



Cheshire Wildlife Trust position statement on the Peak Cluster CCS Proposal

Summary position:

Cheshire Wildlife Trust believes urgent action is needed to tackle climate change, but this must not come at the expense of nature.

Wildlife is already in serious trouble, with many species in decline and our remaining natural places under intense pressure. We are concerned that infrastructure projects, such as the Peak Cluster proposal, could cause further damage to habitats, rivers and wildlife at a time when nature urgently needs space to recover.

We are carefully assessing the potential impacts and advocating for nature to be protected. We will publish our consultation responses on our website to help people make their own informed and meaningful contributions.

Full position:

Cheshire Wildlife Trust recognises the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to address the accelerating climate emergency. However, this emergency is unfolding alongside an equally urgent nature crisis, with wildlife populations in steep decline and habitats already fragmented, degraded and under intense pressure. We cannot afford further losses. Climate solutions must therefore not only reduce emissions, but actively safeguard and enhance the natural environment, rather than cause additional harm.

The proposed Peak Cluster carbon capture and storage (CCS) project involves creating extensive pipeline infrastructure crossing rural landscapes, rivers and wildlife habitats from Derbyshire and Staffordshire through Cheshire and into the Wirral. This infrastructure would pass through areas that are already under significant ecological stress and where remaining habitats are critical for nature's recovery.

The construction of the pipeline and the associated works could result in direct habitat loss and fragmentation, loss of ecological connectivity, disturbance to soils and watercourses, and increased pressure on already vulnerable species.

Our analysis of the impacts is ongoing; however, currently available information indicates that the scheme could impact Local Wildlife Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, ancient woodland, rivers, protected species and bird assemblages, with these impacts being felt mostly significantly in the Wirral and Cheshire Peak District.

Rigorous environmental assessment of the impacts on designated sites, wildlife corridors and protected species is essential.

Cheshire Wildlife Trust therefore calls for:

1. A planning and consenting process that provides meaningful and ongoing opportunities for stakeholders to participate.
2. Comprehensive, independent environmental impact assessments that fully evaluate direct and cumulative effects on wildlife and habitats at both a local and national level.
3. Route selection that prioritises avoidance of local and nationally designated sites, priority and irreplaceable habitats, priority species assemblages and ecological corridors.
4. If the scheme is delivered, unavoidable impacts must be minimised and any residual impacts compensated for locally to the site of impact, secured through legally binding Biodiversity Net Gain.
5. Embedded carbon released from any habitats disturbed or destroyed to be calculated alongside that from the construction and operational processes.
6. Reduction of emissions at source, alongside any reliance on CCS.

We believe that climate action must be pursued in ways that enhance, not erode, biodiversity and natural capital, safeguarding Cheshire's rich wildlife heritage for future generations.



We are advocating for the highest standards to be met on behalf of Cheshire's wildlife and communities. We encourage our supporters to respond to public consultations, and we commit to publishing our responses on our website to enable others to make their own informed responses.