



Association of  
Democratic Services  
Officers

### **Joanna Boaler: Director of Communications**

I have worked at Essex County Council since 2004, in that time I have four positions, all of them working in the democratic and policy environment. I became Head of Democratic Services in 2013 and in 2017 the Head of Democracy and Transparency, where I took on Information Governance. Taking on this role was a challenge, but more taxing was sitting an exam in Information Governance, thankfully I passed, but I don't wish to repeat the experience of taking exams.

Prior to working at Essex, I worked at a quango and also for two Members of Parliament.

My current responsibility includes the full democratic services world - committee and decision making, corporate governance, civic services, member enquiries, school appeals, scrutiny (of which I am the Statutory Scrutiny Officer) and member development, I am also responsible for information governance and rights to information and am a deputy monitoring officer. The role is varied and has changed so much, although some aspects are as similar now as in 2004 when I joined Essex.

I am a strong advocate of democratic services and the role we all play in democracy and so I knew I wanted to get involved with ADSO in some capacity, although I never expected to become a Director. I have sat on the ADSO Board in various ways over the years, first as an alternative regional representative for the East of England, then later as the regional representative for the East of England. In March 2020 I became a Non-Executive Director and then in July 2020 I took on the role of Director of Communications.

I completed the Diploma in Local Democracy in 2014 and later became a Certificate Assessor, although I currently don't have any learners.

I also have a passion for Member Development and have undertaken peer assessments for the LGA Member Development Charter for a number of years.

I am a mummy to two young children, so in addition to my full-time role at Essex and ADSO I don't have a lot of spare time. However, I do try to exercise and love cycle touring holidays and I expect when my eldest starts school in September 2020 I will become involved with his school!

July 2020.