

The battery scheme: what the Council knew before residents were told

When Xlinks' newsletter reached homes within two miles of the site in June 2026, the battery scheme was presented to residents as a new proposal. Records released by Torridge District Council under the Environmental Information Regulations show that the scheme had a designed layout a year earlier, was in formal pre-application by October 2025, and had received the Council's written concerns by November 2025. This sheet sets out that sequence from the Council's own records.

1. June to November 2025: a designed scheme, before residents knew

- The engineering design document and site plans for the "Nexus 1 Project" that Xlinks gave the Council are dated **5 June 2025**. They show the site layout, the battery containers, the substation and the construction compound.
- The Council's advice letter records that Xlinks' pre-application enquiry was **received on 1 October 2025**.
- The Council's written advice, raising "potential significant concerns," is dated **6 November 2025** (see Information Sheets 4 and 5).

2. November 2025: an Ofgem deadline and a caveated response

Emails between Xlinks and the Council from 4 to 6 November 2025, under the subject "Nexus LDES battery," show how the advice came to be issued when it was:

- On 4 November Xlinks chased the Council for its comments on "the battery site," explaining it had a response to send to Ofgem and needed the Council's comments **within the week**.
- On 5 November Xlinks proposed that the response be caveated, "upon confirmation of a PPA, comment from Landscaping yet to be applied," rather than wait for the Council's landscape advice, "so Ofgem can see we are actively involving the local authority." The same email proposed treating the data centre and the battery as two separate legal entities with two separate planning agreements.
- The Council agreed it was "logical to proceed without formal landscape advice at this stage," arranged a site visit for 7 November with an external landscape consultant, and asked Xlinks to confirm that the consultant's cost could be recovered through a planning agreement "at a later date." No such agreement was in place.
- The advice letter of 6 November confirms the gap: instructing a landscape consultant to review the scheme "has regrettably not been possible prior to this response."

3. January to June 2026: from "limited engagement" to public launch

- On 26 January 2026 the Council noted "limited engagement recently on both the Data Centres and Battery Storage projects" and said a Planning Performance Agreement was now required before further meetings.
- Between 11 and 28 May 2026 Xlinks asked four times for a meeting on the "Nexus Battery Site," to be run "in a similar way to we did on Valeon." The Council replied on 29 May, eighteen days after the first request, citing officer leave.
- The Council's own log records meetings with Xlinks on 15 May, 22 May, 12 June and 1 July 2026. Minutes have not been released.
- On 19 June 2026 Xlinks circulated its "Devon Data Campus" newsletter to the Council for distribution to addresses within two miles of the site. Its letter and FAQ on the energy storage system followed on 7 July. The consultation that opened on 14 July was later put on hold, with no closing date and no dates for Public Information Days.

Key point: The battery scheme had a designed layout by June 2025, was in formal pre-application by October 2025 and had the Council's written concerns by November 2025, seven months before residents were told about it. The timing of the Council's advice was driven by a deadline Xlinks had with the energy regulator, and the advice was issued before the Council had obtained its own landscape review.

Sources: Torridge District Council pre-application advice (ref FPEM/0587/2025, 6 November 2025), email correspondence between Xlinks, Arthian and Torridge District Council (November 2025 to June 2026) and the Council's Data Centres/BESS meeting log, all released by Torridge District Council under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (ref #11154, response dated 18 August 2026); Torridge District Council log of meeting dates with Xlinks (FOI ref FS Case 852629324); Xlinks newsletter, 19 June 2026, and letter and FAQ, 7 July 2026.