Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 Sites (IPENS)

Planning for the Future

Site Improvement Plan

Ebernoe Common

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)

UK0012715 Ebernoe Common SAC

Site description

Ebernoe Common is an extensive block of mature woodland and former wood pasture which has been under continuous woodland cover for at least the last 500 years. The range of woodland types within the site and the their longstanding history allows it to support an outstanding diversity of species. In particular, Barbastelle and Bechstein's bats - who favour ancient woodland - breed in the site because it provides suitable roosting and feeding habitats. While Bechstein's feed exclusively in the woodland, Barbastelles commute into the surrounding countryside using the woodland corridors which branch out from the site.

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 Forestry and woodland management	Pressure/ Threat	H9120 Beech forests on acid soils, S1308 Barbastelle bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Investigate potential impacts of woodland management	National Trust, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, Sussex Bat Group
2 Offsite habitat availability/ management	Pressure	S1308 Barbastelle bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Further investigation of bat movements and requirements	National Trust, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, Sussex Bat Group
3 Habitat fragmentation	Threat	S1308 Barbastelle bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Investigation (through genetic analysis) of how this site relates to other bat SACs in the southern UK	National Trust, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, Sussex Bat Group
4 Change in land management	Pressure/ Threat	S1308 Barbastelle bat	Further investigation of foraging and bat commuting routes	National Trust, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, Sussex Bat Group
5 Hydrological changes	Threat	S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Investigate hydrology, improve overall hydrological management, and mitigate potential impacts from development	Natural England

6 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Threat	H9120 Beech forests on acid soils, S1308 Barbastelle bat, S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Further investigate potential atmospheric nitrogen impacts	Natural England
7 Public Access/Disturbance	Pressure/ Threat	S1323 Bechstein`s bat	Investigate present light levels and assess their impact and alleviate if necessary.	National Trust, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, Sussex Bat Group

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 Forestry and woodland management

Woodland management for SSSI features (lichens, invertebrates) which require higher light levels may have a significant impact on the bat species. Additionally some management of the beech woodland is necessary in places. More information about potential impacts on bat species is required.

Action	*Action description*	*Cost estimate*	*Timescale*	*Mechanism*	*Funding option*	*Delivery lead body*	*Delivery partner(s)*
1A	Investigate potential impacts of woodland and wood pasture management in and around the site for other designated features on bat species/population.	£50,000	2015-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	EU LIFE	Local partnership	National Trust, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, Sussex Bat Group

Action	*Action description*	*Cost estimate*	*Timescale*	*Mechanism*	*Funding option*	*Delivery lead body*	*Delivery partner(s)*
1B	Once research has been undertaken into the requirements of the SAC species, tailored management can take place inside the site and outside where bat species are known to use the habitat.	£500,000	2016-20	Habitat creation / restoration strategy: Habitat restoration	EU LIFE	Local partnership	National Trust, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, Sussex Bat Group

2 Offsite habitat availability/ management

The protected site is limited woodland core area where breeding colonies are known to exisit. The bats, however, rely on commuting and foraging habitat outside of the site and this needs to be better understood, protected and appropriately managed. It would also be useful to understand how this site relates to other bat SACs in the southern part of the UK to ensure that they and the connecting habitats are managed appropriately to maintain favourable populations.

Action	*Action description*	*Cost estimate*	*Timescale*	*Mechanism*	*Funding option*	*Delivery lead body*	*Delivery partner(s)*
2A	The designated area of the site is limited to a core area of woodland/wood pasture which is unlikely to reflect the requirements of the species.Further area should be identified with suitable available, restored or created habitat to provide foraging, swarming activty and commuting to hibernating sites and connectivity to related sites.	£100,000	2015-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	EU LIFE	Local partnership	National Trust, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, Sussex Bat Group

3 Habitat fragmentation

Ebernoe Common and The Mens are similar SACs which lie within 5km of each other. It is likely that the bat populations of both sites are genetically linked. Barbastelle bats are known to commute more than 5km and there is continuous woodland cover between the sites to allow Bechstein's to travel. There is a case to investigate whether the two sites should be treated within one overarching Natura 2000 site. It would also be useful to understand (through genetic analysis) how this site relates to other bat SACs in the southern part of the UK to ensure that they and the connecting habitats are managed appropriately to maintain favourable populations.

Action	*Action description*	*Cost estimate*	*Timescale*	*Mechanism*	*Funding option*	*Delivery lead body*	*Delivery partner(s)*
3A	Investigate whether Ebernoe Common SAC and The Mens SAC should be treated as one overarching Natura 2000 site. Investigation (through genetic analysis) of how this site relates to other bat SACs in the southern part of the UK to ensure that they and the connecting habitats are managed appropriately to maintain favourable populations.	£100,000	2015-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	EU LIFE	Local partnership	National Trust, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, Sussex Bat Group

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
3B	Once research has been undertaken into the requirements of the SAC species, tailored management to habitats where bats commute and forage can take place particularly outside the designated areas.	costs covered in action 1B	2016-20	Habitat creation / restoration strategy: Habitat restoration	EU LIFE	Local partnership	National Trust, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, Sussex Bat Group

4 Change in land management

Land management in the surrounding countryside will have an impact on foraging areas for Barbastelle bats but at present the forage requirements (how much habitat and of what type) are poorly understood. Ultimately, inadequate foraging will impact on breeding success within the site. Further investigation of foraging and bat commuting route requirements of notified bat species is required, informing better managment of mature hedgerows which need to be restored and maintained in the area around the site.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
4A	Further investigation of foraging and bat commuting route requirements (both inside and outside of the site) of notified bat species. Further understanding of these requirements will ultimately help deliver better management of foraging and commuting habitat in the surrounding landscape.	£100,000	2015-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	EU LIFE	Local partnership	National Trust, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, Sussex Bat Group

5 Hydrological changes

Recent research has shown that water availability (ponds and streams) within Bechstein's breeding sites is likely to be important. Housing development around the site and hydrological changes in the local area could impact on the availability of these habitats.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
5A	Investigate hydrology in and around the site, improve overall hydrological management in and around the site, and mitigate potential impacts from development.	£15,000	2015-16	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Natural England	Natural England	n/a

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.

Action	*Action description*	*Cost estimate*	*Timescale*	*Mechanism*	*Funding option*	*Delivery lead body*	*Delivery partner(s)*
6A	Further investigate potential atmospheric nitrogen impacts on the site based on application of guidance from Chief Scientist Group Nitrogen Task and Finish Group.	Not yet determined	2014-17	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Not yet determined	Natural England	n/a

7 Public Access/Disturbance

It is known that light pollution has an impact on both myotis species, ie Bechstein's and Horseshoe bats. The investigation would seek to identify what light levels are presently and deduce whether they are having an impact on bat movements/roosting availability in and around the SAC areas.

Action	*Action description*	*Cost estimate*	*Timescale*	*Mechanism*	*Funding option*	*Delivery lead body*	*Delivery partner(s)*
7A	Investigation of the impact of light pollution on the bat populations.	Not yet determined	2015-16	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	EU LIFE	Local partnership	National Trust, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, Sussex Bat Group

Site details

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

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Ebernoe Common SAC	S1308 *Barbastella barbastellus*: Barbastelle bat S1323 *Myotis bechsteinii*: Bechstein`s bat H9120 Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with Ilex and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion robori-petraeae or Ilici-Fagenion*)

Site location and links

Ebernoe Common SAC

Area (ha) **234.93** *Grid reference* **SU977273**	Map link
Local Authorities	West Sussex
Site Conservation Objectives	European Site Conservation Objectives for Ebernoe Common 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 (RMBP) 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.

Ebernoe Common SAC

River basin	South East RBMP
WFD Management catchment	Arun & Western Streams
WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)	GB107041012300

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Ebernoe Common SAC	Ebernoe Common SSSI

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Ebernoe Common SAC	Ebernoe Common NNR

Ramsar	
Ebernoe Common SAC	n/a

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Ebernoe Common SAC	n/a

Version	*Date*	*Comment*
1.0	06/03/15	