
S T U D E N T L O A N S  C O M P A N Y L I M I T E D

Product and Services Development Board
Held at 10.30am on Wednesday 6th February 2008
Boardroom

Present:	Derek Ross	Deputy Chief Executive	Chair	DR
	Wallace Gray	ICT Director		WG
	Christine Aitken	Head of Change Management		CAIT
	Donald Hume	Programme Manager		DH
	Alan McLellan	Head of Business Services		AMcL
	Paul Smith	Head of Business Development		PS
	Peter Robertson	Head of ICT Development		PR
	Colin Clive	ICT Product Developments Manager		CC
	David Thomson	Head of Customer Contact		DT
	Ali Hewison	Customer Services 3i Manager		AH
	Fraser Harris	ICT Technical Support Manager		FH
	Stephen Neilson	Senior Accounting Manager		SN
	Michael Mullin	Procurement Manager		MM
	Les Campbell	Finance Director		LC
	Graeme Duncan	Assistant to Company Secretary	Minutes	GD
Apologies:	Ralph Seymour-Jackson	Chief Executive		RSJ
	Chris Andrew	Company Secretary		CA
	Martin Herbert	Customer Services Director		MH

Distribution: As Above.

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

DR welcomed the group and noted apologies from RSJ, CA and MH. He welcomed AH to her first Product and Services Development Board meeting as the new Customer Services 3i Manager.

2. Minutes of Meeting on 11th January 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2008 were approved.

3. Actions from Meeting on 11th January 2008

Refer to separate outstanding Rolling Action Plan. The below actions merited short discussion;

PSDB001 – SN advised that information had been collated on this issue and an effect on the 08/09 Customer First programme was likely. It was agreed this item should be closed.

PSDB002 – SN advised that Finance and Business Services were working together on this matter and they were working on the assumption that the originally agreed sum of £174K would be sufficient to incorporate Wales into the 07/08 programme. It was agreed this item should be closed.

PSDB003 – DR advised that the Stakeholder Steering Group (SSG) had now disbanded and the Company will now be represented at each quadrilateral meeting where SLC matters will be specifically discussed. He stated that the SSG would be reformed to deal with particular issues should the need arise.

PSDB006 – DR advised that this was still being collated and a delivery schedule/business calendar would be submitted to the next meeting.

4. Delivery Schedule/Business Calendar

Refer to Action PSDB006.

5. Programme Structure Report

DH presented the programme structure report which highlighted that work had commenced on the development of a new programme structure intended to report and assist with the management of the complete portfolio of projects and systems development requests within SLC. He advised that a tender invite had been issued to ten leading consultancy firms and a total of three responses had been received which were now being evaluated. PR then stated that he felt it would have been useful for the Heads of Service to have seen the Terms of Reference for this consultancy work and DR advised that this work had been agreed as the Company were attempting to manage many multi million pound projects which had the ability to impact on each other and that there was a real risk of the Company losing sight of certain issues should an overall view of programmes not be sought.

A discussion then followed on the funding of the work and SN queried where the money for this project would come from as there did not appear to be any underspend projections for the current financial year. DR advised that a discussion had taken place with the Head of Finance where an initial fee of around £100K had been agreed but that there was the possibility that the work which was actually required may not cost as much as the projected figure. LC then queried at which Board approval of this matter would be sought and DH advised that it would be submitted to the next meeting of this Board **ACTION PSDB009 – DH**. PR suggested that the Head of Finance be included in all future discussions in relation to this work and MM requested that in future, budget confirmation should be sought before tender invites were issued.

6. 08/09 Programme Report

CAIT presented the 08/09 Programme Report and provided a summary of the progress which had been made on the programme so far including:

- Application forms for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Ready Reckoner which had been completed ahead of schedule; and
- Changes which had been made to the Customer Portal which was now 70% complete including splitting it into three phases so that each section could be passed as and when it was completed

CAIT then advised that there had been some issues in relation to the funding letters for Northern Ireland and Wales and that the ROI fees had not passed ministerial approval and would not be re-submitted this year. She then updated the Board in relation to EMA & ELG and advised that the consolidated plans for these were now complete. DR then queried what could be done with regard to the month and a half delay expected for EMA and PS advised that one month's contingency had been accounted for with phasing options also available that could address this problem.

A discussion followed on the issue of SF Pilots for the 07/08 Programme which the report showed as having an overspend of £455K. SN advised that this was due to DIUS capping the SF Pilots budget at £1.2M but an increase in staffing costs had meant that this project had gone over budget. He also stated that this project would come under the remit of Customer First from April 2008. DR queried whether this figure was what had originally been forecasted and SN confirmed that this was the case and that many of the costs were fixed such as rent and rates.

AMcL then raised an issue in relation to the storage of EU loan application information which he understood required to be removed from Government storage and transferred to SLC ownership in the near future and stated that negotiations with DIUS would need to take place in relation to the costs associated with this move. He also asked whether he could have access to the tender information for Hunter 2 which had been issued as he had been informed by suppliers that this product may have a short shelf life. MM agreed to supply AMcL with this information **Action PSDB010 – MM**.

DR then advised that the format of the report would be changing over the coming months but until the time and resources became available for this to happen, the current format would remain the same. LC suggested that it would be useful to see in the Financial Summary section of the report details of what had been authorised and what was available in order to draw a comparison between the two. SN agreed to liaise with DH so that this information was included in future reports **Action PSDB011 – DH/SN.**

Wallace Gray joined the meeting during the following item.

7. Customer First Programme Report

DH provided a summary of the Customer First Programme report and stated that good progress had been made to date. He advised that the Separation of Services project was nearing delivery and was still scheduled for a 'Go-live' date of the weekend of 23rd-24th February. He then stated that he was comfortable with the defects which remained open and that the successful migration of the new architecture would mean services would be affected on the preceding Friday and not being fully resumed until the following Wednesday. DR then stated that he did not think this would cause a significant business impact and that Customer Services were preparing to handle any problems during this time.

DH then highlighted a number of other issues including DIUS policy changes, workshops which had been held to help understand Benefits and Outcome Management and the Contact Centre Technologies tender. SN advised that discussions were underway with DIUS in relation to the financial impact of the July 2007 policy changes and these would be built into the Corporate Plan for this year. LC queried whether the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) who would be visiting the Company in the near future would be specifically interested in the financial side of the CF programme. DH advised that it was likely that OGC would raise queries of this nature and he agreed to liaise with SN to ensure that these queries could be answered fully **Action PSDB12 – DH/SN.**

DR referred to the Contact Centre Technologies tender and CC advised that a meeting had taken place with MH which had not enabled any budget issues to be addressed. WG then stated that the Company should be careful regarding the number of people who were becoming involved in this matter and a discussion followed in relation to who had been given the job of Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for this project. WG requested that the SRO for this project be confirmed to the Board **Action PSDB013 – DR.** DR cited this as an example of a lack of programme co-ordination which he felt was beginning to take place in the Company and stressed that it was important that this was brought under control in order that it did not affect the increasing amount of work the Company was undertaking. DT advised that the integration of the Contact Centre Technologies work was vital as there would not be enough contact resources available to meet the requirements should this not go ahead.

8. Update on Project Managers Roles and Responsibilities

CAIT advised that good progress had been made on this matter and the Project Managers Handbook was now available having been through various reviews by Change Management. She stated that external contractors had already commended the handbook and that the Company should start to see consistency in the way managers were operating. DR advised that from what he had seen so far, Project Managers had been at the heart of the creation of this document and they were accepting that they would have to develop in this role. CAIT informed the Board that the handbook would now be submitted to SRO's to ensure that they are comfortable with it and that it would be updated as structures changed within the Company. WG advised that the Cabinet Office had recently stepped up their requirements for Project Management and were ensuring those who were undertaking this type of work were continuously 'Prince 2' accredited. He advised that there may be guidance issued shortly which would require companies to declare non accreditation of this type. It was agreed that CAIT should provide an update on this matter to the next meeting of the Board **Action PSDB014 – CAIT.**

9. Scanning Update

CC advised that numerous meetings in relation to Scanning had taken place since the previous meeting of the Board but it was still not possible to quantify the budget that would be required for this project. He advised that the intention was to proceed with the tender exercise with some changes and to start magnitude planning with

the information that was available to try and produce an estimated cost. DR stated that the issue of Scanning had been known since an early stage and it appeared that a mistake had been made in the planning of this matter. WG queried whether the existing Business As Usual (BAU) arrangements which were in place for Scanning could be utilised and DR suggested that as long as a long-term solution was found, the current supplier could be contacted to negotiate an extension of the current contract. DR agreed to set up a meeting with Hugh Alexander, Project Manager and Mark Cassidy, Student Finance Services Delivery Manager in order to identify the options for Scanning for the Customer First programme **Action PSDB015 – DR.**

10. Business Performance and Risk Reporting

DR presented the business performance and risk report paper which had been submitted for information and advised that this had already been approved by the Executive Management Board. He stated that this was a good, clear focus of how matters should be reported and that any questions in relation to this paper should be directed to John Maynard, Corporate Assurance Manager.

11. Any Other Business

WG highlighted to the Board two potential projects (the installation of the GSi link and ‘The Top 10 Matters to be addressed in Operations’) which he felt would require to be considered as fully resourced projects should they be expected to be implemented successfully. DT advised that five ideas for the ‘Top 10’ that had arisen from an original efficiency programme meeting but the matter had not been progressed since this meeting. WG stressed that this highlighted the need for the project to be fully resourced and managed in order that this task was not left behind whilst other matters were progressed.

LC then advised that arrangements for the ICR debt sale had started to take shape and advised that the Board members would have to consider this matter when submitting Board reports in the future.

PR advised that following work Facilities had undertaken with an external architect, it had been established that there was the capacity for 18 extra desks which could be integrated into the existing set-up. He highlighted that this would help alleviate current accommodation problems although the building now appeared to have reached its full capacity with regards to desks.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Friday, 7th March 2008