



Higher Level Stewardship

Environmental Stewardship Handbook

Third Edition – February 2010

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Brown hare use fallow areas and grass margins for laying up.

What is Environmental Stewardship?

Environmental Stewardship (ES) is an agri-environment scheme that is open to all farmers and is funded by the UK Government and the European Union (EU). Farmers and land managers across England enter into voluntary management agreements with Natural England in order to deliver the scheme. In return for looking after England's countryside – our wildlife, landscapes, historic features and natural resources (soils and water) – and providing new opportunities for public access in some cases, ES provides farmers and land managers with a financial incentive that supports and rewards them for this work. ES is managed by Natural England on behalf of Defra.

Who is ES for?

There are three elements within ES – Entry Level Stewardship (ELS), Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS) and Higher Level Stewardship (HLS). Each element is designed to fit with the needs of different types of land, farmers and land managers. The basics are outlined in the diagram below and table overleaf.

Who has put the scheme together?

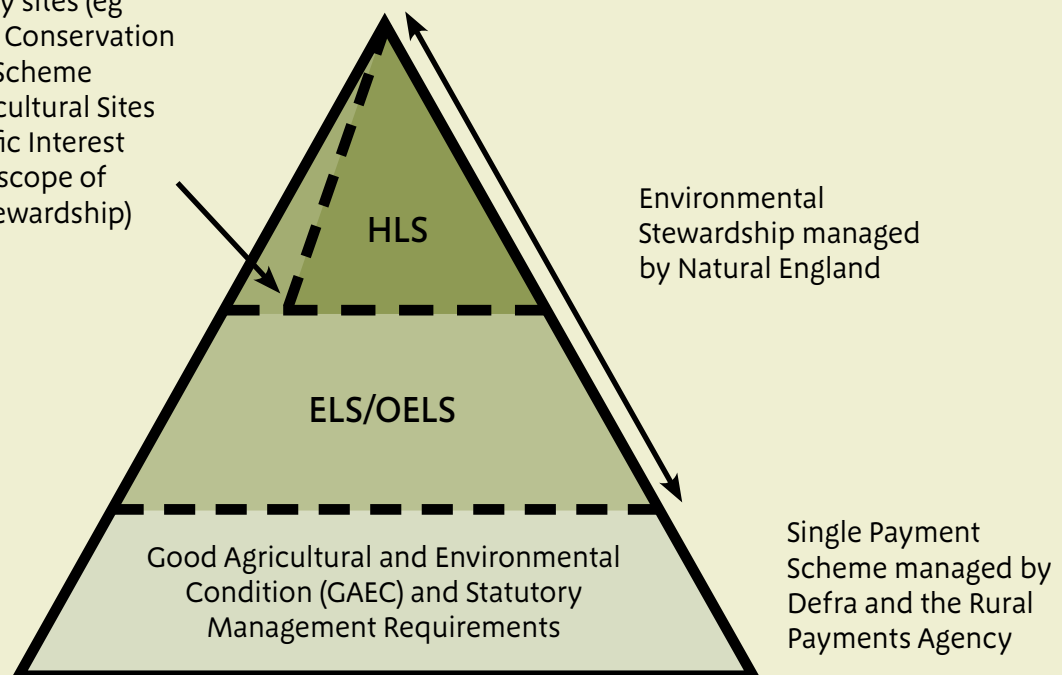
Farming organisations have worked with Natural England and Defra to agree the details of these elements, making sure they are workable and fair for farmers.

What are the benefits of ES?

ES is an effective way for the Government, Natural England and the farming sector to work together to bring environmental benefits to the wider countryside. Tens of thousands of farmers are already in ES because it makes sense for their farming business.

Environmental Stewardship in the wider context

Grants to statutory sites (eg Natural England's Conservation & Enhancement Scheme (CES) on non-agricultural Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) outside the scope of Environmental Stewardship)



	Entry Level Stewardship (ELS)	Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS)	Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)
Level	The simplest level in ES	The organic version of ELS	A more demanding level that asks a farmer to achieve more
Eligibility	Open to all farmers	Open to farmers with organic land, land entering conversion or farms that combine conventional and organic enterprises	Negotiated with farmers in target areas or, outside of those areas, using target themes
Duration	5 years	5 years	10 years, though some options can run longer
Payment	Standard payment of £30 per ha per year (£8 per ha per year on land parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line)	Standard payment of £60 per ha per year Organic conversion aid payments are £175 per ha (improved land for the first two years) and £600 per ha (top fruit orchards for the first three years)	Requires a greater input in management terms, and so attracts higher payments The actual payment varies according to the management required under the specific agreement
What's new in 2010	A new Uplands ELS strand is available from July 2010 to address the particular needs of upland areas. It will have a standard payment rate of £62 per ha per year, and £23 per ha per year on land parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line 15 new ELS options are now available More advice and information is available now for applicants and in certain circumstances one-to-one visits may be arranged	A new Uplands OELS strand is available from July 2010 to address the particular needs of upland areas. It will have a standard payment rate of £92 per ha per year 15 new OELS options are now available If you are entering land for organic conversion for the first time, free support and advice is available through the Organic Conversion Information Service (OCIS). The helpline contact number is 0800 980 0048 More advice and information is available now for applicants and in certain circumstances one-to-one visits may be arranged	A new simplified Farm Environment Plan (FEP) Manual will be published in Spring 2010 One new option and four new capital items are available

Before you read about ES in more detail, you can see what farmers themselves have to say about the scheme in the **Look After Your Land with Environmental Stewardship** booklet available from Natural England. You will also find a summary of each element of the scheme and how it works.

The HLS Handbook – a Quick Guide

This handbook provides full details about HLS, the application procedure and the rules that apply to farmers and other land managers who join. This quick guide explains what the key sections cover and will help you find the answers to questions you may have.

Section 1

Will I be accepted for HLS?

HLS is discretionary. Natural England is looking for agreements that are likely to achieve maximum environmental benefit and represent good value for money. Talk to a Natural England adviser to get an idea of whether you would be likely to get an HLS agreement.

1

What will I need to do if I join HLS?

Section 1.1.4 explains what you will be required to do.

What payment would I receive?

We know that farming is a business and it needs to pay its way. Section 1.1.5 tells you what payment you would receive and Section 1.1.6 tells you when and how you would be paid. Details of all payment rates can be found in **Sections 3** and **4**.

2

Section 2

How do I apply?

Section 2 tells you what you need to do before you apply and provides information on completing and submitting your application.

3

Section 3

How do I find out more about the options?

There are over 90 HLS options and these are summarised in **Section 3**. This section explains their payment rates, an outline of the management requirements and how the options may be combined.

4

Section 4

What will I receive for capital items?

HLS can contribute to the cost of a wide range of capital works. **Section 4** contains a full summary of capital items and their payment rates.

Which edition of the HLS Handbook should I use?

This handbook will apply to all HLS agreements starting on or after 1 February 2010. If this applies to you, this handbook – including all the rules and requirements that it contains – will form a part of your legal agreement with Natural England and must be retained for reference. It is for this reason the handbook needs to include a lot of detail and this explains why it is so comprehensive.

HLS agreements starting before 1 February 2010 will continue to be governed by previous handbook editions, until they are either replaced by a new agreement or reach the end of their 10 year term, as follows:

- Agreements starting January 2006 – September 2008: 1st edition handbook.
- Agreements starting October 2008 – January 2010: 2nd edition handbook.

Key changes from 2nd edition handbook:

- Detailed information about carrying out a FEP survey has been moved to the FEP Manual.
- Option payments have been included in this handbook instead of a separate booklet.
- Information on co-location of options has been gathered together in one table.
- New options:
 - Maintenance of ditches of very high environmental value (HB14).
- New capital items:
 - Identification of orchard fruit tree varieties (IDF)
 - Orchard tree guard (sheep proof) (TOS)
 - Creation of new earth banks (EC)
 - Grip blocking on difficult sites (GBD).



Walkers on the South West Coast Path at Start Point, Devon.

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Section 1

Higher Level Stewardship

1.1 How does HLS work?

1.1.1 What is Environmental Stewardship?

Environmental Stewardship (ES) is an agri-environment scheme that provides funding to farmers and other land managers in England who deliver effective environmental management on their land. It is a major part of the Rural Development Programme for England (2007–2013) (RDPE) and is governed by EU Council Regulation 1698/2005 and Commission Regulations 1974/2006 and 1975/2006 (as amended).

ES has three elements:

- Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) (including the new uplands strand of ELS, referred to as 'Uplands ELS').
- Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS) (including the new uplands strand of OELS, referred to as 'Uplands OELS').
- Higher Level Stewardship (HLS).

HLS, which will usually be combined with ELS or OELS, aims to deliver significant environmental benefits in high-priority situations and areas. HLS concentrates on the higher level of management where land managers need advice and support and where agreements can be tailored to local circumstances.

The primary objectives of Environmental Stewardship are to:

- conserve wildlife (biodiversity);
- maintain and enhance landscape quality and character, by helping to maintain important features such as traditional field boundaries;
- protect the historic environment, including archaeological features and traditional farm buildings;
- promote public access and understanding of the countryside; and
- protect natural resources, by improving water quality and reducing soil erosion and surface run-off.

Within the primary objectives, ES also has secondary objectives of genetic conservation and flood management.

In meeting these objectives, ES will:

- support the adaptation of the natural environment to climate change; and
- enhance the contribution of agriculture and land management to climate change mitigation, for example, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and providing and protecting carbon storage.

Please note that the terms and conditions of Natural England's ELS handbook, as specifically cross-referenced within this handbook, will apply to your HLS agreement even in those cases where your HLS agreement stands alone and is not combined with underlying ELS management options.

1.1.2 Am I guaranteed an agreement?

HLS is discretionary. Agreements are allocated where they are likely to achieve most environmental benefit and represent good value for money. Natural England is looking to secure new HLS agreements that will help manage, restore or create the features set out in the target area and theme statements.

Target areas

Over 100 individually named target areas have been identified across England. They represent the areas where Natural England wishes to focus delivery of HLS to maximise environmental outcomes. Within these target areas, we are seeking multi-objective agreements that can make the greatest total contribution to the identified environmental priorities. The priorities for each target area are set out in the Target Area Statement.

More information is available on the Natural England website – the link to the target areas is in Appendix 2. The distribution of land in England covered by Target Areas, and land covered by Regional Theme Statements, is shown on the map in Appendix 5.

Themes

As well as the target areas, we have identified regional themes that identify priorities for HLS outside the target areas. These themes are detailed in the Regional Theme Statements. The theme approach allows those farmers and land managers outside the target areas to develop HLS applications to meet agreed theme priorities.

More information is available on the Natural England website – the link to the theme statements is in Appendix 2.

1.1.3 Do I need to join Entry Level Stewardship/Organic Entry Level Stewardship?

Normally yes, because ELS, OELS and HLS have been designed to complement each other. If you already have an ELS, or OELS agreement, you will need to re-apply for these options when you make your HLS application. This will ensure that the elements of Environmental Stewardship are combined in the most effective way.

Very occasionally there will be sites for which ELS or OELS options are not available, such as:

- coastal and inter-tidal habitats; and
- lowland heathland.

If your holding is made up largely of these types of habitat, and you believe you would not be eligible for ELS or OELS options, you should discuss this with Natural England. There may be other situations where Natural England considers an HLS-only agreement is appropriate – your adviser will discuss this with you.

1.1.4 What will I be required to do?

In applying for and undertaking an HLS agreement, you are required to:

- Identify, map and retain your Farm Environment Record (FER) features and deliver your ELS or OELS options in accordance with the requirements of the appropriate handbook.
- Deliver the HLS management options and complete any capital works, as set out in your agreement document.
- Adhere to all the scheme terms and conditions contained in this, and the ELS or OELS handbook. In particular, follow cross compliance requirements throughout your land and comply with the other additional requirements contained in Section 1.6.

1.1.5 What payments will I receive?

You will be paid according to the work you agree to when entering into the scheme.

Subject to any EU rule changes referred to at Section 1.4.7 of your ELS handbook or Section 1.4.9 of your OELS handbook, the payment rates that you receive for HLS options will remain the same for the first-five years of your agreement, even if payment rates are reviewed during this period. At this five year break point, any rates that have been changed by a review will normally be applied to your agreement.

For details of all the payment rates, please see Sections 3 and 4 of this handbook.

1.1.6 How and when will I get paid?

If you are accepted into HLS, you will receive a payment every 6 months from the start of your agreement. This will include payment for the ELS or OELS element of your agreement. Each six-monthly payment will be half of your annual management payment for that year, and will be made automatically, apart from the final payment.

Towards the end of the final year of your agreement, you will be sent a form to claim for the remaining payment. When making this final claim, you will need to sign a declaration to confirm that you have complied with the terms of your agreement, throughout the period of the agreement.

Following the introduction of EC regulation 885/2006, all payments will be made directly into your bank account; payments by cheque will not be available. If the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) does not have your bank details, please contact them and request a bank details registration form. Contact details can be found at Appendix 1. If you do not provide bank details to enable payment to be made direct to your account, the RPA will not be able to pay you.

Payment for capital works

You will need to complete a claim form and return it in order to receive payment for capital works.

Your Capital Works Plan will set out the work that you need to do over the whole period of the plan. It will also set out the value of the work you should complete by the end of each intermediate year.

All the work must be completed by the end of the plan period, but the exact order in which you do the work is up to you. The exception is those works that are critical to the success of other management options that are required under your agreement. These 'mandatory works' will be shown in a separate Capital Works Plan for the year in which they must be completed and claimed for.

You will be sent a pre-filled claim form at the start of each plan year. This can be used to claim at any time during the year, as soon as the work is completed, provided the value of each individual claim is at least £500. Once the payment has been authorised, a further form will be sent to you showing any outstanding capital items.

A number of claims can be submitted during the year. If the cost of items claimed exceeds that scheduled for that year, any excess may not be paid until the start of the following year.

1.1.7 When will my agreement start and how long will it last?

There are monthly start dates. Your agreement will start on the next monthly start date after the application is processed, unless you choose a later start date. Our target is to provide you with an agreement within 4 months of receipt of a valid application. Agreements will commence on the first date of a month. For example, for a valid application received during June, we aim to issue an agreement by 1 November. We will give you the earliest start date we are able to, unless you ask for a specific date later than the 4 month target.

In cases where further information is needed, the offer of an agreement may be deferred.

Your agreement with Natural England, which will include ELS or OELS options and HLS options, will be legally binding. It will usually run for 10 years and you will be required to fulfil your obligations for the full term of your agreement. A 20-year agreement may be offered on some inter-tidal and wetland inundation options.

Either party may withdraw from the agreement at the end of the fifth year, without penalty. Notice to withdraw must be given in writing at least 1 month before the end of the fifth year. You will be in breach of your agreement and will incur a penalty if you withdraw at any other time.

1.1.8 Can I get help to understand the scheme and complete my application?

Your Natural England adviser will be able to answer any questions you may have about the scheme and your application. We will visit you to discuss your application and at intervals during the life of your agreement. This is so we can monitor the progress of the various management options with you. It will also provide an opportunity for all parties to reflect on whether the management is achieving the outcomes as set out in your agreement and to consider the need for any adjustments to your agreement. We can also discuss the requirements for including additional capital items.

In the course of these visits, we will collect basic data on the results of management being undertaken. This will allow us to assess the contribution your agreement is making toward government targets for agri-environment schemes.

You can contact your Natural England adviser at any time for further information.

1.1.9 Can an agent act on my behalf?

Please refer to Section 1.1.10 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

1.1.10 How is the scheme inspected and monitored?

Please refer to Section 1.1.11 of your ELS handbook or Section 1.1.12 of your OELS handbook.

1.1.11 Will my details be made public?

Please refer to Section 1.1.12 of your ELS handbook or Section 1.1.13 of your OELS handbook.

In addition to the above, Natural England may, in certain circumstances, make information contained in Farm Environment Plans (FEPs) publicly available. We may also need to disclose details from FEPs to other organisations or individuals for administration, evaluation or monitoring purposes.

Details disclosed include, but are not limited to: your name; the surveyor's name; the name and address of your farm or business; postal town/parish; first part of your postcode; grid references; the total area under agreement; the payments you receive; the location of land parcels; and details of the environmental features.

1.1.12 Will Natural England discuss my application with anyone else?

Yes, when it helps to assess your proposals, particularly if specialist advice is needed. If your land is in a National Park, we will work closely with the relevant National Park Authority in delivering your agreement. Highways authorities are consulted on new access proposals and advice on historic features is sought from local authority archaeological officers. Your Natural England adviser may also seek the views of local specialists, such as a county wildlife trust or local authority countryside staff when assessing your application.

1.2 Who can apply?**1.2.1 Who can join the scheme?**

HLS is open to all farmers and land managers who are one of the following:

- freehold owners
- tenants
- contractual licensees
- common land rights holders.

You must have management control of the land for the term of your agreement (normally 10 years). If you are not certain you have management control for the term of your agreement, you must make a countersigned application with a person who undertakes to carry on your agreement if your management control of the land ceases. Further guidance on countersigned applications is provided at Section 1.2.2 of the ELS or OELS handbook.

1.2.2 What if I do not own some or all of the land?

Please refer to Section 1.2.2 of your ELS or OELS handbook, but note that all references to 5 years should be read as the term for your HLS agreement (normally 10 years, but 20 years if applicable).

1.2.3 What if I own land that is let to a tenant or licensee?

Please refer to Section 1.2.3 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

1.2.4 Are business partnerships and trusts eligible?

Please refer to Section 1.2.4 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

1.2.5 Are public bodies and their tenants eligible?

Please refer to Section 1.2.5 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

1.2.6 Is common land and shared grazing eligible?

Please refer to Section 1.2.6 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

1.2.7 What if others hold rights over my land?

Please refer to Section 1.2.7 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

1.3 What land is eligible?

1.3.1 What land can I enter into the scheme?

Please refer to Section 1.3.1 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

In exceptional cases (for example, on some Sites of Special Scientific Interest), vulnerable non-agricultural land that would benefit from protective management under HLS could be eligible for an agreement. You should discuss the eligibility of such land with your Natural England adviser before making your application.

1.3.2 What land must be excluded from my application?

Please refer to Section 1.3.2 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

1.3.3 Is land that is subject to another scheme or obligation eligible?

As a general rule, Natural England cannot pay you for management that you, or your landlord, are required to do under an existing scheme or obligation.

If land that you intend entering into HLS is in receipt of funding from another grant scheme, you cannot also receive HLS funding for the same work. Work that is outside the scope of HLS may, however, be eligible for grants from other organisations, including local authorities.

You must make sure that there are no other duties or obligations on you or the land that would conflict with your HLS agreement.

The following paragraphs list the most frequently occurring alternative schemes and obligations. Please look through this Section to check if any of the guidance applies to your land.

You should also read Section 1.3 of your ELS or OELS handbook in order to see if any of the guidance provided there also applies to you and your land.

1.3.4 Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS)/Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)

It is not possible for HLS to be combined on the same land as the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) or an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). If you have a CSS or ESA agreement, you will have to wait until your existing agreement expires before applying for HLS in most situations. Land may, however, be added to CSS or ESA agreements where this meets the current scheme rules on amendments.

In some cases, where the existing agreement is on only part of your land, and there are substantial environmental benefits from bringing new land or features into HLS, it may be possible to terminate the existing agreement and replace it with an HLS agreement. Agreement holders who feel they may fall into this category are strongly advised to discuss their case with their Natural England adviser before commissioning a Farm Environment Plan.

1.3.5 Energy Crops Scheme (ECS)

HLS options must not be located within land parcels covered by an Energy Crops Scheme agreement. However, boundaries surrounding ECS parcels may be entered into HLS boundary management options.

1.3.6 Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations

Please refer to Section 1.3.6 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2006

Some HLS options are specifically designed to restore or create valuable habitats, such as arable reversion to species-rich grassland. In entering these options you should assume that the change is permanent, because at the end of your 10-year agreement, the land may well be subject to the Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) (England) (no. 2) Regulations 2006. If the management

has been successful, and the land has reached a high level of environmental significance, these regulations may not allow you to return it to intensive agricultural use, although you may be able to re-enter it into a further agri-environment agreement.

These regulations seek to protect environmentally important land from agricultural intensification. Land likely to be subject to these regulations includes uncultivated and/or semi-natural grassland, heathland, moorland, scrub and wetlands. The type of agricultural operations ('projects') covered include: ploughing; cultivation; digging; scraping; draining; liming; re-seeding; spreading soil or manure or any soil improver; increased application of fertiliser; broadcast spraying of any wide spectrum and/or selective herbicide; and any other work that increases the productivity of the land.

Other options, for example field margins, which are not seeking to re-create semi-natural habitats, are very unlikely to be affected by these regulations.

A link is provided to the Environmental Impact Assessment webpage in Appendix 2.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England & Wales) Regulations 1999

These seek to protect land from potential environmental damage as a result of forestry activity. There are four forestry activities that come under these regulations – afforestation, deforestation, forest roads and forest quarries. The first two activities are most relevant to HLS.

Under these regulations, proposals for afforestation (woodland creation) or deforestation (conversion of woodland to another land use) require consent from the Forestry Commission. Threshold areas exist below which consent is not normally required; the threshold varies depending on the type of forestry activity and the sensitivity of the site.

The HLS options most likely to fall under these regulations are woodland creation and restoration of heathlands, though other options involving tree planting/felling may also apply. If in doubt, contact your local Forestry Commission office for advice.

Further details of these regulations are available in the Forestry Commission booklet **Environmental Impact Assessment of Forestry Projects**, which can be downloaded from the Forestry Commission Internet site. A link to this site is provided in Appendix 2.

1.3.7 Farm Assurance Schemes and the Pesticide Industry Voluntary Initiative

Please refer to Section 1.3.7 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

1.3.8 Habitat Scheme (HS)

It is not possible for HLS to be combined on the same land as the Habitat Scheme (HS). If you have an HS agreement, you will have to wait until your existing agreement expires before applying for HLS in most situations. However, land may be added to HS agreements where this meets the current scheme rules on amendments.

In some cases, where the existing agreement is on only part of the farm, and there are substantial environmental benefits from bringing new land or features into HLS, it may be possible to terminate the existing agreement and replace it with an HLS agreement. Agreement holders who feel they may fall into this category are strongly advised to discuss their case with their Natural England adviser before commissioning a FEP.

1.3.9 Heather and Grass Burning

The Heather and Grass etc. Burning (England) Regulations 2007 explain what you can and cannot do when carrying out controlled burning of permitted vegetation on your farm. Natural England is responsible for enforcing the Regulations. The Heather and Grass Burning Code 2007, which was developed by Natural England and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in consultation with industry partners, outlines good practice for burning heather and grass on your farm. The Code aims to describe a standard of good practice and raise awareness of the new laws, helping burners to burn safely and in ways that can benefit wildlife.

The cross compliance requirements of an ES agreement include complying with these regulations.

If heather or grass burning is part of your HLS agreement, your adviser will discuss and agree a burning plan with you and whether you need a licence. Where your burning plan is agreed with Natural England as part of an Environmental Stewardship agreement, this plan will take precedence over the Heather and Grass Burning Code if the two disagree. A link to further information on this subject is provided in Appendix 2.

1.3.10 Heritage Lottery Funding

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) payments are designed to fund management not covered by HLS or other schemes, or for measures over and above the requirements of other schemes. HLF applications can count HLS as a source of matched or partnership funding towards securing grants for further works, but only where the HLS payments are for separate works that are not subject to prior conditions. Where HLS agreements within an area-wide project have been signed less than 12 months prior to the HLF application, the payments will be viewed as matched funding. The projected payments for future HLS agreements will also be included in the calculations.

1.3.11 Hill Farm Allowance (HFA) and the Uplands Transitional Payment (UTP)

Land on which you are currently claiming HFA is eligible for HLS. HFA will be closing in 2010.

Land that is currently in a CSS or ESA agreement may be eligible for an Uplands Transitional Payment from the RPA until the end of the agreement. Land receiving UTP will be eligible for HLS.

1.3.12 Inheritance Tax/Capital Gains Tax exemption

Please refer to Section 1.3.11 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

1.3.13 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ)

Please refer to Section 1.3.12 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

1.3.14 Organic Farming Scheme (OFS)

The Organic Farming Scheme is closed. Land in OFS is not eligible for HLS. However, it is possible to transfer land from OFS to OELS – see Section 1.3.13 of the OELS Handbook.

1.3.15 Producer Organisation Aid Scheme

Please refer to Section 1.3.13 of your ELS handbook or Section 1.3.14 of your OELS handbook.

1.3.16 Protected Areas: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Natura 2000 Network

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Land designated as an SSSI may be receiving payments under Natural England's Wildlife Enhancement Scheme (WES). SSSI land covered by WES may also be eligible for HLS provided that the two schemes do not fund the same activity.

Natural England will ensure that any HLS agreement helps to achieve favourable condition on the SSSI. We will not award an Environmental Stewardship agreement for any management considered likely to damage the SSSI. Awarding an HLS agreement gives permission, under Section 28E of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), for you to carry out the required management for the duration of that agreement. Permissions for management activities on SSSI land granted as part of an HLS agreement are limited to the duration of that agreement and do not transfer from one land manager to another.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) places new responsibilities on publicly funded bodies ('section 28G authorities') for the management of SSSIs. If you are applying on behalf of such a body, you should contact your Natural England adviser before applying.

Natura 2000 Network

Land designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA), because it holds habitats, plants, animals or birds that are of European importance, is collectively known as the Natura 2000 Network. This land is put in place by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994

Land of this type will also be a notified Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These designations place an additional duty on Natural England to assess any possible significant impacts resulting from an HLS agreement and this will be taken into account when drawing up your agreement. Action necessary for the conservation of the special features of the Natura 2000 sites will usually be allowed. However, there may be some options such as capital works to preserve historic features that need to be assessed in more detail by Natural England.

1.3.17 Protected species

Please refer to Section 1.3.14 of your ELS handbook or Section 1.3.15 of your OELS handbook.

1.3.18 Scheduled Monuments

Land designated as a Scheduled Monument may be receiving payment from English Heritage to help manage the site appropriately under what is known as a Section 17 Management Agreement. Such land may also be eligible for HLS provided that HLS and an English Heritage Section 17 Management Agreement are not funding the same activity.

1.3.19 Single Payment Scheme (SPS)

Please refer to Section 1.3.16 of your ELS handbook or Section 1.3.17 of your OELS handbook. As a general rule, land receiving payments from the SPS may be entered into HLS. Your HLS payment will be additional to any payment you receive from the SPS. It is your responsibility to check your eligibility for SPS.

You should be aware that Natural England has a regulatory responsibility to cross-check all land use options against those declared for the SPS. We will investigate any case where the land use declared for the SPS conflicts, or appears to conflict, with the requirements of the HLS option. For example, an energy crop on land that should be permanent pasture.

1.3.20 Tenancy conditions

HLS options cannot be used for management that a tenant or landlord is required to carry out as an obligation of a legal undertaking, including a tenancy agreement. HLS options can be placed on features (such as buildings or walls) already covered by a tenancy agreement provided the work undertaken for the option is over and above that required by the existing obligation.

1.3.21 Woodland schemes

These are the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (FWPS), the Farm Woodland Scheme (FWS), the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) and the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS). Woodland managed under the Forestry Commission's grant schemes such as EWGS, or the now closed WGS, FWPS and FWS, is not eligible for HLS management options. However, where capital-only schemes exist, it may be possible to include woodland options in HLS. Contact your Natural England adviser or the Forestry Commission for further information.

1.4 Can changes be made to my agreement?

1.4.1 Can I make changes to my agreement?

Please refer to Section 1.4.1 of your ELS or OELS handbook, but note that references to 5 years should be read as the term for your HLS agreement (normally 10 years, but 20 years if applicable).

1.4.2 Can I change my Organic Inspection Body?

Please refer to Section 1.4.2 of your OELS handbook.

1.4.3 Are phased conversions possible under OELS?

Please refer to Section 1.4.3 of your OELS handbook.

1.4.4 What if I let, sell or transfer my land to another party?

Please notify Natural England as early as possible in advance of any change in occupancy or ownership (including sale, transfer, inheritance or lease) of all or any part of your agreement land. If advance notification is not possible, you must inform Natural England within 3 months of the land being transferred. If you do not, you will be in breach of your agreement and you are likely to have to repay the

grant you have received, unless force majeure or other exceptional circumstances apply (see Section 1.4.8 of your ELS handbook or Section 1.4.10 of your OELS handbook).

You must tell the prospective owner or occupier about your agreement before you transfer any existing agreement land. If the new owner or occupier does not continue with the agreement on the transferred land, and/or Natural England does not receive their new application within 6 months of the actual date of transfer, you, not the new owner or occupier, will be in breach of your agreement and you are likely to have to repay all or a part of the grant you have received.

If you transfer **all** your agreement land, you must contact Natural England in writing to confirm the lease, sale or transfer, identifying the new owner or occupier. As indicated above, your whole agreement must be transferred to the new owner or occupier and either continue to its original expiry date or be restarted as a new agreement.

If you transfer **part** of your agreement land, you should contact Natural England to ask us to send you a Land Transfer and Amendment request form (ERDP/LTA1). You will then have to complete and return the form no later than 3 months after the commencement date of lease, the completion date of sale or the actual date of transfer, to amend your agreement.

You will be expected to continue with your existing options on the land that you have retained in your amended agreement. Where necessary, you may need to add further options to meet your revised points target. The amended agreement will run for the remaining term of the original agreement. Alternatively, you may choose to start a new agreement (including any other eligible land that you have), provided that you meet the scheme rules at that time.

If, following a partial transfer, your remaining land will no longer meet the HLS entry criteria, the agreement may need to be closed early. In this case, unless force majeure or other exceptional circumstances apply (see Section 1.4.8 of your ELS handbook or Section 1.4.10 of your OELS handbook), you will be in breach of your agreement, and you are likely to have to repay all or a part of the grant you have received.

1.4.5 What if I acquire land?

If you acquire additional land, it will be in your interests to notify Natural England of the acquisition as soon as possible, to avoid a delay or break in payment. Where the acquired land is already under an Environmental Stewardship agreement and does not remain at the same or higher level of management, the original agreement holder will be in breach of their agreement.

One of the following options will be available, depending on whether or not it is an organic agreement, and on your proposed level of management for the acquired land. For example, on acquisition of new land you may wish to upgrade your agreement from ELS to ELS/HLS. A Natural England adviser can discuss the individual circumstances with you and propose the best solution for your needs:

- Option 1 – you can set up a new agreement to include all your eligible land, including the new land and any existing agreements that you may have, subject to Natural England's approval. You will have to meet the eligibility and entry conditions at the time the new agreement is set up.
- Option 2 – you can take over the agreement on the acquired land for its remaining term. This would be a separate agreement from any pre-existing ES agreement that you may have. Where you take on land forming a part, but not the whole, of an existing ES agreement you may need to add new options to the land to meet the ELS or OELS points target.
- Option 3 – you can apply for a separate agreement on the new land, and, if applicable, wait until your first existing agreement expires and consolidate all your eligible land into one new agreement at that time.
- Option 4 (for ELS and HLS only) – if the acquired land will be managed in the same scheme as your existing agreement, and the additional conditions below are met, you can add it to your existing agreement subject to the following conditions:
 - Land cannot be added to an agreement during the final 2 years of that agreement.
 - The land to be added must be no more than 50 per cent of the size of the original agreement (for example, if you have an agreement of 100 ha, you may add up to 50 ha). If your agreement is within its first 5 years, you may be able to add larger areas with the agreement of your Natural England adviser.

- For acquired land already under agreement, the land to be added must have the same, or earlier, agreement start date than your existing agreement (ie if your agreement starts on 1 January 2010, you can only add land that entered ELS on or before January 2010). This is to ensure that the normal 5 years management is achieved. The entry criteria for both agreements must be the same.

Option 4 can only take effect on the mid-year or end-of-year payment date applicable to your agreement. Additionally, where you have acquired only part of another agreement holder's land, the two agreements must have common payment dates (for example, if your agreement payment dates are 1 February and 1 August, the payment dates on the agreement from where the land is being transferred must be the same). If it is not possible to align the dates, you will need to bring the land in using Option 1, 2 or 3.

1.4.6 When will agreement transfers take effect?

Please refer to Section 1.4.4 of your ELS handbook or Section 1.4.6 of your OELS handbook.

1.4.7 What if I want to upgrade my agreement?

If, on acquisition of land, or at any other time, you wish to upgrade your agreement from ELS/HLS to OELS/HLS or from ELS/HLS to Uplands ELS/HLS, you should contact Natural England first to discuss your plans. You will need to submit a new application and if this is successful, a new agreement will be set up and your existing agreement will be closed.

For upgrades from ELS/HLS to Uplands ELS/HLS, or from OELS/HLS to Uplands OELS/HLS, it may be possible to amend your agreement. Contact your Natural England adviser to discuss your plans.

1.4.8 Derogations

A derogation is required where a minor and temporary change from the agreed management prescriptions is needed on a single occasion. This may involve permission to control serious weed infestations using herbicides; a relaxation from time-based prescriptions; permission to alter cutting or cultivating prescriptions due to practical problems; or to allow metal detecting on known archaeological features on permanent grassland.

You must obtain written approval before you make any changes to your management if you require a derogation for any of the following:

- HLS options
- ELS or OELS options that attract an HLS payment
- ELS or OELS options on the same parcel as an HLS option.

A derogation request form (NE-DR) may be downloaded from the Natural England website or obtained from Natural England. The link to the forms page of the Natural England website can be found in Appendix 2.

Where the derogation concerns organically managed land, you must obtain your Organic Inspection Body's prior approval to the derogation before the proposed change can be made. Your Organic Inspection Body will be required to confirm, by countersigning your derogation request form, that your request is compatible with organic standards.

On receipt of your request, a Natural England adviser may visit you to discuss the issue. You will be informed in writing whether your application for a derogation is approved or not.

The procedure for completing a derogation notice form for your ELS or OELS options is explained at Section 1.4.6 of your ELS handbook or Section 1.4.8 of your OELS handbook.

1.4.9 Variation of your agreement by Natural England

Please refer to Section 1.4.7 of your ELS handbook or Section 1.4.9 of your OELS handbook.

1.4.10 Exceptional circumstances (force majeure)

Please refer to Section 1.4.8 of your ELS handbook or Section 1.4.10 of your OELS handbook.

1.5 Disputes: What happens if I fail to keep to the terms of my agreement or wish to make a complaint?

1.5.1 What is a breach of agreement?

You will be in breach of your agreement if you:

- fail to comply with any agreement conditions;
- are in breach of any requirement which you are subject to under Article 14(2) of Council Regulation 1257/1999, Council Regulation 1698/2005, Commission Regulation 1974/2006, the Rural Development (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2007 or any other relevant European or United Kingdom legislation; or
- make any false or misleading statements in your application or in any other correspondence relating to your agreement.

This is the case whether it is you or anybody else who causes a breach. It is your responsibility to ensure that all agreement conditions are fulfilled, and that all information in your application and other correspondence is accurate.

1.5.2 What penalties could be applied?

If you breach your agreement, you may be liable to one or more of the following penalties, depending on the circumstances of the breach:

- part or all of any future payments due under your agreement may be withheld;
- part or all of the payments already made to you under the agreement may be recovered (and interest charged);
- your agreement may be terminated; or
- you may be prohibited from entering into a new agreement under this scheme or any other EU agri-environment scheme for up to 2 years.

When penalties are imposed, you will be given a written explanation of the reasons for the proposed steps and an opportunity to make any written representations.

When Natural England seeks to recover payments already made to you, interest will continue to accrue from the date of our notification of the breach to you, to the time of reimbursement of the payments from you to Natural England, including during any period when the penalty is being appealed or otherwise under review.

In all cases, any penalties applied will be proportionate to the severity, extent and permanence of the breach.

Penalties will not be applied where Natural England have agreed with you in writing that exceptional circumstances have occurred in relation to any breach (please refer to Section 1.4.8 of your ELS handbook).

The legislation which governs enforcement of breaches of your agreement is the Rural Development (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2007.

Penalties will be applied to the following types of breaches, although Natural England retains discretion to apply penalties in any circumstance specified in paragraph 1.5.1 above:

- 1 Where the total area of eligible land you have declared, or the ELS points/HLS payments you are claiming for a particular option in a specific location, are found to be incorrect or the option is not in that location (for example, a length of hedgerow on the boundary of one field is too short or is not there at all). See below.
- 2 Where the management requirements for an option are not being followed (for example, where a hedgerow has been entered into a hedgerow management option that only permits cutting every other year, but has subsequently been cut annually). See below.
- 3 Where your Farm Environment Record (FER) or Farm Environment Plan (FEP) features have been removed or damaged. See below.
- 4 Where the requirements of cross compliance are not being followed. See below.

- 5 Other breaches of the additional requirements set out at Section 1.6.
- 6 Failure to notify Natural England that you have let, sold or transferred some or all of your agreement land to another party or that you no longer have management control of the land (see Section 1.4).
- 7 Where cross-checks identify that the options you have selected are incompatible with or duplicative of options or management declared under other schemes (such as Single Payment Scheme, CSS, ESA or Forestry schemes).

With respect to any category of breach referred to in this handbook, where a breach is determined by Natural England to be the result of serious negligence on your part you can, in addition to any other penalty, be excluded from all agri-environment measures for the calendar year in question. Where your breach is determined by Natural England to be reckless or intentional, you can be excluded for the following year as well (two years in total) and you may also be required to pay an additional penalty of up to 10 per cent of the payment made or payable to you.

ELS: points claimed cannot be found or management requirements are not being followed

Please see refer to Section 1.5.2 of your ELS handbook.

HLS: length/area discrepancies or management requirements are not being followed

Your payment will be reduced proportionally where checks reveal that:

- there is a discrepancy between what you are claiming for a particular option in a particular location and the actual length/area/number on the ground; or
- you have not followed the management prescriptions for a particular option.

Depending on the scale of the discrepancy between lengths/areas claimed and lengths/areas found, further penalties may be applied as below:

Table 1 Payment reduction and additional penalties for differences between lengths/areas claimed and lengths/areas found

Difference	Penalty
Length/area found is more than the area declared	No penalty, but payment will be based on the length/area declared
Length/area found is less than the area declared: the difference between the area declared and the area found is less than 3%	Payment will be reduced (or recovered) based on the length/area found
Length/area found is less than the area declared: the difference between the area declared payments and the area found is more than 3% but not more than 20%	Difference between declared and found length/area multiplied by two and payment reduced (or recovered) by this amount
Length/area found is less than the area declared: the difference is more than 20% but not more than 50%	All payment for the whole agreement concerned is withheld (or recovered) for the year concerned
Length/area found is less than the area declared: difference is more than 50%	All payment for the whole agreement concerned is withheld (or recovered) for the year(s) concerned, plus an amount equal to the difference will be deducted from the following years/s payment(s)

Damage or removal of FER or FEP features

If you damage or remove any of your FER or FEP features, your annual payment will be reduced. Any penalty will be proportionate to the severity, extent and permanence of the breach, and whether it is repeated.

Consideration will be given to the control you had over the damage or removal; for instance where this might have been wholly or partly due to the action of a third party.

Breaches of Cross Compliance

Breaches of cross compliance will be dealt with in proportion to the extent, severity and permanence of the breach, and whether it is the first time such a breach has occurred. Please contact the RPA for more detail on cross compliance penalties (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

1.5.3 What do I do if I receive an overpayment?

Please refer to Section 1.5.3 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

1.5.4 What if I disagree with any Natural England decision or proposed action regarding my application or agreement?

Please refer to Section 1.5.4 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

1.5.5 How do I make a complaint?

Please refer to Section 1.5.5 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

1.5.6 What do I do if I have a dispute with an Organic Inspection Body over certification issues?

Please refer to Section 1.5.6 of your OELS handbook.

1.6 What additional requirements will apply to my agreement?

You must comply with the additional requirements set out below and in Section 1.6 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

1.6.1 Cross compliance management and HLS options

Please refer to Section 1.6.1 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

HLS options have been designed to go beyond the requirements of cross compliance management. You must follow the procedures explained in Section 3 of the ELS or OELS handbook when you are applying for and managing your hedgerow (for example, HB12) and grass margin (for example, HE10) options. There are some arable options where, for reasons of timing or location, the HLS management may fall outside the cross compliance conditions. If you comply with the conditions of the HLS agreement, you will not have to meet the cross compliance conditions that conflict with the agreement.

The land management required for some options will, however, usually contravene the requirements of cross compliance because the land is unlikely to be capable of being 'returned to agricultural production by the next growing season'. Such land is also likely to become ineligible for the SPS, either because it is 'forest' or because it is 'used for non-agricultural activities'. Therefore, if you have land accepted into one of the options that affect the SPS, which you have included as 'eligible hectares' in your SPS application, you will be required to surrender to the national reserve a number of entitlements equal to the number of 'eligible hectares' upon which these HLS options will be paid.

1.6.2 Common land

If, in addition to the land you are entering into HLS, you also hold grazing rights on common land, you must not increase the level of stocking on the common land.

1.6.3 Capital works

You should follow the timetable in Part 4 of your agreement and complete the works to the specification set out in Part 5 of your agreement.

If your agreement replaces an existing or expired Countryside Stewardship Scheme or Environmentally Sensitive Areas agreement, you must take all reasonable care to protect, for the duration of this new agreement, any capital works that you have completed and for which you have been paid under that agreement.

Section 2

How to apply

2.1 What do I need to do before I submit my application?

2.1.1 Register your land on the Rural Land Register (RLR)

Please refer to Section 2.1.1 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

2.1.2 Ensure you have a Rural Payments Agency (RPA) vendor number and a County Parish Holding (CPH) number

Please refer to Section 2.1.2 of your ELS handbook or Section 2.1.3 of your OELS handbook.

2.1.3 Contact Natural England

If you have not already been approached by a Natural England adviser about submitting an application, you must contact Natural England before completing and submitting a Farm Environment Plan (FEP) and HLS application.

A Natural England adviser will give you a realistic assessment of whether your holding has any potential for HLS before you go to the expense of commissioning a FEP. This is to avoid wasted time, money and effort by you and your FEP surveyor.

Natural England will not charge you for this assessment, but any costs incurred by you at this stage will not be reimbursed by Natural England.

Will I be told the outcome of the assessment immediately?

The Natural England adviser will write to you or your agent to notify you of their assessment of your holding's potential for an HLS application.

If the Natural England adviser considers that there is potential for an HLS agreement on your holding, they will inform you accordingly and explain that you now need to arrange for a FEP to be carried out and use this to help complete and submit an HLS application.

If a FEP and properly completed HLS application are submitted following advice from a Natural England adviser, then, provided the FEP meets the required standards, it will be eligible for a FEP payment. Please refer to the FEP Manual for details.

2.1.4 Obtain an application form and maps

HLS applications must be submitted by post. To apply by post you will have to obtain an application pack first.

Please refer to Section 2.1.5 of your ELS handbook or Section 2.1.4 of your OELS handbook for details of how to obtain a pack.

In addition, FEP surveyors can request a copy of the HLS FEP Manual and an example FEP Map.

2.1.5 Check your application pack is complete

The application pack will include:

- A pre-filled application form with information about you and your land, including RLR field numbers and areas. You need to check that all fields are included on the application form. If they are not please contact your Natural England office. See Appendix 1 for details.
- Environmental Information Maps showing designations on your land such as SSSIs, Scheduled Monuments, Less Favoured Areas (LFA) and the Moorland Line. This will allow you to identify high-priority features on your land that would benefit from the introduction of some of the options.

- A Combined FER and FEP Map. This blank map of your land should be used to prepare your combined FER and FEP Map, and should be returned with your application form. Guidance for entering features on to your FER Map is provided at Section 2.3 of your ELS or OELS handbook. If someone else will be carrying out your FEP, you will need to provide them with your FER Map.
- An ELS or OELS Options Map. This map should be used to mark where you are putting your ELS or OELS options on your land. This map should be returned with your application form.
- An HLS Options Map. This map should be used to show where you are putting your HLS options on your land. These will usually include both the land management options and any capital works that you intend to carry out during the first 2 or 3 years of your agreement. This map should also be returned with your application form.
- Your target area or theme statement.

2.1.6 Carry out a FEP survey

The primary purpose of a FEP is to gather good quality information about the current environmental value and interest of your farm and its potential to deliver additional environmental benefits. The FEP is designed to capture this information in a way that both you and Natural England can use to help build an HLS agreement.

Full details of how to produce a Farm Environment Plan can be found in the FEP Manual available from Natural England offices, see Appendix 1 for contact details.

A FEP consists of a completed form and annotated map(s). The form is available in either electronic or paper format. A personalised paper FEP form will not automatically be provided in the HLS application pack. You are encouraged to use the electronic version of the FEP (the e-FEP) instead, which is available on the Environmental Stewardship pages on the Natural England website. This is because the Historic Environment Record (HER) consultation will normally be provided in a format that allows the information to be electronically copied and pasted into the FEP.

If you require a paper copy of the FEP form, please contact Natural England to request a copy. The link to the e-FEP page can be found in Appendix 2. A standard letter for the Historic Environment Record consultation is at Appendix 4.

The FEP will:

- identify features that may benefit from HLS management, which will allow Natural England to assess applications in a consistent way. It will also provide Natural England with a basis for monitoring the success of the scheme; and
- provide a baseline for future assessment of the condition of features managed under HLS.

For the purpose of the FEP, 'feature' means the environmental features that are listed and explained in the FEP Manual. The target area statement or theme statement relevant to your land will identify the types of feature of particular significance in your area, which we hope to have managed under HLS.

Although a FEP is a prerequisite for entry into HLS, it should also be of general interest to the way the farm is managed, as it will contain a detailed assessment of the historical, landscape and conservation value of the land and it will cover areas such as soil erosion risk. It will provide a useful tool for ensuring that the whole farm is managed in an environmentally friendly way.

A FEP should, therefore, be useful to other farm advisers and contractors. For instance, by identifying vulnerable habitats, it will help in complying with the Voluntary Initiative (on the safe use of pesticides) and should help in complying with environmental standards in farm assurance schemes.

If an application is received for land without a FEP, it will be rejected. FEPs will be valid for 5 years and do not need to be repeated once an HLS agreement is in place.

A FEP must meet our quality standards if we are to make a payment for it. In order to meet our quality standards, the FEP surveyor will have to carry out a thorough desk study and field survey. See the FEP Manual for more detail.

As a condition of ELS and OELS, you must identify, map and protect important environmental features and areas on the land. When applying for HLS, this information is recorded on the combined FER/FEP Map and you do not need to complete a separate FER.

FEPs can be carried out by anyone who has experience of the practical issues involved in the five main objectives of the scheme and an ability to identify the relevant features described in the FEP Manual. Whoever carries out the FEP will need to have access to the Internet in order to obtain relevant information.

Natural England has a register of active local FEP Surveyors and helps to match land owners with them where requested.

2.2 What do I need to consider when completing my application?

Step-by-step advice on completing the application form is given in Section 2.3.

2.2.1 How should I choose which options to put in my application?

The FEP should have identified all environmental features on your land. Your target area statement or theme statement will explain which features identified in your FEP are most likely to meet the objectives of the scheme and would therefore benefit most from inclusion in an HLS application.

Your agreement will be drawn up in discussion with your Natural England adviser using the information in your FEP. Each option will have a set of management prescriptions that you must follow, but there will be considerable flexibility in the means by which you achieve the agreed outcomes.

Environmental Stewardship focuses on achieving outcomes, not just following prescriptions. We need you to work with your adviser, using your knowledge and experience of your land, to adapt and fine tune the management of your holding to achieve the aims of the scheme. All options therefore have one or more 'indicators of success' (see below).

Section 3 of this handbook summarises the aims and management involved for each land management option or group of options, and the payment rates for options. Where relevant, it also includes guidance on what type of land is eligible for particular options. Although the options have been described as primarily addressing a single objective, in practice they can be used to benefit a range of environmental objectives. For example, the creation of species-rich grassland on former arable land could also help protect archaeological remains and reduce diffuse pollution.

2.2.2 What is an 'indicator of success'?

Experience has shown that it is not always possible to achieve the aims of the management options simply by following a set of prescriptions.

Environmental and agricultural conditions change over time and we need you to adapt your management accordingly. The 'indicators of success' are intended to 'paint a picture' of what we are looking to achieve, so that you and your Natural England adviser can judge whether the management is working, and to see whether adjustments are needed. You will need to refer to these indicators, and use your own knowledge of your land and your farming system, to fine tune your management to allow for variations in conditions between years and between different areas of your land. Please note, you must still continue to comply with the management prescriptions, but you should find these provide sufficient flexibility to allow the kind of individual tailoring indicated above.

2.2.3 What is the difference between the maintenance, restoration and creation options?

Many of the broad suites of options have individual components, which at first glance look very similar. In particular, you will see that there are maintenance, restoration and creation options for many features. It is important to understand the difference between them before submitting your application.

Natural England's highest priority is the maintenance of existing high-quality sites, followed by restoration, then creation.

Maintenance

These features will already be in good condition and the FEP will have identified this. The management requirements will almost certainly be very similar to the ones you followed before you joined the scheme. Management will therefore maintain the status quo and there may be limited scope for enhancing the environmental interest.

Restoration

For restoration options, the FEP will have identified the fact that the feature is present but that it is not in a good condition. More positive management will be necessary and certain activities will need to stop, in order that, over time, the feature is restored. You will have the opportunity to discuss the restoration potential of individual land parcels, and their management, with your Natural England adviser. Potential will depend on factors such as:

- soil type
- pH and nutrient status
- soil wetness
- management history
- location of the parcel in relation to existing features.

Creation

The FEP might have identified the opportunity for creating a new feature. Creation options will be limited to the circumstances where a need for habitat creation has been identified, and then only on the most suitable sites.

Suitability will depend on similar factors to those given for restoration (see above). Creation will not normally be accepted if the site already has significant features. If the site is suitable, the creation options will require the conversion to a very specific type of grassland or other habitat, and will be quite demanding.

2.2.4 Can I use ELS/OELS options to complement my HLS options?

Under HLS there is the opportunity to apply for more ELS or OELS options, in addition to those required to meet your ELS or OELS points target. The relevant ELS or OELS options are listed in Section 3 of this handbook. These options should only be included in an HLS agreement where:

- their use will clearly benefit features identified in the HLS target area or theme statement;
- there is no appropriate HLS option available to achieve the desired outcome;
- the targeted feature is best managed using an ELS or OELS option; and
- their use provides best value for money.

Where an alternative HLS option is available, it should be used in preference to using an ELS or OELS option.

2.2.5 Can I have more than one option on the same area of land?

HLS is designed to build upon ELS or OELS options, and you might want to consider how certain ELS, OELS and HLS options could be combined on the same parcel of land. This may deliver additional environmental benefits that would not otherwise be achieved.

As a general rule, an ELS, OELS or HLS land management option cannot occupy the same area of land at the same time as another land management option, unless the second option is a supplement designed to 'sit on top' of the first option.

However, there are exceptions for certain combinations of options. The table at Section 3.4 shows combinations of options that may be located in the same place at the same time. Only combinations of options shown in this table are permitted. A supplement must be located on at least one management option. The table also shows the management options upon which each supplement can be located.

When co-locating options you must follow the prescriptions of all options. In the event that prescriptions of co-located options contradict each other, you must follow the more restrictive of them. For instance, EK5 (Mixed stocking) states: 'Supplementary feeding is allowed, but move feeders as often as required to avoid poaching'. EL3 (Permanent grassland with very low inputs in the SDA) states: 'Do not supplementary feed'. Where these are co-located, no supplementary feeding is allowed.

Options may be placed in the same land parcel, or on the same boundary, as long as they do not overlap on the ground.

2.2.6 How should I take landscape considerations into account?

There are no management options aimed specifically at 'the landscape', but it is nevertheless very important that all of the chosen options respect the character of the area. The selection of appropriate land management options and capital works should reflect and enhance the distinctive historic and landscape character of the local area. Options for the maintenance of existing features and habitats will generally maintain and strengthen the landscape character of the area. Features and habitats to be restored by more pro-active management options will generally conserve, restore and strengthen the typical landscape character.

For example, in a predominantly pastoral, enclosed landscape, options chosen to maintain field boundaries and permanent pasture will help to maintain and strengthen the local landscape character. If an option is also chosen to restore an arable field back to grassland, and is combined with capital works to restore the field boundaries to a stockproof condition, this will make a significant contribution to restoring the local landscape character.

Some options, such as buffer strips and wild bird mixes, which are used to enhance wildlife habitat, need to be very carefully located to ensure that they do not have a negative visual impact on the landscape.

How should I take the protection of nearby rivers and waterbodies into account?

Even though there are no specific options for the protection of rivers and sensitive waterbodies, there are many HLS options that can contribute to the protection and buffering of these sites from some intensive operations. For instance, the placement of resource protection or buffering options alongside, or connected to, sensitive habitats may be important or necessary where the protection of that river or stream is specified in the targeting documents. Capital works may also be available to help further that protection. The FEP will help you identify which fields pose the greatest risk in terms of generating diffuse pollution and your Natural England adviser will help you deploy measures to reduce impacts on off-farm habitats.

2.2.7 Can I apply for capital works?

HLS can contribute to the cost of a wide range of capital works. These works will be agreed with your Natural England adviser and set out in a Capital Works Plan. You cannot have a Capital Works Plan without having one or more HLS land management options. The potential for capital works may be identified as part of the FEP or become apparent later, during the life of the agreement. Works upon which management options will depend (such as fencing and access gates) will have to be completed in year one, but other works may be completed at a later stage.

You can only start work when the relevant Capital Works Plan has been agreed and signed.

An individual Capital Works Plan can run for 1, 2 or 3 years. Amendments to a plan during this period are only allowed under exceptional circumstances, such as force majeure or land transfers. In subsequent years you will be able to apply for a completely new Capital Works Plan to run for another 1-, 2- or 3-year period. Contact your Natural England adviser for the relevant application form and map.

You will usually be expected to manage only one Capital Works Plan at a time. However, in some specific situations, for example, where a management plan is required before further work can be undertaken, a second or third plan may be added before the first plan has expired. Your Natural England adviser will be able to provide more information on when this approach will be taken.

Some works will require consent from a statutory body, and it is your responsibility to ensure that you obtain permission before starting work. Health and safety requirements, codes of practice and any other relevant legislation must also be observed.

Specifications will be provided, if applicable, for the minimum standard of work for items in your Capital Works Plan. If you do not follow these specifications, we cannot pay you for the work. Where it has not been possible to identify a standard payment, a percentage grant based on the actual costs can be offered. In these cases you will need to provide written estimates at the time of your application and a receipted invoice at the time of your claim.

All capital works must be completed and maintained to the standard required to perform their intended function for the duration of your agreement. This includes replacement as necessary.

2.2.8 Do I need to submit an implementation plan or management plan?

Implementation plan

In some situations, plans may be commissioned to refine certain aspects, such as scrub and bracken management, heath/moor burning, resource protection works or large-scale field boundary network restoration. These implementation plans will normally be prepared at the start of your agreement and will then form part of your agreement. Your Natural England adviser will explain if one of these plans is needed and whether funding is available through a Capital Works Plan.

Management plan

A management plan will be needed where a thorough evaluation of the current condition and future potential of the feature, together with detailed recommendations for implementing proposed management is necessary.

A management plan will usually be carried out through a 1-year stand-alone agreement, which could then be followed by a 10-year HLS agreement, if appropriate. As well as a thorough survey and an assessment of feasibility, the plan should suggest all the HLS options and capital items required to deliver optimum management. In certain cases, it may be necessary to undertake the recommended work through a special project. Typically, this is for situations such as:

- historic parkland restoration
- inter-tidal and major wetland creation and restoration
- heathland restoration in a complex archaeological landscape
- the management of poorly-known rare species or those of very restricted distribution.

If your application is likely to involve any of these situations, please discuss them with your Natural England adviser before drawing up your application.

Once the need for a plan and its details have been agreed with Natural England, you will be paid a contribution for the cost of employing professional help to prepare the management plan. Your Natural England adviser will confirm the required content of the plan (detailed guidance notes are usually available).

2.2.9 Do I need consent from anyone?

If your land includes a designated feature, you will require formal consent from the relevant body before carrying out any works that would affect the designated feature. Once your application has been received, your Natural England adviser will discuss your proposals with the relevant body before you are offered an agreement. If you have already started this process, any correspondence or an 'in principle' approval should be submitted with your application, as this will speed up the processing of your application.

In many situations, the relevant body will have to give consent before an HLS agreement can be offered. In all cases, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have the necessary consent before starting any work. Further information is set out below.

Scheduled Monuments

For Scheduled Monuments on your land, the local English Heritage Historic Environment field adviser can give you advice on any management or changes you will need to undertake to bring the monument into favourable condition and your Natural England adviser will consult English Heritage once you apply. You may need Scheduled Monument Consent from English Heritage for some work. They can tell you if the proposed works are likely to be acceptable.

Archaeological fieldwork or metal detecting on your land

Please see Section 1.6.5 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

Work affecting water

You will need Environment Agency or Internal Drainage Board consent for management that will affect watercourses. This includes work both to, and within, 8 m of a watercourse or work within the flood- or coastal plain. For example, the installation of sluices to raise water levels, or excavation works such as ponds or scrapes, may require land drainage consent or an abstraction licence.

Please note that farms with significant erosion problems, or those causing pollution, will be required to rectify this situation before being considered for an agreement, particularly in sensitive river catchments.

Work on trees and hedges

You may need permission for work on trees that are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), for instance during hedge restoration. Ask your local authority Tree Officer. If you are removing trees, or managing overgrown hedges, and you are felling more than 5 m³ of timber in a calendar quarter, you may need a Forestry Commission Felling Licence. Guidance (Tree Felling – getting permission) is available to download from the Forestry Commission website. Details can be found in Appendix 2.

Listed buildings

If any works are proposed to listed buildings, you will need to discuss the proposals with your local authority Conservation Officer, who will advise if listed building consent is required.

Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. These can include rural landscape areas, as it may be the special qualities and interest of the area that leads to its designation. Conservation Area status may impose additional restrictions on carrying out work and remove some permitted development rights on agricultural holdings. The Local Planning Authority must be consulted if any part of the holding is located within a Conservation Area and particularly if any work is proposed to trees, buildings, boundaries or structures.

Planning permission

Most routine agricultural operations do not require planning permission either because they are not regarded as 'development' under planning legislation or because they are 'permitted development' that is 'reasonably necessary' for agriculture. For some activities, such as the creation of new ponds, the planning requirements may not be straightforward. Your Local Planning Authority can give you informal advice as to whether your proposals are either permitted development or require planning consent. You are therefore encouraged to contact them at an early stage if you are unsure whether the activity requires planning consent. 'A Farmer's Guide to the Planning System' is available to download from the Defra website at www.defra.gov.uk.

National Parks

If your land is in a National Park, you are advised to contact the National Park Authority, which can provide advice and information about making the best of the environmental interest on your land as part of your application. It is also the relevant authority for many of the above issues.

2.2.10 What should I do if I have already sown my crops?

Please refer to Section 2.2.4 of your ELS or OELS handbook. When deciding on your agreement start date, you should consider any changes that you may have to make to your farming system and, in particular, your existing cropping commitments.

2.2.11 When should I send in my application?

You can submit your application to your Natural England office at any time. Contact details can be found in Appendix 1.

2.2.12 What happens once I have submitted my application?

Applications that demonstrate good environmental management for target area or theme features are the most likely to be successful. HLS continues to be a competitive scheme and each HLS application will be assessed on its merits against these targets. If your application does not address the relevant priority targets for your area, it will be rejected. There will be no advantage in including large amounts of extra management options in your application that do not address the scheme targets for your area.

If applications do not include satisfactory management of SSSIs or Scheduled Monuments (where present on the holding), they will be re-negotiated or rejected regardless of their assessment.

2.2.13 What will I receive if my application has been successful?

If your application is accepted, subject to any changes agreed with your Natural England adviser, you will be offered an agreement. You will need to sign and return this within 14 days of receipt. The agreement does not come into force until all parties have signed it.

Your agreement document will include the following sections:

- Part 1 will provide details of your annual ELS or OELS and HLS payments, including, where appropriate, 'conversion aid' payments on land in OELS.
- Part 2 will be a summary showing options within your ELS or OELS and HLS agreement.
- Part 3 will describe the management required for each HLS option you have chosen, the prescriptions you must follow and what the 'indicators of success' will be.
- Part 4 will include, if applicable, your Capital Works Plan. The works to be carried out will usually be scheduled over a 2- or 3-year period.
- Part 5 will provide specifications, if applicable, for the minimum standard of work for items in your Capital Works Plan.
- Part 6 will list all your fields under permanent grass and the total area of temporary grass, along with the permitted maximum stocking density for your land.
- Part 7 will be maps showing the location of your ELS or OELS and HLS options.

In addition, you will receive:

- any relevant Environmental Stewardship Guidance Notes, which will provide additional guidance on various land management issues. If you need more information on any particular topic, please contact Natural England; and
- a copy of your FER/FEP Map, forming part of your agreement.

2.2.14 What if my application is unsuccessful?

If the HLS part of your application does not meet our assessment criteria, this part of your application will be rejected. We will tell you if your application has not been successful and explain why. If this happens, you will have three choices (as set out in the application form):

- withdraw your entire application and continue with your existing ELS or OELS agreement (if you already have one);
- proceed with just the ELS or OELS part of your application; or
- withdraw your entire application and re-submit one at a later date.

If you are unsuccessful, you may submit a written representation to Natural England. Your case will then be reviewed.

2.3 How do I complete my application?

2.3.1 Step-by-step summary of how to apply

Step 1 Contact Natural England: Section 2.1.3 of this handbook	Contact with Natural England to discuss the potential your land may have for HLS.
Step 2 Obtain an application form and maps: Section 2.1.4 and 2.1.5 of this handbook	To obtain your pre-filled application form and maps, you should contact your Natural England office. Check that your maps and the pre-filled details on your application form are correct. Check that your RLR field numbers and areas on your Field Data Sheet at Annexes 1, 2 and 3 of your application form are accurate. Complete all the relevant sections of the application form.
Step 3 Prepare a Farm Environment Plan: Section 2.1.6 of this handbook and HLS FEP Manual	Prepare a Farm Environment Plan for your farm. You may wish to hire an agent to do this work for you.
Step 4 Select management options: Section 3 of this handbook	Using the recommendations from the FEP and the target area and theme statements for your area, consider the most appropriate HLS options for your land as discussed with your Natural England adviser.

Step 5 Complete Annexes 1, 2 and 3: Section 2.3.2 of this handbook and your ELS or OELS Handbook	<p>Choose from the list of ELS or OELS and HLS options and complete Annexes 1, 2 and 3 of your application form. Include enough ELS or OELS options to meet your points targets.</p>
Step 6 Complete Annex 4: Section 2.3.3 of this handbook	<p>Choose your HLS rotational options and complete Annex 4. These do not have to be marked on a map.</p>
Step 7 Complete Annex 5: Section 2.3.4 and 4 of this handbook	<p>Choose the capital works, as agreed with your Natural England adviser, that you wish to do in the first 3 years, and complete Annex 5. Mark these on your HLS Options Map.</p>
Step 8 Complete Annex 6: Section 2.3.5 of this handbook	<p>List all your permanent grassland fields and the total area of temporary grassland in Annex 6 and calculate the maximum stocking density.</p>
Step 9 Complete your Options Maps: Section 2.3.6 of this handbook	<p>Complete your Options Maps.</p>
Step 10 Submit your application: Section 2.3.7 of this handbook	<p>Make sure you have read and understood all the terms and conditions contained in this handbook and your ELS or OELS handbook. Check that you have completed all sections of the application form and included any supplementary forms or photographs if required with your application. Submit your application to Natural England and you may wish to retain proof of postage.</p>

Section 2

Where you have an ELS option combined with an HLS option on the same parcel then the HLS payment may have to be reduced where there is an overlap in the management required. See Section 3.4 of this handbook.

Application reference:

* Total value of HLS options for this sheet.

Section 2

Step B: Record the code, description, payment rate and amount in the appropriate columns.

HJ13 Winter cover crops

Step D: Calculate the total payment for all rotational and access base payment options.

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2.3.4 Step 7: How to complete Annex 5 (HLS capital works)

Step A: Write the code of your chosen capital works at the top of one 'work item' column.

Step B: Write the location of the work in this column. For work to boundaries, number them 1, 2, 3 etc (mark the number against the corresponding boundary on the options map); for in-field works, use the RLR parcel number; for any other works use a six-figure grid reference.

Step C: For each entry, calculate the quantity required (eg number, length, area). The quantity should be rounded to the nearest whole unit ie 1.4 m = 1 m, except in the case of quantities based on a per hectare payment in which case these should be rounded to the nearest 0.01 of a hectare.
For actual cost items, please enter the estimated cost of the work.

Step D: Calculate the total amount of your option and record this figure in the row marked 'Total amount'.

Step E: Enter the cost of the capital item per unit or, if it is an actual cost item, the percentage grant rate.

Step F: Calculate the total cost of each capital item.

Step G: For actual cost items, you should enter the estimated cost of the work and multiply by the percentage grant.

Step H: Calculate the total cost of all the capital items.

Annex 5. HLS capital works									
	Work item								
	HR	HSL	PH	FSB/H	WS	WT	HTB	CLH	Total HLS Payment
Location reference	Quantity	Quantity	Quantity	Quantity	Quantity	Quantity	Quantity	Quantity	
1	110 m	110 m		220 m					
2	75 m			150 m					
3			50 m	100 m					
XY6810 6529					85 m	1			
XY6790/6570					42 m	1		£1,100	
Grid ref 848 576							£10,500		
4	250 m			500 m					
Total amount	435	110	50	970	127	2	£10,500	£1,100	
£s/unit OR %	£5.00	£2.40	£5.00	£1.80	£2.00	£85.00	80%	60%	
Total £s	2,175	264	250	1,746	254	170	8,400	660	£13,919

2.3.5 Step 8: How to complete Annex 6 (grassland area and stocking rate)

Step A: List all fields, by RLR field number, on your farm identified as permanent grassland and enter the total amount of permanent grassland. The definition of permanent grassland is as for the SPS, ie land that at the time of application is used to grow grasses or other herbaceous forage, whether naturally or through cultivation, and which has not been included in the crop rotation of the farm for 5 years or longer. If the land has been reseeded during the 5-year period, it may still be counted as permanent grassland.

Step B: Calculate the total area of temporary grassland on your farm. Temporary grassland is land that, at the time of application, has been used to grow grasses or other herbaceous forage, whether naturally or through cultivation, for less than 5 years.

Step C: Calculate the total area of all grassland (permanent and temporary).

Annex 6. Grassland management

If you are applying for any options involving grassland management please complete this annex.

Permanent grassland (RLR Field Numbers)	Area (ha)
XY 6790 6278	9.54
XY 6390 6573	2.49
XY 6850 6549	3.18
XY 6810 6529	10.04
XY 6790 6570	10.87
Total area of permanent grassland (ha)	36.12
Total area of temporary grassland (ha)	2
Total area of all grassland (permanent and temporary)	38.12

Please provide the current maximum stocking density over your farm.

If necessary, please discuss with your Natural England contact.

Livestock units per hectare

1.0

If necessary, please continue on additional sheets and indicate here how many you have attached

Note: In providing the above information, you undertake:

- not to reduce the area of permanent grassland on the farm during the lifetime of the agreement; and
- not to vary the area of temporary grassland by more than 20% during the lifetime of the agreement.

Step D: Calculate the maximum stocking density over your farm.

Animal numbers converted into Livestock Units (LUs)
Animal numbers are converted into Livestock Units as follows:

	LUs
Dairy cow	1.0
Beef cow	1.0
Cattle over 2 years old	0.7
Cattle 6 months to 2 years	0.6
Lowland ewe and lamb	0.12
Hill ewe and lamb	0.08
Ram or teg over 6 months	0.15
Ewe follower and/or store lamb	0.08
Horse	1.0
Pony	0.8

These values are for medium-sized breeds. Large breeds will have approximately 20 per cent higher LU values and small breeds will be approximately 20 per cent lower, for each category.

Other grazing ruminants, such as deer or camelids, should be allocated an LU value in proportion to their liveweight, ie 60 kg animal approximately = 0.1 LU.

Calculate your maximum stocking rate – worked example.

	LUs	LUs
20 beef cows	20 X 1.0	20
7 cattle (over 2 years)	7 X 0.7	4.9
8 cattle (6 months to 2 years)	8 X 0.6	4.8
5 cattle (under 6 months)	5 X 0	0
50 lowland ewes and lambs	50 X 0.12	6.0
3 horses	3 X 1.0	3
Total:		38.7

Total area of forage (no other rented land) in temporary grass or permanent grassland): 38.12 ha

$$38.7 \text{ LU} \div 38.12 \text{ ha} = \mathbf{1.01 \text{ LU/ha}}$$

Your Natural England adviser will discuss and agree this stocking rate with you during the site visit, before an agreement is offered. If necessary, it can be amended at this stage.

2.3.6 Step 9: How to complete your Higher Level Stewardship Options Map

An example HLS Options Map is included at the end of this Section.

For each option you wish to include in your HLS agreement, you must:

- decide where the option is to be located on your land (you may decide you want to have the option in more than one location);
- mark every instance of the option with a coloured pencil on your HLS Options Map(s) using the appropriate colour for that option specified in the map key. Do not mark rotational options or access base payments – these are recorded separately on Annex 4;
- mark any capital works on the same map, annotating each boundary on which work is to be completed with a unique boundary reference number; and
- write the appropriate option code, using a fine black pen, on or against the option in each place that you have marked it on your HLS Options Map(s).

2.3.7 Step 10: Submit your application

Declarations and undertakings

You will need to study parts 2 and 5 of the application form as these contain important declarations and undertakings that will be binding for the duration of your agreement. If you are at all uncertain about your ability to comply with these undertakings, please do not sign the application form until you have discussed your concerns with your Natural England adviser. Please also read Section 2.3.2 of your ELS handbook or Section 2.3.3 of your OELS handbook.

Please read, complete and sign the declaration in your application form.

Please return the following items to Natural England:

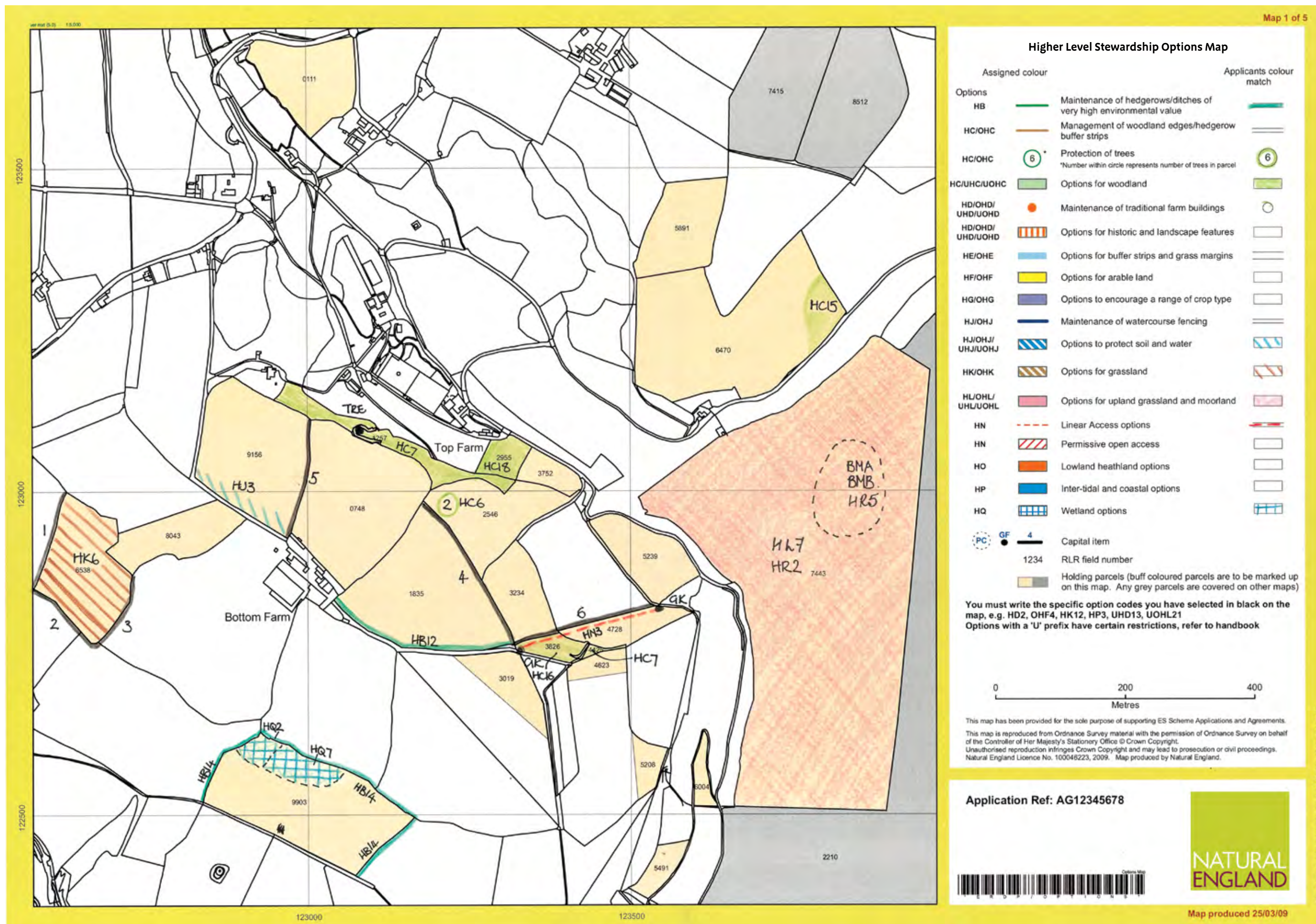
- your completed and signed application form;
- Annexes 1 to 6 of your application form;
- your FEP and combined FER/FEP Map;
- your ELS or OELS Options Map marked with the options you have chosen;
- your HLS Options Map marked with the options you have chosen;
- the HER consultation response; and
- where your application includes organically managed land, copies of your current, valid certificates of organic registration and accompanying schedules issued by your Organic Inspection Body, covering all the land in your organic unit.

Where applicable, you will also need to include:

- consents from other organisations, including the common land supplementary application form, landlord consent and agent authorisation form, where appropriate; and
- management plans (see Section 2.2.8).

You are advised to retain a copy of all these documents before sending them to Natural England. Contact details can be found at Appendix 1.

Higher Level Stewardship Options Map



Section 3

Management options and supplements

The HLS management options and supplements are summarised in this Section. The table in Section 3.1 below provides a complete list, including payment rates, of the available HLS management options. This is followed by detailed descriptions in Section 3.2 of the overall aims and the management required for each of these options. In Section 3.3, there is a list of the ELS or OELS options that can, under certain circumstances, be included in an HLS agreement. At the end of the Section, in 3.4, there is a table that shows the combinations of options that can occupy the same land.

3.1 Summary table of HLS options and payment rates

Code		Payment	Units	Page
Options for boundary features				
HB11	Management of hedgerows of very high environmental value (both sides)	£54	100 m	40
HB12	Management of hedgerows of very high environmental value (one side)	£27	100 m	40
HB14	Management of ditches of very high environmental value <i>NEW in 2010</i>	£36	100 m	41
Options for trees, woodland and scrub				
HC5	Ancient trees in arable fields	£25	tree	41
HC6	Ancient trees in intensively managed grass fields	£25	tree	41
HC12	Maintenance of wood pasture and parkland	£180	ha	42
HC13	Restoration of wood pasture and parkland	£180	ha	42
HC14	Creation of wood pasture	£180	ha	43
HC7	Maintenance of woodland	£100	ha	43
HC8	Restoration of woodland	£100	ha	43
HC9	Creation of woodland in Severely Disadvantaged Areas	£200	ha	44
HC10	Creation of woodland outside Severely Disadvantaged Areas	£315	ha	44
HC15	Maintenance of successional areas and scrub	£100	ha	45
HC16	Restoration of successional areas and scrub	£100	ha	45
HC17	Creation of successional areas and scrub	£100	ha	45
Supplements				
HC11	Woodland livestock exclusion supplement	£100	ha	45
Options for orchards				
HC18	Maintenance of high-value traditional orchards	£250	ha	46
HC20	Restoration of traditional orchards	£250	ha	46
HC19	Maintenance of traditional orchards in production	£95	ha	46
HC21	Creation of traditional orchards	£190	ha	47
Options for historic and landscape features				
HD6	Crop establishment by direct drilling (non-rotational)	£70	ha	48
HD7	Arable reversion by natural regeneration	£500	ha	48
HD8	Maintaining high water levels to protect archaeology	£240	ha	48

Code		Payment	Units	Page
HD9	Maintenance of designed/engineered water bodies	£295	ha	49
HD10	Maintenance of traditional water meadows	£350	ha	49
HD11	Restoration of traditional water meadows	£350	ha	49
Options for arable land				
HE10	Floristically enhanced grass buffer strips (non-rotational)	£485	ha	50
HF12	Enhanced wild bird seed mix plots (rotational or non-rotational)	£475	ha	50
HF14	Unharvested, fertiliser-free conservation headland	£440	ha	50
HF20	Cultivated fallow plots or margins for arable plants (rotational or non-rotational)	£440	ha	51
HG5	Brassica fodder crops followed by overwintered stubble	£90	ha	51
HG6	Fodder crop management to retain or recreate an arable mosaic	£150	ha	51
HG7	Low-input spring cereal to retain or recreate an arable mosaic	£250	ha	52
Options to protect soil and water				
HJ3	Arable reversion to unfertilised grassland to prevent erosion or run-off	£280	ha	52
HJ4	Arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input to prevent erosion or run-off	£210	ha	52
HJ6	Preventing erosion or run-off from intensively managed, improved grassland	£280	ha	53
HJ7	Seasonal livestock removal on grassland with no input restriction	£40	ha	53
Supplements				
HJ8	Nil fertiliser supplement	£55	ha	53
Options for grassland				
<i>Species-rich, semi-natural grassland</i>				
HK6	Maintenance of species-rich, semi-natural grassland	£200	ha	54
HK7	Restoration of species-rich, semi-natural grassland	£200	ha	54
HK8	Creation of species-rich, semi-natural grassland	£280	ha	55
<i>Management of wet grassland for waders and wildfowl</i>				
HK9	Maintenance of wet grassland for breeding waders	£335	ha	56
HK10	Maintenance of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl	£255	ha	56
HK11	Restoration of wet grassland for breeding waders	£335	ha	57
HK12	Restoration of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl	£255	ha	57
HK13	Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders	£355	ha	57
HK14	Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl	£285	ha	57
<i>Management of grassland for target features</i>				
HK15	Maintenance of grassland for target features	£130	ha	58
HK16	Restoration of grassland for target features	£130	ha	58
HK17	Creation of grassland for target features	£210	ha	58
<i>Buffer strips</i>				
HE11	Enhanced strips for target species on intensive grassland	£590	ha	58

Code		Payment	Units	Page
Supplements				
HK18	Haymaking supplement	£75	ha	59
HK19	Raised water levels supplement	£80	ha	59
HQ13	Inundation grassland supplement	£85	ha	59
Options for moorland and upland rough grazing				
HL9	Maintenance of moorland	£40	ha	60
HL10	Restoration of moorland	£40	ha	60
HL11	Creation of upland heathland	£60	ha	61
HL7	Maintenance of rough grazing for birds	£80	ha	61
HL8	Restoration of rough grazing for birds	£80	ha	61
Supplements				
HL12	Supplement for management of heather, gorse and grass by burning, cutting or swiping	£7	ha	62
HL13	Moorland re-wetting supplement	£10	ha	62
HL15	Seasonal livestock exclusion supplement	£10	ha	62
Options for access				
HN1	Linear and open access – base payment	£350	Agreement/yr	63
HN2	Permissive open access	£41	ha	63
Permissive linear access				
HN3	Permissive footpath access	£45	100 m	64
HN4	Permissive bridleway/cycle path access	£90	100 m	64
HN6	Upgrading Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act access for cyclists/horses	£90	100 m	64
HN5	Access for people with reduced mobility	£100	100 m	64
HN7	Upgrading Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act access for people with reduced mobility	£105	100 m	64
Educational access				
HN8	Educational access – base payment	£500	Agreement/yr	65
HN9	Educational access – payment per visit	£100	visit	65
Options for lowland heathland				
HO1	Maintenance of lowland heathland	£200	ha	66
HO2	Restoration of lowland heathland	£200	ha	66
HO3	Restoration of forestry areas to lowland heathland	£200	ha	66
HO4	Creation of lowland heathland from arable or improved grassland	£450	ha	67
HO5	Creation of lowland heathland on worked mineral sites	£150	ha	67
Options for inter-tidal and coastal locations				
Sand dunes and vegetated shingle systems				
HP1	Maintenance of sand dunes	£140	ha	68
HP2	Restoration of sand dunes	£140	ha	68
HP3	Creation of coastal vegetated shingle and sand dunes on arable land	£320	ha	68
HP4	Creation of coastal vegetated shingle and sand dunes on grassland	£200	ha	68
Salt marsh, mudflats and saline lagoons				
HP5	Maintenance of coastal salt marsh	£30	ha	69

Code		Payment	Units	Page
HP6	Restoration of coastal salt marsh	£30	ha	69
HP7	Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on arable land	up to £700	ha	70
HP8	Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on grassland	up to £500	ha	70
HP9	Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat by non-intervention	£150	ha	70
Supplements				
HP10	Supplement for extensive grazing on salt marsh	£70	ha	70
HP11	Salt marsh livestock exclusion supplement	£40	ha	70
Options for wetland				
Ponds				
HQ1	Maintenance of ponds of high wildlife value (less than 100 m ²)	£90	pond	71
HQ2	Maintenance of ponds of high wildlife value (more than 100 m ²)	£180	pond	71
Reedbeds				
HQ3	Maintenance of reedbeds	£60	ha	71
HQ4	Restoration of reedbeds	£60	ha	71
HQ5	Creation of reedbeds	£380	ha	72
Fens				
HQ6	Maintenance of fen	£60	ha	72
HQ7	Restoration of fen	£60	ha	72
HQ8	Creation of fen	£380	ha	72
Lowland raised bogs				
HQ9	Maintenance of lowland raised bog	£150	ha	73
HQ10	Restoration of lowland raised bog	£150	ha	73
Supplements				
HQ11	Wetland cutting supplement	£350	ha	73
HQ12	Wetland grazing supplement	£200	ha	73
Additional supplements				
HL16	Shepherding supplement	£5	ha	74
HR1	Cattle grazing supplement	Up to £35	ha	74
HR2	Native breeds at risk grazing supplement	Up to £70	ha	74
HR4	Supplement for control of invasive plant species	£60	ha	76
HR5	Bracken control supplement	£35	ha	77
HR6	Supplement for small fields	£35	ha	77
HR7	Supplement for difficult sites	£50	ha	77
HR8	Supplement for group applications	£10	ha	77

3.2 Detailed description of HLS options

This Section outlines the management required for each of the HLS options. The exact management prescriptions will be discussed and agreed with you by your Natural England adviser, then included in your agreement.

Options for boundary features

Hedgerows and ditches provide shelter and food for many target species of farmland birds, insects and mammals. They are often an intrinsic part of the farmed landscape, can be important for the plants they contain and can provide important corridors for wildlife movement.

Traditionally, hedgerows and ditches were used to enclose or exclude animals and to mark ownership boundaries and rights of way. Ditches were also used to manage water levels and provide drinking water to livestock. The particular mix of shrub and tree species in a hedgerow, which reflects both the age of the hedgerow and local management customs, contributes to local landscape character. Hedgerows and ditches are a living part of our history and provide a record of our use of the countryside over the centuries.



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The FEP will help identify species-rich hedgerows suitable for HB11 and HB12.

HB11 Management of hedgerows of very high environmental value (both sides)	£54 per 100 m
HB12 Management of hedgerows of very high environmental value (one side)	£27 per 100 m

These options are used to manage hedgerows that support target species of farmland birds, insects or mammals, such as the tree sparrow, brown hairstreak and dormouse. They are also used to maintain hedgerows that make a significant contribution to the local landscape character and/or are historically important boundaries.

Improving the structure of hedgerows through sympathetic trimming, and encouraging a diverse range of hedges across the farm, including the development of a balanced tree population where it is appropriate to the local landscape, benefits farmland birds, insects, plants and mammals.

Where required, works such as laying, coppicing, planting up gaps or establishing new hedgerow trees can be funded by a Capital Works Plan. Hedges managed under an ELS option may also be eligible for Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) capital item payments.

NEW OPTION IN 2010:

HB14 Management of ditches of very high environmental value

£36 per 100 m

This option is aimed at the management of ditches that support target species of plants, birds, mammals and insects. They can occur in grassland, wetland and arable landscapes. Ditches can rapidly become dominated by tall vegetation with scrub on the banks. Sensitive management is necessary to maintain a variety of habitats, from open water to ditches full of wetland plants to benefit the target species. This will also help to maintain local historic wetland landscape character.

If there is a hedge adjacent to the ditch this can also be managed under an appropriate Environmental Stewardship option.

Ditch restoration, and other capital items such as the provision of bridges and sluices, can be funded by a Capital Works Plan.

Options for trees, woodland and scrub

Trees and woodlands provide an integral, and often dominant, part of the landscape in many parts of England. Woodlands have been managed for timber for thousands of years and many still retain signs of this historic management. Old coppice stools and pollards can still be found in many woodlands, as can evidence of woodbanks, charcoal hearths, iron-smelting works and pottery kilns. Woodland, wood pasture, parkland and successional scrub are valuable and important wildlife habitats supporting a diversity of flora, insects, birds and mammals, as well as being of historic interest.

The greatest concentrations of our ancient trees are found in ancient woodlands, wood pastures and parklands. These trees are a valuable habitat for wildlife, including rare and threatened species of insects, lichens, fungi and bats. Wood pasture consists of large, open-grown trees (often pollards), usually standing in grassland or heath. They are a remnant of an ancient system of combining livestock and woodland management. Parklands include designed landscapes created to retain deer for hunting as well as those established more recently. Often originating in medieval times, many were embellished with formal avenues, water features and follies in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Woodland and hedgerow planting can be used to protect soils and watercourses and should be considered with grass buffer strips as a resource protection measure. In drier parts of the country, on peaty and sandy soils where high wind speeds coincide with bare seedbeds, hedgerow and woodland planting may provide a windbreak or shelterbelt and help to reduce the risk of soil erosion. On long, steep slopes, re-establishment or introduction of breaks, such as hedgerows or woodlands, may help to intercept and slow surface run-off water before it builds into damaging flow. Native species would normally be specified for tree planting and in all cases the species used should be appropriate to the site.

These options will not be available if the woodland is already receiving payments under the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme, the Farm Woodland Scheme or the English Woodland Grant Scheme.

HC5 Ancient trees in arable fields

£25 per tree

HC6 Ancient trees in intensively managed grass fields

£25 per tree

By establishing a grass buffer around the base of the tree, these options protect ancient trees within arable or intensively managed grass fields from damage by livestock, cultivation and other agricultural activities.

Management must include:

- establishing an unfertilised grass buffer with a radius of at least 15 m around the base of each tree;
- not allowing treatments applied to the adjacent land to affect the buffer;
- protecting trees from damage by livestock including stock rubbing against the trees, bark stripping and soil compaction;

- retaining all tree limbs, including the lower limbs on the tree; and
- retaining any standing or fallen dead wood.

Capital items, such as fencing to protect trees from livestock, can be funded by a Capital Works Plan.

HC12 Maintenance of wood pasture and parkland

£180 per ha

HC13 Restoration of wood pasture and parkland

£180 per ha

These options are used to maintain or restore the wildlife, historic and landscape character of existing and former wood pasture and parkland. Sites that are suitable for restoration will still support a number of ancient trees and/or parkland features. It may be that the sites are not grazed, are managed under arable cropping or have been planted with conifers or other inappropriate trees.

Parkland restoration will require a parkland plan, which is a capital item funded under the HAP code (see Section 4.2 of this handbook). This is to ensure that the original views and important elements of the designed parkland are retained. The other options will require an implementation plan, which can be funded by a Capital Works Plan under the PAH capital item.

Management must include:

- protection of existing and newly established trees from damage by livestock, including stock rubbing against the trees, bark stripping and soil compaction;
- grazing to maintain areas of closely grazed turf interspersed with taller tussocks;
- no use of fertiliser;
- no ploughing or other cultivation; and
- no re-seeding, rolling or chain harrowing.



© Natural England/Simon Duffield

Remnant oak wood pasture, Hampshire.

Restoration, such as tree planting to replace lost trees, scrub removal to prevent shading to ancient trees and restoration of ponds or water features, can be funded by a Capital Works Plan.

HC14 Creation of wood pasture

£180 per ha

This option is used to create wood pasture on sites that are known to have been wood pasture previously or on sites adjacent to or linking existing areas of wood pasture. The option can also be used on appropriate sites within the National Forest and community woodlands. Planting will not be allowed on archaeological features, on sites of existing wildlife value or where trees would be detrimental to the landscape.

The preferred method of creation will be by careful and flexible grazing management to allow trees and shrubs to develop by natural regeneration. In some cases, it might be necessary to sow a specified grass seed mixture or to plant additional trees, both of which can be funded by a Capital Works Plan.

HC7 Maintenance of woodland

£100 per ha

HC8 Restoration of woodland

£100 per ha

These options are used to maintain or restore farm woodlands to benefit wildlife and to protect and strengthen the local landscape character. They are only appropriate where the woodlands are part of the farmed landscape or part of the management of the agricultural holding (eg grazed). The Forestry Commission's English Woodland Grant Scheme should be used for any woodland with silvicultural objectives – contact your Natural England adviser for further advice.

Management includes:

- maintaining rides and glades within the woodland by grazing or cutting;
- high forest management; and
- rotational coppicing.

Restoration may require you to:

- exclude livestock;
- remove inappropriate species;
- undertake planting;
- protect trees from grazing damage; and
- re-introduce a selective felling or coppicing cycle to restructure the habitat.

Capital items, such as planting new trees and fencing, can be funded by a Capital Works Plan.

In your application, you will need to provide details of what you are trying to achieve and how this will be done. The maintenance option HC7 may not be eligible on plantations funded under the Farm Woodland Scheme or the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme for up to 15–20 years after the period of grant aid for the scheme has ended. For further details please contact your Natural England adviser.



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Depending on the size of the woodland, funding can be obtained through Environmental Stewardship.

HC9 Creation of woodland in Severely Disadvantaged Areas

£200 per ha

HC10 Creation of woodland outside Severely Disadvantaged Areas

£315 per ha

These options are used to create small areas of new woodland that benefit wildlife and strengthen the local landscape. They can also be used to protect soils and watercourses. The options will be particularly valuable on sites adjacent to existing woodland. Planting will not be allowed on archaeological features, on sites of existing wildlife value or where trees will be detrimental to the landscape.

Option HC10 can be used in riparian zones to create flood plain woodland. These can be beneficial, not only in terms of creating valuable habitat, but also in the potential buffering of sensitive waterbodies against diffuse pollution and as water retention areas to mitigate intense flood activity. It must be located in areas supported by the Environment Agency's Catchment Flood Management Plans and in agreement with the Environment Agency.

These options are for new woodlands that are, individually, less than 1 ha in size and, in total, less than 3 ha across your land. If you are considering planting areas larger than 1 ha, grants might be available from the Forestry Commission under the English Woodland Grant Scheme.

Woodland creation may include:

- site preparation;
- fencing the area of natural regeneration or new planting; and
- controlling weeds.

Capital items, such as trees, tree tubes and fencing, can be funded by a Capital Works Plan.

With your application you will need to provide information about how you are going to create and maintain the woodland. This should include the proposed methods of establishment (eg natural regeneration or planting). If you propose planting, you need to provide information on the species that will be planted.

HC15 Maintenance of successional areas and scrub	£100 per ha
HC16 Restoration of successional areas and scrub	£100 per ha
HC17 Creation of successional areas and scrub	£100 per ha

These options aim to maintain, restore or create a succession of scrub habitat. They can be used to provide structure in valuable scrub habitats, including sea buckthorn on east-coast dune systems and limestone pavement in Yorkshire and the north-west. Adjacent to woodland these options can be used to enhance or maintain the quality of the woodland edge environment.

These options can also be used to provide or enhance habitats for specific target species and to protect soils and watercourses. Scrub creation is particularly aimed at sites where target species already occur and where the site is adjacent to existing areas of scrub or woodland. Planting will not be allowed on archaeological features, on sites of existing wildlife value or where trees would be detrimental to the landscape.

Management will be tailored in order to maintain, restore or create the ideal habitat conditions required by a particular target species, or to protect vulnerable soils. This may include:

- allowing scrub to develop naturally;
- extensive grazing on part, or all, of the site;
- exclusion of livestock; and
- coppicing.

Supplements

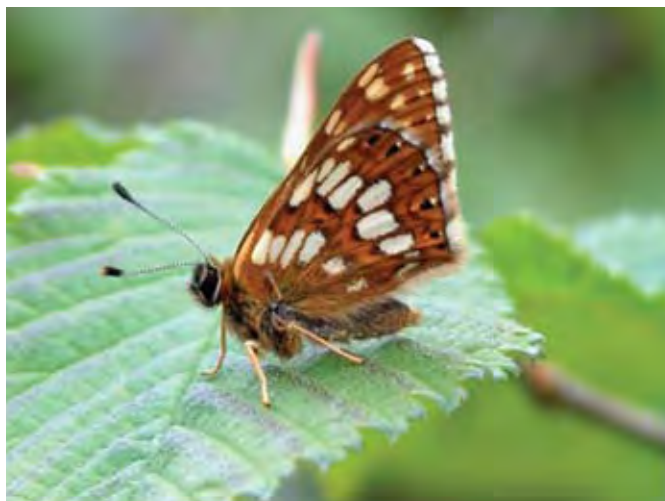
HC11 Woodland livestock exclusion supplement	£100 per ha
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This supplement supports the removal of livestock from overgrazed woodland or from areas of scrub, in order to encourage the establishment of trees and shrubs by natural regeneration. Following successful establishment, a grazing regime would then be re-introduced. The supplement is only available on the Restoration of woodland option (HC8) and the Creation/Restoration of successional areas and scrub options (HC16/HC17).

Please note, you may not be able to claim SPS on land subject to this supplement. Please contact your Natural England adviser for more information.

Options for orchards

Traditional orchards are characterised by widely spaced standard or half-standard fruit trees, of old and often scarce varieties, grown on vigorous rootstocks and planted at low densities, usually less than 150 trees per ha in permanent grassland. Where they occur, they are a distinctive feature in the local landscape, often containing rare fruit varieties and providing valuable habitats for birds, mammals and insects. Dead wood on old orchard trees can support many species of insect, including the rare noble chafer beetle.



© Natural England/Robert Goodison

Duke of Burgundy butterflies benefit from management of scrub grassland.

Traditional orchards generally consist of apple (for fruit or cider), pear (for fruit or perry), cherry, plum or damson trees or cobnut plantations. Extant orchards that are over 30 years old may be eligible for options HC18, HC19 or HC20. Remnant and recently planted orchards may be eligible for option HC21. Preference will be given to sites that can provide public amenity – particularly public access.

HC18 Maintenance of high-value traditional orchards
HC20 Restoration of traditional orchards

£250 per ha
 £250 per ha

These options are aimed at existing traditional orchards and nut plantations of high landscape, historical or wildlife value that are no longer managed primarily for fruit production (although there are no restrictions on selling the fruit).

HC18 is used for maintaining existing traditional orchards that are generally in good condition. These will have at least two-thirds of the original stations occupied by trees, with less than 25 per cent of these requiring restorative pruning.

HC20 is aimed at restoring neglected orchards. These may contain trees that are overgrown or being lost to scrub, and there may be gaps where trees have died or have been removed. Suitable orchards will have between one-third and two-thirds of the original stations occupied by trees. The option is also used where more than 75 per cent of trees require restorative pruning.

Under either option, management must include:

- maintaining the characteristic tree form (this will vary depending on species, variety, management system and – in some cases – region);
- protecting trees from damage by livestock;
- retaining and protecting all mature or over-mature standing trees;
- retaining some standing dead trees and some dead wood on living trees;
- managing the sward through hay-cutting or grazing – without the use of fertiliser; and
- no rolling or chain harrowing.

Restoration may include:

- restorative pruning;
- re-introducing annual pruning;
- a tree-planting programme to restore tree numbers to an appropriate level (see option HC21 for guidance on planting orchard trees); and
- establishing or re-introducing management of a grass sward and/or scrub control.

Capital items, such as fencing, new trees and protective guards, can be funded by a Capital Works Plan.

HC19 Maintenance of traditional orchards in production

£95 per ha

This option aims to maintain traditional orchards that contribute to the historic landscape character (HLC) of the area and are managed primarily for commercial fruit production.

Management will include:

- maintaining the characteristic traditional tree form;
- protecting trees from damage by livestock; and
- following an agreed programme of crop protection to control specific, recorded pests and diseases.

Other management, including a grazing regime, appropriate pruning, fertiliser applications and supplementary feeding, will be tailored to the site and fruit varieties.



© Natural England/Nigel Russell

Traditional apple and plum orchard, Cambridgeshire.

HC21 Creation of traditional orchards

£190 per ha

This option aims to enhance the historic landscape character by establishing small orchards on sites that are known to have been orchard in the past, or are now remnant features with fewer than one-third of the original stations occupied by trees. New traditional orchards that have been recently planted may also be eligible. The option can also be used to extend the area of orchard habitat adjacent to sites known to support threatened species, such as the noble chafer beetle. Suitable sites will normally be smaller than 1 ha and will either contain remnant trees or tree stations or appear as an orchard on old map records. The use of this option is highly targeted and will require the recommendation of a specialist.

To create an orchard, you will need to plant fruit trees of traditional varieties grown on vigorous rootstocks. A circle with a diameter of 1 m around the base of all newly planted trees must be kept free of all vegetation for the first 3 years after planting by mulching, the use of mulch mats, or the careful use of an approved herbicide. Watering will be necessary initially and during dry periods. Formative pruning will also be required, and once grazing is introduced, the trees will need to be protected from livestock damage.

Once the trees are established, the management should be the same as that for option HC18.

Capital items, such as fencing trees and protective guards, can be funded by a Capital Works Plan.

Options for historic and landscape features

Archaeological features such as hill forts, burial chambers, hollow ways, ridge and furrow, sheep washes, traditional farm buildings and Second World War defensive structures all contribute to our rich historical heritage and landscape. They are often of ecological value, enriching landscape diversity and providing wildlife habitat. These features are an important record of our cultural development and where they occur on agricultural land it is important to protect and preserve them. Many features of archaeological interest are protected and preserved in wetlands with high water levels.

The historic environment options will protect the features from further damage or erosion. Provision of interpretation, permissive access and/or educational visits is encouraged on suitable sites.

Where they are considered appropriate by Natural England, the ELS/OELS historic options can also be used to protect or enhance features of historic environment interest within an HLS agreement. The use of options HD/OHD1 to HD/OHD5 will be restricted to situations where the prescribed management meets a primary objective of HLS as identified in the relevant target area or theme statement and where they provide good value for money.

HD6 Crop establishment by direct drilling (non-rotational)

£70 per ha

This option allows annual crops to be direct-drilled, in order to protect archaeological features just below the surface from damage by ploughing or other deep cultivation. Due to the damage caused by the deep root systems of some crops and from harvesting operations, certain crops may not be grown under this option. It is targeted at sites where the land parcel cannot be removed from arable cropping.

Management includes:

- no growing of root crops, maize or energy crops;
- direct drilling all crops at a depth no greater than 30 mm; and
- no cultivation, sub-soiling, deep ploughing or mole-ploughing.

Care must be taken to direct-drill only in dry soil conditions, in order to avoid compaction or rutting.

HD7 Arable reversion by natural regeneration

£500 per ha

This option is targeted at the most vulnerable features within arable or grass ley situations. The purpose is to protect sub-surface features by ceasing cultivation and establishing permanent grassland by natural regeneration.

Other reversion options, such as HD2/OHD2 (Taking archaeological features out of cultivation), may be more appropriate on less sensitive sites; your Natural England adviser will be able to provide further advice. This option may also help to protect soils from erosion and reduce diffuse pollution.

Management must include:

- allowing the sward to establish by natural regeneration; and
- managing the sward by grazing or topping during the first year or so to encourage tillering of the grasses.

Once established, the sward should be managed by grazing or cutting for hay. Any activities that would damage the sward must be avoided.

HD8 Maintaining high water levels to protect archaeology

£240 per ha

Features of archaeological interest that are protected and preserved in wetlands are vulnerable to drainage and agricultural improvement. This option is used to maintain current high water levels to protect underlying archaeological features from desiccation. The option may also help to protect vulnerable soils from erosion, reduce diffuse pollution and maintain the landscape character of the area.

Management includes:

- maintaining water levels at no more than 30 cm below the ground level at all times of the year;
- avoiding field operations and stocking when the land is wet, as this can cause compaction and damage to sub-surface features;
- no ploughing, sub-surface cultivation, re-seeding, chain harrowing or rolling; and
- preventing the development of reeds, large sedges or scrub.

HD9 Maintenance of designed/engineered water bodies

£295 per ha

Designed or engineered water bodies such as millponds and formal water features enhance distinctive historic and landscape character and can provide valuable habitats for wildlife. This option maintains both the designed or engineered water body and the associated features such as dams, retaining walls and sluices. In some cases, an implementation plan will be required; this should be discussed with your Natural England adviser.

Management will be tailored to the individual feature but will include:

- annual maintenance inspections of masonry, brickwork, pointing or engineering structures;
- regular maintenance to avoid decay or deterioration of the fabric; and
- use of traditional materials, techniques and craftsmanship.

HD10 Maintenance of traditional water meadows

£350 per ha

HD11 Restoration of traditional water meadows

£350 per ha

Water meadows are an important component of the distinctive historic and landscape character in parts of England. They also provide valuable habitats for wildlife and, in certain circumstances, may provide an area of flood containment. Water levels in traditionally managed water meadows, including catch meadows, are controlled using sluices and hatches, a process known as floating or drowning the meadow.

These options are used to maintain or restore the demanding traditional management required on water meadows. Management will include:

- floating or drowning the water meadow for an agreed period of time each year; and
- maintaining gutters, carriers or channels to encourage an even film of water approximately 25 mm deep to flow over the sward.

Once the land has dried out, the meadow must be managed by grazing and/or by hay-cutting. Particular care must be taken to ensure that field operations and stocking do not damage the soil structure or cause heavy poaching – especially when the land is waterlogged.

To restore water meadows, you are likely to need an implementation plan before any work to restore items can be started. You may need to restore water control structures and associated gutters, carriers and other channels. Scrub clearance and coppicing of bank-side trees may also be required. These works can be funded by a Capital Works Plan or can form a capital special project.

Options for arable land

Arable farming creates the characteristic open-ploughed land of areas such as East Anglia and the Vale of York. It is also an important part of the mixed farming tradition of areas such as the Midlands and the south-west. However, modern crop management can limit the variety of insects, plants, birds and mammals traditionally associated with such land. For example, arable species such as the corn bunting, grey partridge, pheasant's-eye and cornflower have declined in numbers. Many field boundaries have been removed. In some circumstances, crop management may also cause soil compaction that can lead to increased run-off and erosion. In turn, this can cause pollution of water courses or increased local flooding.



Flooded water meadow south of Salisbury.

© Natural England/Simon Duffield

Arable options are normally available only on land that has been in arable production, including temporary grassland and long-term set-aside, during the 5 years prior to the start of your agreement. An exception to this are options involving the recreation of an arable mosaic (HG6 and HG7), where you can include land that has been in arable cultivation at any time in the last 10 years.

Arable options should only be considered where you can provide evidence that your proposals will benefit species mentioned in your target area or theme statement and recorded in your FEP. Arable options should be placed sensitively to avoid potential detrimental impacts on adjacent waterbodies, particularly where that option may encourage soil compaction and enhance sediment mobility.

Rotational arable options can be moved from field to field to fit in with your crop rotation or within a field to help reduce pest and disease build-up. They can also be kept in the same location within a field if this delivers the required HLS benefits.

If you choose any rotational arable options, you will need to keep a record to confirm the location of these options each year.

Non-rotational arable options will normally be fixed in an agreed location for the duration of the agreement.

HE10 Floristically enhanced grass buffer strips (non-rotational) £485 per ha

This option is used to provide habitat and foraging areas for insects and birds by maintaining buffer strips that contain a mixture of grass and wildflower species. The strips can be located along field boundaries or as a buffer strip around in-field features, such as ponds or archaeological features.

Management must include establishing the strip by natural regeneration or by sowing a seed mixture agreed with your Natural England adviser. Once established, the strip must be cut or grazed to deliver the desired outcomes for your situation.

HF12 Enhanced wild bird seed mix plots (rotational or non-rotational) £475 per ha

This option is used to provide a valuable winter food source for declining farmland birds in arable and mixed farming landscapes. The plots or margins should provide a year-round supply of small seeds tailored to meet the needs of the target bird species. The size, location and number of plots will also be tailored for the target bird species identified in your FEP.

Management must include establishing an agreed seed mixture every year or every other year, and following an agreed pesticide and fertiliser programme.



© Natural England/Mirinda Gardner

Many farmland birds will benefit when crops such as quinoa are allowed to set seed.

HF14 Unharvested, fertiliser-free conservation headland £440 per ha

This option is applied to the headland of a cereal crop. The aim is to provide a year-round food source for declining populations of farmland birds. The restricted pesticide programme in the cereal headland will allow insects to flourish, providing food for chicks in summer. Over winter the unharvested headland will provide a food source for farmland birds by providing grain and seeding arable plants. The headland also has significant additional wildlife benefits when managed in conjunction with HE10 (Floristically enhanced grass buffer strip) or with ELS or OELS buffer strip options on cultivated land (EE1/OE1, EE2/OE2 or EE3/OE3).

Management includes cultivating and sowing a 6 m to 24 m cereal headland, which can surround a range of crop types including cereals. The headland will be managed by following a restricted herbicide and insecticide programme, without the use of fertilisers and left unharvested until the following spring, when normal land management can be resumed. Care should be taken to avoid soil compaction.



Conservation edge to an arable field.

© Natural England/Peter Roworth

HF20 Cultivated fallow plots or margins for arable plants (rotational or non-rotational)

£440 per ha

This option is used to create opportunities for rare arable plants to germinate, flower and set seed.

Management must include cultivation to establish a firm, fine tilth, either in the autumn or spring – depending on the rare arable plants being targeted. The fallow plot or margin should be retained for an agreed period without the use of pesticides and fertilisers. This option must not be located on land parcels identified on the FER/FEP map as being at risk of soil erosion and should be located sensitively to avoid detrimental impacts on nearby waterways.

HG5 Brassica fodder crops followed by overwintered stubble

£90 per ha

Fodder brassicas such as rape, kale and fodder turnips, which are grazed in situ and where weeds can persist in the crop and set seed, provide an important habitat for small-seed eating birds. This option must not be located on land parcels identified on the FER/FEP map as being at risk of soil erosion.

Management must include:

- careful grazing to minimise poaching and soil erosion;
- following a restricted pesticide programme; and
- maintaining the stubble until the following spring.

HG6 Fodder crop management to retain or recreate an arable mosaic

£150 per ha

Where arable farming has declined in traditionally mixed farming areas, this option is used to return land parcels or parts of parcels to arable cultivation, in order to provide valuable foraging sites for seed-eating birds. Fodder crops (brassica or root), grazed in situ, allow arable plants to persist and set seed within the crop.

Management must include:

- establishing a fodder brassica/fodder root crop before 1 July;
- following a restricted pesticide programme;
- grazing over the autumn and winter; and
- maintaining the stubble until the following spring.

HG7 Low-input spring cereal to retain or recreate an arable mosaic

£250 per ha

This option is used to provide an important habitat for declining and localised farmland birds, such as the grey partridge and the corn bunting, and mammals such as the brown hare. The open spring cereal crop will provide breeding sites for ground-nesting birds and will encourage rare arable plants. This option has particular value in areas where spring crops were traditionally grown but have now declined, and will also deliver significant additional wildlife benefits when managed in conjunction with grass buffer strips or margins. It also provides an opportunity for ley establishment by undersowing with a grass/legume mixture.

Management must include:

- establishing a spring cereal crop at a specified seed rate of not more than 100 kg/ha;
- following a restricted herbicide and fertiliser programme; and
- not harvesting the crop before 31 July.

Options to protect soil and water

These options are designed to protect watercourses, standing waters and wetlands by reducing diffuse pollution. They buffer sensitive habitats and protect areas that replenish groundwater by reducing the risk of soil erosion, nitrate leaching and phosphorus transport. They also contribute to flood management by reducing and slowing surface run-off. The use and location of options to protect soil and water in your application should be discussed with your Natural England adviser.

Diffuse pollution is the contamination of watercourses by run-off laden with eroded soils and nutrients (nitrate and phosphate), pesticides, herbicides and faecal contaminants from large areas of land. Increased run-off leading to soil erosion, nitrate leaching and phosphorus transport is often caused by the capping and/or compaction of soils in arable cultivation or grassland systems.

Careful management of grass cover and soil structure will improve water infiltration, reduce run-off and provide protection from soil erosion. The options to protect soil and water are only available on land identified on the FER/FEP map as being at risk of soil erosion. The options will be targeted at this land within priority catchments identified in your target area or theme statement. They can be applied to part-fields or whole fields.

These options can also help protect archaeological features.

HJ3 Arable reversion to unfertilised grassland to prevent erosion or run-off

£280 per ha

HJ4 Arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input to prevent erosion or run-off

£210 per ha

In land parcels identified on the FER/FEP map as being at risk of soil erosion and run-off, using these options will stabilise soils and reduce nutrient loss by the establishment and maintenance of either an unfertilised or a nutrient-restricted, fertilised grass cover. Maintaining a grass cover will help to improve soil structure and water infiltration, reduce surface run-off and protect against wind erosion. Zero or restricted inputs of nitrogen fertilisers and organic manures will reduce the risk of nitrate leaching.

Management must include:

- alleviating any areas of soil compaction before sowing and establishing a specified grass mix (before 1 October);
- cutting the sward at least twice in the first year to encourage the tillering of grasses; and
- from the second year onwards, cutting once after mid-July or grazing.

There must be no overgrazing or poaching, and supplementary feeding will be restricted to mineral supplements.

Option HJ3 does not allow the use of fertilisers or organic manures.

Option HJ4 permits up to 100 kg/ha per year of total nitrogen from livestock manures or no more than 50 kg/ha per year of inorganic nitrogen fertiliser, which can only be applied between 1 February and 14 August.

HJ6 Preventing erosion or run-off from intensively managed improved grassland

£280 per ha

This option aims to reduce soil compaction and surface run-off on improved grassland through extensive grazing. Extensive grazing will help to improve soil structure and water infiltration and reduce run-off. Restricting inputs of fertiliser and organic manures will reduce nitrate leaching.

This option is suitable for use on improved grassland that receives in excess of 200 kg nitrogen/ha and where there is evidence of soil erosion or run-off, or where a soil risk assessment indicates that a target feature is under significant threat from erosion or run-off. It may also be used to buffer sensitive habitats if used in combination with the Nil fertiliser supplement (HJ8).

Management must include:

- alleviation of severe soil compaction;
- application of up to 100 kg/ha per year of total nitrogen from livestock manures or no more than 50 kg/ha per year from inorganic nitrogen fertiliser; and
- restricting supplementary feeding to mineral blocks or licks.

Other management, including grazing and/or mowing regimes, will be tailored to site objectives.

HJ7 Seasonal livestock removal on grassland with no input restriction

£40 per ha

This option supports the removal of livestock at specific times of the year in order to reduce compaction and run-off. This option is suitable for use on soils that are prone to waterlogging, compaction or poaching, and it applies to the whole field. Removing livestock from land parcels receiving this supplement must not cause soil damage on other parcels.

Supplements

HJ8 Nil fertiliser supplement

£55 per ha

This supplement is designed to further extensify the management of land under option HJ6 (Preventing erosion or run-off from intensively managed, improved grassland) without the use of fertilisers. The aim is to reduce nitrate leaching into ground and surface water and help buffer valuable habitats. It should normally be applied to whole fields or part fields greater than 1 ha.



© Natural England/james LePage

Soil erosion can result in diffuse pollution as well as reduced profitability.



© Natural England/Graham Walsh

Cattle grazing riverside land and causing some erosion.

Options for grassland

Species-rich, semi-natural grassland

Unimproved hay meadows and pastures are important to the character of locally distinctive pastoral or mixed farming landscapes. They support distinctive mixes of grasses and wildflowers that reflect acidic, neutral or calcareous soil conditions, often contain uncommon species such as orchids, and are also valuable for butterflies and other invertebrates.

These grasslands are a precious but threatened habitat. Fragments survive in areas that have not been re-seeded, drained or heavily fertilised and therefore often contain some of our best-preserved archaeology. Active management of these habitats will maintain their value for wildlife, contribute to the protection of valued landscapes and archaeology and promote good soil conditions. These options can be very appropriate on coastal cliff tops.

You will need to submit evidence of current soil pH and nutrient status with your application when proposing the creation or restoration of species-rich grassland. Results that are up to 3 years old are acceptable.

HK6 Maintenance of species-rich, semi-natural grassland

£200 per ha

This option is aimed at maintaining grasslands that are already species-rich and in good condition by continuing, or making adjustments to, the current management.

Management must include:

- grazing and/or cutting for hay;
- no ploughing, re-seeding, or installation of new drainage; and
- no heavy poaching.

Other management, including use of organic manures and supplementary feeding, will be tailored to each site based on the type of grassland and the farming system.

HK7 Restoration of species-rich, semi-natural grassland

£200 per ha

This option is used for restoring grasslands that were species-rich in the past, but have suffered from management neglect or have been agriculturally improved. Grasslands that are suitable for this option may still have some diversity of grasses and flowers. Potential for this option will also depend on soil type, pH and soil nutrient status (particularly the amount of available phosphorus).

This option will be managed as option HK6, but restoration may include scrub clearance, invasive weed control and/or seed introduction by an agreed method – such as spreading species-rich green hay from a suitable nearby site.



© Natural England/ain Diack

Species-rich hay meadow with great burnet, lady's bedstraw and rough hawkbit.

HK8 Creation of species-rich, semi-natural grassland

£280 per ha

This option is aimed at creating species-rich grassland on former arable land, ley grassland or set-aside. The creation of species-rich grassland is very demanding and will be feasible only in a few situations. Potential for this option will depend on soil type, pH and soil nutrient status (particularly the amount of available phosphorus). This option will normally be targeted at sites close to existing species-rich grassland.

Creation of a species-rich grassland will include establishing the sward by natural regeneration or using a seed source or mixture recommended by your Natural England adviser. The sward will need to be cut or grazed in the first year to encourage the grasses to tiller and to control annual weeds. Once established, management will be the same as for HK6.

Management of wet grassland for waders and wildfowl

Wet grasslands are important and distinctive components of the coastal and river flood plain landscape. Well-managed wet grasslands provide wintering and/or breeding habitat for wading birds and wildfowl. Winter flooding that creates islands of damp grassland surrounded by shallow surface water (up to knee-deep) provides secure feeding and roosting sites for wildfowl and waders. In addition, it will enhance the grassland habitat for wetland plants and may, in the right situation, provide an area of flood containment.

The shallow flooding concentrates seeds and invertebrates that can attract large numbers of ducks, geese, swans, lapwing and other wading birds. Breeding waders such as snipe, redshank, curlew and lapwing need damp soil conditions, with some areas of very shallow standing water in the spring and early summer, to provide an abundant supply of insect food for their chicks. Larger, open areas are generally preferred by waders and wildfowl, so scrub control may be necessary.

These options can help to protect the many features of archaeological interest that are preserved in wetlands with high water levels – see also Historic environment option HD8 (Maintaining high water levels to protect archaeology). For the management of other wetland habitats including ponds, reedbeds, fens and bogs please see Wetland options HQ1 to HQ10.

These options will be almost entirely located in the lowland river valleys, in areas where surface water can be controlled. An implementation plan will be required for these options in most situations. In addition, consent may be required from the Environment Agency.

A range of capital items such as sluices, bunds, scrapes and ditch restoration can be funded by a Capital Works Plan.

HK9 Maintenance of wet grassland for breeding waders

£335 per ha



Curlew chick.

© Natural England/Dave Key

This option is used for maintaining wet spring and summer grasslands that already provide suitable habitat for breeding waders. In some instances, it may be necessary to change the water management regime to continue to attract these birds. In addition, these grasslands may, in the right situation, provide an area of flood containment and some benefits to flood risk management.

Management includes:

- controlling in-field and ditch water levels in the spring and early summer;
- maintaining ditches and existing field drainage systems;
- creating a varied sward structure by the end of the growing season by grazing and/or taking a late hay cut;
- restricting the stocking density in the bird-nesting season;
- avoiding heavy poaching (although small areas of bare ground are acceptable); and
- avoiding disturbance of birds by recreational or non-essential activities.

HK10 Maintenance of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl

£255 per ha

This option is used for maintaining wet grasslands that already provide suitable habitat for wintering populations of wildfowl and waders. In some instances, it may be necessary to change the water management regime to continue to attract these birds. In addition, these grasslands may, in the right situation, provide an area of flood containment and some benefits to flood risk management.

Management includes:

- controlling in-field and ditch water levels over the winter months;
- maintaining ditches and existing field drainage systems;
- creating a varied sward structure by the end of the growing season through grazing and/or cutting for hay;
- no grazing over the winter months unless approved by your Natural England adviser;
- no heavy poaching (although small areas of bare ground are acceptable); and
- avoiding disturbance of birds by recreational or non-essential activities.

HK11 Restoration of wet grassland for breeding waders

£335 per ha

HK12 Restoration of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl

£255 per ha

These options aim to provide suitable habitat for waders and wildfowl and/or breeding habitat for wading birds by re-wetting permanent grassland and by managing the grazing to create a mosaic of grass structure. These land parcels will have been wetter in the past but have since been drained or improved for agriculture. The potential for this option will depend on both the availability of surface water and the ability to control it. In addition, these grasslands may, in the right situation, provide an area of flood containment and some benefits to flood risk management. These options would normally only be suitable for locations that undergo flooding by freshwater in a non-tidal situation.

Land parcels under this option will be managed as HK9 or HK10, but for restoration of wet grassland you may need to:

- alleviate any areas of soil compaction (except on archaeological features);
- implement a water management regime; and
- excavate scrapes and re-profile ditches.



© Natural England/Trevor Mansfield

Shallow flooding provides good conditions for over-wintering wildfowl.

HK13 Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders

£355 per ha

HK14 Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl

£285 per ha

These options are used to create wet grassland habitat for breeding waders in the spring and summer and waders and wildfowl in the winter months. Land parcels suitable for these options are current arable land or temporary grassland.

These land parcels will have been wetter in the past but have since been drained and improved for agriculture. The potential for this option will depend on both the availability of surface water and the ability to control it. In addition, these grasslands may, in the right situation, provide an area of flood containment and some benefits to flood risk management. These options would normally only be suitable for locations that undergo flooding by freshwater in a non-tidal situation and which have been identified in Environment Agency flood management strategies.

Land parcels under this option will be managed as HK9 or HK10, but additional management for the creation of the wet grassland habitat includes:

- establishing a grass sward by natural regeneration or by sowing a seed mixture recommended by your Natural England adviser;
- alleviating areas of soil compaction;
- implementing water-level management;
- restoring the ditch network; and
- excavating scrapes and ponds.

Management of grassland for target features

These options are used to manage grassland for target features such as great crested newt, chough, curlew, bunting or buried archaeology, as well as particular groups of species such as scarce bumblebees and ground-nesting farmland birds. The FEP will contain records of target features that would benefit from management under options HK15–HK17. These options may also be used to link, buffer and extend existing sites of high wildlife value, where the management will be specifically tailored to the features found on the high-value site.

HK15 Maintenance of grassland for target features

£130 per ha

HK16 Restoration of grassland for target features

£130 per ha

These options will maintain or restore semi-improved or rough grassland, which is known to provide good conditions for target species and other features. These options can also be used to maintain and restore moderately species-rich, semi-improved and enclosed unimproved grassland, but only where this is a local target and where the grassland lacks the potential to be restored to species-rich, semi-natural grassland (option HK7).

They can also be used to manage enclosed species-rich or other valuable grassland in the uplands above or close to the moorland line, for example, upland calcareous grassland. They may also provide ongoing management for grasslands that have been created under classic schemes for objectives such as historic environment protection.

Within Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs), the upland options HL7 and HL8 (Maintenance/Restoration of rough grazing for birds) may be more appropriate for ground-nesting birds.

Management must include grazing and/or cutting for hay. Other management, including fertiliser and supplementary feeding, will be tailored to each site based on the target species present.

HK17 Creation of grassland for target features

£210 per ha

This option is used to create semi-improved or rough grassland on former arable, set-aside or temporary grassland.

Land parcels under this option will be managed in the same way as for option HK15, but creation of the grassland will include establishing a grassy sward through natural regeneration or by sowing a seed mixture recommended by your Natural England adviser.

Buffer strips

HE11 Enhanced strips for target species on intensive grassland

£590 per ha

This option is used to provide additional habitat for invertebrates, birds and small mammals by managing buffer strips in intensive grass leys. These strips of wildflowers and grasses provide nesting habitat and shelter, as well as a food source for a variety of species including farmland birds, bats and insects such as bumblebees and butterflies. The location of the strip may be rotated within the same land parcel.

Management will include sowing and establishing a specified seed mixture of wildflowers and grasses. The strip will need to be protected from grazing and will need to be re-established when the cover of wildflowers decreases. Other management, such as cutting and fertiliser applications, will be tailored to each site based on the species targeted.



Haymaking encourages botanical diversity by allowing flowers to set seed.

© Natural England/Robert Goodison

Supplements

HK18 Haymaking supplement £75 per ha

This supplement is not intended for all fields that are cut for hay. It is available, at the discretion of your Natural England adviser, on meadows of high existing or potential value. These sites will typically be in pastoral areas where the ready availability of livestock and/or the climatic difficulty of haymaking mean they would otherwise be grazed and not cut.

This supplement is suitable for use with options HK6 to HK17 and HD10 and HD11. Providing one of these main management options is in place, and all eligibility criteria are met, it may also be used on the same sites as other supplements, such as the HR6 supplement for small fields.

HK19 Raised water levels supplement £80 per ha

This supplement supports the raising of water levels in ditches and adjacent land, where exceptional and time-consuming management is needed at key periods of the year. This supplement may be used to provide feeding and nesting habitats for wetland birds. In addition, it will enhance the grassland habitat for wetland plants and may, in the right situation, provide an area of flood containment. This supplement can also be used to manage specialised wet grassland communities or to maintain the diversity of fauna and flora in important ditches.

The supplement is available on options HK6 to HK17. HK9 to HK14 are eligible for this supplement, but only in exceptional circumstances where specific management is required to raise water levels. The payments for HK9 to HK14 include an element for raised water-level management, so applicants will need to provide evidence to show that extra effort (such as the installation of pumps) is needed to raise levels.

HQ13 Inundation grassland supplement £85 per ha

This supplement is designed to allow the inundation of areas of the river flood plain that are currently protected by flood defence banks. Grassland that is made available for additional inundation by floodwater can develop as a valuable habitat, complement adjacent habitats and, in appropriate locations, contribute to flood management.

The supplement is also intended for use in designated washlands that are subject to prolonged and random flooding.

Use of this option must be supported by the Environment Agency and conform to their local and overall strategy for fluvial flood risk management. This supplement is only available on options HK10, HK12 and HK14 to HK17 where there are not significant numbers of breeding waders using the site. The site, either alone or as part of a group application, should form a natural hydrological unit, and there should be no significant negative impact on other valuable features.



Views across Grisedale, Mallerstang.

Options for moorland and upland rough grazing

Past management of moorland and upland rough grassland has created diverse upland landscapes and habitats. These habitats, typically above 250 m, include open heather moorland, blanket bog and a variety of grasslands. It is important to establish or maintain appropriate grazing and/or burning regimes to conserve these habitats and associated wildlife, and to protect the soil (especially peat). Moorland and upland rough grassland contain important archaeology and some of our most extensive historical landscapes. Use of these options can help to protect these moorland features and landscapes.

The moorland options aim to maintain and restore habitats contained within moorland grazing units. They may also be used in the management of large land parcels such as allotments, intakes and newtakes.

Capital items, such as fencing and grip blocking, can be funded by a Capital Works Plan.

Please note that any HLS prescriptions in force will override the minimum UELS stocking density.

HL9 Maintenance of moorland	£40 per ha
HL10 Restoration of moorland	£40 per ha

These options are used to maintain or restore moorland habitats to benefit upland wildlife, retain historic features and strengthen the landscape character. In addition, in the right situation they may provide an area of flood containment and some benefits to flood risk management. The options are targeted at grazing units that are predominantly in the SDA, above the Moorland Line and characterised by the presence of upland habitats and species.

Management will include grazing the moorland following an agreed stocking calendar. This calendar will reflect the different habitats within the moorland unit and their present condition. It will indicate how many and what type of livestock will be allowed to graze the moorland in each month of the year.

Restoration may also include grip blocking or temporary fencing, in order to reduce or exclude grazing.

HL11 Creation of upland heathland

£60 per ha

This option aims to create dwarf-shrub communities in upland moorland areas where heathland plants are rare or absent and their seedbanks are depleted. It will enhance the diverse vegetation mosaic characteristic of upland landscapes and will be targeted at areas adjacent or close to existing dwarf-shrub heath.

Management must include:

- site preparation using a combination of topping, scarification, ploughing, burning and/or herbicide treatment;
- establishment of heathland vegetation by sowing or spreading heather or heathland seed or cuttings; and
- control of grass and weed species by an agreed method.

The methodology will be influenced by existing environmental values, such as the presence of archaeology or landscape considerations.

Once established, the heathland would be managed in the same way as option HL9 or HL10.

HL7 Maintenance of rough grazing for birds

£80 per ha

HL8 Restoration of rough grazing for birds

£80 per ha

These options are used to provide rough grassland habitat for upland birds (particularly breeding waders) and other target species. They are targeted at land parcels that are predominantly in the SDA, above the Moorland Line, and that either support populations of upland birds currently or have the potential to do so.

Management will normally include grazing with cattle and/or sheep at an agreed stocking density (between 0.4 and 1.0 Livestock Units/ha depending on site conditions and objective) between 31 March and 20 June. At other times, stocking densities should be managed to achieve the desired sward height.

Restoration will be individually tailored to the site, but may include blocking existing surface drains, ditches and grips to create or extend areas of wet, marshy grassland vegetation.



Shallow pools encourage breeding waders.

© Natural England/Robert Goodison

Supplements

HL12 Supplement for management of heather, gorse and grass by burning, cutting or swiping £7 per ha

This supplement supports the establishment of an appropriate programme of rotational vegetation management, in order to maintain or restore the wildlife value of moorland habitats. It applies to land where a significant change in management activity is required.

The supplement is available on options HL7, HL8, HL9 and HL10.

HL13 Moorland re-wetting supplement £10 per ha

This supplement supports the re-wetting of moorland to maintain wetland habitats and their associated wildlife. Grip-blocking and re-wetting may also help to reduce diffuse pollution by reducing surface run-off from the re-wetted area. This may, in certain locations, help to reduce flooding downstream. In addition, the supplement can help to protect archaeological features and peat exposures.

The supplement is available on options HL7, HL8, HL9, HL10 and HL11.

HL15 Seasonal livestock exclusion supplement £10 per ha

This supplement supports the removal of livestock from moorland and other rough grassland land for periods of time, in order to allow moorland restoration or to achieve additional environmental benefits on moorland that is in good condition. Examples of these benefits include increasing the rate of heather regeneration and allowing rare plants such as spring gentian to flower, or shrubs such as juniper to regenerate. The supplement may also be used to help protect archaeological and other historic features.

The supplement is available on options HL7, HL8, HL9 and HL10.



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Heather burning on moorland above Nidderdale.

Options for access

Providing access is an important way of enhancing public enjoyment of the countryside. The open access and linear access options complement the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network by providing areas of open access or creating new footpaths, cycle and/or bridleways to allow people (including the less mobile) to enjoy more of the countryside. The educational access option encourages visits both by schools and by a wide range of other interest groups, and provides an opportunity to illustrate the links between farming, conservation and food production. It also allows people to see and enjoy the environmental improvements being made as a result of Environmental Stewardship.

Under these options, you will be allowing the public onto your land on a concessionary basis and no new permanent rights of way will be created. Access options may also be considered where the public have, in the past, been allowed informal access or the landowner has tolerated their presence. We will promote your access site on the Natural England website at <http://cwr.naturalengland.org.uk>. Site maps and waymarks will be provided and kissing gates or other access furniture can be funded by a Capital Works Plan.

There will be occasions when increased access conflicts with other Environmental Stewardship objectives. Access will not be appropriate where it may cause potential damage to a feature – such as erosion of an archaeological feature or of a vulnerable habitat – or where it may cause disturbance to wildlife. However, in many cases it is possible to locate the access to run alongside these areas.

It will be your responsibility to ensure that your public liability insurance is sufficient to cover additional access by members of the public. This is particularly important if you are organising school visits under the Educational access option (HN9), so please discuss this with your insurance company.

Access payments are classified as ‘de minimis state aid’. Under European rules, individual businesses are not allowed to receive more than £140,000 (£200,000) from this type of aid over a 3-year rolling period. You will need to keep a record of all such payments that your business has received, including those from other government departments or agencies, for the duration of your agreement.

Access provided under HLS must conform to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which came into force on 1 October 2004. Under this Act, providers of services to the public have to make reasonable adjustments to their physical premises where this is needed to provide reasonable access for disabled people. The extent to which this requirement might apply to you will depend on the nature of your particular access site. You can find more information at www.equalityhumanrights.com

HN1 Linear and open access – base payment

£350 per agreement/year

In addition to the payments related to the length or area of access provided, you will also receive an annual base payment to cover the costs associated with setting up linear or open access, and managing visitors.

HN2 Permissive open access

£41 per ha

This option allows the public to have access to whole fields or other open areas to enjoy a viewpoint, historic feature, riverbank or other feature of interest. It can be located on any land that can be reached by the Public Rights of Way network, permissive paths or other open land.

This option is not available on land that has been designated as open country under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Management will include:

- installing site maps and waymarks;
- erecting any additional access furniture and maintaining all existing access furniture in a good, useable condition;
- keeping the area safe for users and free from litter; and
- excluding from the area animals that are known to be, or are likely to be, dangerous (eg dairy bulls, aggressive suckler cows or beef bulls).

Permissive linear access

These options are used to create new linear routes to link or extend the Public Rights of Way footpath and bridleway network, create circular routes or provide access to features such as riverbanks, historic features and areas of wildlife or landscape interest. These options can also provide links to, and between, landlocked open country designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Options can be located on any land that can be reached by road, on the PROW network or other open land.



© Natural England/Annabelle Bahnam

The start of a permissive footpath with a site map describing the route.

HN3 Permissive footpath access

£45 per 100 m

This option is used to create new linear footpaths for the public to walk on in order to enjoy the countryside.

Management must include:

- maintaining a safe and even surface of at least 2 m in width;
- installing site maps and waymarks;
- erecting any additional access furniture and maintaining all existing access furniture in a good, useable condition;
- keeping the area safe for users and free from litter; and
- excluding animals that are known to be, or are likely to be, dangerous (eg dairy bulls, aggressive suckler cows or beef bulls), from land crossed by a permissive path.

HN4 Permissive bridleway/cycle path access

£90 per 100 m

HN6 Upgrading Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act access for cyclists/horses

£90 per 100 m

HN4 provides a new linear route for the public to ride horses or bicycles in the countryside. This option can also be used to provide an alternative safe off-road route.

HN6 is used to provide new permissive paths for horses and/or cyclists across open country (as designated under the CROW Act), provided that the land will not be damaged by such use.

Management for both options will be the same as for option HN3 (see above) but will require you to maintain a 3 m wide, safe and even, grassed or other firm surface.

HN5 Access for people with reduced mobility

£100 per 100 m

HN7 Upgrading Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act access for people with reduced mobility

£105 per 100 m

These options are used to create new permissive routes for people with restricted or reduced mobility, such as wheelchair users or those with pushchairs. The intended route should be across flat or gently sloping ground, and there should be parking close to the start of the route.

The management will be the same as for option HN3 (see above), but will also require you to:

- maintain a hard surface, 1.2 m wide, with occasional passing places along the route;
- install access furniture such as gates, benches and perches; and
- ensure that there are no barriers along the route other than fully accessible gates.



© Natural England/Richard Cooke

Farm visits provide an opportunity to raise awareness of rural issues.

Educational access

HN8 Educational access – base payment

£500 per agreement/year

HN9 Educational access – payment per visit

£100 per visit

The Educational access option is aimed at encouraging site visits by schools and colleges for curriculum studies at all levels, and by a wide range of other interest groups. It provides the opportunity to explain the links between farming, conservation and food production. It is suitable for any farm where the farmer or other person is keen, willing and able to take groups around and where there is likely to be a demand for such a service. With your application, you will be expected to provide evidence of this demand in the form of letters of support from schools, colleges or other groups. There is scope for interpretation of sensitive features and this option may be used where other forms of permissive access might not be appropriate.

You will need to provide basic information about your farm for inclusion in a 'farm facts' leaflet, which will be produced by Natural England. In addition, where you plan to encourage visits by local schools, you will be required to prepare a teachers' information pack (using a Natural England template). Both documents will be made available to visitors.

You will be required to arrange between 4 and 25 free visits per year, and you will be paid for each visit. If you wish to host more than 25 visits, payment for these may be possible subject to discussion with your Natural England adviser. You must submit a signed, educational access evaluation form from each group for each visit claimed. If you do not achieve four visits, we cannot pay you for this option.

You will also be required to undertake a health and safety check and prepare a risk assessment. You will agree to Natural England promoting your site on the Natural England website at <http://cwr.naturalengland.org.uk> and the Growing Schools website (www.growingschools.org.uk) run by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. You will be encouraged to undertake an accreditation course in the first year of your agreement.

Options for lowland heathland

Formed and maintained by traditional agricultural practices, lowland heathlands are ancient semi-natural landscapes on nutrient-poor acidic, sandy and peaty soils, typically below 250 m in altitude. They are often found on common land with a tradition of public access. The vegetation of lowland heathland is a mixture of dwarf shrubs (particularly heathers and gorses), providing a refuge for rare species such as the marsh gentian, Dartford warbler and sand lizard.

In the past, heathlands were managed by burning, grazing and/or cutting. Many heathlands have been lost or become fragmented due to ploughing, development or forestry planting. Those that remain are often neglected, dominated by scrub and bracken or have returned to woodland.

Management of lowland heathland under these options will protect and enhance the valuable plant communities and associated wildlife, the vegetation mosaics characteristic of lowland landscapes and protect archaeological features.

Soil type, management history and location in relation to existing heathland sites will be significant factors in determining the suitability of a site for restoration or heathland creation. You will need to submit evidence of current soil analysis with your application when applying for the restoration or creation options (results that are up to 3 years old are acceptable). Heathlands vary in character and complexity and therefore an implementation plan may be required. Areas of fen or bog within heathland should be managed under these lowland heathland options.

A range of capital items, including fencing, bunds, sluices and ditch restoration, can be funded by a Capital Works Plan.

HO1 Maintenance of lowland heathland

£200 per ha

This option is used to maintain the valuable plant communities and associated wildlife of lowland heathland by appropriate, active management.

Management will require you to:

- burn, or cut and remove, small patches of heathland each year to sustain a varied and balanced age range and structure of dwarf shrubs;
- maintain fire breaks; and
- graze to control scrub, grasses, bracken and tree cover.

No supplementary feeding is allowed.

HO2 Restoration of lowland heathland

£200 per ha

This option is used to restore lowland heath on sites that have become degraded by scrub (including non-native species such as rhododendron), bracken, invasive grasses, woodland encroachment and, in some cases, overgrazing and too frequent burning. Fragments of heathland vegetation will still be evident.

In addition to the management required for option HO1, you will need to:

- remove areas of scrub, trees and bracken;
- burn, or cut and remove, small areas of heathland to restore a varied and balanced age range and structure of dwarf shrubs; and
- restore an appropriate drainage system to areas of wet heathland and mire.

HO3 Restoration of forestry areas to lowland heathland

£200 per ha

This option is used to restore lowland heathland by clear-felling and re-introducing traditional grazing on sites that were heathland in the past, but have since been forested. Evidence of heathland vegetation will often still remain.

In addition to the management required for option HO1, you will need to:

- clear-fell trees;
- remove accumulated organic litter where it is deeper than 5 cm; and
- restore the original drainage system to areas that historically were wet heathland.

HO4 Creation of lowland heathland from arable or improved grassland

£450 per ha

This option is used to create lowland heathland on arable or improved grassland sites that were historically heathland, but have been improved for agricultural production. It will usually only be possible to restore heathland on sites that have been in intensive agricultural production for just a few years and on which the soil nutrient status is low.

It may be necessary to consider producing a crop for up to 3 years to reduce the nutrient levels in the soil. It may also be necessary to consider adding small amounts of bracken litter or other amendments to reduce pH.



© Natural England/peter Roworth

Lowland heath, North Yorkshire.

In addition to the management required for option HO1, you will need to:

- spread dwarf-shrub cuttings or seed sourced from a local site;
- exclude livestock over the first winter to allow germination; and
- graze from late spring to control competing weeds and grasses.

The methodology will be influenced by existing environmental features, such as the presence of archaeology or landscape considerations.

HO5 Creation of lowland heathland on worked mineral sites

£150 per ha

This option is used to create lowland heathland on worked mineral-extraction (quarry) sites that were historically heathland. These sites are likely to have good potential for heathland creation as they will be very low in nutrients. However, former chalk or limestone quarries are not suitable for this option.

In addition to the management required for option HO1, you will need to:

- prepare the mineral substrate by light surface cultivation;
- spread dwarf-shrub cuttings or seeds sourced from a local site;
- exclude livestock in the first winter following seeding; and
- graze from late spring following seeding.

Options for inter-tidal and coastal locations

Our coastline is valued for its wild, varied and dynamic landscapes; its wildlife, historical features and amenity value; and the vital role that many habitats play in forming natural coastal defences. These options are targeted at managed sand dunes, vegetated shingle ridges and inter-tidal habitats, such as salt marsh. Many of these habitats are nationally and internationally important for their plant, bird and other wildlife interest. Coastal land that is currently behind sea walls, or lies behind sand dunes or shingle ridges, may be suitable for creating new inter-tidal and coastal habitats by allowing managed re-alignment of these areas.

For management of cliff tops see the grassland or lowland heathland options. For management of coastal grazing marshes see the grassland options. For management of dune heaths, see the lowland heathland options; these will need to be individually tailored to meet the management needs of this scarce habitat.

Sand dune and vegetated shingle

Sand dunes and grazed shingle systems support many unusual plants and animals. Flowers such as wild thyme, dog violet and restharrow grow in grassy areas on sand dunes, while yellow horned poppy and sea pea grow on the vegetated areas of shingle. These habitats are also very important for unusual animals and often contain valuable wetlands.

Arable land, set-aside or grassland that lies behind a sand dune or shingle ridge may be suitable to allow the roll-back of these habitats inland. Each site is unique and will require detailed feasibility and planning studies. Please contact your Natural England adviser for further advice.

HP1 Maintenance of sand dunes

£140 per ha

HP2 Restoration of sand dunes

£140 per ha

These options are used to maintain or restore areas of grazed or mown sand dune and vegetated shingle.

Management must include:

- an agreed extensive grazing or mowing regime with no fertiliser or supplementary feeding, in order to protect these rare and often fragile coastal habitats;
- scrub management;
- maintaining the existing drainage and seasonal flooding pattern; and
- retaining accumulations of seaweed and wood debris.

Restorative management may be informed by an implementation plan, but may involve introducing or changing the grazing or cutting regime to manage vegetation, or undertaking erosion control activities such as replacing worn paths with boardwalks.

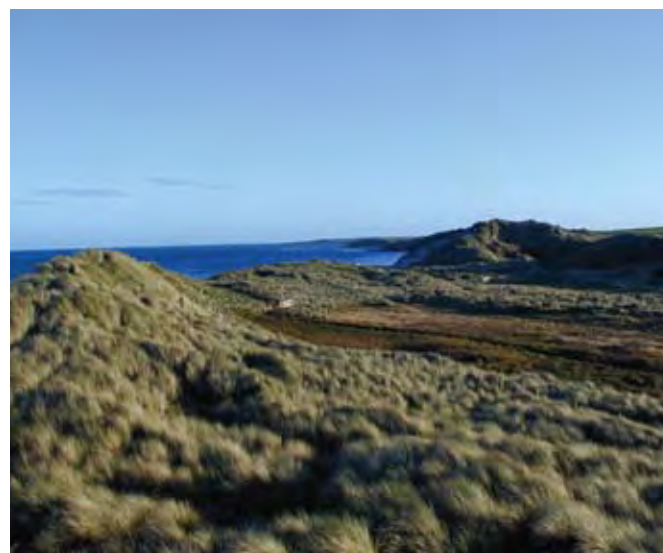
HP3 Creation of coastal vegetated shingle and sand dunes on arable land

£320 per ha

HP4 Creation of coastal vegetated shingle and sand dunes on grassland

£200 per ha

These options allow the migration or development inland of coastal vegetated shingle and sand dune systems. Very sandy or shingle soils may indicate where this habitat has occurred further inland in the past. Each site is unique and will require detailed feasibility and planning studies. Please contact your Natural England adviser for further advice.



© Natural England/Chris Kaighin

Sand dunes and fen at Bamburgh, Northumbria.

Management must include:

- flexible grazing or cutting to control excessive growth of vegetation;
- retaining wood debris and accumulations of seaweed; and
- no cultivation, re-seeding, rolling, chain harrowing, fertiliser or supplementary feeding.

Salt marsh, mudflats and saline lagoons

These habitats support many plants and insects that are specially adapted to survive high salinities and/or regular flooding by the tide. Salt marshes are inter-tidal areas vegetated with plants such as salt marsh grasses, sea aster and sea lavenders. They may attract grazing ducks and geese over the winter and breeding waders such as redshank in the spring. They also provide high-water roosting sites for both wildfowl and waders.

Mudflats exposed at low tide provide vital feeding areas for large numbers of wading birds. Saline lagoons are an uncommon habitat that support some of our rarest plants and animals and are particularly important for birds such as the avocet.

Coastal land that is currently protected from flooding by the sea may be suitable for creating new salt marsh, mudflat or saline lagoon habitat by breaching the sea wall or constructing a water inlet and outlet system. The most suitable sites will be located close to existing inter-tidal habitat and will naturally rise to higher land.

HP5 Maintenance of coastal salt marsh

£30 per ha

HP6 Restoration of coastal salt marsh

£30 per ha

These options are used to maintain or restore coastal salt marsh through continuation or reintroduction of proactive beneficial management practices to achieve environmental objectives. Restorative management will be based on the existing and traditional practices in the area, and may involve introducing or removing grazing in order to produce a mixture of sward structures that supports a high number of salt marsh species. A site suitable for restoration may be one that is currently being inappropriately grazed, overgrazed, or being grazed at an inappropriate time of year, or the site may be difficult to graze and has become dominated by a few coarse plant species.

Management must include:

- maintaining or reintroducing favourable management to encourage the environmental features;
- not damaging the saltmarsh vegetation by disturbing the surface;
- no supplementary feeding or fertiliser inputs unless agreed with Natural England; and
- retaining wood debris and accumulations of seaweed.



Salt marsh at Morecambe Bay.

© Natural England/Graham Walsh

HP7 Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on arable land

up to £700 per ha

HP8 Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on grassland

up to £500 per ha

These options are used to create inter-tidal and saline habitats, such as salt marsh, mudflats and saline lagoons on former arable land, set-aside or improved grassland by way of a managed breach in the sea defences or, for a saline lagoon, constructing a water inlet and outlet system. Suitable sites will normally have been identified in local Environment Agency flood management strategies.

Each site is unique and will require detailed feasibility, design and planning studies. A 1-year inter-tidal habitat creation management plan will be required in order to apply for this option. This needs to be discussed with your Natural England adviser and should include details of:

- site preparation and management of the existing vegetation;
- excavation of any creeks required; and
- breaching the sea wall to allow the site to be regularly inundated by the tide and allowing for variations between lowest and highest tides.

Saline lagoon creation may involve the excavation of the lagoon and the construction of a water inlet and outlet system.

Please note the payment indicated for these options is a maximum rate for land ineligible for SPS. Where the land is eligible for SPS the payment rates will be lower.

HP9 Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat by non-intervention

£150 per ha

This option is used to create inter-tidal and transitional habitats on former arable land, set-aside or improved grassland where an unmanaged breach in the sea defences has already occurred.

A management plan for the site will be required. This will require you to continue to allow tidal flooding and limit any field operations or treatments, and may only allow grazing with prior agreement.

Supplements**HP10 Supplement for extensive grazing on salt marsh**

£70 per ha

This supplement supports the management of grazing on salt marshes where grazing is traditional, or on newly created salt marsh where grazing is appropriate. It is available on options HP5, HP6, HP7, HP8 and HP9.

HP11 Salt marsh livestock exclusion supplement

£40 per ha

This supplement supports the removal of livestock grazing from salt marshes where grazing is either not traditional or is damaging the environmental value of the site. It is available on options HP6 and HP9.

Options for wetlands

Wetlands come in many different forms and are one of our greatest natural assets. Wetland habitats include ponds, reedbeds, fens, bogs and coastal and flood plain grazing marsh. They are home to a wide diversity of wildlife and are often important and distinctive features of the local landscape. In addition they may, in the right situation, provide an area of flood containment and benefits to flood risk management.

When restoring or creating wetlands you must have the ability to control water levels and in most situations you will also need a management plan. For coastal and flood plain grazing marsh, please see the coastal salt marsh options and wet grassland options.

A range of capital items, such as sluices, bunds, pond creation, pond restoration and ditch restoration, can be funded through a Capital Works Plan.

Ponds

HQ1 Maintenance of ponds of high wildlife value (less than 100 m²)

£90 per pond

HQ2 Maintenance of ponds of high wildlife value (more than 100 m²)

£180 per pond

These options are targeted at ponds that are of particular value to wildlife – either because they support rare or threatened species or because of the diversity of wildlife that is present.

Management will be tailored to the individual pond, but you will have to:

- retain the present pond profile;
- retain submerged or partially submerged dead wood; and
- allow natural draw-down to occur.

You must not:

- top up the water level;
- alter the drainage of the pond or adjoining land in any way;
- use any pesticides or fertilisers within 6 m of the pond;
- introduce any plants, animals or waterfowl; or
- feed any waterfowl.

Option HQ1 is used for the management of the first 100 m² of a pond and option HQ2 is used for the management of any area larger than this.

Reedbeds

Reedbeds are an important part of the wetland landscape mosaic. They provide a valuable habitat for plants, insects and birds, including the rare and secretive bittern. Many sites are small and neglected, while some of the larger sites are threatened by drainage and other land improvements. Reedbeds can also be harvested to provide traditional material for purposes such as thatching.

HQ3 Maintenance of reedbeds

£60 per ha

HQ4 Restoration of reedbeds

£60 per ha

These options are used to maintain or restore reedbeds, in order to provide a valuable habitat for birds, insects and mammals such as otter and watervole. Sites suitable for these options should usually be more than 0.5 ha, with a good cover of reeds.

Management must include:

- reed cutting;
- maintaining water control structures in good working order;
- controlling scrub cover and retaining some open water;
- cleaning ditches and foot-drains no more than once in every 5 years;
- cutting ditch banks in rotation; and
- no fertiliser.

You must not use poor-quality water to top up the water levels.

Restoration can include:

- clearing scrub;
- cutting reeds at the appropriate time;
- implementing a water management regime; and
- restoring the ditch network.

Restoration or installation of water control structures and restoration of ditches can be funded under a Capital Works Plan.

HQ5 Creation of reedbeds

£380 per ha

This option is used to create new reedbeds on land of low conservation interest. It is suitable for use on arable, ley grassland or permanent improved grassland. The site should be flat and have a reliable summer water supply.

It will be necessary to maintain standing water over a significant part of the site in summer. Any impacts the use of this option would have on the historic environment would need to be considered.



© Natural England/Terry Heathcote

Transplanting reeds.

Reedbed creation and establishment will be informed by a management plan. This plan will detail the design and construction of the reedbed and will include:

- creating a variety of land forms with areas of higher ground and areas of shallow open water;
- excavating ditches, installing bunds and sluices; and
- establishing reeds.

Once established, the reedbed will be managed in the same way as option HQ3.

Fens

Fens range from wetlands that are typically dominated by rushes, sedges, wetland grasses and characteristic flowering plants, to others that are moss-covered. Fens can be easily damaged by inputs of nutrients or by scrub encroachment. In addition to high botanical diversity, many of these sites will support a variety of birds and insects. These options can also help to protect archaeological features, particularly organic remains.

HQ6 Maintenance of fen

£60 per ha

HQ7 Restoration of fen

£60 per ha

These options are used to maintain or restore fens to provide a valuable habitat for birds, insects and small mammals.

Management must include:

- maintaining water control structures in good working order; and
- maintaining fens in an open condition with just a few scattered trees or shrubs.

You must not allow water containing high levels of nutrients to empty into fens, or use poor-quality water to top up water levels.

Restoration will include scrub clearance and the implementation of a water management regime. Restoration or installation of water control structures and restoration of ditches may be funded by a Capital Works Plan.

HQ8 Creation of fen

£380 per ha

This option is used to create new fens on land of low conservation interest, especially around existing wetlands. Suitable sites will be arable, ley grassland or permanent improved grassland on peaty soils

that are over 0.5 ha (or less if part of a wider wetland mosaic). The potential for this option will depend on the availability of a reliable and adequate water supply. Any impacts the use of this option would have on the historic environment would need to be considered.

Lowland raised bogs

These rare and fragile ecosystems occur on acid peat deposits and only survive in waterlogged conditions. Historically, they often formed part of a larger wetland mosaic. Management of adjacent areas is likely to influence the condition of the bog, and they are easily damaged by drainage, peat digging, scrub encroachment and nutrient enrichment from surrounding land.

HQ9 Maintenance of lowland raised bog

£150 per ha

HQ10 Restoration of lowland raised bog

£150 per ha

These options are used to maintain or restore lowland raised bog to provide habitat for the specialist plants and wildlife that are associated with them. Both options will require the preparation of an implementation plan. Sites suitable for restoration will usually occur on acid peat deposits, be part of a wider wetland habitat and have some typical bog plants.

Management must include:

- retaining rainfall to maintain a high water table throughout the year;
- maintaining water control structures in good working order;
- not digging or turning over peat; and
- no fertilisers.

Restoration will include removing scrub and tree cover to below 10 per cent of the site area and/or filling or blocking ditches.

Supplements

HQ11 Wetland cutting supplement

£350 per ha

This supplement supports a cutting regime where this is the most appropriate form of management for the habitat. In addition, this option may help to maintain local techniques and traditions that may otherwise disappear.

The supplement is only available on the fen, reedbed or lowland raised bog maintenance, restoration and creation options (HQ3 to HQ10).



© Natural England/Iain Black

Round-leaved sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*) growing on the edge of a bog pool.

HQ12 Wetland grazing supplement

£200 per ha

This supplement is used only with the fen, reedbed or lowland raised bog maintenance, restoration and creation options (HQ3 to HQ10). The aim is to support a grazing regime where this is the most appropriate form of management for the habitat.

Additional supplements

These HLS supplements may be available on the same land as certain HLS options (but not with ELS or OELS options). Their use will be discussed with you, and is at the discretion of Natural England. Where appropriate and agreed, however, the use of more than one supplement on a single parcel is possible.

HL16 Shepherd supplement

£5 per ha

This supplement aims to support a grazing regime that will prevent damage to archaeological features, vulnerable soils or vegetation by overgrazing or undergrazing and poaching. The supplement requires the shepherd to identify the most vulnerable areas within the grazing unit and to manage livestock in order to ensure that different habitats are grazed appropriately. This supplement can also help to maintain or restore the vegetation mosaics characteristic of upland landscapes.

HR1 Cattle grazing supplement

up to £35 per ha

This supplement promotes grazing by cattle where this is likely to be beneficial in meeting environmental objectives. Cattle grazing produces a more varied sward structure than sheep grazing and is often better for diversity of plants, invertebrates and birds. In addition, mature cattle are often more suitable for grazing fibrous herbage of low digestibility, trampling bracken, controlling scrub and grazing wet habitats. Cattle treading creates patches of bare soil where new plants can establish themselves, but it can also damage the soil unless it is well managed.

You can use this supplement with a range of options, please refer to Section 3.4 for details.

The number and breed of cattle and the way in which they are managed must be suitable for meeting the objectives of the option(s) to which the supplement is added. Cattle must normally be the main grazing animal in any parcel or part-parcel for the period during which cattle grazing is required under this supplement. If the cattle also meet the eligibility requirements for HR2, the two supplements can be used on the same parcel providing their combined payment rate does not exceed the maximum payment rate for HR2.

HR2 Native breeds at risk grazing supplement

up to £70 per ha

This supplement encourages the use of appropriate native breeds of livestock (from the list in Table 2) for grazing to help achieve the aims of relevant options. Evidence suggests that some native livestock breeds have attributes that are particularly well-suited to harsh climatic conditions, to difficult terrain, to grazing semi-natural vegetation and to achieving conservation objectives. This supplement is also designed to contribute towards the genetic conservation of native breeds at risk.



Longhorn cow, Cumbria.

© Natural England/Chris Chesteron

You can use this supplement with a range of options, please refer to Section 3.4 for details.

The number and breed of livestock, and the way in which they are managed, must be suitable for meeting the objectives of the option(s) to which the supplement is added. Only pedigree-registered animals, and/or their genetically traceable, purebred offspring, are eligible because of the need for independent verification by the relevant recognised-breed society.

You are advised to seek the view of your Natural England adviser about which native breeds may be considered suitable for grazing your land early in the application process. HR2 can also be located on the same parcel as HR1 – providing their combined payment rate does not exceed the maximum rate for HR2.

Table 2 Approved list of native breeds at risk

Cattle	Horses and ponies	Sheep	Goats	Pigs
Aberdeen Angus (Orig ¹)	Cleveland Bay	Badger Face Welsh	Bagot	Berkshire
Beef Shorthorn	Clydesdale	Balwen	Golden Guernsey	British Lop
Belted Galloway	Dales	Black Welsh Mountain		British Saddleback
Blue Albion	Dartmoor	Border Leicester		Gloucestershire Old Spot
British White	Eriskay	Boreray		Large Black
Chillingham	Exmoor	British Milksheep		Middle White
Dairy Shorthorn (Orig ¹)	Fell	Cambridge		Oxford Sandy and Black
Devon	Hackney	Castlemilk Moorit		Tamworth
Dexter ²	Highland	Clun Forest		Welsh
Galloway ³	New Forest	Cotswold		
Gloucester	Shetland	Derbyshire Gritstone		
Guernsey	Shire	Devon and Cornwall Longwool		
Guernsey (Island ⁴)	Suffolk	Devon Closewool		
Hereford	Welsh Mountain (Section A semi-feral ⁵)	Dorset Down		
Hereford (Orig ¹)		Dorset Horn		
Highland		Greyface Dartmoor		
Irish Moiled/Maol ²		Hampshire Down		
Jersey (Island ⁴)		Hebridean		
Lincoln Red		Hill Radnor		
Lincoln Red (Orig ¹)		Jacob		
Longhorn		Kerry Hill		

¹ 'Orig' means pedigree-registered animals listed as being part of an 'Original Population' of that breed, usually in a separate 'closed' sub-register of the breed society's herdbook.

² Native breeds at risk in both the UK and the Republic of Ireland/Eire.

³ 'Galloway' includes Black, White, Dun and Riggitt Galloways.

⁴ 'Island' means pedigree-registered animals listed as being part of the 'Island' population of that breed, usually in a separate 'closed' sub-register of the breed society's herdbook.

⁵ 'Section A semi-feral' refers to a particular and separately identified sub-population of pedigree-registered animals within this breed's studbook. Section A of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society's studbook lists Welsh Mountain ponies whose core registration documents, passports and entries in the National Equine Database are likely to be identified as 'S' [replacing the previous 'F'] to indicate that they are semi-feral and are within the Pony Improvement Scheme for this breed.

Cattle	Horses and ponies	Sheep	Goats	Pigs
Luing		Leicester Longwool		
Northern Dairy Shorthorn		Lincoln Longwool		
Red Poll		Llanwenog		
Shetland		Lonk		
Sussex		Manx Loghtan		
Swona		Meatlinc		
Vaynol		Norfolk Horn		
White Park		North Ronaldsay		
Whitebred Shorthorn		Oxford Down		
		Portland		
		Ryeland		
		Shetland (SSS ⁶)		
		Shropshire		
		Soay		
		South Wales Mountain		
		Southdown		
		Teeswater		
		Wensleydale		
		Whiteface Dartmoor		
		Whitefaced Woodland		
		Wiltshire Horn		

⁶ 'SSS' denotes 'Shetland Sheep Society' and those animals recognised and registered as pedigree Shetland Sheep by that breed society.

HR4 Supplement for control of invasive plant species

£60 per ha

This supplement supports the regular management of particularly severe infestations of invasive non-native species, such as rhododendron, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed, which are damaging a feature of interest.

This supplement cannot be used for controlling weeds listed in the Weeds Act 1959, for the control of bracken or gorse (for which there are other specific options) or for complying with cross compliance requirements.

The HR4 supplement is not available for control of rushes, since rush management is costed into relevant base option payments. The only exception to this is option HL8, where this supplement may be available for a limited period.

HR5 Bracken control supplement

£35 per ha

Bracken control may be necessary to maintain or restore wildlife value or protect archaeological features. It can also help to maintain and conserve the vegetation mosaics characteristic of upland and heathland landscapes. This supplement supports control of the spread, or removal, of existing stands of bracken where it is desirable to do so. It is paid in addition to the capital payments for bracken control to cover the costs of follow-up management. Care must be taken not to cause areas of bare soil in areas vulnerable to soil erosion.

This supplement is mainly intended for use with lowland heathland and upland options, but could also be used where bracken control is necessary on dry grassland, in woodland and on sand dunes. Wherever possible, the primary method of control should be by mechanical means.

HR6 Supplement for small fields

£35 per ha

Small fields, their boundaries and their margins are valuable for wildlife and are important features of the local landscape and the historic environment. Some examples represent the earliest enclosed land used for agriculture, dating back to prehistoric times. Small fields are often proportionately more expensive to manage due to the higher ratio of headland, reduced yields, increased unproductive fieldwork and the higher labour cost per unit of land area and per head of stock, for example.

Fields of less than 2 ha are eligible for this supplement at the discretion of Natural England.

HR7 Supplement for difficult sites

£50 per ha

Some sites are very difficult to access or may contain hazards to livestock that require a higher level of management. This supplement aims to compensate for the increased costs of managing particularly difficult sites, where there is a risk of abandonment. Examples may include very steep slopes, cliffs, islands or bogs, as well as grazing sites that are isolated from the rest of the land.

You will be required to justify the need for this supplement (for example, associated extra costs) in discussion with your Natural England adviser. This option is not available in addition to supplement HR6.

HR8 Supplement for group applications

£10 per ha

This supplement contributes towards the costs of facilitating linked agreements, which together manage a target feature. It is particularly targeted at common land and areas of shared grazing that have two or more active graziers. It may also be applied to applications for agreements covering areas under more than one ownership, which are to be managed for resource protection, inter-tidal habitat management and/or wetland management.

3.3 Adding extra Entry Level Stewardship or Organic Entry Level Stewardship options to your Higher Level Stewardship application

Within HLS, it is possible to apply for some ELS and OELS options over and above those required to meet your points target. When these options are used in HLS, the payment rate is equivalent to the points value of the option in pounds sterling, and they will contribute to your HLS payment.

ELS or OELS options in HLS should not be used where an HLS option is more appropriate, and should only be used where a feature is best managed with an ELS or OELS option, or where the HLS target area or theme statement suggests it would be advantageous. Further information is provided in Section 2.2.4 of this handbook.

Entry Level Stewardship options that are also available under Higher Level Stewardship
(nb These codes are formed by replacing the 'E' with 'H' at the start of the relevant Entry Level Stewardship option)

	Code	Payment	Units
Options for trees and woodlands			
Protection of in-field trees on arable land	HC1	£16	tree
Protection of in-field trees on grassland	HC2	£11	tree
Management of woodland edges	HC4	£380	ha
Hedgerow tree buffer strips on cultivated land <i>NEW in 2010</i>	HC24	£400	ha
Hedgerow tree buffer strips on grassland <i>NEW in 2010</i>	HC25	£400	ha
Options for historic and landscape features			
Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings	HD1	£2	m ² (of ground floor area)
Take out of cultivation archaeological features that are currently on cultivated land	HD2	£460	ha
Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on archaeological features	HD3	£60	ha
Management of scrub on archaeological features	HD4	£120	ha
Management of archaeological features on grassland	HD5	£16	ha
Options for buffer strips			
2 m buffer strips on cultivated land	HE1	£300	ha
4 m buffer strips on cultivated land	HE2	£400	ha
6 m buffer strips on cultivated land	HE3	£400	ha
2 m buffer strips on intensive grassland	HE4	£300	ha
4 m buffer strips on intensive grassland	HE5	£400	ha
6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland	HE6	£400	ha
Buffering in-field ponds in improved permanent grassland	HE7	£400	ha
Buffering in-field ponds in arable land	HE8	£400	ha
Options for arable land			
Management of field corners	HF1	£400	ha
Wild bird seed mixture	HF2	£450	ha
Nectar flower mixture	HF4	£450	ha
Overwintered stubble	HF6	£120	ha
Beetle banks	HF7	£580	ha
Skylark plots	HF8	£5	plot
Unfertilised cereal headlands within arable fields	HF9	£100	ha
Unharvested cereal headlands within arable fields	HF10	£330	ha
Uncropped, cultivated margins for rare plants on arable land	HF11	£400	ha
Uncropped, cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds on arable land <i>NEW in 2010</i>	HF13	£360	ha
Reduced herbicide cereal crop followed by overwintered stubble <i>NEW in 2010</i>	HF15	£195	ha
Options to encourage a range of crop types			
Undersown spring cereals	HG1	£200	ha
Cereals for whole-crop silage followed by overwintered stubble	HG4	£230	ha
Options to protect soil and water			
Management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion	HJ2	£18	ha
In-field grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off <i>NEW in 2010</i>	HJ5	£350	ha

	Code	Payment	Units
12 m buffer strips for watercourses on cultivated land <i>NEW in 2009</i>	HJ9	£400	ha
Enhanced management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion and run-off <i>NEW in 2009</i>	HJ10	£94	ha
Maintenance of watercourse fencing <i>NEW in 2009</i>	HJ11	£4	100 m
Winter cover crops <i>NEW in 2010</i>	HJ13	£65	ha
Options for grassland outside the Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs)			
Take field corners out of management	HK1	£400	ha
Permanent grassland with low inputs	HK2	£85	ha
Permanent grassland with very low inputs	HK3	£150	ha
Management of rush pastures	HK4	£150	ha
Option for mixed stocking on grassland			
Mixed stocking	HK5	£9	ha
Options for grassland and moorland inside the Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs)			
Take field corners out of management in SDAs	HL1	£100	ha
Permanent grassland with low inputs in SDAs	HL2	£35	ha
Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs	HL3	£60	ha
Management of rush pastures in SDAs	HL4	£60	ha
Enclosed rough grazing	HL5	£35	ha
Unenclosed moorland rough grazing	HL6	£5	ha
Options from the Uplands strand of Entry Level Stewardship (UELS)			
(nb These codes are formed by replacing the 'U' with 'UH' at the start of the relevant Uplands Entry Level Stewardship option)			
Woodland livestock exclusion	UHC22	£75	ha
Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings in remote locations	UHD12	£4	m ²
Maintaining visibility of archaeological features on moorland	UHD13	£53	feature
Winter livestock removal next to streams, rivers and lakes	UHJ12	£35	ha
No supplementary feeding on moorland	UHL17	£4	ha
Cattle grazing on upland grassland and moorland	UHL18	£30	ha
Haymaking	UHL20	£60	ha
No cutting strip within meadows	UHL21	£250	ha
Management of enclosed rough grazing for birds	UHL22	£35	ha
Management of upland grassland for birds	UHL23	£37	ha

Organic Entry Level Stewardship options also available under Higher Level Stewardship

(nb These codes are formed by replacing the 'O' with 'OH' at the start of the relevant Organic Entry Level Stewardship option)

	Code	Payment	Units
Options for trees and woodlands			
Protection of in-field trees on rotational land	OHC1	£16	tree
Protection of in-field trees on organic grassland	OHC2	£11	tree
Management of woodland edges	OHC4	£380	ha
Hedgerow tree buffer strips on rotational land <i>NEW in 2010</i>	OHC24	£500	ha
Hedgerow tree buffer strips on organic grassland <i>NEW in 2010</i>	OHC25	£500	ha
Options for historic and landscape features			
Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings	OHD1	£2	m ² (of ground floor area)
Take out of cultivation archaeological features that are currently on rotational land	OHD2	£600	ha
Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on archaeological features	OHD3	£100	ha

	Code	Payment	Units
Management of scrub on archaeological features	OHD4	£120	ha
Management of archaeological features on grassland	OHD5	£16	ha
Options for buffer strips			
2 m buffer strips on rotational land	OHE1	£400	ha
4 m buffer strips on rotational land	OHE2	£500	ha
6 m buffer strips on rotational land	OHE3	£500	ha
2 m buffer strips on organic grassland	OHE4	£400	ha
4 m buffer strips on organic grassland	OHE5	£500	ha
6 m buffer strips on organic grassland	OHE6	£500	ha
Buffering in-field ponds in organic grassland	OHE7	£500	ha
Buffering in-field ponds in rotational land	OHE8	£500	ha
6 m buffer strips on rotational land next to a watercourse <i>NEW in 2010</i>	OHE9	£500	ha
6 m buffer strips on organic grassland next to a watercourse <i>NEW in 2010</i>	OHE10	£500	ha
Options for rotational land			
Management of field corners	OHF1	£500	ha
Wild bird seed mixture	OHF2	£550	ha
Nectar flower mixture	OHF4	£550	ha
Overwintered stubble	OHF6	£150	ha
Beetle banks	OHF7	£750	ha
Skylark plots	OHF8	£5	plot
Uncropped, cultivated margins for rare plants on rotational land	OHF11	£460	ha
Uncropped, cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds on rotational land <i>NEW in 2010</i>	OHF13	£360	ha
Options to encourage a range of crop types			
Undersown spring cereals	OHG1	£150	ha
Cereals for whole-crop silage followed by overwintered stubble	OHG4	£250	ha
Options to protect soil and water			
Management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion	OHJ2	£18	ha
In-field grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off <i>NEW in 2010</i>	OHJ5	£350	ha
12 m buffer strips for watercourses on rotational land <i>NEW in 2009</i>	OHJ9	£500	ha
Maintenance of watercourse fencing <i>NEW in 2009</i>	OHJ11	£4	100 m
Winter cover crops <i>NEW in 2010</i>	OHJ13	£65	ha
Options for grassland outside the Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDAs)			
Take field corners out of management	OHK1	£500	ha
Permanent grassland with low inputs	OHK2	£115	ha
Permanent grassland with very low inputs	OHK3	£180	ha
Management of rush pastures	OHK4	£180	ha
Option for mixed stocking on grassland			
Mixed stocking	OHK5	£9	ha
Options for grassland and moorland inside the Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs)			
Take field corners out of management in SDAs	OHL1	£100	ha
Permanent grassland with low inputs in SDAs	OHL2	£35	ha
Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs	OHL3	£60	ha
Management of rush pastures in SDAs	OHL4	£60	ha
Enclosed rough grazing	OHL5	£35	ha
Options from the Uplands strand of Organic Entry Level Stewardship (UOELS)			

	Code	Payment	Units
(nb These codes are formed by replacing the 'UO' with 'UOH' at the start of the relevant Organic Uplands Entry Level Stewardship option)			
Woodland livestock exclusion	UOHC22	£75	ha
Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings in remote locations	UOHD12	£4	m ²
Maintaining visibility of archaeological features on moorland	UOHD13	£53	feature
Winter livestock removal next to streams, rivers and lakes	UOHJ12	£35	ha
No supplementary feeding on moorland	UOHL17	£4	ha
Cattle grazing on upland grassland and moorland	UOHL18	£30	ha
Haymaking	UOHL20	£60	ha
No cutting strip within meadows	UOHL21	£250	ha
Management of enclosed rough grazing for birds	UOHL22	£35	ha
Management of upland grassland for birds	UOHL23	£37	ha

3.4 Combinations of options that can occupy the same land

Options that apply over the whole agreement are not included in this list (for example, OU1, HN1, HN8, and HN9). This is because they are, by default, co-locatable with all other options. Fencing options such as UC5, UJ3 and J11, and the supplement for group applications, HR8, are not included.

Other options not listed in this table cannot be co-located with any other option (HC5, HD9, and HG5).

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Options for boundary features				
HB11	Management of hedgerows of very high environmental value (both sides)	B4, B5, B12–16	B1, B3, B8, B10	
HB12	Management of hedgerows of very high environmental value (one side)	B4, B5, B12–16	B2, B9	
HB14	Management of ditches of very high environmental value		B6–10	HK6–17, HK19, HP5, HP6
Options for trees, woodland and scrub				
HC6	Ancient trees in intensively managed grass fields			HN2
HC12	Maintenance of wood pasture and parkland	D13, J12, K5, L18		HN2–5, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR5, HR7
HC13	Restoration of wood pasture and parkland	D13, J12, K5, L18		HN2–5, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR5, HR7
HC14	Creation of wood pasture	D13, J12, K5, L18		HN2–5, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR5, HR7
HC7	Maintenance of woodland			HN3, HN4, HN5

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HC8	Restoration of woodland			HC11, HN3, HN4, HN5, HR4, HR5, HR7
HC9	Creation of woodland in Severely Disadvantaged Areas		C22	HN3, HN4, HN5
HC10	Creation of woodland outside Severely Disadvantaged Areas			HN3, HN4, HN5
HC15	Maintenance of successional areas and scrub	K5, L18		HN2-5, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HC16	Restoration of successional areas and scrub	K5, L18		HC11, HN2-5, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HC17	Creation of successional areas and scrub	K5, L18		HC11, HN2-5, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HC11	Woodland livestock exclusion supplement			HC8, HC16, HC17, HN3, HN4, HN5, HR4, HR5, HR7
Options for orchards				
HC18	Maintenance of high-value traditional orchards			HN2-5, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HC20	Restoration of traditional orchards			HN2-5, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HC19	Maintenance of traditional orchards in production			HN2-5, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HC21	Creation of traditional orchards			HN2-5, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
Options for historic and landscape features				
HD6	Crop establishment by direct drilling	G1		HN3-5, HR6
HD7	Arable reversion by natural regeneration	J12, L18, L20, L21, L23		HN2-5, HR1, HR2, HR6, HR7
HD8	Maintaining high water levels to protect archaeology	J12, K2-5, L2-5, L18, L20, L21, L23		HN2-5, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HD10	Maintenance of traditional water meadows	J12, L18, L20, L21	K2-4	HK18, HN2-5, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HD11	Restoration of traditional water meadows	J12, L18, L20, L21	K2-4	HK18, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
Options for arable land				
HE10	Floristically enhanced grass buffer strips			HR6, HR7
HF12	Enhanced wild bird seed mix plots	D3		HR6

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HF14	Unharvested, fertiliser-free conservation headland	D3		HR6
HF20	Cultivated fallow plots or margins for arable plants	D3		HR6
HG6	Fodder crop management to retain or recreate an arable mosaic			HR6
HG7	Low-input spring cereal to retain or recreate an arable mosaic	D3		HR6
Options to protect soil and water				
HJ3	Arable reversion to unfertilised grassland to prevent erosion or run-off	L18, L20, L21	J12, L23	HN2, HN3, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HJ4	Arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input to prevent erosion or run-off	L18, L20, L21	J12, L23	HN2, HN3, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HJ6	Preventing erosion or run-off from intensively managed, improved grassland	L18, L20, L21	J12, L23	HJ8, HN2, HN3, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HJ7	Seasonal livestock removal on grassland with no input restriction	D2, D5, K2-5, L3-5, L18, L20, L21, L23	J12	HN2, HN3, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HJ8	Nil fertiliser supplement			HJ6, HN2, HN3, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
Options for grassland				
HK6	Maintenance of species-rich, semi-natural grassland	K5, L18, L20, L21	D5, D13, J12, K2-4, L2-4, L22, L23	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, HN2-5, HR1, 2, HR4-7
HK7	Restoration of species-rich, semi-natural grassland	K5, L18, L20, L21	D5, D13, J12, K2-4, L2-4, L22, L23	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, HN2-5, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HK8	Creation of species-rich, semi-natural grassland	K5, L18, L20, L21	D5, D13, J12, L22, L23	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, HN2-5, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HK9	Maintenance of wet grassland for breeding waders	B6, B7, K5, L18, L20	D5, K2-4, L2-4, L21, L23	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HK10	Maintenance of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl	B6, B7, K5	D5, K2-4, L2-4,	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, HQ13, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HK11	Restoration of wet grassland for breeding waders	B6, B7, K5, L18, L20	D5, J12, K2-4, L2-4, L21, L23	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, HR1, HR2, HR4-7

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HK12	Restoration of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl	B6, B7, K5	D5, K2-4, L2-4	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, HQ13, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HK13	Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders	B6, B7, K5, L18, L20	D5, J12, L21, L23	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HK14	Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl	B6, B7, K5	D5	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, HQ13, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HK15	Maintenance of grassland for target features	D13, J12, K5, L18, L20	D5, K2, L2-5, L17, L21, L22, L23	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, HN2-5, HQ13, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HK16	Restoration of grassland for target features	D13, J12, K5, L18, L20	D5, K2, L2-5, L17, L21, L22, L23	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, HN2-5, HQ13, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HK17	Creation of grassland for target features	D13, J12, K5, L18, L20	D5, K2, K3, L2-5, L17, L21, L22, L23	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, HN2-5, HQ13, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HE11	Enhanced strips for target species on intensive grassland			HR4, HR6
HK18	Haymaking supplement		L20	HD10, HD11, HK6-17, HK19, HL16, HN2-5, HR4-7
HK19	Raised water levels supplement			HB14, HK6-18, HL16, HN2-5, HR4-7
HQ13	Inundation grassland supplement			HK10, HK12, HK14-17, HL16, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
Options for moorland and upland rough grazing				
HL9	Maintenance of moorland	D13, K5, L18	L5, L6, L17, L22	HL12,13,15,16, HN4-7, HR1, HR2, HL9, HL10
HL10	Restoration of moorland	D13, K5, L18	L5, L6, L17, L22	HL12,13,15,16, HN4-7, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HL11	Creation of upland heathland	D13, K5, L18	L5, L6, L17, L22	HL13, HL16, HN2-7, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HL7	Maintenance of rough grazing for birds	D13, J12, K5, L18, L20, L21	EL2-6, OL2-5, L17, L22, L23	HL12,13,15,16, HN6, HN7, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HL8	Restoration of rough grazing for birds	D13, J12, K5, L18, L20, L21	EL2-6, OL2-5, L17, L22, L23	HL12,13,15,16, HN6, HN7, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HL12	Supplement for management of heather, gorse and grass by burning, cutting or swiping			HL7-10, HL16, HN2-7, HR4-7
HL13	Moorland re-wetting supplement			HL7-11, HL16, HN2-7, HR4-7

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HL15	Seasonal livestock exclusion supplement			HL7–10, HL16, HN2–7, HR4–7
Options for access				
HN2	Permissive open access	C22, C24, C25, D2, D4, D5, D13, E1–9, E10, F1, J12, K1–5, L1–6, L17, L18, L20, L21		HC6, HC12–21, HD7, HD8, HD10, HJ3–4, HJ6–8, HK6–8, HK15–19, HL11–13, HL15, HL16, HP1–4, HR4–7
HN3	Permissive footpath access	C22, C24, C25, D2, D4, D5, D13, E1–9, E10, F1, J12, K1–5, L1–6, L17, L18, L20, L21		HC7–21, HD6–8, HD10, HJ3–4, HJ6–8, HK6–8, HK15–19, HL11–13, HL15, HL16, HO3–5, HP1–4, HR4–7
HN4	Permissive bridleway/cycle path access	C22, C24, C25, D2, D4, D5, D13, E1–9, E10, F1, J12, K1–5, L1–6, L17, L18, L20, L21		HC7–21, HD6–8, HD10, HK6–8, HK15–19, HL9–13, HL15, HL16, HO1–5, HP1–4, HR4–7
HN5	Access for people with reduced mobility	C22, D2, D4, D5, D13, J12, K1–5, L1–6, L17, L18, L20, L21		HC7–21, HD6–8, HD10, HK6–8, HK15–19, HL9–13, HL15, HL16, HO1–5, HP1–4, HR4–7
HN7	Upgrading CRoW Act access for people with reduced mobility	C22, D2, D4, D5, D13, J12, K1–5, L1–6, L17, L18, L20, L21		HL7–13, HL15, HL16, HO1–5, HP1–4
HN6	Upgrading CRoW Act access for cyclists/horses	C22, D2, D4, D5, D13, J12, K1–5, L1–6, L17, L18, L20, L21		HL7–13, HL15, HL16, HO1–5, HP1–4
Options for lowland heathland				
HO1	Maintenance of lowland heathland			HL16, HN4–7, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HO2	Restoration of lowland heathland			HL16, HN4–7, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HO3	Restoration of forestry areas to lowland heathland			HL16, HN3–7, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HO4	Creation of lowland heathland from arable or improved grassland			HL16, HN3–7, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HO5	Creation of lowland heathland on worked mineral sites			HL16, HN3–7, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
Options for inter-tidal and coastal locations				
HP1	Maintenance of sand dunes	K5		HL16, HN2–7, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HP2	Restoration of sand dunes	K5		HL16, HN2–7, HR1, HR2, HR4–7

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HP3	Creation of coastal vegetated shingle and sand dunes on arable land	K5		HL16, HN2-7, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HP4	Creation of coastal vegetated shingle and sand dunes on grassland	K5		HL16, HN2-7, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HP5	Maintenance of coastal salt marsh	K5		HB14, HL16, HP10, HR1, HR2
HP6	Restoration of coastal salt marsh	K5		HB14, HL16, HP10, HP11, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HP7	Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on arable land	K5		HL16, HP10, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HP8	Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on grassland	K5		HL16, HP10, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HP9	Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitats by non-intervention	K5		HL16, HP10, HP11, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HP10	Supplement for extensive grazing on salt marsh			HL16, HP5-9, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR5
HP11	Salt marsh livestock exclusion supplement			HP6, HP9, HR4, HR5
Options for wetland				
HQ1	Maintenance of ponds of high wildlife value (less than 100 m ²)	C22, D13, J12, K1-5, L1-6, L17, L18, L20-23		HR4, HR7
HQ2	Maintenance of ponds of high wildlife value (more than 100 m ²)	C22, D13, J12		HR4, HR7
HQ3	Maintenance of reedbeds			HL16, HQ11, HQ12, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HQ4	Restoration of reedbeds			HL16, HQ11, HQ12, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HQ5	Creation of reedbeds			HL16, HQ11, HQ12, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HQ6	Maintenance of fen	L18		HL16, HQ11, HQ12, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HQ7	Restoration of fen	L18		HL16, HQ11, HQ12, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HQ8	Creation of fen	L18		HL16, HQ11, HQ12, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HQ9	Maintenance of lowland raised bog			HL16, HQ11, HQ12, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7

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HQ10	Restoration of lowland raised bog			HL16, HQ11, HQ12, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HQ11	Wetland cutting supplement			HQ3-10
HQ12	Wetland grazing supplement			HL16, HQ3-10
Additional supplements				
HL16	Shepherding supplement			HK6-19, HL7-13, HL15, HN2-7, HO1-5, HP1-10, HQ3-10, HQ12, HQ13, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HR1	Cattle grazing supplement		L18	HC12-21, HD7-8, HD10-11, HJ3-4, HJ6, HJ8, HK6-17, HL7-11, HL16, HO1-5, HP1-10, HQ3-10, HQ13, HR2, HR4-7
HR2	Native breeds at risk supplement			HC12-21, HD7-8, HD10-11, HJ3-4, HJ6-8, HK6-17, HL7-11, HL16, HO1-5, HP1-10, HQ3-10, HQ13, HR1, HR4-7
HR4	Supplement for control of invasive plant species			HC8, HC11-21, HD8, HD10-11, HE11, HJ3-4, HJ6-8, HK6-19, HL7-13, HL15, HL16, HN2-5, HO1-5, HP1-4, HP6-11, HQ1-10, HQ13, HR1-2, HR5-7
HR5	Bracken control supplement			HC8, HC11-21, HK6-19, HL7-13, HL15, HL16, HN2-5, HO1-5, HP1-4, HP6-11, HQ13, HR1-2, HR4, HR6-7
HR6	Supplement for small fields			HC15-21, HD6-8, HD10-11, HE10-11, HF12, HF14, HF20, HG6-7, HJ3-4, HJ6-8, HK6-19, HL7-13, HL15, HL16, HN2-5, HO1-5, HP1-4, HP6-9, HQ3-10, HQ13, HR1-2, HR4-5
HR7	Supplement for difficult sites			HC8, HC11-21, HD7-8, HD10-11, HE10, HJ3-4, HJ6-8, HK6-19, HL7-13, HL15, HL16, HN2-5, HO1-5, HP1-4, HP6-9, HQ1-10, HQ13, HR1-2, HR4-5

Section 4

Capital items

4.1 Summary table of HLS capital items and payment rates

Further information on special projects and capital items for historic features is provided after this table. For further information on other capital items, please consult your Natural England adviser.

	Code	Payment (£ or % of cost)	Units
Boundaries			
Hedgerow restoration including laying, coppicing and gapping up	HR	£5.00	m
Hedgerow planting – new hedges	PH	£5.00	m
Hedgerow supplement – removal of old fence lines	HF	£0.60	m
Hedgerow supplement – substantial pre-work	HSC	£2.40	m
Hedgerow supplement – top binding and staking	HSL	£2.40	m
Stone wall restoration	WR	£16.00	m
Stone wall supplement – stone from holding	WRS	£6.00	m
Stone wall supplement – stone from quarry	WRQ	£30.00	m
Stone wall supplement – difficult sites	WRD	£7.00	m
Stone wall supplement – top wiring	TW	£1.80	m
Stone-faced hedge bank repair	BR	£16.00	m
Stone-faced hedge bank restoration	BS	£34.00	m
Earth bank restoration	ER	£3.00	m
Creation of new earth banks <i>NEW in 2010</i>	EC	£11.00	m
Casting up supplement – hedge bank options	ERC	£1.20	m (per side)
Ditch, dyke and rhine restoration	DR	£2.90	m
Items associated with tree planting and management			
Spiral rabbit guards	TR	£0.20	each
Tree and shrub – whips and transplants plus planting	TSP	£1.60	each
Tree tube and stake	TT	£0.50	each
Standard parkland tree/hedgerow tree and planting	STT	£7.50	each
Parkland tree guard – post and wire (wood)	TP	£64.00	each
Welded steel tree guard	TGS	£106.00	each
Identification of orchard fruit tree varieties <i>NEW in 2010</i>	IDF	£30.00	tree variety
Planting fruit trees	MT/SF	£17.00	each
Orchard tree guard (tube and mesh)	TO	£3.30	each
Orchard tree guard (cattle proof)	TOF	£36.00	each
Orchard tree guard (sheep proof) <i>NEW in 2010</i>	TOS	£32.00	each
Orchard tree pruning	FP	£17.00	each
Coppicing bankside trees	CBT	£29.00	each

	Code	Payment (£ or % of cost)	Units
Tree surgery, minor – to include minor pollarding	TS1	£43.00	each
Tree surgery, major – to include major pollarding	TS2	£89.00	each
Tree removal	TRE	£25.00	m ²
Fencing in association with conservation work			
Sheep fencing	FSB/H	£1.80	m
Post and wire	FW/B	£1.20	m
Deer fencing	FD	£4.00	m
Rabbit fencing supplement	FR/B	£1.50	m
Permanent electric fencing	FPE	£1.20	m
Fencing supplement – difficult sites	FDS	£2.50	m
High-tensile fencing	FHT	£1.25	m
Historic features			
Historical and archaeological feature protection	HAP	Up to 100% of costs	
Restoration of historic buildings	HTB	Up to 80% of costs	
Landscape items			
Wooden field/river gate	GF	£149.00	each
Stone gate post	LSP	£96.00	each
Removal of eyesore	E	£120.00	each
Wooden wings for gates	LWW	£70.00	each
Resource protection			
Cross-drains under farm tracks	RPD	£139.00	each
Relocation of gates	RPG	£136.00	each
Hard base for livestock drinker	HBD	£85.00	each
Hard base for livestock feeder	HBF	£120.00	each
Reversion – heathland, grass, meadow			
Native seed mix	GS	100% of costs	
Major preparatory work for heathland recreation	LHX	100% of costs	
Re-introduction of livestock			
Cattle drinking bay	CDB	£119.00	each
Cattle grids	CCG	£538.00	each
Water supply	WS	£2.00	m
Water trough	WT	£85.00	each
Livestock handling facilities	CLH	60% of costs	
Upland management			
Grip blocking drainage channels	GBC	£3.40	block
Grip blocking on difficult sites <i>NEW in 2010</i>	GBD	100% of costs	
Scrub and bracken control			
Scrub management – base payment	SS	£76.00	year
Scrub management – less than 25% cover	SA	£228.00	ha

	Code	Payment (£ or % of cost)	Units
Scrub management – 25% to 75% cover	SB	£376.00	ha
Scrub management – over 75% cover	SC	£583.00	ha
Mechanical bracken control – base payment	BMB	£106.00	year
Mechanical bracken control – area payment	BMA	£48.00	ha
Chemical bracken control – base payment	BCB	£61.00	year
Chemical bracken control – area payment	BCA	£112.00	ha
Difficult site supplement for bracken and scrub control	BDS	£7.00	ha
Access			
Hard standing for car parking	CP	£13.00	m ²
Hard standing for disabled paths	ADC	£15.00	m ²
Bridle gate	GB	£220.00	each
Kissing gate	GK	£245.00	each
Kissing gate for disabled access	GD	£290.00	each
Dog gate	ADG	£35.00	each
Timber stile	ST	£100.00	each
Ladder stile	LS	£125.00	each
Step over stile in a stone wall	WSS	£115.00	each
Step through stile in stone wall	WST	£85.00	each
Wooden footbridge	FB	£315.00	each
Bench	B	£115.00	each
Helping prepare Teachers' Information Pack	TN	£490.00	each
Items associated with wetlands			
Creation of ditches – rhines and dykes	WDC	£3.60	m
Creation of gutters	WGC	£1.90	m
Soil bund	S1	£149.00	each
Culvert	C	£153.00	each
Timber sluice	S2	£314.00	each
Brick, stone or concrete sluice	S3	£960.00	each
Creation of temporary ponds – first 100 m ²	SCR	£1.40	m ²
Creation of temporary ponds – over 100 m ²	SCP	£0.90	m ²
Silt trap provision	STP	60% of costs	
Wind pumps for water-level measures	WWP	80% of costs	
Drove improvement	WDI	50% of costs	
Construction of water-penning structures	WPS	80% of costs	
Ponds			
Pond creation – first 100 m ²	PC	£3.00	m ²
Pond creation – over 100 m ²	PCP	£1.00	m ²
Pond restoration – first 100 m ²	PR	£2.10	m ²
Pond restoration – over 100 m ²	PRP	£0.80	m ²

	Code	Payment (£ or % of cost)	Units
Species			
Otter holt – log construction	OH1	£108.00	each
Otter holt – pipe and chamber construction	OH2	£203.00	each
Bat/bird box	SBB	£28.00	each
Bird strike markers	SBS	£1.50	each
Small mammal boxes	SSM	£10.00	each
Badger gates	SBG	£27.00	each
Payment for advice			
Professional help with implementation plan	PAH	£400.00	each
Other environmental issues			
Special projects	OES	No set payment	

4.2 Capital items for historic features

The range of non-standard payment capital items includes two options intended for dealing with historic features or landscapes that require management that falls outside the scope of the annual land management payments.

HAP: Historic and archaeological feature protection

This option may be used where proposals directly contribute to the protection and conservation of the historic environment. Its uses are diverse but include:

- parkland plans or other management plans for historic environment features or landscapes, where research, survey and tailored specifications are required to guide future management, conservation or restoration;
- work to conserve or consolidate historic structures and features that are not considered to be 'historic buildings';
- scrub clearance on archaeological features where the standard methodology and payment rates are unable to meet the requirements of the feature; and
- works such as moving access routes or gateways designed to prevent damage to historic environment features.

In some cases, for example, a management plan for parklands where the park forms the majority of the land, and where the results of the plan would significantly affect the choice of options in the HLS agreement, a 1-year stand-alone HLS agreement should be considered. This should be discussed with your Natural England adviser at an early stage.

HTB: Restoration of historic buildings

The restoration of historic buildings under HLS aims to conserve and lengthen the life of buildings that contribute to the character of the landscape and are of historic interest.

We have produced a guide to assist applicants on the repair and restoration of historic buildings in Higher Level Stewardship. The guide includes details on what we are looking for in a building restoration project, eligible buildings and the materials and techniques that need to be used. It is available from your Natural England adviser.

Any application for a building restoration will be measured against how it meets the wider Environmental Stewardship scheme objectives, including its historic or architectural interest, its contribution to the landscape character of the area, its existing or potential value for wildlife (for example, barn owls and bats) and its accessibility to the public. Priority will be given to buildings that demonstrably meet an objective in the targeting statement for your area. In some cases, specific building types may have been identified where they are considered to be at risk. A building at risk from further significant decay in the near future will have priority over one in a more stable state.



© Natural England/James LePage

Flint walled barn in Hampshire.

Historic building restoration will normally require a management plan as a first stage. The management plan will be included in your first Capital Works Plan and will provide a full assessment of the building, a specification for the work required and tendered costs for carrying it out. Once the management plan has been completed and the claim paid, you will be able to apply in a subsequent Capital Works Plan for a restoration payment for undertaking the work.

We will not normally grant aid for the restoration of any building after 5 years of an agreement. Funding will not be given to assist with the conversion of buildings or where changes would be made that affect the character or interest of the building; for grants enabling this type of work you should contact your Regional Development Agency.

In all cases, you should consult your Natural England adviser at an early stage, and before you start detailed planning or seeking quotes. You will be asked to complete a Historic Buildings Information Form, available from your Natural England office, and return it to your Natural England adviser. This information is needed so that Natural England can do an initial 'desk-based' sift to assess a building's eligibility, historic value and the urgency of work.

4.3 Special projects

In certain circumstances, your proposals may need work outside the scope of the standard payments, or your particular feature will require a unique, tailored specification. Examples, which can be for both capital items and land management projects, include:

- interpretation boards to increase understanding of an area of countryside or historic feature and explain the work being undertaken;
- management plans, for example to identify and cost the work required for creating vegetated shingle or sand dunes; and
- provision of hides for viewing wildlife.

This type of work may be funded as a special project, either as a one-off capital item or for a continuing programme of up to 10 years. Mobile equipment can be funded provided the item is essential to the delivery of a scheme objective and it is the most suitable option available.

For simple work items, such as interpretation boards or leaflets, you will need to submit an initial description of the proposed works, together with an estimate of the costs, and then discuss these with your Natural England adviser at an early stage. For any more complex works, including management plans, you will need guidance on what the special project should cover. In all cases you should consult your Natural England adviser before you start detailed planning or seeking quotes, so that you can be clear that your proposed work is eligible.

Appendix 1

Natural England contact details

Natural England offices are open from 8.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays. Please have your application or agreement details to hand when contacting us.

Please note that all requests for OELS and combined OELS/HLS application packs should be directed to the Crewe office (North West region).

East of England for ELS and HLS

Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Essex
Hertfordshire
Norfolk
Suffolk

Natural England
Incentive Schemes Services
PO Box 247, Cambridge CB2 2WW
Tel: 0300 060 1114
Fax: 0300 060 1124
Email: iss.cambridge@naturalengland.org.uk

East Midlands for ELS and HLS

Derbyshire
Leicestershire
Lincolnshire
Northamptonshire
Nottinghamshire
Rutland

Natural England
Incentive Schemes Services
PO Box 8296, Nottingham NG8 3WZ
Tel: 0300 060 1111
Fax: 0300 060 1121
Email: iss.nottingham@naturalengland.org.uk

North East for ELS and HLS

Durham
Northumberland
Tyne and Wear
Former county of Cleveland

Natural England
Incentive Scheme Services
PO Box 578, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 8WW
Tel: 0300 060 1117
Fax: 0300 060 1127
Email: iss.newcastle@naturalengland.org.uk

North West for ELS, HLS and all OELS and OELS/HLS

Cheshire
Cumbria
Greater Manchester
Lancashire
Merseyside

Natural England
Incentive Schemes Services
PO Box 380, Crewe CW1 6YH
Tel: 0300 060 1113
Fax: 0300 060 1123
Email: iss.crewe@naturalengland.org.uk

South East for ELS and HLS

Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
East Sussex
West Sussex
Greater London
Hampshire
Isle of Wight
Kent
Surrey
Oxfordshire

Natural England
Incentive Schemes Services
PO Box 2423, Reading RG1 6WY
Tel: 0300 060 1112
Fax: 0300 060 1122
Email: iss.reading@naturalengland.org.uk

South West for ELS and HLS

Cornwall
Devon
Dorset
Gloucestershire
Somerset
Wiltshire
Former county of Avon

Natural England
Incentive Schemes Services
PO Box 277, Bristol BS10 6WW
Tel: 0300 060 1118
Fax: 0300 060 1128
Email: iss.bristol@naturalengland.org.uk

West Midlands for ELS and HLS

Herefordshire
Shropshire
Staffordshire
Warwickshire
West Midlands
Worcestershire

Natural England
Incentive Schemes Services
PO Box 530, Worcester WR5 2WZ
Tel: 0300 060 1115
Fax: 0300 060 1125
Email: iss.westmidlands@naturalengland.org.uk

Yorkshire and the Humber for ELS and HLS

East Riding of Yorkshire
North Yorkshire
South Yorkshire
West Yorkshire
North Lincolnshire

Natural England
Incentive Schemes Services
PO Box 213, Leeds LS16 5WN
Tel: 0300 060 1116
Fax: 0300 060 1126
Email: iss.leeds@naturalengland.org.uk

Rural Payment Agency's Customer Service Centre

Customer Service Centre
Rural Payments Agency
PO Box 1058
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE99 4YQ
Tel: 0845 603 7777
Email: csc@rpa.gsi.gov.uk

Appendix 2

Useful web addresses

A list of NDPBs and other public bodies can be found at:
www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/work/codes/ndpbs.aspx

Environmental Stewardship forms can be found at:
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/forms/default.aspx

Guidance on e-FEP:
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/hls/efepguidance.aspx

HLS Targeting and theme statements
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/hls/targeting/default.aspx

Advice about wildlife management and licensing is available at:
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/wildlife/default.aspx

A guidance note on Environmental Stewardship for heritage properties designated under the Inheritance Tax Act 1984 (Natural England 2009) is available at:
www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/environmentalstewardshipguidance_tcm6-8246.pdf

For information on Heather and Grass Burning:
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/burning/default.aspx

Details of our complaints procedure can be found at:
www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/contact_us/complaints.aspx

Further information on public rights of way, including the duties of landowners and occupiers of land, can be found at:
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/rightsofway/default.aspx

Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales can be found at:
www.finds.org.uk/documents/CofP1.pdf

To find the details of your local Historic Environment Record see:
www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/default.aspx

Further information on Environmental Impact Assessments is available at:
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/landmanage/land-use/eia/index.htm>

Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO)
www.algao.org.uk/Cttees/Countryside/ES-HLS.htm

Forestry Commission website:
www.forestry.gov.uk

Appendix 3

Glossary and list of abbreviations

Glossary

Agreement land

All land on which Entry Level or Organic Entry Level and Higher Level Stewardship management prescriptions apply, including items within a Capital Works Plan.

Agri-environment schemes

Schemes under European Commission Regulations 1698/2005, 1974/2006 and 1975/2006 that offer grants for measures to conserve and enhance the countryside. The main schemes are Environmental Stewardship, Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Countryside Stewardship and Organic Farming.

Arable land

Land that has been in arable production, including temporary grassland and long-term set-aside, during the 5 years prior to the start of your agreement.

Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs)

Action plans to conserve and enhance biological diversity within the UK for our most threatened species and wildlife habitats.

Capital works

Works in an agreement attracting one-off payments, for example, hedge laying.

Capital Works Plan (CWP)

The capital works to be carried out during specified periods of your agreement.

Common land

Land owned by one or more persons over which one or more other persons are entitled to exercise rights of common such as grazing animals.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000

Strengthens the legislation on the protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (see below) and introduces new rights of access on foot to open countryside (mountain, moor, heath, downland) and commons.

Derogation

Agreed temporary relaxation from the specified requirements in an agreement.

Easement

A right enjoyed by one landowner over the land of another, for example, a right of access.

Environmental Information Map

The map that Natural England will send to you, with your personalised application form, showing designations on your land such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments and Less Favoured Areas.

Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations

The Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) (England) Regulations 2006, and the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999.

Environmental Stewardship (ES)

Replaced Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Countryside Stewardship Schemes from 2005. It has three elements – Entry Level Stewardship, Organic Entry Level Stewardship and Higher Level Stewardship.

Farm Environment Plan (FEP)

Records features identified on your land together with a statement on their condition. Must accompany an application for Higher Level Stewardship.

Farm Environment Record (FER)

A simple record of the environmental features on your land, required as part of the Entry Level Stewardship or Organic Entry Level Stewardship element of your agreement. As a condition of your agreement, you agree to retain the features identified.

Force majeure

A breach of your agreement caused by unforeseeable circumstances or events beyond your control, which, in spite of the exercise of all due care, could not have been avoided except at the cost of excessive sacrifice.

Historic parkland

A designed landscape, usually with mature trees set in pasture.

Leaching

The process by which percolating water removes nutrients from the soil.

Less Favoured Area (LFA)

An area where the natural characteristics (geology, altitude, climate etc) make farming difficult. LFAs are subdivided into Severely Disadvantaged Areas and Disadvantaged Areas.

Livestock unit (LU)

A measure of grazing pressure, allowing stocking rate comparison between livestock types. Grazing livestock units are calculated according to conversion factors which vary according to the type of animal.

Moorland Line

The Moorland Line encloses land within England that has been defined as predominantly semi-natural upland vegetation, or predominantly of rock outcrops and semi-natural vegetation, used primarily for rough grazing. The Moorland Line encloses nearly 800,000 ha of Less Favoured Area land.

Mosaic

A number of vegetation types within a given area, often having increased environmental value through association with each other.

Non-rotational options

Management options that remain in the same place on your land for the duration of your agreement (for example, Hedgerow management).

Options Map

The map(s) of your land that you send back to Natural England, with your completed application form, on which you have marked the options you wish to enter into Entry Level Stewardship or Organic Entry Level Stewardship and Higher Level Stewardship. These will usually include both land management options and capital works.

Overgrazing

Grazing of land that significantly reduces the growth, quality or species composition of vegetation (other than vegetation normally grazed to destruction) on that land.

Permanent grassland

Land that is used to grow grasses or other herbaceous forage naturally or through cultivation, which has not been subject to cultivation for at least 5 years.

Poaching

Severe damage to the sward and soil caused by inappropriate or untimely concentrations of livestock.

Pollarding

The traditional practice of cutting all the branches from a tree, usually willow, at about 1.8 m above ground so that the regrowth cannot be eaten by stock. The harvested timber was used for a variety of purposes.

Plantation

Woodland where most of the trees have been planted.

Priority targets

The targets against which your application will be assessed. Details of the targets that apply to your land will be included with your application form. If your application does not address any of the targets for your area, it may be rejected.

Rotational options

Options that can be moved around your land during the course of your agreement, for example, skylark plots, wild bird seed mix plots and conservation headlands.

Rural Land Register (RLR)

A database of land parcels and areas within England, managed by the Rural Payments Agency. For land to be eligible for Higher Level Stewardship, it must be registered on the Rural Land Register.

Rural Payments Agency (RPA)

An executive agency of Defra, responsible for the Common Agricultural Policy payment functions, formerly delivered by Defra and the Intervention Board.

Scheduled Monuments

Nationally important sites and monuments that have been given legal protection by being placed on a list or 'schedule'. English Heritage takes the lead in identifying sites in England that should be placed on the schedule by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The current legislation, the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, supports a formal system of Scheduled Monument consent for any work to a designated monument.

Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA)

Severely Disadvantaged Areas are areas which are, in the opinion of the appropriate Minister, inherently suitable for extensive livestock production but not for the production of crops in quantity materially greater than that necessary to feed such livestock as are capable of being maintained on such land, and whose agricultural production is, in the opinion of the appropriate Minister, severely restricted in its range by, or by a combination of soil, relief, aspect or climate, or situated in the Isles of Scilly. Severely Disadvantaged Areas form part of the Less Favoured Areas (LFA).

Silviculture

The management of woods and forests.

Single Payment Scheme (SPS)

A decoupled subsidy payment replacing the 10 major Common Agricultural Policy payment schemes, one of the major reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy, which came into effect in 2005.

Supplements

Annual payments to cover additional work needed for the management of specific habitats.

Target Area Statement

Over 100 individually named, multi-objective target areas have been identified across England. These represent the areas where Natural England wishes to focus delivery of HLS to maximise environmental outcomes. The priorities for each target area are set out in the Target Area Statement.

Target feature/species

Environmental features, or species of particular significance in an area, that need to be protected, enhanced or (re-)created, and on which Natural England wishes to focus delivery of HLS to maximise environmental outcomes and value for money. Examples include historic features, wildlife habitats and plant or animal species.

Theme statement

These address priorities for HLS outside the target areas and have been agreed on a regional basis. They are detailed in the regional Theme Statements.

Undergrazing

Where annual growth is not being fully utilised, or where scrub or coarse vegetation is becoming evident, and this is detrimental to the environmental interests of the site.

Uplands Transitional Payment (UTP)

A payment designed for farms that have Environmentally Sensitive Areas or Countryside Stewardship Schemes. It is a Hill Farm Allowance-style payment based on the total area of your farm. The Rural Payments Agency administers the Uplands Transitional Payment.

Vendor number

A vendor is the name and correspondence address of a business that is entitled to receive grants and subsidies and each vendor is allocated a vendor number.

List of abbreviations

ALGAO	Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BASIS	British Agrochemical Standards Inspection Scheme
CALM	Carbon Accounting for Land Managers
CES	Conservation and Enhancement Scheme
CPH	County Parish Holding number
CRoW Act	Countryside and Rights of Way Act
CSS	Countryside Stewardship Scheme
CWP	Capital Works Plan
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
ECS	Energy Crops Scheme
ELS	Entry Level Stewardship
ERDP	England Rural Development Programme
ES	Environmental Stewardship
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
EU	European Union

EWGS	English Woodland Grant Scheme
FEP	Farm Environment Plan
FER	Farm Environment Record
FWPS	Farm Woodland Premium Scheme
FWS	Farm Woodland Scheme
FYM	Farm Yard Manure
GAEC	Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIS	Geographic Information System
HER	Historic Environment Record
HFA	Hill Farm Allowance
HLC	Historic Landscape Character
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
HLS	Higher Level Stewardship
HS	Habitat Scheme
ISS	Incentive Schemes Services
LEAF	Linking Environment and Farming
LFA	Less Favoured Area
LU	Livestock Unit
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
NVZ	Nitrate Vulnerable Zone
OAS	Organic Aid Scheme
OCIS	Organic Conversion Information Service
OELS	Organic Entry Level Stewardship
OFS	Organic Farming Scheme
OIB	Organic Inspection Body
PRoW	Public Rights of Way
RDPE	Rural Development Programme for England
RLR	Rural Land Register

RPA	Rural Payments Agency
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SDA	Severely Disadvantaged Area
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPS	Single Payment Scheme
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TFB	Traditional Farm Building
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
UTP	Uplands Transitional Payment
WES	Wildlife Enhancement Scheme
WGS	Woodland Grant Scheme

Appendix 4

Standard letter for Historic Environment Record (HER) consultation

Dear [name]

[Your address]

[Address for HER contact]

[Date letter sent]

See www.algao.org.uk/Association/Members.htm

HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP: FARM ENVIRONMENT PLAN CONSULTATION

I am carrying out a FEP for:

Application number:

Farm name:

Farm address:

.....

.....

Six-figure grid reference for the holding:

Local authority area(s) which the holding falls within:

.....

Holding area (ha):

The ownership of all or part of the holding is known to be:

National Trust	Yes/No	Defence Estates	Yes/No
----------------	--------	-----------------	--------

There [*is/is not*] an ELS agreement on the holding.

My aim is to submit an application to meet the following HLS application deadline:

.....

As part of the FEP process, I am required to consult with you, as the local HER.

Please provide me with information and advice on the known historic environment resource on the above holding, in line with the agreed ALGAO, Natural England and English Heritage Service Standard for HER consultation responses and using the standard pro forma template. For your information, the Service Standard is available at:

<http://www.algao.org.uk/Cttees/Countryside/Agri-envEng/ServiceStandard-Version3.o.pdf>

- I enclose a blank colour copy of the official Natural England FEP Map(s) at 1:10,000 scale or larger. This shows the holding boundary, the RLR field numbers that should be used in the consultation response and the field parcels that form the application area.

[Delete as appropriate if the following points are not applicable to this holding.]

- I have identified the limit of any areas of National Trust or Defence Estates land on the enclosed map.
- There is an ELS agreement on the holding and I also enclose a copy of the ELS agreement map and FER Map.

The other land management agreements in place on the holding are [*please insert relevant details or state 'none'*]:

.....

Please provide me with a formal response even if you conclude that there are no known features recorded on the HER that can be managed under the scheme.

I would be grateful for return of your response within 20 working days from receipt of this letter. I understand that I will be charged a fee of £75 for holdings under 50 ha and £150 for holdings over 50 ha, and that this fee may be subject to VAT.

Please send the invoice to: [*insert relevant name and address*]

.....

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for your advice.

Yours sincerely [*Your name*]



Enclosures:

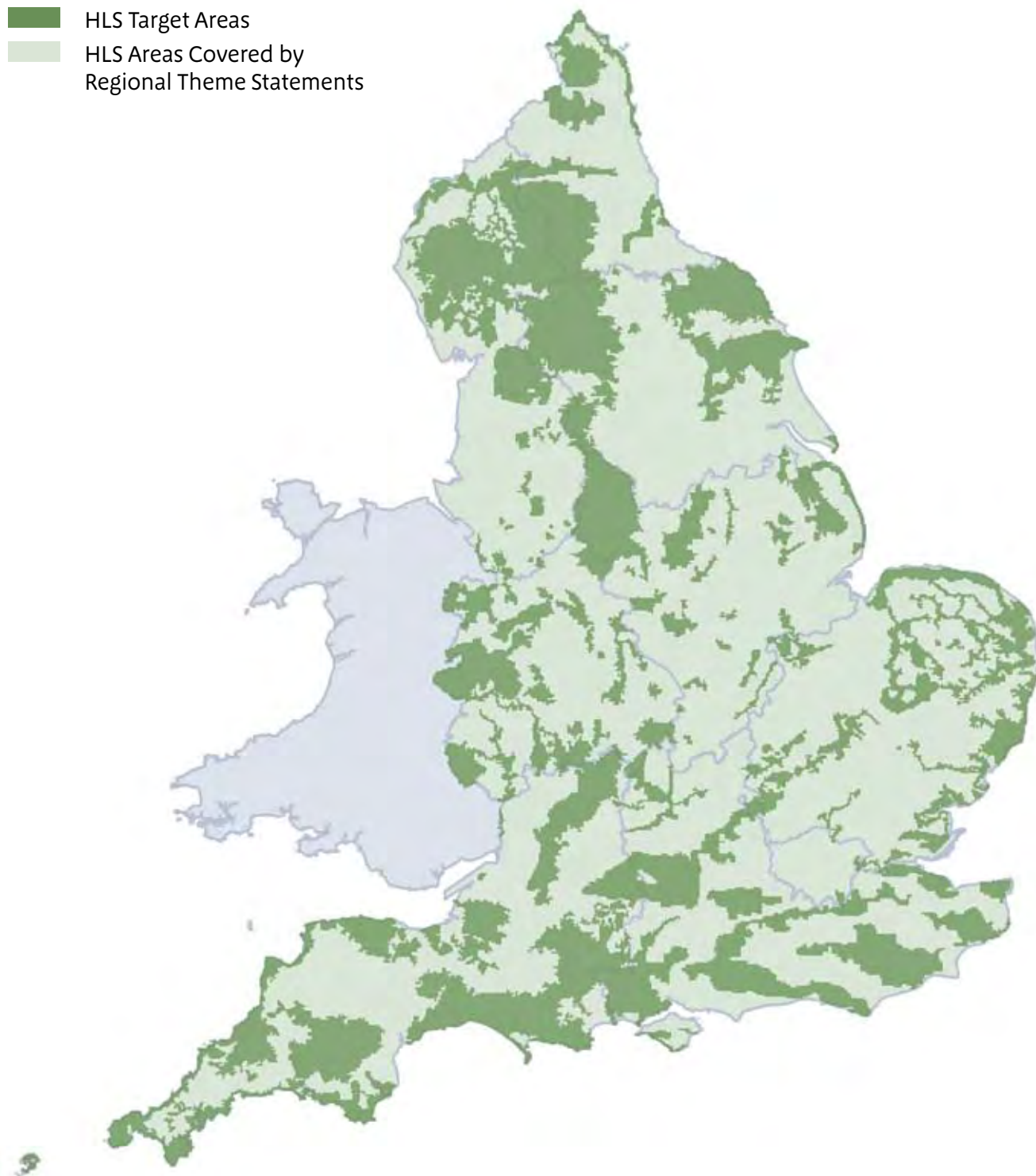
With this consultation request, I have enclosed [tick where relevant]:

- a colour copy of a blank FEP Map(s) at 1:10,000 scale or larger;
- a copy of the ELS agreement map(s); and
- a copy of the FER Map(s).

Appendix 5

Map of Target Areas

-  HLS Target Areas
-  HLS Areas Covered by Regional Theme Statements



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In Natural England, we do our best to provide you with the highest possible standard of service. We promise to treat you fairly, courteously and sensitively and we aim to achieve the following standards:

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- We will only transfer your call when it is certain that the recipient is the best person to deal with your enquiry.
- We will respond to voicemail messages within 2 working days.
- Our voicemail greetings will include details of when we will be able to pick up messages. If this is longer than two working days they will also include details of an alternative contact.
- Letters and emails will be answered within 10 working days of receipt. Where we are unable to provide a final response, we will provide a progress report instead. This will explain who is dealing with your enquiry, what steps are being taken to obtain the information and when you can expect a full reply.
- Correspondence will include the name and contact details of the person dealing with the matter.
- We will respond to all requests under the Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations within the statutory deadline of 20 working days.

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- you would like to suggest ways in which we can improve our service;
- you are unhappy about the way a member of staff helped you or with the level of service you have received; and
- you feel that you have been treated unfairly, insensitively, or have been discriminated against.

In the first instance, please contact the person who has provided you with the service. If you need to confirm contact details or do not have a contact name, please telephone 0845 600 3078, or email enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

For more details visit www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/whatwedo/ourpromise.aspx

Many of the ES options will reduce the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions associated with your farming activities, for instance, by reducing the use of inorganic fertilisers and increasing carbon stores in soils. You can estimate the carbon footprint of your farm by logging on to the Country Land & Business Association's (CLA) Carbon Accounting for Land Managers (CALM) tool at www.cla.org.uk/calm. Natural England and the CLA have been working together to build in a specific ES element to CALM enabling you to estimate the impact of your ES option choices on your farm's carbon footprint.



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