

# Site Improvement Plan

## Wye and Crundale Downs

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)**

**UK0012831 Wye & Crundale Downs SAC**

## Site description

This site hosts the priority habitat type "orchid rich sites". Wye and Crundale Downs has an important assemblage of rare, scarce and uncommon orchids, including Early Spider-orchid *Ophrys sphegodes*, Late Spider-orchid *Ophrys fuciflora*, Burnt orchid *Orchis ustulata* and Lady orchid *Orchis purpurea*.

## 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 Overgrazing	Pressure	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	Monitor current rabbit control programme and adjust as necessary.	Natural England
2 Inappropriate scrub control	Pressure	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	Additional scrub control work required.	Natural England
3 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 on the site.	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 Overgrazing

Grazing pressure from livestock and rabbits is only partially controlled and parts of the site are overgrazed resulting in too short a sward height and inhibiting flowering plants. A programme of rabbit control is underway but effectiveness needs to be monitored.

<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>1A</b>	The current rabbit control programme should be monitored to assess effectiveness and inform future phases of the programme.	Not yet determined	2015-20	National Nature Reserve (NNR) management plan	National Nature Reserve (NNR) running costs	Natural England	

### 2 Inappropriate scrub control

Scrub encroachment on the steep slopes of the Devil's Kneading Trough and other areas of the NNR is only partially controlled by grazing, which is leading to a reduction in the extent of grassland feature.

<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>2A</b>	Additional scrub control work is required on the grassland slopes.	£30,000	2015-20	Habitat creation / restoration strategy: Habitat restoration	Natural England (NNR running costs)	Natural England	

### 3 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>
<b>3A</b>	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		Natural England	

## Site details

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

### Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

#### Wye & Crundale Downs SAC

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

### Site location and links

#### Wye & Crundale Downs SAC

Area (ha) **112.24**      Grid reference **TR084444**      [Map link](#)

Local Authorities      Kent

Site Conservation Objectives      [European Site Conservation Objectives for Wye & Crundale Downs 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.*

### **Wye & Crundale Downs SAC**

<i>River basin</i>	<a href="#">South East RBMP</a>
<i>WFD Management catchment</i>	Stour
<i>WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)</i>	n/a

## Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Wye & Crundale Downs SAC	Wye & Crundale Downs SSSI

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Wye & Crundale Downs SAC	Wye NNR

Ramsar	
Wye & Crundale Downs SAC	n/a

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Wye & Crundale Downs SAC	n/a

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	06/03/15	

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



Environment  
Agency

