

ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

9 July 2019

The Achieving for Children (AfC) Board of Directors met on 9 July 2019. The following substantive items were considered:

Annual Report and Statement of Accounts

The Board noted that there were no recommendation from the external auditor's report. The Board were informed about an ongoing issue in the public sector around pensions. It is possible that the McCloud judgement around pensions and age discrimination will mean pension liabilities will increase with a financial impact on AfC.

Financial Report 2018/19 and Outturn

The Board were informed that there is a new requirement for authorities to submit a 3yr deficit plan to the DfE if the DSG overspend by over 1%. These have been submitted by Kingston and Richmond Councils.

Medium Term Financial Plan

The Board noted that an interim plan has been produced and will be updated to align to the new business plan and considered by the Board at a later date. The plan was considered by Audit and Risk Committee in June

Financial Savings Project Update

The Board looked at the Q1 current position on the projects earmarked for savings in Kingston and Richmond. There have been some posts deleted resulting in increased workloads and this will need to be monitored for impact on service delivery. It was noted that any savings that are not achievable due to the Council(s) not being able to currently make decisions about any of the identified potential projects, will be removed from the projections. It was further noted that SLAs would be renegotiated at the re-commissioning of AfC's contract by the Councils, to ensure value for money.

The opening of the new respite centre for children with disabilities at Moor Lane is delayed due to the building work being behind schedule which has had an impact on the allocated savings for that project.

In RBWM, there is pressure on the savings on the placement budget due to an increase in the level of demand.

All projects and projected savings are being closely monitored and reported to senior managers and will come as a standing item to the Board.

MD Board Report

The Board were informed that Richmond and Kingston are looking at their plans for the re-commissioning of AfC and will draw up an options appraisal to consider whether they wish to continue with AfC for another 5 years.

Health Options Appraisal and outline business case

The Board were presented with an appraisal paper which builds on the outline business case presented at the last meeting. The Board discussed the options analysis and considered the recommendations. It was recognised that this a large piece of work and needs to be in partnership with the councils and the CCGs and will take some time to complete. It was suggested that AfC may be able to work with two consultants recruited by Richmond to advise on the project. It was agreed that the three options would be developed into full business cases.

Health and Safety Audit Actions

There were a number of internal audits carried out in Q4 and the Board reviewed the action updates. The Board were informed that a number of the actions had already been completed and noted those actions still in progress.

SEND Update

It was reported that two new free schools had been agreed with a decision on the providers expected to be made in January.

Both Richmond and Kingston are recording a rise in the number of new Education, Health and Care Plans with Kingston seeing the bigger increase.

There are now two transformation boards, one in Kingston and one in Richmond. This is necessary as there are two separate inspections and slightly different approaches by the two Councils. However, the work to manage the transformation is integrated across AfC.

With regard to Kingston's written statement of action which identified 4 areas of weakness following the SEND inspection, monitoring visits are being carried out by Ofsted to ensure improvement is happening at pace. An LGA Peer Review is taking place at the beginning of October over several days to get a more in depth view. In RBWM's written statement of action, the areas of Key weakness are being addressed and a re-visit is expected in September 2019.