

# **WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**26 MARCH 2018**

### **1. SAFESIDE - UPDATE ON TRANSPORT FUNDING**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Scrutiny Committee note the update on the progress of actions relating to the Safeside update and transport funding.

### **2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to Scrutiny Committee Members to note the progress of actions relating to the Safeside update detailed within Appendix 1.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In 2013/14, schools identified that travel costs impacted on costs to families. WMFS provided funding to support free travel for all schools which led to an increase in numbers at both Eastside and Handsworth.
- 3.2 Initial follow up work in 2014/15 identified that some schools had rebooked for 2015/16, and some who had not, were linked to change of school staff; email promotions not reaching the year group leads; distance of travel in relation to congestion and, overall cost of the visit for the family.
- 3.3 Funding is being targeted at those who have not visited in the last three years.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required. The matters contained in this report will not lead to a policy change.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

These are contained within Appendix 1 to this report.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Scrutiny Committee February 2017, Item 4: Safeside Review – Response to Members’ Questions

The contact name for this report is Gary Taylor (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), telephone number 0121 380 6006

PHIL LOACH  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

## **Progress on Safeside Transport March 2018**

### **Background**

In 2013/14, schools identified that travel costs impacted on costs to families. WMFS provided funding to support free travel for all schools which led to an increase in numbers at both Eastside and Handsworth.

Initial follow up work in 2014/15 identified that some schools had rebooked for 2015/16, and some who had not, were linked to: change of school staff; email promotions not reaching the year group leads; distance of travel in relation to congestion and, overall cost of the visit for the family. This work also identified that a core group of schools regularly made bookings up to a year in advance, and continued to rebook.

In November 2016, WMFS allocated £30,000 to support free travel for schools. This funding is being targeted at those who had not visited in the last three years.

An external procurement process was carried out between January-June 2016 with the contract awarded to Endeavour Coaches which included an agreement to publicise Safeside and volunteer opportunities. A good working relationship has been maintained throughout and positive feedback has been received. The company have been flexible to the needs of the school including changing dates when required.

### **Current Status**

Between July 2016 and March 2018, 41 additional visits supported by this funding (at an estimated cost of £9.5K) have taken place or will do by the 31 March. Enquiries have been received for April and June 2018 which fall outside this current financial year. A request to WMFS Finance has been made to carry forward the funding to the next financial year to be able to confirm and progress booking requests for schools.

### **Number of Schools Booked up until 31.03.18**

<b>Birmingham</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Coventry</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Solihull</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Wolverhampton</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Dudley</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Walsall</b>	<b>4</b>		

**Number of Schools 01.04.18 onwards**

<b>Birmingham</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Coventry</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Solihull</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Wolverhampton</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Dudley</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Walsall</b>	<b>0</b>		

**Moving forward**

Following the success of this funding to support free travel to schools in areas of greatest need having been, identified through deprivation data, a five strand approach to work towards sustainable travel includes:

- Wider work with Fire Engineering, who undertake the work with Primary Authority partners, and to direct some of the funding from partners to specifically to go against Safeside coach travel
- External income from hire of Safeside facilities
- To explore reduced travel costs based on the current contract with Endeavour Coach Company
- Increased working with Business Development to identify funding