



Discover Duddon

Executive Summary

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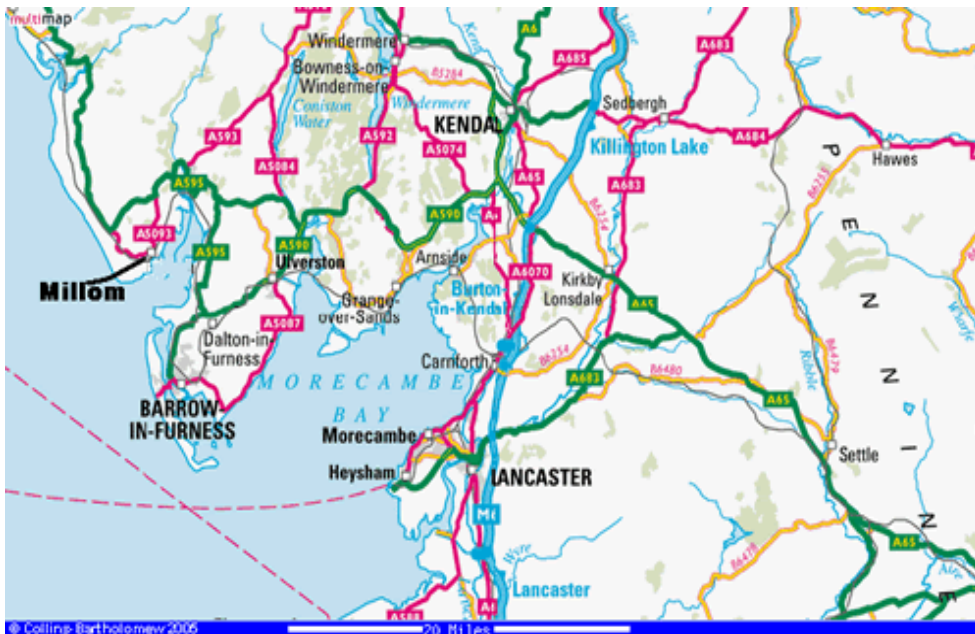
Executive Summary

This area action plan details the recommendations for the Millom area which will enable it to become a vibrant and economically active part of the Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary Regional Park.

The Millom Area

Millom is a small coastal town situated on the southerly peninsula of the Copeland District on the fringe of the Lake District National Park, in Cumbria. Separated from the Furness peninsula by the Duddon Estuary and bounded to the west by the Irish Sea.

As can be seen from the map below the nearest large towns are Barrow in Furness to the south and Whitehaven to the north.



The Duddon Estuary and Millom are at the most western part of the area proposed for the Regional Park. Due to its location, the transport infrastructure in the study area is poor. Millom is served by the A5093 which also passes through Haverigg, south west of Millom, about one mile away. Silecroft is a small quiet village, with a beach which is situated approximately one mile from Haverigg. The road then loops back to the main west coast road the A595 which is a highly trafficked route for both locals, commuters and visitors.

The study area is also served by the west coast mainland railway which has 4 stops within the area, however travel times are restricted. There is also a bus service which runs between Millom and Barrow in Furness.

Natural Environment

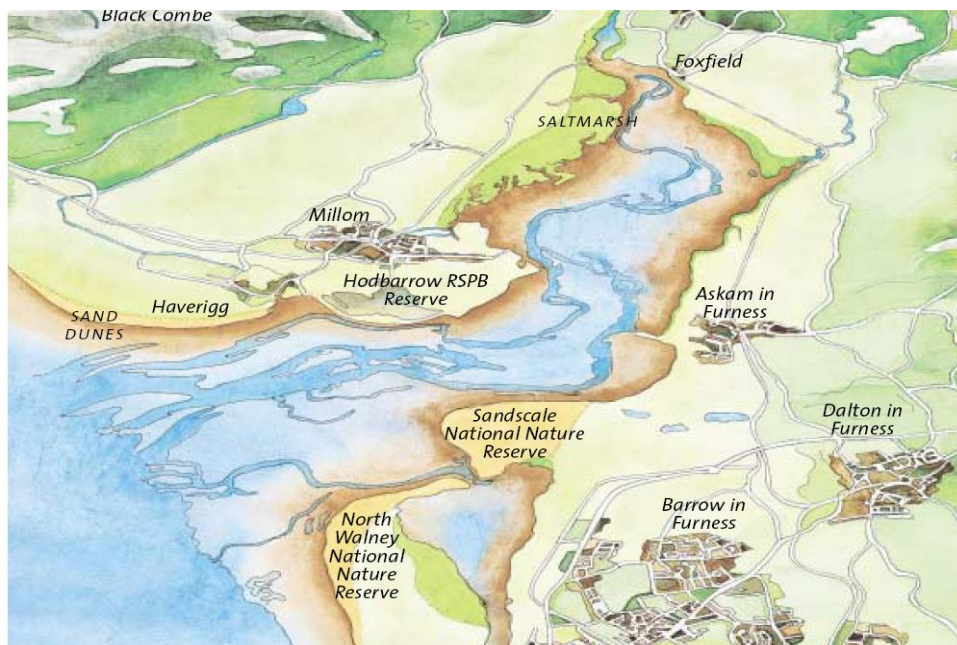
Millom and the surrounding area, benefits from a number of different environments varying from the urban centre of Millom to the sand dunes Haverigg.

The former ironworks site is now designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), see map below.



Duddon Estuary is Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); Hodbarrow Point is a nature reserve for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Due to the number of rare species the Duddon Estuary is also designated as a Wetland International Importance under the Ramsar Convention and as a Special Protection Area due to E.C. Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Birds.

Duddon Estuary



The Built Environment

The built environment mainly within Millom has suffered from a lack of investment for decades. Many of the key buildings, such as the former Co-op building and the Palladium are vacant.



Palladium



Co-op

The main characteristics of the area are;

- Beautiful designated natural landscapes;
- Physical and political isolation;
- Empty industrial and retail units showing a physical manifestation of the economic downturn being felt by the area since the ironworks closed;
- Poor transport links;

Given these characteristics, it is recommended there should be an increase in the use of the area's environmental assets in order to take advantage of the close proximity to the Lake District National Park. However, it is noted that the developments will have to be created without harming the fragile environments. This area action plan details how this may be achieved.

A Vision Millom and the Duddon Estuary

Millom will be an established gateway from the Lake District to the Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary Regional Park offering a range of activities, facilities and beautiful scenery. The development of a Duddon Discovery Centre for research into renewable energy, housed within an iconic building will supply the area with educational, conference and visitor facilities. Public exhibitions promoting leading green technologies and the natural assets and cultural heritage of Millom will be a feature of the Discovery Centre. The development of Incubator units linked with the research and tourism activities will create sustained economic regeneration for local businesses. Millom will be centre for excellence for renewable micro-technologies and the surrounding Duddon Estuary provides a sustainable and high quality experience for visitors



Objectives

The objectives used in this report came from a scoping report on the feasibility of the Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary Regional Park. These objectives are discussed below.

Objective 1

To develop a distinctive identity and positive brand image of the Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary Sub-Region.

Actions to achieve this objective;

- The promotion of the natural environment and increased marketing activities;
- The promotion of the area as a green tourism destination;
- Marketing of the Duddon Estuary throughout the Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary Regional Park.

Objective 2

To conserve and promote the sustainable development of the Regional Park's natural, built and cultural assets.

Actions to achieve this objective are;

- Clean-up areas and remove fly-tipping;
- Up-grade the coastal way;
- Link-up pathways/cycle and bridleways to allow sustainable transport routes and to reduce 'wandering' off the designated routes;
- The development of low impact tourist activities such as walks across the bay, with local guides;
- Up-grade signage, information and interpretation boards around the area.
- Build bird hides at Hodbarrow, Ironworks and Haverigg, sites to provide facilities for bird watchers;

- To educate and retain the cultural heritage of the area, by providing exhibitions in the Duddon Discovery Centre;
- To employ local people as Wardens and educators at key sites;
- To encourage new uses for key buildings within Millom to protect the built heritage of the area;
- To promote the area as a tourist destination to complement the Lake District National Park.

Objective 3

To develop and promote a wide range of high quality leisure and tourism facilities and events.

Actions to achieve this objective are;

- The promotion of the area as a green tourism destination
High quality leisure and tourism facilities based on the green tourism agenda will be promoted.
- Marketing and Promotion under the 'Discover Duddon' brand;
The Duddon Estuary is an area of contrasts, with diverse natural, cultural and historical assets. The Estuary is a unique system of tidal mudflats, saltmarshes and sand dunes, which sustain a variety of wildlife. It is proposed that Millom and the surrounding will be re-branded and marketing using "Discover Duddon": - Duddon: Discover, Diverse, Distinctive.
- Provision of an alternative offer / destination for tourists;
Development of transport linkages and improved accessibility to the areas natural assets will offer opportunities for local attractions and businesses to access the significant potential tourist market, which is strengthened both by the areas unique character and by its proximity to the established

tourist offer of the Lake District National Park. This will be supported by the development of high quality and varied tourist accommodation.

- Provision of a connection to the tourism and leisure offer of the wider Regional Park;

The Regional Park will work proactively to enhance the natural assets of Millom and the surrounding area. The Duddon Estuary coastline and nature reserves at Millom Ironworks, Hodbarrow Lagoon and Haverigg will be protected and sustainably managed to provide improved access and facilities for visitors.

- Provision of leisure facilities for all ages, interests and abilities;

The development of facilities that support tourism such as the shops, restaurants and pubs in the town centre will be encouraged and linked services such as cycle hire will be introduced.

Objective 4

To support the development of the North West coastal trail and provide good access to regional park resources.

Actions to achieve this objective are;

- Creation of cycleways;

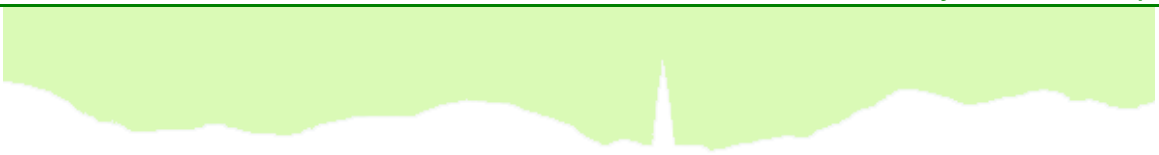
For example, a series of cycle ways around Millom connected to the proposed National Link would help link Millom to the Regional Park, as well as to the Lakes District National Park and the rest of Copeland. See Figure below for proposed cycle routes.



- Bike Hire;

To supplement the proposed localised cycle network, a system of bike hire is proposed where members of the public can hire bikes from key locations within the area. Specifically the railway station and Haverigg.

- Improvement of existing pedestrian footpaths;



Improvements to all footpaths within the area

- New Signage;
- New highly legible signs would promote the use of the new cycle way, coastal way and walking network, and encourage people to travel to the next site of interest. They would clearly indicate the site, what was at the site, and how far it was to the site.
- Improve access to the Coastal Way;
Access will be improved to the Coastal Way through increased signage using maps giving clear instructions on how to gain access to the Coastal Way.
- Increased use of train;
The railway is a key asset for the whole of the Regional Park, not just for Millom and the Duddon area. Promoting its use for locals and visitors, encouraging them to use it as a scenic route to enter and visit the town will tie in with the eco-tourism theme of the Regional Park, as it will provide a sustainable means of transport to enter the town. Key actions will include special fare, family tickets, one day and annual tickets to be created and promoted to try and encourage visitors to use the train on a regular basis.

Objective 5

To play a part in the wider regeneration of the area by increasing employment and enhancing business performance in leisure, sport and recreation and other Park related business sectors and retaining and attracting economic development and high level skills more generally.

Actions to achieve this objective;

- Improve existing industrial offer: creation of an attractive, green industrial estate which will link into the eco-tourism ethos and the energy coast;

- Growth of tourist sector: creation of a key tourist attraction and growth of eco-tourism in the area;
- Public realm improvements: Town centre improvements;
- Improve image: It is hoped that the above actions will help change people's perceptions of area and promote the town as a forward-thinking, innovative and inspiring place to live, visit and work.

Objective 6

To develop the role of the Regional Park as a unifying and binding force in the area.

Actions to achieve this objective;

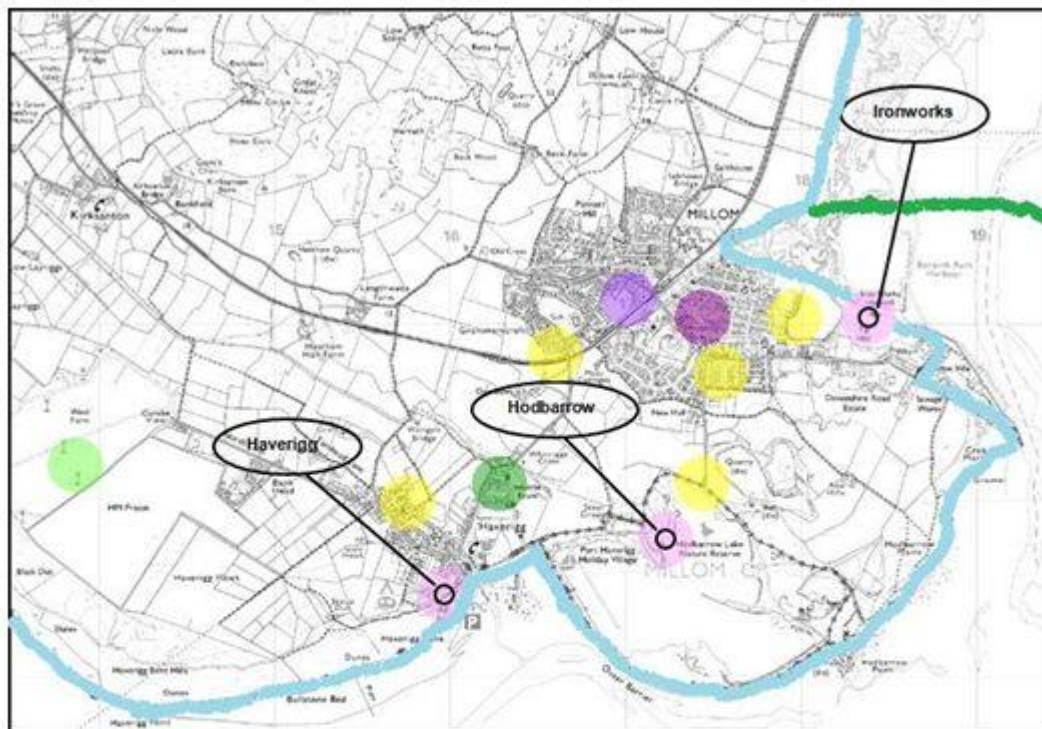
- Establish Millom area as the northern gateway to the regional park;
- Develop new links between the Millom area and the rest of the regional park;
- Strengthen existing links between Millom area and the rest of the regional park;









Key Sites

Given the current characteristics identified and the objectives of the Park a number of 4 key sites have been identified, by desktop surveys and field visits, these are;

- Ironworks Site
- Hodbarrow
- Haverigg
- Millom Town Centre

Key Diagram



| | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
|  | Improved signage and interpretation |  | Haverigg windfarm |
|  | Town centre improvements |  | Derelict industrial buildings |
|  | Palladium |  | Coastal footpath |
|  | Key sites |  | Cross estuary walk |

Ironworks *Iconic...Sympathetic...Sustainable....*

The Ironworks site is the central site within this area action plan. Central to the site is the Duddon Discovery Centre.



The Duddon Discovery Centre an Iconic Building on the Ironworks Site.

The Duddon Discovery Centre: A hands-on, interactive facility based within an iconic, eco-friendly building, featuring events, exhibits, workshops and programmes which will educate and inspire.

- The centre will contain a hands-on interactive museum focussing on the themes of the natural environment, energy production and climate change. There will also be a planetarium and space for travelling exhibitions, which will encourage repeat visits.
- Space will be made available for local producers/retailers to showcase their work in small workshop/boutiques within the centre.

- The design of the centre will be the subject of a national design competition. The winning design must be sympathetic to the natural landscape, iconic and sustainable.

Another key aspect to the Ironworks development is the Eco-industrial estate.

- The proposal involves demolition of the existing units and the creation of a carbon neutral industrial estate, featuring green incubator units to aid the growth of business start-ups within the area.
- The location of the estate will be a key selling point given its proximity to the discovery centre and the beauty of the surrounding landscape.
- The estate will be a pioneer for sustainable development and renewable industries, it links closely with the ethos behind the Energy Coast.

Therefore the Ironworks site will include;

- Iconic Discovery Centre
- Eco-industrial estate
- Modern units & Green business incubators
- Links to Discovery Centre
- Links to Energy Coast
- Support & relocation of existing businesses

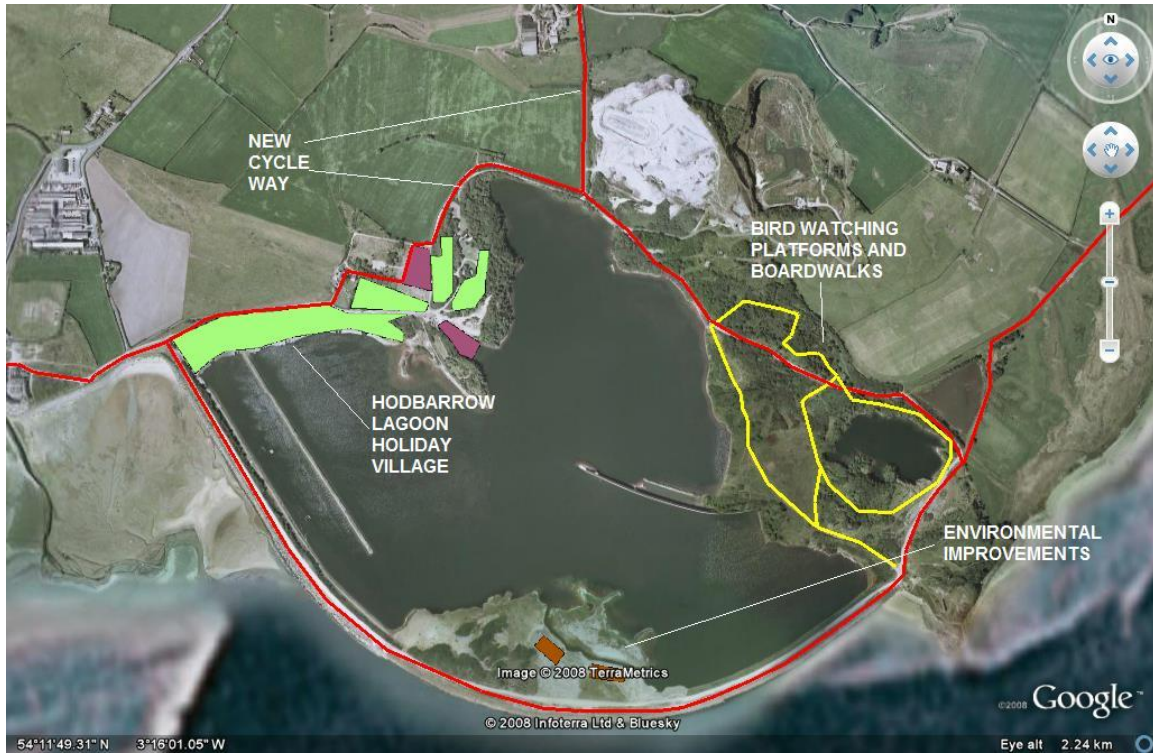
Haverigg

The emphasis of the Haverigg site is not development but improvement of the existing facilities to provide a more pleasant visitor experience. This will be achieved by;

- Improved public access;
- Improved public facilities;
- Restoration of the land;
- Improved interpretation of the site;
- Expansion of the windfarm.



Hodbarrow



The emphasis of the Hodbarrow site is to enhance the visitor experience to this unique environment. This will be achieved by;

- Up-grading of the current caravan park to create Lagoon Holiday Village;
- Eco-friendly timber lodges;
- Prime position for bird watching and water based activities;
- Visitors encouraged to travel by rail and eco-bus;
- Innovative design potential;
- Bird watching platforms and walkways;
- Diversification of uses at the Lagoon;
- New and improved hides;
- Conservation of heritage features;
- Upgrading of existing footpaths and parking facilities.

Millom Town Centre

Millom town centre is need of up-grading and diversification to encourage more visitors and to provide a pleasant experience for residents. This will be achieved by;

- Pedestrianisation;
- Accessibility;
- Public Space;
- Local Produce Markets.



Artists Impression of the proposed redevelopment to Market Square

Wellington Street / Crown Street

Wellington Street and Crown Street are currently underutilised, the focal building at their junction is currently vacant. Therefore it is envisaged that this building should be upgraded to provide high quality accommodation and retail outlets. This will improve the key buildings and conserve the heritage of the area.



Artists Impression of proposed scheme at Wellington Street / Crown Street junction

Conclusion

We believe that Millom and the surrounding area could become a key player within the Regional Park. Given its location the area could provide a gateway to the Regional Park providing unique experience for visitors.

Improvements to the Coastal Way and railway would create an enhanced visitor experience whilst unifying the Regional Park, in a sustainable manner.

The key to these proposals is balancing increasing numbers of visitors whilst protecting and conserving the environment.

It is envisaged that the developments will not be detrimental to the area but will improve it, in terms of environmental improvement and economic regeneration. Millom with increased investment could compliment the Lake District National Park by offering experiences not available within the Lake District. Therefore, enabling visitors to discover the *hidden gem* that is Millom and the Duddon Estuary.