The group received a presentation from a subscription agent who had been invited to attend to provide information on their business continuity and long term plans in context of the transition to open access, including services provided and how these would be charged for. The group took the opportunity to ask questions of the agent.

Having received presentations from a total of three agents, one at this meeting and two at the last meeting, the group considered their next steps. There was clear feedback that COVID-19 was speeding the transition to OA with a demonstrable need to have agreements in place which constrain and reduce costs.

The group wanted to learn more about service pricing as part of a fact gathering exercise which appears to be the required next step. This would allow a strategic approach as the information will also feed into the frameworks. It was noted that having more information on what institution spend goes to the publisher and to the subscription agent gives clarity and aligns with the cOAlition S work. It would be useful to know whether this breakdown of information was in support of the move to Transitional Agreements.

Caren Milloy explained some of the background of setting up the new Kortext and BibliU agreements to which 55 institutions are currently participating / discussing participation. This is being viewed as a pilot year and will enable analysis on expenditure and models.

The group were aware of an e-textbooks petition which is currently circulating and discussed how the group might respond to this, noting the need to create a sustainable and focused market place balancing trust between stakeholders.

It was agreed that e-textbook strategy and communications should be a standing point on the agenda. It will be useful to review how members are using the Kortext and BibliU deals moving forward as this is likely to be different to what they are doing now. Publishers will also be waiting to see the data on the textbook purchases.

The group discussed e-textbook preservation and continuity. Preservation has always been a challenge and something which the purchasing consortia have tried to progress in the frameworks. The situation with Dawsonera provided a test case. In this situation the agreement allowed institutions the right to take up content with the publishers in the case of a significant event. Therefore the vast majority of the content was available.

The group discussed whether the situation with preservation clauses had been shown to be satisfactory or whether more certainty should be sought. Some aspects of the Dawsonera situation made it more manageable and these would not always apply when preservation and continuity are needed. Therefore there will be further discussions to move this matter forward in a forum for consortia.