

Site Improvement Plan

Isle of Wight 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, 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)

UK0016254 Isle of Wight Downs SAC

Site description

The European designated site comprises four Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Headon Warren & West High Down SSSI (part of), Compton Down SSSI, Mottistone Down SSSI and Ventnor Downs SSSI (part of).

In order of abundance, the designated habitats are composed of: chalk grassland (70%) including a proportion of scrub, broadleaved deciduous woodland (16%), heathland (10%) and sea cliff (4%). The chalk grassland is notable (but not designated) for its maritime influenced flora, rarely found chalk heath habitat where acid gravels occur and notably large butterfly populations. The site is also specifically designated for its significant population of Early Gentian *Gentianella anglica*.

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 Public Access/Disturbance	Pressure	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	Investigate and reverse sward damage by implementing infrastructure and habitat management	National Trust, Natural England
2 Inappropriate coastal management	Threat	H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs, H4030 European dry heaths, H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	Identify suitable habitat and consider designation	Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Isle of Wight Council, Natural England
3 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Threat	H4030 European dry heaths	Determine if harmful effects occur and investigate appropriate measures	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 Public Access/Disturbance

Tennyson Down, a part of Headon Warren & West High Down SSSI, is locally experiencing high levels of pedestrian visits that damage the chalk grassland habitat.

<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>
1A	Undertake surveying to confirm the extent and severity of damage to chalk grassland.	Not yet determined	2015-16	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Natural England	National Trust
1B	Identify ways of restoring the chalk grassland.	Not yet determined	2015-16	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Natural England	National Trust
1C	Restore the chalk grassland and prevent further damage.	£7,500	2017-19	Conservation and Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Conservation and Enhancement Scheme (CES)	National Trust	Natural England

2 Inappropriate coastal management

Areas of qualifying SAC habitat presently fall outside of the European designation boundary including: cliff habitat in Compton Down SSSI, and heathland, chalk grassland and chalk heath habitats in Ventnor Downs SSSI. Incorporation of these areas into the SAC would enable a more coherent approach to site management.

<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	Determine if the extent of the SAC designation is adequate and appropriate (allowing dynamic hydrological, geomorphological and ecological process to be able to occur unhindered), investigate appropriateness of re-alignment of SAC boundary into adjacent undesignated habitat.	Not yet determined	2015-16	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Natural England	Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Isle of Wight Council
<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>
2B	In response to findings of investigation 2A, consider commencement of the renotification process to include additional qualifying land areas.	Staff time	2016-20	Designation strategy: Notification Amendment	Staff time	Natural England	n/a

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>
3A	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	2017	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

Isle of Wight Downs SAC

H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts

S1654 *Gentianella anglica*: Early gentian

H4030 European dry heaths

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

Site location and links

Isle of Wight Downs SAC

Area (ha) **461.8** Grid reference **SZ373857** [Map link](#)

Local Authorities Isle of Wight

Site Conservation Objectives [European Site Conservation Objectives for Isle of Wight 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.

Isle of Wight Downs SAC

<i>River basin</i>	South East RBMP
<i>WFD Management catchment</i>	Isle of Wight
<i>WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)</i>	n/a

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Isle of Wight Downs SAC	Compton Chine to Steephill Cove SSSI Compton Down SSSI Ventnor Downs SSSI Mottistone Down SSSI Headon Warren & West High Down SSSI
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Isle of Wight Downs SAC	n/a
Ramsar	
Isle of Wight Downs SAC	n/a
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Isle of Wight Downs SAC	n/a

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
v1.0	13/02/2015	

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000

