

Shopmobility funding 2019/20 – 2020/21

Report of the Planning Portfolio Holder

Recommended:

That the recommended funding of £30,474 for 2019/20 and £30,717 for 2020/21 for Shopmobility be agreed in principle.

SUMMARY:

- This report seeks the in principle agreement to fund Shopmobility for 2019/20 – 2020/21.
- By agreeing the funding it would enable Unity to continue to provide a shopmobility service over that period of time.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council provides support to community organisations and projects through a number of funding schemes. This enables those organisations to provide specific services that improve the quality of life for residents of Test Valley. Shopmobility is an essential service for people who need assistance to access local services and facilities through the use of mobility scooters, wheelchairs and other mobility aids.
- 1.2 Unity applied for a three year revenue grant to operate Shopmobility earlier this year when funding of £30,236 was agreed for 2018/19 with further funding for 2019/20 and 2020/21 to be reviewed on the outcome of the HCC funding position in relation to Community Transport. The County have now completed their review.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to confirm in principle the Council's funding for Shopmobility for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

2 Background

- 2.1 The 14 February 2018 Cabinet agreed the allocation of funding for a number of voluntary sector groups for a three year period from April 2018 until March 2021.
- 2.2 However, at that time there was uncertainty over future funding for Community Transport and other passenger transport subsidies as Hampshire County Council (HCC) were reviewing their funding. Only a one year allocation of funds for 2018/19 for Community Transport and Shopmobility was confirmed, pending the outcome of the review.

- 2.3 The Cabinet report in February recommended that “...*funding for Unity Community Transport Scheme and Shopmobility be approved for 2018/19 only whilst HCC carry out review and reallocation of funds. A report for further funding (2019-2021) will then be reported to Cabinet separately.*”
- 2.4 Cabinet approved funding for Community Transport for 2019-2021 in October this year, after HCC confirmed their funding for Community Transport.
- 2.5 HCC set out their latest position with regard to Community Transport funding and other passenger transport funding on their Executive Decision Day on 29 October 2018. They will be continuing with funding for Community Transport and retendering for the service will be underway shortly with a view to offering the same service over the next two years, with the option to extend up to a further 4 years. There are some relatively minor alterations to bus services as a result of some bus subsidies being removed.
- 2.6 The Shopmobility service complements the Community Transport service by providing assistance to people with mobility issues to access Andover town centre and other local facilities, through the use of mobility scooters, wheelchairs and other mobility aids.
- 2.7 There, were 3388 hires of the equipment (which includes 15 mobility scooters, 3 portable scooters, 2 power chairs and 12 manual wheelchairs), in 2017/18, which is a broadly similar level to the previous year (3543 hires). Around 16% of the hires were for extended periods of time.
- 2.8 With funding now in place for Community Transport (Call and Go and group minibus hire), funding for Shopmobility over the next two years now needs to be confirmed to ensure this service can continue. The recommended grant amounts, as with other three year revenue grants, are based on existing grants with a 1.5% increase on salary related costs. Whether further inflationary increases are possible in 2019/20 and 2020/21 will have to be considered in the context of pressures on the Council’s overall budget at that time.
- 2.9 Accounts for Unity hold a restricted fund for the Andover Shopmobility service, which for the year to March 2017 shows a balance of £7,864, after an annual income of £51,431 and an annual expenditure of £57,647. Accounts for the year to March 2018 are due to be approved by Unity Members at their AGM on 23 November 2018.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 3.1 The Council’s Corporate Plan ‘Investing in Test Valley’ was published in April 2015. The corporate priority of “Contribute to and be part of a strong community” promotes the important role that the voluntary sector plays in the everyday life of the Borough and identifies the need to ensure that our funding is targeted to where it is most needed and can be used most effectively.

4 Consultations/Communications

- 4.1 Unity regularly undertake user surveys of the users of the Shopmobility service the results from which inform the service they provide. The next user survey will be in 2019.

5 Options

- 5.1 The option to consider is whether funding for 2019/20-20/21 is provided, or not.

6 Option Appraisal

- 6.1 HCC will be re-tendering community transport contracts in the autumn so that new contracts will be in place for 01 April 2019. HCC are proposing to award these contracts for an initial 2 year period with the option to extend for up to a further 4 years (six year term in full). TVBC have now agreed to jointly fund this service in principle.
- 6.2 For people with mobility issues Community Transport can ensure they can reach the town centre whilst the Shopmobility service is important in ensuring they can then access the services and facilities they need within the centre. Shopmobility also caters for people who can drive to the town but need mobility aids to get around once there, and also for people who have a temporary need for mobility aids for use over a longer period of time to assist them to access services and facilities. The service assists people with mobility issues to remain independent and be less socially isolated.
- 6.3 By confirming the funding for 2019 – 21 it provides a degree of certainty for Unity with regard to providing the service in future. This is the preferred option.
- 6.4 The alternative is that the Council does not provide the commitment to future funding. Unity may no longer be able to provide the service. This would have an impact on those members of the community who make use of the service.

7 Risk Management

- 7.1 A risk assessment has been completed in accordance with the Council's Risk management process and the existing risk controls in place mean that no significant risks (Red or Amber) have been identified.

8 Resource Implications

- 8.1 The budget sought will be built into the budget estimates for 2019/20 and 20/21, subject to Cabinet approval. The cost of the proposal can be contained within existing resources.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 There are no legal implications for the Council in the recommendations.

10 Equality Issues

- 10.1 An evaluation of the risks associated with the matters in this report indicate that further risk assessment is not needed because the changes/issues covered do not represent significant risks or have previously been considered by Councillors.

11 Other Issues

- 11.1 The provision and supporting alternatives to the private car helps sustainability and addressing a climate change.
- 11.2 All wards/communities may be affected by Shopmobility

12 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

- 12.1 This report seeks the in principle agreement to fund Shopmobility for 2019/20 – 2020/21.

Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

Cabinet report 14th February 2018

Confidentiality

It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.

No of Annexes:	0	File Ref:	Ppt7
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(Portfolio: Planning) Councillor Nick Adams-King

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Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	5 December 2018
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