

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board Sub Committee  
**DATE:** 26 May 2011  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Communities  
**SUBJECT:** Shopmobility  
**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To report the use of the Chief Executive powers to enter into a Licence agreement with the Receivers of Halton Lea Shopping Centre in order that a Shopmobility service at Halton Lea can be provided.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- i) **That the Council notes that after consultation with the Leader and Members of the Executive Board Sub Committee, the Chief Executive has under delegated powers (Matters of Urgency, Constitution) expressed support for the Licence to be agreed as set out in 3.7**

**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.

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. 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 On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2010 a report was presented to the Council's Executive Board Sub Committee which requested permission to tender for a Shopmobility service at Halton Lea. Only one tender was received from WDP, however even though WDP stated that they were prepared to continue the service they indicated that they would still require a similar level of subsidy.

3.5 Since then Officers have attempted to identify alternative options to continue operating this important service and the option of the Council's day services for disabled people has been actively considered. This is now a viable option and a worked up proposal has been developed, which is more cost effective than the costs submitted by WDP. Further cost reductions are possible when a Charitable partner has been agreed.

3.6 During the negotiations the Licensor at Halton Lea has agreed to waive the Licence fee and service charge for the location of the shopmobility service.

3.7 The premises have been offered on a monthly Licence at no cost to the Council save for Business Rates (approx £9000.00 per annum) and Building Insurance recharges (approx. £700 per annum). The unit is to be taken in its present condition and the Council will be responsible for some minor adaptations to comply with Health and Safety requirements.

3.8 2 scooters and 2 wheelchairs were historically the property of HBC and were returned to the Council. The additional 5 remaining scooters were purchased from WDP at a cost of £3,000 but this also included office equipment, shelving, desks etc. The scooters have been maintained by WDP who have service records. The scooters and recharging points are all to be included on council's PAT Testing schedules.

3.9 Appropriate insurance cover is in place.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 If this is successful, it could provide potential job opportunities for disabled people in the future.

4.2 If successful, the Council could consider extending its model to Widnes Town Centre.

## 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The total cost for providing the service will be £14,915. If income of £5,500 is achieved the net cost will be £9,415.

5.2 Business rates of £8,778.25 need to be added however the service is confident of securing a voluntary/charitable status partnership, which will allow the department to absorb the business rates.

## 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Provide universal access to town and retail centres.

### 6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Ensure that retail and business premises in Halton are accessible and benefit from the spending power that people with mobility problems will bring.

### 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Contribute to the continued independence of people with mobility problems.

### 6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None identified.

### 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

Ensure that businesses are not disadvantaged or discouraged by limiting the accessibility of the boroughs retail areas.

## 8.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

8.1 The impact that withdrawing the service would have on disabled people being able to access the town/shopping centres and associated services.

## 9.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

9.1 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.

## 10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
2 December 2010 Executive Board Sub Committee Report	Municipal Building	Dwayne Johnson
28 September 2010 Chief Officers Management Team Report	Municipal Building	Dwayne Johnson
2 March 2010 Chief Officers Management Team Report	Municipal Building	Dwayne Johnson