
SHOPMOBILITY & RING A RIDE

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio

**Responsible Director - Richard Alty,
Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To waive contract procedure rules to award contracts to Darlington Association on Disability for the provision of the Shopmobility service and Darlington & District Youth & Community Association for the provision of the Ring a Ride service from 1 April 2010 until 31 March 2012.

Summary

2. The Shopmobility Service is currently provided by Darlington Association on Disability (DAD), from premises in Horsemarket. DAD has provided the service since 1993 and is currently operating under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) which expires on 31 March 2010. The payment to DAD falls within the remit of the Strategic Review of Funding for the third sector.
3. The Ring a Ride service is provided by Darlington & District Youth & Community Association (DDYCA). The payment to DDYCA falls within the remit of the Strategic Review of Funding for the third sector. The service is currently being reviewed in light of the small number of regular users.
4. The Council's move towards a new business model includes changing the way in which it reviews services provided by, and works with, all organisations including DAD. Thus there is a need to provide the Shopmobility and the Ring a Ride services for up to 2 years from 1 April 2010 whilst longer term arrangements are put in place. It has not been possible to follow normal procurement procedures for these contracts due to the timescale for reviewing and deciding upon a course of action for the Council's relationships with the third sector.
5. Contracts with external organisations should be on a contractual basis rather than by SLA since these should only be awarded for in-house services, or when other local authorities are carrying out work on this Council's behalf. This being so, it is recommended that members agree that the Contract Procedure Rules are waived in accordance with Rule 14, to permit contracts valued at £80,000 net of rent to be drawn up with DAD for the provision of the Shopmobility service and £90,000 with DDYCA for the provision of the Ring a Ride service until 31 March 2012. The contract with DDYCA would be subject to the ongoing

review of the service and could be terminated early depending on the outcome.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that :-

- (a) a contract is awarded to Darlington Association on Disability for the provision of the Shopmobility service from 1 April 2010 until 31 March 2012.
- (b) a contract is awarded to Darlington Youth and Community Association for the provision of the Ring a Ride service from 1 April 2010 until 31 March 2012, subject to a forthcoming decision concerning the review of the function.
- (c) that the Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration) in consultation with the Cabinet Member with the Transport Portfolio be authorised to make the necessary arrangements.

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-

- (a) To continue to provide the existing Shopmobility and Ring a Ride services whilst the wider review of the Council's support to voluntary organisations takes place and whilst the findings of the review of the Ring a Ride service are considered.
- (b) To allow for contractual negotiations to be concluded.

**Richard Alty,
Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)**

Background Papers

Strategic Review of Funding for the Third Sector (Cabinet 5 January 2010)

Simon Houldsworth : Extension 2701

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues relating to Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	There are no issues relating to Health and Well Being.
Sustainability	There are no issues relating to Sustainability.
Diversity	There are no issues relating to Diversity.
Wards Affected	All wards.
Groups Affected	Users of Shopmobility and Ring a Ride services.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend any change to the Budget, but does recommend that normal tender processes are set aside.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The Council's new business model supports the realisation of outcomes in the Community Strategy.
Efficiency	The continuation of the existing services are the most efficient method of procuring them in the short term.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. The Shopmobility Service is currently provided by Darlington Association on Disability (DAD), from premises in Horsemarket. DAD has provided the service since 1993 and is currently operating under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) which expires on 31 March 2010. The Council financially supports the provision of the Shopmobility service, with a budget of £68,000 in 2009/10 (£40,000 is paid to DAD for the provision of the service; the balance being the rent of the premises used).
9. The service is well used, with over 400 hires being made in October 2009, the majority of whom (83%) required an electric scooter. Most users are over 65 years of age, although just under a third are between 36 and 65 years old. Despite its popularity, very few people (6) were unable to use the service due to equipment shortages during the period August to October 2009. The service provides a 'shop window' to other services for disabled people and their carers. There are a high percentage of referrals during the last monitoring exercise on referrals (5 February 2007 to 31 March 2007), with 147 Shopmobility users referred to other DAD services and 187 people referred to external organisations (of which 57 were referred to Darlington Borough Council).
10. Darlington & District Youth & Community Association (DDYCA) provide the Ring a Ride service for the Council, operating five and half days a week. The service may be used by eligible residents and their carers and has 134 members who undertake an average of 164 trips per month (2009 value). There are a small number of regular users (36), with the balance being intermittent or passive users. The service is financially supported by the Council through a Service Level Agreement (£45,000 pa 2009/10) with additional income being received from fares charged (starting at £3 for a single journey within the urban area) and payments from the Council's taxi concessionary fare scheme for the redemption of taxi vouchers.
11. A review of the service is currently underway given the low numbers of regular users. The review has identified possible net savings, despite a potential increase in the requirement for care packages. A Disability Impact Assessment is being undertaken to inform the decision about how best to provide transport to meet the needs of this group of people. Subject to the decision once the review is complete, it is proposed that a contract is prepared from 1 April 2010 until 31 March 2012, with the ability to terminate it with three months notice at any point during this period.
12. The Council's move towards a new business model includes changing the way in which it relates to organisations in the third sector, including DAD and DDYCA. The developing approach will mean that payments to both organisations will be clearly linked to sustainable community priorities, be fair and provide more certainty. It is currently anticipated that any new arrangements would be in place from 1 April 2012 with a period of preparation in the intervening years. Thus the date of 31 March 2012 is a suitable end date for the existing arrangements with both service providers, subject in the case of Ring a Ride to the findings of the review process.
13. It has not been possible follow normal procurement procedures for these contracts due to the timescale for reviewing and deciding upon a course of action for the Council's

relationships with the third sector; both the issues of strategic grant and rent subsidy impact on the Shopmobility service.

14. Contracts with external organisations should be on a contractual basis rather than by SLA since these should only be awarded for in-house services, or when other local authorities are carrying out work on this Council's behalf. This being so, it is recommended that members agree that the Contract Procedure Rules are waived in accordance with Rule 14, to permit contracts valued at £80,000 to be drawn up with DAD for the provision of the Shopmobility service and with DDYCA (£90,000) for the provision of the Ring a Ride service until 31 March 2012. The contract with DDYCA would be reviewable to permit members to terminate it at any time if this was the outcome of the ongoing review of the function. After this date, the arrangements in the draft business model for the Third Sector would apply, possibly involving the procurement of long term contracts, either as a stand alone function or in conjunction with an associated service. This approach is recommended for the continuity it offers to the user, allowing them to benefit from the experience that both organisations can provide in the period prior to the introduction of the new business model.

Outcome of Consultation

15. No consultation has been carried out in the preparation of this report.