

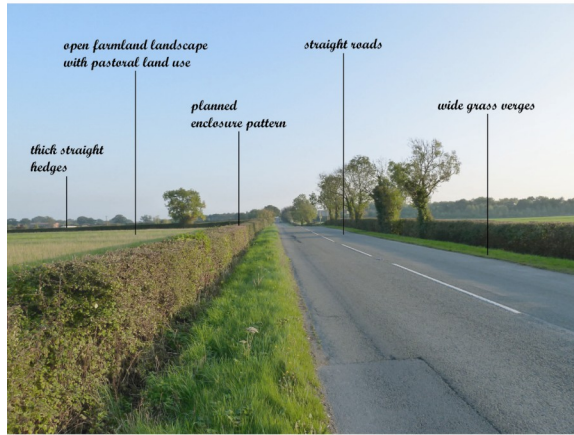
Landscapes of Worcestershire

Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Land Management*

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 wayside 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.

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Guidelines for Land Management

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...

Woodland and Trees

The general guidelines for woodland and trees in Enclosed Commons are to:

- **conserve** and **enhance** tree cover along water courses
- **conserve** and **enhance** the spatial pattern and scale of the landscape, particularly through opportunities for woodland planting

These are landscapes that can generally accommodate new woodland planting, including commercial plantations and planting of non-indigenous species. 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 scale – i.e. discrete woodland blocks. Benefits to woodland can also be brought about by replanting on former sites and by restoring appropriate management to existing neglected woodland.

Hedgerows

The general guideline for hedgerows in Enclosed Commons is to:

- **conserve** and **restore** distinctive hedgerow pattern with priority given to primary 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 (primary) hedgerows should guide the composition of new hedgerow planting. Fencing and other uncharacteristic boundary treatments could be removed and replaced by hedgerows. Where new hedgerows are proposed, they should follow a regular pattern. Care must be taken to respect the large, open scale of the landscape when augmenting, restoring or re-introducing this regular pattern of enclosure.

Land Use

The general guidelines for land use in Enclosed Commons are to:

- promote the development of wide field margins for wildlife benefit
- promote the **creation** and appropriate management of natural vegetation communities on non-farmed areas and along highways

The promotion of field margins, and the (re)establishment of natural vegetation communities in non-farmed areas and along verges/highways (and the conservation of watercourse trees as noted above) acts to encourage connectivity of habitats in the farmed landscape. In addition, opportunities should be sought to encourage the more characteristic pastoral land uses in the wider landscape, particularly if arable land uses appear to be dominating.

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