Higher Education Information Directors in Scotland (HEIDS)

Approved Minutes

Friday, 16 September 2011
University of the Highlands and Islands, Inverness

Present:

Chair

Alun Hughes	The University of the Highlands and Islands	AH

Secretary

Fraser Muir	Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	FM
David Baudains	SFC	DB
Gerry Costello	SAC	GC
Heidi Fraser-Krauss	St Andrews University	HFK
Brian Gilmore	University of Edinburgh	BG
Frazer Greig	University of Abertay	
Frances Neilson	JANET UK	
Simon Marsden	University of Edinburgh	SM
John Maher	University of the Highlands and Islands	JM
Kathy McCabe	University of Stirling	KM
Andy McCreath	Robert Gordon University	AM
Ronnie McIntyre	SAC	RM
Sandy MacDonald	University of Glasgow	SMD
Brian Mullins	University of the West of Scotland	BM
Dean Phillips	University of Aberdeen	DP
Jem Taylor	University of the Highlands and Islands	JT
Mark Toole	University of Stirling	MT

Via video conference:

Catherine McMillan	University of Strathclyde	CM
Mike Roch	Heriot-Watt University	MR
Bruce Roger	University of Strathclyde	BR

1. **Apologies were received from the following:**

David Beards	SFC
Caroline Cochrane	RCS
Allan Doyle	APUC
Gerry Dougan	SFEU
Darren Gibb	APUC
Tom Mortimer	University of Dundee
Moriamo Oduyemi	Abertay University
Fraser Ross	RCS

Michael Turpie   University of Abertay

The chair welcomed Mike Roch from Heriot-Watt University to his first meeting of HEIDS and to David Baudains who would be representing the Scottish Funding Council.

2.   Minutes of the previous meeting: **Action**

The minutes of the meeting held at University of Edinburgh on May 23rd 2011 were approved.

3.   Matters arising:

FM would circulate members responses to the JISC and UCISA regarding the JISC review.

4.   Shared Services project update

MT introduced the project report and thanks both the steering group for their work on the project and the SFC for project funding. An update on progress since the report was published was received covering synergies with the McClellan report into public sector ICT, the indicated road map and quick wins. Attention was brought to the shared student records system as a particularly challenging area but one which the group felt should be aired.

Circulation had been quite wide, for example with SUFDG members and JANET UK with particularly positive response from the latter which was considered vital to future successes. Meetings with APUC and with members of the SPSN had been undertaken. Key would be to develop a vehicle with authority and commitment to broken services.

The group then discussed when and how APUC would and could be involved in future developments. The Chair stated that APUC must be involved in any procurement that came out of the project.

The group then discussed BlackBoard versus Moodle VLEs in terms of the project. It was agreed to take forward both options in terms of licence models and hosting options.

The group discussed the relevant points of the McClelland report and how it mapped onto the findings of the shared services report. It was felt that HEIDS as a group needed to engage with the points or risk being left behind or out of discussions however it was considered that a knee-jerk reaction or change should be avoided. The group considered the position of the funding council but it was reported that as they were not consulted there was no view on what was considered necessary or mandatory from the funders perspective. Is was also unclear as to whether funding would be affected or whether investment would be made if changes as a result of the report were deemed necessary.

The Chair concluded the item asking whether members considered that we had an agreement and volunteers to progress each of the items identified in the project report. It was consider that this should be discussed further as part of the following agenda item on the future of HEIDS.

5.   The future of HEIDS

The Chair introduced the paper on the future of HEIDS previously circulated. A need for structured vehicles to work through in order to progress the items identified as a priority was set out to members.

MR raised the issue of the recent white paper regarding the Universities Scotland (US) efficiencies task force. It was noted that the Chair sits on this

group. It was also noted that, like SAUDE with respect to Energy and Estates, HEIDS was expected to be the vehicle for ICT. US expects sector bodies to undertake the work. In addition, the Universities UK (UUK) efficiencies group was looking at streamlining business processes as a means to increase efficiency.

The group went on to discuss shared student records. MT noted that we must undertake work to answer the question of whether it can be done or prove it cannot as the question will not disappear. JM described the work being undertaken by UHI in this area. It was noted that we must engage with professional groups, such as students records divisions when looking at administrative systems and this message needs to be referred back to US for action.

Members then discussed how projects would be funded and what options would be available to the group to progress. The subject of subscription charges was raised and members agreed that commitment to this would be wholly dependent on what the rates would be. Parallels with UCISA and SCURL were drawn with respect to both a subscription model as well as the need to rely on volunteers from the sector in order to undertake work on projects.

The group voted on whether to change HEIDS structurally with the majority voting to retain the present structure at this time. However it was agreed to undertake some work over the next two months on how the group might change to better enable some of the work to be undertaken in future. This should include better engagement with FE.

Several work streams were proposed, 4 to look at priority projects and 1 to look at future structures. The Chair asked members to consider leading each of the streams over lunch.

The group broke for lunch and agreed to continue discussion

5.   **The future of HEIDS continued**
The Chair welcomed back members and summarised the discussion prior to lunch.

Priority area leads were identified as follows:

3.a – IT Continuity and Storage: Brian Mullins (UWS)	BM
3.b – collaboration tools: Andy McCreath (RGU)	AM
3.c&d – Blackboard: Mark Toole (Stirling)	MT
3.e – Moodle: Heidi Fraser-Kraus (St Andrews)	HFK

In addition, Gerry Costello from SAC will lead on developing a model for HEIDS to operate under in order to further facilitate these developments.   GC

The group agreed to meet again earlier than the next scheduled meeting and in approximately 2 months time to report on progress. FG agreed to host at Abertay.   FG

The Secretary agreed to circulate actions and an updated survey response with some urgency.   FM

6.   Reports
As previously circulated, only specific items would be discussed on the day.
Written items to the secretary are noted below.

6.1   SFC (DB)
There is not much to report on McClelland. We understand from the Scottish
Government that two Cabinet Sub-committees have been established. One of
these will deal with implementing the Christie and McClelland reports. But as yet
we don't know about the F&HE sector ICT board. In that context it seems very
timely for HEIDS to be discussing the issues regarding the future of HEIDS. And
I gather HEIDS colleagues are due to meet John McClelland on 4 October so
that would be an opportunity to explore these governance issues and options.

Following discussions with Malcolm Reade from the JISC, the group should think
about JISC as well as the JANET UK brokerage and SFC Invest to Save, in
considering how developments might be supported.

The funding bodies have awarded the contracts for the 3 studies (JISC services,
JISC governance, JANET review)

HEFCE is making a submission to BIS in October on JANET procurement (so
SFC will have to make some in-principle decisions soon on JANET)

The new RSC Scotland service (hosted by Glasgow University) is operational;
SFC is continuing to provide additional funding for assessment and accessibility

The group might be interested in the discussions on SPSN, facilitated by
Scottish Procurement. There is wide interest across the public sector in creating
a SPSN, but things are at an early stage. A possible scenario is that we get on
with procuring a PSN-compliant JANET backbone on the current timetable, and
the SPSN is developed in stages over the next few years, rather than as a single
major procurement soon.

6.2   Universities Scotland (DT)
Members should note the paper from US distributed separately.

6.3   JISC (AH/MT)
Nothing to note.

6.4   JCN/JANET UK (AH/MT)
Nothing to note

6.5   RSCs (CC)
Nothing to note/covered in SFC update

6.6   SCURL/SCONUL (FM/MT)
Nothing to note

6.7   UCISA CISG (HFK)
Nothing to note

6.8   UCISA Executive
Nothing to note

6.9 APUC

Microsoft & Adobe
Invitation to Tender on behalf of the Scottish Colleges Consortium to supply license services is expected to be released on 15th September 2011

Apple
The successor agreement has been let to Apple Computers International and will be available from October 2011. APUC will distribute further information on this as soon as it is available.

IT Hardware
Scottish Procurement issued a full OJEU tender for this requirement on 17th August 2011. The agreement is expected to be available by November/December 2011.
There is the potential for HEIDS to nominate an evaluation panel member for the tenders evaluation, however the evaluation process is due to commence fairly soon. Dialogue on a representative from HEIDS is therefore welcome.

Servers & Storage
The existing NSSA, due to expire on 31st July 2011, has been extended until 30th April 2012.

VLEs
Angus Warren has been discussing options around this with members of groups involved in VLE management in the sector such as HEIDS, Scot-Bug etc and will be further liaising with HEIDS shortly on this.

John McClelland ICT Review and HEIDS ICT Review
APUC will take steps including some resource re-allocations in the coming weeks to ensure it is structured and aligned to support and work in partnership with HEIDS to support developments that HEIDS may wish to put in place.

Other news:
Frank Rowell has become the new Head of Consortia and Chief Executive of the North East Universities Purchasing Consortia , based in Leeds (he has been commuting from York, where he lives, to Edinburgh for many years). Frank has made an outstanding contribution to the organisation and in its delivery of services to the sector. A positive point however for us is that he will of course remain within the sector.

7   AOCB

Public Sector/Services Network (PSN)
MT updated the group on attendance at a recent PSN meeting representing HE sector. It was noted that security is a major concern. It was reported that the PSN could be summarised as a shared physical network and as a "network of networks".

The development of PSN would not hold up progress with SJ6 and it is strongly desired that JANET should form the backbone of the Scottish PSN (SPSN). SJ6 would be PSN compliant as required. Procurement Scotland are leading the procurement with a swift timetable.

The group discussed the impact and relevance of the SPSN to members with respect to their own membership of Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs). MT agreed to host/facilitate a meeting of representatives of Scottish MANs.   MT

FN described the alignment of contracts and opportunities that now present themselves to the sector.

8   Venue and Agenda for the next meeting
The next meeting would be held in the University Abertay within the next two months in order to progress and report on priority items discussed and agreed in the meeting.

Fraser Muir
16/09/11