Option Name:	**Heather regeneration - burning**

Option Code:	**HRB**

Option Payment:	Year 1: £ 142.30 per ha

Option Aim(s):	To create firebreaks or a patchwork with a range of heather ages.

Scheme Applicability:	Wider – EFS(W)		Higher – EFS(H)	✓	Group – EFS(G)	✓
This option is made up of:	Annual Management requirements		NPI (capital items)		✓	
This option is:	Permanent		Rotational	✓		

Option Description and Outcome:	This non-productive investment (referred to as capital works) Option will remove old, dead material by controlled burning and can therefore be used to create firebreaks. It can also regenerate heather and encourages new growth from the plant base and the underlying seed bank. The Option can create a moorland patchwork with a range of heather ages which encourages utilisation by livestock on the whole area, benefits wildlife including red grouse and contributes to mitigation of climate change. This option can only be used in very limited circumstances.
Choice of site:	'Heather regeneration - controlled burning' may only be carried out in EFS(H) and EFS(G). The need for 'Heather regeneration – controlled burning' will be specified in the site specific Remedial Management Plan (ssRMP). The area and location of the heather regeneration through controlled burning will be detailed on a ssRMP map.
Essential capital works:	'Heather regeneration - controlled burning' is considered as capital works.
Additional optional capital works available for this Option:	None
Area Permitted:	**Minimum** 0.01 ha **Maximum** Not Applicable*

* DAERA reserves the right to limit a Higher Level agreement value where it considers appropriate to ensure value for money.

Requirements and Controls:

Code	Non-productive investment requirements (capital works)	Control type[1]		
		Admin	CwRS	OTSC
HRB1C	Complete all 'Heather regeneration - controlled burning' in the first year of the EFS(H) or EFS(G) agreement.			✓
HRB2C	Complete the claimed area of 'Heather regeneration - controlled burning' in the field(s) where the works have been approved.	✓		✓
HRB3C	Keep field records as required in the site specific Remedial Management Plan.	✓		✓

[1] The possible control types for each requirement may be:
'Admin' – administrative checks, 'CwRS' – Control with Remote Sensing, 'OTSC' – On-the-Spot Check

Further Advice:

You are advised to contact NI Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) before the burn to agree a wildfire risk management plan.

Observe all relevant Health and Safety guidelines when operating machinery or using hand tools when completing works under this Option. For further information on Health and Safety guidelines, please check the attached link to the Health and Safety Executive NI: http://www.hseni.gov.uk/guidance/industries/agriculture-3-column.htm

Firebreaks must be present to ensure a controlled burn. These can either be natural features such as gullies, wet strips or flushes, farm tracks or rock outcrops. If no natural firebreaks exist, artificial ones should be created. All firebreaks should cut across the line of the proposed fire. Firebreaks should be at least 6 m wide and preferably 10 m wide. You must ensure that all fires are properly put out before leaving the site.

Remember that under Cross-Compliance Good Agricultural and Environment Condition (GAEC) 5 the burning of heather, gorse, whin or fern between 15 April and 31 August is not permitted to prevent erosion and to protect ground nesting birds.

Burning should only take place in suitable weather conditions which occur, on average, on only ten days each year. Light winds are often variable in strength and direction, which make control of the burn difficult. Always aim to burn when the breeze is blowing downhill if possible.

Fires should be kept to around 30 m wide and not allowed to spread to more than 50 m wide and can be as long as is practical. Normally, a burning team should consist of at least 5 - 6 competent people. A realistic target would be five burns per day each covering 0.4 - 0.8 ha (max 4 ha.).

If the burn has been carried out properly, heather stems will regenerate both from the plant base and the underlying seed bank. These young tender shoots will invariably attract sheep and, if overgrazing results, the heather may be grazed out. This can be avoided if the burning programme is spread over the whole moor rather than concentrating it in one area. If the regenerated heather is at a risk from overgrazing, some form of temporary fencing, for example electric fencing, should be considered.