Cheshire Wildlife Trust
Bickley Hall Farm
Bickley Lane, Malpas
Cheshire. SY14 8EF
The Cheshire Wildlife Trust
Registered Charity No. 214927

Cheshire Wildlife Trust

6th November 2026

Dear Mayor Rotheram,

A shift towards renewable energy is essential to tackling the climate crisis but this must not be achieved by further degradation of the natural world. We cannot solve one crisis by exacerbating another. We need joined-up thinking to ensure a holistic decision is reached for nature, the climate, people, and energy security.

During your Mayoral Question Time on the 6th October, you indicated that the proposed Mersey Tidal barrage "would not have a massive environmental impact". Cheshire Wildlife Trust and The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside have serious concerns regarding this claim.

The Mersey Estuary is vital to wildlife in the UK and beyond. It benefits from the highest level of international protection due to its significance in worldwide species migrations. It is designated under the UNESCO Ramsar Convention and as a Special Protection Area under the European Habitats Directive – as is the Mersey Narrows & Wirral Foreshore. It also holds national significance as a Special Site of Scientific Interest.

The damage caused by tidal barrages extends far beyond their immediate surroundings. While you mentioned, "I'm comfortable it won't have the negative environmental impacts Peak Cluster would… it basically connects two sides of the River Mersey," this is exactly the reason why the environmental stakes are so high. Severing the Mersey from the sea risks irreparable damage to coastal sites around the Irish Sea. Changing sediment flows, displacing flood impacts and interfering with delicate tidal cycles have significant and far-reaching consequences.

Our understanding of the natural world has advanced since tidal barrages were first conceived. Right now, global delegates at the COP17 biodiversity conference are committing to creating a healthy, thriving natural environment for the benefit of future generations. The designated sites in the Mersey Estuary and Liverpool Bay area are an essential part of the UK's Global Biodiversity Framework obligations to protect and manage 30% of land for nature by 2030. Tidal barrages pose a significant risk to these obligations and any loss or degradation of protected land and water seriously undermines the government's international commitment.

We are concerned that conclusions are being drawn regarding both the benefits of a tidal barrage and potential locations for its delivery before the supporting evidence has been made publicly available. In particular, we have been unable to identify published

assessments that substantiate statements regarding environmental impacts, nor the comparative evaluation that led to a barrage being identified as the preferred option.

Current legislation would, in all likelihood, preclude the development of a large barrage because of the extent of compensatory habitat required. Therefore, we would welcome greater clarity on the evidence base underpinning decision-making, including how alternative options were assessed and the reasons they were not taken forward. This would provide reassurance that all viable approaches, particularly those with potentially lower environmental impacts, have been fully and objectively considered.

Given the importance of these issues, we would like to ask if you would meet with us directly to discuss the evidence, assumptions and decision-making process and to explore ways in which negative environmental impacts of any proposed tidal energy scheme could be avoided.

Yours sincerely,





Charlotte Harris
CEO Cheshire Wildlife Trust

Dr Tom Burditt
CEO The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside

Cc Andy King