

Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP
Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

Via email to: secretary.state@energysecurity.gov.uk

Via email c/o: donald.campbell@foxglove.org.uk
Thursday, 23 October 2025

Data centres and the Carbon Budget Delivery Plan

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing to you from organisations working on issues relating to the environment and technology, with concern about the climate emissions that will result from the rollout of new, ‘hyperscale’ data centres; and to ask you to confirm whether emissions from data centres will be included in the new Carbon Budget Delivery Plan due at the end of this month.

New data centres planned or in construction are significantly larger than those currently in use in the UK, and will use enormous quantities of electricity resulting in equally significant carbon emissions.

To take an example, just one facility planned for Elsham in North Lincolnshire will have a peak energy use of 1.1 gigawatts of power and, according to planning documents submitted by its own developer, will result in emissions of 850,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent every year.

This is one of the larger examples. However, it is just one of more than 100 planned data centres, which will be on a different order of magnitude in terms of power use and emissions to those we are familiar with today.

These numbers put data centres on a par with international airports such as Birmingham or Edinburgh when it comes to emissions. In terms of power use, just one data centre such as Elsham would absorb the output of an existing nuclear or gas power station.

Data centre emissions represent a growing and very significant threat to the UK's decarbonisation plans. We are concerned that failure to consider the sector in the Carbon Budget Delivery Plan would create a material risk to our ability to meet net zero. We would be very grateful if you could confirm whether or not they will be included.

We are eager to work together with Government to ensure that data centres do not jeopardise our climate targets, and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Martha Dark – Co-Executive Director, Foxglove

Sonja Graham – CEO, Global Action Plan

Aoife O'Leary – CEO, Opportunity Green