

Landscapes of Worcestershire

Landscape Type Information Sheet

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



The Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use, like the Settled Farmlands on River Terraces, share many characteristics of the Principal Settled Farmlands. They are lowland agricultural landscapes, with hedged fields, and a dispersed settlement pattern.

Again the primary defining characteristic relates to soils and to the subsequent land use. These are landscapes of heavy or poorly drained soils with which is associated a predominantly pastoral land use. The field pattern follows that of the other Settled Farmlands, tending to be sub-regular, again suggesting early enclosure from areas of open field, but the size of the fields tends to be smaller, and the pattern more prominent.

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Tree cover is primarily represented by hedgerow trees and by trees along watercourses. In both instances these can be notable in their numbers, and, combined with the field size, results in a landscape of much smaller, more intimate, scale than the other Settled Farmlands categories.

The same pattern of dispersed farmsteads and wayside dwellings occurs in association with a dense network of lanes.

The defining pastoral land use of these landscapes is becoming diluted due to increased arable cultivation, which in turn has an impact upon the scale and enclosure pattern of these Settled Farmlands. 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. Woodlands are not characteristic of these landscapes and hedgerow trees, together with linear tree cover associated with watercourses, are particularly important, providing the defining tree cover element of these areas. The existing patterns of tree cover should be conserved, and opportunities for new tree planting should be focused on strengthening and restoring hedgerow tree populations and the tree cover associated with watercourses.

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. The overall strategy for the Settled Farmlands with Pastoral Land Use is, therefore to conserve and enhance the unity and small scale, hedged character of the landscape and its defining pastoral land use.

Landscape Guidelines

- conserve and enhance the pattern of hedgerows
- maintain overall pastoral land use
- seek opportunities to conserve all remaining areas of permanent pasture
- conserve and enhance tree cover along watercourses
- conserve hedgerow tree populations and promote new hedgerow tree planting
- retain the integrity of the dispersed pattern of settlement

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