HyNet North West is an exciting new hydrogen and carbon capture project in North West England and North Wales. It is paving the way for a more sustainable future that will contribute significantly to regional and national ‘net zero’ targets, while creating and protecting local jobs. The first step of this journey is to develop a pipeline which will transport CO$_2$ from industries in the Stanlow and Ince area to depleted gas reservoirs in Liverpool Bay. As a major infrastructure project, it will go through a nationally regulated planning process to ensure its delivery is as safe and smooth as possible while reflecting the needs of local people.

**What is the planning process?**

The carbon dioxide (CO$_2$) pipeline for HyNet North West will run from the Stanlow area in Cheshire, transporting CO$_2$ through Flintshire to be stored in underground depleted gas reservoirs in Liverpool Bay. This will involve building a new section of pipeline, as well as re-purposing an existing natural gas pipeline for CO$_2$.

As the CO$_2$ pipeline will be over 16km in length, the project is classified as a ‘Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project’ (or NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008. This means that one of the main types of consent we will be seeking to obtain is a Development Consent Order (DCO). Obtaining the DCO will allow us to construct the new pipeline.

We will also need to get approvals from Flintshire County Council under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA) to undertake works to improve the existing pipeline and modify the facilities at the existing Point of Ayr gas terminal to be able to manage CO$_2$ rather than natural gas.

**How do we obtain a Development Consent Order (DCO)?**

The DCO process helps to streamline the decision-making process for large infrastructure projects and helps to ensure that communities and stakeholders are given fair opportunity to make their views known. We will need to apply to the Planning Inspectorate for the DCO, after which point there are clear stages which we will need to follow.

As part of our application process, we will need to meet certain requirements as we progress through the different stages. You can find more information on the DCO process online at: [infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk](http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

**Who makes the decisions?**

It is the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy who will make the final decision on whether to grant or refuse permission for our CO$_2$ pipeline project.
What is the difference between DCO and TCPA consents?

As the CO₂ pipeline spans across both England and Wales there are some distinct parts of our proposals within Wales which will need to be approved through a TCPA application, as opposed to a DCO application.

The TCPA application process will be slightly different, and the decision-maker for these applications will be Flintshire County Council. However, the principles of our TCPA application will remain the same:

- We will undergo robust consultation with stakeholders and communities,
- We will consider the potential impacts of these proposals (including environmental impacts assessment), and
- Our application will be duly considered by the members of the Flintshire County Council planning committee before any decisions are made.

At what stage are we in now?

We are currently in early pre-application stages, focusing on defining a fixed route for the CO₂ pipeline before developing the designs further.

What are the next steps?

Following this initial consultation, we will further develop the designs for the CO₂ pipeline, including defining the specific route it will follow, as well as locations of any above ground installations. We will also undertake assessments of potential environmental impact of the routing and construction of the pipeline and develop plans to avoid, reduce or mitigate identified environmental effects.

Once we have developed our proposals in more detail, we will consult on the scheme again, providing a more detailed opportunity for communities and stakeholders to view the proposals and make their views known.

Other parts of HyNet, such as the hydrogen production plant, will also be going through separate planning applications and consenting processes. More information on these projects will be made available in due course.