

Chapter 7: Management Strategies and Guidelines

Introduction

- 7.1 So far this assessment has described the variation in the character of the landscape around Leeds, outlined the main pressures for change, and examined public perceptions of the landscape and changes that are affecting it. This chapter examines the steps that need to be taken to conserve the diversity of the landscape and to enhance its character and quality where appropriate, in the face of pressures for change which may have adverse effects.

Overall management strategy

- 7.2 The landscape types and the individual landscape units provide the building blocks for an overall landscape management strategy. For each landscape type and each one of the 45 landscape units which have been identified, a judgement has been made about the general strategy, which should guide measures directed at conserving or enhancing the landscape, choosing between:
- conservation of existing character and of particular features which contribute to that character;
 - enhancement by restoration of character where change is causing that character to be lost;
 - enhancement by creation of new landscapes, where previous character has been completely lost and where the landscape is degraded, or where other circumstances are such that there may be scope for major change.
- 7.3 Judgements about the appropriate strategy are based on the existing character and condition of the landscape in each unit. For example, a severely degraded landscape unit which has no clear character requires enhancement by the creation of new landscapes. On the other hand, an intact landscape of strong and distinctive character requires the conservation of its existing character and appropriate management.
- 7.4 For some landscape types and units, the emphasis should be on some combination of the three options noted above. For example: a careful balance between conservation and enhancement through restoration; or a balance between enhancement through restoration and enhancement through the creation of new landscapes. These broad management strategies for the landscape units are shown in Figure 4. These broad management strategies are shown in a more detailed form on an Ordnance Survey base at 1:50,000 scale, which is incorporated in the pocket at the back of this report. For some landscape units where a combination of management options has been proposed, for example conservation and enhancement, the 1:50,000 map shows more specifically (where appropriate), those areas which are to be conserved and those which are to be enhanced.
- 7.5 The management strategies are detailed for each landscape type in Part 2 and for each landscape unit in Part 3 of this report.

Landscape management guidelines

- 7.6 Beyond these broad strategies we have also identified a wide range of actions which need to be taken to conserve and enhance the character of the landscape at a more detailed level. This information is presented in the form of landscape management guidelines, which briefly set out a wide range of measures for conserving and enhancing the character and responding to the varying pressures for change. The aim is not to prevent change but to steer it, so that the distinctive and special qualities of the landscapes around Leeds are retained.

- 7.7 The guidelines have been developed at three different levels:
- those which apply equally to the whole of the countryside around Leeds, described in the section '**General management guidelines**' later in this chapter;
 - those which are specific to each of the 19 **landscape types** which have been identified, and which are described in detail in **Part 2** of this report;
 - those which apply specifically to the 45 individual **landscape units**, and which are described in detail in **Part 3** of this report.
- 7.8 It is important to remember that these are landscape guidelines and do not take full account of the equally important interests of nature conservation, archaeology or recreation and access. When these guidelines are translated into specific actions, projects or proposals, these interests will need to be fully considered. For example, if a guideline suggests that new tree or woodland planting may be appropriate, it will be very important to ensure that this will not cause any damage to existing nature conservation or archaeological interest of individual sites.
- Mechanisms for implementation
- 7.9 The majority of the land around Leeds is privately owned and much of it is farmed, though the City Council does own significant areas, as do other public agencies. Implementing the actions suggested by the guidelines will rely very heavily on influencing the actions of private landowners. Only change resulting from development can be directly controlled through the planning system. However, many of the guidelines relate to land management and can be influenced indirectly by advice, liaison and negotiation, use of financial incentives through grant systems, or by direct involvement in practical work.
- 7.10 We have already indicated, in Chapter 5, some of the financial incentives that are available to farmers to encourage environmentally friendly farming, notably the Countryside Commission's Countryside Stewardship and Hedgerow Incentive Schemes. However, there are a wide range of grant schemes which may also help to encourage appropriate landscape management. There are relevant grants available from MAFF, the Countryside Commission, English Nature, the Forestry Authority and English Heritage. These are briefly summarised in Table 3 with further information provided in Appendix C.
- 7.11 Grants alone can only achieve so much and in any case, landowners and farmers may need positive encouragement to use them to achieve the aims for a co-ordinated landscape strategy. In other areas of the country it has been shown that much can be achieved by the local authority establishing special projects to encourage and support landowners, farmers and other agencies in their efforts.
- 7.12 This can take the form of a 'Countryside Management Project' of the type which has been operating in the Tong-Cockersdale area south west of Leeds for a number of years, with financial support from the Countryside Commission. Alternatively, some authorities establish special 'landscape projects' based on assessments and strategies such as this, and appoint special project staff to work with landowners to implement the guidelines. The Warwickshire Landscape Project is a good example of this approach and is again supported by the Countryside Commission.
- 7.13 In addition, it is possible to make positive use of the planning system to achieve change, for example by attaching suitable planning conditions when permission is given for new development. or by using Section 106 Agreements. These can, in appropriate circumstances, allow countryside or landscape benefits to be achieved as a result of new development, allowing compensation for losses which result from the development. There are now many examples around the country of such agreements being used to achieve such benefits.

- 7.14 The City Council can lead by example in the way that it manages its own land, and can also achieve much through the work of the Highways Department which, with the Department of Transport in the case of motorways and trunk roads, is actively involved in planning and designing new roads and managing existing ones. New road schemes, where these are essential, can be linked to landscape enhancement in a broad adjacent corridor, to ensure fit with the surrounding landscape. Land adjacent to existing roads may provide scope for new tree planting, and sensitive management of verges can help to create interest and diversity in the countryside.
- 7.15 The City Council can also seek to influence other statutory and public landowners to achieve landscape objectives. For example, Yorkshire Water control large areas of land around reservoirs, and the National Rivers Authority have a particular interest in the landscape of river and stream corridors and river catchments. Liaison and joint action with these and other bodies may also provide a means of implementing the landscape management guidelines.
- 7.16 Table 4 in Part 2 of this report summarises the main landscape types that have been identified, the main management guidelines that should apply and the means of implementation of the management guidelines.

General management guidelines

- 7.17 The following management guidelines are general guidelines which can be applicable to all the landscape types and landscape units in the area around Leeds.

Development and settlement

- *Retain in new development existing features that contribute to landscape character.*

The suburbanising influences associated with new development are an increasing pressure on the traditional character of the rural environment. These influences are having a subtle, cumulative impact, especially on all matters of design. Examples of this may include the external modernisation of buildings, the erection of illuminated and corporate plastic road signs, the replacement of roadside hedges with quick growing ornamental screens and even standardised landscaping schemes. Standardised planning criteria, policies and design guides can often necessitate the replacement or modernisation of existing features and can result in rather bland and characterless developments. More flexibility and discretion is therefore needed when applying design standards in rural landscapes and in particular, original features such as walls, roadside hedges and mature trees should be retained.

- *All new development should include proposals for on site landscaping with appropriate tree and woodland planting.*

Tree and woodland planting provides the best means for absorbing new development within the landscape. Often, insufficient space is allowed within development sites for adequate landscaping with trees. As a result, new developments can appear detached from the surrounding landscape, rather than linking strongly to it. Adequate space should be allocated and resources provided for the ongoing management of these features. Integration can best be achieved by allowing established trees to be retained and designing new planting to break up the densely built appearance of development sites. Inappropriate species choice can also draw attention to new development. Ornamental species planted as quick growing screens should be avoided, with native species which reflect local landscape character being favoured.

- *Protect and enhance the internal open space of village settlements.*

Rural villages typically have a low settlement density and a high proportion of land which is not built up. This may include gardens, allotments, pony paddocks, the village green and other open spaces. These features are an important part of the village scene and should be conserved. They also contribute to an irregular settlement outline and help to tie the village into the wider farmed landscape. Excessive infill development can disrupt this pattern and result in a hard built edge against open farmland. The design of new development should therefore incorporate sufficient open space to break up hard edges and to allow appropriate landscaping to link the new settlement with the surrounding farmland. The character of such open space should reflect other existing areas within the settlement.

- *Soften hard built edges through increased tree planting within and around new development.*

Often the interface between new development and the surrounding landscape appears sharp and stark. This is most noticeable when a hard built up edge abuts open farmland, where the landscape is in decline. Tree planting within and around new development is one of the best ways to soften hard edges and opportunities should be sought for offsite planting to help link the development into the wider landscape. This would be particularly appropriate for development in the wooded arable farmland and open arable farmland types. The aim should not necessarily be to hide buildings, but rather to integrate them into the landscape. Locally occurring species should be used, while avoiding ornamental species as these can often draw attention to the development they are trying to hide.

- *New agricultural buildings should be sited, designed and landscaped to blend with the surrounding farmed landscape.*

Traditional farm buildings constructed from local materials such as millstone grit or limestone, often have a distinctive regional identity. This identity is being eroded by the construction of modern farm buildings, which often look out of place and can be visually intrusive. Many new buildings are large by necessity and therefore careful siting and design are important considerations as no amount of landscaping will conceal a building indigenous broadleaves of native origin where possible.

Field boundaries

- *Enhance field pattern through new appropriate wall and hedgerow management.*

The general condition of hedges and walls along field boundaries throughout the district is variable. Many boundaries are showing signs of disrepair and are falling into decline as agricultural practices change. As such, they would benefit from more appropriate management. Where hedgerows are closely trimmed and gappy or dying out at the base, they should be allowed to grow thicker and taller, with planting up of individual gappy hedges, where appropriate. Consideration should be given to traditional hedge laying or coppicing practices and existing incentives for replanting, such as the Hedgerow Incentive Scheme, should be more actively promoted. Drystone walls are also a distinctive feature of the northern and western parts of the District, contributing significantly to the local character. In places they are falling into disrepair and are being replaced by wire fencing. Where possible, these walls should be restored, with priority given to those along roadsides and along farm boundaries.

Recreation and access

- *The design of recreational facilities such as golf courses should seek to reflect the character of existing landscape features.*

Recently, there has been increasing demand for sport and recreational facilities in the countryside, particularly around the fringes of Leeds. Some areas, such as the wooded arable farmland around the large estates to the east of Leeds and the areas adjacent to the urban fringe parks can absorb these pressures better than others. With careful planning these facilities can be readily assimilated into this type of landscape. Golf courses could, for example be designed to take on the appearance of modern day parklands as they mature. The retention of existing mature trees and the selection of appropriate tree species is an important consideration, particularly as most landscaping at present appears to favour quick growing or smaller amenity species. For further advice and guidance, see the Countryside Commission's recent publication on golf courses in the countryside (CCP438).

Historic

- *Seek to conserve all sites of archaeological and historical importance.*

The area around Leeds contains many antiquities and historic buildings, some of which are scheduled or listed and covered by various planning policies and controls, or judged to be a material consideration in reaching a planning decision. There are however many other features unprotected by official designations or subject to developments or changes in land uses which either are not subject to routine planning controls or are subject to decisions made at a higher level than the local planning authority. Examples of such threats include works by various statutory undertakers, landscaping and tree planting by both public and private bodies and ploughing up of areas formerly under woodland or permanent pasture.

These archaeological and historical features can add to landscape character at a local level and provide strong social and cultural links with the past. It is important therefore, that continued encouragement is given to bodies undertaking work outside the planning process to adopt a code of practice which includes due consideration of heritage matters.

Table 3: Relevant grant and incentive schemes

| TYPE OF MANAGEMENT | GRANT/INCENTIVE SCHEME |
|--|---|
| Woodland and amenity tree planting and management | |
| Trees for shelter belts and shading of livestock | Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme (MAFF) |
| Enclosure of grazed woodland (limited to schemes including 75% or more of broadleaved species) | Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme (MAFF) |
| Woodland planting | Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (MAFF) Woodland Grant Scheme Forestry Commission) |
| Woodland management | Woodland Grant Scheme Forestry Commission) |
| Amenity tree-planting, pollarding, tree surgery and fencing | Landscape Conservation Grant (Countryside Commission) |
| Amenity tree-planting where the primary objective is nature conservation | Project Grants (English Nature) |
| Hedges, walls, shelter belts and other boundaries | |
| Provision, replacement or improvement of shelter belts | Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme (MAFF) |
| Provision, replacement or improvement of hedges (including hedgerow trees) with associated works | Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme (MAFF) |
| Hedge laying and coppicing | Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme (MAFF) |
| Provision, replacement or improvement of walls and banks (of material traditional to the locality) with associated works | Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme (MAFF) |
| Fencing, as part of a planting scheme | Woodland Grant Scheme (Forestry Commission) |
| Hedges and hedge laying, and dry stone walls, preferably as part of a farm conservation grant | Landscape Conservation Grant (Countryside Commission) |
| Restoration and management of hedgerows | Hedgerow Incentive Scheme (Countryside Commission) |
| Hedges, walls and fencing, if on a site of nature conservation importance | Project Grant (English Nature) |
| Landscape Improvement and Habitat Protection | |
| Heather and Grass burning | Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme (MAFF) |
| Fencing, to encourage heather regeneration by excluding stock | Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme (MAFF) |
| Green lanes, ponds and other landscape features | Landscape Conservation Grant (Countryside Commission) |
| Heather management and bracken control, where intended to enhance habitat for wildlife | Project grants (English Nature) |
| Management and re-creation of targeted landscapes | Countryside Stewardship (Countryside Commission) |
| Traditional buildings and historic or archaeological sites | |
| Reinstatement or repair of traditional farm buildings using materials traditional to the locality | Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme (MAFF) |
| Repairs and management of ancient monuments | English Heritage |

