

MINUTES OF ADSO BOARD MEETING
11.00am 23 September 2011
at Birmingham City Council

In attendance:

Helen Abraham (HA) West Midlands
 John Austin (JA) Chairman
 Helen Gee (HG) North West
 Tom van der Hoven Honorary Secretary
 Sue Keogh (SK) Director Administration and Events
 Laura Latham (LL) Director Communications
 Clive Parker (CP) Vice Chairman and South East
 John Quinton (JQ) Director Regulatory Governance and South West
 Tim Revell (TR) London
 Mark Towers (MT) Director Training

Apologies for absence:

Susan Farrell East of England
 June Gurry South West
 Matthew Kane East Midlands
 John Lynch Director Finance
 Rebecca Owen East Midlands
 Michael Robson North East

76. Welcome and Introductions

John Austin welcomed Board members. He noted that Colin Sweeney had moved on from his position since the last meeting, and that ADSO was grateful for his work within the East region. Apologies for absence were noted as above.

77. Minutes of last meeting

Date on the minutes to be changed to 4 July. Otherwise the minutes were accepted as a correct record.

Completed tasks:	Who by
Circulate ADSO Conference 2011 flyer.	SK
LGA – agreed that we would maintain relationship with Richard Kemp and also seek another contact at LGA	JA
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
To send out a specification for the administration of the ADSO training programme to three agreed providers.	MT
Publicise changes to constitution on the website for comments by members.	TvdH/LL
Results of London Branch survey to be reported to the Board	TR
To agree a preferred company for conference call facility (the conference call facility has now been trialled)	MT
In progress:	
Provide a generic breakdown at the regional level as to the number of members	LL

using the ADSO website and conduct a survey as to why some members were not using the website. (see Item 3 for usage stats)	
Follow up suggestions for speakers and workshops	SK
Contact speakers to provide a detailed brief for the conference	SK
Put consideration of Weightman's as sponsors for the MJ Awards for 2012 on the agenda for the next Board meeting (on this agenda)	JA
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
Put consideration of sponsor for 2012 IIMC Conference on the agenda for the next Board meeting (on this agenda)	SK

79. Website report (LL)

Laura Latham reported her update to Board which included usage statistics. The summer period has been quiet. The qualifications portal has been live since May. Diploma learners were put on in July. A new online polls facility has been created which needs to be tested by 30-40 people. The Forum area seems lively. LL requested Board Members to be more active and comment on the website to keep it dynamic.

The report was noted. Board members will be allocated a section of the website to check to ensure information is up to date.

80. Conference 2011 (JA/SK)

We have had 88 bookings to date and have broken even now. Two ads have appeared in the MJ and bookings continue to come in. We anticipate making at least £3.5k. Lunch was discussed and it was confirmed that there is a reasonably wide range of buffet choices available. SK to clarify which of two closely located Travel Lodges in Kings Cross we are suggesting to delegates.

SK provided the following update on the programme:

- The two keynote speakers are confirmed
- Workshop sessions for the morning are all booked.
- Afternoon workshop 4 on Collaboration – need one other person to work with Nick Evans. MT to follow up with Northamptonshire for Health and Social Well Being Board.
- Afternoon workshop 5 on communication - Member communication possible focus, or paperless meetings. Other suggestions were a political journalist such as Michael Burton (MJ).
- Final speaker- possibly Lambeth group whip Cllr Jack Hopkins who is doing another session for ADSO on 14 October – focus on communicating with members. TR to follow up.

Guests invited:

Michael Burton
IIMC (x 2)
Richard Kemp (LGA)
Jessica Crowe (CfPS)
John Adams (Northern Ireland)
Andrew Ferguson (Scottish representative)
Laura Latham
Sue Keogh
David Henderson-Stewart (CIPFA)

John O'Brien, London Councils
CLG contact.

There has been a delay in contacting potential sponsors. Graeme Ratten has booked Modern.gov for a Gold package and Astech, Polar Audio, Learning Pool have also shown an interest. Matt Kane and Michael Robson to pursue other contacts including: Barsbank Public-I, Democracy Counts and CMIS were also suggested.

It was agreed that SE Employers will do the badges again and SK will co-ordinate delegate packs. (Possibly being sent to Camden Council in advance).
Sue will be asking Board members to bring their laptops to avoid equipment hire costs.

81. Director's reports

i) Chairman's report – points of discussion or action:

John presented a report of recent activities to the Board. He commented about the trend towards re-merging of scrutiny and democratic officer roles again. MJ Awards: John presented a proposal to the Board to fund the awards for 2012 at £8k. It was suggested that the criteria should be revisited to include the evidence of professional development by councils or that entry should be restricted to ADSO members only and to offer one years' membership for up to 5 staff.

Judges to be: John Austin, Graeme Creer from Weightmans and one person from LGA (or possibly Richard Kemp).

Resolved:

That the Association sponsor the MJ Awards for 2012 at a cost of £8000.

ii) Finance Director's report (LL)

Laura Latham presented the finance report, prepared in John's absence. Membership figures are looking good and renewal reminders are still to go out from Sunderland. Three councils have advertised on the website in last few months. VAT returns have been completed for Apr-Jun, next quarter being started shortly.

Income is showing as unrealistically high in the qualifications account as Regional advisers are paid their fee half at start and half at end of course and not all have finished to date. Need to quantify financial commitments still outstanding, within the report to AGM. SK/MT to work on this.

The next step is aligning the accounts to the business plan so JA and JL will start work on this.

iii) Honorary Secretary's report

The Board noted the comments received from members on the draft Articles which were published for comment on the website. The Board decided to retain the titles of Chairman and Vice Chairman rather than the suggested 'Chair' and 'Vice Chair'. The Board also noted the comment received about electronic voting which requested that a decision not be based on the outcome of an electronic ballot if any member disagreed with the proposal. The Board disagreed with this approach and decided to retain the arrangements as proposed in the original draft. The Board agreed to reduce the number of days required to give notice due to the change to allow electronic distribution of notices.

82. Training and qualifications (MT/SK)

Mark Towers presented his report to the Board. The Meetings Procedures courses are sold out. It had been agreed that course authors would be paid £125 per course but this is not reflective of the work put into this. It was agreed that this will be increased to £250 for writing or validating courses, with a lower fee of £100 p.a. to people updating courses. Mark Towers and Laura Latham abstained from voting.

The Chair asked if the programme covers all topics for students taking the qualification. MT said yes within the overall programme. The knowledge banks also cover all subject areas. It was noted that the transfer of learners to Proqual should be complete by mid-October. There are 78 learners on the ADSO certificate (4 completed) and 19 on the Diploma. Tim Revell and Helen Gee have achieved their A1 (Assessor) qualifications. JA will ask Michael Burton to present the certificates at the conference.

The Chairman thanked everyone involved in providing the training and qualifications services for learners

There is potentially funding available to review the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Democratic Services but these were last updated in Jan 2010 and the Board felt that it is not a priority to revise these.

Resolved: No action on these at this time.

There is also funding available to carry out a further Workplace Survey but as the sector has not changed significantly in last 12 months it is also not a priority to re-run it. It was agreed that if ADSO do want to undertake this at a later date, it could fund this independently.

Resolved: No action on this.

83. Regional updates

- **South West** –an existing county/unitary committee managers plus member services network is combining into one network which is meeting on 30 September. The first SW branch meeting will be held the same day and appointments made to various positions
- **North West** – Organising a mini-conference in early 2012, with support from NW Employers to facilitate, aimed at non-managers. Topics – member officer relations, Career coaching, personal development
- **West Midlands** – the next regional meeting is on 21 October 2011
- **London** - branch meeting 8 July, café style and interactive work to discuss results of recent London-wide survey; presentation by CE of Camden, on secondment with Treasury, session on modernising member support. London Councils – health and well-being board lead officer. Next meeting October, elected Members attending to speak about what members expect from officers. Derek Gadd (of London Councils) has been looking at encouraging non-council organisations to join. JA/TR to explore this further. This branch has developed branch rep role descriptions – JA to circulate again
- **East Midlands** –separate update circulated. Branch met in Sept 2011 and member survey has been conducted.
- **South East** – fairly quiet, ticking over. Members prefer to communicate electronically rather than hold face to face meeting. Good take up of conference places from SE delegates.
- **East of England** – rep now appointed (Norwich)
- **Yorkshire and Humber** -still need rep/members
- **North East** - HG reported that the NE is actively working on a regional event in the form of a mini conference.

A discussion was held around whether the Board could/would fund mini-conference events in the regions to cover modest expenses and catering. There was interest in doing this from Board Members. It was felt this would require a consistent application and approval process to be established. It was agreed that SK would draw up criteria for regional events.

84. Communications:

Promotional materials were discussed. SK noted that we have a problem storing items in bulk. The following suggestions will be explored further: calendars, pens, lapel badges, mugs, post-its. It was agreed that SK will get prices/quotes for a range of items.

85. Working with others:

- i) MJ Awards – covered under Chairman's report
- ii) CIPFA benchmarking – 83 Authorities have joined the benchmarking club. Review meetings are being held in London and Leeds, both heavily subscribed. Reps who had seen the reports said how useful these were. An article is to go in the forthcoming Democracy Direct bulletin on this and how councils can join/how much it costs. (MT)
- iii) IIMC – regional meeting in Reading 12 October, three ADSO reps attending, the possibility of European conference being explored (TvdH, JA).

Re IIMC grant to attend their conference – TvdH recalled difficulty qualifying for this possibly relating to having to be members of IIMC for a certain period to get this.

Next IIMC conference will be held in Portland, Oregon, in 20-24 May 2012. JA will be invited as a guest - Directors who are interested in attending to write to the Chairman. ADSO also sponsored a member to attend last year. Board discussed this and were supportive of doing this again.

Resolved: two places to be sponsored to max of £1500 inclusive, one learner and one member. SK to adjust the application form to reflect the learner aspect and ensure they are available for the Conference delegate pack.

- iv) ICSA (JA) – covered under Chairman's report
- v) CfPS (JA) – covered under Chairman's report

86. Future developments – deferred

87. Any other business – none

88. Future Board meetings 2012

SK to circulate dates for January, March, July, September, plus November.

ACTION	WHO
Create and circulate top tips on how to use the online forum	LL
Upload information regarding accommodation for the ADSO conference to the website	LL
Source additional display stand materials	JL
Look at colours / resolution of ADSO logo to make it easier to see	LL
Add description of roles for Directors to ADSO website	TvdH
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
Follow up further suggestions for conference speakers and workshops	SK / MT / TV / JA
Draft principles for interim manager facility to seek legal advice and discuss further at next Board meeting	TR
Allocate section of the website to Board members for checking and updating	LL
Invited agreed guests to conference	JA
Allocate roles at conference to Board members (including bringing laptops)	SK
Quantify outstanding financial commitments from qualifications account	MT / SK
Start to align accounts to business plan	JA / JL
Discuss options for a scrutiny course with Jessica Crowe from CfPS	MT
Ask Michael Burton to present certificates to learners at the conference	JA
Draw up criteria for funding for regional events	SK
Obtain prices for promotional items	SK
Write article for Democracy Direct on usefulness of benchmarking club	MT
Directors interested in attending IIMC conference to contact JA	Directors
Revise criteria and application form for attending IIMC conference	SK
Circulate dates for future Board meetings	SK