

The power question, in plain English: how much, and where from?



Electricity pylons and substation infrastructure of the kind that would carry power to and from Alverdiscott. Illustrative, not a photo of this site.

Run flat out, the data centre alone would use as much electricity every year as **4.5 to 4.9 million UK homes**. That is not a number Xlinks' letters lead with. This sheet explains where that figure comes from, and where all that power is meant to come from.

4.5-4.9 million homes

What the data centre alone would use in a year, running flat out, non-stop

1.1 million homes

What could be drawn in a single moment when the battery site charges up alongside the data centre

Devon's whole peak

What the data centre alone would use every day, close to the whole county's busiest moment

What does "1,800 MW" actually mean?

A data centre is not like a house. A house draws power in bursts, the kettle, the heating, the TV. A data centre runs at close to full power all day, every day, all year round. **So, the campus's headline capacity figures understate the true yearly total.**

The developer's own plans describe a data centre of up to 1,800 MW, plus a separate battery site big enough to store and release 1.8 GW at a time. Run continuously at around 1.5 GW, the data centre alone would use roughly 13,140 GWh of electricity a year: the same as 4.5 to 4.9 million UK homes. When the battery charges up at the same time, combined demand could briefly reach almost 3 GW, the same as around 1.1 million homes, all drawn through one connection point. For comparison, the whole of Devon, every home and business, uses about 1.4 to 1.6 GW at its very busiest moment.

Where would the power come from?

Both the data centre and the battery site would connect through Alverdiscott, a National Grid site near Bideford. But Alverdiscott was not built with this campus in mind. Years ago, National Grid, working with Xlinks, identified Alverdiscott as the preferred landing point out of five sites considered, for a cable bringing electricity from wind and solar farms in Morocco, 4,000km away under the sea, part of the Xlinks Morocco-UK Power Project. That project involved a large converter station (a building that turns cable power into the ordinary power our homes use) and was turned down by the Government in June 2025.

Neither the data centre nor the battery site is the Morocco project. But both now want to use the same connection point, for a very different job: taking a huge, constant supply of power out to run a data campus and battery site, rather than receiving a one-off delivery of power from overseas.

There would also be a new substation built on the data centre site itself

It is not just Alverdiscott that would need new grid infrastructure. **The developer's own April 2026 briefing to the Council describes the data centre's full 1,800 MW load being delivered via "a new utility-owned 400kV switchyard" built on the data centre site itself**, which would then connect out to Alverdiscott. That briefing lists this switchyard, along with the first three data centre buildings, as part of the earliest stage of construction, targeted for 2028.

So, there are really two grid projects hidden inside these applications, not one: a new high-voltage switchyard built on the data centre's own land, and the separate reinforcement of Alverdiscott substation needed to take everything that switchyard would send out. Neither has a published cost or public timetable beyond the developer's own 2028 target for Stage 1.

Does Alverdiscott need to be upgraded?

Yes, and this is written in Torridge District Council's own pre-application advice on the battery site, not just our own analysis. **The Council's letter states: "It is also understood that significant works to Alverdiscott Substation are required to facilitate a connection. As a result, the Council will require more information about the status of these works in preparation for a formal application. This appears to be key to the viability of the project overall."**

That is the Council telling the developer, in writing, that the upgrade works at Alverdiscott are central to whether either scheme can go ahead at all, and that it has not yet been given the information to judge them. No plan, cost or timetable for those works has been published by National Grid.

The Council's advice raises a related point too: the battery site sits about 3.5km from Alverdiscott and would need underground cabling to reach it, when a standalone battery scheme like this could, in the Council's words, be sited closer to the grid instead. The Council has asked the developer to explain why this site, and this connection, was chosen.

Is the data centre not dependent on the Morocco project?

The developer's own April 2026 briefing to the Council says the data centre is "designed to operate fully with the UK grid independent of the Xlinks timeline," meaning it should work even if the Morocco cable is never built. That is a fair claim to test, not to dismiss out of hand. But we have not seen paperwork showing a separate connection agreement exists for the data centre alone, one that does not rely on the same wider Alverdiscott upgrade that was always going to be needed for the Morocco project.

Why this matters

At a public meeting in Great Torrington, Xlinks representatives said openly that they want to revive the Morocco project using private money, and that they are also looking at connecting new offshore wind farms at Alverdiscott. Both current applications rely on the same connection point that was set up for that bigger scheme and come from a developer who has told the public he wants to bring it back. Put together, the two applications now in front of Torridge District Council may only be the first two parts of a much bigger project at Alverdiscott, one whose full scale has not yet been explained to residents.

Key point: The data centre alone would use as much electricity every year as roughly 4.5 to 4.9 million homes, drawn through a grid connection point that was built for a different, rejected project, with no published plan for how it would be upgraded to do this new job.

Sources: Arthian Ltd, "Valeon Data Centre Campus, Update for Torridge" (Document Ref: 319327-REP-LPA-001, Issue 1.0, 13 April 2026), prepared for Stratus Data Development Ltd and submitted to Torridge District Council: scale and switchyard description, and Section 8.2 on grid independence; Torridge District Council pre-application response, Land Between Abbotsham and Alverdiscott (Ref: FPEM/0372/2021, 8 October 2021); Torridge District Council pre-application advice, Nexus 1 BESS (Ref: FPEM/0587/2025, 6 November 2025, Section 1: Principle of Development); Xlinks' Morocco-UK Power Project Consultation Report (Document 5.1, November 2024), including its account of the Alverdiscott site selection process; Devon Data Campus Summary (independent research report, July 2026); letter to Geoffrey Cox MP from Huntshaw Community Against the Devon Data Centre and Battery Storage, 27 June 2026.