

MANAGEMENT OF LINESIDE VEGETATION

SECTION 255

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF LINESIDE VEGETATION

Clearance of cess strip

- 1 On each side of the tracks, a cess strip shall be cleared of all woody vegetation to permit such land to be managed by mechanical flailing.

Where practicable, the cess strip shall be 5.0 metres wide measured from the nearest rail on which trains may pass. The minimum width of the cess strip appropriate to line speed shall be in accordance Table 255/I.

Table 255/I	
Line Speed (mph)	Width of cess measured from nearest line on which trains may pass (metres)
< 100	2.10
101 - 125	2.80
> 125	3.60

(255.001)

Management plan

- 2 The management of lineside vegetation in the verge shall be carried out in accordance with a Management Plan determined by the Contractor following consultation with the Zonal Railtrack Environmental Manager, and shall be agreed with the Employer's Representative.

The Management Plan shall include a planned programme of work to provide a co-ordinated systematic approach to vegetation management in accordance with the requirements of this Section of the Specification, and shall where practicable accord with the recommendations in Appendix 255A. In particular, the Management Plan shall include for:

- (i) identification and removal of trees liable to fall in high winds or otherwise infringe the Standard clearance as defined in Railway Group Standard GC/RT5204, or touch a.c. electrification overhead line equipment,
- (ii) removal of lineside vegetation liable to obscure signals or reduce sighting distances for lookouts, drivers, level crossing users etc,
- (iii) identification and removal or coppicing of trees liable to produce a heavy leaf fall,
- (iv) elimination of fire hazards particularly to signalling equipment and cables arising from lineside vegetation,

- (v) ensuring surface cracking and movement on embankments and cuttings due to lineside vegetation is minimised,
- (vi) ensuring the function of ditches and drainage is not affected by lineside vegetation.

The Management Plan shall identify Contractor's personnel with particular responsibilities, and provide details of their training, experience and competence.

Following identification of areas requiring action, the work shall be programmed using an order of priority based on the factors:

- (i) safety and railway operational requirements,
- (ii) nature conservation,
- (iii) landscape amenity and aesthetics.

Priority shall be given to locations with recorded heavy leaf fall, and to locations with potentially hazardous trees.

The Management Plan shall be reviewed not less than annually, and any changes considered necessary by the Contractor shall be agreed with the Employer's Representative.

A record of actual work carried out shall be maintained for audit purposes. The record shall include:

- (i) details of trees pollarded or coppiced and date when repollarding or coppicing will need to be repeated,
- (ii) details of controlled burning, and details of Sites registered for burning by the Contractor.

(255.002)

Prevention of heavy leaf fall

- 3** Further to Clause 255.002, lineside vegetation shall be inspected to determine a priority for action to be taken where trees are liable to heavy leaf fall.

Areas shall be categorised for sections of each quarter mile length of track as follows:

1. No trees or shrubs.
2. Shrubs with gaps between them.
3. Half grown trees and shrubs with some gaps between them.
4. Short lengths of fully grown trees with branches overhanging the tracks in places.
5. Extensive lengths of trees with branches overhanging the tracks.

The Management Plan shall include for the prioritised removal, coppicing where appropriate, of trees liable to heavy leaf fall as listed in Appendix 255C, in areas categorised 4 or 5.

Trees of species liable to heavy leaf fall growing adjacent to Railtrack owned land shall have the removal of their overhanging branches included in the Management Plan, subject to the agreement of the neighbours on whose land the tree is growing, and that such removal does not leave the tree unstable.

Within each category priority shall be given to track circuited lines and lengths of track where trains regularly accelerate or brake.
(255.003)

**Good
neighbourliness**

4 Further to Clause 255.002, the management of lineside vegetation shall ensure that:

- (i) vegetation does not provide a screen which would encourage trespass or vandalism, and where practicable acts as a deterrent to trespass,
- (ii) scrub cover for rabbits that are damaging farm crops is reduced so that access can be gained to their warrens for their eradication,
- (iii) noxious weeds as specified in the Weeds Act 1959 such as spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broad leaved dock and ragwort are removed,
- (iv) the growth of lineside vegetation does not adversely affect adjacent property.

Where work is proposed to be carried out in statutory designated Sites (SSSIs, Conservation Areas, tree preservation orders etc), the appropriate Authority shall be notified. Details of designated Sites are listed in Clause 255.013.

Weeds subject to nuisance legislation and diseased vegetation injurious to crops and orchards such as scrub harbouring infestations of the brown tailed moth shall be controlled.

Trees, scrub or weed shall be cleared as necessary, where complaints from adjacent property owners are found by the Employer's Representative to be justified.

When carrying out tree clearance works next to residential or public land, the last line of trees and shrubs inside the boundary of Railtrack premises shall be retained, or the screening otherwise maintained. Pollarding shall be considered for the provision of high screening where the fence line is close to the railway.
(255.004)

**Conservation of
wildlife**

5 The management of lineside vegetation shall ensure that:

- (i) healthy trees and shrubs, wherever possible, are retained to provide a food source and cover for birds,

- (ii) areas of fine grassland with a wide range of flora retain their significance and are not invaded by scrub or brambles,
- (iii) scrub, where appropriate, is retained to provide cover for small mammals and birds.

Work likely to affect nesting birds shall not be carried out during the nesting period.

(255.005)

Preservation of landscape

6 The management of lineside vegetation shall ensure that:

- (i) attractive views from trains are kept open on passenger lines,
- (ii) woodlands and trees, where possible, are managed so as to maintain and provide continuing features in the landscape,
- (iii) attractive, rare or unusual areas of vegetation, are retained,
- (iv) open areas, which result from the removal of over-mature trees, and which occur as the result of development work, are replanted with slow growing species.

(255.006)

Requirements for the management of trees

7 Trees shall not be planted to stabilise cuttings or embankments and the areas of cuttings covered by trees shall not increase.

On clay soils no additional trees shall be planted within 30 metres of buildings or structures.

Trees that are to have work carried out shall be marked on Site to a marking system agreed with the Employer's Representative. Red paint shall not be used for such marking.

Trees on clay soils shall be identified either for pollarding to reduce water demand, or removal, subject to any resultant clay heave not affecting adjacent embankments, cuttings or structures and the Employer's Representative shall be advised accordingly.

Trees on embankments may be allowed to grow where benefit to the local landscape is provided, and no hazard to the operation of the railway or slope instability will be caused. Trees on embankments shall not cause shrinkage or cracking due to moisture extraction.

(255.007)

Inspection for unsafe trees

8 Inspection of trees on the lineside shall be carried out at a frequency agreed with the Employer's Representative, in order to identify trees which are unsafe.

Trees shall be examined for:

- (i) signs of disease or ill-health such as fungus growing on the trunk, cavities in the trunk, bark falling off, dying twigs or branches in the crown, discoloured leaves,

- (ii) signs of instability, such as tall, thin trees leaning over at an angle, tree roots pulling out of the ground, recently fallen branches.

Trees shall be inspected a minimum of twice a year, and following any severe gale or storm. Trees identified as unsafe shall be inspected weekly until remedial works have been carried out.

Records of inspection shall be maintained by the Contractor for audit purposes.

The Employer's Representative shall be advised of the location and other relevant details of all diseased or unstable trees.

Trees considered liable to affect the safety or operation of the Railway shall be removed or otherwise made safe at the earliest practical opportunity.

Diseased trees shall be monitored, and removal arranged during planned maintenance in accordance with the Management Plan.

(255.008)

**Vegetation
management -
chemical methods**

- 9** Herbicides shall be used and applied in accordance with Section 256: Weedkilling.

(255.009)

**Vegetation
management -
mechanical
methods**

- 10** Flailing may be used for the management of lineside vegetation below 70 mm diameter on the verge or cess. Flails may be on-track, road/rail or road only.

Flail equipment shall be used with a safe system of work in accordance with Railway Group Standard GC/OG0022.

Chain saws, clearing saws and strimmers shall comply with and shall be used with a safe system of work in accordance with Railway Group Standard GC/OG0011.

Strimming shall be used in areas less than 300 m².

(255.010)

**Vegetation
management -
manual methods**

- 11** Controlled burning shall be carried out clear of all lineside equipment, and where such burning will assist the development of fine grassland. The controlled burning of small areas may be undertaken in conjunction with other work.

Tree felling, coppicing, planting and grass cutting shall only be undertaken by competent Contractor's personnel.

(255.011)

**Requirements for
structures**

- 12** Vegetation shall not be allowed to grow on or within falling distance of any structures such as bridges and retaining walls, or otherwise affect the stability of structures.

Where such growth has occurred, such vegetation shall be cut down and where practicable removed. Tree stumps shall be chemically treated to prevent regrowth in accordance with Section 257: Tree Felling and Scrub Clearance.

Damage to brickwork or masonry shall be made good in accordance with Section 150: Brickwork, Blockwork and Masonry.
(255.012)

Details of statutory designated areas

- 13** Sites of Special Scientific Interest within the Contract area are as listed in Table 255/2.

Table 255/2			
Sites of Special Scientific Interest			
Location	ELR	Mileage	Item Protected
(INSERT)	(INSERT)	(INSERT)	(INSERT)

Conservation Areas within the Contract Area are as listed in Table 255/3.

Table 255/3			
Conservation Areas			
Location	ELR	Mileage	
		From	To
(INSERT)	(INSERT)	(INSERT)	(INSERT)

Tree preservation orders within the Contract Area are as listed in Table 255/4.

Table 255/4			
Tree Preservation Orders			
Location	ELR	Mileage	Tree Species Protected
(INSERT)	(INSERT)	(INSERT)	(INSERT)

(255.013)

Requirements for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- 14** Where areas that are part of the operational railway are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the management of lineside vegetation shall be undertaken in accordance with the Management Plan for each SSSI agreed with /English Nature. /the Countryside Council for Wales. /Scottish Natural Heritage. /

Sites of Special Scientific Interest within the Contract area are as listed in Table 255/2.

Where not already erected, signs shall be erected and maintained at the boundaries of SSSIs facing the tracks so that Railtrack staff, Contractor's personnel and operators of weed spraying trains can be aware of their location. The signs shall specify the features of special interest such as plants, living creatures or geology.

Signs to indicate SSSIs shall not be red or otherwise affect the vision of train drivers in anyway. The signs shall be visible from the track, and made from durable materials.

The minimum and maximum size of the signs shall be agreed with Railtrack's corporate Signing Manager whose address is:

Corporate Signing Manager
Property Directorate
Floor 3, Fitzroy House
355 Euston Road
London NW1 3AG

Tel: 0171-830 5712
Fax: 0171-830 5708

The type of support to the sign and method of installation shall be agreed with the Employer's Representative.

(255.014)

**Requirements for
grassland**

- 15** Grassland shall be managed to ensure the retention of the grassland. Grassland shall be cut annually except where controlled burning has been or will be carried out within the same growing season.

The cut material shall be removed or shall be burnt in accordance with Clause 255.016.

(255.015)

Controlled burning

- 16** In England and Wales the burning of uncut grass or low scrub shall be done only in the permitted season from November to March inclusive. In Scotland burning shall be limited to October to April.

In England and Wales notice shall be given in local papers, at bridges and stations in the area, and direct to the occupier of the adjacent land a minimum of one week before burning, and further notice given if the burning is not carried out or completed within 4 weeks of the initial notice.

When controlled burning is to be carried out, the Employer's Representative, Fire Brigade and Police shall be advised, and any requirements specified shall be complied with by the Contractor.

Controlled burning shall not be carried out in the vicinity of cables, cable routes, troughing, signalling, a.c. electrification overhead line equipment, fences, within 10.0 metres of property, or adjacent to other combustible materials. Adequate procedures shall be taken to prevent flames spreading out of control into adjacent farm land or gardens.

Controlled burning shall not be carried out at SSSIs, conservation areas, or other locations where burning may destroy rare species.

Controlled burning shall not cause a nuisance to local residents obscure railway signals, or affect the vision of train drivers in anyway. Burning shall not be carried out at night.

Firebreaks shall be cut as necessary.

Controlled burning shall not be carried out on ash embankments and on fine grassland, except for on encroaching scrub, or dense scrub more than 1.5 metres high.

Scrub taller than 1.5 metres shall be cut down and burned in heaps, and the regrowth burned in 3 - 5 years time.

Fires shall be attended at all times by at least two people with fire beaters and shall be extinguished completely before the Site is left unattended.

Controlled burning shall be carried out every 2 - 3 years for grassland, and as required for scrub control.

(255.016)

**Regeneration of
mature woodlands**

- 17** After felling or removal of adult trees in mature woodlands, existing healthy seedlings or saplings of suitable tree species listed in Appendix 255C shall be selected and tagged in the resultant gaps.

Gaps shall be at least 20 metres across to provide enough light for the small plants. Selected plants in the gaps shall be at least half their own height apart. Any others shall be removed and the young plants thinned once every 3 - 5 years.

Selected plants may be covered with tree shelters to protect the plant from wind, animal damage and chemical spray.

Enough new trees shall be 'encouraged' to replace those which are dying or being removed from the woodland.

An area round the selected plant of at least 1.5 metres diameter shall be kept weed free at all times for the first 3 - 4 years after planting by cutting, hand weeding or spraying. The selected plant shall not be choked by scrub or large weeds.

(255.017)

**Requirements for
planting**

- 18** Trees and shrubs shall be planted to stock or restock areas with trees where natural regeneration has not taken place.

In areas identified as category 3 in accordance with Clause 255.003 and tree felling is not practicable, small shrubs shall be planted in diagonal strips to prevent vortex problems and to trap fallen leaves.

Shrubs and trees for planting shall be selected from the suitable species listed in Appendices 255B and 255C, and shall be planted in accordance with Section 252: Planting of Shrubs and Trees.

Trees or shrubs shall be planted in gaps which are at least as wide as the surrounding trees are high.

Areas to be replanted shall be cleared of scrub, weeds etc. by cutting a clearing at least 2.0 metres in diameter, and any regrowth sprayed with glyphosate so that the planting spots are free of vegetation.

Planting stock shall be 300 - 600 mm high obtained from a nursery, and shall be planted as soon as possible after delivery to the Site.

Roots shall be kept moist and protected at all times before planting.