



Minutes of ADSO Board Meeting
20 July 2012
Islington Borough Council, 11am

In Attendance:

John Austin	Chairman
Gareth Davies	North East (as substitute for Michael Robson)
Helen Gee	North West
Matthew Kane	East Midlands
Sue Keogh	Director of Administration and Events
Laura Latham	Director of Communications
John Lynch	Director of Finance
Clive Parker	South East/Vice-Chairman
John Quinton	Regulatory Governance and South West
Tim Revell	London
Mark Towers	Director of Training
Jo Straw	Learner / Clerk

Apologies for Absence:

Helen Abraham	West Midlands
Susan Farrell	East of England
Tom van der Hoven	Secretary
Jo Morrison	South West
Michael Robson	North East
Anita Searby	South West

115. Welcome and Introductions

John Austin, ADSO Board Chairman, welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were recorded as above.

116. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2012 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

All action points from the previous meeting had been completed, with the following exceptions and comments made:

- John Austin had invited Member Champions to a meeting with representatives of the ADSO Board and, whilst they were happy to support ADSO, not all would be able to attend. He has therefore not pursued the idea.
- Tim Revell had received no comments regarding the constitutional status of local government on the forum.

117. Association Website

Laura Latham, Director for Communications, provided an update on the ADSO website as detailed in her report. Laura discussed with the panel the statistics from the period of 10 June – 10 July 2012.

The statistics remained fairly consistent. Laura encouraged Board members to use social media, particularly Twitter, to promote ADSO further.

Laura asked for volunteers to become regional web publishers to provide regionally specific information to members; ideally these would not be the regional representatives. The Board discussed offering a free place at the ADSO conference for regional web publishers as an incentive and agreed to discuss this further at the business planning meeting.

Laura explained that the election software was ready to use if elections for the position of Chairman or Vice-Chairman were contested, and asked for a volunteer and a stand-by volunteer to assist herself and Tom throughout the election process.

A new law on website Cookies had been passed and websites were required to display a message describing how they use Cookies. Barsbank had offered to create this message for each of the three ADSO websites at a cost of £65 + VAT per website. It was agreed to pay Barsbank this amount to carry out the work.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the web development update be noted.
- 2) That the Board would consult the rota and ensure they monitor and reply to posts on the ADSO forum at their designated time.
- 3) That the Board would recruit regional web publishers.
- 4) That the Board would use social media to promote ADSO further.
- 5) That £65 + VAT per website, for three websites be agreed as the fee for Barsbank to make the ADSO websites comply with the Cookies law.

118. Conference

Sue Keogh, Director for Administration and Events, updated the Board on the plans of the ADSO Conference 2012 which would take place on 22nd November 2012. Sue reported that bookings were going well as 81 people had signed up even though the programme had not been published. A keynote speaker for the morning had yet to be agreed, but the six workshops had been confirmed. Work would continue on selecting a keynote speaker.

The Board discussed the topics covered by the workshops. It was agreed that there should be a workshop around committee systems but that the workshop should focus in on a specific issue as many people would already be well versed in the legislation. John Austin agreed to brief Weightmans on facilitating a session on Independent Members.

Matthew Kane updated the Board on the progress in finding sponsors for ADSO for a period of two years. Two organisations Company A and Company B had expressed an interest in the exclusive main association and conference sponsor package on a two-year deal at a cost of £3000 plus VAT. In addition, several companies had expressed an interest in the affiliate package. An additional organisation Company C had offered a free web-cast of the Conference. It was suggested that in addition to the offer of a webcast, Company C be asked to take up an affiliate sponsorship package and consider whether short clips and interviews could also be provided.

The Board considered the proposals presented by Company A and Company B regarding the main association and conference sponsor package. Following a vote, it was decided by majority that the package be awarded for two years to Company A. Both companies would be informed of the outcome and a press release would be issued to confirm which organisation had been successful in due course. Members of the Board expressed a continued willingness to work with all past and existing sponsor organisations to develop services and support across the sector.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Board would approach contacts to recruit a keynote speaker.
- 2) That John Austin would brief Weightmans to deliver a workshop session on independent members.
- 3) That Matthew Kane would enquire whether Company C would take up an affiliate sponsorship package.
- 4) That Company A would be awarded the main association and conference sponsor package.
- 5) That the Main Associate and Conference sponsor not be publicised until all details of the contract had been formalised.

119. Director's Reports

a. Chairman's Report

John Austin, Chairman, presented the Chairman's report. John explained that ADSO had not been on the HMRC 'List 3'. This list provides an exemption for members who may potentially incur an income tax liability if their membership fees are paid by their employer. John had contacted HMRC and ADSO had been put on List 3, however HMRC would not back-date the exemption. It was agreed that information about the potential income tax liability for previous years would be sent out with information about membership renewals.

John raised the idea of creating a register of temporary Democratic Services staff (discussed at a previous Board meeting) and it was decided to discuss this at the next meeting. He then reminded the Board to use the new ADSO logo. The Board discussed the possibility of purchasing new ADSO banners and it was agreed that John Lynch would purchase three new banners displaying the new ADSO logo; one each for the North, South and Midlands.

John Austin confirmed that Paul Hoey of Hoey Ainscough Associates Ltd was interested in working with ADSO and would attend regional meetings to discuss the new Standards regime if requested. Paul had also set up a virtual network for those working within the new Standards regime with a focus being on the new independent persons. John commented that the £300 fee to join the network could be a worthwhile investment with regard to training new IPs.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Chairman's report be noted.
- 2) That information regarding potential income tax liability for the previous years be sent out with information about membership renewals.
- 3) That the issue of creating a register of temporary Democratic Services staff be brought to the next meeting.
- 4) That John Lynch purchase three new ADSO banners displaying the new logo.

b. Finance Report

John Lynch presented the Finance report and updated the Board on ADSO income and expenditure. John explained that ADSO had public liability insurance which covered the organisation for £5 million. ADSO were due to renew their professional risk insurance to cover trainers; John was investigating the most cost effective option and it was agreed that he would accept the cheapest quote.

John asked the Board to consider whether ADSO should increase the price of membership. The Board discussed the options in detail and agreed to freeze the fees for another year. It was agreed

that Laura Latham would update the membership application forms for this year. It was further agreed that a future consultation exercise with members could take place on what they thought of a potential membership price increase.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- 1) That the Finance report and insurance update be noted.
- 2) That the issue of membership fees be brought to the business planning meeting.
- 3) That ADSO members be consulted at some point in the future about a potential membership price increase.
- 4) That Laura Latham would update the membership application forms for this year.

c. Secretary's Update

John Austin presented the Secretary's report to the Board. It was explained that any member of ADSO could stand to be Vice Chair and did not have to currently be a regional representative.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- 1) That the Company Secretary report be noted.

120. Training & Qualifications

Mark Towers, Director for Training, provided an update on training courses 2012/13. Mark explained that at least half of the ADSO certificate knowledge modules were covered by a training course. Mark updated the Board about the ADSO qualifications. Laura and Sue held a training day on research methods for the diploma as the next cohort of learners were due to start in the autumn. Mark explained that the training business plan would feed into the ADSO business planning meeting on 24 August.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- 1) That the feedback on the training events/programme and the qualifications update be noted.

121. New Standards Regime

John Quinton updated the Board on the new Standards Regime and asked for ideas about how proactive ADSO should be in issuing guidance. The Board discussed the potential for joint working with legal expertise on issuing guidance. It was agreed that John Austin would approach Weightmans and ask about sharing best practice for the new Standards Regime.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- 1) That Laura Latham would re-name the middle section of the forum to make it specifically about Standards.
- 2) That a separate forum for the Standards regime be set up and members encouraged to add documents to the forum to make it a good source of information, including local templates, standards guidance and adverts for Independent Persons.
- 3) That John Austin would approach Weightmans to enquire about sharing best practice with regards to the new Standards Regime.

121. Regional Updates

Regional Updates were provided as follows:

London: There had been two branch meetings since the last ADSO Board meeting including presentations on the new committee system, Westminster's new parish council, the use of social media, a presentation from the Parliamentary Outreach Service and a discussion about holding a regional seminar. Branch elections had taken place and all the positions had been filled. The branch had 206 members as of July which was a slight decrease in membership.

East Midlands: Matthew Kane provided the Board with an evaluation report of the regional seminar held in June. The free seminar had attracted 40 delegates, approximately half of whom were ADSO members. The branch continued to have an informal structure as the idea of elected branch members was not popular in the region. Events would be organised by ad hoc sub committees.

North West: At the standardisation meeting members were asked about priorities; members expected the regional Spring conference to be annual. A core group was willing to assist in the running of the regional branch.

South West: The region had held many sessions. Whilst it was difficult to obtain formal feedback on these, an evaluation took place at the end of each session and the feedback gained from this was positive.

North East: There was not much formal activity in the region. The region was improving communications with members and a growing number of people were willing to help organise events. There was interest in holding an event about the new Standards Regime and an event about Police and Crime Panels.

South East: Members did not wish to formalise the branch as they preferred a 'light touch'. Members commented that they would like their meetings to take place in London.

East: Yorkshire and Humberside had been asked to form a regional branch however there was only a little interest in this.

West Midlands: Membership had increased from 64 to 87. An event was scheduled for 6 September which would cover a wide range of issues.

122. Business Plan

The Board discussed the feedback they had received from members which would contribute to discussions at the business planning meetings. The feedback received from members included:

- i) Business continuity: ADSO continues to be reliant on volunteers
- ii) ADSO continued to be an influential professional body
- iii) Visibility needed to be improved amongst Democratic Services professionals
- iv) ADSO should work with employers to make the qualification a job requirement
- v) There should be more focus on regional events
- vi) There should be more joint procurement discounts on products and services negotiated by ADSO
- vii) Training: a wider variety of training courses available covering topics such as data protection

John Austin discussed the agenda for the business planning meeting and it was agreed that the agenda should include:

- viii) Directors Roles: do they remain fit for purpose?
- ix) Determining priorities
- ix) Aligning the budget to priorities

A discussion then took place about gaining the views of members regarding what types of events they would like ADSO to do. It was decided that this could be a project at a later date.

123. Working with others

a. MJ Awards

John Austin informed the Board that had received an email from Michael Burton at the MJ asking if ADSO would have a Democratic Services category again. John had asked Weightmans if they will continue to co-sponsor the award next year and was awaiting a reply... This would obviously have a significant bearing on whether ADSO could sustain the sponsorship of the award.

The Board discussed the benefits of being able to access the Municipal Journal electronically and considered enquiring whether a discounted or corporate membership was possible. It was agreed that Emma Jameson and Michael Burton be invited to the ADSO conference.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Board discuss sponsoring the MJ awards at the September meeting.
- 2) Consideration be given to inviting a representative of the MJ to the conference

b. IIMC

Tom van der Hoven's recent e mail to the IIMC was noted. James Doble had put in an application to run a plenary session on Shared Services and Democratic Renewal at the IIMC conference in New Jersey. Sue Keogh advised of positive feedback to this workshop when it had been run at ADSO and other events. It was confirmed that Ronnie Frederickx had been appointed Director of Region XI for a 12 month period and Jaap Paans would succeed Ronnie to become Director the next year.

ADSO had also been working on an affiliation with European members (within the IIMC structure) as there would be a greater commonality amongst members than currently existed in Region XI.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Board would discuss IIMC at a future meeting.

124. Future Developments

John Quinton explained that there had been a series of meetings (with Department of Health) to discuss the next steps with regard to Health and Wellbeing Boards to which ADSO had sent representatives. Regulations were due to be trialled in Autumn 2012 and ADSO would be used to test the format. Melanie from DOH would be working with the LGA to create non-statutory guidance and would ask for ADSO to be involved in drafting this.

John went on to explain that the Health Scrutiny regulations were also out for consultation and he would be speaking to the Department of Health to pass on ADSO's details to get a similar role in terms of influence. John would be asking the Health Scrutiny Officer at his council for specialist views and welcomed views from anyone else as well to include in an ADSO submission to the consultation.

125. Any other business

Mark Towers raised the issue of senior council staff doing work for companies (eg as company secretary) and charging for it. Mark welcomed comments from anyone else doing something similar.

The meeting closed at 3.00pm.

ACTION POINTS

That the Board would recruit regional web publishers.	All
That the Board would approach contacts to recruit a keynote speaker.	All
That John Austin would brief Weightmans to deliver a workshop session on independent members and possibly other related standards issues at the conference.	JA
Company A be awarded the main sponsor package. Matthew Kane to enquire whether Company C would take up an affiliate sponsorship package.	MK
That Laura Latham would update the membership application forms for this year.	LL
That information regarding HMRC List 3 and the potential income tax liability for the previous years be sent out with information about membership renewals.	LL
That John Lynch purchase three new ADSO banners displaying the new logo.	JL
That a consultation be undertaken in the future about a potential membership price increase in due course.	LL
That Laura Latham would re-name the middle section of the forum to make it specifically about Standards.	LL
That John Austin would approach Weightmans to enquire about sharing best practice with regards to the new Standards Regime.	JA
That the Board discuss sponsoring the MJ awards at the September meeting	All
That the Board would discuss developments at the IIMC at a future meeting.	All