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**Issues paper**

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This report sets out the findings and recommendations of the review chaired by Professor Sir Alan Wilson into the strategy, activities and effectiveness of the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC).

# Review of the Joint Information Systems Committee

**Report to HEFCE by the JISC  
Review Group**

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# Review of the Joint Information Systems Committee: report to HEFCE by the JISC Review Group

To	Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions Heads of HEFCE-funded further education colleges Heads of all other higher education institutions throughout the rest of the UK Heads of all other further education colleges and learning and skills providers throughout the UK
Of interest to those responsible for	Senior management, information and communications technology strategy, libraries, information systems, engagement with JISC, and organisations working in these and related areas
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## Executive summary

### Purpose

1. This report sets out the findings and recommendations of the review chaired by Professor Sir Alan Wilson into the strategy, activities and effectiveness of the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC). The review's terms of reference are at Annex A and the Review Group membership is listed at Annex B.

### Remit of the review

2. The review was commissioned by HEFCE, working with all of JISC's public funders, both higher education (HE) and further education (FE). It encompasses the full range of JISC activities, not just those funded by HEFCE. The review process was informed by: discussions with JISC staff and Board members; interviews with key stakeholders; evidence provided by JISC and from many other sources; and by an extensive consultation with institutions<sup>1</sup>, sector bodies, comparator organisations and other interested parties.

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<sup>1</sup> This report uses the term 'institution' as shorthand to encompass 'universities, colleges and other learning providers' across the HE and FE sectors.

## **Key points**

### **Principal findings**

3. The Review Group was impressed by the range of evidence demonstrating the success of JISC over many years. There is a common view that it has played a pivotal role in the UK as an enabler of innovation and of early, widespread adoption of information and communications technology (ICT). Its shared services (most notably the Joint Academic Network, JANET) have become indispensable to the HE and FE sectors. It has done outstanding work to create and collect electronic content and resources, and in negotiating collective procurement on behalf of the sectors. There is no comparable body within the UK, and internationally its reputation is outstanding as a strategic leader and partner.

4. Alongside this praise has come some criticism of the breadth and complexity of JISC's activity, and of its structure, processes and governance arrangements. Some of this reflects its undoubted success and the demands of different funders and institutions to extend the range of its work, and differences in need between HE and FE. All this has resulted in, at times, a lack of coherence and follow-through. There have been questions about the impact of some of JISC's activity. In an era of financial constraint, it is necessary to refocus activities around clearer priorities, and to ensure JISC operates with a sustainable financial model.

### **Recommendations**

5. A 'vision for the future role of JISC' is set out in paragraphs 76-91, which includes the review's recommendations. A summary of these recommendations is as follows:

- JISC activity should be focused on achieving a large impact:
  - activities need to be clearly linked to the sectors' priorities
  - JISC should offer sector leadership through 'routes to best practice', wherever such practice resides
  - research and development activity should focus on horizon-scanning and thought leadership
  - services and projects should be rationalised, with a view to significantly reducing their number
- JISC should be funded through a combination of grants and subscriptions/user charges
- rather than be located within HEFCE for accountability purposes, JISC should become a separate legal entity, and the implications of this for the four companies (see paragraph 17) should be reviewed
- governance arrangements should be clarified, to ensure that the Board takes clear overall strategic control
- the internal structure should be clarified and simplified, to improve efficiency and control

- a plan for the proposed internal structure and operations should estimate the savings to be achieved
- there should be discussions between JISC, its funders, sector representatives and other bodies, to determine an overall funding strategy for ICT in the HE and FE sectors.

### **Action required**

6. No immediate action is required of institutions in response to this document.

## Context for the review

7. Paragraphs 8-31 briefly set out contextual information that is explored in more detail in paragraphs 32-75.

### JISC's history, mission, strategy and structure

8. The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) was established in 1993 as an advisory committee to the higher education (HE) and further education (FE) funding bodies across the UK. Its mission is: 'to provide world-class leadership in the innovative use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support education, research and institutional effectiveness'<sup>2</sup>. Its current strategic objectives<sup>3</sup> are to:

- provide cost-effective and sustainable shared national services and resources
- help institutions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their corporate and business systems
- help institutions to improve the quality of learning and teaching and the student experience
- help institutions to improve the quality, impact and productivity of academic research
- be a responsive, reflective and learning organisation that demonstrates value for money.

9. The general investment criteria that JISC applies to its activities<sup>4</sup> are:

- the activity is ICT-based
- the activity provides a UK-wide benefit and adds value beyond that which could be achieved by institutions acting individually or collectively
- the activity is not possible, or is unlikely, without central support
- a clear output is delivered with demonstrable value for money.

10. The scope of JISC's work has grown significantly over the years, through increasing demands and expectations from funders and institutions, and in response to new technological opportunities. The organisational form and structure have evolved to accommodate these changes.

11. JISC is not a separate legal entity but for accountability purposes is located within HEFCE, which provides 50 per cent of its core funding. This relationship is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding with the four UK HE funding bodies, setting out their priorities. There is a similar Memorandum of Understanding between the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and HEFCE (on behalf of JISC) to cover the contracted services for FE and skills in England. The funders' Steering Committee

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<sup>2</sup> For more information see 'JISC Strategy 2010-2012', p12.

<sup>3</sup> As above, p13.

<sup>4</sup> As above, p16.

provides guidance to the JISC chair and executive secretary on government and funding council priorities and expectations. It also provides advice on and endorses the annual JISC funding proposals to each funding body. It meets four times a year.

12. The JISC Board determines JISC's programme of work to reflect the needs of the education and research communities and to deliver JISC's mission. It meets three times a year and comprises: 17 members appointed by the funding bodies; the chairs of JISC Collections, JISC Advance and JANET; and eight assessors and observers from the funders, with five members of the JISC senior management team in attendance.

13. There are a number of sub-committees, which were reorganised following the Gross Review in 2008<sup>5</sup>, reporting directly to the Board. In addition to the audit, nominations and remuneration committees, the following relate specifically to aspects of JISC's strategy:

- JISC Infrastructure and Resources Committee – ensures the provision of cost-effective and sustainable shared national infrastructure and resources for UK FE, HE and research
- JISC Organisational Support Committee – supports managers and administrators in institutions by identifying relevant areas of work appropriate to JISC
- JISC Learning and Teaching Committee – helps institutions promote innovation in the use of ICT to benefit learning and teaching
- JISC Support of Research Committee – supports the needs of researchers, particularly in the context of network infrastructure, authentication and data storage and retrieval
- the Chairs Committee comprising the chairs of these sub-committees, the chair and deputy chair of the Board, and JISC Executive senior managers, helps to co-ordinate the work of the sub-committees and oversees the annual JISC Services Portfolio Review<sup>6</sup>.

14. These sub-committees have established working groups, of which there are currently around 20, to investigate specific issues or oversee programmes. Examples include the Business and Community Engagement Advisory Group, Geospatial Working Group and Retention Co-ordination Group. Working groups are disbanded when their work has been completed.

15. The JISC Executive supports the Board and its sub-committees, focusing on the delivery of JISC's programme of work. It consists of four groups: Finance and Corporate Services; Policy; Services and Outreach; and Innovation.

16. JISC's innovation activity involves working closely with colleges and universities to carry out research and to develop advice and guidance, products and services. It leads

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<sup>5</sup> 'A review of the sub-committee structure of JISC' (July 2008), Ian Gross, JISC Head of Internal Audit.

<sup>6</sup> See footnote 41.

activities that support core themes in the JISC strategy through innovation programmes and initiatives. JISC currently manages and funds 225 projects within 35 programmes<sup>7</sup>.

17. A range of JISC services provide expertise, advice and guidance and resources to address the needs of all users in HE and FE. Around 60 services are delivered through service providers, principally the following bodies (the first four of which are companies limited by guarantee):

- JANET (UK) – manages the operation and development of the Joint Academic Network (JANET), the UK's education and research network
- JISC Collections – negotiates with publishers of online resources and with owners of digital content, on behalf of further and higher education
- JISC Advance – provides information, advice and guidance to the sectors and is responsible for seven services and 13 regional support centres
- British Universities Film and Video Council (BUFVC) – a representative body promoting the production, study and use of film and related media in higher and further education and research
- Mimas – a national data centre based in the University of Manchester
- EDINA – a national data centre based in the University of Edinburgh.

18. JISC's principal funders are:

- HEFCE – HE, England
- BIS – FE, England, working with the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)
- Scottish Funding Council (SFC) – HE and FE, Scotland
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) – HE, Wales
- Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) – FE, Wales
- Department for Employment and Learning (in Northern Ireland) (DEL) – HE and FE, Northern Ireland
- Research Councils UK.

19. In recent years schools have had access to JANET under different funding arrangements in England, Scotland and Wales (through the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA) in England, the Scottish Government, and the Welsh Assembly Government). With the closure of BECTA by 31 March 2011, this funding for schools' use in England is under review. In addition, schools in England have been able to use online resources provided by JISC Collections through JISC Collections for Schools, initially part-funded by BECTA, and this continues as a subscription service. Schools are also able to benefit from openly available advice and guidance, including that provided by JISC Advance. For the past decade, sixth form

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<sup>7</sup> For more information see [www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo.aspx](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo.aspx) (accessed 14 December 2010).

colleges in England have had full access to JANET and the same range of services as further education colleges as part of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funding of that sector. With the recent closure of the LSC and the responsibility for sixth form colleges now resting with the Department for Education, the continuation of this central funding from 1 April 2011 is also under review.

## **ICT opportunities and challenges for the sectors**

20. Institutions and the funding bodies, through JISC, have invested considerable resources in ICT. Its rapid development continues to change the way they, their students and their business partners work. This happens across the full range of institutions' activities – teaching and learning, research, business and community engagement<sup>8</sup>, management and administration – and so presents a range of opportunities and challenges.

21. Two years ago, Professor Sir Ron Cooke's report on online innovation in higher education<sup>9</sup> noted that the UK has a world-class ICT infrastructure, but that more effective leadership was required to exploit its potential. His report recommended greater emphasis on the development of open access learning resources, revitalised investment in e-infrastructures, and more support for institutions in developing information strategies, including the use of ICT in management and administration.

22. A recent report by Research Councils UK<sup>10</sup> underlined the importance of e-infrastructure to high-quality research and the international position of UK science. This report defined e-infrastructure as digitally based technology, resources, communications and people and organisational structures. It argued for targeted and co-ordinated investment to reduce ongoing costs through efficiency savings, a drive for greater adoption of the technology, and work to support interoperability and collaboration across the research community.

23. Similar themes emerge from the work of the Online Learning Task Force<sup>11</sup>. This concluded that online learning provides a real opportunity for institutions to develop responsive, engaging and interactive provision which, if offered at scale, could deliver quality and cost-effectiveness as well as meet student demands for flexible learning. It noted that changes in pedagogy, skills and organisation needed to keep pace with

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<sup>8</sup> 'Business and community engagement' is the term used in the HE sector. In the FE sector other, similar terms may apply.

<sup>9</sup> 'On-line innovation in higher education', report by Professor Sir Ron Cooke to the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, October 2008.

<sup>10</sup> 'Delivering the UK's e-infrastructure for research and innovation', a report commissioned by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Research Councils UK, July 2010.

<sup>11</sup> 'Collaborate to compete: seizing the opportunity of online learning for UK higher education' (HEFCE 2011/01), report by the Online Learning Task Force, available at [www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs).

technological change. An unpublished report from BECTA<sup>12</sup> makes many of the same points for the FE and skills sector, noting that the 'full technology premium' has yet to be realised, and that ICT developments need to take their place as part of the mainstream provision.

24. Institutions are thus being driven by a variety of forces – national and international competition, student demand and expectations, and the need to manage costs, as well as technological innovation itself – to embrace ICT to a greater extent. This involves thinking more imaginatively about collaboration, shared services, and partnerships with the private sector. The question is how they should be supported in doing this and whether, or to what extent, there is a role for any body to provide leadership to the sectors.

### **National and international comparators**

25. JISC is unique in the UK, providing what many stakeholders have described as a 'holistic approach' to the sectors' needs, from research and innovation, to core services, resources, advice and training. In so doing it works in partnership with other bodies such as the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL), the Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association, the Higher Education Academy, the Leadership Foundation for HE (LFHE), Research Councils, the British Library, and the Association for Learning Technology. It has also worked with BECTA and LSIS, and work with the latter will continue following the closure of BECTA.

26. Internationally, JISC is one of a small group of organisations acknowledged to be 'world class' in providing leadership in ICT<sup>13</sup>. It has many similarities with SURF in the Netherlands<sup>14</sup>, which in the context of this review commented that they are the only two national organisations in the western hemisphere involved in all aspects of innovative ICT support for higher education and research. They have very similar strategies, work on joint projects, and co-operate to influence the high-level EU policy agenda. Other notable organisations with which JISC collaborates include DEFF (Denmark's Electronic Research Library)<sup>15</sup>, and DFG (the German Research Foundation)<sup>16</sup>. In the USA, there is no national system for HE or FE, although JISC also has a number of partners there, including EDUCAUSE, a non-profit membership association<sup>17</sup>. It has also had joint

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<sup>12</sup> 'Towards efficiencies through technology in the Further Education and Skills Sector: A plan to realise the benefits', BECTA, December 2010 (not yet published).

<sup>13</sup> For example, see 'International benchmarking study: a report to JISC by David Mason Consultancy', July 2007.

<sup>14</sup> For more information see [www.surffoundation.nl/en/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.surffoundation.nl/en/Pages/default.aspx).

<sup>15</sup> For more information see [www.deff.dk/default.aspx?lang=english](http://www.deff.dk/default.aspx?lang=english).

<sup>16</sup> For more information see [www.dfg.de/en/index.jsp](http://www.dfg.de/en/index.jsp).

<sup>17</sup> For more information see [www.educause.edu](http://www.educause.edu).

funding relationships with the National Endowment for the Humanities<sup>18</sup> and the National Science Foundation<sup>19</sup>.

## **The contemporary context, including finances and funding**

27. The debate about ICT opportunities and challenges takes place at a time of unprecedented pressure on public finances. The recent Comprehensive Spending Review will lead to significant reductions in public investment in HE and FE over the next few years, albeit in different ways with different effects across the four nations of the UK. The current position in higher education is as follows:

a. For England, the Government's response to the Browne Report<sup>20</sup> will result in higher student contributions, and this will change market dynamics and increase institutions' sensitivity to changes in student demand and expectations. HEFCE will lose a large proportion of its teaching grant as this is replaced by higher tuition fees, and its regulatory function, perhaps as part of a different organisation, will change.

b. The Scottish Government published a Green Paper on a sustainable HE funding solution for Scotland on 16 December 2010. In the context of the Green Paper, the Scottish Government will look at the financial implications of funding solutions, including the impact of tuition fee changes in England, but it is opposed to the introduction of tuition fees.

c. The Welsh Assembly Government has indicated that higher education institutions in Wales will also be able to increase student contributions, though with the Welsh Assembly Government covering the additional costs to Welsh-domiciled students, and these associated costs resulting in a reduction in HEFCW grant.

d. In Northern Ireland, no decisions have been taken yet in relation to the fee cap. A public consultation, which will take account of developments in England and Wales, as well as in an independent review completed in Northern Ireland earlier in 2010 (and which is being updated in light of the Browne review) will be published in early 2011.

28. Across the UK, the whole business model for higher education in particular is likely to be transformed. How different institutions will react and adapt is not yet clear.

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<sup>18</sup> For more information see [www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov).

<sup>19</sup> For more information see [www.nsf.gov](http://www.nsf.gov).

<sup>20</sup> The Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance, led by Lord Browne, was tasked with making recommendations to Government on the future of fees policy and financial support for undergraduate and postgraduate students. Its final report, 'Securing a sustainable future for higher education in England' (October 2010), is available at <http://hereview.independent.gov.uk/hereview/report/>.

29. As regards FE, in England the publications 'Skills for Sustainable Growth'<sup>21</sup> and 'Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth'<sup>22</sup> set out equally significant reforms of the FE and skills sector within a smaller budget. A loan system for adults, similar to arrangements in HE, will be introduced. Furthermore, the closure of BECTA by April 2011 will make additional demands on JISC to support the FE and skills sector. Similarly, there are policy and funding developments across the rest of the UK.

30. The funding bodies themselves will have less scope to fund ICT in the sector. There is a risk that if the burden of investment falls more on institutions, some of them will reduce it to manage short-term financial pressures. However, increased investment in ICT will in the long term underpin institutional sustainability and international competitiveness. For example, in the FE and skills sector, BECTA has estimated very significant savings nationally through appropriate use of technology<sup>23</sup>.

31. Alongside changes taking place to public funding, there is a potentially increased role for private providers in HE. There is an important question about how they will be accommodated within the work of JISC.

## **What are institutions' needs and who should meet them?**

### **The principal markets**

32. Through its consultation (see Annex C) the Review Group sought views on current and future ICT needs, however they might be met (that is, not necessarily by JISC), for all sectors. These needs are described as either general or specific to the four main 'markets' identified by Professor Sir Ron Cooke in his 2007 report<sup>24</sup>. These remain relevant today. There was widespread agreement on the following points, although not all will apply to every institution, and there will be differences of emphasis between FE and HE. They are illustrative and not intended to be comprehensive:

### **Underpinning and general needs**

- robust, secure, resilient and high-performance networks and infrastructure, including complementarity and inter-operability
- identity and access management
- cloud computing
- meeting rising expectations from students and other users
- shared services and sector procurement arrangements to improve value for money

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<sup>21</sup> Available at [www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/10-1274-skills-for-sustainable-growth-strategy.pdf](http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/10-1274-skills-for-sustainable-growth-strategy.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Available at [www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/10-1272-strategy-investing-in-skills-for-sustainable-growth.pdf](http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/10-1272-strategy-investing-in-skills-for-sustainable-growth.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> See footnote 12.

<sup>24</sup> 'The value of JISC to higher and further education', Professor Sir Ron Cooke, March 2007.

- sharing best practice
- staff training, development and support – in partnership in HE with the Higher Education Academy
- improving digital literacy for both staff and students
- enabling accessibility and inclusion through technology

### **Learning and teaching**

- flexible, diverse and student-focused provision
- virtual learning environments and integrated e-learning tools and services
- access to resources, including open content
- high-quality content generally
- tools for collaboration and communication
- responding to social learning, and supporting the use of personal devices to access institutional systems and resources
- secure assessment systems

### **Research**

- high bandwidth connectivity to facilitate research collaboration and co-operation, including inter-disciplinary and international activity
- a technical and legal framework to access digital content across borders
- repository and digital curation services
- facilities for storing, sharing and analysing very large data sets
- effective search and delivery tools
- research information management
- easy desktop video conferencing facilities

### **Business and community engagement**

- customer relationship management
- flexible network access policies
- institutional portals bringing together business and academia

### **Management and administration**

- secure single sign-on systems
- self-service systems at the institutional level, supporting many administrative processes, such as enrolment, registration, timetabling and results
- changing student information systems in the post-Browne Review and reformed FE system era (England only)
- integrating disparate systems

- flexible corporate management information systems
- affordable and extensible student record systems
- records management.

33. The above points are broadly aligned with JISC's current strategy<sup>25</sup>, which itself was developed after consultation.

### **Cross-cutting issues of which JISC needs to be aware**

34. The lists after paragraph 32 represent common priorities across most institutions. They amount to a continuing and demanding programme of investment and change, and raise some important questions about how this will be achieved.

### **Technological versus cultural problems and needs**

35. These priorities are clearly focused around technological issues, but ICT systems have a human dimension: how the staff and students make use of them, and how institutions as a whole adopt them and evolve with their use. One of the underpinning needs is improving digital literacy, highlighted both by those who responded to the consultation, and by many other reviews and reports, including the Online Learning Task Force<sup>26</sup>. Students' experience of ICT may vary considerably, and there is a particular challenge in managing and meeting their expectations across the diverse FE and skills sector. In many cases, their knowledge and expectations will exceed those of staff.

36. Issues of take-up and impact are linked with organisational culture. The best technology and systems will not keep the UK at the forefront of educational and research practice if their use is confined to small groups of enthusiasts, or if implementation is poorly led, managed and supported.

### **Finding and disseminating best practice**

37. Finding and disseminating best practice was a recurring theme running through many of the consultation responses. It is not always necessary to innovate, though there are linkages between 'scanning the environment' for emergent technologies, developing and trialling them, and publicising best practice wherever it is to be found. It is clearly important to be aware of what other organisations are doing so as to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. The question is where the balance of effort should be placed. Proven best practice may be of greater benefit to the sector in an era of resource constraint than widespread research and development, the payback from which may be uncertain.

### **Who should be responsible for identifying and responding to needs?**

38. There are many possible roles for sector-wide bodies, which include understanding what their sector as a whole will need in the future, formulating and agreeing strategies for meeting those needs, and providing solutions themselves. JISC has engaged in all of these activities, in partnership with institutions but also with other bodies. The question

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<sup>25</sup> 'JISC Strategy 2010-2012'.

<sup>26</sup> See paragraph 23.

now is whether it should specialise more, especially if it cannot be funded to cover the current range of activity. This will have a bearing on the current investment strategy and criteria (see paragraph 9). Its role might become more explicitly focused around identifying ICT needs on behalf of the sectors.

### **What should institutions be doing for themselves?**

39. The vast majority of ICT investment in the sectors is made by institutions themselves. In many cases this is informed by JISC's work – innovation, best practice, shared services – as well as other sources of advice and guidance. With reduced public funding, the burden of investment will shift further to institutions. How might JISC and other bodies help them to make sensible choices and achieve value for money? How might institutions learn from each other more effectively, for example through sector representative bodies?

40. There is a strong argument that national bodies such as JISC have played an important role in helping the sectors to engage in risky projects that individual institutions would have been unwilling or incapable of taking on themselves. However, this may have been more the case in the past than now.

## **The current operation of JISC**

41. This section discusses what JISC currently does and how it functions, in the light of the above analysis of institutions' needs. It addresses questions of appropriateness, effectiveness and impact.

### **Strategy**

42. Paragraph 8 sets out JISC's strategic objectives. Most responses to the consultation did not refer directly to its overall strategy but instead commented on the effectiveness or otherwise of its activities and services. Those comments tended to reflect the sector, location and mission of each institution or organisation, but there was a general view that JISC's strategy is now too broad. Over time there appears to have been 'mission drift', with expertise and resources stretching over many areas. JISC's impact on the FE and skills sector has been reduced since the LSC's withdrawal from full core membership of JISC in 2005, which has also led to different provision across the UK.

43. The wide remit also results in a sense of fragmentation, complexity and a lack of coherence. This is evidenced in JISC's current operating plan, in which there are 55 'key activities' within the five strategic objectives (paragraph 8 in this report), and in the organisational structure (paragraphs 66-68). There are challenges in managing such a wide range of activity, and being fully accountable for it to a diverse group of stakeholders.

### **Activities, services and innovation projects**

44. The promotion of innovation has been central to JISC's mission, and since 2000 it has funded approximately 1,000 such projects<sup>27</sup>. Many organisations have commented

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<sup>27</sup> 'Transformation through technology', JISC, April 2010, p6.

on the positive impact of this developmental activity, which has accelerated and co-ordinated progress across the sectors, and helped to keep the UK at the forefront of ICT applications to education and research. Programmes have fostered collaboration and built capacity.

45. Criticism of the current approach to innovation projects can be summarised as:

- the portfolio is too large, such that JISC does not have the resources to oversee it effectively and ensure the maximum return on investment
- investments are too small
- funding is short term and does not allow for sustainability beyond the project period
- many projects are for small user communities and therefore are of limited benefit
- projects rarely result in scalable and transferable learning that might yield long-term benefits
- many projects never get translated into live services and/or take too long to develop
- the application process is opaque and burdensome
- there is a view that the same institutions tend to succeed in bidding for funds.

46. As regards services, there is universal praise for JANET, both nationally and internationally. It is a major source of competitive advantage to the UK. Institutions value many other services and utilities (some specifically related to the network), including the following:

- authentication, authorisation and access management
- JISCMail<sup>28</sup>
- JISC infoNet<sup>29</sup>
- other advisory and consultancy services (through JISC Advance), particularly JISC Legal<sup>30</sup> and TechDis<sup>31</sup>
- video conferencing
- good practice guides and reports
- COPAC online library catalogue<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> JISCMail facilitates knowledge sharing within UK education and research communities, using e-mail and the web to enable the development of specialist online groups. Source: 'JISC Services 2010'.

<sup>29</sup> JISC infoNet provides good practice guidance on strategic planning, implementation and management of digital technology in HE and FE.

<sup>30</sup> JISC Legal provides advice on legal issues in the adoption and use of digital technologies in HE and FE.

<sup>31</sup> JISC TechDis is an advisory service on accessibility and inclusion through technology.

<sup>32</sup> COPAC provides free, online access to the catalogues of more than 50 UK libraries and museums.

- digital curation
- Mimas and EDINA national data centres.

47. Many institutions commented that there is a lack of awareness of the range of JISC services, and that many of them appear to be under-used. This may reflect the diversity of needs in the HE and FE sectors, and varying degrees of enthusiasm for ICT-enabled education and research. It may also relate to another observation made by several responses: that JISC is not effectively communicating its work and relevance to all stakeholders, notwithstanding its many publications and recently remodelled web-site.

48. The work of JISC Collections is also highly regarded. Its role in negotiating collective procurement, and building repositories, is cited as a good example of achieving value for money on behalf of institutions. It plays a key role, with other stakeholders such as the British Library, in driving forward the digitisation strategy.

49. JISC's promotion of the open agenda (open access, open resources, open source and open standards) is more controversial. This area alone is addressed by 24 programmes, 119 projects and five services<sup>33</sup>. A number of institutions are enthusiastic about this, but perceive an anti-publisher bias and note the importance of working in partnership with the successful UK publishing industry. Publishers find the JISC stance on the open agenda problematic.

50. The 13 regional support centres (RSCs) are widely used and valued by further education colleges and some higher education institutions. For many they represent JISC's presence in the English regions, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. There have been numerous positive comments about their training and development activities, and their engagement with individual institutions, including face-to-face contact. Others noted that there appears to be great variation in the scope and type of support provided by the RSCs, and this affects the variable awareness and uptake of JISC services. It is not clear whether this regional structure, employing more than 130 staff (headcount) in total, is the most efficient use of resources, when so much support and advice can be provided at a distance.

## **Value for money**

51. This leads to wider considerations of value for money, which is one of JISC's explicit investment criteria (see paragraph 9). As already noted, JANET and JISC Collections clearly advance both the use of technology and cost-effectiveness across the sectors, through collective procurement and delivery. In other areas the evidence is more mixed.

52. Two recent value for money reports<sup>34</sup> for JISC Advance and JISC Collections indicated a high rate of return from funding both areas. As these reports acknowledged, however, there are methodological challenges in making estimates of 'value' – for example where comparable services are not available on the open market, in attributing

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<sup>33</sup> For more information see [www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/topics/opentechnologies.aspx](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/topics/opentechnologies.aspx).

<sup>34</sup> Available at [www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/generalpublications/2010/valueformoney.aspx](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/generalpublications/2010/valueformoney.aspx).

savings (in time and effort) from using services, and in assessing the impact of services. Nonetheless, we could conclude that many services have proved to be very worthwhile.

53. Some responses to the consultation questioned the return on the investment in a large number of small projects (see paragraph 45). In contrast, a 2009 report<sup>35</sup> by Million+ identified the high impact of small JISC projects in smaller universities. In the consultation there were further comments that many services are not well known or well used. It is also likely that organisational complexity (discussed below) is not conducive to overall efficiency and effectiveness, and that improvements could be made here.

### **Horizon scanning and sector leadership**

54. Horizon scanning consists of understanding current and possible future trends in ICT and how they might affect the sectors. This is of vital importance to the maintenance of the UK's competitive position. It might be considered an aspect of many areas of JISC's work, such as innovative projects, upgrading the network, developing new services, and working with overseas partners. The question here is: if JISC does not do this, which other bodies could take on the role?

55. JISC also demonstrates sector leadership in HE in what has been described as its 'holistic approach', covering the principal markets (paragraph 32) and everything from blue-skies thinking to deliverable services. The fact that all this is made available through a single organisation might either contribute to, or detract from, effectiveness – if the result is complexity and a lack of focus. It may not be necessary for JISC to maintain core capabilities in all areas, if it and institutions are able to work with other partners. It is important for JISC not to see itself primarily as a research organisation or to engage in a large number of speculative projects. What institutions tell us they most need are practical solutions, from whichever source is most appropriate.

### **Assessing needs and priorities**

56. Given the varying missions of institutions across both the HE and FE and skills sectors, and the expectations of the different public sector funders, there are inevitably challenges in meeting the needs of all the stakeholders. The consultation responses showed a variety of views about how well JISC does this, whether formally through its governance processes and working groups, or more informally through other forms of continuing contact with institutions.

57. It is one thing to identify needs, such as those set out after paragraph 32; it is another to prioritise those needs, especially at a time of increasing constraint on resources. Who is to set priorities? The answer to this is related to who funds JISC. If the balance of funding shifts more toward institutions, then there will need to be clearer mechanisms to ensure that their priorities are reflected in the overall strategy. There will need to be broad agreement on what matters most, and this will certainly include developing the network.

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<sup>35</sup> 'From inputs to impact: A study of the impact of JISC funding on universities', October 2009.

## The relationship with the funders, mission groups and customers

58. As noted in paragraph 11, the Steering Committee is the formal means by which the funders maintain a close link with JISC and influence its activity. The various sub-committees and working groups are designed to ensure that institutions and representative bodies are involved in decision-making. The sub-committees were reorganised following the Gross Review in 2008<sup>36</sup>, with a view to making them more strategic and less operational. Working groups are set up by sub-committees to investigate specific issues or oversee programmes.

59. There are a number of tensions here, relating to the way JISC is funded, and the complexity of its relationships. For example, many in the FE sector report that JISC tends to concentrate mainly on the HE sector, which (through the HE funders) provides the majority of its funding. This is a consequence of funding arrangements for FE in England since 2005 (see paragraph 42). Some higher education institutions would like JISC to concentrate **only** on HE. There is a common view that JISC tends to engage mainly with ICT and library professionals in institutions rather than senior managers. Recognising this, JISC has recently set up a 'Strategic alert for senior managers and academics in universities and colleges'<sup>37</sup>.

60. For some, the relationship with HEFCE and the other funders is unclear, and this may lead to uncertainty as to whether they are all pulling in the same direction. Various other bodies, such as the LFHE, the Association for Learning Technology, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and UCAS, point to existing, effective and improving working relationships with JISC; others such as Research Councils UK and SCONUL would like to work more closely than at present. Few mission groups responded to the consultation, preferring to leave it to member institutions to submit individually, and few institutions specifically mentioned the role of mission groups in relation to JISC. We note that mission groups play an important role in facilitating consultation meetings with JISC at the most senior level. However, it is difficult to know what further role they could play.

## Governance arrangements

61. This discussion about how JISC assesses needs and priorities, and how it engages with institutions, leads us to consider the current governance arrangements. This is important because of the relationship between corporate governance and long-term organisational effectiveness and success, as explained for example by the UK Corporate Governance Code<sup>38</sup>. As many people have commented in the course of this review, JISC's current arrangements are complex and could not be described as a model of good governance.

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<sup>36</sup> 'A review of the sub-committee structure of the JISC', Ian Gross, JISC Head of Internal Audit, July 2008.

<sup>37</sup> Available at: <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A2=SUPPORTINGYOURINSTITUTION:6db45e77.1011p>.

<sup>38</sup> 'UK Corporate Governance Code', Financial Reporting Council, June 2010.

62. JISC itself has evolved into a complex and dispersed organisation (or set of organisations). There is broad representation of differing types of institution and the funders, as already noted, although some respondents assess that certain groups such as the FE sector and research-intensive institutions remain under-represented on sub-committees and working groups.

63. The current arrangements bring considerable cost. As one institution commented, attempting to allow all stakeholders to play a part results in a large overhead, bureaucracy and a lack of focus. A number of responses to the consultation commented that it is not evident how JISC is governed: for example, how the JISC Executive, the sub-committees and the four companies relate to one another. The Board is seen as too big, the functions of the sub-committees as opaque, and the companies not subject to proper strategic control.

64. At the heart of all these issues lies the status of JISC itself. It is neither truly independent nor really part of HEFCE. The companies were set up in part to ensure that they are not subject to HEFCE's direct control, but that leads to an indirect relationship between them and JISC. As part of HEFCE, JISC operates with the current government spending controls over activities such as ICT, recruitment, marketing, advertising and the use of consultants, regardless of its overall level of funding. There is also a considerable overhead to HEFCE in trying to make the current relationships and arrangements work.

65. It is clear that legal status, strategic focus, organisational structure and governance are all inter-related. There is a strong argument for less complexity, to help JISC improve efficiency and effectiveness, and operate with less resource.

### **Internal structure**

66. Comments about the internal structure are similar to those about governance. While acknowledging the skill and professionalism of JISC staff, and their many achievements, there is a general consensus that JISC is burdened by problematic structural arrangements. One commentator described 'Byzantine complexity'. Structures are seen as opaque and fragmented, and not adequately explained by publications and JISC's own web-site. Roles – of staff, and of sub-committees and working groups – are often not properly understood.

67. JISC's operations are highly dispersed geographically. The JISC Executive is located across three sites, with staff employed by three different organisations: HEFCE, based in Bristol; the University of Bristol; and King's College London. Across the companies, JANET (UK) is based at Didcot in Oxfordshire, the data centres are located at the universities of Edinburgh and Manchester, while BUFVC is in London. The services provided by JISC Advance operate from eight sites, with RSCs hosted by 13 institutions around the UK. JISC Collections operates from two sites: London and Oxfordshire.

68. All this reflects the way JISC has grown and developed over time, and a deliberate intention to embed its activities in the sector and around the country. The issue now is whether such complexity and dispersion make sense. Do they not increase overheads, impede effective control, reduce agility and hinder responsiveness to changing needs?

## Funding and financial control

69. In line with its organisational complexity, JISC's financial arrangements are also highly complex. There are separate core<sup>39</sup> and capital budgets, and for 2010-11 the figures are £89.2 million (academic year) and £27.6 million (financial year) respectively. The core budget has been static for the past three years, while the capital budget has varied considerably between years, depending on the availability of funds and funding council priorities. The sources of core funding are as follows:

Funder	Income (£m)	Percentage of total
HEFCE	44.3	49.7%
SFC (HE)	6.6	7.4%
HEFCW	2.7	3.0%
DEL (HE)	1.1	1.2%
Research Councils	1.8	2.0%
<b>HE total</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>63.3%</b>
BIS (FE, England)	26.8	30.1%
SFC (FE)	3.4	3.8%
DCELLS	1.8	2.0%
DEL (FE)	0.7	0.8%
<b>FE total</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>36.7%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>89.2</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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<sup>39</sup> 'Core funding' is provided to deliver JISC's core programmes and services and cover most of the running costs of the JISC Executive.

70. In 2010-11 JISC's core funding is distributed as follows:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Expenditure (£m)</b>	<b>Percentage of total</b>
JANET	38.8	43.5%
JISC Collections	4.2	4.7%
Other content services <sup>40</sup>	7.3	8.2%
JISC Advance (excl. RSCs)	4.5	5.1%
Regional Support Centres	7.6	8.5%
<b>Services total</b>	<b>62.4</b>	<b>70.0%</b>
Infrastructure/data management	9.9	11.0%
Learning and teaching	3.8	4.3%
Support for research	2.8	3.1%
Administration, and business and community engagement	3.6	4.1%
<b>Innovation total</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>22.5%</b>
<b>Running costs</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>89.2</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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<sup>40</sup> This term has been used to describe all JISC's other services: Federated Access Management, EDINA and Mimas data centres, Digital Curation Centre, British Universities Film and Video Council (BUFVC), Economic and Social Data Service (primarily Economic and Social Research Council-funded) and JISC's Monitoring Unit, which collects usage data from all JISC's services.

71. JISC's overall capital programme is funded by HEFCE and HEFCW only. This restricts how it is used and makes it difficult to implement a UK-wide strategy. However, since 2006-07 all the funders (except for the Research Councils) have contributed to the development of SuperJANET 5. In 2010-11 total capital funding is allocated to the following programmes:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>£m</b>
SuperJANET 5 and English Regional Network	8.2
Upgrades to services infrastructure	1.3
Digitisation and content enhancement	3.0
Repositories	4.3
Identity management	0.9
Institutional innovation	1.8
Flexible service delivery	1.8
Learning and teaching	1.1
Support for research	2.6
Project management	2.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27.6</b>

72. The four companies have their own accounts, which include income allocated from JISC but also other sources of income. For example, in the year to 31 July 2010, JANET (UK) received £16.2 million (or 25 per cent of its total income) from charges to institutions (including schools and other bodies) for network and other services; 68 per cent of JISC Collections' income came from subscriptions; and BUFVC also received 25 per cent of its income from subscriptions. JISC Advance only started trading in 2009-10, and it is mainly funded by JISC.

73. SuperJANET needs to be upgraded to SuperJANET 6 to meet anticipated needs. There are particular concerns about finding capital funding to do this. This has to be considered as part of the debate about what JISC does and how it is funded.

74. The companies are run professionally to ensure financial viability. Their finances are scrutinised by JISC Executive staff and the relevant JISC sub-committee, as well as being subject to the annual accountability review process that HEFCE normally operates for all related bodies. There are service level agreements between JISC and the companies, but there is limited operational control by JISC Executive, which might appear to be a drawback given the role of the companies in delivering aspects of the overall JISC strategy.

75. The high degree of reliance by JISC itself and JANET (UK) on direct public funding, comes with many conditions attached. Each funder's grant letter specifies detailed

requirements and expectations. This dependence will also become problematic as public expenditure comes under increasing pressure.

## **A vision for a future JISC**

76. This section brings together the various observations about JISC's current operations, as set out above, in the light of JISC's historical development (see paragraphs 8-19) and the principal ICT needs of the HE and FE sectors (see paragraph 32). It represents the Review Group's judgement about what JISC should be doing now, and how it should be organised, based on all the evidence it has received. The recommendations reflect the challenging funding environment, the changing role of the sectors' regulators, and the potentially increased role of private providers. The overall aim of these recommendations is to help JISC build on its considerable successes.

77. This is quite deliberately an outline vision rather than a complete picture for the future. Depending on the outcome of discussions between JISC itself, JISC's principal funders and other stakeholders, not least institutions, further work will need to be done to investigate the detail.

## **Refocusing JISC's strategy and activities**

78. The work of JISC needs to be more tightly focused on the sectors' priorities.

### **Recommendation 1**

JISC activity should be focused on achieving a large impact in relation to the sectors' needs and strategic priorities:

- a. All activities need to be clearly linked to the sectors' priorities, in the areas of learning and teaching, research, business and community engagement, management and administration, and underpinning needs. The priority of some of these areas may change with evolving policy agendas.
- b. JISC should offer sector leadership through 'routes to best practice', wherever such practice resides. This will include working with institutions on ICT strategies and engaging more with senior managers, academics and teachers to achieve sustainable 'cultural transformation'. The overall aim should be to embed best practice. This function might be described as the 'JISC Demonstrator Lab'.
- c. Research and development activity should focus on horizon-scanning and thought leadership – through a 'JISC Futures Lab'. This would include a small number of research activities, where this is appropriate.
- d. Services and projects should be rationalised, with a view to significantly reducing their number – based on clear criteria such as: size, impact, value for

money from sharing services, and the possibility of commercial or other alternatives<sup>41</sup>. Providing the services the sectors identify as needs should become a greater emphasis within JISC work.

## Options for funding JISC

79. As regards funding JISC, there are two main possible sources of income: grants from funding bodies, and subscriptions and/or user charges from institutions. A third source could be income from consultancy and other such commercial activities. It is probable that over the next few years the funding bodies will have fewer resources to help fund the priorities listed after paragraph 32. As a result, JISC could scale back its activities or spread its investment over a longer timeframe, but it is questionable whether this would be in the national interest. Therefore, if the overall level of investment in ICT (primarily the infrastructure) is not to fall, additional contributions will have to come from other sources.

80. If grants from the funding bodies were to reduce and JISC were to become mainly/more funded through subscriptions and user charges, JISC would become more clearly a membership organisation. It might also make it easier for JISC to develop appropriate relationships with private providers. As already noted in paragraph 72, three of the JISC companies already receive substantial income from these sources. Institutions and other bodies could pay membership fees to JISC for core activities according to their size, mission and business need.

81. This is broadly the status of SURF, JISC's partner organisation in the Netherlands (see paragraph 26), which also receives government grants. In the case of JISC, the funding bodies could still provide funds to promote particular activities or help the sectors to share risk. There are also interesting models in the UK HE sector. HESA is mainly funded by subscriptions from all HEIs<sup>42</sup>, while the LFHE receives a substantial proportion of its income from subscriptions, programmes and events, with a declining proportion of funding council grants<sup>43</sup>. In contrast, the Higher Education Academy remains mostly funded by the four HE funding councils, but this income will be reduced significantly over the next few years.

82. A shift toward subscriptions would make JISC less dependent on uncertain and fluctuating public funding. A further major advantage as a membership organisation is that it would become more accountable and responsive to institutions, and in turn,

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<sup>41</sup> JISC's annual Services Portfolio Review, which reports each year in May and is overseen by the JISC Chairs Committee, is already established to consider a broad range of data and information on the current services. In 2011 this portfolio review should reflect the broader recommendations arising from this Review of JISC, in relation to strategic focus, efficiency and effectiveness.

<sup>42</sup> The Financial Memorandum between funding councils and institutions requires all institutions to subscribe to HESA. Subscriptions from institutions have fixed and variable elements.

<sup>43</sup> Around 97 per cent of HEIs are currently members of LFHE. Membership fees vary according to the size of the institution.

institutions paying subscriptions and fees would probably have a greater sense of commitment to JISC.

83. Several responses to the consultation argued that services are far more cost-effective if all or most institutions use them. A subscriptions model might lead to extensive opting-out by institutions, thereby increasing costs to those that remain. This will need careful investigation. However, it underlines the point that JISC should focus on those services that institutions themselves are using heavily.

#### **Recommendation 2**

There should be detailed investigation of the following options for funding core JISC operations, each of which may result in a reduction in funding from the current position:

- a. Funding mainly by grants from the funding bodies, as at present.
- b. Funding mainly by subscriptions and user charges from institutions and other organisations.
- c. Funding through a combination of grants and subscriptions/user charges.

The Review Group assesses (c) to be the likely direction of travel, notwithstanding the sensitivities involved. Such a model would avoid the full funding burden falling on institutions at a time of financial uncertainty and pressure, while ensuring that the funding bodies are still able to influence JISC activity to pursue national priorities and deliver sector-wide benefits. Initially, subscription might need to be compulsory (as in the case of HESA), to ensure continuity of provision, but this could change over time. There needs to be an investigation of the appropriate balance of subscriptions and charges that would reflect the various needs of HE, and FE and skills, and also provide a way for the schools sector to opt into JISC services<sup>44</sup>.

### **The status of JISC and the companies**

84. There is a basic question about JISC's status. Its current relationship with HEFCE creates unnecessary complication, ambiguity and a lack of transparency, and imposes restrictions on the way it operates. Furthermore, as noted in paragraph 27a, HEFCE's own role is changing. It should be noted that a key driver for establishing JANET (UK), JISC Collections and JISC Advance as companies limited by guarantee was the fact that JISC was not a legal entity in its own right<sup>45</sup>. The argument for JISC separating from HEFCE becomes overwhelming if JISC were to become a membership organisation, as discussed in paragraphs 79-83.

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<sup>44</sup> As noted in paragraph 19, the funding of schools' use of JANET in England from 1 April 2011 is under review.

<sup>45</sup> The fourth company – BUFVC – whose operations are much smaller in scale than the other three, was already a company when transferred to JISC from the Open University in 2007.

### **Recommendation 3**

JISC should become a separate legal entity, and the implications of this for the four companies should be reviewed. The means of implementing this will require detailed investigation, and the timescale and outcomes may need to be considered against possible future changes to the position and scope of HEFCE and other higher education bodies.

## **Aligning governance and the internal structure with JISC's refocused role**

85. Whatever the formal status of JISC, and however it is funded, there is a need for the principles of good governance (see paragraph 61) to be reflected in its arrangements and structures. The overall aim should be to reduce complexity and fragmentation, and improve transparency and accountability.

### **Recommendation 4**

Governance arrangements should be clarified as follows:

- a. The Board should take clear overall strategic control, and therefore be smaller and part of a governance structure in which all the key functions report to it.
- b. The Board should articulate the overall priorities, which will be determined through effective consultation and engagement with the sectors.
- c. The Board should allocate major areas of expenditure.
- d. The relationship with the companies will change in line with any change in their status (see Recommendation 3). All companies that remain should report directly to the Board.
- e. The sub-committees should be replaced with advisory groups comprising sector representatives, which should have no role in allocating resources. They should help the Board to identify needs and priorities, as indicated at (b) above.

### **Recommendation 5**

The internal structure of JISC should be clarified and simplified, to improve efficiency and control, as follows:

- a. There should remain a small senior management team, but with a simpler organisational structure beneath it.
- b. The organisational structure should reflect the key strategic elements (see Recommendation 1): the routes to best practice (the Demonstrator Lab), horizon scanning (the Futures Lab), and rationalised services. In each element of this structure, the contribution to learning and teaching, research, business and community engagement, management and administration, and common systems should be articulated as part of new strategic and operating plans.
- c. In consolidating the provision of services, particular attention should be paid to the possibility of reducing geographical dispersion and improving efficiency. In

particular, there should be a review of the role and number of regional support centres.

## **Achieving savings**

86. In the current financial climate it may not be possible to continue to fund JISC activities on their present scale. In the opinion of the Review Group, it is reasonable to expect the above recommendations to deliver substantial savings in overall costs. This should be achieved through new governance arrangements, a simpler structure, the review and consolidation of services, and across JANET (UK), JISC Collections and JISC Advance<sup>46</sup>.

### **Recommendation 6**

A plan should be drawn up of the proposed internal structure and operation of JISC, which estimates the savings to be achieved, including those relating to JANET (UK), JISC Collections and JISC Advance.

## **An overall funding strategy for ICT priorities**

87. Expenditure on ICT for HE and FE needs to be clearly linked to strategic priorities. In practice all the priorities, such as those listed after paragraph 32, and probably other areas, will require investment if the UK is to remain at the forefront of education and research. The JISC Board has recently acknowledged that the specific needs of FE were being overlooked and has started to consider how the strategic priorities of the FE and Skills sector could be more effectively addressed, but a coherent approach is needed across the whole of JISC's remit. Therefore, there need to be discussions between all the interested parties – JISC, the funders, and bodies such as BIS, LSIS and Research Councils UK – to determine an overall funding strategy. This should include consideration of how to fund the development of SuperJANET 6. Another example is the need for continuing substantial investment in research computing (see the specific needs identified at paragraph 32), where currently there is a modest contribution from JISC and much larger investments by institutions and the Research Councils. In all areas, it is important to agree what it is appropriate for JISC to do.

### **Recommendation 7**

There should be discussions between JISC, the funders, sector representatives and bodies such as BIS, LSIS and Research Councils UK, to determine an overall funding strategy for ICT in the HE and FE and skills sectors. This should specifically address how to fund the development of SuperJANET 6 and research computing. These discussions should consider what it is appropriate for JISC to do within the overall strategy, alongside investments by institutions and the Research Councils.

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<sup>46</sup> BUFVC is excluded from this list because it is much smaller in scale than the other three companies; but efficiencies savings might be achieved here also.

## **Immediate priorities**

88. It will take considerable time to implement all the above recommendations. However, major changes taking place in the sectors impart some urgency. The Review Group therefore identifies the following as immediate priorities:

- changing the Board and sub-committee structure (Recommendation 4)
- starting the rationalisation of services and projects, with a reduction in geographical dispersion (Recommendations 1 and 5c)
- securing funding to develop SuperJANET 6 (Recommendation 7)
- starting a review of the status of JISC and its companies (Recommendation 3).

89. In implementing all the recommendations, essential services and operations must be maintained and staff properly looked after.

## **Conclusion**

90. JISC is an invaluable national resource. The aim of this review has been to suggest how JISC, which has evolved in response to increasing demands over 20 years, might be made more 'fit for purpose' in a financially constrained and highly competitive global environment. Owing to the restrictions on our time, resources and information, the Review Group's recommendations can only describe the likely direction of change and suggest a starting point. For us, the first and most important step is to change the organisation's governance. It will be for the newly constituted Board to undertake the research, analysis and stakeholder consultation which will inform the ultimate restructuring and re-direction of JISC.

91. In our view, any successful repositioning of JISC is likely to entail the following:

- preserving and building on the world-class ICT infrastructure of the UK higher and further education sectors
- rationalising the organisational structure and operations of JISC
- putting funding and governance more directly in the control of institutions who are the principal users and customers of JISC services
- reducing the number of JISC's objectives and priorities, and ensuring that these are aligned with the needs of institutions and funders
- spending more money and resources on identifying and promoting best practice
- spending less money overall.

## **Annex A Terms of reference**

The review considered:

- JISC's activities and evidence about their appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and added value
- the effectiveness of how JISC delivers its core functions, including:
  - the relationship to and governance of JISC related bodies/companies
  - internal structure and processes of JISC and relationship with HEFCE
  - capabilities and resourcing within JISC, reviewed against comparator organisations, including views on how demands may change in the future
  - JISC's use and effectiveness of its committees, especially in terms of identifying needs of the community, horizon-scanning and use of programme funds
- how effectively and efficiently JISC meets the needs and works in partnership with the FE and HE communities, UK government agencies and other key stakeholders.

## Annex B Review Group membership

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role/capacity</b>
Sir Alan Wilson	Chair of Review Group
David Baker	JISC Deputy Chair
Brian Baverstock	SFC Assessor
David Blaney	HEFCW Assessor
Heather Fry	HEFCE Assessor
Malcolm McBain	Head of Student Support Services and ILT (Curriculum), New College Durham
John McLaughlin	BIS
Rene Olivieri	HEFCE Board member
Shirley Pearce	HEFCE Board member, Vice-Chancellor (Loughborough)
Sheila Rodgers	DEL Assessor

## Annex C Review methodology

### Evidence gathering

1. The Review Group met four times between the end of September and mid-December 2010. It received reports, publications and other written evidence, from JISC and other sources. Interviews were conducted with:

- senior JISC staff
- the current and previous chairs of the JISC Board
- senior HEFCE staff
- the chief executives of two Research Councils
- representatives from institutions and other organisations.

### Consultation

2. As part of its evidence gathering, the Review Group agreed that all HE and FE institutions, relevant sector representative bodies and other key stakeholders should be directly invited to contribute their views on the HEFCE Review of JISC. In addition, the HE and FE funding bodies were invited to contribute their comments, and over 50 other organisations were contacted, including 10 international organisations. An open invitation to contribute to the review was also advertised on the JISC web-site, enabling the wider community to submit their views.

3. One hundred and fifty-nine responses were received by the deadline, in response to both the open and targeted invitation to comment. This total includes the 1994 Group and the Russell Group, both of which said they would not add to their members' individual responses. Forty-four FE providers and 60 higher education institutions responded, across all four nations of the UK, together with 11 international organisations, other bodies and JISC Committee chairs. The full list of respondents is:

1994 Group	National Library of Wales
Aberdeen College	National Museums Northern Ireland
Accountancyplus training	Natural History Museum
Amac (FE provider)	Nelson and Colne College
Arts University College at Bournemouth	New College Durham
Association for Learning Technology	New College Nottingham
Association of Colleges	New Zealand Ministry of Education
Association of Colleges in the Eastern Regions	Newcastle University
Association of Heads of University Administration	Newman University College

Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers	North Hertfordshire College
Association of Subscription Agents and Intermediaries	Northbrook College Sussex
Aston University	Northern Counties College
ATG Training	Norwich University College of the Arts
Bangor University	The Open University
Barnet College	Perth College UHI
Basingstoke College of Technology	Peter Symonds College
BECTA	Portsmouth College
Berkshire College of Agriculture	Publishers Association
British Library	Queen Mary, University of London
Broadland Council Training Services	Queen's University Belfast
Buckinghamshire County Council	Research Councils UK
Cambridge Regional College	Research Information Network
Canadian Heritage Information Network	Research Libraries UK
Canterbury College	Roehampton University (two responses)
Cardiff University	Rose Bruford College
Cardonald College Glasgow	Royal College of Art
City College Norwich	Royal Holloway, University of London
City College Peterborough	Royal London Society for the Blind
City of Bristol College (two responses)	Royal Veterinary College
Coalition for Networked Information (US)	Ruskin College, Oxford
Colchester Institute	Russell Group
Coleg Llandrillo	School of Oriental and African Studies
Collections Trust	SFC
College of West Anglia	Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL)
College Ystrad Mynach	South Downs College
Council on Library and Information Resources (USA)	Springfield Education and Training Limited

Danish Agency for Libraries and Media/Denmark's Electronic Research Library (DEFF)	Staffordshire University
De Montfort University (two responses)	SURF (Netherlands)
DEL Northern Ireland	Swansea Metropolitan University
Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) (Germany)	Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association
Dorton College of Further Education, Royal London Society for the Blind	UCAS
Eastleigh College	UHI Millennium Institute
Edge Hill University	UK Online centre (at St Vincent College)
Edinburgh's Telford College	Universities Scotland
Elmwood College	University College Plymouth Marjon
Fareham College	University for the Creative Arts
Glasgow Caledonian University	University of Aberdeen
Glasgow School of Art	University of Cambridge/Imperial College London
Godalming College	University of Chester
Harlow College	University of Derby
Harper Adams University College	University of Edinburgh
Higher Education Academy	University of Glamorgan
HEFCE	University of Gloucestershire
HEFCW	University of Leeds
HESA	University of Leicester
Homefield College	University of Liverpool
Independent response	University of Manchester
Information Authority, The	University of Northampton
Itchen College	University of Nottingham
ITHAKA (USA)	University of Oxford (two responses)
JISC Committee Chairs (five different responses)	University of Plymouth
JISC Film and Sound Think Tank (JISC working group)	University of Portsmouth (two responses)
John Wheatley College	University of Reading

Lancaster University (two responses)	University of Stirling
Langdon College	University of Strathclyde
LFHE	University of Surrey
LSIS	University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (three responses)
Leeds Metropolitan University	University of Wales, Newport
Lowestoft College	University of Warwick
Microsoft Research	University of Wolverhampton
Milton Keynes College	University of York
National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy	Wellcome Trust
National Endowment for the Humanities (USA)	Wirral Metropolitan College
National Institute of Adult Continuing Education	

## **Annex D List of abbreviations**

<b>BECTA</b>	British Educational Communications and Technology Agency
<b>BIS</b>	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
<b>BUFVC</b>	British Universities Film and Video Council
<b>DCELLS</b>	Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (part of the Welsh Assembly Government)
<b>DEL</b>	Department for Employment and Learning (in Northern Ireland)
<b>FE</b>	Further education
<b>HE</b>	Higher education
<b>HEFCE</b>	Higher Education Funding Council for England
<b>HEFCW</b>	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
<b>HESA</b>	Higher Education Statistics Agency
<b>ICT</b>	Information and communications technology
<b>JANET</b>	Joint Academic Network
<b>JISC</b>	Joint Information Systems Committee
<b>LFHE</b>	Leadership Foundation for Higher Education
<b>LSC</b>	Learning and Skills Council
<b>LSIS</b>	Learning and Skills Improvement Service
<b>RSC</b>	Regional support centre
<b>SCONUL</b>	Society of College, National and University Libraries
<b>SFC</b>	Scottish Funding Council