Welcome

Chair Dr Ken Thomson, Jisc trustee and principal, Forth Valley College, opened the day with a welcome to everyone attending this year’s stakeholder forum. He highlighted the forum’s key role as part of our governance arrangements and as an important mechanism for talking to stakeholders about our progress, new services and the initiatives we have in the pipeline.

He stressed that it’s a vital opportunity for Jisc’s board and leadership team to hear about our stakeholders’ imperatives and future needs. With this in mind he asked participants to give their input throughout the day during the round table discussions, lunchtime networking opportunities and breakout group sessions to help in shaping our future developments. And for those with more still to contribute, there was an informal opportunity to continue talking to Jisc executive staff and trustees on a one-to-one basis after the formal event closed.

126 people registered for the event, of which 102 people attended on the day. This is a breakdown of registrations by type:
How have we done?

Professor David Maguire, Jisc chair and vice-chancellor, University of Greenwich, opened the session with a presentation on some of Jisc’s highlights from 2015. A copy of his presentation is here.

He talked about what we do – focusing on the three main things; delivering shared digital and infrastructure services; sector-wide deals with IT vendors and commercial publishers, and providing expert and trusted advice and practical assistance.

He talked about its impact – during 2015 we worked with 969 education organisations, and 18m people used the Janet national network infrastructure. We negotiated 50% of all UK library spend on e-resources. Annually, we save the sector around £203m.

He highlighted some achievements:

- The first FE customer signed up to our shared data centre
- We negotiated deals and passed on big savings to customers:
  - More than £7.5m through cloud purchasing frameworks and special terms with Amazon, Microsoft 365 and Google
  - £70m through Jisc collections’ negotiations on electronic content
  - £1.8m through the eBooks for FE service

He described our response to the reduction in core funding over the last five years and explained that it has enabled us to maintain the same levels of service through internal efficiencies and savings.

He talked about the potential offered by Jiscom to exploit Jisc’s assets and leverage reductions in institutions’ Jisc costs, and outlined our biggest challenge in the years ahead - increasing costs and decreased funding.

Ken Thomson then introduced the Jisc annual review 2015 video.

Participants asked...

"If the Jisc budget was cut year on year, how was Jisc able to carry on delivering services?"

By reorganising into a single entity, with all staff on one payroll and in fewer locations, we have saved money. We have made improvements in our procurement process, introduced tax efficiencies, ceased some services and also refocused on the key things that users really want.

“Reflecting on the information about decreasing funding and savings made – when will Jisc start to feel significant pain?”

It is starting to happen now. Austerity is the future. We don’t know what our funding will be beyond 2015-16, but government funding will probably continue to fall so we are exploring how the subscription model can help.
“If you’re being driven to make savings and transfer the costs to the sector – how are you going to help me convince my vice-chancellor that you are still value for money?”

We have been developing a case that makes Jisc’s value evident and meeting with senior leaders in the sector to discuss this and will continue to do so. We want to help you make the case in your organisation, so tell us what you need and we will make sure you have it.

“It appears that more services will go into ‘pay as you go’: how much will remain in the subscription and how much will be on a ‘pay as you go’ basis? This may help answer what the sector wants.”

We are looking at this carefully at the moment – it’s clear that the sector actually wants the more expensive elements. Unbundling adds complexity and cost so we don’t think it’s in the longer term interests of the sector.

**Coming soon**

“Coming soon”: a presentation by Dr Phil Richards, Jisc’s chief innovation officer

A copy of the presentation can be found [here](#). Phil Richards thanked those who contributed to the first round of the co-design process and invited participants to consider taking part in the upcoming 2016 process.

He shared information on several services now in the pipeline:

- The **ORCID open research identifier**, which offers significant benefits to researchers and their institutions and is being offered to UK universities through a national consortium agreement that went live in July 2015
- The **national business intelligence service** that we’ve launched with the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to replace HEIDI and help staff make sound business decisions
- **Equipment.data and Kit-Catalogue**, two services to support sharing of high value equipment and expertise and help universities reduce costs
- Our **digital capabilities and leadership** work to help staff in academic, administrative and professional roles thrive in a digital environment. We will deliver discovery, diagnostic and reflective tools
- Our **FE and skills online CPD service**, a response to the Further Education Learning Technology Action Group (FELTAG), which will enable teachers and trainers to share digital content and associated practices
- Our **national learning analytics service** pilot, developing tools and metrics to help universities and colleges improve student satisfaction, retention and attainment. This service will go into full production from September 2017
- Our **research data management shared services**, which are working to ensure that all universities and their researchers will have the capability to create, manage and share research data effectively
Our horizon scanning activity which looks in-depth at some of the major trends in digital technology, including cloud computing, data-driven decision making, the digital institution, open by default, personalised learning and research in a connected era

Participants asked...

“If we had to recommend one of the services that you’ve talked about to our senior management teams, which would it be?”

This depends on your role – but learning analytics is exciting. It also holds dangers, so we are merging data together in a secure way that respects key associated policies. The large data sets that we’re creating will provide insights into how modern eLearning works.

“I’m really interested in when we might expect to see some of these services – particularly the learner analytics?”

Five universities are piloting the beta services and 70 more universities and colleges say they want to get involved. A wider beta service will engage more institutions from September 2016 before delivery of the learning analytics architecture as a service starts in September 2017.

Round table discussion: is this vision broadly right? What is the most important thing Jisc should do to help deliver the vision?

Three different groups addressed these questions, each with its own particular focus. And, while all three agreed broadly with the visions, they also asked whether they were ambitious enough. They wanted to know what would be dramatically different by 2020/30 as a consequence of them.

Here’s what else they told us:

Research

- Academics and researchers are innovators and Jisc has a role in providing the infrastructure and core services that can support them
- Take account of the diversity of the sector: don’t assume that universities will want to share their data
- Globalisation is an important issue
- Jisc should focus on what it does best – connectivity and data security, procurement frameworks, support for managing large-scale data
- Don’t neglect the softer processes that support research. A big challenge for the sector is pre-grant submission
- Consider the implications of new EU regulations regarding personal data
The sector may need to improve its skills to deliver the vision

Jisc should reconsider how it addresses innovation in times of austerity

And they asked us:

- Can Jisc help universities’ work with industry, in particular regarding the challenges around IP and potential conflicts with open access? Can the sector exploit IP to make research pay for itself?
- Should Jisc have a role in political horizon scanning: what are the implications of the Green Paper?
- Could the vision be turned on its head: mobilise the research community to advocate on Jisc’s behalf?

FE and skills

- Engagement is needed at the leadership level between Jisc, colleges and AoC to deliver the vision and any consequent change
- Jisc should review its own capabilities so that it can focus support in the right areas – ie around technology and its role as the “glue” that binds the organisation.
- Jisc can help by playing to its strengths - for example, in procurement, in developing key services that empower learners and free up teaching staff to do their job, and in helping staff to use technology effectively

HE learning and teaching

- There are many things in the 2030 vision that we should be doing now; a five-year strategy may be better. In particular, the learner analytics work is welcomed – but delivery in two years is too late. The sector may need to look at commercial solutions in the meantime
- 2020 is only four years away. The sector may not be in a stable position by then. Expect more competition in the future and consider how universities will co-operate in this context
- By 2030 digital natives will be middle managers and this might mean that HE changes and moves more quickly in future
- Technology needs to support changes in the sector that are driven by people, not technology
- Students already check what their experience might be by contacting other students, Facebook groups etc. (and this includes the full experience such as accommodation and not just the course)

And they said Jisc should:

- Help with “business as usual” solutions so institutions can focus on innovation
- Understand its position in the market place – is it in direct competition or trying to influence the market?
- Remember the social side of learning
- Discuss these visions with academics
➢ Focus on what can be achieved – and don’t try to do everything. Engage with leaders rather than everyone
➢ Take account of the diversity of the sector: how does Jisc support uniqueness?
➢ Take account of the differences in the drivers between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
➢ Focus on providing support for learner analytics, but distinguish between retention and learning
➢ Review how to support institutional innovation in times of austerity
➢ Maintain its position on openness and interoperability
➢ Consider the difference between “campus” and “university” – and the need for underpinning infrastructure to support the anywhere, anytime, device requirements for a virtual campus
➢ Consider whether collective deals can be done around apps/tools that students like to reduce or remove third party costs
➢ Help with longer term horizon planning

The way forward together

Presentation from Dr Paul Feldman, Jisc’s new chief executive

A copy of the presentation can be found here. Paul Feldman outlined his aspirations for the organisation to be a highly valued, world-class powerhouse of digital support and transformation to the UK teaching and research communities.

He said that, to achieve this, we will need to justify the subscription and ensure that services are aligned to customer needs, adding real value because – with less government funding - we will be more reliant on subscribers paying for services they value. The insights of our stakeholders are therefore absolutely vital so we can identify where we can add most value.

He invited stakeholders to be our digital partners and to exploit the capabilities that are coming through the services pipeline. He said that we will:

➢ Provide solutions that aren’t available in the market or where there’s a need for national infrastructure
➢ Help customers to adopt blended learning
➢ Support the FE sector, pushing forward with FELTAG
➢ Help institutions extend their international reach
➢ Open up our northern shared data centre – and consider opening others elsewhere
➢ Add to Janet, if needed, for the research needs of the future
➢ Build on the success of our new customer relations function
- Apply digital to ourselves - looking to extend the self-service of our services
- Explore new mechanisms for charging where funding doesn’t cover services that are wanted by all. We will provide optional services that customers want to buy
- Explore alternative models such as joint ventures, consortia and crowd funding, to develop new capabilities

Participants asked…

“How will you ensure that Jiscom doesn’t take Jisc’s focus away from the core sectors in education and research?”

Jiscom is a way of contracting outside of education and research. It is a way to reduce costs and our priority will always be with education and research.

Breakout group sessions

Five breakout groups were offered to participants to hear their views on key strategic issues. A summary of feedback from these discussions is provided below.

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<th>Breakout group</th>
<th>Feedback from discussion</th>
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<td>Breakout group A: how can Jisc help universities respond to proposed reforms such as the Green Paper and the Nurse review?</td>
<td>We wanted to know what the key challenges were for your institutions in the changes proposed in the Green Paper and the Nurse review and what systems, services or data Jisc could provide to support you in responding to these challenges. The group asked us to think about how we can provide more support for digital culture, skills, literacies and leadership. They want us to focus beyond digital skills to digital literacy, to provide online training materials and sources of help, and to demonstrate the benefits to academics. They want us to help them find new, better ways to listen to the student voice, and to explore new qualitative tools and metrics – and, lastly, to act as curator for a new data model for research.</td>
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<td>Breakout group B: Jisc subscription in HE – the next phase</td>
<td>We wanted to understand how to position the Jisc subscription so that it is recognised as a strategic investment in your institutions and to discuss how research and development in HE could be funded if there is less core funding for Jisc in future. The group asked us to consider providing greater transparency about cost, usage and the value of services as well as more clarity about what is included in the fee so that it is easier to make a case for the value of Jisc. But, they said, at the same time the funding model should remain simple. They stressed the importance of effective communications and suggested that we broaden our engagement with institutions to</td>
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Breakout group C: Jisc subscription on FE – help us to understand what you would pay for

We wanted to know if you had to pay a Jisc subscription, to what extent you would be willing to pay for services within the Jisc offer and how we could position the subscription to ensure that it is recognised as a strategic investment in your college.

Certain services, notably Janet, are absolutely core for the FE and skills sector so funding for Jisc is seen as a strategic investment – but we need to do more to demonstrate the strategic aspects of our offer, as well as its breadth, to senior management within colleges and skills providers. It was suggested that a newsletter for senior managers would be valuable.

The group stressed the need to be driven by customer demand: rather than marketing existing products account managers should find out what customers need and what their biggest problems are so Jisc is better able to meet the changing needs of the sector over time.

The group listed some specific things we could offer that would improve support for learners and reduce institutional costs – more digital resources to support apprentices and key skills such as maths and English; a content delivery platform to support personalised learning, and cloud-based products that could be made available through Jisc frameworks such as Office 365.

The session ended on a pragmatic note: a move to a subscription model for funding would require greater oversight of Jisc’s activities so that the sector can be assured that we offer value for money.

Breakout group D: Jisc support for area reviews

We wanted to know what challenges colleges expect the area reviews to raise, and how we can provide support.

Participants said there were challenges associated with the review process itself and also around preparing for the outcomes. While some of these will be outside our remit, group members said that, over the coming months, we could help by:

- Producing case studies and examples of good and bad practice so colleges can learn from others about technology as an enabler
- Considering the development of a ‘merger model’
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<td></td>
<td>▶ Providing opportunities for “idea exchanges” between colleges and support sharing of market intelligence</td>
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<td>▶ Supporting shared services and system/data integration to enable better decision-making</td>
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<td>▶ Offering staff training on data integration, change management, digital skills and literacy</td>
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<td>▶ Identifying existing Jisc products and services which could help colleges through this process</td>
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**Breakout group E: Jisc priorities in the current funding climate**

We asked participants about the services they would like us to develop to help meet their operational and strategic objectives within three time spans: nine months, two years and five years. However, the group wanted the service improvements now or very soon and those listed in the ‘nine months list’ were key to their needs, as detailed below:

▶ Do what you do now – but bigger, better and faster
▶ Protect existing services
▶ Ensure everything you do adds value and addresses challenges the sector faces now
▶ Enhance the things that make Jisc unique and world-leading
▶ Engage more with the research councils
▶ Respond quickly as institutions transform
▶ Make the national digital library a world-beater
▶ Extend Prevent services
▶ Explore crowd-funding for the education sector
▶ Improve interoperability and connectivity, safeguard the cyber security resource and ensure uninterrupted services
▶ Negotiate e-book deals for HE
▶ Offer more cloud-based services within Janet
▶ Create more opportunities for institutions to share best practice – account management and JiscMail aren’t enough on their own
Wrap up and close

Professor Paul Layzell, Jisc trustee and principal, Royal Holloway, University of London, thanked participants for their contributions and summarised a few of the take-home messages from the day:

- Jisc must be more ambitious and show more leadership while also delivering the basics and focusing on what is really needed. Taking our core offering and making it world-beating is the way to deliver this
- Our leadership and advocacy is seen as valuable
- We must make sure we are transparent and provide value for money
- We should reflect on our style of communication
- We need to think about the role of our account managers and ensure that they can go beyond the existing service catalogue to offer tailored solutions.