

## **Smart Data Council – terms of reference**

All Smart Data Council members are required to formally acknowledge and accept these terms of reference prior to participating in the council or any sub-committee meetings.

### **Introduction**

The Smart Data Council is a non-statutory advisory body established to accelerate the development of Smart Data schemes across sectors. Comprising up to 25 members, including 2 co-chairs, it is supported by the Department for Business and Trade's Smart Data team, which also provides the secretariat function. While it holds no formal decision-making powers, the council supports the government's strategic direction by facilitating dialogue, sharing insights and encouraging cross-sector co-operation.

### **Purpose of the council**

The Smart Data Council is established to accelerate the development of Smart Data schemes across sectors. Its main aims are to:

- foster cross-sector collaboration to drive innovation and practical implementation of Smart Data initiatives
- provide expert advice to government on policy development, delivery models and best practice
- ensure diverse perspectives are represented, including those of consumers, innovators, industry leaders and policymakers
- act as a visible ambassador for Smart Data, engaging proactively with Parliament, regulators, investors and other key stakeholders to promote awareness, trust, and uptake of Smart Data solutions.
- represent the council at public forums, stakeholder events and industry platforms, advocating for the Smart Data ecosystem and the Smart Data Trust Guidebook
- share best practices, insights and outputs to support the development of a trusted, inclusive and interoperable Smart Data environment in the UK

## **Objectives of the council**

### **Scheme-level progress**

The council will:

- support the implementation of 20 or more Smart Data Strategy schemes by 2035, helping government lay the groundwork for effective delivery
- advise on policy development and ethical best practice to ensure successful deployment across market sectors
- ensure inclusive representation in scheme development, particularly of consumer voices
- assess the viability of sector-specific schemes from multiple perspectives and provide feedback to government

### **Cross-sector governance and coordination**

The council will:

- support the development and delivery of the Smart Data Trust Guidebook, which will define governance arrangements for a trusted Smart Data ecosystem in the UK
- ensure the Smart Data Guidebook incorporates diverse stakeholder perspectives, including those of consumers, innovators, regulators and industry leaders

### **Broader policy engagement**

The council will:

- promote shared approaches to governance and delivery to reduce duplication and barriers to interoperability across sectors
- provide insight into Smart Data developments in policy, technology and data sharing, ensuring alignment where appropriate
- advise government on the UK's strategic positioning in international Smart Data markets and ensure alignment with broader policy and technological development

## **Membership**

The Smart Data Council is convened under the leadership of the Minister for Digital Economy (working across the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)), who provides strategic oversight and ensures alignment with government priorities for Smart Data policy and delivery.

### **Co-chair of the Smart Data Council**

The minister is supported by the Smart Data Council's Co-chair, appointed through a fair and open recruitment process managed by the DBT Smart Data Team. The Co-chair will serve a maximum term of 24 months and is expected to commit up to 20 days per year, including participation in scheduled council meetings and related activities. Co-chairs are not remunerated for their participation. Their role includes facilitating council discussions, representing the council externally, and supporting the development and delivery of Smart Data initiatives.

### **Council members**

Membership is by invitation only, based on individuals' skills, knowledge and experience relevant to Smart Data policy, technology, consumer engagement and sector delivery. Members participate in a personal capacity as independent experts, not as representatives of their organisations. Members are not remunerated for their participation. Government officials may attend meetings as observers or contributors but are not considered formal members of the council.

### **Members' roles and expectations**

Smart Data Council members play a vital role in shaping the development and delivery of Smart Data initiatives. Members are expected to:

- act as a critical friend, offering constructive challenge and expert insight to support the council's mission and delivery
- participate in an individual capacity, contributing personal expertise rather than representing the views of their organisation
- support the dissemination of council outputs to relevant communities, helping to raise awareness and encourage adoption of Smart Data principles

- contribute to sub-committees, providing input on specific issues and supporting delivery-focused workstreams
- provide input into the design and refinement of key documents, including guidance, frameworks and strategic plans
- attend and prepare for meetings, ensuring active and informed participation
- uphold the council's commitment to diversity and representation, reflecting the skills, experiences and needs of the wider Smart Data community
- demonstrate appropriate expertise and experience relevant to Smart Data policy, technology, consumer engagement or sector delivery

### **Council values**

The Smart Data Council is guided by a shared commitment to openness, expertise and collaboration. These values underpin how members engage with one another, contribute to council activities, and support the development of a trusted Smart Data ecosystem.

#### **Openness**

Council members will:

- share views, plans and knowledge as widely as possible to promote transparency and collective learning
- actively seek and listen to perspectives from Smart Data users, stakeholders, regulators, policymakers and others
- promote and disseminate council outputs and thinking to encourage broader engagement with Smart Data initiatives

#### **Expertise**

Council members will:

- contribute their expertise as individuals, drawing on current and previous professional experience across sectors
- apply their knowledge to advance Smart Data development and inform constructive, forward-thinking proposals
- use sound judgement to respect privacy, confidentiality and the sensitivities of shared information

## **Collaboration**

Council members will:

- support one another in discussion, decision-making and delivery of council objectives
- constructively hold each other to account for commitments made within the council
- ensure all voices are heard and considered with care and respect, encouraging an inclusive and balanced dialogue

## **Confidentiality**

Smart Data Council members are entrusted with access to sensitive information, discussions and materials that may relate to government policy, commercial interests or stakeholder engagement. To maintain trust and integrity, all members are expected to uphold the highest standards of confidentiality. By participating in the Smart Data Council, members acknowledge and accept the following confidentiality obligations as a condition of their involvement.

### **Respect for confidential information**

Members must not disclose, share or discuss any confidential information obtained through council activities outside of authorised channels, unless explicitly permitted by the Department for Business and Trade (DBT).

### **Handling of sensitive materials**

Any documents, communications or insights shared during council meetings, subcommittees or related engagements must be treated as confidential unless otherwise stated.

### **Privacy and discretion**

Members must exercise good judgement in respecting the privacy of individuals and organisations involved in Smart Data initiatives, and avoid sharing identifiable or sensitive data without consent.

### **Continued obligation**

The duty of confidentiality continues beyond the duration of a member's term on the council. Former members must not disclose information obtained during their tenure unless authorised.

### **Breach of confidentiality**

Any breach of confidentiality may result in a review of membership and potential withdrawal from the council, subject to DBT's discretion.

### **Membership terms**

The following membership terms apply:

- membership is reviewed on a rolling basis, with new members added as needed to support the council's evolving priorities
- there is no fixed minimum or maximum term of service
- all members are expected to uphold the council's values and contribute meaningfully to its objectives
- where attendance or conduct falls short of expectations, membership may be reviewed and, if necessary, withdrawn by the department
- members wishing to resign should notify the secretariat in writing, ideally providing a notice period covering at least one council meeting cycle to support continuity and handover

### **Meeting arrangements**

Council meetings will be arranged as follows:

- meetings will typically take place up to 4 times per year, with each meeting held in person and lasting for no more than 2 hours – the possibility to attend virtually will be offered in exceptional circumstances
- the secretariat will aim to circulate meeting papers at least 5 working days in advance of a council meeting
- additional experts may be invited to attend specific meetings where their input would add value