

Landscapes of Worcestershire

Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Land Management*

Timbered Plateau Farmlands

Landscape Type Description

A varied, mixed farming landscape of hedged fields, scattered farms, woods and wooded valleys associated with upstanding areas of undulating relief. The landform conveys a sense of strength and dominance which tends to override the pattern of tree cover and fields. Variations in landform within this landscape create a changing sequence of visual perspectives, ranging from open vistas on plateau summits to more secluded scenes along valley bottoms.



Key Characteristics

Primary

- Upstanding plateau of rolling topography dissected by broad valleys
- Filtered medium/long distance views
- Ancient wooded character
- Mixed hedges with scattered hedgerow oaks

Secondary

- Organic enclosure pattern of medium-to-large fields
- Linear tree cover pattern of wooded valleys often associated with streamside habitats
- Mixed farming land use

Tertiary

- Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads and hamlets



Current Concerns

The deterioration of the overall structure of tree cover tends to be the major issue in these landscapes. Woodland cover is not always a prominent component of the landscape today; the streamside tree cover can often be fragmented and the hedgerow tree cover composed of primarily mature or veteran trees. The network of hedgerows can often be fragmented, severely so in places, resulting in the remaining woodlands becoming isolated from other areas of tree cover.

It is important to conserve existing elements of tree cover - particularly woodland cover and streamside trees - and the hedgerow pattern. The gradual change from a landscape of mixed agriculture to one dominated by arable farming, suggests that the function of hedgerows will become increasingly reduced, rendering the whole linking structure of hedgerows and tree cover, upon which the landscape character depends, increasingly vulnerable.

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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 woodland in Timbered Plateau Farmlands are to:

Woodland and Trees

- **conserve** and manage all ancient woodland sites, restocking with locally occurring native stock
- **restore** the tree cover pattern through promoting the coalescence of fragmented remnants of ancient woodland
- **create** new woodland - favouring native broadleaves and with oak as the major species
- promote infilling of gaps in tree cover along watercourses and dingles

In some places a doubling of the woodland cover could be considered in order to retain and emphasise the woodland associations and origins of these areas, and to give greater structure to the landscape. New planting should aim to perpetuate the wide range of woodland size that is characteristic of this landscape's structure. Whilst it is recognised from an ecological perspective, that 'new' ancient woodland can't simply be created, new woodland can - from the landscape perspective - 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. In this landscape, there should be particular emphasis upon the presence and *pattern* of woodland cover and streamside trees.

The general guidelines for hedgerows in Timbered Plateau Farmlands are to:

Hedgerows

- **conserve** and **restore** the pattern of hedgerows throughout the area, giving priority to primary boundaries and boundaries of assart origin
- **conserve** hedgerow oaks and promote the importance of veteran trees
- **restore/enhance** the hedgerow oak population, particularly through encouraging natural regeneration

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.

Parkland

The general guideline for parkland in Timbered Plateau Farmlands is to:

- **conserve** and **restore** existing parkland areas

The distinctive tree cover associated with ornamental grounds and parks should be conserved and restored through appropriate management and replanting if necessary.

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