

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Cheshire West and Chester Council

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Date: 8 December 2022

Dear Whitby resident,

Whitby Hydrogen Village

Along with other residents of Whitby, you have been asked to be part of a pioneering proposal to switch from the natural gas supply to hydrogen. A number of questions have been asked about the council's involvement and support for the Cadent Whitby Hydrogen village pilot, and we want to ensure that all the questions you have will be answered. We had hoped to get in touch sooner, however have been limited by the Chester by-election and restrictions on communications during the pre-election period.

It is important to be clear that the Council is not a decision-maker or lead agency for this project, but we are committed to ensuring it is delivered transparently and in partnership with our residents.

Your local Councillors have advocated for your interests, and will continue to ensure your questions are fully answered. We have advocated for a financial benefit to residents, support for home insulation, and that the option of switching from gas to electric is available. The Council supports residents in making whatever choice is right for them. We have also supported the greenest possible supply of hydrogen for the pilot. And we will ensure that the data and information about community views put forward to government is gathered using techniques that adhere to research industry standards. A commitment to safety is absolute, verified by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), and the Council will be meeting with Ofgem and the HSE to seek ongoing assurance.

Following a number of issues and concerns raised by local people, we have developed a list of Frequently Asked Questions on the Council's role in the trial, included alongside this letter. Cadent



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have published a more detailed set of FAQs on the trial. These are available on the [Whitby Hydrogen Village website](#) and via a link from a new page on the [Council's website](#).

The world is facing a climate emergency. We are proud to be at the forefront of the measures required to address climate change. The changes we need to make across society bring great challenges. But they also create many opportunities, particularly here in Ellesmere Port, which is once again at the forefront of new technology. The production of low carbon hydrogen is a vital element of this. The natural gas that we use to heat our homes and cook our food is a fossil fuel which contributes to climate change. The respected and independent Climate Change Committee has advised that residential natural gas will have to be phased out starting in 2033 if the UK is to deliver on its climate commitments. This is a major national challenge, and we need to find solutions that work for all our communities.

Following recommendations from the Climate Change Committee, the government is seeking an area to begin the roll out of hydrogen supply to homes. They asked local gas networks to bring forward proposals for the most suitable areas. The Council was then approached by Cadent, the local gas network, to support a proposal. Whitby was identified by Cadent as the most suitable area, because of the nature of the gas network and the proximity to sources of hydrogen from nearby industry. The HyNet consortium of businesses from across the North West is developing the infrastructure required to make Ellesmere Port one of Europe's leading centres for hydrogen-powered industry; helping to ensure our local industry can meet its climate commitments, while creating new green jobs for local people.

The Whitby Hydrogen Village project will benefit from this infrastructure, and also draw green hydrogen produced from the Frodsham Wind Farm, ensuring it is as low carbon as feasibly possible. By connecting local homes to this low carbon energy source, there is a long-term prospect of affordable clean heat long into the future.

The government may choose not to go ahead with this project. There is another area being considered, in Redcar, Teesside. We regret that this has been launched as a competitive process, but that is the government's preferred approach. At this stage Cadent is testing out local views, and engaging with every resident to determine the best solution for every home. The government will decide in July 2023 which proposal will go forward to the next stage.

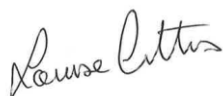
If you have any further questions which you want answered, please do raise them with Cadent or at the Hydrogen Experience Centre. We would encourage you to participate in the community events

which are being held in coming weeks and months, more information about these can be found on the Hydrogen Village website. Or, if you would prefer to contact the Council, we have a designated email address to receive your comments: climatechange@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk.

The Council will host an event to listen to residents views, and hear a range of expert perspectives early in the new year, to ensure all viewpoints are heard and that we are as transparent as possible about the Council's role in this process.

I hope you find this information helpful, and we encourage you to play your part in this important initiative.

Yours sincerely,



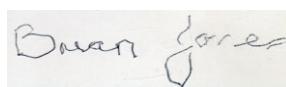
Councillor Louise Gittins
Leader of the Council



Andrew Lewis
Chief Executive



Peter Rooney
Whitby Park Councillor



Brian Jones
Whitby Groves Councillor