

**ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN BOARD OF DIRECTORS
14 December 2016**

The Achieving for Children (AfC) Board of Directors met on 14 December 2016 in Twickenham. The following substantive items were considered:

Managing the growth of AfC: RBWM

Ian Dodds, Deputy Chief Executive, and David Groves, Chair of the Board, presented a paper to update on the admission of Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) into AfC, including the implementation plan. It was noted that the Joint Committee had agreed to recommend their admission as a full member. It was further noted that the two Councils were undertaking a review of governance arrangements. Once an admission date has been agreed, a project plan would be drawn up. The Board approved the scheme of delegation for the transfer of children's services from RBWM to AfC.

Managing the growth of AfC: Evolution of Senior Leadership

Nick Whitfield, Chief Executive of AfC, informed the Board of the move to new management structure for the next two years as AfC further reduces costs in Richmond and Kingston, grows as a company and operates as a Partner in Practice.

The Board asked for clarity around balancing operational autonomy while maintaining a single company ethos and consistency of practice, and how to delineate between practice within operational areas and company support for other LA's.

A full budget paper will be produced once AfC have had confirmation that their PiP funding bid to the DfE has been successful.

Signs of Safety and the localities model

The Board received a presentation on the Signs of Safety Model. The intention is to implement across the whole service, not just child protection, so that it works with families in a range of situations. It was recognised that to implement effectively, working with partners on the models is key. The Board and senior leadership team will be the first to receive training under the programme and then joint training for workers will be done with RBWM with Board members then having an opportunity in future to visit workers to see how Signs of Safety is working. With regard to the localities model, it was confirmed that the project is on target. Robert Henderson confirmed that currently there are no redundancies planned for social workers.

Update on social care/SEN demand

Robert Henderson reported that there has been a further increase in demand in both social care and special educational needs. He highlighted some of the causes for the increased

demand and budget along with suggested actions to offset increased demand on budgets. These include: developing a commissioning team to get better costs for placements, and the building of a children's home. Rob's report would be updated following any comments from the Board and it was agreed that the Chief Executive and David Archibald, Non-Executive Independent Director would sign off on behalf of the Board before it was presented to the two Councils.

Budget setting for 2017/18

The Director of Finance updated the Board on the progress made in setting the 2017/18 budgets and provided an overview of savings plans. It was reported that the current year projected outturns are currently stable, and that she is leading end to end expenditure reviews. The Board discussed the growth and the savings plans and noted in particular

- That IDo is leading reviews of the support services, including level and volume of future requirements (ie HR, ICT and internal audit)
- That several sets of savings rely on delivery of capital projects, such as SEN respite.
- That education savings are being addressed separately as funding announcements are made by Government

Future of education services

Charis Penfold, Director of Education Services, introduced her report. The Board discussed the potential scenarios for education and schools funding (including expected government announcements), noting that every scenario is likely to result in significantly less funding for AfC education services via Government / Councils. The Board agreed the importance of keeping the local family of schools together, and that the focus of council funding should be upon ensuring that vulnerable children are supported effectively so that every child achieves and that gaps in progress / achievement are addressed. It was agreed that discussions with the Council should be around keeping the family of schools together to protect vulnerable children, SEN children and children missing education in particular. The Board discussed the potential for MATs and / or Teaching Schools to take forward school improvement work, but noted that the Councils still have statutory duties while they maintain schools. Central to effective support for children is having positive relationships with all schools. It was agreed that Nick Whitfield and Charis Penfold would take forward in light of funding announcements when made.