

6. WEST DRIVE

The Board considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Police Scotland providing a summary of West Drive 2018.

The Board were advised that West Drive was a road safety initiative aimed at educating young road users and reducing road casualties. The target audience was 6th year pupils who attended each of the 11 West Lothian High Schools and Academies.

Over the last ten years the initiative had been held annually and had been well attended.

In 2018 the West Drive event was held in Inveralmond Community High School on 28, 29 and 30 August with each day seeing different schools attend for a half day input. Each session was then separated into two parts; the first was based around a theatre production presented by Baldy Bane Theatre Group, followed by a presentation by the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Spokes and Karen Kefferty, whose son was killed in a road accident. The second session involved indoor and outdoor activities including Police Scotland carrying out reaction tests, Highway code quizzes and activities with “beer goggles”.

In terms of budget the Board were advised that there was no budget provided by the Community Safety Unit to facilitate the event however there were associated costs which were covered through other sources. This included the Baldy Bane production being funded through Road Safety Scotland at a cost of £250,000 for the annual programme.

Previously the Community Safety Unit had paid the transport fees for each of the schools however it had been agreed prior to implementation this was no longer feasible. Therefore each school took responsibility for provision of their own transport which came from their own budgets. There was no cost associated with the use of Inveralmond Community High School. The school also provided lunch to the presenters and organisers as they did not have to cover transport costs.

It was anticipated that there would be no change to the Community Safety budget situation in 2019 and early indications were suggesting that Road Safety Scotland would not be funding a theatre production for 2019.

The report also explored options on the choice of venues for future events, ensuring attendance at future events was at maximum capacity and those partners participating and presentation content, noting what worked well and what could be done differently/better.

The report continued by suggesting that if West Drive were to continue then a full review should be carried out in respect of the existing partnership and additional support should be sought from other agencies as well as additional avenues of support from existing agencies.

Following West Drive 2018 consultation was carried out and each school was asked to submit feedback on the event. Of those attending 147

responses were received. The overall perception of the event was that it had had a direct impact on participants in making them a safer and more responsible driver. A link was also provided in the report where further detailed analysis on the event could be found.

The report concluded that West Drive was a popular event and it would appear from feedback and anecdotal evidence that it had had an impact on young drivers. Police Scotland data indicated that there had been a reduction in road casualties from 482 in 2016/17 to 416 in 2017/18 and whilst this was not down to West Drive alone it could be considered a contributing factor.

West Drive could not continue in its current form in 2019 however the Community Safety Unit remained committed to running West Drive and meeting the needs of young drivers in West Lothian.

The Board was asked to note the terms of the report and the proposals contained within with support being sought to allow the Community Safety Unit to move forward with the project.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To agree that a report setting out the proposals for West Drive in 2019 would be brought back to a future meeting of the Board.