

ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE: **14 NOVEMBER 2018**
REPORT BY: **CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
SUBJECT: **SENIOR LEADERSHIP OF ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN**

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following the resignation and departure of Nick Whitfield as Chief Executive, it is necessary to plan how his role will be replaced. This was discussed at the Joint Committee on 11 July 2018, and it was agreed that the Chair of the Board of Directors consult and develop proposals to bring back to the Joint Committee meeting in November.
- 1.2 The Joint Committee agreed a number of principles, as follows: given that there is unlikely to be early expansion of the company to include further local authorities, the new arrangements should focus on business as usual, and in particular on balancing budgets and delivering required savings; there is therefore a reduced role for the Chief Executive in terms of driving expansion in the short-term; the current interim arrangements appear to be working well; and Achieving for Children should review the current senior management structure and seek to achieve efficiencies within existing roles while ensuring effective senior leadership
- 1.3 Through the appointment, the Board of Directors and Council are seeking to achieve: organisational stability and leadership; advice to the Councils on the commercial sustainability of the company; strong financial management and accountability; and constructive relationship-building with a range of strategic partners.

2. OPTIONS

- 2.1 Discussions have been held with both current Directors of Children's Services and the Chief Operating Officer. Since the Joint Committee meeting in July 2018, one Director of Children's Services has obtained a new role and will leave his post in December.
- 2.2 There have been discussions with the Director of Children's Services in Windsor and Maidenhead, who has indicated that he has, at present, no wish to take on a greater leadership role in relation to the current Chief Executive position. He prefers to focus exclusively on his current role at this point in time.
- 2.3 In discussion with the current Chief Operating Officer, it is clear that he would be able to combine his current role with the Chief Executive role. Indeed, he has been doing so very effectively since June 2018. It will be important to review the appropriate grade for this combined role.

2.4 The options considered at the Joint Committee in July 2018 were:

A. Recruit a Chief Executive on a like-for-like basis

Given the financial constraints and agreed strategic direction and priorities, it was agreed that a new appointment should be made within existing resources in order to reduce the ongoing employee costs of the company.

B. Delete the Chief Executive role entirely

Given the financial constraints and agreed strategic direction and priorities, it was agreed that a new appointment should be made within existing resources in order to reduce the ongoing employee costs of the company.

C. Combine the functions with an existing Deputy Chief Executive role: either a Director of Children's Services (DCS) or the Chief Operating Officer.

Each Council has taken the decision to appoint its own DCS. Combining the functions of the Chief Executive with one of the Directors of Children's Services would create a perceived or real inequity between the three owning Councils. This may result in one DCS having a greater control or influence over the totality of the company's resources. There are significant pressures within children's services across all three boroughs that require the full attention and focus of their DCS. To combine the functions would compromise the capacity required needed to drive improvements in quality and practice and manage the pressures of demand-led services.

With less of a focus on the growth of the company the Chief Operating Officer role is most likely to have the capacity to deliver the functions required within existing financial resources. This would be a more cost effective option to recruiting a separate Chief Executive and not compromise the capacity needed to drive improvements in quality and practice and manage the pressures of demand-led services.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The Joint Committee requested that the Board develop a proposal to replace the former Chief Executive, by means of deploying current senior leaders. It is proposed that the Chief Executive role and the Chief Operating Officer role are combined to provide the most appropriate and cost-effective solution. The Chief Operating Officer is currently the interim Chief Executive.
- 3.2 It will be necessary for HR to independently evaluate the salary for this combined role based on a revised role profile. The job profile is attached as **ANNEX A**.
- 3.3 HR advice has been taken on the most appropriate recruitment process for the role. Given that it is proposed that the Chief Executive post and the Chief Operating Officer post are combined, with the potential that an existing post-holder is made redundant, the appropriate procedure (in line with the HR policies of the Councils and company) is that the Chief Operating Officer should be ring-fenced for the combined

role. There would need to be an appropriate appointment process; this would need to involve the Councils as the appointment of a Chief Executive is a reserved decision.

- 3.4 Joint Committee suggested that consideration should be given to the most appropriate title for a combined role. While wishing to deliver efficiencies and reduce senior manager numbers, the Board of Directors feels that the most appropriate title for this role would be Chief Executive.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That the Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer roles are deleted and the functions of the two posts are combined into a new role of Chief Executive.
- 4.2 That the Chief Operating Officer be ring-fenced for interview for the role.
- 4.3 That HR be asked to advise on the appropriate salary for this new combined role and to determine the appointment process for the role given that it is a reserved decision.

5. CONTACT

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