

TECHNICAL NOTE 1

DATE:	14 October 2021	CONFIDENTIALITY:	Public
SUBJECT:	Flintshire LDP Examination		
PROJECT:	HyNet North West CO ₂ Pipeline	AUTHOR:	Natalie Corless
CHECKED:	Mike Greslow	APPROVED:	Trevor Croft

HYNET NORTH WEST CO₂ PIPELINE & FLINTSHIRE LDP HOUSING ALLOCATION AT EWLOE

INTRODUCTION

This note has been produced at the request of Flintshire County Council (FCC) to provide an update to the Examination Inspector on the emerging Flintshire Local Development Plan (LDP) on the progress of the routing options for the HyNet CO₂ pipeline, and in particular the impacts on the LDP housing allocation HN1.7 at Ewloe.

BACKGROUND

HyNet North West is promoting an integrated low carbon energy project to materially reduce carbon emissions in North West England and North Wales. The project will produce clean hydrogen to replace the fossil fuels used currently for industry, transport and homes. HyNet will also capture and store carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions produced by the proposed hydrogen production facilities and existing local energy intensive industries.

The HyNet project is made up of several different elements – a key element is a pipeline that will take the CO₂ emissions to be securely stored in depleted gas reservoirs in Liverpool Bay. Delivery of the CO₂ pipeline will comprise the construction of a new underground pipeline, which will connect with an existing natural gas pipeline that will be repurposed so that it can transport CO₂.

The new pipeline will transport CO₂ produced and captured from existing industrial premises in the Ince and Stanlow area in Cheshire. It will also transport CO₂ from a new low-carbon hydrogen production plant at Stanlow Refinery. From here it will run south-west through Cheshire and into Flintshire, connecting into the existing repurposed pipeline at a location near Flint.

The existing pipeline runs from a location near Flint in the vicinity of the existing Connah's Quay Power Station, and travels west through Flintshire to the existing Point of Ayr Gas Terminal in Talacre. The pipeline then runs under water from the shoreline until it connects to the depleted gas reservoir where the CO₂ will be injected.

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The new-build pipeline is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and will be subject to a Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Planning Inspectorate in Q3 2022. There will be some elements of development associated with the existing pipeline, these will be subject to a Town and Country Planning Act application in Q4 2022/Q1 2023 to FCC as the Local Planning Authority.

CONSULTATION

A non-statutory consultation on the HyNet CO₂ pipeline was held between 9 June and 11 July 2021 to introduce the proposals to the public and stakeholders as well as invite comments on the different pipeline route options identified.

The route options presented at the consultation are shown in **Figure 1**. The two main route options for the pipeline are Option I (shown in pink) and the more southerly Option G (shown in blue). The indicative location of the proposed housing allocation HN1.7 in relation to the pipeline route is indicated by the red arrow.



Figure 1: CO₂ pipeline route options presented at non-statutory consultation

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HyNet submitted their Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping request to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on 3 June 2021. FCC were invited by PINS to provide comments on the scoping request and responded on 30 June 2021.

FCC contacted HyNet on 23 August 2021 to make the team aware that the proposed scoping boundary of the CO₂ pipeline would travel through some of the allocations proposed in the emerging Flintshire LDP and in particular a portion of the housing allocation in Ewloe (HN1.7), which is shown below on **Figure 2**. FCC were concerned this would have an impact on the proposed housing numbers that the allocation could provide, which they have said is fundamental to the housing provision of the LDP and soundness of the Plan.

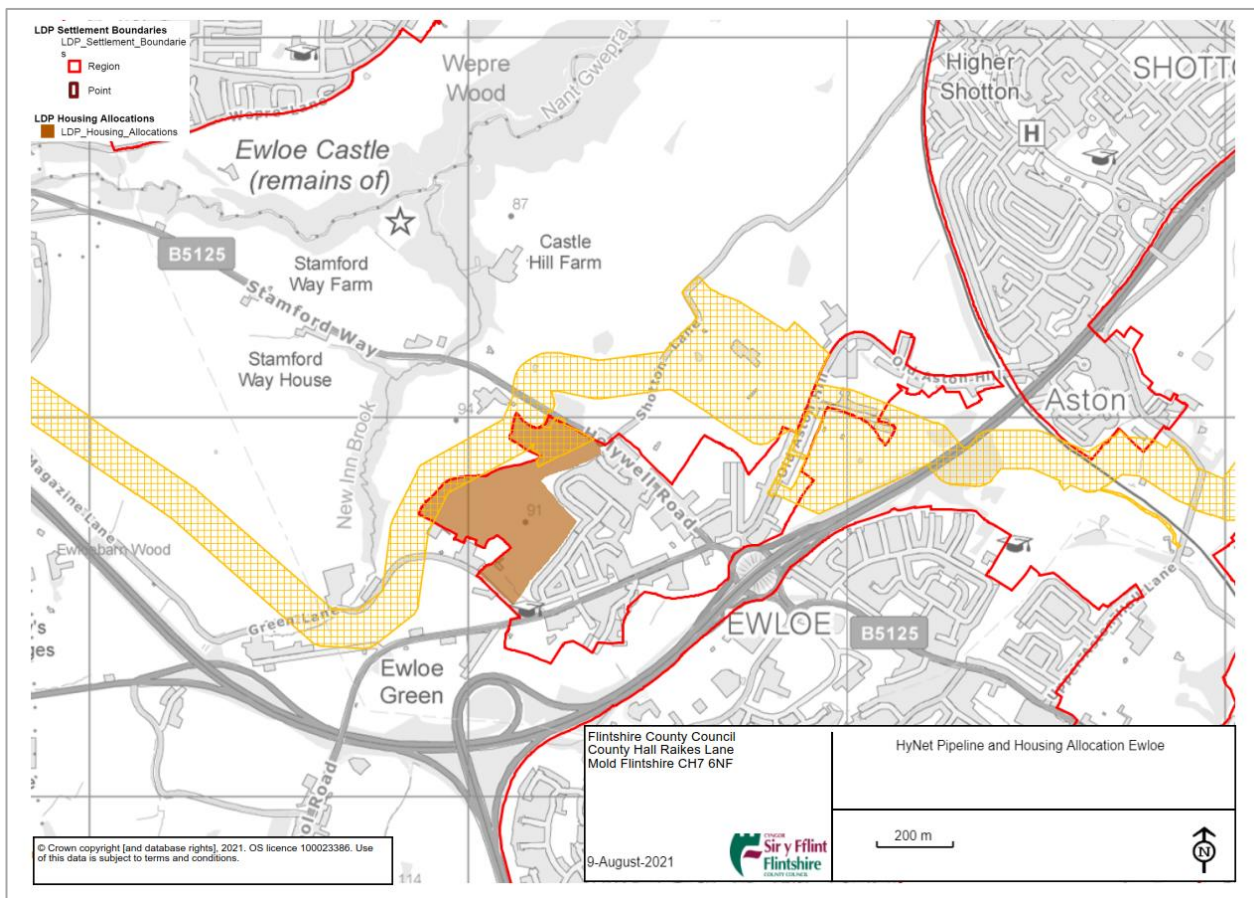


Figure 2: HyNet Pipeline and Housing Allocation Ewloe (Flintshire County Council)

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A call was set up with Hannah Parish (FCC Case Officer on HyNet project) and the Spatial Planning team on 25 August to discuss the issues raised. During the call, the HyNet team explained that the current boundary is an EIA scoping boundary which is 50-100 metres wide. This is a wider corridor within which the final route will be located and it is intended that this would be refined down further for statutory consultation and again at DCO submission in 2022. The HyNet team confirmed that the route appraisal and options work for the pipeline route was still ongoing, but we would seek to avoid overlap with the Ewloe allocation to avoid any further conflict with the ability of FCC to plan for the projected housing need.

PROGRESS OF PIPELINE ROUTING OPTIONS AT EWLOE

Regular monthly meetings have been held between the HyNet team, FCC and Cheshire West and Chester Council to provide an update on the CO₂ pipeline project. At the 8 September meeting, the HyNet team gave a high-level update on the route options appraisal, the constraints affecting the route and confirmed that the LDP allocations had been factored into the appraisal.

As a result of these discussions, the HyNet team have also undertaken some further design work to review how the CO₂ pipeline design can be refined to avoid the housing allocation HN1.7. As part of this work, the team reviewed the scoping boundary of the pipeline and are proposing to extend this boundary further west and, subject to further survey work, expect that it can route the pipeline to completely avoid the LDP allocation. Further details on the boundary will be presented in Q1 2022 at statutory consultation.

The HyNet team have also prepared a constructability report and are reviewing the easement widths for the CO₂ pipeline. Ground investigation surveys commenced in October 2021 which will inform the overall approach for the disposal of spoil and land restoration options. HyNet have agreed to keep FCC up to date on the outcomes of this exercise as there may be sites/developments coming forward in Flintshire where materials could be used.

TIMESCALES FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The programme milestones for the CO₂ pipeline are listed below:

- Statement of Community Consultation – Q4 2021 – Q1 2022
- Statutory consultation – Q1 2022

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- DCO application submission – Q3 2022
- Acceptance (28 day) – Q4 2022
- Pre-Examination (4 months anticipated) – Q4 2022 -Q1 2023
- Examination (6 months) – Q1 2023 – Q3 2023
- Examining Authority Recommendation – Q4 2023
- Secretary of State Recommendation – Q1 2024
- Anticipated start of construction – Q2 2024

SUMMARY

HyNet North West have held discussions with Flintshire County Council about the overlap of the CO₂ pipeline and the housing allocation HN1.7. As a result, the team have undertaken further design work and are now proposing to move the scoping boundary further west to avoid the allocation. Subject to further survey work, the HyNet team are confident that the CO₂ pipeline can be rerouted to avoid the LDP allocation. The reworked boundary will be presented at statutory consultation in early 2022.