



Mercian Collaboration Directors Meeting

Minutes

6th November 2017, Coventry University

17/08 Apologies & introductions:

Present

Dave Parkes (Chair, DMU), Angela Brady (Aston), Anne Knight (Cranfield), Caroline Williams (Nottingham), Caroline Taylor (Leicester), Charlotte Green (Staffordshire), Chris Porter (Newman), Chris Powis (Northampton), Enid Pryce-Jones (BCU), Emma Walton (SG&CG, Loughborough), Gaz J Johnson (MCDO), Guy Lavender (OU), Judith Keene (Worcester), Laurian Williamson (PM only, RDMSG, Leicester), Lesley Thompson (Lincoln), Maria Carnegie (Derby), Mark Toole (NTU), Robin Green (Warwick), Phi Brabban (SG, Coventry), Kirsty Kift (MSDG), Joss Granger (Wolverhampton), James Anthony-Edwards (Wolverhampton), Paul Reynolds (Keele, Treasurer), Yvonne Budden (PM Only, Copyright Group, Warwick)

Apologies

Diane Jobs (Vice-Chair, Birmingham), Emma Sansby (BGU), Fiona Parsons (SG, Wolverhampton), Ian Snowley (Lincoln), Rosie Jones (OU), Simon Bevan (Cranfield), Tracey Clarke (Sheffield, White Rose)

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, especially Anne on behalf of Cranfield, the newest member of the Mercian Collaboration. Thanks was noted to Phil, Kirsty and their staff for hosting the meeting.

17/09 Collaborative Management and OCLC GreenGlass

Tracey Clark (representing Sheffield and White Rose Libraries), the Associate Director of Academic and Digital Strategies at Sheffield University, was invited to attend to talk in place of Sheffield's Librarian, Anna Horne. For personal reasons, Tracey was at the last minute regrettably unable to attend, but noted she was happy to answer questions from Directors after the meeting. As Tracey had sent a presentation ahead of the meeting, this will be distributed to all Directors for comment.

ACTION: GJJ to distribute Tracey's presentation to all Directors

ACTION: SG to collate any questions on GreenGlass and feedback to Tracey

17/10 SCONUL Learning Spaces Toolkit

In the absence of the prior item, the time was devoted instead to a later topic: discussions and comments on the SCONUL Learning Spaces Toolkit. Judith Keene, on behalf of the SCONUL task and finish group who had worked on this, introduced this item. She noted the group's remit was to look at learning spaces, and that she was looking for thoughts on how SCONUL could help Directors in this sphere. The group had been asking how libraries are developing their own spaces, along with what is the campus wide influence of the library. Whether or not the library can input to learning space developments, and where within institutional structures they can bring influence to bear, was especially of interest. She noted she hoped most Directors were familiar with the SCONUL learning spaces toolkit, and added there were some follow up exercises going on. For example, Pete from Canterbury Christchurch, was looking into following up on some of the case studies, to go as resources on the Jisc website. Also, the group had looked at the EduCause toolkit, and while this was more about teaching spaces, there was still lots of useful stuff within it.



Judith asked how aware Directors were of these resources, and indeed what other sources of good practice and inspiration they turn to when developing learning spaces and environments. A general discussion ensued after which Dave and Judith summarised the comments. Judith will take the comments back to the SCONUL Transformation Strategy Group, and thanked the Directors for their input. The Chair noted his thanks to Judith, and the rest of the STSG for their efforts in examining this area.

ACTION: Judith to feed Directors' comments back to the SCONUL Transformation Strategy Group

17/11 Partnership Experiences

Joss Granger (Liaison Services Manager) from Wolverhampton was welcomed to the meeting to present on this topic, and spoke on *Climbing the Collaborative Heights*. A discussion and exchange of experience between Directors followed, with a number of them noting both the contrasts with Wolverhampton's experiences, and also the parallels within their own institutions. The Chair noted his thanks to Joss, along with James who also contributed, for leading a robust and engaging discussion which had highlighted some valuable lessons. James and Joss also presented Wolverhampton's partnership checklist, a resource which they would be happy to share via email with the other Directors not present today. It was also agreed that it would be helpful to distribute Joss' slides.

ACTION: James Anthony-Edwards and Joss Granger to supply partnership checklist and presentation slides to Directors

17/12 Governance

a) Minutes of the previous meeting, actions and matters arising

There were no corrections and the minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

Caroline W noted that at a prior meeting she had offered to share some information, relating to international library experiences in dealing with fluctuating exchange rates and subsequent publisher price inflations. She briefly shared her experiences with the Directors, noting it was difficult to get a breakdown in terms of what is going on with exchange rates. It was agreed the matter of exchange rates and their impact on publisher deals etc, was a topic to raise with Jisc at the March 2018 meeting. It was noted that Jisc had offered to attend today's meeting, but as the agenda was already full they had been invited to attend in March 2018.

b) SCONUL Subgroup: Proposed Memorandum of Understanding

Paul and Dave introduced this topic and provided context, noting the Mercian (along with the Northern Collaboration and NoWAL) had been approached by SCONUL earlier in the year to propose a revision to the relationship status between the groups. In essence, to stave off VAT charges being applied to most expenditures, the Mercian, and other regional SCONUL collaboration groups, needed to officially become subgroups of SCONUL. To ensure the parameters of this relationship were well defined, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between each of the regional collaborations and SCONUL had been proposed¹. While this was being formulated both GJJ and the Steering Group officers had spoken with their regional collaboration counterparts, to ensure we were all thinking along similar lines.

¹ See Steering Group minutes 17(11), 17/19(a) and following this meeting, 17/27(a)



The draft MoU had taken longer than anticipated for SCONUL to produce, meaning despite ongoing discussions, the SG had only received a copy of it the preceding week. Consequently, there had not been time for the SG to fully review it, but that this would be addressed as a matter of priority at their next meeting in a couple of weeks.

Caroline T, as interim SCONUL Board Chair, noted that this endeavour should not be regarded as an attempt to 'take over' the Mercian Collaboration, although from the Board's perspective it was a change in the relationship between the parent group and the regional collaborations. Hence, the MoU was an essential document in defining and clarifying this revised relationship. She also raised an issue about the staff employed by regional collaborations (e.g. the MCDO), and the need for clarity from SCONUL about what is being delegated and what additional responsibilities, if any, regional collaborations would be taking on. This would be especially pertinent if any disputes arose between employer and employee, to understand where responsibilities lay. She highlighted that Ann Rossiter, SCONUL Executive Director, had been speaking with HR consultants to ensure their approach was acceptable and legal.

It was noted that the SCONUL financial year starts 1st January, which means there is a requirement for this arrangement to be in place somewhat rapidly, necessitating a swift review of the MoU. The Chair highlighted in his discussions with the other collaborations, a general acceptance of this change to collaborative relationship with SCONUL was observed. Robin commented that such a SCONUL subgroup relationship with the MC was discussed in the Collaboration's early days, and that the financial implications particularly of not shifting to this new relationship (e.g. instigation of VAT charges on most MC activities) would seem to be prohibitive in declining it. It was also noted uncertain additional administrative burdens, for the SG and MCDO, may potentially arise following the shift in status. Consequently, the situation would need to be carefully monitored during the transition period.

The Directors generally responded positively and proposed accepting the proposed shift to subgroup status, with a caveat that the SG must carefully review the MoU to consider any anticipated issues and propose appropriate modifications before formal acceptance.

ACTION: Steering Group to review SCONUL Subgroup MoU and feedback proposed modifications to SCONUL on behalf of Mercian Directors

c) Treasurer's Update and 2018 Subscription Models

Paul presented the Collaboration's finances, and proposed member subscription models for 2018. He noted that 2017 had been a very successful year with the hosting of our first conference, a continuing programme of staff development events along with a growing number of special interest subgroups (SIG). Consequently, this had resulted in increasing costs in running the Collaboration, not all of which were anticipated, notably additional monthly costs of £96 for website security updates from Adaptive had been an unexpected and considerable new cost. However, there had also been some financially favourable incidents too, with DMU kindly providing a conference venue for no charge, and an additional £500 contribution from the University of Birmingham to support the conference's costs.



Reserves 31/12/2016:	£7,308	
Subscription Income 2017:	£13,221	
Expenditure 2017 ² :		£15,520
Anticipated Reserves 31/12/2017:	£5,009	

Previously, it had been agreed ideally around £5,000 should be left in the reserves at the end of each financial year. Nevertheless, while the MC would end 2017 with reserves around the desired level, the projected expenditure for 2018 was anticipated to be higher, reflecting the increased SIG activity, website, conference, MCDO and SIG event support costs. Paul estimated a total projected expenditure of £19,000 for 2018, a figure which does not include a general contingency fund. Consequently, he had modelled three different member subscription options for 2018, with institutionally specific charges adjusted in accordance with the banded subscription model devised by Robin as past-treasurer. These options had been discussed and approved by the SG, and were presented in detail to Directors.

Assuming the proposed spend for 2018 was accepted, this provided Directors with three subscription options to choose from:

- **Option A:** *No change in subscriptions*, except where an institution has moved bands. This option would mean the MC would be in a deficit situation by the end of 2018.
- **Option B:** *Minor increase*, which would leave reserves at under half the desired level by year's end. This would require increases ranging from £17 p.a. for the smallest libraries up to £250 p.a. for the largest.
- **Option C:** *Moderate increase*, which this would leave almost the agreed level of reserves at year's end. This option would require increases of £34 p.a. for the smallest libraries to up £500 p.a. for the largest.

In approaching this decision, Paul highlighted that the Collaboration was clearly still in its 'build up' stage, as indicated by the greater range of activities the MC undertakes year-on-year. He noted, therefore, on the back of this growth in activity, it was a fair assumption that Directors would prefer not to scale back MC activities in the coming year. This was generally agreed by the Directors present. The Chair also noted that there had been increasing demands on the MCDO's time, and the SG were currently reviewing options to develop or expand this, which would also potentially make additional calls on MC funds. Paul highlighted that MC member subscriptions remain, even adopting Option C, significantly lower than those levied by collaborative library groups in other regions. Hence, he proposed that the Collaboration offered good value for money.

In the light of these considerations, the Treasurer and SG recommended the adoption of Option to enable the MC to deliver our envisaged programme of 2018 activities whilst retaining our reserves at the agreed level.

The Directors discussed these options, and agreed the value in supporting the increasing and ongoing activities of the MC. Hence, Directors approved Option C.

ACTION: Paul to liaise with SCOUNL to arrange for MC subscriptions to be invoiced from all member institutions

² Including anticipated costs for Nov/Dec



d) Inter-Collaboration Relationships

As has been noted before, the MCDO and SG members, frequently liaise with their counterparts at other regional collaborations. This is often around particular issues, for example the SCONUL MoU. The Chair invited comments about how, why or with whom the MC could establish formal or informal links. For example, other regional library groups outside of the academic domain. After some discussion, it was agreed there were no clear targets in mind, but that there could be areas of potential mutual interest. It was proposed this was a matter for SCONUL Board to consider, and that Caroline T would take the matter forward.

ACTION: SG to keep a watching brief on inter-collaboration and regional group relationships on behalf of the SG/Directors

ACTION: CT to take thoughts on inter-regional collaboration back to the SCONUL Board to consider

e) Website

Paul had already highlighted (17/12(c)) the unexpected new annual website costs (~£1,200) charged by Adaptive, and consequently the SG had discussed the potential for migrating to a new hosting service. However, there was little support for this to date, highlighting technical and operation problems. Additionally, with an anticipated new configuration for the MC as a SCONUL Subgroup, remaining with their chosen web provider seemed a politic choice. Consequently, for the foreseeable future the MC website would remain hosted by Adaptive.

Paul also noted that these charges were before any remedial (e.g. error corrections, outside of the MCDO's access) or developmental work was done on the site, where additional charges would be levied. It was noted there was hope that SCONUL was getting the best value for money, from their web provider. Mark confirmed SCONUL had performed all due diligence in the selection of Adaptive, and GJJ noted that he had always found the company highly responsive to his questions and requests. It was suggested the web provider costs, brought with them the assurance of a continued service and mitigated reputational loss, through the provision of a continued and stable platform.

It was noted in terms of an economy of scale, and in the light of the varying subscription rates across other collaboration in contrast to the MC, a potential existed for SCOUL to reconsider the degree of charges levied. E.g. an hourly charge of £96 was a much greater proportion of the MC's income, in contrast to the NC.

GJJ noted that access levels and increase in content, were highlighted in his report (17/12(g)).

ACTION: Chair/Treasurer to confirm Web provider contractual arrangements

f) SIG Sponsors & Governance

As had been previously announced, all SIG now have a member of the SG assigned as a sponsor to provide 'further support, insight and communication'³. Information about this has been sent to SIG Chairs, and is included on the website.

ACTION: GJJ to remind All of sponsor roles and identities

³ Johnson, G.J., (2017) *SIG Steering Group Sponsor: Role Description*. Available at: <https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/SIG%20Steering%20Group%20Sponsor-Oct%202017.pdf>



Secondly, following earlier discussions (16/11) the matter of formalising SIG governance rules had returned to Directors. GJJ had provided a brief paper summarising the proposed regulations and invited comments or suggested amendments. The Chair noted that as this matter had been discussed thoroughly before, he strongly recommended the acceptance of the proposed regulations. These were accepted with the following minor corrections.

*3. **Founding Subgroups.** To avoid overlap and redundancy, a brief assessment of any **regional or national** comparator organisations should be conducted by the subgroup convener prior to any new SIG's establishment.*

It was noted, for example, that the MSDG tries to take on national agenda into their considerations as well as regional.

g) Collaboration Development Officer

GJJ's report on activities had been disseminated ahead of the meeting, and was made available for comment. The Chair thanks GJJ for his continued efforts. GJJ has also made the report available on the website, under the Key Documents section.

17/13 Priorities and Action Plan

a) Digital Preservation Training

Laurian Williamson was in attendance to discuss this, in the light of earlier discussions by Directors instigated by Caroline T, and had submitted a paper summarising the key points. Laurian outlined the approach to digital preservation at Leicester, noting their acquisition of access for eight staff members to the Digital Preservation Training Programme (DPTP) for beginners. She noted it was fantastic to have time to devote to this development exercise, and normally allocated around 5 hours monthly to completing a module. Study is self-paced so everyone on it, works at a different pace. This was followed by a monthly 'teach meet' to share experiences with other staff. It was a very supportive experience, and all participants were able to learn from each other. DTPT provides the course and also provide an expert to provide input and support. Laurian noted some participants felt more uncomfortable asking questions in the public forum, and so they had set up a closed message forum in Moodle, without the tutor. She noted this had been a very valuable experience.

Caroline T noted the mix of experience each participant had brought into the learning experience, had been especially valuable as a means of developing her staff's general digital preservation skills and knowledge. Additionally, they had all gained training in some very specific areas. Nevertheless, she highlighted the need to go beyond the basics of digital preservation training in terms of workforce development.

The question to Directors, Caroline T noted, was 'is there a desire to do something as a group' with respect to digital preservation training? She highlighted the group training experience had been integral to the Leicester team, and that perhaps multiple institutions working together would generate even greater synergies and benefits.

It was agreed there was some interest, and that GJJ would gather information on this to feedback on the Collaboration's desires in this direction. Hence, the Directors would return to consider this item in the light of this.

ACTION: GJJ gather perceptions from Directors towards adopting a regional digital preservation training endeavour.



b) SIG Proposal: Copyright & Licenses

A proposal from the pre-existing 'Midlands Copyright Group' had been submitted for initial review by the MSDG in September, where it was warmly received. A revised proposal had been submitted by Yvonne Budden on behalf of the group, to become a subgroup of the Collaboration as the Mercian Copyright Group (MCG). Yvonne explained that the current group has existed for a number of years, in various iterations, and has a membership mostly, but not entirely drawn from Mercian libraries. They have a termly pattern of informal meetings to discuss issues of copyright in its broadest and most practical sense.

The proposition to Directors was to absorb this group as a Mercian SIG, for a trial period of 12 months. This was seen as a way to formalise the group's working and broaden its membership to include representatives from all regional members. Yvonne stressed the group's value for copyright officers, who are often lone workers within their roles, in meeting to exchange experience regularly. She also noted their draft ToR had been amended to take on board some of the comments from discussions at MSDG's September 2017 meeting. However, with respect to expanding the group's remit beyond copyright and IP, to consider issues around (for example) information compliance, was felt to be outside the current group members' comfort zone. This would be revisited following the 12 month trial period, alongside the group's core functions and remit.

The Chair thanked Yvonne, and the MCG's members, for their contribution, noting that there was considerable interest across the MC membership in copyright support. It was agreed that the trial period was acceptable, and would allow for a formal review of group purpose and adjustments to its role at this point. Hence, the group was welcomed as the newest MC SIG.

It was noted the one non-Mercian region member was a slight anomaly, and one that would need to be carefully reviewed in the light of the year's trial, but that Directors were not overtly opposed to their continued membership. It was commented that SCOUNL may have some insight to be drawn on here. Additionally, the MCG noted they had contact with similar groups in other regions, with whom they exchanged information and insights.

ACTION: Yvonne to investigate if SCOUNL Copyright Group has activity or input that could be drawn on in shaping the MCP's activities

ACTION: GJJ to coordinate and support Yvonne and MCG

ACTION: SG to decide on a Group Sponsor for the MCG

ACTION: GJJ create section of Website for group

c) Buddying Scheme

Kirsty reported back on the Mercian Buddying Scheme, which the MSDG had instigated and was coordinating. There has been considerable interest, both at the conference and since the scheme went onto the web, with slightly more people wanting to work as supporting buddies than those seeking support. However, there is a broad range of skills, experiences and areas within which buddies have been coming forward. The scheme is to run initially for 6 months, and progress will be reviewed at the March 2018 MSDG meeting. It was noted there may be other regional informal buddying going on, and information on these schemes may have value in the review.

ACTION: Yvonne Budden to pass details of informal buddying to Kirsty



d) Talent Management

Dave noted there was not much to report, and he had wrestled with creating a framework, commenting there was considerable interest in progressing this idea within and outside the collaboration. However, a framework introduced too much subjectivity, and there appeared to be too many operational, procedural and cultural institutional issues restricting the development of a coherent protocol. In particular, how such a scheme would be centrally monitored or governed, alongside interacting with institutional systems (notably HR), was an especially challenging problematic.

Consequently, he proposed developing an enabling statement, noting the MC's support for talent management placements and projects between member organisations, but that he would leave the specifics of how such activities operated to the particular institutions involved. He acknowledged this might be perceived as somewhat of a 'cop out', but that the complexity of such a scheme, weighed against the MC's current limited central administrative resource, weighed strongly in favour of ideological rather than practical response.

The Directors agreed and supported this view. It was suggested speaking with HR staff in individual institutions might help clarify how tenable such a scheme might be, were it to be developed further in the future.

ACTION: All Directors to speak with local HR reps to discuss practicalities of staff exchanges within the Mercian region

It was noted that the talent management statement was aimed at library staff in member organisations. Spelling out clearly what the Collaboration's vision of talent management was crucial, and how any progress could be made within individual institutions. For example, the role of not only spotting talent to develop, but bringing that talent to bear on specific mutual endeavours. While the Collaboration's role, within the bounds of the Chair's vision, was an underlying ideological support, the question of how the MC could have a greater practical role remained for future clarification.

It was noted that the SCONUL Emerging Leaders report has not yet been communicated as fully as it could be, and that there might be synergies between the report and the MC's talent management vision. It was agreed to return the item to the SG to consider, especially with respect to identifying what the problem was such a scheme might seek to solve, and whether this might be a national rather than regional task.

ACTION: DP and GJJ to draw up 'enabling statement' for talent management for the website

e) Mercian Annual Report 2017

The Chair and GJJ noted that the Steering Group had agreed to progress the MC annual report, as a valuable marketing tool, ROI demonstration for members and reflective exercise. This is anticipated as an annual output, and one that may well now form part of the SCONUL requirements for subgroups. The Chair and MCDO were developing this, with the expectation that it would be made available in an e-only format in early 2018, noting other regional collaborations have already or are now ceasing physical annual report production. It was noted all SIG will be required to submit a brief summary of their activities for inclusion, but that most information in the report will collate from existing sources (e.g. meeting minutes, website etc). The readership is anticipated to be both external to the collaboration, as well as member institution's staff, and that the core of the report will be about the collaboration's activities, not those of its members.



ACTION: All SIGs to submit brief reports/content for the annual report

ACTION: GJJ and DP to coordinate production of the Collaboration's annual review

17/14 Group Reports

a) Conference Group

The Conference Group met recently (Oct 27th) to review feedback, and start planning the next (2018) conference. The Chair thanked Emma and CG for their efforts on an excellent 2017 conference, and noted the delivery of two reports. The first provided information on attendee demographics, and the other dealt with the evaluative feedback. Emma noted that the CG has reviewed the feedback, taking on board comments to incorporate into planning for #Mercian18.

Emma noted a number of recommendations and comments in the report. There were some procedural issues over the timing of the Mercian, and other regional collaboration conferences. Additionally, the suggestion to tie the Mercian conference into the U21 International Conference to be hosted at Birmingham in the summer was discussed. It was agreed that this was not a good match, and that the timing of the Birmingham event would leave the CG with insufficient lead time to organise the Mercian event, and hence a September 2018 date was desirable. Additionally, as the 2017 conference had been held in Leicester, it was felt that a West Midlands venue was desirable, if possible.

Raising funding beyond the money allocated by the MC Treasurer was a necessity for #Mercian18, given the tight budgetary costs associated with #Mercian17, even with a free conference venue. It was proposed to recoup some costs through sponsorship, although this will add some more issues with respect to catering and venue requirements. Hence, there would be a need to have a more clearly worded conference aim in terms of success factors, audience and anticipated content. Emma would devise this and agree with the SG a couple of broad mission statements, which reinforced the event's broad aim, topics and audience demographics. GJJ was in the process of adapting a sponsorship format from the M25, with insight from other regional collaborations, which the SG would review. Hence, it was agreed that seeking sponsorship was desirable for #Mercian18.

ACTION: Emma and CG to delineate conference CSF and aims more clearly

ACTION: GJJ to generate sponsorship policy document for review by SG

No delegate fees were levied in 2017, but this offered a problem in terms of opening spaces to delegates external to the Collaboration and also in terms of generating further revenue to support the conference's activities. Emma said the CG wished to propose a low delegate fee for Mercian member organisations' staff, with a higher premium fee levied on external delegates. A figure around £50 had been proposed by the group as the baseline. A discussion followed where some Directors were opposed to paying additional fees for the conference, as for some the proposed figure represented proportionally a sizable amount in contrast to their Collaboration membership fees. It was suggested that assuming a good price for venue, and sufficient sponsorship income was achieved, then delegate fees would not be necessary.

It was agreed that no delegate fees will be charged for delegates from Mercian libraries to the 2018 conference, but that the matter will be reviewed following the conference's hosting. However, external delegate spaces will be chargeable, and additionally the role of sponsorship in supporting the conference becomes more critical. Emma noted that the Mercian Conference had not yet achieved a 'must attend' delegate perception, and so it was unlikely that any large premium could be attached to any fee charging regime.



The Directors agreed that the 80-120 delegate size remained desirable, and that an annual conference rather than biennial was better to allow to build annually on event successes. It was also agreed that Directors would serve to encourage attendance and promote the event to their staff, noting this had been quite successful in 2017.

Emma noted that speakers can present papers as pairs, and that the CG remained keen to get first time speakers from within the region to engage. She acknowledged that the prospective September 2018 date-range might not be ideal for all, but was the best possible solution talking other options into account. However, this year's date had given rise to some coordination and communication issues for the planning team, for which resolutions were under review by the CG.

Emma noted that the CG has lost membership over the year, due to relocation or new commitments, and it was important to bolster the team numbers. She also remarked on the value of having CG team members on the ground at the host city/institution, meaning that there might be a need to recruit additionally, once the venue was agreed. Currently, she was seeking two new members, and was especially keen to involve West Midlands staff.

It was agreed to support the recommendations made by the CG in their reports, taking into account the preceding modifications and comments.

ACTION: All Directors to consider volunteering staff members to the Conference Group

b) Mercian Disability Forum

Group Chair, Beck Maguire, was not in attendance but Directors had received the subgroup's ToR to review and approve. It was noted the MDF were meeting on 13th Nov 2017 to, among other things, start planning an event for next year. GJJ noted he would be coordinating and supporting them in that regard. The MDF had also expressed has a strong interest in the buddying scheme. It was noted that service development aspects appear to be lacking in the ToR, and ideally, they should be included. It was also suggested that the initial paragraph of the ToR would be more appropriate at the end. However, with these proposed modifications the Directors agreed to endorse the MDF's ToR.

ACTION: MDF Chair and members to revise ToR wording accordingly

c) RDM Support Group

Laurian Williamson spoke to update Directors on RDMSG activities, noting in particular they had hosted a workshop session during the conference. Steps are still being taken to develop the RDMSG's membership and engagement across the Mercian region, and that they anticipated meeting again formally as a subgroup in the new year.

d) Staff Development Group

Kirsty reported that the events programme for 2017/18 is underway, and the programme has been sent to all institutions. The next meeting of the group's committee is in March, and while it was originally planned for Worcester, has been relocated to Loughborough due to a room booking clash. It was noted that, as previously approved by Directors, a lot of the same venues were being used for events. However, efforts were being made to vary the locations where possible, so as to give all Mercian region staff a chance to attend events of interest. The Chair noted his thanks to Kirsty and the SIG for their efforts.



e) SCONUL Update

Caroline T, in her role as interim Chair of SCONUL Board reported that a new Vice-Chair has been elected, and they will take over the role of SCONUL Chair in April 2018. She reported that the Leadership task and finish group launched its outputs in October, and these are available on the website. She noted there was still work to be done here, especially relating to the experience register. She commented, following on from earlier discussions that the Learning Spaces group will roll out their conclusions on 8th December, noting this is a very far ranging piece of work. How this will be taken forward remains under discussion.

Both of these task and finish groups have been producing outputs under SCONUL's current strategy, but already thought was being given to the next strategic plan (2019-2021), and that it is likely they will be seeking input from the regional groups. SCONUL has also set up a Services Group, which will be overseeing things such as SCONUL stats. Again, this is still in the process of being configured in terms of how the group operates. Related to this, Caroline noted that some high-level stats may be challenging due to closures, and referred everyone to the SCONUL Board minutes. Finally, she noted that the SCONUL Summer Conference 2017, had seen an increase in delegates, which given recent years' attendance levels was an improvement.

Jisc: To receive a report

As noted above, Jisc have been invited to attend the next meeting for a substantive discussion, including a presentation on the NBK.

ACTION: GJJ to formally invite Neil Grindley (Jisc) and Bethan Ruddock (NBK Project Manager) to attend the March 2018 meeting

ACTION: GJJ and DP to brief Jisc about discussion topics

17/15 AOB

a) Dates, venue & items for future meetings

Caroline W volunteered to host the next meeting, at Nottingham, with the date to be agreed offline.

ACTION: GJJ to coordinate with Caroline W over next Directors meeting date.

*[It was subsequently agreed that the meeting will be held **Monday 19th March 2018**]*