

Your questions about the East London Datacentre Campus

What is a Local Development Order?

A Local Development Order is a planning document which provides permission for specified types of development, in specified locations. In making an LDO 'permission' is effectively granted upfront however, the same amount of assessment and scrutiny on whether development proposals are acceptable is undertaken by Local Planning Authorities in preparing them. For further information, please see our page on LDOs [here](#).

What is the 'East Havering Datacentre Campus'?

The East Havering Datacentre Campus is a proposal for a datacentre campus and associated facilities in North Ockendon. Datacentres are physical buildings that store specialist IT infrastructure. As part of the campus there is proposed to be multiple datacentre buildings, an indoor horticultural facility, a district heating network, an Ecology Park, and a visitors centre.

What is the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) role in this?

The LPA is the public authority whose duty through legislation is to carry out specific planning functions. The LPA is allowed to make LDOs under planning legislation. The LPA controls and leads the LDO process. Consultation on the draft LDO was approved by the [Strategic Planning Committee on 3rd March 2026](#). Following consultation, any decision to make the Local Development Order will be the responsibility of the Strategic Planning Committee.

What's the difference between the LPA and Havering Council?

The LPA must act independently from the Council. The LPA carries out planning functions and is separate from the corporate side of the Council that engages in promotional and regeneration activities.

Who is Digital Reef and what is their role?

Digital Reef is a private developer and would be the potential beneficiary of the LDO. Preparation of the LDO has involved a partnership between Digital Reef and the LPA.

Evidence prepared by Digital Reef and its consultants has been relied upon to support the draft LDO. Key documents include information on need and alternative sites prepared by Savills, details on the availability of power prepared by Noveus and an assessment of the potential economic benefits prepared by Oxford Economics.

Technical information on the delivery of the proposed development has been provided by Digital Reef and their consultants on matters including earthworks, drainage, landscape and ecology, energy, whole life carbon, the circular economy, lighting and minerals.

All of the material produced by or on behalf of Digital Reef has been carefully scrutinised by the Local Planning Authority, supported by its own consultants.

Why is an LDO being progressed ?

As a planning tool, LDOs provide greater opportunities for the LPA to drive appropriate development and secure high-quality schemes.

In September 2024, the Government designated UK data centres – the buildings which store much of the data generated in the UK – as ‘Critical National Infrastructure. Data Centres are now on the same footing as water, energy and emergency services systems insofar as their contribution to daily life.

The objective of this draft LDO is to enable the development of data centre floorspace which will contribute towards meeting the significant need for it within the London region. It will also lead to the creation of an Ecology Park and visitor’s centre and through a programme of habitat creation, tree planting and management, will deliver significant biodiversity gains.

How do I submit comments on the LDO?

Please submit comments under the ‘submit your comments’ heading on this page.

What happens next?

When the consultation closes, the LPA will review and consider all comments received during the consultation period.

If the LPA considers it appropriate to take forward the LDO to adoption, it may need to make changes that it considers are needed following the review of the comments received. If significant changes are needed to documents, the LPA may need to consult again.

Any decision to make the Local Development Order will be the responsibility of the Strategic Planning Committee. The corresponding report would detail the consultation responses received and how these have been taken into account when seeking approval for adoption.