

Site Improvement Plan

Rodborough 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)

UK0012826 Rodborough Common SAC

Site description

Rodborough Common is the most extensive area of semi-natural dry grasslands surviving in the Cotswolds of central southern England, and represents CG5 *Bromus erectus* – *Brachypodium pinnatum* grassland, which is more or less confined to the Cotswolds.

The site contains a wide range of structural types, ranging from short turf through to scrub margins, although short-turf vegetation is mainly confined to areas of shallower soils.

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 Undergrazing	Pressure/ Threat	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	Increase grazing pressure in key areas	Gloucestershire County Council, National Trust, Natural England, Commons group(s)
2 Public Access/Disturbance	Pressure/ Threat	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	Reduce impact of recreational use	Gloucestershire County Council, National Trust, Natural England, Stroud District Council, Commons group(s)
3 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Threat	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	Further investigate potential atmospheric nitrogen impacts	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 Undergrazing

Undergrazing is an issue due to the reliance on the rights of commoners to turn out cattle. The number of stock have dropped over the years to the point that additional cattle now need to be electric fenced on to the most species-rich areas on the slopes. Of key importance is the lack of cattle grids on minor roads which means that Commoners are less inclined to push the cattle on to the lower slopes where they may escape onto busy surrounding roads. It is these lower slopes that are the most species-rich and are suffering from a lack of grazing. A better evidence base (NVC survey, see action 2A) relating to the state of the site's grasslands is desirable to support the case for improved grazing.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Six cattle grids on minor roads are required to prevent cattle from straying when Commoners are encouraged to push cattle on to the lower slopes.	£220,000	2014-16	Partnership agreement	Not yet determined	Commons group(s)	Gloucestershire County Council, National Trust, Natural England
1B	Additional liaison with partners required, to increase grazing intensity across the Common (particularly on the lower slopes).	Staff time	2014-16	Advice: Negotiation	Natural England	Natural England	National Trust, Commons group(s)
1C	Clearance of some of the secondary woodland which has developed around the edges of the Common as a result of sustained undergrazing (beyond the scope of HLS), and its restoration to grassland.	£50,000	2015-18	Habitat creation / restoration strategy: Habitat restoration	Natural England	National Trust	Natural England, Commons group(s)

2 Public Access/Disturbance

The common is very close to Stroud and recreational use has greatly increased over the past few decades. This has created many new paths and parking areas which cause soil compaction to the detriment of the surrounding sward. Dog faeces is a particular issue which also damages the sward but also poses a real disease risk to the cattle which are vital to the management of the Common. New and proposed housing continues to add to the problem.

<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>
2A	Assessment of grassland (including NVC) and access strategy required regarding impacts of recreation on the Common.	£10,000	2015-16	Advice: Access Strategy	Natural England	Natural England	Gloucestershire County Council, National Trust, Commons group(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	Partnership with Local Planning Authority (and landowner/ occupier) to minimise risk of increasing housing around Stroud leading to increased recreational pressure on the Common.	No cost	2015-20	Partnership agreement: Other	No net cost	Stroud District Council	National Trust, Natural England, Commons group(s)

3 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

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.

<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	2015-17	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

Rodborough Common SAC

H6210# Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*)

Site location and links

Rodborough Common SAC

Area (ha) **104.26** Grid reference **SO849036** [Map link](#)

Local Authorities Gloucestershire

Site Conservation Objectives [European Site Conservation Objectives for Rodborough 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.

Rodborough Common SAC

<i>River basin</i>	Severn RBMP
<i>WFD Management catchment</i>	Severn Vale
<i>WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)</i>	n/a

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Rodborough Common SAC	Rodborough Common SSSI Minchinhampton Common SSSI
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Rodborough Common SAC	n/a
Ramsar	
Rodborough Common SAC	n/a
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Rodborough Common SAC	n/a

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	06/05/2015	

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000

