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**PROVISION OF SHOPMOBILITY SERVICE 2007-2008**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Nick Wallis, Highways and Transport Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To approve the extension of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Darlington Borough Council and Darlington Association on Disability, for the provision of a Shopmobility service for residents and visitors to Darlington town centre for the period April 2007 to March 2008.

**Information and Analysis**

2. The Shopmobility Service is currently provided by Darlington Association on Disability (DAD) under a SLA, which ends on 31 March 2007. DAD has provided the service since 1993 and is currently operating under authorisation by Cabinet dated 7 February 2006.
3. The use of Shopmobility Service has continued to increase. July to September 2006 saw an increase of 6% over the same period in 2005. On average, 30 new customers are registering to use the service each month. DAD and the Shopmobility Service have moved into new premises as part of the redevelopment of the Dolphin Centre.
4. A high proportion of service users are satisfied with the current service and usage continues to increase.
5. The previous Cabinet report (Provision of Shopmobility Service 2006-2011, 7 February 2006) recommended that the Service be put out to tender for the period up to March 2011. Tender documentation was prepared in line with corporate procedures.
6. However, following a review of funding of the voluntary and community sector, implemented in April 2006, a further review of the sector is being undertaken in order to develop the strategic direction and framework for engaging with and supporting the development of the voluntary and community sector activity within Darlington. This work began in May 2006 and is ongoing. It is considered prudent to delay the tender process for Shopmobility until the outcome of this review is known.

***Proposed Course of Action***

7. A working group comprising Adult Services, Policy and Transport Policy will review and monitor the links between the Shopmobility Service and other services offered by DAD. This will identify whether Shopmobility is a discrete service or whether it is part of a wider package of measures that meet the service needs of disabled people, their families and

carers. The outcome of the work will be completed by September so that the tendering process can be undertaken in good time for implementation from April 2008, to ensure continuous provision of the Shopmobility service.

8. The service will continue to be delivered by DAD until March 2008 and revenue funding is identified within the Transport Policy budget to fund the service on a like for like basis. A market value lease will also be put in place from 1 April 2007 for the Horsemarket premises as per the recommendations of the first review of the voluntary and community sector. This will not have an impact on costs as the current funding includes a contribution for service delivery and premises rent.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

9. As part of the review of the Voluntary and Community Sector, DAD has identified that Shopmobility provides a 'front door' to many other services that they provide, some of which are funded by Darlington Borough Council and some that are provided through other funding streams or other providers.

### **Legal Implications**

10. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

### **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

11. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

### **Council Policy Framework**

12. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

### **Decision Deadline**

13. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

### **Key Decisions**

14. This is a key decision since the service covers all Wards in the Borough.

## **Recommendation**

15. It is recommended that Members approve the extension of the existing Service Level Agreement with Darlington Association on Disability until 31 March 2008.

## **Reasons**

16. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons:
  - (a) To ensure continuity of provision of a Shopmobility service to local people and visitors to Darlington.
  - (b) To ensure that the future provision of Shopmobility Service is undertaken in line with the wider review of the Voluntary and Community Sector.

**John Buxton**  
**Director of Development and Environment**

## **Background Papers**

Shopmobility Service Level Agreement

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