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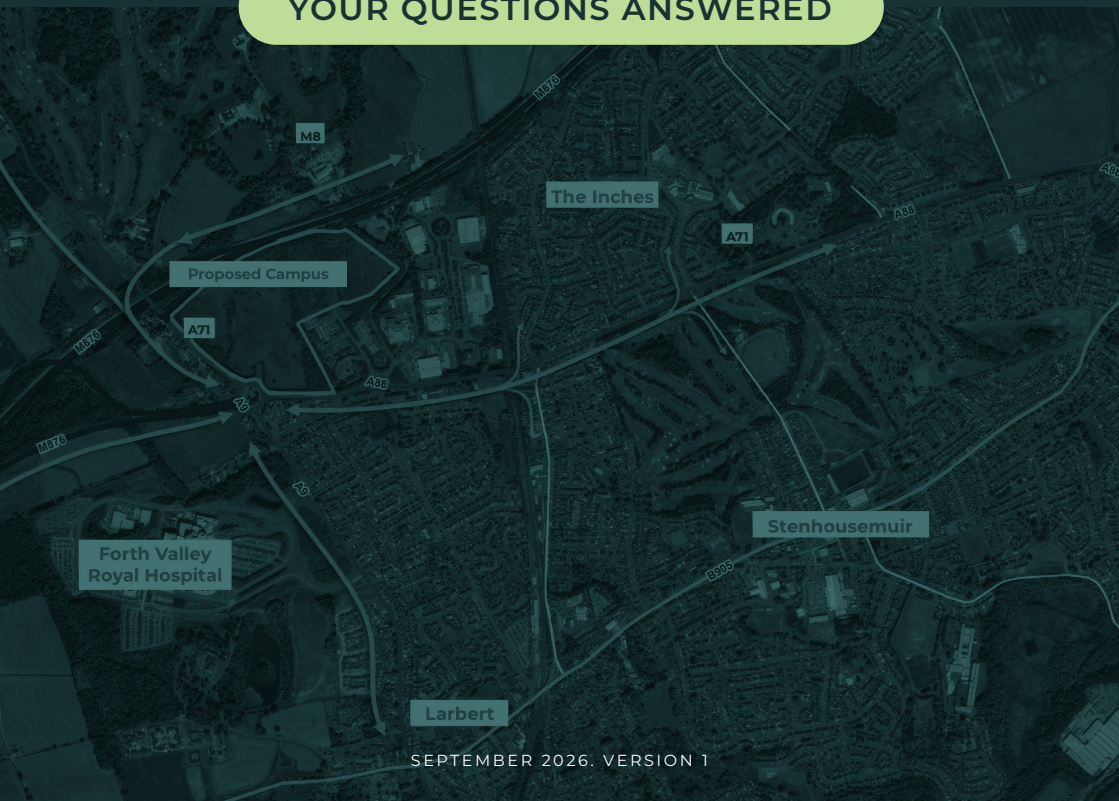
Larbert

Data Centre Campus

Planning reference: P/26/0237/FUL

Responding to the questions raised at the pre-determination hearing and through consultation.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



SEPTEMBER 2026. VERSION 1

Contents

Introduction 3

Glossary of terms 4

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1. About data centres 5

2. Why this site? 6

3. Site map 8-9

4. Backup power 10-12

5. Noise and vibration 13-14

6. Air quality 15

7. Your health and safety 16-17

8. Water use 18-19

9. Managing heat 20

10. Energy use 21-22

11. Transport and site access 23

12. Drainage and flooding 24

13. Landscape and biodiversity 25

14. Planning and policy 26-27

15. Jobs and community benefits 28-29

16. Working with the community 30-31

Introduction

In this booklet, we answer the questions, concerns, and feedback we've heard from the community and Councillors during the pre-determination meeting, our public consultations, through our conversations, and our dedicated communication channels.

We know there's a lot of information to take in, so we've aimed to provide clear, straightforward answers and explain not just what we're proposing, but why and how it would work. We've also highlighted our commitments throughout the booklet, so it's clear what you can expect from us and how we will address the issues that matter to the community.

If you have a question that is not answered in this booklet, you may refer to the Larbert Data Centre Campus website at **consult.apatura.energy/larbert** or email us directly at **larbert@apatura.energy**

Glossary of terms

AI	**Artificial intelligence:** Technology that enables computers to learn, solve problems and perform tasks that normally require human intelligence.
BESS	**Battery Energy Storage Systems** store electricity for use when it's needed.
Biodiversity	The plants, animals and habitats found in an area.
Category C trees	Trees with limited arboricultural value or long-term potential, assessed by age, condition, structure, and location.
Closed-loop water cooling	A cooling system that circulates and reuses water.
CLG	**Community Liaison Group**: A forum for local representatives to discuss the project with Apatura.
COMAH	**Control of Major Accident Hazards:** Rules for safely managing sites where certain hazardous substances are stored or used.
Curtailment	Curtailment occurs when renewable electricity is available, but the electricity network doesn't have enough capacity to carry it to where it's needed.
Data centre	A building housing computer equipment used to store and process digital information.
Denny Substation	An electricity substation near Denny forming part of the local electricity network.
District heating	A network that supplies heat from a central source to nearby buildings.
EIA	**Environmental Impact Assessment:** A detailed assessment of potential environmental effects.
HVO	**Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil** is a renewable fuel that can replace diesel in suitable equipment.
HSE	Health and Safety Executive.
LVIA	**Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment:** A study of effects on the landscape and views.
NPF4	Scotland's National Planning Framework, which describes all national planning policies.
NIA	**Noise Impact Assessment:** A study of potential noise from a development and its effects on nearby locations.
Planning application	A formal request to the council for permission to develop a site.
Proposal	The plans for the Larbert Data Centre Campus and associated works.
Scottish Enterprise (SE)	Scotland's national economic development agency and the owner of the proposed data centre site.
SEPA	**Scottish Environment Protection Agency** - Scotland's environmental regulator.
Scottish Power Energy Networks	SP Energy Networks own and operate the electricity transmission and distribution network in Central and Southern Scotland
Watercourses	Places where water flows, such as rivers, burns and streams.
VIA	**Visual Impact Assessment:** A study of how a development could change views.

1. About data centres

What is data?

Data is the information we all increasingly rely on every day, created, stored and processed digitally. It includes everything from emails and online transactions to cloud services, cybersecurity, transport systems, emergency communications, AI, medical research services.

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What is a data centre?

A data centre is a specialist facility that houses the computer systems and infrastructure needed to store, process and manage large amounts of digital information.

As demand for digital services continues to rise, more infrastructure is needed to store and process this information reliably.

The Data Centre Campus at Larbert is intended to provide infrastructure that supports this growing demand for digital services.

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Why are data centres suddenly under so much scrutiny?

With increased demand for technology, comes greater scrutiny on where and how data centres are designed, developed and operated.

Many concerns about water, heat, and noise stem from data centres developed in other locations like the US.

However, these developments cannot be directly compared with developments in the UK. The US has different permitting, regulation and climate conditions.

2. Why this site?

Why was the site in Larbert selected for development?

When identifying locations for potential development, we consider a broad range of factors, including but not limited to:

> Effects and opportunities for local people
> Proximity to secure power and connectivity
> Planning and land use
> Ecology and biodiversity
> Landscape and visual impact
> Noise
> Flood risk and air quality
> Transport and site access
> Local skills and the construction supply chain
> Potential opportunities for district heating

We also consider how a development could make best use of Scotland's existing and planned energy infrastructure, including the availability of renewable generation and opportunities to help make better use of power that might otherwise be constrained or curtailed. This occurs when renewable electricity is available, but the electricity network doesn't have enough capacity to carry it to where it's needed.

We carried out a structured search and appraisal of potential locations in this area, prioritising brownfield or employment-allocated land within reach of the Denny substation and our consented Glenside Farm BESS project.

Owned by Scottish Enterprise, the site at Glenbervie Business Park is allocated for business and industry use in the current Falkirk Local Development Plan, dating back to an original designation in 1992. Its location also offers access to a skilled workforce and established construction supply chains, with potential opportunities for future district heating.

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Was access to power the main reason for choosing this site?

Access to secure power was an important factor, but not the only one. We considered a broad range of factors, including potential impacts and opportunities with local communities planning and land use, environmental impacts, transport, local skills and supply chains, and opportunities for district heating.

The site's proximity to the Denny substation and existing energy infrastructure was therefore one factor in a wider assessment of whether the location was suitable.

Why are there relatively few suitable sites for this type of development?

Developments of this scale require a combination of significant power capacity, reliable connectivity, suitable land and appropriate planning and environmental conditions. These requirements need to be met in the same location, which significantly limits the number of suitable sites.

In Scotland, access to the electricity network and proximity to renewable generation are particularly important. The location of suitable grid infrastructure can therefore be a major factor in determining where this type of development can be considered.

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How would the development fit with the surrounding area?

The proposed development sits on the urban fringe, within a landscape already shaped by the M876, Glenbervie Business Park and associated commercial buildings, Forth Valley Hospital and housing.

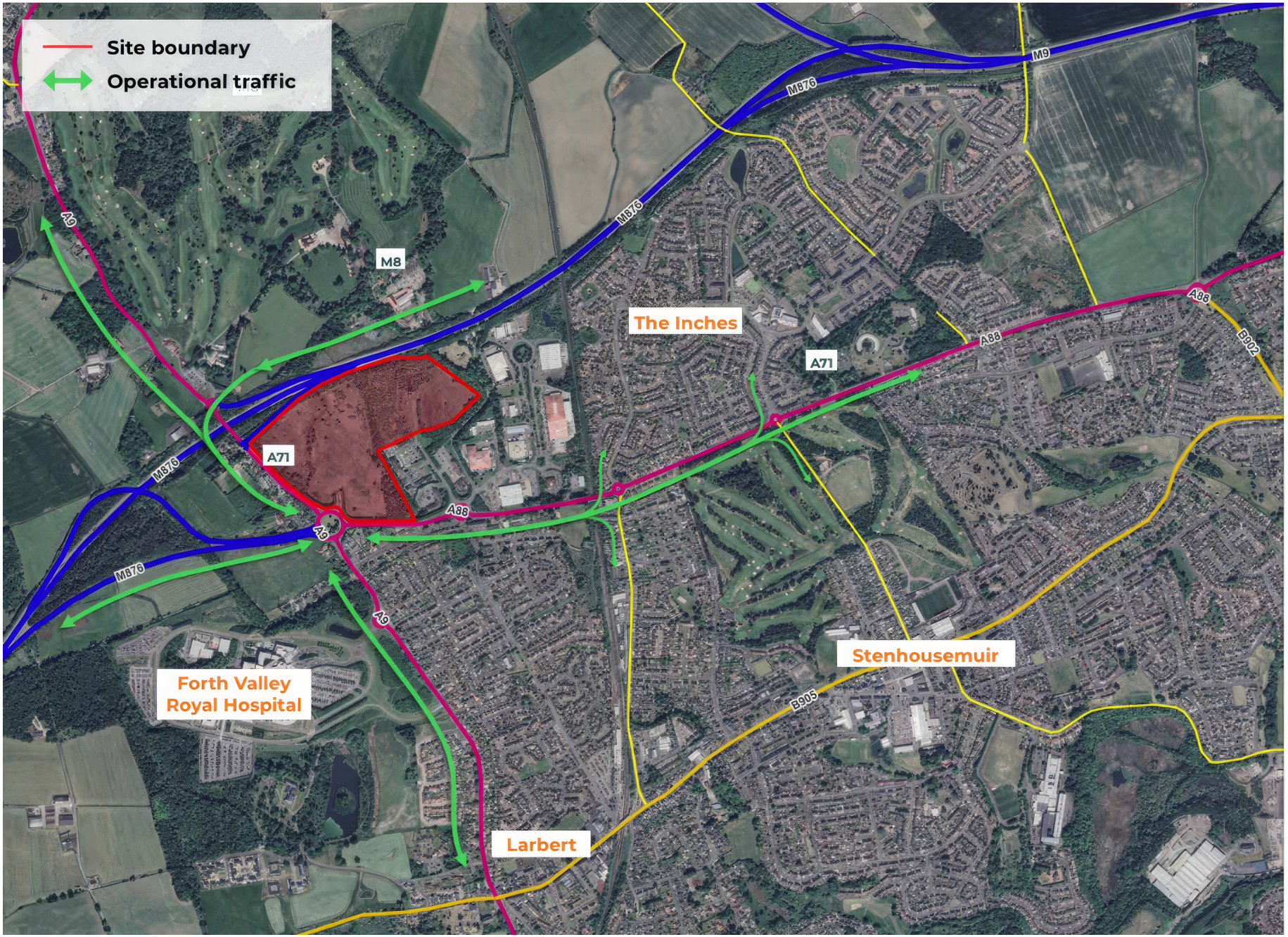
The masterplan was informed by the Environmental Impact Assessment process and revised in response to consultation feedback. For example, the substation was moved to an alternative part of the site.

Meanwhile, the mature boundary trees that screen the site are retained, and a strip of open ground has been kept between the site boundary and the fence to maintain a walking route.

The development also offers opportunities to enhance biodiversity we can relocate grasslands or provide additional enhancements.

We will design the development around the characteristics of the site and its surroundings, using the planning and environmental evidence to maximise opportunities and avoid, reduce and manage potential impacts.

3. Site map


Site boundary
Operational traffic
M9
M876
M8
A71
A88
A86
B902
B905
Forth Valley Royal Hospital
The Inches
Stenhousemuir
Larbert

4. Backup power

Why does the proposed data centre need backup power?

As mission-critical infrastructure, data centres need a reliable and continuous electricity supply. Backup power keeps essential systems operating if the normal grid supply is interrupted.

However, backup generators will only be used in an emergency (i.e. during a power interruption), or for scheduled testing and essential maintenance, and that testing will be limited and carefully scheduled.

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How often are the generators tested?

The generators will be tested regularly to make sure they are ready to operate if needed. At present, the testing programme is envisaged to include:

Monthly: around one hour of testing at reduced load

Quarterly: longer tests of up to four hours

Annually: a further test of up to four hours

It is estimated that each generator would run about **28 hours a year** for testing - 12 at half load, 16 at full load. Apart from routine testing, no generator will be run for any purpose other than providing emergency backup power.

Testing will be phased, so only small groups of generators will operate at any one time rather than the whole site operating together. We will schedule it to minimise disturbance and control it through planning conditions and SEPA authorisation, which can limit generator operating hours.

We understand that generators are a concern for local people. Their use will be limited to testing, maintenance, and genuine interruptions to the grid supply, and we assessed their potential noise and air-quality impacts as part of the planning application.

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Will the backup generators create noise?

Generators produce noise when running, which is why this has been assessed as part of the planning application.

Routine testing will be limited and carefully scheduled, and generator operation must meet the relevant noise requirements and controls. The aim is for essential testing to take place without unreasonably affecting nearby residents.

Will the generators affect local air quality?

The generators are the main potential source of air emissions from the campus, but they would only operate during scheduled testing and maintenance, or if the normal electricity supply was interrupted.

The planning application includes detailed air quality modelling of generator emissions during testing and emergency operation, taking account of existing background air quality, nearby homes and people, and sensitive ecological areas.

We're also looking at ways to minimise emissions through fuel type and emissions-control technology.

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Why are there multiple generators?

The generators provide backup power to maintain essential systems if the normal electricity supply is interrupted. There are multiple units so that individual generators can be taken offline for maintenance without leaving the campus without backup capacity.

What we are exploring is bringing down the installed backup capacity. We are working to reduce that total, which would allow smaller generator sets. Smaller sets use less fuel and produce lower emissions and less noise than the larger units originally assessed, so this is the change that would most directly reduce the effects that matter to people living nearby.

The air quality and noise assessments will be updated to reflect the refined design, and the final capacity and the updated results will be submitted to Falkirk Council before determination and published.

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Could the number of backup generators be reduced?

What we are exploring is a reduction in capacity rather than in the number of units. The campus still needs enough separate generators to cover maintenance and keep essential systems running, and we will continue to look at whether the number of units can be reduced as the design is finalised. The change that would make the difference to noise and air quality is the reduction in installed capacity and the smaller generator sets that come with it.

Could the fuel be changed?

We are assessing lower-emission alternatives to diesel, including Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), a renewable fuel that can be used in compatible generators without major equipment changes. It significantly reduces lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions and some air pollutants while providing the same reliable backup power.

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What is HVO and what are its benefits?

HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) is a renewable alternative to conventional diesel. When used in compatible backup generators, it can significantly reduce lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions and some air pollutants, while providing the same reliable backup power. It can also be used without major changes to existing generator equipment, reducing our reliance on fossil fuels.

Whatever fuel is used, the backup system must provide reliable, safe power while minimising its environmental impact to acceptable standards and regulations.

Any relevant design changes will be reflected in the information submitted to the Planning Authority before determination.

OUR COMMITMENT

We are working to reduce the amount of backup power needed on site, allowing smaller, quieter generator sets. We are also assessing lower-carbon fuels, including HVO. We will submit updated air quality and noise assessments to Falkirk Council and publish them before a decision is made.

5. Noise and vibration

Will construction of the data centre cause noise and vibration?

Construction will involve some temporary noise and activity from vehicles, plant and other works.

Construction noise will be managed through a construction and environmental management plan which will be conditioned as part of any planning consent. This will include controls on working hours and construction activity. There will be a particular focus on nearby noise-sensitive locations, including Glenbervie Care Home and Forth Valley Hospital.

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Will the data centre create noise when it's operational?

Like other large technical facilities, the data centre will generate some operational noise, mainly from cooling equipment and backup generators.

The Noise Impact Assessment submitted with the planning application measured existing background sound levels around the site over a full week, including daytime and night-time periods, and assessed the proposed development using the British Standard (BS) 4142:2014+A1:2019 Method for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound (BS 4142) methodology.

Acoustic enclosures, screens and barriers, together with careful equipment selection and layout, are built into the design to reduce noise reaching nearby properties. With these measures in place, operational noise is predicted to be no higher than existing background sound levels at the assessed properties, both day and night. The overall predicted noise impact is low.

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Will the data centre operate 24 hours a day, and will people hear it throughout the night?

The data centre is intended to operate continuously, but nearby residents should not experience persistent or intrusive noise. Night-time conditions have been specifically assessed, and the assessment predicts no increase in sound levels above existing background levels at the assessed properties which are representative of the worst-case scenario.

Put simply, the predicted night-time sound level outside the most exposed homes is comparable to being in a library, and indoors with a window partially open, it is comparable to a whisper or trees moving in the wind.

If backup power generators are used, will they generate noise and vibration?

The generators are a backup system, not the site's normal electricity supply. They would operate if the normal supply is interrupted and for routine testing and maintenance.

They will be housed in acoustic enclosures, with additional screening and careful positioning to reduce noise reaching nearby properties.

Routine testing will be limited in duration. At present, the intention is that this will comprise monthly tests lasting around an hour and quarterly and annual tests lasting up to four hours.

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Will there be a low-frequency hum?

Our assessment does not predict a noticeable hum or other tonal noise during normal operation or testing.

We know that low-frequency noise is a particular concern for some communities. Some of the reference points are from the US, where noise regulations and data centre power requirements are different from those in Scotland.

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Who can enforce noise limits once the campus is operational?

Both Falkirk Council and SEPA have powers to regulate noise.

If planning permission is granted, Falkirk Council can set conditions through that consent requiring maximum thresholds and additional monitoring and reporting during operation.

SEPA will regulate noise from the backup generators through the site's environmental authorisation. This can include requirements for noise assessment, the use of Best Available Techniques and ongoing monitoring.

OUR COMMITMENT

We will accept planning conditions that set noise limits at the site boundary, require post-construction measurements, and make the results publicly available.

6. Air quality

Will the data centre or its backup generators affect local air quality?

We understand why air quality is a concern, particularly for people living near the proposed development and for those concerned about generator emissions.

The data centre itself would not be a significant source of air emissions during normal operation. The backup generators would operate only for scheduled testing and maintenance, or if the normal electricity supply were interrupted.

The planning application includes detailed air-quality modelling of generator emissions during testing and emergency operation, taking into account existing background air quality, nearby homes and people, and sensitive ecological areas. The generator design is also being refined to minimise emissions, with considerations including cleaner fuels such as HVO, emissions-control technology, and exhaust-stack design.

The final design and installation will need to comply with all relevant environmental requirements and any conditions set by the planning and regulatory process. The potential impact on local air quality is therefore being carefully assessed, managed and monitored rather than assumed.

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Who monitors emissions once the campus is running, and will the results be public?

Before it can operate, SEPA must authorise emissions to air, land or water. This authorisation is separate from and in addition to planning permission. It sets legally binding conditions, typically covering emission limits for the generators, fuel quality, restrictions on generator operating hours and testing, emissions monitoring and reporting, maintenance, and record-keeping. The operator must demonstrate compliance to SEPA regularly, with monitoring carried out by accredited third parties.

We have committed to publishing the monitoring results rather than summaries.

We will follow sustainable design principles and best practical measures to ensure that emissions meet all relevant environmental requirements.

7. Your health and safety

Could the development affect the health and wellbeing of local residents?

The planning and environmental assessment process considers potential effects on people and communities, including noise, air quality, transport, and drainage. Falkirk Council will consider this, along with available technical evidence, consultation responses, and planning policy, when determining the application.

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Will a Health Impact Assessment be provided?

Yes. An independent Health Impact Assessment will be submitted to Falkirk Council before determination. This assessment is currently underway, and we will publish the findings when we receive them from our consultants.

Whether a fuel storage installation of this kind attracts duties under the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations, or requires Hazardous Substances Consent, depends on the confirmed quantity of fuel held on site rather than on a preliminary design assumption. Those regimes are administered separately from the planning process, by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and SEPA.

We are confirming the storage volume through detailed design and will engage with HSE and SEPA on whichever consents apply, and we will be open about the outcome.

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How will the site be kept safe?

Safety and security will be integrated into the campus from the outset, including measures for the electrical infrastructure, buildings, backup generation, fuel storage and controlled access to the site.

Police Scotland has also emphasised the need for robust security measures at data-centre developments and the importance of appropriate liaison with the police. We will work with Police Scotland and other relevant emergency services to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for the safe operation of the campus, emergency response and the protection of people and infrastructure.

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How will fuel be stored on site?

Fuel would be stored in purpose-designed underground storage tanks, as set out in the submitted planning application.

The arrangements include secondary containment to prevent and manage spills, fire protection, controlled fuel handling and transfer, and support for emergency procedures. The design, construction, and monitoring of the tanks must comply with applicable fuel-storage standards, and they will be subject to relevant safety and regulatory assessments.

The final tank configuration and total capacity will be confirmed through detailed design. We will publish the confirmed volume once it is finalised.

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Is this site subject to COMAH regulations?

Whether the proposed fuel storage would trigger separate COMAH requirements or require Hazardous Substances Consent depends on the final quantity of fuel stored on site. These requirements are separate from the planning process and are overseen by the relevant regulators, including the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and SEPA.

As the design develops, we will confirm which consents and regulatory requirements apply and ensure the final design meets them.

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How will fire risk be managed on the campus?

The detailed Fire Safety Strategy will set out the proposed arrangements for managing fire risk and emergency response, including engagement with the relevant emergency services.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service was consulted through the consultee process and advised they do not routinely comment on planning applications but would potentially be involved during the building warrant process.

OUR COMMITMENT

A Health Impact Assessment will be completed, independently reviewed, submitted before determination and published.

8. Water use

Why does a data centre need water?

Data halls full of computer servers generate heat during operation and must be kept within a specific temperature range to operate safely and efficiently. Cooling is therefore essential to data centre design.

Different cooling technologies are available, including air cooling, water-based systems and hybrid solutions. The right approach depends on the facility design and local conditions, while balancing energy efficiency, water use, and resilience.

At Larbert, we will install a closed-loop water cooling system.

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Will the Larbert Data Centre Campus use large amounts of water?

Water use matters, and we understand why people want to know how much water the data centre would need.

The proposed Larbert Data Centre Campus is designed around a closed-loop cooling system, which recirculates water rather than continuously drawing fresh water for cooling.

The system would need an initial fill, followed by much smaller amounts to replace losses and support maintenance. As a reference point, the **Sustainable Data Centre Charter** estimates an initial requirement of around 5.9 million litres for a 300 MW data centre – roughly the equivalent of three Olympic-sized swimming pools. This is a one-off system fill; ongoing water use would be significantly lower.

We know water use matters to the local community. That's why the Larbert Data Centre Campus is committed to a closed-loop cooling system without evaporative cooling towers. This will minimise ongoing water use and support a safe, controlled cooling environment. We'll maintain that focus on water efficiency throughout the campus's design and operation.

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How is water brought to the campus?

Water for the initial fill of the closed-loop cooling system will be supplied through a combination of mains water and tankers. The tankers will normally deliver drinking-quality water, which will be treated on site.

Before filling the system for operation, it will be cleaned and flushed. The water will then be treated with carefully controlled chemicals to prevent corrosion and bacterial growth and tested to ensure it meets the system's requirements.

Once filled, the water will circulate within the closed-loop system, with only occasional top-ups needed.

How is the water treated?

Because the water is recirculated within the cooling system, we may use small amounts of treatment chemicals to keep it clean and protect equipment from corrosion.

The system would not produce regular wastewater. It would be drained via tanker only when required for essential maintenance, and any discharge would be properly controlled and authorised.

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Could the cooling system affect tap water, the River Carron, or cause legionella?

No. The cooling water is held in a sealed circuit, is not connected to the public water supply, and does not discharge to a watercourse in normal operation. Legionella risk is mainly associated with evaporative cooling towers, which release a fine water mist into the air. The Larbert campus will not use evaporative cooling towers.

OUR COMMITMENT

We will use closed-loop cooling, with no evaporative cooling towers, and will accept this as a condition of planning consent.

9. Managing heat

How will the data centre manage the heat generated by the computing equipment?

Computing equipment generates heat when it operates, so the cooling system removes that heat to keep the equipment running safely and efficiently.

The proposed Larbert Data Centre Campus will use a closed-loop cooling system that circulates and reuses water to carry heat away from the equipment. The design also allows future local heat recovery and use.

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Could the data centre create a local heat island?

Data centres generate heat because the electricity used by computing equipment is ultimately converted largely into heat. The campus therefore needs an effective cooling system, and heat management is considered part of the design.

The Larbert campus uses a cooling approach designed for efficient cooling and explores opportunities to recover usable heat.

The project has been designed to be district heat ready, meaning the infrastructure could support future heat recovery where a suitable local heat network and demand exist. We are already in discussion with stakeholders such as Forth Valley Hospital about how heat can be reused productively to benefit the hospital campus.

We will continue working with relevant stakeholders to explore local heat recovery and maintain the infrastructure needed to connect to a suitable future district heat network.

10. Energy use

How much electricity will the Larbert Data Centre Campus use, and where will it come from?

Data centres need a large, reliable electricity supply to operate around the clock. The Larbert campus is designed around a 300MW electricity demand and has a secured, dual-fed transmission connection to SP Energy Networks' Denny 275kV substation.

This provides a highly resilient connection to the national electricity network. Over the last six years, average reliability at transmission level across the UK has been 99.99986% - equivalent to the grid failing to deliver around 39 seconds of full national demand per year.

That level of reliability matters because it means backup generators are there for resilience when grid supply is interrupted, rather than as a routine power source. The connection has been assessed through the regulated electricity network process and is designed to operate within the wider grid.

The nearby Glenside Farm Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) will also provide additional flexibility and resilience to the local electricity system.

The campus will draw electricity from the national grid, so the generation mix supplying it will vary over time, including renewable electricity when available.

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How will the development's impact on the electricity network be assessed?

The proposed connection has been assessed through the electricity network process.

NESO and Scottish Power Energy Networks will assess the requirements and impacts of the connection on the wider transmission and local distribution networks as part of that process, before the connection is made.

—

Will the additional demand cause power cuts in the local area?

No. The campus will connect directly to the high-voltage transmission network, rather than to the local network that supplies homes, businesses and the hospital.

Before the connection becomes operational, Scottish Power Energy Networks will assess the impact of the additional demand on the wider network, taking existing users into account and confirming that the system remains secure and able to operate safely.

These assessments are carried out in accordance with the Security and Quality of Supply Standards, overseen by Ofgem.

What happens if the grid supply is interrupted?

The data centre will normally run on grid electricity. Backup generators provide resilience, not routine power, and would operate only during testing and maintenance or in the unlikely event that the normal electricity supply is interrupted.

We will work within the site's electricity network requirements and explore opportunities to improve energy efficiency and resilience.

11. Transport and site access

Will the development affect local roads and traffic?

A development of this scale will involve construction traffic, including deliveries and vehicle movements. Once operational, there will also be traffic from staff, maintenance and servicing.

We understand that local residents will want to know what this means for everyday journeys and access to the surrounding roads. A Transport Assessment has been prepared as part of the planning application, looking at the potential impact on the local road network and how people will travel to and from the site.

—

How will construction traffic be managed?

Construction traffic will be managed through a Construction Traffic Management Plan, conditioned within the planning consent. The plan will cover vehicle routes, site access, delivery arrangements, and the timing of construction movements. The aim is to keep traffic moving safely and minimise disruption to residents and road users.

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When will fibre and underground cables be laid?

The development will require new telecommunications and other underground services. Any cables that need to cross roads will be installed as part of the construction works, with the timing and method planned to minimise disruption and keep roads and access routes safe.

Construction traffic will be carefully managed, with controlled site access, planned vehicle routes and arrangements to minimise disruption and maintain emergency access.

12. Drainage and flooding

Could the development increase flood risk?

The development is designed to manage rainfall on the site and ensure it does not increase flood risk elsewhere.

The drainage system has been designed to manage very heavy rainfall, including the effects of climate change, and will accommodate both the new campus and existing flows from Glenbervie Business Park.

Two small watercourses cross the site from south to north. The western channel is the more prominent of the two, and the layout has been designed around it. It will therefore be retained and enhanced as part of the proposals. The eastern channel is a seasonal flow that emerges from an existing culvert at Glenbervie Business Park. The proposal is to culvert and re-route this channel, and we are providing further information to Falkirk Council on this element.

The site also contains an existing man-made detention basin serving the current business park. The proposed drainage system will manage these existing flows alongside those generated by the new campus. Rainwater will be collected and controlled using permeable sub-base and surfacing, flow-control devices, an attenuation basin and attenuation storage tanks. The system has been designed for a 1-in-200-year rainfall event - as policy dictates - with an additional allowance for climate change.

Further checks are being carried out to confirm that the watercourses can continue to flow safely and that the drainage system performs as intended.

OUR COMMITMENT

The intrusive ground investigation is being carried out now, before a decision is made - not after consent. The results will be shared with SEPA and Falkirk Council before determination.

13. Landscape and biodiversity

Will the development change the landscape?

A development of this scale will change the site's appearance, and we understand local people will notice. However, the design has considered the existing landscape and surrounding area, with measures to help the development sit as comfortably as possible within its setting.

Around 68% of the existing trees will be retained, with some lower-quality trees removed. A further 267 trees will be planted, along with new woodland, hedgerows, shrubs, and other planting to help screen the development and strengthen the landscape.

External lighting will also be carefully designed to limit unnecessary light spill into the surrounding area.

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How will the development support biodiversity?

We want the site to provide opportunities for nature alongside digital infrastructure. An Ecological Impact Assessment has identified potential effects on habitats and species, and the proposals include new and enhanced habitats and features, such as bird boxes, bat boxes and insect habitats.

We have indicated a recreation path around the site as part of the planning application. The existing perimeter woodland belts would be retained and used to screen and soften the proposed development within the surrounding landscape.

We are also working on options to facilitate further off-site biodiversity enhancements.

14. Planning and policy

What is the planning process?

The planning system provides the policy framework within which Falkirk Council considers whether a proposed development is appropriate for its location.

The Council considers planning policy, technical and environmental evidence, and representations from local people, statutory consultees and other organisations before making its decision.

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What does this mean for Larbert?

The application is supported by detailed assessments covering issues including noise, air quality, transport, drainage and flood risk, landscape, climate change, ecology and biodiversity, and economic impact.

It also includes an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which assesses the development's likely significant environmental effects.

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What planning policies apply?

The application is assessed against relevant national and local policy, including National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and the Falkirk Local Development Plan.

NPF4 identifies green data centres as a type of national development and as a result the principle of development is established. However, it does **not** mean planning permission is automatic. The Larbert application must still be assessed against the relevant policies and the evidence submitted.

—

What does "worst-case scenario" mean in the assessments?

When preparing an Environmental Impact Assessment, we have to make assumptions about how a development could operate.

For Larbert, the assessments considered the maximum development envelope and the maximum number of generators, so that potential environmental effects could be tested against a demanding scenario.

This doesn't mean the maximum scenario reflects the campus's expected day-to-day operation. As the design develops, we expect the final configuration to be refined, including the number and type of generators. We will provide updated information to the Planning Authority before determination.

Will the questions raised by consultees and the community be answered before a decision is made?

Yes. We're continuing to work with Falkirk Council and the relevant consultees to provide the information and clarification required to assess the proposal.

This includes matters raised during the consultation and hearing process, such as noise, water, energy use, air quality and emissions, biodiversity, drainage and flooding, health and safety, and economic impacts.

Where the design changes, we'll provide updated information to the Council before determination.

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Can local people still have their say?

The Pre-Determination Hearing was an important part of the planning process, but it was not the planning decision. Falkirk Council will still determine the application.

You can continue to view the application and, where the application remains open for representations, submit comments through Falkirk Council's planning portal. Representations form part of the information considered when the application is determined. We'll also continue to provide opportunities to ask questions and engage directly with the project team through our dedicated communication channels.

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What does the Scottish Parliament's resolution on data centres mean for this application?

The Scottish Parliament has passed a resolution calling for a pause on decisions on data centre developments while it considers wider issues. The resolution does not itself determine the Larbert planning application.

The application will continue to be considered by Falkirk Council under the applicable planning process, taking account of relevant national and local planning policy, technical evidence and representations.

We will provide the information needed to answer consultee and community questions, reflect relevant design changes in the planning submission, and continue working with the Council as national guidance develops.

15. Jobs and community benefits

Do data centres really create jobs?

While data centres use a high degree of technology and automation, they still need people to build, operate and maintain them.

Jobs would be created during construction and in the long term once the campus is operating, including IT and information services, engineering, facilities, maintenance, and security. The development would also support jobs through local businesses and supply chains.

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How many jobs could the Larbert Data Centre Campus support?

An independent Economic Impact Assessment by Glic estimates that, once fully operational, the development could support 1,382 full-time equivalent jobs across Scotland each year. Within Falkirk, this includes an estimated 297 jobs on site, with a further 218 supported through the local economy - 515 jobs in total.

These are based on Government and Scottish economic data and take account of the fact that not all economic activity will remain locally.

The full Economic Impact Assessment is available on the Larbert project website.

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Why have different employment numbers been quoted?

Some figures quoted during the hearing referred to the number of people expected to be in the buildings at any one time, rather than to the number of jobs the development would support.

The independent Glic Economic Impact Assessment estimates 297 full-time equivalent jobs on site once the campus is fully operational, with a further 218 jobs supported by the Falkirk economy - 515 in total.

The Fire Strategy uses different occupancy figures because it is designed to determine matters such as escape routes and evacuation capacity. It is not an employment assessment.

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What is the Community Wealth Fund?

Once the data centre is operational, the proposal includes a Community Wealth Fund worth approximately £1.8 million each year, based on a £6,000 per MW contribution from the 300MW data centre.

Over 30 years, this would represent an investment of more than £50 million in the local community.

The fund could support things that make a real difference locally - from community facilities, parks and play areas to skills and training, education, environmental projects, and health and wellbeing initiatives.

Any commitments made by Apatura through the planning process - such as environmental mitigations, Section 75 agreements and any other conditions attached to consent - are attached to the development and the site, not to Apatura as a company. They remain binding on whoever operates the facility.

While not controlled specifically through the planning application, our community benefit fund will be secured in a similar way, through a legally binding agreement that transfers with the site to any future owner or operator, so the obligation to pay remains enforceable regardless of who runs the data centre.

This is standard practice for developments of this nature. For example, onshore wind farms, where community benefit funds are tied to the wind farm and whoever operates it, not the original developer.

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Who will decide how the fund is used?

We don't want to decide that for the community. We want local people to help shape the fund's priorities and tell us where they believe it could make the greatest difference. An independent third party or existing Community Trust(s) will administer the fund to provide a transparent and locally led approach.

As the project progresses, we'll share more information about how the fund will work and how decisions will be made.

Please share your ideas through the Larbert project website here: **consult.apatura.energy/larbert/feedback**

OUR COMMITMENT

We will establish a Community Wealth Fund of £1.8 million a year, secured through a legal agreement that will bind any future owner. The fund will be independently administered and shaped locally, so its benefits reflect local priorities.

16. Working with the community

How will Apatura work with the local community?

We've listened to your feedback, and we recognise that we need to do more to build a strong, open relationship with the local community.

We'll provide more frequent, straightforward updates to local people and our mailing list, not just at formal planning milestones. This includes a hosted webinar, frequent updates to the project website, and outputs from community meetings.

We're also establishing a Community Liaison Group to provide a regular forum for questions, concerns and two-way conversations with local representatives.

We want everyone in Larbert and across Falkirk to have meaningful opportunities to ask questions, share ideas and help shape how the project can contribute locally, not just during planning but throughout its life.

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What is a Community Liaison Group?

We're establishing a Community Liaison Group (CLG) as a regular forum for open, constructive two-way conversation between Apatura and local representatives.

The group will bring together people from Larbert and across the Falkirk area to raise questions, share concerns and ideas, and discuss the project directly with our team.

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Who will be part of the Community Liaison Group?

We want the group to reflect a range of local perspectives and experiences from Larbert and the wider Falkirk area.

We are actively inviting community groups, businesses and organisations to join the CLG.

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Can I suggest an idea for the Community Wealth Fund?

Absolutely. We want to hear what you think would make a real difference locally.

You can share your ideas through the Larbert project website: **consult.apatura.energy/larbert/feedback**

Your ideas could be about community facilities, the local environment, education and skills, activities, infrastructure or anything else you believe could benefit the area.

How can I ask a question about the project?

Our dedicated inbox is open for questions, comments and feedback about the proposal, construction, operation, community engagement or the Community Wealth Fund. Email us at **larbert@apatura.energy**

We'll use the questions we receive to help shape our ongoing engagement and keep the FAQs up to date.

We will provide regular updates, establish the Community Liaison Group and keep creating opportunities for people to ask questions, share ideas and hold us to our commitments throughout the project's development.


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