



School IT Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 22nd March 2017

Present:

Gordon Smith (Chair) (GS)
Richard Bartlett (RB)
Lydia Drumright (LD),
Robin Uttin (RU)
David Robinson (DR) (standing in for Litsa Biggs)
Richard Hey (RH)
Nigel Berryman (NB)
Soren Barage (SB)
Bertie Gottgens (BG)
Guy Williams (GW)
John Sinclair (JS)
Mary Dixon-Woods (MDW)

Apologies: Caroline Edmonds (CE), Randy Read (RR), Chris Wallace (CW), Litsa Biggs (LB) and Bertie Gottgens (BG)

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of last School IT Committee meeting held on 24th November 2016 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

With regard to three action points from the last meeting:

- DR noted that he had had an action point to draft a paper on the challenges around timetabling. He said there were some very complex issues involved in this matter, and consequently, the paper was still under development, however it would be brought to a subsequent meeting of this Committee.
- RB noted that he had had an action point to consider how the School could help staff who work in scientific computing. He reported that this was still under consideration, alongside and in collaboration with UIS.
- RB noted that he had had an action point to contact John Danesh to ask him whether he could nominate anyone from PHPC to sit on this committee. RB reported that he had been invited but was unable to attend.

4. Policy

i) Cyber Security

RB reported on a conference he had attended the previous week on Cyber Security organised by National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) who are now the official Government technical authority in information security. RB reported that there were a number of ideas which came out of the conference which would inform how CSCS and potentially others in

the School/University manage information security risk. The clearest messages received were:

- Fundamentally, security which does not work for users, does not work at all
- Password policy should be simplified to a minimum length, and password guidance issued recommending people use “three random words”
- Any policy element where no action would be taken in the event of non-compliance should be issued as guidance, not policy.
- Ideally user facing policy should be minimised, and the majority of information security policy should be directed to those responsible for IT (IT teams like CSCS)

ii) **Communication and Security**

- a. This arose out of a communications incident following the launch of the New Employee Self Service Launch. *RB* reported that lessons had been learnt about appropriate style and content of communication to avoid users being confused or encouraged to open phishing emails. *RH* also highlighted that lessons had been learnt in *UIS*, and within the *HR Systems Division*, from where this communication had originated.

5. Strategic Planning

i) **CSCS cost saving plans**

RB reported on a number of *CSCS* cost saving plans that were currently under consideration:

- It was reviewing its charging model and intended to move from monthly to annual billing. In addition to this, they were also considering moving to charges based more on consumption of service rather than access to service (e.g. a charge for storage consumed by a group, not storage which a group has access to).
- It was also considering whether changes to *CSCS* storage and network architecture, and adoption of *UIS* and/or cloud based services could reduce service charges.
- It was planning to launch Microsoft OneDrive for Business in conjunction with Windows 10. He said that *CSCS* was considering whether some users should be given a OneDrive account but not necessarily a home drive. This would lead to lower storage costs for *CSCS* and these savings could be passed on to their customers.

MDW expressed frustration about the amount of time spent on invoicing. *RU* pointed out that this was a wider issue for the whole University and *RB* assured her that the proposed new annual charging model (which would involve a greater degree of automation) along with the existing functionality to map services to cost centres, should save users a significant amount of time.

ii) **The JSCS**

RB said that although the *JSCS* project had now been shelved, *CSCS* had learnt a number of valuable lessons from it which they would use to improve their cost recovery model (as mentioned above). The project had also uncovered some gaps in service provision and *CSCS* would now move to fill these gaps.

RB highlighted a couple of benefits which *CSCS*'s involvement with *SBS* had brought the School. He noted that the department of *Zoology* was *CSCS*'s largest customer in terms of billing, and he also mentioned that *CSCS*'s involvement with the *SLCU* had given the School access to the *SLCU*'s large offsite data centre, which meant *CSCS* users benefited from less risk of data centre outage than most other users (including those using *UIS* services) due to greater geographic dispersal of the data centres.

RU asked *RB* whether *CSCS* had any plans for further expansion. *RB* told him that 3 departments within *SBS* (*Plants Sciences*, *Biochemistry* and *Psychology*) were still interested in joining *CSCS* but

he would not be able to consider any further expansion until the next financial year. He assured the Committee that no other departments in SBS would be able to join CSCS until this Committee had the opportunity to review the business case for any expansion.

lii) High Performance Computing Services

LD had attended meetings where the governance of High Performance Computing services was discussed. The HPC Strategy Group, which reported into both the Planning and Resources Committee (PRC) and the Information Services Committee (ISC) sat at the top. There would be groups which feed into that, one of those being a joint Clinical Medicine/Biological Sciences group jointly chaired by Nabeel Affara (Department of Pathology, Biological Sciences) and LD. The HPHI Oversight Committee (a sub-committee of the School IT Committee) would feed into that joint SBS/SCM group. This governance structure would inform how the existing cluster facilities, and the new Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) funded Peta5 high performance cluster would be funded and operated.

6. Performance

RB circulated a paper on the CSCS Performance metrics as requested during the previous Committee meeting (now attached to these minutes).

7. CSCS Finances

RB said he had no figures to circulate at this meeting, however RU suggested that half yearly accounts should be circulated at each Lent term meeting.

Action point – RB to circulate a post meeting half yearly report on CSCS’s finances.

8. University IT (UIS and ISC)

RH gave the Committee a brief update on University IT:

SPS/SCM Relationship Manager – Andrew Leedham who was currently an IT Infrastructure Manager at SOAS, had been appointed to this post and would start on 22nd May. He will visit the School during his induction to meet key stakeholders.

Cyber Security - RH confirmed that this was now the joint number one issue on the risk register, and its Cyber Security programme was currently being revamped with support from the most senior members of the University. He reported that there were 6 work strands to this programme, including:

- Institutional Engagement.
- A policy tool kit project.
- Bolstering the Computer Emergency Response Team (CamCERT) who were responsible for detecting security problems and co-ordinate the response to security incidents.
- A security engineering project to provide services which departments may wish to take up
- An Information Asset Owners project to ensure that staff who handle sensitive data were doing it correctly.
- A Security Assurance Service project to deal with the security around the replacement of specific services.

9. NHS IT matters

LD reported on NHS IT Matters

- **Electronic records** – LD reported that the Trust had recently become a Global Digital Exemplar site and had received £10 million from NHS Digital to improve their electronic medical records. She also reported that ULC and GOSH were both adopting EPIC (the Trust’s Electronic Patient Record system) and the Trust would be supporting them with the implementation.

- **SDHS** - LD said that an electronic system for data applications was now in place, although there were still restrictions on who could apply for data as they did not have the capacity to deal with lots of requests.
- **Medical imaging** – GW is currently working on plans to obtain an API for anonymising image files for which they will need a secure data hosting platform in the UIS space. The High Performance Hub for Informatics (HPHI) will not have the capacity to meet demand, so it will be implemented in Peta5.
- **LIMS** – LD reported that the Trust had recently implemented a new LIM system (Laboratory Information Management) which would ensure that they will continue to be HTA compliant.

MDW raised concerns that small data studies were having to comply with very strict PID requirements and this was proving to be so onerous that some project were being shelved. RB advised her that there should not be any barriers other than cost, and GS asked her to provide further feedback on this issue.

GS queried who was now supplying IT services to the Trust, LD reported that HP Enterprise is still the primary service provider, but they are procuring storage from Novosco.

10. Any other business

None

11. Date of Next Meeting

1pm – 2.30pm, Wednesday, 28th June.