I~Work Document 10-1
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<u>Minutes of the core network meeting on Friday 20 April 2007</u>
10.00 – 15.30, RCA Senior Common Room, London

Present
Jo-Anne Bichard & Jeremy Myerson, RCA
John Clarkson & Pat Langdon, University of Cambridge
Peter Buckle, University of Surrey
Amanda Griffiths, University of Nottingham
James Lloyd, ILC-UK
Beate Baldauf, Imanol Nunez & Kerry Platman (Chair), University of Warwick

Apologies
Terry Dickerson, Cambridge
Robert Lindley, Warwick
Julian Williamson, HSL

Agenda
1. Introduction
2. Discussion of work packages
3. User group meetings

1. Introduction

In her introduction Kerry Platman provided an overview on recent changes in the ESRC timetable. Following an NDA call for outline Collaborative Research Proposals in September 2007 (which is effectively open to new entrants), six page long outline proposals need to be submitted to the ESRC by mid November 2007. This means a later deadline compared to the original timetable, but at the same time stiffer competition. Further details on the I~work's timetable are contained in I~work document 2-3, which – together with a number of other documents referred to in the minutes – can be downloaded from the I~work portal (►**see meetings, 20th April 2007, Royal College of Art).**

Thanks to the help of Jo-Anne Bichard an I~work leaflet has now been produced. Paper copies have been distributed at the meeting and an electronic file can be downloaded from the portal.

2. Discussion of work packages

Following Kerry Platman's introduction and briefing, John Clarkson presented his thoughts on how our work packages might best be integrated into one cohesive model in an attempt to present a convincing case to the reviewers. Perspectives or structures for this model could focus on a number of approaches, including a user-led, design-led, solution-led, question-led, research-led, knowledge-led policy-led, solution-led, requirements-led or design led approach. John elaborated on some of these possible structures and presented one model for discussion (►**for further details see I~work portal)**. During this discussion presentations by other members of the network were also given to elaborate on certain work packages or to emphasise a certain point (most of these documents can be found on the I~work portal).

Key issues which emerged during the discussions included the following, with some of them being more generic in nature and others focusing on discussing the content of a specific box in the model (details of the model refined during the discussion can be found on page 4).

General comments

o The focus of the project should be on the ageing worker rather than the older worker and should include the 50 plus group up to the final destination before exiting the labour market and beyond. The focus on the dynamic nature of ageing would also lead away from any individual issues older worker might face. The dynamic nature of ageing in our research will include aspects such as physical and mental capacity, but exclude e.g. financial matters.

o Feedback from the group suggested that the focus of the model should be on inclusive access to work *and* extended years in work.

o It was reiterated that the value of the older worker in business and society should form an important part of the project. A key question should also be what it is about work which keeps people engaged in (paid) work.

Defining the work (boxes on the left hand side of the model)

For all those who have not been present please note that not all boxes have been discussed in detail. Putting flesh on the bones by the assigned partners (see page 4) will be particularly important in those cases where the content of the box has remained a bit opaque.

o **The future of work**: Building on earlier ideas on the content of the future of work package, Beate Baldauf presented a preliminary outline and touched upon relevant IER work, in particular the 2004-2014 projections undertaken for the SSDA (►**for further details see I~work portal**[1]). A case was made for including a qualitative element allowing for an in-depth analysis for the future of work. The selection of case studies could be based on a combination of a number of criteria, such as the projection results, size of the company (probably opting for the two extremes, i.e. large companies and SMEs), results of the ELSA study on how older workers assess their jobs, sectoral frameworks for life-long learning and career development and capacity profiles for each sector which Cambridge could provide.

o However, consideration also needs to be given as to what kind of conclusions can be drawn from the case studies since we are aiming for results which can be generalised.

o There was felt to be some merit in bringing forward some work to be undertaken as part of the Future of Work WP to help make the case for the selection of sectors /broad occupational areas in the project proposal.

o **Understanding the user**: The case was made for the inclusion of the evaluation of interventions at different user levels, e.g. corporate level, managerial level and individual level.

Developing the work (pink box in the middle)

o The pink box visualises the primary research part of the project. A case has been made for all of those WPs in the pink box to focus on the same sectors / broad occupational groups as this would strengthen the cohesiveness of the proposal and help to build up an in-depth knowledge on the future of work in those selected areas. The pink box also visualises the integration of all research strands at the end of the project.

o **Developing the business case**: One element of this WP would form a generic piece on the business case for employing ageing workers. This should cover the economic, social and political context and at least touch upon international and in particular European issues. The Age Positive web site, for example, has published a number of case studies supporting the business case for employing older workers, with criteria employed by companies including

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[1] For those who could not attend the meeting a quick overview can be gained by reading the Summary Report; pp. 16, 40, 42, 80 and 85 from the National Report and pp. 4, 40,41, 46 and 48 in the Technical Report.

reduced absenteeism, reduced labour turnover and increased revenue. Criteria which could be added include corporate responsibility and increased job satisfaction. A key element of this WP will also be drawing together empirical results from the case studies which pertain to the business case, in particular the results of intervention of evaluations.

o There was a strong view that decisions about design interventions and their business case, i.e. whether the company wants to introduce inclusive design and what kind of measure they opt to implement, should be left to the Board to decide. Measures could include either inclusive or adaptive jobs or a mix and match, i.e. the procurement of new equipment and moving people around in jobs to alleviate job strains.

o **Designing systems**: This box symbolises the core of the project (the novelty part), should relate to our slogan Realising Potential (else potential for value is lost or value is not realised) and should give us a competitive edge. There may be further suggestions as to how this could perhaps be made more explicit or poignant in a snappy form (designing systems to realise the potential of workers is certainly too long).

o **Designing jobs** (box specifications used earlier: manage jobs, sustain jobs, sustainable jobs) To help realise the potential of ageing workers jobs may need to be redesigned, workers may need to engage in further training and/ or learning or workers may decide to change their career trajectories substantially. This WP would also incorporate the planned empirical research on capabilities, health and productivity and what it is that the worker values when working.

o Managing knowledge was not considered to be a WP in its own right as it was thought that we would not be conducting original work in this particular area. What might be worth exploring as part of the overall research is whether there is an age aspect to knowledge management.

o At some stage during the discussion, Jeremy Myerson thought it helpful to provide on overview of a relevant collaborative international project they have been awarded recently to give a more precise idea on the kind of work the RCA undertakes (►**for further details see I~work** and/or www.welcomingworkplace.com). The core element of this project on the ergonomic needs of older workers in the knowledge economy consists of two company case studies in each of the three countries - UK, Australia and Japan. The project is underpinned by a broad literature review which includes HR, employment, skills, knowledge management theory and knowledge work. Jeremy emphasised that the RCA could either lead a work package or thread their research into the work packages.

o Nottingham and Surrey plan to deploy the grounded theory approach in the case studies which could bring to light entirely new findings.

o There was also some discussion about what the project outcomes should be, ranging from guidance, development of tools, evaluation, monitoring and metrics / measurements, examples of good practice and suggestions for new research areas.

Disseminating the work (boxes on the right hand side of the model)

o The original model was broadened to include the dissemination of project outcomes along three strands: **influencing policy**, **influencing practice** - including business practice - and **influencing culture** (i.e**.** society, employability of older workers).

o Discussions took place as to whether we should elicit the help of a well known consultancy or ACAS to disseminate the findings of the study.

o Discussed was also an all encompassing new box called **society** within which all the interactions within the labour market take place.

Other strategic considerations
o The case was also made for having one meeting with external experts and/or inviting them to key project events to elicit critical feedback and assist us with linking up with relevant

international discussions. These key (international) experts should already be named in our proposal to strengthen our case.

o   In terms of scoping the study in financial terms it was thought that we could aim for £2 millions. This can be supplemented by partnerships in kind. There is also a case for including PhD projects within the context of the overall project.

The slightly modified model which emerged at the close of the discussion is displayed below, together with the lead responsibilities and collaborating partners which have been assigned to each box or WP for the time being.

Work package model
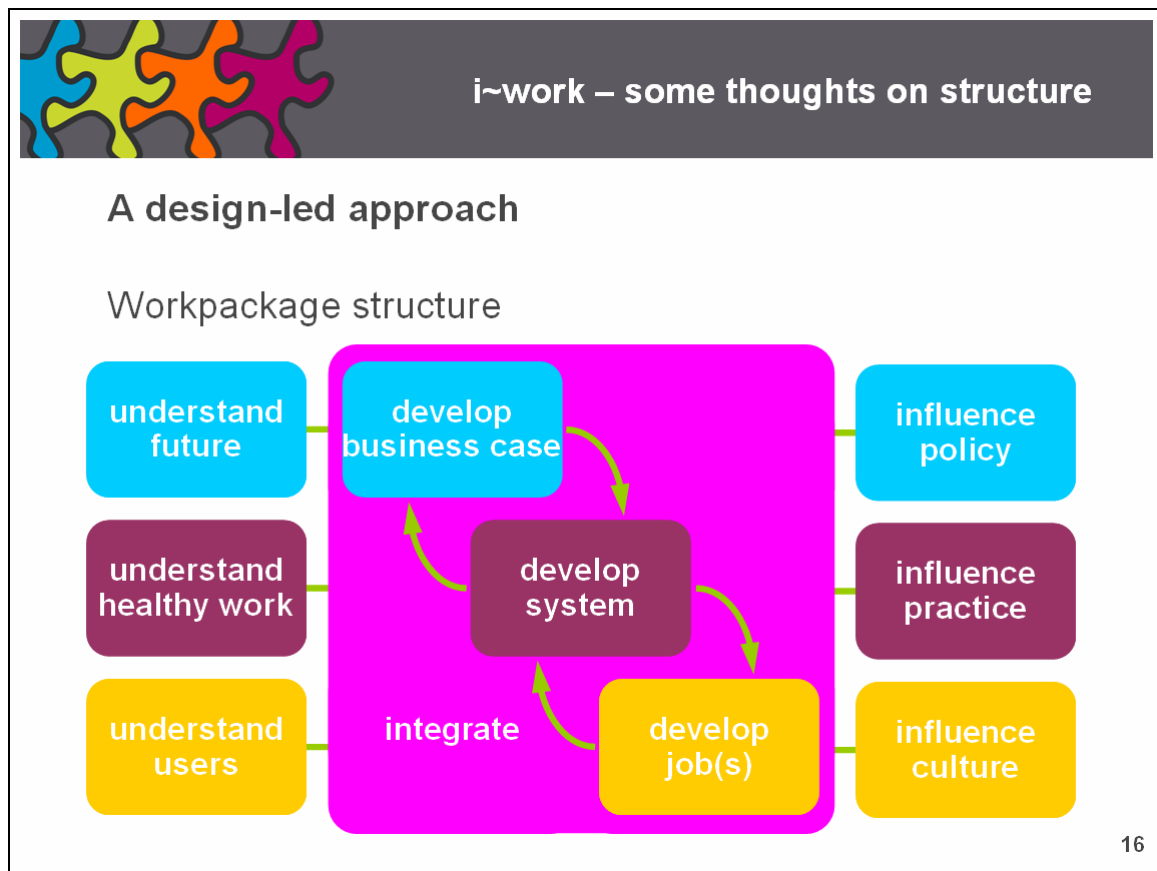
Lead partners (underscored) and collaborative research partners

WP1	Understand future	<u>Warwick</u>, ILC
WP2	Understand healthy work	<u>Surrey</u>, Notts, HSL
WP3	Understand users	<u>Camb</u>, Surrey, RCA, Warwick
WP4	Develop business case	<u>Warwick</u>, Cambs, Surrey, RCA, Notts
WP5	Develop system	<u>Surrey</u>, Warwick, Cambs, RCA, Notts
WP6	Develop job(s)	<u>Warwick</u>, Cambs, Surrey, Notts
WP7	Integrate	<u>Cambs</u>, Surrey, Warwick, RCA, Notts
WP 8	Influence policy	Provisional: <u>Warwick</u>, ILC-UK
WP9	Influence practice	Tbc
WP10	Influence culture	Tbc

How we take this forward

- During the discussion lead and co-investigators have been assigned to each work package. The lead investigators, in collaboration with the co-investigators should
(a) provide the full title of the work package (with the essence contained in the box)
(b) elaborate on the aims, tasks and methods of the work package and
(c) develop a clear and simple vision of the outcomes for each work package.

- Think through the implications of the model;

- Special attention should be paid to any required further rephrasing of the boxes.

- Attach our track record to each of the boxes (to display our competences to reviewers)

- Forward institutional blurb and individual CVs to Kerry;

- Pat Langdon presented an overview of a successful collaborative proposal Cambridge submitted to the research council. Some inspiration might be drawn from this document with regard to structuring the work packages and presenting the track record (►a shortened version of the paper copy is available on the **I~work portal**).

- The **11ᵗʰ of May** has been set as the deadline for all of the above. This will allow Kerry to integrate any possible suggestions for the refinement of the model and to collate all the other material into one document in time before the **next meeting on 24 May, 10.00 -17.00 in London at Friends House (opposite Euston Station)**.

3. User group meetings

According to our time table user group meetings should be held during May and June by the lead institutions assigned to it during our last meeting. Cambridge have put together some further thoughts on the user group meetings to assist with the planning and the reporting of results (►**for further details see I~work portal, Document 8-1**). User group consultations do not have to follow one specific format. They can draw on focus groups or one to one talks with user group representatives. The RCA, for example, uses the opportunity of an annual conference to solicit views from the user community.