UNIVERSITY OF KENT
Information Services Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2007

Present: Dr R Baker (Chairman), Professor A Chadwick, Mr NSR Jackson, Dr K Leydecker, Mrs C Pickaver, Mr J Pink, Mr PV Slater, Mr J Sotillo, Mr S Thornton, Dr AH Ward, Mrs JC Hornsby (Secretary).

In attendance: Ms KM Doyle, Ms G Woodhams.

Apologies: Dr A Klevan

14/06-07 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2006 were approved.

15/06-07 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee discussed the proposed membership of the Director of Communications and Marketing and the IS Head of Planning and Administration, both *ex officio*, the former to reinforce links between the Communications & Development Office and IS services across the University, and the latter as a member of the IS Senior Management Team.

It was agreed that a request should be made to Senate to include both posts in the membership of the ISC and that the Director of Communications and Marketing should be required to provide a report to each meeting of the Committee.

ACTION: SECRETARY

16/06-07 CHAIR’S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair reported that this would be his second and final meeting of the Committee, before he left the University, and that his successor in this role would be Professor John Baldock.

17/06-07 MATTERS ARISING

(a) Information Services User Satisfaction Survey (08/06-07(ii))

The action on the Director of Information Services under this minute is included in the Operational Plan (see minute 23/06-07(ii)) below).

(b) Extended Opening Hours Pilot (11/06-07)

The Head of Library Services reported that the pilot period of longer opening hours would be extended into the end of the Spring Term as requested, but that the Deputy PVC had recommended that the pilot be given a further year to bed in before any decision is taken on extending the facility to students at Associate Colleges.

(c) Web Development (12/06-07)
The Director of Communications & Marketing reported that a news release on current activity on web development would be issued very soon.

**18/06-07 COMPUTER USER PANEL**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2007 for information (Paper ISC 11/06-07).

**19/06-07 LIBRARY USER PANEL**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2007 for information (Paper ISC 12/06-07).

**20/06-07 MEDWAY DRILL HALL LIBRARY USER GROUP**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2006 for information (Paper ISC 13/06-07).

**21/06-07 WEB STRATEGY & STEERING GROUP REPORT**

The Committee received a report from the Web Strategy and Steering Group (WSSG) for information (Paper ISC 14/06-07). It was noted by the Chair of the WSSG that the current report was a scaled down version of the one which had previously come before the Committee (ISC 16/05-05), and that this would provide a good basis for the new Chairman.

**22/06-07 CMSDS IMPLEMENTATION GROUP REPORT**

The Committee received a report from the CMSDS Implementation Group for information (Paper ISC 20/06-07). The Academic Registrar noted that such risks as there are, are related to development, and that resources are needed for ongoing development and further innovation. It was noted that identification of priorities for the CMSDS was being taken forward in a sub-group of the Implementation Group.

**23/06-07 REPORTS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES**

(i) Director’s Report: November 2006 – February 2007

The Director of Information Services spoke to his report (ISC 21/06-07), and the following points in were highlighted in particular:

*A1 Heavy Use of Services*

The Committee's attention was drawn to the graphs in the Appendix to the report.

*A3 SPAM*

A new approach to dealing with SPAM has been introduced, whereby suspicious emails are rejected at University level prior to their ever reaching users. This replaces the previous system in which emails were permitted at University level, but needed to be rejected by users. Under this system the level of SPAM had become intolerable both for users and for IS.

The new approach may need further strengthening in time, but has reduced the pressure on IS for the moment. It is conceivable, if unlikely, that some genuine email might be rejected in this way. In such cases, the University has no control over the notification sent back to the original
sender, but normal practice is for the relevant email system to issue a notification in the event of an undelivered message.

**B7 University Portal**

It was explained that the portal would vary according to the identity and needs of the user (so an applicant would be different from a student in course who would be different from an alumnus). A dashboard approach would be key to this, and would also link in with plans for a CRM system.

**B12 Review of Desktop Provision**

It was agreed that the significant requirement for new hardware across the University, in order to implement Microsoft Vista should be flagged at M3.

**ACTION CHAIRMAN**

**B13 Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plans**

No live ‘switch-off’ is planned during testing of these plans, but IS want to discover the expectations that departments have of IS in the event of a major incident affecting local systems. The Committee endorsed IS’s plans for testing disaster recovery plans.

**B15 Identity for Life**

Proposals for this will be brought to the next meeting of ISC.

**ACTION: DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES**

**B16 Second Machine Room**

The need for a second machine room and the risks posed by a single one to University Operations was emphasised.

**B17 Accommodation**

IS staff are currently split between three locations: Templeman Library, Cornwallis South and Registry, and accommodation is becoming a critical issue, such that some staff may need to relocate to Keynes College, further splitting collaborative teams.

**C3 and C5 Medway: Opening Hours & Policies and Procedures**

Consistency of provision between sites, and between institutions are becoming the focus of students’ attention in Medway.

The Committee thanked the Director of Information Services for his report and agreed that it was formatted very helpfully with clear links to the IS Operational Plan, the IS Budget Bids and the University Operational Plan. It was discussed at some length, together with the Draft Operational Plan 2007-2008, and the Information Services Budget Bids, 2007-08. See below.

**(ii) Draft Operational Plan 2007-2008**
(iii) Information Services Budget Bids, 2007-08

*Background:* Information Services are funded to deliver services through a system of top slicing Departmental budgets. The funds are rolled forward annually as the basic funds available.

Each year, projects which require funding in addition to this general budget are identified and classified as needing either one-off or recurrent funding. These are the bids contained in the present paper. The bids are separated into 3 separate categories: core services, development, and future needs, and items are listed in priority order under each heading.

The Director of Information Services seeks the approval and support of the Information Services Committee for the bids identified in the paper before submitting them to in the general budget bidding process.

The Committee considered the Director's Report, the Operational Plan and the Budget Bids together.

During discussion the following points were made:

- There had been much debate at M3 about the use of additional fee income, and that two principal criteria were emerging:
  
  (i) Enhancement of the student experience  
  (ii) Capital Projects (rather than ‘soft’ resources)

- Non-recurrent bids for funding might, under the rather more favourable financial position this year be dealt with in short order, while recurrent funding is subject to the scrutiny and views of the next Vice-Chancellor.

- **Budget Bid 1.3 E-maturity.** There was strong support for this item, although regarded as fiddly and technical in some ways, as it has a significant impact on the student experience.

- **Budget Bid 2.3 Customer Relationship Management and Admissions System** should be strengthened by linking with the budget bids made by the Director of Communications & Marketing for web development, and the Academic Registrar, both of whom have significant interests/responsibilities in this area.

- **Budget Bid 2.9 Video Streaming** was singled out for support, as it not only would save money in the longer term (by eliminating the need to purchase DVDs etc), but also linked in to enhancement of the student experience as favoured by M3. The Committee agreed that since there was support for this functionality across several departments, particularly in Humanities, that the bid for this item should be moved from IS reserves to central non-recurrent funding.

- The Departmental Materials Fund Review had not been circulated to the ISC. The Head of Library Services laid a copy on the table and the paper was circulated to members after the meeting ([ISC 23/06-07](#)). The Committee were of the view that it is a critical fund and as such, should be discussed with the new Chairman prior to its being sent to M3 with the support of the Committee. Comments on the paper should be sent directly to the Head of Library Services.

Further comments on the budget bids should be sent directly to the IS Head of Planning and Administration by the end of the Spring Term for incorporation into the final version of the bids.

**ACTION:** ALL
(iv) National Student Survey – IS Report to Executive Group

The Chair reported that there had been significant interest at EG in the results of the NSS, and recognition and support at the Deans’ awayday, for the need to do something about Library provision. Given the current preference of EG for capital projects (see 23/06-07(ii) above), bids for extra space in the library are likely to receive support, whereas in fact the major pinch points appear to be in resources (i.e. books and materials) rather than capital.

The Committee’s view was that funding for resources should be a top priority for the Library, and were supportive of the Library’s efforts to enhance facilities, noting in particular:

- If the University aspires to be in the top 20 (the aim stated in the University’s Operational Plan), then there needs to be a recognition of the need to invest in Library services
- The Library could be a natural home for the implementation of the International Strategy; the provision of café facilities/multimedia/meeting spaces.

The Head of Library Services urged the Committee to exercise caution before recommending capital projects to extend current space. A review of the current usage of space within the Library needs to be undertaken before any new build is proposed, especially in view of the shortage of accommodation for IS staff (as outlined in the Director’s report).

(v) Results of the Business Systems Survey 2006

This item was postponed until the next meeting, to ensure that key users in the Academic Division could respond.

ACTION: DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS SYSTEMS TO REOPEN SURVEY

24/06-07 UNIVERSITY OF KENT AT MEDWAY

(i) Medway Review Update

The Head of Library Services spoke to this paper (ISC 19/06-07).

The review process began last year and the paper is a summary of where we are. Key issues for IS in Medway are

(i) Ease of Use
(ii) Putting back resource where it was temporarily removed

Although provision in Medway does differ from that in Canterbury, equivalences are being implemented wherever possible.

The need for clarity in relation to the future of the Tonbridge centre was raised; it was also reported that the Library is in place at Wye, but that agreement had still to be reached for ICT provision.

25/06-07 LIBRARY REGULATIONS

The Committee received paper ISC 22/06-07, a proposal to amend the Library Regulations, with the insertion of:
(XI) Photographs may not be taken in the library building unless prior permission has been granted by the Director of Information Services or his nominee.

The Head of Library Services explained that the background to this proposal had been the aggressive behaviour of some Library users in taking photographs of other users and/or members of staff, without consent. It is not meant to inhibit the legitimate photographing of books or materials where this might be an aide-memoire.

There was some disquiet about this proposal which would suggest that this was an issue particularly for the Library. Rather, if there is an issue with threatening or aggressive behaviour, this ought to be addressed via the University's harassment policy. It was agreed that practice at other University Libraries should be investigated and the results brought back to the next meeting of the Committee, before any decision is made.

**ACTION: HEAD OF LIBRARY SERVICES**

26/06-07 WEB FORUM

It was reported that there will be a Web Forum held on 29 March 2007 in the Senate, to which all staff were invited.

27/06-07 CHAIRMAN

The Committee thanked the Chairman for his work on behalf of the Committee and offered their good wishes in his new post.

28/06-07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 6 June 2007.