

An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Commission Order
ABP-320852-24

Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

Planning Authority: South Dublin County Council

Planning Register Reference Number: SD24A/0164W

Appeal by Google Ireland Limited against the decision made on the 22nd day of August, 2024 by South Dublin County Council to refuse permission for the proposed development.

Proposed Development: Ten-year planning permission is sought for the expansion of existing Google Ireland Limited operations including the development of a 72,400 square metres data storage facility which will incorporate data halls with associated support areas, a high voltage compound, offices and staff facilities, a loading area, mechanical and electrical yards, internal and external utilities, security fence and gates, landscaping including acoustic screening, two number stormwater attenuation ponds, additional internal vehicle and pedestrian infrastructure, together with ancillary buildings and site infrastructure. The development also includes the creation of a new active travel thoroughfare connecting Grange Castle Business Park South and Profile Park Road, all on a site on lands at Grange Castle Business Park South, in the townlands of Aungierstown and Ballybane and Kilbride, Dublin on an overall site of 20.44 hectares.

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Decision

GRANT permission for the above proposed development in accordance with the said plans and particulars based on the reasons and considerations under and subject to the conditions set out below.

Reasons and Considerations

The Commission performed its functions in relation to the making of its decision, in a manner consistent with Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Act 2015, as amended by Section 17 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, (consistent with Climate Action Plan 2024 and Climate Action Plan 2025 and the national long term climate action strategy, national adaptation framework and approved sectoral adaptation plans set out in those Plans and in furtherance of the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State).

In coming to its decision, the Commission had regard to the following:

(a) National Policy in particular:

- The National Planning Framework –Project Ireland 2040,
- The Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy, July 2022.

(b) Regional Policy including in particular:

- The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region 2019-2031.

(c) Local Planning Policy including in particular:

- The provisions of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028.

(d) the following matters:

- The 'EE' (Enterprise and Employment) zoning objective that pertains to the majority of the subject site and the appropriate landscaping works proposed for the RU (Rural) zoning objective.
- The nature, scale, design of the development and the pattern of development within the immediate area.
- The nature of the site within an existing business park campus and the collocation of the proposed data centre on the same land holding as other GIL data centres.
- The proposal's general compliance with guiding principle of the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy, July 2022.
- The existing fixed connection to the national grid and the existing grid connection agreement with Eirgrid which includes a flexible demand arrangement.
- The applicant's engagement with Corporate Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) including an existing signed (PPA) securing renewable energy.
- The overall design and layout of the development and the comprehensive landscaping scheme with extensive tree planting and the opening up of watercourses with potential for biodiversity net gain.
- The documentation and submissions of the Local Authority, the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated documentation and the mitigation and monitoring measures proposed.

- The submissions and observations made to An Coimisiún Pleanála in connection with the appeal including the Further Information request response and submissions regarding the:
 - LEAP - Large Energy User Action Plan issued by the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment in January 2026 and,
 - CRU Large Energy Users Connection Policy (CRU/2025236_ issued by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities in December 2025.
- The likely consequences for the environment and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and the likely significant effects of the proposed development on European sites.
- The Inspector's Report and the Inspector's Addendum Report and recommendation, including the examination, analysis and evaluation undertaken in relation to Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.

The Commission considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, including a condition requiring evidence of engagement with and the completion of further Corporate Power Purchase Agreements in advance of commencement of the development in order to secure appropriate and sufficient renewable energy supply, in addition to a condition requiring the use of renewable fuel for the backup generators, the proposed development would accord with European, national, regional and local planning and related policy, would not have an unacceptable impact on the landscape, visual, heritage or residential amenity of the area or of property in the vicinity, and would be acceptable in terms of water, utility, and drainage impacts. The Commission did not consider it necessary to restrict the hours of testing of standby generators in the context of the statutory requirements for an industrial emissions licence for the operation of the facility. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Appropriate Assessment Screening

In screening the need for Appropriate Assessment, it was determined, on the basis of a precautionary approach, that the proposed development could result in significant effects on:

- South Dublin Bay Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 000210).
- North Dublin Bay Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 000206).
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary Special Protection Area (Site Code 004024).
- North Bull Island Special Protection Area (Site Code 004006).

It was determined that the development would have potential for significant effects in view of the conservation objectives of those sites and that an Appropriate Assessment was required.

Appropriate Assessment

Following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the Natura Impact Statement and all associated material submitted, the Commission considered that adverse effects on site integrity of the European sites set out above can be excluded in view of the conservation objectives of these sites and that no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects. The Commission's conclusion is based on the following:

- Detailed assessment of construction and operational impacts.
- Effectiveness of mitigation measures proposed including construction environmental management measures, surface water management, pollution control, protection of watercourses and appropriate monitoring and supervision by and Ecological Clerk of Works.

- Application of planning conditions to ensure adherence to these measures.
- The proposed development would not affect the attainment of conservation objectives for the European sites of Dublin Bay or prevent or delay the restoration of favourable conservation conditions.

Environmental Impact Assessment

The Commission completed an Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed development, taking into account:

- (a) the nature, scale and extent of the proposed development,
- (b) the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and supporting information,
- (c) the submissions from the applicant, the observers and prescribed bodies in the course of the application,
- (d) the reports of the planning authority, and
- (e) the Inspector's report and the Inspector's Addendum Report.

The Commission considered that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and supporting documentation adequately identifies and describes the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental effects of the proposed development and that the information contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report complies with the provisions of EU Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU.

The Commission was satisfied that the Inspector's Report sets out how these various environmental issues were addressed in the examination and recommendation which are incorporated into the Commission's decision. The Commission considered and agreed with the Inspector's reasoned conclusions, that the main significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed development on the environment are, and would be mitigated, as follows:

Transport, Population and Human Health, Noise and Vibration,

- Potential significant, indirect, short-term effects on the local road network arising from cumulative construction traffic potentially leading to HGV queuing in internal site roads would be mitigated through the management and timing of construction traffic as agreed in the Construction and Environmental Management Plan.
- Direct effect on air quality during the construction phase has the potential to have a negative significant, short-term effect in proximity to the works and the mitigation measures that will be put in place during construction will ensure that the impact of the development complies with all EU ambient air quality limit values which are based on the protection of human health. For the operational phase, the results of modelling assessment have found that ambient concentrations of nitrous oxides due to emissions from the gas generators are below the air quality limit values when the generators are operated at the overall reduced levels of 100 hours with a small reduction in ground level concentrations predicted.

- Direct significant to very significant negative short term noise effects arising for seven residential receptors along Baldonnell Road to the south of the site during the construction phase, which would be mitigated by a suite of appropriate construction phase management measures, adherence to best practice measures, and planning conditions.
- Direct significant negative noise effects during the operational phase as a result of use of the emergency back-up generators which would apply to the hourly testing once a month or rare use in emergency situations where there is a site black out. In both instances the effects would be very short term and, the context of testing, noise limits would remain in compliance with the Industrial Emissions Licence.

Biodiversity and Water

- Potential effects in terms of hydromorphology associated with changes to waterbody morphology (depth, width, structure, substrate) and changes to the riparian zone structure as a result of works to reroute the watercourse through the site are mitigated with the provision of a 10 metre riparian buffer and the diversion of the stream and de-culverting sections would be broadly beneficial.
- On a precautionary basis, there is potential impacts on amphibians, bats, breeding birds and other mammals during the construction and operational phase. In terms of foraging, there are potential significant effects on bats, breeding birds and other mammals and further significant impacts in terms of disturbance for birds which are mitigated through implementation of a Construction Management Plan and the replacement of foraging habitat, landscaping improvements and nesting boxes with works scheduled outside the nesting season.

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Archaeology, Architectural, and Cultural Heritage

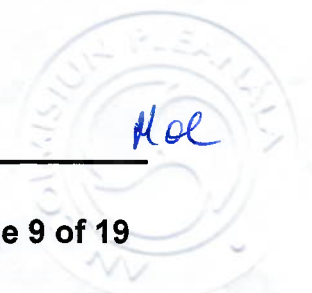
- Direct negative, significant and permanent effects on archaeology during the construction phase as a result of earthworks and excavation would be mitigated by archaeological monitoring of groundworks and compliance with measures outlined in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

Resource and Waste Management

- Potential for significant direct or indirect cumulative effects on resource and waste management during the construction phase would be mitigated by the implementation of standard good construction practices.

Climate and Material Assets

- Indirect adverse moderate effects which would be classed as significant based on Transport Infrastructure Ireland Guidance, related to the emissions from energy generated by the national grid to power the proposed development and potential negative, significant and long-term effects on power supply as a result of total annual energy consumption which would be mitigated through the provision of roof mounted Photovoltaic (PV) panels and Corporate Purchase Power Agreements, Energy Management System, certification under the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact standard as well as the design facilitating district heating when this becomes available for connection.



Major Accidents

- Potential significant effects with regards to major accidents in terms of structural damage/collapse, contamination, transport incidents, biosecurity, and industrial accidents which are mitigated by design, the operation in line with standard construction management practices and adherence to an Industrial Emissions licence and an Emergency Action Plan.

Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The period during which the development hereby permitted may be carried out shall be 10 years from the date of this Order.

Reason: Having regard to the nature of the development, the Commission considers it appropriate to specify a period of validity of this permission in excess of five years.

3. The proposed development shall not be used, sold, let or otherwise transferred or conveyed, save as part of the overall campus with DC1 and DC2, unless otherwise authorised by a prior grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interest of sustainable development and environmental protection.

4. The developer shall submit full details in relation to all external materials and finishes for the written agreement of the planning authority. The submission shall provide for variations in cladding colour for the east and west elevations of DC3 (Data Halls) and the Facility Support Area (FSA) building.

Reason: In the interests of residential and visual amenity.

5. Prior to the commencement of the operation of the development hereby permitted, the developer shall submit evidence of engagement with Corporate Purchase Power Agreement(s) (CPPA) and the details of CPPA's that the developer has entered into for the written agreement of the planning authority, which shall demonstrate that the energy demand of DC3 is offset with new renewable energy generation. For the avoidance of doubt, the CPPA(s) shall comply with the following:

- (a) the renewable energy projects shall not be supported by government, consumer or other public subsidies,
- (b) the new renewable energy projects shall be located in Ireland,
- (c) the new renewable energy generation shall relate to energy that is not being generated at the date of grant of this permission, and

- (d) the amount of electricity generated by the new renewable energy generation projects covered by the CPPA/s shall be equal to or greater than the electricity consumed from fossil fuel sources by the DC3 data centre in operation.

Reason: In the interest of sustainable development.

6. The mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, and other plans and particulars submitted with the planning application, shall be implemented in full in conjunction with the timelines set out therein, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the conditions of this permission.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and protection of the environment during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development.

7. The mitigation measures contained in the submitted Natura Impact Statement (NIS), shall be implemented.

Reason: To protect the integrity of European Sites.

8. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall confirm via plans, drawings, and technical specifications, that the development will include the required infrastructure, installed to a connection point on the site boundary, to allow for a connection to a future district heating network. Details shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of sustainability.

9. The developer shall engage a suitably qualified licence eligible archaeologist (licensed under the National Monuments Acts) to carry out pre-development archaeological testing in areas of proposed ground disturbance and to submit an Archaeological Impact Assessment report for the written agreement of the planning authority, following consultation with the National Monuments Service and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, in advance of any site preparation works or groundworks, including site investigation works/topsoil stripping/site clearance/dredging/underwater works and/or construction works. The report shall include an Archaeological Impact Statement and Mitigation Strategy. Where archaeological material is shown to be present, avoidance, preservation in-situ, preservation by record (archaeological excavation) and/or monitoring may be required. Any further archaeological mitigation requirements specified by the planning authority, following consultation with the National Monuments Service and the Department, shall be complied with by the developer. No site preparation and/or construction works shall be carried out on site until the archaeologist's report has been submitted to and approval to proceed is agreed in writing with the planning authority. The planning authority, the National Monuments Service, and the Department shall be furnished with a final Archaeological Report describing the results of any subsequent archaeological investigative works and/or monitoring following the completion of all archaeological work on site and the completion of any necessary post-excavation work. All resulting and associated archaeological costs shall be borne by the developer.

Reason: To ensure the continued preservation (either in situ or by record) of places, sites, features or other objects of archaeological interest.

10. The attenuation and disposal of surface water shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority for such works and services. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit details for the disposal of surface water from the site for the written agreement of the planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of public health.

11. Public lighting shall be provided in accordance with a scheme which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and public safety.

12. Prior to the commencement of operations, a Mobility Management Plan (MMP) shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority. This shall provide for incentives to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking by staff employed in the development.

Reason: In the interest of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport.

13. Site development and building works shall be carried out between the hours of 0700 to 1800 Mondays to Fridays inclusive, between 0900 to 1400 hours on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and public holidays. Deviation from these times shall only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written agreement has been received from the planning authority.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of property in the vicinity.

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14. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall liaise with the planning authority regarding the Green Space Factor score for the proposed development. The developer shall submit to the planning authority for written approval an updated Green Space Factor proposal demonstrating compliance with the minimum score having regard to the relevant land use zoning. Should proposals meet the requirements of the Green Space Factor require amendments to the landscaping scheme hereby approved, then written approval from the planning authority for such amendments to the landscaping scheme shall be obtained prior to the commencement of development. In the event that the minimum Green Space Factor cannot be secure on-site then the developer will further liaise with the planning authority to explore alternative options for compliance including potential off-site solutions and partnership with local groups.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to enhance the ecological value of the site.

15. The construction of the development shall be managed in accordance with a Construction and Environmental Management Plan, which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for the development, including:
- (a) location of the site and materials compound(s) including area(s) identified for the storage of construction refuse,
 - (b) location of areas for construction site offices and staff facilities,
 - (c) details of site security fencing and hoardings,

- (d) a detailed Construction Traffic Management Plan which shall include details of the timing and routing of construction traffic to and from the construction site and associated directional signage, to include proposals to facilitate the delivery of abnormal loads to the site and measures to obviate queuing of construction traffic on the adjoining road network,
- (e) details of on-site car parking facilities for site workers during the course of construction,
- (f) measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris on the public road network,
- (g) a Resource Waste Management Plan (RWMP) as set out in the EPA's Best Practice Guidelines for the Preparation of Resource and Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects (2021) to include details of off-site disposal of construction/demolition waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil,
- (h) alternative arrangements to be put in place for pedestrians and vehicles in the case of the closure of any public road or footpath during the course of site development works,
- (i) details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels,
- (j) containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained. Such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater,
- (k) means to ensure that surface water run-off is controlled such that no silt or other pollutants enter local surface water sewers or drains, and

- (l) a record of daily checks that the works are being undertaken in accordance with the Construction Management Plan shall be available for inspection by the planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of amenities, public health and safety and environmental protection.

16. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall enter into a connection agreement with Uisce Éireann to provide for a service connection to the public water supply and/or wastewater collection network.

Reason: In the interest of public health and to ensure adequate water/wastewater facilities.

17. The 45 number standby generators shall be powered by renewable fuel sources and there shall be a restriction on the use of fossil diesel. Prior to the operation of the development, the developer shall submit to the planning authority, written confirmation of the renewable fuel source that is to be utilised (i.e. HVO or other renewable diesels).

Reason: In order to power the proposed development through renewable energy.

18. The developer shall liaise with Parks and Public Realm Section and other relevant departments in relation to provision of Public Art.

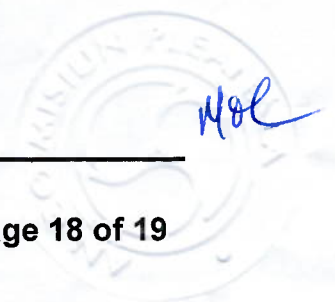
Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to accord with the policy of the development plan.

19. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall liaise with the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA), Weston Airport, and the Department of Defence/Irish Air Corps at Casement Aerodrome with regard to the use of cranes during construction. Following consultation, a strategy shall be prepared and agreed in writing by the planning authority prior to the use of any cranes on site.

Reason: In the interests of aviation safety and public safety.

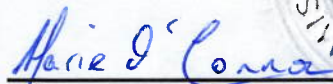
20. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall lodge with the planning authority a cash deposit, a bond of an insurance company, or such other security as may be acceptable to the planning authority, to secure the satisfactory reinstatement of the site upon cessation of the project coupled with an agreement empowering the planning authority to apply such security or part thereof to such reinstatement. The form and amount of the security shall be as agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of agreement, shall be referred to An Coimisiún Pleanála for determination.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory reinstatement of the site.



21. The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that is provided or intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The contribution shall be paid prior to commencement of development or in such phased payments as the planning authority may facilitate and shall be subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment. Details of the application of the terms of the Scheme shall be agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of such agreement, the matter shall be referred to An Coimisiún Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme.

Reason: It is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that a condition requiring a contribution in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Act be applied to the permission.


Marie O'Connor

**Planning Commissioner of An Coimisiún
Pleanála duly authorised to authenticate
the seal of the Commission.**

Dated this 23rd day of September 2026.