

Devon Data Centre and BESS Action Group

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Public Information Sheet 6

August 2026

Fact-Check: the Devon Data Campus FAQs, checked against the developer's own documents

*This sheet takes each question and answer published on the Xlinks/Devon Data Campus FAQ page and checks it against the developer's own technical documents and other published evidence: planning documents, appeal decisions, correspondence with Xlinks, and independent research. It draws in particular on two of the applicant's own documents: the Valeon Data Centre Campus, Update for Torridge District Council (Doc Ref 319327-REP-LPA-001, Issue 1.0, dated 13 April 2026, prepared by Arthian Ltd for Stratus Data Development Ltd), and the associated Zone of Theoretical Visibility figures L1 to L7 (Doc Ref 319327-ADW01-Draft v0.1 ZTV, Arthian Ltd, 18 November 2024). Being the applicant's own technical material, these carry particular weight where they contradict the public FAQ. Each entry gives a verdict, a plain explanation, and the source it is based on. **Some assessments rely on figures that Xlinks has not yet published, so a number of items are marked as unverified rather than false.***

How to read the verdicts

- **ACCURATE:** consistent with our evidence, no material concern
- **PARTLY ACCURATE / INCOMPLETE:** technically defensible but leaves out material context
- **MISLEADING / CONTESTED:** our evidence directly conflicts with the claim or the framing
- **UNVERIFIED:** no independent data in our files either way, flagged for further research

Environment: Water, wildlife and power

Q: Would the campus consume lots of water from local waterways?

Xlinks answer: No. The site would be self-sufficient, recirculating water to absorb heat, topped up from collected rainwater.

Verdict: MISLEADING / CONTESTED Xlinks' own technical briefing to Torridge District Council gives a figure the FAQ omits entirely: under extreme conditions (the P1 scenario), annual water consumption across the full data centre campus can reach approximately 2.9 billion litres, corresponding to a Water Usage Effectiveness of around 1.70 litres per MWh. It is true that under normal (P50) operating conditions WUE approaches zero, so the FAQ's 'self-sufficient' framing is broadly accurate for typical days. But describing the scheme simply as 'self-sufficient' without giving the 2.9 billion litre peak-demand figure, or addressing how that peak would be met in a drought year when rainwater collection is lowest, is a material omission rather than a full answer. No Water Framework Directive assessment has been published.

Source: Valeon Data Centre Campus, Update for Torridge District Council (Doc Ref 319327-REP-LPA-001, Issue 1.0, 13 April 2026, Arthian Ltd for Stratus Data Development Ltd), section 4.2 Cooling Equipment Schedule; Devon_Data_Campus_Summary.pdf (Water Resources section); North Devon Gazette public information notice, 'The Devon Data Campus: The Local Environment, Land and Construction' (Richard Hardy, Project Director, Devon Data Campus, edition date to be confirmed)

Q: Would it discharge into local waterways?

Xlinks answer: No, there would be no discharge into the Torridge or any waterway; firefighting runoff would be contained on site.

Verdict: MISLEADING / CONTESTED This is directly contradicted by the applicant's own technical document. Section 8.3 of Arthian's briefing to Torridge District Council states plainly: 'All wastewater discharge will be treated to Environment Agency permit standards.' A permitted discharge is still a discharge. The FAQ's blanket 'no discharge into the Torridge or any waterway' cannot be reconciled with the applicant's own consultant confirming that treated wastewater discharge is part of the design, subject only to meeting a permit standard, not avoided altogether. Separately, on firefighting runoff specifically, the closest directly comparable case, the Hawkchurch/Pound Road BESS appeal, was refused in part because containment and removal measures for contaminated firewater were not adequately demonstrated, creating a risk of aquifer contamination.

Source: Valeon Data Centre Campus, Update for Torridge District Council (Doc Ref 319327-REP-LPA-001, Issue 1.0, 13 April 2026, Arthian Ltd for Stratus Data Development Ltd), section 8.3 Cooling and Water; Hawkchurch Appeal Decision 33198031.pdf (paras 93-94); North Devon Gazette public information notice, 'The Devon Data Campus: The Local Environment, Land and Construction' (Richard Hardy, Project Director, Devon Data Campus, edition date to be confirmed)

Q: What would power the campus, would it use diesel generators?

Xlinks answer: Powered via the national grid at Alverdiscott, drawing increasingly on the South West's growing renewable generation, and designed around clean power rather than fossil fuels. Standby backup power only, for rare outages and brief testing, not day to day.

Verdict: MISLEADING / CONTESTED The applicant's own technical briefing confirms fossil fuel combustion is built into the design, which sits uneasily with the FAQ's claim that the campus is 'designed around clean power rather than fossil fuels.' Section 3.3 of Arthian's April 2026 document describes a tiered resilience architecture: short-duration cover (50 milliseconds to 15 minutes) from lithium iron phosphate battery storage, followed by long-duration cover of 24 to 72 hours from 'high-efficiency gas engines or diesel generators fuelled by hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO renewable diesel),' with the document noting these are 'designed as hydrogen-ready for future fuel conversion.' HVO is a lower-carbon substitute for mineral diesel, but it is still a combustion fuel burned in engines that produce NOx and particulate emissions, and 72 hours of backup cover across a 1.8GW campus implies a very large fleet of engines and a correspondingly large volume of on-site fuel storage. Neither the number and size of the generators, the total fuel storage capacity, nor an air-quality modelling methodology has been published. Describing this arrangement simply as 'standby backup power' for 'brief periodic testing' understates both the scale of the fossil-fuel plant involved and how it sits against the 'clean power' framing used earlier in the same answer.

Source: Valeon Data Centre Campus, Update for Torridge District Council (Doc Ref 319327-REP-LPA-001, Issue 1.0, 13 April 2026, Arthian Ltd for Stratus Data Development Ltd), section 3.3 On-Site Resilience; North_Devon_31_07_26_Data_Center_Report.docx (Stand-by Power section)

Living Nearby: Site, views, noise and safety**Q: How much of the land would actually be built on?**

Xlinks answer: Land option for up to 850 acres; current layouts would use around a third, with the majority given to landscaping and open space.

Verdict: NEEDS CLARIFICATION We measured this directly from the applicant's own site layout drawing (Doc Ref XL-000-00-02, 'Site Sections', March 2026), which shows a single continuous site boundary line (drawn in red where it crosses open fields and a darker olive tone where it follows hedgerows and tree lines in the aerial photo beneath it) enclosing the whole data centre site, including the three ponds well to the north of the buildings, not just the development platform itself. Tracing that full boundary and the green-shaded development platform within it (the five data centre buildings, cooling equipment, the 132kV electrical switchyard and internal access roads), the platform covers approximately 20 to 25 per cent of the

site measured this way, somewhat less than the 'around a third' figure given in the FAQ. Given this is measured from a photographed copy of a printed drawing rather than the underlying CAD file, our figure carries a margin of error and should be read as 'roughly a quarter' rather than an exact percentage. The FAQ does not say what the 'third' is a third of: our figure of a quarter is measured against the same site boundary shown on the applicant's own drawing, whereas Xlinks' 'around a third' may instead be based on the wider 850-acre land option rather than the 750-acre application site itself, so the two figures are not necessarily measured on the same basis.

Source: Land North of Norwood Farm, Great Torrington, North Devon, Site Sections drawing (Doc Ref XL-000-00-02, 1:7,500 @ A3, March 2026); Letter_Historic_England_South_West.docx (750-acre data centre figure)

Q: Would I be able to see the data centre?

Xlinks answer: From certain viewpoints, yes, but landscape and woodland screening would minimise this.

Verdict: MISLEADING / CONTESTED The applicant's own Zone of Theoretical Visibility mapping does not support the 'certain viewpoints' framing. Figures L1 to L7, prepared by Arthian for the substation and each of the five data centre buildings, show theoretical visibility extending well beyond the outer 5km (3.1 mile) distance ring in multiple directions, most extensively to the north towards Bideford and to the south past Great Torrington. The combined Figure L7 shows the great majority of the mapped 5km radius shaded as visible from the substation and/or one or more data centre buildings, and DC4 and DC5 alone (Figures L5 and L6, each 40 metres tall) generate almost total theoretical visibility across the same area. The ZTV notes also state the mapping is based on topography only and does not account for vegetation screening, so these are worst-case boundaries, not a modelled real-world view, but they are the applicant's own figures and go well beyond 'certain viewpoints'. This sits alongside Torridge District Council's refusal of a comparable scheme (Woodtown, ref 1/0939/2025/FULM) on landscape and visual harm grounds, describing 'creeping industrialisation' of this same open countryside.

Source: Figures L1 to L7, Zone of Theoretical Visibility (Doc Ref 319327-ADW01-Draft v0.1 ZTV, Arthian Ltd, 18 November 2024); Woodtown_BESS_Refusal_Summary.docx; North Devon Gazette public information notice, 'The Devon Data Campus: The Local Environment, Land and Construction' (Richard Hardy, Project Director, Devon Data Campus, edition date to be confirmed)

Q: Would the energy storage system pose a fire risk?

Xlinks answer: Fires are very rare, less common than in other non-residential buildings; strict regulation and a Fire & Rescue Service plan would contain any incident.

Verdict: PARTLY ACCURATE / INCOMPLETE The 0.7%/0.8% fire-rate comparison is a genuine industry-wide figure (DESNZ Clean Flexibility Roadmap), but even the industry's own explainer material acknowledges the basis and denominator for that statistic are not published, and the UK fleet remains young and small, so the comparison should be treated with caution. More importantly, our direct correspondence with Xlinks has established there is no BESS-specific statute currently in force in England; the relevant Bill remains before Parliament; toxic gas release (hydrogen fluoride) from a single unit fire is a distinct risk the FAQ does not address; and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service had not been confirmed as formally engaged as of our last letter.

Source: BESS_ESN_Document_Summary__1_.docx; Xlinks_Response_Letter Energy Storage System.docx (points 1, 3-5)

Q: How many battery units would the energy storage system contain?

Xlinks answer: Around 1,720 containerised battery units; final number confirmed through detailed design.

Verdict: ACCURATE (AS FAR AS WE CAN VERIFY) We hold no evidence to contradict this figure, which is presented as indicative pending the full application. The more material gap, not addressed in the FAQ, is decommissioning: our correspondence has asked Xlinks to confirm a fixed decommissioning scheme with a financial bond, given Stratus Data Developments Limited (understood to hold the land option) was only incorporated in December 2024 and has no trading history.

Source: Xlinks_Response_Letter Energy Storage System.docx (point 6)

About Xlinks: Xlinks and the wider project

Q: Would the campus be powered through the Morocco-UK Power Project?

Xlinks answer: No current proposals for this; the campus would be powered via the national grid at Alverdiscott. The Morocco-UK Power Project is a separate project that remains on pause.

Verdict: MISLEADING / CONTESTED This is directly contradicted by the applicant's own technical briefing to Torridge District Council, dated 13 April 2026, only months before this FAQ was published. Section 8.2 of that document states in terms: 'The data centre campus is designed on a power-first principle. The Xlinks Morocco-UK Power Project will deliver 3.6 GW of firm renewable electricity generated by 11.5 GW of solar and wind capacity in Morocco, backed by a 22.5 GWh battery storage system.' The same document's own site-selection table names grid connection to the Morocco project as 'the single most important locational determinant for a data centre campus of this scale,' specifically because 'the Xlinks Morocco-UK Power Project delivers two 1.8 GW grid connections directly at Alverdiscott.' The document does add that the campus is designed to be able to operate on UK grid renewable power so that it is not solely contingent on the Morocco programme, which is a fair point, but it does not change the fact that the applicant's own April 2026 briefing describes the Morocco project as central to the power-first design principle and to why this site was chosen at all. Telling residents in August 2026 that there are 'no current proposals' to link the two is difficult to square with the applicant's own document from four months earlier.

Source: Valeon Data Centre Campus, Update for Torridge District Council (Doc Ref 319327-REP-LPA-001, Issue 1.0, 13 April 2026, Arthian Ltd for Stratus Data Development Ltd), sections 8.1-8.2 and Table 3; Letter_Historic_England_South_West.docx

Q: Who is Xlinks?

Xlinks answer: A British company specialising in renewable-energy based projects.

Verdict: ACCURATE Factually correct as a description, though the data centre applicant of record is Stratus Data Development Ltd, with Arthian Ltd as planning consultant, so references to 'Xlinks' should not be read as naming the applicant.

Source: Valeon Data Centre Campus, Update for Torridge District Council (Doc Ref 319327-REP-LPA-001, Issue 1.0, 13 April 2026, Arthian Ltd for Stratus Data Development Ltd), front cover and section 1.1

Jobs & Benefits: Jobs, skills and local benefits

Q: How many jobs will be created?

Xlinks answer: 650-1,200 permanent jobs and 2,000-3,500 during construction, plus supply-chain jobs.

Verdict: MISLEADING / CONTESTED Our independent research finds the permanent jobs figure substantially inflated against global comparators. Hyperscale campuses typically run at 20-30 permanent staff per 100MW; at c.1,500MW that implies a realistic 300-450 roles. Direct comparators support this: the Stargate 1GW campus in Abilene, Texas delivered around 357 permanent jobs for \$3.5bn invested; Google's 500MW Kansas City campus created around 200 permanent roles. The construction jobs figure (2,000-3,500) is broadly consistent with industry benchmarks, but these are temporary and the skilled trades required do not exist locally in sufficient numbers, so most would need to be imported, with consequent pressure on local housing.

Source: Devon_Data_Campus_Summary.pdf (Employment Claims section)

Q: Would the jobs created go to local people?

Xlinks answer: Locally rooted employees stay longer; the campus would run job fairs and work with local education partners.

Verdict: UNVERIFIED A reasonable aspiration but not a commitment with numbers attached. Our research indicates the specialist roles involved (critical environment technicians, high-voltage engineers, network

operations staff) require qualifications not generally available in the North Devon labour market, meaning most such roles would likely need to be filled by relocated specialists regardless of local recruitment effort.

Source: Devon_Data_Campus_Summary.pdf (Employment Claims section)

Q: What other benefits would the Devon data campus bring?

Xlinks answer: A community benefit package worth tens of millions of pounds, alongside business rates.

Verdict: NEEDS CONTEXT The pledge itself is not something we can verify or disprove in advance. It is important to note, however, that community benefit funds are voluntary and are not a material planning consideration: government guidance and case law are clear that such offers must not influence a planning decision, so a community benefit package is not, in itself, a reason to grant permission.

Source: 20260331_Assessing_BESS_applications__Regen.pdf (Private investment and economic growth / Community benefit funds section)

Q: Is there a data centre already up and running where these benefits have been achieved?

Xlinks answer: Yes, the START Campus in Sines, Portugal.

Verdict: UNVERIFIED We hold no independent research on the START Campus in our files, so we cannot confirm or dispute the comparison.

Source: No source held, flagged for further research

Why Here: Why AI, and why this location

Q: Why does AI matter? / Why do we need UK-based AI data centres?

Xlinks answer: It is the engine behind many everyday services; for example, more than 4 million NHS patients have already had faster lung cancer diagnoses or all-clear results / To meet AI demand, the UK needs more computing capacity; UK currently relies on AI data centres abroad; data security risk; UK doesn't benefit from the jobs and investment; The NHS and Police are just two of the organisations who are bringing data back onshore.

Verdict: UNVERIFIED These are general public-interest arguments about AI policy rather than site-specific planning claims. We hold no project material that verifies or disputes the NHS diagnosis statistic or the broader data-sovereignty argument, and, being general policy points rather than facts about this application, they are not directly rebuttable from our evidence base. They are also not, in themselves, planning considerations specific to this site.

Source: No source held, general policy argument, not site-specific

Q: Why site an AI data centre here?

Xlinks answer: A 'Goldilocks' climate; proximity to planned renewable generation; strong fibre connectivity; available electricity grid capacity.

Verdict: MISLEADING / CONTESTED The 'available grid capacity' claim is the weakest link, and the applicant's own site-selection table confirms why. Arthian's April 2026 briefing states that grid connection is 'the single most important locational determinant for a data centre campus of this scale,' and gives the reason as the Xlinks Morocco-UK Power Project delivering 'two 1.8 GW grid connections directly at Alverdiscott.' In other words, the site was not chosen because Alverdiscott happened to have spare capacity sitting idle; it was chosen because of capacity built for the Morocco project specifically, which was rejected by government in June 2025 and remains paused. No National Grid Electricity Transmission commitment on reinforcing Alverdiscott for continuous AC demand supply, independent of that scheme, has been published, and the Southwest Peninsula is an acknowledged capacity-constrained extremity of the transmission network. Climate suitability is a genuine factor for cooling efficiency, but no cooling design, water-use targets or climate-resilience stress-testing beyond the applicant's own figures have been published for independent scrutiny.

Source: Valeon Data Centre Campus, Update for Torridge District Council (Doc Ref 319327-REP-LPA-001, Issue 1.0, 13 April 2026, Arthian Ltd for Stratus Data Development Ltd), Table 3 Site Selection; Devon_Data_Campus_Summary.pdf (Power Supply and National Grid section); North Devon Gazette public information notice, 'The Devon Data Campus: The Local Environment, Land and Construction' (Richard Hardy, Project Director, Devon Data Campus, edition date to be confirmed)

Q: Why isn't it being built on a brownfield site?

Xlinks answer: Brownfield options were considered but very few sites offer the combination of grid capacity, renewable proximity, climate and fibre connectivity this site provides.

Verdict: UNVERIFIED Xlinks has not published a sequential/site-selection assessment for independent review, so this claim cannot be checked against evidence. Separately, our own research into the commercial logic of the site is sceptical on different grounds: it notes the location sits outside the government's new AI Availability Zones, has poor access roads for the scale of plant delivery required, and lacks the low-cost, green-power market conditions that typically drive this kind of investment decision, suggesting factors other than a pure site-selection exercise may be at play.

Source: North_Devon_31_07_26_Data_Center_Report.docx (Conclusion section)

Planning: Process and timeline

Q: How does the planning process work? / Why not central government rather than the local council?

Xlinks answer: Separate applications for the data centre and BESS will go to Torridge District Council as local planning authority, following the standard local process.

Verdict: MISLEADING / CONTESTED As a description of the standard process for a normal application, this is accurate. But it omits the live possibility that these should not be treated as two ordinary local applications. Xlinks' related Morocco-UK Power Project was itself escalated to national (NSIP/DCO) status under Section 35 of the Planning Act 2008 because its grid infrastructure was found to be of national significance. Our legal advice is that the shared Alverdiscott connection, common developer, and Xlinks' own stated intent to revive a Morocco or other interconnection at the same site support treating the data centre and BESS applications cumulatively rather than as independent local matters, precisely the kind of 'salami-slicing' the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017 are designed to catch. Presenting the local route as simply the correct and settled process does not reflect this live risk.

Source: EN0101640000805.1_Consultation_Report.pdf (Section 35 direction); Letter_Historic_England_South_West.docx; Devon_Data_Campus_-_Planning_Objection_Checklist__Revised_.docx (Theme 8)

Q: What is the timeline for the project?

Xlinks answer: Enabling works provisionally 2027/28, construction from 2028/29, BESS complete by end of 2030; data centre construction phased over a multi-year period.

Verdict: UNVERIFIED We have no basis to dispute this timeline in our files, since no application has yet been submitted. For context, pre-application consultation is currently paused with no confirmed new date, and the consultation deadline previously given was 11 August 2026; any extension to that deadline had not been confirmed at the time of writing.

Source: Internal campaign tracking (consultation status, not yet independently published by Xlinks)

Q: How would construction be managed?

Xlinks answer: A construction management plan agreed with the local authority would cover traffic, noise, dust, light and working hours.

Verdict: ACCURATE This is a standard and accurate description of how construction management plans are typically secured as a planning condition. No construction management plan has yet been published for this scheme, so its adequacy cannot yet be assessed.

Source: *No conflicting evidence held*

Produced by the Devon Data Centre & BESS Action Group. Contact: Kenneth White, kjwwhite@icloud.com. This sheet is provided for public information and is not legal advice.