



Review of Corporate Membership and Treatment of Income from Corporate Members

Introduction

Council was asked for:

1. a review of the packages.
2. table showing what each Corporate Member is paying and what they get in return
3. a breakdown of the proposed allocation of funds to support the key priorities of the association as set out on the Constitution objectives.

Background

In April 2021 the then President, Simon Hughes, made the suggestion that instead of one off sponsorship of conferences that we move to *“a single strategic discussion about a longer-term sponsorship package (around three years in length)”*. Consultation was held with the key sponsors and they felt *“that this was ‘easier’ for them to secure within the business, rather than lots of individual approaches”*

A job description for a sponsorship officer was drawn up and Jeremy Pilgrim was appointed on 4th August 2021.

Parallel to this, the organisation of the 2022 conference Sutton had begun. On 20th January 2022, Jeremy stepped down from the post. In order to ensure sponsorship revenue for the conference on 1st February a Task Force meeting was convened by Simon Hughes, Immediate Past President, and attended by Lee Dawson, Malcolm Williams, Neil Simon (NS) and Neil Webster (NW). NS and NW drew up a target list whilst NW drafted a sponsorship brief for potential Corporate Members (CM). The packages have since been developed are attached as Appendix 1 (item 1 above). At the same time NW was working on the procurement of the conference organiser with Ade Adebayo.

After 27th May 2022 NS and NW began to put in place packages with the four lead organisations – Carter Jonas (CJ), Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH), Norse and Avison Young (AY).

As NW took on this responsibility for the 2022 conference, it would appear that everyone assumed he was the de facto Sponsorship Officer.

In the absence of anyone taking this forward, and with NW working on Espressos Briefings with Avison Young, FACES Away Days with Carter Jonas and Revo with LSH, he has reported on progress through the Head of Engagement report to Council since July 2022 e.g. *“in the absence of the Sponsorship manager I have been developing our Corporate Membership package which has been well received and we already have two takers.”*

and Nov 22 - We have five (four, one pulled out) partners signed up for the rolling three year corporate membership. I have turned my attention to 2023 (until we have the post filled).

All this can be found in Council meetings notes per timeline in Appendix 2.

For **item 2** the table below shows the packages which were taken by CMs over the last two years and the expected position for this year. In addition to these funds some partners have taken lower level packages at the Conferences but these are covered off by each financial plan and reconciliation for each conference.

What they receive is set out in the packages in Appendix 1.

In terms of value for money for ACES it should also be noted that we get considerable value from CMs through the AY Espressos, APC Away Days (CJs and LSH to date) and requests to attend round tables and workshops.

	2022		2023		2024	
	Invoiced	Paid	Invoiced	Paid	Invoiced	Paid
Avison Young	£4,725	£4,725	£8,500	£8,500	Likely Gold £8,500	n/a
Lambert Smith Hampton	£7,250	£7,250	£8,500	£8,500	Asking for Platinum £12,000	n/a
Norse Consulting	£7,250	£7,250	Passed this year	£0	50/50 Gold	
Carter Jonas	£10,000	£10,000	£8,500	Late invoice	Likely Gold £8,500	
Totals	£29,225	£29,225	£25,500	£17,000	£29,000	
Note	Proportioned as wasn't full financial year. AY net of figure held from 2021. Figures net of extra delegate costs.		July 2023 to July 2024		July 2024 to July 2025	

In relation to the figures here and in the packages it should be noted that there are lower levels of conference attendance and thus less interest in "conference sponsorship" per se (see CM's comments). So a comparison between the totals here and a previous conference is "apples and pears". In addition revenue is now coming from elsewhere e.g. CIPFA Diploma.

Item 3 – Receipts from the CMs were proposed to be attributed per the 2023 President's (Helen Stubbs) proposal of: 1/3 for conference, 1/3 for AGM, 1/3 for central funds. With regard to the latter, members will be aware of the proposals to develop a financial strategy, on the back of completing the Business Plan, to which CM receipts will contribute.

As part of this review, the current CMs have been asked to feedback on their satisfaction with new, current arrangements. This commentary is in Appendix 3 and shows high satisfaction levels.

Over time, a number of other potential CMs have been approached – CBRE, Kajima, Wilmott Dixon, BNP, Cushman Wakefield, Buro Happold, Cluttons, Allsops, Arup, Atkins/F&G, Knight

Frank are just a few examples. Some are still considering it, others have taken smaller packages e.g. conference stand. Others simply don't have a corporate governance or business model which works with a national, cross public sector model. Nobody has suggested that our current model is inappropriate.

Council are asked to:

- 1. Note this report.**
- 2. Acknowledge and accept the actions taken to date and results achieved in the circumstances.**
- 3. Consider future resourcing of the management of Corporate Members and other partners and supporters and whether this should include re-appointment of a Sponsorship Officer.**
- 4. Allow CMT to approve packages for the next three years. A paper can be brought back for review thereafter.**

Neil Webster/Trevor Bishop

April 2024

Appendix 1 – Current Membership packages

ACES corporate membership arrangements – 2023

During 2022 we brought in our new arrangements for the private sector support of ACES. These have been very well received by the corporate members and individual ACES members. Some declined as we only had part of the year available, however, this is not so for 2023. Hence the early approach.

The range of opportunities is too many to include in this brief so do approach us if you wish to put forward an idea.

A couple of new initiatives where we may be looking for support

- Providing support for APC candidates in the public sector
- Research in to Later Living

We are also teaming up with a range of partners including Lawyers in Local Government, Society of London Treasurers, County Treasurers Association, Public Practice, Future of London and Government Property Function to ensure our reach for our partners is much greater than just our membership.

If you did not receive a 2022 version of this read on, otherwise do contact us to discuss the opportunity.

Overview

ACES has traditionally seen the annual conference as the flagship event for engaging with the private sector. The last two years has seen us migrate to a more all year round engagement, more strategic and less polarised on the conference. As well as our valued members we now have a database of over 1,000 senior people in public sector estates that are keen to continue their engagement and possibly join ACES.

Aside from the conference our traditional arenas for engagement have been:

- The AGM
- The Terrier journal
- Website

Now we are able to extend this to online events, face to face round tables, seminars, CPD sessions, socials with our rising stars and future ACES members (FACES), branch meetings etc

Additional feedback

We have also taken on board feedback from previous sponsors such as:

- The differentiation between the main and second tier sponsors. They often felt that they wanted greater 'prominence' particularly when they were lead or headline sponsors. This was particularly important when other people from their organisation attended events and a sense of 'being lost' sometimes among some very minor companies'!
- Having a longer term, say three to four year relationship and programme. Felt that this is 'easier' for them to secure within the business, rather than lots of individual approaches.
- The focus on the conference versus the rest of the year
- The Terrier is an excellent tool to reach a large number of Members (with a feeling that it was distributed further around to a wider audience)
- Virtual conference / events – reached between 300-400 people and in particular non-ACES Members with a high number of public sector attendees (c. 95%)
- The conference / AGM allowed for more bespoke discussions

- Sponsorship packages may mean being a lead sponsor for one year at conference, taking a lesser role next year
- Some sponsors did have a particular geographic focus (i.e. where they had offices) or particular areas of the business that they wanted to grow.
- Packages could include a presence over several channels
- An annual review between ACES and companies would be welcomed, to help identify potential events / topics for them to cover.

Outcome:

ACES has developed a new format whereby companies can buy in to a range of initiatives which span at least 12 months, if not longer. There is an opportunity to hold strategic discussions with sponsors that span the 'presidential year' and that would help provide greater certainty of income for ACES.

With the conference hosts and locations known for the next three years we can potentially plan for companies to commit to specific locations and themes well ahead of time.

If a company is to be involved in the conference, then there may be a series of webinars or round-tables leading up to the event which provides greater exposure which peaks at the conference.

Based on the above further discussions have been held with supporters and there is a unanimous support to this idea. One equated it to membership of the CBI or of a club.

There is a clear request from a number of sponsors to move to longer term sponsorship packages and to have regular discussions that meet their needs. However, where companies wanted to just sponsor or attend one event, this would not be an issue (i.e. if a company has a very clear geographic focus). A higher level future involvement might develop as a result.

Options

1 Platinum corporate member for a year* at £12,000 (one only) includes

- Platinum "sponsor" of the conference plus associated branding
- At least one webinar or round-table event before or after the conference
- Priority annual event planning with ACES team
- First choice of themes for events
- Two places at the new ACES celebration event in Edinburgh on November 17th
- Presentation of an ACES award at above and associated branding
- Priority ACES support for agreed public sector initiatives throughout the year e.g. FACES programme
- Platinum member branding on the main website
- Platinum member branding in Terrier journal – inside cover advert
- *Ability to choose which year ahead of time

2 Gold corporate member for a year* at £8,500 includes

- Gold "sponsor" of the conference
- One webinar before or after the conference
- Gold member branding on the main website
- Gold member branding in Terrier journal
- One place at the new ACES celebration event in Edinburgh on November 17th
- Presentation of an ACES award at above and associated branding
- ACES support for agreed public sector initiatives throughout the year e.g. FACES programme

- Choice of themes for events after Platinum sponsor but before others
- Annual event planning with ACES team
- *Ability to choose which year ahead of time

3 Silver corporate member ad hoc events (£ indicative)

- Conference supporter – stand, if space available £2,000
- AGM supporter - £2,500
- Four webinar events per year - £7,500
- One round table event - £3,000
- Terrier – standard rate card
- Supporter of FACES social events - tba
- Branch events tailored accordingly - tba

Notes

- Commitment can be made for one Platinum and two Gold levels over a three year period
- The ACES team will ensure priorities are protected and that there are no theme overlaps over a three year period.

[Sponsor].....

Lead representative.....

Theme agreed for 2023 conference and supporting webinar.....

Appendix 1A – conference related benefits for Platinum member

- 1) Prime visibility at National Presidential Conference including drinks reception
- 2) Prominent signage at venue and exhibition
- 3) One exhibition stand (up to 5 panels in 3m x 2m space), includes first choice of position and complimentary refreshments and lunch on days of conference for two people
- 4) A full-page company profile within any conference brochure
- 5) A single inclusion flyer in delegate packs
- 6) Two complimentary tickets for the conference dinner
- 7) Additional tickets to the dinner at preferential rate subject to availability
- 8) Logo and company profile on the ACES website
- 9) Logo included in conference edition of ACES Terrier journal
- 10) Full delegate list one week prior to the event
- 11) Seating at conference dinner next to ACES Presidential team .
- 12) Speaker slots during main conference
- 13) Facilitated access to ACES branch network

Appendix 1B - conference related benefits for Gold member

- 1) One exhibition stand (3m x 2m space)
- 2) Half page company profile within any conference brochure
- 3) Complimentary refreshments and lunch on days of conference for two people
- 4) One complimentary ticket for the conference dinner
- 5) Additional tickets to the conference dinner at preferential rate subject to availability
- 6) Opportunity for attendees to dine with ACES Council members
- 7) Opportunity for a speaker slot
- 8) Signage in conference venue
- 9) Full delegate list prior to the event
- 10) Logo and link to company profile on ACES website
- 11) Logo included in conference edition of ACES Journal

Appendix 2 – Council Decisions/references

Council Jan 22: Task Force established, after Jeremy's resignation, recognising that the job was too much for one person.

CMT 18/3/22: Actions confirmed: CR to approach Sponsorship Officer with final ultimatum for a full written report for January 2022 Council. DONE. JEREMY HAS RESIGNED. TASK TEAM NOW ESTABLISHED. CMT TO ENDORSE ACTIONS AND PROPOSALS

Council Apr 22: Update on Task Force meetings and development of a matrix.

Council Jul 22: Head of Engagement reported on Task Team progress, discussions with partners on sponsorship of Conference and beyond, and development of a Corporate Membership of ACES. Reference also made under Conference item to securing agreements with CMs on packages, including Conference.

AGM 2022: Reference to HoE securing CMs to assist funding of Conference 2022.

Council Jan 23: A Council Member asked about CMs for 2023 and HoE confirmed that details would be finalised as part of the Business Plan review.

February 2023 – Council were asked to approve, remotely, the Conference and AGM proposals from the President. The results of the survey of Council members, together with individual comments are attached as further appendices to this report and demonstrate a majority endorsement of the proposals.

Council Apr 23: Under the Conference item, confirmed that on income, for the purpose of the plan, one third of Corporate Membership fees for 2023 was taken for the conference (per above).

Council July 2023: Conference item again: As a result of the efforts of Neil Webster, considerable support from Corporate Members and others had been lined up for the Conference including Carter Jonas, Norse Group, Avison Young and Lambert Smith Hampton

Appendix 3 – Feedback from current Corporate Members

“I would say that the corporate membership has enabled us to build a stronger and more embedded relationship with ACES members. Rather than just relying on a single annual event and effectively pot-luck on who attends, we have been able to widen the range of activity at branch level, increase the number of articles in the Terrier, and plan effectively ahead of the conference. I think if the Association had continued to operate purely around the conference, the reduced programme and associated reduction in face time with members would have made the proposition less attractive.”

“In terms of the sponsorship point, our view is that the annual corporate sponsorship approach helps to build a stronger relationship and to plan events and support more holistically. The course on Wednesday [APC Away Day] is an example of that, both in terms of the benefit to ACES/FACES but also the connections you now have in our business to pick up opportunities relating to training and marketing etc which you may not have had previously.”

“Transitioning from a conference sponsorship approach to an annual membership has been an excellent move for Avison Young. Embracing this shift has not only deepened our engagement with public sector and ACES members but has also provided us with a sustainable platform for continuous collaboration.

The annual membership has proven to be a strategic investment, offering us year-round exposure and access to a diverse network of public sector leaders. The consistent presence of our Espresso Briefing series, has allowed us to build meaningful relationships, stay abreast of industry trends, and actively contribute to discussions that shape the landscape.

Moreover, the exclusive benefits and tailored opportunities that come with our annual membership have empowered us to align our brand with key initiatives and position ourselves as thought leaders. We highly recommend this approach to any organisation seeking sustained visibility, networking, and influence within public sector and local authorities across the UK.”