



ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN BOARD OF DIRECTORS 16 December 2015

The Achieving for Children (AfC) Board of Directors met on 16 December 2015 for their annual Training and Planning Day. The following substantive items were considered:

Special Educational Need and Disabilities (SEND) Provision

Simon James, Associate Director for SEND, attended the Board to discuss the proposals for developing further SEND provision across Kingston and Richmond. This includes respite provision at Moor Lane and additional special school provision. Simon outlined the rationale for these projects and the benefits for children and families as well as the anticipated financial benefits. The Board questioned Simon regarding the evidence for the proposals, including future projections and potential take up of respite provision, discussed the importance children having appropriate surroundings (whether respite, school, or residential school) with suitable “home” feel and personal scale, the need to understand demand from users in more detail, and the mechanics of funding and ownership of any new provisions.

The Board agreed to develop the proposals further and asked Simon to report back in June 2016.

Organisational transformation

Rob Henderson, Deputy Chief Executive, introduced proposals that continue the integration of services within AfC (in particular across Early Help and Social Care to improve the journey of the child). The Board discussed the proposals, the associated opportunities and risks for service delivery and staffing, and the proposed savings and costs. The Board approved the implementation of the project, subject to funding, and will monitor progress.

Key Projects

Lucy Kourpas, Head of Financial Control, provided the Board with updates on some of the key projects being undertaken across the organisation- Better by Design, Supported Accommodation and Special Educational Needs Transport. Lucy outlined the aims and objectives of each of the projects, the progress to date and the financial implications, and these were then discussed by the Board.

Business Plan

Ian Dodds, Director of Standards and Improvement, presented the proposed changes to the AfC Business Plan which will focus on four key themes of “safe and healthy”, “educated and happy” (both of which are about service delivery) and “improving and efficient” and “growing” (which include service delivery but also company development). The Board discussed the proposed projects for inclusion, the need for distinction between service related projects and company- wide projects, the proposed reporting schedule, and agreed that the absolute priorities of delivering high quality service should be maintained and emphasised.

Ian will return to the next Board meeting with a draft Business Plan for discussion.

Staff Survey

Ian Dodds presented the full Staff Survey results for discussion with the Board. He outlined that the response rate has increased, which is an indicator of good staff engagement, and that all responses have improved, with the majority improving by 10 percentage points. Areas of development relating to staff retention, access to learning and development opportunities, talent management and open and transparent communications have been identified. Ian has attended Staff Council to discuss the result and will involve them in the development of the action plan to address the issues identified.

The Board welcomed the report and the improvements since 2014, agreed the areas of development, and agreed that the next survey should be in 2017.