

Site Improvement Plan

Beer Quarry & Caves

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)

UK0012585 Beer Quarry & Caves SAC

Site description

This complex of abandoned mines in south-west England is divided in two by a road, with a working quarry to the north and a disused quarry and cave system to the south. This site supports important populations of hibernating bats. Its use as a hibernation site by the Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii* is the primary reason for its designation as a SAC. The area also supports a significant presence of both the Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* and the Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* which are both qualifying features but are not primary reasons for the site's selection.

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 Direct impact from third party	Pressure	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Control access to the site	Natural England, Hanson Aggregates
2 Planning Permission: general	Threat	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Develop planning guidance	East Devon AONB, East Devon District Council, Natural England
3 Habitat vulnerability	Pressure	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Develop an access strategy and install gates/ grilles	Natural England, Hanson Aggregates
4 Inappropriate scrub control	Threat	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Devise and implement scrub management plan	Natural England, Hanson Aggregates
5 Habitat connectivity	Threat	S1303 Lesser horseshoe bat, S1304 Greater horseshoe bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Consider opportunities for agri-environment schemes on key bat habitat	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 Direct impact from third party

There is disturbance due to unauthorised access to the northern part of site due to lack of suitable barriers at cave entrances. Large raves/ parties have occurred at the site in recent years resulting in people entering the caves.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Work with owner/occupier to develop an access strategy to control site access without compromising bat interest.	Staff time	2015-16	Advice: Access Strategy	Staff time	Natural England	n/a

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1B	Implement the recommendations of the access strategy: install barriers and/or fencing as appropriate.	Not yet determined	2016-20	Conservation and Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Conservation and Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Natural England	Hanson Aggregates

2 Planning Permission: general

Development on the land around the Beer Quarry caves SAC could have an impact on bats through loss of foraging habitat, loss of minor roost sites, and disruption of flightpaths. By considering the bats' requirements in AONB planning guidance, their needs can be taken into account at an early stage of development planning leading to better habitat provision outside the designated site.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
2A	Work with the Local Authority, AONB team and local bat group to develop planning guidance.	Staff time	2015-20	Advice	Staff time	East Devon AONB	East Devon District Council, Natural England

3 Habitat vulnerability

There is currently uncontrolled access to the site. Some northern parts of the site are prone to draughtiness and the bats' habitat may be improved by blocking gaps.

<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	Survey to identify if any measures are required to address draughtiness of some sections and ensure the different micro-climates, temperature and humidity regimes of the caves to the north and south of the road are fully understood so that the effect any changes might have on usage by all species of bats can be predicted.	£3,000	2015-16	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	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>
3B	Implement recommendations from the survey.	Not yet determined	2016-20	Mechanism not identified / develop mechanism	Developer, Conservation and Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Natural England	Hanson Aggregates

4 Inappropriate scrub control

The growth of scrub around the quarry cave entrances needs to be managed so it does not impede the flight path of the bats.

<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	Produce a management plan identifying areas that need routine scrub management to maintain access for bats and implement plan.	Not yet determined	2016-20	Conservation and Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Conservation and Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Natural England	Hanson Aggregates

5 Habitat connectivity

The quality of habitat features within any bat protection zones identified in future planning guidance needs to be maintained and/or enhanced.

<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	Consider land within any bat protection zones identified in future planning guidance alongside future agri-environment targeting guidance, to identify opportunities for using agri-environment schemes to maintain and/or enhance bat habitat in appropriate areas.	Not yet determined	2016-20	Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Common Agricultural Policy 2014-20 (New Environmental Land Management Scheme)	Rural Development Programme (RDPE)	Natural England	n/a

Site details

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

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Beer Quarry & Caves SAC	S1303 <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> : Lesser horseshoe bat
	S1304 <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> : Greater horseshoe bat
	S1323 <i>Myotis bechsteinii</i> : Bechstein`s bat

Site location and links

Beer Quarry & Caves SAC

Area (ha) 31.1	Grid reference SY215892	Map link
Local Authorities	Devon	
Site Conservation Objectives	European Site Conservation Objectives for Beer Quarry & Caves 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.

Beer Quarry & Caves SAC

River basin

[South West RBMP](#)

WFD Management catchment

East Devon

WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)

n/a

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Beer Quarry & Caves SAC	Beer Quarry & Caves SSSI

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Beer Quarry & Caves SAC	n/a

Ramsar	
Beer Quarry & Caves SAC	n/a

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Beer Quarry & Caves SAC	n/a

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	29/04/2015	

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