

# UK MAN Managers' Group

Minutes of meeting held on 21 October 2009 at 39/47 Gordon Square, basement level, room GOR B03, Birkbeck College, University of London, Bloomsbury, London, WC1E OPD

## **Present:**

John Linn	AbMAN	
Mark Jameson	C&NLMAN	
Linda McCormick	ClydeNET	
Brian Gilmore	EaStMAN	
Ian Griffiths	EMMAN	
Mike Whitehead	FaTMAN	
David Hayling	Kentish MAN	
Paul Kentish	Kentish MAN	
Jon Aldington	Kentish MAN	
Mike Byrne	LeNSE	(Chair)
Andrew Kerl	LMN	
Geoff Cooper	LMN	
Peter White	LMN	
Chris Kelly	NIRAN	
Tim Robinson	NNW	(Note-taker)
Jason Bain	NorMAN	
Neil Francis	SWERN	
Ian Sugden	SWERN	
Ed Carter	YHMAN	

## **Apologies:**

Jem Taylor UHI

## 1. Administrative Matters

### 1.1 Dates of Future Meetings:

The dates of the first three meetings in 2010 were confirmed. The note takers and lunch payers were also confirmed.

20/01/2010 – HEFCE Offices, London

Lunch: SWERN & Minutes: NIRAN

14/04/2010 – HEFEC Offices, London

Lunch: EMMAN & Minutes: NORMAN

23/06/2010 - HEFEC Offices, London

Lunch: EaStMAN & Minutes: SWERN

It was agreed that the fourth meeting in 2010 would be on

20-Oct-2010 – HEFCE Offices, London (tbc)

Lunch: ClydeNET & Minutes: UHI

Action: *Louise Bexon* to book HEFCE Offices

It was agreed that 13-Oct-2010 should be reserved as an alternate date if 20-Oct proved to be unsuitable, e.g. clashed with JDT

## 2. Notes of previous meetings:

29/04/09 meeting:

Accuracy                      Agreed

Matters Arising              None

24/06/09 meeting:

Accuracy                      Agreed

Matters Arising              None

## 3. JANET Partner Agreement:

### a) JPA funding model

No changes proposed by JANET(UK) or UKMMG so the review group had not met. It was noted that JUK are paying NNW's large rate bills as per the funding model. It was noted some RNOs had reduced their costs in the 2009/10 benchmark round.

#### *Rates*

Ed Carter reported that YHMAN had received a rates evaluation form from the VOA for 2010/11 which showed a better understanding of data networks and asked relevant questions. It also asked about Data Centre provision – UPS, rack space etc.

Jason Bain (JB) had also received a similar form.

It was noted that not all RNOs have yet been approached by the VOA about dark fibre rates

### b) Procurement audits

Several audits have been held since the last UKMMG meeting: EMMAN, NorMAN and LMN agreed they had been low key affairs

RNOs should consider having a Procurement Advisor.

Legislation changes on 20-Dec introduce civil penalties (fines) for non compliance. Courts have the ability to cancel contracts.

### c) SLA Negotiations (Jason Bain)

None

New SLA (01-Aug-2009) has been published

### d) JDT matters

JUK contact database update project starting to correct errors in CDF – general discussion of principles.

RNOs can't see their own contact details – they have to be asked for.

Mandatory roles – discrepancies between Ops manual and requirements from JDT  
Ops manual will need changing if JUK require other info.

Use of [another@rno.ja.net](mailto:another@rno.ja.net) addresses suggested as way of avoiding conflicts between RNO and Institution roles and addresses.

## *Netsight-2*

Final presentation from Mark Leese.

It was noted at UKMMG that Mark Leese has completed his secondment to JUK and is returning to STFC.

Concern was expressed about who would run other monitoring activities that are still outstanding, e.g. IPmc Beacons

### e) JANET(UK) liaison/actions

It was agreed that all the actions from the previous meetings had been completed – see email 12-Jun-2009

RT had not taken up UKMMG's offer of using the afternoon of 2 out of the 4 meetings held annually as JUK run JPA Managers meetings.

It was reported that Tim Marshall (TM) would like to discuss the summary papers produced by Mike Whitehead (MW) with Mike.

## 4. Discussion on JANET(UK) plan for change of JANET delivery model

### a) Objectives of this discussion (Mike Byrne)

At the end of the discussions MB wanted

- The position of all the RNOs on the contract extensions to be clear
- An honest appraisal of what end users think
- Alternate Models to have been discussed
- The possibility of the fragmentation of UKMMG into RNOs wishing to comply and those wishing to resist to have been discussed
- Views of RNO Boards to be clear– objections to loss of assets, staff etc
- Next steps for UKMMG to be clear

Ian Griffiths (IG) noted he is elected to JUK Board by JNT Association members and Institutional members. IG feels it is his role to inform the JUK Board of the views of those he represents. As an outcome to these discussions he would be willing to take a set of questions to the JUK Board meeting which was to be held on 22-Oct

### b) JANET(UK) RNO Review Process (slides from Rolly Trice)

These are the slide set used by RT to present to UCISA-NG. They are a modified version of those he used to present to the EMMAN Board only the day before, i.e. he had changed them in the light of comments and questions from EMMAN.

IG expressed surprise that JUK had not made formal presentations when they met with other RNOs. JB noted they had presented to the NorMAN Board (at his request)

## *JPA Extensions*

All RNOs had now met with JUK with YHMAN the last meeting on 20-Oct, the day before UKMMG.

All RNOs had now had a formal contract extension offer except

- LMN – not offered
- KentMAN – not offered
- AbMAN – special case – already in discussions with JUK to cease on or before 30-Sep-2011
- YHMAN – only just met with JUK – expect to receive a letter shortly

The letters had gone to the Chair of the RNO with copy to RNO Manager

It was not known why LMN (they were surprised how many RNOs had) or KentMAN had not received a letter

All RNOs offered an extension had formally accepted or were in the process of doing so – no one will reject the offer.

No RNO had definitely decided to quit, even AbMAN are only in the discussion stage.

JUK believe three RNOs are agnostic to carrying on – AbMAN, FATMAN and LENSE. CANLMAN would put themselves in the same grouping.

### c) JANET(UK)'s intended timescales

A general discussion around all the issues was held

It was reported at RUGIT that Bob Day was writing a briefing paper to be published in late Oct/early Nov summarising the JUK position and their response to the queries received so far – the date was unclear. This will distil the JUK Board papers for the community.

JUK are planning to write to all institutions again by the end of October and come back to the RNOs in Nov or early Dec.

There was concern about who received the original letters and where subsequent letters would go.

JUK did agree to let us see the list when asked but there is no sign of it so far.

*Note – Tim Kidd's letter to the community issued on 23-Oct-2009*

#### *Staff impact*

EMMAN getting legal advice on staff status.

TUPE clause – JB has been advised it didn't apply at NorMAN (Newcastle) as staff are working on RNO and LAN.

Staff are leaving because of the uncertainty. It is felt JUK will honour TUPE.

JUK may set up Regional Centres but there is still great concern regional technical staff will leave.

#### *Funding*

Funding availability over the next few years could be very limited. No substantial capital funding. Funding is going to get tight.

Network charging – can JUK impose more?

Too high network charging could lead to a revolt.

d) [Current views of other groups: JIR, UCISA, RUGIT etc. \(various\)](#)

*UCISA NG:*

UCISA Exec is waiting for further information – split on response – some institutions are agnostic.

Aware of CoM discussions and JIR position.

TM has answered some of the questions in the early letter.

UCISA members who had previously been connected via RNOs were now the most against JUK's proposal.

*JIR:*

No reply from Chair to letter from CoM.

Item for discussion at the Feb-2010 meeting.

*RUGIT:*

8 options reduced to 2 options

1. JUK runs everything
2. Some outsourcing to regional body – but would this be legal?

Procurement wasn't mentioned at JUK Board. JUK told decision was to do with cost savings but TM can't answer cost savings questions

AK – Mixed views within RUGIT

*HEIDS*

Not sure what HEIDS formal position is.

e) [18/09/09 Chairs of MANs meeting \(Ian Griffiths\)](#)

Notes of the meeting have been circulated after giving attendees considerable time to disagree with their contents,

IG has written to Malcolm Read noting

- JANET is the sectors network, not JUK's
- Open and transparent review required
- Need definition of what services JUK will provide
- Need to look at alternative proposals

Email holding response received.

IG has asked Roger McClure, chair of JUK for the JUK Board paper to be circulated.

RM is in a no win position – provide papers and they will be used to attack JUK, don't provide and it is a conspiracy. FOI was also referenced as a reason to refuse request.

RM believes we are still in a consultation period

Unclear what is being consulted on – consultation on direction of travel and how it is to be achieved not when – but what is coming over is when not how.

IG will summarise his discussions to the Chairs of MANs list.

#### f) Current views of individual RNO boards/representatives (All)

Each RNO summarised the views of their respective boards.

*C&NLMAN*  
*LENSE*  
*NNW*  
*CLYDENET*  
*EASTMAN*  
*FATMAN*  
*ABMAN*  
*SWERN*  
*NIRAN*  
*LMN*  
*KentMAN*  
*EMMAN*  
*YHMAN*  
*NORMAN*

#### g) Discussion (All)

Staffing issues

Only LMN (5) and LENSE (3) have directly employed staff

Discussion of TUPE issues

EMMAN taking legal advice

All RNOs and JUK have duty of care to staff

#### h) Decision on response or action required by this group

MB review of where we are

End customers

- most don't care as long as they get what they get now
- If HEIs want to object they need to raise issues with the Funding councils

Alternative models

- Public sector partnerships - e.g. Kent

HEFCE see JISC acting for them

- Should we focus on costs?
- JUK as an organisation is going to grow and cost more
- What is the RNO FTE head count? Question arose in discussions about how many staff would be required by JUK to run everything the RNOs currently do.

Next steps

- Attend JUK Strategic Briefing on 30<sup>th</sup> Nov
- Hold detailed individual discussions with JUK during Nov/Dec, then
- Decide on group action/response at our January meeting.

JANET (Scotland)

- What is Scottish Government position?
- Geography hinders the prospects of real savings for JUK

Reorganise in England

- Along RDA boundaries?
- Merge RBCs and RNOs?

New PoP contracts – more out of hours

Concern about LMN and KentMAN position

Ask JUK for more details of how they run TVN etc

Should UKMMG have a formal role appointed by CoM?

UKMMG is committed to providing the best services that we can to our connected organisations and would like to work with JUK to provide the best services to JANET.

Sponsored connections

Under review

Ask JUK what they are reviewing as some RNOs being refused sponsored connections

JUK Value for Money study – when will this come out?

## 5. Terms of Reference of the group

The draft terms included in the minutes of the Jun-2009 UKMG meeting were accepted with one minor change – ‘identify’ in bullet 2 was replaced with ‘collate’.

The Terms of Reference of UKMMG are:

- To provide a forum for information exchange between regional network operators
- To collate the regional network service needs and trends of associated institutions to help inform strategic direction
- To provide representatives to appropriate forums and provide expertise to relevant groups
- To provide formal liaison with JANET(UK) on contractual matters
- To work with JANET(UK) and other parties on matters of mutual interest

## 6. RNO Reports

These were taken as read except for a discussion on the provision of dark fibre by THUS as noted in the FATMAN Report

Note this was taken before item 4 on the agenda.

### FATMAN: C&W/THUS dark fibre procurement (Mike Whitehead)

Open Fibre concerns: Thus have told us that C&W rules now govern all the open fibre circuits. These rules have been clarified and no longer allow the sale of Open Fibre circuits. As explained to us, this means that C&W would not allow renewal of our existing circuits (though at least one other MAN has been told that existing circuits could be renewed). This is of serious concern to us - and potentially to all other MANS using Thus Open Fibre. There is no realistic alternative provider for some FaTMAN circuits.

EASTMAN had had a different version of this from THUS, with their position hardening between two meetings

EASTMAN were concerned that this showed C&W could change the rules at anytime

NNW had raised the issue with their account manager and got a contradictory response:

Please let me explain the current situation with Dark fibre from THUS and the approach Cable and Wireless will take.

If an Education customer currently has Dark fibre services with THUS then all requests for Dark fibre will be considered.

If both ends of the circuit are already On-net then the decision will be to bid.

If there is a dig involved and a high capital cost then Cable and Wireless will then make one of two decisions:

1) if there is deemed to be a benefit to the group to carry out and fund the dig, i.e. it gives access to further potential business for the group as a whole they are likely to bid;

2) if there is no advantage to the group they will no-bid. In this instance THUS has then been granted permission to engage a third party to carry out the work. This would be by way of an Asset exchange. THUS would arrange for the work to be carried out on behalf of the customer and then sell them the fibre as an asset. The customer will then have the opportunity to take out a maintenance contract with THUS where THUS would charge an annual fee to maintain the fibre on behalf of the customer.

I hope this clarifies the situation, if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Andy Symonds  
Account Manager - Education

[TBR had subsequently had further email from THUS with their official position:

As you will be aware THUS prides itself on the extensive portfolio of products and services that it provides to the Education and Research communities. Specifically our data portfolio is one of the most extensive available within the UK especially with our recent launch of Ethernet VPN & ADSL+2 services. An integral part of our data portfolio has been the supply of Dark Fibre services to the Education sector and especially to the RNO community. It has come to our attention that there has arisen a recent perception that following the acquisition of THUS by Cable & Wireless (CW) that THUS will no longer provide new dark fibre services to the Education and Research communities. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify this situation.

THUS and our parent company fully appreciate the importance of such services to the education and research communities. Equally I am sure that the education and research communities fully appreciate the challenges and at times the limitations that the provision of such services presents to ourselves and our parent as a network operator. However as a broad principle THUS does and will continue to offer Dark Fibre services. The supply of Dark Fibre by THUS however is wholly restricted to the Education and Research communities. Where there is a clear and justifiable requirement for Dark Fibre and where it is commercially viable then THUS will investigate all avenues including self provision on own fibre, provision on OLO fibre and stand alone build including asset transfer. This is with a view to as ever providing a comprehensive and cost effective proposal. In relation to the latter point of "stand alone build including asset transfer" THUS are imminently about to announce to the communities some exciting developments.

It is my hope and that of the THUS Education Team that the above helps to clarify the situation. If you or any of your member organisations have any further concerns or questions then please do not hesitate to contact myself or indeed your THUS Education Sales Specialist.

**Kenny Nicholl**  
Head of Education Sales  
THUS, a Cable & Wireless business]



It was felt that it would not be in the interest of the RNOs to raise this formally with THUS/C&W but that a watching brief would be kept. It was likely that several Scottish RNOs would consider early reprocurement to avoid problems next year or in 2011.

## 7. Any Other RNO Business

None

Meeting closed 1600