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Development Control
Civic Centre High Street
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Our ref: NE/2025/138116/01
Your ref: 75111/APP/2025/739
Date: 14 May 2025

Dear Michael,

Union Park, UP4 North Hyde Gardens, Hayes, UB3 4QQ

Redevelopment of site to deliver extension to existing Union Park data centre campus consisting of (a) free standing data centre building (b) energy, power, and water infrastructure (c) site access and internal roads (d) site security arrangements (e) hard and soft, green landscaping and (f) other ancillary and auxiliary forms of development

Thank you for consulting us on the above application, on 25 April 2025.

Environment Agency position

We have **no objections** to the proposed development; however, we would like to draw your attention to the following informative comments regarding permitting and past contaminative uses of the site.

Advice to Local Planning Authority

Environmental Permitting Regulations

The proposed development will require a permit under Section 1.1 Part A of the Environmental Permitting Regulations (England and Wales) 2016. We do not currently have enough information to know if the proposed development can meet our requirements to prevent, minimise and/or control pollution.

The combustion activity is comprised of aggregated diesel fired “back-up” generators for which additional aspects will be considered as part of the permitting process. The applicant is strongly advised to undertake enhanced pre-application discussions with the Environment Agency’s Permitting Service and consider Twin Tracking an Environmental Permit application with this Planning Application.

The following issues will be considered as part of the permitting process for aggregated diesel generators:

- Impacts from air emissions from both (a) the testing and maintenance regime and (b) the worst case emergency scenario of all engines running continuously for 72 hours. Air Dispersion modelling will assess impact to both air quality standards and [Acute Exposure Guideline Levels](#) for Oxides of Nitrogen.
- The applicant has applied Best Available Techniques (BAT) namely;

- Selection of emissions optimised ignition engines that are compliant with USA EPA Tier II / TA Luft standards. Further guidance on BAT for engine design standards is published here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergency-backup-diesel-engines-on-installations-best-available-techniques-bat>; It is however noted the proposal includes additional secondary abatement Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR).
- A maintenance and testing regime that minimises the impact to air quality by minimising and sequencing of testing;
- Fuel storage and, where applicable, urea storage standards for ground and surface water protection.

Whether the applicant will need to go beyond BAT and install and optimise Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) to reduce emissions further. This is likely where air quality is poor or multiple sites using aggregated back-up engine co-locate.

- Stacks for the exhaust of emissions for back-up diesel generation are vertical and of sufficient height above nearby buildings and flow is unimpeded.
- Use of an Air Quality Manage Plan (AQMP) to manage and monitor air quality risks during site standby maintenance, testing and outage operations.

The Local Authority should satisfy themselves that the design of stacks facilitates dispersion of pollutants from local receptors (where SCR not proposed) and the development is not designed such that retrofitting Selective Catalytic Reduction for each engine is not possible. This is particularly important if the Authority considers co-location of aggregated standby generation is likely in the future. The Local Authority may wish to ensure the operator has selected emissions optimised engines as this may affect the design of the development if they need to change to secure an Environmental Permit.

An Environmental Permit only covers activities associated with the combustion of fuels in aggregated back-up generation and will not include emission limit values due to the nature of their use as emergency equipment. Monitoring will be undertaken using the [low risk](#) standard introduced for medium combustion plant (i.e. not MCERTS).

The Environment Agency has issued a permit Ref DP3442QV and is determining a second permit ref ZP3527SS to operate the Data Centre(s) located to the east of this development. If the development of all data centres in this specific location/area are operated by the same operating company it is likely a single EPR permit would be required to cover them **all**.

Contaminated Land

This development site appears to have been the subject of past industrial activity which poses a high risk of pollution to controlled waters.

However, we are unable to provide site-specific advice relating to land contamination as we have recently revised our priorities so that we can focus on:

- Protecting and improving the groundwater that supports existing drinking water supplies
- Groundwater within important aquifers for future supply of drinking water or other environmental use.

We recommend that you refer to our published '[Guiding Principles for Land Contamination](#)' which outlines the approach which should be adopted when managing this site's risks to the water environment.

We also advise that you consult with your Environmental Health/Environmental Protection Department for advice on generic aspects of land contamination management. Where planning controls are considered necessary, we recommend that the environmental protection of controlled waters is considered alongside any human health protection requirements. This approach is supported by paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Land contamination: risk management and good practice

We recommend that developers should:

- Follow the risk management framework provided in [Land Contamination: Risk Management](#), when dealing with land affected by contamination
- Refer to our [Guiding principles for land contamination](#) for the type of information that we require in order to assess risks to controlled waters from the site - the local authority can advise on risk to other receptors, such as human health
- Consider using the [National Quality Mark Scheme for Land Contamination Management](#) which involves the use of competent persons to ensure that land contamination risks are appropriately managed

Refer to the [contaminated land pages](#) on gov.uk for more information.

Waste on-site

The CL:AIRE Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice (version 2) provides operators with a framework for determining whether or not excavated material arising from site during remediation and/or land development works is waste or has ceased to be waste. Under the Code of Practice:

- excavated materials that are recovered via a treatment operation can be reused on-site providing they are treated to a standard such that they are fit for purpose and unlikely to cause pollution
- treated materials can be transferred between sites as part of a hub and cluster project
- some naturally occurring clean material can be transferred directly between sites

Developers should ensure that all contaminated materials are adequately characterised both chemically and physically, and that the permitting status of any proposed on-site operations are clear. If in doubt, the Environment Agency should be contacted for advice at an early stage to avoid any delays.

We recommend that developers should refer to:

- The [position statement](#) on the Definition of Waste: Development Industry Code of Practice
- The [waste management page](#) on GOV.UK

Waste to be taken off-site

Contaminated soil that is (or must be) disposed of is waste. Therefore, its handling,

transport, treatment and disposal are subject to waste management legislation, which includes:

- Duty of Care Regulations 1991
- Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005
- Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016
- The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011

Developers should ensure that all contaminated materials are adequately characterised both chemically and physically in line with British Standard BS EN 14899:2005 'Characterization of Waste - Sampling of Waste Materials - Framework for the Preparation and Application of a Sampling Plan' and that the permitting status of any proposed treatment or disposal activity is clear. If in doubt, the Environment Agency should be contacted for advice at an early stage to avoid any delays.

If you receive (or reject) any hazardous waste, you must send a report to the Environment Agency. These are known as 'returns. If you dispose of hazardous waste at the premises where it's produced, you may also need to send returns. You should follow the guidance provided here: [Hazardous waste: consignee returns guidance](#).

Advice to Applicant

Water Resources

Increased water efficiency in new developments potentially enables more growth to be realised without an increased availability of water resources. Developers can highlight responsible water use as a positive corporate social responsibility message that will boost the commercial appeal of the development. For the homeowner/tenant, lower water usage also reduces water and energy bills.

We endorse the use of water efficiency measures in all developments, particularly in those that are new. Use of technology that ensures efficient use of natural resources could support the environmental benefits of future proposals and could help attract investment to the area. Therefore, water efficient technology, fixtures and fittings should be all considered as an integral part of new developments and/or refurbishments. The technology used to achieve improved water efficiency (e.g. efficient fittings, greywater recycling, etc) is also an attractive feature for many prospective building owners and tenants.

Commercial/Industrial developments

We recommend that all new non-residential developments of 1000sqm gross floor area or more (i.e. 'major' developments) should achieve the [BREEAM 'excellent' standard](#) for water consumption (category 'WAT 01'), or equivalent. This standard may already be a requirement of the local planning authority.

We also recommend you contact your Local Planning Authority for more information.

Pre-Application Advice

Regarding future applications, if you would like us to review a revised technical report prior to a formal submission, outside of a statutory consultation, and/or meet to discuss our position, this will be chargeable in line with our planning advice service. If you wish to

request a document review or meeting, please contact our team email address at HNLsustainableplaces@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Further information on our charged planning advice service is available at;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-advice-environment-agency-standard-terms-and-conditions>.

Final comments

Thank you for contacting us regarding the above application. Our comments are based on our available records and the information submitted to us. Please quote our reference number in any future correspondence. Please provide us with a copy of the decision notice for our records. This would be greatly appreciated.

Should you have any queries regarding this response, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Imogen Nayager-Stafford
Planning Specialist

Phone: 0203 025 5646

Email: hnlstableplaces@environment-agency.gov.uk