

M25 Consortium Steering Group

Review of Working Groups

Background

The Steering Group considered a report on the Consortium's Working Groups which was undertaken in September 2006 and after discussion agreed the following way forward.

Context

It was clear from discussion with Chairs of Working Groups and within the Steering Group that a large amount of very useful activity has been undertaken over the last few years, and that the Consortium is fortunate in the hard work and dedication of many people who participate in activities. It was also recognised that membership of Working Groups is useful personal development activity and we should acknowledge this and take pride in the fact that people continue to want to be involved in the Consortium's many activities.

The Groups fall into two main categories: those which were formed in response to a specific agenda and those which provide services which underpin the work of the Consortium in general.

It was also noted that the Groups had grown up over the years without defined procedures for membership and other constitutional arrangements, and at this stage of the Consortium's maturity, these issues should be addressed.

Working Groups

Disaster Management Group

This Group is one of the longest established and has been important in raising the profile of the Consortium. It has had many considerable achievements. However, it was decided that the time was right to discontinue this Group in its current format.

It was agreed that:

- *work on business continuity should be completed by the end of the calendar year*
- *conversion of the web pages into the new site's look, feel and style should also be completed*
- *an annual report is made to the Steering Group by one of the SG members who assumes responsibility for this specific brief. This might logically be done in consultation with those who formerly worked in this Working Group.*
- *An annual Exchange of Experience event is organised under the aegis of CPD25*

Disability Working Group

This Group was set up in response to the legislation concerning disabled students and has made some important recommendations. However, it was decided that this Group had met its original objectives and should be discontinued.

It was agreed that:

- *one final piece of work should be undertaken in the area of access to member libraries for disabled students and based around an access card or entitlement. This work can be carried out by a small sub-group and can be incorporated into “Find a Library” and the Access scheme*
- *an annual Exchange of Experience event is organised under the aegis of CPD25*

Advocacy Working Group

This Group produces a number of effective tools to promote the Consortium and its activity. There has, however, been some ambiguity about its remit in terms of advocating the work of the Consortium and this has led to some confusion with the Collaboration and Partnership Group.

It was agreed that:

- *the Group is renamed “Marketing and Communication Working Group” and*
- *advocacy work is moved to the Collaboration and Partnership area*
- *an annual marketing plan is produced.*

Quality Working Group

This Group is one of the newer Groups and is still establishing its agenda, having identified a large number of initiatives. There is a clear regional dimension to this Group as proximity makes it easier to collaborate on initiatives.

It was agreed that the Group works up a proposal around two or three themes for presentation at a future meeting of the SG and that a clear indication is given at that meeting for the Group to work towards, together with discussion of any resource requirements.

London Health Libraries

This Group has had some notable achievements in access for placement students and in service charters. However, the health picture in London is changing (five SHAs to one).

It was agreed that the Group maintains a watching brief in this area to identify how it should best proceed, making a recommendation to a future SG meeting.

Collaboration and Partnership Working Group

This Group maintains relationships with a number of groups which are important to the Consortium to ensure that the Consortium’s agenda is in tune with regional developments. However we felt that this work could be overwhelming.

It was agreed that:

- *the Group undertakes further work to slim down the number of bodies with which it engages*
- *some thought is given by the Group to the relationship with the LLDA and a recommendation is brought to the SG about whether to renew our subscription (c£5k) or seek other ways in which we can work with them.*

Resource Discovery Working Group

This Group has responsibility for keeping a watching brief on activities in the broad area of resource discovery as well as giving direction to the Systems Team and the InforM25 suite of products.

It was agreed that:

- *the Group should continue in its current format*
- *it should investigate other activities such as developments in institutional repositories*
- *it should continue to seek ways of responding to JISC calls.*

CPD25

This Group (actually five task groups and a steering group) has been very successful and delivers a well-respected programme of events.

It was agreed that:

- *the Group should continue in its current format (but see below for constitutional arrangements)*
- *It investigates further administrative support to enable more activities to take place (e.g. exchange of experience events as noted above and brings a proposal to the SG in due course).*

Constitutional Arrangements

The size and diversity of our members and the personal and professional development opportunities that membership of the Consortium affords is recognised and welcomed.

It was agreed that we put in place some arrangements to ensure that regular opportunities arise for people to serve on the Consortium SG or its Working Groups and that a clear and transparent set of procedures are in place to allow us to do this.

Chairs of Working Groups

Rules for membership of the SG are set out in the Memorandum of Association and Rules for the Conduct of Business however there is no comparable statement for Working Groups.

It was agreed that where possible the Chairs are elected members of the SG. Where they are currently co-opted they should ensure they are proposed for election at the

next available opportunity. However, we should allow ourselves the ability to co-opt (as a Chair) people who are not the institutional representative or have served their maximum period in office as long as this does not exceed two people in any one period.

Members of Working Groups

We agreed that as a rule members do not serve on a Working Group for more than three consecutive years. Where someone has particular expertise or knowledge he or she should be recommended for a further period.

We agreed that a call for expressions of interest is made three times a year to all member institutions and that a database is kept of those who might become members of Working Groups. We also recommend that the final decision on whether someone is appointed to a Working Group is made by the Chair of that Group.

CPD25

There is currently no procedure for electing a chair for this Group which is, as noted above, highly visible and important for the Consortium. We agreed that proposals would be brought to the next Members' Meeting.

New activities

We discussed new activities with chairs of groups and these centred around the following:

Database of expertise

This has been discussed before and we agreed that a small sub-group of the SG is tasked with exploring this initiative and scoping it. If it proves desirable, an external agency should be engaged to work on this.

Consortial purchasing

Although the Consortium still has no intention of acting as a purchasing consortium *per se* we agreed that some work is undertaken by a sub-group of the SG to explore the work of LUPC/SUPC in relation to Library (and related) products to identify any areas that are being ignored, and to see whether there is any scope for influencing either producers or procurers in our area (both geographical and domain).

Research

We agreed that there might be merit in constructing a database or other interactive directory of research collections held by our members. This might build on the work already conducted by other groups which partially cover our area, but would give a research overview of materials held in our region(s).

Planning

We agreed that an annual planning event takes place each Spring to discuss the priorities for the Working Groups. This meeting will ensure that there is a good fit with the overall strategic plan and allow the SG as a whole to have the opportunity to comment on plans. It will also ensure there is good communication between the work of all of the Groups and that it ties into the process for setting the budget.