

Connecting Landscape and Economy in Yorkshire

– the case for doing business with Yorkshire’s landscapes

- Yorkshire’s landscapes have a material impact on the success of Yorkshire's economy. And yet few businesses in the region have practical options for influencing and optimising that relationship.
- This initiative is about forging those links; creating business value from healthy landscapes, and at the same time driving investment in healthy landscapes by mobilising their value to business.
- It’s based on an approach called ‘Landscape Enterprise Networks’ (LENs). Developed by 3Keel in partnership with Nestle, LENs builds a system of ‘collaborative value chains’, where groups of businesses work together to invest in landscape outcomes in which they have a common interest.

1. Understanding the connections between landscape and business

Recent analysis commissioned by the LEP and LNP in partnership with Nestle and the Woodland Trust has shown that key landscape functions such as flood mitigation, production of raw materials, and the Yorkshire landscape’s role in attracting talent and tourists are directly connected to the operational and strategic needs of businesses across the Yorkshire economy.

Many of these dependencies can be seen through the lens of risk – for example, risk to real estate, operations and logistics from flooding. It can also relate to the carrying capacity of landscapes – for businesses and for their workforces – in terms of the availability of potable water and, often more to the point, in terms of the capacity for the landscape to manage effluent. It can also be about opportunity. The unique landscapes of Yorkshire are a tool for businesses to attract and retain the talent they need to thrive, and they underpin the large and growing tourist industry.

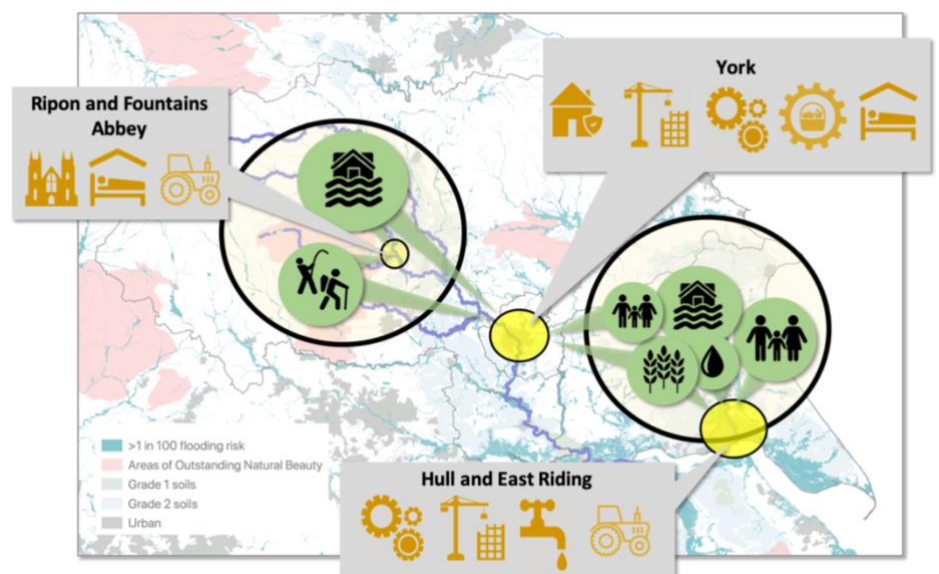
A lot of work and expertise has been put into codifying and evaluating the importance of these ‘ecosystem services’ to society. We don’t attempt to re-do this here. Our focus has been on ‘testing the water’ with selected groups of businesses; to see where there are practical opportunities to build revenue generating transactions between businesses that are impacted by landscapes and businesses that can manage those landscapes.

Our opportunity analysis has focused on two target areas:

(1) Hull and East Riding, where productive agricultural landscapes may also be linked to demand for water catchment management, and

(2) Ripon and Fountains Abbey, where there may be opportunities to build business links between hospitality and heritage interests and traditional estate landscapes.

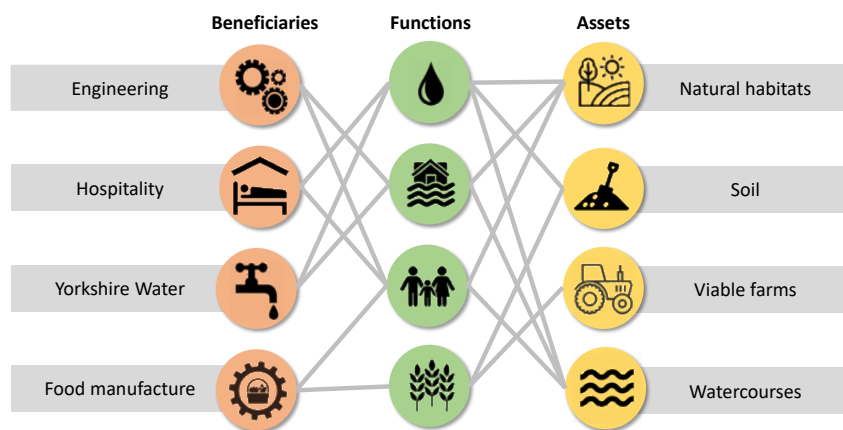
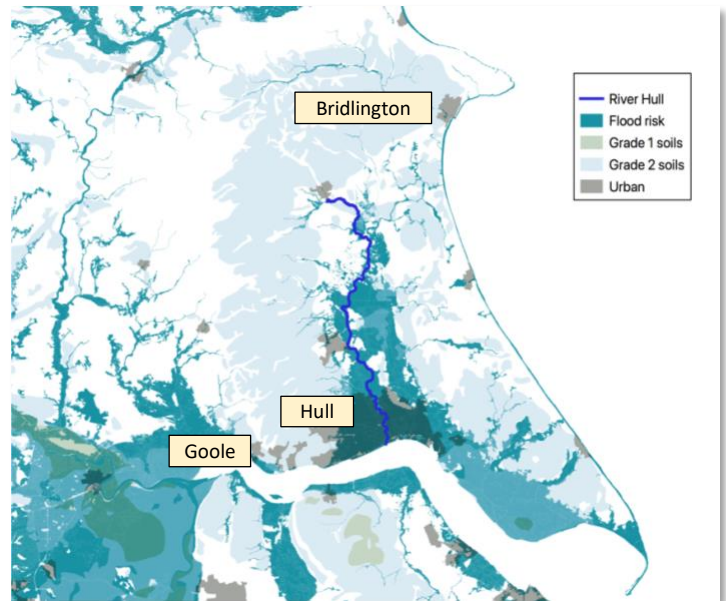
In both instances there are potential commercial relationships to businesses in the wider region, with a particular nexus in York.



2. Focus on Hull and East Riding

While the East Riding is known for its fertile and productive agricultural soils, the landscapes here also provide vital support functions to other equally significant sectors of the economy.

- **Engineering and Manufacture** accounts for more than one fifth of GVA, and businesses like Siemens in Hull and Goole require flood protection and effluent capacity for their real estate assets, and for protection from disruption to logistics. And they require attractive places to live in order to attract and retain skilled staff.
- **Recreation** is worth £800million / year to the East Riding economy. Visitors to the 'Opportunity Coast' require clean bathing water, and day trippers from York to the Wolds look for attractive, accessible landscapes that are rich in wildlife.
- **Food production** – from field through to manufacture – is highly significant, with rich soils supporting combinable crops, horticulture and pig production. All of these provide raw material for regional manufacturers, such as biscuit flour for KitKat production at Nestlé's facility in York.
- All sectors of the economy are dependent ultimately on clean **water**, and Yorkshire Water's operation in East Riding is part of a wider business that provides 2 million people with clean water. In the East Riding Yorkshire Water is responsible for water supply and effluent management.



Most of these practical business requirements from the landscape can be keyed back to a few, common landscape assets in which there is a shared interest: healthy soils and watercourses, flourishing farms, and robust networks of natural habits.

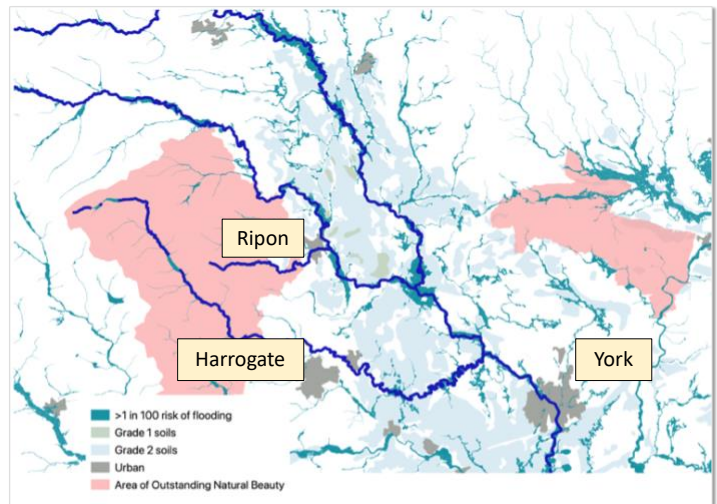
What the opportunity could look like here...

- The Sustainable Landscapes Project has a well-established programme operating on farms across East Riding. It works with major food manufacturers and Yorkshire Water to provide verifiable sustainable sourcing options for raw material, based on soil stewardship and water catchment protection.
- At the same time, there is an identified demand for flood risk management from major businesses along the Humber Estuary– something influenced by East Riding catchments. These businesses are looking for collective solutions that might reduce insurance costs and disruption to their operations.
- Properly coordinated, this represents a potential additional customer base for the Sustainable Landscapes Project and its farmers, to augment and extend their existing work.

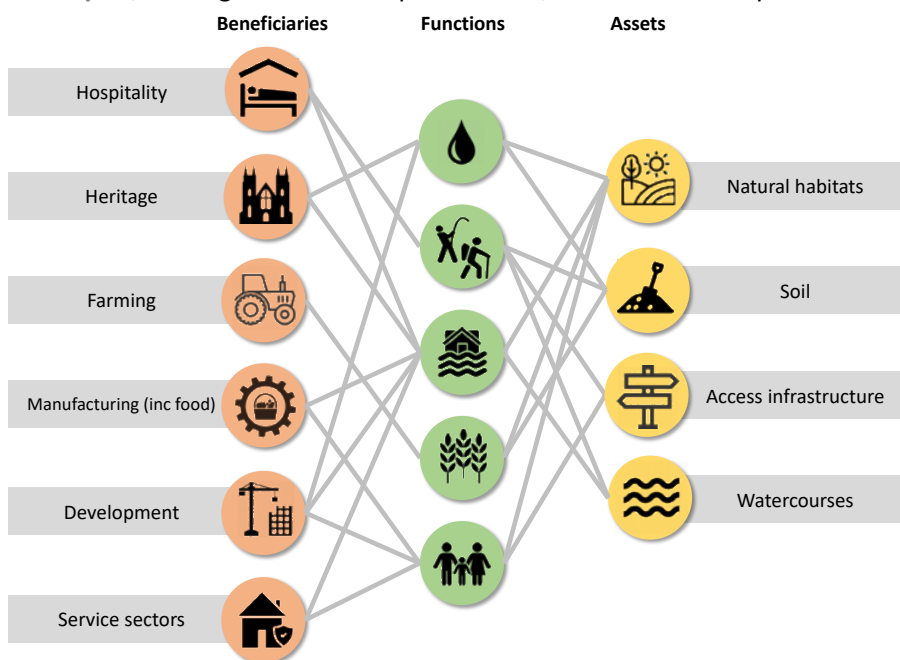
3. Focus on Ripon and Fountains Abbey

The area around Ripon and Fountains Abbey, linked by the river Skell, is a quintessential Yorkshire landscape – characterised by mixed farming, sporting estates and historic monastic ruins. It's deeply rural in character, and while farming makes up only 3% of GVA, the quality and performance of the landscape has a core part to play in the success of a wide range of sectors, from local SMEs to larger businesses downstream in York.

➤ **Tourism**, at 23% of GVA, is the biggest sector in the local economy; comprising small family enterprises, up to large hospitality and field sports venues and the National Trust's World Heritage Site at Fountains Abbey. The attractiveness of the landscape is an obvious asset for all of these. But so too is the health and stability of soils, which has knock-on sedimentation impacts on angling, and notably on the Studley Royal water gardens at Fountains Abbey – an important 'anchor' for local tourist business.



➤ Landscape quality and performance is similarly valuable for the range of **service sector SME businesses in Ripon**, making it a desirable place to live, which in turn helps them to attract and retain talent.



➤ The same 'liveability' function is relevant to **employers further down the river catchment**, too, such as manufacturers, the University, tech and service sector employers in York. While people may not move to or stay in York specifically to be close to the Skell and Fountains Abbey, the landscape contributes to a wider regional appeal. In a similar cumulative way, the performance of the Skell has a part to play in the wider role upper catchment tributaries to the Ouse have in flood risk mitigation through York.

What the opportunity could look like here...

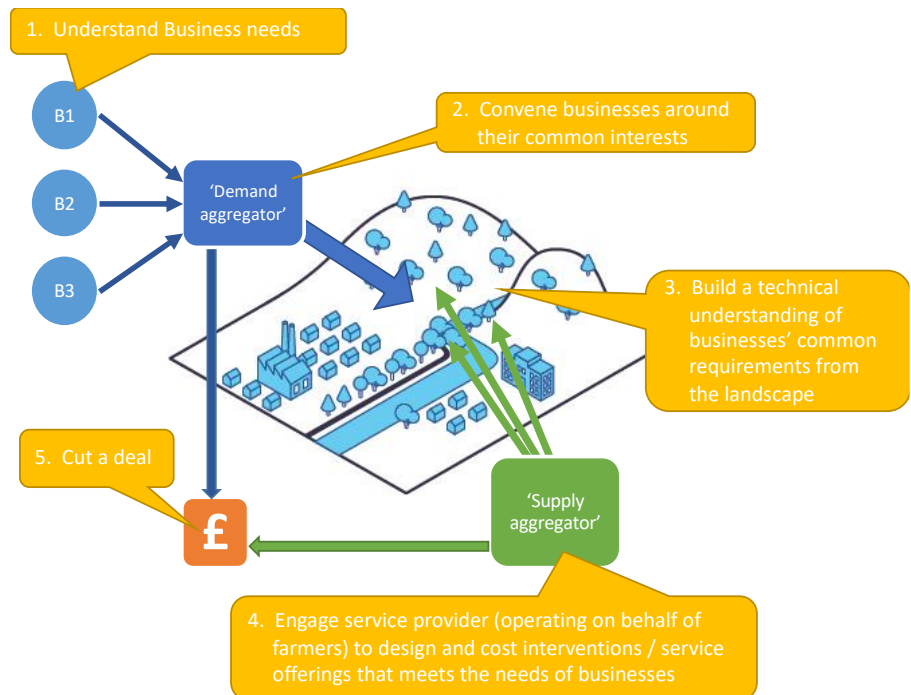
- The National Trust & the Nidderdale AONB are working together on the HLF-funded Skell Valley Project, with the remit to invest in and protect the natural and heritage assets around the River Skell.
- Those investments are important for the landscape, and for the World Heritage site. But they are also relevant to business. There are currently two emerging concepts for 'LENs builds' on this work:
 1. The building of a local 'hospitality consortium' of businesses, perhaps anchored one of the major local players like Grantley Hall, which would collaborate to define and procure business-relevant outcomes from the Skell Valley Project.
 2. Linking that local consortium with partners in the York business community, which might share an interest in recreation and quality of life outcomes, and/or in the potential to develop a wider model that might be relevant to catchment and flood risk outcomes.

4. Next steps – building the opportunity

I Creating the first ‘anchor’ value chains

The ultimate aim of any LENS project like this is to create multiple value chains, driving and investing in multifunctional landscapes, and delivering value for a wide range of business and civil society beneficiaries. In practice however, this sort of ‘complex system’ must be grown incrementally. And the place to start is with a first value chain. For each of the two opportunity areas in Yorkshire, therefore, this is the first task, and it breaks down into the five stages summarised in the diagram, **right**.

Potential focal points for each of these have been set out in the previous pages. However, the precise nature of what is traded should emerge firstly through engagement with ‘demand-side’ beneficiary businesses, and then subsequently through engagement and negotiation the supply-side (farmers, and those working on their behalf).



II Formalising and growing each partnership outwards

Once the initial collaboration and ‘anchor investment’ is put together, then a wider network of beneficiaries and supply side players can be built up around an increasingly wide range of landscape functions and markets. These emerging programmes would be able to draw on support and learnings from other LENS programmes operating in the UK, to develop appropriate governance, and to help steer the development process and put in place adequate quality/delivery assurance.

III Other opportunities in the region

The two opportunities identified here are promising places to start, but they are not expected to be by any means the only, or even the best, places to start building connections between landscapes and the economy in Yorkshire.

One of the most significant implications of these new Land Enterprise Networks is that they are rarely confined to rural areas. In fact, the most powerful potential economic dependencies on landscapes will often occur between the urban and the rural: for example between York and the wider headwaters of the Ouse and its tributaries, or between Leeds and its extensive functional hinterlands – stretching well up into the Yorkshire Dales.