



Minutes of ADSO Board Meeting

22 March 2013

**Committee Room 1, Islington Council Town Hall, Upper Street, N1
2UD**

In Attendance:

John Austin	Chairman	P
John Quinton	Vice Chairman and Director for Government Consultation	P
Sue Keogh	Director for Regional Developments and Events	P
Laura Latham	Director for Communications	P
John Lynch	Director for Finance	P
Mark Towers	Director for Training and Yorkshire & Humberside	P
Tom van der Hoven	Company Secretary	P
Gareth Davies	North East	P
Helen Gee	North West	A
Matt Kane	East Midlands	P
Helen Abraham	West Midlands	P
Tim Revell	London	P
Rosalind Reeves	South West	P

Jo Morrison	South West	A
Clive Parker	South East	P
Susan Farrell	East of England	A

1 Welcome and Introductions

John Austin, ADSO Board Chairman, welcomed members to the meeting – especially Rosalind who now represented the South West region.

The above apologies were noted.

2 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 December was agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

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

- Drawing up a specification and quote for financial work to be undertaken. JL
- Sharing of good practice and cases – new Standards Regime. Graeme Creer has changed roles at Weightmans. John will discuss this with his replacement. JA
- That Matt Kane negotiates with IML to provide their facilities at our 2013 conference. Matt had spoken to them and is waiting for their confirmation. MK

3 Association Website

Laura Latham, Director for Communications, provided an update on the ADSO website as detailed in her report. Laura discussed with the Board the statistics from the period 10 February to 10 March 2013.

1711 Absolute unique visitors on the site – this is an increase of 300 visitors on the previous period monitored.

Of the total page views, the most popular continue to be Members Forum, Resources – Democracy Direct, Conference 2012 and Book Your Course.

The ADSO website has been in existence in its current format / layout since the Association was formed in 2009.

The look and feel of the website has remained constant. With the refresh of the ADSO Logo, and the continued development of the Association, it was now time to review the site and refresh it.

This goes hand in hand with the development of a Social Media Strategy for the Association, currently being worked on by Wayne Chandai from Lambeth..

Feedback was sought from ADSO Members who, via the Members Survey had volunteered to provide assistance / input to the website. All are willing to remain involved in the project as it develops.

The key issues identified have been put together into a phased development plan (with approximate timescales) to continue the development of the website over the coming years and to add additional features to enhance its maintainance and improve the member experience.

LL

Much of this is dependent on the refresh of the website to incorporate the functionality on the front page. Costs for the actual social media work will be minimal (subject to the investment in the website)

A final version of the strategy will be presented to the Board in July, along with fully costed proposals for the website development.

LL/WC

A number of web publishers have recently come on board (including West Midlands and South West.)

A role profile has been developed to cover the role and user guides refreshed to assist with web content editing.

An ongoing issue was currently being investigated relating to document upload on the Members Forum. There appears to be an intermittent issue in uploading documents and text in certain posts. Barsbank has suggested that they may have to rebuild the forum to resolve the issue. The Board agreed that the matter should be resolved as soon as possible and authorised Laura and John L to agree a solution and costings with Barsbank.

Laura also reported a potential security breach of our website and was working with our ISP providers to investigate/resolve. Laura was asked to keep members informed.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the website statistics be noted.
2. That a detailed fully costed specification be developed for the phased approach to refreshing the website to cover Phase 1 and 2 at the current time.
4. That Laura and John L be authorised to agree a solution and costings with Barsbank to resolve the problems with uploading documents to the Forum.
5. That the progress being made in the development of a Social Media Strategy for the Association be noted.

4 Conference Update

Sue Keogh, Director for Regional Developments and Events', tabled a draft programme for the

conference. The Board discussed possible themes, keynote speakers and topics for the various workshops.

Some of the suggestions for a theme included 'Time for a Change', 'New Ideas', 'Innovation', 'New Horizons'.

Board members were asked to provide Sue with SK
names of possible speakers, topics for workshops
and any other suggestions. She agreed to pull
together a programme and circulate it for
comments.

It was agreed that a social function be arranged to SK/MK
take place after the conference and that it be
included in the programme. Matt to look for a
possible sponsor.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the 2013 conference and Annual
General Meeting be held at Birmingham City
Football Club on 21st November 2013.
2. That Sue Keogh draw up a provisional SK
programme and circulate it for comments.

5 Directors' Reports

5.1 Chairman's Report

John Austin mentioned that DCLG had recently consulted on proposals to remove the requirement that a Designated Independent Person (DIP) be appointed to review cases when a local authority proposed to pursue disciplinary action against its Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer or Chief Finance Officer. ADSO was asked for its comments to the changes. John responded on behalf of ADSO and expressed our opposition to

the proposed changes.

A request had been received via Keith Stafford for ADSO to sponsor the National Skills CFA Business Apprenticeship Graduations. The Board did not support the request.

The shortlisting for the MJ Awards took place on 13 March. 13 submissions were received. Those shortlisted will be interviewed on 22 April in Liverpool.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the Chairman's Report be noted.
2. That the request to sponsor the National Skills CFA Business Apprenticeship Graduations not be agreed. JA

5.2 Finance Report

John Lynch presented the Finance report and Annual Accounts and updated the Board on ADSO income and expenditure.

The Association has made a profit over the last three years of operation. The Business Account we have with Barclays allows us to do our banking on-line and incurs no charges except if we pay in cheques or cash or write cheques.

This earns us no interest whatsoever. John submitted a proposal to invest a sum of money on a fixed rate deposit.

John tabled the draft Annual Accounts for 2012 for approval.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the Finance Report be noted.
2. That £60k be invested in a 2 year Fixed Rate Deposit with Raphael's Bank of 2.5% AER with no access to the cash during that JL

period.

3. That R. Raphael & Sons plc be authorised and requested to open a fixed rate Corporate Board in the name of ADSO subject to the banks terms and conditions set out in Appendix A to the report. JL
4. That the annual accounts for 2012 be approved and circulated to the membership. TvdH/LL

5.3 Company Secretary Report

Tom reported that that ADSO had 927 members as at 28th February. Of those 858 had fully paid their membership dues whilst the rest were in the process of doing so.

Tom also reminded the Board that the annual elections of Chairman and Vice Chairman were due to be held prior to the AGM in November. He will report timescales to the Board in July. TvdH

6 Business Plan update

The Board discussed the first draft of the Business Plan. Members felt that a visioning exercise was required so that the plan included a clear view of how ADSO saw its position in future.

The Board agreed that a section on 'Communication' be included and that there needed to be a separation between our broader aims and the Action Plan in support of those aims.

The matter of a possible change to some regions was mentioned again and it was agreed to review this at the July Board meeting.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That a visioning exercise by the Board be held in June 2013 and that the date be agreed between the Chairman and JA/TvdH

Company Secretary.

2. That suggested changes be submitted to All
John Quinton to enable him to circulate a
draft 3 weeks in advance of the meeting.
3. That a review of the current regions be JA/TvdH
considered at the above visioning exercise
and the July Board meeting.

7 Training and Qualifications

Mark Towers, Director for Training, provided an update on training courses 2012/13. The training programme continued to be a success both financially and from an evaluation perspective.

During January 2013, a new course relating to the work of the scrutiny officer was run. This was well supported in the North and in London. Due to low course bookings sessions scheduled for Dover and North Lincolnshire were cancelled.

As a pilot exercise, a one off course was run in house with officers from Waltham Forest, on 'Decision Making and the Legislative Framework'. It was attended by Democratic Services Officers and Lawyers and was facilitated by Peter Edwards on behalf of ADSO.

At the last meeting of the Board, the 2013 Training Programme was approved. This has now been launched with the Law and Practice Plus sessions held in February and March 2013. The School Appeals and Members and Officer Behaving Badly courses are also now being promoted.

On Thursday 14th March, the first Trainers Network met in Birmingham to review how the courses from the previous Training Programme had been delivered and receive and evaluate feedback from the trainers. A second event will be scheduled for those unable to attend this one.

There are now 22 learners who have achieved the Certificate. Two of these learners have now started on the ADSO Diploma in Local Democracy.

Learners on the diploma are continuing to progress and the second cohort commenced on 3rd December in Birmingham.

An external verifier visit has been arranged for Wednesday 24th April, with the new external verifier Jeff Aston who has been appointed by the awarding body 'Proqual'.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the feedback on the training events so far reported upon and the qualifications update be noted.

8 Incentives/Benefits for holders of appointed positions within ADSO

At the Away Day held in August 2012, discussions were focused around encouraging more 'volunteers' to assist with the work of ADSO. It was recognised that the current support was predominantly done by a small core group of individuals who received no payment. The purpose of this report was to look at options for incentivising those who currently and in the future have a role on a consistent basis which supports the work of ADSO.

The Board considered the options and did not support any incentives or benefits for individuals. The Board did however support providing a benefit to the employers of those individuals that gave up their time to serve ADSO.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That 2 places on a training course or one conference place be offered free of charge to the authorities of those members serving

on the Board.

2. That a similar benefit be extended to others who work in support of the Board and ADSO at the discretion of the Board.
3. That in the event that a decision is required in advance of a Board meeting, the Chairman, in consultation with the Finance Director and Company Secretary, be authorised to make that offer.
4. That a business case for volunteers be drawn up to explain the benefits to employers of a volunteer's involvement with ADSO. SK

9 Member Benefit Sponsors – to appoint a lead

Tom explained that the idea of a membership benefit package came up in a discussion he and the Chairman had had with Nick Randle, CEO of Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

From the discussion, it appeared that SLCC's benefit package was sponsored in some way and he undertook to investigate.

There are companies that put together member benefit and incentive packages. The cost to the company/employer is usually based on a 'per head' annual charge.

Several large employers and local authorities do offer similar benefits to their employees.

The Board endorsed the principle and asked Tom to investigate it further and report to the next meeting. TvdH

It was RESOLVED:

That consideration be deferred to the July Board meeting. TvdH

10 Combined London/South East branch

Clive Parker reported that there did not seem to be an appetite amongst South East region members to formally establish a branch. As a result he had been in discussion with the London branch to explore the possibility of the South East region merging with them.

Members of the South East region attended the recent London branch meeting. Unfortunately, due to the weather conditions, very few actually attended. Tim Revell indicated that in principle some members of the London Branch did not have a problem with the suggestion but if it was to be taken forward he would have to formally raise it with the branch.

Other than a formal merger, there was always the option of joint meetings. In light of the earlier decision to review some regions at the next Board meeting, it was agreed to defer a decision until then, when the views of the London Branch would hopefully also be known.

It was RESOLVED:

That consideration be deferred to the July Board meeting.

11 Regional Updates

The following Regional Updates were provided. These can be found in the regional pages on the website:

North East:

North West:

East Midlands:

West Midlands:

London:

South West:

South East:

East of England:

The Board congratulated Essex County Council who had been awarded Member Charter Status.

It was also noted that Becky Owen had stood down as a regional representative for the East Midlands. The Board thanked Becky for the contribution she had made over the years to the development of ADSO both nationally and regionally. The Chairman was asked to write to Becky in those terms.

JA

12 Working with Others

12.1 MJ Awards

The shortlisting for the MJ Awards took place on 13 March. 13 submissions were received. Those shortlisted will be interviewed on 22 April in Liverpool.

12.2 IIMC

Tom reported on the IIMC Region XI Board meeting that took place on 1st March 2013. Both he and John Austin will serve as members of that Board.

The Region XI Board agreed its Terms of Reference and immediate priorities plus work plan for the Development Consultant.

The Board agreed to progress a Region XI conference in Europe in 2014. It also supported the concept of a bulk affiliations scheme in principle which will now be negotiated with IIMC.

We received 5 applications for sponsorship to the IIMC conference. Joanne Straw of Blackpool and Lennox Beattie of LB Richmond were awarded the sponsorship.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted
2. That the Chairman attend the 2013 IIMC conference on behalf of ADSO and that his costs be paid.

12.3 Others

The South East Employers conference will be held on 21 June. ADSO will have a stand at the conference.

13 Consultations

13.1 John Quinton reported that the following responses on behalf of ADSO had been submitted:

- DCLG consultation on making Community Governance reviews easier in order to set up new town and parish councils.
- Detailed comments had been made to DoH on the regulations relating to Health and Wellbeing Boards and this had resulted in specific guidance being issued that was jointly branded by the LGA and ADSO
- Health Scrutiny consultation on guidance. This process had just begun and there were specific Issues of delegation and proportionality.
- Consultation on draft amendment standing order regulations. The Chairman had responded on behalf of ADSO.
- LEP's and funding. This was being

monitored currently and may throw up some governance issues.

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- DCLG re data transparency

13.2 The Chair of the London branch is setting up a JA focus group in response to a request from ICSA. The aim is to ask those working in local government what specific governance challenges they face in order to ascertain what ICSA can do to support them. It was agreed to put the invitation to the London and South East branches.

14 **Next meeting and dates for 2013**

The next meeting will be held at 11.00 am on 12 July at Islington Council.

A future meeting is scheduled for 20 September (tbc).

The meeting closed at 3.35 pm.