

- 2.4 (9.1) *Terms of Reference*. The wording has now been changed from 'the role of the forum should not duplicate' to 'the role of the forum is distinct from'.

3 TNA's public service performance against our targets

- 3.1 JJ presented the latest information on TNA's performance against several of our key public service related targets (see charts in separate document).

It was suggested that the information shown in the charts could be misleading and has its limitations; especially with reference to the target for the number of downloads. It was confirmed by LO that one download could be as small as one page or as large as 100.

It was confirmed that the target for the percentage of calls answered within 20 seconds was for calls answered by a person and not to an automated system.

- 3.2 There will be an online user satisfaction survey in January 2008 and the results are expected at the end of March.

- 3.3 It was asked whether the downtime for IT systems is monitored: JJ confirmed that availability is monitored and we consistently achieve the target of 99% availability. It was asked if performance figures could be included in future.

JL

- 3.4 Concern was expressed that there is no back-up for the many computers in the building. LO responded that providing backup for the entire infrastructure would not be financially viable. We do have a back-up generator to safeguard and protect our website; this is the key area that needs to be on uninterrupted power.

- 3.5 The group was asked if they felt any other areas should be monitored and that could be included in our KPI's for the future. It was suggested that figures are provided for non-availability of original documents due to them being out to record copying.

JL

4 Programme for improvements to TNA's public services at Kew (LO)

- 4.1a LO reported that plans had not altered, but this is probably the most difficult time of the project with the least number of seats being available. He apologised for this but stated that they wanted to keep the building open as long as possible. The timetable for works published on the website may change – this is because cabling in the reading rooms may take longer than expected. This will not affect the date for the relocation of the

FRC services.

4.1b There were two problems experienced when the office reopened following the building works in December; with document ordering (which was due to a system change) and the lack of heating in the link. Both were unrelated to the refurbishment project.

4.1c There was concern expressed that there is a lack of guidance for new readers following the December closure, particularly on entrance to the reading room area. It was explained that there is still a staff presence at the 'information' point in this area. Unfortunately it is less visible as the original desk has been removed and replaced with temporary furniture.

It was suggested that during this period it would be useful to have a member of staff deployed to speak to readers on their way out of the reading rooms and gather their feedback on the temporary set up. Although this was thought a good idea we do not have the resources to cover this proposal. We are encouraging written feedback and we have 8 suggestion boxes, including one on the main enquiry desk.

It was suggested that Security could hand out feedback forms to readers on their exit.

4.1d New glass panels leading into the Research Enquires Room – it was felt that these were not visible enough (these may not be part of the final plans). During the meeting PS arranged to increase the amount of tape on the glass panels to make them more visible.

4.1e One of the machines using copy cards was out of order; these machines are frequently going wrong and there are many problems with payment issues. Apologies were made and the group were informed that we are looking into replacing these machines.

It was pointed out that the British Library uses a receipt system for self-service copying and it was asked if that could be adopted here. It was noted that we have the same supplier as the BL and we are at present in discussion with them regarding updating our equipment.

4.2 The Library will have to be packed away for 4-6 weeks, but the work in this area is on schedule. The books will be returned in stages and some will be back on the shelves in February.

4.3 Readers were still unhappy about the closure of the library enquiry desk and were rather concerned that the expertise of library staff will be unavailable. It was reiterated that all staff

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multitask and can deal with basic questions, or know where to go to obtain answers.

The new enquiry desk on the first floor will remain, and front line staff will be floor walking. There will be a Duty Enquiry Service Manager, as there is now; this is a senior member of staff on duty to which any questions can be directed.

There will be an extensive training programme for all staff enabling them to work in all areas of the public facing enquiry desks. We are not withdrawing any services or lowering the standards, merely changing the way we deliver the service and integrating the library to make it more available. Due to our Rota it is impossible to have all specialists on duty at the same time. Should there be questions that cannot be answered by staff on duty then they will be able to call on more experienced members of staff with greater expertise in certain fields: this includes our various experts on the records as well as the qualified librarians. JJ suggested that Helen Pye-Smith (Head of Library) be invited to a future meeting.

JL

- 4.4 There was an enquiry about where the library journals and magazines were and when they will be available. They will probably eventually be moved to the RER. All back-copies are kept but may not be on the shelves.

It was asked if there could be a temporary list of what is available and the date it is published? It was stated that all items available in the library are in the on-line library catalogue.

- 4.5 Badges: it was asked if badges could be colour coded by specialist area. It is difficult to decide how much information should be displayed on such a small area. JJ agreed to look into this matter with LO.

JJ/LO

- 4.6 **Monitoring Seat Allocation during refurbishment period (TG)**

At present there are only 152 seats available in the Document Reading Room, but between 22 February and 16 April seat numbers are expected to increase to 216.

The Microfilm reading Room will continue with one third of its seats removed until the end of the refurbishment period.

The first two days of the reduced seating were quite busy and document production was 35% higher than usual on a Monday. On the Monday there were 37 on a waiting list for seats and each person got a seat after waiting between 10minutes and 2.45 hours: 5 people did not wait.

On Tuesday there were 55 on the list, waiting between 16 minutes and 2.50 hours.

On Wednesday there was one person who had to wait 16 minutes for a seat.

Thursday (at 11:40) there were 13 on the list.

It is envisaged that the situation will get worse during this stage of the refurbishment.

- 4.7a Concern was expressed regarding the number of empty desks; those who had finished for the day and had not 'exited' their seats.

It was asked if perhaps something could be done to make use of these seats or if there was a better way to manage seat allocation.

Suggestions:

1. Message on seat allocation screens reminding readers of the low capacity and to swipe out when they are finished with their seat.
2. Security (or someone) to ask readers as they are leaving if they have swiped out, and asking them to do so if they haven't.
3. 'Airline style' seat allocation – allocate more seats than are actually available and have documents delivered to lockers for currently non-existent seat numbers so that seats can be used as soon as they are available.
4. Perhaps only guarantee a seat for four hours
5. Maybe those with reserved documents should arrive by a certain time
6. Put a note on computers warning of the problems and asking readers to swipe out when they have finished and/or ask Security to monitor the situation.

TG

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TG

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TG

TG

JJ asked TG to investigate the possibilities of the above and explore other means of allocating seats. TG to e-mail those present at the meeting for further feedback

Post-meeting note: TG met with users before Christmas to discuss above

- 4.7b Many were concerned that if they had to travel later, or had long journeys they would not be able to get seats. Apologies were made but inevitably there will be problems as we are trying to provide a service for all. Suggestions regarding seating would be gratefully received.

- 4.7c It was thought that not enough information was on our website about the current disruptions, and that it was not prominent enough

Post-meeting note: this information is now on the front page of our website.

4.7d It was noted that coach groups were still intending to visit during this period and that this would drastically affect available seats.
Post-meeting note: most of the coach groups have been contacted and warned about the situation, some have cancelled and some have postponed their visits. Unfortunately a number of groups are unable to cancel their visit.

4.7e It was suggested that documents be returned to the repositories at the end of each day – TG stated that this was impracticable, and that increased document handling is not good for the records. Our KPI Target is to deliver documents to the Reading Room in 35 minutes; TG wanted to ensure that people knew that this target could impact on the documents themselves: incorrect and excess handling and can harm documents.

4.8 **Family Records Centre Relocation**

4.8a The closure date for the FRC is 15th March but the GRO have yet to confirm their date; we are in discussion with the GRO about their future services. There have been assorted reports in the media, but not all are correct - we have no control over the press.

Apart from Census Microfilm everything available at the FRC is now available at TNA. There have been misconceptions that the hard copy BMD were to be transferred here, but they are not part of our holdings - they belong to the GRO). We do have some BMD on microfiche, and we are in discussion as to whether we will take any more on film.

4.8b There were questions about the difference between the FRC and the GRO; basically people could not distinguish between the two and it was felt by some that the information on our website was misleading.

Post-meeting note: PS has e-mailed the Webmaster and asked for an improvement to the message regarding the distinction between the GRO and TNA and their respective responsibilities.

4.8c The 1911 Census are scheduled on-line in 2009.

4.9 Concern was raised about asbestos; the levels, what was being done to protect staff and visitors, and what will be done should any more be found. It was pointed out that we have responsible and experienced staff in charge of the building and that air monitoring was being carried out as and when needed and that we have taken every sensible and reasonable precaution necessary.

It was asked if this information could be double-checked with the

Estates Department.

JL

5 Updates (JJ)

- 5.1 Car parking: We will not be introducing charges for at least the next financial year. There will be a higher level of demand for parking in the future and we need to investigate how to best manage this usage. We will be monitoring the levels of car park use and may install barriers but these would not be used for charging for the foreseeable future.
- 5.2 New rules: We are planning to update the rules and these will be introduced at the end of January (after the closure week 21-27 January). These will be reviewed again at the end of March. We will also be changing the types of identification required before issuing reader tickets; in the future there will be no declaration forms and no temporary tickets.
There will be no change to the tickets already issued, although we will be looking into this.

We will cease stapling loose papers from 31st March

- 5.3 Refurbishment: During the closure period in January, Security desks will be moved to the first and second floors and the Reader Reception desk will be moved to the first floor. We will also take this time for extensive staff training.
There will also be building works carried out in the public restaurant.

From 28th January the service points will have moved.

- 5.4 There will also be an upgrade to the Document Ordering and Reader Registration systems.

6 The next meeting will be on January 17th.