

TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the proceedings of the hybrid meeting of the Special Town Planning Committee, held on Monday 2nd June, 2025.

PRESENT: Councillor R. Davies (in the Chair).

Councillors: M. Buckley, D. Challenger, P. Cunningham, N. Davies, C. Griffiths, M. Hanson, D. Jones, E. Jones, M. Perfect and J. Stoneley.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor M. Whittaker.

IN ATTENDANCE: L. Wood, Town Clerk, N. Thornton, Support Officer, Mr. J. Hook, Project Integration Team Leader, Uniper and Mr. R. Brandwood, Consenting Manager, Clean Dispatchable Power, Uniper.

7. PUBLIC ENQUIRY ITEM

There were no members of the public present.

8. DECLARATION OF INTEREST – MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillor P. Cunningham declared an interest on the Town Planning Committee due to being a member of the Flintshire County Council Planning Committee and left the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the declaration of interests will be recorded.

9. LOW CARBON PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AT UNIPER, CONNAH'S QUAY

Mr. J. Hook and Mr. R. Brandwood provided an update on the proposed energy project. They confirmed that key concerns previously raised by the Council, specifically visual impact, public accessibility, air emissions, and project transparency were being addressed. They explained that the design had evolved since the start of the project, due in part to advancing technology and the need to safeguard air quality. As a result, taller stacks were deemed necessary to meet strict emissions requirements and to improve dispersion.

Councillor M. Buckley, speaking on behalf of Oakenholt residents, requested a visual impact assessment from Oakenholt Hall Farm and other key public points, and why are 150 metre chimneys necessary and were alternatives, less visually intrusive options considered. She also asked what consideration has been given to the long-term impact on tourism and local wellbeing caused by the industrialisation of the skyline. What independent impact assessments have been conducted and who were they commissioned by. In response, Mr. Hook and Mr. Brandwood stated that three 3D visuals from different vantage points would be included in the Environmental Impact Assessment, which would also address the impact on tourism. They noted that this was a non-statutory consultation, and all feedback received would be incorporated into the final planning stage. They confirmed that the independent impact assessment was commissioned by themselves.

Councillor C. Griffiths expressed concern about the design changes and questioned why these were not foreseen earlier. She asked whether the existing building would be reused and whether Flintshire County Council had been consulted. Mr. Hook and Mr. Brandwood responded that the intention had always been to demolish the existing buildings to make way

for the new facility. They explained that changes in design and emissions requirements were common during large construction projects and that such changes had prompted this new consultation. They assured the Council that Flintshire County Council and other relevant authorities were being kept fully informed.

Councillor M. Hanson raised concerns about the increased stack height, the potential environmental and visual impact, and the safety of the changes. She asked about the content of the emissions and whether independent assessments had been conducted. Mr. Hook and Mr. Brandwood clarified that the stacks had increased in height, but not doubled, compared to earlier designs. They stated that an independent consultant was carrying out the Environmental Impact Assessment, which would be reviewed by the Secretary of State. They also explained that the new plant would emit small quantities of ammonia, a key difference from the current plant, which necessitated the taller stacks to ensure better environmental control.

Councillor M. Buckley asked what the air quality impact on residents would be, how emissions would be mitigated for vulnerable people and listed buildings, what effects pile driving specifically on listed building would have and can a viewpoint be added for the Oakenholt Hall conservation area that is included in their updated Appendix D Landscape and Visual Amenity Report. Also, would compensation be provided to affected residents and whether residents would have to support their own legal costs to explore compensation claims. Mr. Hook and Mr. Brandwood explained that air quality and dispersion modelling formed a core part of the assessment. Mitigation strategies included reducing ammonia concentrations and increasing stack height for better dispersion. They stated that pile driving, noise, and vibration assessments had already been completed and included in the environmental impact assessment. They committed to further assurance where risks were identified. With regard to compensation, they confirmed that a process existed and that information on this would be made available.

Councillor D. Challenger questioned why the existing Connah's Quay power station did not have tall stacks and asked what measures were in place to mitigate harmful emissions, also what constitutes acceptable impact on the environment. Regarding the new stacks, would they be colour toned to blend into the environment. Mr. Hook and Mr. Brandwood responded that the current station did not involve the use of ammonia and the temperature of the gas emissions would be cooler, and therefore needed a bigger stack to ensure they travelled higher and explained that architectural measures such as colour toning and surface finishes would be considered to reduce visual impact.

Councillor N. Davies raised concerns about the pungent smell of ammonia, particularly given the proximity of a new school being built in Flint, and the prevailing wind patterns. She expressed concern about the impact on children's lung health and the broader community. She asked what the benefits of the project would be for Flint. Mr. Hook and Mr. Brandwood explained that emissions impact modelling considered weather patterns and long-term environmental effects.

They emphasized the broader benefits of the project, including community engagement through school and STEM programmes, as well as the significant economic value it would bring to the region. They confirmed that the exact form of community benefits was still under consideration and welcomed further suggestions from the Council.

Councillor M. Hanson asked where ammonia would settle, noting its potential long-term health effects, particularly on children with disabilities, soil, and animals. Mr. Hook and Mr. Brandwood addressed these concerns by highlighting the extensive air quality modelling being conducted to minimise harm to both human health and the environment.

The Chair, Councillor R. Davies, asked about the carbon output difference in the event that the carbon capture system did not function. Mr. Hook and Mr. Brandwood explained that the plant was designed to capture 95% of CO₂ emissions from flue gas, which would then be transported via a high-CO₂ infrastructure pipeline. If the pipeline became unavailable, CO₂ would be vented through a 150-metre stack designed for such abnormal operations. They suggested that if the HyNet pipeline could not be used, then carbon emissions would increase significantly. This would result in a significant increase in the carbon tax the business is liable for, making this mode of working uneconomic over the long term. They also reiterated the mitigation steps in place for ammonia emissions under both scenarios.

Councillor M. Hanson raised concerns about the accessibility and clarity of the consultation documents. She noted that many residents might struggle to understand the materials due to complex language and the lack of easy-to-read materials. She requested that an easy-read version be produced and that Public Health Wales conduct a health impact assessment. Mr. Hook and Mr. Brandwood acknowledged these points and said the documentation had been prepared with the help of a communications consultant. They confirmed that hard copies were available at designated information points and all documents were accessible online.

Councillor M. Buckley enquired about local job creation, mechanisms for ensuring environmental compliance, and whether future public engagement events would be held. Mr. Hook and Mr. Brandwood confirmed that approximately 60 permanent jobs would be created, with current staff transitioning to the new asset. They stated that environmental monitoring would be undertaken and reported to Natural Resources Wales. While no further in-person consultation events were planned, residents were encouraged to submit questions via email.

Councillor N. Davies requested that all questions and answers from the evening’s meeting be compiled and submitted to the Council for sharing with residents. Mr. Hook and Mr. Brandwood agreed to this.

Councillor D. Challenger suggested holding a Zoom Q&A session to further engage the community. Mr. J. Hook and Mr. R. Brandwood agreed to take this suggestion back for consideration.

The Chair, Councillor R. Davies, stressed the importance of submitting responses to the consultation before the deadline. Councillor M. Perfect encouraged individual Councillors to submit their own responses to ensure the town’s voice was heard.

Councillor M. Hanson proposed contacting the local MP and potentially engaging with other Councils to address concerns about the project’s impact, particularly regarding emissions and health effects.

RESOLVED: That the Council collates and submits all concerns raised during the meeting to the Uniper prior to the consultation deadline.

Date of Council Meeting	Monday 2 nd June 2025
..... Chair	