



Minutes of ADSO Board Meeting

21 March 2014

**Committee Room 4, 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	P
Tom van der Hoven	Company Secretary	P
Linda Scott	North East	P
Helen Gee	North West	A
Brendan Martin	Yorkshire and Humberside	A
Matt Kane	East Midlands	P
Georgina Atkinson	West Midlands	P
Tim Revell	London	P
Vacant	South West	

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. He extended a special welcome to Linda Scott – North East representative.

The above apologies were noted.

2 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2013 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

All action points from the previous meetings had been completed or included in the agenda for this meeting.

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 1 February to 1 March 2014.

1835 Absolute unique visitors on the site. Of the 2403 overall visits to the website 11.3 % were new visitors.

Of the total page views, the most popular continue to be Members Forum, Resources – Democracy Direct and ADSO training/booking pages.

All regions (with the exception of Yorkshire and Humberside) have a regional web publisher who is responsible for uploading and maintaining content on the regional pages and adding news items to

the front page to promote particular events and activity. They received guidance notes and support in January 2014 which was followed up in March 2014.

Unfortunately at the current time, there hasn't been much additional content added (this may correlate with regions being at the planning stage for events and seminars) so this will be followed up regularly with publishers.

Sue Keogh as support administrator for Laura has received two sessions of training so far with a further slight adaptation required to the website to enable further distribution of administrator permissions. Training will be on-going as required thereafter.

Tom van der Hoven is yet to be trained but will be at the earliest opportunity.

The new ADSO website is fully social media compatible and the aim is that members (and non members using the public site) can interact more widely with ADSO.

There has been some success using social media through the #AskPickles session in which ADSO participated. It is hoped the legislative amendment required to enable electronic summons will be approved in April 2014 providing that Social Media can act more effectively in some cases in the place of written correspondence.

At its meeting in December 2013 the Board approved a Social Media Strategy for the Association. The work as listed under the Next Steps Element has been progressed on schedule between January – March 2014.

Following the discussion at the Board in December 2013 a meeting took place on 21 February 2014 with Richard Vize, a freelance journalist, communications consultant and public policy expert. (<http://www.richardvize.co.uk/>)

The aim was to have an informal discussion about how ADSO's external communications could be further developed and prioritised. The conversation focussed on ADSO's aims to become more closely aligned with key government departments and figures and becoming a key influencer, the importance of social media for communications and niche areas where ADSO could begin to make its mark nationally.

At the end of the meeting Richard agreed to develop some costed ideas to assist ADSO to move forward. His proposals have not yet been received. LL/JL

The Board urged all Board members to actively engage in social media activity. ALL

A learning session will be held prior to the next Board meeting and Wayne Chandai invited to assist. LL

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the website statistics be noted.
2. That development of the Social Media Strategy, completion of the Social Media audit and the next steps in further developing the work be noted.
3. That a learning session for Board members on the use of social media be held prior to the next Board meeting. LL/TvdH
4. That, if the Richard Vize's report recommends some quick wins which aren't costly, the Urgency Committee be authorised to proceed with it prior to the next Board meeting. LL/JL

4.1 Conference 2014

Sue Keogh, Director for Regional Developments and Events', tabled proposals for the 2014

Conference.

Birmingham City Football Club has been booked for 20th and 21st November for a 1 ½ day conference with a dinner on the Thursday evening. It was agreed at the last Board meeting that we would pilot our own ADSO Awards ceremony at the dinner.

Costs

The Board agreed an Early Bird registration rate of £195 plus VAT and £245 plus VAT post Early Bird and for non-members. Learners would pay half price.

.Programme

The Board endorsed the proposed programme and discussed possible themes, keynote speakers and topics for the various workshops. Sue will list the suggestions and circulate it to the Board for further comment. SK

Awards Ceremony

The Board endorsed the proposal to have just four Awards:

- Learner of the Year (nominated by Regional Advisers)
- Team of the Year x 2 (one for Unitaries, Mets & Counties and one for Boroughs & Districts)
- Individual of the Year (nominated by Leaders, Chief Executives, etc)

Suggested criteria for the categories are to be drawn up by John A for Individual of the Year, Clive for Team of the Year and Sue and Mark for Learner of the Year. JA/CP/SK/MT

The Board agreed the following prizes:

Team of the Year – trophy, framed certificate and £300 voucher

Individual of the Year – trophy, framed certificate,

offer to attend the annual IIMC conference in America (maximum £1500 ADSO contribution) or £100 voucher.

Learner of the Year - trophy, framed certificate, offer to attend the annual IIMC conference in America (maximum £1500 ADSO contribution) or £100 voucher.

If the offer of sponsored attendance at the IIMC Annual Conference is not taken up, the Board will review whether the opportunity should be offered to the wider membership.

Laura Latham agreed to source the trophies and John Lynch the certificates.

Judging of the submissions will be undertaken by John Austin, a Chief Executive, one of the sponsors and Sue Keogh.

The suggested timescales are:

1/5/14	Launch
30/7/14	Deadline for entries
31/8/14	Shortlisting completed (3 in each category)
30/9/14	Interviews completed and winners selected

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the proposed programme be endorsed.
2. That four awards be piloted this year for the following categories – Team of the Year (2) (one for Unitaries, Mets & Counties and one for Boroughs & Districts), Individual of the Year and Learner of the Year and that the prizes be as set out above.
3. That an Awards Ceremony be held at the dinner on Thursday 20th November 2014.
4. That the Annual General Meeting of the Association be held on Thursday 20th November 2014.

4.2 Update on Sponsors

Matt Kane provided an update on the recent annual user group conference hosted by our Main Association and Conference Sponsor, Modern.gov.

ADSO was represented at the conference held at Leicestershire County Council offices in Glenfield on 6 March 2014. The full-day conference was extremely well attended with over 100 delegates coming from around the country.

Back in March 2012 the Board agreed a number of sponsorship packages which Matt detailed in his report. The Board was asked to review the existing packages, decide whether any should be added or deleted and decide the pricing for each package.

The Board agreed to continue with the current sponsorship packages but decided to withdraw IIMC Conference Sponsorship as no interest had been shown in this category.

The Board also agreed to invite only one main sponsor for a maximum period of two years but that they be given the option to sponsor only for one year.

It was RESOLVED:

1. The Board noted the outcome of the 2014 Modern.gov User Group Conference and the arrangements for next year's event.
2. That the sponsorship categories be retained with the exception of the IIMC Conference Sponsorship category. MK
3. That only one main sponsor be accepted at a fee of £2,000 for 1 year or £3,500 for the maximum of two years. MK
4. That corporate branding be applied to sponsorship literature and that sponsor packages be published via the website.

5 Directors' Reports

5.1 Chairman's Report

Knowles on Local Authority Meetings

Following discussions with the ICOSA, the Chariman reported that ADSO Members will receive a 25% discount on the 7th edition of 'Knowles' due to be published in May 2014. The cost to members will be £74.96 plus p&p as opposed to the normal price of £99.95.

Member Benefit Scheme

The Chairman and John Lynch met with a TvdH representative of 'Wider Plan' to discuss their member benefit scheme. They also considered written proposals from another provider but they were deemed to be too expensive and were ruled them out at an early stage.

ADSO has the option of a 12 month pilot costing £750. Costs beyond the pilot will be 50p per member with a minimal annual cost of £500.

Wales

Since the last meeting, the Chairman has kept in JA contact with the Welsh LGA and has provisionally agreed that ADSO will attend a democratic services network meeting in June to 'showcase' who we are and explain the benefits to staff in Wales of joining ADSO.

IIMC Conference - Brussels

The Board was reminded that it had agreed to sponsor up to 10 members to a maximum of £200

each to attend the Brussels conference. Priority was to be given to learners. The Board also agreed to sponsor Board members to a total of £3000. He confirmed that, following an open invitation amongst members, we received 16 applications. Seven of these were learners so they automatically were agreed. We filled the other 3 places from drawing lots. Both the successful and unsuccessful applications have been notified.

(Board members have expressed an interest in attending. ADSO will therefore be sending 19 delegates.

Those attending have been asked to enroll before the early bird discount expires on 24th March and to join the IIMC to take advantage of the member discount.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the Chairman's Report be noted.
2. That a 12 month pilot with Wider Plan at a cost of £750 be agreed. TvdH
3. That Wider Wallet be offered a stand at our conference at no cost. MK
4. That the attendance at the Brussels Conference as set out above be noted. JA

5.2 Finance Report

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

Since the last Board meeting we have had another 14 jobs advertised on the website.

John gave an update on the membership numbers (978) per region and income received and outstanding.

It was hoped to submit the draft accounts for 2013 to this meeting. Although a draft had been produced which showed we produced a profit of £37,165 for last year, a number of queries have still

to be resolved concerning outstanding invoices which could affect this figure.

The accountant dealing with this is on leave until next week so he will circulate the accounts to everyone once these queries have been resolved and he is provided with the full background information to the accounts to answer any questions on this. JL

It was RESOLVED:

That the Finance Report be noted.

5.3 Company Secretary Report

At the December meeting the Board expressed its support for Tom van der Hoven's candidacy as IIMC Board Director for Region XI.

Unfortunately, due to work commitments, Tom subsequently decided not to stand for election.

It was RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

6 Business Plan update

John Quinton, Vice Chairman, provided an update. Following agreement at the last board meeting the appropriate Directors had been asked to prepare draft action plans for their respective priorities within the Business Plan.

in view of the short timescales involved, no effort had yet been made to ensure consistency or cross referencing of the information prepared by individual Directors. This required further input and refinement.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted and the content of

the various actions be endorsed.

2. That the relevant Directors review the content including cross referencing where relevant, providing costs and identifying volunteers to support the actions where appropriate. Directors
3. That the column with “RAG Rating” be deleted. JQ
4. That consideration be given to longer term actions. Directors
5. That the information be provided to John Quinton no later than 4th April 2014. JQ
6. That a summary document of the Business Plan be produced for publication. JQ

7 Training and Qualifications

Mark Towers, Director for Training, provided an update on training courses.

The ADSO Training Programme has continued to go from strength to strength in 2013 and 2014 sees the addition of a new partner and courses and the return of well supported courses from recent years.

Managing Members, Meetings and Minefields – December 2013

At the end of 2013, a new course was introduced on to the programme focusing on some of the softer skills a Democratic Services Officer will need. This proved very successful with a high level of positive feedback. Three courses were run in London (London Borough of Redbridge), East of England (Ipswich Borough Council) and West Midlands (Birmingham City Council).

Just a Minute – January and February 2014

During early 2014, a re run of a course from a couple of years ago was undertaken on minute

taking. The 'Just a Minute' course was reworked following feedback from the last time it was run and in particular a practical exercise involving taking minutes with a webcast was included.

Five courses were held across the country. The course was popular and the feedback was very good.

The next scheduled event is the new addition of 'Planning and the Democratic Process, which will be run in conjunction with the 'Planning Advisory Service' (PAS). The take up for this course has been excellent with a second course scheduled in London (5 events in all). There has been a true joint approach to writing the course and PAS are giving their services free of charge.

Review of Materials

As mentioned at the last meeting a review of the training materials took place over the festive period. This will see some of the changes to the popular courses which are re run each year and the agreement to improve the templates for course materials with some model templates being developed by Blackpool Council for ADSO Training courses and ADSO and partner organisation courses.

At the recent Centre Management meeting the opportunity of piloting a management course as part of the 2014 programme was discussed with a view to including a similar type of course in a 2015 programme.

Sue Keogh has been liaising with Mark Doyle from the company called 'The Method' who did the workshop at the conference.

The proposal is to run a pilot one day course entitled "Maximising your Management Impact" with the course subsidised 50% by ADSO at the company's office in Waterloo.

We are also looking at other partnerships in line

with Business Plan key action “Explore existing strategic management development provision, with aim of sponsoring a number of ADSO members to attend a development programme” and will report back further on this at a future meeting.

A diploma network day was held in Birmingham on 6th March and it was encouraging to see the enthusiasm of learners making progress and the different approaches to the pathways.

A standardisation meeting is due to be held in Birmingham on 3rd April (the afternoon of the trainer session). Standardisation is becoming ever important as more and more people take up the qualification and more Advisers are recruited.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the feedback on the training events so far reported upon be noted.
2. That the qualifications update be noted.
3. That the proposal to hold a pilot management course entitled “Maximising your Management Impact” as a one day subsidised course in conjunction with ‘The Method’ be endorsed. MT
4. That the ‘Planning Advisory Service’ (PAS) be offered a free stand at the 2014 conference. MK

8 Membership Transfers

John Lynch reported on two issues regarding membership transfers that had been raised with him.

1. If an authority registers a further member which takes it to a discount threshold, does the discount apply to all of the members or only to the additional new member from that authority?

The Board decided that the discount should only

apply to the latest new member.

2. If an authority has paid for 10 members and one resigns, can the authority replace the person?

The Board decided that the person can be replaced if the membership fees were paid by the authority. In the case of an individual paying their own membership fee, their membership transfers with them when they leave the authority.

It was RESOLVED:

That transfer of membership be dealt with as set out above. JL

9 Regional Updates

Regional Updates were provided by London, East Midlands, West Midlands and South East. These can be found in the regional pages on the website.

The Chairman reported that Rosalind Reeves had resigned as regional representative for the South West. Jo Morrison had also indicated that she would no longer be available.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That the Board's appreciation be extended to Rosalind Reeves and Jo Morrison for their contributions in the South West region and to the Board.
2. That the members in the South West region be made aware of the vacancy and nominations invited from interested members to represent the region on the Board. SK

11 Working with others

IIMC Bulk Membership Scheme

TvdH

The matter was deferred till the next Board meeting.

Attendance of IIMC Annual Conference

The Chairman reported that Ann Hunter from Kent County Council and Simon Hughes from Sheffield City Council had won the sponsorship to attend the conference.

It was RESOLVED:

1. That it be noted that Ann Hunter from Kent County Council and Simon Hughes from Sheffield City Council had won the sponsorship to attend the IIMC Annual Conference in Milwaukee.
2. That Clive Parker represent the Board at the IIMC Annual Conference and that his travel costs be paid.

12 Consultations

John Quinton reported that ADSO had responded to a number of consultations such as the draft Standing Order Regulations regarding replacing Independent Members (Code of Conduct matters) and the recording of decisions on budget setting and The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations.

13 Next meeting and dates for 2014

The next meeting will be held at 11.00 am on 11th July 2014 at Islington Council.

Future dates for 2014 are 19th September and 12th December 2014.

The meeting closed at 3.55 pm.

