



## **ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN BOARD OF DIRECTORS 27 JANUARY 2015**

The Achieving for Children (AfC) Board of Directors met on 27 January 2015 in Kingston. Gill Holmes attended the meeting as an observer prior to being appointed as a Non-Executive Independent Director. The following substantive items were considered:

### **2014-15 Quarter 3 Review**

Ian Dodds, Director for Standards and Improvement, provided an update on Performance for 2014-15 Q3. Ian informed the Board that there has been a slight dip in overall performance across the quarter with more contractual performance indicators rated as red or amber. However, actions are in place to address these indicators and performance is expected to improve either by 2014-15 Q4 or 2015-16 Q1.

Paul Bettles, Director of Finance and Resources, provided an update on Finance for 2014-15 Q3. Paul highlighted progress against outstanding issues and got approval from the Board to implement change control processes with the two Councils to generate extra resources to fund the increases in demand-led services. The Board expressed concern about the prospect of ending this year with an overspend on our 'core' budget and tasked Nick and SLT with doing all they could to address this.

Nick Whitfield, AfC Chief Executive, provided an overview of key AfC activity over the past quarter including: highlighting continued school improvement in Kingston and Richmond against a national trend of decline and informing the Board that school place planning remains on track. The Board discussed the results of the staff survey, noting the many areas of positive feedback and discussing how to improve the results next year in areas such as recruitment and retention.

### **Budget for 2015-16**

Paul Bettles presented the proposed budget for 2015-16 including the Medium Term Financial Plan which was then considered by the Board. Following discussions, the proposed budget was agreed by the Board, recognising the efforts of staff that will be required to deliver the requisite quality of service within the budgets that the Councils can afford. The Board requested that Nick and SLT develop more detailed medium term planning given the expected budget cuts in future years.

### **Update regarding the ICT Strategy**

Ian Dodds gave the Board an update on the ICT Strategy and highlighted a number of successes related to the integration of systems, the successful roll out of google with a single email system, calendar and potential for document sharing, and the work that is currently underway to identify potential benefits of mobile working. Ian also informed the Board of the ICT related challenges. The Board recognised the challenges, given the location within the ICT network of two Councils but emphasised the need for ICT to support service effectiveness and efficiency improvements.

### **Special Educational Needs (SEN Transport)**

Rob Henderson, Deputy Chief Executive, set out the business case for the management of SEN Transport Services in Richmond to be transferred to AfC and

the proposed timetable to develop and agree an operational model for SEN Transport, consult with stakeholders and agree policy change in Richmond Council, should the decision be to proceed. The Board discussed the business case and the practicalities and agreed with the logic of the proposal to manage SEN transport across the two boroughs in a more integrated manner. The Board approved the proposal, subject to clarification upon a series of issues that Rob will take forward with the Council.

#### **Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted Preparedness**

Nick Whitfield gave a brief update about the latest DfE Review of Kingston, which continues to be positive about the improvements being made, and about preparation for Ofsted inspections which are anticipated in both boroughs this year. The Board thanked all staff for their focus on service quality and in preparing for Ofsted.

#### **Richmond Council and Wandsworth Council Working Together**

The Board discussed the recent announcement that Richmond Council and Wandsworth Council would be sharing a Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive and working together more closely in the near future, and its implications for AfC. The Board emphasised its commitment to continuing to deliver services to Kingston and Richmond and to continue to improve those services.