The group confirmed their updated terms of reference which incorporated the changes agreed at the previous meeting.

The group discussed negotiations and agreements with some specific suppliers. The discussion noted the change in the sectors needs which for some products have shifted from the need for affordable site licences, to home licences and now to students expectations of being able to use the product anywhere and on any device.

It was noted that where there was a difficulty because a supplier appeared to have a monopoly over a particular product a solution was to look for an alternative that was broadly similar.

These discussions fed into those on developing a set of sector wide conditions of satisfaction. Institutions views would be sought on whether they were looking for agreements that provided options within a framework or affordable all in agreements.

In setting the conditions of satisfaction group members were aware that virtualisation is the direction of travel, with institutions looking to replicate what students would have sitting at a desk within an institution, wherever they would like to access this. This provides students with choice but there are safeguards as the sector is a regulated industry and students would only be given this access for the duration of their studies. Virtualisation also provides a way of addressing digital poverty.

The conditions also covered pricing including how this should be set to be fair and reasonable and not subject to significant increases. Simplicity and flexibility of agreements is also important to institutions. Where the required licences could be granted instantly this would avoid institutions paying for oversupply.

Institutions are aware of GDPR regulations and that there are privacy concerns where data is processed in other countries. Institutions also need information about where data is processed in order to check the direct and indirect carbon footprints of suppliers and therefore be accountable in the move to net zero.

The group will develop these conditions to have a clear picture of the sector’s requirements for software agreements.

The group will continue to raise awareness of their work to ensure full engagement with the sector. The membership provides representation across the sector and so the group are in a good position to support Jisc in their negotiations.