



North Devon Council

Report Date: Wednesday, 19 July 2023

Topic: Strategic Grant 2023/24 - Ring and Ride and Shopmobility services

Report by: Director of Resources/Deputy Chief Executive

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Council at its meeting on 22 February 2023 approved an annual strategic grant of £14,720 to Go North Devon for the provision of shopmobility and ring and ride services for North Devon.
- 1.2. The Trustees of Go North Devon at its Board meeting on 10 May 2023 took the decision to dissolve Go North Devon by 30 September 2023 and cease all services by 18 August 2023.
- 1.3. This report sets out proposals for the continuation of ring and ride and shopmobility services in North Devon following the dissolution of Go North Devon.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That £5,000 of the remaining strategic grant be awarded to Mid Devon Mobility for the provision of a ring and ride service for North Devon for the period from September 2023 to the end of March 2024.
- 2.2. That £2,360 of the remaining strategic grant be awarded to Age Concern Barnstaple and North Devon for the provision of a shopmobility service from September 2023 to the end of March 2024.
- 2.3. That Council consider appointing a Councillor to Mid Devon Mobility as an outside body appointment for the life of Council and that attendance at meetings be an approved duty.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To reallocate the strategic grant previously awarded to Go North Devon to ensure the continuation of Ring and Ride and shopmobility services in North Devon.

4. REPORT

- 4.1. Council at its meeting on 22 February 2023 approved an annual strategic grant of £14,720 to Go North Devon for the provision of shopmobility and ring and ride services for North Devon. Only the first half of grant (£7,360) has been paid and the second half of payment was due for payment on 1 October 2023.
- 4.2. Following the Trustees of Go North Devon decision at its board meeting on 10 May 2023 to dissolve Go North Devon, the Manager of Go North Devon has approached Mid Devon Mobility regarding the continuation of a ring and

ride service in North Devon and Age Concern Barnstaple and North Devon regarding the potential to provide a shopmobility service.

- 4.3. At the Go North Devon Board meeting held on 24 May 2023, it was agreed that Mid Devon Mobility be invited to submit a proposal for the provision of a Ring and Ride service in North Devon and that representatives be invited to attend a Board meeting on 22 June 2023. The Chair, Chief Executive Officer and Business Development Manager attended this meeting to present the proposal.
- 4.4. Mid Devon Mobility is a registered charity and was established in 1989. They established their first Ring and Ride Scheme in 1990 and by 1994 were firmly established in the role of a community transport provider for the area. In February 2014 the area that they covered was expanded and they now cover the whole of the Mid Devon area and provide transport solutions to 3 market towns and 63 parishes.
- 4.5. Mid Devon Mobility have submitted a budget for the remaining 6 months and next year to North Devon Council setting out the following proposals:
 - 4.5.1. To provide a ring and ride service in North Devon covering the same area and operating the same schedule of service and fare structure as Go North Devon currently provides with effect from 21 August 2023.
 - 4.5.2. That all existing clients will be advised of the change over to Mid Devon Mobility week commencing 10 July 2023 and that the contact telephone number would remain the same
 - 4.5.3. Employing a driver (s) from the North Devon area to operate the ring and ride service
 - 4.5.4. Journeys on the ring and ride service could be booked in a number of different ways i.e. by phone, email, text or with the driver.
 - 4.5.5. Joint press release would be issued with Go North Devon and funders week commencing 10 July 2023.
 - 4.5.6. Using the same telephone number currently used by Go North Devon.
 - 4.5.7. They will also look at options to extend the current service after a 6 month period.
 - 4.5.8. Consideration would be given for the need for weekend social outings to help alleviate the loneliness.
 - 4.5.9. The livery of the current Go North Devon bus would be updated to stated "North Devon Ring and Ride" and include reference to Mid Devon Mobility, however the existing number would be retained (i.e. 01271 328866) and included on the livery of the bus.
- 4.6. Mid Devon Mobility have also submitted a budget for 2024/25, of which any continuing grant award will be considered as part of the North Devon Council annual budget setting process in February 2024.
- 4.7. Go North Devon at its meeting on 21 June 2023 have agreed to gift the mini bus, transfer their database of clients and telephone number to Mid Devon Mobility.
- 4.8. If Council are minded to agree to transfer of some of the remaining strategic grant to Mid Devon Mobility, a grant service level agreement would be put in

place whereby Mid Devon Mobility would be required to provide quarterly data specific to North Devon in relation to the numbers of passenger journeys.

- 4.9. Mid Devon Mobility Trustees have also agreed to change their constitution and widen the area that is covered to include North Devon. Trustees from North Devon would be welcome to join the Board and a representative from North Devon Council would also be welcome to attend Board meetings.

- 4.10. Age Concern Barnstaple and North Devon has submitted a quote for a 12 month period for the costs to provide four electric scooters and four static wheelchairs for public use for hire on a daily/weekly rate from their offices located at the rear of Green Lanes.

- 4.11. Go North Devon at its meeting on 21 June 2023 agreed to gift four electric scooters to Age Concern Barnstaple (and the remaining shopmobility equipment to Mid Devon Mobility to be hosted by hotels in North Devon for the driver to use if required).

- 4.12. If Council are minded to agree to transfer some of the remaining strategic grant to Age Concern Barnstaple and North Devon, a grant service level agreement would be put in place whereby Age Concern would be required to provide quarterly data regarding usage.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Council at its meeting on 22 February 2023 approved an annual strategic grant of £14,720 to Go North Devon for the provision of shopmobility and the ring and ride service for North Devon. Only first half of grant (£7,360) has been paid. The second half of the strategic grant has already been approved as part of the budget setting process.

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. The reallocation of this strategic grant will enable the continuation of ring and ride and shopmobility services in North Devon to support people who live in North Devon who suffer social or other exclusion owing to geographical factors, disabilities, health issues, frailty or poverty to access local facilities and services.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 7.1. There are no environmental implications arising from these proposals.

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 8.1. What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:
- 8.1.1. The commercialisation agenda: None
 - 8.1.2. Improving customer focus and/or: None
 - 8.1.3. Regeneration or economic development: None

9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

- 9.1. Article 4, paragraph 4.5.2
9.2. Delegated power



10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:
(The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Governance and Senior Corporate and Community Services Officer.