

Frequently asked questions

What is a data centre?

Data centres are buildings with lots of servers that store, process and manage our digital activity. Most of us interact with data centres hundreds of times a day without realising.

Everyday activities like making a bank transaction, sending an email, looking up directions or searching for something online are all powered by data centres.

It's estimated that there are over 500 data centres in operation across the UK today, a number that grows quickly as our world becomes more digital.

Would Thurrock Data Centre be noisy?

Detailed assessments have been completed to demonstrate that there would not be any adverse noise effects from the data centre.

Do data centres generate lots of traffic?

Once operational, data centres typically generate very low levels of daily traffic compared with other commercial or industrial developments, as they do not rely on large numbers of staff or frequent deliveries. Most vehicle movements are associated with the construction phase, which is temporary and would be carefully managed through a Construction Traffic Management Plan.

Are data centres safe?

Yes. Data centres are designed and operated to high safety standards and are subject to building regulations, fire safety requirements and ongoing monitoring. Safety systems, including fire prevention and emergency response measures, are carefully assessed as part of the planning and regulatory process. There are a number of data centres in operation across the UK which operate safely as part of our everyday infrastructure.

Would Thurrock Data Centre impact on local utilities?

There would not be any impact on local utilities. Thurrock Data Centre would be air-cooled and therefore wouldn't use water cooling. Typical water and waste connections for this type of development would be made, and power would be supplied directly from the National Grid substation (not the local electricity network).

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How does Google ensure its data centres are sustainable?

Google Data Centres are the most efficient in the world. Compared to five years ago, we can deliver approximately four times as much computing power per unit of electrical power at our highly efficient data centres. As operators of our own data centres, this means we are able to continually upgrade and maintain our data centres to reduce energy consumption.

The Environmental Impact Assessment for the project demonstrates that the greenhouse gases generated by Thurrock Data Centre during construction would have minimal effect on the UK Carbon Budget, contributing less than 0.004%. Moreover, the annual average of the total operational GHG emissions forecast is anticipated that this will contribute to circa 0.033%.

How would Thurrock Data Centre affect biodiversity on the site?

We are working with Natural England to set out a package of habitat creation and long-term management. A substantial part of the site is preserved for nature and woodland enhancements, to be managed in perpetuity under a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan, alongside the statutory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain route.

What happens next?

We are continuing to work with council officers and hope for the planning application to be considered by members in the coming months. If planning permission is granted, reserved matters and further detailed design stages would follow before any construction begins. The community will continue to be kept informed as the project progresses.