

Association of Democratic Services Officers - Business Plan 2014 -
2017



Association of
Democratic Services
Officers

BUSINESS PLAN

2014 to 2017

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWARD

I am pleased to introduce ADSO's business plan for 2014-2017.

ADSO is now a well-established association within the local government sector. We have come a long way since we were created in 2009.

Membership has consistently increased as has the range of services we offer to our members.

We have managed to do this with a very modest membership fee and by keeping our costs low, whilst attracting other sources of income to fund our activities.

We have given much thought to what our future priorities should be.

We will continue to improve the services we offer, including development opportunities for our members.

We wish to raise our profile nationally and regionally and to build up effective working relationships with key Government Departments, local government associations and elected members.

We feel we have a lot to offer central and local government generally and will be working hard to get that message across through a variety of communication means including social and other media.

Through implementing this business plan, I am confident that ADSO will continue to grow and increase its influence across all forms of government and related sectors.

John Austin, Chairman ADSO

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PART 1 - MISSION, VISION AND AIMS

MISSION

To represent, promote and develop excellent democratic Services, for the benefit of everyone who works within the sector and those we support.

VISION

To be a nationally recognised professional association regarded as such by Central and Local Government, our membership and partners.

AIMS

- To promote the professional status of democratic services and governance within all aspects of local and community governance
- To foster the advancement of efficient and best practice in governance and democratic services matters
- To promote professional development by the provision of qualifications for our membership and learning opportunities for all
- To represent the democratic services profession through active engagement with our members and others
- To be recognised as a body of influence on matters relating to democratic services and governance generally
- To develop national and international links with partner organisations

- To disseminate information and advice on all aspects of governance and democracy
- To continue to develop a sustainable and forward looking Association

PART 2. PRIORITIES: 2014-2017

1. To raise the profile of the Association, regionally, nationally and internationally
 - a. draw up a plan to raise our profile in Local Government including with elected members and others with job roles related to Democratic Services
 - b. to identify champions / influencers and how they could support the Association
 - c. develop international links through IIMC and related organisations
 - d. develop a communications strategy to maximise the marketing of the association and to enhance the use of the website.
2. To increase the learning and development opportunities for our members
 - a. expand the existing programme to include personal as well as professional development
 - b. develop a system for professional accreditation and recognition
 - c. improve completion rates for the Certificate and Diploma
 - d. explore options for developing the annual conference

3. To increase membership and improve membership engagement
 - a. carry out a review of the regions to ensure the structure is meeting the needs of members
 - b. increase regional engagement
 - c. develop a campaign to recruit more volunteers
 - d. increase the range of benefits for members

4. To build a sustainable organisation and increase financial stability
 - a. draw up a succession plan for Board members
 - b. consider options for employing paid staff
 - c. review the constitution / organisational structure
 - d. develop new income streams for the Associations

**ADSO Business Plan 2014-17
Priorities Action Plan**

Key Action	Costings	Lead Board Member	Target Date / Key Milestone	Progress	
Priority 1 – To raise the profile of the Association regionally, nationally and internationally					
A. Draw up a plan to raise our profile in Local Government including with elected members and others with job roles related to Democratic Services – see also section D on Communications.					
1	Approach to LGA and London Councils with a view to raising ADSO profile and the importance of professional support by DS staff to councillors.	Initially within existing resources	John Austin	November 2014	Board to discuss proposals after initial approach has been made
2	Promotion event(s) in Wales	£1,500	John Austin/Sue Keogh	June 2014	<p>Contact made with Welsh LGA. Network event attended in June and reported to Board July 2014.</p> <p>Contact also made with Public i to seek support in promoting ADSO in Wales</p> <p>Discussions to take place with an awarding body in Wales to assess viability of developing qualification</p>
3	<p>Retain regular contact with DCLG and other Government agencies regarding consultation documents and other democratic services related initiatives.</p> <p>Make efforts to meet with DCLG to begin regular dialogue.</p>	Existing resources	John Quinton/John Austin	Ongoing	<p>ADSO has recently responded to a number of consultation exercises. DCLG have recently acknowledged ADSO's offer of support in changing the law re-paperless meetings/agendas and has said it will be back in contact at the relevant time.</p> <p>Meeting held with CLG officers on 17/06/14 to</p>

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Key Action	Costings	Lead Board Member	Target Date / Key Milestone	Progress	
				discuss ADSO's comments on the plain English guide to the Openness Regulations	
B. To identify champions / influencers and how they could support the Association					
1	<p>Refresh the ADSO Member Champion role with a clear strategy in relation to the role and how we can maximise that role including a process for regular engagement with the members concerned.</p> <p>Discuss with LGA (see A1 above) and consider a virtual network of member champions.</p> <p>Link with outcome of communications strategy – see D below</p>	Existing resources	John Austin	31.12.14	To be actioned
C. Develop international links through IIMC and related organisations					
1	Maximise ADSO attendance at IIMC European Conference 2014. Use conference to promote membership of IIMC.	£6,000	John Austin	June 2014	Completed. ADSO co-organised Region XI Conference in Brussels. We will be hosting the next Region XI meeting in October in Bristol. 18 members attended. Those who attended joined IIMC.
2	Develop networks and contacts across Europe and refresh criteria to promote Diploma learners exchange visits within	£3000	Sue Keogh/Mark Towers	Ongoing	Contacts made by ADSO members in Brussels to develop networking. To be developed further at Region XI meeting in October 2014.

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Key Action		Costings	Lead Board Member	Target Date / Key Milestone	Progress
	Europe				
3	Promote IIMC to increase membership including developing a bulk membership scheme.	Within existing resources	John Austin/Tom van der Hoven	31.3.15	Began with promotion of European Conference in Brussels. Further initiatives to be developed. Report to Board in September 14
D. Develop a Communications Strategy to maximise the marketing of the Association					
1	Appoint Communications Consultant, identify key messages and target audiences and agree actions and implementation plan.	£1200	Laura Latham	31 st March 2014	Meeting held with potential consultant on 21.2.14. Initial appointment for 2 days work. Consultant's report produced and actions agreed at Board on 11 July 14.
2	Develop website to enable continuing communications development to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh of front page • Blog facility to be added and blogger identified • Twitter feed on front page • Enhanced Board member profiles 	£500 website improvements Payment for blogger TBC	Laura Latham	Ongoing with early implementation September / October 2014 onwards	Discussed at initial meeting with Consultant on 21.2.14. Workshop arranged with consultant for 17.6.14.
3	Through development of relationships with local government press, have 2 ADSO articles published in forthcoming year.	NA	Laura Latham/John Austin	September 2015	

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4	Track national news and develop ADSO commentary to be communicated through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveying members and sharing findings • Identifying ADSO lead spokespeople for key issues • Continuing to contribute to enquiries and articles in local government press 	£1000	Laura Latham	December 2014 / ongoing	
5	Review the implementation of plan on an ongoing basis with a full review after a period of 12 months	£1200 (to cover cost of review with Consultant)	Laura Latham and Board Members	July 2015	
Priority 2 – To increase the learning and development opportunities for our members					
A. Expand the existing programme to include personal and professional development					
1	Explore existing strategic management development provision e.g. SOLACE with aim of sponsoring a number of ADSO members to attend a development programme.	£4,000	Sue Keogh, plus volunteer	Annual sponsorship opportunity starting January 2015	
2	Research feasibility of developing or	No cost for	Mark Tower / Sue	Proposal with	

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Key Action		Costings	Lead Board Member	Target Date / Key Milestone	Progress
	commissioning an ADSO management development programme for new / aspiring first line managers.	research	Keogh, plus volunteer	options to be take to September 2015 Board meeting	
3	Ensure at least one personal development programme is included in the annual ADSO training programme.	No additional costs	Mark Towers / Laura Latham	From January 2015	
B. Develop a system for professional accreditation and recognition					
1	Research professional bodies which offer accreditation.	No cost for research	Mark Towers, plus volunteer	Research to be undertaken by 1 st December 2014.	
2	Explore options for ADSO to offer own accreditation and recognition.	No cost	Mark Towers, plus volunteer	Discussion of options at March 2015 Board meeting	
C. Continue to improve completion rates for Certificate and Diploma					
1	Analyse learner progress records to establish approximate percentage completion rates per learner and implement tracking system.	No cost	Mark Towers / Sue Keogh	60% of learners to complete Certificate in 18 months timeframe	

**ADSO Business Plan 2014-17
Priorities Action Plan**

Key Action	Costings	Lead Board Member	Target Date / Key Milestone	Progress
			50% of learners to complete Diploma in 2 year timeframe	
2	Assess impact of centre communication regarding learner completion rates and put in place intervention plans for learners who have not completed the Certificate within 2 years from start date.	No cost	Mark Towers / Sue Keogh	All Certificate learners registered from September 2013 to complete or withdraw within 3 years
D. Explore options for developing the annual conference				
1	Evaluate new format of 2014 conference and agree options for future conferences.	No cost	Sue Keogh	Report to Dec 14 Board meeting
2	Pilot ADSO Awards at 2014 conference and draw up a development plan for future years.	No cost	Sue Keogh	Report to Dec 14 Board meeting
Priority 3 – To increase membership and improve membership engagement				
A. Increase regional engagement.				

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Key Action		Costings	Lead Board Member	Target Date / Key Milestone	Progress
1	Regional Representatives to develop an action plan for their region to include regional development priorities.	N/a	Sue Keogh with Regional Representatives	January 2015 for plan finalisation by all regions	
2	Each Region represented on the Board to hold a free seminar / event for members between April 2014 and December 2015.	£4500 total (based on £300 - £500 for each region)	Regional Representatives (with support from Sue Keogh)	9 events to be held by December 2015	
3	ADSO to arrange promotional sessions in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland including the possibility of offering training.	£500	Sue Keogh and John Austin	March 2015 Regions to be represented on the ADSO Board	Event held in Wales in June 14. Being followed up (See Priority 1 - A2 above).
4	Continue to review the structure of the regions to ensure it is meeting the needs of Members.	N/a	Tom Van Der Hoven and ADSO Board	Reviewed in December 2013. To be reviewed every 2 years thereafter.	
B. Develop a campaign to recruit more members and volunteers					
1	Branded materials to be reviewed and	£1,500	Laura Latham and	November 2014	

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	promoted.		Sue Keogh (with support from Communications Consultant)		
2	Targeted communications developed to attract new members in under-represented regions and local authorities.	£1,000	Laura Latham and Sue Keogh	December 2014	First meeting of Yourkshire and Humberside Region held on 14 July 14.
3	First campaign for 'Recruit a New Member' to be launched in August 2014 and reviewed in January 2015.	£100	Sue Keogh, Laura Latham and Regional Representatives	100 new members to be recruited by December 2014	
C. Increase the range of benefits for members					
1	Membership Benefit Scheme to be rolled out for pilot year.	£750	Tom van der Hoven	April/July 2014	Done. Progress monitored at Board meeting on 11 July 14.
2	Invite feedback from members on the benefit scheme after first year and annually thereafter (if continued) and negotiate interim changes if required.	£750 per year	Tom van der Hoven	October 2014 Board report in March 2015	

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Key Action		Costings	Lead Board Member	Target Date / Key Milestone	Progress
3	Review IIMC Bulk membership scheme and make decision to proceed for pilot year	No cost	Tom van der Hoven	July – September 2014	To Board in September 14
4	Undertake full survey of members to ascertain value of existing benefits and seek feedback on future benefits	£200	Tom van der Hoven	December 2015	
Priority 4 – To build a sustainable organisation and increase financial stability					
A. Draw up a succession plan for Board members					
1	Each Board Director to produce some practice/guidance notes as to what their role actually involves so that this can then be used as the basis to train other staff or use as the basis for drawing up a specification if the role or part of it were to be outsourced.	No cost	John Lynch	Sept 2014	
2	To identify a process for the identification of potential successors to Board members.	No cost	John Lynch	December 2014	

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Key Action		Costings	Lead Board Member	Target Date / Key Milestone	Progress
3	Put in place some Shadowing/Mentoring arrangements for those members we identified as possible successors into the Board Roles.	No cost	John Lynch	March 2015	
B. Consider options for employing paid staff					
1	Obtain external advice from a management consultant on the current structure and organisation of ADSO and the business model employed.	Estimate £2,500	John Austin	April 2015	
2	Look at various financial options/incentives to members to carry out roles or to recognise the effort they put in. These could range from a straight financial payment to offering free membership, free training or conference places. This to include assessment of whether any of these options would change the legal status of ADSO as a 'not for profit' company	Estimate of £8,000	John Lynch	December 2014	
3	As an alternative to draw up a clear specification of the roles required and then go out to tender, to include partners and	TBC	John Lynch		Can only do this once practice/guidance notes are produced by each Director and then Board to decide which roles they want to tender for.

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Key Action		Costings	Lead Board Member	Target Date / Key Milestone	Progress
	local authorities, tender for the work.				
C. Review the Constitution / organisational structure					
1	Look at organisational structure and discuss with Board members to ensure the structure is fit for purpose and for the future.	Within existing resources	TdvH	November 2015	To follow actions in 4A1 and prior to review and appointment of Directors in 2015
2	Invite comments from members on current structure and Constitution.	Within existing resources	TdvH	November 2015	
3	Review Constitution and report to Board.	Within existing resources	TdvH	November 2015	
4	Report proposed changes to Constitution to AGM.	Within existing resources	TdvH	November 2015	
D. Develop new income streams for the Association					
1	Increase the number of suppliers or companies advertising on our website or sponsoring regional training and events and reviewing our current charge structure.		John Lynch Matthew Kane		

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2 Investigate offering a management qualification either on our own or working in partnership with a University.		Sue Keogh		Not to be progressed currently – see action at 2A1
3 Offer Peer Reviews or Management Consultancy to local authorities.		John Austin	2016	