



Charlton Riverside Data Centre Proposal

Planning Context

October 2025





Contents

1.0 Introduction 2

2.0 The Need for Data Centres..... 3

3.0 National Context 4

4.0 The Site & Surroundings 5

5.0 The Opportunity at the Site..... 6

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This note has been prepared on behalf of Patrizia to accompany a pre-application request for the proposed development of a 180 MW data centre, ancillary offices and work units for small to medium size businesses, landscaping, and associated infrastructure at Charlton Riverside, within the Royal Borough of Greenwich ('RGB').
- 1.2 This note provides background and site details, including an overview of the national and local planning context, and a summary planning assessment to provide information to inform pre-application discussions.

2.0 THE NEED FOR DATA CENTRES

- 2.1 Data centres are facilities for storing, processing and managing large amounts of digital data. The need for data storage and processing has grown in unison with the exponential growth in digital data brought about by computers, the Internet, mobile devices, the Cloud and, more recently, the use of AI. To accommodate this growth and to remain competitive in the global digital landscape, there is a clear and compelling need for the delivery of new data centre infrastructure within the UK.
- 2.2 The Government's Compute Roadmap (July 2025) stresses the importance of hosting large-scale digital infrastructure on UK soil to strengthen strategic and economic resilience and insulate key elements of the economy from global shocks, particularly in the context of meeting sovereign needs such as NHS or national security that require secure, local data processing. The digital services provided by data centres present an opportunity for the UK to capture the full economic value, efficiency gains and growth potential of the transition to cloud networks.
- 2.3 Known IT demand, mostly driven by Cloud service providers, is estimated to be in the region of 2,000 MW IT. Demand for capacity far outweighs supply; even if all of the proposed data centre schemes across London are consented, there would still be a sizeable deficit in capacity for Cloud Service Providers to operate their platforms. There is an estimated pipeline of just 477MW, much of which will not be viable in the short-to-medium term to cater to the demand levels¹.
- 2.4 Additionally, there is a lack of available land in suitable locations to serve this demand, especially in London, where demand is high for land and grid capacity to provide the City's financial institutions with the extremely low latency connectivity they need.
- 2.5 Global demand for data centres is expected to almost triple by 2030, primarily due to AI, and this demand far outweighs the estimated pipeline of supply². New data centre facilities are therefore required to cater to both Cloud demand and the growing need for AI dedicated data centres.

¹ Data Centre Development Report prepared on behalf of DCo1 UK Limited by Knight Frank, September 2024 - submitted in support of Hertsmere Borough application ref. 24/1152/OUTEI granted on 12 February 2025.

² See House of Commons Library Research Briefing, Data centres: planning policy, sustainability, and resilience, published 27 August 2025.

3.0 NATIONAL CONTEXT

The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy

- 3.1 The National Industrial Strategy, published in June 2025, highlights the value of data as a growth asset that increasingly underpins innovation and productivity across all economic sectors; it states that “the ability to collect, share and use data in a safe and trusted way has become essential”. Importantly, the strategy makes reference to the need to increase certainty for gigafactories, laboratories, and data centres as crucial commercial opportunities, and the need for timely planning decisions to give greater confidence to businesses that decisions on high-priority developments such as data centres are being made speedily and supported by a more strategic planning policy framework.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.2 In December 2024, the Government revised the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to confirm that significant weight should be given to the need to support economic growth and productivity in the planning process, particularly where this would support the country in being a global leader in driving innovation (Paragraph 85).
- 3.3 When setting local policies and making planning decisions, the NPPF also introduced a requirement for local authorities to specifically consider the need for data centres and enable development to meet that need (Paragraph 86). The revisions also require local authorities to address the specific locational requirements of different sectors, including knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries, such as data centres and grid connections (Paragraph 87a).

Critical National Infrastructure Designation

- 3.4 In September 2024, the Government designated data centres as Critical National Infrastructure (CNI), recognising their fundamental importance to the UK's modern economy. Specifically, the Government's commitment to ensuring the sector remains secure and stable highlights the critical role data centres play as the backbone of the UK's digital economic growth strategy.

4.0 THE SITE & SURROUNDINGS

Local Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 The site is located within Charlton Riverside, an underutilised manufacturing and industrial area identified within both the London Plan (2021) and the Greenwich Core Strategy (2014) as an Opportunity Area (OA) and a Strategic Development Location (SDL).
- 4.2 Within the Core Strategy, Charlton Riverside is designated as a key regeneration area with transformational potential to deliver a new mixed-use urban quarter, including new homes, employment opportunities, and community and education facilities (CS Policy EA2).
- 4.3 The Charlton Riverside SPD (2017) provides detailed guidance for redevelopment within the SDL. The SPD's vision is underpinned by a number of principles, including the creation of an additional 5,000 to 7,500 homes and an additional 4,400 jobs in the area. In terms of employment, the SPD sets out that new development is expected to maintain or re-provide equivalent employment floorspace and significantly increase job densities within B use classes compared to the existing situation.
- 4.4 The site forms part of the central section of Charlton Riverside SDL, which is identified by the SPD as having *"the greatest potential for development, with much of the existing commercial activity either replaced by mixed use or more intensive forms of commercial/industrial activity"*.
- 4.5 The 'Stone Foundries' building within the site is included on Greenwich's Local Heritage List (updated July 2023, ref no. 669a) as an important site of employment heritage for the British Royal Navy. However, the main factory building which currently occupies much of the site is noted as having no architectural interest. The site is also located adjacent to the Charlton Riverside Conservation Area, which covers Atlas and Derrick Gardens along Hope Lane and extends further to the northeast. Terraced properties arranged around the small greens on Atlas and Derrick Gardens are listed jointly on the Local Heritage List, with historic and architectural interest as an example of Model Workers housing.
- 4.6 The site is located in Flood Zone 3, but benefits from the River Thames tidal flood defences, and therefore has a residual risk of tidal flooding. The latest SFRA undertaken by RGB (2018) assesses the site as part of a much wider parcel (Site ID: C5, Charlton Riverside Central) which covers land up to the edge of the Thames, and this concludes that more vulnerable uses should be located above ground floor, alongside effective site and building layout, surface water management measures, and sustainable drainage systems.

5.0 THE OPPORTUNITY AT THE SITE

- 5.1 As set out above, there is a demonstrable need for data centre capacity to meet market demand, with data centre operators seeking sites to deliver capacity for both Cloud and AI purposes. The site presents a rare opportunity in that it possesses all the attributes necessary to develop a data centre within the next few years in terms of its scale, location, and availability, including a confirmed power connection, high-speed fibre infrastructure and proximity to financial markets.
- 5.2 The proposed data centre use is considered to be a highly compatible land use for the site given its specific characteristics and location within a mixed-use regeneration area; it will regenerate an underutilised site within a key regeneration area, bringing the site into active and enhanced economic use.

Key Benefits

- 5.3 The key benefits of the proposed development include the following:
- 1) Creating a new 180 MW data centre to meet the UK and London's critical need for data centre capacity;
 - 2) Making a significant contribution to the local and national economy, through the creation of new jobs, construction investment and additional economic output (see the accompanying Economic Benefits Statement for further details);
 - 3) Optimising the redevelopment of a previously developed (brownfield) land, in line with the Government's priority for making best and efficient use of land;
 - 4) Delivery of improved transport infrastructure, supporting RGB's ambitions for growth at one of the Borough's key site allocations;
 - 5) Providing an opportunity to include units for small to medium-sized enterprise work units, to encourage sustainable economic growth;
 - 6) Delivery of new green infrastructure, including the creation of a green corridor and the delivery of biodiversity net gain, in turn improving the visual relationship with nearby residential properties; and
 - 7) Reducing potential energy consumption through the utilisation of waste heat from the data centre or future residents (district heating network opportunity).
- 5.4 Fundamentally, Charlton Riverside is identified as a longstanding opportunity to deliver a new mixed-use urban quarter, and national planning policy is clear that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, including the provision of additional data infrastructure. The site is considered to be in a sustainable and suitable location for the proposed use and therefore the emerging proposal for redevelopment of the site for data centre use should be supported.



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