

# Site Improvement Plan

## Skipwith 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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk)

**This Site Improvement Plan covers the following Natura 2000 site(s)**

**UK0030276    Skipwith Common SAC**

## Site description

Skipwith Common is an extensive area of lowland heath within the Vale of York. There are extensive areas of wet and dry heath, with rush pasture, mire, reedbed, open water and woodland. The site is recognised for its breeding bird population with woodlark being present and nightjar are also known to have bred in the past. The site has a diverse invertebrate population with dragonflies, damselflies and moths being well represented.

## 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 Public Access/Disturbance	Pressure	H4010 Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath, H4030 European dry heaths	Wardening is considered the best way to tackle irresponsible recreational use	Natural England, Landowner(s)
2 Inappropriate scrub control	Threat	H4010 Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath, H4030 European dry heaths	Ongoing scrub clearance through agri-environment scheme	Natural England, Landowner(s)
3 Drainage	Threat	H4010 Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath, H4030 European dry heaths	Monitoring success of previous drainage mitigation	Natural England
4 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Pressure	H4010 Wet heathland with cross-leaved heath, H4030 European dry heaths	Site Nitrogen Action Plan	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 Public Access/Disturbance

Most of Skipwith Common is Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) access land, with large numbers of visitors, many with dogs. Although the site is also a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and there is some wardening and presence on the ground to police dog walkers, uncontrolled dogs affect site management through stock worrying and loss of stock to dog attacks. This has the knock-on effect of threatening future grazing management. If the site was unable to be grazed this would adversely affect the wet and dry heath communities.

<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>
<b>1A</b>	Additional wardening on the Common.	£5,000 per year	2014 onwards	Advice: Wardening	Natural England (NNR running costs)	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>
<b>1B</b>	Signage and other education and awareness raising activities.	£10,000	2014 onwards	Advice: Education & awareness raising	Not yet determined	Natural England	Landowner(s)

## 2 Inappropriate scrub control

Scrub encroachment, particularly by regenerating birch, if unchecked would threaten SAC heathland habitats.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
2A	Additional scrub control through HLS amendment.	£20,000	2014 onwards	Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Environmental Stewardship Higher Level Scheme (HLS)	Not yet determined	Natural England	Landowner(s)

## 3 Drainage

Changes in hydrology and drainage have capacity to affect distribution of SAC heathland communities. Changes in hydrology have occurred as a result of mining subsidence in the past. Although mitigation has been implemented to rectify hydrological changes, monitoring is required in order to ensure mitigation delivers desired results.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
3A	Monitor success of previous mitigation.	£20,000	2014-20	Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE): Environmental Stewardship Higher Level Scheme (HLS)	Not yet determined	Natural England	n/a

## 4 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

Nitrogen deposition exceeds site relevant critical loads for all SAC features. No observed impacts as a result of air pollution apparent although some work has been undertaken in connection with intensive agriculture (poultry units). This suggested heather beetle damage could be exacerbated by air pollution and lead to unfavourable condition.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
4A	Further investigate potential atmospheric nitrogen impacts on sites 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

## Site details

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

### Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

<b>Skipwith Common SAC</b>	H4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>
	H4030 European dry heaths

### Site location and links

#### Skipwith Common SAC

Area (ha) **295.2**      Grid reference **SE668362**      [Map link](#)

Local Authorities      North Yorkshire

Site Conservation Objectives      [European Site Conservation Objectives for Skipwith 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 (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.*

### **Skipwith Common SAC**

River basin

[Humber RBMP](#)

WFD Management catchment

Derwent Humber, Wharfe and Lower Ouse

WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)

GB104027063690

## Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

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

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

Ramsar	
Skipwith Common SAC	n/a

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

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	18/12/2014	

[www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000)

