

**Minutes of the Socitm National Advisory Council Meeting
Held 15 September 2009 at Baker Tilley, London**

	Preamble	Action
1	<p>John Serle welcomed Rose Crozier to her first NAC meeting. Rose would be the main link between NAC and SBD.</p> <p>John Serle reported on the death of Christine Peacock (Auditor to Socitm) and wished to record both thanks for her efforts and the sadness of Socitm.</p> <p>David Houston advised that Christine’s business had been taken over by another organisation and a meeting with them was planned for week commencing 21 September 2009. Any governance issues would be reported back to NAC.</p>	DH
2	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Neil Harvey, Chris Guest, Paul Hackett, Mick Phythian, Andy Roberts, Steve Hopson, Janet de Rochefort, Ray Whitehouse, Richard Steel, Steve Palmer, Vic Freir, Glyn Evans and Steve Sankey.</p>	
3	<p>Election of Chair</p> <p>John Serle reminded the meeting that he had been chairing NAC for one year and it was now time to review the position.</p> <p>John Serle was elected chair for a further year.</p>	
4	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2009</p> <p>The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
5	<p>Matters arising from previous minutes</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
6	<p>Declaration of Conflict of Interest</p> <p>None were reported.</p>	
	<p>Main Board Items</p> <p>NAC Development</p> <p>A NAC development discussion paper by Adrian Hancock & Rose Crozier had been circulated.</p>	

After some discussion it was agreed that the role of NAC is advisory and scrutinising with two way engagement with the regions.

Future NAC agendas would be more focussed on needs of the membership and would be split between the scrutinising role and issues relevant to the regions.

Agendas to be circulated well in advance of meetings in order that NAC members could feed into their regions and obtain points of view to bring to the meetings.

A further suggestion was that one of the Socitm Business Stream Managers would address meetings in order to provide NAC members with information to feed to their regions.

It was noted that attendance at NAC meetings was generally poor. In future should a NAC member miss two consecutive meeting then the chair will write to the member to ascertain commitment and possibly arrange a replacement/substitute from the same region.

Summary of changes for NAC future agendas

- Less on Socitm internal issues
- Better Main Board reporting and information sharing
- Possible presentation on a current big issue
- Issues and agenda to be determined by regions

Strategy Briefing

Adrian Hancock had circulated a draft copy of the Socitm Commercial Strategy and advised that other drafts were available for Membership and Communications Strategy.

The resurrection of SSL was queried and NAC were advised that due diligence had taken place and it was planned that commercial activities would operate through SSL from January 2010.

Strategic Finance Presentation

David Houston gave a presentation on Strategic Planning for 2009-2012 covering

- Present Financial Status
- Financial challenge faced by the Board
- The Boards response
- Structural issues related to Financial well being

The financial position was still reasonably stable after the turn-round in 2008. Reserves had been clarified and split into £500k wind-up

	<p>contingency and £300k free for investment in the business. However, Socitm could never survive on member subscriptions alone and so the Board had carefully considered options for the future.</p> <p>To illustrate the Board debate two scenarios were presented:</p> <p>Scenario 1 was "continue to minimise expenditure and sustain existing commercial services only" which, although financially beneficial in the short term, in the Boards view would be likely to result in Socitm declining and eventually being wound up as members left because of inadequate support.</p> <p>Scenario 2 “increasing capacity” by utilising the free reserves to invest in three new roles: Heads of Policy, Membership and Commercial Development. While this investment would create a loss in 2010 the Board believed there would be increasing profits in 2011 and 2012 to the extent that reserves could be built up again to a more reasonable level.</p> <p>NAC questioned how there could be growth in Socitm as it was highly likely that there would be budget reductions across all of local government.</p> <p>It was suggested, in response, that there could actually be a growth in consultancy work and other existing society activities because Councils would need assistance with radical change programmes.</p> <p>NAC were also advised of the current situation with Socitm Consulting Ltd. A graph which illustrated the much better returns to the Society since September 2008 was presented. The MOU under which both parties are operating expires on 31 December 2009. Discussions are in progress to produce a new arrangement which would be agreeable to all parties. A decision will need to be taken soon as the MOU would only be extended for a couple of months at the outside.</p>	
7	<p>Membership Board</p> <p>Membership value statement Rose Crozier advised that the recently issued ‘value statement’ was a good foundation for the Head of Membership to work upon.</p> <p>Delivering benefit to members There was much going on behind the scenes as Professionalism also encompasses Communities and Mentoring.</p> <p>In order to re-engage regions and Heads of Profession a Membership Board Professionalism Workshop, to which the LCIO Council had been invited, will take place on 22 September 2009.</p> <p>NAC were still concerned about how Socitm were presenting</p>	

	<p>themselves to membership with regard to e.g. Banners, attitude, reasons for joining and other publicity materials at conferences.</p> <p>Whilst the ambition is to forge wider and deeper membership communities a balance must be maintained with existing members.</p> <p>NAC suggested that initiatives from the Membership Board regarding communities be channelled through NAC to the regions to obtain feedback.</p> <p>NAC suggested that existing members be requested to re-sign up to Socitm as valuable data could be harvested.</p> <p>NAC also suggested that there be a fee for new members joining Socitm as well as an annual membership fee.</p> <p>Report on the appointment of Head of Membership NAC were advised that Socitm had consulted with PARN over this appointment and there was a good short list of candidates with relevant experience. Interviews to take place on 30 September 2009.</p> <p>Mentoring NAC were advised that a Pilot Scheme for Mentoring would be launched at the October conference. Following a broadcast, at the end of July, to the membership 15 Mentors and a number of Clients (Mentees) had been identified. The scheme will work by Mentors providing a brief CV and Clients will select the appropriate person to fulfil their needs and requirements. A training day has been arranged for Mentors to be facilitated by an experience trainer. The scheme will be reviewed following the six months pilot.</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>NAC reported the following issues on the Socitm website: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog was last updated at the beginning of August • Socitm Futures is difficult to locate on the website <p>Future finance of regions</p> <p>There was some discussion over the way in which the regions were financed. The budget for this year had anticipated an income of £20k and expenditure of £30k leaving £10k to be redistributed to the regions.</p> <p>There is an inconsistency within the regions as secretarial support is funded in some regions and by volunteers in others. At least one region has requested additional financial support from Socitm and this is under consideration.</p>	

	<p>Traffic Light Report</p> <p>David Houston demonstrated the traffic light report currently available only to SBD.</p> <p>NAC requested that monitoring reports, only available to the board, be made available to NAC. This was agreed.</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p>Dates of future meetings</p> <p>Wed 13 January 2010 10.00 – 14.00 hours Wed 14 April 2010 10.00 – 14.00 hours</p> <p>Venues to be advised.</p>	

Appendix A

NAC meeting 15 September 2009 – Attendance list

Name	Organisation
John Serle	Independent Consultant (Chair)
Nick Roberts	Surrey County Council
Mike Jackson	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Caron Alexander	Northern Ireland Civil Service
Damian Parkinson	Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue
Mike Weston	Telford & Wrekin Council
Adrian Hancock	Managing Director Socitm
Rose Crozier	Belfast City Council (Socitm Vice President)
Peter Gallon	Northumberland County Council (Socitm Vice President)
David Houston	Socitm Interim Executive Director
Pamela Larsen	Socitm
Bernard Gudgin	Socitm