PLANNING

Date: Monday 4 August 2025
Time: 5.30 pm
Venue: Rennes Room, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business.

If you have an enquiry regarding any items on this agenda, please contact Mark Devin, Democratic Services Manager on 01392 265477.

Entry to the Civic Centre can be gained through the Customer Service Centre, Paris Street.

Membership -
Councillors Knott (Chair), Rolstone (Deputy Chair), Asvachin, Atkinson, Banyard, Bennett, Harding, Hughes, Hussain, Ketchin, Mitchell, M, Williams, M and Pole

Agenda

Part I: Items suggested for discussion with the press and public present

8 **Update Sheet**

To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Place. (Pages 3 - 20)

Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Planning Committee will be held on **Monday 8 September 2025** at 5.30 pm in the Civic Centre.

Find out more about Exeter City Council services by looking at our web site *http://www.exeter.gov.uk.* This will give you the dates of all future Committee meetings and tell you how you can ask a question at a Scrutiny Committee meeting. Alternatively, contact the Democratic Services Officer (Committees) on (01392) 265107 for further information.

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PLANNING COMMITTEE

4th August 2025

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Correspondence received and matters arising following preparation of the Agenda

Item 5: 24/1536/OUT Land Adjacent Marsh Barton Railway Station, Clapperbrook Lane East, Exeter, EX2 8QE.

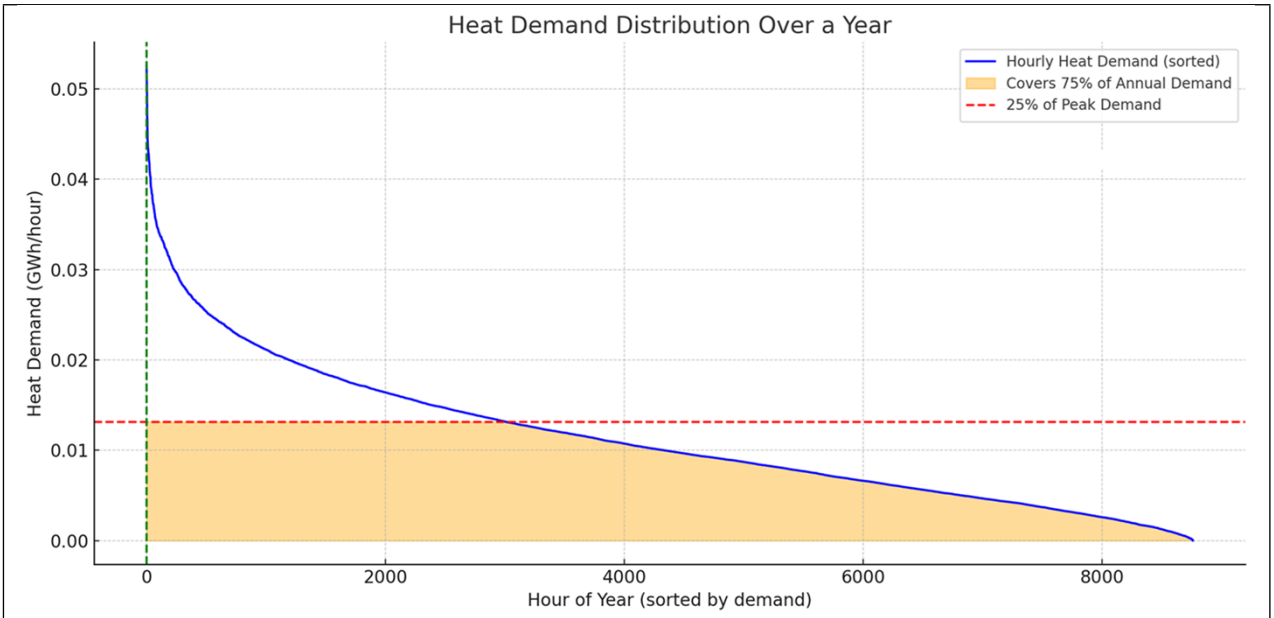
On 31 July, the agent submitted the following response to the objection from Cllr Moore:

"The applicant has not sufficiently demonstrated how the Energy Centre will support the delivery of CP14 (and CC1 and CC2 of the new draft policy) for developments within Exeter allowing for a transition towards Net Zero.
a. The *heat output* from the Energy Centre sets out how the heat generated will produce "Carbon savings of at least 13,000 tonnes per year with the potential to increase significantly. 75% emissions reduction from day one for customers replacing gas boilers with a network connection. Improved air quality by reducing use of gas boilers." These figures relate *only to the recipient buildings*; they *do not relate to the energy source used to generate the heat*. Indeed they lock in gas generation carbon emissions for the lifetime of the boilers into the 2040's.

The assertion in this comment is incorrect. 75% emissions reductions are based at the Energy Centre, which in turn applies to our customers.

The Energy strategy for the EEN relies on a maximum of 25% of our heat coming from gas boilers. The majority of this is at peak demand on coldest days. 75% of our heat will come from Air Source Heat Pumps, powered by zero carbon electricity (with certificates to show origin of the electricity). It is theoretically possible to power the whole energy network with 100% low carbon technology, however sizing this to cover the highest demands would be (a) hugely expensive to install and run), and (b) not viable because the electricity grid in Exeter doesn't have anywhere near enough capacity.

Through sizing our low carbon heat generation at 25% of peak demand we can serve 75% of total heat demand in the most cost effective manner possible:



e. There is n**o evidence in the sustainability appraisal setting out the operational greenhouse gas emissions when the plant is in use.** The applicant states the energy centre will secure: “Energy resilience through secure, local, low-carbon heat sources”, yet the applicant has changed the water source heat pumps to air source heat pumps, with gas back up boilers without providing evidence of the greenhouse gas(GHG) emissions that these models will generate to back up the low-carbon assertion.

Please see the response above in relation to GHG emissions. Our plan was always to have gas boilers for peak and back-up generation in order to create a project that can deliver decarbonisation at scale in the most economically viable way. The change in heat pump technology is driven by choosing the most deliverable scheme but water source heat pumps remain an option for the future. We are allowing space within our planning application for a future WSHP building.

The Air Pollution reports assumes the gas boilers operate on a continual basis, for 660 operating hours per annum for five boilers and as such produce 26,402 MWh/40MW. However, “five gas reserve boilers are proposed which will be used when the ASHPs cannot operate (although only four will operate at any one time) and two emergency generators are proposed to provide power to the energy centre in the event of an electricity supply failure.”

Yes this is correct. See both responses above. At peak times we will need to run gas boilers to be able to meet peak demand for the customers. We also require gas boilers to provide critical resilience for customers such as the hospital and university. The Exeter Energy Network will reduce NOx emissions by 90% compared to individual gas boilers through a mix of (1) 75% reduction in gas use, as described above, and (2) using the newest clean-burning gas boilers for the remaining 25% of our heat.

The GHG emissions of this gas consumption (and the electricity needed for the ASHP/other sources) are not calculated.
This is not correct. Gas consumption is included within the emissions savings provided. Please see above

f. **Further information should be required from the developers showing the GHG emissions created by the Plant to evidence the 'low carbon' assertion and in order to demonstrate compliance with new Local Plan Policy CC1 and Exeter's Net Zero 2030 priority set out in the emerging Local Plan.**
Please see above

g. **A condition should be put in place for annual reporting to the Council on GHG production by the plant, and a timeframe with agreed and conditioned milestone for moving to Net Zero 2030 in line with the Local Plan Policy CC1 & CC2.**

We will be reporting annual GHG production and savings to all customers and are happy to extend this to the Council.
We will also be contractually bound by anchor load customers to present a costed decarbonisation trajectory. Depending on the emissions reduction approach and timeframes there may be an additional cost to customers. Therefore we cannot commit to decarbonisation timeframes and milestones to the council, as the decision will ultimately rest with anchor load customers.
It should be noted however, that the network will need to be able to demonstrate net zero heat provision in line with anchor load customer decarbonisation targets. We also expect heat networks regulation to mandate increasingly strict decarbonisation targets of all heat network providers.

h. There is no evidence in the sustainability appraisal setting of the greenhouse gas emissions created in construction. Heat loss from the building will have a local impact on the local ecology and increase GHG emissions. Much of the floor area is not a manned area, so isn't heated, and will passively heat itself due to the operation of the process - no further heating will be provided.

A Condition should be put on the development to require the highest level of construction standard in order to minimise heat loss and maximise sustainability.

1Energy is in the business of selling heat. We are therefore highly incentivised to minimise heat loss and maximise sustainability

With regards to the queries about the BNG calculation and whether the access track has had an impact on the calculation, we have reviewed this and provided the evidence that the access does not change the result at all (see attached).

We can also confirm that the badger setts are not within the application site."

On 31 July, the following objection was received from Mr Martin Stapleton. Accordingly, the number of objections has risen from 12 to 13.

"Dear Councillors, Planning officers,

I failed to comment on the planning application due to missing the notification of this application. If possible, I would be very grateful for the councillors and/or the planning consultation to mention/consider my views.

Name : Martin Stapleton
Address : 118 Cowick Lane, EX29HE
Status : Regular user of the area for walking, cycling and running
View : Object to application

Summary : I would have objected to the original proposal, based on the clear violation of the Riverside and Ludwell Valley Parks Masterplan. Whilst the original plan could have created a (debatable) environmental argument for this violation, the current plan does not - it is simply the building of a factory on a greenfield site that has been previously marked for protection, when there are many more suitable locations - and it is precisely the kind of creeping development that the Masterplan was intended to prevent.

Detail :
Alteration/Falsification of Proposals
From the outset, the main pillar of the proposal has been the necessity to site the development beside the river, so as to extract/replace water from the river Exe. This is no longer in the application (except for reference to possible future development), and therefore there is absolutely no justification for using this location. This could be characterised as a change of plans by the developer - but it could also be characterised as a complete falsification of those plans to justify the use of a greenfield site that is cheap and easy for them to develop.

'Public' consultation
In August 2024, the public consultation stated "The comments received on the plans through feedback forms were predominantly positive, highlighting several key benefits. Respondents appreciated the heat network as a whole, praising its potential environmental benefits, including carbon reductions and improvements to river and aquatic life." - however, it is clear that at that point that there were many misleading points in the publicity :

- Their public presentation (second exhibition panel) states "A water source heat pump will take heat from the River Exe". As this is no longer the proposal, the public consultation is completely invalid
- Every source (press releases etc) states the heat source will be water from the river Exe . As this is no longer the proposal, the public consultation is completely invalid
- Every source states the development is next to the Solar Park, and Marsh Barton Station. I have found no mention anywhere of the Valley parks. This is incredibly disingenuous - possibly it could be called a lie by omission.
- Leaflets distributed. I live on Cowick Lane, in one of the specified areas, and I did not receive one.
- " Six feedback forms were received in total." - this is indicative of the appalling reach of the public consultation - the target of the consultation was apparently 13,000 people?!?

Gateway to the Valley Parks
In the Valley Parks Masterplan pp43, it says "Island Parks is soon to benefit from the Devon Metro Project, which will bring a train station to Marsh Barton, alongside Clapperbrook Lane, and provides significant opportunity for the area to develop as a main gateway to the Valley Parks", and proposes " The space is a key place for woodland planting". This planning application instead proposes to make the main gateway to the Valley Parks a large industrial building housing computer servers and gas boilers - it makes a mockery of the Masterplan.

Visibility and Audibility from Valley Park, and Canal Path
In the 'landscape and visual appraisal' document, it states (Viewpoint 2) : "During winter months, there is a greater extent of visibility into the Site through gaps between tree trunks, providing a greater sense of openness. This results in more prominent views of the Energy Recovery Facility and the Clapperbrook Lane East bridge over the railway corridor. The prevailing amenity of the view remains, however there is a greater appreciation of being in proximity to the urban area to the west. The sensitivity of receptors at this location is judged to be High." - Read simply this says that the development will be clearly visible from the valley park clearly in late autumn, winter and early spring. Further, the canal path will be dominated in that area by both the view of, and noise from, the development.
This document also states (section 6.4) : " During both construction and operation there would be a notable change to the character of the Site. The implementation of built form alongside formal access and fencing would add urbanising characteristics across approximately 50% of the Site. Around Clapperbrook Lane East there would be some removal of existing trees and vegetation to the north and south, resulting in a more open character for this area of the Site. (...). There would be a reduction in the landscape tranquillity of the Site resulting from visual and noise disturbance..." -> this is actually damning - there will be significant visual and noise disturbance to the area described by the Masterplan as a main Gateway to the Valley Parks.
To be clear, the statement " The sensitivity of receptors at this location is judged to be High." is defined on page 31 of that document -> "Value or character is recognised through national or local designation " and "Little capacity to accommodate development of the same type, scale and appearance as the Proposed Development." How the report concludes that this would only affect visual amenity with "Minor Adverse magnitude" is beyond me, as someone who walks past there regularly - although I would argue that even this degree of effect is too much for a site that is meant to be the gateway to the Valley Parks.

Water Lane development planning
One of the main points stated in the 2024 report on "Liveable Water Lane" was "Establish the area around Marsh Barton station as a regional destination for recreation and water-related activities." - it is possible to pretend that this development improves nature by claiming an increase in biodiversity (although this is a pathetic assertion when juxtaposed to the potential benefits of using the whole site as a biodiversity development, or even just leaving the area as a wild area) - but it is not possible to claim that this development would not massively degrade the potential of the area as a centre for leisure, recreation and the environment. If there was, for example, to be a watersports centre in the future - the obvious site would be by the railway station - any other location would have a direct negative impact on the Valley park.

Further to this, the outline planning for the Water Lane development does not show any intent to connect to this development. That implies that there is _no connection_ of this development proposed on the West of the river, thus invalidating the proposed location further.

I hope that these points/opinions are of use.

Kind regards,

Martin Stapleton”

Introducing 1Energy and Exeter's Energy Network

About 1Energy

Exeter Energy Network Overview

The Exeter Energy Network is a £120 million low-to-zero carbon heat network, with £42 million funded by the UK Government's Green Heat Network Fund (GHNF). This flagship scheme provides the only cost-effective solution to providing decarbonised heat to cities.

Developed by 1Energy, a the project is part of portfolio of projects looking to deliver affordable and eco-friendly heating solutions across several UK cities, including Exeter, Bradford, Milton Keynes, Derby, and Oxford.

Exeter Energy Centre

The Exeter Energy Centre is a fundamental component of the Exeter Energy Network. It is the source of all the low carbon heat that will be served to customers throughout the network. The Energy Centre will be located near Marsh Barton railway station and serve a variety of existing and new developments, targeting both public and private sectors where decarbonisation is crucial.

Economic Benefits

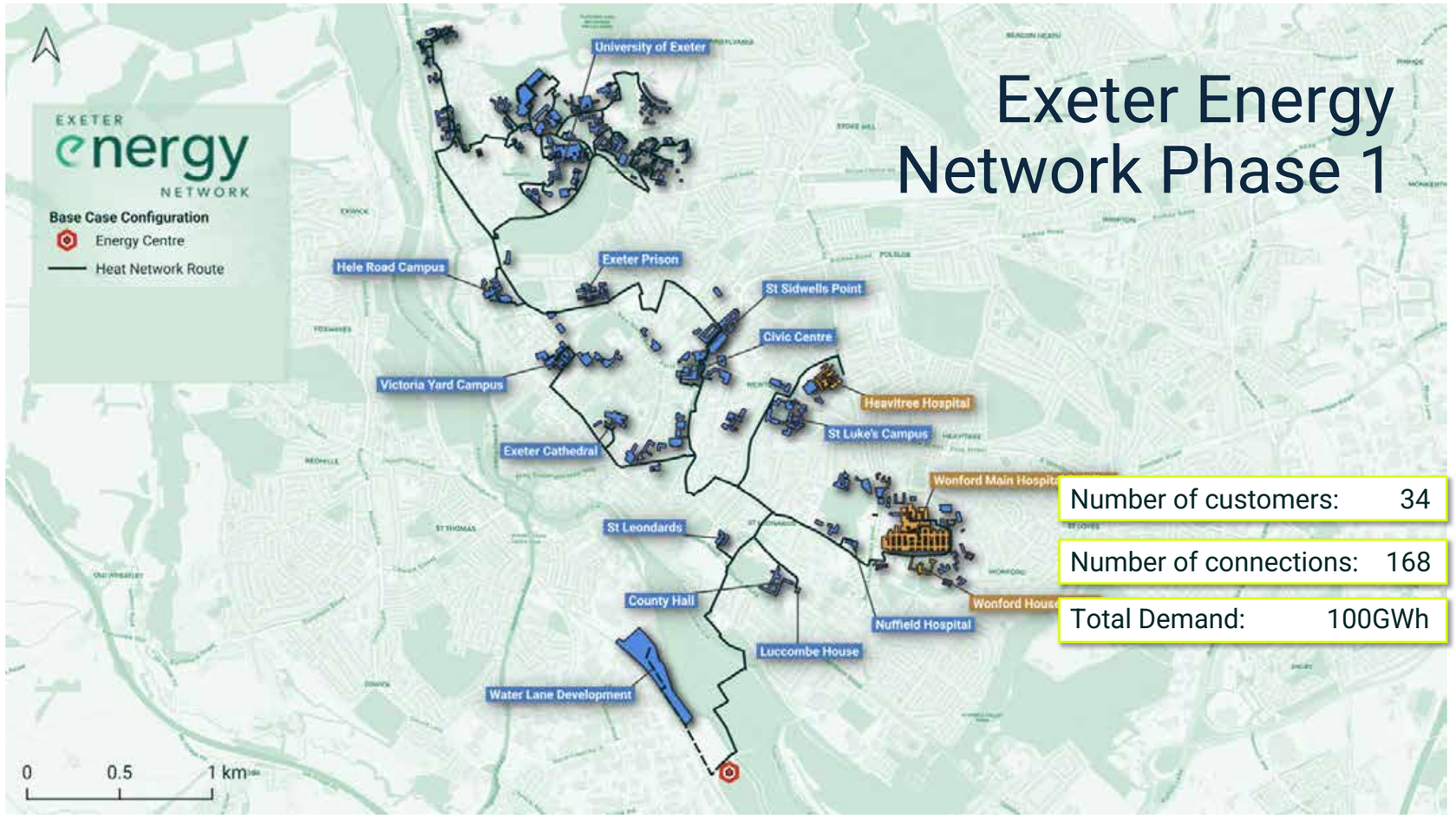
Significant inward investment which boosts the local economy by maximizing the local supply chain. Creates apprenticeships and job opportunities.

Increases Exeter's attractiveness to businesses.

Environmental Benefits

Saves at least 13,000 tonnes of CO2 annually, and contributes to cleaner air. Helps Exeter achieve Net Zero emissions by 2030. Aligns with Exeter's and UK Government's climate and heat network goals. Demonstrates 1Energy's commitment to sensitive site development. Opportunities for significant nature and social value improvements on the remaining Grace Road site.

Social Value - the project will generate over £ three million per annum of social value benefits to the city through CO^{2} savings, air quality improvements and local job and apprenticeship schemes



Project Brief

The Proposal

Exeter Energy Limited (1Energy) are delivering a new low-to-zero carbon District Heat Network (DHN) in Exeter. The DHN will generate heat at a single energy centre, Exeter Energy Centre, located off Clapperbrook Lane, adjacent to Marsh Barton railway station.

Outline Planning permission is sought to create a high-quality, sustainable energy centre that meets modern standards of construction and is sympathetic to the surrounding environment. Heat will be generated through a combination of air source heat pumps (ASHPs) and a steam offtake from the adjacent energy from waste (EfW) facility. The concept design has been based on the below energy scenario and form part of Exeter's wider carbon-neutral district heating strategy.:-enabling connected buildings to completely remove their gas boilers and receive affordable low carbon heat to reduce carbon emissions by seventy five % straight away. As the electircity grid decarbonises, the network will be able to supply zero carbon heat.

10MW ASHP + potential steam offtake from EfW

An area of site has been set aside for a potential future Water-Source Heat Pump (WSHP) building that will abstract heat from the River Exe. This building is not yet developed.

Through careful design, consideration and communication with all stakeholders, including the Local and County authorities and respective energy infrastructure partners has been had to ensure an optimal outcome for all whilst being respectful of the local architecture and surroundings.

The Energy Centre's built form, infrastructure and architecture aim is to sit blended into the landscape setting whilst being sympathetic to its immediate industrial surroundings, adding both aesthetic and ecological value.

Precedent Images - Energy Centres, similar size and context

Barking Energy Centre

Bunhill Energy Centre

Greenwich Energy Centre

Olympic Park Energy Centre

The Proposal - Amount and Use Design Response

The delivered scheme is intended to be flexible and adaptable enough to accommodate and respond to the evolving UK energy market, but also robust and efficient enough to maintain low operating costs over its full economic life.W

With regard other support structures shown on the master site plan overleaf and external to the proposed energy centre, there are six thermal stores, a large thermal store, 33Kv substation and 11Kv substations and a small gas kiosk outbuilding.

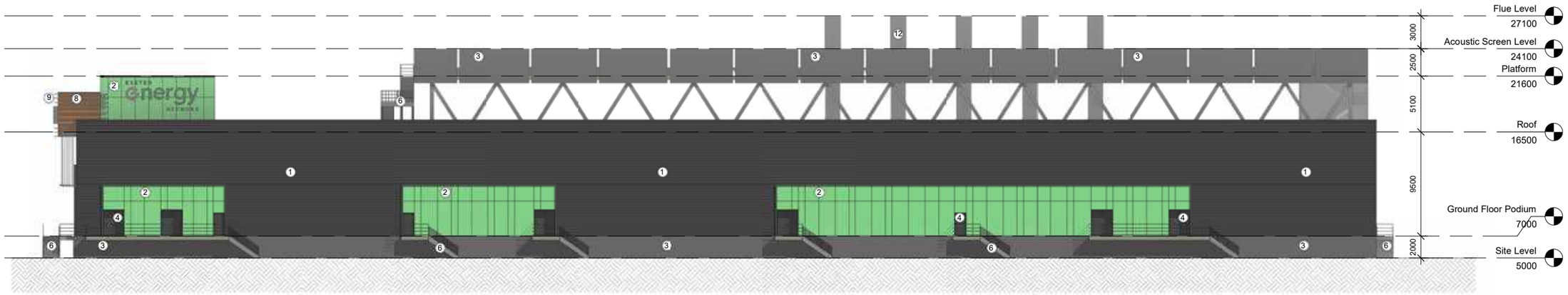
The proposed energy centre and external structures are positioned centrally within the development site, aligned with the Railway station, built on podiums with stepped access, orientated East-West in response to the flood alleviation design strategy.

The proposed vehicular access point is off Clapperbrook Lane, providing entrance into the secure energy centre site. Semi-controlled access is provided to the visitor car-parking, where secure access to energy centre compound is provided.It is proposed to provide a public footpath around the development site, providing formal access to the wider field setting, currently closed off. A landscape led design approach, aiming to create a space on site for both nature and people connecting the new development to the surrounding landscape and by enhancing the natural environment and providing an area of local ecological and social value.

Site Masterplan

The Proposal - Indicative Render Images

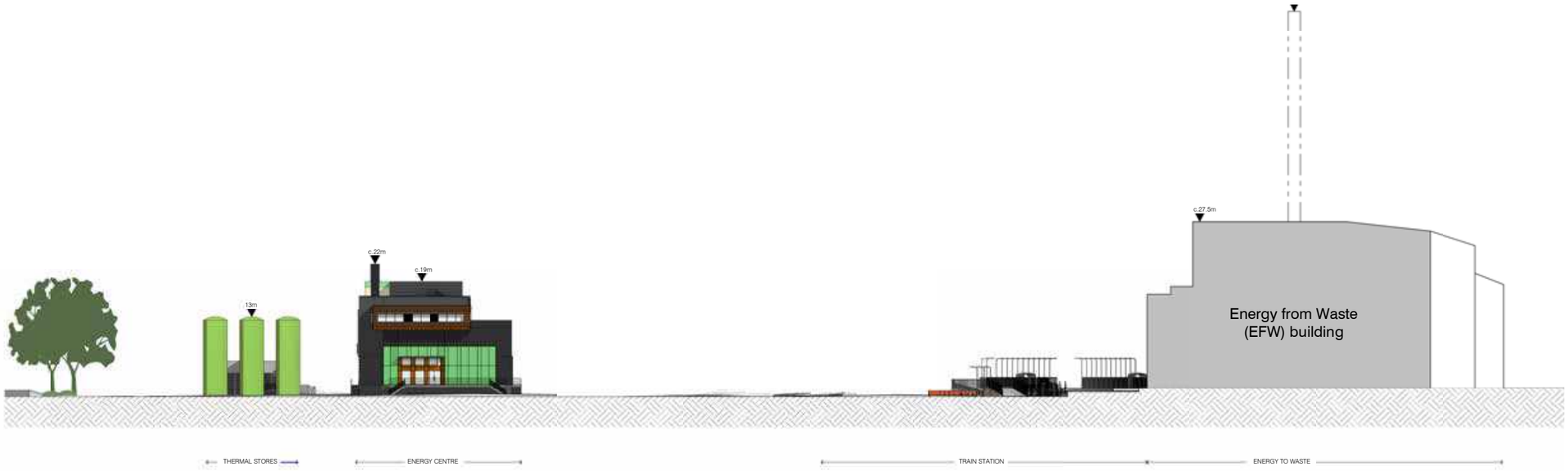
The Proposal - Elevations

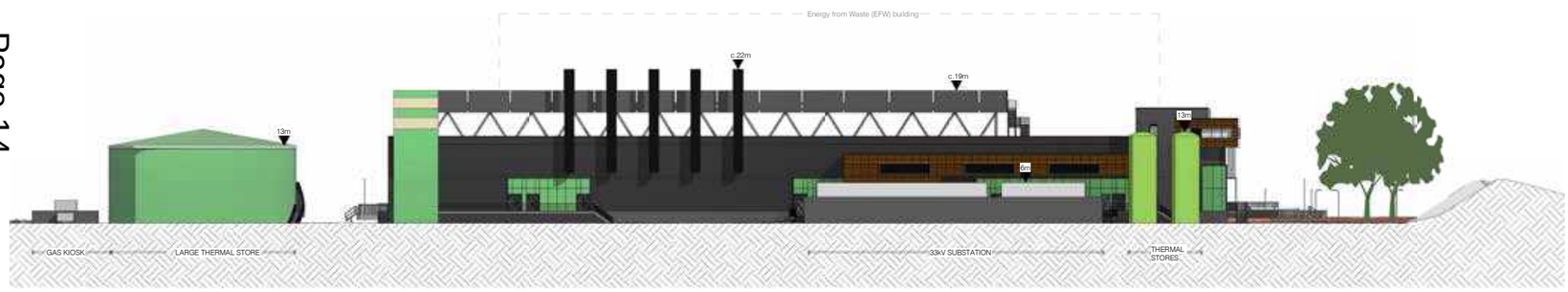


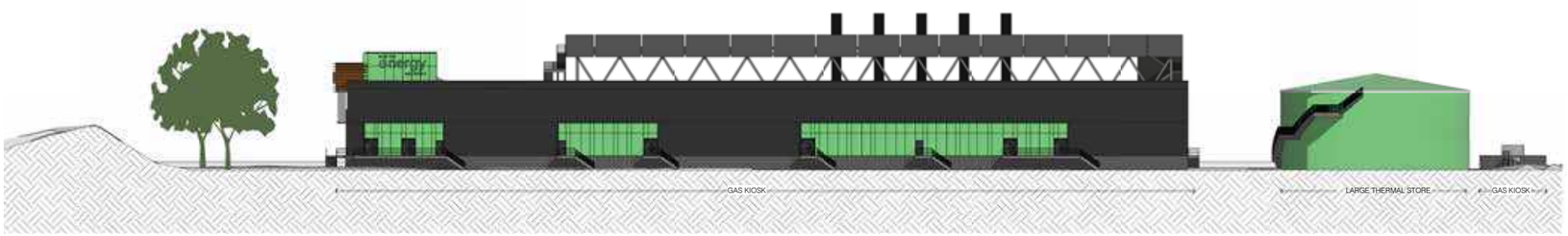
Energy Centre Elevation - West

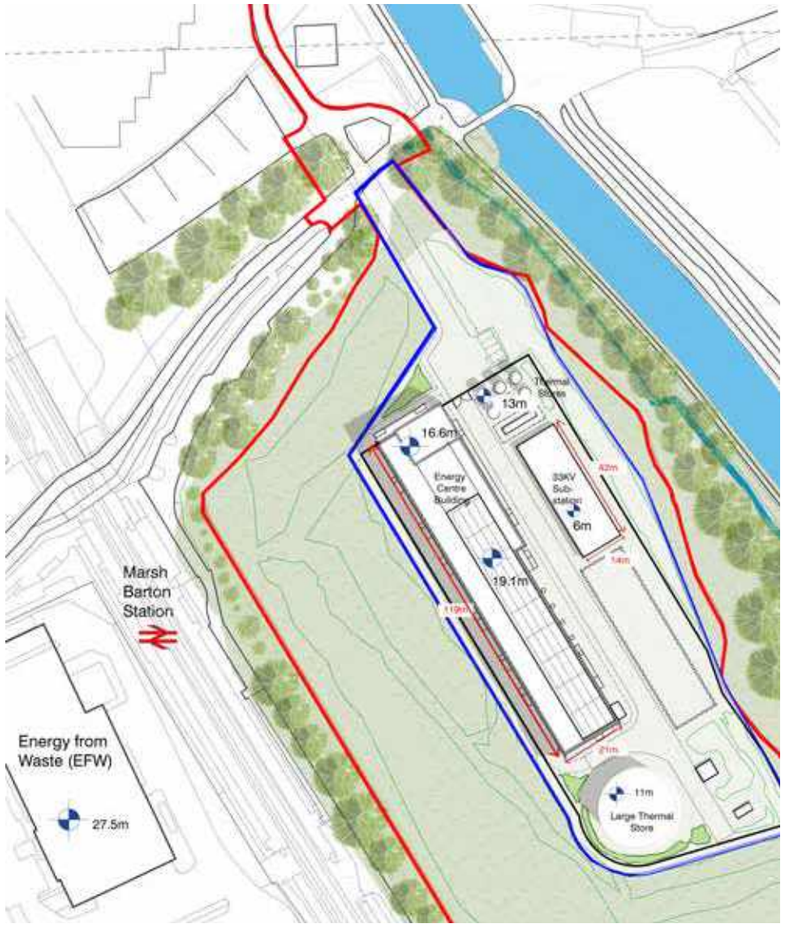
Energy Centre Elevation - East

The Proposal - Indicative Site Sections









Exeter Energy Centre
Potential Landscape Extension Area

Following design team feedback, we confirm 1Energy's dedication to collaborating with Exeter City Council (ECC) on the wider Grace Road field area to ensure a high quality landscape setting surrounding the Exeter Energy Centre. We support ECC's plans to transform the site into a leisure and biodiversity net gain (BNG) space that enhances local amenity. 1Energy have asked Ramboll's landscape architecture team to create illustrative designs showcasing potential collaborative initiatives.

An initial landscape plan for the proposed Exeter Energy Centre has been developed within the Site's Red Line Boundary (RLB). The region to the south of the site, outlined in blue in Figure 1 to the right, and referred to as the Potential Additional Area, offers local ecological and social value. The potential opportunities shown in this report provide examples of what could be achieved in this area.

Pending outline planning approval, the project team would collaborate with ECC and other stakeholders to create a holistic design for the Grace Road field. The Reserved Matters application and construction sequence are planned to allow for thorough collaboration, ensuring that the development meets community needs while preserving and enhancing wildlife habitats **through the development of new wildlife areas replacing the current low biodiversity value field**

Ramboll's landscape design approach emphasises how the Potential Additional Area can serve both nature and people, connecting the new development seamlessly into the surrounding landscape while serving to enhance the natural environment. The landscape team has developed three concepts for the area that maximise opportunities for:

- nature and people;
- interaction with nature; and
- habitat creation.

Our design approach aims to inspire and engage visitors by providing opportunities for relaxation, play, exercise, and education, while supporting native plants, birds, mammals, reptiles, and invertebrates.

Legend

Red Line Boundary

Potential Additional Area for landscape design

Figure 1: Red Line Boundary and Potential Additional Area for landscape design

Current landscape proposals within RLB and Concept Design Opportunity 1

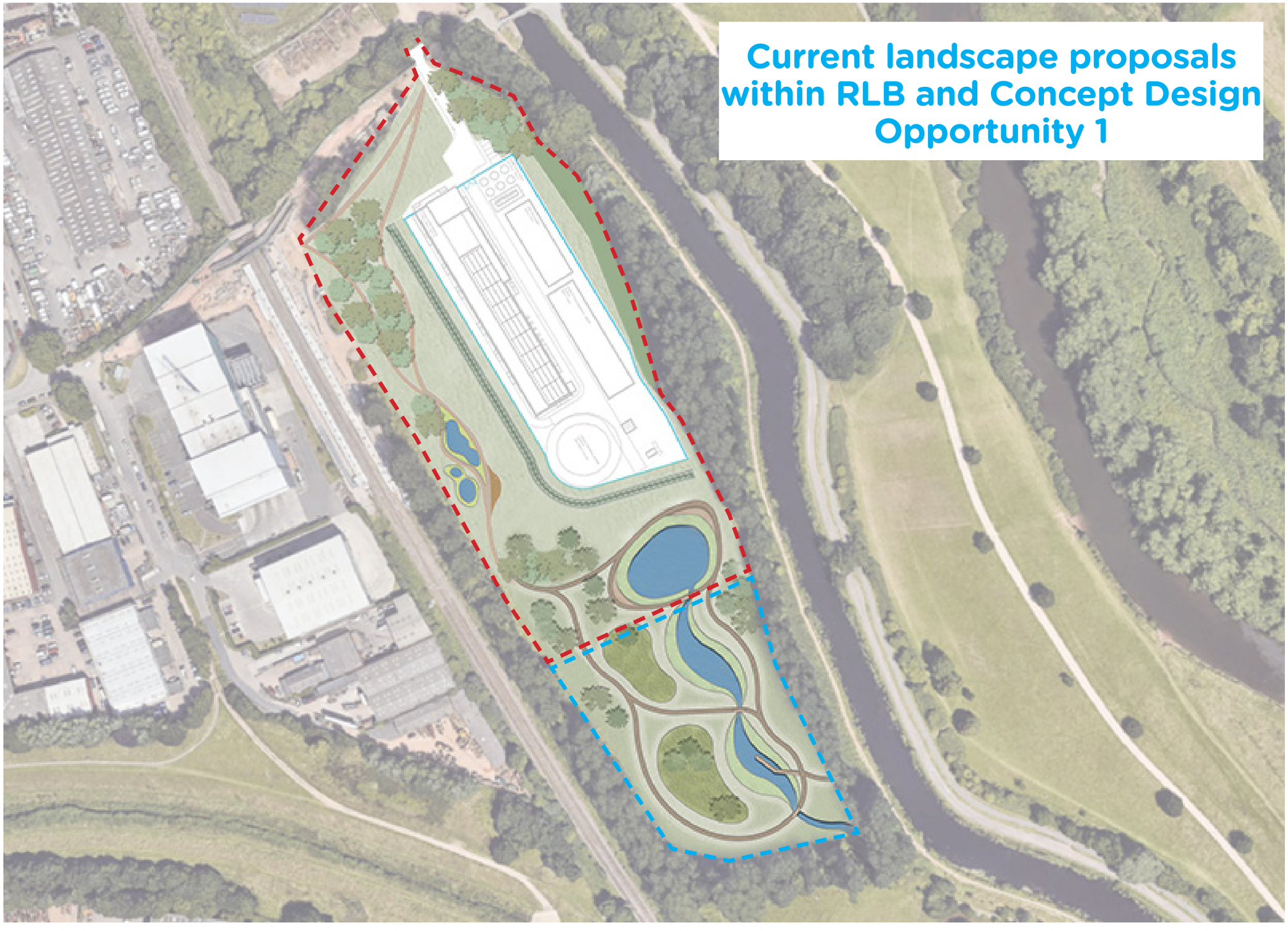


Figure 2: Photoshop render of the Exeter Energy Centre Landscape Design within the Red Line Boundary shown alongside Concept Desing Opportunity 1 (shown in detail on page 4 and 5).

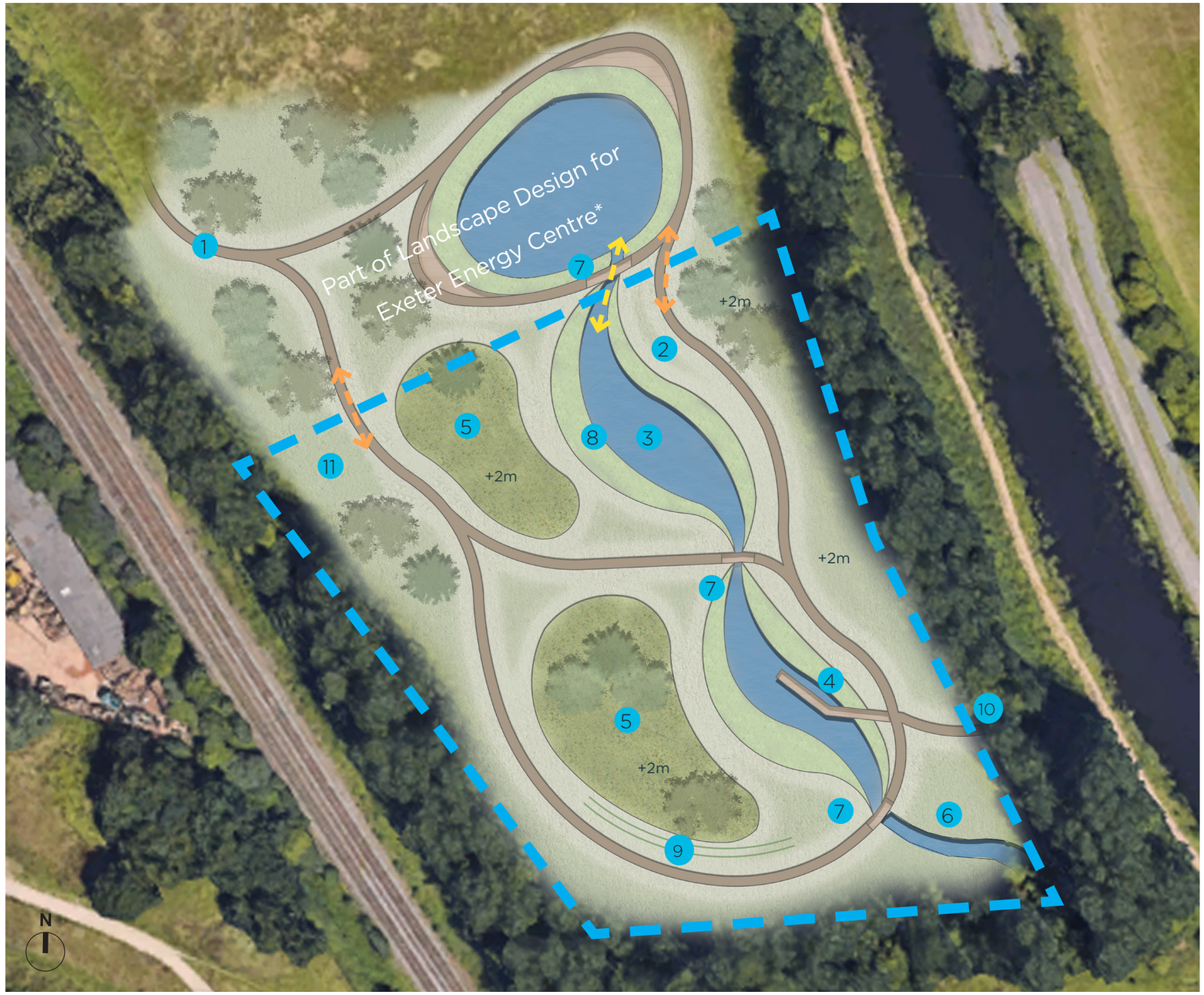
Concept Design Opportunity 1
Maximising Space for Nature and People

Option 1 aims to create a space for people and nature to enjoy. Incidental play trails, dipping areas, sweeping paths and views of wildlife create a calming place for visitors to walk, exercise, play and learn. This concept also leaves space for nature with the creation of water-bodies, marginal planting and scrub areas to provide food and shelter for the local wildlife.

1. Path joins to route within the Exeter Energy Centre design with natural permeable surfacing
2. South facing basking bank for invertebrates
3. Connected blue infrastructure feature that can work as both a wet and dry bed
4. Dipping pond area for interaction with water feature - area to be used as flexible space
5. Scrub area to provide refuge for local wildlife
6. Potential blue infrastructure connection to link with ponds to the south of the area
7. Small board-walk bridge over ditch
8. Marginal planting
9. Incidental play area with naturalistic play equipment
10. Step access to canal Path
11. Species rich grassland

Legend

- Opportunity for connecting footpath to northern site area
- Opportunity for conecting blue infrastructure areas
- Potential Additional Landscaped Area
- Proposed trees
- +2m Spot heights



*All landscaping in this area is detailed in the Exeter Energy Centre design proposals

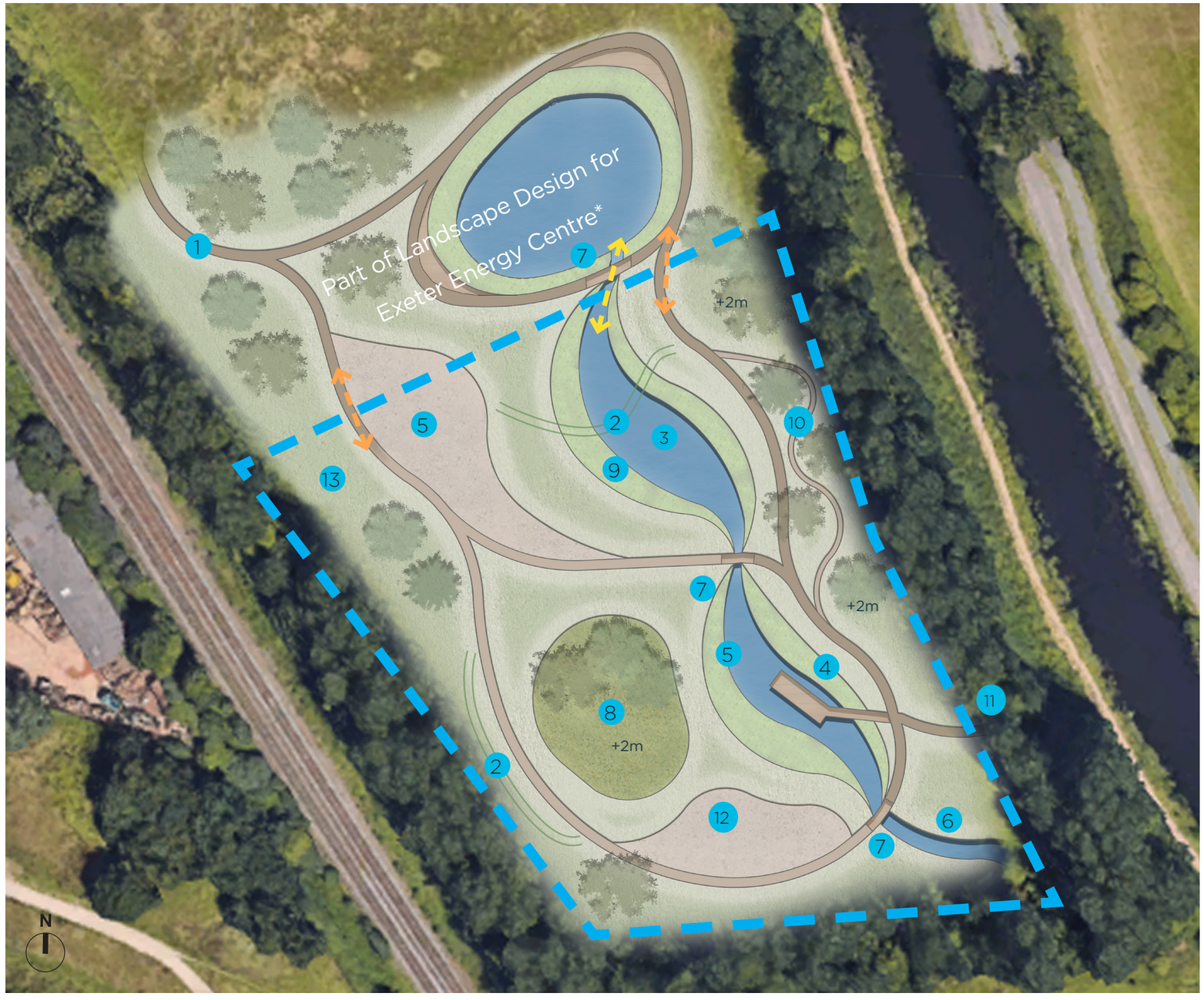
Concept Design Opportunity 2
Maximising People's Interaction with Nature

Option 2 focuses on how people can interact with nature in the space. Play opportunities dotted round the site include a large play area, all weather stepping stones and a play cycle track. The play features are surrounded by trees and wetland planting encouraging young visitors to connect with nature. For other visitors a board-walk with benches overlooking the water, an outdoor gym and multiple paths create a calm natural space for relaxing and exercise.

1. Path joins to route within the Exeter Energy Centre design with natural permeable surfacing
2. Incidental play area - wooden naturalistic play equipment to run along side the path and stone stepping stones
3. Connected blue infrastructure feature that can work as both wet and dry bed
4. Dipping pond area for interaction with water feature, area to be used as flexible space
5. Naturalistic play area, surfaced with with hogging, with wooden play equiptment, recliners and benches
6. Potential blue infrastructure connection to link with ponds to the south of the area
7. Small board-walk crossing
8. Scrub area for wildlife refuge
9. Pond edge planting
10. Play cycle track running along side the path
11. Step access to canal Path
12. Outdoor gym made of natural wood with hogging surfacing
13. Species rich grassland

Legend

- Opportunity for connecting footpath to northern site area
- Opportunity for conecting blue infrastructure areas
- Potential Additional Landscaped Area
- Proposed trees
- +2m Spot heights



*All landscaping in this area is detailed in the Exeter Energy Centre design proposals

Concept Design Opportunity 3
Maximising Nature and Habitat Creation

Opportunity 3 focuses on creating a biodiverse, multi habitat space for wildlife and visitors to enjoy. A single path creates undisturbed spaces for plants and animals to thrive whilst still providing access through the length of the site. Extensive scrub and marginal planting fitted with hybernaculars will encourage birds, mammals, reptiles and invertebrates into the site, giving visitors the opportunity to spot a variety local wildlife and learn about them through information boards.

1. Path joins to route within the Exeter Energy Centre design with natural permeable surfacing
2. South facing basking bank for invertebrates
3. Connected blue infrastructure feature that can work as both wet and dry bed
4. Single track through site to protect local wildlife still with good views throughout the site
5. Large scrub areas for wildlife refuge including areas for hybernaculars and insect hotels
6. Potential blue infrastructure connection to south
7. Small board-walk crossing
8. Pond edge planting
9. Step access to canal path
10. New tree planting to encourage local wildlife
11. Species rich grassland

Legend

- Opportunity for connecting footpath to northern site area
- Opportunity for conecting blue infrastructure areas
- Potential Additional Landscaped Area
- Proposed trees
- +2m Spot heights

*All landscaping in this area is detailed in the Exeter Energy Centre design proposals

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