

Update on Scrutiny Review of Safeside – September 2016

Summary of Safeside review proposals

The review of Safeside was concluded in May 2013. Since then a new Safeside Manager, Carol Morgan, has taken over responsibility for both facilities at Eastside and Handsworth. Carol has recently reviewed the management structures and these recommendations were included in the wider review of the Community Safety team as recommended by the Partnerships Scrutiny Review.

The environment that Safeside operates in has changed significantly since the review was conducted. In education the rise of academies continues to make it difficult to engage schools on mass. Increased pressure on curriculum and school budgets makes it increasingly hard for schools to support trips, and the costs are increasingly being passed on to parents.

Having said that, the visitor numbers for 2015/16 at Eastside (10,483) were the second highest annual attendance since Safeside opened, and only 800 lower than the highest year which was 2010/11

An update is provided below against the specific recommendations of the Scrutiny Review:

1. That priority continues to be given to those groups that the Service is targeting as part of its vision outlined in the Plan under the banner 'Making the West Midlands Safer'.

Progress

Safeside continues to focus on schools from the more disadvantaged areas of the WM. We are currently mapping the schools that have visited and linking with local organisations in priority areas including crimestoppers and local Children's Centres

2. That a member of the Authority be designated 'champion' for Safeside to promote the facility and to report regularly to the Authority on activity and progress.

Progress

A verbal update on progress against this recommendation will be given to Scrutiny Committee

3. That Section 41 members on the Authority be encouraged to promote and raise awareness of Safeside at their home authorities.

Progress

A verbal update on progress against this recommendation will be given to Scrutiny Committee.

4. That further sponsorship and external funding opportunities be investigated to fund the cost of visits to enable offers and discounts to be made to schools (for e.g. by approaching the Authority's insurers).

Progress

Offers and discounts for visitors have been provided through sponsorship from Nationwide Building Society, Network Rail and Enterprise Inns. In addition equipment has been provided through support from Eon, Network Rail and National Express

5. That school governors, headteachers and school fora be approached to raise awareness of Safeside and in particular, year 5 teachers be targeted through a marketing and promotion strategy utilising both Safeside resources, wider West Midlands Fire Service and Fire Authority members as appropriate and by providing briefings for primary and secondary heads fora within the seven districts.

Progress

Safeside have provided a range of opportunities including professional tours, offering bespoke meeting space and wider marketing directly to head teachers. Due to the change in the academy status of most schools this continues to be a focus over the next 3 years

6. That schools be recommended to consider utilising Pupil Premium to fund visits

Progress

Following research on pupil premium Safeside are aware that schools manage and utilise these funds in different ways due to the particular needs of their school. Safeside will continue to regularly promote the use of pupil premium wherever possible.

7. That members of the Authority be encouraged to seek views from the schools in their local area by making personal approaches where possible.

Progress

A verbal update on progress against this recommendation will be given to Scrutiny Committee

8. That links be established with local Health and Wellbeing Boards, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Safeguarding Boards (both children and adults) to mirror the good practice and success of the Wolverhampton project.

Progress

WMFS is represented on most H&WB and safeguarding boards across the WM. This partnership approach was recently scrutinised and reviews are currently being implemented. Since the engagement with Wolverhampton SCB Safeside has further developed the YOYO programme for the transition into independent living in later teens.

9. That links be established with the Police to raise awareness of Safeside and encourage visits from appropriate groups to address crime and disorder issues.

Progress

Safeside have struggled to engage with WMP at a strategic level, mainly due to changing roles within the police. However there are more local links established including with a local police officer who attends Safeside programmes to deliver crime and disorder messages. There are new opportunities within the current transformation of WMP under their 2020 vision that Safeside and the partnerships team will continue to pursue.

10. The local authorities be asked to investigate levels of attendance and awareness in their own area by placing an item on Safeside on the work programme of an appropriate scrutiny committee

Progress

Lead members to liaise with their respective local authorities. A verbal update on progress against this recommendation will be given to Scrutiny Committee

11. That more pre-booked sessions for members, parents, staff and local charitable groups be offered and that Safeside continue to be promoted during school holidays.

Progress

Safeside currently have evening and weekend visitor groups and this last summer saw our first multi-agency work-skills programme for young people.

Safeside are further developing provision at Handsworth for voluntary and community organisations for adults and young people in the evenings and at

weekends. These currently include activity groups such as Karate and also include Aquarius (substance misuse) and youth offending service

12. That a separate piece of work be undertaken with regards to how barriers relating to transport can be overcome to enable more visits

Progress

General feedback from schools indicated that the cost of transport was becoming prohibitive for schools to visit. To test his theory a full subsidy on transport costs was provided during the period Jan 2015 to Mar 2016. The tables below show the cost and impact of the funding on visitor numbers

Eastside Primary School visitor numbers

Period	Visitors	Cost
2013	4,131	
2014	4,977	
2015	9,026	£21,680 (£2.40 per head)

Eastside Secondary School visitor numbers

Period	Visitors	Cost
Jan – Mar 2014	99	
Jan – Mar 2015	334	
Jan – Mar 2016	670	£3,220 (£4.81 per head)

The impact of the funding was a dramatic increase in visitor numbers. For Primary schools the visitor numbers would have been even higher but there was a limit of volunteer capacity to support visits. (NB. The difference between the “per head” costs is a reflection of the more efficient use of the capacity of coaches possible for primary school groups).

This analysis shows that cost of transport continues to be a significant barrier. It is essential that visitor numbers are maximised, so in future Safeside will secure the

funds to continue to provide subsidised transport for schools. This could include focusing any external sponsorship and funding towards transport costs.

An emerging barrier from feedback from schools appears to be increased travel times due to congestion. As a consequence Safeside are planning to include specific feedback from schools on this aspect of their visit to gather evidence of the level of this issue.