



28 July 2010

Report from the Governors' Group to the Priorities Panel on future ways of working

The Priorities Panel meeting to be held on Wednesday, 11 August 2010 was originally suggested as a joint meeting with the Governors' Group. At their meeting on 21 July 2010, the Governors' Group considered that it may not be helpful to hold this meeting jointly and it was agreed that the meeting should be of the Priorities Panel only (with the exception of the Governor's representative, Cate Jackson).

The Governors' Group felt that problems that have arisen have been largely the result of a lack of a clear definition of the processes required to identify priorities, and that it might be helpful if an attempt was made to clarify the situation before the 11 August 2010 meeting in order that concerns could be addressed and solutions found.

The overall objectives are:

- To clearly define issues by providing sufficient information for decisions to be made at one meeting without request where possible, for further information
- To classify LINK work on issues into categories for action which will generally be either potential projects or a less intensive input, ie letter, telephone call etc
- To make clear decisions so that issues do not need to be reconsidered at the next meeting
- To debate issues in order to arrive at a Panel consensus on a recommendation for action
- To make recommendations based on the discussion ie for the project approach or lesser input
- To have a clear and well defined end point ie recommendation made for a project group to be established, a letter to be written, a telephone call to be made etc
- Where possible to put a time frame on the discussion so that everyone can be kept informed of what is likely to happen and when.

The starting point for decision making on any issues must be the information supplied by the Host organisation, Kent & Medway Networks Ltd (KMN). This will require KMN to clearly define the issue before putting the facts to the Priorities Panel. Issues should not be put to the Panel until there is sufficient information available for the Panel to make a decision.

When it is deemed that there is sufficient information, this will be used by the Panel to decide. Only in exceptional cases should there be a need for further information before this decision is made (it is realised by all that there can never be too much information but a line has to be drawn for the decision making process to proceed otherwise it will never take place).

The issues come to the Panel to be categorised (not prioritised) according to the action to be taken by the LINK. The action may be to recommend the initiation of a project or something less resource intensive such as a letter, telephone call etc, or even to decide to recommend that the LINK is not in a position to take action.

Every issue coming to the Panel will receive a recommendation for action. Given this relatively simple outcome it should be possible to arrive at a recommendation without too much information as further investigation will continue after the recommendation is made, especially if it is to be project work.

The current system of scoring may not be appropriate to arrive at a recommendation and it may be worth considering a more simple system or merely modifying the existing one to make it simpler. The critical question is can the LINK do anything about it? If the answer is yes, then a recommendation follows. If no, the matter is referred back to the originator with positive suggestions for them to get the answers they need from elsewhere.

This system will give the Panel the chance to debate the issue and to come to a consensus view before making a recommendation. It may be useful to have headings in order to structure the debate and some of those used in the previous scoring system should be considered, eg is anyone else involved in this work? Is there existing information? Etc. It should not be necessary to give a numerical score as the Panel will not be attempting to put issues into any order of importance as every issue will have a recommendation for action. Resources will in the end determine what can be done.

The Panel will recommend and KMN will act upon their recommendation in whatever way is suggested and appropriate. Every issue submitted and considered will get a recommendation. Whatever the action recommended the issue will move on and not reappear on the agenda of future meetings except as a report from KMN of the actions which were taken as a result of the recommendation.

In some circumstances, acting upon the recommendation will reveal a more complex problem than was originally suggested. In such cases, the revised problem will be treated as a separate issue and will restart the process with KMN gathering all the necessary new information and submitting it to the Panel for their consideration at their next meeting.

The Governors' Group will receive those issues which require significant financial input by the LINK (significant to be defined) and will decide whether resources are available to do this work. They will also be kept informed of all the other issues which have been resolved as a result of the recommendations and subsequent KMN action.

In this process the functions of the various components are:

Priorities Panel

- To receive issues for investigation from KMN
- To debate these using the information supplied
- To arrive at a consensus
- Identify actions through recommendations
- Refer recommendations to KMN
- To be informed at each meeting of the result of the recommendations / action taken on previous issues.

Governors' Group

- To receive via KMN recommendations from the Panel of potential project work and any other work which may involve costs above the normal
- To decide whether or not resources can be allocated to the proposal
- To receive from KMN reports of actions taken as a result of work identified by the Panel on the lesser input issues.

KMN

- To receive issues from referrers, establish / clearly define the issue and confirm the referrers objectives (what it expects / would like the LINK to do)
- To prepare information for the Panel relating to the issues received
- To act upon the recommendations of the Panel
- Write, telephone or email those who have raised an issue to inform them what has happened
- Prepare details of the proposed projects or large pieces of work for consideration for financing by the Governors' Group
- Suggests names for Project leader and project group members for project proposals using the participant / information base
- To keep on ongoing list of actions taken as a result of the recommendations of the Panel including reporting back to the Panel the decisions of the Governors' Group.

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28 July 2010