

MINUTES OF ADSO BOARD MEETING

5 July 2011

at London Councils
at 11.00 am

In Attendance:

Helen Abraham (HA)	West Midlands
John Austin (JA)	Chairman
Helen Gee (HG)	North West
Julie Hill (JH)	South West
Tom van der Hoven (TvdH)	Secretary
Matthew Kane (MK)	East Midlands
Sue Keogh (SK)	Administration and Events
Laura Latham (LL)	Communications
John Lynch (JL)	Treasurer
Clive Parker (CP)	South East/Vice-Chairman
John Quinton (JQ)	Regulatory Governance and South West
Tim Revell (TR)	London
Michael Robson (MR)	North East
Mark Towers (MT)	Training
Alexa Smith (AS)	Learner

Apologies for Absence:

Rebecca Owen	East Midlands
Colin Sweeney	East

64. Welcome and Introductions

JA welcomed members to the meeting and advised that AS, a learner from Wiltshire Council, would be taking minutes. Particular welcome was given to new members of the Board (Tim Revell and Julie Hill). Apologies for absence as shown above were noted.

65. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2011 were confirmed as a correct record.

The majority of action points from the meeting were either in hand or had been completed. The following updates were reported on specific actions:

- a) A regional representative from the Welsh region would no longer be followed up.
- b) John O'Brien (London Councils) was happy to attend the ADSO Conference, however only had an available window either side of lunch time.
- c) A new ADSO brochure had been produced. Please contact SK if you would like further copies.

66. Association Website

LL provided an update on the website. Traffic on the ADSO website was lower for the period 22 May-21 June 2011 than the previous period monitored. The online payments system had been withdrawn from the ADSO website as at the end of May 2011. The functionality would remain and could be re-instated should it be required in the future. The ADSO qualifications portal received sign off at the end of May 2011 following a period of testing. A small group of users were uploading work onto the system to ensure any remaining issues could be resolved. Please contact LL if you notice outdated website content.

The Board then considered three quotes from companies to develop the capacity for undertaking elections for positions electronically.

Resolved:

- 1) To note the website statistics provided in terms of monitoring the traffic to www.asdo.co.uk.
- 2) To note ongoing progress in developing the qualifications portal.
- 3) To approve the quotation from Company 3, as in the Web Development Update circulated with the agenda, for the implementation of the online polls system for branch and national ADSO elections.

The Chairman thanked LL for her ongoing work on the website and looked forward to her ADSO support continuing with her new position at the London Borough of Richmond. The meeting congratulated Laura on her appointment.

67. Conference 2011

The Board considered a checklist for the organisation of the ADSO Conference in 2011 that was circulated at the meeting. A conference flyer had been produced – SK will circulate to Board members to help them promote the event. ADSO members would be encouraged to look at the bulletin and the website for updates on the conference. Speakers and workshops for the conference were discussed; please get in touch with SK if you have any additional suggestions. MJ and Opportunities would be contacted once the programme for the conference had been confirmed, with sponsorship managed by Opportunities magazine. The target attendance for the conference was a minimum of 100 people (although we were aiming for 150), at a cost of £149 for ADSO members and £199 for non-members.

Board members were asked to let SK know if they wanted accommodation for the evening before the conference (Thursday 17 November).

68. ADSO Business Plan

The Board considered and commented on the ADSO 2010 to 2013 business plan, as updated in April 2011.

Resolved:

- 1) To postpone introduction of a continuing professional development scheme for all members to the 2012 annual conference (Priority 1, Action 5).

- 2) To postpone use of the website to undertake all Association membership functions (applications and renewals) electronically to October 2012 (Priority 2, Action 7).
- 3) To freeze subscriptions and existing discounts for the forthcoming year (2011/12), to review in 2012 (Priority 4, Action 3).
- 4) To amend the risk factor from high to medium on co-opting interim representatives from all regions and having fully functioning branches of the Association across all regions (Priority 5, Actions 1 and 2).
- 5) The business plan would be resubmitted to the Board in six months time.

69. Director's Reports

a) Chairman's Report

The Chairman's report was noted. There was interest from SOLAR in joint training sessions with Scottish authorities, while it had been agreed that ADSO membership would not be proactively sought in that area, given existing provision by SOLAR. In Northern Ireland many gaps in support for democratic services staff had been identified and there was great interest in ADSO, especially once the reconfiguration of authorities had settled down. JA had made contact with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association and they undertook to canvass interest in that region. JA had staffed the ADSO stand at the SEE conference. The conference had received good support from democratic services staff and interest had been expressed in the diploma by a number of individuals.

b) Finance Director's Report

The Finance Director's report was noted, with the amendment that the Overview and Scrutiny for Beginners course was held in the West Midlands rather than the East Midlands.

Resolved:

- 1) That membership fees would be frozen for another year at £45 per annum.

c) Secretary Report – to include Review of Articles

The Board considered the Secretary's report.

Resolved:

- 1) To refer to an 'ADSO Board' rather than 'Council'.
- 2) To no longer use the term 'Interim' with regards to the Board.
- 3) To confirm the following titles:
 - Director for Administration and Events - SK
 - Director for Training – MT
 - Director for Communications – LL
 - Director for Regulatory Governance – JQ

70. Training and Qualifications

SK declared an interest in the agenda item with regards to the training programme given her role within SEE. She took no part in the discussion. The Board considered the ADSO Pilot Training Evaluation and Qualifications Update. The Chairman thanked those involved for the success of the training programme so far. MT agreed to send out a specification for the administration of the programme to three providers. Three learners were about to complete the qualification and the new qualifications portal would greatly enhance the learning experience.

The Board considered feedback from the Electoral and Democratic Services Skills and Workforce Survey from Skills for Justice. The survey identified an older workforce and a large proportion of female managers. Concern was raised as to whether respondents to the survey reflected the sector in general. The potential for linking survey findings with funding opportunities was highlighted.

Resolved:

- 1) To note the positive feedback and financial income from the Pilot Training Programme.
- 2) To approve the outline training programme for 2011-12.
- 3) To approve the proposals for payment of a flat fee of £125 to course authors on the conditions outlined in the report and payment of travel expenses to attend the annual course planning meeting.
- 4) To approve the proposal to offer a limited number of places across the programme to Regional Advisers at a rate of £15 as part of their Continuing Professional Development.
- 5) To receive a further update on the roll-out of the programme at the next meeting in September 2011.
- 6) To note the update on the qualifications.
- 7) To note the Skills and Workforce Survey feedback.
- 8) To send out a specification for the administration of the ADSO training programme to three agreed providers so that a decision can be made before the start of the next courses in September.

MT circulated a supplementary report regarding a conference call facility. Such a facility would enable the easy recording and storing of evidence of professional discussions and could be used for remote meetings and decision making. Three companies had been approached for quotations and one approximate quotation of £1,200 per year had been received.

Resolved:

- 1) To authorise MT to agree a preferred company for a conference call facility with the Finance Director and Chairman in advance of the next meeting, with an estimated annual cost not to exceed £1,500.
- 2) To report back to the next meeting on the progress made regarding above and other uses of a conference call facility.

71. Regional Updates

The Board received and noted regional updates, as below:

- North East - MR would be touring the region to attend team meetings, raise the profile of the Association and identify potential future trainers.
- South East – CP felt that members were content and kept informed via email.
- London - potential for development was identified by TR with four authorities without ADSO membership and several authorities with one or two members only. Three/four meetings were planned a year. A membership survey to help shape ADSO services to the London Branch was being undertaken. This would be shared with the Board when the results were known.
- South West – JQ highlighted the region was focusing on rationalising networks and a successful first combined network meeting had been held.
- East Midlands – MK noted the region had met and were hoping to increase membership by taking future meetings to places that were not yet well represented.
- North West – there was good membership across the region, however HG explained they wanted to reach out to non managerial staff. A formal branch set up did not seem appropriate at this stage.
- West Midlands – HA explained there was a cultural difference in the West Midlands and the issue was getting managerial staff on side. This was a barrier to holding a regional event. Feedback had been received that people could not afford to attend the conference.
- East of England – an additional regional representative had been identified for this region and she would be invited to the next meeting.

72. Communications

Promotional brochures were circulated to the Board members. Please contact SK if additional copies are required.

73. Working with Others

a) MJ Awards

A successful awards ceremony had been held on 23 June 2011, with South Tyneside being declared winners. This was followed by discussion regarding the criteria for MJ Awards entrants and whether ADSO could restrict entries to member authorities only.

b) CiPFA Benchmarking

The Board noted that next year's questionnaire would be a revised one and the overview and scrutiny element would involve more detailed questions.

c) IIMC Conference

SK reported that the IIMC Conference had been a fantastic opportunity to network, hear some excellent speakers and take part in a highly professional large scale event. A potential sponsor for the 2012 ADSO Conference had been identified at the IIMC Conference.

74. Future Developments

The impact of the Coalition Government and the Localism Bill in particular was yet to be determined. JQ emphasised that working with the Department for Communities and Local Government would be key to developing the Association.

75. Any Other Business

An e-form had been designed to facilitate the process for appointing interim managers to local authorities. The Board felt this should be a facility for ADSO members only and a brokerage service for all levels of staff. An introduction fee was agreed in principle. TR to develop proposals for further discussion at the next meeting.

76. Future Meetings

The Board confirmed the next meeting would be held on:
Monday 26 September 2011 in Birmingham.

Resolved:

- 1) The Board meetings would alternate between a London and a Birmingham venue.

The meeting concluded at 3.00 pm.

ACTION	WHO
Contact Councillor Richard Kemp regarding his position as LGA champion.	JA
Provide a generic breakdown at the regional level as to the number of members using the ADSO website and conduct a survey as to why some members were not using the website.	LL
Create and circulate 'top tips' on how best to use the online forum.	LL
Circulate ADSO Conference 2011 flyer.	SK
Follow up suggestions for speakers and workshops.	SK
Contact speakers to provide a detailed brief for the conference.	SK
Publicise ADSO Conference via Facebook and Twitter.	LL
Upload information regarding accommodation for the ADSO Conference to the website.	LL
Check if own local authority has corporately signed up to CiPFA for discount purposes.	All Board members
Report back to a future Board meeting about the London Scrutiny network event on 6 July.	JA
Source additional display stand materials.	JL
Add description of roles for Directors to ADSO website.	TvdH
To send out a specification for the administration of the ADSO training programme to three agreed providers.	MT
To agree a preferred company for conference call facility.	MT
Publicise changes to constitution on the website for comments by members.	TvdH/LL
Put consideration of Weightman's as sponsors for the MJ Awards for 2012 on the agenda for the next Board meeting.	JA
Reconsider use of the ADSO logo at the MJ Awards in future (it was commented that the logo had been difficult to see).	LL
Put consideration of sponsor for 2012 IIMC Conference on the agenda for the next Board meeting.	SK
Results of London Branch survey to be reported to the Board.	TR
Draft principles for interim manager facility to seek legal advice and discuss further at the next Board meeting.	TR
Share disclaimer information with TR.	LL