

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board Sub Committee  
**DATE:** 2 December 2010  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Adults & Community  
**SUBJECT:** Shopmobility  
**WARDS:** Boroughwide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To consider the future arrangements for the provision of a Shopmobility service in Halton.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**That Members of the Executive Board Sub Committee:**

- i) Agree to proceed with a tender process for the provision of a Shopmobility service at Halton Lea, Runcorn;**
- ii) Agree to receive a further report on the outcomes at a future Board meeting.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 Warrington Disability Partnership (WDP) were appointed to run a Shop mobility service from Halton Lea on behalf of the Council. A grant of £33,670 was paid by the council to WDP for a period of 12 months. This was renewed for a further 12 months on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 at a cost of £34,015.

3.2 The service provides accessible transport in the form of motorised scooters and wheelchairs to enable those who suffer mobility problems to access the main shopping areas. The service provides equity for those suffering mobility problems, older people and the disabled. It enables people to be part of the community and to have continued independence. The target users are disabled people and people with short-term mobility difficulties within the Halton area and disabled people visiting Halton Lea. The Widnes shopping mobility service ceased in 2008.

3.3 The current service only operates at Halton Lea through a small yearly membership charge (£17) with free usage, thereafter, for 12 months. Day members pay a small visitor charge of £4.00. The scheme operates six days a week and opens Monday – Saturday 9am to 5pm. There are fourteen electric scooters, six manual wheelchairs and two electric wheelchairs available. WDP own the equipment.

Members may book equipment up to one week in advance. Day visitors may only book on the day of use WDP also promotes the different types of equipment available from retailers to promote independent living as well as general information and advice and signposting.

- 3.4 WDP has been monitored in the same way that all voluntary organisations are, who receive grant aid in excess of £5,000pa from the council. At the end of the third quarter the cumulative results for 2009 were that they had 84 Day Users and 82 yearly members. These users have used the equipment as follows: -

	Total hours
Electric scooter	2240
Manual wheelchair	155
Electric wheelchair	0
Power chair	1.3

The profile of the users per visit is: -

**Enquirer**

Carer/relative/friend	539
Professional	52
Individual	1040

**Age**

Young people (U18)	21
Adults (18 – 65)	1159
Older people (over 65)	431

Currently there is one paid member of staff at Halton Lea supported by 8 part-time volunteers. They provide voluntary hours as follows: -

From our monitoring information the volunteer hours at Halton Lea were Quarter1 - 1,176 hours, Quarter2 – 1,201 hours and Quarter3 – 1,452 hours.

4.0 **FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS**

- 4.1 Ideally there should be one shop mobility in each town centre. However cost, location and accessibility are key considerations. The service does lend itself to be provided by a social enterprise/voluntary organisation. This is because the style of operation and service can be supported by volunteer staff. WDP have only one paid member of staff working at the Halton Lea Shop mobility when it is open plus a number of volunteer staff. There is also management supervision and one volunteer who maintains the scooters.
- 4.2 Widnes now has the main shopping centre for Halton but finding an accessible location has always been an issue.
- 4.3 In terms of costs, any future operation is likely to be similar to the

operation run by WDP. WDP currently enjoy the free let of a retail unit in Halton Lea. If this arrangement was not continued the cost would increase.

- 4.4 To continue the service it is proposed to enter a process to determine the extent and capacity of community organisations, including an in house option through Day Services, to undertake the work. A draft specification is attached as Appendix 1. It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Health, and Corporate Services, with the Strategic Directors for Adults and Community and Resources be given delegated authority to develop and deliver a Shopmobility Service in Runcorn for a two year period.

## 5.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 51 The Community Strategy has a cross cutting commitment to the provision of facilities and services that are accessible for all. The continuation of the Shop mobility service is an important part of this strategy.

## 6.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 For the operation of Halton Lea in 2011/12 the cost is £34,015. If the operation and costs are duplicated then the cost of operating two shops could be up to a maximum of £90K. In addition, there would be an initial set up cost in purchasing the scooters for the Widnes service. This capital cost would be up to £20,000. This cost would depend on whether rent free premises could be found in Widnes and maintained in Runcorn.

## 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 The impact that withdrawing the service would have on disabled people being able to access the town/shopping centres and associated services. The council would be liable to receive adverse publicity if it did not maintain a shop mobility service in Halton.
- 7.2 The provision of a Widnes service may be more problematic and expensive than in Halton Lea. This is due to the increased difficulty of finding suitable vacant premises.
- 7.3 There are few community organisations in Halton with the capacity to undertake this role successfully.
- 7.4 WDP have operated the shop at Halton Lea successfully for 1 ½ years. There is a risk that they may decide withdraw if funding is not continued at the current rate.
- 7.5 The agreement for free premises rental at Halton Lea is between WDP and the owners of the shopping centre. Any new operator would need to renegotiate this arrangement or incur a rental charge of approximately £10,000.

## 8.0 **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 8.1 The continued operation of shop mobility is an important part of enabling those with mobility problems, older people and the disabled to be part of the community and have continued independence.

# SHOP MOBILITY – HALTON

## Service Specification

### 1. Aim

To provide people with mobility problems equal access to town and retail centres. To promote equality, independence and an improved quality of life to those who are disabled, older people and those suffering general mobility problems.

The council's priorities are: -

- Health
- Urban renewal
- Children and young people
- Employment learning and skills
- Safer Halton

### 2. Location

Operate a "shop front" premises in Halton Lea, Runcorn. The premises must offer easy access by car with sufficient near by parking and good wheelchair access between the premises and car park.

The premises will be close to or be part of the main shopping areas and be easily accessible i.e. without crossing major roads or travelling excessive distances.

Premises may be stand alone or part of a larger retail/commercial establishment.

The service will be publicised through local networks including disability organisation, Doctors surgeries, public buildings and information points. In addition marketing and promotional activities shall be undertaken to raise the profile of the service.

### 3. Equipment

Each shop shall provide a minimum of: -

a. Electric scooter X 12

Manual wheelchair X 6

b. General information on the service, wider information and sign posting for mobility and disability services in Halton.

Equipment shall be available from the shop premises, Monday to Saturday 10.00am to 5.00pm. Staff shall be trained to assess the needs of service users and to match the most appropriate equipment to their individual needs.

Equipment will be hired to service users without the need to make a reservation in return for an hourly charge and subject to availability.

The service shall operate a membership scheme for regular users that offers a discounted charge for the hire of equipment. Equipment may be reserved in advance by members of the scheme.

All equipment shall be maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations and records kept of faults, servicing and repairs to each unit. Maintenance shall be carried out by a qualified technician, trained to undertake this work.

#### **4. Monitoring/reports**

Usage of the service shall be monitored and returns made quarterly.

Performance reports shall be submitted annually.

Monitoring information shall include: -

Number of hours the equipment is hired

Age of hirers

Home post code

Number of enquiries received and from whom i.e. carer, friend etc

Nature of mobility problem

Staff hours worked including volunteer hours

Financial report

Service developments implemented during the year.

## **TENDER SUBMISSION**

Your submission and Form of Tender must be duly authorised and signed by your organisations Chairman, Company Secretary or Chief Executive Officer.

The council may accept the tender in whole or in part and is not bound to enter into an agreement with any or all organisations submitting a tender.

The following information must be submitted by the applicant at tender stage. The style of submission is for the applicant to determine but the content will include: -

### **Management**

- a. Brief and concise biography of key staff and management that demonstrate the skills and abilities they bring to the organisation.
- b. Management structure chart for the organisation.
- c. Internal communication systems. Staff recruitment and supervision protocol.
- d. Health and safety organisation including staff training. Please include your Health and Safety Policy or statement.
- e. Identify the management and supervision arrangements for the Shop mobility service in both Runcorn and Widnes.

### **Market research and business generation**

- a. How you would research and identify your potential clients in Halton.
- b. What methods would you use to target clients and promote/publicise the service. What are your projections for annual usage of the service.
- c. Who are your partners – how will you get referrals
- d. Who are your competitors?
- e. Proposals for customer consultation.
- f. Procedure/system for the receipt of comments and complaints.
- g. Service review and monitoring arrangements.

**Objectives**

- a. Describe your Short term service objectives – next 6 months
- b. Long term objectives once established – 2 to 5 years
- c. How do you intend to meet these targets/objectives? How will you measure success.
- d. Identify partners with whom you will work to provide this service.

**Premises/equipment**

- a. Identify the location and nature of any existing premises in use and identify any proposed new premises.
- b. Comment on its usability and suitability for your activities.
- c. How will you maintain the equipment.

**Financial information**

- a. Projected annual budget for Shop mobility
- b. Three year profit and loss account for the shop mobility service
- c. Identify any alternative/additional funding streams that may secure the long term viability of the project in view of restrictions on Council funding.
- d. Any capital requirements or start up costs to be incurred.
- e. Show how the costing of your service has been arrived at.  
Cover the assumptions that have been made in relation to the budget, salary/rental increases, income calculations etc.
- f. Detail your proposed membership system for clients and proposed scale of charges for clients to use the service.

**Equal opportunities**

- a. Please submit your equal opportunities policy/statement.
- b. Explain your approach to equal opportunities and how this is put into action.