



Higher Level Stewardship

Environmental Stewardship Handbook

Fourth Edition – January 2013

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	Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) including Uplands ELS	Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS) including Uplands OELS	Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)
Level	The simplest level in Environmental Stewardship (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 for a longer period
Payment	Standard payment of £30 per ha per year (£8 per ha per year on land parcels of 15 hectares or more above the Moorland Line) Uplands ELS has 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	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) Uplands OELS has a standard payment rate of £92 per ha per year	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 2013	Section 2 – Environmental objectives – highlighting ELS options of greatest environmental value. Section 3 – Option directory for ELS and Uplands ELS. Changes to options: ■ Five new options added to address specific environmental needs. ■ Points value of 10 options adjusted to improve environmental benefit. ■ Detailed option prescriptions of 11 options changed to clarify eligibility and encourage uptake. ■ Titles of five options changed to spell out the environmental purpose of the options. Section 4 - How to apply and Section 5 – Terms and conditions – now covers both ELS and Uplands ELS.	Section 2 – Environmental objectives – highlighting OELS options of greatest environmental value. Section 3 – Option directory for OELS and Uplands OELS. Changes to options: ■ Five new options added to address specific environmental needs. ■ Points value of 10 options adjusted to improve environmental benefit. ■ Detailed option prescriptions of 11 options changed to clarify eligibility and encourage uptake. ■ Titles of five options changed to spell out the environmental purpose of the options. Section 4 – How to apply and Section 5 – Terms and conditions – now covers both OELS and Uplands OELS.	Section 2 – Option directory for HLS New option HF24 – Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds

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 quick guide will help you find the answers to questions you may have about the scheme, the application process and the rules.

1

Section 1 – Introduction to Higher Level Stewardship

Covers the basics: what you can achieve with HLS, how long agreements last, how the application process works; what and when you will be paid; and an overview of the rules.

2

Section 2 – Option Directory for HLS

Contains the detailed management requirements for each HLS option, and the new option for 2013.

You should make sure you have read and understood all the management requirements that apply to the HLS options you select and any combined management with ELS, OELS and Uplands ELS and OELS options (please refer to the ELS or OELS handbook as appropriate and Section 2.2.2 of this handbook). When you sign your application form, you are confirming that you will comply fully with the management requirements for the duration of your agreement.

3

Section 3 – Capital items

Contains a full summary of capital items and their payment rates.

4

Section 4 – How to apply for HLS

Explains what you need to do before you apply, and provides a step-by-step guide to completing your application form.

5

Section 5 – Terms and conditions

The rules that you will need to comply with when you enter into an HLS agreement. If you have a combined ELS/HLS, Uplands ELS/HLS, OELS/HLS or Uplands OELS/HLS you must refer to the ELS or OELS handbook as appropriate. **You should read the relevant Terms and Conditions before you apply as these will also form part of your legal agreement with Natural England.**

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Section 6 – Appendices

Includes a glossary of some of the main terms used in the handbook, our contact details, and a list of other useful sources of information.

Which edition of the HLS Handbook should you use?

This handbook will apply to all HLS agreements starting on or after 1 January 2013. 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.

HLS agreements starting before 1 January 2013 will continue to be governed by previous handbook editions, until they are either replaced by a new agreement or reach the end of their term, as follows:

- 1st edition handbooks: Agreements starting August 2005 - September 2008.
- 2nd edition handbooks: Agreements starting October 2008 - January 2010.
- 3rd edition handbooks: Agreements starting February 2010 - December 2012.

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In Section 5, Terms and conditions, the text in black is applicable to all HLS agreements. The text specific to HLS agreements including OELS, is highlighted green.

Throughout this handbook, all references to ‘our’, ‘us’ or ‘we’ refer to ‘Natural England’ and all references to ‘you’ or ‘your’ refer to ‘the agreement holder’.

Section 1

Introduction to Higher Level Stewardship

1.1 Introduction and general overview

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 in return for delivering environmental management on their land.

Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) is one of three elements of ES. The other two elements are Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) and Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS). Detailed information about ELS and OELS is provided in the separate ELS and OELS handbooks.

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.

(Uplands ELS and Uplands OELS offer a higher level of payment in return for environmental management of land within the Severely Disadvantaged Areas [SDAs]).

This section provides an introduction to ES, setting out the key elements of the scheme. Section 2 details the land management options available for you to choose from, Section 3 lists the capital items and Section 4 provides advice on how to apply. The full terms and conditions are set out in Section 5. Please ensure that you understand the full terms and conditions before submitting an application to join ES.

Before reading this document you may wish to refer to the *Look After Your Land with Environmental Stewardship* booklet, which provides an introduction to the scheme and is available to download from the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk.

1.1.2 Why join ES?

The 44,000 current ES agreements are delivering almost 200,000 km of environmentally-friendly hedgerow management (around 124,000 miles) and more than 7,500 ha of bird seed mix, and protecting more than 191,000 in-field trees. Monitoring shows that this management is achieving real benefits for wildlife.

1.1.3 Where can you get help?

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.

During these visits, we will collect basic data on the results of the 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.

You can also contact Natural England for help with general enquiries. If you have a general query about ES, please call us on 0300 060 0011.

1.2 Key information

1.2.1 Who can apply?

HLS is open to all farmers and land managers who are freehold owners, tenants, contractual licensees or common land rights holders. **You must have management control of the land for the entire term of your agreement (a minimum of 10 years).** If you are not certain that you will 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 (see Section 5.3 of the ELS or OELS handbook).

1.2.2 Do you need to join ELS/OELS?

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 ES are combined in the most effective way. Natural England will then provide you with a joint ELS/HLS, Uplands ELS/HLS, OELS/HLS or Uplands OELS/HLS agreement.

1.2.3 How can you apply?

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 an HLS application. A Natural England adviser will give you a realistic assessment of whether your holding has potential for HLS. Further details can be found in Section 4, How to apply for HLS.

1.2.4 What land is eligible?

Land to be entered into the scheme must be registered on the Rural Land Register (RLR). ES is a whole-farm scheme, so your HLS application must include all the eligible farmland that you manage. See Section 5.4 for full details, including eligibility of land in other schemes.

1.2.5 What are you agreeing 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 handbook and the ELS or OELS handbook. In particular, follow cross compliance requirements throughout your land and comply with the additional requirements contained in Section 5.5.

1.2.6 When will the agreement start and how long will it operate?

Natural England prioritises holdings for inclusion in HLS based on known features and information about their potential for environmental delivery. The aim is to prioritise holdings which have the potential to provide the maximum environmental outcomes. The resulting prioritised list of holdings for each area is called the 'HLS Pipeline'. The proposed start dates may be sometime in the future depending on the potential environmental outcomes.

1.2.7 What will you be paid?

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 5.6.7 of your ELS or OELS handbook, the payment rates you receive for HLS options will remain the same for the first five years of your agreement, even if the payment rates are reviewed during this period. At this five-year break point, any rates that have been changed as the result of a review will normally be applied to your agreement.

For details of all the payment rates, please see Sections 2 and 3 of this handbook.

1.2.8 When will you be paid?

You will receive two payments in each year of your agreement, with each payment representing half of your total annual payment for that year. These payments will be made automatically and you will not have to complete a claim form. However, if there are any changes to your agreement then you must let us know, for instance, if you have amended your field boundaries.

We are required to operate a fixed annual cycle for payments:

- if your agreement starts on or before 1 June in any calendar year, you should receive your first payment in that calendar year; or
- if your agreement has a start date of 1 July or later in the year, you will receive your first payment in the following calendar year.
- we will assume that on 15 May each year, you make a deemed claim for payments. If there are any reasons why you are no longer eligible to claim, or changes have occurred to your agreement land which we are unaware of, for instance, if you have amended your field boundaries, you must inform us immediately.

Further details including a tool to help you work out the timings of your payments are available at: www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/developments.aspx.

If we overpay you in error, you may be asked to refund the overpayment.

1.2.9 Can an agent act on your behalf?

Yes. You can authorise an agent to discuss a potential application, to submit an application and to act on your behalf in all matters relating to the maintenance of your agreement. Your payments can also be made to an agent.

If you wish an agent to be authorised to attend and act on your behalf at a meeting led by Natural England to identify and discuss potential HLS applications that you may decide to submit to Natural England in the future, you must complete and send an agent authorisation form (NE-auth) to your local Natural England office in advance of the meeting. The addresses for all our offices can be found at: www.naturalengland.org.uk. Please contact your local team to discuss dates for HLS application clinics led by Natural England in your area.

You will need to complete, sign and return the agent authorisation form in advance of any Natural England HLS application clinic. You can download one from our website at: www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/forms/default.aspx.

An additional Agent Authorisation form will need to be submitted to allow an agent to act on your behalf to submit an HLS Farm Environment Plan (FEP), an HLS application or to claim HLS payments.

You will need to complete, sign and return the agent authorisation form (NE-auth) with your application. You can obtain one from us or from our website at: www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/forms/default.aspx.

Please note that any payment you make to an agent to help with your application will not be reimbursed by us.

1.2.10 How will your information be stored and used?

Your information will be stored and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This Act gives you, as an individual, the right to know what data we hold on you, how we use it, with whom we share it and to ensure that it is accurate.

We will respect personal privacy whilst complying with access to information requests to the extent necessary to enable Natural England to comply with its statutory obligations under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (see Section 5.2.8 for details).

1.2.11 Can you make changes to your agreement?

Continuity is important during your agreement if we are to achieve the environmental benefits. We will therefore only agree to changes that are absolutely necessary. Should the situation arise where you need to change the choice or location of your management options, or vary your management for a short period of time then, subject to our approval, we can amend your agreement. If you need to make a minor or temporary change to your management prescriptions, you can apply for a derogation. You must not make changes without our prior approval (see Section 5.6 for details).

Section 2

Option directory for HLS

Section 2.1

The HLS management options and supplements are summarised in this Section. The table in Section 2.2.1 below provides a complete list, including payment rates, of the available HLS management options. This is followed by detailed descriptions in Section 2.2.2 of the overall aims and the management required for each of these options. In Section 2.2.3, there is a list of the Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) or Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS) options that can, under certain circumstances, be included in an HLS agreement. At the end of the Section, in 2.2.4, there is a table that shows the combinations of options that can occupy the same land.

2.1.1 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.

2.1.2 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 Farm Environment Plan (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 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. The 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.

2.1.3 How should you 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, permanent pasture and tree and woodland features will help to maintain and strengthen the pattern and scale of the landscape. 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 or obscure the characteristic field pattern and scale of the landscape.

How should you 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.

Section 2.2

2.2.1 Summary table of HLS options and payment rates

All new text, including new options and changes to existing options, is highlighted in blue.

Code	Option	Payment	Unit	Page
Options for boundary features				
HB11	Management of hedgerows of very high environmental value (both sides)	£54	100 m	17
HB12	Management of hedgerows of very high environmental value (one side)	£27	100 m	17
HB14	Management of ditches of very high environmental value	£36	100 m	17
Options for trees, woodland and scrub				
HC5	Ancient trees in arable fields	£25	tree	18
HC6	Ancient trees in intensively managed grass fields	£25	tree	18
HC12	Maintenance of wood pasture and parkland	£180	ha	18
HC13	Restoration of wood pasture and parkland	£180	ha	18
HC14	Creation of wood pasture	£180	ha	19
HC7	Maintenance of woodland	£100	ha	20
HC8	Restoration of woodland	£100	ha	20
HC9	Creation of woodland in Severely Disadvantaged Areas	£200	ha	21

Code	Option	Payment	Unit	Page
HC10	Creation of woodland outside Severely Disadvantaged Areas	£315	ha	21
HC15	Maintenance of successional areas and scrub	£100	ha	21
HC16	Restoration of successional areas and scrub	£100	ha	21
HC17	Creation of successional areas and scrub	£100	ha	21
Supplements				
HC11	Woodland livestock exclusion supplement	£100	ha	22
Options for orchards				
HC18	Maintenance of high-value traditional orchards	£250	ha	22
HC20	Restoration of traditional orchards	£250	ha	22
HC19	Maintenance of traditional orchards in production	£95	ha	23
HC21	Creation of traditional orchards	£190	ha	23
Options for historic and landscape features				
HD6	Crop establishment by direct drilling (non-rotational)	£70	ha	24
HD7	Arable reversion by natural regeneration	£500	ha	24
HD8	Maintaining high water levels to protect archaeology	£240	ha	25
HD9	Maintenance of designed/engineered water bodies	£295	ha	25
HD10	Maintenance of traditional water meadows	£350	ha	25
HD11	Restoration of traditional water meadows	£350	ha	25
Options for arable land				
HE10	Floristically enhanced grass buffer strips (non-rotational)	£485	ha	26
HF12	Enhanced wild bird seed mix plots (rotational or non-rotational)	£475	ha	26
HF14	Unharvested, fertiliser-free conservation headland (rotational)	£440	ha	27
HF20	Cultivated fallow plots or margins for arable plants (rotational or non-rotational)	£440	ha	27
HF24	Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds NEW IN 2013 Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.	£822	tonne	27
HG5	Brassica fodder crops followed by overwintered stubble	£90	ha	28
HG6	Fodder crop management to retain or recreate an arable mosaic (rotational)	£150	ha	28
HG7	Low-input spring cereal to retain or recreate an arable mosaic (rotational)	£250	ha	28
Options to protect soil and water				
HJ3	Arable reversion to unfertilised grassland to prevent erosion or run-off	£280	ha	29
HJ4	Arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input to prevent erosion or run-off	£210	ha	29
HJ6	Preventing erosion or run-off from intensively managed, improved grassland	£280	ha	29
HJ7	Seasonal livestock removal on grassland with no input restriction	£40	ha	30
Supplements				
HJ8	Nil fertiliser supplement	£55	ha	30
Options for grassland				
Species-rich, semi-natural grassland				
HK6	Maintenance of species-rich, semi-natural grassland	£200	ha	30
HK7	Restoration of species-rich, semi-natural grassland	£200	ha	31
HK8	Creation of species-rich, semi-natural grassland	£280	ha	31

Code	Option	Payment	Unit	Page
Management of wet grassland for waders and wildfowl				
HK9	Maintenance of wet grassland for breeding waders	£335	ha	32
HK10	Maintenance of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl	£255	ha	32
HK11	Restoration of wet grassland for breeding waders	£335	ha	33
HK12	Restoration of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl	£255	ha	33
HK13	Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders	£355	ha	33
HK14	Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl	£285	ha	33
Management of grassland for target features				
HK15	Maintenance of grassland for target features	£130	ha	34
HK16	Restoration of grassland for target features	£130	ha	34
HK17	Creation of grassland for target features	£210	ha	34
Buffer strips				
HE11	Enhanced strips for target species on intensive grassland	£590	ha	34
Supplements				
HK18	Haymaking supplement	£75	ha	35
HK19	Raised water levels supplement	£80	ha	35
HQ13	Inundation grassland supplement	£85	ha	35
Options for moorland and upland rough grazing				
HL9	Maintenance of moorland	£40	ha	36
HL10	Restoration of moorland	£40	ha	36
HL11	Creation of upland heathland	£60	ha	36
HL7	Maintenance of rough grazing for birds	£80	ha	37
HL8	Restoration of rough grazing for birds	£80	ha	37
Supplements				
HL12	Supplement for management of heather, gorse and grass by burning, cutting or swiping	£7	ha	37
HL13	Moorland re-wetting supplement	£10	ha	38
HL15	Seasonal livestock exclusion supplement	£10	ha	38
Options for educational access				
HN8	Educational access – base payment	£500	agreement/yr	38
HN9	Educational access – payment per visit	£100	visit	38
Options for lowland heathland				
HO1	Maintenance of lowland heathland	£200	ha	40
HO2	Restoration of lowland heathland	£200	ha	40
HO3	Restoration of forestry areas to lowland heathland	£200	ha	41
HO4	Creation of lowland heathland from arable or improved grassland	£450	ha	41
HO5	Creation of lowland heathland on worked mineral sites	£150	ha	41
Options for inter-tidal and coastal locations				
Sand dunes and vegetated shingle systems				
HP1	Maintenance of sand dunes	£140	ha	42
HP2	Restoration of sand dunes	£140	ha	42
HP3	Creation of coastal vegetated shingle and sand dunes on arable land	£320	ha	42
HP4	Creation of coastal vegetated shingle and sand dunes on grassland	£200	ha	42
Salt marsh, mudflats and saline lagoons				
HP5	Maintenance of coastal salt marsh	£30	ha	43
HP6	Restoration of coastal salt marsh	£30	ha	43
HP7	Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on arable land	up to £700	ha	44

Code	Option	Payment	Unit	Page
HP8	Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on grassland	up to £500	ha	44
HP9	Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat by non-intervention	£150	ha	44
Supplements				
HP10	Supplement for extensive grazing on salt marsh	£70	ha	44
HP11	Salt marsh livestock exclusion supplement	£40	ha	44
Options for wetland				
Ponds				
HQ1	Maintenance of ponds of high wildlife value (less than 100 m ²)	£90	pond	45
HQ2	Maintenance of ponds of high wildlife value (more than 100 m ²)	£180	pond	45
Reedbeds				
HQ3	Maintenance of reedbeds	£60	ha	45
HQ4	Restoration of reedbeds	£60	ha	45
HQ5	Creation of reedbeds	£380	ha	46
Fens				
HQ6	Maintenance of fen	£60	ha	46
HQ7	Restoration of fen	£60	ha	46
HQ8	Creation of fen	£380	ha	46
Lowland raised bogs				
HQ9	Maintenance of lowland raised bog	£150	ha	47
HQ10	Restoration of lowland raised bog	£150	ha	47
Supplements				
HQ11	Wetland cutting supplement	£350	ha	47
HQ12	Wetland grazing supplement	£200	ha	47
Additional supplements				
HL16	Shepherding supplement	£5	ha	48
HR1	Grazing supplement for cattle	Up to £35	ha	48
HR2	Grazing supplement native breeds at risk	Up to £70	ha	48
HR4	Supplement for control of invasive plant species	£60	ha	51
HR5	Bracken control supplement	£35	ha	51
HR6	Supplement for small fields	£35	ha	51
HR7	Supplement for difficult sites	£50	ha	51
HR8	Supplement for group applications	£10	ha	51

2.2.2 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.

In order to check the eligibility of your HLS options for the Single Payment Scheme (SPS), you should refer to the *SPS Guidance* and any supplements (see details in Appendix 2).

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 the soil type, 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 HLS capital item payments.

HB14 Management of ditches of very high environmental value	£36 per 100 m
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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 (ES) 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 a distinctive, 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 must 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 must be appropriate to the site. The establishment of new tree features must be designed and appropriately sited in order to fit with and strengthen the local landscape character and any distinctive pattern of trees and woodlands.

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

Significant individual trees are often important landscape features as well as providing habitat for wildlife and shelter for stock. 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 3 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 Professional help with implementation plan (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

HC8 Restoration of woodland

£100 per ha

£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 must 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
HC10 Creation of woodland outside Severely Disadvantaged Areas

£200 per ha
 £315 per ha

These options are used to create small areas of new woodland that benefit wildlife and strengthen the character of 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 must 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
HC16 Restoration of successional areas and scrub
HC17 Creation of successional areas and scrub

£100 per ha
 £100 per ha
 £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.



Duke of Burgundy butterflies benefit from management of scrub grassland

© Natural England/Robert Goodison

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

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). It only applies in the years that grazing is excluded.

Please note, you may not be able to claim SPS on land subject to this supplement. Please contact the RPA or refer to the *SPS Handbook* and any supplements, details at Appendix 2.

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 record of historic land use and 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.

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

£250 per ha

HC20 Restoration of traditional orchards

£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 must 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 historic options HD/OHD1 to HD/OHD5 are available to use in HLS agreements as the principle means of addressing the management needs of targeted historic features. These options are specifically designed to deliver clear benefits for targeted features in HLS.

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 must 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 must be discussed with your Natural England adviser. **Water bodies of 1 ha or more are not eligible for this option.**

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.



Flooded water meadow south of Salisbury

© Natural England/Simon Duffield

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 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 with species such as the corn bunting, grey partridge, pheasant's-eye and cornflower showing declines. In some circumstances, crop management can also cause soil compaction which can lead to increased run-off and erosion and cause pollution of water courses or increased local flooding.

Arable options can play an important role in restoring some of the habitats and resources needed in modern farmed landscapes to support some of the key species living there. They 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 must 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 must be placed sensitively to avoid any detrimental impacts on adjacent waterbodies, particularly where that option may encourage soil compaction and enhance sediment mobility. Measures to mitigate these issues should be undertaken but care must be taken to avoid impacts on any below-ground archaeology present. Arable options should be carefully located to ensure they support and enhance the characteristic field pattern and scale of the landscape.

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 provide a year-round supply of food including small seeds. The size, location, number and composition of plots or areas will need to 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 (rotational)

£440 per ha

This option is applied to the cereal headland of a cropped area. The aim is to provide a year-round food source for declining populations of farmland birds and habitats for other farmland wildlife. The restricted pesticide programme will allow insects to flourish, providing food for chicks in summer and over winter, the unharvested headland becomes a valuable food source for farmland birds by providing grain and seeding arable plants. The headland also has significant additional wildlife benefits when managed alongside HE10 (Floristically enhanced grass buffer strip) or with buffer strip options (EE1/OE1 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 is 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 must be taken to avoid soil compaction.

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

£440 per ha



© Natural England/Roger Cerry

Conservation edge to an arable field

This option is used to create opportunities for rare arable plants to germinate, flower, set seed and complete their life-cycle.

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 must 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.

HF24 Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds

£822 per tonne

This option is used to provide winter food for seed-eating farmland birds through the 'hungry gap' period in late winter, before natural food resources become available again in late spring.

This option is only available within HLS agreements that contain the minimum area of arable options required to meet the HLS Farmland Bird Package and where certain farmland bird species are present.

Management includes spreading a tailored seed mixture at least weekly from January to April and keeping a record of the feeding carried out. The amount and type of feed will be determined by Natural England to support the target farmland birds present.

Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.

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:

- managed 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 (rotational)

£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 which can provide valuable foraging for seed-eating birds. Fodder crops (brassica or root) that are 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 (rotational)

£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 provides 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 must 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. The guidance above under 'Options for arable land' on potential landscape impacts should be noted.

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



© Natural England/James Griescheff

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

This option aims to reduce soil compaction and risk of surface run-off on improved grassland by reducing the stocking density and fertiliser inputs. Extensive grazing will help to improve soil structure and water infiltration and reduce run-off. It will also help to reduce nitrate leaching through reduced inputs of fertiliser and/or organic manures.

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 help buffer sensitive habitats if used in combination with the Nil fertiliser supplement (HJ8).

Management must include:

- grazing management to reduce risk of soil compaction and surface run-off;
- 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



© Natural England/Graham Walsh

Cattle grazing riverside land and causing some erosion

This option supports the removal of livestock at specific times of the year in order to reduce compaction and risk of surface 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 risk of 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 must normally be applied to whole fields or part fields greater than 1 ha.

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/Iain Black

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.



© Natural England/Dave Key

Curlew chick

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

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, ciril 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 HL9 and HL10 may be more appropriate for upland moorland sites. Options HL7 and HL8 (Maintenance/Restoration of rough grazing for birds) may be more appropriate for ground-nesting birds but not appropriate for extensive use above the Moorland Line.

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.

Supplements

HK18 Haymaking supplement

£75 per ha

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Haymaking encourages botanical diversity by allowing flowers to set seed

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, must form a natural hydrological unit, and there must be no significant negative impact on other valuable features.

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.



Views across Grisedale, Mallerstang

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 Uplands ELS 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 Severely Disadvantaged Area, 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 must 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.



© Natural England/Robert Goodison

Shallow pools encourage breeding waders

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.

Options for educational access

Options for permissive linear and open access (HN1 to HN7) are no longer available for new agreements or amending existing agreements. However, we are happy to support provision of voluntary permissive access in HLS agreements where considered suitable. A range of capital items are therefore available to support voluntary permissive access (see Section 3). Providing access is an important way of enhancing public enjoyment of the countryside. The educational access option provides opportunities for visits by schools for curricular studies and illustrates the links between farming, conservation and food production. It also provides for Care Farming visits - supervised on-farm activities for vulnerable groups of disaffected, disadvantaged or disabled people. It also allows people to see and enjoy the environmental improvements being made as a result of Environmental Stewardship.



© Natural England/Annabelle Banham

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

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 for curricular studies for pupils up to the age of 16 (Key Stage 4) and Care Farming visits. It provides the opportunity to explain the links between farming, conservation and food production. It is suitable for any farm where the farmer or nominated 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 or Care Farming groups.

You will need to provide basic information about your farm for inclusion in a 'farm facts' leaflet, which will be produced by Natural England. Copies will be supplied to you to help you in promoting your site to schools.

You will be required to arrange between 4 and 25 free visits per year, and you will be paid for each visit. You must submit a signed, educational access evaluation form from each group for each visit claimed. If you do not achieve the minimum of four visits in any agreement year, we cannot pay you for this option.



© Natural England/Richard Cooke

Farm visits provide an opportunity to raise awareness of rural issues

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 cwr.naturalengland.org.uk and the Growing Schools website (www.growingschools.org.uk). You will be encouraged to undertake an accreditation course in the first year of your agreement.

It will be your responsibility to ensure that your public liability insurance is sufficient to cover educational access by members of the public. Please discuss this with your insurance company.

Access payments and those relating to the maintenance of (E/HD1) or the restoration of historic buildings (HTB) are classified as non-agricultural 'de minimis state aid'. Under European rules, individual benefactors are not allowed to receive more than €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 you have received, including those from other government departments or agencies, for the duration of your agreement.

Educational access provided under HLS must be compliant with the Equality Act 2010. 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.

A range of capital items are available to support educational access. Please see Section 3 for more details.

Options for lowland heathland

Formed and maintained by a combination of grazing, cutting and burning over centuries, most lowland heathlands are ancient, semi-natural landscapes on nutrient-poor acidic, sandy and peaty soils, typically below 250 m in altitude. The vegetation of lowland heathland is a mixture of dwarf shrubs (particularly heathers and gorses), grasses, flowering plants and trees, with scattered bare ground, providing a refuge for rare species such as the marsh gentian, Dartford warbler and sand lizard.

In the past heathlands were exploited by grazing livestock, cutting vegetation for building materials and fuel and by burning patches to produce new growth for the livestock. Many heathlands have been lost or become fragmented due to ploughing, development or forestry planting. Those that remain are often neglected, dominated by rank grasses, scrub, bracken or secondary woodland.

One quarter of all lowland heathlands in England are Common Land. While these were created in the same way as other heathlands (grazing, cutting, burning), in many cases the traditional management was discontinued decades ago due to economic and social changes. These areas have become important for public access and recreation. The restoration of the nature conservation value, which usually involves reintroducing traditional practices, and the public access and enjoyment, should be complementary, not antagonistic targets.

Grazing raises particular concerns amongst communities perhaps less familiar with livestock. Animals can offer a remarkably high level of subtlety and selectivity as a management tool, and deliver effects that machinery alone cannot. However, the scale, timing and frequency of grazing events can vary considerably depending on the desired results and can be planned to reduce the impacts on recreational use of the site.

Management of lowland heathland under the options below will protect and enhance the valuable plant communities and associated wildlife, the vegetation mosaics and structure 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 must 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. The choice of management options or combination of options will depend on the particular characteristics and features of each site.

You will be required to:

- burn, and/or cut and remove, small patches of heathland each year to sustain a varied and balanced age range and structure of dwarf shrubs and bare ground;
- maintain fire breaks;
- graze where this is essential to achieve the desired nature conservation outcomes, and to help control scrub encroachment, create structural diversity, and to control the spread of bracken and coarse grasses. Where grazing is not possible, you must specify how you will produce a similar effect through increased cutting and/or burning;
- 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 or woodland encroachment. Fragments of heathland vegetation will still be evident.

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

- reduce areas of scrub, trees and bracken to appropriate levels;
- burn and/or cut and remove areas of mature and over mature heathland vegetation to create a varied and balanced age range and structure of dwarf shrubs and bare ground;
- graze from late spring to control competing weeds and grasses; 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 management practices 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 and remove them from the site (or agree on-site disposal);
- remove accumulated organic litter and brash where it is deeper than 5 cm;
- graze from late spring to control competing weeds and grasses; 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 (A soil amendment is any material added to a soil to improve its physical properties) 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 to allow germination; and
- graze from late spring to control competing weeds and grasses, after the vegetation has developed.

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 following seeding; and
- graze from late spring after the vegetation has developed.

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.

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.



Sand dunes and fen at Bamburgh, Northumbria

© Natural England/Chris Kaighin

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.



© Natural England/Graham Walsh

Salt marsh at Morecambe Bay

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. An 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 must 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. Please contact the RPA or refer to the *SPS Handbook* and any supplements, details at Appendix 2.

HP9 Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat by non-intervention	£150 per ha
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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
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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
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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 must 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 must 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.

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.



© Natural England/Terry Heathcote

Transplanting 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/ain Diack

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. They are not available with other HLS options, or ELS or OELS options on their own, nor with O/ELS options being used as 'more of the same options'. See Section 2.2.4 for the list of HLS options which these supplements can be combined with.

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 Shepherding 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 Grazing supplement for cattle

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. **This option is available on common land.**

You can use this supplement with a range of options, please refer to Section 2.2.4 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) and the 'indicators of success' 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. **This combination does not apply to common land.**

HR2 Grazing supplement for native breeds at risk

up to £70 per ha



© Natural England/Chris Chesterton

Longhorn cow, Cumbria

This supplement is for the use of appropriate native breeds of livestock (from the list in Table 1) for grazing to help achieve the aims of relevant options and the 'indicators of Success'. 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 not available on common land.**

You can use this supplement with a range of options, please refer to Section 2.2.4 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. This combination does not apply to common land.

Table 1 Approved list of native breeds at risk

Cattle	Horses and ponies	Sheep	Goats	Pigs
Aberdeen Angus (Orig ¹)	British Percheron Horse	Badger Face Welsh	Bagot	Berkshire
Beef Shorthorn	Cleveland Bay Horse	Balwen	Cheviot (Feral)	British Landrace (Orig ¹)
Belted Galloway (including White Galloway)	Clydesdale Horse	Beulah Speckled Face	Golden Guernsey	British Lop
British Friesian (Orig ¹)	Dales Pony	Black Welsh Mountain	Saanen	British Saddleback
British White	Dartmoor Pony	Border Leicester	Toggenburg	Gloucestershire Old Spot
Chillingham	Eriskay Pony	Boreray		Large Black
Dairy Shorthorn (Orig ¹)	Exmoor Pony	Castlemilk Moorit		Large White (Orig ¹)
Devon (Red Ruby)	Fell Pony	Clun Forest		Middle White
Dexter ²	Hackney Horse	Cotswold		Oxford Sandy and Black
Galloway ³	Hackney Pony	Derbyshire Gritstone		Tamworth
Gloucester	Highland Pony	Devon and Cornwall		Welsh
Guernsey	New Forest Pony	Longwool		
Guernsey (Island ⁴)	Shire Horse	Devon Closewool		
Hereford (Orig ¹)	Suffolk Horse	Dorset Down		
Highland	Welsh Mountain (Section A semi-feral ⁶) Pony	Dorset Horn		
Irish Moiled/Maol ²		Exmoor Horn		
Jersey (Island ⁴)		Greyface Dartmoor		
Lincoln Red		Hampshire Down		
Lincoln Red (Orig ¹)		Hebridean		
Longhorn		Herdwick		
Luing		Hill Radnor		
Northern Dairy Shorthorn ⁵		Jacob		
Red Poll		Kerry Hill		

Cattle	Horses and ponies	Sheep	Goats	Pigs
Shetland		Leicester Longwool		
Sussex		Lincoln Longwool		
Vaynol		Llandovery Whiteface Hill		
White Park		Llanwenog		
Whitebred Shorthorn		Lonk		
		Manx Loaghtan		
		Norfolk Horn		
		North Ronaldsay		
		Oxford Down		
		Portland		
		Romney		
		Ryeland (including Coloured)		
		Shetland		
		Shetland (Island ⁴)		
		Shropshire		
		Soay		
		South Wales Mountain (Nelson type)		
		Southdown		
		Teeswater		
		Welsh Hill Speckled Face		
		Wensleydale		
		Whiteface Dartmoor		
		Whitefaced Woodland		
		Wiltshire Horn		

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

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

³ 'Galloway' includes pedigree-registered Black, 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 within the relevant breed society's herdbook.

⁵ Northern Dairy Shorthorn cattle are registered as separately-identified animals within the Dairy Shorthorn breed of cattle.

⁶ 'Section A semi-feral' refers to a particular and separately identified sub-population of pedigree ponies that are registered within the studbook of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society (in accordance with their approved rules). To retain their semi-feral status they are required to remain within their designated environment and have individual passports officially annotated to show their semi-feral status. Confirmation as to their individual eligibility should be checked with the Welsh Pony and Cob Society which retains lists of all potentially eligible 'Section A semi-feral' ponies.

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 must 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.

Only 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 urban sites, very steep slopes, cliffs, islands or lowland raised bogs. **This option is not available in the SDA.**

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. **This option is only available for the first year of the agreement.**

The Uplands ELS mandatory requirement UX1 Moorland commons and shared grazing requirements underpins the HLS supplement HR8 Supplement for group applications and a combined payment of both UX1 and HR8 cannot exceed £10 per ha.

2.2.3 Adding extra ELS or OELS options to your HLS 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 must not be used where an HLS option is more appropriate, and are only eligible to be used where a feature is best managed with an ELS or OELS option, or where the HLS target area or theme statement states it would be advantageous. Further information is provided in Section 4.2.2 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	Unit
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	HC24	£400	ha
Hedgerow tree buffer strips on grassland	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 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	£255	ha
4 m buffer strips on cultivated land	HE2	£340	ha
6 m buffer strips on cultivated land	HE3	£340	ha
2 m buffer strips on intensive grassland	HE4	£255	ha
4 m buffer strips on intensive grassland	HE5	£340	ha
6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland	HE6	£340	ha
Buffering in-field ponds in improved permanent grassland	HE7	£400	ha
Buffering in-field ponds in arable land	HE8	£400	ha
Supplement to add wildflowers to field corners and buffer strips on cultivated land	HE12	£63	ha
NEW IN 2013			
Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.			

	Code	Payment	Unit
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
Cereal headlands for birds	HF9	£100	ha
Unharvested cereal headlands for birds and rare arable plants	HF10	£330	ha
Uncropped, cultivated margins for rare plants	HF11	£400	ha
Uncropped, cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds on arable land	HF13	£360	ha
Reduced herbicide cereal crops followed by overwintered stubble	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	HJ5	£454	ha
12 m buffer strips for watercourses on cultivated land	HJ9	£400	ha
Enhanced management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion and run-off	HJ10	£94	ha
Maintenance of watercourse fencing	HJ11	£4	100 m
Winter cover crops	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
Ryegrass seed-set as winter/spring food for birds	HK20	£80	ha
NEW IN 2013 Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.			
Legume- and herb-rich swards	HK21	£200	ha
NEW IN 2013 Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.			

	Code	Payment	Unit
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
Uplands Entry Level Stewardship options (Uplands ELS)			
(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	Unit
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	OHC24	£500	ha
Hedgerow tree buffer strips on organic grassland	OHC25	£500	ha
Options for historic and landscape features			
Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings	OHD1	£2	m ² (of ground floor area)

	Code	Payment	Unit
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
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	£340	ha
4 m buffer strips on rotational land	OHE2	£425	ha
6 m buffer strips on rotational land	OHE3	£425	ha
2 m buffer strips on organic grassland	OHE4	£340	ha
4 m buffer strips on organic grassland	OHE5	£425	ha
6 m buffer strips on organic grassland	OHE6	£425	ha
Buffering in-field ponds in organic grassland	OHE7	£500	ha
Buffering in-field ponds in rotational land	OHE8	£500	ha
Supplement to add wildflowers to field corners and buffer strips on cultivated land	OHE12	£63	ha
NEW IN 2013 Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.			
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	OHF11	£460	ha
Uncropped, cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds	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	OHJ5	£454	ha
12 m buffer strips for watercourses on rotational land	OHJ9	£500	ha
Maintenance of watercourse fencing	OHJ11	£4	100 m

	Code	Payment	Unit
Winter cover crops	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
Ryegrass seed-set as winter/spring food for birds	OHK20	£80	ha
NEW IN 2013 Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.			
Legume- and herb-rich swards	OHK21	£200	ha
NEW IN 2013 Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.			
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
Uplands Organic Entry Level Stewardship options (Uplands OELS)			
(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

2.2.4 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, HN8, and HN9). This is because they are, by default, co-locatable with all other options.

Fencing options such as UC5, UJ3 and J11 are not included.

Relationships between HLS supplements and O/ELS options are only shown where the relationship affects the payment rate of the HLS supplement. With this exception, there are no direct co-location relationships between HLS supplements and O/ELS options because supplements must be used with an underlying HLS option. The co-location relationship is between the underlying HLS option and O/ELS option. For co-location relationships between HLS options and O/ELS options being used as 'more of the same' options in HLS, follow the ELS/OELS columns.

Other options not listed in this table cannot be co-located with any other option (HC5, HC6, HC7, HC10, HD9, and HG5).

HLS option code	HLS option title	ELS/OELS option codes (without the initial E, O or U) that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column without a reduction in your HLS payment	ELS/OELS option codes (without the initial E, O or U) that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column with a reduction in your HLS payment	HLS option codes that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
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				
HC12	Maintenance of wood pasture and parkland	D13, J12, K5, L18		HR1, HR2, HR4, HR5, HR7
HC13	Restoration of wood pasture and parkland	D13, J12, K5, L18		HR1, HR2, HR4, HR5, HR7
HC14	Creation of wood pasture	D13, J12, K5, L18		HR1, HR2, HR4, HR5, HR7
HC8	Restoration of woodland			HC11, HR4, HR5, HR7
HC9	Creation of woodland in Severely Disadvantaged Areas		C22	
HC15	Maintenance of successional areas and scrub	K5, L18		HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HC16	Restoration of successional areas and scrub	K5, L18		HC11, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HC17	Creation of successional areas and scrub	K5, L18		HC11, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HC11	Woodland livestock exclusion supplement			HC8, HC16, HC17, HR4, HR5, HR7

HLS option code	HLS option title	ELS/OELS option codes (without the initial E, O or U) that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column without a reduction in your HLS payment	ELS/OELS option codes (without the initial E, O or U) that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column with a reduction in your HLS payment	HLS option codes that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
Options for orchards				
HC18	Maintenance of high-value traditional orchards			HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HC20	Restoration of traditional orchards			HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HC19	Maintenance of traditional orchards in production			HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HC21	Creation of traditional orchards			HR1, HR2, HR4–7
Options for historic and landscape features				
HD6	Crop establishment by direct drilling	G1		HR6
HD7	Arable reversion by natural regeneration	J12, L18, L20, L21, L23		HR1, HR2, HR6, HR7
HD8	Maintaining high water levels to protect archaeology	J12, K2–5, L2–5, L18, L20, L21, L23		HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HD10	Maintenance of traditional water meadows	J12, L18, L20, L21	K2–4	HK18, 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
HF14	Unharvested, fertiliser-free conservation headland	D3		HR6
HF20	Cultivated fallow plots or margins for arable plants	D3		HR6
HF24	Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds	F2, F22		
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

HLS option code	HLS option title	ELS/OELS option codes (without the initial E, O or U) that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column without a reduction in your HLS payment	ELS/OELS option codes (without the initial E, O or U) that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column with a reduction in your HLS payment	HLS option codes that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
Options to protect soil and water				
HJ3	Arable reversion to unfertilised grassland to prevent erosion or run-off	L18, L20, L21	J12, L23	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	HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HJ6	Preventing erosion or run-off from intensively managed, improved grassland	L18, L20, L21	J12, L23	HJ8, 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	HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7
HJ8	Nil fertiliser supplement			HJ6, 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, 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, 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, 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
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

HLS option code	HLS option title	ELS/OELS option codes (without the initial E, O or U) that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column without a reduction in your HLS payment	ELS/OELS option codes (without the initial E, O or U) that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column with a reduction in your HLS payment	HLS option codes that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
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, L22, L23	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, HQ13, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HK16	Restoration of grassland for target features	D13, J12, K5, L18, L20	D5, K2, L2–5, L17, L22, L23	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, HQ13, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HK17	Creation of grassland for target features	D13, J12, K5, L18, L20	D5, K2, K3, L2–5, L17, L22, L23	HB14, HK18, HK19, HL16, 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, HR4–7
HK19	Raised water levels supplement			HB14, HK6–18, HL16, 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, HR1, HR2,
HL10	Restoration of moorland	D13, K5, L18	L5, L6, L17, L22	HL12, 13, 15, 16, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HL11	Creation of upland heathland	D13, K5, L18	L5, L6, L17, L22	HL13, HL16, 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, 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, HR1, HR2, HR4–7

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HL12	Supplement for management of heather, gorse and grass by burning, cutting or swiping			HL7–10, HL16, HR4–7
HL13	Moorland re-wetting supplement			HL7–11, HL16, HR4–7
HL15	Seasonal livestock exclusion supplement			HL7–10, HL16, HR4–7
Options for lowland heathland				
HO1	Maintenance of lowland heathland			HL16, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HO2	Restoration of lowland heathland			HL16, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HO3	Restoration of forestry areas to lowland heathland			HL16, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HO4	Creation of lowland heathland from arable or improved grassland			HL16, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HO5	Creation of lowland heathland on worked mineral sites			HL16, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
Options for inter-tidal and coastal locations				
HP1	Maintenance of sand dunes	K5		HL16, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HP2	Restoration of sand dunes	K5		HL16, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HP3	Creation of coastal vegetated shingle and sand dunes on arable land	K5		HL16, HR1, HR2, HR4–7
HP4	Creation of coastal vegetated shingle and sand dunes on grassland	K5		HL16, 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

HLS option code	HLS option title	ELS/OELS option codes (without the initial E, O or U) that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column without a reduction in your HLS payment	ELS/OELS option codes (without the initial E, O or U) that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column with a reduction in your HLS payment	HLS option codes that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
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
HQ10	Restoration of lowland raised bog			HL16, HQ11, HQ12, HR1, HR2, HR4, HR6, HR7

HLS option code	HLS option title	ELS/OELS option codes (without the initial E, O or U) that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column without a reduction in your HLS payment	ELS/OELS option codes (without the initial E, O or U) that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column with a reduction in your HLS payment	HLS option codes that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
HQ11	Wetland cutting supplement			HQ3-10
HQ12	Wetland grazing supplement			HL16, HQ3-10
Additional supplements				
HL16	Shepherding supplement			HK6-19, HL7-13, HL15, HO1-5, HP1-10, HQ3-10, HQ12, HQ13, HR1, HR2, HR4-7
HR1	Grazing supplement for cattle		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	Grazing supplement for native breeds at risk		L18 (if the NBAR are cattle)	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, 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, HO1-5, HP1-4, HP6-11, HQ13, HR1-2, HR4, HR6-7

HLS option code	HLS option title	ELS/OELS option codes (without the initial E, O or U) that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column without a reduction in your HLS payment	ELS/OELS option codes (without the initial E, O or U) that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column with a reduction in your HLS payment	HLS option codes that can be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
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, 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, 0, HK6–19, HL7–13, HL15, HL16, HO1–5, HP1–4, HP6–9, HQ1–10, HQ13, HR1–2, HR4–5
HR8	Supplement for group applications		UX1	

Section 3

Capital items

3.1 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.

Capital item	Code	Payment (£ or % of cost)	Unit
Boundaries			
Hedgerow restoration including laying, coppicing and gapping up	HR2010	£7.00	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	WR2010	£30.00	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	BS2010	£55.00	m
Earth bank restoration	ER2010	£10.10	m
Creation of new earth banks	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	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)	TOS	£32.00	each
Orchard tree pruning	FP	£17.00	each
Coppicing bankside trees	CBT	£29.00	each

Capital item	Code	Payment (£ or % of cost)	Unit
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	m³
Fencing in association with conservation work			
Sheep fencing	FSB2010/ FSH2010	£2.50	m
Post and wire	FW2010/ FWB2010	£2.50	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	GBC2010	£4.30	per block
Grip blocking on difficult sites	GBD	100% of costs	

Capital item	Code	Payment (£ or % of cost)	Unit
Scrub and bracken control			
Scrub management – base payment	SS	£76.00	per agreement per year
Scrub management – less than 25% cover	SA	£228.00	ha
Scrub management – 25% to 75% cover	SB	£376.00	ha
Scrub management – over 75% cover	SC	£583.00	ha
Management of scrub on wet sites	SW	Up to 100% of costs	
Mechanical bracken control – base payment	BMB	£106.00	per agreement per year
Mechanical bracken control – area payment	BMA	£48.00	ha
Chemical bracken control – base payment	BCB	£61.00	per agreement per year
Chemical bracken control – area payment	BCA	£112.00	ha
Difficult site supplement for bracken and scrub control	BDS	£7.00	ha
Access			
Access Capital Item	ACI	No set payment	
Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation	CEVA	Actual cost	
Hard standing for car parking	CP2010	Actual cost	
Hard standing for disabled paths	ADC2010	Actual cost	
Bridle gate	GB2010	Actual cost	
Kissing gate	GK2010	Actual cost	
Kissing gate for disabled access	GD2010	Actual cost	
Dog gate	ADG2010	Actual cost	
Timber stile	ST2010	Actual cost	
Ladder stile	LS2010	Actual cost	
Step over stile in a stone wall	WSS2010	Actual cost	
Step through stile in stone wall	WST2010	Actual cost	
Wooden footbridge	FB2010	Actual cost	
Bench	B2010	Actual cost	
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

Capital item	Code	Payment (£ or % of cost)	Unit
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	Up to 100% of costs for structures and for feasibility and/or hydrological implementation plans	
Ponds			
Pond creation – first 100m ²	PC	£3.00	m ²
Pond creation – over 100m ²	PCP	£1.00	m ²
Pond restoration – first 100 m ²	PR	£2.10	m ²
Pond restoration – over 100m ²	PRP	£0.80	m ²
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	

3.2 Capital items for historic features

The range of non-standard payment capital items includes two options intended to deal 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.

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.



© Natural England/James LePage

Flint walled barn in Hampshire

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.

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.

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.

Payments for this option are classified as 'non-agricultural de minimis state aid'. Under European rules, individual benefactors are not allowed to receive more than €200,000 from this type of aid over any 3 tax years. You will need to keep a record of all such payments that you have received, including those from other government departments or agencies, for the duration of your agreement.

3.3 Access

A range of capital items are available to help support voluntary permissive access and educational access on your holding. Any applicant considering providing voluntary permissive access should discuss this with their local highways authority at the relevant council. The standard items listed can support voluntary access and are paid at actual cost. Natural England will provide a specification for these items, and can suggest a guide to the cost of such items.

Access capital items are not available on Public Rights of Way. Any structures required for a public route should be discussed with the local highways authority.

Where no standard item exists, then novel projects can be considered through the use of the Access Capital Item (ACI) option. This can be used for projects that support public access to the countryside or

for assisting with the educational access option. These will typically be negotiated at a percentage rate of project costs. Further details about ACI option eligibility and assessment criteria are available on the Natural England website, details at Appendix 2.

Applicants considering projects for educational access should also have the educational access revenue (HN8) item within their agreement. A range of guidance (details are available on the Natural England website) exists to help target these type of projects to areas where there is demand for educational access facilities and also details what type of projects may be available.

Claims for all projects will need to be supported by receipted invoices.

Where access payments are classified as 'non-agricultural de minimis state aid', European rules apply. Individual benefactors are not allowed to receive more than €200,000 from this type of aid over any 3 tax years. You will need to keep a record of all such payments that you have received, including those from other government departments or agencies, for the duration of your agreement.

3.4 Special projects

In exceptional circumstances, your proposals may need work outside the scope of the standard payments, or your particular feature will require a unique, tailored specification.

This type of work may be funded as a Special Project. Claims for all projects will need to be supported by receipted invoices.

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. Special Projects are only available for unique items. If there is a standard capital item listed then this item and its payment rate must be used.

Section 4

How to apply for HLS

4.1 Before you apply

4.1.1 Things to do before you apply

Before you apply, you need to make sure that:

- You understand the scheme requirements – see Section 5.
- You have read the scheme rules – see Section 5.
- You are eligible to apply for the scheme – see Section 5.3.
- Your land is eligible to be included in your application – see Section 5.4.
- You have registered all of your farm land on your holding on the Rural Land Register (RLR) administered by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) (see Appendix 2 for contact details).
- You have a vendor number, CPH number and Single Business Identifier (SBI). If you have previously claimed payments under the Single Payment Scheme (SPS), an England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) scheme or a Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) scheme, you will already have been issued with a vendor number. The CPH number enables Natural England to identify the location of your holding and provide your application maps. If you do not have a vendor number or CPH number you must obtain one from the RPA (see Appendix 2 for contact details).

4.1.2 Contact Natural England to determine HLS suitability and HLS Tier

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 an HLS application. A Natural England adviser will give you a realistic assessment of whether your holding has 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. If they consider your holding may have potential for HLS they will add the holding to the HLS Pipeline (see below).

For further details regarding FEPs, please refer to the FEP Manual.

How will holdings be assessed for suitability for HLS?

The HLS Pipeline is a list of holdings which may be suitable for HLS. Natural England holds HLS Pipeline Clinics to assess the suitability of holdings for HLS and to prioritise them according to their potential to deliver environmental outcomes. The clinics will usually be one to one meetings between Natural England advisers and agents. If you do not use an agent then you may contact Natural England yourself to discuss your holding's potential for HLS.

HLS Pipeline clinics will be an opportunity for you or your authorised agent to discuss potential applications with the HLS adviser. The individual meetings will be private and confidential and only cover those holdings for which the agent is authorised to act. You must complete an HLS Pipeline Agent Authorisation Form to authorise your agent to act on your behalf at the HLS Pipeline Clinic.

You will need to complete, sign and return the Agent Authorisation form (NE-auth) in advance of any Natural England HLS Pipeline Clinic. You can download one from our website at:

www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/NE-AUTHPFPC_o112_tcm6-26798.pdf.

At the HLS Pipeline Clinic the following will occur:

- a decision will be taken on whether a holding is suitable for HLS;
- consideration will be given to the prioritisation of the holding within the HLS Pipeline (ie the proposed start date);
- a decision will be taken on which of the 3 HLS tiers the application should be processed under.

If the Natural England adviser considers that there is potential for an HLS agreement on your holding they will inform you accordingly, in writing, to confirm which tier the application will be processed under and confirm the proposed agreement start date.

The 3-Tier HLS Process

All HLS applications are assigned to one of 3 tiers depending on the complexity of the application, which will have been discussed at the HLS Pipeline Clinics or with your Natural England adviser. The tiers are:

- **Fast-track** – Farm Environment Plan (FEP) produced in-house by Natural England and suitable for holdings where only one Natural England adviser visit is required.
- **Standard** – FEP produced by external FEP surveyors and/or third party agents and suitable for all other holdings and where a maximum of two visits by a Natural England adviser is required.
- **Complex** – FEP produced by external FEP surveyors and/or third party agents and suitable for the most complex holdings. Complex cases may, due to their nature, require up to four Natural England adviser visits.

Note: For Standard and Complex Tier applications, you may choose to produce the FEP yourself if you feel you have the requisite skills. See Who is responsible for arranging and paying for the FEP? within Section 4.1.5.

The criteria for assigning an application to one of the tiers can be accessed from the HLS webpage on the Natural England website: www.naturalengland.org.uk/es.

4.1.3 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 (whether the application is Fast track, Standard or Complex Tier).

Please refer to Section 4.1.3 of your Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) or Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS) handbook for details on how to obtain the correct scheme pack (ie HLS only, ELS/HLS, Uplands ELS/HLS, OELS/HLS or Uplands OELS/HLS). Your Natural England adviser will have confirmed in advance which tier you have been allocated to.

4.1.4 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 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Scheduled Monuments, Less Favoured Areas (LFAs) 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 Farm Environment Record (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 4.3 of your ELS or OELS handbook. If someone else is completing your FEP (including a Natural England adviser for Fast-track applications), 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 (please refer to Section 5.2.4).

4.1.5 Have a FEP survey carried out

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.

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.

Who is responsible for arranging and paying for the FEP?

Responsibility for arranging, paying for and carrying out the FEP will depend on which HLS Tier the application has been allocated to:

FEPs for Fast-track Tier applications:

The FEP will be produced by a Natural England adviser. A Natural England adviser will arrange to visit your holding to produce the FEP and help you draw up your application. There is no charge for producing the FEP.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) consultation request form will be completed by a Natural England adviser and provided to you to sign and forward onto the local authority. You will have to meet the cost of the Historic Environment Record (HER) consultation – Natural England will not make any payment to you or the local authority towards the cost of this.

Please refer to the FEP Manual (Official List of Changes) available on the Natural England Website at www.naturalengland.org.uk for more information on the HER consultation costs.

FEPs for Standard and Complex Tier applications:

You will need to arrange for a FEP to be carried out. 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. If you have the necessary skills you could carry out the FEP yourself; alternatively, you may wish to hire an agent and pay them to carry out the FEP. 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.

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. If a FEP and properly completed HLS application are submitted following clearance from Natural England to proceed with a FEP, then, provided the FEP meets the required standards, it will be eligible for a FEP payment.

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. The link to the e-FEP webpage can be found in Appendix 2. If you require a paper copy of the FEP form, please contact Natural England to request a copy.

Carrying out the Historic Environment Record (HER) Consultation:

The 'HER Consultation Request' can be initiated by the FEP surveyor in two ways:

1. Electronically to participating HERs through new functionality provided by the Selected Heritage Inventory for Natural England (SHINE) website: the FEP Surveyor will need to register their details at www.myshinedata.org.uk where instructions for using this more efficient process will be provided.
2. Direct to the HER in writing, using the standard letter for the HER Consultation at Appendix 4.

More information on FEPs

Full details of how to produce a FEP can be found in the Farm Environment Plan (FEP) Manual, which is available from Natural England offices (see Appendix 1 for details). In addition, FEP surveyors can request a copy of the HLS FEP Manual and an example FEP Map.

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.

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.

4.2 Choosing your options

Step-by-step advice on completing the application form is given in Section 4.3.

4.2.1 How should you choose which options to put in your 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 Section 2.1.1).

Section 2 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.

You need to check your current SPS codes align with potential choice of HLS options. Please refer to the *SPS Guidance* and any supplements (see Appendix 2 for details).

4.2.2 Can you use ELS/OELS options to complement your 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 2 of this handbook. These options must 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 must be used in preference to using an ELS or OELS option.

4.2.3 Can you 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 2.2.4 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.

4.2.4 Can you 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) must 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.

4.2.5 Do you 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.

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).

4.2.6 Do you 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 5.5.5 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.

4.2.7 What should you do if you have already sown your crops?

Please refer to Section 4.2.5 of your ELS handbook or Section 4.2.6 of your 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.

4.2.8 When should you send in your application?

Your Natural England adviser will determine a date by which you must submit your application in order for the agreement to commence during the agreed financial year.

4.3 Step-by-step summary of how to apply

Step		Action required	Handbook reference
1	Determine HLS suitability and HLS application tier	Contact Natural England to discuss the potential your land may have for HLS (HLS Pipeline Clinic), position on the HLS Pipeline and allocation to one of three HLS application tiers.	Section 4.1.2 of this handbook
2	Obtain an application form and maps	Contact Natural England to obtain your application form and maps. Check 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 are correct.	Sections 4.1.3 and 4.1.4 of this handbook
3	Arrange for a FEP survey to be carried out	For Standard Tier and Complex Tier applications you need to prepare a Farm Environment Plan. You may wish to carry out the FEP yourself or hire an agent to do this work for you. For Fast-track Tier applications Natural England will carry out the FEP.	Section 4.1.5 of this handbook
4	Complete Sections 1 and 2 of your application form	Complete Sections 1 and 2 of your application form, making sure that: ■ you have chosen your preferred agreement start date by ticking the relevant box at Question 8. Your farming system and choice of options may influence the time of year when you would like your agreement to start. HLS has monthly start dates with agreements commencing on the first date of each month. At Section 2 of your application form, you can select your preferred agreement start date or simply opt for the next one available. You should note that your choice of start date will affect the timing of your payments (see Section 1.2.8 When will you be paid?). ■ if you are making a countersigned application, you have completed Question 9 and the relevant person has completed Question 9a–d and completed and signed the Land Ownership and Control Declaration and Undertakings section. ■ you have entered details of your farm enterprise(s) at Question 13 (ELS/HLS) or Question 14 (OELS/HLS).	
5	ELS/HLS applications only: complete the ELS elements of your application	Complete your Farm Environment Record (FER). Identify and record on your FER Map any fields at risk from soil erosion or run-off. Work with your Natural England adviser to select the most appropriate ELS/Uplands ELS options from the handbooks. Check that you have exceeded your points target.	Steps 2-4 and 6 of Section 4.3.3 of the ELS handbook

Step		Action required	Handbook reference
6	OELS/HLS applications only: complete the OELS and ELS elements of your application	Calculate the areas of land eligible to attract conversion aid payments. Complete your Farm Environment Record (FER). Identify and record on your FER Map any fields at risk from soil erosion or run-off. Complete your Field Parcel Reconciliation Form (NE-FPR). Work with your Natural England adviser to select the most appropriate OELS/Uplands OELS options (and ELS/Uplands ELS options if applicable) from the handbooks. Check that you have exceeded your points target.	OELS/HLS (OELS options only) applications: Steps 2-3, 5-7, 9 and 11 of Section 4.3.3 of the OELS handbook OELS/HLS (ELS/OELS options) applications: Steps 2-9 and 11-12 of Section 4.3.3 of the OELS handbook
7	Select HLS Management Options and Capital Works	Using the recommendations from the FEP and the Target Area and Theme Statements for your area, choose the most appropriate HLS options and capital works (that you wish to do in the first 3 years) for your land as discussed and agreed with your Natural England adviser.	Section 2 (Management options) and Section 3 (Capital items) of this handbook
8	Complete Annexes 3 and 4: HLS options	Work with your Natural England adviser to select your HLS rotational and non-rotational options. Complete Annexes 3 and 4.	See Figures 1 and 2 for examples
9	Complete Annex 5: Capital Works	Complete Annex 5 and mark the capital items on the HLS Options Map.	See Figure 3 for example
10	Complete Annex 6: Grassland management	List all your permanent grassland fields and the total area of temporary grassland in Annex 6 and calculate the maximum stocking density.	See Figure 4 for example
11	Complete your HLS Options Maps	Complete your Options Maps. 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 educational access base payments – these are recorded separately on Annex 4. ■ mark any capital works on the same map and write the appropriate item code, using a fine black pen, on or against the item in each place that you have marked it on your HLS Options Map(s). For boundaries annotate each boundary on which work is to be completed with a unique boundary reference number. ■ complete and include your options map for ELS/OELS. See Section 4.3.3, Step 4 in your ELS handbook or Section 4.3.3, Steps 7 and 8 of your OELS handbook.	

Step	Action required	Handbook reference
12 Complete the Checklist and sign the Declarations and Undertakings Section (Section 4 for ELS/HLS and Section 5 for OELS/HLS) of your application form	Complete the Checklist and complete and sign the Declaration and Undertakings sections of your application form, making sure that: ■ you have checked that you have completed all sections of the application form and included any supplementary forms or photographs if required with your application. ■ you have checked the box in Section 4 or Section 5 to confirm which scheme you are applying for. ■ you have read and understood all the terms and conditions contained in this handbook. ■ if you are applying for ELS/HLS you have read Section 5 of your ELS handbook. ■ if you are applying for OELS/HLS with OELS only or ELS/OELS options you have read Section 5 of your OELS handbook. ■ if you are making a countersigned application, you and the counter signatory have read and understood the declarations and undertakings in Section 2. ■ you have read and understood the declarations and undertakings in Section 4 or 5. If you are at all uncertain about your ability to comply with any of the declarations and undertakings, please do not sign the application form until you have discussed your concerns with your Natural England adviser.	
13 Submit your application	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. ■ 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. ■ Management plans (see Section 4.2.5). ■ It is recommended that you obtain proof of postage for these and any other documents you send to Natural England. You are also advised to retain a copy of all these documents before sending them to Natural England. Contact details can be found at Appendix 1.	

To complete Annexes 1 and 2 and the ELS/OELS points target and choice of scheme options sections of your application form, follow the guidance given in Section 4.3.3 of your ELS or OELS handbook. For Annex 3, follow the instructions below.

Step A: Write the code of your chosen option at the top of the options column. Note, in this example, the first option is an ELS option attracting an HLS payment.

Step B: Calculate the amount of this option for each field parcel where you have decided to locate it. Record this amount in the corresponding row of the options column. For each entry, calculate the area in hectares (rounded to the nearest 0.01 ha (100 m²) or the number of occurrences or the number of metres (for certain boundary options).

Step C: Calculate the total amount of your option for all field parcels and record this figure in the row marked 'Total amount (ha/100 m)'.

Step D: Enter the cost per hectare or number available for the option in the row marked 'HLS £ per unit', eg for HE3 you would enter £340.

Step E: Calculate the total payment for that option.

Step F: Once you have recorded all your non-rotational options within the field, calculate your total HLS payment for the options recorded and enter this figure in the HLS £s row of the Total HLS £s column.

Where you have chosen an entry level option to contribute towards your HLS application, you must use the relevant HLS code, eg use HE3 instead of EE3 for a 6 m buffer strip. All codes are shown in Section 2 of this handbook.

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 2.2.4 of this handbook.

Annex 3: Field Data Sheet for HLS non-rotational options within fields

Please enter all the non-rotational options and supplements within fields that you have chosen into this data sheet. Details of the options and supplements available are provided in the HLS handbook.

Application reference:

[illegible]

To calculate the HLS £s, multiply the total amount (hectare/length) by the HLS £s per hectare or number. In this case, the option is Maintenance of hedgerows of very high environmental value, option code HB12, so the calculation is: 800 m x £27/100 m (£0.27/m) = £216

If necessary, please continue on additional sheets and indicate in the box how many have been attached

* Total value of HLS options for this sheet.

Step A: Decide which rotational options (options listed below) and educational access base payment (HN8) you would like to apply for as part of your HLS agreement.

To record rotational options:

The following rotational options are available in HLS. These include ELS or OELS options that can attract an HLS payment, as well as HLS options.

- Step C:** Calculate the total payment for each option.

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

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Figure 3: 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 (100 m²) 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 %	£7.00	£2.40	£5.00	£2.50	£2.00	£85.00	80%	60%	
Total £s	3,045	264	250	2,425	254	170	8,400	660	£15,468

Figure 4: How to complete Annex 6 (grassland area and stocking rate)

Step A: List all fields, by LRL 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

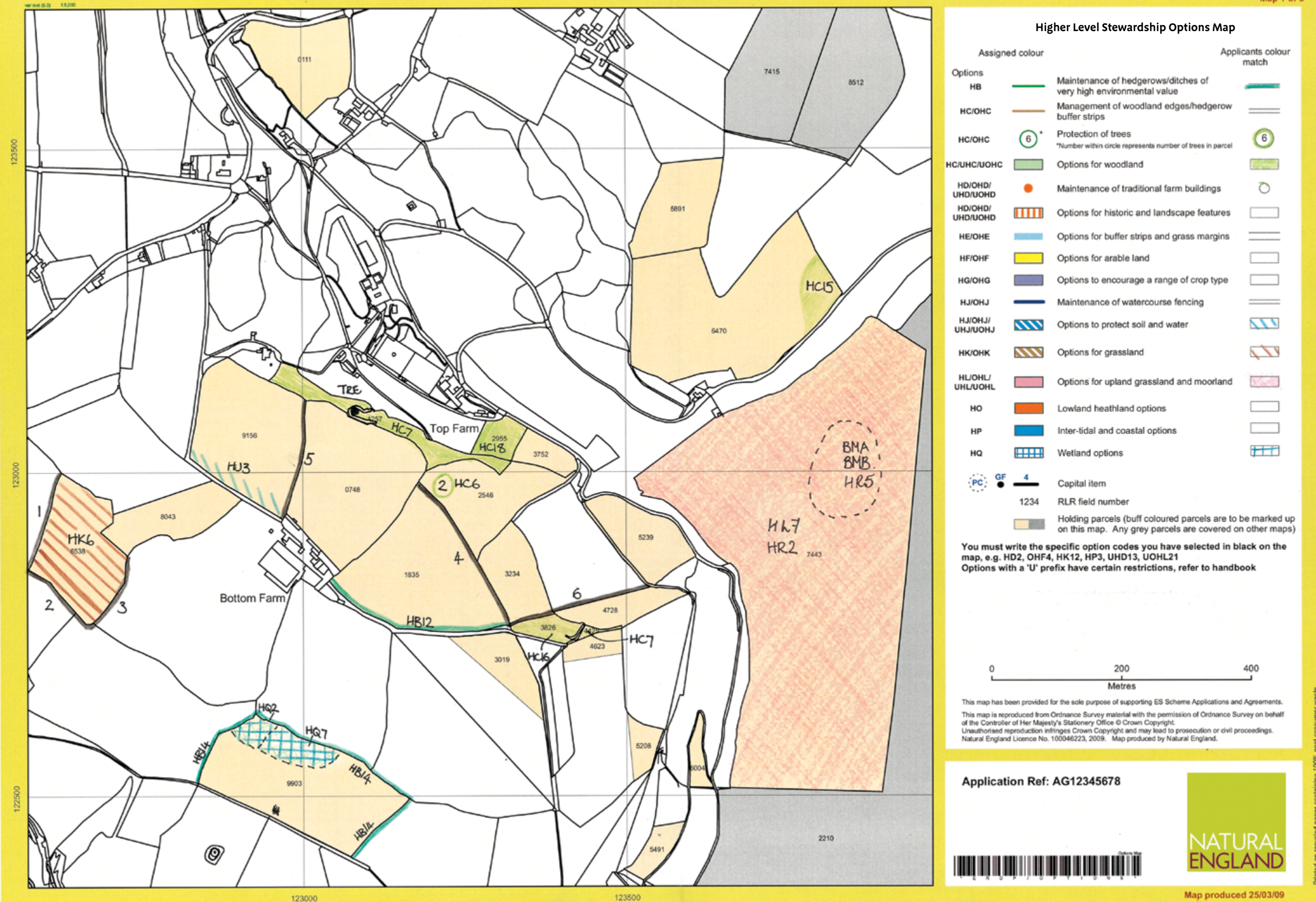
$$38.7 \text{ LU} \div 38.12 \text{ ha} = \mathbf{1.01 \text{ LU/ha}}$$

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.

Higher Level Stewardship Options Map

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

© Natural England/Naomi Oakley



4.4 What happens next?

4.4.1 What happens once you have submitted your 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.

4.4.2 What will you receive if your 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. Please refer to Section 1.2.8 for further details of start dates and timing of payments. 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; and
- 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.

4.4.3 What if your 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.



Adonis Blue male

Section 5

Terms and Conditions

5.1 Introduction

Environmental Stewardship (ES) 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 65/2011 (as amended or as may be amended).

ES has three elements:

- Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) (including Uplands ELS)
- Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS) (including Uplands OELS)
- Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)

HLS, which will usually be combined with (Uplands) ELS or (Uplands) 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.

(Uplands ELS or Uplands OELS offers a higher level of payment in return for environmental management of land within Severely Disadvantaged Areas [SDAs].)

This section provides the terms and conditions that apply to HLS agreements. **If you sign up to an HLS agreement, the terms and conditions provided in this section will apply to you.**

Please note that the terms and conditions of Natural England's ELS (or OELS) 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 (or OELS) management options.

The primary objectives of ES 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.

5.2 About your agreement

5.2.1 When will your agreement start and how long will it last?

Natural England prioritises holdings for inclusion in HLS based on known features and information about their potential for environmental delivery. The aim is to prioritise holdings which have the potential to provide the maximum environmental outcomes. The resulting prioritised list of holdings for each area is called the HLS Pipeline. Proposed start dates may be sometime in the future depending on the potential environmental outcomes.

All HLS applications will be assigned to one of three processing tiers depending on the complexity of the application. The 3 tiers for processing are:

- **Fast-track** – Farm Environment Plan (FEP) produced in-house by Natural England and suitable for holdings where only one Natural England adviser visit is required;
- **Standard** – FEP produced by external FEP surveyors or third-party agents and suitable for all other holdings where a maximum of two visits by a Natural England adviser is required; and
- **Complex** – FEP produced by external FEP surveyors or third-party agents and suitable for the most complex holdings. Complex cases may, due to their nature, require up to four Natural England adviser visits.

Note: For Standard and Complex Tier applications, you may choose to produce the FEP yourself if you feel you have the requisite skills. See Who is responsible for arranging and paying for the FEP? within Section 4.1.5.

There are monthly start dates and agreements will commence on the first day of a month. Certain start dates can be accommodated if requested by the customer. Please note that if unforeseen complications are encountered with the application your start date will be delayed until these are resolved. Your agreement start date cannot be backdated. You should note that your choice of start date will affect the timing of your payments (see Section 1.2.8).

The criteria for assigning an application to one of the tiers can be accessed from the HLS webpage on the Natural England website.

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

Your agreement with Natural England, which will include (Uplands) ELS or (Uplands) 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 one 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.

5.2.2 Do you need to join ELS/OELS?

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

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

- coastal and inter-tidal habitats
- lowland heathland.

If your holding is made up largely of these types of habitat, and you believe you would not be eligible for (Uplands) ELS or (Uplands) 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.

5.2.3 What are you agreeing 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 (Uplands) ELS or (Uplands) 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; and

- Adhere to all the scheme terms and conditions contained in this handbook, and the (Uplands) ELS or (Uplands) OELS handbook. In particular, follow cross compliance rules throughout your land and comply with the other additional requirements contained in Section 5.5.

5.2.4 Are you 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

In addition to 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).

5.2.5 What payments will you 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 5.6.7 of your ELS or 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 2 and 3 of this handbook.

Details of the timing of payments are available on the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/developments.aspx.

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 (CWP) will set out the work 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 CWP 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.

5.2.6 How will you be paid?

Your Environmental Stewardship payments are managed by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). RPA will make payments directly into your bank account. If the RPA does not have your bank details, please contact them on **0845 603 7777** and request a Customer Registration form or visit the RPA website (see Appendix 2). Without your bank details, the RPA will not be able to pay you.

5.2.7 Will Natural England discuss your 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.

5.2.8 Will your details be made public?

Please refer to Section 5.2.6 of your ELS or 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.

5.3 Who can apply?

5.3.1 Who can join the scheme?

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

- owner occupiers
- tenants (including farmers who may have an agreement labelled as a licence but who in practice have wider land management responsibilities) (see Sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3)
- landlords (see Section 5.3.4)
- licensors (see Section 5.3.5).

You must have control of all the activities needed to meet the compulsory scheme requirements and prescriptions of the HLS (and OELS, ELS and Uplands O/ELS) land management options you have selected. If you do not have full control of all such activities, for instance, due to the land being common land or where separate sporting tenancies are in place, please refer to Sections 5.3.9 and 5.3.10 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

You must also have management control of the land for the entire term of your HLS agreement (normally 10 years). If you are not certain to have management control lasting for 10 years, please refer to Section 5.3.2.

If Natural England finds that you are ineligible to have an HLS agreement on any land, reductions and penalties as set out in Section 5.7.2 may apply. You may want to seek independent professional advice relating to your circumstances.

5.3.2 What if you are a tenant?

Please refer to Section 5.3.2 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).

5.3.3 What if you are a licensee?

Please refer to Section 5.3.3 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.3.4 What if you are a landlord?

Please refer to Section 5.3.4 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.3.5 What if you are a licensor?

Please refer to Section 5.3.5 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.3.6 What about using contractors to manage the land?

You may employ contractors to undertake agricultural work on your land or to undertake work required under the (Uplands) ELS or (Uplands) OELS options you have chosen. You should notify the contractor about the agreement and your obligations under it. It will be your responsibility to ensure that they do not breach the terms of your agreement.

5.3.7 Are business partnerships and trusts eligible?

Please refer to Section 5.3.7 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.3.8 Are public bodies and their tenants eligible?

Please refer to Section 5.3.8 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.3.9 Is common land and shared grazing eligible?

Please refer to Section 5.3.9 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.3.10 What if others hold rights over your land?

Please refer to Section 5.3.10 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.4 Is your land eligible?**5.4.1 What land can you enter into the scheme?**

Please refer to Section 5.4.1 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

In exceptional cases (for example, on some Sites of Special Scientific Interest [SSSIs]), 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.

5.4.2 What land must be excluded from your application?

Please refer to Section 5.4.2 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.4.3 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. However, work that is outside the scope of HLS may 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 5.4 of your ELS or OELS handbook in order to see if any of the guidance provided there also applies to you and your land.

5.4.4 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. However, land may 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.

5.4.5 Energy Crops Scheme (ECS)

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

5.4.6 Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations

Please refer to Section 5.4.6 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 regulations 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 website. A link to this site is provided in Appendix 2.

5.4.7 Felling licences/Tree Preservation Orders

Please refer to Section 5.4.7 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.4.8 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.

5.4.9 Heather and Grass Burning

The Heather and Grass etc. Burning (England) Regulations 2007 state what you can and cannot do when carrying out controlled burning of specified 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.

5.4.10 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.

5.4.11 Inheritance Tax/Capital Gains Tax exemption

Please refer to Section 5.4.9 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.4.12 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ)

Please refer to Section 5.4.10 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.4.13 Producer Organisation Aid Scheme

Please refer to Section 5.4.11 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.4.14 Protected areas: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Natura 2000 Network 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 conditions on the SSSI. We will not award an ES 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 2010.

Land of this type will also be a notified SSSI. These designations place an additional duty on Natural England to assess any possible significant impact 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.

5.4.15 Protected species

Please refer to Section 5.4.12 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.4.16 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.

5.4.17 Single Payment Scheme (SPS)

Please refer to Section 5.4.14 of your ELS or 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.

5.4.18 Can you use land to apply for HLS that someone else is using to apply for SPS?

Please refer to Section 5.4.15 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.4.19 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.

5.4.20 Uplands Transitional Payment (UTP)

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.

If you are in receipt of UTP, you are **not** eligible for Uplands ELS/OELS on any of your land. As several people may have interests in an upland holding at the same time (eg owner, tenant, grazier) it is essential that when you consider applying for Uplands ELS, you discuss this intention with other interested parties. However, you can apply for ELS, and may put ELS options (but not Uplands ELS options) on land covered by the UTP.

If you have claimed UTP, your claim covers the calendar year following your claim submission and it is paid only in respect of the life of your (or your landlord's) ESA/CSS agreement, which could be for all or part of the calendar year. The *Uplands Transitional Payment 2012 to 2014* booklet contains more information concerning the periods covered by UTP and is available from the RPA Customer Service Centre (0845 603 7777).

Before you are paid your UTP, RPA will adjust the value of your UTP if you (or your landlord) decide to either end the ESA/CSS agreement on your land early or enter Uplands ELS on any land that you farm not covered by the 'classic' agreement.

After you are paid your UTP: if you have already been paid your UTP, RPA will ask you to repay the difference between the amount paid and the amount to which you are now entitled following the early termination of the ESA/CSS agreement, or the land not covered by the classic agreement was entered into Uplands ELS.

Please refer to Section 5.4.18 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.4.21 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.

5.5 What additional requirements will apply to your agreement?

You must comply with the additional requirements set out below and in Section 5.5 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.5.1 Cross compliance management and HLS options

The term 'cross compliance' refers to the requirement for farmers to comply with a set of Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) and keep their land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) as a condition of claiming EU land-based grants and subsidies. SMRs are a baseline to Stewardship scheme options, and failure to observe the rules could result in reduction or loss of scheme payments depending on the severity of the breach.

The cross compliance rules apply to Environmental Stewardship agreements, whether or not you are also claiming under the Single Payment Scheme (SPS). Therefore, when joining the scheme, you will be agreeing to:

- maintain your land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) by meeting a range of standards that relate to the protection of soils, habitats and landscape features and water; and
- meet a range of Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) covering the environment, public and plant health, animal health and welfare, and livestock identification and tracing.

You must comply with cross compliance requirements across all of the agricultural land that you farm, including land on your SPS claim form (whether it is claimed or not) and common land over which you exercise or hold rights of common.

A proportion of agreement holders will be inspected each year to check that they meet the cross compliance standards and requirements. If any non-compliance is found, it will normally be necessary to reduce your payments, depending on the seriousness of the non-compliance. Cross compliance applies to a number of schemes (including ES and the SPS); any reductions due as a result of non-compliance will therefore be applied to payments due under each of the schemes for which you have submitted a claim.

Full details about cross compliance can be found in the latest version of *The Guide to Cross Compliance in England* and the associated publication *Guidance for Cross Compliance in England: Management of Habitats and Landscape Features*. Copies of these are available on the RPA website, details in Appendix 2. Further information and advice about cross compliance can be obtained from Defra's Farming Advice Service, details in Appendix 2.

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.

5.5.2 Avoidance of under-utilisation and overgrazing

As a condition of your HLS agreement, you will be required to avoid under-utilisation and overgrazing on the whole of your farmed area. You must distribute stock across your farm to ensure this is the case.

Under-utilisation is defined as occurring 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.

Overgrazing means grazing land with so many livestock that the growth, quality or diversity of vegetation is adversely affected, and this is detrimental to the environmental interests of the site.

We will investigate cases of suspected under-utilisation and overgrazing. You will be in breach of your agreement if you fail to follow subsequent professional advice.

5.5.3 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.

5.5.4 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 CSS or ESA 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.

5.5.5 Protection of historic features

Your annotated Farm Environment Record (FER), includes information supplied by us on the Environmental Information Map (see Section 4.1.4 of your ELS or OELS handbook for more details). The FER will show the location of some of the historic features (including archaeological features and traditional farm buildings) on your land. For any of these features, and for any additional features of which you are subsequently advised in writing by us, you should not:

- cause ground disturbance, including poaching by livestock, on known archaeological features or areas of historic interest under grassland;
- sub-soil or de-stone on areas containing known archaeological features, unless these operations have been demonstrably undertaken as a routine in the past five years;
- deliberately plough more deeply or undertake additional groundworks or drainage on those areas already under cultivation that contain known archaeological features;
- run free-range pigs on archaeological features;
- remove any useable building stone, walling stone or traditional roofing material off the land, excluding materials produced from established quarries; or
- damage, demolish or remove building material from substantially complete ruined traditional farm buildings (TFBs) or parcel boundaries.

5.5.6 Archaeological fieldwork and metal detecting on your land

You are required to ensure that metal detecting or archaeological fieldwork does not conflict with the requirements of your HLS agreement. You should refer to your obligations detailed in Section 5.5.5 of your ELS or OELS handbook. In addition, do not carry out or permit metal detecting or archaeological fieldwork on any of the archaeological sites on your holding identified in your FEP unless agreed with your Natural England adviser in writing.

With certain exceptions (see below), metal detecting is allowed on land within an (Upland) ELS or (Upland) OELS agreement provided that it is undertaken in accordance with best practice laid down in the current Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales and that you agree that all finds are reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme. For details of this code, please see www.finds.org.uk.

Metal detecting is **not** allowed on Scheduled Monuments, SSSIs and known archaeological sites under grassland. By 'known archaeological sites' we mean archaeological sites identified in your FER and any additional sites of which you are subsequently advised in writing by us.

You must also ensure that the metal detecting does not conflict with the requirements of your ELS agreement, ie where the proposed detecting will affect your ability to meet any option prescriptions. In such a case, you will need a derogation. Section 5.6.6 explains how to apply for a derogation.

As part of your (Uplands) ELS or (Uplands) OELS agreement we require you to protect and retain archaeological sites and other environmental features (ie the features identified in your FER) over the entire area under agreement. You must ensure that no damage is caused to these features, and any additional features of which you are subsequently advised in writing by us, wherever metal detecting takes place.

Damage to archaeological sites is taken to mean disturbance of previously undisturbed deposits in and on archaeological sites and monuments, and any removal, loss and/or disruption of standing masonry or other upstanding structural material. If you are in any doubt about whether any operations will damage environmental features, please contact us.

You must inform us of large-scale metal detecting events, including metal detecting rallies, on any ELS agreement land at least 12 weeks before the event. You should provide all available details, including the date, location, a map showing the parcels to be searched (marked with any areas excluded), and the expected number of participants. We will provide you with advice to ensure that the event does not conflict with the requirements and objectives of the (Uplands) ELS or (Uplands) OELS agreement.

On Scheduled Monuments, you must obtain a licence from English Heritage before metal detecting can take place. Detecting without such a licence is a criminal offence.

On SSSIs, where actions resulting from metal detecting (eg digging or vegetation disturbance) are listed as 'operations likely to damage the special interest' of the SSSI, you must give written notice to us of these operations. Detecting can only proceed with written consent.

You need to apply for a derogation for any proposed fieldwork (such as test-pitting or excavation) that would cause, or is expected to cause, ground disturbance or damage (see above) to any known archaeological sites. Section 5.6.6 explains how to apply for a derogation.

In addition, any archaeological fieldwork (including the use of ground penetrating radar or remote sensing) on Scheduled Monuments requires written consent from English Heritage before fieldwork can commence. You must obtain written consent from us for any archaeological fieldwork (including the use of ground-penetrating radar or remote sensing) on SSSIs before fieldwork can commence.

5.5.7 Other activities on your land

Subject to any other existing restrictions, country pursuits such as shooting, hunting and fishing are allowed provided they are compatible with your agreement. You should make sure that any activities, and the exercise of other rights, will not conflict with the delivery of the required management of the scheme options.

Before allowing any non-farming activities to be carried out on your organic land (for example caravan parks), you must contact your Organic Inspection Body (OIB) to ensure that the status of your organic land will not be compromised.

5.5.8 Inspecting and monitoring your agreement

Authorised Defra staff or their agents may visit you to inspect your land during the course of your agreement. The RPA will visit a percentage of agreements every year to assess compliance with the scheme requirements. EU regulations require that, in many cases, there will be no warning of an inspection. You must give inspecting officers access at any reasonable time and you may be asked to accompany them to help identify work and discuss the requirements of your agreement. Deliberate failure to be available to accompany the officer will be treated as unacceptable and potentially as a breach of agreement. In addition, if you refuse an inspection, payment on your agreement will not be made.

Natural England and Defra monitor agreements to assess the environmental and economic impacts of the scheme. By applying to join the scheme, you are agreeing to co-operate with any scheme monitoring.

5.5.9 Keep necessary records

You must retain all scheme documentation. Defra staff or their agents may ask to see it during inspections.

If an option requires you to:

- graze a field at a particular stocking density, or
- not increase your stocking above the existing level, or
- graze or exclude stock at specific times of the year,

you must be able to demonstrate compliance with the scheme requirements by keeping adequate records which identify the livestock type and stocking level on each parcel where the option is located.

You must also keep records of the location and timing of 'rotational options' and any specific records referred to in the management options in Section 2.

You are required to keep comprehensive records as evidence of your organic farming practices. This means that you will be expected to renew the registration of your organic land each year to ensure that you are registered with an Organic Inspection Body for the full duration of your OELS agreement. Copies of these certificates and schedules must also be retained for the full duration of your agreement. You will be in breach of your agreement if you fail to comply with this requirement.

5.5.10 Other funding

You must not accept any other European Union (EU) funding or enter into another agreement that applies to the agreement land or capital works covered by your HLS agreement without our written consent. EU regulations do not permit more than one source of EU funding for the same activity.

5.5.11 Publicity

For any publicity, events, information or interpretative material on or about the agreement land, you must acknowledge the support of Environmental Stewardship, as part of the RDPE.

5.5.12 Photographs

If you are required to supply photographs in support of your application (because an option you have selected requires you to do so), each photograph must clearly show the feature to be managed. Ideally, the whole of the feature should be on one photograph, but where necessary, you should use more, for instance, to show all sides of a traditional farm building (TFB) in Uplands ELS.

Each photograph should display the date on which it was taken and must be clearly numbered. The photographs should be cross-referenced with a map showing the position the photographs were taken from, the number of the photograph and an arrow indicating the direction of the shot. You can submit the photographs in either digital format (on a CD) or as colour prints (at least 6"x4").

5.5.13 Organic standards

The production of organic food is strictly regulated by EU law (Council Regulation 834/2007). The standards prescribed by these regulations set out the inputs and practices that can only be used in organic farming and growing and the processing of organic food and feed, as well as the inspection system to be used to ensure that the standards are met. In the UK, private Organic Inspection Bodies (OIBs) are licensed by Defra to ensure that these standards are met. All food and feed sold as organic must therefore originate from growers, processors and importers who are registered with an approved OIB and are subject to regular inspection.

You must comply with the organic standards on all your organic land for the entire duration of your agreement. Should the EU standards be revised, you will also need to meet any additional requirements that are introduced for the duration of your OELS agreement.

You should also be aware that organic seeds must be used on OELS land. Where this is not possible, you must contact your OIB for a derogation. This does not apply to any agreed derogation allowing the use of grass seed mixtures that have a minimum organic content.

Inspectors from your OIB will visit your farm at least once a year in order to check that you are meeting the necessary organic farming standards. We may need to obtain a copy of these inspection reports for administrative purposes, and in applying to enter OELS, you authorise the release of these reports to us.

5.6 Making changes to your agreement

5.6.1 Can you make changes to your agreement?

Please refer to Section 5.6.1 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).

5.6.2 What if you let, sell or transfer your 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 you do not notify us in advance (to include your confirmation in writing for a whole farm transfer or the return of your Land Transfer and Amendment form [LTA 1] for a part farm transfer) we may not be able to transfer to the dates specified in Section 5.6.4 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

If advance notification is not possible, you must inform us (to include your confirmation in writing for a whole farm transfer or the return of your Land Transfer and Amendment form [LTA 1] for a part farm transfer) within three 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 5.6.9 of your ELS or 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 four months (for land transferring into ELS/OELS agreements) or six months (for land transferring into HLS agreements) 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** of your agreement land, you must contact Natural England in writing no later than three months after the commencement date of lease, the completion date of sale or the actual date of transfer to confirm the transfer, identifying the new owner or occupier. In these circumstances, 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, otherwise we will be required to recover all payments to you.

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 three 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 5.6.9 of your ELS or 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.

5.6.3 What if you acquire land?

If you acquire additional land, it will be in your interest 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/HLS to OELS/HLS or Uplands 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; or
- Option 4 – if the acquired land will be managed in the same scheme as your existing agreement, you can either amend or continue your existing agreement to add the land as follows:
 - amend your existing agreement for its remaining term and keep the same agreement number. This option can only be used if your transfer date aligns with the partial or end of year payment date applicable to your agreement (and/or the payment date applicable to another agreement holder's agreement where you have acquired only part of their land); **or**
 - continue with your existing agreement for its remaining term, but with a new agreement number.

This is subject to the following conditions:

- 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 five years management is achieved. The entry criteria for both agreements must be the same.

5.6.4 When will agreement transfers take effect?

Please refer to Section 5.6.4 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.6.5 What if you want to upgrade your 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.

5.6.6 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; or permission to alter cutting or cultivating prescriptions due to practical problems.

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 OIB 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 5.6.6 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.6.7 Variation of your agreement by us

Please refer to Section 5.6.7 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.6.8 Certainty of payment

The European Commission are reviewing the continuation of, and provision for, agreements that run beyond 2015 in the context of the current CAP reform negotiations. Natural England does not have legal authority to make payment commitments beyond 2015, but there is a clear precedent in the current programme (RDPE 2007-2013) for continuing to make payments on agreements carried over from the previous programming period.

5.6.9 Exceptional circumstances (force majeure)

Please refer to Section 5.6.9 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.6.10 Can you change your Organic Inspection Body?

Please refer to Section 5.6.10 of your OELS handbook.

5.6.11 Are phased conversions possible under OELS?

Please refer to Section 5.6.11 of your OELS handbook.

5.7 Disputes: What happens if you fail to keep to the terms of your agreement, have a dispute or wish to make a complaint?

5.7.1 What is a breach of agreement?

You will be in breach of your agreement if you:

- fail to comply with any agreement conditions; or
- are in breach of any requirement which you are subject to under Council Regulation 1698/2005, Commission Regulations 1974/2006 or 65/2011, 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.

5.7.2 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, in addition to reducing your payment to what you should actually be due based on the findings:

- we may withhold part or all of any future payments due under your agreement;
- we may recover (with interest charged) part or all of the payments already made to you under the agreement;
- we may terminate your agreement;
- we may apply any penalties set out in the relevant EU legislation; or
- we may prohibit you from entering into a new agreement under this scheme or any other EU agri-environment scheme for up to two 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 we seek 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 us, 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 we have agreed with you in writing that exceptional circumstances have occurred in relation to any breach. Please refer to Section 5.6.9 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

The legislation which governs enforcement of breaches of your agreement is the Rural Development (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2007 and Commission Regulation (EU) No 65/2011.

Penalties will be applied to the following types of breaches, although Natural England retains discretion to apply penalties in any circumstance specified in Section 5.7.1:

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).
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).
3. Where your Farm Environment Record (FER) or Farm Environment Plan (FEP) features have been removed or damaged.
4. Where the rules of cross compliance are not being followed.
5. Other breaches of the additional requirements set out at Section 5.5.
6. Failure to notify us 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 5.6.2).
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 us 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 us to be reckless or intentional, you can be excluded for the following year as well (ie 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 or OELS: points claimed cannot be found or management requirements are not being followed

Please see refer to Section 5.7.2 of your ELS or OELS 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 shown below:

Table 2 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 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 crop group 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 crop group 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. We will take into consideration 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 2 for contact details).

5.7.3 What do you do if you receive an overpayment?

Please refer to Section 5.7.3 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.7.4 What if you disagree with any of our decisions or proposed actions regarding your application or agreement?

Please refer to Section 5.7.4 of your ELS or OELS handbook.

5.7.5 What do you do if you have a dispute with an Organic Inspection Body (OIB) over certification issues?

Please refer to Section 5.7.5 of your OELS handbook.

5.7.6 How do you make a complaint?

Please refer to Section 5.7.5 of your ELS handbook or Section 5.7.6 of your OELS handbook.

Appendix 1

Contact details

Natural England offices

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

Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Essex
Hertfordshire
Norfolk
Suffolk

Natural England
Customer Services
PO Box 247, Cambridge CB2 2WW
Tel: 0300 060 0011*
Fax: 0300 060 1124
Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

East Midlands

Derbyshire
Leicestershire
Lincolnshire
Northamptonshire
Nottinghamshire
Rutland

Natural England
Customer Services
PO Box 8296, Nottingham NG8 3WZ
Tel: 0300 060 0011*
Fax: 0300 060 1121
Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

North East

Durham
Northumberland
Tyne and Wear
Former county of Cleveland

Natural England
Customer Services
PO Box 578, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 8WW
Tel: 0300 060 0011*
Fax: 0300 060 1127
Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

North West

Cheshire
Cumbria
Greater Manchester
Lancashire
Merseyside

Natural England
Customer Services
PO Box 380, Crewe CW1 6YH
Tel: 0300 060 0011*
Fax: 0300 060 1123
Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

South East

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

Natural England
Customer Services
PO Box 2423, Reading RG1 6WY
Tel: 0300 060 0011*
Fax: 0300 060 1122
Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

South West for ELS and HLS

Cornwall
Devon
Dorset
Gloucestershire
Somerset
Wiltshire
Former county of Avon

Natural England
Customer Services
PO Box 277, Bristol BS10 6WW
Tel: 0300 060 0011*
Fax: 0300 060 1128
Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

West Midlands for ELS and HLS

Herefordshire
Shropshire
Staffordshire
Warwickshire
West Midlands
Worcestershire

Natural England
Customer Services
PO Box 530, Worcester WR5 2WZ
Tel: 0300 060 0011*
Fax: 0300 060 1125
Email: enquiries@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
Customer Services
PO Box 798, Leeds LS1 9NA
Tel: 0300 060 0011*
Fax: 0300 060 1126
Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

Please note:

Calls to phone numbers marked * above will be answered initially by an external switchboard service working on Natural England's behalf. They will then connect callers to Natural England staff who can deal with your enquiry.

In order to help the switchboard operator to direct your call accurately:

- please give the name of the specific person or team you wish to speak to, if you know this;
- otherwise, please give as much detail of the nature of your enquiry and the geographical area that it relates to, as possible.

Appendix 2

Useful web addresses

Natural England application information:

Supplementary forms for Environmental Stewardship (agent authorisation, common land and shared grazing, derogation) 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

Mapping software that may be helpful in measuring areas and lengths is available at:

www.magic.gov.uk

Other Natural England sources of information:

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 2011) is available at:

publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35042

Details of the Natural England 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

Further information about Access Capital Item (ACI) Option Eligibility and Assessment criteria can be found at:

www.naturalengland.org.uk/images/access_capital_items_eligibility_tcm6-30525.pdf

Advice on the management of hedgerows and hedgerow trees (including *The Hedgerow Management Cycle and Scale*) is available through the Natural England publications catalogue:

publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/39004?category=9006

A wide range of information, including bird distribution maps can be found at:

www.natureonthemap.org.uk

Further information on Environmental Impact Assessments is available at:

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/eia/default.aspx

The Heather and Grass Burning Code can be downloaded from:

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/burning/default.aspx

Details about the Catchment Sensitive Farming programme can be found at:

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/csf/default.aspx

External sources of information:

Information about Non-departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) and other public bodies can be found at:

www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/resources/information-on-public-bodies

Information on Felling licences including the booklet *Tree Felling – getting permission* is available at:
www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6DFK86

Forestry Commission website:
www.forestry.gov.uk

Code of Good Agricultural Practice can be found at:
www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2011/06/16/pb13558-cogap

Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales can be found at:
finds.org.uk/getinvolved/guides/codeofpractice

Information about archaeological features on your farm can be obtained from your local Historic Environment Record (HER) at:
www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/CHR

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

Rural Payments Agency's (RPA) 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

Full details about cross compliance can be found on the RPA website at:
www.rpa.gov.uk/crosscompliance

In addition, the Farming Advice Service provides advice on cross compliance and other subjects to help you improve the economic and environmental performance of your farm:
www.defra.gov.uk/farming-advice

Single Payment Scheme Handbook and supplements:
rpa.defra.gov.uk/rpa/index.nsf/home

Appendix 3

Glossary and list of abbreviations and acronyms

Glossary

Agreement land

All land on which Entry Level Stewardship or Organic Entry Level Stewardship 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, 1975/2006 and 65/2011 (as amended or as may be amended) that offer grants for measures to conserve and enhance the countryside.

Arable land

Land that has been in arable production, including temporary grassland and long-term set-aside, during the five 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 where management rights are vested in a number of individuals.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000

Strengthens the legislation on the protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) (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 way.

Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations

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

Environmental Information Map

The map that Natural England will send to you, with your personalised application form, showing designations on your land such as SSSIs and Scheduled Monuments.

Environmental Stewardship (ES)

Replaced Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Countryside Stewardship Schemes from 2005. It has three elements – Entry Level Stewardship (including Uplands Entry Level Stewardship), Organic Entry Level Stewardship (including Uplands 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 ELS or OELS 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 hectares 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 return to Natural England, with your completed application form, on which you have marked the options you wish to enter into ELS (including Uplands ELS) or OELS (including Uplands OELS) and HLS. These will usually include both land management options and capital works.

Overgrazing

Grazing of land which 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 five years.

Plantation

Woodland where most of the trees have been planted.

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 the ground so that the regrowth cannot be eaten by stock. The harvested timber was used for a variety of purposes.

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

Rural Land Register (RLR)

A database of land parcels and areas within England, managed by the RPA. For land to be eligible for HLS, it must be registered on the RLR.

Rural Payments Agency (RPA)

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

Scheduled Monument

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.

Scrub

Any distinct area within a parcel (which may even amount to the entire parcel area) which is clearly capable of being grazed (i.e. is not too dense) is eligible for the Single Payment Scheme (SPS), while any distinct area which is clearly incapable of being grazed (i.e. is too dense) should be excluded, even if such areas are adjoined. This will mean that, for example, within a grass parcel containing scrub (not thistle), those grass parts which do not have scrub growing on them are eligible for SPS, as are those parts where the scrub is short and animals can walk over them and graze on the scrub. Any area where the inspector is satisfied that animals cannot penetrate for grazing, should be deducted.

Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA)

These 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 a 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.

Shared Grazing

Shared grazing is communal pasture where graziers have a legal entitlement to graze (for example, a pasture used jointly by tenants) but where the land is not registered as common land.

Silviculture

The management of woods and forests.

Single Business Identifier (SBI)

A unique reference number for beneficiaries of rural development schemes, including SPS, to identify the owners/occupiers of land and to aid the co-ordination of inspections, implementation of cross compliance, and declaration of total European Union (EU) funding received by each beneficiary.

Single Payment Scheme (SPS)

A decoupled subsidy payment replacing the 10 major Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payment schemes, one of the major reforms of the CAP, 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 Area or Countryside Stewardship Scheme agreements within the Severely Disadvantaged Areas. It is a 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 and acronyms

ACI	Access Capital Item
ALGAO	Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BASIS	British Agrochemical Standards Inspection Scheme
CALM	Carbon Accounting for Land Managers
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CES	Conservation and Enhancement Scheme
CPH	County Parish Holding

CRoW Act	Countryside and Rights of Way Act
CS	Customer Services
CSS	Countryside Stewardship Scheme
CWP	Capital Works Plan
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
ECS	Energy Crops Scheme
EH	English Heritage
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
HER	Historic Environment Record
HLC	Historic Landscape Character
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
HLS	Higher Level Stewardship
HS	Habitat Scheme
LEAF	Linking Environment and Farming
LFA	Less Favoured Area
LU	Livestock Unit
MESME	Making Environmental Stewardship More Effective
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
NVZ	Nitrate Vulnerable Zone

OELS	Organic Entry Level Stewardship
OIB	Organic Inspection Body
PAH	Professional help with implementation plan
PRoW	Public Rights of Way
RDPE	Rural Development Programme for England
RLR	Rural Land Register
RPA	Rural Payments Agency
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SBI	Single Business Identifier
SDA	Severely Disadvantaged Area
SHINE	Selected Heritage Inventory for Natural England
SMRs	Statutory Management Requirements
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 for Standard tier and Complex tier applications

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:

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 50ha, 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:

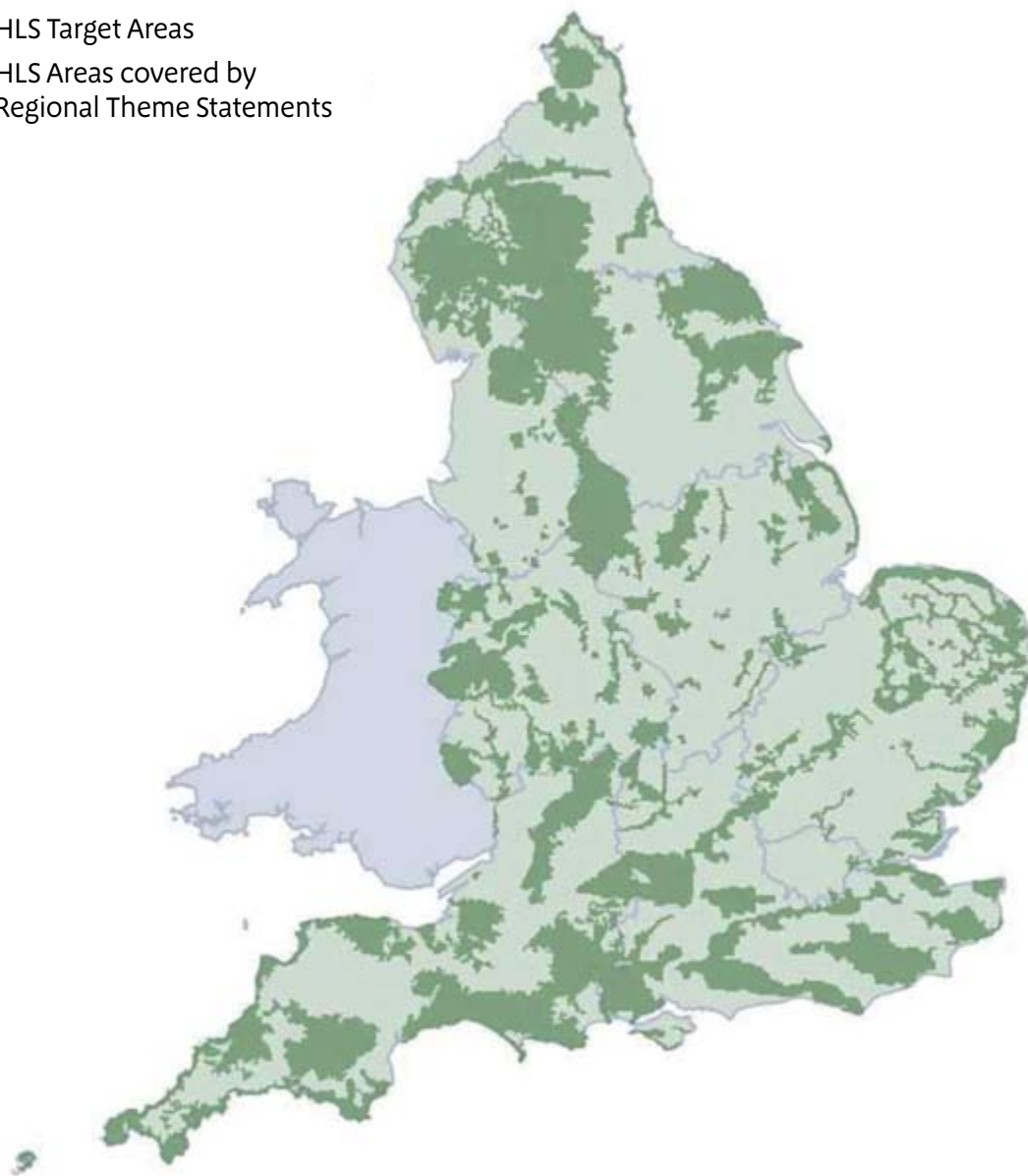
With this consultation request, I have enclosed *[tick where relevant]*:

- 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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As the Government's adviser on the natural environment, Natural England is committed to provide practical advice, grounded in science, on how best to safeguard England's natural wealth for the benefit of everyone.

Our remit is to ensure sustainable stewardship of the land and sea so that people and nature can thrive. It is our responsibility to see that England's rich natural environment can adapt and survive intact for future generations to enjoy.

We work with farmers and land managers, business and industry, planners and developers, national and local government, interest groups and local communities to help them improve their local environment.

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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.

Front cover photograph:

Traditional hay meadow and barn in Swaledale.

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ISBN 978-1-84754-240-3

Catalogue Code: NE350

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