

Site Improvement Plan

Liverpool Bay/ Bae Lerpwl

Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) have been developed for each Natura 2000 site in England and for most sites which straddle the border between England and Wales. This plan has been drawn up as part of the Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 sites (IPENS) in conjunction with the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales. 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 whole site (in both England and Wales), 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 SIP for this cross-border site between England and Wales is based on Natural England and Natural Resources Wales's current evidence and knowledge, and are live, and not legal documents; they will be updated to reflect changes in our evidence/knowledge and as Actions get underway. The information in the SIP will be used to update both England and Wales's contributions to the UK's Prioritised Action Framework (PAF).

The SIPs are not formal consultation documents, but if you have any comments (relating to areas within England and/or Wales) 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

To contact Natural Resources Wales telephone 0300 065 3000, or email enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

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

UK9020294 Liverpool Bay/ Bae Lerpwl SPA

UK0030376 Shell Flat and Lune Deep cSAC

Site description

The SIP covers Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA (referred to as Liverpool Bay) and Shell Flat and Lune Deep cSAC.

Liverpool Bay covers a large area from low water to approximately 20km offshore in the Eastern Irish Sea, extending from Anglesey in Wales to Blackpool in England. It is classified to protect common scoter, a sea duck that overwinters in the site in the tens of thousands and feeds on bivalve molluscs on the sea bed, as well as red throated diver which also overwinter in the site and are pursuit predators of small fish. The site also protects the habitats that support these species.

Shell Flat and Lune Deep cSAC lies offshore of Blackpool and Fleetwood and protects the subtidal sandbanks of Shell Flat. This area is the home to many of the bivalves that support the common scoter population, as well as the rocky reefs found on the slopes of the Lune Deep, a glacially formed trench that leads into Morecambe Bay.

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 Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine	Pressure	A001(NB) Red-throated diver, A065(NB) Common scoter, H1110 Subtidal sandbanks, H1170 Reefs, Waterbird assemblage	Assess activities, where necessary introduce and/or ensure compliance with byelaws. Monitor to ensure compliance.	Natural England, North Western Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
2 Transportation and service corridors	Threat	A001(NB) Red-throated diver, A065(NB) Common scoter, Waterbird assemblage	Research effect of current levels of activity on bird features.	Natural England, Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
3 Fisheries: Recreational marine and estuarine	Threat	A001(NB) Red-throated diver, A065(NB) Common scoter, Waterbird assemblage	Assess whether recreational fishing could impact birds.	Natural England, North Western Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)
4 Extraction: non-living resources	Threat	A001(NB) Red-throated diver, A065(NB) Common scoter, H1110 Subtidal sandbanks, H1170 Reefs, Waterbird assemblage	Examine the effects of aggregate dredging on site features.	Natural England

5 Siltation	Threat	A001(NB) Red-throated diver, A065(NB) Common scoter, H1110 Subtidal sandbanks, H1170 Reefs, Waterbird assemblage	Investigate possible habitat improvements resulting from disposal site change.	Natural England, Natural Resources Wales
6 Water Pollution	Threat	A001(NB) Red-throated diver, A065(NB) Common scoter, Waterbird assemblage	Periodically review oil spill plans in light of site features.	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 Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine

The issues described here only apply to English waters. Dredges (inc. hydraulic), benthic trawls and seines are categorised as 'Red' for this interest feature (and specifically the sub-features: Stony reef communities; Bedrock reef communities) as part of Defra's revised approach to commercial fisheries management in European Marine Sites (EMSs), and requisite mechanisms are being or will be implemented by the North West Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (NWIFCA). There is a specific issue with the light otter trawl fishery around Lune Deep Reef, for which the NWIFCA have implemented a byelaw that allows for the continuation of a limited fishery adjacent to the feature, based on its track record. This matter only relates to the SAC feature. For commercial fishing activities categorised as 'Amber or Green' under Defra's revised approach to commercial fisheries in EMSs require assessment and (where appropriate) management. This assessment will be undertaken by NWIFCA and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). For activities categorised as 'green', these assessments should take account of any in-combination effects of amber activities, and/or appropriate plans or projects, in the site. The existing fisheries that fall into this category may be a current pressure as result of the removal of marine species preyed upon by SPA birds, damage to the sea bed, entanglement of birds in nets and disturbance of the birds. There is interest in developing a clam fishery in Liverpool Bay using novel technology which poses a threat.

<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	English waters only: Red activities: Ensure compliance with bye-law and provide an appropriate level of reporting to ensure sites are well managed and to enable Natural England to provide advice on the condition of features and potential condition threats. Ongoing action.	Staff time	2015-25	Enforcement: Byelaws	Staff time	North Western Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)	Natural England
1B	English waters only: Amber/Green activities: Where the assessments indicate management is required, introduce appropriate measures.	Staff time	2016	Enforcement: Byelaws	Staff time	North Western Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)	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>
1C	English waters only: Amber/green activities: If management measures are established, ensure compliance with bye-law and provide an appropriate level of reporting to ensure sites are well managed and to enable Natural England to provide advice on the condition of features and potential condition threats. Ongoing action.	Staff time	2015 onwards	Enforcement: Byelaws	Staff time	North Western Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)	Natural England, Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

2 Transportation and service corridors

There is existing heavy use of the area for shipping in established corridors that birds avoid. Proposals for shipping and transport routes outside of the established corridors would have high potential for disturbance to SPA birds. This issue applies to English waters only.

<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	Research the effect on bird features of current levels of vessel disturbance	£4,000	2015-16	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Natural England	Natural England	Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

3 Fisheries: Recreational marine and estuarine

There is a threat of disturbance to SPA birds from recreational vessels (classified as pelagic) located largely closer to shore, with the impact of this being poorly understood. Pelagic: sub-activity includes gear that does not interact with the seabed e.g. pelagic trawls, drift nets and pelagic long lines. They also use handlines and rod & line angling (vessel-based) including where no anchoring occurs.

<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	Examine Sea Angling 2012 survey information to assess whether levels of recreational angling activity are likely to be having an effect on the site.	£2,000	2015-16	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Natural England, Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)	North Western Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)	Natural England

4 Extraction: non-living resources

Aggregate dredging results in the affected dredged area becoming unsuitable habitat for organisms living on and in the seabed. The effect of this on the SPA bird features is not fully understood. Applies to English waters only.

<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	Collate and evaluate evidence on potential existing effect of dredged areas on SPA bird features and their supporting habitats.	£4,000	2015-18	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Natural England	Natural England	

5 Siltation

As a result of recent changes in the use of dredged material from the Mersey, some of which is now disposed of within the Mersey Estuary system, rather than at a disposal site within the Liverpool Bay SPA. The removal of this deposit from the SPA may result in habitat improvement at the disposal site. Applies only to the SPA in English waters.

<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	Investigate whether the movement of the dredging disposal site out of the Liverpool Bay SPA to allow beneficial use of dredged material within the Mersey Narrows has resulted in improved supporting habitat for Liverpool Bay SPA birds and whether this has could be beneficially repeated for other disposal sites within the SPA.	£8,000	2015	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Natural England	Natural England	Natural Resources Wales

6 Water Pollution

The site faces a risk of oil spills or other pollution incidents from shipping and industry.

<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	At appropriate intervals review oil spill contingency plans with the Standing Environment Group, with particular regard for current and future bird features of the SPA.	Staff time	2015-25	Advice	Natural England	Natural England	

Site details

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

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Liverpool Bay/ Bae Lerpwl SPA	A001(NB) <i>Gavia stellata</i> : Red-throated Diver A065(NB) <i>Melanitta nigra</i> : Black (common) scoter Waterbird assemblage
Shell Flat and Lune Deep cSAC	H1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time H1170 Reefs

Site location and links

Liverpool Bay/ Bae Lerpwl SPA

Area (ha) **170292** Grid reference **SH903880** [Map link](#)

Local Authorities Blackpool; Conwy; Denbighshire; Flintshire; Fylde; Gwynedd; Isle of Anglesey; Sefton; West Lancashire; Wirral

Site Conservation Objectives

Site Conservation Objectives (covers area in England) [Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA](#)

Site Conservation Objectives (covers area in Wales) <http://www.ccg.gov.uk/landscape--wildlife/protecting-our-landscape/special-sites-project/liverpool-bay-spa.aspx>

European Marine Site conservation advice [Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA](#)

Regulation 33/35 Package [Regulation 33/35 package link](#)

Marine Management Organisation site plan [MMO Site Action Plan link](#)

Shell Flat and Lune Deep cSAC

Area (ha) **10565** Grid reference **03 12 14W**
53 51 50N [Map link](#)

Local Authorities n/a

Site Conservation Objectives

Site Conservation Objectives (covers area in England) [Shell Flat and Lune Deep cSAC](#)

Site Conservation Objectives (covers area in Wales)

European Marine Site conservation advice [Shell Flat and Lune Deep cSAC](#)

Regulation 33/35 Package [Regulation 33/35 package link](#)

Marine Management Organisation site plan [MMO Site Action Plan link](#)

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.

Liverpool Bay/ Bae Lerpwl SPA

River basin	North West RBMP
WFD Management catchment	n/a
WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)	n/a

Shell Flat and Lune Deep cSAC

River basin	North West RBMP
WFD Management catchment	n/a
WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)	n/a

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Liverpool Bay/ Bae Lerpwl SPA	Puffin Island - Ynys Seiriol SSSI North Wirral Foreshore SSSI Ribble Estuary SSSI Sefton Coast SSSI Little Orme's Head/ Criegiau Rhiwledyn SSSI Dee Estuary/ Aber Afon Dyfrdwy SSSI Gronant Dunes and Talacre Warren SSSI Arfordir Gogleddol Penmon SSSI Tandinas Quarry SSSI Traeth Lafan SSSI Traeth Lligwy SSSI Trwyn Dwlban SSSI Aber Afon Conwy SSSI Glannau Penmon / Biwmares SSSI Great Orme's Head/ Pen y Gogarth SSSI
Shell Flat and Lune Deep cSAC	No SSSI
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Liverpool Bay/ Bae Lerpwl SPA	Ribble Estuary NNR
Shell Flat and Lune Deep cSAC	n/a
Ramsar	
Liverpool Bay/ Bae Lerpwl SPA	Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore Ribble & Alt Estuaries The Dee Estuary (England) The Dee Estuary (Wales)

Shell Flat and Lune Deep cSAC

n/a

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)

Liverpool Bay/ Bae Lerpwl SPA

Y Fenai a Bae Conwy/ Menai Strait and Conwy Bay SAC

Shell Flat and Lune Deep cSAC

Sefton Coast SAC

Great Orme's Head/ Pen y Gogarth SAC

Dee Estuary/ Aber Dyfrdwy (Wales) SAC

Dee Estuary/ Aber Dyfrdwy (England) SAC

Ynys Seiriol/ Puffin Island SPA

Traeth Lavan/ Lavan Sands, Conwy Bay SPA

The Dee Estuary SPA

Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA

Mersey Narrows & North Wirral Foreshore SPA

Shell Flat and Lune Deep cSAC

Morecambe Bay SAC

Liverpool Bay/ Bae Lerpwl SPA

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
0.3	20/03/2015	



www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000