



**DISCOVER
DRURIDGE**

HIGHTHORN

**DRAFT - DISCOVER DRURIDGE
DELIVERY STRATEGY**

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CM/N/795/PL

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This strategy aims to demonstrate how 'Discover Druridge' will deliver long term protection and enhancement of Druridge Bay and its coastal plain for the benefit of the environment, its communities, visitors and wildlife.
- 1.2 Druridge Bay is the area of Northumberland coastline and plain between the town of Amble in the north and the village of Lynemouth to the south. This strategy focuses on the key central areas of the bay from High Hauxley to Cresswell.
- 1.3 Druridge Bay has the potential for being an area of national, regional and county importance, both for nature and tourism. Whilst offering a rich, diverse and varied habitat at present, lack of investment and collective partnership has led to a fractured approach to its vision for the future of Druridge Bay. Previous attempts to provide a unified strategy for the Bay have failed due to land management issues, funding challenges and the lack of a catalyst to drive long term change.
- 1.4 This strategy aims to explain how Banks Mining will provide this catalyst, through the delivery of funds from the Highthorn surface mine, in partnership with key local conservation and tourism bodies and local members of the coastal and business community to deliver lasting improvements and benefits for the long term protection and enhancement of the Bay.
- 1.5 This strategy will define a key vision with a series of core objectives, seeking to highlight the location of priority actions, who is responsible for delivery and timescales, initially over a 7 year period, and thereafter into the future.
- 1.6 This strategy also seeks to define, through a series of realistic and achievable management actions, how the untapped potential of Druridge Bay can be realised, creating a destination for local people and visitors alike, add to and compliment Northumberland's tourism offering and economy whilst maintaining and adding to its current status as an important wildlife area.
- 1.7 For the purpose of taking forward this key initiative, and delivering its objectives, it is intended that a partnership will be formed with key local stakeholders to guide the direction of the strategy representing the varied interests of the group in a complimentary fashion. It is intended that a high level Steering Group will be formed which will translate the aims and objectives of this strategy into realised actions, capitalising on the initial investment of Banks Mining into the future. This will be achieved through the creation of wider partnerships with other agencies in the future, authorities and organisations which can influence the management of the Bay in a balanced and progressive manner.

2 VISION

- 2.1 Overarching Vision '*Discover Druridge*'

"To encourage people to explore the inspiring destination of Druridge Bay, drawing on the heritage of the area, connecting people with places and wildlife whilst providing opportunities for education, employment and tourism. To promote travelling inland to discover how the past and present come together to produce the Druridge Bay identity."

2.2 This vision aims to stimulate action and address a range of objectives via a programme to be implemented, initially over a 7 year period, the duration of the Highthorn surface mine. However, the strategy itself, has been prepared with a longer term vision in mind, built on work completed previously, to be realised by others through a continuing commitment to positive management once the Highthorn surface mine has completed and been restored.

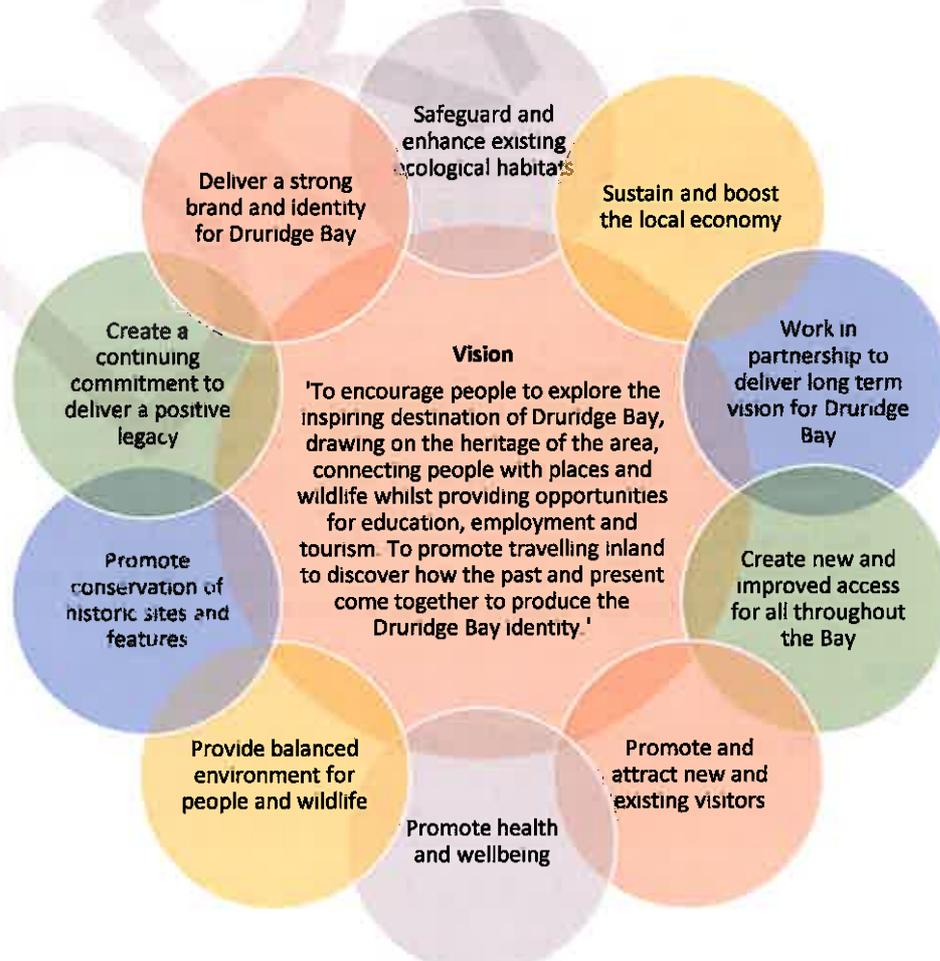
2.3 The vision expresses an overall ambition for the future to allow Druridge Bay to be recognised nationally for the outstanding quality of its landscape and environment, to provide an exceptional visitor experience and a home for strong, sustainable communities. Banks Mining is committed to help deliver the vision, particularly within the early years and to act as a catalyst for the delivery of the greater bay-wide vision over the long term.

3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

3.1 A number of high level potential strategic objectives have been identified, to help to deliver the overall vision. Due to their overarching nature, a number of them are inter-related.

3.2 As such, specific actions/projects identified are likely to contribute to more than one of the strategic objectives.

3.3 Discover Druridge: Vision and Strategic Objectives



Strategic Objectives

- 3.4 To promote and attract new and existing visitors to Druridge Bay by:
- a) Adding to Northumberland's tourism economy.
 - b) Creating an exceptional destination visitor experience to be known as 'Discover Druridge'
 - c) Protecting and enhancing current visitor attractions and assets throughout the Bay
- 3.5 To safeguard and enhance existing ecological habitats and areas of wildlife interest through:
- a) Investing in existing habitats and nature reserves.
 - b) Creating new habitats to form a nature network and safe corridor of travel for wildlife.
 - c) Designing a balanced access for people to enjoy, experience and learn about nature at Druridge Bay without disrupting the wildlife.
 - d) Ceasing the permitted sand extraction at Hemscott Hill on Druridge Bay to help protect the dune habitats and increase public enjoyment of the beach.
- 3.6 To sustain and boost the local economy by bringing forward employment and business opportunities by:
- a) Jobs created at the Highthorn surface mine.
 - b) Job creation through the ongoing implementation and management of the 'Discover Druridge' vision.
 - c) Encouraging visitors to stay, shop, eat and play in the surrounding area.
- 3.7 To work in partnership with local agencies, authorities and organisations to deliver a unified vision for the long term future of Druridge Bay and the surrounding area by:
- a) Forming a high level steering group to help translate the greater aspirations for the Bay into realistic and deliverable actions.
 - b) Bringing forward balanced and complimentary proposals for the Bay.
 - c) Gaining financial and management commitment from all parties to deliver the unified vision in the long term.
 - d) Attracting further investment to Druridge and the surrounding area.
- 3.8 To create new and improved access for all throughout the Bay and to neighbouring villages by:

- a) Creating trails to explore the existing and new assets of the Bay.
 - b) Creating and maintaining a coastal path all along the Bay.
 - c) Creating a boardwalk path through the dunes to help provide improved access and assist in the management of the sensitive dune habitat.
 - d) Creating off-road cycle paths, adding to the existing network, linking assets which are currently cut-off and promoting the nationally recognised Coast to Castles Route and Sustrans Route 1.
 - e) Improving car parking access in safe and controlled manner for easy access for all.
 - f) Investing in Druridge Bay Country Park to provide a gateway to the Druridge Bay visitor's experience.
- 3.9 To promote the health and wellbeing agenda by encouraging active lifestyles by:
- a) Providing new access routes all across the Bay.
 - b) Introducing new and improving access ways into the existing access network.
 - c) Providing a cycle hub at Druridge Bay Country Park where the safe, off road cycle ways can be accessed.
 - d) Improved access and facilities for the disabled.
 - e) Encouraging use of the Druridge Bay beach for walking, swimming and pursuing beach sports.
 - f) Getting local people and visitors alike out into the beautiful countryside to appreciate the areas heritage, linking them to, and informing them of its history.
- 3.10 To provide a balanced environment for both people and wildlife, connecting people with place by:
- a) Creating and investing in new wildlife viewing areas.
 - b) Restricting access into important wildlife areas for conservation and species development through creative planting of hedgerows and positioning of access routes away from sensitive areas.
 - c) Clearly signposting where dogs should be on leads for the protection of wildlife to minimise disturbance.
 - d) Introducing a management regime restricting deliberate disturbance of wildlife from designated agricultural areas.
 - e) Creating new habitats for development of new species.

- f) Cessation of sand extraction activities at Hemscott Hill in Druridge Bay.
 - g) Creating viewing areas from which people can enjoy Northumberland's Dark Skies.
 - h) Providing interpretation of what people are seeing, encouraging education and learning whilst enjoying a healthy day out.
- 3.11 To promote conservation of historic sites and features, and where appropriate, make accessible with interpretation to aid learning and enjoyment of our heritage by:
- a) Introducing new access routes to sites of historic interest.
 - b) Introducing regular interpretation and signage to direct visitors to assets, and providing learning opportunities to appreciate our heritage.
 - c) Protecting 'at risk' heritage assets.
 - d) Improving the cultural setting of heritage assets where the landscape has been altered.
- 3.12 To create a continuing commitment from key parties to deliver a positive legacy for the future of the Bay, its inhabitants, wildlife and the land itself by:
- a) Delivering a unified vision of the future to be promoted through a representative steering group to represent a balanced range of interests.
 - b) Introducing a network of new habitats to provide a Bay-wide link for nature and people in a safe manner.
 - c) Gaining landowner agreement to follow an approved grazing regime in selected areas with long term nature conservation in mind.
 - d) Commitment to the long term delivery of 'Discover Druridge' beyond the life of the Highthorn surface mine.
 - e) Cessation of sand extraction activities on Druridge Bay.
 - f) Creating a new role for a Druridge Bay project officer ranger to coordinate, promote and help deliver the 'Discover Druridge' vision.
- 3.13 To deliver a strong brand and identity for Druridge Bay, achieved by:
- a) Promoting 'Discover Druridge' through a range of media to encourage an increase in visitor numbers and make Druridge Bay synonymous with an active, independent and exciting visitor experience.
 - b) Working with local agencies, organisations and authorities to promote and invest in the 'Discover Druridge' experience.
 - c) To create a long term position responsible for the delivery of 'Discover Druridge' objectives.

- d) To create a website for 'Discover Druridge' promoting a day out at Druridge Bay with links to other key regional tourism opportunities.

4 KEY ISSUES FOR DRURIDGE BAY AND NORTHUMBERLAND

4.1 A number of key Council strategies highlight the importance of the growth of the economy and tourism for the county over the next few years. The main targets and priorities outlined in the various strategies are set out below.

Strategy	Date	Key targets/priorities
Northumberland Economic Strategy	2015-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A number of priorities for growth outlined - Key themes; business, people and place - Creation of 10,000 new jobs in the county by 2031 - Highlights that tourism and culture capitalising on the Northumbrian identity are a major part of the Northumbrian economy - 13% of all jobs within the region are in the tourism industry - Tourism sector employment has increased by 18% over the past five years <p>Specific tourism Interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need for an integrated approach to help fill the gaps to attract more visits, encourage visitors to do more, stay longer and spend more - Importance of strengthening the use of the 'Northumberland Identity' - Tourism development is reliant upon and supports the effective conservation and stewardship of local heritage and the natural landscape
Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan	2013-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councils main strategic planning document - Provides clear statement of the council's vision, strategic aims and policy priorities <p>Corporate priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic growth: Aim to promote a more prosperous county - Places and Environment: Aim to maintain and further improve quality of our towns, villages and countryside - Stronger communities and families - Health and wellbeing - Developing the organisation: with limited resources
Northumberland Destination Management Plan	2015-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognises that the 'visitor economy' is hugely important to the economic wellbeing of Northumberland - Tourism can help to provide prosperity for all - Tourism is the second most important employment sector in Northumberland - Over the last five years tourism jobs have increased significantly by 18% or 2,000 jobs, more than any other sector - Brand story based on four pillars: Adventure, space, people and culture - Beyond the four pillars, a number of priority areas have been identified as having the greatest benefit for Northumberland. These include: Heritage,

		Northumbrian culture, cycling and walking, landscapes, nature based tourism, events, activities, dark skies, weddings, out of season offer and food and drink
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- 4.2 As well as focusing on employment and tourism, the council strategies also include a wide range of other strategic priorities. These priorities include; nature, conservation, health and wellbeing. Highthorn and the wider Discover Druridge proposals will provide a significant contribution to these priorities as well as the council's wider key economic and tourism objectives.

Employment opportunities

- 4.3 The council's corporate plan includes a corporate priority for economic growth, aiming to promote a more prosperous county. The Northumberland Economic Strategy sets out an ambitious growth strategy to create 10,000 new jobs in the county up to 2031. This complements the new Northumberland Local Plan which provides the long term spatial planning framework to enable business, housing and infrastructure development.
- 4.4 The proposals at Highthorn will create a minimum of 50 jobs during the lifetime of the surface mine and will help to maintain existing support and the supply chain. In addition to direct employment opportunities that the surface mine will create, Discover Druridge offers the potential to create significant numbers of direct and indirect employment opportunities as well as contributing an increased input to the local economy.
- 4.5 Discover Druridge aims to enhance visitor numbers by undertaking a co-ordinated approach to enhancing the local area capable of developing the 'Discover Druridge' experience into a locally, regionally and nationally recognised tourist destination.
- 4.6 A potential role has been identified for a project officer/ranger to co-ordinate, promote and help deliver the Druridge Bay vision. As Discover Druridge grows and becomes a regional and national tourist destination, the role may expand and offer further employment opportunities in the longer term.
- 4.7 The possible redevelopment of the Druridge Bay Country Park including; refit of the existing building, café, children's park, shop, education centre and dark skies observation point will provide considerable employment opportunities both during the construction phases and once the additional facilities have been completed.
- 4.8 The creation and maintenance of new hides across the bay, pedestrian and cycle trails and the commissioning of artwork are all likely to offer further sources of employment.
- 4.9 Once Discover Druridge draws more tourists into the area and encourages them to spend more time, there will be the need/demand to provide ancillary facilities required to support the tourist offering. This may include shops, cafes and other amenities, leading to further jobs being created.

Tourism

- 4.10 The NCC Economic Strategy, Corporate Plan and Destination Management Plan all highlight the key role that tourism plays in the Northumberland economy. The council's economic strategy highlights that tourism and culture, capitalising on the Northumbrian identity are a major part of the Northumbrian economy. The strategy states that 13% of all jobs within the region are in the tourism industry and even more significantly that tourism sector employment has increased by 18% over the past five years.
- 4.11 Tourism will have a key role to play in contributing to the council's ambitious target of creating 10,000 new jobs by 2031. The unique nature of Discover Druridge has the potential to contribute to a number of important Council strategies and targets and become an integral part of Northumberland's tourism offering.
- 4.12 Northumberland Tourism has produced a Destination Management Plan for Northumberland between 2015 and 2020. The plan recognises that the 'visitor economy is hugely important to the economic wellbeing of Northumberland' noting the 'benefits of a prosperous tourism industry are not just economic. Sensible and sustainable management of the assets enjoyed by visitors, from beautiful landscapes and signature attractions to walking paths and clean beaches also make Northumberland a place that residents can both enjoy and be proud of.'
- 4.13 The 'Discover Druridge' proposal is set within this county-wide strategy recognising the aspiration for Northumberland to develop a sustainable visitor economy which supports – not damages – the core values of Northumberland's environment. The proposals are underpinned by creating new habitats and enhanced protection of existing wildlife areas. All new proposals will ensure that the local environment is protected.
- 4.14 Discover Druridge provides an opportunity to contribute significantly to the tourism offering in South East Northumberland following the approach advocated within the council's economic strategy and drawing on all of the interventions highlighted in the Destination Management Plan. The creation of a brand and marketing campaign will raise the profile of the area and create a sense place and identity across the whole Druridge Bay area. All signage, interpretation boards and entrance features will be consistent, using the same branding, to help create a sense of place.
- 4.15 By designing a visitor experience which attracts visitors who fit with the Destination Management Plan's brand of 'An Independent Spirit' 'Discover Druridge' will support the local tourism economy and compliment the wider strategic vision for the future of tourism in Northumberland.



Our character is born from the contrasts of nature; our remote hills; our vast skies; our tranquil lakes and the rugged beauty of our coastline. Generations have lived

as part of this landscape, creating strength, passion and wisdom, finding individual paths and protecting a way of life together.

A journey through Northumberland reveals the warmth of our welcome and celebrates our character. Slow down and discover experiences. Challenge your senses and feel the thrill of adventure. You, like us, can go your own way.

- 4.16 The Northumberland Destination Management Plan 2015-2020 has a brand story which highlights how the overall vision will be achieved based upon four pillars: Adventure, Space, People and Culture; to describe each facet of the brand that together make Northumberland distinctive as a visitor attraction. This strategy will make reference to these pillars throughout to link how the creation of Discover Druridge will assist the delivery of Northumberland Tourism's vision.
- 4.17 Beyond these four central pillars, the Northumberland Destination Management Plan 2015-2020 highlights a number of priority areas which have been identified as having the greatest benefit for Northumberland if they are developed. These include:

Priority Area	Delivered as part of Discover Druridge
Heritage	Yes
Northumbrian Culture	Yes
Cycling and Walking	Yes
Landscapes and unique/rare wildlife (nature based tourism)	Yes
Events - A few authentic and inspirational signature events plus a wide range of smaller events	No but with potential for others to do so as part of long term vision
Activities	Yes
Dark Skies	Yes
Weddings	No
Out of Season offer	Yes
Food and Drink	Yes

- 4.18 The Restoration First projects that will be delivered by Banks Mining will provide significant access improvements with new recreational routes being provided. The projects will encourage visitors to travel inland and open up the wider Druridge Bay area away from the beach as a tourist destination in its own right. There is further potential to provide wider recreational links to villages to the west of the A1068 in the longer term.
- 4.19 The specific projects identified as part of the wider Discover Druridge proposals will attract more tourists and provide them with the opportunity to stay longer in the area. The heritage, nature, geology and recreational trails, boardwalk path through the dunes, new and refurbished hides, dark skies viewing platforms, new wetlands and the promotion and conservation of historic sites will all contribute to an improved tourism offering which will appeal to a wide range of people.

Nature and conservation

- 4.20 The Council's Economic Strategy highlights that tourism development is reliant upon effective conservation and stewardship of local heritage and the natural landscape. Preserving and enhancing the built and natural heritage and assets of the area is a key part of Discover Druridge.
- 4.21 Druridge Bay is an area of wildlife and nature conservation interest and has a range of existing designated sites:

Designation	Number	Type of Designation	Details
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	4	National	Low Hauxley Shore, Northumberland Shore, Cresswell and Newbiggin Shore and Cresswell Pond
Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI)	2	Regional	Druridge Links and Warkworth Lane Pond
Ramsar Site	1	International	Northumbria Coast
Special Protection Area	1	International	Northumbria Coast

- 4.22 As part of the restoration first proposals, Banks Mining will enhance existing ecological habitats and areas of wildlife interest through:
- a) Investing in existing nature reserves.
 - b) Creating new habitats to form a nature network and safe corridor of travel for wildlife.
 - c) Designing a balanced access for people to enjoy, experience and learn about nature at Druridge Bay without disrupting the wildlife.
 - d) Ceasing the sand extraction at Hemscott Hill in Druridge Bay, protecting the dune habitats and public enjoyment of the beach
- 4.23 It is important to note the role that previous mineral extraction has played in the local area. A number of the natural features were influenced by humans including

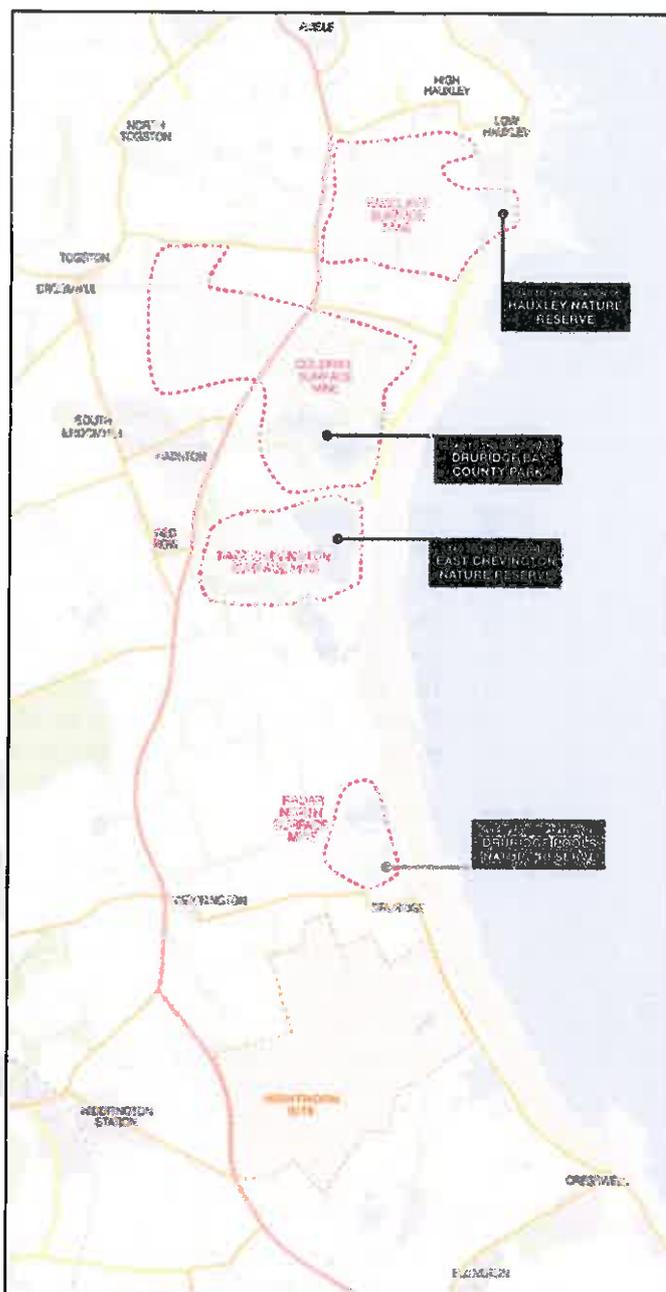
subsidence ponds from deep-mine workings or sites and features created following mineral extraction. Recent land restoration schemes have included the Druridge Bay Country Park and East Chevington Nature Reserve which now contain ecologically diverse areas of woodland, wetland and grassland.

4.24 The environment at Druridge is enjoyed by both the local community and visitors to the area and constitutes an important element in the attraction of the Bay. Nevertheless, Banks Mining consider that the area can accommodate and sustain larger, better quality areas for wildlife and ecological habitats to thrive alongside the local community and visitors. This can be delivered by the Discover Druridge Partnership.

4.25 Banks' vision for wildlife and ecological enhancement at Druridge Bay particularly covers the area from Cresswell to Hauxley and inland from the Bay to the A1068. It is anticipated, however, that the improvements and preservation of these areas will have further reaching benefits for Northumberland.

4.26 Improvements to the local environment will happen as soon as work is started at Highthorn. Some actions can be implemented immediately, whilst others will take time to come to fruition. Steady steps to improve the area will occur throughout the life of the site and for long into the future.

4.27 On the commencement of coal extraction, Banks Mining will permanently remove the sand extraction permission at Hemscoth Hill. This permission currently has no restriction on the amount and rate at which sand can be extracted and covers an area of broadly 40 hectares of beach and dune. Land will be restored and the dunes re-stabilised. The removal of such machinery and industrial processes will protect the beach and assist in the management of the sensitive dune habitat.



- 4.28 127 hectares of new wetland and wet grassland habitat will be provided located at a number of positions surrounding the Highthorn site. As agreed with the Northumberland Wildlife Trust, RSPB and the Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club, these new areas of habitat have the greatest potential to deliver a net gain for the important bird species that currently use the bay.
- 4.29 Areas such as Druridge Bay Country Park and East Chevington are excellent centres for wildlife and ecological habitats. As part of the 'Restoration First' proposals, Banks Mining will improve connectivity to and from these areas, linking up with other rich and diverse areas such as Cresswell Ponds and Warkworth Lane Pond. This connectivity improvement is both for wildlife and ecology through green corridors, nature networks and well-designed wetland areas, and also for the public to enjoy – from a seasoned birdwatcher to someone out for a short walk.
- 4.30 The creation of new shelterbelts and hedgerows and general cleaning up of areas around Druridge will also assist in providing new habitats to a range of species. Additionally, gaining landowner agreement to follow an approved grazing regime in selected areas will contribute to the long term conservation of the area. The Countryside Stewardship Scheme, part of The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development provides a financial incentive which will encourage landowners to follow this approach. Banks Mining will provide information and encourage and support landowners to apply for stewardship.
- 4.31 The promotion of conservation of historic sites and features is also identified as a key part of the Discover Druridge proposals. A new access trail to sites of historic interest will be provided along with the protection of 'at risk' heritage asset. The Low Chibburn Preceptory will be greatly improved as part of the Restoration First proposals. This Scheduled Ancient Monument is currently on the Historic England buildings at risk register. Banks Mining will clean up the building and surrounding land, plant a wildflower meadow in the surrounding field and add footpaths, signage and interpretation boards. Encouraging more visitors to the preceptory will provide increased natural surveillance and assist with preventing anti-social behaviour from occurring, which has been a recent issue.

Health and Wellbeing

- 4.32 Health and wellbeing is identified in the council's Corporate Plan and in the Destination Management Plan as one of the Council's corporate priorities and as a key part of growing the tourism industry.
- 4.33 Discover Druridge will provide multiple benefits for health and wellbeing. As part of the Restoration First proposals, a series of trails will be delivered by Banks Mining during the lifetime of the surface mine. The trails are focused on specific areas of interest within Druridge Bay and include heritage, nature, geology and recreational based routes. A series of short, medium and long routes are embedded within each area of interest to appeal to a wide range of potential users. New signage, interpretation boards and information leaflets will be provided to ensure that the trails are well promoted and are easy to follow.
- 4.34 As well as the defined trails, a number of other footpaths and bridleways will be created and improved, totalling 7.9km of new and upgraded access routes.

- 4.35 There are a number of further footpath/cycle enhancements that will be explored by the Druridge Bay Partnership. Such routes include the creation and maintenance of a coastal path all along the bay, creation of a boardwalk path through the dunes and the potential for wider links to neighbouring villages to the west of the A1068. A number of the potential links are longer term, however, it is important to consider connectivity and potential linkages at an early stage.
- 4.36 The majority of other projects identified within Discover Druridge are related to outdoor recreational activities. Some require walking and cycling whilst others merely encourage visitors to be outdoors. All of the projects will provide wider health benefits by encouraging visitors to enjoy taking part in recreational activities outdoors as part of a healthy lifestyle.

5 Banks Mining History/Experience

- 5.1 Banks Mining have been at the forefront of implementing the principle of 'Restoration First,' where we seek to provide some of the benefits associated with mineral extraction and restoration in the early stages of operations, rather than having to wait until the site has been completed, as has tended to be the traditional approach.
- 5.2 Having restored 113 surface mines across northern England and Scotland over the last 35 years, Banks Mining have built up a wealth of experience about how to secure the maximum possible benefits from such projects for landowners, local communities and the surrounding environment.
- 5.3 As the importance of environmentalism, biodiversity and conservation subsequently has grown, far greater emphasis has been placed on linking restored landscapes more closely to the areas that surrounded them, and providing tangible environmental, landscape, ecological or recreational benefits to local communities.
- 5.4 This can involve several approaches, such as extra land not needed for mining being used to deliver a lasting positive legacy for both the local area and the wider region at an early stage in the development of a surface mine.
- 5.5 Two recent case studies illustrate how Banks Mining have delivered 'Restoration First' benefits for projects in Northumberland working in partnerships with local interest groups.

Case Study

Northumberlandia

- 5.6 As part of a planning application for a new surface mine at Shotton, Banks Mining and the landowner, the Blagdon Estate decided to create something unique which would enhance the positive social and economic impact of the project on the surrounding area.
- 5.7 The company adopted a "Restoration First" strategy to the scheme, taking an extra piece of land donated by the landowner, adjacent to the mine and providing a new landscape for the community to enjoy while the mine is still operational. The project

team approached world-renowned artist Charles Jencks to design a new landmark feature.

- 5.8 The outcome of the design process was Northumberlandia, a reclining female figure set into the local landscape and built from carefully selected material taken from the surface mine that would become the world's largest human landform.
- 5.9 It was envisaged that the project would be an outstanding artistic landmark which would stand alongside the region's other main tourist attractions, and would also provide high quality leisure facilities for use by the local community and visitors to the area for many decades to come.
- 5.10 Responsibility for managing the landform park will now be with The Land Trust, a national organisation which secures the long term future of public spaces and which will continue to work in conjunction with local partners including Northumberland Wildlife Trust and Azure.
- 5.11 The project has already generated significant local, national and international interest, and it is predicted to quickly become a major regional tourist attraction, there has been over 100,000 visitors already in Northumberlandia's first year.
- 5.12 This example demonstrates that Banks Mining restoration projects deliver lasting benefits to local communities. Northumberlandia has become a national and regional tourist attraction and has provided a lasting social and economic impact to the local area.



6 DISCOVER DRURIDGE PARTNERSHIP:

- 6.1 There are a number of key stakeholders actively involved in Druridge Bay, all of which have their own separate plans and long term aspirations. Bodies and organisations including The National Trust, the Northumberland Wildlife Trust, Northumberland County Council, Sustrans, Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club, the RSPB and the local parish councils all have an interest within the Bay.
- 6.2 Through Banks Mining's involvement in the area since the announcement of the Highthorn proposals and wider discussions with former members, it is clear that there is still an aspiration for a coherent strategy and management of the Bay. This is one of the reasons why Bank's Mining are proposing to establish a new partnership.

Partnership – Benefits

- 6.3 The creation of the Discover Druridge Partnership offers multiple benefits in delivering and promoting the area as a tourist destination. Bringing together key parties will provide a coordinated approach to attracting more tourists and will help to fill the gaps which will attract more visits, encourage visitors to do more, to stay longer and to spend more. The partnership will be able to prioritise specific projects and actions to maximise the potential of the area to attract more tourists and encouraging them to spend more time in the area.
- 6.4 Additionally, the range of potential funding streams available to the partnership will assist in developing Discover Druridge into a significant tourist destination in its own right to complement other tourist facilities in Northumberland.
- 6.5 Banks Mining together with local partners and key stakeholders will be responsible for ensuring the effective promotion, marketing and communication of Discover Druridge.

Partnership – Structure

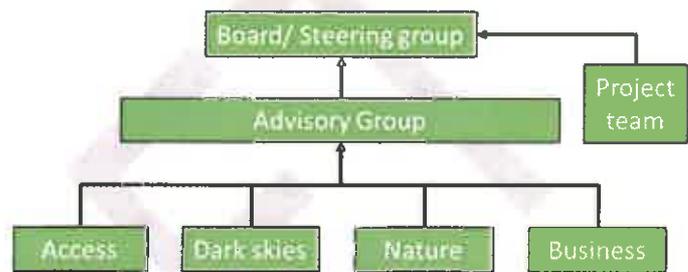
- 6.6 Banks Mining and Highthorn will act as a catalyst and facilitate the new partnership, bringing together interested parties as well as delivering a number of key projects during the first few years of the partnership. Improvements to the local environment will happen as soon as work is started at Highthorn. Some actions can be implemented immediately, whilst others will be developed throughout the life of the site and others being completed upon its restoration. Steady steps to improve the area will occur throughout the life of the site and for long into the future.
- 6.7 Existing threats to the Bay will be removed, such as the sand extraction at Hemscott Hill and the lack of investment in the area. This will be achieved alongside creating significant amounts of new habitats, recreational facilities and attractions all aimed at helping people to discover what Druridge Bay has to offer. The company will steer the initial drive of the Druridge Bay Management Plan seeking partnership and collaborative working towards the agreed vision for the area.
- 6.8 A funding commitment from Banks Mining will be made from the commencement of coal extraction with a revenue stream available to undertake priority actions. In

order to deliver the wider aspirations of Discover Druridge, contributions and match funding should be sought from third parties and partnership members.

6.9 However, achieving all of the aims for the Druridge Bay area is dependent upon the creation of partnerships with agencies, authorities and organisations which can influence and contribute to the management, diversity and prosperity of the Bay. Financial and management commitment from all parties to work together as a partnership will be required to ensure the overarching vision is delivered over the long term.

6.10 The high level steering group will be created to act as collective decision makers to translate the aims and objectives of the strategy into realised actions and capitalising on the initial investment of Banks Mining as well as other potential funding streams.

6.11 The Advisory groups, which will feed into the decisions made by the steering group, will be created with relevant representatives from the steering group



organisations, local parish councils, other amenity groups and any other interest groups (such as Northumberland and Tyneside Bird Club and Sustrans). The purpose of these working/advisory groups will be to enable ideas and future projects to be formulated and discussed, ultimately allowing the steering group to make informed decisions.

6.12 Representatives of local residents and members of the public will also be able to feed into the decision making process and propose any further improvements to be decided by the steering group.

6.13 From initial discussions with the key organisations it is apparent that there is an aspiration and justification for a dedicated project officer or ranger who is charged with co-ordinating and delivering the "Discover Druridge" opportunity. Potentially, with agreement from the Steering Group, the Banks Mining funding could be used to finance a dedicated project officer, who in turn would provide input into the Steering Group.

6.14 It is envisaged that as the Discovery Druridge partnership becomes established, Banks Mining's involvement will reduce. The proposed improvement works delivered as part of Restoration First and on site restoration will require the input of Discover Druridge partnership. It is intended that beyond this point, the Partnership will be capable of sustainably managing its affairs using its own revenue streams.

Highthorn proposals

6.15 Throughout the design of the Highthorn surface mine, Banks Mining have been eager to work together with interested parties such as Northumberland Tourism, the Northumberland Wildlife Trust and other local organisations to ensure

proposals for Highthorn and the wider area will create a landscape designed specifically with wildlife and the local community in mind.

6.16 The table below summaries some of the key consultees who have been approached throughout the design stage of the planning application and the Druridge Bay initiative:

Consultee	Reason for consultation
Northumberland County Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Department • Highways Department • Environmental Health Department • Economic Development • Rights of Way Department • Apprenticeships Officer • Archaeological Officer • County Ecologist 	Local Planning Authority for the site area
Widdrington Village Parish Council	Parish Council for the site
Widdrington Station and Stobswood Parish Council	Neighbouring Parish Council
Ellington and Linton Parish Council	Parish Council for the site
Cresswell Parish Council	Neighbouring Parish Council
East Chevington Parish Council	Neighbouring Parish Council
Ulgham Parish Council	Neighbouring Parish Council
Hauxley Parish Council	Neighbouring Parish Council
Environment Agency	Statutory consultee on all surface mining proposals
Natural England	Statutory consultee
English Heritage	Statutory consultee
Northumberland Wildlife Trust, RSPB and other local nature groups	Interested in the proposals and the potential to create new opportunities for nature conservation
Northumberland College	Interested in the potential for apprenticeship and training opportunities.
United Utilities / Northern Power Grid	Impact of the proposals upon their apparatus
Local Caravan Parks	Businesses adjacent to the site
Ramblers Association, British Horse Society and Sustrans	Representatives of users of public rights of way

Local people and local businesses	Interested in the design of the scheme and the potential effects and benefits
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6.17 A number of the requests/priorities highlighted by the above groups, including members of the public, have been addressed in the proposals for the site and the restoration scheme. The Statement of Community Involvement provides details of the changes and how these have been addressed (see Appendix 1 of the planning application). This demonstrates that Banks Mining are committed to local engagement and working with all interested parties in the development of new proposals.

7 Summary

7.1 Discover Druridge has the potential to become a regional and national tourist attraction whilst maintaining and adding to its current status as an important wildlife sanctuary.

7.2 Banks Mining will provide the catalyst through the delivery of funds from the Highthorn surface mine, in partnership with key local conservation and tourism bodies. By working collaboratively, the wider partnership will deliver the long term vision and objectives ensuring the longevity and stability of the Discover Druridge concept.

7.3 The specific actions identified by Banks Mining and key local groups have formed part of the restoration proposals for the site. Some actions will be delivered quickly whilst others are longer term projects, some of which are aspirational at this stage.

7.4 Banks Mining are committed to leaving a lasting, positive legacy for Druridge Bay, its surrounding areas and the county of Northumberland. Its intentions are to then remain a key part of the Druridge Bay area, but allow the partnership to successfully steer itself and create a positive legacy for the future of the Bay and its wildlife.

7.5 With everyone working together, investing in 'Discover Druridge' and creating wider partnerships, we can deliver a long term successful tourist destination, whilst maintaining and protecting the key natural assets which are so integral to Druridge Bay.