

Landscapes of Worcestershire

Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Planning and Development*

Enclosed Commons

Landscape Type Description

A landscape of very similar character to the Sandstone Estatelands, with the same ordered pattern of large fields of regular outline, straight roads and estate plantations. It is an open, formal landscape with a visual clarity primarily defined by the straightness of the field boundaries, patterns that have arisen as a result of late enclosure from former commons and wasteland.



Key Characteristics

Primary

- Hedgerow boundaries to fields
- Planned enclosure pattern of straight boundaries and roads with wide verges

Secondary

- Pastoral land use
- Planned woodland character
- Woodland pattern of discrete blocks (estate plantations)

Tertiary

- Gently rolling topography
- Open farmland landscape
- Impoverished soils
- Dispersed pattern of isolated farmsteads and scattered way-side dwellings



Current Concerns

This is a planned landscape with a notably regular pattern, defined by the straightness of its hedge lines and roads and the outlines of its woodlands. This regularity is strongly expressed visually, the wide roadside verges emphasising the straightness of the roads and the general openness of the landscape enabling the pattern to be clearly evident. Tree cover along watercourses can contribute significantly to the landscape structure but hedgerow tree cover is generally less significant. These landscapes are often adjacent to areas which remain today as unenclosed common land. The presence of wayside dwellings corresponds to the historic evolution of these landscapes from areas of former waste and common land. Scattered farmsteads can also be a characteristic feature. These are farmed landscapes with an inherent land use of mixed agriculture, although recent increases in arable dominance may be evident. If such a trend continues, the functional value of hedgerows could be significantly reduced. Any loss or deterioration in the hedgerow structure could dilute their visual clarity.

Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Planning and Development*
Enclosed Commons
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.

Land Use - Pastoral

There may be opportunities to incorporate or encourage substantial areas of grassland for amenity or/recreational land use – either directly within the development or, by agreement, on land adjacent to it.

Opportunities may arise to promote Stewardship and other funding incentives, in order to encourage pastoral land uses in the wider landscape, particularly if arable land uses appear to be dominating, although such areas of land are likely to be outside those to which the development proposals relate.

Enclosure Pattern - Planned

There are likely to be many opportunities to introduce a regular pattern of boundaries – for example defining ownership boundaries to dwellings, providing new field boundaries, introducing areas of woodland or other planting for landscaping purposes, or defining roadside boundaries.

Care must be taken to respect the scale of the landscape when augmenting, restoring or re-introducing the regular pattern of enclosure.

Woodland Character - Planned

These are landscapes that can generally accommodate new woodland planting, including commercial plantations and planting of non-indigenous species. Focus could be placed on introducing new blocks of woodland, and bringing derelict/unmanaged areas of woodland into appropriate management. There is great potential for imaginative landscape design together with a wide range of opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of the area. When creating new woodland it will be important to respect the strong woodland characteristics associated with the Enclosed Commons – particularly the regular boundary shape, and the scale – in order fully to achieve appropriate landscape gain.

Woodland Pattern - Discrete Blocks

There may be opportunities to strengthen the pattern of discrete woodland blocks by planting new blocks, by replanting and by restoring appropriate management to existing neglected woodland. Inappropriate small woodlands could be removed or enlarged as appropriate to best effect.

Large-scale Landscape

Opportunities may arise to remove subdivisions of formerly larger fields or parcels of land. There may be opportunities for new woodland planting, and this, and any new landscaping associated with new development should reflect the particular scale of these landscapes. Landscape gain can probably be best achieved by simply respecting the large scale and avoiding dilution of this through the introduction of small scale elements.

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