

Site Improvement Plan

Helbeck & Swindale Woods

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)

UK0030167 Helbeck & Swindale Woods SAC

Site description

The *Tilio-Acerion* woods here have developed over limestone, with crags, blocks and fine scree showing through in parts. In the Swindale section there is a steep-sided gorge with cliffs up to 30 m high. The wood is predominantly ash *Fraxinus excelsior* with some elm *Ulmus sp.* and has a rich ground flora.

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 | H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes | Improve the structural diversity and composition by controlling Sycamore and managing open areas | Forestry Commission, Ministry of Defence (MoD), Natural England |
| 2 Disease | Threat | H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes | Monitor for the presence of ash dieback disease and plan for its possible impacts | Forestry Commission, Ministry of Defence (MoD), Natural England, Woodland Trust |
| 3 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition | Pressure/Threat | H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes | Control, reduce and ameliorate the impacts of atmospheric nitrogen deposition | Not yet determined |

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

Glades and other open areas add structural diversity to the woodlands and provide important habitat for associated species. However these require management if they are to be maintained. Some areas, particularly within Helbeck Woods have very dense even-age stands, which require some management, particularly to support lichen populations. Sycamore, a non-native species, is present at undesirable levels in some parts of the wood. The aim is to control and reduce its extent.

| Action | Action description | Cost estimate | Timescale | Mechanism | Funding option | Delivery lead body | Delivery partner(s) |
|--------|---|---------------|-----------|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1A | Control and reduce sycamore particularly in Helbeck Wood. | £7,500 | 2015-21 | Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Common Agricultural Policy 2014-20 (New Environmental Land Management Scheme) | Rural Development Programme (RDPE) | Natural England | n/a |
| 1B | Control and reduce Sycamore in Helbeck Wood. | £5,000 | 2015-20 | Major Landowner Group land ownership activities : Undertake Specific Management Works | Ministry of Defence (MoD) | Ministry of Defence (MoD) | Natural England |

| Action | Action description | Cost estimate | Timescale | Mechanism | Funding option | Delivery lead body | Delivery partner(s) |
|--------|---|---------------|-----------|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1C | Manage the woodland structure and maintain open areas and glades. | £5,000 | 2015-20 | Major Landowner Group land ownership activities : Undertake Specific Management Works | Ministry of Defence (MoD) | Ministry of Defence (MoD) | Natural England |
| Action | Action description | Cost estimate | Timescale | Mechanism | Funding option | Delivery lead body | Delivery partner(s) |
| 1D | Manage the woodland structure and maintain open areas and glades. | £7,500 | 2015-21 | Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Common Agricultural Policy 2014-20 (New Environmental Land Management Scheme) | Rural Development Programme (RDPE) | Natural England | Forestry Commission |

2 Disease

Ash dieback disease is caused by the fungus *Chalara fraxinea*. Whilst the disease has only recently arrived in the UK and its impact is not fully understood it has the potential to kill large numbers of ash trees at this site if it were to arrive. As ash is one of characteristic components of the tree canopy its loss could alter the structure and composition of the woodland types present.

| Action | Action description | Cost estimate | Timescale | Mechanism | Funding option | Delivery lead body | Delivery partner(s) |
|--------|---|---------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---|
| 2A | Monitor the wood annually for signs of ash dieback disease. | £1,500 | 2014-20 | Investigation / Research / Monitoring | Forestry Commission | Local partnership | Forestry Commission, Ministry of Defence (MoD), Natural England, Woodland Trust |

| <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> |
|---------------|--|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 2B | Develop a contingency management plan for the impact of ash die back disease on the SAC. | Not yet determined | 2015 | Investigation / Research / Monitoring | Not yet determined | Natural England | Forestry Commission, Ministry of Defence (MoD) |

3 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

Nitrogen deposition exceeds site relevant critical loads. The precise impacts are unclear and require further investigation.

| <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 | Control, reduce, ameliorate atmospheric nitrogen impacts | Not yet determined | 2014-20 | Site Nitrogen Action Plan | Not yet determined | Not yet determined | Not yet determined |

Site details

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

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Helbeck & Swindale Woods SAC H9180# *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines

Site location and links

Helbeck & Swindale Woods SAC

Area (ha) **136.38** Grid reference **NY784164** [Map link](#)

Local Authorities Cumbria

Site Conservation Objectives [European Site Conservation Objectives for Helbeck & Swindale Woods 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.

Helbeck & Swindale Woods SAC

River basin

[Solway Tweed RBMP](#)

WFD Management catchment

Eden and Esk

WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)

GB102076070760

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

| Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) | |
|--|---|
| Helbeck & Swindale Woods SAC | Swindale Wood SSSI Helbeck Wood SSSI |
| National Nature Reserve (NNR) | |
| Helbeck & Swindale Woods SAC | n/a |
| Ramsar | |
| Helbeck & Swindale Woods SAC | n/a |
| Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) | |
| Helbeck & Swindale Woods SAC | n/a |

| <i>Version</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1.0 | 24/11/2014 | |

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