

 EXECUTIVE – 10th June, 2009		Agenda Item No.
Title	Shopmobility Service	
For further information about this report please contact	Andy Jones, Acting Deputy Chief Executive	
Service Area	Deputy Chief Executive	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number		
Background Papers		

Contrary to the policy framework:	Yes/No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	Yes/No
Key Decision?	Yes/No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes/No

Officer/Councillor Approval		
With regard to officer approval all reports <u>must</u> be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Relevant Director	15/05/09	Andrew Jones
Chief Executive	20/05/09	Chris Elliott
CMT	20/05/09	All
Section 151 Officer	20/05/09	Mike Snow
Legal	19/05/09	Peter Oliver
Finance	20/05/09	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	20/05/09	Les Caborn
Consultation Undertaken		
Please insert details of any consultation undertaken with regard to this report. Warwick District Mobility Limited		
Final Decision?		Yes/No
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report requests member approval of a two-year Grant Agreement between Warwick District Council and Warwick District Mobility Limited so helping to secure the short term future of the Shopmobility Service in Royal Priors. The Council has £15,000 in its base budget in respect of the Shopmobility Service but the Trustees of the service have requested greater certainty about the funding and entering into a Grant Agreement would help achieve this.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members approve the two-year Grant Agreement to run from 1st April 2009- 31st March 2011 (Appendix A) between Warwick District Council and Warwick District Mobility Limited.
- 2.2 Members note the work being undertaken to review the Grant Agreement process to ensure that the Council is receiving value for money and that funding is targeted at the Council's priorities.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Warwick District Mobility Limited Shopmobility Service (hereafter referred to as Shopmobility) has been in operation for a number of years having been established following a successful application for lottery funds.
- 3.2 At the February 2007 Executive agreement was given to allocate £15,000 to Shopmobility on an ongoing basis but that a review of the operation be undertaken to determine its long term viability.
- 3.3 A review was undertaken by councillors at Town, District and County level but not until late 2008. The County Council decided not to support the scheme financially.
- 3.4 To try and put the Service on a more sustainable footing Shopmobility has entered into a service contract with Leamington Shopmobility (Trading) Ltd (hereafter referred to as the Company) to run the Service.
- 3.5 Although it is hoped that this new contractual agreement will bring a more "private sector" approach to the operation, the reality is that without District Council funding and a £7,000 per annum contribution from Leamington Town Council the Service would close.
- 3.6 Research of similar services across the country suggests that Shopmobility services rely on council funding to continue operating.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There was a request at the February 2007 Executive that the Shopmobility service should be reviewed. Following the review the County Council decided not to continue with funding. Members' fears regarding the long term viability of the Service have since become a reality as Trustees of Shopmobility have had to reconsider the model of service delivery. Therefore recognising that the review requested by members did not take place until late 2008, it appears inequitable not to try and give the Service some short term security whilst a comprehensive review of the service is undertaken.

- 4.2 The option not to recommend a two year Grant Agreement was therefore discounted as the Council would have no outcome monitoring arrangements against which to measure the service as part of the review.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 The Council's budget has an ongoing amount of £15,000 for the Shopmobility service. There is therefore no effect on the budget as a consequence of the recommendation.
- 5.2 A review of the Grant Agreement process will consider, among other things, the criteria for grant support, obtaining value for money and the treatment of inflation.

6. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 6.1 The recommendation supports the Council's corporate strategy objective of understanding and supporting the differing needs of our communities focusing support where it is needed most.

7. **BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 Following a successful bid for lottery funding in 2003, the Shopmobility service was established in The Priors, Leamington Spa. The aim of the service is as follows:
- The loan of mobility equipment to those with any mobility difficulty (whether temporary or permanent) after an appropriate assessment of needs and training in order to assist them to access goods, services and/or events within Leamington Town Centre.
- 7.2 The loan of equipment is ordinarily on a daily basis but a more extended loan can be made to those visiting the town or recovering following hospital treatment.
- 7.3 To hire the mobility equipment Shopmobility charges a membership fee but it was always recognised that without income from other sources the Service would not be viable: Currently the scheme is supported by both the District and Town Councils.
- 7.4 Notwithstanding this support, the Trustees of the Service became increasingly concerned that the Service was not sustainable and so had to examine different ways the service could be operated.
- 7.5 With the real threat of closure, the principal employee of the Service suggested that he establish a trading company and run Shopmobility as a business. The Trustees accepted this proposal and have entered into a contractual arrangement (Appendix B) for the delivery of the service.
- 7.6 This agreement was effective from 1st, April 2009 and hopefully allowing the company to concentrate on the trading aspect whilst Shopmobility (the Charity) concentrates on the fundraising will see an increase in income in both areas.
- 7.7 The Council has always considered that the scheme provides a valuable service to the local community, however, there has also been concern about the ongoing long term commitment the Service was probably going to require.

- 7.8 It would therefore be appropriate to put the Service under a proper grant arrangement so that the Council has an input into the required outcomes for the service whilst at the same time providing a degree of certainty whilst it reviews the operation.
- 7.9 Members will be aware of that the Council has established a Community Partnership Team with the County Council. Part of this team's responsibility is the administration of grants to voluntary and community sector organisations. It is therefore important that an examination of the arrangements for the award of grants is undertaken to ensure that:
- There is no duplication of funding by the District and County Councils;
 - That there are clear award criteria in place;
 - That the Council attains value for money;
 - That there are clear and measurable service outcomes;
 - That the opportunity of funding is publicised in the "third" sector as widely as possible
- 7.10 The review will be undertaken and concluded so that members are able to consider the findings as part of the budget setting process for 2010/2011.