



Representing Drainage Water Level & Flood Risk Management Authorities

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

Wednesday 25 September 2024

Venue: Acorn Room, RIC, Stoneleigh Park, Coventry CV8 2LG

10.30 – 13.00

APPROVED

Invited					
Name	Role and organisation	Present	Name	Role and organisation	Present
Tim Farr (TF)	Advisory Committee Chairperson, Deputy Chair, ADA	Y	Josie Bateman (JB)	Environment Agency (National Agency)	Apologies
Charles Mills (CM)	Policy Committee Chairperson, Deputy Chair, ADA	Y (online)	Catherine Harris (CH)	Wilkin Chapman LLP (Independent Advisor)	Y (online)
Robert Caudwell (RC)	Chairperson, ADA	Y (online)	Innes Thomson (IT)	Chief Executive, ADA	Y
Peter Bateson (PB)	Company Secretary, ADA	Y			
Jim Hutchinson (JH)	Balfour Beatty (Associate Member)	Y	In attendance		
Jane Froggatt (JF)	Chief Executive, Witham & Humber Drainage Boards (IDB)	Y (online)	Ian Moodie (IM)	Technical Manager, ADA	Y
Glen Westmore (GW)	Flood Risk Planning and Consenting Team Leader, Surrey County Council (Local Authority/ASA)	Y (online) (Items 10-15)	Sue Crowther (SC)	Administration & Finance Officer	Y

Ref	Minutes
13	<p>Welcome and apologies</p> <p>Apologies noted from JB.</p>
14	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>None raised.</p>
15	<p>Minutes of previous meeting</p> <p>Minutes of the ADA Advisory Committee meeting held on 11 June 2024 were approved. Actions outstanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC to draft set terms & conditions regarding invoices. • SC to provide write off debtors figure at year end.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT to prepare an ADA subscriptions future changes paper (see Item 22).
16	<p>Update from Board of Directors previous meeting Minutes of meeting tabled and noted.</p>
17	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>CH advised that a draft of version 2 of the Good Governance Guide was ready and awaiting ADA’s input before publication. IT apologised for the delay due to ADA’s current workload. Discussion followed on pros and cons of digital and printed copies being available. JF highlighted the need for an updated guide.</p> <p>CH to send latest draft of the Good Governance Guide to ADA and IT/IM to review.</p> <p>Action: ADA asked to target completing of the Good Governance Guide by November 2024.</p>
18	<p>Recruitment Update</p> <p>a. Membership Officer IT advised the Committee that ADA had successfully recruited a new Membership Officer, Mrs Laura Lamb, who would start with ADA on 14 October 2024.</p> <p>b. Chair IT reported that RC’s final term as ADA Chair would conclude in 2026. ADA plans to set up a recruitment process this autumn to appoint someone as succeeding Deputy Chair in November 2025, prior to succeeding RC as Chair in late 2026. IT reported that ADA would be inviting expressions of interest by April 2025.</p> <p>Action: TF/IT to set up a small working group for the recruitment of a new ADA Chair – to invite Henry Cator (ADA President) as chair of the group.</p>
19	<p>ADA Financials</p> <p>ADA financial figures were provided to the Committee as at 31 August 2024 for reporting to the ADA Board.</p> <p>a. Bank Balance IT reported that this was following its usual path through the year and ADA was keeping watch on trajectory towards the end-of-year balance.</p> <p>b. Income & Expenditure PB advised that we should not use the suspension account entry. The Committee advised that ADA needed to adopt a consistent approach to reporting the costs and income from the ADA Gazette against the budget.</p> <p>IT noted that income was on track, but that this was largely owing to a significant underspend in costs, namely not having yet recruited a new member of staff. Consequently, ADA was no longer on track for an overspend in 2024 as budgeted, but was likely to have a balanced or positive outcome for the year.</p> <p>Action: IT to further investigate differences in budget and actual costs.</p> <p>Action: IT to update cost and income reporting for the ADA Gazette.</p>

	<p>Action: ADA asked to provide detail of income and expenditure for the ADA Gazette over the last three/four years.</p> <p>c. Debtors The Committee reviewed the debtors report provided. This was comparable with previous years, and did not raise concern with the exception of longstanding debts for Anglian Water. There remained a handful of local authorities not having paid subscriptions in 2024.</p> <p>Action: IT/SC to review debt from Anglian Water.</p>
20	<p>Budget 2025 2026 and 2027</p> <p>IT advised he had prepared a budget for next three years. The budgets presented assumed that ADA’s membership remained consistent. IT expressed concerns regarding the deficit that these predicted moving forward. It was emphasised that ADA’s current financial position was supported by ADA’s LAPSIP work for Defra, which was set to conclude at the end of March 2025. The proposed closer collaboration between ADA and ASA had not been included within the budget.</p> <p>Discussion followed regarding ADA’s office and Gazette production costs. Challenge was made on increases in office overheads, and whether ADA was being too conservative with budget estimates.</p> <p>IM responded that the ADA Gazette was currently a major income earner for ADA not only in advertising revenue, but also in attracting Associate Members. Any reduction or loss of the ADA Gazette in its current form may put that income at significant risk.</p> <p>Action: IT/SC to review office overhead estimates and adjust if necessary.</p> <p>IT noted that the majority of ADA’s income came from membership fees, and there was a need to explore further income streams for ADA.</p> <p>There was a discussion about work undertaken for Defra, such as gathering information regarding future drainage rates and special levies. IM highlighted that although such work places additional requirements on ADA, it was seen as part of ADA’s role representing members, and unlikely to form an additional income stream.</p> <p>IT reported that ADA was unlikely to receive extra funding from Defra or the Environment Agency, nor was it possible to project extra income from any specific projects or from ADA’s collaboration with ASA.</p> <p>IT said that he had considered higher membership fee increases and that a 10% rise in 2026 and 2027 would lead to a balanced budget in 2027 providing that there was no change in membership numbers, or significant unbudgeted costs. However, IT cautioned that there was a risk that some members may leave ADA with subscription fee rises.</p> <p>Action: The Committee asked for additional information to be added to the budgets to show the effect of 8% and 10% rises on membership fees.</p>
21	<p>ADA Staff Pay & Conditions</p> <p>TF advised that a report was being prepared by the HR Agency and would be available by 27 September. It would be circulated to the Committee prior to the Pay & Conditions Sub-Group meeting on 01 October.</p>

	<p>Action: TF to share confidential paper from HR Agency with IT for sending out to ADA Directors.</p> <p>IT highlighted that decisions will be needed from ADA’s Board and that ADA’s function is wholly dependent on its staff.</p> <p>IM said that ADA’s role had changed over time with a greater reliance upon the ADA office and reduced voluntary support from IDB staff. JF highlighted the need for reviewing business models with financial pressures being placed on everyone.</p>
<p>22</p>	<p>Future Structure of Membership Fees</p> <p>IT advised that a restructuring of ADA’s membership fees would be required in the near future. This was as a result of IDBs amalgamating, which under the current subscriptions fee structure reduced in reduced subscriptions. IM suggested using information from the preceding year’s IDB1 return, basing subscription fees on a proportion of the annual income that each IDB raises.</p> <p>The Committee also discussed developing a three tier structure for raising subscriptions from different sizes of Associate Members, and potentially considering the size of local authorities in the subscription fees they pay.</p> <p>Action: IT to prepare paper on reforming ADA’s subscription fees to initially inform ADA’s Board of Directors.</p> <p>Action: IT to convene a working group to investigate the future basis for ADA’s subscription fees.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>ASA/ADA Collaboration</p> <p>IT advised that ADA’s service level agreement with ASA had been updated and a memorandum of understanding had been issued, based upon a two-stage approach towards a full amalgamation of the associations. GW advised the ASA executive had been updated and agreed with joint vision and plan, and that they would welcome the co-ordination of messages to membership and future resourcing. Documents are being reviewed by the ASA Executive and will be sent to ADA for their agreement or further adjustment.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Events</p> <p>IT updated the Committee on progress towards this year’s ADA Flood & Water Conference 2024. Five high-profile speakers had been confirmed. To break even would require 135 paying delegates to book. The exhibition was proving popular amongst Associate Members, and the space initially available had already sold out.</p> <p>A meeting of senior IDB officers had been arranged to take place on the evening before the Conference at the RAF Club.</p> <p>ADA’s Annual General Meeting 2024 would take place online, via Microsoft Teams, on 3rd December.</p> <p>The ADA Environment Day 2025 would take place on 05 February at Park Farm, Thorney near Peterborough. IM was working on putting together an informative speaking line up related to the lowland aquatic environment for flood and water management authorities.</p>

	<p>IT reported that he was in discussion with CIWEM about the possibility of ASA and ADA collaborating in the next Flood & Coast Conference & Exhibition to be held at the Telford International Centre in 2025.</p> <p>The next meeting of the APPG for Sustainable Flood and Drought Management would take place on 09 October 2024. To be quorate the APPG requires 20 MPs and/or peers to attend. IT and Michael Sly (Chair, North Level District IDB) would be speaking at a parliamentary reception for the LGA Special Interest Group (SIG) for IDB Levies on 08 October 2024.</p>
13	<p>Business Plan</p> <p>TF would be forming a small working group to develop ADA's next Business Plan.</p> <p>Action: IT to draft an outline of a possible business plan for working group to elaborate</p>
14	<p>AOB</p> <p>JF highlighted the breadth of financial pressures that IDBs were facing, with specific concerns in respect of cuts to Environment Agency funding for maintenance and the consequent impacts upon partnership funding working (through PSCAs), and on the proportion of highland water contributions paid to IDBs. JF also reported the Environment Agency's intention to reduce the availability of mobile pumps to lowland rural areas owing to pressure upon/cuts to the incident response budget.</p> <p>Action: IT to raise those concerns regarding cost pressures with the Environment Agency's national FCERM team.</p>
15	<p>Next meeting</p> <p>ADA Board of Directors, 11.00 - 15.00, Tuesday 15 October 2024, at Westminster Kingsway College, London.</p> <p>Board meeting dates will be agreed at that meeting and Advisory Committee meetings will be scheduled to be held approximately three weeks beforehand.</p> <p>Action: IM to advise Committee Members of proposed Advisory Committee meeting dates for 2025.</p>