

Mercian Collaboration

Meeting 1 October 2015, University of Leicester

Present: Angela Brady (Aston), Maria Carnegie (Derby), Deborah Findlay (University College Birmingham), Robin Green (Warwick), Diane Job (Birmingham), Judith Keene (Worcester), Kirsty Kift (Coventry), David Parkes (Staffordshire), Fiona Parsons (Wolverhampton), Chris Porter (Newman), Chris Powis (Northampton), Enid Pryce-Jones (Birmingham City), Lys Ann Reiners (Lincoln), Paul Reynolds (Keele), Emma Sansby (Bishops Grosseteste), Caroline Taylor (Leicester) (Chair), Mark Toole (Nottingham Trent), Emma Walton (Loughborough), Caroline Williams (Nottingham).

Apologies: Ian Snowley (Lincoln), Nicky Whitsed (Open)

1. Notes and Matters Arising from the 24 March 2015 Workshop

There were no progress updates from the April workshop.

2. Secretary

Following the departure of Jo Webb a Secretary is needed to join the Steering Group. Members are urged to consider taking on the role - contact Caroline if interested.

3. Staff Development Group (SDG)

Kirsty Kift (Staff Development Group Chair) was present on behalf of the Group.

The SDG's Terms of Reference were agreed, with the proviso that point 3 (Chair's role) should become the first point.

Action: Kirsty Kift

Kirsty outlined the SDG's proposed plan for 2015-2016, which had been informed by priorities identified at the Directors' March workshop. The Programme was approved with thanks to the SDG for the Programme and their work to reorient the SDG to the new MC approach.

In discussion:

The annual development of Programmes would be determined by a combination of MC strategic priorities and requirements gathered by the SDG in consultation with operational staff.

The MC Work Plan will be developed in March/April for the following year. The SDG will draw on this to prepare a draft programme in their June meeting. This will be refined over the summer and presented at the Directors' September/October meeting for approval.

It was noted that:

- Enabling exchange of experience and discussion was valuable across different levels of staff
- Events may have to be repeated in different locations owing to the size of the Region and the unworkable travelling times that would otherwise be involved.

The MC would provide financial support for external input to meet agreed programme priorities. The level of support and how such events would be managed was discussed. The SDG should coordinate with other groups with similar priorities wherever possible.

There was some discussion of types of funding that would be provided: speaker expenses could be met but a requirement for fees would have to be judged on a case by case basis.

The MC Officer would provide support as appropriate and as capacity permitted.

SCONUL had also offered to provide a level of support – what this might be in practice remains to be determined.

It was agreed that a Regional MC conference was important, and that the SDG should build the first conference into their 2016-2017 Programme. The MC recognised that capacity to deliver on this would have to be considered carefully. It was noted that organisation of the Northern Collaboration is by a small conference team of volunteers headed by their Development Officer (equivalent to the MC Officer); this might be a model the MC could adopt.

Work on an interim SDG Web presence has begun. The SDG Web presence would promote SCONUL events in addition to those of the Collaboration to increase awareness of opportunities amongst Member libraries.

The question arose of where this would be hosted. Mark Toole offered to ascertain the progress of SCONUL's offer.

Action: Mark Toole

4. MC Work Plan 2015-2016

4.1. MC Officer

Recruitment of the Officer post had taken place. It was proposed to make an offer to Gareth Johnson. This was agreed, with Chair's Action to be taken should any issues arise.

4.2. Work Plan Proposals for the MC Officer

- Web site and online presence
- Meetings with MC Directors to progress the agreed March Workshop work strands
- Contact with similar groups in the Region, e.g., IT and Research Directors
- Contact with groups similar to the MC in other Regions
- MC Conference: to develop a Collaboration strand separate from the SDG Work Plan

It was agreed that the Officer's time would be used more effectively if small groups of co-located Directors had introductory meetings with the Officer together rather than the Officer meeting all Directors separately.

Action: MC Officer when in post

5. Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

The NC supports a number of SIGs, e.g., Value and Impact, Repositories as Shared Services, Content. Mark noted that SCURL's experience is that SIGs work well in drawing in staff interest at grassroots and higher level.

There are different SIG types, e.g., Shared Experience, Project-based. It was **agreed** that the MC preference is for Task and Finish SIGs, with terms of reference, timescales and schedules/project plans. These should ideally be led by Directors but where this is not feasible/the most appropriate mode then there should be clear reporting mechanisms.

The first MC SIGs would be based on the March 2015 Workshop priorities. When in post the MC Officer will contact Directors for interest in leading the SIGs.

Action: MC Officer

6. JISC Account Manager

There are different Account Managers across the MC Region. Some concern was expressed that it would be difficult to convey MC interests. It was **agreed** that the various Account Managers should be invited to attend the next MC meeting.

Action: MC Officer

7. SCONUL Update

Mark Toole reported:

The SCONUL Strategy Groups are being reconfigured to support implementation of the new Strategy. There will be three Groups going forward.

A Task and Finish Group is being created to take forward the Strategy Leadership theme.

The Content Group is active and further information will be disseminated on this.

8. Focus on RDM

Presentations and discussion were led by Ben Wynne from Leicester and Emma Walton from Loughborough. The format and sessions were very productive and the leads were thanked.

It was agreed that it would be useful for RDM Officers across the Member libraries to have a focused exchange session around RDM, potentially focusing on early stage interventions.

Action: MC Officer

9. Any Other Business

9.1. 2016 Subscriptions

As spend will be low in 2015 it was agreed that subscriptions for 2016 would be based on 2015 spend plus a safety factor in case any significant additional requirement should arise. When the required information was available the Steering Group would consider and propose subscription rates.

Action: Robin Green

9.2. OCLC EMEA Meeting

Fiona reported that the next OCLC EMEA Member Meeting would be held on 1-2 March 2016 in Madrid, focusing on 'the selfie generation'.

9.3. Warwick Symposium

Robin invited Members to attend a 19 November Symposium at Warwick on the future of academic libraries, organised as part of the celebrations for Warwick's 50th anniversary.

9.4. Updates

In lieu of round-the-table updates Caroline asked Directors to share by email to the MC list 3 key points about their institutions/services.

Action: All

9.5 Next meeting

16 March 2016; venue Loughborough (to be confirmed).