

Clean power? The backup plan is gas and diesel

Xlinks tells residents the campus is “designed around clean power rather than fossil fuels.” Its own briefing to the council describes something different.

- The developer's own briefing describes a two-tier backup system: batteries for the first 50 milliseconds to 15 minutes, then “high-efficiency gas engines or diesel generators” for 24 to 72 hours.
- Xlinks has not decided between the two. Choosing gas engines could mean a new gas pipeline to the site, or large on-site LNG or LPG storage tanks. Neither option has been detailed publicly.
- If diesel is chosen, the fuel would be hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO), a lower-carbon substitute for mineral diesel, but still a combustion fuel burned in engines that produce NOx and particulate emissions.
- The design is described as “hydrogen-ready for future fuel conversion.” Green hydrogen is not commercially available at this scale today, so for the foreseeable life of the site, backup power means burning diesel or gas, not hydrogen.
- Standby generators of this kind are typically tested under load on a regular basis, often monthly, to stay ready for use. That means recurring noise and localised emissions long before any real grid outage, not just the “brief periodic testing” described in the FAQ.
- Neither the number of generators nor the total on-site fuel storage capacity has been published.



Diesel and gas generator units of the kind used for large-scale backup power. Illustrative, not a photo of this site.

Key point: Three days of backup power for a campus this size means a large fleet of combustion engines and a lot of fuel stored on site. That is not what most people picture when they hear “clean power.”

Sources: Arthian Ltd, “Valeon Data Centre Campus, Update for Torridge” (Doc Ref 319327-REP-LPA-001, 13 April 2026), prepared for Stratus Data Development Ltd, section 3.3 On-Site Resilience. Xlinks, Frequently Asked Questions, devondatacampus.com/faqs.