

Westminster Energy, Environment & Transport Forum policy conference:

Next steps for data centres in the UK

Timing: Morning, Friday, 11th September 2026

Taking place online

Draft agenda subject to change



WESTMINSTER ENERGY
ENVIRONMENT &
TRANSPORT FORUM

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Lord Hunt of Kings Heath, former Minister of State, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2024-2025)
- 9.05 **Considerations for the future of data centres in the UK - energy demand, infrastructure and net zero**
Professor Keith Bell, Lead, Energy Infrastructure Transitions theme, UK Energy Research Centre; and Holder of the Scottish Power Chair in Future Power Systems, Dept. of Electronic and Electrical Engineering, University of Strathclyde
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Policy, regulation and investment - critical infrastructure, planning and resilience**
designation of data centres as critical national infrastructure | implications of enabling data centres to opt into the NSIP regime | alignment with planning reform and infrastructure delivery | progress in delivering AI Growth Zones | Cyber Security and Resilience (Network and Information Systems) Bill proposals, including implications for risk management, incident reporting and resilience | the expanding role of Ofcom in oversight of digital infrastructure | emerging expectations for environmental reporting, lifecycle emissions accounting, biodiversity net gain and environmental compliance obligations | balancing economic growth, energy demand and environmental constraints | priorities for network investment, energy costs and implications for project viability | UK attractiveness as a location for digital and AI-related infrastructure, international competitiveness and long-term investor confidence
Allan Bosley, Director, Public Affairs, Ark Data Centres
Senior representative, planning
Senior representative, legal
Senior representative, investment
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.20 **Electricity system regulation - network investment, system planning, and large-scale users**
Senior representative, regulation
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.45 **Chair's closing remarks**
Lord Hunt of Kings Heath, former Minister of State, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2024-2025)
- 10.50 Break
- 11.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.05 **Sustainability of data centres - environmental impacts, resource demand and technological innovation**
Senior representative, environment
- 11.15 **Environmental and local implications - sustainability, resource use and biodiversity net gain**
findings from the Environmental Audit Committee's inquiry | strategies to manage environmental impacts across electricity demand, water use, land use and cumulative local effects | environmental reporting, operational transparency and approaches to monitoring environmental impacts | cooling technologies, heat reuse and opportunities to reduce water consumption and improve efficiency | biodiversity net gain requirements and implementation within the NSIP regime | community engagement and local consent | the role of local authorities in community engagement and managing concerns around land use, noise, heat and environmental impacts
Bean Beanland, Sector Consultant, Commercial, Industrial and Public Sector, HPA UK
Oliver Hayes, Head, Policy and Campaigns, Global Action Plan
Senior representative, local authority
- 11.30 Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.50 **Grid connections, electricity demand and implications data centre deployment**
Matt Chatfield, Head, Strategic Demand Connections, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.15 **Electricity system capacity and system constraints**
Senior representative, network operator
- 12.25 **Infrastructure delivery, grid connections and system integration**
grid connection constraints | implications of prioritising data centres within the connection queue | approaches to allocating capacity between competing users and sectors | regional capacity challenges and interaction with housing, industrial demand and wider system planning | opportunities for greater co-ordination between developers, network operators, regulators and local authorities to support timely delivery | electricity system governance arrangements and implications for strategic planning | supply chain readiness, procurement lead times and workforce requirements for large-scale deployment | project timelines and delivery risks | implications for investment confidence and delivery of digital and AI-related infrastructure
Senior representative, grid
Senior representative, infrastructure
Senior representative, data centre
Senior representative, supply chain
- 12.45 Questions and comments from the floor
- 13.10 **Chair's and Westminster Energy, Environment & Transport Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Energy, Environment & Transport Forum