

Site Improvement Plan

Margate and Long Sands

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)

UK0030371 Margate and Long Sands SCI

Site description

Margate and Long Sands lies north of the Thanet coast of Kent and extends to the outer reaches of the Thames Estuary. It contains a number of Annex I sandbanks slightly covered by seawater at all times, the largest of which is Long Sands itself. The sandbanks are composed of well-sorted sandy sediments, with muddier and more gravelly sediments in the troughs between banks, and the upper crests of some of the larger banks dry out at low tide. The banks are tidally influenced: the southern ones are aligned approximately east-west in the direction of tidal currents entering the Thames Estuary from the English Channel whereas Long Sand is aligned in a north east - south west orientation with influence from the North Sea. In common with all sandbanks the structure of the banks is dynamic and there have been significant movements of the bank edges over time.

The fauna of the bank crests is characteristic of species-poor, mobile sand environments, and is dominated by polychaete worms and amphipods. Within the troughs and on the bank slopes a higher diversity of polychaetes, crustacea, molluscs and echinoderms are found. Mobile epifauna includes crabs and brown shrimp, squid and commercially important fish species such as sole and herring. Although not proposed as an interest feature, there is a significant amount of the reef-forming ross worm *Sabellaria spinulosa* at this site, which when formed as a reef qualifies as an Annex I habitat (biogenic reef). However, the available data indicate that the distribution of this species is patchy, or that the aggregations form crusts rather than reefs. Areas of high *S. spinulosa* density support a diverse attached epifauna of bryozoans, hydroids, sponges and tunicates, and additional fauna including polychaetes, bivalves, amphipods, crabs and lobsters. These diverse communities are usually found on the flanks of the sandbanks and towards the troughs.

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	H1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time	Introduce and enforce appropriate management as necessary	Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

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

Commercial fishing activities categorised as 'amber or green' under Defra's revised approach to commercial fisheries in European Marine Sites (EMS) require assessment and (where appropriate) management. This assessment will be undertaken by Kent & Essex IFCA 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. Fishing activities within the site include set and drift-net tramelling netting, potting, and trawling.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Where the assessment indicates that management is required, introduce appropriate measures, encouraging voluntary adoption.	Not yet determined	2016	Regulation: Creation / amendment of byelaws	Not yet determined	Marine Management Organisation (MMO)	Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)
1B	If management measures are established, ensure compliance with bye-law and/ or voluntary agreements, 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.	Not yet determined	2016 onwards	Regulation: Creation / amendment of byelaws	Not yet determined	Marine Management Organisation (MMO)	Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)

Site details

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

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Margate and Long Sands SCI	H1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time
	H1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide

Site location and links

Margate and Long Sands SCI

Area (ha) **64914** Grid reference **01 22 12E** [Map link](#)
51 33 55N

Local Authorities n/a

Site Conservation Objectives [Margate and Long Sands SCI](#)

European Marine Site conservation advice [Margate and Long Sands SCI](#)

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.

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

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Margate and Long Sands SCI	n/a

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Margate and Long Sands SCI	n/a

Ramsar	
Margate and Long Sands SCI	n/a

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Margate and Long Sands SCI	Outer Thames Estuary SPA

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	18/05/2015	

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