

Site Improvement Plan

Hastings Cliffs

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)

UK0030165 Hastings Cliffs SAC

Site description

Hastings Cliffs SAC are an area of actively eroding soft cliff that includes the most southerly exposures of the lower Hastings Beds. The site contains three valleys cut into the strata, which support woodland and scrub habitats with an unusual 'Atlantic' bryophyte flora.

Closer to the sea the maritime influence stunts the trees, but other bryophytes become important here, with one species, fragrant crestwort *Lophocolea fragrans*, at its only south-east England locality. Maritime scrub and coastal heathland are found closer to the cliff edge, with grassland supporting maritime species such as thrift *Armeria maritima*. The clay cliff slopes are eroding and support a range of habitats from bare ground and flushes to maritime grassland and scrub, reflecting the successional development of vegetation following cliff-falls.

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 Inappropriate coastal management	Pressure/ Threat	H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs	Establish extent, composition and condition of features, and management recommendations for each habitat.	Natural England
2 Water Pollution	Threat	H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs	Identify, map and advise on hydrological features management and restoration	Environment Agency, Hastings Borough Council, Natural England, Landowner(s)
3 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Threat	H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs	Further investigate potential atmospheric nitrogen impacts on the site	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 Inappropriate coastal management

There is a lack of good environmental information on the extent, composition and condition of the Annex 1 SAC qualifying habitats and/or those supporting habitat elements. As such it is difficult to a) establish whether appropriate management is in place to ensure favourable condition status can be achieved and b) understand the impacts of dynamic coastal erosion on the structure and function of existing cliff habitat and the inland habitats evolutionary sequence to ensure these can adapt without adverse affects. Current review work has also identified the potential for additional Natura 2000 features to be present within and adjacent to the site.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Establish extent, composition and condition of the Annex I habitat qualifying features ensuring that effective coastal change adaptations are considered, then produce costed management and/or restoration recommendations for each habitat. The site is dynamic at the coastal fringe, so any survey method needs to take account of this and report on how these elements will change over time, and assess impacts of any coastal erosion control measures and the impacts these may have on the cliff habitats, their structure and function, and the inland sequence of cliff top habitats.	£30,000	2015-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Natural England	Natural England	n/a

2 Water Pollution

Concerns have been raised over occasional reports of poor water quality in the ancient gill woodlands. Drainage systems, together with locations of natural springs, seepages and wet flushes are currently unmapped on site. Suitable water levels and water quality are required to support SAC habitat features.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
2A	Investigate sources of water pollution and make recommendations to eliminate or reduce impacts	£5,000	2015-17	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Natural England	Natural England	Environment Agency, Hastings Borough Council, Landowner(s)

<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	Depending on outcome of the above water pollution investigation, further action will be needed to eliminate or reduce impacts through a Diffuse Water Pollution plan and/or monitoring.	£5,000	2018-20	Diffuse Water Pollution Plan	Natural England	Natural England	Environment Agency, Hastings Borough Council, Landowner(s)
<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>
2C	Identify, map and monitor all surface and groundwater systems: ditches, streams, drains, natural springs, seepages and wet flushes to ensure that the water quantity and water quality required to support SAC habitat features is located and appropriately managed or restored to ensure favourable conservation status.	£46,500	2017-20	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Natural England	Natural England	n/a

3 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

Nitrogen deposition - there is a lack of established critical load habitat comparison data, however, there are concerns that there is a risk of atmospheric nitrogen impacts on the site. This requires 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	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	Not yet determined

Site details

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

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Hastings Cliffs SAC

H1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts

Site location and links

Hastings Cliffs SAC

Area (ha) **183.72** Grid reference **TQ866111** [Map link](#)

Local Authorities East Sussex

Site Conservation Objectives [European Site Conservation Objectives for Hastings Cliffs 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.

Hastings Cliffs SAC

River basin

[South East RBMP](#)

WFD Management catchment

Cuckmere & Pevensey Levels

WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)

n/a

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Hastings Cliffs SAC	Hastings Cliffs to Pett Beach SSSI

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Hastings Cliffs SAC	n/a

Ramsar	
Hastings Cliffs SAC	n/a

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Hastings Cliffs SAC	n/a

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	22/12/14	

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