

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

DOWNS COMMITTEE

13 April 2015

Report of: Service Director, Environment and Leisure

Title: Downs Management Report

Ward: N/A

**Officer Presenting Report: Andrew Gordon,
Heritage Planning and Partnership Officer**

Contact Telephone Number: 0117 9639194

RECOMMENDATION:

Members:

To note the points and recommendations made in the report.

Summary

This report reflects the objectives of the Downs Management Plan and to inform members of progress since the last meeting.

The significant issues in the report are:

- ⌘ Enjoyment
- ⌘ Access
- ⌘ Working Groups
- ⌘ Landscape
- ⌘ Wildlife
- ⌘ Management and Resources.

1. Policy

Not Applicable

2. Consultation

a) Internal

John Williams, Area Manager North.

Andrew Gordon, Heritage Planning and Partnership Officer

Mike Allen, Business Manager
Becky Belfin, Nature Conservation Officer
Richard Ennion, Environmental Improvement Manager

b) External

Mandy Leivers, Avon Gorge and Downs Biodiversity Education Officer
Jack Penrose, FOD + AG
Chris Westcott, Natural England

3. Context

Enjoyment:

Following member's agreement, to create a new BBQ area on both sides of Ladies Mile and at Parry's Lane, officers and a member visited the new locations, to decide how the BBQs should be set out. After careful consideration of the landscape setting, ground maintenance requirements, and the numbers of BBQ places that should be provided to meet expected demand, it was decided that 9 locations should be provided, including 7 at Ladies Mile and 2 at Parry's Lane (see attachment 1 for maps showing locations). Each location would consist of a picnic bench, fixed to the ground, with a cluster of up to 4 stone slabs around it (see attachment 2 for photomontage of what a typical picnic bench and slabs could look like).

Recommendation: Members approve the locations and lay out of BBQs at Ladies Mile and Parry's Lane as set out above.

Access:

Information provided by BCC Security Services recorded only one incident of anti-social behaviour, from 1 January until 11 March 2015, involving unauthorised parking on the grass.

Working Groups

Traffic group

A workshop was run by the City Design Group to enable them to understand what members requirements are for developing integrated transport strategy for the Downs. The outcome of the workshop is that CDG have produced a draft brief for a place and movement framework which is to be presented in item no. 9.

Interpretation subgroup

Members agreed at the last meeting that a subgroup should set up to consider how the Downs 2012-2017 management plan objectives relating to interpretation materials on the Downs could be progressed. These include:

- 7.1.4 Review provision of existing information materials and develop new high quality interpretation materials as appropriate.

- 7.1.6 Produce an all-encompassing interpretation and promotional plan (covering access, recreation, history, wildlife etc.) to ensure that the Downs are widely promoted.
- 7.6.16 Provide an information point adjacent to Stoke Road, which includes emergency telephone contact numbers and information such as public notices.

Members and Officers met on 26 February 2015 to discuss the audits of both wildlife and non-wildlife interpretation materials provided by the Avon Gorge and Downs Biodiversity Officer (see attachment 3a & 3b). The key outcomes and recommendations from the meeting (see attachment 4) are:

- The audits mean that the objective to review the existing information materials has been met
- To refurbish 3 existing welcome boards by next spring/winter including displaying the byelaws. These would be displayed at the white tree roundabout, the observatory and water tower
- The history of the Downs panels displayed along the railings at the water tower should be taken down, as they have reached the end of their life and placed in the Downs changing rooms.
- The Downs history leaflets should be reprinted after the artwork has been reviewed.
- The Downs webpages should be updated and this should include PDF of the history leaflet and all of the up-to-date wildlife project leaflets.
- The Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project tree and meadow trail leaflets should be reprinted in 2015/16 and 2016/17 respectively.
- The Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife project website should be redesigned and updated to reflect the changing partnership.
- Avon Gorge trail leaflets to promote the geology and wildlife should be created. It was considered this can only be progressed after the gorge access issues have been addressed including waiting for decision on the proposed five closures of the Portway
- With regard to management plan objective to produce an all-encompassing interpretation and promotional plan, the group suggested that the Green Capital (GC) project should promote the importance of Downs in helping to deliver its objectives. To this end Councillor Morgan agreed to write to media person dealing with Green Capital and to ask question at a Council meeting about how BCC estates and parks are contributing to delivery of GC objectives including making links with the tourist office
- Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project (AGDWP) should sell greeting cards.
- That the AGDWP seasonal Educational Officer is made into full time post. A case will be presented by the Educational officer to members at their meeting next November 2015 as part of a proposal to extend the project for a further 5 years.

Recommendation: Members are asked to support the subgroup recommendations. The Downs finance officer has advised that likely

expenditure is affordable from the Downs reserves.

Rock Fall Group:

Bridge Road:

Parson's Brinkerhoff (PB) have completed an evaluation of mapping /tactile rock inspection of the rock faces on the northern side of Bridge Road (see the findings of inspection in their letter in attachment 5a). In summary the inspection found that the extent of instability of the two faces i.e. eastern and western sections was greater than when they originally inspected them.

The situation has been complicated by officers being approached by the representatives from the local Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) group raising concerns that the rock stabilisation, especially rock netting, will impact on the ability for interested parties to access/view the geological features of interest associated with rock faces to be stabilised. To ensure these concerns are taken into consideration, the RIGS group, officers and PB have met representatives from the group to explain the health and safety issues presented by the Bridge Road rock face, the stabilisation options and to understand the importance of the geological exposures and why there is need to maintain access to them. The primary importance of the geological exposures is that they are the only examples of mineral deposits and fossils, around 350 million years ago, which are accessible to school groups in the Avon Gorge.

In summary PB have looked at the options (see PB letter in attachment 5b) to stabilise the rock faces and identified an approach which offers both measures to reduce the risk of further rock fall on to the Bridge Road pavement, as well as allowing continued access to the geological exposures. This includes:

- Netting and rock nailing the eastern section, which has the greatest instability of the two sections.
- Netting and rock nailing the top of the western section which has a greater instability and using rock bolts only to stabilise unstable rocks found below this area, thereby allowing continued access to geological exposures.

The estimated cost (before going out to tender) for these works is £28,000.

PB advises that the timescale from agreeing the design to completion of the works is estimated at around 13 weeks.

Recommendation: That the members agree to the netting and rock nailing of the whole of eastern rock section and partial netting and rock bolting of the western section to reduce the liabilities to reasonably practicable level.

Risk Management of Rock faces.

BCC Highways consultants have completed rock face inspection/survey using drones and ground inspections to identify hazards to the Portway, network rail line and the public. The inspection report has not yet been provided.

Landscape:

The restoration of the Victorian steps in the Gully and has been completed and results are impressive and will significantly enhance public access in this area. (See photographs in attachment 6).

Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge (FODAG) have all carried out access enhancement by clearing scrub encroaching onto the Gully footpath. They have informed officers they intend to approach members for support in carrying out further access enhancements in the Gully.

Members are asked to note that officers have received a communication from the (FODAG) supporting the work carried out by the Downs Team which states *“FODAG would like to acknowledge the work that has been undertaken to restore the ramparts of the Hill Fort at Observatory Hill. The phased program of work to remove small trees and scrub from the hill is restoring this important historic landscape. The task has been carried out sensitively in-house by the Downs team, with the assistance of offenders from the Community Payback Scheme. FOD+AG look forward to the completion of the final stages of the program”*.

e) Wildlife:

The Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project Steering Group has commented on drafts of both a Scrub Management Plan for the Downs, and a Woodland Management Plan for the Bristol side of the Avon Gorge. Final versions of these plans will be brought to Downs Committee for consideration and approval at the next meeting in July.

It is likely that the Project Steering Group will need to develop a large funding bid to secure the resources necessary to implement the remaining actions in the Avon Gorge Management Plan, and address the actions from the Avon Gorge Site Improvement Plan (see attachment 7). The Project Steering Group would like to approach the Downs Committee for a contribution towards match-funding in relation to this work. The BCC Nature Conservation Officer will bring a detailed request for such funding to a subsequent Committee meeting for consideration.

f) Management and Resources:

Apart from the normal daily litter removal, goat checking and weekly football pitch preparation, the Downs Team have completed the annual cut back of growth on Bridge Valley Road, which are required for health and safety maintenance and tactile inspections of the rock faces. Work on the Clifton Hill Fort bank for another season has stopped for the breeding bird period. Various chipping jobs have been completed including arising's from a conservation rope work contractor. Two memorial benches have been assembled and installed. The team have also planted two Hawthorns trees outside Engineers House, cut back herbaceous beds on the Downs and hedges around the toilet blocks. They will need to wait for suitable ground conditions to begin some of the planned soiling/seeding reinstatement works required including the Sea Walls rock stabilisation contractor compound.

The Area Manager, North has tendered the Downs hay cut (the closing date will be 27th March). He will need a decision on the preferred contractor and on whether or not to deliver free bails to the City farms (as there is a cost for this). It is proposed the quotes received are circulated to members for comment and final decision made by the Lord Mayor and Master.

Finance

Following a request from members to see further details about the proposed refreshment unit at Sea walls, officers have provided a location plan and photomontages showing what the unit (see attachments 8 a,b & c) and associated infrastructure could look like. The revised costs of the installing infrastructure including a reduced area of hard standing for just the parking unit and provision of an electrical supply are estimated as being around £11,000. The anticipated income from the concession offered for 3 year period is estimated to be between £10,000 and £15,000. BCC Markets charge approximately 7% management fee (for invoicing & complaints handling).

Recommendation: Members are asked to decide whether or not they wish to allow the concession, taking into account the new information provided.

Risk Assessment:

Officers have met with BCC Corporate Safety in response to the petition to raise the height of the Sea Walls cliff barriers, to reduce the number suicides along this cliff. Corporate Safety will be providing a risk assessment of the cliffs and existing barriers, but their initial response suggests the barriers are a reasonably practicable measure to reduce the risk of falling from the cliffs.

5. Public Sector Equality Duties

5a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with

the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:

- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

6. Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

The Clifton and Durdham Downs (Bristol) Act 1861 provides that the Downs should remain as a place for the resort and recreation of the citizens of Bristol, and that a committee should be appointed to manage them. The recommendations of this report are within the powers conferred by this statute.

Financial

(a) Revenue:

(b) Capital

None

Financial advice provided by Mike Allen, Business Partner.

7. Land

The land is under the control of the Downs Committee.

8. Personnel

Not applicable

Appendices: 1 & 2

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: None

Bristol City Council
Clifton and Durdham Downs
Proposed BBQ Locations



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ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE

Scale : @A3 1:1,298
 Date: 02/03/2015



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Bristol City Council
Clifton and Durdham Downs
Proposed BBQ Locations



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Photomontage of one of the BBQ locations including a picnic bench and surrounding 4 stone slabs



Photomontage of one of the BBQ locations including a picnic bench and 2 stone slabs



Google map

Photomontage showing the proposed location of a refreshment van at Sea Walls, Durdham Downs



Audit of non-wildlife interpretation for the Avon Gorge and Downs

Since the 1990s a range of interpretive materials has been produced for the Downs including: welcome signs; panels and trail leaflets looking at the history of the site and webpages. The following is a summary of the non-wildlife interpretation that has been produced (please see the separate document outlining the interpretation produced by the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project).

	Item	When developed	Description and recommended course of action
1	Welcome interpretive panels	1990s?	Five large, wooden-framed 'welcome' panels at entry points to the Downs. Only one remains (by White tree roundabout). The others were: by the fountain / ice-cream van as you approach the Observatory; at the junction of Fountain Hill / Circular Road; at Seawalls; beside the Water Tower. On side of the panel was a map of the site with historical and wildlife points of interest and the other side listed the bye-laws. All but the one at White tree roundabout were removed between 2002 and 2010, as they fell into disrepair or were vandalised.
2	Two interpretive panels about the history of the Iron Age Hill fort at the Observatory	2011 / 2012	The two history panels were produced with HLF funding, by Vicky Abel, as part of the public consultation to explain the scrub clearance works from the hill fort ramparts.
3	Clifton Downs history trail leaflet, Durdham Downs History trail leaflet and the history trails panels	2010/ 2011	The history trail leaflets and the panels were developed and produced by Francis Greenacre to mark the 150 th anniversary of the passing of the Downs Act. The project was funded by HLF. There are just a couple of boxes of leaflets left. The varnish on the panels (which are on the railings of the Water tower) is cracked and the panels are due to come down soon. There was talk of displaying them in the Downs changing rooms.
4	History webpages	2011	There is a link to http://www.thedowns150.org.uk/ from the City Council website page about the Downs. A collection of oral histories of the Downs can be found here and were collected for the 150 th anniversary of the Downs act.
5	Bristol city council webpages	2010?	There are web pages for the Downs and for the Avon Gorge on the city council website. They need updating.

The following are action points from the Downs and Avon Gorge management plans which we need to discuss on Tuesday 24th February ...

A Management Plan for Clifton and Durdham Downs (2012 - 2017)

7.1.4 Review provision of existing information materials and develop new high quality interpretation materials as appropriate.

7.1.6 Produce an all-encompassing interpretation and promotional plan (covering access, recreation, history, wildlife etc) to ensure that the Downs are widely promoted.

7.6.16 Provide an information point adjacent to Stoke Road, which includes emergency telephone contact numbers and information such as public notices.

A Management Plan for the Bristol side of the Avon Gorge (2010 - 2015)

6.35 Review provision of existing information materials, and develop new high quality interpretation materials as appropriate.

6.36 Develop and implement a marketing plan for the gorge to ensure that it is promoted widely

Avon Gorge & Downs Wildlife Project interpretation audit

Introduction

The Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project education programme was launched in September 2001. The aims of the programme are:

- To develop and deliver a programme of education, interpretation and promotional work to encourage greater public involvement, understanding and enjoyment of the wildlife interest of the Avon Gorge & Downs and its management, and
- To raise awareness of the significance of the Gorge as a site of both national and international importance.

Over the last 14 years a range of methods have been used to fulfil those aims, including walks, talks, course, children's and family events as well as the delivery of educational sessions for schools and play schemes. In addition to the face-to-face methods of interpreting the site, written interpretation has also been used. Some of these printed interpretive methods were developed early in the programme and need reviewing and replacing. Ideas for new interpretation are also to be considered.

Actions to carry out this audit and develop materials have been included in the two management plans that cover the area:

A Management Plan for the Bristol side of the Avon Gorge (2010 - 2015)

No.	Action	Lead	Yr 1 2010	Yr 2 2011	Yr 3 2012	Yr 4 2013	Year 5 2014	Cost band £	Source
6.14	Provide information materials about the geology of the gorge such as panels and leaflets.	AGDWP				X	X	5 – 10K	AGDWP, Downs Committee, Grand aid
6.35	Review provision of existing information materials, and develop new high quality interpretation materials as appropriate.	AGDWP		X	X			20 – 50K	AGDWP, Downs Committee, Grand aid

A Management Plan for Clifton and Durdham Downs (2012 - 2017)

No.	Action	Lead	Yr 1 2012/ 2013	Yr 2 2013/ 2014	Yr 3 2014/ 2015	Yr 4 2015/ 2016	Year 5 2016/ 2017	Cost band £	Source
7.1.4	Review provision of existing wildlife information materials, and develop new high quality interpretation materials as appropriate.	EO	X	X	X	X	X	20 – 50K	Existing resources Combination of Capital / Grant / Downs Reserves

Audit

The following table lists all of the written interpretive materials, when they were produced, if they are to be replaced and when. **Estimates of costs need to be confirmed.**

	Item	When developed	Description and recommended course of action	Estimated cost £	When
1	Discover the Downs leaflet (Regular, large print, audio CD and braille version are available).	2002, 2008, 2013	The 'Discover the wildlife of the Avon Gorge and Downs' was first produced in 2012. It was re-printed in 2008. In 2012, with funding from Downs Committee, the leaflet was completely re-designed. It was re-launched in 2013 in the following formats: regular leaflets (60,000), large print (1,000), audio CDs (100) and braille copies (30).	£6k	Begin re-design in 2016 if partners change.?
2	Postcards (Bristol onion, Bristol rock-cress, peregrine falcon and Bristol whitebeam).	2003	A series of four wildlife postcards were produced. They were exceedingly popular and were a great way to promote the special wildlife of the Avon Gorge and Downs and to highlight the work of the Project. A new set should be produced including a goat image.	£2k	2015?
3	Avon Gorge and Downs display in the Zoo	2003	The interpretation signs for this display have been in place since 2003. The text was re-written in 2014. Panels to be re-designed, re-printed and installed in 2015 if budget allows.	£10 From Zoo budget	2015
4	Wildlife interpretation panels	2003 / 2004 2013	The original nine panels were put in place in 2004. The existing panels were re-designed, re-printed and installed in 2012/ 2013. All of these panels were funded through Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship scheme. They have a life of about 5 years, so plan to replace in 2018.	£5,570 Installation £680	2018
5	Bristol Dinosaur interpretation panel	2013	A panel about the Bristol Dinosaur was designed by our graphic designer and following the design style of our wildlife panels. Bristol University paid for this work. It was installed at the top of Blackboy Hill.	£2,586	Done 2013
6	Travelling display	2003 2013	The old travelling display (produced in 2003) was re-designed at the same time as the Discover leaflet. The review, re-design and re-print was funded through Natural England's HLS scheme. One or more of the panels may have to be re-designed and re-printed if partners change.	£500	2016 – update if partners change.
7	The Downs' Meadow trail leaflet	2004, 2008	Created in 2004 (8,000 copies) and re-printed in 2008 (3,000 copies), the trail needs re-developing and re-printing. We have no copies left.	£3k	2016
8	The History of the Gorge trail	2004	This was produced in conjunction with us, as part of the BBC British Isles series. It is now out of print.	-	-
9	River Avon Trail panels	2004	A series of panels were created for the whole of the River Avon Trail. We contributed to two which were about the wildlife and landscape of the Avon Gorge. All of the panels were vandalised and there are no plans to replace	-	-

			them.		
10	The Downs' bird trail leaflet	2005, 2008, 2011 2014	Created in 2005 (5,000 copies) and re-printed in 2008 (3,000 copies), the trail was re-developed, re-printed and re-launched in 2011 (10,000). Demand was such that we re-printed a further 3,000 copies in 2014. A re-print will be needed in 2016.	£750	Re-print in 2016
11	Project website	2005	The project website was launched in 2004. The Nature Conservation Officer and Education Officer will appoint a web designer, agree the structure and write the content. Some work has been done in terms of developing a brief and re-writing sections. Work has been on hold due to time constraints and waiting to see if we will have a change in the partnership. URGENT.	£6k? re-design and re – develop. £? running costs	2015?
12	Brunel Garden display on the Clifton Suspension Bridge	2006 2013	The interpretation signs for this display were first put in place in 2006. The display was re-designed and re-printed in 2013. The Bristol onion sign has been vandalised and needs to be replaced in 2015.	£100	2015
13	The Downs' tree trail leaflet	2007, 2008, 2010	Created in 2007, 10,000 copies were printed. It was so popular we had to re-print it in 2008 (1,000). As three of the trees died, we re-developed and re-printed the trail in 2009 (15,000 copies). The current trail needs to be re-designed and re-printed in 2015. Would like to develop two other tree trails for different parts of the Downs as well.	£ 3k per leaflet	2015/16/17
14	The Downs – a natural history year (book)	2008	Written by local author Geraldine Taylor in 2008. The education officer was the natural history consultant. Out of print.	-	-
15	Peregrines of the Avon Gorge leaflet	2009 2013	Produced in conjunction with the Bristol Ornithological Club in 2009. Reprinted in 2013. Will need re-printing in 2016.	£500	2016
16	N0. 40 bus podcast	2010	Produced by Avon Wildlife Trust, the education officer contributed to the section of the bus' route that goes over the Downs. No further action needed.	-	-
17	The Downs lichen trail leaflet	2010 2011 2012 / 14	Developed and printed in 2010 (3,000 copies), it was launched in 2011. Reprint of 2,000 copies in 2012 and 3,000 in 2014.	£750	-
18	Goat grazing project interpretation panels and signs	2011 2013	Eight 'Help us look after the goat' signs were created and installed on the kissing gates. Two large information signs we designed and printed. One was installed at the top of the Gully outcrop and the other at the goat viewing area near Seawalls. All of these panels were funded through Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship scheme. They have a life of about 5 years, so plan to replace in 2018.	£2k	2018
19	Near endangered exhibition	2013	A one-off art exhibition which included endangered wildlife of the Avon Gorge and Downs. Part of the North Somerset Arts Trail.	-	-
20	Films about our wildlife	2013 / 2014	A film about the Goats in the Gully was produced by UWE student Jess Pitcher and a film about the wildlife of the Avon Gorge and Downs was produced by film maker Ester de Roij. Both have been shown as part of the talks programme but		2015/16?

			it is intended they will go on the website once completed.		
21	Downs seasonal family trail leaflets.	2014	All four seasonal family trails were produced and launched in 2014. At the moment we are photocopying them. We need to find funds to professionally print them.	£750 per leaflet	2015
22	Clifton Suspension Bridge visitors' centre	2014	Provided information and images for the displays about the wildlife of the Avon Gorge for the new Clifton Suspension Bridge visitors' centre.	-	-

On-going through the year					
1	Annual Review	x	Design, print and publish the Annual Review in conjunction with the Nature Conservation Officer and Education Officer	£1k per annum	Annually
2	Photographic library	x	Maintain and continue to build up a library of photographs of the wildlife, the landscape and events. These are used in education sessions, talks, events and to promote the site through posters, press releases and the website. They are also used in the project publications such as the annual review, nature trail leaflets and other leaflets.	£500 per annum	On-going
3	Monthly Downs diary	x	Continue to produce and display the monthly Downs diary in the notice boards at the top of Blackboy Hill and in the Zoo. We post it on the project Facebook page. Aim to have an electronic version on the website.	-	Monthly
4	Social media	x	We have a Facebook page and twitter account. Would like to do more but limited time.	-	Ongoing
5	Exploration of other interpretive methods and promotional opportunities		Explore new and innovative methods of interpreting the site and other promotional opportunities as they arise. A list of ideas is attached at the end of this document but rely on opportunities / funding / the right partners..		Ongoing

Planned new developments					
1	Geology trail leaflet and panels		To be developed in conjunction with local experts from the Avon RIGS group. Funding needs to be found. This can only be progressed in conjunction with the plans to produce safe crossings on the Portway (See gorge management plan). Was due to be developed in 2013 and in place 2014.	£20k needed	2015/16 (if highways improvements can be achieved)
2	Circular wildlife trail walks leaflets – taking in routes linking the Downs and Gorge.		This can only be progressed in conjunction with the plans to produce safe circular routes in the gorge. (See the gorge management plan). Was to be developed in 2014.	£3k each needed	2015/16 (if highways improvements can be achieved)

Publicity and promotion

Over the last 14 years we have promoted the wildlife of the Avon Gorge and Downs very effectively. We have appeared on Countryfile, BBC radio 4, BBC radio Bristol, ITV and Points West. Numerous articles have appeared in newspapers, magazines and as part of internet articles.

New ideas

All rely on the opportunity arising i.e., the right partners / funding or other resources being in place.

- Wildlife guide apps for smart phones
- Joggers' podcasts –seasonal ones about the wildlife
- Develop a Flickr page (need to investigate how to moderate this)
- Create a selection of greetings cards to be sold in aid of the project (walk participants have been asking about goat ones)
- Publish a story about the goats for small children (it's been written and is being used in education session but we'd need to commission illustrations, a graphic designer and get them printed. It should also be made into a web book)
- Create stronger links with Tourist information, including promotional materials
- Display about the project inside the Observatory
- Stronger links with other city green spaces / heritage parks – links to other sites on signage / BCC website /having each others leaflets
- Create carved interpretive benches (e.g. carved in the shape of the whitebeam leaves)

Subgroup meeting to discuss delivery of the 2012-2017 Downs Management Plan objectives for interpretation held on 26 February 2015

Present:

Francis Greenacre (FG) –Merchant Venturer
Glenise Morgan (GM) –Councillor
Andrew Gordon (AG) –Heritage Planning and Partnership officer
Ben Skuse (BS) – Downs Supervisor
Mandy Leivers (ML) – Avon Gorge & Downs Biodiversity Education Officer

The group considered the following management plan objectives:

- 7.1.4** Review of provision of existing information materials and develop new high quality interpretation materials as appropriate
- 7.1.6** Produce an all-encompassing interpretation and promotional plan (covering access, recreation, history wildlife etc.) to ensure the Downs is widely promoted.
- 7.6.16** Provide an information point adjacent to Stoke Park Road, which includes emergency telephone contact numbers and information such as public notices

The discussion revolved around an audit carried out by Mandy Leivers of existing information for both non-wildlife materials for the Avon Gorge and the Downs and for the Avon Gorge & Downs Project which included recommendations see appendix 1 and 2 respectively. The key points/actions were as follows:

- ML had completed the review of existing materials through her audit
- There are two existing welcome boards; one at White Tree roundabout and by the approach to the Observatory. There are also a couple of the old, broken panel frames. The intention is to refurbish the two existing panels and create a third panel from the old ones. ML, FG and BS will liaise to draft the text and Bristol design should be asked to design the artwork and map. A panel should be photographed and circulated to members and officers to get their thoughts on the updated content. The panels should include webpage links and emergency telephone numbers **Action ML to produce a brief and liaise with BD in the autumn/Winter with FG and BS's help including looking at how to display the byelaws which are currently on the back of the boards. BS to investigate if a third panel frame can be constructed from the old frames.**
- The panels on the water tower railings explaining the history of the Downs should be taken down as they coming to end of their life due to weathering. It's suggested these are placed on the walls of the changing rooms. **Action BS to organise the taking down of the boards and putting up in the changing rooms in November 2015.**
- The Downs history leaflets should be reprinted after the artwork has been reviewed. **Action FG to review the leaflet artwork**
- The Downs webpages need updating this should be carried out when BCC general website is updated and this should include PDF of the history leaflet and all of the up-to-date wildlife project leaflets. **Action AG to approach the BCC person updating the website and ask them to liaise with ML regarding the content.**
- The presence and location of new BBQ areas should be advertised using the 5 existing temporary banners with the addition of a location map. **Action BS to install boards in strategic locations before the summer.**
- Wildlife and geology. There are 9 wildlife/geology panels around the downs. The Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife project has produced a number of educational materials including a monthly Downs diary, meadow, lichen and tree trails, a leaflet about the peregrines, family trails and the Discover the wildlife of the Avon Gorge and Downs leaflets. It is proposed the both the tree and meadow leaflets are reprinted in 2015/16 and 2016/17 respectively.

- The Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife project website needs to be redesigned and updated to reflect the changing partnership. **Action ML to produce figures and costs after the Gorge access feasibility study has been completed subject HLF funding.**
- New ideas include:
 - Creation of Avon Gorge trail leaflets to promote the geology and wildlife. It was considered this can only be progressed after the gorge access issues have been addressed including waiting for decision on the proposed 5 closures of the Portway
 - Production of all-encompassing interpretation and promotional plan: It was suggested that that the Green Capital project should promote the importance of Downs in helping to deliver its objectives. **Action GM to write to media person dealing with Green Capital and to ask question at a Council meeting about how BCC estates are contributing to delivery of GC objectives including making links with the tourist office**
 - - Selling greeting cards
 - Making the seasonal educational officer permanent **Action AG to raise at next DC meeting**

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10 March 2015

Dear Andrew

ROCK FACE STABILISATION DETAILED DESIGN AT BRIDGE ROAD, CLIFTON DOWN, BRISTOL

Further to the recent mapping/tactile inspection exercise that was undertaken on the rock cutting adjacent to the northern side of Bridge Road Bristol we would like to up-date you on the current position and the proposed way forward, including a timetable of delivery.

At the time that the proposal was written, following the recommendations contained within the options report, February 2014, it was envisaged that the cutting would be managed and the risk of injury or death to members of the public, road users or Bristol City Council maintenance staff would be by a combination of rock bolting and the installation of a static fence. It was thought at that time that the bolting would be located in the western section of the cutting and static fencing in the eastern section.

The findings from the mapping/tactile inspection exercise, indicate that at the western end of the cutting numerous blocks daylight in the upper part of the face, 4.0 to 5.0m above the footway, while at the eastern end the daylighting blocks are distributed across the entire face; the attached photo montage indicates the positions of the daylighting blocks. The distribution of the daylighting blocks and the physical constraints presented by the site indicate that the original approach may not safeguard those passing on the path immediately adjacent to the cutting or any person undertaking maintenance and could potentially expose Bristol City Council to unwanted liabilities. In particular given the distribution of daylighting blocks in the upper part of the face, together with the absence of an offset between the toe of the cutting and the footway, a static fence would need to be in the order of 4.0 to 5.0m high to provide the level of protection required to protect the public. The fence would also need to be offset from the toe of the rock face thereby restricting public access.

In order to protect the public and Bristol City Council maintenance staff we would recommend that the options contained within the options report be developed as set out below.

Scaling the entire face of the daylighting blocks judged to be unstable should be undertaken, however, it should be noted that this may result in degradation of the face. Due to the site constraints described above we no longer believe that the installation of a static fence is achievable. Furthermore, given the distribution of daylighting blocks and the on-going weathering processes that will impact the face scaling alone will not protect persons passing beneath the face. In order to mitigate this risk we would recommend that the face is closely meshed, with mesh being fixed with rock nails/dowels. The mesh will be contoured across the entire rock cutting face. This mesh will require annual inspection and potentially maintenance.

A lesser approach could be adopted comprising scaling the entire face of loose material with meshing and rock nails installed across the eastern portion of the face, where the rock mass is poorer. In the western


portion localised rock bolting would be required to stabilise those blocks that are daylighting, but are currently not unstable. It must be noted that Bristol City Council's liabilities would be increased in this area as the measures proposed, while stabilising the blocks identified, would not protect against other blocks becoming unstable and falling into the footway.

Subject to instruction from Bristol City Council and an agreed approach to the safety measures to be employed a time line is set out below, please note timescales are from date on instruction.

- Two weeks: agreement of design approach and meeting with third parties.
- Six weeks: Design undertaken, specification/drawings prepared.
- Eight weeks: Contract documents prepared, form of contract to be agreed with Bristol City Council.
- Ten weeks: Tender period.
- Twelve weeks: Works start date.

— We trust the above is clear, however, should you require clarification please do not hesitate to contact us. It should be noted that while there are third party interests in this cutting, ultimately the responsibility and liabilities rest with Bristol City Council.

Yours Sincerely



KD Power
Regional Associate

- 1. 1000x700x450
- 2. 500x600x350
- 3. 450x350x300
- 4. 300x400x350
- 5. 300x200x300
- 6. 300x1000x350
- 7. 300x200x300
- 8. 1500x2000x300
- 9. 300x500x250
- 10. 1100x500x500

- 12. 350x400x300
- 13. 700x400x300
- 14. Area heavily fractured
no average block size
- 15. 400x500x500
- 16. 1800x500x450
- 17. 660x900x450
- 18. 700x250x500
- 19. 1100x400x600
- 20. 300x450x600
- 21. 250x250x200 (x3)
- 22. 150x250x250 (x3)

- 23. 800x800x500
- 24. Area heavily fractured
no average block size
- 25. 1400x400x800
- 26. 250x400x250
- 27. 200x550x300
- 28. 700x1200x600
- 29. 450x700x400
- 30. 400x500x250

11. Area heavily fractured
no average block size



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27 March 2015

Dear Andrew

ROCK FACE STABILISATION DETAILED DESIGN OPTION APPRAISAL AT BRIDGE ROAD, CLIFTON DOWN, BRISTOL

Further to the recent mapping/tactile inspection exercise that was undertaken on the rock cutting adjacent to the northern side of Bridge Road Bristol and subsequent meetings with Bristol City Council, and third party stake holders; we set out below the detailed design options to address the stabilisation/safe guarding of the public, together with the benefits and dis-benefits of each option. We also include our recommendation of the preferred option, taking into account safety of the public and stakeholder requirements.

The major third party stakeholder is the Avon RIGS group who have designated the cutting as a RIGS site. Andrew Maithieson, of Avon RIGS Group, indicated the educational value of the cutting, but did indicate that the lower part of the western half of the cutting is where most features of interest are located.

Originally it was envisaged that management of the risk of injury or death to members of the public, road users or Bristol City Council maintenance staff would be achieved by a combination of rock bolting and the installation of a static fence. It was thought at that time that the bolting would be located in the western section of the cutting and static fencing in the eastern section. However, the findings from the mapping/tactile inspection exercise, indicate that at the western end of the cutting numerous blocks daylight in the upper part of the face, 3.0 to 5.0m above the footway, while at the eastern end the daylighting blocks are distributed across the entire face. The distribution of the daylighting blocks and the physical constraints presented by the site indicate that the original approach would not safeguard those passing on the path immediately adjacent to the cutting or any person undertaking maintenance and could potentially expose Bristol City Council to unwanted liabilities. In particular given the distribution of daylighting blocks in the upper part of the face, together with the absence of an offset between the toe of the cutting and the footway, a static fence would need to be in the order of 4.0 to 5.0m high to provide the level of protection required to protect the public. The fence would also need to be offset from the toe of the rock face thereby restricting public access.

In order to protect the public and Bristol City Council maintenance staff we have detailed below the three options that will provide this protection and can be constructed at the site.

All options will include scaling the entire face of unstable, loose material, however, on-going weathering and other natural processes will with time lead to further loose material and rock fall therefore scaling alone will not protect persons passing or working beneath the face.

In order to provide protection for members of the public, road users and Bristol City Council maintenance staff we would recommend that the face is closely meshed, the mesh will be contoured across the face of the rock cutting, with mesh being fixed with rock nails/dowels. The three options set out in the table below.

Option	Description	Benefits	Dis-benefits
1	The entire rock cutting east of the toilet block fully meshed following scalling. Mesh to be doweled/bolted at 2.5m spacing.	Face fully contained. Minimal residual hazard.	Total obscuring of RIGS site and loss of educational asset. Highest cost.
2	The eastern half of the face is meshed and major daylighting blocks in the western half are bolted.	Half the RIGS site will be accessible, including the area of greatest interest. Lowest cost.	Significant residual hazard as the weathered upper parts of the cutting will not be stabilised. Unable to bolt individual blocks within the weathered zone.
3	The eastern half of the face is fully meshed along with the upper half of the western face. Subject to site appraisal individual major daylighting blocks in the lower part of the western half of the face are bolted.	Areas of face from which rock is most likely to fall fully contained. Access to the areas of the RIGS site most beneficial to education maintained. Low residual hazard.	Medium cost. Low residual hazard.

It should be noted that the mesh and any exposed cutting will require annual inspection and potentially maintenance, including the removal of vegetation.


The cost estimates set out below are based upon outline design and recent schemes, but must only be considered as a guide and should not be taken as an accurate cost estimate. Professional fees are excluded from these costs.

Option	Cost Estimate
1	£35,500
2	£23,000
3	£28,000

Having considered the options available we would recommend that Option 3, while not being the lowest cost, reduces risk of rock fall injuring a member of the public or a member of Bristol City Council's staff to a low level, with only the lower part of the western half of the cutting face being exposed where no daylighting blocks were identified and with the rest of the cutting be confined the hazard is considered to be low. Furthermore, this option maintains access to the RIGS site and satisfies the aspirations of the third party stakeholders.

We trust the above is clear, however, should you require clarification please do not hesitate to contact us. It should be noted that while there are third party interests in this cutting, ultimately the responsibility and liabilities rest with Bristol City Council.

Yours Sincerely



K D Power
Regional Associate







Site Improvement Plan

Avon Gorge Woodlands

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)

UK0012734 Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC

Site description

The Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC is good example of *Tilio-Acerion* forests in south-west England. It is important because of the high concentration of Small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata* and the presence of rare whitebeams *Sorbus spp.*, including at least two which are unique to the Avon Gorge (*S. bristoliensis* and *S. wilmottiana*), and other Nationally Scarce plants, such as Angular Solomon's-seal *Polygonatum odoratum*.

The associated species-rich transitions to scrub and herb-rich calcareous open limestone grassland often found on cliff ledges support a high number of Nationally Rare and Scarce species, such as Bristol rock-cress *Arabis scabra*, round-headed leek ('Bristol onion') *Allium sphaerocephalon* and honewort *Trinia glauca*. Part of the Leigh Woods side of the SAC is considered to be important remnant wood pasture habitat which was managed as a wood pasture for many hundreds of years. This is shown by the presence of large numbers of veteran pollards, which are also highly likely to be important for saproxylic 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 Invasive species	Threat	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites), H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Effectively control invasive species across the site to reduce impact. Key to ensuring its effectiveness will be a coordinated approach across the whole site	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, Network Rail, Downs Committee, Merchant Ventures, Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust, Trustees of the Wills Estate, Bristol Zoo
2 Undergrazing	Pressure/ Threat	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites)	Explore and implement further grazing reintroduction projects where appropriate	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, Network Rail, Downs Committee, Merchant Ventures, Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust, Trustees of the Wills Estate, Bristol Zoo

3 Public Access/Disturbance	Pressure/ Threat	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites), H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Deal with public access through engagement, management and interpretation	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, Network Rail, National specialist, Downs Committee, Merchant Ventures, Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust, Trustees of the Wills Estate, Bristol Zoo
4 Disease	Threat	H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Regularly monitor diseases that affect trees, and take action as necessary	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, Network Rail, National specialist, Downs Committee, Merchant Ventures, Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust, Trustees of the Wills Estate, Bristol Zoo, University of Bristol
5 Changes in species distributions	Threat	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites), H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Regularly monitor species distributions and take action as necessary	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Local partnership, University of Bristol, National specialists
6 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition	Pressure	H6210 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone (important orchid sites), H9180 Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes	Control, reduce and ameliorate atmospheric nitrogen impacts	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 Invasive species

Non native species (including: certain *Cotoneaster spp.*; Holm Oak *Quercus ilex*; Viburnum tinus *Viburnum Laurustinus*; Buddleia; Everlasting Pea *Lathyrus latifolius*; Alexanders *Smyrniololus atrum*; Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*; Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*; Onion sp. *Alliums spp.*; Turkey oak *Quercus cerris*) and other species are present across the site. The Cotoneasters and other invasive species have a tendency to spread quickly and form dense mats which smother out areas of the SAC grassland and smaller rare species. Holm oak is evergreen, casting heavy shade and is growing more quickly than many native trees - it has the potential to affect plant species associated with *Tilio-Acerion* woodland habitats as well as shading out grassland. Effective methods of elimination and control are currently being undertaken in certain parts of the site but a coordinated approach is needed across the whole site (particularly on the North Somerset side within land owned by Networkrail, the Trustees of the Wills Estate and Suspension Bridge Trusts). On the Leigh Woods side of the Gorge (mainly in the Forestry Commission managed area) there are other problems with Rhododendron, Cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* and various planted stands of Conifer Spp. And these will need to be considered as part of an invasive species plan. Native species of shrub and tree are also considered a major threat to the open limestone grassland habitats and there is a constant need for control across the site. Additional consideration needs to be given to the issue of deer and grey squirrel damage which is a potential issue affecting regeneration of the Leigh Woods side of the Gorge.

Action	Action description	Cost estimate	Timescale	Mechanism	Funding option	Delivery lead body	Delivery partner(s)
1A	Development of an Avon Gorge-wide 'Invasive species and priority habitats management plan'. Development of this plan could be coordinated by a new Project Officer role who could potentially become part of an expanded Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project looking at the management of issues affecting the whole Gorge.	£10,000- £30,000	2015-17	Invasive Control Plan: Invasive Species Control Programme	Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), HLS/NELMS, Non-native species project, Other stakeholder(s) contributions, Other large scale funding bid	Local partnership	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, Network Rail, Downs Committee, Merchant Ventures, Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust, Trustees of the Wills Estate, Bristol Zoo

<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>
1B	Delivery of the Avon Gorge-wide 'Invasive species and priority habitats management plan'. Designed, funded and delivered by all key landowners and stakeholders. With increased and additional organisational funding and with external 'other' funding to ensure the delivery can be achieved and sustained long term.	£100,000- £500,000 over 10 years	2017 onwards	Invasive Control Plan: Invasive Species Control Programme	HLS/NELMS, Non-native species project, Other stakeholder(s) contributions, Other large scale funding bid	Local partnership	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, Network Rail, Downs Committee, Merchant Ventures, Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust, Trustees of the Wills Estate, Bristol Zoo

2 Undergrazing

Grazing has been introduced into two parts of the site but the vast majority of it is ungrazed at present. The majority of the North Somerset side is ancient woodland and not in need of grazing. But the open quarries on the North Somerset side and further areas of the grassland on the Bristol side need to be looked at in terms of sustainable management options - grazing animals being one of them (although this will need very careful planning, consideration, funding and ongoing management). The lack of grazing on these open areas is resulting in loss of habitat, pressure from scrub / invasive species and the need for expensive mechanical management.

<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	Development of an Avon Gorge-wide 'Grazing management plan'. Development of this plan could be coordinated by a new Project Officer role who could potentially become part of an expanded Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project looking at the management of issues affecting the whole Gorge.	£10,000- £30,000	2015-17	Habitat creation / restoration strategy: Habitat restoration	HLS/NELMS, Other stakeholder(s) contributions, Other large scale funding bid	Local partnership	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, Network Rail, Downs Committee, Merchant Ventures, Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust, Trustees of the Wills Estate, Bristol Zoo

<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	Delivery of the Avon Gorge-wide 'Grazing management plan'. Designed, funded and delivered by all key landowners and stakeholders. With increased and additional organisational funding and external 'other' funding to ensure the delivery can be achieved and sustained long term.	£200,000- £600,000	2017 onwards	Habitat creation / restoration strategy: Habitat restoration	HLS/NELMS, Other stakeholder(s) contributions, Other large scale funding bid	Local partnership	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, Network Rail, Downs Committee, Merchant Ventures, Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust, Trustees of the Wills Estate, Bristol Zoo

3 Public Access/Disturbance

The site suffers major pressures from public access. Most legal access isn't a problem and the main issues result from inappropriate and often illegal access, an example of which is the use of the steep side of the Gorge on the North Somerset side for downhill mountain biking. Other negative aspects of access ranges from overall visitor pressure to vandalism. Future close monitoring and security work is needed involving various parties, to ensure the site remains protected. 'Legal' or permitted access still needs close monitoring and engagement to ensure that no damage to sensitive SAC habitats occurs. There is increasing pressure to encourage more people onto the site to appreciate it. This could quite conceivably increase over the coming years due to increased interest and a desire to engage further. There are many opportunities to improve safe multi-user access to certain areas of both sides of the Gorge, and also further possibilities to link both sides together by promoted routes. The understanding of the National and European significance of the site through engagement, promotion and interpretation is key to its sustainable use. Clearly the SAC features should be at the forefront of all future public engagement and access decisions. Nitrogen deposition from dog fouling could lead to further specific local impacts.

<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	Development of an Avon Gorge wide 'Public access engagement, interpretation, improvement and management plan'. Development of this plan could be coordinated by a new Project Officer role who could potentially become part of an expanded Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project looking at the management of issues affecting the whole Gorge.	£10,000- £30,000	2017	Advice: Access Strategy	Other stakeholder(s) contributions, Other large scale funding bid	Local partnership	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, Network Rail, National specialist, Downs Committee, Merchant Ventures, Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust, Trustees of the Wills Estate, Bristol Zoo

<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>
3B	Implementation of the Avon Gorge-wide 'Public access engagement, interpretation, improvement and management plan' is key to ensuring protection of SAC features on the North Somerset side and Bristol side of the Avon Gorge. Funded and delivered by all key landowners and stakeholders with 'other' external funding being an essential part of ensuring the delivery can be achieved and sustained long term.	£100,000- £500,000	2017 onwards	Partnership agreement	Other stakeholder(s) contributions, Other large scale funding bid	Local partnership	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, Network Rail, Downs Committee, Merchant Ventures, Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust, Trustees of the Wills Estate, Bristol Zoo, National specialists

4 Disease

Ash Dieback *Chalara fraxinea* has the potential to dramatically affect the overall structure of the Avon Gorge woodland. Ash is not a feature of the SAC woodland but a major component of the high forest structure. The relatively recent death of several of the mature (and young) rare whitebeam trees on both the North Somerset and Bristol side of the Gorge is of significant concern and needs 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>
4A	Development of an Avon Gorge-wide 'Plant disease identification and management plan'. Development of this plan could be coordinated by a new Project Officer role who could potentially become part of an expanded Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project looking at the management of issues affecting the whole Gorge.	£5,000- £10,000	2014-16	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Staff time, Other stakeholder(s) contributions	Natural England/ Forestry Commission	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, Network Rail, National specialist, Downs Committee, Merchant Ventures, Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust, Trustees of the Wills Estate, Bristol Zoo, University of Bristol

<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>
4B	Implementation of the Avon Gorge-wide 'Plant disease identification and management plan'.	£5,000- £25,000	2016 onwards	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Staff time, Other stakeholder(s) contributions	Natural England/ Forestry Commission	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, Network Rail, National specialist, Downs Committee, Merchant Ventures, Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust, Trustees of the Wills Estate, Bristol Zoo, University of Bristol

5 Changes in species distributions

Over the years there have been local changes in species populations and distributions (including some significant fluctuations in population sizes). The 2010 Condition Assessment identified several specific plant species where populations had reduced to worrying levels. Although this is likely to be caused mainly by scrub and invasive species and the other issues highlighted in this document (disturbance from public access, development, disease & pollution), the changes could also be attributed to climate change. It is not clear whether national changes in species distribution driven by climate change will affect Avon Gorge but the assumption is that this could be highly likely. Some work has been initiated with the Bristol Botanical garden to look into a species recovery programme for some of the plants affected and this needs further investigation. A programme of whitebeam spp. monitoring and future management should be developed in partnership with Bristol University and national experts.

<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>
5A	Development of an Avon Gorge-wide 'Species distribution and monitoring management plan / strategy'. Development of this plan could be coordinated by a new Project Officer role who could potentially become part of an expanded Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project looking at the management of issues affecting the whole Gorge.	£3,000- £10,000	2014-16	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Staff time, Other stakeholder(s) contributions	Natural England/ Forestry Commission	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, Network Rail, Downs Committee, Merchant Ventures, Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust, Trustees of the Wills Estate, Bristol Zoo, University of Bristol, National specialists

<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>
5B	Implementation of an Avon Gorge-wide 'Species distribution and monitoring management plan / strategy'.	£10,000- £30,000	2016 onwards	Investigation / Research / Monitoring	Other stakeholder(s) contributions, Other large scale funding bid	Natural England/ Forestry Commission	Bristol City Council, Forestry Commission, National Trust, Natural England, Network Rail, Downs Committee, Merchant Ventures, Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust, Trustees of the Wills Estate, Bristol Zoo, University of Bristol, National specialists

6 Air Pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

Nitrogen deposition exceeds site-relevant critical loads. The site is situated on the edge of a city and there are major roads and other transport routes currently running directly through and adjacent to it. The effect of these, general urban pollution and the amount of atmospheric nitrogen deposition has not been fully studied but it is likely to be a potential issue for the SAC features currently and in the long term. Pollution influences from Avonmouth and Severnside should also be considered due to the relatively close proximity to the site.

<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>
6A	Control, reduce and ameliorate atmospheric nitrogen impacts. Develop a long term monitoring strategy for the effects of nitrogen deposition on rare plants and SAC habitats directly linking to changes in species distribution.	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

Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC	H6210# Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>)
	H9180# <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines

Site location and links

Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC

Area (ha) 152.35	Grid reference ST560741	Map link
Local Authorities	City of Bristol; North Somerset	
Site Conservation Objectives	European Site Conservation Objectives for Avon Gorge Woodlands 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.

Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC

River basin

[Severn RBMP](#)

WFD Management catchment

Bristol Avon & North Somerset Streams

WFD Waterbody ID (Cycle 2 draft)

n/a

Overlapping or adjacent protected sites

Site(s) of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC	Avon Gorge SSSI

National Nature Reserve (NNR)	
Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC	Leigh Woods NNR

Ramsar	
Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC	n/a

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)	
Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC	n/a

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1.0	06/01/2015	

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