



**Haweswater Aqueduct Resilience Programme - Proposed Bowland
Section**

Volume 6

Proposed Ribble Crossing

Chapter 2: Environmental Context

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2. Environmental Context

2.1 Introduction

- 1) This chapter provides an overview of the environmental setting of the Proposed Ribble Crossing, describing some of the key features of the natural and built environment which fall within, or are in proximity to, the planning application boundary. More detailed baseline environmental information is presented throughout Chapters 6 to 18.

2.2 Setting of the Proposed Ribble Crossing

- 2) The setting of the Proposed Ribble Crossing comprises a section of the River Ribble valley and the town of Clitheroe, which is located approximately 2 km to the south. Clitheroe is a historic market town and civil parish with a population of 16,279¹. The village of Waddington, a Conservation Area and parish with a population of 1,028², lies several hundred metres west of the Proposed Ribble Crossing at its closest point.
- 3) The Ribble Valley in the Clitheroe area is defined by the steep lowland fringes of Easington Fell to the north, the urban settlement of Clitheroe to the south, and lowland agricultural farmland to the east and west. Topography ranges from approximately 100 m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at Clitheroe Castle, 180 m at the steep valley sides to the north, and 50 m within the low-lying valley floor. The valley sides of Easington Fell and land at Clitheroe Castle, situated upon a limestone reef knoll, provide extensive views across the valley landscape. Clitheroe Castle and the Ribblesdale Cement works provide local landmarks within views towards the south.
- 4) Over time, the River Ribble and its tributaries have contributed to the tranquil and settled character of the valley landscape. The meandering river and its surrounding open, flat floodplain are enclosed by steep wooded bluffs and terraces. This floodplain is flanked by the undulating lowland farmlands of the River Ribble valley, which are interspersed with settlements, occasional country halls and a number of large farms. There is a general absence of settlement within the floodplain itself, although historic stone bridges are notable landscape features over the River Ribble.

2.3 Setting of Local Towns and Villages

- 5) The town of Clitheroe and the linear villages of Waddington, West Bradford and Grindleton are often located at the bottom of wooded cloughs within the valley bottom and along the lower valley slopes. The picturesque limestone villages have retained their vernacular character and are broadly untouched by modern development. Clitheroe is situated at the convergence of major road and railway corridors, such as the A671, and contains a combination of commercial, industrial, and residential buildings. Key historic features include Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and a Grade II Registered Park and Garden at Clitheroe Castle. Conservation Areas are also present at Waddington and Clitheroe.
- 6) The predominant land use outside of the settled areas is pastoral farmland, consisting mostly of semi-improved pasture grazed by sheep and cattle. These are arranged in a patchwork of fields bounded by a combination of hedgerows, wooden fencing, post and wire fencing or stone walls. Patches of woodland provide a sense of enclosure, including prominent ancient woodland cloughs that descend into the valley bottom alongside the neighbouring pastoral farmland to the north.

¹ https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/northwestengland/admin/ribble_valley/E04005253__clitheroe/

² <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04005285>

2.4 Natural Environment and Designated Features

- 7) There are no nationally protected landscape or biodiversity features located within the planning application boundary. However, the Proposed Ribble Crossing is located directly to the south of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), thereby forming part of its setting.
- 8) Other designations relevant to the EIA are summarised below and described in more detail in subsequent chapters.
- The River Ribble, a designated 'Main River'
 - A Grade II Registered Park and Garden, Clitheroe Castle, located within the urban area of Clitheroe
 - Conservation Areas present at Clitheroe and Waddington
 - Scheduled monuments and listed buildings
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest present at Coplow Quarry and Salthill and Bellmanpark Quarries
 - Local Nature Reserves present at Cross Hill Quarry and Salt Hill Quarry
 - Ancient Woodland along stream valleys between Easington Fell and Waddington, West Bradford and Grindleton within the river valley.

2.5 Land Access and Rights of Way

- 9) A network of public rights of way (PRoWs) and permissive paths exists within the area, which creates recreational links between the River Ribble, the rising fells and the surrounding settlements of Clitheroe and its nearby villages. Other recreational routes include Sustrans National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 90 (passing through the villages of Waddington, West Bradford and Grindleton; and the long distance paths (LDPs) of Pendle Witches Way, Clitheroe 60k and Ribble Way. There are small pockets of Registered Common Land and Open Access Land at Waddington, West Bradford and Grindleton.