

UK MAN Managers Group

Notes of Meeting held on 9 October 2006 at HEFCE, London

Present:

Dave Vinograd (Convenor)	
Mike Byrne (Deputy Convenor)	LeNSE
Kit Powell (Secretary)	SWERN
Jason Bain	NorMAN
Joe Burns	NIRAN
Chris Cheney	“EastNet”
Ed Carter	YHMAN
Bob Day	UKERNA (<i>item 1</i>)
Penny Gould	UKERNA (<i>items 1-3</i>)
Ian Griffiths	EMMAN
David Hayling	Kentish MAN
Jim Hendry	MidMAN
Mark Jameson	C&NLMAN (<i>item 1</i>)
Paul Kentish	Kent MAN
Andrew Kerl	LMN
Tim Kidd	UKERNA (<i>item 1</i>)
John Littledale	UKERNA (<i>items 1-3</i>)
Andy Mason	SWERN
Linda McCormick	ClydeNET
Steve Percival	UKERNA (<i>items 1-3</i>)
Tim Robinson	NetNorthWest
Denis Russell	UKERNA (<i>item 1</i>)
Ian Sugden	SWERN
Pete White	LMN
Mike Whitehead	FaTMAN
Roger Williams	WNL

Apologies were received from:

John Linn	AbMAN
Malcolm Pitcher	NetNorthWest
David Stedham	North Wales MAN
Jem Taylor	UHI

Dave Vinograd thanked Bob Day for the presentation on RPAN3, which he gave before the meeting started.

1 UKERNA issues

Denis Russell requested that any RNOs who had yet to do so should arrange for senior UKERNA staff to meet their management board to discuss RPAN3.

Jeremy Sharp had circulated a number of updates on SJ5 progress. It was now on track for acceptance by 23 October (except the N. Ireland section).

The timetable for RN transitions to SJ5 still provided by completion by the end of the year, but it was very tight. An option to prolong the SJ4 service to mid-March 2007 had been agreed as a contingency. There were currently no plans to carry out transition work over the Christmas/New Year period.

As well as possible lack of diversity between it and some RN links, a number of diversity issues had been identified in SJ5 fibre infrastructure itself (in NorMAN and EastMAN). Denis asked RNs to review carefully the route diagrams provided by Verizon to identify any problems of this sort that might not be apparent to those without their local knowledge. This was urgent as there was a payment retention that could at this stage be used to encourage timely rectification.

RNs (in England and Scotland only) could still bid for funding to rectify lack of diversity between their infrastructure and SJ5's. There would be a deadline for such applications (though this would not be invoked until the RNO had received accurate route information from Verizon).

Tim Robinson said that he was concerned at the very short time – one week – between the SJ5 acceptance and NetNorthWest's SJ4/SJ5 transition. Bob Day said that it was intended to move RNs relatively slowly at the beginning of the process, speeding up as and when it was problem-free. This would make it easier to back out if problems did arise.

2 Notes of previous meeting

2.1 Accuracy

There were no corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 June 2006.

2.2 Briefing note on the issues surrounding SPB provision

Tim Robinson had not yet produced this, and would do so in the next month.

Action: Tim Robinson

2.3 Engaging JDAG with the community

Mike Byrne reported that he had discussed with Jeremy Sharp the possibility of including a session on JDAG at a future Networkshop. It was felt that there was insufficient interest in the community at large to justify this, and noted that JDAG had already been the subject of an article in *Network News*

3 Further UKERNA issues

Steve Percival said that there had been some changes in the distribution of RNO-facing responsibilities between Penny Gould and John Littledale, and a note describing the new arrangement would be circulated shortly.

A new fault reporting section of RPAN 2.5 with some minor changes had been sent to members of the negotiating team for circulation to the Group for comment.

Preparation of updated schedules of payments to RNOs should be complete within the next fortnight. The AEI would be 4.03%.

Twelve-month performance figures were now very good.

Rate-limiting on 4Mbps connections to FEIs over 10Mbps circuits should now be removed. Any requirements for RN infrastructure changes arising from this should be discussed with UKERNA as provided for in RPAN 2.5. The RPAN schedule would be updated to reflect this new FEI connection speed policy. Jim Hendry pointed out the anomalous listing of HE connections as 8Mbps. David Hayling asked what was to be done about colleges running 10Mbps connections at full capacity: Steve said that no central funding was available for upgrades, though this was being discussed with the LSC. It was suggested that internal measures taken by some FEIs were restraining their bandwidth use; there were in any case large variations in bandwidth use between FEIs, and Steve said he felt that connections at 4 or 10Mbps did not reflect the range of requirements within the sector. Ian Griffiths said that a package used by EMMAN to detect anomalous flows had discovered high traffic being generated by compromised systems within institutions.

On SLA-related matters Steve said that there were three negotiations:

1. The routine annual cycle between UKERNA and the JISC, which starts January-February (Ed Carter and Jason Baine representing UKMM).
2. The “root and branch” review: a kick-off meeting had been held (Tim Robinson represents JCN and Ian Griffiths UCISA).
3. Starting in the second quarter of 2007, discussion on the alignment of the JISC/UKERNA SLA with the SLD in the RPAN; this depended on the outcomes of the first two.

Mike Byrne pointed out that any instability consequent on the SJ5 transition could adversely affect an RNO’s delivery of the SLD.

4 Report from RPAN contract changes team

Mike Byrne said that on 10 October he would circulate the minor revision of the fault reporting formats previously mentioned, for comment by the end of the month.

Action: all, by end of October

Ian Griffiths said that one of the two points on the 2.5 draft that the last Group meeting had asked the team to raise had been accepted, and they had been advised that the other was not of great concern.

Jim Hendry commented that it would have been helpful if the Group had been advised of the successful conclusion of the negotiations: as it was they had heard nothing before the new contract was sent to them for signature. This point was taken.

The team for RPAN3 negotiations was discussed. Dave Vinograd said the team should reflect the variety of size and governance in RNs, and members should be prepared to undertake an intense and demanding workload. Tim Robinson said he was willing to take part, and Dave asked for other volunteers so that the team could be constituted by December.

Action: all

Dave would seek funds for professional advice on legal, financial, and procurement aspects from the JISC. It was agreed that these should cover an additional legal service: a commentary (by the same legal advisor) on legal aspects of the new contract, since this should reduce the delay and cost to RNOs of any legal advice they felt necessary. The possibility of getting expert advice on the risk aspects of the new contract was discussed, but it was agreed that this was not needed.

Mike Whitehead suggested that the members of the Group would be able to offer expertise and effort to assist and back up the members of the team in particular areas. This was agreed to be an excellent idea.

5 Report the SLA negotiation team

Jason Bain said that there was little to add to Steve Percival's report.

Group input on the "root and branch" review was discussed. Ian Griffiths felt that as he and Tim Robinson were involved as representatives of other bodies it would be useful if there were some other channel between the Group and the reviewing body. Jason agreed to continue to serve on the SLA negotiation body and act as a point of contact between the Group and the members of the "root and branch" review.

6 Report from JDAG

Mike Byrne reported that JDAG had met in July. Development champions had been invited to the meeting and this had been a success. He would circulate the draft minutes to the Group.

Mike reported on the projects in hand.

IPv6

The v6 guide had been circulated for comment. Further training courses were planned.

It was not clear what the demand for v6 was, and when it would have to be met. It remained to be established what skills sites would need, and whether they would be available.

Multicast issues were apparently resolved, though SJ5 implementation would test this view.

Special-purpose bandwidth

Tim Robinson was writing a report on the distribution within RNs. He noted that it was important not to assume that SPB service was necessarily lambda-based: a variety of means could be used to distribute it. Mike commented that uncertainty about what would be required to distribute SPB caused problems in writing procurement specifications.

Performance measurement and monitoring

There was nothing to report.

Phase II QoS

Mike said that there had been two meetings since June. UKERNA intended to report on QoS to the JISC by the end of the year.

It was generally agreed that the major effort in implementing any end-to-end QoS scheme would be within client site networks.

[QoS was discussed further under 11.1.]

7 Review of RN SuperJANET5 connection progress

Dave Vinograd said that once this started RNOs that has experienced migration should provide as much feedback as possible to the Group.

Several RNOs expressed disappointment at the way the infrastructure installation had been handled by Verizon and its sub-contractors.

8 Liaison with Chairs of MANs Group

Ian Griffiths reported that CoM had met on 1 July 2006. No further meetings had been held or were planned.

The relationship between the Group and CoM in the context of the RAN3 negotiations was discussed. Although CoM was an advisory group, it was important that they should not be disengaged from the process. It was suggested and agreed that when a draft of the new contract emerged CoM should be asked to receive and approve it. Tim Robinson said that he would mention this to Mark Clark.

9 UCISA-NG

Tim Robinson reminded the meeting that there were still concerns in the NG on the window for scheduled maintenance extending to 09:00, reduction in the level of operational cover on bank holidays, and the requirement to test the fail-over of RN connection to SJ5 under “normal network load”. 24*7 operational cover was also an aspiration.

10 Dates of future meetings

Wednesday 10 January 2007, HEFCE London (NorMAN to pay for catering)

Tuesday 24 April 2007, Birkbeck London (LMN to pay for catering)

11 Other business

11.1 QoS

Mike Byrne expanded on and emphasised the points he had made earlier. He believed that the UKERNA members of the JDAG group were very keen to reach agreement on a policy to recommend to the JISC by the end of the year. However, some RNOs might question the need for QoS in the light of the greatly-increased bandwidth of national and regional networks.

Some were advocating the restriction of the use of some service classes to particular applications; for example, Expedited Forwarding being used exclusively by JVCS. Mike suggested that this might conflict with plans that an RNO might have for use of QoS within its network. He urged all members to provide him in the next two or three weeks with feedback to input to the QoS group so that he could try to ensure that RNs' constraints were taken into account.

Action: all

It was pointed out that while the majority of QoS effort would be needed from end client sites, some RN requirements could be overlooked. For example, if out-of-profile traffic from a site was marked down it was important to have tools to demonstrate to the site what had been done and why.

11.2 Rating liability for fibre-optic plant

Tim Robinson provided the following update on the position in Manchester.

NNW has been approached by the Valuation Office Agency to discuss the rating of the parts of our network that are provided over dark fibre.

Telco Position

I have written to both our Telco suppliers to ascertain what they believe is the current rating situation with regard to circuits they supply to us. As expected both believe that they are responsible for rates on managed circuits but that NNW is responsible for rates on dark fibre.

Discussions with the VOA

I last corresponded with the VOA in Jul-2004. Two years later, in Aug-2006, they requested details of our dark fibre network. They have subsequently indicated that they will be raising an assessment based on the network as it stood on 01-Apr-2005 plus any links that have been lit since that date.

The details I sent them did not include dark fibre links that we have on order as they are only interested in lit links. I also excluded intra-campus links, arguing that they are the responsibility of the host institution. I also stated that we believe that any rates payable are subject to the statutory 80% reduction for charities as all NNW members are charities. Finally I have given them point to point distances, as in most cases I do not have details of the true on-fibre distance.

The rateable value so far is around £60,000. This is calculated using a tone of

£500 per route kilometre if 2 fibres are lit
£668 per route kilometre if 4 fibres are lit
£880 per route kilometre if 8 fibres are lit

At a rate payable of 42.2% this would make NNW liable to a full rate bill of around £25,320 reducing to £5,064 when the 80% reduction is applied.

I have also estimated that NNW's Rateable Value could increase to £202,050. At a rate payable of 42.2% this would make NNW liable to a full rate bill of £85,265 reducing to £17,053 when the 80% reduction is applied.

The vast majority of these rates (£182K RV out of £202K) will be chargeable to RPAN as they are for links used to provide either the NNW core or links (primary and resilient) to HE sites.

Only contiguous network can be included in each assessment so if like NNW you have pockets of dark fibre than each will get a separate assessment from a separate rating authority.

11.3 Charges for private fibre connections

Ian Griffiths requested information on how RNOs charged for delivery of service to client sites over self-provided fibre links. Ian Sugden confirmed that the level of charge suggested was similar to that made by SWERN.