

# RIPON CITY PLAN

## Supporting Document: Environment & Heritage

### Appendix H.a: River corridors

The three principal rivers of Ripon are the Ure, the Skell and the Laver. This photo survey aims to give a flavour of each to illustrate its character, with the emphasis on those stretches most affected by possible riparian development.

#### The River Ure

The largest and longest of the three rivers, the Ure passes through Wensleydale before emerging into the flatter landscape of the Ripon area. The topography means that the river is subject to flooding as in the photograph from Ure Bank below although the scale of flooding has been significantly reduced by flood prevention measures carried out in the last five years.



Starting at the northern boundary of the parish at Little Studley the photos show a sequence from there towards North Bridge. A well-used public footpath runs along the western bank coming down from West Tanfield. River margins are mostly thinly-wooded. There is little evidence of tree management but much of flood damage. Some stiles and fences need repair.



The prominence of the engineering structures at Ure Bank Top is evident from the riverside footpath – a warning that careful siting is needed for large features such as these.

North Bridge is a significant feature in the landscape. It provided the principal route into the city from the north until the coming of the bypass carried by the Duchess of Kent Bridge. Recent flood prevention works have seen the historic bridge repaired, arches opened up and its approaches re-landscaped.



The Ure continues south-east towards the confluence with the Skell. The riverside footpath on the city (western) side is well-used by walkers and anglers. The path broadens to allow space for informal recreation and there is access to the river in several places. Occasional seating, not always well-maintained, allows views of the river and beyond.

From this stretch of the river, little is seen of the city because of the planting along the A61 Ripon Bypass, with the Cathedral a notable exception. Flooding is a severe constraint on development in this part of the city.



## The River Skell

Ripon's second river rises near Pateley Bridge, flows through the 18<sup>th</sup> century Studley Royal water gardens and the Valley of the Seven Bridges and enters the city from the south-west at Hell Wath. The land on either side here is of high nature conservation value and protected from development. Public access to the river is provided by the riverside path which begins near its confluence with the Laver and continues more or less uninterrupted through the city.



Downstream from the footbridge at High Cleugh, the river flows past housing on Borrage Lane and Borrage Green Lane to flow under the Harrogate Road at Borrage Bridge. This stretch has suffered from catastrophic flooding but the threat has receded since the completion of flood prevention measures.





The Riverside Village developed in the 1990s on the north bank of the Skell makes full use of the river as an attractive setting and gives an idea of what could be achieved by development further downstream in the Bondgate Green Area.





The greatest opportunity for riparian development which would benefit the city lies on that stretch of the Skell downstream from Bondgate New Bridge past the Water Rat pub and down as far as the Priest Lane ford. The jumble of industrial and commercial buildings has some which are capable of imaginative reuse but for others the desirable solution is demolition and replacement with better.



East of the bypass, which crosses the river by the converted railway viaduct, the river is bordered to the north by the open flood plain and to the south by housing, light industrial units and the sewage treatment works at Fisher Green. Works to strengthen the banks for flood protection are evident here.



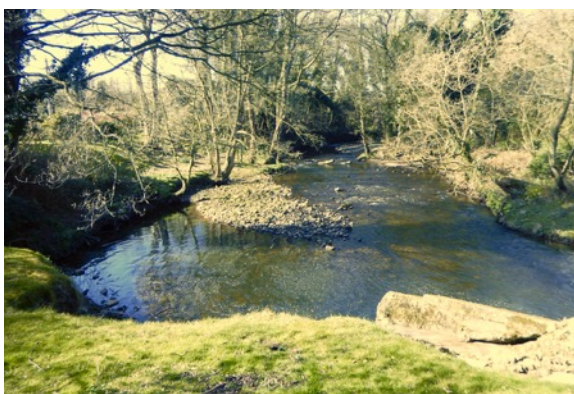
### The River Laver

The Laver enters the city from the north-west at Ellington Banks (a Special Landscape Area) and runs close to the city's western boundary until turning east to join the Skell at High Cleugh.

The first stretch runs in open country past Clothierholme Farm and south of the barracks site before passing into the wooded valley west and south of Bishopton. Although the barracks is on the whole well-screened, the expected regeneration of the military estate provides the opportunity for substantially enhancing the riverside environment as well as making it more publicly-accessible.



Its course is mostly free of development and much is of considerable nature and landscape value. An intrusion into this Arcadian beauty is the palisade fencing defining the riverside footpath near the Galphay Road.



From Bishopton Bridge, the Laver begins its transition to an urban river, where part is semi-rural along Mallorie Park Drive and part borders the informal recreation area of High Cleugh.



Riverside walks are popular with dog-walkers and the mown recreation area provides a pleasant outlook for nearby residents and a space for children's play. The Laver joins the Skell just upstream from the wooden footbridge which links High Cleugh with the southern Skell footpath.

