techUK Data Centres Council
Terms of reference

Purpose

1.   The techUK Data Centres Council will provide strategic direction for all techUK activities related to the Data Centres Programme.

2.   The techUK Data Centres Council will support the Programme in:

> Represent techUK's data centres members as the collective voice of policy which impacts data centres in the UK, holding government and regulator accountable, and shaping the major industry decisions for the future;

> Continue to lead regular engagement with key stakeholders and decisionmakers on the challenges, opportunities and developments facing the UK's telecoms sector;

> Enable data centre businesses to build relationships with each other, enhancing the industry through innovation that is commercialised and optimised.

Responsibilities

3.   Members of the Council are expected to act in accordance with techUK's Values (Respect, Courage, Integrity, Generosity, Pride).

4.   Members of the Data Centres Council will be expected to engage in debate and discussion. Members should be ready and willing to openly discuss issues with stakeholders and other members in every Council meeting.

5.   Key responsibilities include:

> Steer the Data Centres Programme, agree priorities for action, engage with the resulting Working Groups;

> Define the policy responses required for a given issue – wider programme member views will also be sought;

> Acts as a trusted sounding board for government seeking input on relevant issues;

> Works directly with external stakeholders on specific industry issues;

> Interacts with other techUK groups focusing on related topics;

> Represent the interests of techUK data centre members in industry forums, standards bodies, platform operators, and other stakeholders.

6. Additional responsibilities include:

> Thought leadership: To raise the profile of the techUK Data Centres Council, members of the Council are requested to contribute to techUK's thought leadership outputs, including events, reports and insights.

Membership

7. techUK Data Centres Council membership aims to reflect the range of companies, both in terms of sectors and size that are interested in each work programme. It will also strive to reflect diversity in all its forms and, in particular, from underrepresented groups across the tech sector. One member will be appointed as Chair to help coordinate its output with techUK Secretariat, there will also be a Vice-Chair to support the Chair.

8. The Council will comprise 20 members, plus Secretariat, drawn from techUK's Data Centres Programme, with a small number of seats open for broader techUK membership should all seats not be filled.

9. Members of the Council must be employed by a body that is a member of techUK and should ideally be of manager status or above.

10. If appropriate and agreed by members of the group, stakeholders (government officials, technical experts, consultants, legal experts, or educational bodies) can be invited to attend meetings on a regular basis.

11. 80% (at least 16 members) are designated as data centre operators within colocation and co-hosting data centres industry[i]. Within that constraint, techUK will endeavour to ensure that the Council represents the full range of member interests relating to data centres.

12. Of that 80%, at least 4 members are designated from an SME. *An SME is defined as: The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro (circa £41m), and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro (circa £36m).* SME User Guide, European Commission.

13. 20% (at least 4 members) are designated from outside the data centre operators within colocation and co-hosting data centres industry within the techUK

membership. This can be hyperscaler data centres, legal firms, cloud providers, data centres advisory, integrated data centre operators services, or businesses in the data centre supply chain.

14. Membership, including the Chair, will run for two-year periods on an individual basis. Members will be nominated via an open call to techUK's Data Centres Programme, with a small number of seats open for broader techUK membership should all seats not be filled.

15. Once nominations have concluded, this will be followed by a member vote if necessary. Only one individual per techUK member company may be on the Council.

16. If an individual Council representative leaves their company to join another techUK member then they may remain on the Council (as long as this doesn't result in a techUK member company having two representatives). If they join a company which is not a techUK member they may remain on the Council for 3 months, after which they will be required to leave unless the company is in the process of applying for techUK membership.

17. Representatives may be re-elected onto the Council, and there is no cap on how many times they can be re-elected.

18. The Council will operate a 'Strike' attendance policy. If a member is not present (even with apologies sent) at two or more compulsory meetings during a calendar year, that representative will be ejected from the Council and asked to provide an alternative member from their organisation to take their seat.

19. Council members may designate appropriate deputies in their absence, or in case items on the agenda require specific expertise.

20. The Council shall have the power to create sub-groups and working groups to address strategic issues which require a more detailed input. These sub-groups should be led by Council members and comprised – where required – of other invited individuals from the techUK membership. The chair of these sub-groups shall report back to the Council when requested.

Meetings

21. The Council will meet (in person and/or online) at least six times a year, with further meetings and/or calls to be scheduled as required/agreed by the membership.

22. Meetings will be minuted by the Secretariat unless a private session is requested and agreed to by the Chair.

23. Where decisions require a vote, each Council member (one vote per company in case of deputies present) has one vote but in the case of a hung vote, the Chair may exercise an additional casting vote.

24. A minimum of six members is required for a meeting to be deemed quorate.

25. Discussion is transparent: meeting agendas and minutes are available to all Data Centre Programme members.

26. Council meetings operate under The Chatham House Rule when necessary.

Decision-making process

27. When techUK member funds are being used to commission work, a high level of consensus is required.

28. When developing a formal position (such as an industry response to a Government Consultation), the Secretariat will only develop an outline once at least ten members of the Council have indicated a willingness to participate.

29. Policy positions require a lower level of consensus although techUK is at its strongest when it speaks with one voice.

30. In times when a consensThere will be times when consensus cannot be reached given the different viewpoints present in the Council. In the first instance, the Secretariat will seek to set out the differences within the Board. It will not, however, seek to quantify these differences. If the Council is particularly divided – or if there is significant opposition to developing a position, the secretariat in conjunction with the Chair will make a decision on whether a public position would play a role in ensuring techUK remains a relevant, influential and credible voice.

Secretariat

31. The techUK Secretariat will manage and resource the work of the Council.

32. The Secretariat comprises of:

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About techUK

techUK is the trade association which brings together people, companies and organisations to realise the positive outcomes of what digital technology can achieve. With around 1,000 members (the majority of which are SMEs) across the UK, techUK creates a network for innovation and collaboration across business, government and stakeholders to provide a better future for people, society, the economy and the planet. By providing expertise and insight, we support our members, partners and stakeholders as they prepare the UK for what comes next in a constantly changing world.

techUK's award-winning Data Centres programme provides a collective voice for UK operators. We work with government to improve the business environment for our members.

To date we've saved UK operators over £150M, alerted them to business risks, mitigated regulatory impacts and raised awareness, most recently negotiating key worker status for the sector. techUK is a signatory of the Carbon Neutral Data Centre Pact.

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[i] Colocation. Providers typically rent out space within a physical facility in which a customer, or multiple customers, can locate their own network(s), servers, and storage equipment. The support infrastructure of the building (such as power distribution, environmental control, network connectivity, and security) is provided as a service by the operator. These third-party data centres may also provide services that connect telecommunications and network service providers to other telecommunication and network service providers. This is commonly known as interconnection/peering.

Co-hosting. Providers typically rent out space to customers within a physical facility, but unlike colocation, both the network(s), servers, and storage equipment and the support infrastructure of the building are provided as a service. Co-hosting is intended to cover services such as bare metal hosting, hardware-as-a-service, and dedicated servers/hosting, where these are not cloud services. Co-hosting providers can sometimes also provide virtualization or containerisation environments for their customers.