Chapelhall data centre (DV4): information sheet for objectors

Planning permission in principle 26/01110/PPP, North Lanarkshire Council. Applicant DataVita DV4 Limited.

Part A. For residents

A1. What is being applied for

DataVita DV4 Limited has applied for planning permission in principle for a data centre on 9.67 hectares of green belt land between Lancaster Avenue and the M8, west of Bellside Road. The application reference is 26/01110/PPP. It was signed on 31st August 2026, further documents were added on 3rd September 2026, and the drawings were published on 5th September 2026.

The headline figures, all taken from the applicant's own documents:

- **A building envelope of up to 230 metres long and 70 metres deep, with a maximum development height fixed as a level, +188.250 metres above sea level.** That is 26 metres above the flattened site platform, about 20 metres above the ground at Rowantree Row, and about 28 metres above the ground at Lancaster Avenue. The application form gives 40,700 square metres of floorspace, described as Class 6 Storage or Distribution.
- **A 120 MVA electrical connection.** At full load that is about 1.05 TWh of electricity a year. The applicant expects to run at about 60 per cent, so roughly 0.63 TWh a year.
- Up to 48 standby generators at 3 MW each, which is up to about 144 MW of installed generating plant, each with its own flue between 10 and 28 metres tall, and each fitted with exhaust treatment to cut nitrogen oxides.
- Up to 2,304 cubic metres of stored fuel, enough to run every generator at full load for 72 hours.
- 120 permanent jobs on site once it is running, against a stated capital cost of £849.6 million.
- A Community Investment Fund of £75 million over 15 years, and an estimated £30.2 million of business rates over 25 years.

North Lanarkshire Council notified 19 addresses as neighbours. If you live in Chapelhall or Calderbank and did not get a letter, you can still object. Anyone may comment on a planning application, whether or not they were notified.

A2. What *"in principle"* means, and why it matters here

This is not an application to build a particular building. It is an application to establish that a data centre is acceptable on this land, with the detail settled later through a second application called approval of matters specified in conditions. If permission in principle is granted, the argument about whether a data centre belongs here is over.

The application is not short of numbers. It gives generator counts, fuel volumes, flue heights, water use, efficiency targets and testing hours. Almost none of them is proposed to be fixed. The Energy Statement calls its generator figures *"anticipated"* and says they *"will be reviewed and confirmed at detailed design, agreed with the operator and insurer"*. The two parameter drawings, which are the only part of the application that would bind the developer, carry the note *"Proposed architectural, civil, structural and landscape elements as shown are indicative only"*, and the three boundary parameter sections add *"All dimensions are indicative."*

There is also no named occupier. The word *"pre-let"* does not appear anywhere in the application. Several commitments are written as depending on an operator who has not been identified, including the fuel storage, the testing regime and the noise limits.

The practical consequence is simple. If a number is not written into a planning condition, it is not a limit. The single most useful thing an objection can ask for is that the council either refuse the application or, if it is minded to grant it, fix the parameters by condition rather than leave them to a later stage.

A3. Thirteen things worth writing about

These are the points that come out of the applicant's own reports. Use them in your own words. A short letter that makes two points properly carries more weight than a long one that lists everything.

- **1.** The way the generators will actually be used has not been assessed. The generators are not only for emergencies. On hot days with high computing demand, up to 32 of the 48 generators may run in daytime, for up to 80 hours a year. The air quality assessment states that this mode *"has not been evaluated in this air quality assessment"* and will be looked at later. The noise assessment leaves it out of the combined assessment with the rest of the plant. So the mode that will happen most often, on the warmest days of the year when windows are open and people are outside, is the one nobody has modelled.
- **2.** Night-time noise from the generators is already over the limit on the applicant's own figures. With all 48 generators running, the noise assessment predicts 9 decibels above background at night at Rowantree Row and 7 decibels above at Lancaster Avenue. The report accepts this is *"likely indicative of an adverse impact"* under the relevant British Standard, and then proposes no mitigation, on the basis that a power cut is unlikely. An unlikely event that has not been mitigated is still an unmitigated event.
- **3.** Your street may be in one assessment and missing from the other. Of the five streets the council notified, the air quality assessment names three (Castlehill Crescent, Lammermuir Way and Eildon Crescent, which it misspells) and the noise assessment names one (Rowantree Row). Rowantree Row and Grampian Crescent appear nowhere in the air quality assessment at all. No street appears in both. No school, nursery, care home or doctors' surgery is named as a receptor in either report.
- **4.** The applicant's own flood consultant says the layout should be changed, and it has not been. The Flood Risk Assessment finds that two of the proposed plant buildings sit in high flood risk areas, that a third sits in an overland flow route, and that the raising of ground levels in the north-east *"may result in additional water passing across Chapelhall roundabout"*. It recommends that the layout be amended to move the plant buildings out of the flood risk areas. The layout submitted with the application is the one it criticises.
- **5.** The fuel. Up to 2,304 cubic metres of hydrotreated vegetable oil would be stored on site, roughly 1,800 tonnes. Nothing in the application says whether that requires hazardous substances consent, or whether the Health and Safety Executive has been asked. The only mention of major accident hazards anywhere in the application is a database search checking whether anyone else nearby stores hazardous substances.
- **6.** There is no Transport Assessment on the planning portal. The Planning Statement lists one among the supporting reports, the consultation report says at paragraph 3.10 that it *"has been prepared and is submitted with the application"*, and the site layout drawing sends the reader to it for the visibility splays at the junctions. It is not published. Traffic was one of the things people raised at the consultation events, and the document that is supposed to answer them cannot be read.
- **7.** The height is a level, and from your street it is taller than 26 metres. Every written document describes the building as 26 metres. The parameter drawings express the limit as a level instead: +188.250 metres above sea level. That is 26 metres only if you measure from the flattened platform at the lowest corner of the site. The applicant's own cross-sections put the ground at Lancaster Avenue at +160.300 metres and the ground at Rowantree Row at +168.000 metres, so from those two places the permitted envelope stands about 28 metres and about 20 metres above you.
- **8.** Only the building has a stated height limit, and the drawings that set it say they are indicative. The +188.250 metre limit is put against the Data Centre Building Zone in the legend. The Associated Plant Zone, which is the larger of the two and holds up to 48 generators with flues of between 10 and 28 metres, gets no separate figure. The cross-sections draw the +188.250 metre line across the whole development zone, so it appears to cap the plant area as well, and they show the associated infrastructure at +181.000 metres, which the key calls an indicative proposed level and not a maximum. On the platform level of +162.250 metres that is 18.75 metres, while the +188.250 metre line would permit 26 metres, some 7 metres higher than the drawings illustrate. The screening bund meant to hide and muffle it is labelled Height and Form TBC. Both parameter drawings then carry the note *"Proposed architectural, civil, structural and landscape elements as shown are indicative only"*, and the

three boundary parameter sections add *"All dimensions are indicative."* These drawings are the only thing a permission in principle would bind the developer to.

- **9.** Nobody has assessed what it looks like from your window. The council's screening opinion decided the visual effects were not significant on the basis that a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment would be submitted with the application. No LVIA has been submitted. There is no viewpoint, no photomontage and no visual assessment anywhere in the 34 documents, so nothing in the application shows what a 26 metre building on a raised platform looks like from Rowantree Row, Lancaster Avenue or the path along the north of the site.
- **10.** The electricity connection is named and then left out. The site would connect at transmission level to the Newarthill Grid Supply Point, some distance away. The route of that connection, how it would be built, whether overhead or underground, and what it would affect on the way, appear nowhere in the application. The Energy Statement says the connection *"will be delivered by the network operator under the grid connection offer"*. The data centre cannot run without it, and nobody has assessed it.
- **11.** The heat that was going to warm the hospital is now a greenhouse. The only named users of the waste heat are the new Monklands hospital and the BioCity campus. The Energy Statement admits the hospital project *"has been delayed as the project is under review"*. Nothing is signed with either. What has appeared instead is a community greenhouse, funded from the Community Investment Fund, which is a discretionary pot rather than a legal obligation. Nobody is now proposing to heat homes in Chapelhall.
- **12.** Is this a good return on 9.67 hectares of green belt? The site is allocated for specialised business use, and the applicant says around 9 hectares is allocated and around 7 hectares already has planning consent. The 2018 permission was granted on 4.943 hectares, so it is worth asking which consents make up the 7. On the applicant's own figures the development delivers 120 permanent jobs on 40,700 square metres of floorspace, which is about 339 square metres of building per job, and about £7.1 million of capital cost per permanent job.
- **13.** Very few people were told. 19 addresses were notified. Four public exhibitions were held before the application, attended by 57, 6, 77 and 2 people. The consultation report says it will set out the numbers of people who gave written feedback, and then never gives that number.

A4. Four arguments to leave alone

Each of these is tempting and each of them weakens everything else in the same letter.

- ***"They should build it somewhere else."*** **A planning authority decides the application in front of it.** Objecting to the location is fine if the reason is a green belt or amenity reason specific to this site. A general objection to data centres is not a material consideration.
- ***"It will use all our water and put our bills up."*** **The cooling system is closed loop.** The applicant estimates 25 to 50 cubic metres of top-up a year, with a one-off fill of about 2,000 cubic metres and about 4.8 cubic metres a day of ordinary welfare use. Scottish Water has confirmed it can supply the site. The water argument does not run here, and using it invites the council to discount the rest.
- ***"Nothing is being done about the fumes."*** **Something is.** Every one of the 48 generators is to be fitted with Selective Catalytic Reduction to cut nitrogen oxides, plus further exhaust scrubbing, and the fuel is a renewable diesel substitute rather than ordinary diesel. Say so, and then ask the harder questions in Part B, which are about whether the abatement is secured by condition and whether it works during short low-load test runs.
- ***"It will not create any jobs."*** **It will create some.** The stronger question is whether 120 jobs is a good return on 9.67 hectares of green belt allocated for employment use, and how that compares with what the allocation was held for.

A5. How and when to object

Objections go to North Lanarkshire Council, quoting application reference 26/01110/PPP. You can comment through the council's online planning portal, by email to planningenquiry@northlan.gov.uk, or by post to Planning and Place, Civic Centre, Windmillhill Street, Motherwell ML1 1AB.

Check the date on your neighbour notification letter and the date of the newspaper advertisement on the portal. For an application of this kind the period for representations is normally 21 days from the date of the notice. In practice councils generally consider representations received after that date up to the point the officer's report is finalised, but do not rely on it. If in doubt, send it now and send it again if new documents appear.

What makes an objection count:

- **Put your full name and postal address on it.** Anonymous representations are usually disregarded.
- **Say what you object to, and why, in your own words.** Copied text is counted once.
- **Name the document and paragraph where you can.** *"The Flood Risk Assessment at paragraph 6.5 recommends the layout be amended"* is a sentence the case officer has to deal with. *"It will flood"* is not.
- **Concede what is sound.** This application is better prepared than most, and an objection that acknowledges the parts that are properly done is read more carefully than one that objects to everything.
- **Ask for something specific.** Refusal, or a condition fixing a parameter, or a request that the council obtain further information before determining the application.
- Keep a copy, with the date.

It is also worth writing to your ward councillors, to Kenneth Stevenson MP and Neil Gray MSP, and to your community council. A councillor can ask a question at committee that no objection letter can.

Sources

All quotations are from documents published on the North Lanarkshire Council planning portal under reference 26/01110/PPP, downloaded on 4th September 2026, with the drawings downloaded on 5th September 2026. Two quotations at Finding 15 come from the separate screening case 26/00707/EIASCR: the council's screening opinion of 19th June 2026 and the applicant's EIA Screening Report of May 2026, both downloaded from the portal in August 2026.

Document	Portal file reference
Planning Supporting Statement, Ironside Farrar, August 2026, issue FINAL 31.08.26	PLANNING_STATEMENT-2059067
Energy Statement, 31 August 2026	ENERGY_STATEMENT-2059065
Cumulative Air Quality Assessment, Arthian, 27/08/2026, Issue 01	CUMULATIVE_AIR_QUALITY_ASSESSMENT-2059053
Noise Impact Assessment, New Acoustics	NOISE_IMPACT_ASSESSMENT-2059055
Flood Risk Assessment, parts 1 to 3	FLOOD_RISK_ASSESSMENT_PART_1-2059056 and following
Green Belt Assessment, Ironside Farrar, August 2026	GREEN_BELT_ASSESSMENT-2059066
Landscape and Ecology Report	LANDSCAPE_AND_ECOLOGY_REPORT-2060483
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	PRELIMINARY_ECOLOGICAL_APPRAISAL__PEA__REPORT-2060485
Economic Impact Assessment, EKOS	ECONOMIC_IMPACT_ASSESSMENT-2059064
Pre-Application Consultation Report, Ironside Farrar	PAC_PRE_APPLICATION_CONSULTATION_REPORT-2059068
Design and Access Statement, parts 1 to 4	DESIGN_AND_ACCESS_STATEMENT_-_PART_1-2059071 and following
Stage 1 Geo-Environmental Desk Study, parts 1 to 3	2026-1025_DV4_-_STAGE_1_GEO-ENVIRONMENTAL_DESK_STUDY-2059048 and following
Drainage Strategy Report, parts 1 to 4	DRAINAGE_STRATEGY_REPORT_-_DV4_V1-12_PART_1-2059060 and following
Heritage Impact Assessment and Concluding Cultural Heritage Statement, GUARD Archaeology	HERITAGE_IMPACT_ASSESSMENT-2059054 and -2059069
Construction Environmental Management Plan	CONSTRUCTION_ENVIRONMENTAL_MANAGEMENT_PLAN-2059070

Document	Portal file reference
Application form and neighbour notification list	APPLICATION_PDF-2059238 and NOTIFIN_-_Neighbours_Notified_with_Map-2060734
Drawings, MLA Architects, all dated 31.08.26 at revision "-": PL008 Proposed Development Parameters; PL009 Proposed Development Zone; PL010 Indicative Site Layout Plan; PL011 Access Strategy; PL012 Phasing; PL013 to PL015 Indicative Site Sections; PL016 to PL018 Indicative Boundary Parameter Sections; PL001 to PL007 existing site drawings	PROPOSED_DEVELOPMENT_PARAMETERS-2059082; PROPOSED_DEVELOPMENT_ZONE-2059083; INDICATIVE_SITE_LAYOUT_PLAN-2059084 and following
Screening opinion, North Lanarkshire Council, 19th June 2026 (case 26/00707/EIASCR)	SCREENING_OPINION-2040736
EIA Screening Report and appendices, Ironside Farrar, May 2026 (case 26/00707/EIASCR)	EIA_SCREENING_REPORT___APPENDICES-2024652