

Part 3

HLS - MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

SPECIFIC OPTIONS, PRESCRIPTIONS AND INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

HK6 - Maintenance of species-rich, semi-natural grassland

Land parcels managed under this option:

Greenham and Crookham Commons

SU49644022, SU49643641, SU49640760 – Grassland between Alderbridge Gully and Ballshill and Handpost Gullies, Compartment 3E and 3B

SU51642785 – North Eastern Airbase Disturbed Grassland, Compartment 13

SU49655207, SU50641392, SU50650636 and SU50647780 – North Central Airbase Grassland, Compartment 14

SU50647830, SU51647522 and SU51646335 – South Eastern Airbase Grassland, Compartment 8

SU48645581 – Western end of runway, Compartment 16

SU50647747, SU49644170, SU49644490, SU50648365 – Central Airbase Lozenges, Compartments 9 to 12

SU48659321 – Compartment 15, North Western Airbase Grasslands

Padworth Common

SU61648161 – North Common grassland, Compartment 4

General description of the management required

This option is targeted at the maintenance and protection of areas of species-rich grassland. The importance of species-rich grassland is recognised by the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). The option can also contribute to protecting valued landscapes and archaeology, and the promotion of good soil conditions.

This management is intended to benefit the following features:

- Species rich grassland including BAP acid grassland
- Great Crested Newt
- Archaeological features

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don'ts

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- Follow the detailed objectives in the agreed management plans (see Additional Notes).
- Manage the sward by grazing with cattle and/or ponies and/or cutting to achieve a sward height of between 2cm and 10cm in October / November.
- Do not install new drainage or modify existing drainage systems unless agreed with your Natural England contact.

- Supplementary feeding should not take place within Greenham and Crookham Commons SSSI and outside the SSSI, should be confined to mineral blocks whenever possible.
- Control undesirable species such as injurious weeds so that by year 5, their cover is less than 5% of the area. Agree all methods of control with your Natural England contact.
- Ploughing, sub-surface cultivation and reseedling are not permitted. Chain harrowing or rolling are permitted except between 15 March and 15 July.
- Field operations and stocking must not damage the soil structure or cause heavy poaching. Take particular care when the land is waterlogged.
- To benefit Great Crested Newts the land within a 200m radius of a breeding pond must be managed extensively and no new barriers such as buildings, walls, tracks, or footpaths created. Potential hibernation sites such as rabbit burrows, log piles, rocky areas or woodland should be retained.
- To protect the archaeological/historical features identified in the Farm Environment Plans for all three commons, do not:
Place anything likely to cause ground disturbance on or near the features such as fences, feeders, water troughs.
Locate access routes on or near the features and if the feature is being damaged by the use of a PROW, consult the Highway Authority.
Allow the development of burrows.
Allow trees to prevent them being blown down.

Indicators of Success

Grassland within Greenham and Crookham Commons SSSI

- All SSSI land should be in favourable or recovering condition (i.e. meeting the targets set out in the Conservation Objectives).
- Archaeological /historic features listed in the Historic Environment Record, Farm Environment Plan and in the Historic Management Plan have suffered no further degradation. The depth of soil covering the feature/s has been maintained.

Grassland not designated SSSI

- The Soil Phosphate Index should be 0 or 1.
- By year 3, cover of coarse grass species must be less than 20%.
- By year 5, at least 1 indicator species for BAP lowland acid grassland habitat is frequent and another 3 at least occasional in the sward (see Additional Notes).
- By year 10, cover of bare ground should be between 1% and 10%, distributed throughout the field in hoof prints or other small patches.
- Archaeological /historic features listed in the Historic Environment Record, Farm Environment Plan and in the Greenham and Crookham Common Historic Management Plan have suffered no further degradation. The depth of soil covering the feature/s has been maintained.

Additional notes

Management plans informing the maintenance of grassland under this agreement include:

- Greenham and Crookham Commons Management Plan – to be agreed in Year 1 and to be in accordance with a.) the Historic Environment Management

Plan to be produced in Year 1, and b.) Site of Special Scientific Interest Conservation Objectives.

- Historic Environment Management Plan for Greenham – to be produced and agreed in Year 1.
- Padworth Common Management Plan – to be agreed in Year 1.
- Capital Works Programmes under this agreement.

Where the grazing system involves livestock managed and/or owned by others, e.g. commoners' livestock, there should be regular and timely liaison with livestock managers/owners.

Where grazing is not possible or grazing is not having the desired effect, other means of managing vegetation will be necessary.

Since all land under this agreement is Open Access Land, management of recreational pressures will be crucial to achieving the agreement objectives. This is particularly relevant where management is seeking to provide suitable habitat for ground-nesting birds such as Nightjar or wader species.

BAP lowland acid grassland indicator species are listed in the Farm Environment Plan handbook.

Greenham and Crookham Commons

Until management on Greenham and Crookham Commons can be informed by the Historic Environment Management Plan to be produced in Year 1, activities which cause disturbance to the ground or alteration of archaeological/historical features are not permitted and your Natural England contact should be informed immediately of declining condition and/or threats to the historic/archaeological features.

Padworth Common

It is preferable to introduce grazing on Padworth Common as soon as possible. Secretary of State approval will be required to fence the common and capital grants can be made available for fencing, gates etc.

HK7 - Restoration of species-rich, semi-natural grassland

Land parcels managed under this option:

Greenham and Crookham Commons

SU48646785 and SU51642866 - Runway grassland areas, Compartment 16

SU48652301 - Grassland at western end of runway (SSSI), Compartment 1B

SU51646985 - Grassland around the northern edge of Crookham Pools, Compartment 18

General description of the management required

This option is targeted at grasslands that are potentially rich in plant and associated animal life. They are often on `difficult` ground and may have suffered from management neglect or they may have been selected for agricultural improvement. The botanical diversity of such grassland may be enhanced by simply amending existing management practices. The option can also contribute to protecting valued landscapes and archaeology, and the promotion of good soil conditions.

This management is intended to benefit the following features:

- Species rich grassland
- Great Crested Newt
- Archaeological features

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don`ts

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- Follow the detailed objectives in the agreed management plans (see Additional Notes).
- Manage the sward by grazing with cattle and/or ponies and/or cutting to achieve a sward height of between 2cm and 10cm in October / November.
- Do not install new drainage or modify existing drainage systems unless agreed with your Natural England contact.
- Supplementary feeding should be confined to mineral blocks whenever possible.
- Control undesirable species such as injurious weeds so that by year 5, their cover is less than 5% of the area. Agree all methods of control with your Natural England contact.
- Ploughing, sub-surface cultivation and reseeding are not permitted. Chain harrowing or rolling are permitted except between 15 March and 15 July.
- Field operations and stocking must not damage the soil structure or cause heavy poaching. Take particular care when the land is waterlogged.
- To benefit Great Crested Newts the land within a 200m radius of a breeding pond must be managed extensively and no new barriers such as buildings, walls, tracks, or footpaths created. Potential hibernation sites such as rabbit burrows, log piles, rocky areas or woodland should be retained.
- To protect the archaeological/historical features identified in the Farm Environment Plans for all three commons, do not:

Place anything likely to cause ground disturbance on or near the features such as fences, feeders, water troughs.

Locate access routes on or near the features and if the feature is being damaged by the use of a PROW, consult the Highway Authority.

Allow the development of burrows.

Allow trees to prevent them being blown down.

Indicators of Success

Land designated SSSI

- All SSSI land should be in favourable or recovering condition (i.e. meeting the targets set out in the Conservation Objectives).
- Archaeological /historic features listed in the Historic Environment Record, Farm Environment Plan and in the Historic Management Plan have suffered no further degradation. The depth of soil covering the feature/s has been maintained.

Land not designated SSSI

- The Soil Phosphate Index should be 0 or 1.
- By year 5, at least 3 indicator species for BAP lowland acid grassland or other relevant BAP lowland grassland are occasional in the sward, or four indicators are present at lower frequency.
- By year 10, at least 1 indicator species* for BAP lowland acid grassland or other relevant BAP lowland grassland is frequent and another 3 indicator species at least occasional in the sward (* see Additional Notes).
- By year 10, cover of bare ground should be between 1% and 10%, distributed throughout the field in hoof prints or other small patches.
- Archaeological /historic features listed in the Historic Environment Record, Farm Environment Plan and in the Greenham and Crookham Common Historic Management Plan have suffered no further degradation. The depth of soil covering the feature/s has been maintained.

Additional notes

Management plans informing the restoration of grassland under this agreement include:

- Greenham and Crookham Commons Management Plan – to be agreed in Year 1 and to be in accordance with a.) the Historic Environment Management Plan to be produced in Year 1, and b.) Site of Special Scientific Interest Conservation Objectives.
- Historic Environment Management Plan for Greenham – to be produced and agreed in Year 1.
- Capital Works Programmes under this agreement.

Where the grazing system involves livestock managed and/or owned by others, e.g. commoners' livestock, there should be regular and timely liaison with livestock managers/owners.

Where grazing is not possible or grazing is not having the desired effect, other means of managing vegetation will be necessary.

Since all land under this agreement is Open Access Land, management of recreational pressures will be crucial to achieving the agreement objectives. This is particularly relevant where management is seeking to provide suitable habitat for ground-nesting birds such as Nightjar or wader species.

Until management on Greenham and Crookham Commons can be informed by the Historic Environment Management Plan to be produced in Year 1, activities which cause disturbance to the ground or alteration of archaeological/historical features are not permitted and your Natural England contact should be informed immediately of declining condition and/or threats to the historic/archaeological features.

BAP lowland grassland species indicators are listed in the Farm Environment Plan Handbook.

HO1 - Maintenance of lowland heathland

Land parcels managed under this option:

Greenham and Crookham Commons

SU49644022, SU49640760, SU49640917 and SU49643641 – Heathland between Alderbridge Gully and Ballshill and Handpost Gullies, Compartment 3B and 3E

SU50647747, SU49644170, SU49644490 and SU50648365 – Central Airbase Lozenges, Compartments 9 to 12

SU48646313 – Southwestern Heathland, Compartment 2A

SU51642785 – North Eastern Airbase, Compartment 13

SU50654110, SU50646888, SU50649689 and SU50650636 – Heathlands north of Burys Bank Road, Compartments 17B to D

SU48640565 and SU48643080 – Western heathland, Compartment 1C

SU48653916 and SU48652301 – Western end of runway, Compartment 1A and 1B

SU50641392 – Heathland near to Rangers buildings, Compartment 16

SU49637779 and SU50634487 – Heathland south of New Greenham Park, Compartment 4B and 5A

SU51647522 – South Eastern Airbase, Compartment 8B

SU51646335 – Eastern end of runway, Compartment 8A

SU52642937 – Crookham Common, Compartment 6A

Padworth Common

SU61648782, SU61648161 – North Common, Compartments 1 and 4

SU62641367 – South Common, Compartments 5 to 9

Wokefield Common

SU65661226 – Northwestern heathland

SU65666008 – Southeastern heathland

General description of the management required

This option is designed to encourage the appropriate management of existing lowland heathland sites in good condition. Such sites require active management input to retain their ecological value. Sensitive management, using a combination of grazing, cutting and removal, or burning will be required. Archaeological features will be protected by the continuation of an appropriate grazing regime and the prevention of scrub growth. Maintenance of lowland heathland will help to maintain and strengthen the vegetation mosaics characteristic of lowland landscapes.

This management is intended to benefit the following features:

- Lowland heathland – BAP habitat
- Uncommon birds – Nightjar, Woodlark, Dartford Warbler.
- Archaeological features

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don`ts

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- Follow the detailed objectives in the agreed management plans (see Additional Notes).
- Produce a balanced range and spread of dwarf shrub age classes by cutting and removing vegetation each year in accordance with agreed management plans. Such management will be a necessary supplement to grazing where the grazing regime is not achieving the desired structural diversity.
- Manage gorse in accordance with agreed management plans by coppicing and/or removal in selected stands, to ensure that vigour is maintained and the full range of age classes is represented and to manage gorse dominance where appropriate.
- Graze with cattle and/or ponies suitable for the conditions, to suppress scrub and grasses and maintain a structural mosaic in dwarf shrub stands. Grazing pressure exerted by wild mammals, e.g. rabbit and deer, needs to be taken into account.
- Ploughing or cultivation is permitted only for agreed areas of bare ground which are created specifically for biodiversity benefit, and where there is no risk to archaeological remains.
- Installing new drainage, or modifying existing drainage systems is not permitted unless agreed with your Natural England contact.
- All firebreaks must be maintained, or rotated, with new ones created and old ones abandoned.
- Do not apply fertilisers, organic manures or waste materials (including sewage sludge).
- Supplementary feeding should not take place within Greenham and Crookham Commons SSSI and outside the SSSI, should be confined to mineral blocks whenever possible.
- Control injurious weeds so that their cover is less than 5%. Control method to be agreed with your Natural England contact.
- Control trees/scrub in accordance with agreed management plans. There should be no increase in the extent of trees/scrub from the baseline established in 2008 and some scrub should be maintained.
- To protect the archaeological/historical features identified in the Historic Environment Record, Farm Environment Plans and in the Greenham and Crookham Common Historic Management Plan, do not:
Place anything likely to cause ground disturbance on or near the features such as fences, feeders, water troughs.
Locate access routes on or near the features and if the feature is being damaged by the use of a PROW, consult the Highway Authority.
Allow the development of burrows.
Allow trees to prevent them being blown down.

Indicators of Success

Heathland within Greenham and Crookham Commons SSSI

- All SSSI land should be in favourable or recovering condition (i.e. meeting the targets set out in the Conservation Objectives).
- There should be no declining trend in numbers of territories of Nightjar, Woodlark or Dartford Warbler (unless associated with trends being experienced at a wider landscape or national scale).
- Archaeological /historic features listed in the Historic Environment Record, Farm Environment Plan and in the Historic Management Plan have suffered no further degradation.
- Reduction in extent of Common Gorse on airbase lozenges in accordance with agreed management plan.

Heathland not designated SSSI

- Cover of dwarf shrubs such as Bell Heather, Ling Heather, Cross-leaved Heather, Dwarf Gorse should be between 25% and 95%, with at least two dwarf shrub species frequent.
- There should be a wide range of age classes of dwarf shrubs present. This should include between:
 - 10% to 60% cover of pioneer stage
 - 20% to 40% cover of building stage
 - 20% to 40% cover of mature stage
 - Less than 20% cover of degenerate stage
 - No more than 10% cover of dead dwarf shrubs.
- At least 3 desirable wildflower species such as Heath Bedstraw, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Heath Milkwort, Tormentil, Sheep's Sorrel, Common Dog-violet should be occasional throughout the heath/acid grassland mosaic.
- Cover of bare ground should be between 1% and 10%.
- Cover of Common Gorse should be between 2% and 10%.
- Cover of bracken should be under 5%.
- Cover of trees/scrub should be under 10%.
- Cover of bryophytes and lichens should be at least 10%.
- Archaeological /historic features listed in the Historic Environment Record and Farm Environment Plan have suffered no further degradation. The depth of soil covering the features has been maintained.
- There should be no declining trend in numbers of territories of Nightjar, Woodlark or Dartford Warbler (unless associated with trends being experienced at a wider landscape or national scale).

Additional notes

Management plans informing the maintenance of heathland under this agreement include:

- Greenham and Crookham Commons Management Plan – to be agreed in Year 1 and to be in accordance with a.) the Historic Environment Management Plan to be produced in Year 1, and b.) Site of Special Scientific Interest Conservation Objectives.
- Historic Environment Management Plan for Greenham – to be produced and agreed in Year 1.
- Wokefield Heathland Restoration Plan – to be produced and agreed in Year 1.
- Padworth Common Management Plan – to be agreed in Year 1.

- Capital Works Programmes under this agreement.

Where the grazing system involves livestock managed and/or owned by others, e.g. commoners' livestock, there should be regular and timely liaison with livestock managers/owners.

Where grazing is not possible or grazing is not having the desired effect, other means of managing vegetation will be necessary.

Occasional stands of moderately sparse bracken on the edge of the heathland habitat should be retained. This is particularly valuable for Nightjar where there is unsuitable dwarf shrub structure.

Since all land under this agreement is Open Access Land, management of recreational pressures will be crucial to achieving the agreement objectives. This is particularly relevant where management is seeking to provide suitable habitat for ground-nesting birds such as Nightjar or wader species.

Greenham and Crookham Commons

Until management on Greenham and Crookham Commons can be informed by the Historic Environment Management Plan to be produced in Year 1, activities which cause disturbance to the ground or alteration of archaeological/historical features are not permitted and your Natural England contact should be informed immediately of declining condition and/or threats to the historic/archaeological features.

Heathland on Greenham and Crookham Commons should be maintained to conserve and extend Nightjar, Dartford Warbler and Woodlark territories identified in 2008 (note that provision of bare ground for these species in the heathland should take into account the large resource available in the thinly vegetated gravel areas). Data collected through bird monitoring activities on the commons should be used to inform management.

On the southwest lozenge of Greenham and Crookham Commons SSSI, the heathland structure should be skewed towards the pioneer stage to ensure maintenance and spread of important lichen communities in this area.

On the lozenges of Greenham and Crookham Commons SSSI, gorse management is key to heathland maintenance. Management will involve diversification of the age/physical structure by coppicing and grazing by ponies and also a reduction in extent of gorse through stump treatment. The management strategy will seek to optimise the value of the gorse as a nectar source, shelter for livestock and wildlife, access management tool etc.

Padworth Common

It is preferable to introduce grazing on Padworth Common as soon as possible. Secretary of State approval will be required to fence the common and capital grants can be made available for fencing, gates etc.

HO2 - Restoration of heathland from neglected sites

Land parcels managed under this option:

Greenham and Crookham Commons

SU51642866 – Airbase runways, Compartment 16

SU51643110 – Southeastern heathland, Compartment 5C

SU48646785 – Western end of runway, Compartment 1B

Padworth Common

SU61648782, SU6164706, SU61648161, SU61646680 and SU61647882 – North Common, Compartments 1 to 4

Wokefield Common

SU65666008 – Southeastern heathland extension

General description of the management required

This option aims to encourage the restoration of lowland heathland on sites whose management has been neglected. Such sites are likely to have become degraded by scrub, bracken, invasive grasses or secondary woodland encroachment. Soil type, management history and location in relation to existing heathland sites will be significant factors in determining suitability. Significant site clearance and weed control may be needed, but it is expected that, following suitable treatment, heathland vegetation will re-establish without the need for seeding from external sources. Restoration of neglected sites will help to restore and strengthen the vegetation mosaics characteristic of lowland heathland, and thus enhance the integrity of the historic landscape character of the area.

This management is intended to benefit the following features:

- Lowland heathland – BAP habitat
- Uncommon birds – Nightjar, Woodlark, Dartford Warbler.

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don`ts

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- Follow the detailed objectives in the agreed management plans (see Additional Notes).
- In accordance with agreed management plans, remove areas of scrub, together with arisings, or burn on metal sheets and remove ash. Control unbrowsed regrowth with approved herbicide or by stump winching but do not carry out stump winching on archaeological features.
- Restore a balanced range of dwarf shrub age classes by cutting in accordance with agreed management plans.
- Control bracken according to agreed management plans and using methods appropriate to circumstance, i.e. avoid mechanical control methods on

archaeological features and avoid disturbance of ground-nesting birds.

Removal of compact litter mats may be necessary.

- Create bare ground in areas where no bare ground exists and/or where target species will benefit.
- Provide fire control measures.
- Graze with cattle and/or ponies suitable for the conditions, to suppress scrub and grasses and establish a structural mosaic in dwarf shrub stands. Adjust stocking density to ensure vegetation does not suppress heather seedlings or plants, avoids stock damage to heather seedlings and allows dwarf shrubs to establish and build. Grazing pressure exerted by wild mammals, e.g. rabbit and deer, needs to be taken into account.
- Where livestock are not available, control vegetation structure and composition by cutting.
- After successful establishment, operations involving ploughing, sub-surface cultivation, reseeding, installation of new drainage or modification of existing drainage systems are not permitted unless agreed with your Natural England contact.
- Do not apply fertilisers, organic manures or waste materials (including sewage sludge).
- Supplementary feeding should not take place within Greenham and Crookham Commons SSSI and outside the SSSI, should be confined to mineral blocks whenever possible.
- Control injurious weeds so that their cover is less than 5%. Control method to be agreed with your Natural England contact.
- Control trees/scrub in accordance with agreed management plans to restore secondary woodland/scrub to heathland.
- To protect the archaeological/historical features identified in the Farm Environment Plans for all three commons, do not:
Place anything likely to cause ground disturbance on or near the features such as fences, feeders, water troughs.
Locate access routes on or near the features and if the feature is being damaged by the use of a PROW, consult the Highway Authority.
Allow the development of burrows.
Allow trees to prevent them being blown down.

Indicators of Success

- By year 5, cover of dwarf shrubs such as Bell Heather, Ling Heather, Cross leaved Heather, Bilberry and Dwarf Gorse should be at least 10%.
- By year 10 cover of dwarf shrubs should be between 25% and 95%, with at least 2 species frequent.
- By year 5, there should be (for heathland patches over 0.5ha):
At least 10% cover of pioneer stage.
At least 10% cover of building stage and/or no more than 20% cover of dead dwarf shrubs.
- By year 5, cover of Common Gorse should be between 2% and 10%.
- By year 5, cover of bracken should be under 5%.
- By year 5, cover of scrub/trees should be under 10%.
- By year 10, cover of bare ground should be between 1% and 10%.
- By year 5, at least 2 desirable wildflower species such as Heath Bedstraw, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Heath Milkwort, Tormentil, Sheep's Sorrel, Common Dog-violet should be occasional.

- By year 10, cover of bryophytes and lichens should be at least 10%.
- Archaeological /historic features listed in the HER and FEP and identified in the Greenham Common Historic Management Plan have suffered no further degradation. The depth of soil covering the features has been maintained.

Additional notes

Management plans informing the maintenance of heathland under this agreement include:

- Greenham and Crookham Commons Management Plan – to be agreed in Year 1 and to be in accordance with a.) the Historic Environment Management Plan to be produced in Year 1, and b.) Site of Special Scientific Interest Conservation Objectives.
- Wokefield Heathland Implementation Plan – to be produced and agreed in Year 1.
- Padworth Common Management Plan – agreed.
- Capital Works Programmes under this agreement.

Where the grazing system involves livestock managed and/or owned by others, e.g. commoners' livestock, there should be regular and timely liaison with livestock managers/owners.

Since all land under this agreement is Open Access Land, management of recreational pressures will be crucial to achieving the agreement objectives. This is particularly relevant where management is seeking to provide suitable habitat for ground-nesting birds such as Nightjar or wader species.

Occasional stands of moderately sparse bracken on the edge of the heathland habitat should be retained. This is particularly valuable for Nightjar where there is unsuitable dwarf shrub structure.

Where grazing is not possible or grazing is not having the desired effect, other means of managing vegetation will be necessary.

Greenham and Crookham Common

Until management on Greenham and Crookham Commons can be informed by the Historic Environment Management Plan to be produced in Year 1, activities which cause disturbance to the ground or alteration of archaeological/historical features is not permitted.

Heathland on Greenham and Crookham Commons should be restored to conserve and extend Nightjar, Dartford Warbler and Woodlark territories identified in 2008 (note that provision of bare ground for these species in the heathland should take into account the large resource available in the thinly vegetated gravel areas). Data collected through bird monitoring activities on the commons should be used to inform management.

Padworth Common

It is preferable to introduce grazing on Padworth Common as soon as possible. Secretary of State approval will be required to fence the common and capital grants

can be made available for fencing, gates etc.

Wokefield Common

Clearance of secondary woodland will be as agreed with the landowner.

HO3 - Restoration of forestry areas to lowland heathland

Land parcels managed under this option:

Padworth Common

SU61647254 and SU61648161 – North Common plantation areas, Compartments 3 and 4.

General description of the management required

This option aims to encourage the restoration of lowland heathland on existing or previously forested land. It is most likely to apply to conifer plantations which show evidence of heathland vegetation in forest rides or other open areas. Soil type, management history and location in relation to existing heathland sites will be significant factors in determining suitability. Significant site clearance and weed control may be needed, but it is expected that, following suitable treatment, heathland vegetation will re-establish without the need for seeding from external sources. Clear-felling forestry and the reintroduction of traditional grazing will restore areas of heathland, along with its associated wildlife, and will strengthen the vegetation mosaics characteristic of lowland landscapes.

This management is intended to benefit the following features:

- Lowland heathland – BAP habitat
- Uncommon birds – Nightjar, Woodlark and Dartford Warbler.

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don'ts

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- Follow the detailed objectives in the agreed management plans (see Additional Notes).
- Clear-fell trees and either remove all arisings from site, or burn safely on site taking care to prevent spread of fire. Cut stumps flush to ground. Adopt best forestry practice when clearing areas, by following the Forestry Commission's 'Forest and Water' Guidelines. Seek guidance from the County Archaeologist and your Natural England contact prior to any ground preparation works.
- Investigate the depth of accumulated organic litter. Remove the litter where it is greater than 5cm, but ensure that the surface of the mineral soil receives minimal damage. Where the litter is less than 5cm, disturb the litter layer to stimulate germination of the seed bank. Seek guidance from the County Archaeologist and your Natural England contact prior to any ground preparation works.
- Provide fire control measures as agreed with your Natural England contact, including fire breaks and a fire plan.
- Once all clearance operations are complete, seek to introduce grazing with cattle and/or ponies suitable for the conditions, to control any scrub/tree regeneration, bracken etc. Adjust stocking density to ensure that vegetation does not suppress heather seedlings, but avoids damage to them. Where livestock are not available, remove competing weeds by cutting.

- After successful establishment, operations involving ploughing, sub-surface cultivation, reseeding, installation of new drainage or modification of existing drainage systems are not permitted unless agreed with your Natural England contact.
- Do not apply fertilisers, organic manures or waste materials (including sewage sludge).
- Supplementary feeding should be confined to mineral blocks.
- Control injurious weeds so that by year 5 their cover is less than 5%. Agree control methods with your Natural England contact.
- Control trees / scrub regeneration.

Indicators of Success

- By year 5, cover of dwarf shrubs such as Bell Heather, Ling Heather, Cross-leaved Heather, Bilberry, Dwarf Gorse should be at least 10%.
- By year 10 cover of dwarf shrubs should be between 25% and 90%.
- By year 10, cover of Common Gorse should be between 2% and 10%.
- By year 10, cover of bare ground should be between 1% and 10%.
- Archaeological /historic features listed in the HER and FEP have suffered no further degradation. The depth of soil covering the features has been maintained.
- By year 5, tree/scrub cover is less than 25%.
- By year 10, tree/scrub cover is less than 15%.
- By year 5, bracken is under 5%.

Additional notes

Management plans informing the restoration of heathland on Padworth Common are:

- Padworth Common Management Plan – to be agreed in year 1.
- HLS Capital Works Programme.

Public consultation and Forestry Commission felling licenses will be necessary prior to felling.

It is preferable to introduce grazing on Padworth Common as soon as possible. Secretary of State approval will be required to fence the common and capital grants can be made available for fencing, gates etc.

Where grazing is not possible or grazing is not having the desired effect, other means of managing vegetation will be necessary.

Since land under this agreement is Open Access Land, management of recreational pressures will be crucial to achieving the agreement objectives. This is particularly relevant where management is seeking to provide suitable habitat for ground-nesting birds such as Nightjar or wader species.

In order to protect the archaeological interest, guidance should be sought from the County Archaeologist and your Natural England contact prior to any felling or ground preparation works.

HR2 - Supplement for native breeds at risk

Land parcels managed under this option:

Greenham and Crookham Commons

SU49644490, SU49644170, SU50647747 and SU50648365 – Central Airbase
Lozenges, Compartments 9 to 12

General description of the management required

This supplement aims to encourage the use of appropriate native breeds of livestock (from the approved list and with reference to the guidance) for conservation grazing. Evidence suggests that native livestock breeds may have attributes that are better suited to harsh climatic conditions, to difficult terrain, to grazing semi-natural vegetation and to achieving conservation objectives. This supplement is also aimed at contributing towards the genetic conservation of native breeds at risk, when linked with ES scheme primary objectives.

This management is intended to benefit the following features:

- Lowland heathland - BAP habitat

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don'ts

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- Grazing will be delivered by pedigree-registered 'native breeds at risk' livestock from the approved list and/or their genetically-traceable purebred offspring.

Indicators of Success

- Size of pedigree-registered herd, including their genetically-traceable purebred offspring, on the holding of Exmoor ponies must be maintained at 9 or, where possible, increased.
- Evidence that ponies are browsing gorse.

Additional notes

This supplement seeks to support the agreement holder in a.) managing the gorse on the airbase lozenges of Greenham and Crookham Commons by grazing Exmoor ponies and b.) breeding and building up the herd on the common. Commoners' livestock may graze alongside the agreement holder's Exmoor ponies but this agreement provides financial support only to the agreement holder's animals.

This supplement applies to 21ha of gorse identified by a Natural England survey of the airbase lozenges and runways in 2008. The gorse cover is approximately distributed on the lozenges as follows: 12ha on the southwest lozenge, 6ha on the northwest, 2ha on the northeast and 1ha on the southeast. Future changes in number of ponies, extent of gorse etc may result in re-negotiation of the supplement.

HR5 - Bracken control supplement

Land parcels managed under this option:

Padworth Common

SU62641367 – South Common

SU61648782, SU61648161 – North Common, Compartment 1 and 4

General description of the management required

This option is aimed at controlling the spread, or removing existing stands, of bracken where it is desirable to do so. This is usually for maintaining or restoring biodiversity value or protecting archaeological sites. Bracken management can also help to maintain and conserve the diverse vegetation mosaic characteristic of local landscapes.

This management is intended to benefit the following features:

- Lowland heathland - BAP habitat

Management Prescriptions; the dos and don'ts

The following rules apply across the whole area being managed under this option.

- Control Bracken in accordance with agreed management plans (see Additional Notes).
- Do not carry out chemical control of bracken where spray drift may settle on watercourses or where important fern species or susceptible communities are present.
- Do not undertake any chemical control in water catchment areas without the necessary prior consent from the Environment Agency.
- The area treated in each year should be small enough for the agreement holder to be able to carry out any necessary follow-up control using the resources available to them.
- Temporary grazing control techniques should be implemented to protect vegetation regeneration where necessary.
- Any re-infestation during the term of the agreement should be effectively controlled.

Indicators of Success

- By year 5, cover of bracken should be between 0% and 5%.

Additional notes

Management plans informing the control of bracken under this agreement include:

- Padworth Common Management Plan – to be agreed in Year 1.
- Capital Works Programmes under this agreement.

Some forms of mechanical control present a risk to archaeological features and should not be undertaken without consultation with your Natural England contact.