

Site Improvement Plan

Drigg Coast

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)

UK0013031 Drigg Coast SAC

Site description

Drigg Coast SAC contains a small bar built estuary fed by three rivers; the Irt, the Esk and the Mite. There are intertidal mud and sand flats, significant saltmarsh areas and some of the least disturbed transitions to terrestrial habitats of any UK estuary. It has the most extensive sand dune system in Cumbria with both fixed and mobile dunes, dune heath, dune slacks, fixed dune grasslands and vegetated shingle.

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 Undergrazing	Pressure	H2130 Dune grassland, H2170 Dunes with creeping willow, H2190 Humid dune slacks	Increased grazing of dunes, ideally with cattle, delivered through HLS agreements	Ministry of Defence (MoD), Natural England, QinetiQ
2 Inappropriate scrub control	Pressure	H2110 Shifting dunes, H2120 Shifting dunes with marram, H2130 Dune grassland, H2150 Coastal dune heathland, H2190 Humid dune slacks	Sea buckthorn clearance programme being implemented	Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Ministry of Defence (MoD), QinetiQ
3 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Pressure	H2110 Shifting dunes, H2120 Shifting dunes with marram, H2130 Dune grassland, H2150 Coastal dune heathland, H2170 Dunes with creeping willow, H2190 Humid dune slacks	Site Nitrogen Action Plan to be developed	Not yet determined
4 Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine	Threat	H1130 Estuaries, H1140 Intertidal mudflats and sandflats, H1310 Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand, H1330 Atlantic salt meadows	Byelaws, Regulation and enforcement	North Western Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)

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 Undergrazing

Serious neglect of dune grazing over many years and a massive decline in rabbit population have contributed to over-stabilisation and rank grasses dominating dune grasslands and slacks.

<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	Ongoing compliance monitoring of existing Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Scheme agreements.	Not yet determined	2014-18	Enforcement	Not yet determined	Natural England	Not yet determined

<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>
1B	If HLS fails to deliver sufficient grazing then regulation may be required to achieve favourable grazing management on Drigg Dunes.	Not yet determined	2014-18	Regulation: Compulsory Management Scheme/Notice	Not yet determined	Natural England	Not yet determined

<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	New tenancy/grazing agreement likely to be the most effective means of manging cattle grazing on Drigg Dunes.	Not yet determined	2014-18	Advice: Tenancy Negotiation	Not yet determined	Not yet determined	Not yet determined

<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>
1D	Grazing needs to be introduced on the dunes within Eskmeals Range.	Not yet determined	2014-20	Non-Natural England funded site management plan	Not yet determined	QinetiQ	Ministry of Defence (MoD)
<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>
1E	Grazing needs to be introduced on the dunes within Eskmeals Range.	£10,000	2014-20	Major Landowner Group land ownership activities : Undertake Specific Management Works	Not yet determined	QinetiQ	Ministry of Defence (MoD)

2 Inappropriate scrub control

Invasive sea buckthorn scrub has shaded out and stabilised dune grassland and dune slack features, also preventing the existence of mobile dunes in places.

<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	Significant sea buckthorn clearance is underway but need to ensure programme is followed up in future years on Eskmeals Range.	Not yet determined	2014-20	Major Landowner Group land ownership activities : Undertake Specific Management Works	Not yet determined	QinetiQ	Ministry of Defence (MoD)

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
2B	HLS agreement includes funding for sea buckthorn clearance but work is not yet underway and is a large and difficult job due to access restrictions	Not yet determined	2014-16	Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Common Agricultural Policy 2014-20 (New Environmental Land Management Scheme)	Not yet determined	Cumbria Wildlife Trust	n/a

3 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

Nitrogen deposition exceeds site relevant critical loads. Nutrient enrichment of dune habitats adds to rank growth and stabilisation, in combination with a lack of grazing.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
3A	Control, reduce and ameliorate atmospheric nitrogen impacts	Not yet determined	2014-20	Site Nitrogen Action Plan	Not yet determined	Not yet determined	n/a

4 Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine

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. 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. Fishing activity within the site includes hand working, pots and creels and netting.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
4A	Where these assessments indicate management is required, appropriate measures will be introduced by the NW IFCA. If management measures are established, on-going work will be required by the IFCA to ensure compliance and 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. Fisheries include hand working, pots and creels and netting.	Not yet determined	2016	Enforcement: Byelaws	Not yet determined	North Western Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)	n/a

Site details

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

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Drigg Coast SAC

H1130 Estuaries
H1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
H1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand
H1330 Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)
H2110 Embryonic shifting dunes
H2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes")
H2130# Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes")
H2150# Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (*Calluno-Ulicetea*)
H2170 Dunes with *Salix repens ssp argentea* (*Salicion arenariae*)
H2190 Humid dune slacks

Site location and links

Drigg Coast SAC

Area (ha) **1397.44** Grid reference **SD071960** [Map link](#)
Local Authorities Cumbria
Site Conservation Objectives [Drigg Coast SAC](#)
European Marine Site conservation advice [Drigg Coast SAC](#)
Regulation 33/35 Package [Regulation 33/35 package link](#)
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.

Drigg Coast SAC

River basin

[North West RBMP](#)

WFD Management catchment

South West Lakes

WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)

GB112074069900, GB112074070080

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Drigg Coast SAC	Drigg Coast SSSI

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Drigg Coast SAC	n/a

Ramsar	
Drigg Coast SAC	n/a

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Drigg Coast SAC	n/a

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	03/12/2014	

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