

Environment Agency

Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme:

Planning Supporting Statement:
Waller Hill Beck Flood Storage
Reservoir and Town Centre Flood
Walls

Issue | 16 December 2013

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

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1 Introduction

1.1 This Document

This Planning Supporting Statement has been prepared on behalf of the Environment Agency in support of a planning application for a Flood Storage Reservoir at Waller Hill Beck, to the East of Skipton and the creation of flood walls in Skipton Town Centre.

The construction of the Flood Storage Reservoir forms part of the wider Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme, which is detailed below. The overall scheme is required because currently properties in Skipton are at risk of flooding to Skipton Town Centre.

In recent years the Environment Agency's efforts on the ground have focussed on minimising the risk through active maintenance of the beck channels and culvert clearance operations.

This Chapter of the report describes the drawings and additional supporting documents which are provided with this application. Chapter 2 describes the site and its immediate surroundings. Chapter 3 outlines the Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme, with a focus on the proposals for a Flood Storage Reservoir at Eller Beck, Chapter 4 outlines the national and local planning policy relevant to the scheme proposals, and provides an assessment of the scheme having regard to the planning framework and any other material considerations. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the report.

1.2 Application Supporting Information

A scheme wide Non-Technical Summary

A non-technical summary of the Environmental Statement has been included as part of the planning application. This has been produced for the full Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme, which consists of three distinct sites. One of which is Eller Beck Flood Storage Reservoir.

A scheme wide Environmental Statement

A Statutory Environmental Report including the following environmental topics:

- **Human Beings and Land use:** consideration of impacts of scheme on human beings, primarily focussing on impacts loss of agriculture land and access to foot paths.
- **Flora and Fauna:** presenting results of Phase 1 Habitat Survey and required protected species surveys and making recommendation for mitigation.
- **Landscape and Visual Amenity:** assessment of impacts of the scheme on landscape and visual amenity.
- **Cultural Heritage, Archaeology and Material Assets:** results of Historic Environment Records search and consultation relating to archaeology.

- **Water Quality, Drainage and Hydrology:** considers water quality and referenced the Water Framework Directive Assessment, which will be included as an Appendix to the ES.
- **Traffic and Transportation:** access routes, frequency and number of trips associated with construction and operation of the proposed works.
- **Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology:** an assessment of any likely contamination from excavation and movement of materials.

Design and Access Statement

A Design and Access Statement has been prepared in line with the guidance set out in Development Management Policy Annex: Information requirements and validation for planning applications (and the accompanying guidance), which has replaced section 3 of Circular 01/2006 (Changes to the Development Control System). The Design and Access Statement sets out how the design has developed to take into consideration both constraints on the site and the pre-application consultation undertaken with statutory consultees and the public.

A scheme wide Flood Risk Assessment

A Flood Risk Statement has been produced in accordance with the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework.

Planning Supporting Statement

A Planning Supporting Statement setting out the policy context of the surrounding area and how the proposal meets the policy requirements of the site.

Statement of Community Involvement

A Statement of Community Involvement is included with this submission which sets out the consultation that has taken place with surrounding residents and other consultees.

Topographical Survey

A topographical Survey has been carried out for the site and a copy is included with this planning submission.

Plans

A range of plans are included for approval as part of this planning application:

Waller Hill Flood Storage Reservoir

- Drawing WH_101: Site Location Plan (1:25,000).
- Drawing WH_103: General Arrangement.
- Drawing WH_206: Reservoir Extents.
- Drawing WH_302: Long Section.
- Drawing WH_303: Inlet Structure Plan.
- Drawing WH_501: Stilling Basin Plan.
- Drawing WH_601: Key Plan.
- Drawing WH_602: Downstream General Arrangement Plan.

- Drawing WH_603: Upstream General Arrangement Plan.
- Drawing WH_604: Further Upstream General Arrangement Plan.
- Drawing WH_901: Existing Site.

Town Centre Works

- Drawing TW_101: Skipton FAS Site Location Plan.
- Drawing TW_102: Site Location Plan (flood defences only).
- Drawing TW_103: Site Location Plan (WHB & Town Works).
- Drawing TW_GM_103: General Arrangement.
- Drawing TW_SM_103: General Arrangement.
- Drawing TW_MS_103: General Arrangement.
- Drawing TW_DP_103: General Arrangement.

2 Site Context

2.1 The Development Site and Surroundings

The proposed development site is located in Skipton, an historic market town and the gateway to the Yorkshire Dales National Park. According to the United Kingdom Census 2011, the town had a population of 14,623 people¹.

The Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme includes development across three sites. This Design and Access Statement relates to the creation of a Flood Storage Reservoir on Waller Hill Beck (also referred to as Skibeden Beck at sections along its length) and works in the town centre.

The proposed scheme on Waller Hill Beck is located to the east of Skipton town centre. The dam is located across Waller Hill Beck, to the north of the A6069, Otley Road and south of the A65. The dam is sited in pastureland, and within the lower section of the valley. Approximately 100m downstream of the dam location, the valley narrows significantly to a ravine. Upstream the valley is typically grazed grassland.

To the north of site is agricultural land, bounded by the A65. To the east and west is further agricultural land, and to the south is the A6069.

The Town Centre Flood Walls are located at four locations in the Town Centre, including flood walls next to Eller Beck at the Morrisons Open Channel, Spindle Mill, and on Waller Hill Beck at Ginnel Mews. Defence works will also be constructed at Devonshire Place located on Waller Hill Beck.

2.2 The Rationale for the Scheme

The town of Skipton has experienced a significant degree of flooding, with major events occurring in 1908, 1979, 1982, 2000, 2004 and 2007. Flow velocities in the watercourses are high. Eller Beck flows through woodland just upstream of the town with high potential for entrapment of woody debris. As a result of these factors, flooding with a rapid onset is compounded by scour and culvert blockage problems.

The Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme has therefore been developed to tackle the flooding issues in Skipton. The scheme will result in a Skipton having 1 in 100 year flood protection. The alternatives to this scheme are included in the Environmental Statement that accompanies this planning application.

¹ Census 2011

3 Development Proposals

3.1 The Full Skipton Flood Risk Assessment Scheme

The Waller Hill Flood Storage Reservoir and Town Centre works are two elements of a wider Skipton Flood Alleviation scheme. The Skipton Flood Alleviation scheme consists of three separate elements:

- Construction of a Flood Storage Reservoir on Eller Beck upstream of the A65;
- Construction of a Flood Storage Reservoir on Waller Hill Beck to the east of Skipton; and
- Installation of flood walls at various locations within Skipton Town Centre, including Ginnel Mews and Devonshire Place on Waller Hill Beck and a site at Morrisons supermarket and Spindle Mills on Eller Beck.

A single Environmental Statement and Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared for all three elements of the scheme, as the three elements of the scheme are intrinsically linked and the required level of flood protection offered by the scheme is based on the construct of all three components. However the three elements of the scheme fall into different Local Planning Authorities, this means separate planning applications are required. The applications are set out below:

- An identical joint application will be submitted for the Eller Beck Flood Storage Reservoir to Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and North Yorkshire County Council
- A planning application for the Flood Storage Reservoir at Waller Hill Beck and for the flood walls in the town centre will be submitted to Craven District Council (*this planning application*).
- A Mineral Planning Application to North Yorkshire County Council, as the mineral authority to construct a borrow pit adjacent to the Waller Hill Beck dam. The borrow pit will provide earth and clay for construction of the flood storage areas at Waller Hill and Eller Beck.

3.2 Waller Hill Beck Flood Storage Reservoir

3.2.1 General Description

This Planning Supporting Statement is in support of the planning application for a flood storage reservoir at Waller Hill Beck and Flood Walls in four locations in Skipton Town Centre.

The Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme requires the construction of a flood storage reservoir on Waller Hill Beck. Flood flows above 1.7m³/s shall be retained by a flow control structure, and flood waters shall be stored behind an dam. Under normal conditions the control structure shall not restrict the flow of Waller Hill Beck. The dam shall contribute to the 1 in 100 year standard of protection in Skipton, in conjunction with the other components of the scheme.

In summary, the flood storage reservoir at Waller Hill Beck shall comprise the following elements:

- The earth dam dam with grassed 1v:4h slope & upstream slope 1v:4h.
- Reinforced grass spillway channel on the downstream face, which terminates in a reinforced concrete stilling basin and tumblebay.
- Reinforced concrete inlet structure, which houses steel trash screens and steel orifice plate.
- Reinforced concrete culvert which passes through the dam and conveys the flow of Waller Hill Beck.
- New construction access from the A65 and permanent maintenance access from the A6069 Otley Road .
- Creation of BAP habitat, tree planting and landscaping.

Prior to the commencement of construction, site clearance works shall be required.

The description as included on the planning application form is as follows:

'Construction of a flood storage reservoir on Waller Hull Beck including a dam with a crest height of 9.5 metres (149.5mAOD), a reinforced grass spillway, a stilling basin, a control structure, a new road junction and access road from the A6069, improvements to an existing road access off the A65 to create a temporary access to the site and landscaping and habitat creation at land between the A65 and A6069, Skipton and the construction of flood walls with a maximum height of 107.5mAOD at Ginnel Mews, 106.58mAOD at Devonshire Place, 104.64mAOD at Spindle Mill and 101.67mAOD at Morrisons Open Channel in Skipton Town Centre'.

3.2.2 Dam and spillway

The dam stretches across the width of the valley, approximately 100m upstream of the ravine. Both the left and right abutments tie in to an area of land currently used as grazing by the landowner. At the bottom of the valley the dam shall be approximately 9.5m high, with the spillway crest set at the 1 in 100 year flood water level. Key information of the dam is provided in the table below:

Crest (top) level (mAOD)	Spillway at 149.50 (top of weir)
Height of dam	149.6m AOD including an allowance for post-construction settlement) which equates to approximately 9.5 metres above existing ground level.
	Abutments at 151.30
Crest width (m) (and material)	Spillway at 11.0 (reinforced grass)
	Abutments at 4.0 (grass)
Approximate length of dam (m)	105
Upstream slope (and material)	1v:4h (grass)
Downstream slope (and material)	1v:4h (reinforced grass on spillway, grass on abutments)

Approximate volume of material (m ³)	20,000
Water storage at spillway level (m ³)	162,325

The spillway shall comprise a reinforced grass open channel cut in to the downstream face. The reinforcement shall be open cell concrete blocks, hidden from view by topsoil and grass. The spillway channel shall terminate in a stilling basin.

3.2.3 Stilling basin

The stilling basin is formed as a reinforced concrete pool, which has raised concrete blocks to help dissipate the energy from the water. A low flow channel will be incorporated to take the normal river flows.

3.2.4 Control structure

The structure that controls the flows downstream shall comprise an inlet structure and culvert.

The inlet structure shall comprise a reinforced concrete headwall with reinforced concrete wing walls. Galvanised steel trash screens and working platforms shall be installed within the inlet structure to prevent catchment debris from blocking the culvert. Vehicular access shall be provided from the A6069 to the inlet structure.

The culvert shall be reinforced concrete and of size 1.2m by 2.0m high. The cross sectional dimensions of the orifice plate shall be 0.4m wide by 0.4m high. The culvert shall be 66m in length. The invert of the culvert shall contain 0.3m high baffles which shall help retain geomorphological materials and create a “natural” bed. Therefore the internal height of the culvert shall be 1.7m (i.e. the height from the top of the baffles on the base of the channel to the roof of the culvert). The culvert shall convey the flows of Waller Hill Beck and discharge in to the stilling basin. From there the beck flows back into the existing natural channel.

3.2.5 Channel diversion

Waller Hill Beck control structure will be constructed on line. However channel diversions are proposed as part of habitat creation.

3.2.6 Road junction and Access

A temporary site access will be created using an existing access off the A65. This junction will be improved to allow construction access. A new site access shall be provided on the A6069 to allow Environment Agency maintenance vehicles access the dam. The road junction shall be located downstream of the left abutment. Vehicular access shall be provided to the inlet structure. All access routes shall be surfaced to be in keeping with the local landscape.

3.2.7 Landscaping

The dam and reinforced grass spillway will be finished as grassed surfaces in keeping with the existing area. The scheme also includes tree planting and the creation of BAP habitat.

As part of the proposed works at Waller Hill Beck, the creation of BAP habitat and improvement of the existing watercourse is proposed. At the downstream end of the proposed dam, 250m of river will be restored to create a meandering plan form increasing the channel length and reducing the gradient of the channel. The new channel will have varying cross-section profiles through its length and in-channel features to create flow diversity and ultimately improve the biodiversity. Within this downstream area backwater reed habitat/pond areas will also be created with side channels off the main channel, totalling 0.2ha of BAP habitat.

Upstream of the proposed dam, approximately 500m of watercourse will be meandered to improve flow diversity and arrangement to encourage overspill onto adjacent land for the creation of 1.8ha of BAP habitat in the form of floodplain grazing marsh, reed beds and wet woodland. These works will require excavation of existing ground to reach desired levels for the creation of the required habitat types.

3.3 Town Centre Works

The proposed works in the town centre will be four distinct locations. They are required to bring the full Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme to a standard of protection to provide 1:100 year protection. They are the low spots in the existing river walls or areas of flooding weakness in the town centre.

3.3.1 Morrisons Open Channel, Eller Beck

Reinforced flood defence walls are required on both left and right banks of Eller Beck at Morrisons open culvert

Left Bank: The flood defence wall will be constructed along the existing wall line at the DIY store car park. The wall will tie in from the Broughton Road bridge parapet wall to the Morrisons culvert headwall downstream over an approximate length of 46m. A safety hand rail will be required to be installed on top of the raised flood wall for health and safety purpose. The existing top of wall level varies from 101.14mAD to 101.40mAD. Top of flood wall defence level will be 101.67mAD which requires a maximum wall height of approximately 0.60m. The wall face on the DIY car park side of Eller Beck will be finished with a formwork liner while the beck side face is to be clad with stone.

Right Bank: A reinforced concrete flood wall will be constructed along the existing fence line. The wall will tie from the Broughton Road bridge parapet wall to the Morrisons culvert headwall downstream over an approximate length of 29m. Pointed coping will be placed on top of the wall for health and safety purposes. The minimum ground level is approximately 100.37mAD but varies in level. Top of flood wall defence level will be 101.67mAD which requires a maximum wall height of 1.3m. The wall face at the Morrisons/Broughton Road side will be clad with stone while the Beck side wall will be finished with a formwork liner.

3.3.2 Spindle Mill , Eller Beck

It is required to raise the existing level of low railing wall immediately upstream of Coach Street culvert on the right bank over a length of approximately 15m. The pedestrian access gate immediately downstream of the low railing wall at the back of Spindle Mills will also be required to be raised.

The existing top of wall levels varies from 104.57mAD to 105.31mAD, while ground level is at 104.14mAD (varies). It will be required to raise the wall level to 104.6mAD. The wall height will be required to be raised to 0.46m above ground level. The existing access gate ground level is 104.43mAD (varies) and will be raised to a height of 104.64mAD, approximately 0.21m above ground.

It is proposed to use stone to raise the level of wall and access step.

3.3.3 Ginnel Mews, Waller Hill Beck

A reinforced concrete flood wall is required upstream of the playground pedestrian bridge on the right bank only. The existing stone wall will be replaced with a reinforced concrete flood wall to flood defence level over a length of approximately 11.5m. The existing level of the wall is 107.290mAD and is 0.90m above ground level. The top of defence flood level will be at TW 107.5mAD and a wall height of 1.11mAD above ground level.

The low section of wall will also be raised using a reinforced concrete wall to flood defence level over a length of approximately 14m. The top of wall level varies from TW 106.120mAD to TW 106.770mAD. The top of the defence flood level will be at TW 107.210mAD and a height of 1.09m above ground levels.

The pedestrian bridge will also be raised, with steps and a ramp (1:12 gradient) providing access from Ginnel Mews to Devonshire Street and Millennium Walk. The existing pedestrian bridge soffit level is at 106.479mAD and will be raised by 0.52m to a new soffit level of 107mAD.

Downstream of the pedestrian bridge, the existing playground boundary wall on the right bank will be replaced by a reinforced concrete wall to flood defence level and will follow the existing line of the wall over a length of approximately 60m. The existing playground boundary wall level varies from TW 107.110mAD to TW 107.460mAD with wall heights of 0.60m to 1.01m above ground levels.

Maximum flood defence level will be TW 106.790mAD and the wall height of 0.5m above ground.

Both reinforced concrete flood walls will re-use existing stone to clad both sides. Pointed coping stones and safety hand rails are to be placed on top of the wall for health and safety purposes. Pointed coping stones are to be placed on top of the wall for health and safety purposes.

3.3.4 Devonshire Place, Waller Hill Beck

A reinforced concrete flood defence wall on the right bank is required from the culvert headwall to tie into the boundary wall located in front of the government buildings. The flood wall is to be constructed to a level of 106.58mAD. The defence wall is to be a maximum height of 1.84m above existing ground levels.

Strengthening works of the culvert headwall and the boundary wall at the government buildings are required to be undertaken. Further upstream, strengthening works to the bowling club boundary wall may also be required.

The defence wall is to be stone clad. The existing bed level is to be retained with natural bed material placed over the wall base. Ground levels at the pedestrian access from Devonshire Place to Ginnel Mews may need to be raised through landscaping. Upstream of the government buildings, raising of the timber arch pedestrian bridge may be required.

4 Planning Policy Context

4.1 The Development Plan

In accordance with section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Development Plan in respect to the proposed Waller Hill Beck Flood Storage Reservoir and Town Centre Flood Walls comprises the Saved Policies of the Craven District Council Local Plan (July 1999).

Section 38 of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act identifies that when making a decision on a planning application, decisions:

'shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'.

A large variety of other documents can be material considerations in the determination of planning applications. This includes non-statutory planning documents (e.g. Supplementary Planning Documents), national policy documents (e.g. Planning Policy Statements), draft documents, other plans and strategies and recent planning applications.

4.2 National Planning Policy Framework

Core Planning Principles

The NPPF set out the Government's planning policies for England in one single document. The NPPF includes 12 core planning principles (paragraph 17); one of these is relevant to the proposed development. This core planning principle is to:

'promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production)'

The proposed works at Waller Hill Beck use agricultural land to perform the function of a flood alleviation scheme for Skipton. This approach is supported by the above core planning principle.

Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Sections 10 of NPPF outline the Government's policy on meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change and include the policy below :

'Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Local Plans should be supported by Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and develop policies to manage flood risk from all sources, taking account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management bodies, such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards. Local Plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development to avoid

where possible flood risk to people and property and manage any residual risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change, by (paragraph 100):

- applying the Sequential Test;
- if necessary, applying the Exception Test;
- safeguarding land from development that is required for current and future flood management;
- using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding; and
- where climate change is expected to increase flood risk so that some existing development may not be sustainable in the long-term, seeking opportunities to facilitate the relocation of development, including housing, to more sustainable locations’.

The full Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme, of which Waller Hill Beck Flood Storage Reservoir and Town Centre works form a component of, seeks to improve the flood defence in the town of Skipton to a 1 in 100 flood protection level. Currently there are 378 residential and 165 non-residential properties at risk of flooding during 1 in 100 annual flood event.

A Flood Risk Assessment has been produced for the full Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme. The Flood Risk Assessment concludes that the development proposals are acceptable from a flood risk perspective, as the scheme will reduce the likelihood of flooding.

Implementation of the Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme will lessen the threat of flooding to existing development within Skipton, and de-risk future development land from a 1 in 100 annual flood event.

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Section 12 of the NPPF outline the Government’s policy on conserving and enhancing the historic environment and includes the below policy:

‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation (paragraph 128)’.

Chapter 9 in the Environmental Statement set out the potential significance of the impact of the proposed scheme on heritage assets. To support a robust analysis of the impact of proposed scheme on heritage assets and the overall character of the townscape, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken.

The Environmental Statement confirms that the Waller Hill Beck Flood Storage site lies on agricultural land. There are no known archaeological sites or designated heritage assets within the footprint of the proposed construction site.

There a number of heritage assets in close proximity to the proposed works at Waller Hill, but these are low in value.

The whole of Skipton Town Centre is in a Conservation Area. The ES confirms the possibility of encountering unknown sub-surface remains at all the sites in the town centre is moderate to high. The recovery of material of Mesolithic date onwards from excavations in the town centre suggests that the remains could be of any date although it is most likely that they would be of medieval or post-medieval date. In the case of the Morrison's supermarket site there is a possibility of encountering remains of the reservoirs, tannery and dyeworks noted on historic mapping. At the Spindle Mill site it is possible that remains of the medieval manorial fulling mill could be encountered. Surviving remains of this nature would however have low to medium heritage value.

It is therefore possible to conclude through evidence provided in the Environmental Statement that the impact on all heritage assets is considered to result in 'less than substantial harm' to the heritage asset.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

Sections 4 of NPPF outline the Government's policy on promoting sustainable transport. Of particular relevance to the proposed scheme is Paragraph 32, which states:

'All developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment. Plans and decisions should take account of whether (paragraph 32):

- *the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;*
- *safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and*
- *improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where their residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.'*

The development is not considered to generate significant amounts of traffic movements during construction or operation. The estimated movements during construction are set out in Chapter 10 of the Environment Statement that accompanies this planning application. The chapter concludes that overall the construction trips associated with the proposed development can be safely and satisfactorily accommodated by the existing transport network.

The main source of traffic generation for the proposed development would be construction traffic during construction of the reservoir. Estimates of the traffic volumes that would be generated during construction stage have been made based upon the forecast volumes of material that would need to be brought to and from the site.

Construction access would be taken directly from the A65. It is proposed to use an existing access to the Farmhouse to the west Low Skibeden Farmhouse farm, which would be widened to create an appropriate construction access.

Once the construction works on site have been completed the only traffic generated by the proposed development would be for occasional maintenance access for the Environment Agency staff. A permanent maintenance access is proposed from the A6069 Otley Road.

A Public Right of Way exists 0.5km east of the site. The Public Right of Way terminates at the A6069 where the track to Close House forms a junction

4.3 Existing Local Planning Policy

4.3.1 Saved Policies from the Craven Local Plan, 1999

The proposed development at Waller Hill and within Skipton Town Centre falls within the jurisdiction of Craven District Council. Saved policies from the Council's 1999 Local Plan provide the main planning framework for the District.

Each element of the development proposal must have regard to different Craven Local Plan (1999) policy designations, which are set out as follows:

- The proposed development at Waller Hill falls within the Special Landscape Area in the Open Countryside, and is therefore affected by saved policies ENV1 and ENV2.
- The flood defence development at the Morrison's Supermarket Site is not in the Conservation Area, and is not affected by any further policy designations.
- Devonshire Place, Spindle Mill Site and Ginnel Mews Site are within the Skipton Town Conservation Area, and therefore will need to have regard to
- The proposed development at the Ginnel Mews Site is in an area of Important Open Space.

The relevant policy on flood protection was not saved in 1999 and therefore does not form part of the current Development Plan for Craven.

Policy ENV1 Development in the open countryside

Land beyond the existing built-up areas of the settlements, as defined by the Development Limits, will be treated as open countryside. Policy ENV1 states:

'The Council will protect the character and quality of the open countryside from being spoilt by sporadic development by defining development limits. Small scale development appropriate for the enjoyment of the scenic qualities of the countryside and other appropriate small scale development having a rural character will only be permitted in the open countryside where it:

1. Clearly benefits the rural economy;
2. Helps to maintain or enhance landscape character;
3. Is essential for the efficient operation of agriculture or forestry; or
4. Is essential to the needs of the rural community.

Large scale development in the open countryside will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there is an overriding need for the proposal due to the requirements of the utility services, transport, minerals supply or national security.'

The proposed development at Waller Hill is required to provide flood protection to the town of Skipton. It is therefore an essential infrastructure scheme, which will secure the future of 378 residential and 165 commercial properties currently at risk of flooding during a 1 in 100 year event.

The creation of a flood alleviation scheme in open countryside meets the requirements of Policy ENV 1, as the location of the dam is based on engineering requirements and the need to store water from the Waller Hill Beck outside of Skipton Town Centre.

ENV2 Requirements for development in open countryside

This policy seeks to maintain the character and appearance of the District countryside, and states:

'Development acceptable in principle under policy ENV1 will only be permitted where:

- 1. It is compatible with the character of the surrounding area, does not have an unacceptable impact on the landscape and safeguards landscape features, including stone walls and hedgerows, worthy of protection;*
- 2. The design of buildings and structures and the materials proposed relate to the setting, taking account of the immediate impact and public views of the development;*
- 3. Rural access roads can accommodate the traffic likely to be generated by the proposal; and*
- 4. Services and infrastructure can be provided without causing a serious harmful change to the rural character and appearance of the locality.'*

This section only relates to the Waller Hill Beck elements of the scheme, as they are in open countryside.

Compatibility with character of surrounding area

Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement includes a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the Waller Hill Beck Flood Storage Reservoir and town centre works.

The LVIA notes that Waller Hill Beck Flood Storage Reservoir located on an agricultural field immediately north and parallel to the A6069 and south of the A65. The river known as Skibeden Beck provides an enclosed space with step topography to both sides of its catchment area. The main receptors are the view from the A6069 Otley Road (part of road to the east of the site and PROW on Skipton Moor Common Land. A site visit confirmed no views from Park Hill Battery Schedule Ancient Monument (SAM) or any of the sections of the PROW that runs from Tarn Moor, across Skipton Golf Course, through into Skipton Castle and Conservation Area. The LVIA states that given the medium sensitivity of the overall landscape receptor and after construction when the mitigation

planting has been established the magnitude of change will be reduced to negligible adverse resulting in a landscape effect which is not significant.

The material and design of the dam has considered surrounding character as much as possible within the parameters of the engineering requirements of the scheme, as detailed below. The aim of these measures is to reduce the visual impact of the scheme through use of appropriate materials and landscaping. The valley containing the Waller Hill Beck is relatively steep, and this offers the opportunity to create a dam, which should result in limited visual impact. Following completion of the works, the land can continue to be used for agriculture.

Materials and Design

The scale of the proposed dam and the use of materials required to create the Flood Storage Reservoir are design features which are dictated by engineering requirements. The Flood Storage Reservoir must have the capacity to retain the required level of flood defence and it must be constructed of materials which will endure the lifetime of the scheme.

The proposed development includes a reinforced grass concrete as part of the western side of the dam. The rest of the dam is constructed from clay and then covered in grass. There scheme will impact on an existing dry stone wall. This will be rebuilt on the same alignment once the works are complete. A Landscape Plan has been provided with the planning application. This sets out extensive tree planting, habitat creation and design features to further mitigate the visual impact of the scheme. Further details of the landscaping approach can be found in the Design and Access Statement and Landscape Plan.

Access Roads and Services

Construction access would be taken directly from the A65. It is proposed to use an existing access to the Farmhouse to the west Low Skibeden Farmhouse farm, which would be widened to create an appropriate construction access.

Once the construction works on site have been completed the only traffic generated by the proposed development would be for occasional maintenance access for the Environment Agency staff. A permanent maintenance access is proposed from the A6069 Otley Road.

Policy ENV10 Protection of Trees and Woodlands

Craven District Council encourages development proposals, particularly those of a large scale, to retain existing mature trees on the site. Where this is not possible, the Council will require the developer to plant suitable replacements.

'In considering proposals for development, the Council will seek to safeguard the following from harm or unjustifiable loss:

- 1. A tree or hedgerow protected by a preservation order; or*
- 2. A tree within a Conservation Area; or*
- 3. An area of recognised Ancient Woodland;*
- 4. Any trees or tree belts which do or will, when mature, contribute significantly to any of the following:*

- a) *The landscape diversity*
- b) *The setting of nearby existing or proposed buildings*
- c) *A wildlife habitat*
- d) *Visual amenity.*

Where the Council approves the loss of a tree or hedgerow with reference to the criteria at policy ENV 9, it will require suitable replacement planting either within the same site or on land within the applicant's control.'

The proposed Waller Hill Beck scheme results in the loss of 9 trees. The trees that need to be removed are not subject to Tree Preservation Orders and are not ancient woodland. Two of the trees that need to be removed as part of the works have low Bat Roost Potential. To mitigate their loss replacement planting of trees and installation of 2 bat boxes will provide compensatory/additional areas of bat foraging habitat. The trees are not providing a setting for existing or proposed buildings, visual amenity or landscape diversity. A landscape plan has been produced for the Waller Hill site, which includes areas where it is proposed to replant trees.

The town centre result in the following tree removal:

5 – 10 trees being removed at Spindle Mill,

1 tree at Devonshire Place;

5 trees at Ginnel Mews.

There is no tree removal required as part of the permanent works at the Morrison's supermarket site. There may be a requirement for some tree removal related to construction access. This is being investigated further through detailed design.

4.3.2 Emerging Local Planning Policy

Given the Craven Local Plan was adopted some time ago, it is prudent to consider the emerging direction of the new Local Plan policies.

Craven have recently undertaken a period of community engagement on high level themes of their Local Plan. This consultation considered the key strategic issues of housing numbers and employment hectares, however flood risk and landscape character were not considered at this early stage of the Local Plan preparation.

5 Summary and Conclusion

The scheme has been developed to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the development plan and wider engineering requirements and legalisation set out in the Reservoirs Act.

The delivery of the Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme will improve the flood defences for the population of Skipton, and is in support of national planning policy, which seeks to focus development away from flood risk areas, but also deliver improved flood defences. The National Planning Policy Framework, the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework promotes the use of flood storage to reduce flood risk. The scheme is an essential infrastructure project and seeks to protect the Town of Skipton as one of the elements of the wider Skipton Flood Alleviation scheme.

Design

The proposed development supports Saved Policies ENV2 Requirements for development in open countryside (Craven District Council) delivering a scheme that considers the visual impact and uses high quality materials. Whilst the scale of the dam is dictated by engineering requirements; the use of a reinforced grass spillway results in a dam, which is broadly covered by grass. The landscaping approach seeks to minimise the impact of the scheme.

A Landscape Plan has been provided with the planning application. This sets out extensive tree planting, habitat creation and design features to mitigate the visual impact of the scheme.

Other Environmental Considerations

The scheme does affect ecology and protected species, however extensive mitigation and habitat creation, including BAP habitat creation is proposed to mitigate the impact. This is set out in detail in chapters 6 and 8 of the Environmental Statement, but in summary includes creation of BAP habitat and improvement of the existing watercourse. At the downstream end of the proposed dam, 250m of river will be restored to create a meandering platform increasing the channel length and reducing the gradient of the channel. The new channel will have varying cross-section profiles through its length and in-channel features to create flow diversity and ultimately improve the biodiversity. Within this downstream area backwater reed habitat/pond areas will also be created with side channels off the main channel, totalling 0.2ha of BAP habitat. Upstream of the proposed dam, approximately 500m of watercourse will be meandered to improve flow diversity and arrangement to encourage overspill onto adjacent land for the creation of 1.8ha of BAP habitat in the form of floodplain grazing marsh, reed beds and wet woodland. These works will require excavation of existing ground to reach desired levels for the creation of the required habitat types.

There are no heritage assets or records that would indicate archaeological remains on the Waller Hill Beck site and no high value remains at the town centre works.

The proposed access arrangements have been agreed with the North Yorkshire County Council Highway Department.