

Part 5

CAPITAL WORKS SPECIFICATIONS

CHEMICAL BRACKEN CONTROL

General

Bracken control must have a minimal adverse impact on other environmental interests on the site. In general chemical control causes less disturbance to archaeological sites, ground nesting birds and invertebrates than mechanical control, but it will kill other species of fern and may be more damaging to other plants around the site.

A management plan is required before bracken control is grant aided. The plan must identify the environmental benefits of carrying out the work as well as any risks to sites of archaeological or ecological importance, soil erosion and impacts on the landscape (short and long term). The management plan should identify areas to be controlled, the most appropriate control method to be used and details of follow up treatments to control regrowth. The management plan must be agreed with your Natural England contact before work starts. The work must be carried out in accordance with the agreed plan.

The management plans detailing the method of bracken control are:

Padworth Common Management Plan – to be agreed in Year 1.

Wokefield Heathland Management Plan – to be produced and agreed in Year 1.

Chemical Bracken Control

All applications of herbicides must be in accordance with current legislation and relevant codes of practice. You should ensure any relevant consents are gained before carrying out the work e.g. consent from the Environment Agency may be required to spray near a watercourse.

Use asulam or glyphosate to control bracken, providing this is within the approval for the product at the time of application.

Asulam is the preferred herbicide as it is more selective than glyphosate and can be applied by aerial spraying (unless subject to a change in approval). Care must be taken when using asulam, particularly on or near sensitive sites, as it can check the growth of other plants including some native grasses, and will kill other fern species.

Glyphosate may only be used on areas of very dense bracken with no underlying vegetation, or in a height selective applicator (i.e. weed wiper), or for spot-treatment of regrowth.

Spraying must be carried out when the fronds are fully expanded but not senescent, usually between mid-July and late September, depending on altitude. You must not use vehicles that could cause damage to wet areas, sites of archaeological or ecological value, or disturb ground nesting birds where they are known to be present.

All herbicide application must be done in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and must follow the guidelines on bracken control produced by Natural England and the Environment Agency. Any areas missed must be sprayed in the following year. Spot treatment of surviving fronds must take place after two years using ground-based methods.

Site re-vegetation

Re-vegetate all control sites by encouraging natural regeneration. As the site regenerates any bracken regrowth or injurious weeds must be controlled.

Additional Notes

The Capital Works Plan and Payments table in Part 4 of your agreement shows the amount of work to be carried out during the lifetime of the plan. The work must be carried out in the location(s) shown on the agreement map in Part 7. The quantity of work you must carry out and/or the year has been specified in the following locations:

Location reference	Quantity (no./ area / length)	Notes
SU61648161	0.8ha	Padworth Common – North Common, Compartment 4. Control may be needed following clearance of Scots Pine plantation in year 1. Control to be carried out in Year 2.
SU61648782	0.6ha	Padworth Common – North Common, Compartment 2. Control to be carried out in Year 2.
SU61641367	2 ha	Padworth Common – South Common. Control to be carried out in Year 2.
SU65666008	0.5ha	Wokefield Common – southeastern heathland extension area. Control may be needed following clearance of secondary woodland in Year 1. Control to be carried out in Year 2.

CHEMICAL BRACKEN CONTROL

Chemical Bracken Control Base Payment

Refer to guidance notes on pages 1 and 2 for information about appropriate bracken control.

HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURE PROTECTIO

Historic Environment Management Plan

A brief for the production of an Historic Environment Management Plan will be prepared in consultation with historic environment advisors in Natural England and West Berkshire council during the early part of Year 1. The Plan must be prepared following this brief and completed by no later than the end of Year 1.

The aim of this Plan is to inform management of Greenham and Crookham Commons so that a.) the historical interest can be conserved and enhanced, and b.) potential conflicts with other management objectives, such as nature conservation objectives, can be minimised.

The Plan's management recommendations will be incorporated into the various elements of the Higher Level Stewardship management agreement as appropriate.

The Plan will include, in general terms:

- 1.) A survey and evaluation of the existing historic environment features of Greenham and Crookham Commons, building upon the information gathered by the HLS Farm Environment Plan.
- 2.) Management recommendations as to how to conserve and enhance features, particularly in relation to what can be delivered through HLS and how potential conflicts with other management objectives might be minimised.

The Capital Works Plan and Payments table in Part 4 of your agreement shows the amount of work to be carried out during the lifetime of the plan. The work must be carried out in the location(s) shown on the agreement map in Part 7. The quantity of work you must carry out and/or the year has been specified in the following locations:

Location reference	Quantity (no./ area / length)	Notes
Greenham and Crookham Commons	1	To be confirmed: a detailed brief for a Historic Environment Management Plan will be agreed in the early part of Year 1 and the Plan will be completed by the end of Year 1.

MANAGEMENT PLAN PREPARATION

- 1. Padworth Common and Wokefield Common: Pond Management Plan**
- 2. Greenham and Crookham Commons: Pond Management Plan**

Two management plans must be prepared following the briefs given below. The plans should be submitted to your Natural England contact by **28 February 2009**. Any work identified in the management plans must not be started until it has been agreed with your Natural England contact.

The main aim of these plans is to provide management recommendations that, in particular, could be delivered by HLS. The plans should identify the ecological and historical value of each pond (i.e. presence of notable species such as Starfruit or Brilliant Emerald, Historic Environment Records such as those associated with Pullen's Pond) and advise how each pond should be managed to conserve or enhance the identified interest. Targeted ecological/historical surveys will be carried out where there is a lack of up-to-date information, but otherwise existing survey reports and other information will be used.

- Name of agreement holder, holding, HLS agreement reference and the land to which the Plan relates. The pond plans are intended to cover all ponds that could benefit from management under an HLS agreement.
- Dates of commencement, review and expiry. The plan should include an outline of the management aims and objectives, and a proposed schedule of works.
- Site description, including a justification for why an Implementation Plan was required.
- All environmental features within the Plan area should be identified and their relevance to the HLS priorities recorded.
- Any management constraints applying to the environmental features should be identified and taken into account.
- Overall aim and management priorities should be identified and justified.
- Actions to achieve management aim and priorities.
- Maps should be used to identify current condition, management actions and target condition.
- The pond plan should consist of a detailed survey of the ponds including a species list (to include botanical aquatic, semi-aquatic and marginal vegetation as well as an assessment of the aquatic invertebrate and any amphibians present) (Detailed information such as species lists should be annexed)

- Factors to take into account: a consideration of how much, if any, intervention is required in the form of litter/silt removal; the existing wildlife value; the need and justification for removal of tall vegetation, trees and scrub from in or around the pond, the creation of new habitats such as shallow grassy areas for invertebrates, and plans for the planting of banks, shallow areas in the draw-down zone and management of any existing trees.
- Under no circumstances must fish be introduced.

3. Wokefield Common: Heathland Management Plan

The management plan must be prepared following the brief given below. The plan should be submitted to your Natural England contact by **28 February 2009**. Any work identified in the management plan must not be started until it has been agreed with your Natural England contact, **with the exception of areas to be worked on in the first year of your agreement, in advance of completion of the plan.**

The main aim of the plan is to help set out a schedule for the Wokefield Common heathland management and restoration works, as it is envisaged the area to be managed will increase over the course of the agreement. An outline of the locations and total area of heathland to be restored by the end of the ten years of the agreement has already been produced. The management plan should detail the management year by year and be agreed by the landowner.

- Name of agreement holder, holding, HLS agreement reference and the land to which the Plan relates. The heathland plan is intended to cover all heathland restoration and management areas at Wokefield Common.
- Dates of commencement, review and expiry. The plan should include an outline of the management aims and objectives, and a proposed schedule of works.
- Site description, including a justification for why an Implementation Plan was required.
- All environmental features within the Plan area should be identified and their relevance to the HLS priorities recorded.
- Any management constraints applying to the environmental features should be identified and taken into account.
- Overall aim and management priorities should be identified and justified.
- Actions to achieve management aim and priorities.
- Maps should be used to identify current condition, management actions and target condition.

SCRUB MANAGEMENT

General

For the purposes of this grant, scrub means any woody shrubs including European gorse, bramble and young trees. Dwarf and Western gorse are integral components of heathland and should not be included in this item.

Significant scrub clearance work must be in accordance with an agreed management plan (see Additional Notes).

You must ensure any relevant consents are obtained before carrying out the work e.g. consent from English Heritage for work on a Scheduled Monument and the Natural England SSSI specialist for work in a SSSI.

Timing

Work must be done between 1 October and 28 February, outside the bird-nesting season.

Scrub control

Techniques for removing scrub include flailing, using a chain saw and clearing some species (e.g. birch or pine) by hand. Controlling scrub by burning is not acceptable unless it is specifically agreed with your Natural England contact.

Cut scrub down to ground level without disturbing the roots and leaving no protruding stems. Care must be taken to avoid uprooting adjacent grassland or heathland plants. Stumps must not be removed unless specifically agreed with your Natural England contact. In exceptional circumstances and where agreed with your Natural England contact, it may be necessary to remove large stumps using mechanical equipment. Under no circumstances is scrub burning or stump removal to be undertaken on sites of archaeological interest.

Controlling scrub regrowth

Regrowth on Wokefield Common should be controlled for the duration of the agreement to ensure scrub reduction or eradication.

In cases where herbicides are applied to control regrowth you must observe the requirements of current legislation. You must also refer to the manufacturer's guidance on application rates and safety requirements. Herbicides must be applied with extreme care to ensure the grassland or heath vegetation is not affected.

On Padworth Common, scalloping of woodland edges and scrub patches should be undertaken in accordance with the agreed management plan to diversify the age range and structural diversity and create a diverse edge habitat.

Disposal of cut material

Dispose of cut material in accordance with agreed management plans. The creation of a limited number of habitat piles is appropriate in some places. Bonfire sites must be far enough away from trees to avoid causing damage and at least 10m from the crown of any tree. Burning sites and piles of wood must not be on patches of ground where they could damage species rich grassland, anthills or other ecological or archaeological features. The area used for burning must be agreed in advance with your Natural England contact and cleaned up as soon as possible after burning.

Burning on a metal sheet reduces damage to the soil and makes it easier to remove ash from the site. As the site regenerates the growth of nettle, thistle, dock, ragwort and other weed species must be controlled.

Additional notes

The agreed management plans informing scrub management carried out under this Capital Item are:

- Padworth Management Plan – to be agreed in Year 1.
- Wokefield Heathland Restoration Plan – to be produced and agreed in Year 1.
- Capital Works Programme

Details of scrub clearance on Wokefield Common in Year 1 has been agreed with the landowner and with Natural England. Further clearance to be carried out on Wokefield Common will be informed by the Wokefield Heathland Restoration Plan and this agreement will be amended to reflect this plan.

The Capital Works Plan and Payments table in Part 4 of your agreement shows the amount of work to be carried out during the lifetime of the plan. The work must be carried out in the location(s) shown on the agreement map in Part 7. The quantity of work you must carry out and/or the year has been specified in the following locations:

Location reference	Quantity (no./ area / length)	Notes
SU65666008	0.5ha	Wokefield Common – Southeastern heathland extension. Clearance of secondary woodland and scrub necessary to restore heathland. Since the aim is to remove the scrub, control of re-growth will be necessary. This agreement provides a payment rate for clearance of scrub >75% cover, plus a base payment. Clearance to be carried out in year 1.
SU62641367	1ha	Padworth Common – South Common. Scalloping of woodland edges and scrub patches as per agreed management plan.

SCRUB MANAGEMENT

Scrub Management Base Payment

Refer to information on pages 7 and 8 for further details about scrub management.

TREE REMOVAL

Trees should be felled and cleared as agreed with your Natural England contact.

You should ensure any relevant consents are gained before carrying out the work e.g. Felling licences from the Forestry Commission or consent relating to Tree Preservation Orders from the Local Authority.

Disposal of Felled Material

Felled trees are to be removed from site. In certain circumstances and where agreed with your Natural England contact, some wood may be left stacked on site for wildlife habitat.

Thin branches and twigs must be removed from site or burnt at agreed locations. Bonfire sites must be far enough away from any remaining trees to avoid causing damage and at least 10m from the crown of any tree. Burning must not take place on areas of species rich grassland, anthills or other ecological or archaeological features. Burning on a metal sheet reduces damage to the soil and makes it easier to remove ash from the site. The area must be cleaned up as soon as possible after burning. As the site regenerates the growth of nettle, thistle, dock, ragwort and other weed species must be controlled.

The agreed management plan detailing the tree clearance work is:

- Padworth Common Management Plan – to be agreed in Year 1.

Additional Requirements

The Capital Works Plan and Payments table in Part 4 of your agreement shows the amount of work to be carried out during the lifetime of the plan. The work must be carried out in the location(s) shown on the agreement map in Part 7. The quantity of work you must carry out and/or the year has been specified in the following locations:

Location reference	Quantity (no./ area / length)	Notes
SU61647254 SU61648161	46m ³	Scots Pine plantation on Padworth Common -North Common to be cleared to allow restoration of heathland. Volume of timber to be removed has been calculated by the Forestry Commission using approximate figures provided by the agreement holder. Clearance planned for Year 1.