

COMHAIRLE CONTAE FHINE GALL

FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

FINGAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023-2029

TUESDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER 2022

Chapter 14 - Development Management Standards

Motion from Councillor Paul Mulville, Councillor Joan Hopkins: 82337

Add bullet point to objective DMSO94 to allow for oversight of the benefits of data centres

- Details of the type and category of data that is to be stored within the the data centre as well as overall storage capacity

Justification:

Data centres often deem themselves essential infrastructure however there is a distinct lack of transparency about the utility of the data that is stored within them. On this basis, this motion suggests adding an additional bullet point to objective DMSO94.

REPORT:

It should be noted that Chief Executive's Recommendation CE CH 14.3 seeks to amend the title of Objective DMSO94.

Objective DMSO94 relates to Space Extensive Developments and states: *Proposals for space extensive developments such as data centres are required to address the following:*

- *Energy efficiency measures for the development to reduce the carbon footprint in support of national targets towards a net zero carbon economy, including renewable energy generation*
- *The extent of energy demand and proximity to multiple high voltage strategic grid connections with significant electricity supply capacity available including areas with high concentration of renewable energy electricity generators*
- *The availability of appropriate infrastructure such as high voltage electricity, fibre optic cables, water and waste water etc. to support the use as a data centre*
- *Measures to support the just transition to a circular economy*

- *Measures to facilitate district heating or heat networks where excess heat is produced*
- *High-quality design approach to buildings which reduces the massing and visual impact of same. A visual impact assessment may be required in some circumstances, depending on the specific site*
- *Details of employment numbers once operational*
- *Details of the levels of traffic to and from the site at construction and operation stage*
- *Evidence of sign up to the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact*
- *A decommissioning report which sets out the development strategy for the site if and when the data centre is no longer in use, in order to bring the site back to a future developable state.*

Objective DSMO94 sets out requirements for space extensive development such as data centres. It focuses on design and operational issues such as energy efficiency measures, energy demand, availability of appropriate infrastructure, measures to support the just transition to a circular economy, measures to facilitate district heating, high-quality design, employment numbers, levels of traffic generation and potential decommissioning.

At both national and regional level, policy and objectives set out in both the NPF and RSES promote and support communications networks and digital infrastructure at appropriate locations. Specifically, National Strategic Outcome 5 'Strong Economy Supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills' of the National Planning Framework (NPF) aims to create places that can foster enterprise and innovation and attract investment and talent. Delivering this outcome will require the coordination of growth and placemaking with investment in world class infrastructure, including digital connectivity. NSO 5 sets out the importance of digital and data innovation and indicates a number of objectives to achieve this including: 'Promotion of Ireland as a sustainable international destination for ICT infrastructures such as data centres and associated economic activities.'

The RSES (Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy) indicates that the increasing use of digital technologies is impacting on every aspect of our lives and due to a fast moving and evolving infrastructure, the region will need to be able to respond and adapt to future communications networks and technology along with changing work practices and emerging economic models. RPO 8.25 on Communications Networks and Digital Infrastructure states: 'Support the national objective to promote Ireland as a sustainable international destination for ICT infrastructures such as data centres and associated economic activities at appropriate locations.'

National and regional policy in relation to Data Centres focuses on their economic impact, impact on grid capacity and efficiency, use of renewable energy, potential co location or clustering with similar/related uses and provision of a clear pathway to decarbonisation. As such, it is considered that [the policies and objectives in the Draft Plan](#) should align with national and regional policy in terms of how we assess proposals for data centres and should focus on design and operational matters rather than on the type of data stored within. Such matters are more appropriately regulated by governmental organisations such as the Data Protection Commission.

Having regard to the above, amending Objective DMSO94 to require proposals for space extensive developments such as data centres to specify the type and category of data to be stored within is not considered to be appropriate or reasonable and is not a matter for the Planning Authority.

In terms of the request that proposals for space extensive developments such as data centres specify their overall storage capacity, it is considered that to request this information is appropriate, fair and reasonable and such information should form part of the assessment of these proposals. It is therefore considered appropriate to amend Chief Executive's Recommendation CE CH 14.3 to include a bullet point including "Details of overall storage capacity."

RECOMMENDATION:

Amend Chief Executive's Recommendation CE CH 14.3

DMSO94 ~~Utilisation of Vacant Properties for Remote Working Facilities~~ [Space Extensive Developments](#)

Proposals for space extensive developments such as data centres are required to address the following:

- Energy efficiency measures for the development to reduce the carbon footprint in support of national targets towards a net zero carbon economy, including renewable energy generation
- The extent of energy demand and proximity to multiple high voltage strategic grid connections with significant electricity supply capacity available including areas with high concentration of renewable energy electricity generators
- The availability of appropriate infrastructure such as high voltage electricity, fibre optic cables, water and waste water etc. to support the use as a data centre
- Measures to support the just transition to a circular economy

- Measures to facilitate district heating or heat networks where excess heat is produced
- High-quality design approach to buildings which reduces the massing and visual impact of same. A visual impact assessment may be required in some circumstances, depending on the specific site
- [Details of overall storage capacity](#)
- Details of employment numbers once operational
- Details of the levels of traffic to and from the site at construction and operation stage
- Evidence of sign up to the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact
- A decommissioning report which sets out the development strategy for the site if and when the data centre is no longer in use, in order to bring the site back to a future developable state.