

Landscapes of Worcestershire

Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Land Management*

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 water-courses
- 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.

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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...

The general guidelines for trees in Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use are to:

- **conserve** and **enhance** tree cover along watercourses
- **conserve** hedgerow tree populations and promote new hedgerow tree planting

Trees

Woodland is not characteristic of these landscapes but tree cover is provided by hedgerow trees and linear tree cover along watercourses. 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 of the 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. In addition to new planting, there may be opportunities to extend the life of existing trees 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. Where woodland is present, the existing population of individual trees may require a particular boost to prevent the woodland becoming the dominant tree cover characteristic.

The general guideline for hedgerows in Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use is to:

- **conserve** and **enhance** the pattern of hedgerows

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 primary (long established) hedgerows should be noted and used to guide the composition of new hedgerow planting. Fencing and other uncharacteristic boundary treatments could be removed and replaced by hedgerows.

The general guidelines for grassland in Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use are to:

- seek opportunities to **conserve** all remaining areas of permanent pasture
- **maintain** overall pastoral land use

Grassland

These are landscapes of heavy or poorly drained soils with which is associated a predominantly pastoral land use. The remaining areas of permanent pasture can often be of significant biodiversity interest, and this can be threatened by the increasing change in land use in favour of arable farming. Initiatives to safeguard remaining areas of permanent pasture should be strongly promoted in these areas.

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