

# Site Improvement Plan

## Thrislington

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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk)

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

**UK0012838 Thrislington SAC**

## Site description

Thrislington SAC, a former quarry, contains one of the most important stands of lowland calcareous grassland on magnesian limestone substrate in Britain. The qualifying feature of the SAC is semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *Festuco-Brometalia* and an important orchid site. Thrislington contains the largest of the few remaining stands of CG8 *Sesleria caerulea* - *Scabiosa columbaria* grassland which exists only in the north east of England, and although a relatively small SAC at 22.72 ha, its importance is due to the fragmented locations of remaining grassland sites of this nature.

## 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 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Threat	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	Further investigate potential atmospheric nitrogen impacts	Natural England
2 Climate change	Threat	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	Investigate effects of climate change and identify appropriate adaptation actions	Natural England, Lafarge Tarmac
3 Change to site conditions	Threat	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	Determine causes of <i>Bromopsis erecta</i> spread and potential mitigating management	Natural England, University(ies), Consultant, Lafarge Tarmac

## 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 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 as it could be a contributory factor in the currently observed spread of erect brome *Bromopsis erecta* across the SAC. The site is in close proximity to a major trunk road and local kilns.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Further investigate the potential atmospheric nitrogen impacts on the site, based on the application of guidance from the Chief Scientist's Group Nitrogen Task and Finish Group.	Not yet determined	2015-17	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Natural England	Not yet determined

### 2 Climate change

Thrislington SAC lies at the transition between the cool and wet north west, and warm and dry south east and the vegetation reflects this. Climate change may result in significant species composition change.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
2A	Review likely climate change impacts and identify appropriate adaptation actions.	Not yet determined	2015-20	Mechanism not identified / develop mechanism	Not yet determined	Natural England	Not yet determined

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
2B	Resurrect the monitoring of effects of climate change, set up by University of Lancaster.	Not yet determined	2015-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Developer, Natural England	Natural England	Lafarge Tarmac

### 3 Change to site conditions

There is an observed spread of *Bromopsis erecta* within the site. This could be due to a combination of factors including nitrogen deposition, climate change and historic transplantation.

<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>
<b>3A</b>	Monitor vegetation change in the area of the grassland feature.	Not yet determined	2015-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Developer, Natural England, Research project, S106 Agreement	Natural England	University(ies), Consultant, Lafarge Tarmac

## Site details

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

### Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

#### Thrislington SAC

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

### Site location and links

#### Thrislington SAC

Area (ha) **22.58**

Grid reference **NZ317328** [Map link](#)

Local Authorities

Durham

Site Conservation Objectives

[European Site Conservation Objectives for Thrislington SAC](#)

European Marine Site conservation advice

[n/a](#)

Regulation 33/35 Package

[n/a](#)

Marine Management Organisation site plan

[n/a](#)



## Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Thrislington SAC	Thrislington Plantation SSSI

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Thrislington SAC	Thrislington NNR

Ramsar	
Thrislington SAC	n/a

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Thrislington SAC	n/a

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1.0	11/05/2015	

[www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000)

