

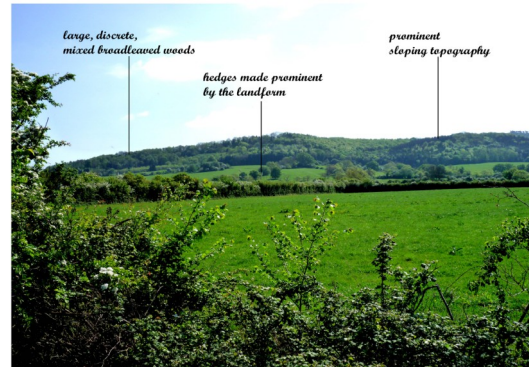
# Landscapes of Worcestershire

## Landscape Type Advice Sheet - Land Management

# Wooded Hills and Farmlands

### Landscape Type Description

These landscapes are similar to the Principal Wooded Hills, but have more of an emphasis on farmland than woodland. The woods tend to occur as discrete blocks framing larger areas of enclosed fields. The latter are often associated with a small village or hamlet. There is a sense of balance, with a character that is less extreme than the related type of the Principal Wooded Hills.



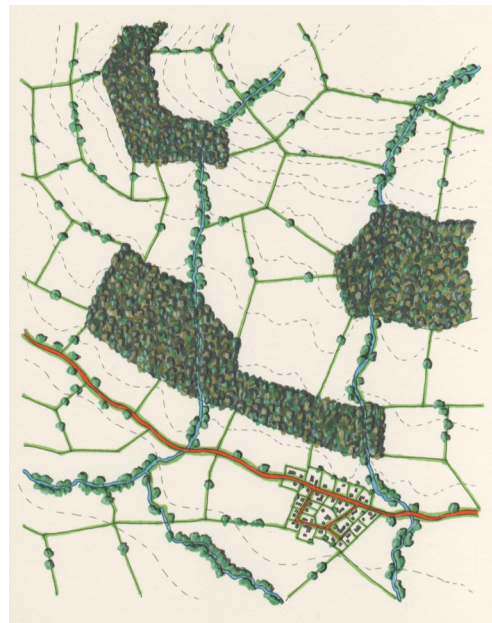
### Key Characteristics

#### Primary

- Prominent sloping topography
- Hedgerow field boundaries are an important element in defining landscape scale
- Tree cover pattern of large, discrete woodland blocks

#### Secondary

- Woodland of ancient character
- Mixed farming land use
- Medium-framed views
- Sparsely clustered settlement pattern associated with areas of former open fields



### Current Concerns

These are landscapes that often lack a strong sense of visual cohesion today, due to the variable amount of woodland cover and the decline in both hedgerow pattern and fabric. The mixed broadleaf composition may also have been diluted by the presence of conifer planting. The strength and scale of the landscape becomes diluted if the large woodland blocks become fragmented if the structure of hedgerow and streamlines is broken, or if features of an inappropriate small scale are introduced.

There are considerable opportunities for planting new large woodland blocks in these landscapes, particularly the replanting of areas of recent clearance, though the importance of the patterns of historical land clearance should be recognised and conserved. Emphasis should also be placed on perpetuating the corridors that link the woodlands together. Given the difficulties in encouraging new hedgerow tree planting, priority could be given to strengthening the patterns of streamside tree cover and dingles. Within the farmed areas, the upper slopes may include areas of permanent pasture of botanical interest.

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## Opportunities for Landscape Gain

### How to use this sheet

The aim of this information sheet is to provide *general guidelines* about the priorities for land management activities - focusing on relevant landscape features - within this Landscape Type. However, Landscape Types are generic descriptions of landscape character and any advice **must** be interpreted within the context of the site in question. Please also visit the Landscapes of Worcestershire mapping pages <http://gis.worcestershire.gov.uk/home/wcc-lca-maps> to click on your area and read the more specific ecological and landscape descriptions.

In the case of any habitat work, specialist advice should be sought from the County Ecologists and/or the appropriate agency (Natural England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, Defra) to ensure that the work is appropriate, is carried out at the right time of year, in the correct manner and in the best possible location. Surveys may need to be carried out to assess the sites for presence of protected species or existing habitat. With this in mind, please read on for opportunities for land/habitat management activities appropriate to this Landscape Type...

The general guidelines for woodland in Wooded Hills and Farmlands are to:

- **conserve** existing blocks of woodland
- **restore** the balance of woodland cover throughout these landscapes
- **conserve** and **restore** the ancient woodland character of all woodlands
- **enhance** tree cover along watercourses and dingles

### Woodland and Trees

Whilst it is acknowledged that ancient woodland can't simply be (re)created, from the landscape perspective new woodland *can* reflect ancient characteristics in terms of shape/outline and species composition and so integrate into the landscape and strengthen its character. There may also be opportunities to restore areas of ancient woodland through the introduction of appropriate management, or the removal of alien species and appropriate replanting. There may be opportunities to strengthen the pattern of discrete woodland blocks by planting new large woodland blocks and by replanting and restoring appropriate management to existing neglected woodland. The woodland blocks may have been reduced in size in this landscape or inappropriate recent planting may have linked previously discrete woods. Opportunities should be sought to redress this either through extending the size of individual woodlands or taking the decision not to replant linking woodland after it has been cropped. Additionally, the hedgerow and streamside trees may be sparse or in poor condition and opportunities should be taken to increase their density. Landscape gain could be achieved by additional planting along watercourses and ditches and an increase in hedgerow trees either by new planting or by altering the management of existing hedges to allow individual specimens to grow up. Some landowners are already tagging hedgerow trees to prevent them being inadvertently cut. Inappropriate small woodlands could be removed (no replanting after cropping) or enlarged as appropriate to best effect.

### Hedgerows

The general guideline for hedgerows in Wooded Hills and Farmlands is to:

- **conserve** the historic pattern of large hedged fields, with priority being given to strengthening and restoring primary hedge lines

There may be opportunities to plant new hedgerows, restore, strengthen or protect existing hedgerows and their patterns, and promote appropriate management - in terms of maintenance regimes and protection from stock. The species composition of existing long established hedgerows should be used to guide the composition of new hedgerow planting. There may also be opportunities to plant new hedgerow trees, extend the life of existing hedgerow trees through such means as tree surgery, protective measures, or protection of the setting (i.e. the hedgerow).

### Grassland

The general guideline for grassland in Wooded Hills and Farmlands is to:

- **conserve** all remaining areas of permanent pasture

Opportunities to encourage a more mixed land use should be exploited, particularly if arable land uses appear to be dominating (in which case reversion to grassland would be encouraged). The retention/restoration of permanent pasture in areas of historic parkland should be considered a priority.

For more information visit our website [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lca](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lca) or contact the Worcestershire County Council Environmental Policy Team on 01905 766038