

# Landscapes of Worcestershire

## Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Planning and Development*

# 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

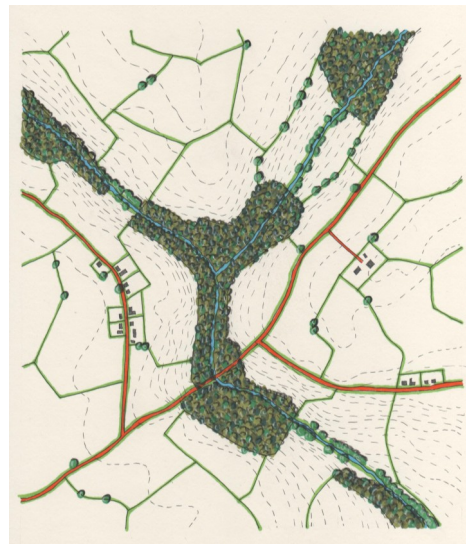
- Upstanding plateau of rolling topography dissected by broad valleys
- Filtered medium/long distance views
- Ancient wooded character
- Mixed hedges with scattered hedgerow oaks

#### 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.

## Landscape Type Advice Sheet - *Planning and Development*

# Timbered Plateau Farmlands

### Opportunities for Landscape Gain

#### Ancient Woodland

There may be opportunities to create new woodlands. Whilst ancient woodland itself cannot simply be created, from the landscape perspective new woodland can at least reflect ancient characteristics in terms of shape/outline and species composition.

There may be opportunities to restore areas of ancient woodland through the introduction of appropriate management, or the removal of alien species and appropriate replanting.

Development sites themselves may not always offer the best location to accommodate new woodland planting and to achieve its full potential. These opportunities cited above may be best realised on land elsewhere in the vicinity, by private agreement between the developer and landowner.

#### 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.

#### Linear Tree Cover

The prime opportunities will relate to the perpetuation of the dingle woodlands - encouraging the appropriate management of existing woodlands and seeking to increase their extent where appropriate, or restoring the pattern where woodland has been lost. Although the dominant woodland pattern is of linear woodland along streams, other discrete woods of varying size are also associated with this Landscape Type. The same principles of securing appropriate management together with new woodland planting will be relevant, but away from the dingles, will be less of a priority, . There may also be opportunities to plant new hedgerow trees, extend the life of existing hedgerow trees through such means as tree surgery, protective measures, or protection of the hedgerow. The use of protective designations such as TPOs might be relevant to both woodlands and to individual trees. 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.

#### Enclosure Pattern

Opportunities to reflect the organic field pattern may materialise through the shape of newly planted hedgerows, the outline of new woodland planting, the definition of roadside boundaries and verges, the spatial distribution and orientation of new buildings, avoiding uniformity of pattern in all cases.

#### Medium-scale, Open Views

Opportunities may arise to restore former field patterns, which in turn define the scale of the landscape. The contrast between the open, long distance views of the plateau area, and the more intimate scale of the valleys should be encouraged where possible – the juxtaposition of new woodland planting and buildings may contribute towards this.

#### Land Use - Mixed Farming

Whilst there is little potential to influence land use at the landscape scale, with current trends suggesting a move towards increased arabilisation, it may be possible to encourage the incorporation of pastoral land uses on land associated with, or adjacent to, new development. This may be particularly appropriate if an element of public access is to be accommodated.

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