Caren Milloy (CMI) provided an update on the work of the UUK/Jisc content negotiation strategy group including how in recognition of significant financial challenges facing the sector, they supported Jisc in seeking reduction in pricing from publishers. The chair of the group, Professor Stephen Decent, signed the letters to publishers and those to journal publishers also included the new requirements for transitional agreements. The requirements for transitional agreements have moved from a focus on cost neutrality to cost reduction.

CMI then spoke about Jisc’s National digital learning licensing initiative. The focus is on maximising what the sector can achieve from this approach both in terms of content and a benefit from the analytics in informing future provision. There will be a focus on open and affordable content and the SUPC framework should be utilised to procure content. Discussions are taking place with Kortext and BibliU to regarding provision of the content.

The group confirmed that in relation to both proposals they would need clarity and discussions around whether there would be a minimum purchase, trigger points for purchasing and pricing.

The group discussed provision during the Covid 19 lockdown and moving forward including potential content models.

Members are aware of and preparing for significant budget cuts although the level of these may not yet be known. There is a re-assessment of the balance between print and digital, including going through reading list to identify texts only available in print and finding alternatives texts or options such as digitisation of chapters. There has been more purchasing of e-books and looking at the most cost effective way to make such purchases. Some existing licences are being upgraded for concurrent use. Some members are using Unsub.

The group were provided with publisher updates by Caroline Mackay covering OUP, SAGE, Cambridge Core and McGraw Hill e-textbook content

The group were aware that Dawsonera were likely to go into administration unless a buyer could be found. Other aggregators are not currently looking to host the content. APUC and SUPC have been looking at a solution to preservation which will not be in place for this situation with Dawsonera but should be going forward.

The group will meet again in September.