Data Centres: Engine of Growth #1: Supply Chain

Building or commissioning a data centre is eye-wateringly complex and expensive. Each element of financing, planning, design and construction needs specialist skills, and that is even before it is operational. As a result data centres generate a complex supply chain and rapidly growing demand for a wide range of specialist services. A single data centre therefore acts as an engine of growth in multiple economic sectors, from engineering to planning consultancy, from security fencing to publishing. This image shows just a few of the services that data centres need and some of the types of employment that data centres create – and this excludes employment, growth and productivity generated by the data centre for its customers. That’s another story. For more information on data centres and growth see our other papers: Er, what is a data centre?, Data Centres and Power: Fact or Fiction, So What Have Data Centres Ever Done for Us? and Data Centres: A Day in YOUR Life or contact emma.fryer@techuk.org. And if you want to know why we chose these particular trains, go to the last page of this paper!
Data Centres: Engine of Growth #2: Customers

Data centres are not just fancy sheds full of computing equipment. Data centres enable and power service economies in the way that heavy industry used to power manufacturing economies; they are the agents of growth for the knowledge economy. This is because a single data centre supports multiple layers of economic activity. Some organisations provide basic data centre services (security, resilience, power and connectivity, sometimes known as position, power and ping). Others re-sell this service to third parties, or add one or many of a vast range of IT enabled services from fleet logistics to web hosting. Other organisations use the data centre to provide a full range of IT services for their customers or to manage their own computing functions. In this way a single data centre can provide IT functions for hundreds or even thousands of businesses, it improves productivity and generates employment and growth within its customer base. And this excludes the build stage which generates its own supply chain of jobs and services. That's another story. For more information on data centres see our other papers, listed at the end of this document or contact emma.fryer@techuk.org.