



<b>Subject:</b>	Request to present: Shopmobility
<b>Date:</b>	7th March, 2018
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Louise McLornan, Democratic Services Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The Committee is asked to consider a request from Shopmobility to attend a future meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>determine whether it wishes to accede to a request from Shopmobility to present to a future meeting of the Committee</li></ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	Shopmobility Belfast has requested to address the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in order to raise awareness of its service and to request Council backing and financial support.
3.2	The request from Shopmobility Belfast advises that: “It’s the largest scheme in Northern Ireland with eight centres in the greater Belfast area. They have had almost 48,000 bookings over the last forty-two months, providing a free service to help people with mobility problems to access everyday services; to shop, to socialise with friends and family and to attend GP and hospital appointments and to do so with freedom, dignity and independence.
3.3	Inability through lack of funding to access these activities can result in social isolation, poor physical and mental health and depression, leading people to remain or become lonely, excluded and confined to their homes.
3.4	For the past twenty-two years, Shopmobility Belfast has afforded its users equality and parity of esteem to do what every able-bodied person is able to do; choose when and where they can go and what they do.
3.5	One unique aspect of its service allows it to meet members who struggle to make it to their units at local bus and train stations, hotels, tourist board offices and at shopping centre car parks. It provides sighted guides for people who are blind or have reduced vision and works with councils and event organisers to provide mobility equipment assistance at shows, cultural events, fairs and fleadh’s around the region throughout the year to ensure people with disabilities and mobility issues get full access to enjoy activities, the same as able-bodied people. This also attracts huge economic benefit to Belfast and beyond with our members spending an average £30 per trip.
3.6	The current threat of cuts or cessation to this already beleaguered service comes from the Budgetary Briefing Paper issued by the Department of Finance on 18th December 2017. There has also been no renewal of the contract with Belfast City Council (through Economic Development) to provide Accessible Services to the people of Belfast City. This an inexcusable and indefensible scenario. It would rob the most vulnerable in our society of a life line and their overall quality of life would be severely diminished.

	<p>Shopmobility is not just about transport, it serves a wider purpose and contributes in every way to a healthier, diverse and equal society. Belfast City Council should show commitment to addressing key inequalities, particularly those experienced by the Section 75 equality groups.”</p>
3.7	<p>The Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to accede to the request to present at a future meeting.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no financial or resource implications associated with any agreement to accede to a request from Shopmobility Belfast.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>None</p>