Mercian Deputies & Senior Staff Group – 6th March 2020
University of Leicester
Minutes

Attendees

Anne Knight (Cranfield), Jenny Rochfort (Nottingham), Vicky McGarvey (Staffordshire), Kay Jeffries (Derby), Phil Vaughn (Coventry), Ian Keepings (Birmingham), John Dowd (Birmingham), Benjamin Veasey (Loughborough), Jo Aitkins (Leicester), Joanne Dunham (Leicester) - Chair

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Notes from the previous meeting (previously circulated by Gareth)
3. Refining the group's terms of reference (as shared on the mailing list)
4. Networking, experience exchange, general discussions
       Round table on activities and developments in our institutions
    Defining themes for future meetings
    Feedback the Mercian Collaboration draft strategy
5. Reporting back to the Board on the Group
6. Next steps, venue and approximate date
7. AOB

Welcome and Introductions

    # JD welcomed all to the meeting
    # Apologies noted
    # Mercian Directors meeting activity was noted
    # All participated in a round-table of introductions

Notes from the previous meeting (previously circulated by Gaz Johnson)

    # Inclusivity and representation within the Deputies & Senior Staff Group

- *NOTED* – All acknowledged that Invitation went out to the list. Further colleagues have signed up as a result.
- *NOTED* - It was noted that there had been some discussion at the last meeting as to what constituted deputies and senior managers.
- *DECISION* - It was agreed that there should be no fixed membership
- *NOTED* - The group felt that, when considering participation from the previous and current meetings, there was a good spread of colleagues from institutions, responsible for different aspects of library activity. All agreed that this would enable the group to have to have an informed discussion across a range of opportunities and challenges facing libraries in the region.
- *NOTED* - All felt that this group provided a good opportunity to feed back into the directors group; to report back as to what initiatives or shared areas for concern/exploration is reflected across the region.

    # Virtual Meetings & collaborative workspace to investigate funds around virtual meeting

- *NOTED* – All saw potential in having a collaborative space for sharing files, video conferencing and holding discussions. Microsoft Teams was mentioned as being a potential tool which could enable this however, there were questions over how this

could be used across institutions. The group wondered if Gaz Johnson might investigate the practicalities on behalf of the group.

  - ○ ***ACTION - GJ - Explore how we set-up a MS Teams area.***

Actions from previous meeting
- *NOTED* – All actions complete

Refining the group's terms of reference (as shared on the mailing list)

Terms of Reference
- *NOTED* – Group noted its thanks to PV & Kirsty Kift (Coventry) for drafting the group's Terms of Reference as well as all those who had provided comments against the draft.
- *NOTED* – Group noted a number of suggested amendments/additions/clarifications to be made to the Terms of Reference, including:
  - ○ Add a point that the Group will call on experts to present on topics for discussion within the group to account for the fact that CPD is often challenging for senior managers
  - ○ Indicate that the Group shall pilot for the 1st year the notion of a rolling Chair to be determined through discussion/volunteering on a meeting by meeting basis.
- *DECISION* – The Group endorsed the Terms of Reference, to be sent to the Directors Group for approval
  - ○ ***ACTION - PV - to finalise Terms of Reference in time to be sent to Director's Group prior to their next meeting (likely as an AOB via DJ)***

Annual Report
- *NOTED* – The Group noted that it shall interpret the requirement for an annual report as an annual 'highlights' update on the group's activities.
  - ○ ***ACTION – GJ - clarify when summary report is due***

Hosting Group Meetings
- *NOTED* - Clarification that it will be the role of the host to coordinate the administration of meetings, including polling of suitable dates, invitation and setting of the agenda
- *NOTED:* No funds are available for hosting activities. Therefore, the host institution would be required pick up the expense associated with refreshments

Group Sponsor
- *NOTED* – Diane Job acting as group sponsor but clarification around this in the long-term should be sought
  - ○ ***ACTION - JD/IK to check with DJ about whether DJ envisions continuing to sponsor***

Networking, experience exchange, general discussions
COVID-19
The group shared local experiences around responding to the COVID-19 implications, including planning impact on service offerings, staffing levels, technology requirements, impact on external deadlines (UKRI consultation, REF related activity) and broader university teaching and research planning.

Institutional Updates
- Each representative provided an update on institutional priorities and activities of interest. Discussion amongst group members followed.

Defining themes for future meetings
- *NOTED* – Suggestions for future meeting themes, including:
    - Research agenda
    - Developing collections & content
    - Staffing & linking with cultural change & diversification
    - Attainment gaps & widening participation
    - Learning spaces
    - Systems & infrastructure
    - How library services link into university strategic priorities
    - CPD for senior managers
    - Future thinking - re-envisioning library services and planning for the next 5-6 years
- *DECISION* – Agreed that the next meeting theme would centre around research support, scholarly communications and supporting REF. To be hosted at Nottingham.

Reporting back to the Board on the Group
- *NOTED* – The group would need to discuss this at a further date.

Next steps, venue and approximate date
Next Meeting
- *DECISION* - Nottingham to host next meeting on the theme of research agenda; research support, scholarly communications and supporting REF. Date to be arranged
- ***ACTION - JR to take ownership of next meeting & theme***

7. AOB
- *NOTED* – No AOB recorded.