

Councillors and Civic Society critic plan to sell field for an energy c

by ANITA MERRITT

anita.merritt@reachplc.com
@DevonLiveNews

Page 24
Page 33
Page 18
Page 32
Page 28
Page 16
Page 29
Page 27
Page 35
Page 36
Page 23

newsdesk@devonlive.

al: 07879 603303 or
sandecho.co.uk
44 060910 or visit
44 060 261
92 344888
7801 309665

enews

STS

3QD: Mon-Sat,
4.30pm. Bank Hol Mon,

es, Alington St, EX4
Sun 11am-5pm. Bank

Cowick Street, EX4
m, Sat 9am-1pm, Sun

ore Street, Heavitree,
m, Sat 9am-5.30pm,

n Lawn Terrace,
Fri 8.30am-6pm, Sat &

Athelstan Rd, EX1 1SF:
m-8pm, Sun 9am-4pm
ouse Lane, EX2 6NF:
m-1pm, Sun closed

SUNSET

8; Fri 0813/1630;
n 0812/1633;
e 0810/1635;



is Wollacott
d, Thursday could
ls, before rain
e weekend may

AND

thing that is factually
ct the editor, Scott
ott.harrison@
The Editor, Express
ada Square, Canary
and, once verified,
as possible. The
hed Reach PLC,
Independent Press

FURY has been sparked over Exeter City Council's plans to sell a green field within the Riverside Valley Park to make way for a new energy centre.

The authority is proposing to sell a third of playing fields at Grace Road Fields, amounting to 1.8 hectares, to Exeter Energy Network for an energy plant that will extract heat from the River Exe and use excess heat from the nearby incinerator as well as from a proposed data centre.

It will provide heating for commercial and domestic premises alongside the river as well as the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital and County Hall, headquarters of Devon County Council.

The site is located between Marsh Barton railway station and the Exeter Canal. Part of the site was used as a laydown area when the railway station was being constructed.

The council shared details of the public consultation on the news page of its website on December 17, giving people only until December 31 to respond.

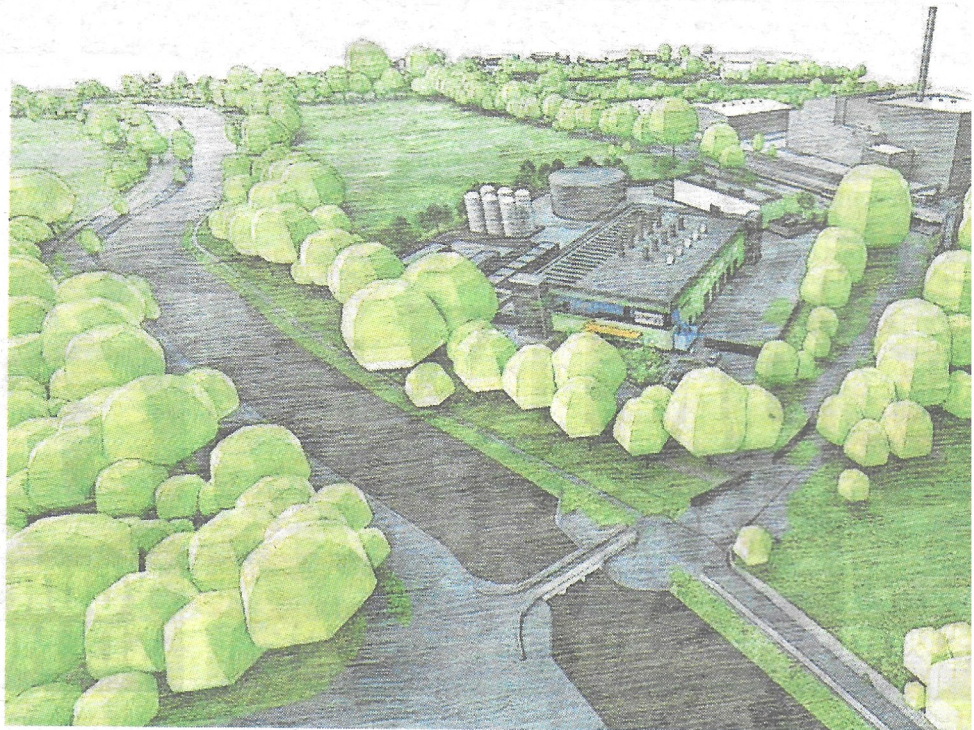
Green Party councillors called for the consultation to be halted, claiming that more key information was required for people to make informed responses.

It follows criticism from Exeter Civic Society about the proposals, stating it goes against council policy to protect the valley parks and adding: "Once green space is built on it can never be replaced within the city boundary."

Councillor Andy Ketchin said: "Disposing of precious and diminishing green space requires a cast iron case to be made and the Labour-led council has failed to do this.

"The sale of this field for an industrial complex goes against the council's own policies to protect the city's valley parks.

"Furthermore, the information provided to the public is misleading and inadequate. It fails to mention the field is within the protected Riverside Valley Park and gives the



» A proposed energy centre at Grace Road Fields, Exeter

impression that this is a brownfield site rather than a green space.

"Neither has there been any environmental impact assessment. This field is a valuable site for nature, and a flood-sensitive area.

"Exeter City Council has a legal duty to establish the impacts on nature and the environment that will result from this industrial complex before it flogs off the site.

"Finally, the council has not checked the developer's claims that this is the only possible site for the energy plant. I have asked to see details of all 13 alternative potential sites looked at, but the developer has not shared that information.

"The public needs full and accurate information on this proposal so that responses to the consultation are well informed."

Cllr Ketchin is calling on the council to delay the proposed sale of the Grace Road Fields site until the case has been made to the public that the company has proved there is no alternative brownfield site that could be used.

The council previously stated that an assessment of 14 potential sites

across the city for the energy centre was carried out, with the proposed location found to be the most suitable.

Exeter Energy Network explained why it has chosen the site in documents provided as part of the consultation.

It states: "An assessment of 14 potential energy centre sites across the city was carried out, with the proposed location found to be the most suitable for several reasons. The most important of these is the proximity of the site to a number of potential sources of low-carbon energy: an energy-from-waste facility which currently produces significant amounts of waste heat; a council-owned solar farm; and the River Exe - latent heat from the river could be used as a source of renewable energy for the project.

"Connecting to at least one of these sources of low-carbon energy will reduce the emissions associated with the Exeter Energy Network, while at the same time reducing the cost of heat for our customers."

The Civic Society has formally objected to the proposal. In a letter

signed by chairman, it stated: "The publicly consulted residents from Water Lane and green infrastructure is expected to be mainly flats with no space.

"Many of the locally will be built, perhaps with the many will be s

It continues: "The council failed to express about this project, ordered the disposal of the excess and then failed to propose publicly a meeting a media response.

A council "Councillors relating to this July and at co

"The public ment on the P proposal notice, sale is subject planning cons

Work to replace part of sewer pipe complete

SOUTH West Water has said it has conditions, including tree removal, over the winter