

PASTORAL ESCARPMENT

Landscape character

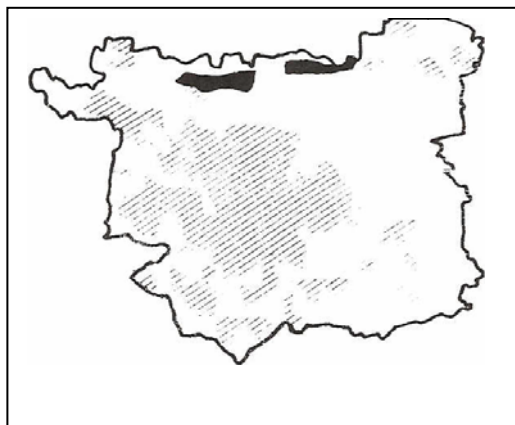
The pastoral escarpment landscape type occurs on the escarpment running from the Otley Chevin, past Harewood and on to Collingham and can be found in two landscape units: West Harewood Escarpment (WHF2) and East Harewood Escarpment (WHF3).

It is characterised by narrow areas of pastoral farmland, lying on the steep sided slope of the escarpment which runs from west to east along the southern edge of the Wharfe Valley. Characterised by sheep and cattle grazed pastures, the fields tend to be small and bounded by a mix of walls, fences and hedges, with pockets of rough grassland and scrub occurring on the steeper slopes.

Throughout, woodland is a prominent feature in views, with small mixed and coniferous plantations lying amidst the pasture. Isolated buildings are the only forms of settlement, linked by narrow sunken roads which drop down the slope from the plateau to the valley. Due to the height and positioning of the area, spectacular views can be gained from the escarpment over the Wharfe Valley and beyond to the north.

Forces for change

The major underlying influence on the pastoral escarpment landscape type is the dominant effect that landform has on its character. This has influenced land use and cover, resulting in a mainly pastoral area which have probably remained little changed over the last century. Notable changes which have occurred include the addition of a large mixed plantation on Rawdon Hill and the gradual decline in the condition of field boundaries, in particular hedgerows. Recent change has occurred with the development of leisure facilities on the escarpment face.



Management strategy and guidelines

The overall management strategy for the pastoral escarpment landscape type should be one of conservation of the important and characteristic features of the wooded and pastoral slope. There are also opportunities for restoration of farmland features such as hedgerows where these are in decline and some limited opportunities for enhancing the pattern of wooded copses and coverts through small scale planting.

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

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

- *Conserve remaining areas of permanent pasture.*

Permanent pasture is a characteristic feature on the escarpment, and has remained undisturbed for many years mainly due to the steepness of the slope on which it lies. Such areas should be conserved and managed as low input grassland, to increase their value for landscape and wildlife. Ploughing should be avoided and small scale tree and woodland planting should be designed to avoid the best areas of pasture.

- *Maintain and enhance tree cover through small scale woodland planting.*
Although this is a well-wooded landscape, particularly along the western end of the escarpment, there is scope for some small scale deciduous planting in some areas. This could take the form of planting to extend and reinforce the pattern of characteristic small coverts and copses and should be targeted on the higher slopes. Particular attention should be given to the location and shape of the planting, whilst maintaining a patchwork pattern with the fields of permanent pasture which they enclose. Care should also be taken not to block off views from the escarpment down over the Wharfe Valley.
- *Conserve the wooded character of mature roadside trees.*
Roadside trees are important features within this landscape type, particularly where they lie alongside the characteristic sunken lanes which pass north to south over the escarpment. Many of these trees are mature and need to be retained until other trees have grown to replace them. To maintain and enhance this tree cover, natural regeneration of trees should be encouraged wherever possible or new planting should be carried out, using locally occurring native tree species such as oak and ash.
- *Conserve and enhance field boundaries through more appropriate wall and hedgerow management.*
The general condition of walls and hedgerows along the pastoral escarpment is very variable. Although some are intact, many hedgerows, particularly those towards the eastern end of the escarpment, would benefit from more appropriate management, which would allow hedgerows to grow thicker and planting up of individual gaps. Drystone walls made from the local gritstone are distinctive features of the roadsides, the higher slopes and the western end of the escarpment. Where these are falling into disrepair, they should be restored, with priority given to restoring those along roadsides and along farm boundaries.
- *Conserve characteristic old sunken roads or 'green lanes'.*
There are several sunken roads or 'green lanes' which lead from the south, from settlements such as East Keswick over the escarpment and down to the River Wharfe. These old trackways, with their overgrown and ancient hedgerows are important remnants of a former way of life, adding to local landscape character, as well as being long established wildlife corridors. As such, encouragement should be given to their protection.