

Site Improvement Plan

Rochdale Canal

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)

UK0030266 Rochdale Canal SAC

Site description

This section of the Rochdale Canal extends approximately 20 km from Littleborough to Failsworth, passing through urban parts of Rochdale and Oldham and the intervening areas of agricultural land (mostly pasture).

Water supplied to the Rochdale Canal in part arises from the Pennines. This water is acidic and relatively low in nutrients, while water from other sources is relatively high in nutrients. The aquatic flora of the canal is thus indicative of a mesotrophic water quality (i.e. is moderately nutrient-rich) although there is evidence of some local enrichment.

One species associated with mesotrophic conditions and found on the canal is Floating water-plantain (*Luronium natans*); a European Protected Species. The canal supports a diverse range of other aquatic flora, including a very wide range of pondweeds (*Potamogeton spp*) and in places there are good stands of emergent vegetation including plants such as water violet (*Hottonia palustris*). Marginal vegetation is rich in places and includes large stands of yellow flag (*Iris pseudacorus*) and occasionally the locally uncommon royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*).

There is a rich invertebrate assemblage in excess of 112 species; 13 of these species are of local importance; two species are nationally scarce, a water beetle (*Agabus uliginosus*) and the pea mussel (*Pisidium pulchellum*). Predatory macro-invertebrates such as caddis fly larvae, adult and larval water beetles, dragonfly and damselfly larvae and certain water bugs amongst a predominantly herbivore-detritivore community is indicative of a healthy structured ecosystem. Twelve species of coarse fish predate on these invertebrates.

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 Physical modification	Threat	S1831 Floating water-plantain	Remove trees, maintain reserves, propagate <i>Luronium natans</i> , and targeted dredging	Canal and River Trust, Natural England
2 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Pressure	S1831 Floating water-plantain	Develop and implement a Site Nitrogen Action Plan	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 Physical modification

Over-shading and leaf drop from developing bank-side trees denies opportunity for Floating water plantain to establish on large and growing sections of the canal.

<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>
1A	Bankside tree removal to reduce shading effects and leaf litter input.	£60,000	2015-20	Conservation Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Conservation Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Natural England	Canal and River Trust
1B	Install local livestock fencing to protect offside bank from erosion.	£2,000	2015	Conservation Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Conservation Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Natural England	Canal and River Trust
1C	In-channel reserve maintenance to maintain effective protection for established populations of Luronium natans and provide nursery areas for propagules.	£37,000	2015	Conservation Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Conservation Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Natural England	Canal and River 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>
1D	Propagation/planting of Floating Water Plantain to help boost population and extent of the plant.	£15,000	2015-20	Conservation Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Conservation Enhancement Scheme (CES)	Natural England	Canal and River 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>
1E	Dredging to lower canal bed and removal of soft material to reduce disturbance effects on establishing plants and reduce resuspension of material effects during boat passages.	£500,000	2015-20	Navigation works: Appropriate Dredging Programme	EU Life	Natural England	Canal and River Trust

2 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

Nitrogen deposition exceeds site-relevant critical loads for the supporting habitat which is in unfavourable condition.

<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	Control, reduce and 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

Rochdale Canal SAC

S1831 *Luronium natans*: Floating water-plantain

Site location and links

Rochdale Canal SAC

Area (ha) **25.55**

Grid reference **SD893038**

[Map link](#)

Local Authorities

Rochdale; Tameside

Site Conservation Objectives

[European Site Conservation Objectives for Rochdale Canal 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.

Rochdale Canal SAC

River basin

North West

[North West RBMP](#)

WFD Management catchment

Irwell

WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)

GB112069061120, GB112069061161, GB112069064600, GB112069064690, GB112069064720

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Rochdale Canal SAC	Rochdale Canal SSSI

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Rochdale Canal SAC	n/a

Ramsar	
Rochdale Canal SAC	n/a

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Rochdale Canal SAC	n/a

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	07/10/2014	

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000

