

Site Improvement Plan

Devils Dyke

Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) have been developed for each Natura 2000 site in England as part of the Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 sites (IPENS). Natura 2000 sites is the combined term for sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protected Areas (SPA). This work has been financially supported by LIFE, a financial instrument of the European Community.

The plan provides a high level overview of the issues (both current and predicted) affecting the condition of the Natura 2000 features on the site(s) and outlines the priority measures required to improve the condition of the features. It does not cover issues where remedial actions are already in place or ongoing management activities which are required for maintenance.

The SIP consists of three parts: a Summary table, which sets out the priority Issues and Measures; a detailed Actions table, which sets out who needs to do what, when and how much it is estimated to cost; and a set of tables containing contextual information and links.

Once this current programme ends, it is anticipated that Natural England and others, working with landowners and managers, will all play a role in delivering the priority measures to improve the condition of the features on these sites.

The SIPs are based on Natural England's current evidence and knowledge. The SIPs are not legal documents, they are live documents that will be updated to reflect changes in our evidence/knowledge and as actions get underway. The information in the SIPs will be used to update England's contribution to the UK's Prioritised Action Framework (PAF).

The SIPs are not formal consultation documents, but if you have any comments about the SIP or would like more information please email us at IPENSLIFEProject@naturalengland.org.uk, or contact Natural England's Responsible Officer for the site via our enquiry service 0300 060 3900, or enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

This Site Improvement Plan covers the following Natura 2000 site(s)

UK0030037 Devils Dyke SAC

Site description

Devil's Dyke holds one of the best and most extensive areas of species-rich chalk grassland in Cambridgeshire. The grassland is of a type characteristic to chalklands of south, central and eastern England and represents a habitat type now very restricted in distribution and extent throughout its British range.

The Dyke is an ancient linear earthwork comprising a deep ditch and high bank, originally colonised by plants from adjacent calcareous grassland. For this reason the Dyke is important as one of the few remaining areas still supporting these relict chalkland vegetation communities, once traditionally maintained by sheep grazing.

Plan Summary

This table shows the prioritised issues for the site(s), the features they affect, the proposed measures to address the issues and the delivery bodies whose involvement is required to deliver the measures. The list of delivery bodies will include those who have agreed to the actions as well as those where discussions over their role in delivering the actions is on-going.

Priority & Issue	Pressure or Threat	Feature(s) affected	Measure	Delivery Bodies
1 Inappropriate scrub control	Pressure/ Threat	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	Improve vegetation management	Natural England, Butterfly Conservation, Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, Friends of Devil's Dyke, The Jockey Club
2 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Threat	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	Investigate potential air pollution impacts	Natural England

Issues and Actions

This table outlines the prioritised issues that are currently impacting or threatening the condition of the features, and the outstanding actions required to address them. It also shows, where possible, the estimated cost of the action and the delivery bodies whose involvement will be required to implement the action. Lead delivery bodies will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the action, but not necessarily funding it. Delivery partners will need to support the lead delivery body in implementing the action. In the process of developing the SIPs Natural England has approached the delivery bodies to seek agreement on the actions and their roles in delivering them, although in some cases these discussions have not yet been concluded. Other interested parties, including landowners and managers, will be involved as the detailed actions are agreed and delivered. Funding options are indicated as potential (but not necessarily agreed or secured) sources to fund the actions.

1 Inappropriate scrub control

There is some scrub encroachment which is beginning to become damaging on some parts of the site and is likely to cause the notified grassland to deteriorate. Grassland vegetation management is currently managed by hand cutting as grazing cannot be carried out due to equestrian practices which have taken place for centuries. The current HLS agreement does not provide sufficient funding to allow appropriate management of the sward because of the steepness of the site.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Minor scrub clearance (approximately 0.05ha) is required around Cambridge Gap which lies to the south east within the main designated SAC area.	£2,000	2015	Habitat creation / restoration strategy: Habitat restoration	Rural Development Programme (RDPE)	Natural England	Butterfly Conservation, Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, Friends of Devil's Dyke, The Jockey Club
Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1B	Increase funding for annual sward management throughout the site.	£45,000	2015-20	Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Environmental Stewardship Higher Level Scheme (HLS)	Rural Development Programme (RDPE)	Natural England	Butterfly Conservation, Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, Friends of Devil's Dyke, The Jockey Club

2 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

Nitrogen deposition exceeds the site-relevant critical load for ecosystem protection and hence there is a risk of harmful effects, but the sensitive features are currently considered to be in favourable condition on the site. This requires further investigation.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action description</i>	<i>Cost estimate</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Mechanism</i>	<i>Funding option</i>	<i>Delivery lead body</i>	<i>Delivery partner(s)</i>
2A	Further investigate potential atmospheric nitrogen impacts on the site based on application of guidance from Chief Scientist Group Nitrogen Task and Finish Group.	Not yet determined	2014-17	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Natural England	Not yet determined

Site details

The tables in this section contain site-relevant contextual information and links

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Devils Dyke SAC

H6210# Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*)

Site location and links

Devils Dyke SAC

Area (ha) **8.02**

Grid reference **TL611622**

[Map link](#)

Local Authorities

Cambridgeshire; Suffolk

Site Conservation Objectives

[European Site Conservation Objectives for Devils Dyke SAC](#)

European Marine Site conservation advice

[n/a](#)

Regulation 33/35 Package

[n/a](#)

Marine Management Organisation site plan

[n/a](#)

Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) provides the main framework for managing the water environment throughout Europe. Under the WFD a management plan must be developed for each river basin district. The River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) include a summary of the measures needed for water dependent Natura 2000 sites to meet their conservation objectives. For the second round of RBMPs, SIPs are being used to capture the priorities and new measures required for water dependent habitats on Natura 2000 sites. SIP actions for non-water dependent sites/habitats do not form part of the RBMPs and associated consultation.

Devils Dyke SAC

River basin

[Anglian RBMP](#)

WFD Management catchment

Cam and Ely Ouse (including South Level)

WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)

n/a

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Devils Dyke SAC	Newmarket Heath SSSI Devils Dyke SSSI
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Devils Dyke SAC	n/a
Ramsar	
Devils Dyke SAC	n/a
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Devils Dyke SAC	n/a

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
0.3	23/12/14	

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000

