

REPORT

To : PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE		Subject: NORTH LANARKSHIRE SHOPMOBILITY
From : DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT		
Date : 1 st May 2002	Ref. : Rep 840	

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the progress of the North Lanarkshire pilot Shopmobility Project.

2 Background

- 2.1 Members will recall from previous reports relative to the establishment of the North Lanarkshire pilot Shopmobility Project that the service was to be initially set up at Exchange Place, Coatbridge.
- 2.2 Building warrant application was approved December 2001. The portacabin was brought onto site and sunk down into the foundations, taking away any need for external ramps. Outside, 9 dedicated parking spaces were provided and the surrounding grounds were turfed and levelled providing adequate space for external seating and bins. A gate was fitted to the entrance of the area with signage alerting people that the car park is private and only for those on a visit to Shopmobility.
- 2.3 Signage was placed at seven different places approaching the Shopmobility Service. The signage for the roads is appropriate although signage for the cabin and the site should be bigger to enable the advertising of opening hours. It has been decided by the Shopmobility Committee to include Saturday as a service day, although no operational date has been determined.
- 2.4 The cabin is 40 ft by 12 ft and is adequate to house the service and the equipment. It should be possible to have some of the equipment outside, weather permitting, and this would provide more space in the cabin during opening hours. External photocell security lighting is fitted to the cabin and an intruder and fire alarm system is also in place. The service is connected to North Lanarkshire Radio Link System.
- 2.5 The service was officially launched on 18 December 2001 by Tom Clarke CBE, JP, MP.
- 2.6 The Shopmobility Manager has recruited volunteers to suit the needs of the service. New Deal for Disabled is still being investigated and may require a financial commitment by either the Shopmobility service or the Council.

3 Current Position

- 3.1 Registrations for the service are currently standing at 37. On average 10 people are using the service each week. These figures reflect every Shopmobility service across the country in the first 3 months of the year and are acceptable for a service in its infancy. Once the weather picks up around Easter time customers tend to visit the service on a regular basis and this is when retailers will start to see the benefits.
- 3.2 It is intended to have an Open Day in May 2002 properly introducing the service and its benefits to the retailers and businesses in the town centre and surrounding area. It is essential to work in partnership with the retailers and contribute any information with regards to the Disability Discrimination Act which comes into force by 2004, thus ensuring complete accessibility for all disabled people to all buildings.
- 3.3 Letters seeking funding and the sponsorship of the equipment have been prepared and will reach retailers and businesses by the end of March 2002. It is common practice throughout Scotland for businesses to sponsor a piece of equipment at £1 per day (therefore creating a regular income of £365 per year).
- 3.4 It is anticipated that net costs of installation (capital) and revenue commitments to 31 March 2002 will be approximately £93,000. Members will recall North Lanarkshire Council has agreed to provide up to £27,000 in year 2002/03 subject to match funding by North Lanarkshire Shopmobility Group. The following amounts have been secured by the group at 31 March 2002:

£5,000 -	North Lanarkshire Forward	-	External Development
£4,500 -	Lloyds TSB Foundation	-	Administration Costs
<u>£4,950 -</u>	South Coatbridge SIP	-	Cabin Lease 2002/03
<u>£14,450</u>	Total		

An application should be submitted to the Community Fund by June 2002 seeking funding for start up costs for the first three years of the service.

- 3.5 The Shopmobility Steering Group works closely with the Manager and provides staffing assistance if required at short notice. It should also be noted that an assistant will be required in the very near future to permit the Project Manager to fully address the needs of the service.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.



David M. Porch
Director of Planning and Environment

25 March 2002

For further information, please contact John Halpin, Project Manager, tel: 01698 266566.