



Association of
Democratic Services
Officers

Annual Conference 2017



Nottingham

23rd and 24th November

[#ADSOCConf2017](https://twitter.com/ADSOCConf2017)



Sponsors and exhibitors



Conference information

We are delighted that you will be attending ADSO's annual conference on Thursday 23th and Friday 24th November 2017, it will be a great event.

Location and Directions

The event is being held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Nottingham, Nuthall Road, Nottingham, NG8 6AZ. You will find a map and directions [here](#).

There is free parking for those who are travelling by car. The closest train station is Nottingham which is a short taxi or tram ride away from the hotel.

AGM

The Association's AGM will take place at 4.20pm on Thursday 24th November, papers have been published on the website <https://www.adso.co.uk/adso-governance/>

Refreshments

Refreshments will be available at various stages during both days and a conference dinner will take place in the evening on Thursday 23th November 2017. This will start with a complimentary drinks reception sponsored by Modern.Gov at 7.00pm followed by a three course dinner at 8.00pm.

If you have any special needs or dietary requirements which were not included on your booking form, please let us know (info@adso.co.uk) as soon as possible.

Programme day one - 23rd November

11.00 - Arrival and registration

11.30 - Welcome and introductions

11.40 - Facilitated discussions

An opportunity to discuss a range of topics with colleagues. Topics to include Effective Member Support, Partnership Working, and the Pitfalls of Paperless Working

12.30 - LUNCH

1.30 - Presentation from main sponsor - Modern.Gov

1.40 - Workshops:

- 1) The new Knowles - Phil McCourt
- 2) Developing Ethical Walls, James Doble, Cherwell and South Northamptonshire Council's
- 3) Scrutiny in challenging times, Jacqui McKinlay, Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS)
- 4) Shaping the future through your people – Chris Menlove-Platt Coach and Trainer

2.50 - TEA

3.10 - Plenary session:

Professor Colin Copus - The role of good Governance in Local Government

4.20 - Association of Democratic Services Officers, Annual General Meeting

5.00 -Closing remarks from ADSO Chair

7.00pm - Modern.Gov drinks reception

8.00pm - Conference dinner and learner award presentation - Disco sponsored by Public- i

Programme day two - 24th November

9.15 - Arrival and coffee

9.45 - Welcome and overview of day

10.00 - Plenary session:

Kevin O'Keefe, Wolverhampton Council
Wolverhampton Council were winners of the MJ Award, Excellence in Scrutiny and Governance and Kevin will share key points from their entry.

10.45 - Panel discussion with Q&A - chaired by Cllr Kay Cutts MBE, Nottinghamshire County Council

Kevin O'Keefe, Wolverhampton Council
Cllr Bryony Rudkin, Ipswich Borough Council
John Austin, ADSO Chair

11.45 - Break

12.00 - Facilitated discussion sessions (picking up themes from keynote speakers and Panel)

What does what you have heard mean for you, your organisation and ADSO?

1.00 - Lunch

2.00 - Feedback from facilitated discussions

2.30 -Workshops:

- 5) The Thanet Story – Nick Hughes, Thanet DC
- 6) The Wandsworth and Richmond Story, Peter Sass, Head of Governance
- 7) The Tower Hamlets Story – Matthew Mannion, LB Tower Hamlets
- 8) The Wigan Story - Christine Charnock Jones & Diane Adshead, Wigan Council

3.30 – Closing remarks from Chair



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Day one workshops

Workshop 1

The new Knowles - Phil McCourt

This is a workshop based around Knowles' law and practice of local authority meetings. The current edition of this long running publication came out last year, the eighth since it was first published forty years ago.

Philip is the current author and the concept of this workshop is to ask you

What is missing?

Is it structured in the right way?

What doesn't it answer (or where does it answer questions no one asks)

Where is it too long or too scant?

What works and doesn't work in it for you?

It is also your opportunity to ask questions of the author, such as why is it so short on jokes?

Workshop 2

"We're gonna build a wall!" - A guide to managing conflicts and danger zones in shared working and alternative service delivery models - James Doble – Cherwell and South Northants Councils

Life in local government is definitely not as straight-forward as it used to be. In the past a council would deliver all its own services to its local communities. Today we have all sorts of different relationships and delivery models including shared and joint working, combined authorities, joint committees, trusts, employee mutuals and council owned companies. We appoint councils and officers to different boards and have vastly more complicated relationships. What are the pitfalls? Who is allowed to know what? Who can talk to who? When does conflict occur and how can this be managed? This workshop aims to look at the conflicts and danger zones that can occur in shared working and using alternative service delivery models and provide practical steps and guidance for managing them.

Workshop 3

Scrutiny in challenging times: Jacqui McKinlay, Chief Executive Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS)

The latest Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) research shows that the public services world is getting more complex and the resources available to support democratic decision-making continues to reduce. As challenges in relation to budget savings, housing, economic growth, planning, health and public involvement are featuring heavily in Cabinet and committee discussions everywhere, how can we be best preparing our organisations. Jacqui will share the latest research and experiences from around the country, and provide delegates with an opportunity to air their specific concerns and get the collective brain power of colleagues focused on solving them.



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Workshop 4

Shaping the future through your people – Chris Menlove-Platt, Business Coach

Within any organisation that truly values its' people, Coaching/Mentoring and Leadership/Management are interlinked skills. Whilst each has similar inputs, Coaching and Mentoring have different outcomes and create different engagements so the trick is recognising when each one is effective. This short, interactive workshop will give an overview of how people create their reality, investigate the basics of a coaching/mentoring process and offer some tips on being an effective coach and/or mentor.

Day two workshops

Workshop 5

The Thanet Story: Adapting to change– Nick Hughes, Committee Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer Thanet District Council

May 2015 saw Thanet District Council become Britain's only UKIP controlled Council. With over 40 newly elected Councillors out of a total of 56, huge change was inevitable. Hear how Democratic Services adapted to and capitalised upon some of the unique challenges this presented. There will be group discussion sessions that will allow attendees to appraise the work that was undertaken by the Council and also to challenge possible perceptions of what working for a UKIP Council may be like. To finish there will be a short question and answer session, where attendees can ask any further questions they may have.

Workshop 6

The Wandsworth and Richmond story: Sovereignty Vs Harmonisation- Peter Sass, Head of Governance serving Richmond and Wandsworth Councils

It is rare in local government for a single staff group to be jointly-employed by more than one Council and even more unusual in a single-tier area such as London. Since October 2016, Wandsworth and Richmond Councils have been operating in this way, supporting two sovereign Councils; two sets of Members and two Constitutions. The two democratic services teams have also come together under a single head of governance and, whilst it is early days, this is an exciting model and a great challenge in terms of harmonising processes where possible yet respecting the individuality and sovereignty of each Council. This workshop will examine some of these opportunities in greater detail and seek views and recommendations from participants as to where, when and how harmonisation could take shape.

Workshop 7

The Tower Hamlets Story - Matthew Mannion, Committee Services Manager and Louise Fleming, Democratic Services Manager, LB Merton

For a number of years the London Borough of Tower Hamlets was in the local, and sometimes national, news due to its challenging political environment. This came to a head in 2014/15 with complaints about how the Independent Mayor was running the Borough, including by the BBC's Panorama Programme. Some complaints were about specific actions, others about the overall culture at the authority. The Government acted at the end of 2014 and appointed Commissioners to take over certain Council functions. Then in the Spring of 2015 the Mayor was removed by the Courts following an election petition. A new Mayor was elected and, along with a new Corporate Leadership Team, has undertaken various reforms to satisfy the Commissioners and have the powers returned. Find out how Democratic Services supported two different governance frameworks and the competing demands of the various decision makers. What lessons can we all learn from their experiences?

Workshop 8

The Wigan Story - Christine Charnock-Jones, Democratic Services Manager, Diane Adshead, Deputy Democratic Services Manager Wigan Council and David McGrath, Link UK.

Wigan's Democratic Services Team were proud to receive the ADSO Democratic Services Team of the Year 2016 for successfully moving from a committee role that was very much back office, to a role that showcases the Council's transformation to a modern forward thinking Council. The Team has gained vast amounts of knowledge in supporting Members with IT, in arranging Council flagship events, modernising 75 elected members in their role as community leaders, moving modern.gov to such a level that the whole of the Council's decision making process is now done through modern.gov and continuing to do the day to day duties required of a Democratic Services Team. This new way of working has enabled the team to fully support 'The Deal' and to ensure that Members are equipped to support and promote it in their communities.

There are eight workshops, four on each day. Please ensure that you book which workshop you will be attending. You can do that via the link below:

<https://www.adso.co.uk/annual-conference-2017-information/>

Information about our speakers and workshop facilitators

Professor Colin Copus



Professor Colin Copus is the Director of the Local Governance Research Unit in the Department of Politics and Public Policy, De Montfort University where he is a Professor of Local Politics. His academic interests are central-local relationships and the constitutional status of local government, localism, local party politics, local political leadership and the changing role of the councillor. Colin has worked closely with policy-makers and practitioners in central and local government. He was an advisor to the Political and the Constitutional Reform Committee the Communities and Local Government Committee on its inquiry into the role of the councillor.

He has published widely in academic journals. Colin's latest book is entitled: *In Defence of Councillors*, published by Manchester University Press. Colin was the editor *Local Government Studies* 2001 to 2013. He has also served as a councillor on a London Borough council, a county and a district council and three parish councils

James Doble



James has held various roles at Lancaster City, Cherwell and South Northamptonshire Councils completing full democratic modernisation programmes including revised constitutions and decision making arrangements. In May 2011 James became part of shared working arrangements between Cherwell and South Northamptonshire Council heading up the Democratic and Elections team supporting both councils in democratic, member services, scrutiny, elections and civic. He also holds the positions of Deputy Monitoring Officer and Deputy Returning Officer for both authorities.

For the last year James has been seconded part-time heading up governance for the council's transformation agenda and authored the proposals (now council policy) to create a confederation model to radically transform the way that services are delivered and governed, enabling the councils to work and trade with future and supply services to other organisations. James is now involved with discussions on future governance arrangements including combined authorities and new ways of working at the sub-regional level.

Jacqui McKinlay

Jacqui McKinlay is the Executive Director of the Centre for Public Scrutiny, an independent charity and the leading, national body promoting better public scrutiny and accountability across the public sector. Jacqui joined CfPS in May 2015, prior to that she was Director of Strategy and Customer Services at Staffordshire County Council. Staffordshire is one of the largest local authorities in England and recognised nationally as leading the way in public sector reform, commissioning and community leadership. Working with the Cabinet Office, Jacqui also supported the development of the sector-wide Commissioning Academy and Framework. Jacqui is a communications professional by trade working at Board level for fifteen years. Her experience spans central government, local government, non-departmental public bodies and a range of sectors including health and sport.



Councillor Kay Cutts



Kay Cutts MBE is the Leader of Nottinghamshire County Council. She has served as the County Councillor for Radcliffe-on-Trent since 1989 and has been Conservative Group Leader since October 2000. Between June 2009 and May 2013 she was the Leader of the Council when the Conservatives were the majority group. In addition to her daily duties as Group Leader, she serves on the Finance & Property, Policy and Nottinghamshire Pension Fund committees and also on the Public Health Sub-committee and the Health & Wellbeing Board. Kay is a Governor of Radcliffe-on-Trent Junior School and serves her local Parish Councils at East Bridgford, Flintham, Holme Pierrepont & Gamston, Radcliffe-on-Trent and Shelford & Newton, and Parish Meetings at Car Colston, Kneeton and Screveton.

Councillor Bryony Rudkin



Having worked directly for a high profile London Leader in the heady days of the 1990's, Bryony stood for election to Suffolk County Council in May 1997. She has had various roles at SCC, including Leader, and in 2008 was elected to Ipswich Borough Council where she is currently Deputy Leader and holds the portfolio for Culture, Leisure and Communications. She served on the board of the East of England Development Agency for six years and has been a member of the boards of a variety of local organisations and

partnerships. She has worked on sector-led improvement for over a decade now at the Local Government

Association and has helped support authorities and individual councillors right across the country and elsewhere in the world. She completed a Masters at INLGOV at the University of Birmingham in 2014 and is now studying for a PhD, looking at the contribution of councillors to local government policy-making.

Diane Adshead

Diane moved to Wigan from Scotland in 1989 and she has two grown up daughters. She lives in a 167 year old cottage with her husband, dogs and cats. She joined Wigan Council Democratic Services Section in 2005. Before that, she worked in Private Sector as an office manager. She is the Deputy Manager of the section. Since joining the section, Diane has been involved in establishing a buy back service for VA Schools; induction and member development; Programme for Schools Module (going out to schools and discuss democracy and the importance of voting); Deal Days (the Council's Open Day); attaining the NWE0 Charter Level 1 Review for Member Development; a Deal Ambassadors Pilot for elected members and the development of Political Awareness training for staff. In 2005 she went 'back to school' and did a part time evening course and in 2009 she attained an Honours Degree in English from Bolton University.



Philip McCourt

Supporting a number of local authorities directly and through Weightmans LLP, Philip specialises in corporate governance law and management. He provides consultancy and interim services, as well as training and presentations for councillors and their officers in-house and at various events. Philip's background is that he is a chartered secretary and a solicitor by training, beginning with a not for profit organisation before joining local government in 1988. Since then, he has worked for a number of councils and for the Improvement and Development Agency. He was first appointed as a monitoring officer in 2000.



Philip is a past President of ACSeS (the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors) for 2011 to 2013, leading into the creation of LLG. Over his career Philip has undertaken a number of wider pieces of work for and on behalf of local authorities and their national bodies. This has included developing materials and procedures for the ethical governance toolkit and peer review, chairing the model constitution group, chairing the grouping of ACSeS, NALC, SLCC and others in producing the the Parish Council Governance Toolkit, producing the Councillor Guide to Licensing Decision Making for LACoRS and leading on the model code on planning matters and on corporate governance and local authority companies. Philip is an external author and editorial consultant on local government for Lexis Nexis and is the author of the 8th edition of Knowles.

Kevin O'Keefe

Kevin is Director of Governance and Solicitor to the City of Wolverhampton Council, with responsibility for a dozen or so corporate service areas including Democratic Services. Kevin sits on the Council's top table which has steered the organisation to winning this years' Municipal Journal Awards for Local Authority of the Year, Most Improved Council of the Year, Excellence in Governance & Scrutiny and Senior Management Team of the Year. A solicitor for almost 30 years, Kevin is passionate about developing positive working environments which stimulate both teams and individuals to excel in whatever they do.



Chris Menlove-Platt



Chris is a business mind coach and as such, enjoys helping people become really effective by allowing them to investigate their own inner resources so that they can understand and act on their own issues and grow their own strengths. Through helping individuals in business there is a resultant effect upon the effectiveness of the team and the organisation. He is a charismatic and energetic facilitator who enjoys creating transformation within my delegates through the programmes that he delivers. He also loves

developing strong business relationships via networking, and creating mutual benefits, links and interdependency. Accredited as a Master Practitioner of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) and a certified NLP Trainer, Chris enjoys using it as a foundation to his coaching and training. He is also qualified to use MBTI and has a post-graduate Diploma in Occupational Assessments. He is a recognised Trainer and Coach with the Association of NLP (ANLP).

Christine Charnock-Jones



Christine is the Democratic Services Manager which means that she oversees the Council's committees, mayoral, executive support and member support teams. She has 39 years' experience working for the local authority, 32 years of which have been working with elected members; and I have been a senior manager for the past 17 years. Christine has a considerable amount of experience in dealing with Members of the Council and Senior Officers on a day to day basis, through Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings and associated Democratic Services functions. I was also mayoral

secretary from 2001 until 2009. She is also an ADSO Mentor, Regional Assessor and Specialist Advisor in her spare time and has helped four learners to achieve the ADSO Certificate and is working with one other learner who is studying for the Diploma.

Nick Hughes



Nick is Committee Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer at Thanet District Council.

He studied Business at De Montfort University and Canterbury Christchurch University before joining Local Government in 2003. He began his career in Housing Benefits at Thanet District Council before transferring to their Democratic Services team in 2005. After a two year stint at Canterbury City Council as a Democratic Services Officer he returned to Thanet to take up the position of Committee Services Manager in April 2010 and taking over full responsibility for the Committee

function in Autumn 2015. He was appointed Deputy Monitoring Officer in 2016. Nick's particular interests are Member Training and induction and ways in which to open the democratic process to the public.

Matthew Mannion

Matthew has been the Committee Services Manager at the London Borough of Tower Hamlets since July 2012. His team are responsible for supporting all the Council's formal decision making meetings and a number of others such as informal cabinet. He and his team have helped steer their authority through an extremely difficult political environment over



the last few years with a controversial independent elected Mayor running the authority for 5 years before he was removed by the courts. At the same time government commissioners were appointed to take over certain functions of the Council. The team are very proud that they have ensured decision making processes remained functioning and they have supported the new Mayor and Corporate Leadership Team in introducing new processes and bringing decision making back to the Council. Before working at Tower Hamlets, Matthew was a Democratic Services Team Leader at The London Borough of Lambeth for four years and a Democratic Services Officer at the London Borough of Brent for five. He likes to be widely involved in the democratic services 'world', serving as the current Chair of ADSO's London Branch Committee. He also likes to engage with the technology on offer including by chairing the Modern.gov National User Group. He has run 'How to use Twitter' training courses at ADSO events, much to his wife's amusement (who is much better at Twitter!). He occasionally tweets at @MrM_Mannion

Louise Fleming



Louise started working in Local Government in 1999 as a Junior Committee Administrator at Surrey Heath Borough Council. In 2006, she moved to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets as a Senior Committee Officer. In 2014 she left Democratic Services for a brief stint as a Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer working for the Head of Paid Service. It was during this time that she was seconded to provide dedicated support to the Commissioners appointed by the DCLG while the Council was under Directions. When the DCLG handed

back powers to the Council and the Commissioners left, Louise felt that it was time for a little less excitement and decided to come back to Democratic Services. Since May 2017 she has been managing the Democratic Services team in the London Borough of Merton.

Peter Sass



Head of Executive and Committee Services, Richmond and Wandsworth Councils Peter has worked in democratic and member support functions in many different Councils for over 31 years and has been a service head for the last 13 years. During that time, Peter has developed a significant knowledge base, extensive contacts and wide experience in the sector. Peter has been a member of ADSO for several years and was appointed as the ADSO Company Secretary in November 2015, replacing Tom Van Der Hoven. In addition, Peter is an ADSO trainers

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