

Landscapes of Worcestershire

Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Planning and Development*

Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use

Landscape Type Description

A rolling, lowland, settled agricultural landscape with a dominant pastoral land use and small scale, defined by its hedged fields. Hedgerow and streamside trees, together with those associated with settlement, provide tree cover in a landscape with a notable network of winding lanes, scattered farms and clusters of wayside settlements.



Key Characteristics

Primary

- Pastoral land use
- Small-scale landscape defined by prominent pattern of hedged fields
- Tree cover character of trees rather than woodland

Secondary

- Tree cover pattern of scattered trees along hedgerows and watercourses
- Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and groups of wayside dwellings
- Sub-regular enclosure pattern, with small and medium-sized fields
- Rolling lowland with occasional steep-sided hills and escarpments

Tertiary

- Gleyed soils



Current Concerns

The defining pastoral land use of these landscapes is becoming diluted due to increased arable cultivation. Hedgerows lose their function and in turn may become neglected. Over the past years hedgerows have been removed, resulting in larger fields and a change in the scale of the landscape and, although the Hedgerow Regulations should now reduce such direct damage, deteriorating management is likely to continue. The loss and deterioration of hedgerows in turn threatens the survival of the hedgerow tree populations. Hedgerow trees, together with linear tree cover associated with watercourses, are particularly important, providing the defining tree cover element of these areas.

The remaining areas of permanent pasture can often be of significant biodiversity interest and initiatives to safeguard them should be strongly promoted in these areas.

Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Planning and Development* Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use Opportunities for Landscape Gain

Hedgerows

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 guide the composition of new hedgerow planting. Fencing and other uncharacteristic boundary treatments could be removed and replaced by hedgerows.

Trees - Character and Pattern

The population of individual (hedgerow and field trees) trees should be safeguarded and augmented as required with additional planting. In many locations, the populations of field and hedgerow trees exhibit the reverse age structure that is required to ensure their perpetuation as a characteristic of these landscapes – new populations of young trees (of appropriate species) need to be established as a matter of priority. Where woodland is present, the existing population of individual trees may require a boost to prevent the woodland becoming the dominant tree cover characteristic.

There may be opportunities to plant new trees in hedgerows and along water-courses, extend the life of existing trees in such locations through such means as tree surgery, protective measures, or protection of the setting (i.e. the hedgerow). The use of protective designations such as TPOs might be relevant. The removal of inappropriate trees – such as belts of poplar may on occasion be appropriate, combined with new planting of a more appropriate nature in terms of species and location.

Small-scale Landscape

Opportunities may arise to sub-divide large fields or parcels of land. Open plan schemes may be afforded some semblance of structure in order to create sub-division of area. The location and orientation of new buildings can create intimate areas, particularly if regular patterns are avoided. The planting of trees of appropriate scale can filter views, and the incorporation of hedgerows can contribute to the small scale of an area. The incorporation of such features as chimneys, and other roof structures to reduce the uniformity of the roofscape can also contribute to creating an intimacy of scale and filtering of views.

Land Use – Pastoral

Opportunities may arise to promote agri-environment funding incentives to encourage a predominantly pastoral land use, particularly if arable land uses appear to be dominating.

Sub-regular Enclosure Pattern

Former enclosure patterns (as identified from early edition OS maps) could be restored. New boundaries to fields, gardens and roads could follow sub-regular patterns.

Settlement Pattern - Wayside

The distinctive settlement pattern of this Landscape Type - scattered farmsteads and groups of wayside dwellings - is best perpetuated by the avoidance of significant new development. Creating clustering or settlement nuclei through new development is inappropriate to the characteristic settlement pattern while current planning guidance precludes dispersed settlement in the landscape in general. Consequently, significant amounts of new development will generally be discouraged from these landscapes, being better sited in those landscapes where settlement clusters and nuclei *are* appropriate.

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

