

Welcome

Welcome to our public consultation

We are preparing proposals for a new data centre campus, known as Roding Campus, on land south of Roding Lane, between Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill.

No planning application has been submitted. We are consulting now, before an outline application is prepared, so that your views can shape the proposals while there is still time for them to make a difference.

What we are consulting on

The proposals are at an early stage. The location and broad scale of the buildings are becoming clear, but a great deal is not fixed. There is real scope to influence the landscaping and screening, what happens on the southern part of the site, and how construction and the site itself would be managed.

Who is here today

Members of the project team are here to answer your questions, including P3P, who is managing the development of the site, Arup, the planning consultant, and PLMR, the community engagement team. Please do come and talk to us.

How to have your say

The consultation runs from **Monday 28 September to Friday 23 October 2026**. Please take a feedback form and leave it in the box before you go, or complete it online at www.rodningcampus.co.uk.

All feedback is read and considered, and will be reported anonymously in a Statement of Community Involvement submitted with the planning application.



Illustrative view of the emerging proposals

The Site

The site sits on land south of Roding Lane, between Buckhurst Hill to the west and Chigwell to the east. It is bounded by Roding Lane to the north, the M11 motorway to the east, the River Roding to the west and the Central line railway to the south.

What is there now

The site covers approximately 26.5 hectares of grassland and low shrubs, with trees and hedgerows mainly along the boundaries. The area of the site proposed for the data centre campus sits several metres above the surrounding land, which is believed to be the result of spoil deposited when the M11 was built.

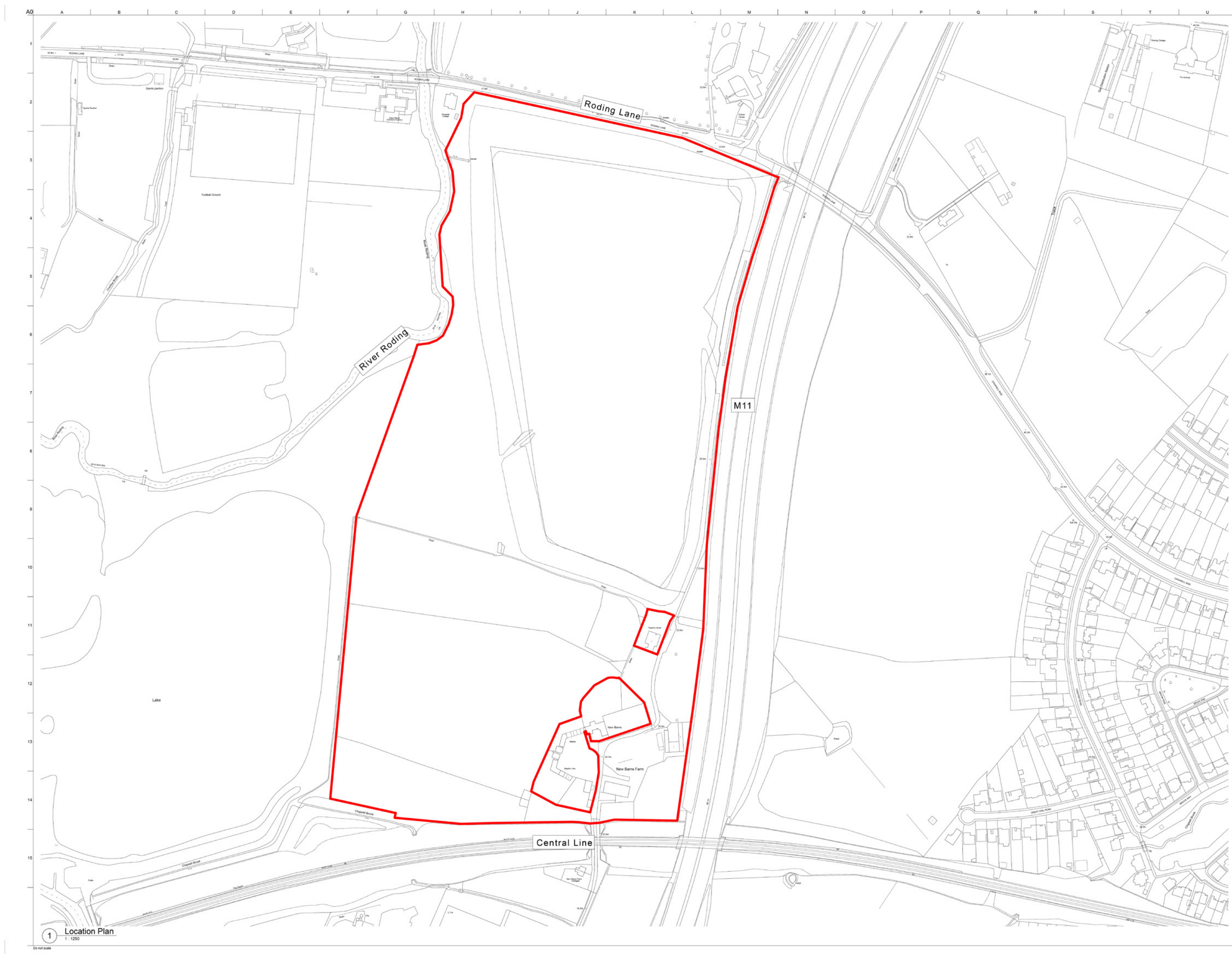
A number of residential properties sit within the wider site boundary and are excluded from it. A private road runs through the site. There are no public rights of way across it, although several run nearby, including the London Loop.

What is around it

Luxborough Lakes lies to the south-west, with an informal walking route around it. Buckhurst Hill Football Club lies to the north-west of the site, across the River Roding, and Old Loughtonians Hockey Club lies to the south, beyond the Central line railway.

How much would be built on

Around 5.4 hectares of the 26.5-hectare site are proposed for the data centre campus. The rest would feature retained vegetation, landscaping, public green space and opportunities for new community uses.



Site location map

What we are proposing

Two data centre buildings, each with an adjoining administrative office and back-up generator yards, on the northern part of the site.

The proposals also include:

- a substation compound towards the north-west of the site, nearest the grid connection
- internal access roads circulating the two buildings
- four car parking areas
- a guardhouse on the main internal access road
- acoustic and visual screening, and a perimeter security fence
- an attenuation pond in the west of the site to manage rainwater run off
- new planting, landscaping and green space across the wider site
- an on-site fuel cell facility for initial power

What an outline application means

We are preparing an outline planning application. This establishes the broad parameters of the development, the development zones within the site, maximum building heights, access arrangements and landscape buffers.

The detailed design, including the appearance and materials of the buildings, would be considered through a further application at a later stage, if outline permission were granted. Access is currently intended to be considered as part of the outline application.

Scale

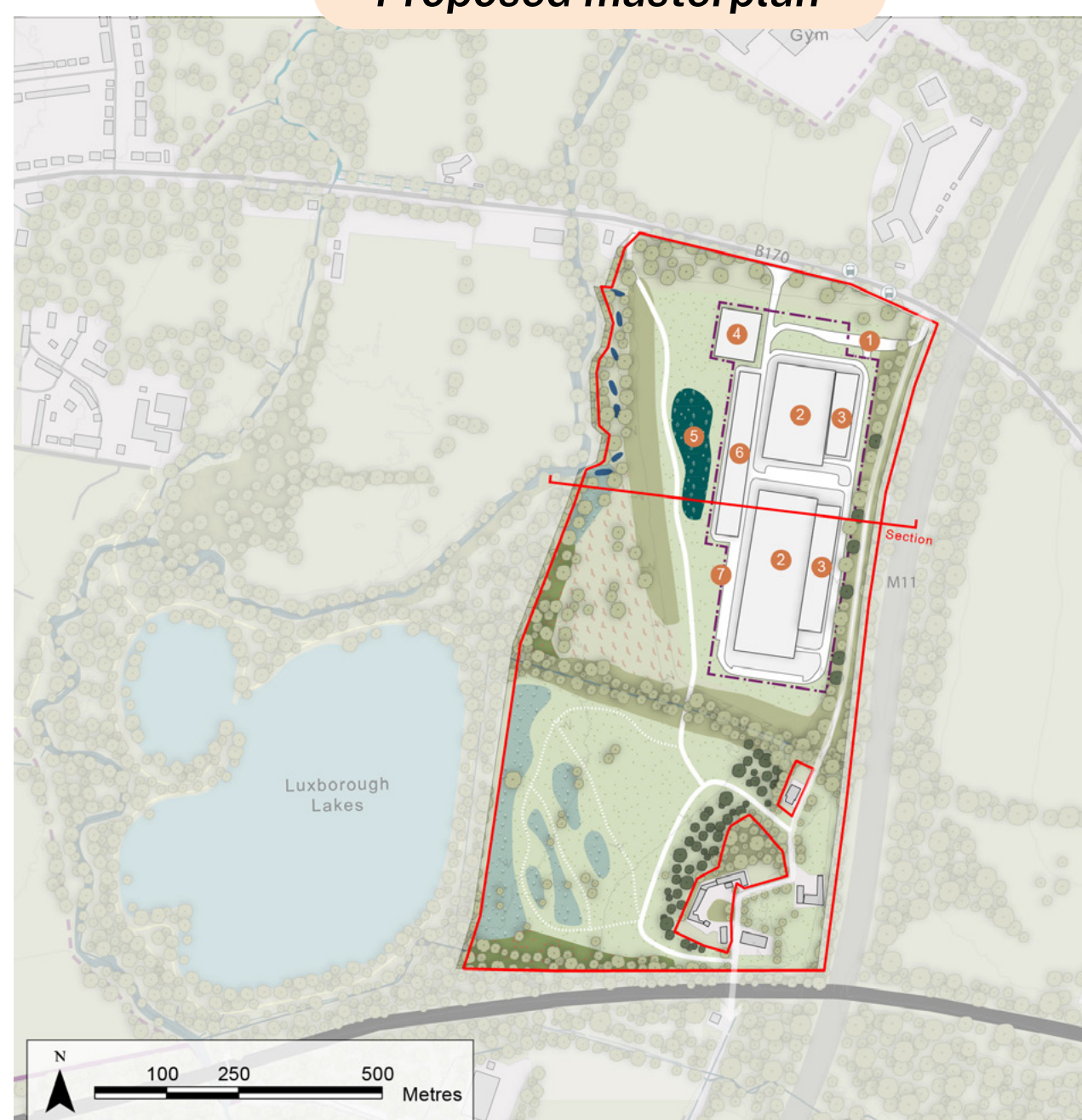
The buildings are proposed to accommodate two data hall floors. The buildings are sized to make full use of the power available and the space available at the plateau level of the site. To reduce how tall the buildings appear from surrounding properties, we are looking at both screening and architectural treatment to minimise the potential impact.

Economic impact

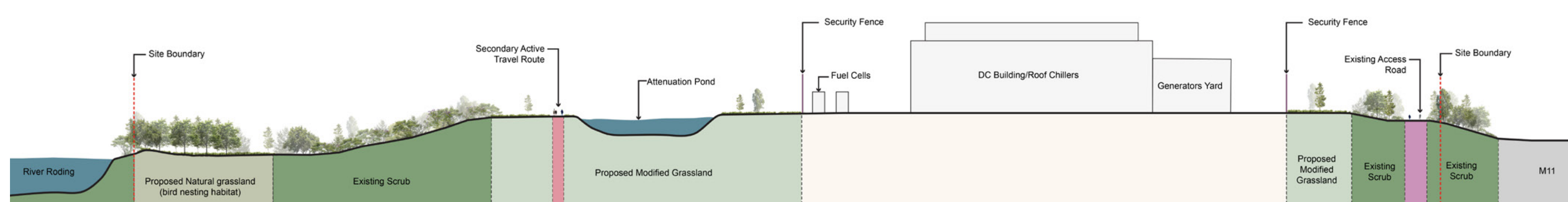
The creation of construction jobs during the development of this scheme would provide employment opportunities for local people, as well as across Essex and the South-East. Once operational, the campus would also support permanent, highly skilled jobs.

The proposed data centre would generate business rates revenue for the local authority, and together with the investment in the area, would provide a boost to the local economy.

Proposed masterplan



Key	
	Site Boundary
	Data Centre Massing
	Data Centre Security Fence
	Proposed Wet Grassland
	Proposed Attenuation Pond
	Proposed Modified Grassland
	Existing Trees
	Proposed Tree Planting
	Existing Scrub
	Proposed Scrub
	Proposed Natural grassland (bird nesting habitat)
	Proposed Scrapes
	1 Main Entrance and Gatehouse
	2 Data Centre Buildings / Administration Offices
	3 Back-Up Generator Yard
	4 Substation Compound
	5 Attenuation Pond
	6 Interim Power Infrastructure
	7 Perimeter Security Fence



Whole site section

What is a data centre, and why here?

What is a data centre?

A data centre is a secure facility used to store and process digital information.

Services people use every day rely on them, including online banking, cloud storage, streaming, NHS and healthcare systems, and artificial intelligence. As more of daily life moves online, more capacity is needed to store and process that information.

Why a data centre here?

Data centres can only go where several things come together at once. They need a viable connection to the electricity grid, high-capacity fibre connections, a large enough single parcel of land, and proximity to other digital infrastructure.

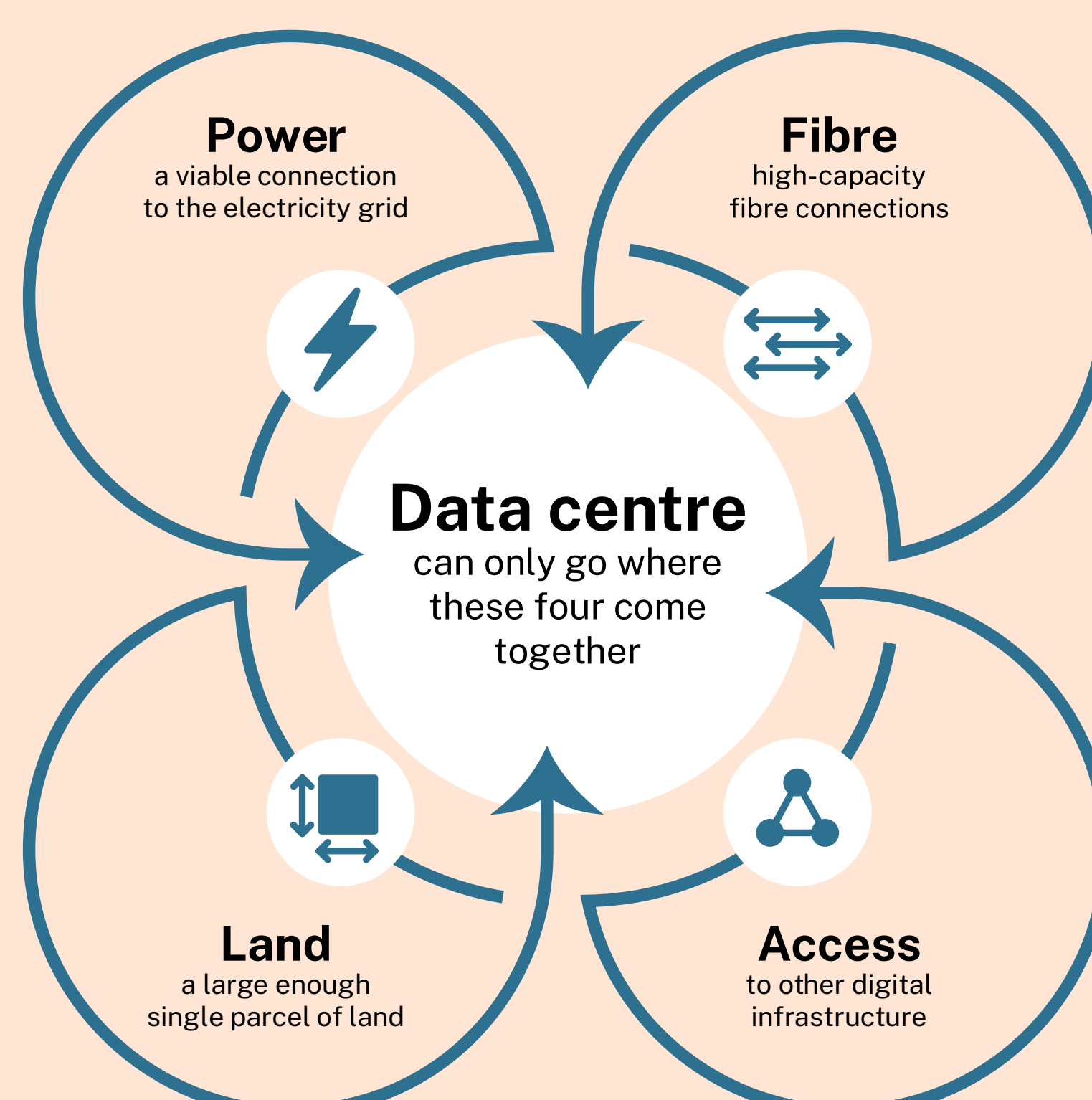
There is also growing demand for data to be held within the UK. Public bodies and regulated sectors increasingly need sensitive information stored under UK jurisdiction, and the Government recognised the importance of this in September 2024 when it designated data centres as Critical National Infrastructure.

Sites that meet all of those requirements are uncommon. Sites that combine sufficient land with a viable grid connection are scarce.

This site has an existing grid connection application to a substation at Buckhurst Hill. The north-east London, Essex and Hertfordshire area is an emerging location for digital infrastructure, with existing or proposed data centre activity at Loughton, North Weald, Enfield and Waltham Cross. Epping Forest District Council is a co-founder of the Essex and Herts Digital Innovation Zone.

Why not a brownfield site?

Brownfield land is used for data centres where it works. In practice many brownfield sites are either too small, too fragmented, or not near enough to available grid capacity. Meeting national need requires a range of sites, and the suitability of this one is being tested through the technical and planning work supporting the application.



Requirements for a data centre

The rest of the site

No data centre development is proposed on the southern part of the site, or on the lower ground towards the River Roding.

Why does the boundary cover the whole site?

The application boundary has deliberately been drawn around the whole landholding rather than only around the development area. This means the future of the southern land would be settled through the same planning permission, with restrictions secured over it, rather than left open to come forward separately at a later date.

This is the part we most want to hear about

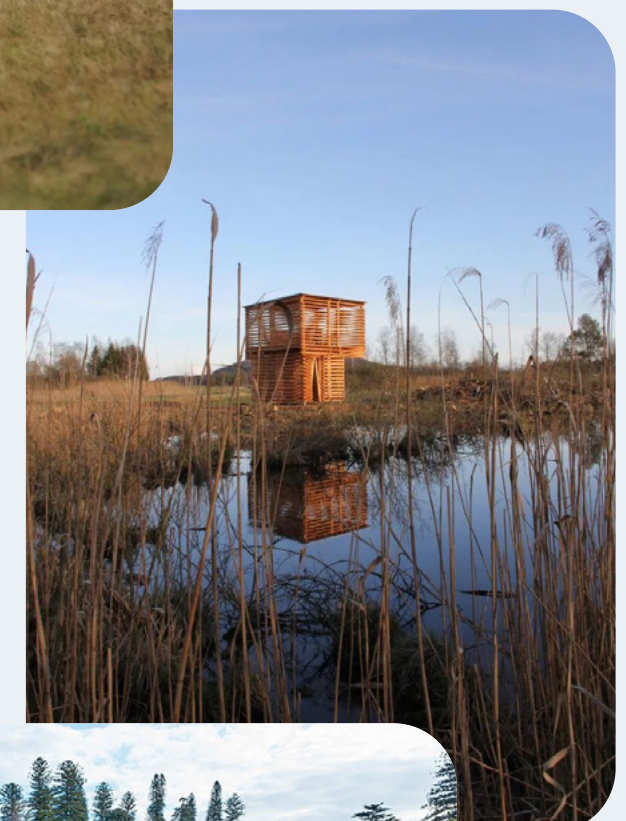
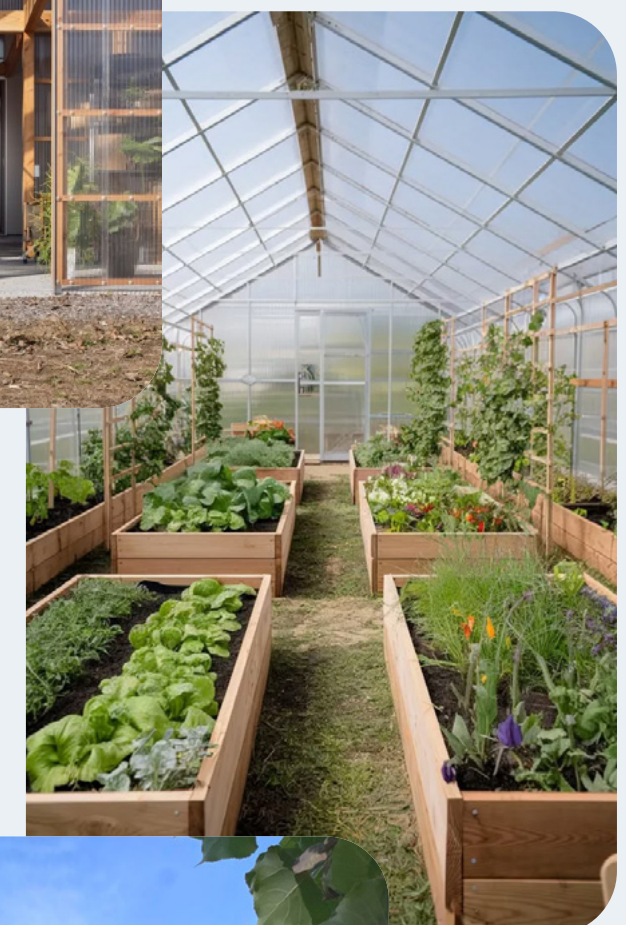
The feedback form asks what you would like to see here. If none of these appeal, please tell us that too.

What it could be used for

The southern part of the site is currently fenced off with no public access. We are exploring how it could be opened up for wider community benefit. Ideas being looked at include:

- walking routes and footpaths
- cycling routes
- discovery or nature trails
- links to nearby schools
- new woodland and tree planting
- wetland and habitat creation
- somewhere to sit and spend time
- other community focused uses

Nothing has been decided, and no option is preferred at this stage.



Site opportunities map



Key	
	Site Boundary
	Data Centre Massing
	Data Centre Security Fence
	Active Frontages and Arrival Point
	Community Hub
	Wellness Hub
	Wetland Discovery Nodes
	Natural Play Areas
	Potential swimming/wellness pool
	Primary Active Travel Route (pedestrian + cycle)
	Secondary Active Travel Route (pedestrian + cycle)
	Nature trail (pedestrian)
	Proposed Wet Grassland
	Attenuation Pond
	Proposed Modified Grassland
	Existing Trees
	Proposed Tree Planting
	Existing Scrub
	Proposed Scrub
	Proposed Natural grassland (bird nesting habitat)
	Proposed Scrapes

Opportunities:	
1	Habitat connectivity to surrounding high value habitats including LNR (Local nature reserve), woodlands and tree belts
2	Natural screening of data centre
3	Enhancement and celebration of the River Roding
4	Enhancement of historic field boundaries and hedgerows
5	Creation of flood management/wetland habitat/wetland discovery
6	Connect with existing local open space
7	Creation of active frontage and arrival space, with opportunities for public realm around the bus stop
8	Opportunities for creation of community pavilion
9	Opportunities for creation of wellness hub

Landscaping and screening

The valley here is defined by hedgerows, historic field boundaries and open views across the river. Those views are sensitive to new development, and we know they matter to people living around the site.

Working with the existing ground

The site sits several metres higher than the land around it, the result of spoil being deposited when the M11 was built. We are looking at the building and landscape design to mitigate this impact.

The buildings are located on the northern part of the site and set away from the lower ground towards the River Roding.

Testing the visual impact

A full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is being prepared and will be submitted with the planning application. It will test how the development would be seen from viewpoints around the site, including views across the valley.

What the landscaping would include

- green buffer zones around the development
- new tree and hedge planting, using species found locally
- retention of existing trees and hedgerows wherever possible
- careful positioning of buildings within the landscape

This is not fixed

The planting shown here is illustrative. Tell us which views matter most to you, and where you think screening is most needed. The feedback form asks about landscaping and screening directly.



- Key
- Site Boundary
 - Data Centre Massing
 - Data Centre Security Fence
 - Proposed Wet Grassland
 - Proposed Attenuation Pond
 - Proposed Modified Grassland
 - Existing Trees
 - Proposed Tree Planting
 - Existing Scrub
 - Proposed Scrub
 - Proposed Natural grassland (bird nesting habitat)
 - Proposed Scrapes

Proposed ecology masterplan

Nature and the Green Belt

Biodiversity

Ecological surveys are underway to understand the habitats and wildlife on and around the site. The proposals are seeking to achieve at least 10% biodiversity net gain.

The design looks to strengthen habitat connections to the high value habitats nearby, including ancient woodland, the Sites of Special Scientific Interest, local nature reserves, hedgerows, tree belts and wet meadows.

Epping Forest and nearby protected sites

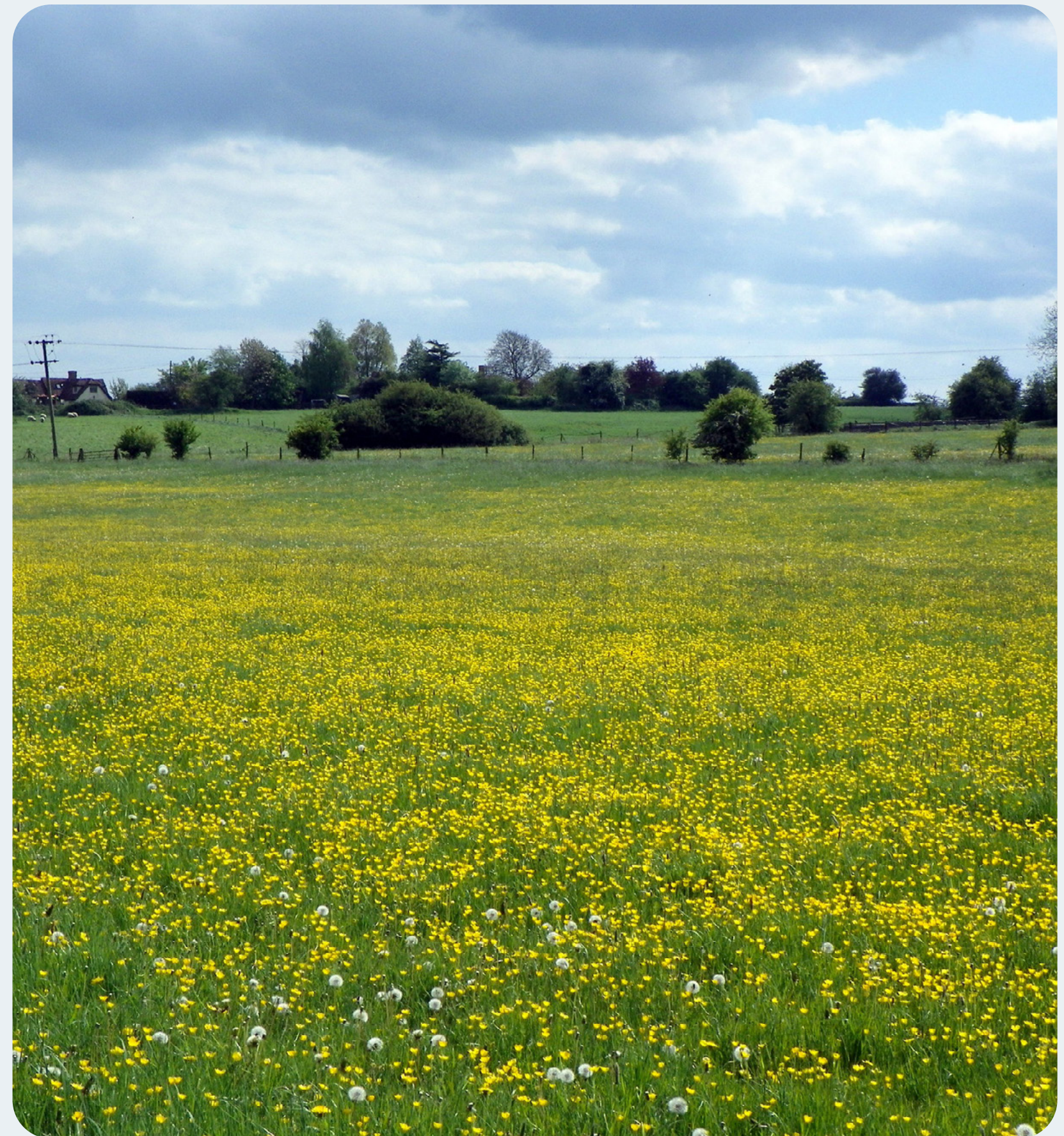
Parts of Epping Forest are designated a Special Area of Conservation for their internationally important habitats. Knighton Wood, Epping Forest and Roding Valley Meadows are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and Roding Valley Meadows and Linder's Field are local nature reserves.

The effects of the proposals on these sites will be assessed as part of the planning application, with mitigation identified where required.

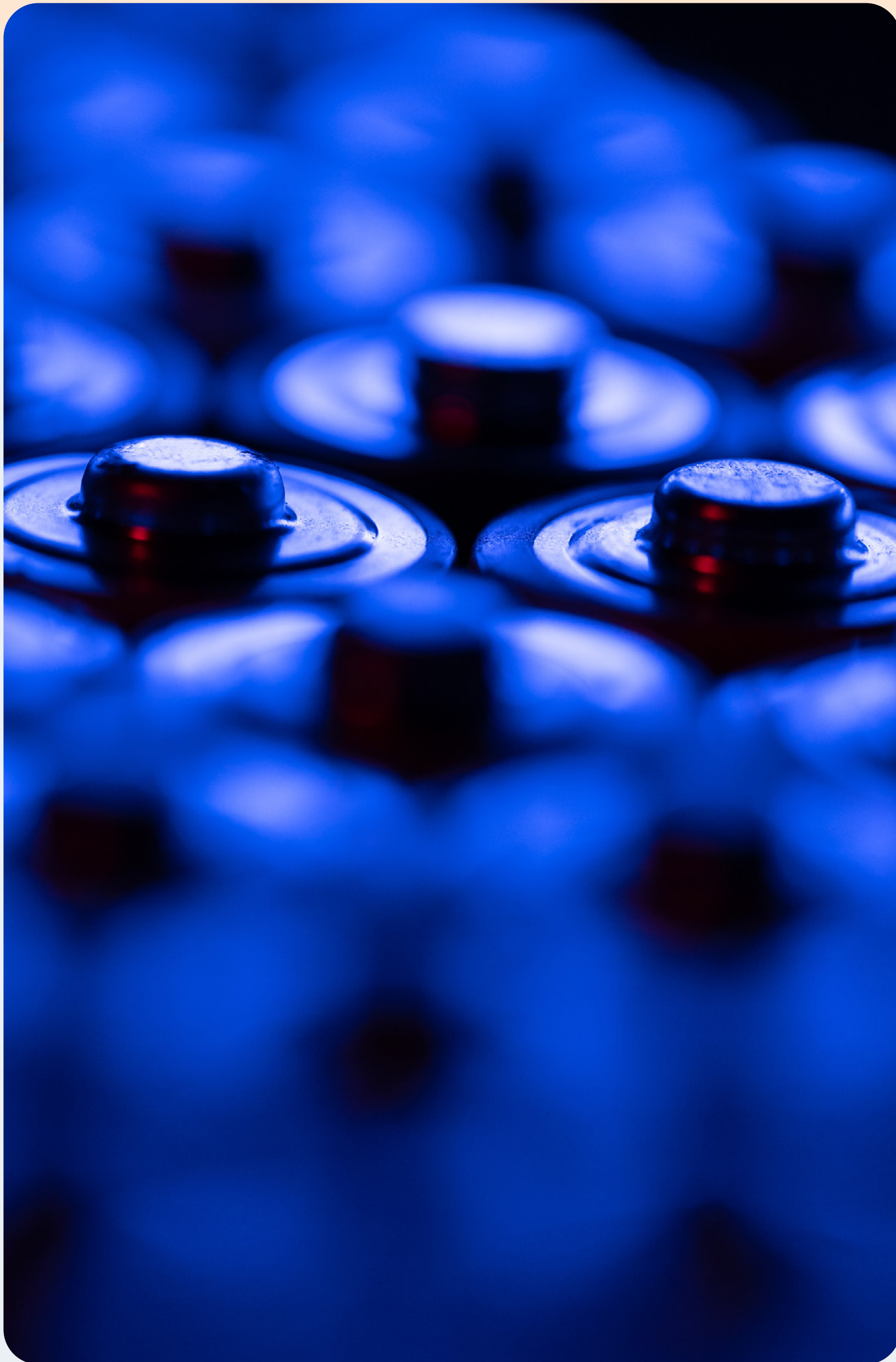
Green Belt

The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt, and we recognise the sensitivity of development in these areas.

The application will set out why we believe that development on this site in particular is appropriate, and the specific benefits of this proposal. It will be for the planning decision-making authority to weigh up these material benefits against other national and local policy considerations to reach a conclusion. Following the submission of a planning application, the opportunity for representations to be made to the planning authority will be available.



Power, water and flood risk



Power

The site would initially be powered by fuel cells instead of a full grid connection. We have reviewed a range of on-site power generation options, including gas engines, and have selected fuel cells for the following reasons: they are much quieter than gas engines and produce almost no nitrogen oxides or particulates. Fuel cells generate electricity through an electrochemical reaction rather than by burning fuel. The intention is to connect to the electricity grid as soon as the required upstream works are complete.

Standby generators would also be provided to keep the site running in the event of a power failure, as at any data centre. They would run only during a failure and for periodic testing, and noise and emissions from them will be assessed through the planning application.



Water

On water, we understand the pressure the local supply is under. Data centre cooling technology has advanced considerably, and most modern facilities now use systems that need very little water.

The cooling system will use a closed-loop design, which recirculates the same coolant rather than drawing continuously from the mains. We are committed to a design that keeps water use to a minimum. The cooling system and expected water consumption will be confirmed during the detailed design phase, and any water supply will need to be assessed by Thames Water.

Flood risk

Part of the western edge of the site lies within a flood zone. No buildings are proposed there. The attenuation pond would manage rainwater run off from the developed area.

Traffic, noise and construction

Access

Two access points onto Roding Lane are proposed: a main access at the north-east corner, and a second further west for emergencies, which would also be used during construction.

Construction access is proposed from the north, off Roding Lane, rather than along the existing private track.

Traffic

Data centres generate relatively low levels of day-to-day traffic once operational, compared with other development of a similar size. Early transport work estimates around 21 additional vehicle movements in the morning peak hour and 13 in the evening peak.

A full Transport Assessment will accompany the application, covering construction and operational traffic. The highway authority will need to be satisfied with the access arrangements.

Noise

A Noise Impact Assessment will measure existing background noise levels and set limits agreed with the Planning Authority. Noise attenuation will be designed as the project progresses.

Construction

A Construction Management Plan would be agreed with the Planning Authority, covering vehicle routes, working hours, noise and dust control, site access and safety, and measures to limit disturbance.

Other development nearby

The assessments will consider the proposals alongside other schemes coming forward in the area, to understand any combined effects.



Data centre components

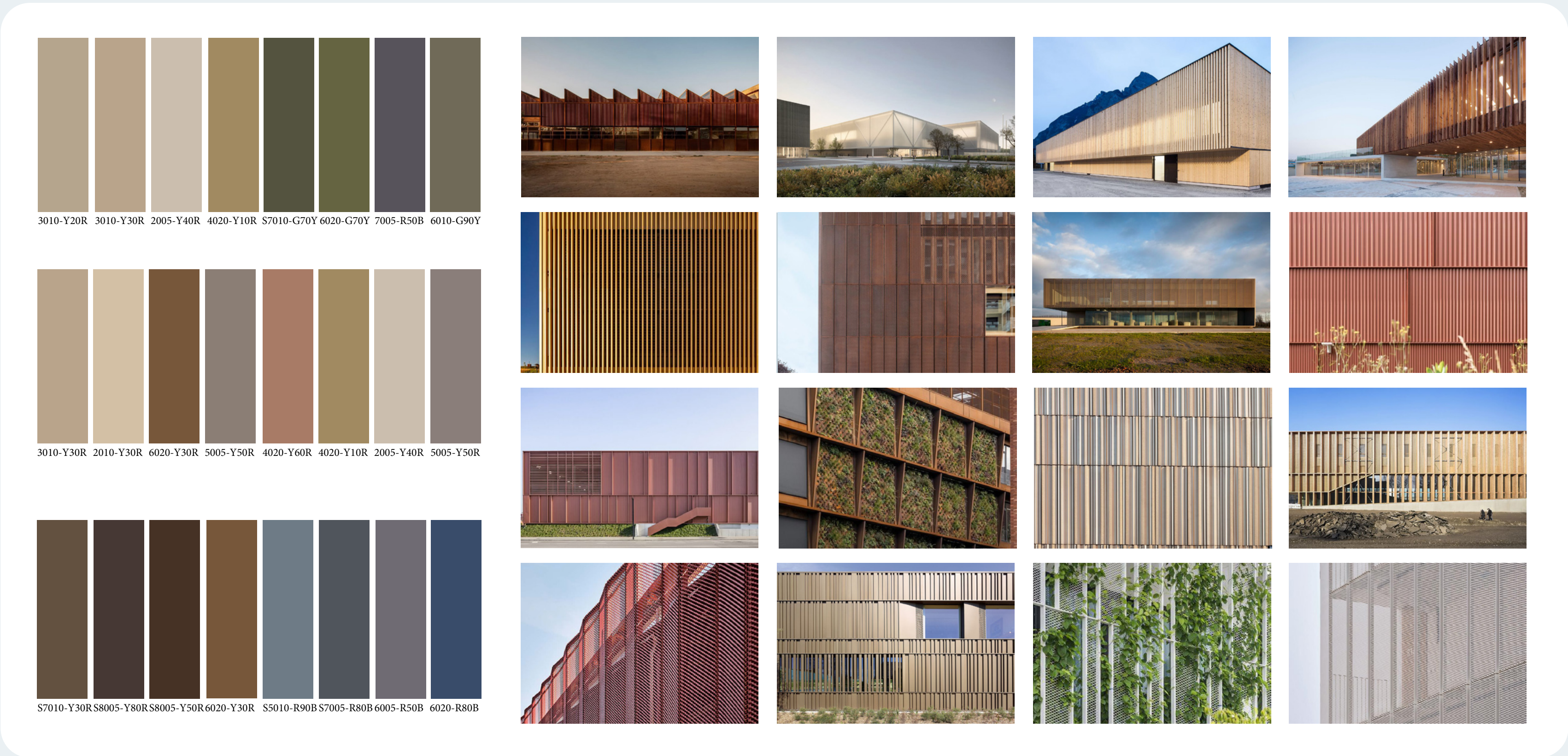
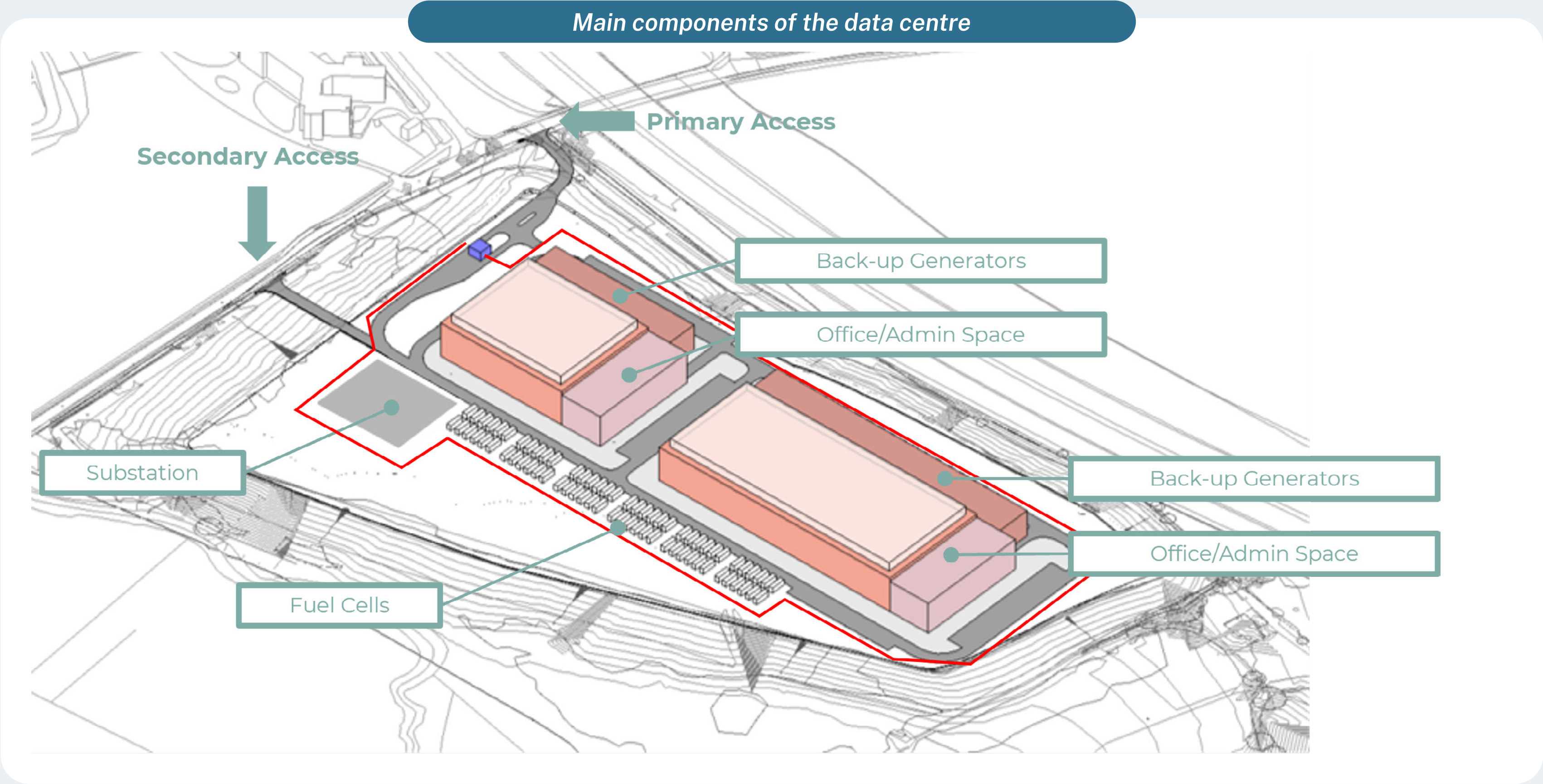
This board gives an illustrative view of the main parts of the data centre buildings and the approach to the materials on their outside. The detailed design would be considered at a later stage, if outline permission were granted.

Design approach

- High-quality materials with lasting character
- Rich façades defined by depth, shadow and texture
- Carefully composed forms and roofscapes
- Designed in dialogue with landscape and ecology

Choosing the colours

To define a palette that complements its surroundings and helps mitigate the visual impact of the proposed development, a colour study of the local context has been undertaken and will continue to be refined as the design develops.



Images shown are illustrative examples intended to communicate the proposed material palette and design principles. They do not represent the final material selections, which will be developed further through the design process and agreed as part of the approval process.

Next steps and have your say

What happens next

This consultation closes on Friday 23 October 2026. Everything you tell us is read and considered.

We will then review your feedback alongside the ongoing design and technical work, and refine the proposals where we are able to.

An outline planning application would be submitted to the Planning Authority, together with the technical assessments referred to on these boards.

Once it is submitted, the Planning Authority runs its own consultation. You will be able to comment formally again before any decision is reached.

Have your say

Feedback forms are available here today. Please fill one in before you go and leave it in the box.

You can also respond online at www.rodningcampus.co.uk at any point up to **Friday 23 October**.

What happens to your feedback

Everything we receive is reported anonymously in a Statement of Community Involvement submitted with the planning application. It sets out what people told us and how the proposals changed as a result.

Staying in touch

You can contact the project team at any time, and we will log and answer every enquiry. To receive updates as the proposals develop, tick the box at the end of the feedback form.



Email info@rodningcampus.co.uk



Freephone 0800 208 4928



www.rodningcampus.co.uk