

ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

7 February 2019

The Achieving for Children (AfC) Board of Directors met on 7 February 2019. The following substantive items were considered:

Audit and Risk Committee Meeting

It was noted that there is less focus on the schools' audits than corporate ones and the Board were informed that as AfC have no accountability for schools their audit should sit in the Council's audit plan. However, the thematic audits carried out in schools, bridge the gap between schools and AfC.

SEND Transformation Plan

The Board received an update on the Kingston Transformation Plan. A paper following the consultation is being presented to Committee in Kingston on 7 February. A decision will be made at this meeting and this will then go to full Council meeting on 26 February when the Council sets its own and the schools' budget.

The Board were informed that Kingston are having meetings, both with the DfE, Ministers and the MP to continue to lobby for more funds.

The Richmond Plan is currently being drafted with emphasis on needs, developing a better local offer and engagement with parents. Richmond have also met with the DfE.

Q3 Reports

The Board heard from the MD on the key highlights in his report.

The Board were informed that AfC Prime will cease at the end of March 2019 and the Prime social workers have been moved to roles currently filled by agency workers. Any remaining grant will be returned.

The Board were updated on the current position regarding the free school applications. If approved the buildings affected would be the King Charles Centre in Surbiton and Moor Lane in Chessington which would require staff and services to be re-located.

The new business plan is in the early stages of development. Listening events for staff and Members are being organised and a member of the AfC Board will be attending. It was noted that the plan will set out the priorities for AfC but will be more specific around the Councils' priorities and where AfC fits into those.

Finance Director's Q3 Report

Key issues highlighted on the finance update was the need for a substantial amount of work to stabilise the general fund in Kingston with DSG in both Kingston and Richmond remaining a big concern. General Fund overspend has slightly increased.

Budget 2019/20

The Board noted that AfC are currently going through all the council's budget setting processes. Also noted was the need to manage the large differential savings targets. This will go to the senior leadership team to agree AfC's position on it.

Performance Dashboard

The Board gave their comments on the shape of the new dashboard and these will be incorporated in the next re-iteration. Key highlights from this dashboard are that any actions from the recent RBWM inspection are being addressed; capacity issues within health services is being addressed; low levels of multi-agency engagement from partners was noted; staff turnover is higher than it should be.

Partners in Practice

The Board received updates on the PiP programmes.

Signs of Safety training is almost rolled out in Kingston and Richmond and has started in Windsor and Maidenhead. Pace on train the trainer work will be stepped up in order to ensure practice is imbedded. The funding for Strengthening Families Plus ends in March 2020 and an evaluation of the impact of the project will be carried out

The Board noted that the contracts with Coventry and Swindon have now ended. Improvement work with Reading is still continuing and discussions will be had as to what AfC's model is when funding comes to an end. It is likely that AfC will consult on smaller projects going forward.

Health Options Appraisal

It was recognised that the current service is of high quality but additional resources would be needed if it were to expand, which is an option. Indication is that the national direction of travel is towards integration but more work needs to be done to assess whether co-location or integration is most important/has more impact for the children and families.

The Board requested a further paper with suggested models. This paper would be brought to the July meeting.

Governance Review Implementation

The Board noted the implementation of the review is in progress. The Board were updated on the Education Commission which Kingston set up to look at SEND. The outcome of this will be shared with the Board when it is published. The Board noted that Kingston and Richmond's contracts with

AfC have until April 2021 to run and it was important that the Board should be looking at this now and the AfC MD is having discussions with the Councils to agree a timetable.