

Site Improvement Plan

Sidmouth to West Bay

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)

UK0019864 Sidmouth to West Bay SAC

Site description

Sidmouth to West Bay is an example of a highly unstable soft cliff coastline subject to mudslides and landslips. The principal rock types are soft mudstones, clays and silty limestones, with a small chalk outlier in the west.

Vegetation is very varied and includes pioneer communities on recent slips, calcareous grassland and scrub on detached chalk blocks, and extensive self-sown woodland dominated by ash *Fraxinus excelsior* or sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. This mosaic of habitats makes this site rich in invertebrates, especially bees and wasps. The Red Data Book lichen *Parmelia quercina* occurs on ash *Fraxinus excelsior* trees.

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 Invasive species	Pressure	H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs, H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Plan and manage the removal non-native invasive species	Natural England
2 Disease	Threat	H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Plan and manage for the impacts of ash die-back	Forestry Commission, Natural England, Volunteers, National Nature Reserve (NNR)
3 Direct impact from third party	Pressure	H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs	Safeguard sea cliff habitat through advice and the use enforcement action if necessary	Natural England, Local partnership
4 Planning Permission: general	Pressure	H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs, H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Safeguard SAC habitats by better understanding the combined impact of existing small scale developments and identifying positive solutions	East Devon District Council, Natural England, West Dorset District Council
5 Water Pollution	Threat	H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs	Investigate areas where poor water quality may be an issue	Environment Agency, Natural England, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (South-West)

6 Vehicles	Pressure/ Threat	H1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines	Advise, regulate and enforce, in order to prevent boat storage harming sensitive areas	East Devon District Council, Natural England, West Dorset District Council
7 Habitat fragmentation	Pressure/ Threat	H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs	Investigate the loss of cliff top habitat due to coastal change and plan for its roll-back	National Trust, Natural England, Landowner(s)
8 Inappropriate coastal management	Pressure	H1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines	Work strategically with partners to achieve appropriate coastal management using a range of interventions such as development of a coastal adaptation strategy, advice, better communication, and regulation	Dorset County Council, East Devon District Council, Natural England, West Dorset District Council, Lyme Regis Town Council
9 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Threat	H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Investigate the impact of nitrogen deposition	Not yet determined

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 Invasive species

Buddleia is present throughout woodland between Axmouth and Lyme Regis, often in clearings or on grassland areas. Elsewhere Pampas grass, Japanese knotweed, and laurel are present within the NNR

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Map the location of alien invasive species along the SAC.	£2,000	2014-16	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Natural England	Natural England	n/a

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1B	Formulate an invasive species management plan and begin removing these from the site.	Not yet determined	2016-20	Invasive Control Plan: Invasive Species Control Programme	Natural England	Natural England	n/a

2 Disease

Chalara fraxinea, the cause of ash die-back, could affect woodland areas between Axmouth and Lyme Regis although has not been recorded on the NNR to date. The spread of this disease has the potential to have a devastating impact on the physical structure and diversity of the woodland.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
2A	Monitor the ash woodland for signs of <i>Chalara fraxinea</i> .	Not yet determined	2014-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)	Natural England	Volunteers, National Nature Reserve (NNR)

<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	Action plan to respond to <i>C. fraxinea</i> in the event of the disease appearing in the SAC.	Not yet determined	2014-20	National Nature Reserve (NNR) management plan	Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)	Natural England	Forestry Commission

3 Direct impact from third party

Unconsented work to stabilise small sections of cliff face has resulted in the loss of vegetation and inhibited re-growth.

<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	Work with land owners/occupiers to reinforce the need for consents and Habitats Regulations Assessment to reduce the risk of future unconsented works.	Not yet determined	2014-20	Advice: Negotiation	Staff time	Natural England	Local partnership
3B	Monitor the level of unconsented activities and consider enforcement action options if the situation does not improve.	Not yet determined	2014-20	Enforcement	Staff time	Natural England	n/a

4 Planning Permission: general

The presence of chalets and beach huts can lead to the interruption of natural cliff movement processes

<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>
4A	Develop an improved evidence base by assessing the combined impact of existing small scale developments (such as beach huts, chalets, caravan parks etc) to better understand the cumulative effect of such development on the interest features across local authority boundaries, and seek positive solutions.	£10,000	2015-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	No funding required	Natural England	East Devon District Council, West Dorset District Council

5 Water Pollution

Sea cliff vegetation on hard and soft rock may be affected by poor water quality arising from agricultural run off or other human activity landwards of the cliffs. Further investigation is required to ascertain if the SAC is or could be affected.

<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>
5A	Survey cliffs of the SAC to identify and map areas where eutrophication via surface water runoff is occurring.	Not yet determined	2014-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Natural England	Environment Agency, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (South-West)
5B	Approach householders/landowners to discuss mechanisms to reduce or remove sources of water pollution (leaking septic tanks, slurry lagoons etc).	Staff time	2014-20	Advice	Not yet determined	Local partnership	Environment Agency, Natural England

6 Vehicles

Motor boats being parked on the beach could leak oil and fuel, and also vehicle pressure compacts sediments and shingle, and abrades developing shingle vegetation.

<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>
6A	Ensure that owners and operators of boats are made aware of the need to avoid damaging the beach while storing boats and that vehicle use over sensitive areas must be avoided.	£1,000	2014-20	Advice: Education & awareness raising	Local Authority, Conservation body	West Dorset District Council	East Devon District Council, Natural England
<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>
6B	Ensure owners and operators of boats avoid damaging the beach while storing boats, and that vehicle use over sensitive areas is avoided.	Not yet determined	2014-20	Enforcement: Byelaws	Not yet determined	Local partnership	East Devon District Council, West Dorset District 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>
6C	Ensure owners and operators of boats avoid damaging the beach while storing boats and that vehicle use over sensitive areas is avoided.	Not yet determined	2014-20	Regulation: SSSI Regulation	Not yet determined	Natural England	n/a

7 Habitat fragmentation

There is very limited opportunity for coastal habitats e.g. vegetated sea cliff vegetation to move inland as coastal change occurs e.g. erosion and landslips.

<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>
7A	Identify and monitor areas where the extent of SAC habitat features are being, or will be markedly reduced in extent and quality as result of coastal erosion on one side, and the presence of agricultural landuse on the landward side constraining dynamic 'habitat migration'.	Not yet determined	2014-16	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Natural England	National Trust, Landowner(s)
<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>
7B	Plan to roll back coastal cliff top habitats by reverting cultivated land to semi-natural habitats.	Not yet determined	2016-30	Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Common Agricultural Policy 2014-20 (New Environmental Land Management Scheme)	Rural Development Programme (RDPE)	Natural England	National Trust, Landowner(s)

8 Inappropriate coastal management

This SIP covers one of four almost continuous SACs on the Dorset/Devon coast which also overlaps with the Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site (Jurassic Coast WHS). Although the World Heritage Site covers the earth science interests, these are closely linked to the biological quality of the site and the underpinning coastal management issues are similar. The role of the Shoreline Management Plan and subsequent strategies is important, and policies for no active intervention, or for restoration of coastal processes are essential for the biological interest to be maintained. To enable coastal adaptation of human assets, there needs to be a strong partnership of all relevant organisations and planning authorities. The Branscombe area for example would benefit from the development of coastal adaptation strategy to help contribute towards managing the risk of new sea defences or repairs to unofficial installations along the coast. Elsewhere strandline vegetation features have been reduced in extent on areas of beach built upon and now featuring chalets. Damage to coastal vegetated shingle resulting from vehicles being driven onto the beach is an issue in some locations.

<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>
8A	Develop closer working with land owners and other parties reinforcing the need for consents and Habitat Regulations Assessment for any new coastal defences or repairs to existing unconsented works.	Staff time	2014-20	Advice: Negotiation	Staff time	Natural England	n/a

<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>
8B	Develop a Coastal Adaptation Strategy for the Branscombe area.	Staff time	2014-20	Non-Natural England funded site management plan	Staff time	Natural England	East Devon District 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>
8C	Chalets are located within the SAC boundary on some areas of beach. Natural England needs to work with relevant landowners and authorities to identify opportunities to restore areas of beach particularly in relation to the measures identified in the Shoreline Management Plan.	Not yet determined	2014-20	Advice: Negotiation	Staff time	Natural England	Dorset County Council, West Dorset District Council, Lyme Regis Town 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>
8D	Publicise and remind all beach users that strandline vegetation is both important habitat and susceptible to damage from vehicular use.	Not yet determined	2014-20	Advice: Education & awareness raising	Local Authority, Landowner(s), Owner/Occupier	Natural England	West Dorset District Council, Lyme Regis Town Council

9 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>
9A	Further investigate potential atmospheric nitrogen impacts on the site based on application of guidance from Chief Scientist's Group Nitrogen Task and Finish Group.	Not yet determined	2014-17	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Not yet determined	Not yet determined

Site details

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

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Sidmouth to West Bay SAC	H1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines
	H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts
	H9180# <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines

Site location and links

Sidmouth to West Bay SAC

Area (ha) 897.3	Grid reference SY326912	Map link
Local Authorities	Devon; Dorset	
Site Conservation Objectives	European Site Conservation Objectives for Sidmouth to West Bay 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.

Sidmouth to West Bay SAC

River basin

[South West RBMP](#)

WFD Management catchment

Dorset, East Devon

WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)

GB108044009790, GB108045008630

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Sidmouth to West Bay SAC	Axmouth to Lyme Regis Undercliffs SSSI Sidmouth to Beer Coast SSSI West Dorset Coast SSSI
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Sidmouth to West Bay SAC	Axmouth to Lyme Regis Undercliffs NNR
Ramsar	
Sidmouth to West Bay SAC	n/a
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Sidmouth to West Bay SAC	n/a

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