

## **SHOPMOBILITY**

<u>Report of the:</u>	Head of Customer Services&Business Supt.
<u>Contact:</u>	Joy Stevens / Richard Chevalier
<u>Urgent Decision?(yes/no)</u>	No
<u>If yes, reason urgent decision required:</u>	N/a
<u>Annexes/Appendices (attached):</u>	None
<u>Other available papers (not attached):</u>	Environment Committee Minutes and Agenda October 2016

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

**The Committee is asked to consider the findings of this Shopmobility review, to confirm if Epsom & Ewell Borough Council wishes to continue to operate the service and to agree to release funds from the repairs and renewals fund to purchase some new mobility scooters.**

### **RECOMMENDATION (S)**

**That the Committee considers the findings of the shopmobility report and agrees the following:**

- 1. To continue running the shopmobility service.**
- 2. To release funds from the repairs and renewals fund, estimated to be a maximum of £8,500, to purchase six new mobility scooters.**
- 3. To release £12,000 of the remaining repairs and renewals fund back to the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council general fund.**
- 4. To reduce the amount transferred to the repairs and renewals fund from £3,000 to £1,500 per annum.**

## **1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy**

- 1.1 In making a decision the Committee should consider the balance of delivering further efficiency savings and cost reductions whilst supporting the community and promoting healthy and active lifestyles for users of the shopmobility service.**

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Epsom & Ewell Borough Council provide a discretionary shopmobility service at the Ashley Centre car park between 9:00am and 4:30pm, seven days a week.
- 2.2 The service allows visitors to Epsom with mobility challenges to hire an electric mobility scooter or a manual wheelchair for the duration of their visit to the retail outlets in Epsom.
- 2.3 The service currently has four 4-wheeler scooters, two 3-wheelers scooters and five manual wheelchairs.
- 2.4 New scooters were last purchased in 2009 and the six existing scooters are now becoming increasingly unreliable and tired in appearance. Continued use will raise health and safety concerns for the users as well as reputational damage if the scooters breakdown.
- 2.5 The cost of a new scooter is approximately £1,400 but the Council would need to go through a procurement tender process. The fleet of six scooters could be replaced with three 3-wheeler scooters and three 4-wheeler scooters for an estimated £8,500.
- 2.6 There is currently an annual charge of £21 for membership to the service, which entitles the member to unlimited use of the service throughout the year. Members can call in advance to reserve scooters or wheelchairs.
- 2.7 Mobility scooters and wheelchairs can also be hired by non-members at a cost of £5 per visit.
- 2.8 The service currently has 74 members. The table below shows the usage levels for both motor scooters and wheelchairs in 2016/17.

Date Used	Total	Members	Non-members	Mobility Scooter	Wheelchair
April 16	<b>134</b>	125	9	94	40
May 16	<b>145</b>	135	10	113	32
June 16	<b>135</b>	132	3	95	40
July 16	<b>140</b>	128	12	105	35
August 16	<b>144</b>	127	17	112	32
September 16	<b>132</b>	124	8	97	35
October 16	<b>151</b>	143	8	121	30
November 16	<b>152</b>	147	5	113	39
December 16	<b>140</b>	131	9	110	30
January 17	<b>108</b>	104	4	79	29
February 17	<b>115</b>	106	9	92	23

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March 17	<b>145</b>	137	8	121	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1641</b>	1539	102	1252	389

2.9 In the table above the following can be seen:-

2.9.1 93.8% of visitors were members. 6.2% were non-members

2.9.2 76.3% use a mobility scooter. 23.7% use a wheelchair

2.9.3 The figures would suggest that on average each member would appear to use the service 21 times per year. In reality some members use the service once a month whereas others can use it as much as four or five times a week.

2.10 The income and expenditure for operating the shopmobility service in the last five years can be seen below:-

Year	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Income	(£1,131.60)	(£1,685.03)	(£1,652.66)	(£1,614.66)	(£1,818.00)
Expenditure	<b>£1,615.35</b>	<b>£372.96</b>	<b>£1,706</b>	<b>£963.14</b>	<b>£1,235.50</b>
Revenue	<b>£483.75-</b>	(£1,312.07)	<b>£53.34-</b>	(£651.52)	(£582.50)

2.11 Over the last five year period, the operating cost of the service shows a small revenue surplus of £2,000.

2.12 One hidden cost not included in the figures above is the officer time required to issue and return scooters and wheelchairs to the customers. If each visit required approximately six minutes of the officer's time then this cost would be in the region of £2,000 per year.

2.13 The expenditure figure includes a sum of £340 per year to service the scooters and wheelchairs. Replacement parts are an additional cost. Due to the age of the scooters then the cost for replacement parts is likely to increase substantially.

2.14 In addition to the expenditure included in the table above, £3,000 per annum is currently being transferred from the Shopmobility revenue budget code to a repairs and renewals reserve fund. This is to pay for new scooters or wheelchairs when required.

2.15 The total sum currently in the repairs and renewals reserve fund is £28,245.

### 3 Shopmobility services offered by other local authorities

- 3.1 Epsom & Ewell Borough Council are one of only a few boroughs in Surrey who offer this non-statutory service to their residents. Below is a table of shopmobility service offered by nearby Councils:-

Shopmobility		Operated by
Elmbridge	No service	
Guildford	£3.50 single, £20 for the year	Council
Mole Valley	Tues and Thurs only.	Charity
Reigate & Banstead	The Belfry in Redhill runs a service £10 per year or £2 for guest.	Private
Runnymede & Spelthorne	£6 daily use or £25 year + £2.50 each use.	Charity
Surrey Heath	No Shopmobility service	
Tandridge	No Shopmobility service	
Waverley	No Shopmobility service	
Woking	£5 daily use or £15 per year + £3 each use	Charity
Sutton	£6.50 daily hire only	Charity

### 4 Retailer Consultation

- 4.1 In July 2016 Epsom & Ewell Borough Council undertook a retailer consultation. Two of the questions in the report specifically related to the shopmobility scheme.
- 4.2 When asked “how useful do you find the Shopmobility scheme to your business”, most responses were ‘neutral’ (42%, n=27). 24% (n=15) found it ‘very useful/useful’ and 35% (n=23) ‘little use/not useful’.
- 4.3 The vast majority of respondents said ‘No’ to sponsoring a Shopmobility scooter (98%, n=78).
- 4.4 The full results of the retailer consultation were reported to Environment Committee in October 2016.

### 5 Other considerations

- 5.1 Officers have enquired about the possibility of EEBC leasing scooters for an agreed period, rather than purchasing them. The cost of this would be approximately £150 per scooter per month, in effect meaning that after nine months a saving would have been made by purchasing a scooter.

### 6 Proposals

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to consider both the revenue, capital and manpower costs of offering the service alongside the benefits for the users of the service.

- 6.2 If the Committee wishes the service to continue, the following recommendations are made:
  - 6.2.1 Up to six new scooters be purchased from the repair and renewal fund at a cost approximating £8,500
  - 6.2.2 That £12,000 be released from the repair and renewal fund back to the Council's general fund.
  - 6.2.3 At the end of each financial year £1,500 be transferred to the shopmobility repair and renewal fund rather than the current arrangement of £3,000.
- 6.3 If the Committee wish for Epsom & Ewell Borough Council to cease to operate the service then further considerations would need to be made.
- 6.4 Please note, since this report was prepared, an accident occurred and some of our existing scooters were damaged. It appears that they may have been damaged beyond repair. At the time of writing the matter has been passed to our insurers, and a claim for all or some of the costs of acquiring new scooters may be made against the car driver's insurance.

## 7 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 7.1 Some financial savings could potentially be made by closing the service but these would need to be measured against the impact of not offering the service.
- 7.2 If the service continues to operate using the existing equipment then costs for repairs are likely to increase.
- 7.3 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** There is currently a balance of £28,245 held on the Corporate Repairs and Renewals fund for the Shopmobility Service. The expenditure proposed to replace the current fleet and the £12,000 contribution to General Fund balances would reduce this to £7,745.
- 7.4 Reducing the annual contribution to the reserve by £1,500 per annum would result in a net revenue expenditure budget of £1,500 for 2018/19.

## 8 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 8.1 The Council has a general duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- 8.2 Having 'due regard' means consciously thinking about all three aims of the general duty as part of the decision making process at all levels. This means that equality issues must influence the decisions the Council takes both as an employer and as a deliverer or commissioner of services.

- 8.3 ***Monitoring Officer's comments:*** *The legal issues have been addressed in the body of the report. If there was a proposal not to continue the service, the equality implications of such a proposal would require further assessment.*

## **9 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications**

- 9.1 None for the purposes of this report.

## **10 Partnerships**

- 10.1 Enabling visitors to Epsom with physical challenges to use the retail outlets, businesses or medical facilities within Epsom.

## **11 Risk Assessment**

- 11.1 If the service continues to operate using the existing equipment then there is the likelihood of increased repair costs until such time as the equipment is no longer fit for purpose.
- 11.2 If the service continues to operate using the existing equipment there is an increased risk of an insurance claim being made from an accident or injury suffered on the scooter due to wear and tear.

## **12 Conclusion and Recommendations**

- 12.1 That the Committee agrees to continue to operate the shopmobility service.
- 12.2 That the Committee agrees to release funds from the repairs and renewals fund, estimated to be a maximum of £8,500, to purchase six new mobility scooters.
- 12.3 That the Committee agrees that £12,000 of the remaining repairs and renewals fund is released back to Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's general fund.
- 12.4 That the Committee agrees to reduce the amount transferred to the repairs and renewal fund from £3,000 to £1,500 per annum from the end of 2017/18.

**WARD(S) AFFECTED: (All Wards);**