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NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TO BE MADE

The following Executive Decisions are due to be made by the CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE on THURSDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2021.

1. Shopmobility Funding (GV510) (Pages 3 - 10)

Reports relating to the decision(s) to be taken are attached to this notice, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. A meeting will not necessarily take place when the decision is made. Please contact Democratic Services for more information.

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For Publication

Shopmobility Funding (GV510)

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|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Meeting: | Governance Portfolio Holder |
| Date: | 9 th September 2021 |
| Cabinet portfolio: | Governance |
| Directorate: | Corporate |

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To approve the start of a 12 week consultation period with Chesterfield and District Shopmobility to inform future funding decisions.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the portfolio holder Governance approves a 12 week consultation period with Chesterfield and District Shopmobility regarding future funding from Chesterfield Borough Council.
- 2.2 That following the consultation period a report is submitted to Cabinet in December 2021 to decide on funding to Chesterfield and District Shopmobility from April 2022 onwards.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 To enable Cabinet to make an informed decision regarding future funding commitments to Chesterfield and District Shopmobility.

4.0 Report details

- 4.1 Background

Chesterfield and District Shopmobility (Shopmobility) is a charity based at 1 New Beetwell Street, Chesterfield. It provides a variety of services for residents and visitors to Chesterfield and surrounding areas. The primary focus of the organisation is to provide mobility scooters and wheelchairs for hire through a variety of packages including half day rates to assist shoppers and long-term home hire. Repair and replacement services are also available via the onsite workshop.

4.2 Chesterfield Royal Hospital Trust has a partnership arrangement with Shopmobility which enables motorised scooters to be booked to assist visitors to the hospital who have mobility difficulties.

4.3 A range of volunteering opportunities are also available, enabling people to develop new skills and experience and to meet new people and reduce social isolation. Volunteers generally assist one or two days a week via buddy schemes and have meet and greet roles.

4.4 Service usage

Due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on service usage we have used statistics provided by Shopmobility for 2019 rather than 2020 which show:

- An average of 20 short term hires per month for mobility scooters and wheelchairs with a high of 38 in July and a low of five in January
- An average of 13 longer term hires with a high of 17 in September and a low of 11 in August
- An average of 188 day or half day hires during the period. The highest figures are for December at 211 and the lowest in April at 173

4.5 An additional service is currently being offered called 'Tracks and Trails' which enables the promotion of scooter hire suitable for walking routes. This service has been promoted by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and through walking groups to enable Shopmobility members to access organised walks and use a number of trails around the borough and surrounding area. This scheme has been funded via Active Derbyshire's 5 ways to wellbeing programme (which is administered by Derbyshire Voluntary Action).

4.6 Covid-19 impacts

During the Covid-19 pandemic Shopmobility reported a slight increase long-term hire to an average of 14 per month. Some customers preferred to keep the equipment at home and access more neighbourhood focused facilities rather than those in the town centre. Customers reported that long-term hire was particularly valuable for meeting with friends and family within social bubbles during the pandemic.

4.7 Chesterfield Borough Council Funding

Chesterfield Borough Council currently funds Shopmobility via an annual grant of £21,789 via a "Section 137 grant". Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables local councils to spend a limited amount of money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory powers to use. A local council has the basic power to spend money (subject to a statutory limit of £8.41 per elector for 2021/22) on purposes for the direct benefit of its area or all or some of its inhabitants.

4.8 The funding agreement with Shopmobility states that Chesterfield Borough Council can reduce or cease funding with a notice period of three calendar months. Best Value Statutory Guidance 2015 supports the notice period stating that an authority intending to reduce or end funding to community and voluntary sector organisations, at least three months' notice should be given. In addition, an authority should engage the organisation as early as possible before taking a decision on the future of service, funding and assets and wider impacts on the local community. This includes a consultation period to enable the organisations to put forward options on how to reshape the service or project.

4.9 This section 137 grant funding to Shopmobility has generally been approved on an annual basis or in two year blocks since around 2002. In July 2018 a report to Cabinet regarding community and voluntary sector funding highlighted that the Council was facing unprecedented levels of cuts in central government funding and most services were having to reduce their budgets despite a surge in demand. Due to this alternative funding provisions began to be developed and in the case of Shopmobility a key service level agreement output was agreed for the organisation to develop a strategy to move towards self-funding. This was expected to report in 2020/21 in order to inform future funding decisions. However, we have not yet received details of the

strategy and will need to assess progress towards this goal. In addition to pressures previously identified in 2018, Chesterfield Borough Council like many organisations has experienced further increases in demand for services, the need to adapt to new needs and requirements and further financial pressures due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a need to consider funding affordability and impact regarding existing and emerging needs for community recovery.

4.10 Cabinet will need to take a decision in December 2021 regarding future funding for Shopmobility in order to give the three calendar months' notice period should a decision be made to reduce or cease funding. We are now seeking to launch a 12 week consultation with Shopmobility to inform any decision on future support. The consultation will focus on:

- Progress towards development and delivery of the self-funding strategy
- Impact of the Council's current funding level and potential impact on the organisation and service users should funding be reduced or ceased
- Contribution to the Council's priorities within the Council Plan and the Covid-19 community recovery approach

4.11 Shortly before the official 12 week consultation an initial meeting will be held with Shopmobility to find out more about their partnership arrangements, customers and other stakeholders and the best routes to engage them in the formal consultation. This would usually be a combination of in writing, telephone and online engagement but alternatives may be suggested.

5.0 Alternative options

5.1 The alternative option is do nothing at this stage and wait for the annual decision report on funding April as in previous years. However this would not enable early discussions and consultation regarding the self-funding strategy and funding impacts to inform decision making. If the Council wanted to make changes at that point a 12 week consultation period would need to be undertaken.

6.0 Implications for consideration – Council Plan

6.1 The consultation stage will specifically consider contribution to Council Plan priorities made by Shopmobility.

7.0 Implications for consideration – Financial and value for money

7.1 The Council currently funds Shopmobility via a Section 137 grant of £21,790 per annum. Value for money, the Council’s financial position and the impact on Shopmobility and their customers will need to be considered as part of future funding decisions. This will be informed by the consultation.

8.0 Implications for consideration – Legal

8.1 Various legislation has been considered, including Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and Best Value Statutory Guidance 2015, has been considered in the preparation of this report.

9.0 Implications for consideration – Human resources

9.1 No additional human resource implications have been identified.

10.0 Implications for consideration – Risk management

| Description of the Risk | Impact | Likelihood | Mitigating Action | Impact | Likelihood |
|--|--------|------------|---|--------|------------|
| Contribution to funding pressures on Chesterfield BC. | M | H | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2019 action agreed with Shopmobility to develop a self-funding plan Consultation to inform decision making around future funding Assistance to be offered to help Shopmobility find additional / alternative funding and reshape services | L | M |
| Provision of Shopmobility services in Chesterfield and surrounding areas | M | H | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation to consider impact on the organisation and service users Conversations and agreement in 2019 | M | M |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| | | | <p>to highlight need to develop self-funding plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance to be offered to help Shopmobility find additional / alternative funding and reshape services • 12 week consultation and minimum of 3 calendar months' notice for any reduction of ceasing of funding | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|

11.0 Implications for consideration – Community wellbeing

11.1 The consultation stage will specifically consider contribution to the Covid-19 community recovery approach priorities and community wellbeing.

12.0 Implications for consideration – Economy and skills

12.1 The consultation stage will specifically consider contributions to the Council Plan around economy and skills.

13.0 Implications for consideration – Climate Change

13.1 The decision report to Cabinet will consider climate change implications – informed by the consultation.

14.0 Implications for consideration – Equality and diversity

14.1 The decision report to Cabinet will include a full equality impact assessment – informed by the consultation.

Decision information

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Key decision number | Non-key decision |
| Wards affected | All |

Document information

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| Report author |
| Donna Reddish – Service Director Corporate |
| Background documents |
| These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared. |
| None |
| Appendices to the report |
| None |

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