

Site Improvement Plan

Hamford Water

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)

UK0030377 Hamford Water cSAC

UK9009131 Hamford Water SPA

Site description

The Hamford Water Site Improvement Plan covers the area of the Hamford Water SPA and the Hamford Water cSAC.

Hamford Water is a large, shallow estuarine basin comprising tidal creeks and islands, intertidal mud and sand flats, and saltmarshes. The flats are a small, locally sheltered area of medium to low level clay and silt flats. In places, particularly on the seaward side, the London Clay bedrock is exposed, and this area with soft recent muds provides contrasting substrates for inter-tidal algae and invertebrates. The saltmarsh fringe is of varying width outside the sea wall around most of Hamford Water, and the islands, notably Horsey, Skippers, Hedge-End and Garnham's, have substantial saltmarsh on their margins or, locally, within their breached sea walls.

Above the saltmarsh there is unimproved and improved grassland (including grazing marsh), scrub, woodland, hedges, ditches, ponds and reedbeds. The site is important for several internationally important populations of overwintering and breeding waterfowl (SPA) as well as being the most important area for Fisher's estuarine moth *Gortyna borelii lunata* in the United Kingdom (cSAC)

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 Coastal squeeze | Threat | A046a(NB) Dark-bellied Brent Goose, A048(NB) Common shelduck, A052(NB) Eurasian teal, A132(NB) Avocet, A137(NB) Ringed Plover, A141(NB) Grey Plover, A156(NB) Black-tailed Godwit, A162(NB) Common redshank, A195(B) Little Tern | Investigate the extent of impacts | Environment Agency, Natural England |
| 2 Inappropriate scrub control | Pressure/Threat | S4035 Fisher's estuarine moth | Large-scale scrub clearance of the area of the main moth population | Environment Agency, Essex Wildlife Trust, Natural England |
| 3 Changes in species distributions | Pressure/Threat | A046a(NB) Dark-bellied Brent Goose, A048(NB) Common shelduck, A052(NB) Eurasian teal, A137(NB) Ringed Plover, A140(NB) Golden Plover, A141(NB) Grey Plover, A151(NB) Ruff, A156(NB) Black-tailed Godwit, A162(NB) Common redshank, A195(B) Little Tern, Waterbird assemblage | Investigate the extent of impact to the specific site, and the wider area | Natural England |

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------|---|---|---|
| 4 Public Access/Disturbance | Pressure/ Threat | A046a(NB) Dark-bellied Brent Goose, A048(NB) Common shelduck, A052(NB) Eurasian teal, A132(NB) Avocet, A137(NB) Ringed Plover, A140(NB) Golden Plover, A141(NB) Grey Plover, A151(NB) Ruff, A156(NB) Black-tailed Godwit, A162(NB) Common redshank, A195(B) Little Tern, Waterbird assemblage | Investigate mechanisms to manage public access and minimise disturbance | Natural England |
| 5 Air Pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition | Threat | A195(B) Little Tern | Further investigate impacts on the site using appropriate scientific guidance | Natural England |
| 6 Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine | Threat | A046a(NB) Dark-bellied Brent Goose, A048(NB) Common shelduck, A052(NB) Eurasian teal, A132(NB) Avocet, A137(NB) Ringed Plover, A140(NB) Golden Plover, A141(NB) Grey Plover, A151(NB) Ruff, A156(NB) Black-tailed Godwit, A162(NB) Common redshank, A195(B) Little Tern, Waterbird assemblage | Establish appropriate management through creation and enforcement of byelaws | Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA), 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 Coastal squeeze

Areas of intertidal saltmarsh, mudflats, sand and shingle used by overwintering and breeding birds for feeding, roosting and/or nesting are under threat from coastal squeeze. The consequences of climate change, including sea level rise and an increased frequency in coastal storms and tidal surges, are likely to be contributing factors in coastal squeeze. Tectonic subsidence along the east coast of England and hard sea defences are also likely to exacerbate the issue.

| Action | Action description | Cost estimate | Timescale | Mechanism | Funding option | Delivery lead body | Delivery partner(s) |
|--------|--|--------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1A | Investigate the extent and detail of impacts of coastal squeeze on the site to provide an understanding of the impact of coastal processes at a localised level and enable priorities for future work to be set. | Not yet determined | 2015-18 | Investigation / Research / Monitoring | Not yet determined | Environment Agency | Natural England |

2 Inappropriate scrub control

Scrub encroachment results in a loss of habitat for Fisher's Estuarine Moth, as the moth's larval foodplant (Hog's Fennel) is a species of open grassland. Although there are plans in place for scrub reduction/control in several areas, more action is likely to be needed to get/keep it under control.

| Action | Action description | Cost estimate | Timescale | Mechanism | Funding option | Delivery lead body | Delivery partner(s) |
|--------|--|--------------------|-----------|--|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2A | Large-scale removal of Blackthorn scrub from the main site for Fisher's Estuarine Moth to extend grassland with Hog's Fennel landwards. The site is an island and is very inaccessible and the project will include works to get machinery to site, remove scrub and follow-up management to manage scrub re-growth and create grassland habitat. In addition targetted scrub removal is necessary within the moth's habitat on the mainland, along stretches of sea wall and borrowdyke edge. | Not yet determined | 2016-20 | Habitat creation / restoration strategy: Creation of new habitat | Not yet determined | Essex Wildlife Trust | Environment Agency, Natural England |

3 Changes in species distributions

The decline in numbers of some species of bird in Hamford Water may be related to international changes in distribution and/or population levels related to climate change. This includes climatic variables and habitat quality issues at breeding grounds outside of the UK.

| Action | Action description | Cost estimate | Timescale | Mechanism | Funding option | Delivery lead body | Delivery partner(s) |
|--------|---|--------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 3A | Investigate how changes in numbers of waders and wildfowl recorded at site are influenced by national and international changes in distribution and/or population levels related to climate change and other factors. | Not yet determined | 2015-20 | Investigation / Research / Monitoring | Not yet determined | Natural England | Not yet determined |

4 Public Access/Disturbance

There is some unauthorised public access on foot, from boats and by quad bike/motorbike to sensitive localised areas in Hamford Water.

| Action | Action description | Cost estimate | Timescale | Mechanism | Funding option | Delivery lead body | Delivery partner(s) |
|--------|--|--------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 4A | Investigate mechanisms to manage public access and minimise disturbance to breeding and overwintering birds, focusing on the most sensitive areas. | Not yet determined | 2015-17 | Investigation / Research / Monitoring | Not yet determined | Natural England | Not yet determined |

5 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.

| Action | Action description | Cost estimate | Timescale | Mechanism | Funding option | Delivery lead body | Delivery partner(s) |
|--------|--|--------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 5A | 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 |

6 Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine

Commercial fishing activities categorised as 'amber or green' under Defra's revised approach to commercial fisheries in European Marine Sites require assessment and (where appropriate) management. This assessment will be undertaken by Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA). For activities categorised as 'green', these assessments should take account of any in-combination effects of amber activities, and/or appropriate plans or projects, in the site.

| Action | Action description | Cost estimate | Timescale | Mechanism | Funding option | Delivery lead body | Delivery partner(s) |
|--------|--|--------------------|-----------|---|--------------------|--|---------------------|
| 6A | Where the assessments indicate management is required, introduce appropriate measures. | Not yet determined | 2016 | Regulation: Creation / amendment of byelaws | Not yet determined | Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA) | Natural England |

| <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> |
|---------------|---|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 6B | If management measures are established, ensure compliance with bye-law and provide an appropriate level of reporting to ensure sites are well managed and to enable Natural England to provide advice on the condition of features and potential condition threats. | Not yet determined | 2015-20 | Enforcement: Byelaws | Not yet determined | Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA) | Natural England |

Site details

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

Qualifying features

#UK Special responsibility

Hamford Water SPA

A132(NB) *Recurvirostra avosetta*: Pied avocet
A156(NB) *Limosa limosa islandica*: Black-tailed godwit
A048(NB) *Tadorna tadorna*: Common shelduck
Waterbird assemblage
A137(NB) *Charadrius hiaticula*: Ringed plover
A046a(NB) *Branta bernicla bernicla*: Dark-bellied brent goose
A162(NB) *Tringa totanus*: Common redshank
A141(NB) *Pluvialis squatarola*: Grey plover
A195(B) *Sterna albifrons*: Little tern
A052(NB) *Anas crecca*: Eurasian teal

Site location and links

Hamford Water cSAC

Area (ha) **50.35** Grid reference **TM217276** [Map link](#)
Local Authorities Essex
Site Conservation Objectives [Hamford Water cSAC](#)
European Marine Site conservation advice [n/a](#)
Regulation 33/35 Package [n/a](#)
Marine Management Organisation site plan [n/a](#)

Hamford Water SPA

Area (ha) **2187.21** Grid reference **TM231251**

[Map link](#)

Local Authorities

Essex

Site Conservation Objectives

[Hamford Water SPA](#)

European Marine Site conservation advice

[Conservation Advice for European Marine Sites](#)

Regulation 33/35 Package

[Regulation 33/35 package link](#)

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.

Hamford Water cSAC

| | | |
|---|----------------|------------------------------|
| <i>River basin</i> | Anglian | Anglian RBMP |
| <i>WFD Management catchment</i> | Combined Essex | |
| <i>WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)</i> | n/a | |

Hamford Water SPA

| | | |
|---|----------------|------------------------------|
| <i>River basin</i> | Anglian | Anglian RBMP |
| <i>WFD Management catchment</i> | Combined Essex | |
| <i>WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)</i> | n/a | |

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

| Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) | |
|--|--|
| Hamford Water SPA | Hamford Water SSSI Hamford Water SSSI |
| National Nature Reserve (NNR) | |
| Hamford Water cSAC | Hamford Water NNR |
| Hamford Water SPA | Hamford Water NNR |
| Ramsar | |
| Hamford Water cSAC | Hamford Water |
| Hamford Water SPA | Hamford Water |
| Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) | |
| Hamford Water SPA | Hamford Water SPA Hamford Water cSAC |

| <i>Version</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|
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