of rare or localised species. In some cases restoration might include the chamfering back of rock faces, elsewhere it may be preferable to retain quarry faces intact to preserve their geological or nature conservation interests.

Field Boundaries

The scale and shape of its patchwork of fields and hedgerows determine the visual structure of this landscape. Future management should ensure that the existing hedgerow network is conserved and strengthened along existing alignments, particularly around Pickering and east of Thornton-le-Dale. Traditional hedgerow management techniques should be promoted, avoiding mechanical over-flailing.

Field hedgerows should be replanted along historic field boundaries where they have been removed due to agricultural intensification and field enlargement. New hedgerows should be designed to strengthen and restore the historic field pattern, using locally occurring native species. Close to settlements, such as Pickering, the restoration of a traditional small scale, linear field pattern should be considered a priority.

Settlements and Buildings

The principal settlement in the *linear scarp farmland* is the town of Pickering. Like other market towns in the District, it is under particular pressure to expand. In order to accommodate housing demand, current planning policy is designed to permit controlled expansion of market towns, including Pickering. However, open areas of the town, including Smiddy Hill, Beacon Hill and the environs of the castle make a significant contribution to the setting of the town particularly when viewed from the south. As a result there should be a general presumption against further growth on more elevated parts of the town and any future development allocations should be directed to controlled infill and expansion in areas south of the A170.

Some of the villages would benefit from specific planting schemes to strengthen their identity, particularly at points of entry along the A170. However, it is important that any such planting be designed strategically in response to a careful, detailed visual analysis that takes full account of variations in character between the settlements.

Although some small scale village infill development may be accommodated, this should be handled sensitively. All efforts should be made to resist suburbanisation by inappropriate construction and detailing.

Infrastructure

There is further scope to improve the setting of the A170, focusing in particular on hedgerow restoration and carefully sited tree planting to enhance views out across the Vale of Pickering. The suburbanising influence of swathes of ornamental bulb planting within the grass verges should be avoided. Management measures should instead concentrate on the diversification of grass and native wildflower species.

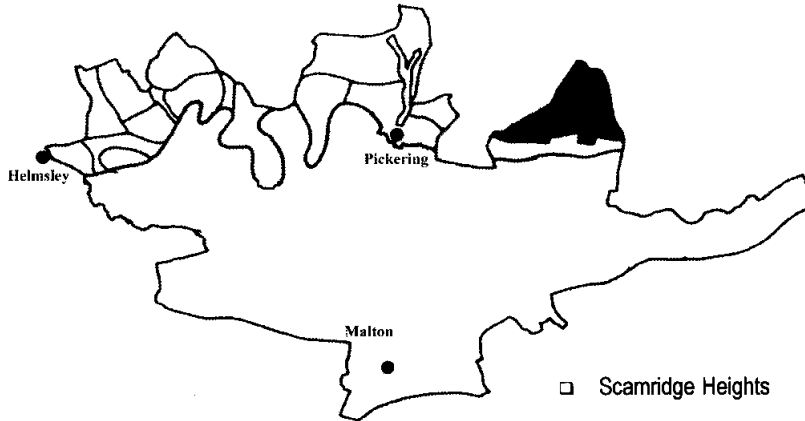
Attractive 'entrance' features could be provided on the approach to villages along the A170. Similar to those on the approach to Thornton-le-Dale. These could use vernacular materials and traditional methods of construction to reinforce and reflect the character of the individual settlements. By giving the appearance of narrowing the road corridor, they may also assist in the reduction of traffic speeds.

The existing character of the rural tracks should be maintained and their associated verges, banks and hedgerows managed to avoid erosion and encourage wildflower interest.

Priorities for Action

- ❑ *Conserve and restore the historic hedgerow network to enhance the structured, rhythmic quality of this landscape, particularly around Pickering and east of Thornton-le-Dale.*
- ❑ *Resist further field enlargement particularly near settlements and within the dry valleys.*
- ❑ *Upgrade the landscape of the A170, focusing on hedgerow restoration, tree planting schemes designed to frame views over the Vale of Pickering.*
- ❑ *Undertake a specialist study of Newbridge quarry with a view to possible restoration.*
- ❑ *Restrict expansion of Pickering north of the A170.*

AREA G High Eastern Farmland



Key Characteristic Features

- Elevated large scale sloping plateau dissected by dry valleys.
- Open rural landscape with generally expansive views.
- Extensive network of drystone walls.
- Isolated farms.
- Woodland generally follow the landform.
- Shallow and elevated valleys of pasture.

Landform and Context

High eastern farmland is found at the eastern end of the Tabular Hills and lies above 100m AOD with a high point at Givendale Head Farm that is 230m AOD. To the north and west the area is bounded by the North York Moors National Park, whilst to the east the area is bounded by the Ryedale District boundary and to the south by *linear scarp farmland* that abuts the Vale of Pickering.

Limestone and calcareous gritstones of the Tabular Hills dip slope underlie the area, which slopes fairly consistently to the Vale of Pickering, increasing in steepness only in the vicinity of the A170 due to the effects of the Helmsley – Filey fault line discussed previously. The *high eastern farmland* has been carved into sweeping forms by relatively broad dry valleys, which have eroded the upland to leave undulating ridges that extend southwards becoming progressively steeper and more indented down the dip slope.

Land Use and Landscape Pattern

This is a rural landscape in which arable farmland predominates, but which also includes some substantial areas of pasture particularly in the upper reaches of the dry valleys. Fields tend to be medium to large and regularly shaped. A defining feature of this landscape is that, in addition to hedgerows, drystone walls often bound the fields although many of these are now falling into disrepair. The field boundaries generally date back to the period of Parliamentary Enclosures. Even around the settlements, there is little evidence of the relic open-field medieval fields found elsewhere in the Fringe of the Moors. There has been a long standing tradition of sheep farming in the areas as evidenced by Malton Cote, which dates back to the medieval period when it was a grange or upland sheep farm, possibly under monastic influence.