

Landscape Character Type 3: Valley slopes

LCT 3A UPPER FARMED AND WOODED SLOPES

Constituent Land Description Units 100, 101, 102, 163, 164, 165, 169, 31, 65, 98, 99

Location

Frequently occurring extensive areas along the upper slopes of river valleys throughout the area.

Description

Undulating sloping land on greensand below the steep wooded scarp, where deciduous woods and copses on the upper valley slopes grade to pastoral/mixed cultivation, with some arable cultivation along the lower edge, especially in the southern part of this type. An intricate mix of small to medium fields with irregular boundaries of very wide earth banks with low, species-rich hedges and many trees, creating a well-treed and intimate character. Oak and ash are the most prominent species. Upper stream valleys are often steep and V-shaped, without a distinct valley floor, but with wetland along streams and in patches throughout. The settlement pattern is of isolated farms and occasional large houses, with some deserted farmsteads and small villages linked by very narrow winding lanes. Red brick and stone are often used in dwellings, with rusty corrugated iron roofs to stone farm buildings (these would formerly have had slate, clay tile or thatch roofs). There is little 20th century development. Occasionally this type occupies the slopes immediately below the plateau, but it is less steep and less wooded than the scarp slopes. The feeling of remoteness is strengthened by lack of settlement and limited views out, where vegetation acts as a screen or filter.



Key Characteristics

- Undulating upper valley slopes below the scarp slope
- Well treed pastoral farmland, with arable cultivation on lower slopes
- Small to medium size fields with irregular boundaries
- Deciduous woods and copses, especially on hilltops and upper slopes
- Very wide, usually low, species-rich hedges with many hedgerow trees
- Dispersed settlement pattern of isolated farms and small villages
- Very winding narrow lanes
- An intimate and intricate landscape with views out confined by vegetation
- Remote and with little 20th century development



Management Guidelines

Boundaries: enhance by

1. Encouraging the conservation of hedgerow trees by planting or tagging selected saplings, to maintain and enhance the well-treed character of this type.

Field pattern: enhance and restore by

1. Encouraging the retention and management of existing field boundaries to maintain the mixed pattern of small to medium fields.

Semi-natural habitats: conserve and enhance by

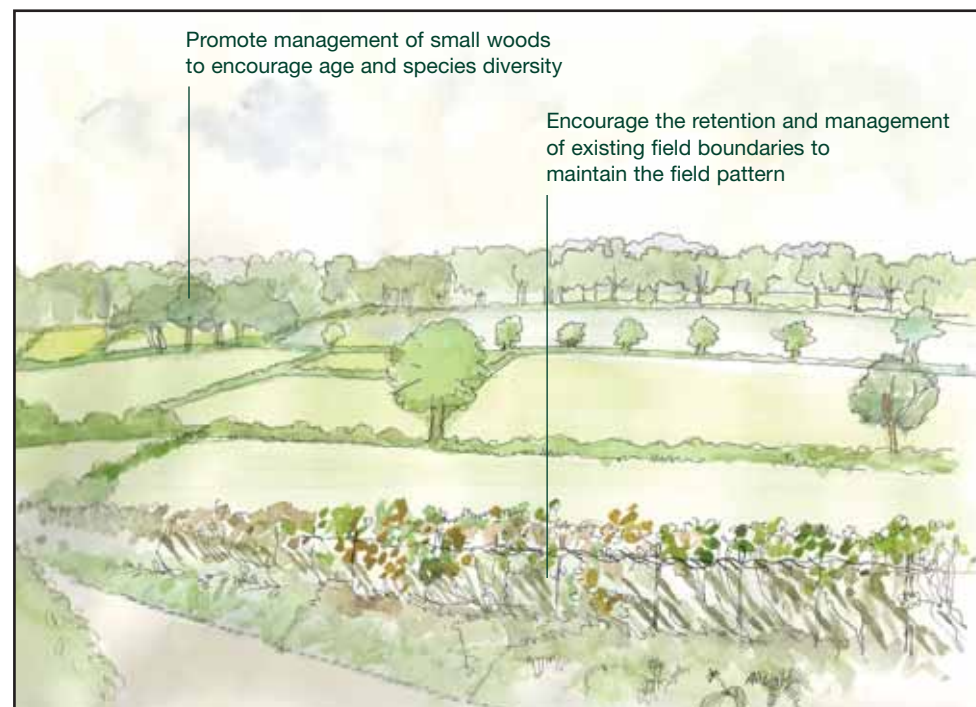
1. Encouraging management via appropriate grazing regimes to control scrub and maintain unimproved grassland, flushes and wildflower meadows.

Woodland: conserve and enhance by

1. Promoting management of small woods to encourage species and age diversity and a diverse ground flora.
2. Encouraging the planting of deciduous edges around conifer plantations and new hedges to link to existing ecological corridors.
3. Encouraging the reversion of conifer plantations to broadleaf woodland.

Settlement and development: conserve and enhance by

1. Improving integration of 20th century development within the wider landscape, especially by replicating the distinctive treed earth banks and small woods of this Landscape Character Type.



Management Guidelines Illustration

Recommendations for further action

Boundaries: Promote the biodiversity benefits of less intensive management and raise awareness of the potential damage from fertiliser run-off or spray.