

NOWAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2008

NoWAL Objectives

- To widen access to library resources across the consortium
- To improve learning and information support services to the North West University Association community
- To liaise, as appropriate, with the North West University Association and to help determine strategies and policies
- To represent the aims and objectives of Higher Education libraries in the region to the Regional Development Agency and other similar bodies
- To share information and experience
- To pursue collaborative procurement of products and services
- To engage in collaborative staff training and development
- To seek funding opportunities (from, for example, HEFCE, JISC, AHRB) for the development of services by the consortium or by any subset of the consortium
- To influence thinking in professional/government arenas
- To pursue cross-sectoral collaboration; for example, Health
- To liaise with Libraries North West
- To develop innovative approaches to library service delivery
- To represent and promote the benefits of collaboration among Higher Education institutions to those within and outside the sector

Governing principles

- Collaborative activity must add value to what could be achieved by institutions acting independently
- Whilst collaborative activity may not involve all members of the association, projects can only be defined as group projects if all members are in agreement
- Members will pay a subscription determined by the Board
- Activity should be matched to available resources
- The constitution shall be reviewed at regular intervals

Consortial context

Since its inception in 2000 NoWAL has developed its governing principles, expanded its membership and established its core services, particularly access and borrowing across the consortium, collaborative purchasing, and staff development and training. In addition, a number of significant initiatives, most notably the consortial purchasing agreement to deliver e-books in the north west, have demonstrated how much can be achieved through joint endeavour.

NoWAL acknowledges that the first priority of its members is to their own locally determined strategic aims and objectives. This Strategic Plan, therefore, aims to reflect and develop local priorities wherever possible,

assisting members in the achievement of those priorities in the context of a collaborative group.

Nationally there is an increasingly strong regional focus to the economic, social and educational landscape. The North West is a leading region; a high NoWAL priority must be to work closely and collaboratively with the consortium's North West providers and partners.

Over the period of this Plan NoWAL will seek to build on its established services whilst promoting a culture in which creativity and innovation is encouraged in order to introduce leading edge service developments. The group will support pilots to investigate innovative approaches to service developments, with a clear emphasis on enhancing customer benefit.

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed no later than one year before the end of the planning period.

Strategic Themes

NoWAL has agreed three key strategic themes for the planning period:

- **Services to users**
- **Infrastructure support**
- **Relationships and influence**

We recognise that clear governance and effective marketing are essential to the successful achievement of these strategic aims. For this reason, objectives have also been set against these supporting themes.

Services to users

NoWAL's priority is the improvement of learning and information support services to its user community. Through collaboration we aim to provide enhanced access to information to support learning and research, using our combined strengths to add value to the services we provide. Over the period of the Strategic Plan NoWAL aims to build upon existing services whilst also developing those in emerging areas of interest. This will include:

Aims

- To enhance access and borrowing services, which offer added value when benchmarked against existing national schemes
- To share best practice and local service developments
- To provide access to enhanced e-resources through, for example, consortial procurement
- To provide reciprocal access to e-resources where licences permit
- To explore new methods of user support and service delivery, taking the implications of converged services into account
- To raise standards and enhance the customer focus of service delivery

Method

- Evaluate the impact of consortial e-books delivery and explore ways in which to further develop this service
- Set up a task team to explore best practice in the support of information literacy.
- To evaluate customer services across the group using “mystery shoppers” to benchmark experience against agreed criteria
- Adapt one of the UK Computing Plus models for providing access to e-resources
- Develop a framework of performance measures, including statistical and impact measures

Infrastructure support

NoWAL maintains and funds an established range of infrastructure services which support the consortium’s commitment to service delivery. Over the period of the Strategic Plan we aim to further develop these services in areas where collaboration clearly offers greater effectiveness to individual member libraries. In addition, some infrastructure services will be evaluated in order to ensure value for money.

Aims

- To explore and identify changing staff roles in LIS provision, including the deployment of staff and the effective delivery of services
- To provide support in collaborative procurement
- To consider changing space planning needs and advise on best practice
- To provide a forum for experience sharing regarding change management, new services etc.
- To provide senior management seminars in order to share and discuss best practice

Method

- To provide a staff development and training programme consistent with members’ needs
- To undertake specific investigations and projects e.g. provision of a costed model for a regional store, including a possible cross-sectoral collaborative venture

Influence

NoWAL aims to represent the best interests of its members to regional and national organisations on issues relevant to our agreed strategic aims. This role includes both influencing policy making and leading on relevant strategic issues. NoWAL recognises that influencing policy makers and other bodies is crucial to both aiding the proactive development of services for our users and in shaping the future of the HE sector and professional groups.

Aims

- To ensure that NoWAL's joint position is agreed on key regional and national initiatives
- To improve the consortium's communication and liaison with appropriate regional bodies
- To identify key groups to engage with and work with as appropriate
- To develop an external NoWAL 'voice'

Method

- To develop a confidential web site for the sharing of strategic plans, action plans and working papers on strategic and operational developments
- To allocate responsibility to individual group members to draft responses to reports and other developments of relevance to the sector
- To agree a communication strategy for the group

Supporting Themes

Governance

NoWAL's membership represents the Higher Education institutions in the north west region. It is anticipated that, for the period of this plan, any membership changes will only reflect regional changes to that constituent group and will not include any significant change of focus. However, the group is committed to seeking new partnerships in order to meet its strategic aims most effectively.

Aims

- To seek opportunities for collaboration
- To develop proactive partnerships in order to meet specific aims and objectives at a national as well as a local level
- To benchmark best practice from other consortia in the public and private sectors
- To reconsider the current system of governance following enhanced membership, no later than 1st February 2005
- To develop robust methodologies to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of NoWAL initiatives

Promotion and communications

NoWAL has to communicate and promote its activities to three audiences, and at a number of levels. This role includes raising the profile of the full scope of NoWAL activities to staff in its constituent institutions, to regional and national professional bodies, and to key agencies in the region and beyond. Marketing and promotion to end-users will most appropriately be undertaken by institutions' own staffs as an extension of local services to users, as will communication of strategic activity to institutional senior management, both supported by appropriate NoWAL-agreed and -produced materials. All promotional activity will be evaluated for cost-effectiveness and (where possible) impact.

Aims

- To develop a targeted promotion and communications strategy
- To promote the added value of the NoWAL collaboration to chief officers, member institutions and to key regional agencies
- To raise awareness of the services developed through NoWAL, at local, regional and national level, both operationally and strategically
- To evaluate promotional activities for their effectiveness (relative to their cost)
- To provide a forum for the exchange of experience and expertise on promotion and communications

Method

- To establish a Working Group with responsibility for publicity and promotion (Operations Group minute OG03/064 refers)
- To identify the different target audiences and develop targeted promotion and communications plans
- To generate targeted publicity and supporting materials
- To identify events and opportunities for profile- and awareness-raising, and to provide appropriate personnel and materials in support
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of promotional activities

7 June 2004 (incorporating revisions agreed at the NoWAL Board meeting held on 11 May 2004).

17 August 2004 (incorporating revisions submitted by members of Operations Group during consultation June 2004).

28 September 2004 (incorporating Promotion and communications section).

8 October (incorporating amendment to end of Consortial context section agreed at NoWAL Board meeting held on 5 October 2004) .