

MINUTES OF ADSO INTERIM COUNCIL MEETING

Held at London Councils Offices 2/7/10

Attended: John Austin – Director/Chairman, Clive Parker – South East/ Vice-Chairman, Sue Keogh – Director, Mark Towers – Director, Laura Latham - Director, John Lynch – Director/Treasurer, John Quinton – Director, Tom van der Hoven – Director/Secretary, Michael Robson – North East, Colin Sweeney – East of England, Helen Gee – North West, Helen Abraham – West Midlands, Matthew Kane – East Midlands, Rebecca Owen – East Midlands.

Apologies: Sue Crosland – South West , Nano Hill – West Midlands, Andrea Woodside – Yorkshire and Humberside, Gillian Hayes - Wales

13. Welcome and introductions and apologies

Following the introductions and confirmation of apologies received it was highlighted that Andrea Woodside and Gillian Hayes would be unavailable for future meetings. An alternative representative for Wales would be sought and SK agreed to liase with Sarah Titcombe from the Welsh LGA.

14. Minutes of the last meeting and action points

The minutes of the meeting on the 12th April 2010 were agreed. The majority of the action points from the meeting were covered on the agenda or had been completed and the following comments were made;

- i. The South West Regional representative was confirmed as Sue Crosland and the alternative representative would be Graham Russell. John Quinton would be the representative in Sue's absence.
- ii. Two possible Scottish Representatives have expressed an interest and would be followed up by CS.
- iii. The Chairman (JA) would contact John Adams as a possible Northern Irish representative.
- iv. Following discussions with Weightmans a newsletter would be created for a trial period for six months. In exchange, a stall would be provided free of charge at the ADSO Conference. The Chairman confirmed that the information would be tailored for ADSO members and that only ADSO Members would have access to the news letter which would be placed in the secure area of the website. JA to progress.
- v. SK and TVH confirmed that the development of the Health and Safety Policy was progressing and they would circulate a draft to Board members.
- vi. Positive feedback related to the job advert section of the website had been received and had proved useful – JL to seek further feedback. A recruitment agency had expressed an interest in advertising on the website.
- vii. Andrea Woodside is no longer available – currently no Yorkshire and Humberside representative on the Board.

The outstanding action points were highlighted;

- a) Identify regional web publishers for all Regions except London and SE
- b) Provide more information for the regional pages
- c) Set up regional databases and regional threads on the discussion forum (LL)
- d) Pursue expression of interest related to advertising on the website (CP)
- e) Set up suggested Payment Module on Association website (LL)
- f) Consider other payment options for conference (LL)
- g) Get costs options for secure voting and online polls on the website (LL)

- h) Put the Scheme of Delegation on the Members Forum (LL & JA)
- i) Amend the Business Plan, including adding Talent Pool and Mentoring and put on the Association website (MT)
- j) Talk to Nick Randall re Interim Managers (JA)
- k) Draw up criteria for joint badging event with other organisations (SK)
- l) Draw up content for the website regarding providing a mentoring service (JA, JL)

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 12/4/10 be confirmed as a correct record.

15. Association Website

Laura summarised the progress since the last meeting.

- The statistics obtained from the website indicated a monthly increase in visits to the website, with 1333 visits and 769 unique visitors. The most visited area related to the Annual Conference, followed by the jobs pages.
- The Regional pages were not viewed often – LL requested that new content added should be flagged on the front page as often this went unnoticed. The Regional database was being progressed and the group would be updated when completed.
- A quote from Barsbank had been received for £350.00. This would enable voting and election features, linked to log ins. Two further quotes would be obtained using the same specifications and value for money would be assessed.
- John Lynch (JL) summarised the slow progress made with Barclay Bank when creating the account for online payments. An agreement had been finalised which would be reviewed after one year, although both Barclays and ADSO can review the agreement at any time. The Barsbank system could use the Barclay technology and would make online payment tracking easier.
- The Board discussed the current payment options for the conference, including the advantages of online payment options. It was highlighted that an online payment facility could also be used to pay for the qualification and external supplies and services would find on online system advantageous.
- LL agreed to circulate pdf versions of the membership lists received from Sunderland, including the full excel spreadsheet. Updated versions would be supplied to TVH when required.
- It was agreed that ADSO would continue to use the service provided by AEA for collating Membership information. This current cost of £10 per person (reduced to £8 next year) was considered value for money for the time and effort required to collect the information.
- LL highlighted that electronic registration had not yet been linked on the website and a separate form was currently required. JA agreed to liase with AEA in order to establish this link.
- The East Midlands meeting highlighted that it would currently be simpler to join the Association as a group rather than as an individual. LL responded that this had originally related to VAT regulations but none had been flagged recently. RO to check the exact concern and report back to LL.
- Monitoring of the website had been taking place by Board Member on a rota basis and it was agreed that this would continue.

Resolved:

- 1. New material added to the Regional pages should be linked to the front page of the site.**
- 2. That two further quotes would be obtained for facilities allowing secure voting and online polls, prior to the Board making a final decision.**
- 3. That ADSO would continue to use the service provided by AEA for collating Membership information.**

4. **That facilities for online membership registrations be made available as soon as possible.**
5. **That website monitoring would continue on a rota basis by the ADSO Board Directors.**

16. Conference 2010

JA and SK updated the group on the arrangements that had been progressed since the last meeting.

- a) General Update
 - The date of the conference was confirmed as 15th to 16th November in the Hilton Hotel, Leeds.
 - Carol Wheeler has been asked to pursue sponsorship following on from positive feedback about her contribution last year.
- b) Developing Draft Programme
 - The Sub-Committee had developed a list of possible speakers for the conference
 - The draft programme was discussed in some detail and SK agreed to amend it and recirculate.

It was highlighted that due to current economic climate, the number of delegates who are able to attend the conference could be lower than the previous year. LL confirmed 44 expressions of interest to date. The majority of Local Authorities would only be allowing attendance to essential conferences, although it was highlighted that the ADSO conference was value for money.

- c) Costs and Budgets

The proposed conference budget as of July 2010 was circulated. It was agreed that ADSO would pay keynote speakers travel and hotel fees.

- d) Arrangements for AGM
 - The accounts would not be finalised by November but an update would be provided at the AGM.
 - Only ADSO Members would attend the AGM meeting and the Annual Report would include compulsory and additional items
 - The meeting would take place at the end of Day 1 and 45 minutes would be allocated.
 - A deadline of 40 days prior to the AGM was set for items to be added to the agenda.
 - The Group agreed that to purchase insurance for the conference
 - A list of guests was agreed

Resolved

- (1) **That a final list of key note speakers and workshops for the conference would be decided by the Sub Committee and circulated to the Board.**
- (2) **That Conference Insurance be purchased from the quotes provided**
- (3) **That the AGM take place at the end of Day 1 of the conference and would be allocated 45 minutes.**

17. Association Business Plan

MT confirmed that a half-year report would be provided at the next meeting.

18. Finance

JL updated the Board on the accounts and made the following points;

- The VAT return would be due at the end of the month. The first quarter cost was £667 and the next quarter would be expected to be less.
- The accountant had given an estimate of £1200 for the Annual accounts work and a final invoice would be produced once a more accurate assessment on the amount of work required had been completed.
- The Board agreed that it would not be financially beneficial to move money to a high interest account.
- The Board agreed that due to the low ADSO Membership a reduction in cost would not be offered for part of the year. However, in order to encourage current and potential members to attend the ADSO conference, any Members who join from 1st September will be eligible for the whole year's membership at the set price.
- The Board agreed that organisations wishing to add further members could do so at a discounted rate if they had been previously eligible for a discount. However, if the new member incurred the discount they would not be eligible and backdated reductions would not be available. The group agreed it would be beneficial to add a frequently asked questions section to the website.
- JL advised that the accountant had suggested no corporation tax would be required as the organisations currently has no employees.

Resolved;

- (1) That the currently used bank account should not be changed to a high interest account.**
- (2) Members joining or re-subscribing from 1st September 2010 would gain a full years membership**
- (3) Discounted corporate membership rates would continue for additional members but discounts would not be backdated.**

19. Regional Updates

i. East of England

A second meeting was being arranged in August at which 18 Councils would be represented.

ii. North East

It is envisaged membership would increase from October, although currently low. Another collaborative event would be organised.

iii. East Midlands

The June meeting went well, it has been acknowledged that a need for ADSO had been identified within the industry. The membership cost has been highlighted as an ongoing issue for Local Authorities. A request had been made for more flexible payment options for the qualification so learners could either self fund or LAs could spread the cost over two financial years.

iv. London

It had been suggested that completion of the qualification could be made part of the job specifications in order for funding to be ring fenced in an attempt to combat the large number of cuts expected.

v. North West

The first meeting is scheduled for September and has been supported by North West Employers. It was asked that special thanks be noted for Sue Baxendale for the personal commitment and support provided.

vi. South East

155 Members had registered in the region but they were not yet active and the group was in the formation stage.

vii. South West

The primary aim in this area was to co-ordinate the two big networks, County/Unitaries and the District Councils and feedback regarding the Diploma had been encouraging. A request had been received that future conference dates are set in advance, possibly setting the 2011 date at the 2010 conference. The agenda for the South West focused on shared learning and development and the progress of a skills framework matrix linked to the qualifications.

vii. West Midlands

An ADSO event was scheduled to be held following the Member Services Network meeting in Birmingham. Emails had been circulated to the Member Development network but responses had been slow. The first meeting would be an introduction and a full regional launch would be organised for September/October.

The Chairman reiterated that Board Members would be happy to attend any regional meetings as requested. Emphasis was placed on website use to publicise meetings and encourage membership.

20. **Communication**

i. Newsletter

SK asked the Board to consider if a newsletter would still be required or if e-alerts with headings linked to the website would be more beneficial.

It was agreed that an e-alert would be appropriate and should include:

- Reference to the MJ awards
- Information on next years sponsorship
- The benefits of renewing membership
- Information on shared services
- Links to the website and social networking sites
- Summary of events held and progress on the conference
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It would be hoped that the first newsletter would be complete in the first week in August.

ii. Letter – Membership Renewals (SK)

The letter would include the benefits of the membership and a price comparison with other organisations.

iii. Legislative updates/briefings

Discussions have taken place with Weightmans (see Item 14). Robert Shepperd was thanked for his work on the newsletter template.

21. Code of Ethics

No concerns had been highlighted with the draft and the policy would be uploaded to the website and linked to the newsletter.

22. Working with Others

i. MJ Awards

The Board congratulated Teignbridge on winning the award, it was agreed that the three submissions should be added to the ADSO website (LL). The award had been financially subsidised in 2010 but it was agreed that, subject to financial provision, efforts should be made to continue with the award in 2011. The award raised the profile of ADSO, raised morale and attracted members. Co-sponsorship with other organisations could be explored to reduce costs. The Board agreed that the 2011 judging criteria should be carefully considered to ensure a worthwhile contribution, with the judges identified well in advance.

SK updated that Awards for assignments/learners would be provided on the second conference day.

ii. SEE Conference

An ADSO stand would be displayed at the conference, provided free of charge. Copies of the ADSO business plan would be provided and screen and a laptop showing the Association website. It was also agreed that a disk would be produced which included the business plan, information on the three MJ award submissions, website information and other relevant information.

iii. IdeA Course – Warwick

To date, no applications for accreditation had been received. All information was available on the website and information would be added to the newsletter.

iv. IIMC Conference Feedback

LL reported on the positive and informative visit to the IIMC Conference and requested that formal thanks be noted. The conference facilities were very good, the speakers engaging and the value of inviting guests to well run and interesting conferences was highlighted. The Board discussed the advantages of joint membership and referred to the IIMC exchange programme. Reference was made to the different LAs within London, which could offer a variety of experiences. LL agreed to summarise the experience for newsletter article.

v. British Youth Parliament

JA and SK had met with a representative from the British Youth Parliament who have expressed an interest in joint working and would attend the Conference. The Board agreed that JA should attend a Youth Parliament meeting in Belfast as a panel member, fitting with the priorities of ADSO.

vi. Standards Board (added to the agenda)

Reference was made to the recent abolition of the Standards Board as a result of the new coalition Government. The Government would consult relevant bodies on low cost, local options to replace the Standard Board and the Board agreed ADSO should endeavour to be involved.

Vii. Centre for Public Scrutiny

CfPS have become more productive in their approach towards ADSO. JA had been invited to attend the National Forum and to make a presentation to discuss how the two organisations could work together.

Resolved:

- (1) **Subject to costs, the Board agreed to continue to sponsor the MJ ADSO award in 2011, with the judging criteria clearly identified.**
- (2) **The ADSO Chair to attend the British Youth Parliament conference in Belfast to take part in a panel discussion.**

23. Training and Qualifications

i. Knowledge Bank Workshop Training

MT referred to the ADSO Training Sub Committee held on the 12th April 2010 and referred to the minutes attached to the agenda papers. Reference was made to the Knowledge Bank workshops and the following salient points were highlighted;

- Three knowledge banks had been developed in: Executive and Role of Council, The Role of Members and Officers, The role of Overview and Scrutiny.
- Ongoing consultation would take place with questions developed to focus on key areas of knowledge and understanding.
- Referring to the pilot training session undertaken in the North West for the Executive and Role of Council module, existing resources were now in place, including a presentation, workshop discussion scenarios and resources packs for the sessions to be piloted in other areas. A similar session would run in the South. JQ volunteered to facilitate the workshop.
- Courses would be free to ADSO learners and ADSO members would receive a discount. This should be emphasised as another positive reason to join the Association.

ii. Regional Adviser Training – Cohort 2

Cohort two commenced with 9 new Regional Advisors and another 20 learners. The induction for the North would take place on the 5th July and for the South on the 14th July 2010.

iii. Professional Diploma in Democratic Services

Following the Standards and Qualifications Group meeting in June, it was agreed that the proposed qualification would be more about the application of knowledge rather than just the knowledge itself and should be pitched at a L5 or L6. Reference was made to the Professional Diploma discussion paper circulated, which provided an overview of the proposed structure and content.

The initial draft of modules had a deadline of 12th July 2010, modules would then be consulted upon with practitioner representations and progressed at the S&Q meeting in August.

The Chair praised the work completed on the qualifications and the Board agreed that the Diploma should be promoted at the Conference in November.

24. Any Other Business

- i. Benchmarking
A request, via the Chair, asked ADSO to collaborate on a bench marking project with ACSeS and CIPFA. The Board discussed the challenges around bench marking, specifically with the variety of factors that could be measured. The research would have to be quantitative rather than qualitative and a lot of research would be required. The Board agreed this type of collaborative work would be important in raising the profile of the organisation.
- ii. Model Constitution
Currently being developed by Graham Russell.
- iii. Public Liability Insurance
SK to confirm financial figures and obtain quotes.

Resolved:

(1) For the Board to take part in collaborative work related to bench marking with ACSeS and CIPFA.

25. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 27th September in Coventry or Leicester. Location to be confirmed.

| ACTION | WHO |
|---|----------|
| Pursue Welsh representation on the Council | SK |
| Pursue Scottish representation on the Council | CS |
| Pursue Northern Irish Contact | JA |
| Progress Members newsletter with Weightmans | JA |
| Further develop the Health and Safety Policy for Association | SK & TVH |
| Identify regional web publishers for all Regions except London and SE | ALL |
| Provide more information for the regional pages | ALL |
| Set up regional databases and regional threads on the discussion forum | LL |
| Obtain further feedback from those who have placed job adverts | JL |
| Set up suggested Payment Module on Association website | LL |
| Consider other payment options for conference | LL |
| Get further costs for options for voting and online polls on the website | LL |
| Put the Scheme of delegation on the Members Forum | LL/JA |
| Amend the Business Plan, including adding Talent Pool and Mentoring and put on the Association website | MT |
| Talk to Nick Randall re Interim Managers | JA |
| Draw up some criteria for joint badging events with other organisations | SK |
| Draw up content for the website re providing a Mentoring service (Longer term aim) | JA/JL |
| Circulation of Sunderland membership lists | LL |
| Contact AEA to request linking member registration to the website | JA |
| To check concerns reported at the East Midland meeting related to individuals registration so any problems can resolved | RO/LL |
| Circulate draft conference programme | SK |

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| Collate membership renewal letter | SK |
| Purchase insurance for ADSO Conference | SK |
| MJ submissions to be added to the ADSO website for information | LL |
| Membership Costs breakdown to be added to the Newsletter | LL |
| Frequently asked question re membership added to the website | LL |
| Add Code of Ethics to website | LL |
| Documents provided to create information disk for the SEE conference | LL/MT |
| Information on accreditation to be added to the newsletter | LL |
| Newsletter article on IIMC exchange visit | LL |
| Gather information on putting the qualification on the QCF and the proposed timescales for the work. | MC |
| Development of a Model constitution | GR |
| Gather quotes for public liability insurance | SK |