Completing Sir Geoffrey Cox's Xlinks Survey

Guidance for Residents | Devon Data Centre and BESS Action Group | October 2026

Why you should respond

- Sir Geoffrey Cox MP has written to residents near the proposed site with a survey on the Xlinks Data Centre and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).
- He has stated serious reservations about the proposals and will use the responses to build a schedule of questions for Xlinks and Torridge District Council.
- The results will be quoted. If opponents do not respond, the results will be shaped by those who do.
- Several questions ask what residents want from Xlinks. Answered carelessly, these could be read as acceptance of the scheme in return for benefits. This note explains how to answer so your views are recorded accurately.

Key principles

- **Be honest.** Answer every question truthfully. This guidance is about avoiding misreading, not about overstating.
- **Ask for information, not concessions.** Asking Xlinks for more information does not imply support. Asking for community benefits or job guarantees can be presented as conditional acceptance.
- **Use the "Other" boxes and free text.** These are where the strongest points can be made.
- **Score clearly.** If you oppose the proposals, Q8 and Q8b are the most important answers on the form.

Question by question

Q1. How well informed do you feel?

- Answer honestly. Many residents feel poorly informed because Xlinks' public consultation was postponed with no new date.

Q2. What additional information should Xlinks provide?

- Tick any topics you want information on. Information requests do not imply support.
- Water usage, Fire and safety risks, Noise and light pollution, Environmental impacts and Visual impact are all relevant.
- Use **Other** to add the gaps the survey leaves out, for example: "Evidence of need; grid connection deliverability; loss of BMV farmland; cumulative impact; decommissioning security."

Q3. Which aspects matter most to you? (up to three)

- Suggested: Protection of the countryside, Environmental protection, Infrastructure impacts.

Q4. How confident are you the developer has engaged effectively?

- Answer honestly based on your own experience.

Q5. Which commitments would you most like to see from Xlinks?

- **Take care with this question.** Ticking community benefit funding, job guarantees or infrastructure investment could be presented as support in exchange for benefits.

- If you oppose the scheme, tick only **Other** and write: "No commitment would make this proposal acceptable."
- Community benefit payments are generally not a material planning consideration and should not influence the planning decision.

Q6. Should economic and employment claims be independently verified?

- Very important.

Q7 and Q7b. Do residents have sufficient opportunity to influence the development?

- Answer honestly. If you tick No, useful options in Q7b are: Publication of more detailed technical information; Independent expert question-and-answer sessions; Direct engagement with parish and town councils.
- Engagement must be held in public. Closed-door meetings with Xlinks are not genuine engagement.

Q8 and Q8b. Do you support the Data Centre and the BESS?

- These are the most important answers on the form. If you oppose the proposals, mark **0** on both.
- A clear score from the affected parishes is direct, measurable evidence of local opinion.

Suggested questions for Q9 and Q10

Use your own words where you can. Points you may wish to raise:

- **Grid connection:** The NESO register shows approximately 19,000MW of capacity queued at the relevant substation with no live connections. How will this scheme secure a grid connection, and when?
- **Need:** What independent evidence shows a need for a data centre and 1.8GW BESS at this location?
- **Decommissioning:** Stratus Data Developments Ltd was incorporated in December 2024 with no trading history. What legally binding financial security will guarantee decommissioning and site restoration?
- **Morocco link:** Xlinks has acknowledged that reviving the withdrawn Morocco-UK power link is a desired outcome. Is this proposal a way of salvaging that project?
- **Fire safety:** What separation is proposed between battery units and homes, and has Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service been consulted?
- **Cumulative impact:** How will the combined effect of the data centre, the BESS and other local schemes be assessed?
- **Decision route:** Will Xlinks give a binding commitment that both applications will be determined by Torridge District Council?

Your contact details

- Name and address help confirm you are a constituent and that your response carries weight.
- The contact preference boxes are optional. You do not need to sign up to further communications to have your response counted.

How to return the survey

- **Online:** geoffreycox.co.uk/campaigns/surgery-survey (or scan the QR code on the letter)

- **Photo and email:** tellgeoffrey@geoffreycox.co.uk
- **Post:** Lockyer House, Paddons Row, Tavistock, PL19 0HF
- Please return it promptly. Each adult in a household may wish to respond separately.