

PASTORAL FRINGE FARMLAND

Landscape character

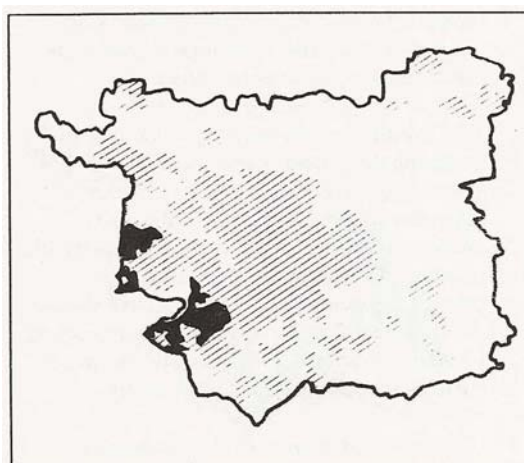
The pastoral fringe farmland landscape type is found along the undulating western fringe of Leeds, occurring in two landscape units: the Gildersome Fringe (LCM1); and the Bradford Fringe (LCM2).

It is a landscape of actively farmed land, containing a mixture of landscape influences, all dominated by human activity such as housing, industrial areas, quarries, tips, amenity land, recreation grounds, neglected and disturbed land. The farmland tends to consist of mainly small-scale fields of pasture, grazed by sheep, cattle and frequently horses.

Throughout, the farmland is under intense public pressure, with urban fringe land uses such as caravan storage, scrap yards and horse grazing common. Often, the structure of the landscape has, or is starting to break down with many hedgerows becoming low cut and gappy, or stone walls in disrepair. Many areas around the farmland are well used by the local community for both authorised and unauthorised recreational uses, providing a valuable amenity resource.

Forces for change

The pastoral fringe farmland landscape type is under pressure from the encroachment of industrial, commercial and residential areas as well as activities such as golf course development, mineral extraction and landfill. Some of the land is degraded under-used agricultural land, with activities such as horse grazing and unauthorised leisure and recreational activities commonplace, and throughout, there has been a gradual deterioration of farmland features such as field boundaries. This has resulted in a poorly managed, fragmented landscape in places, particularly close to the urban edge, although some intact areas still remain.



Management strategy and guidelines

The overall management strategy for the pastoral fringe farmland landscape type should be a combination of mainly restoration of the open pastoral fringe and the characteristic farmland features, where these are in decline; combined with enhancement through small scale planting, particularly close to the urban edge and around intrusive features or areas of new development. There are also opportunities for the conservation and enhancement of areas of woodland, for example, along the slopes to the south of Calverley.

Management guidelines which are applicable for all the landscape units within the pastoral fringe farmland landscape type are described below.

Detailed management strategies and guidelines for the individual landscape units are described in a separate document, using the references listed above left.

- *Seek to control the adverse effects of horse grazing in inappropriate locations.* In recent years, there has been an increasing demand for the use of land for horse grazing, particularly around the fringes of urban areas. In places this has had a significant impact on the landscape with the proliferation of temporary structures and ancillary buildings and with impoverishment of pasture due to overgrazing. Where possible, these adverse effects of horse grazing should be controlled, as they can introduce a 'suburbanising' influence into rural landscapes.

- *Conserve and enhance the wooded continuity of valleys and enhance their value as landscape, wildlife and recreational corridors.*
A characteristic feature of this landscape type, and one which contrasts with the generally open nature of the pastoral fringe, are the wooded strips and larger areas of woodland along becks and extending up the valley slopes. These form key linear features and important landscape, ecological and in places recreational corridors. To enhance this value, natural regeneration of trees should be encouraged with small scale planting where appropriate, particularly along the slopes. Consideration should be given to encouraging recreational access along these valleys where this does not already exist.
- *Where opportunities exist, consider restoring areas of former parkland.*
Although landscaped parks are not a particular feature within this landscape type, there are some remnant areas, for example at Farnley Park and around the Grange. As well as their historical importance, park lands provide diversity and interest in the landscape. True parkland with permanent grassland and large scattered trees is in decline. Wherever possible, consideration should be given to reinstating areas of former park and new planting to replace old trees.
- *New small scale planting may be appropriate, particularly as screening for prominent industrial developments or farm buildings, golf courses and sections of highway.*
Although the priority for this landscape type should be to maintain the intact open nature of the higher ground, there are many areas, particularly around the Farnley Fringe, where small scale new planting would be appropriate, particularly as a screen for intrusive development. Screening should preferably be used in a positive way as part of an overall planting scheme for the area, rather than as an afterthought in an attempt to hide a particularly intrusive building or section of road.
- *Conserve and enhance tree cover along field boundaries, particularly on the lower slopes and within the valleys, through regeneration and replanting of boundary trees.*
The priority for this landscape should be to maintain the generally open character of the intact ridges and higher ground. However, tree cover along boundaries on the lower slopes and within the valleys is a characteristic feature. To maintain and enhance this, natural regeneration of boundary trees should be encouraged wherever possible or replanting should be carried out using locally occurring species such as oak, ash and sycamore.
- *Conserve and strengthen the characteristic pattern of small and medium sized fields.*
Field pattern is a dominant visual element, particularly on the open pastoral ridges and slopes. The small and medium sized fields are typically bounded by a mix of hedgerows and drystone walls. In places, particularly closest to the urban edge, the hedges are becoming overgrown and gappy and the walls falling into disrepair, occasionally being replaced by wire fencing. This results in a more open neglected looking landscape. Many hedges would benefit from more appropriate management, which would include traditional management techniques such as coppicing and planting up of individual gaps. In addition, walls should be restored, with priority given to restoring those along roadsides and along farm boundaries.