

WOKING SHOPMOBILITY – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary
<p>An application for financial support has been received from Woking Shopmobility to assist with the Charity's running costs. ShopMobility was set up with the aim of enabling barrier-free access to shopping and business facilities in Woking by providing self-driven motorised equipment or manual wheelchairs. Users of the service can also ask for the assistance of a wheelchair pusher if required.</p> <p>The Group is applying for funding to enable it to return to providing a regular service six days a week and maintain the wide range of equipment needed to meet the requirements of their clients. The amount requested - £12,500 – is at the same level awarded in recent years.</p> <p>The Group highlights that over the course of the past year approximately 889 users made around 3,684 visits. Since opening in 1989, there have been over 80,000 visits. It is recommended that a grant of £12,500 be awarded for 2021/22.</p>

Recommendations	
The Executive is requested to:	RESOLVE That , subject to the outcome of the Council's budgetary process, a grant of £12,500 be awarded from the Community Grants Budget towards the running costs of ShopMobility.
Reason for Decision	To ensure the continued services of the Group for Woking residents.
Legal Authority	S132 Local Government Act 1972 S106 Transport Act 1985
Confirmation of funding	<p>This award is provisionally made on the expectation that the Council's budgets for revenue and capital projects remain at the same level allocated for the current financial year. The Council's overall budget, including the sums allocated for community grants, will be determined by Council at its meeting on 11 February 2021. In the event the grant budgets are set at the anticipated levels, confirmation of the Council's support will be sent to successful applicants. Groups should not plan for the 2021/22 funding until this confirmation has been received.</p> <p>Should the budgets be reduced as part of the Council's efforts to achieve savings to offset the impact of Covid on the Council's financial position, a special meeting of the Executive will be held to review the provisional awards and allocate the funds available on a priority basis.</p>
Conditions	<p>Accounts. The Organisation must submit accounts for the year in which the grant is awarded, including an income and expenditure account and balance sheet. Please note that accounts for other years may also be required.</p> <p>Monitoring Information. The Organisation must submit quarterly monitoring information as a measure of its achievements. Failure to</p>

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	<p>provide details will jeopardise the award. E-mail requests will be sent to the applicant on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Publicity. Where possible, the Organisation is required to publicise the support received from Woking Borough Council, including on websites and literature / leaflets produced.</p> <p>Payments. Unless exceptional circumstances exist all invoices must be received quarterly with monitoring information for the previous quarter.</p> <p>Payment Period. Final quarter claims must be made by the second week in April. Unclaimed awards will not be available at a later date unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated to the Council before the end of the award year.</p> <p>Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Following the introduction of new legislation from April 2018, the Council expects the support of partner agencies in identifying people at risk of homelessness as early as possible to maximise the opportunities to prevent such. Partner agencies / organisations are expected to be engaged in joint working arrangements to assist in finding suitable housing and support solutions, and where appropriate to undertake and respond to the new 'duty to refer'. Groups which do not support this new legislation and way of working positively may put their Council support at risk.</p>
Performance Indicators	<p>Users. The Organisation to provide a breakdown of the users.</p> <p>Enquiries. The Organisation to provide a breakdown of the enquiries received.</p> <p>Publicity. The Organisation to advise how the Council's support has been publicised.</p> <p>Statement of Use. The Organisation to provide a statement stating the use to which the grant money has been put.</p>
Future Support	<p>Due to the impact of Covid-19, the financial pressure on the Council's budgets is higher than ever and is expected to continue in the coming years. Accordingly the overall level of support available in future years may be reduced. The applicant is therefore to be advised that the award of funding for 2021/22 does not imply that a similar application in 2022/23 would be supported. In particular, it is emphasised that the Council is extremely unlikely to be in a position to award any sums above the 2021/22 levels.</p> <p>In view of this, the applicant is to be advised to ensure that contingency plans for the Group's operations for 2022/23 have been drawn up in the event that the Council is unable to continue its support beyond April 2022. All applicants are strongly recommended to pursue alternative sources of funding and are encouraged to approach Woking Borough Council's Community Support Team for advice and support.</p>

The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendations.

Background Papers:

2021/22 Application Form.

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Reporting Person:

Ray Morgan, Chief Executive
Extn: 3333, Email: ray.morgan@woking.gov.uk

Contact Person:

Frank Jeffrey, Democratic Services Manager
Extn: 3012, Email: frank.jeffrey@woking.gov.uk
Doug Davern, Democratic Services Officer
Extn: 3018, Email: doug.davern@woking.gov.uk

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Simon Ashall
Email: cllrsimon.ashall@woking.gov.uk

Shadow Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Will Forster
Email: cllrwill.forster@woking.gov.uk

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1.0 Summary of Application	
1.1 Status and Aims	<p>Woking Shopmobility was set up in 1989 as a Mayoral charity and the unit opened in 1992. Its aim is to provide barrier free access to shopping and business facilities in Woking by provision of self-drive motorized equipment or manual wheelchairs. A pusher can be provided for manual wheelchairs if required. The service is open to all but traditionally the clients have been the elderly and registered disabled, with the addition of accident sufferers, or people recovering from operations or sufferers of other medical conditions.</p> <p>The Charity aims to provide freedom and independence and promotes social inclusion, noting that users contribute significantly to the economic viability of the town.</p>
1.2 Employees	5, Administrators who do not have set hours. They work a flexible rota agreed with them in advance. The Chairman/General Manager is a volunteer.
1.3 Volunteers	22, whose activities include Treasurer, Secretary, Chairman/General Manager, Trustees, maintenance, pushers , administrators, IT support.
1.4 Clients/Users	<p>450, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 180 male 270 female 450 disabled 40 ethnic minority 315 resident in Woking 5 aged 11-18 225 aged 19-65 220 aged 65+ <p>Users can also apply to be members and pay £12 per annum plus £3 per visit or single users who pay £5 per visit.</p>
1.5 Members	<p>247, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 99 male 148 female 247 disabled 15 ethnic minority 173 resident in Woking 1 aged 6-10 4 aged 11-18 115 aged 19-65 127 aged 65+
1.6 Sum Requested	£12,500 (Revenue)

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1.7 Project	<p>The grant funding enables the Group to provide a regular service six days a week at charges clients can afford, while maintaining the wide range of equipment needed to meet their needs. The increasing demand for its facilities plus the ongoing Woking Shopping development points towards a strengthening of the community need.</p> <p>The Group notes that Saturday has become its busiest day and it is considering a Sunday opening if it can be resourced.</p>										
1.8 Cost breakdown:	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">Salaries -</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£36,800</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Office Running Costs -</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£4,150</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Equipment Maintenance -</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£3,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Insurance -</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>£3,000</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total -</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£47,450</td> </tr> </table>	Salaries -	£36,800	Office Running Costs -	£4,150	Equipment Maintenance -	£3,500	Insurance -	<u>£3,000</u>	Total -	£47,450
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Total -	£47,450										
1.9 Community Benefit	<p>The community benefit that the Group provides can be summarised threefold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Woking residents in need of help directly benefit from the provision of scooters and wheelchairs, such that they are not excluded from shared spaces in the town centre. The Group notes “constant demand” in this regard. - The same residents are able to contribute to the economic viability of the town. The Group notes that development in the town centre should bolster their case, in that new retail spaces will precipitate more demand for ShopMobility services. - Lastly, the Group has run popular fundraising activities, which, while a bi-product of the service being provided, have the capacity to improve community cohesion. 										
1.10 Covid-19 Impact	<p>The Group had to close the unit during lockdown and the five employees were put on the government furlough scheme from the end of March to 1 July, when they opened for three days a week and implemented very strict safety measures.</p> <p>Following Government guidance, the majority of clients were found to be classed in the “vulnerable category” and therefore only 47 clients have used the services since the unit reopened in July. The Group have increased their opening to five days a week, following the safety procedures and eventhough the usage is low, it has increased to an average of 7 users a day during September and 59 clients have renewed their membership.</p>										

2.0 Financial Background	
2.1 Budget	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £20,713 in the bank.</p> <p>The Group has submitted a budget for 2021/22 which shows an anticipated income of £49,500 against an anticipated expenditure of £51,500, resulting in an anticipated deficit of £1,700.</p> <p>Anticipated income includes WBC grant (£12,500), member visits (£15,000) and Woking Shopping (£10,000). Items of expenditure include salaries (£39,000), equipment running costs (£4,000) and</p>

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	office running costs (£4,500).
2.2 Accounts	The Group has submitted accounts for 2019/20 which show an income of £53,949 (£52,757 in 2018/19) against expenditure of £51,209 (£48,497 in 2018/19), resulting in a surplus of £2,740 (a surplus of £3,193 in 2018/19). The sum of £54,430 was carried forward at the end of the 2019/20 year.
2.3 Support over the past five years	<p>2020/21 – £12,500</p> <p>2019/20 – £12,500</p> <p>2018/19 – £12,500</p> <p>2017/18 – £12,500</p> <p>2016/17 – £12,500</p> <p>Following a change in the funding arrangements, the Group has received an annual grant of £10,000 from Woking Shopping since 2012/13, resulting in a lesser grant being awarded by Woking Borough Council. As a part of the arrangement, the Council increased its support of the Woking Community Transport Town Centre Buggy by the same amount since that time.</p>

3.0 Assessment of Application		
3.1 Key Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constitution ○ Registered Charity ○ VAT Registered ○ Equal Opportunities Policy ○ Safeguarding Policy ○ Reserves Policy ○ Quality Mark ○ Other funding sources pursued ○ Other support by the Council ○ Fundraising ○ Two quotes ○ Regular monitoring provided previously <p>* Mandatory rate relief, discretionary rate relief, concessionary rent</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes*</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Yes</p>
3.2 Consultee Comments	<p><u>Councillor Will Forster</u></p> <p>I am happy to support Woking Shopmobility's grant application of £12,500.</p> <p>Woking Shopmobility was formed in 1989 as the then Mayoral Charity, they help provide freedom and independence to enable people to enjoy Woking town centre. They support 600 users access Woking town centre and make an important contribution to support less mobile</p>	

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	<p>residents and add to the economic strength of the local economy.</p> <p>Woking Shopmobility will be a key organisation to help encourage the public back to Woking town centre post covid-19.</p> <p><u>Diana Chan, Health and Wellbeing Manager</u></p> <p>Woking Shop Mobility provides self-driven motorized equipment or manual wheelchairs. A pusher can be provided for manual wheelchairs if required. The project is open to all.</p> <p>I am supportive of the £12,500 being requested to allow Woking Shop Mobility to recover from the loss they anticipate in this financial year due to Covid and return to operating 6 days a week.</p>
3.3 Assessment	<p>Woking Shopmobility's aim is to provide barrier free access to shopping and business facilities in Woking by provision of self-drive motorized equipment or manual wheelchairs. The project is mainly used by elderly and registered disabled visitors to the Town Centre, with the addition of accident sufferers, or people recovering from operations or sufferers of other medical conditions.</p> <p>The Group has applied to extend its existing revenue funding of £12,500 in 2021/22. During 2019/2020, there were 894 users of the service, with 3,684 visits being made. The total number of visits since the project started is over 80,000. Demand has risen such that the Group is now considering opening on a Sunday, should the resources be found (as it stands, services are offered six days a week). The Group also notes that demand has not dropped while development work has taken place in Woking Town Centre.</p> <p>The Group prides itself in making retail facilities in Woking town centre accessible for all and works with Woking Community Transport to ensure "a seamless Home to Shop experience for people with limited mobility", contributing to the economic viability of the town.</p> <p>Fundraising activities undertaken include the Annual Pancake race, Christmas and Easter Tombola, Quiz night, Christmas party, and bucket collections at Ambassadors and Woking Football club. The monthly tombola also raises £500 per annum.</p> <p>The grant of £12,500 has been provided since 2012/13, and now constitutes around 23% of their income. A further 19% is provided by Woking Shopping and 28% from membership and user fees, with the remainder accrued through donations and fundraising. The Group notes that a reduction in grant funding would lead to a rise in charges per visit for users.</p> <p>Accordingly it is recommended that the Council's support is continued and that a grant of £12,500 is awarded for 2021/22.</p>

REPORT ENDS