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# Northumberland Wildlife Trust

*People taking action for wildlife*



## **Highthorn opencast coal development proposal, refusal decision; Northumberland Wildlife Trust position statement and response to decision announcement**

Northumberland Wildlife Trust welcomes the news that the proposed opencast coal mine at Highthorn on Druridge Bay in Northumberland has been turned down by the Secretary of State Sajid Javid.

NWT objected to the proposals and submitted evidence to the Public Inquiry and felt on balance that the development would impact negatively on the wildlife conservation of the area and also on people's enjoyment of the many aspects of nature that this currently tranquil area provides. It was very clear during the consultation how passionate local people were about the area and its wildlife and how they felt this was too much of a risk to conservation and the quality of their local natural environment and the landscape they so valued.

NWT was concerned alongside our partners, RSPB and National Trust, that existing wildlife such as geese, marsh harriers and wading birds, as well as other species and the integrity of the nature reserve we manage at Cresswell Pond could not be entirely protected.

Whilst large areas of new habitat were offered by way of compensation for the development, it remained uncertain how this would be secured and managed into the future. Overall, our view remains that this was the wrong development concept in the wrong place and that given the nature conservation sensitivity of the whole of Druridge Bay, it was not an appropriate place to develop an opencast mine in these times. This is especially the case in relation to the need to phase out use of coal in regard of global warming and this is something underlined in the recently published Government's 25 year Plan for the Environment. Thus, it was also the wrong timing entirely for such a proposal.

However, in recognising this, as a Trust we do appreciate the disappointment felt by those who might be dependent on the industry for employment and the hard work of the developer Banks Mining, in going the extra mile in trying to demonstrate how any negative environmental impacts could be offset and compensated for. Whilst this was encouraging to see, for local people and visitors, for wildlife and nature and for reasons of carbon management linked to global warming, this rejection of the proposal was the right result.



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