

Task Note 3: Ealing Shopmobility – Site Surveys for Pilot Location & Accessibility Audit

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The TAS Partnership Limited

The Specialist Public Transport Consultancy

Guildhall House, Guildhall Street, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 3NU - Tel: 01772 204988 or E-mail: info@tas-part.co.uk

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Executive Summary

1. Ealing Site Surveys & Accessibility Audit

- 1.1 In order to identify and consider potential locations for the pilot Shopmobility scheme in Ealing, a number of sites have been surveyed. These have been assessed for their suitability for Shopmobility operations established in the following ways:
- via lease of a retail or office unit
 - via portacabin or temporary structure
 - via mobile unit
 - via shared occupancy with another agency.
- 1.2 Very few retail units are currently available and the rentals averaged £46,000 p.a., although a unit could be gained for £33,000. These units may need additional capital allocation to effect changes to improve layout and accessibility. Office units – whilst slightly cheaper – were largely located on 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors, and unsuitable for Shopmobility.
- 1.3 Of the sites surveyed with the installation of a portacabin in mind, several locations had advantages but it was felt that none offered any really tangible opportunities to adopt this approach, and that problems would likely prove insurmountable.
- 1.4 There were several possible locations where a mobile unit could be parked. This option is the most simple to effect and requires minimal site facilities. The use of Dickens Yard and the Town Hall frontage were felt to be the most favourable option.
- 1.5 The potential to share accommodation with another agency is considered and the Ealing Community Resource Centre identified as the only viable option for this approach. The Centre does not, however, have any space available for use in the foreseeable future, and there is a waiting list for tenancies. Also, the Centre is some distance away from Ealing Broadway. No voluntary sector agencies with spare space capacity are based at Ealing Broadway.
- 1.6 The findings of an accessibility survey of Ealing Broadway are incorporated, which indicate on a street-by-street basis the ease of movement and access that Shopmobility users can expect to find. There are some reasonable levels of access in Ealing but also a number of problem areas.
- 1.7 Finally, a report is included regarding the Ealing Town Centre development Framework Event.

1.1 Context

- 1.1.1 A retail development at Dickens Yard, Ealing Broadway, has provided an opportunity for a Shopmobility facility to be established, as indicated in Ealing Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance for the site, and the public statement by developer St. George of their intentions for the site¹.
- 1.1.2 Through temporary equipment loan, Shopmobility is an established means of enabling freedom of access to retail and civic amenities for those with mobility constraints, and its adoption at Dickens Yard is an indication of Ealing Council's planning policy to create an accessible environment, and thereby enhance its broader commitment to social inclusion.
- 1.1.3 Ealing Council has commissioned a feasibility study to provide a critical analysis of the range of issues that Shopmobility raises (operational, technical and strategic), and detailed proposals for an Ealing scheme, with reference to an initial temporary location, and to the Dickens Yard development itself.

1.2 Objective of this Task Note

- 1.2.1 Ealing Council anticipates that the Dickens Yard development is still some way in the future, possibly not becoming realised until 2012. In order to hasten a more immediate level of service delivery, an interim pilot scheme has been proposed. This pilot would need a temporary location.
- 1.2.2 This Task Note offers the results of site surveys undertaken in Ealing town centre at all potential locations for the temporary scheme that could be identified. The following issues were considered in terms of each site that was surveyed:
- availability – unused space, under-used space, vacant property, expiring leases, shared resources, likely permission being granted, etc.
 - environment – state of adjoining pavements, obstacles, nearby use, traffic issues
 - affordability – level of finance required to cover rent, leasing, improvement or alteration costs
 - facilities – square footage available, adjacent car parking and minibuss space, utilities, toilet facilities, security issues

¹ See <http://www.dickens-yard.co.uk/stgeorgeproposaldickensyard.pdf>

- accessibility – links to pedestrian routes, public transport, proximity to main shopping thoroughfare
 - image – the ability for Shopmobility to be launched and marketed as a vibrant and proactive scheme, avoiding negative connotations (delivery areas, service yards) and assuming a high profile.
- 1.2.3 The consultation also considered the wider environment from an accessibility viewpoint. Shopmobility is dependent on a consistent level of access throughout its operational area, and therefore some grasp of the state of the surrounding environment is needed when planning for services of this kind.
- 1.2.4 The report from the Ealing Town Centre Development Framework event held on 4th July highlighted some pertinent issues for this study.

2.1 Locations & Delivery Infrastructure

- 2.1.1 The location of any Shopmobility scheme is critical to its ultimate success. For instance, being the wrong side of a busy road with no pedestrian crossings, too far from public transport links, or having inadequate on-site parking provision are all factors that could hamper development, and have serious consequences in terms of user-friendliness.
- 2.1.2 However, the ability for a Shopmobility scheme to have a free choice of prime locations is also severely compromised. Good Shopmobility sites are usually only gained with some concerted will or commitment from the local authority, retail sector or developer. Schemes are rarely able to harness sufficient resources or influence to select locations for themselves.
- 2.1.3 The consultation has given equal consideration to each of the following potential arrangements for accommodating the interim scheme:
- a) at an existing shop / office / building that is currently vacant
 - b) within an existing building currently occupied (e.g. by voluntary sector agency), but which has spare capacity
 - c) at a site at which a temporary structure / portacabin might be erected
 - d) at a site where a mobile unit might be parked.
- 2.1.4 The further option of a new building for the temporary scheme has not been explored on the grounds that it would be highly unlikely that resources would be available for this.
- 2.1.5 The site surveys and audits that were undertaken as part of this TAS / ECT consultation were governed by a reasonably pragmatic approach, being mindful of the following:
- a) the limited number of options that Ealing Broadway offers in terms of empty shop units, open spaces and easy access
 - b) knowledge that future sustainability may depend on low rentals and modest start-up costs, and
 - c) that extensive capital outlay on renovation / improvements would not be cost-effective for what is envisaged as a temporary arrangement.
- 2.1.6 The brief, however, could only be fulfilled by an audit visit to every site that presented itself as being in some way viable.

3.1 Retail Units Identified as Potential Sites for Shopmobility

- 3.1.1 A report was commissioned by James Cousins of Cousins West Chartered Surveyors to identify retail units that were potentially suitable for a Shopmobility scheme. The surveyors were instructed that the location was crucial in that participants must be able to park / be dropped off immediately outside the property which must be in very close proximity to all amenities and have the facility to store scooters / office, etc.

3.2 Commercial Property Report

- 3.2.1 The preliminary report is as follows:

"Commercial property - Ealing's commercial centre is particularly vibrant and prime properties are always in demand and rarely come to the market with vacancy rates generally being very low. Sizable premiums are usually paid for prime pitches.

We have studied the Central Business District to assess areas of suitability as a whole and have concluded that The Mall and Broadway are too prime in location and not suitable but have identified potentially suitable locations as being the "one way system" located off The Broadway being the High Street and Bond Street which joins New Broadway. These comprise a parade of similar lock up retail properties which are generally more secondary in nature but are still very much in demand. These are still in very close proximity to all the amenities in the town centre.

There are at present very few properties available to let but we list details of those that are known to us as follows which are numbered on the attached plan accordingly:

- *6c – Ealing Broad Way Centre (High Street) – 370 sq ft net internal. New lease available for a term to be negotiated at a rent of £ 32 500 pa exclusive of rates and service charge.*
- *35 High Street - 888 sq ft net internal. New lease available by negotiation at a rent of £ 38 000 pa plus rates at £ 9742 pa*
- *2 Bond Street – 710 sq ft Ground floor with 550 sq ft Basement. Assignment of lease with passing rent of £ 33000 pa with a premium required of £ 25 000. Rates TBA*

We are also aware of the following properties available on New Broadway.

- *3 New Broadway (Currently Woolwich) – coming to market shortly 1000 sq ft Ground Floor 753 sq ft basement plus upper part. Exact passing rent not known but thought to be in region of £75 000 pa.*
- *51 New Broad way (CD Warehouse) – awaiting details”*

3.3 Office Space

- 3.3.1 In the right circumstances, commercial offices could be adapted for a Shopmobility operation. A number of currently available offices were considered but none had adequate ground floor accommodation. The rentals were in the range of £28,000 to £32,000 per year. It is unlikely that an appropriately sited, ground floor office at a reasonable price will become available.
- 3.3.2 There is also an additional need to gain permission for operation from a property classed as an office, and the TAS / ECT consultants were advised that many landlords would be reluctant to accept a tenant who wished to change the permission for use arrangement.

3.4 Conclusions

- 3.4.1 This report encompassed all available retail property in Ealing Broadway at the time of the consultation, and suggests the following conclusions:
- Choice of property was not wide
 - Rentals are expensive, between £32,500 and £75,000, and the going rate per sq ft averaged at £60 per annum (£647 per sq metre per annum.)
 - Internal layouts of retail units can be awkward and problematic for Shopmobility needs
 - Square footage tends to be split over two or more floors (and therefore of minimal use to a Shopmobility service)
 - In some cases building alterations work would be needed to achieve adequate levels of accessibility
 - Offices tended to be located away from the main shopping streets and were invariably on 1st, 2nd or 3rd floors
 - Office rentals – although cheaper than shop units – were also expensive, circa £30,000 pa, with a going rate of between £160-£260 per sq metre per annum.

4.1 Locations Identified as Potential Sites for a Cabin or Temporary Building

4.1.1 The whole town centre of Ealing was surveyed to locate any suitable open, public space upon which a portacabin could be erected, and which offered other potential benefits (access, car parking, etc). 10 potential sites were located, as detailed below.

4.2 Medus Car Park (adjacent to Haven Green, aka BBC Car Park)

4.2.1 *Advantages:*

- Excellent pedestrian access from Ealing Broadway, Haven Green and Uxbridge Road.
- Excellent public transport links – opposite Ealing Broadway station and adjacent to the numerous bus routes that operate from Haven Green and outside the station. The site is also close to the bus stops on Uxbridge Road.
- Good minibus, taxi and private car access – no height or width restrictions.
- Excellent parking facilities – there is plenty of room to allow designated disabled parking bays, as well as sufficient non disabled parking.
- Close proximity to retail, leisure and council facilities – the shopping centres are just a few minutes walk away and the Council buildings are within a short distance of the car park.
- Ground surface is in good condition – with a flat wide surface and enough room to allow service users to practice with the equipment before venturing into Ealing Broadway.

4.2.2 *Disadvantages:*

- Located in a very busy area – especially during peak hours, which raises concerns over health and safety. The surrounding areas can become very crowded which may discourage users from accessing the service.
- The surrounding roads are in bad condition; the footpath leading to Uxbridge Road, from both ends of the car park, inclines at an awkward angle and is difficult for wheelchair users, especially people who are not familiar with mobility equipment.

- Privately owned – it may be difficult to negotiate an allocated space for the scheme.

4.3 Haven Green (Behind the taxi rank)

4.3.1 *Advantages:*

- Excellent pedestrian access from Ealing Broadway, Haven Green and Uxbridge Road and located opposite Ealing Broadway station.
- Excellent public transport links – opposite Ealing Broadway station and numerous bus routes operate from Haven Green, therefore public transport access is easy and convenient.
- Good minibus, taxi and private car access – no height or width restrictions and a taxi rank is located on the Haven.
- Close proximity to retail, leisure & council facilities – the site is a well known part of Ealing Broadway and is near the main attractions in the area, including the two shopping centres.
- Ground surface is in good condition. The footpath around the potential site is in reasonably good condition, with a level surface and traffic lights and a pedestrian crossing.

4.3.2 *Disadvantages:*

- No parking facilities available. The site would need to be developed to incorporate adequate parking space.
- Very busy public transport interchange point. This presents a potential health and safety risk. Vehicles are constantly driving alongside the site and the pedestrian area becomes very congested during peak hours.
- Existing green space / conservation area – much potential for objections from local residents and infringement of various planning regulations.

4.4 Ealing Broadway Centre (Delivery Area)

4.4.1 *Advantages:*

- Good pedestrian access – wide, flat surfaces on the ground floor, avoiding the need to use a lift. Pedestrian access is possible from both the High Street and from Windsor Road.
- Good minibus, taxi and private car access from The Grove, close to the entrance to the Shopping Centre car park. There are no height or width restrictions in the area, allowing access for larger vehicles.

- Within the shopping centre – short distance from the back entrance to the Centre.
- Ground surface is in good condition – pathway leading to the shopping centre is new, level and well maintained. There are dropped kerbs and a pedestrian crossing adjacent to the site.
- Ample room for training and practice, to enable users to familiarise themselves with scooters and wheelchairs. There are also benches which could be used as a waiting area and for resting.

4.4.2 *Disadvantages:*

- Delivery area for the shops and businesses. Large delivery lorries and trucks frequently use the area, there are clear health and safety implications to consider.
- Lack of public transport access – the site is at least 10 minutes walk from the rail station and a similar distance from the various bus routes around the area. This distance could well prove too much for people with mobility difficulties and may dissuade users from accessing the scheme.
- Lack of suitable car parking space – potential space under the flyover but not enough room to allow disabled parking as well as non blue badge access.
- Unattractive physical environment – the area is situated behind the Shopping Centre. This could present a negative image which could have implications for attracting and deterring potential users and volunteers.
- Privately owned: The Shopping Centre management will not sanction the use of this site, primarily due to health and safety implications. Additionally, the potential car parking space near the site is owned by the businesses that operate on the High Street.

4.5 Ealing Broadway Centre (Car Park, 1st floor)

4.5.1 *Advantages:*

- Excellent parking facilities. There are currently a number of disabled parking bays and good potential to increase the number if necessary.
- Close proximity to retail, leisure & council facilities. The car park is on the first floor of the Shopping Centre, adjacent to the Library, thus very close to all the shops and facilities in the centre. The centre is well equipped for disabled shoppers and has refreshment and toilet facilities nearby.

- Ample space for training – the design of the car park provides sufficient space for training while the ground surface is in good condition, with flat level area leading to the lift.

4.5.2 *Disadvantages:*

- No access for minibuses. The height and width restrictions mean that only cars and taxis can get into the site. This will discourage Community Transport / Dial-A-Ride passengers from using the service.
- Pedestrian access is limited. Walkers would need to get into the site by going through the Shopping Centre and using the lift to get up to the car park. For people with restricted mobility this distance will prove too much. Escorts may need to meet the service users outside the Shopping Centre.
- Inadequate public transport access – major bus routes on the Uxbridge Road and Haven Green are about 10-15 minutes away from the car park, which would again force service users to walk a distance to the site.
- Building works – the library is shut for renovations until January 2008 which would cause disruption to the area surrounding the potential site.
- Difficulty in attracting volunteers. Volunteers may not enjoy working in the car park, isolated from the main part of the Centre.
- Privately owned. The Centre Management is unwilling to allow use of the site for the proposed scheme.

4.6 Ealing Broadway Centre - floor space (Beales / Tesco)

4.6.1 *Advantages:*

- Reasonable pedestrian links – access from the High Street, Windsor Road and through the Shopping Centre from the Uxbridge road entrance.
- Close to retail outlets. The site is conveniently located just outside Tesco and the Beales department store, inside the Shopping Centre, with easy access to all the shops, services and refreshments.
- Good ground condition – flat and level, allowing comfortable access for wheelchair users. The kiosks outside Tesco's have been removed which further increases the area's accessibility.

4.6.2 *Disadvantages:*

- No access for minibuses, taxis and cars – height and width restrictions are imposed in the car park. Service users would have to make their own way to the site.

- Inadequate access from any mode of transport - private cars can use the Shopping Centre car park but users arriving by car would still have to use the lift and walk to the site. People who use minibuses would have an even longer walk to the site from outside the Centre.
- The floor space is currently leased. The cafe uses this space. It is unlikely that the space would become available in the near future.

4.7 Dickens Yard (alley way entrance / access from Town Hall)

4.7.1 Advantages:

- Good pedestrian link from Uxbridge Road, and centrally located.
- Good public transport links. There are numerous bus routes along the Uxbridge Road within yards of this site.
- Close proximity to retail, leisure and council facilities. All facilities are close enough to comfortably access including the Town Hall and cinema.
- Safe environment – a well lit area, so is ideal for vulnerable people.
- Good ground condition. The Town Hall annexe entrance ground condition is flat, wide and well paved. The level surfacing ensures all mobility equipment users can manoeuvre around with little difficulty.

4.7.2 Disadvantages:

- No safe or dedicated minibus, taxi or private car access. This will discourage potential service users from accessing the service or increase the need for volunteers to go and meet service users at a nearer point in the town centre.
- Building site. This will be fraught with risks – service users will be reluctant to access a service, no matter how beneficial, if it is located within or even on the edge of a building site.
- Very limited space, as the entire area is being redeveloped.
- Access improvement work needed to the Alleyway entrance – currently the ground is not level and unsuitable for mobility equipment users.

4.8 Ealing Broadway Station

4.8.1 Advantages:

- Excellent pedestrian access from Haven Green and Uxbridge Road.

- Excellent public transport links – train, tube station and bus interchange point.
- Car parking spaces outside the station. These could be allocated to the scheme. Additional car parking could be available in the Medus Car Park (opposite station).
- Good minibus, taxi and private car access, no height or weight restrictions.
- Close proximity to town centre, enabling service users to comfortably access all the facilities available in the area, including the town hall and council buildings.
- Good ground condition – flat surfaces, although minor improvements are needed to surrounding streets leading into the town centre.

4.8.2 *Disadvantages:*

- Located in a very busy area, especially during peak hours, which raises concerns over health and safety. The surrounding areas can become very crowded which may discourage users from accessing the service.
- Very limited space outside the station, especially for training purposes.
- Car parking space is unavailable. Currently dedicated to the businesses / shops on the parade outside the station, so very unlikely to be made available for the scheme.
- Privately owned - the ability to negotiate a space for the scheme is very unlikely.

4.9 Ealing Green

4.9.1 *Advantages:*

- Very good pedestrian access from Uxbridge Road, Mattock Lane and Bond Street.
- Good minibus, taxi and private car access. No height or weight restrictions.
- Car parking spaces – already allocated within the area, both blue badge and non disabled.
- Close proximity to town centre – within a short distance to the High Street, Bond Street and Ealing Broadway Shopping centre. Easy to also access council facilities.
- Very attractive physical environment – existing green space therefore it is inviting and pleasant for both volunteers and service users.

- Very close proximity to local events and festivals in Walpole Park.
- Ground is in good condition – flat level surfaces with only minor improvements needed such as dropped kerbs.

4.9.2 *Disadvantages:*

- Inadequate public transport access. Major bus routes on the Uxbridge Road and Haven Green are about 10-15 minutes away from the car park, which would again force service users to walk a distance to the site.
- Existing green space / conservation area – objections from local residents and infringement of various planning regulations.

4.10 Sandringham Mews Car Park, High Street

4.10.1 *Advantages:*

- Good pedestrian access from Ealing Broadway, Uxbridge Road and High Street.
- Good public transport access. Close to numerous bus routes on Uxbridge Road, and within walking distance from bus interchange point at Haven Green.
- Good minibus, taxi and private car access – no height or width restrictions and opposite the current (unofficial) Dial-A-Ride drop off point.
- Excellent parking facilities. There is ample room to allow designated disabled parking bays, as well as sufficient non disabled parking.
- Located within the hub of the town centre. Opposite the post office, an entrance to the Ealing Broadway shopping centre and main council and retail facilities on Uxbridge Road and Bond Street.

4.10.2 *Disadvantages:*

- Major improvement work needed to the ground as it is in extremely bad condition. Currently there are potholes, cobble stones, uneven surfaces – therefore it is currently very difficult for anyone with any mobility difficulty or using mobility equipment to access this site.
- Privately owned - so far the consultation has been unable to establish contact with land owner and property management company.

4.11 Britannia Car Park (adjacent to UGC Cinema, Uxbridge Road)

4.11.1 *Advantages:*

- Good pedestrian links from both the Uxbridge Road and Mattock Lane.
- Reasonable public transport access – close to many bus stops on Uxbridge Road.
- Good minibus, taxi and private car access – no height or width restrictions within the site.
- Excellent parking facilities. There is adequate room to allow designated disabled parking bays, as well as sufficient non disabled parking.
- Within reasonable vicinity of town centre – located opposite the town hall, adjacent to the cinema and within walking distance to retail outlets.
- Ample room for training and practice to allow users to familiarise themselves with scooters and wheelchairs.

4.11.2 *Disadvantages:*

- Too far from Ealing Broadway station: Approx 1 mile from the main public transport interchange point at Ealing Broadway, which would either discourage users from accessing the service or increase the need for volunteers to meet them at a nearer point.
- Major improvement work is needed to the operational vicinity. Currently there are many potholes and an uneven surface, and therefore it is almost impossible for anyone with any mobility difficulty or mobility equipment to access this site.
- Privately owned – it would be difficult to negotiate an allocated space for shopmobility unit.

4.12 Conclusions

4.12.1 The 10 sites surveyed above have been considered in terms of the practicality of the Shopmobility service being offered from these locations. The surveys have not been able to provide any detailed data regarding:

- a) the likelihood of planning / use permissions being granted
- b) the weight-bearing suitability / stability of the ground for a portacabin installation
- c) the size of cabin that would be appropriate, and

d) utility connectivity.

4.12.2 The conclusions regarding these sites as a result of the surveys are as follows:

- All the above sites, in however favourable a location, do present difficulties in locating a temporary portacabin within them. There was no ideal or obviously advantageous location; all would present challenges and entail compromises.
- The ability to secure a space within a private car park is particularly difficult as car park land owners are reluctant to give up space which is already currently very well utilised as is the case for most car parks in Ealing Broadway. In effect, a commercial sacrifice would have to be negotiated, not only to provide space for the cabin, but also the additional parking bays that would have to be given over to Shopmobility use at peak times.
- The use of existing green spaces such as Haven Green and Ealing Green is unlikely as this would infringe various planning regulations as well as attract plenty of local resident objections. However, a mobile scheme could be sited on these green spaces temporarily to service local community events and festivals.
- The use of the Ealing Shopping Centre is also very unlikely as there is very little space within the centre itself. However, the Management have allowed the use of some floor space for a temporary mobile scheme during Christmas and for promotional purposes.
- Repeated attempts were made to approach the owner of Sandringham Mews car park to discuss the possibility of its use for Shopmobility but the TAS / ECT consultants were unable to make contact as the owner did not respond.
- The Dickens Yard site is in an ideal location but as it will be a building site for potentially the next 5 years, it would not be good practice to establish a scheme at this site. Not only would there be obvious health and safety risks and implications, but potential users are unlikely to want to access a service from a building site.

5.1 Suggestions for Shopmobility Locations made by Stakeholders during the Consultation

5.1.1 During the course of interviews and meetings, several suggestions were made to the TAS / ECT consultants regarding potential temporary locations. These sites were also surveyed and given due consideration. Many of these also overlapped with the sites already identified above.

5.2 Ealing Access Committee

5.2.1 The following suggestions were made:

- The 1st floor car park of the Ealing Broadway Shopping Centre (see 4.5 above).
- The empty units on the 1st floor of Ealing Broadway Shopping Centre (Unit 28). These are undergoing refurbishment and are not currently available for use. Once they are fit to let, they will be for A3 use and charged out at commercial rates.
- Thames Valley University car park – this would only be available for a Saturday-only service, possibility for a weekend mobile scheme.
- UGC Cinema on Uxbridge Road. Use of foyer and potential vacant storage space. Although the cinema is in a good location with respect to pedestrian, minibus and public transport access, it is still a 10 minute walk from the main hub of public transport at Ealing Broadway. There are car parking facilities adjacent to the cinema – however, it is highly unlikely that any spaces would be allocated to the scheme in what is a privately-owned, well utilised car park. The cinema building itself is run down and inaccessible. The doors are very heavy and cumbersome especially for those with mobility difficulties. There is a step access to the building therefore the use of mobility equipment from the cinema would be severely restricted unless a ramp was installed. Also, space within the cinema is extremely limited.
- Bar HaHa Car Park (Ealing Green): Private owners are very unlikely to give up space in a very well utilised car park.
- A commercial retail unit. This is the most expensive option. A retail unit in 35 High Street has been sourced which has excellent pedestrian, minibus, and public transport access. It also has car parking facilities and is in the hub of the town centre. The current rent is £38,000 pa exclusive of rates. (See also 3.2.1 above).

5.3 London Borough of Ealing Officers Forum

5.3.1 The following suggestion was made:

- Old Fire Station & Stable, Longfield Avenue. This option would need to be negotiated with St. George developers. The site will be retained for historical reasons (listed building) and it could be used to operate a beneficial service. However, this will be on the edge of a building site for up to 5 years. It would not be advantageous to the scheme or good practice to establish a Shopmobility in such a potentially dangerous area. There will be building material delivery trucks and heavy plant vehicles accessing the site, hence it will be fraught with health and safety risks. (Users would have to cross the site access road to reach the Broadway.) Also pedestrian, minibus, public transport, private car and taxi access will very extremely restricted during the next 5 years whilst the site is re-developed.

5.4 Ealing Broadway Business Improvement District (EBID)

5.4.1 The following suggestions were made:

- BBC Car Park by Haven Green (see also 4.2 above). It might be viable for the council to consult with Medus about possibly hiring some space within this car park for a portacabin. However, EBID have advised that space is currently very limited, and that the car park is very well utilised. Therefore they are very unlikely to respond by allocating space for a scheme.
- Spring Bridge Car Park – Council owned and currently under-utilised. It may be possible to negotiate some space for a portacabin and dedicated disabled parking spaces through the Head of Parking at LB Ealing. However, there is no minibus access to this car park, which, when combined with the poor condition of the pavement and ground surrounding, rules this site out as a viable option.
- Sandringham Mews Car Park, High Street (see 4.10 above).

5.5 Conclusions

5.5.1 Though all these suggestions were interesting and worth further investigation, the more viable options had already been considered as part of the consultation process. The remaining suggestions all proved to be problematic for a wide variety of reasons as stated above.

6.1 General

- 6.1.1 The location requirements to accommodate a Shopmobility service delivered via mobile unit are theoretically the most simple to identify. As the mobile unit is in effect a self-contained truck, it merely needs adequate groundspace to park. This simplicity does not, however, negate the need for careful consideration of access issues and adjacent parking for Shopmobility users.
- 6.1.2 Also, depending on the kind of vehicle used, it may require width and headroom dimensions that exceed those even of a minibus. Many town centre traffic routes and car parks are deliberately designed to restrict (and in some cases prevent) access by HGV class vehicles. This is another factor that would determine location.
- 6.1.3 Toilet and rest facilities that would be integral to a permanent Shopmobility facility cannot be provided in a mobile unit. It would be prudent, therefore, to locate the mobile unit within the vicinity of accessible public conveniences. Seating or benches would also be desirable (although to an extent, some seating could be carried on the vehicle). Ultimately, however, the provision of public conveniences is a matter for the local authorities, and beyond the scope of this study.

6.2 Dickens Yard / Town Hall forecourt (New Broadway)

- 6.2.1 It is proposed that the building works may commence in September 2008, but a more realistic likelihood is sometime during 2009. So for a period of 12-18 months, this site could be utilised. It would be relatively straight-forward for the Council to allocate space for the Unit and disabled / non disabled car parking spaces.
- 6.2.2 Access to utilities would not prove difficult at this site. Other advantages include:
- good pedestrian and public transport links
 - good minibus, car and taxi access (if sited towards the Longfield Avenue side)
 - close proximity to town centre (shops & council facilities)
 - very safe area
 - excellent ground condition if the mobile unit is sited towards the Town hall annexe entrance - newly paved, wide pavement (as opposed to access from the alleyway which adjoins New Broadway).

- 6.2.3 For promotional purposes, and to ensure maximum profile, for 1 or 2 days per week, the mobile unit could be sited directly outside the Town Hall on New Broadway. This is within very close proximity to Dickens Yard, so users will identify the service with that area.
- 6.2.4 There may be a possibility of moving the unit and locating it more permanently outside the Town Hall once the building works in Dickens Yard commence. Car parking facilities will then be available opposite the Town Hall at the Britannia car park. (It is unclear whether permanent disabled car parking spaces could be secured for the scheme – this would need to be negotiated with the private owners of Britannia car park).
- 6.2.5 Minibus access, however, may be compromised in relation to this site, due to restrictions on stopping in bus lanes. Alternatively passengers could be dropped off in Britannia car park and cross the road to access the mobile unit outside the Town Hall.
- 6.2.6 There remains the possibility of the scheme being permanently located outside the Town Hall if Dickens Yard site is not available. The issues involved in this would need investigation by Ealing Council.

6.3 Mattock Lane (adjacent to Ealing Green)

- 6.3.1 Currently there are car parking spaces allocated along the southern side of Mattock Lane. It is a Borough road, so negotiating a space for parking a mobile unit would go through the Council. Car parking spaces for the scheme could possibly be negotiated. However, it is thought that this may prove difficult due to the relative paucity of street parking facilities in the area. The Council may be extremely reluctant to give up the car parking spaces for the scheme. (For further details of this site, see 4.9 above)

6.4 Arcadia Car Park (Spring Bridge Road)

- 6.4.1 This is a multi-story car park off Spring Bridge Road. It has an open top which would enable minibus access. There may be a possibility of negotiating some space through the Arcadia Centre. However, this site is currently subject to a pending redevelopment option, within a timescale that is not currently clear.
- 6.4.2 If this site were used, users would collect equipment and use the shopping centre lift to enter the town centre rather than via Spring Bridge Road (see accessibility audit for condition of Spring Bridge Road). The access from ground to top floor is steep for mobility users, and it presents an unattractive physical environment, as the space is used for deliveries. This would present obvious health and safety risks.

6.5 Christ the Saviour / Christchurch Grounds (Uxbridge Road)

- 6.5.1 This would offer an excellent location, good pedestrian, public transport and minibus access. However, it is not clear the church would be willing to make available any space within its grounds for this scheme as it would compromise most of the current car parking facilities. Additionally, this will become a building site once the Dickens Yard works start, therefore this might only be a temporary option for next 12-18 months.

6.6 Conclusion

- 6.6.1 If Shopmobility delivered via mobile unit is to be developed, then the Dickens Yard / Town Hall option presents the most viable location. In any case, arrangements need only be entered into on a trial basis initially, with the potential for the unit to be moved elsewhere.

7.1 Multi-agency Building Occupancy

7.1.1 Shopmobility need not have exclusive use of any premises, nor should it disregard the potential to form one part of a wider range of services being hosted from within one building. By necessity, the voluntary sector has often entered into multi-agency occupancy to reduce overheads and also to form a more cohesive 'one stop shop' approach to servicing community need. Thus far the consultation has identified only one such building in the Ealing community, detailed below.

7.2 Ealing Community Resource Centre

7.2.1 The Ealing Community Resource Centre is located at the Lido Centre, Mattock Lane, and describes itself as the "flagship centre for the voluntary sector in Ealing."² It accommodates 13 voluntary, community and faith sector agencies, including Ealing Community and Voluntary Service, Ealing Centre for Independent Living and Volunteer Centre Ealing.

7.2.2 The centre offers:

- office accommodation for local voluntary groups
- hot-desking facilities for small neighbourhood groups
- new community meeting, training and counselling rooms
- community equipment loan scheme
- community IT and information suite

7.2.3 In theory this building would present location possibilities for Shopmobility. The process to secure space is as follows:

- Submit expression of interest with space requirements
- Join a waiting list
- Be allocated space as and when it becomes available.

7.2.4 There is a criteria for the types of groups accepted in the Centre. They need to be community based, and Shopmobility would comply with this. However, there is no storage space as such, but office space could be utilised for mobility equipment. It is likely that space is very limited (currently they are at full capacity) and when space does become available, it is not extensive.

² Ealing Resource Centre website www.ealingresourcecentre.org.uk

7.3 Conclusion

7.3.1 Ealing Resource Centre would present some benefits as a Shopmobility location but the following disadvantages count against it:

- a) The location is better for serving West Ealing; the main shopping facilities at Ealing Broadway are almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile away
- b) It is designed to offer agencies office accommodation and is unsuitable for a service such as Shopmobility which requires greater space and more open layouts
- c) There is currently no adequate floor space available to rent.

8.1 Accessibility Audit of Shops & Public Premises in Ealing Broadway

- 8.1.1 Shopmobility cannot function in isolation from its immediate surroundings, nor is it a means of addressing any deficiencies in the levels of accessibility in the wider environment. Shopmobility will inevitably fail unless a reasonable degree of access is to be found on adjoining pavements, doorways, buildings etc. For this reason any feasibility study of Shopmobility in Ealing needs to take account of broader levels of access.
- 8.1.2 The critical question is: do shops in Ealing Broadway provide enough access for disabled people to use their premises? Since the introduction in 2004 of the third phase of provisions under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, all shopkeepers and retailers are expected to make reasonable adjustments to their buildings to allow access for disabled people, or to be able to demonstrate that disabled people are not at any greater disadvantage than any other customer. The extent to which this legislation has been embraced as a prompt to improve town centre public environments has varied enormously.
- 8.1.3 Additionally, being still relatively recent legislation, there is insufficient case law as yet to determine how far the DDA has impacted on accessibility, and the ways in which its terms can be interpreted to effect amendments and improvements. This is 'passive' legislation which needs a case to be mounted by an individual who feels they have been discriminated against.
- 8.1.4 It is beyond the remit of this feasibility study to undertake any exhaustive or definitive auditing to a building by building, floor by floor, doorway to doorway level of detail. The purpose of this more general audit is to assess the accessibility of shops and public premises in Ealing Broadway in a way that informs any measures that a Shopmobility may need to make provision for.
- 8.1.5 Shopmobility also has a role to play in spearheading the need for access improvements, in the followings ways:
- it will be in receipt of unique information that can be used to effect improvements – that is, users will report problems, hazards, evidence of bad practice to the scheme
 - it can adopt a campaigning and lobbying profile (perhaps in partnership with local access and disability groups)
 - it can provide direct advice to businesses and service providers as to how to improve access to their facilities

- it can demonstrate that – through embracing the needs of Shopmobility users – the retail sector is in fact securing future business turnover.

8.2 Methodology for Access Audit

- 8.2.1 The audit was undertaken by Stefan King (Ealing resident) and Jason McArdle (employee of Ealing Community Transport). Previous access audits may have been undertaken for Ealing Broadway but would quickly become out of date.
- 8.2.2 It is important to emphasize that this audit was not undertaken with the technical approach of a surveyor or architect; Shopmobility needs are far better accounted for by reflecting the actual experience of disabled people.
- 8.2.3 The accessibility requirements of powered wheelchair users are probably the most acute, as they often move around the town centre independently and are generally confined to the wheelchair for the whole duration. Powered wheelchairs are less able to negotiate kerbs and obstacles than scooters and manual wheelchairs. The general shopmobility experience suggests that many scooter users can walk a limited distance, and often leave the scooter outside the shop.
- 8.2.4 Local resident Stefan King is a 28 year old electric wheelchair user with cerebral palsy. Stefan has worked with ECT as a consultant on various accessibility, disability and mobility projects and services. In May 2007, Stefan and Jason visited Ealing Broadway to examine the accessibility of all the public premises including shops, banks, bars and restaurants. Accessibility features of shop / building entrances, interiors, footpaths and road surfaces were examined.
- 8.2.5 Throughout June 2007, Jason made additional visits to the Ealing Broadway area, analysing the accessibility of the area in further detail. He also marked his findings of each location on an ordnance map. Contact with Stefan was maintained throughout the writing of the report to clarify issues, and exchange ideas. The report is structured in a way that each section of Ealing Broadway was examined separately.

8.3 Areas of Ealing Broadway

- 8.3.1 Ealing Broadway is made up of a number of areas, each with distinct characteristics. For the purpose of this report they have been split into the following areas:
- a) Ealing Broadway Centre (Including Oak Road and High Street Mall)
 - b) The Broadway
 - c) Arcadia Centre

- d) New Broadway
- e) Spring Bridge Road
- f) Bond Street
- g) The Mall (including Windsor Road)
- h) High Street
- i) Haven Green

8.4 Relative Levels of Accessibility

8.4.1 Approximately 70% of premises in the Ealing Broadway area are accessible to disabled people. However, there is considerable variation in accessibility from street to street, and sharp differences between major chain stores and smaller independent traders.

8.4.2 The percentage of accessible premises in each section of Ealing Broadway is as follows:

- Ealing Broadway Shopping Centre: 95% accessible
- The Broadway: 85% accessible
- Arcadia Centre: 100% inside but with some access problems
- New Broadway: 80% accessible
- Spring Bridge Rd 15 % accessible
- Bond Street: 50% accessible
- The Mall: 45% accessible
- High Street: 67% accessible
- Haven Green: 56% accessible

8.4.3 While all the banks, government buildings, supermarkets and the post office are accessible, many bars, cafes, restaurants and shops remain difficult or impossible for disabled people to access.

8.4.4 Premises that offer social or leisure activities (including the many bars, restaurants and cafes) are less likely to have easily accessible entrances and often have layouts that make it hard for disabled people to safely move around. This is especially true with smaller independent businesses that occupy older buildings.

- 8.4.5 The further away from the shopping centres and the Broadway a building is, the less likely it is to be accessible.
- 8.4.6 Of the accessible premises, a considerable number continue to present problems to disabled people as they have awkward, heavy doors and limited floor space due to the layout of display items or tables and chairs.
- 8.4.7 This has proven to be a consistent problem in all parts of Ealing Broadway, and there remain significant obstacles to prevent disabled people from accessing all of the shops, services and other facilities Ealing Broadway has to offer.

8.5 Ealing Broadway Shopping Centre

- 8.5.1 Being a more recent development, and managed by one company, the Shopping Centre presents a more consistent and acceptable level of accessibility:
- Approximately 95% of the premises in the Ealing Broadway Shopping Centre are accessible.
 - Ealing Broadway Shopping Centre is fully accessible from all entrances, with flat, level surfaces and a wide walkway to ensure easy movement.
 - There are facilities inside the shopping centre specifically for disabled people, including a toilet which is available on the ground floor, as well as two lifts that allow access to the first floor and car park. A third lift, the North lift, is available but is too small for a large wheelchair or a scooter.
 - Disabled parking is available on the first floor, adjacent to the library. Wheelchairs are also available for loan in this location.
 - All of the entrances to the retail units in the main section of the shopping centre are accessible for disabled shoppers.
 - The design of the Centre allows comfortable access for wheelchair users; there are no steps on the entrances of the shops, so there is no need for ramps leading into any of the premises. There are no major physical barriers to contend with.
- 8.5.2 The most accessible premises have wide entrances with automatic doors and enough staff to provide additional assistance if necessary. The best examples of this can be found in the Tesco and Marks and Spencer supermarkets. The kiosks that were in the corridor outside Tesco have been removed, which improves access to that area.
- 8.5.3 However, there are a significant number of properties where the doors cause difficulties for disabled people.

- 8.5.4 There were several examples in the Centre where the premises have a wide, flat surface in the lobby, but also have heavy doors, with awkward handles, which make it very difficult to enter without assistance.
- 8.5.5 A clear example of this is the seen at the entrances to Beales department store, where entry from both sides of the centre is restricted by the cumbersome doors. Automatic doors would make things much easier for disabled people. Once inside the store there is a reasonable amount of space for wheelchair mobility; there is even a lift to allow access to the upper floor.
- 8.5.6 Disabled shoppers often encounter problem when display items block the aisles. This is a particular problem in the smaller stores where there is less space and a lot of stock to exhibit. It is often very difficult to manoeuvre around these shops and this factor limits the number of premises that can be considered to be completely accessible to disabled people.
- 8.5.7 One side of the parade of shops on Oak Road, on the periphery of the Centre, stands out for its limited accessibility in comparison to the rest of the Centre. The shops, all small independent businesses, are identically designed and have narrow doorways with a step that restricts entry for disabled customers. In contrast the shops directly opposite are all easy to get in to.

8.6 The Broadway

- 8.6.1 Over 85% of premises on the Broadway are accessible. In general, this section of the Ealing Broadway area is well equipped to provide comfortable access for disabled shoppers. The majority of retail units have flat entrances or ramps to ensure easy access to the premises.
- 8.6.2 The pavement area along this stretch of the Uxbridge Road is reasonably easy to travel along. The newer buildings on the corner of Uxbridge Road have been designed with access for disabled people included.
- 8.6.3 There are some good examples of businesses which have taken steps to accommodate wheelchair users. The entrance at Lloyds Bank, for instance, has a large step that would prevent wheelchair access, but does have a service buzzer that can be activated to alert staff when a disabled person needs to access the building.
- 8.6.4 However, although access into most shops is straightforward enough, disabled customers still face a difficult time once inside the shops. There is the common problem of display items or stock placed inconveniently down aisles or across the shop floor.
- 8.6.5 Some shops are easier than others, usually due to the physical size of the site:

- WH Smith has a large retail space and it is easy to access all of the aisles. On the other hand, some of the smaller fashion stores are more cramped for space and are tricky to move around in.
- The Marks and Spencer entrance (on the corner of the High Street and the Broadway) has an automatic door which allows trouble-free access for wheelchair users.
 - ◆ The shop has an equally accessible alternative doorway inside the shopping centre. Once inside the department store, disabled people have a fairly large area to move around in with considerable space between the tills and the aisles.
- Most of the doors on the shops are kept open at all times, although there are a few cases where a shop assistant would have to come to the door to allow access.

8.7 Arcadia Centre

- 8.7.1 The Arcadia Centre is almost 100% accessible once inside, yet there are potential difficulties in accessing the centre. The pedestrian entrance (on Uxbridge Road) is quite difficult for disabled people, especially wheelchair users, because of the escalator ramp that leads into the ground floor of the centre.
- 8.7.2 All shops and outlets on both floors of the Arcadia centre have accessible doorways, many of which are automatic or are permanently left open.
- 8.7.3 The problem of shops with difficult interiors is consistent and is again evident in the Centre. In HMV, for example, an entire section of the shop is effectively off limits for wheelchair users as it is down a flight of stairs. This is also true of Waterstones bookshop in the other shopping centre.
- 8.7.4 While staff are often helpful, and would happily get specific items from those sections, it prevents wheelchair users from browsing through the books or DVDs on sale, thus reducing their independence and enjoyment while out shopping.
- 8.7.5 There is an accessible entrance on Spring Bridge Road that leads to the second floor of the Arcadia Centre. The footpath surface here is in good condition, although the pedestrian area is quite narrow.
- 8.7.6 Lifts are available between the ground floor and the car park; however if they are not working (a frequent occurrence) then there is no other way for disabled people to use the facilities on the ground floor without attempting to use the difficult entrance on Uxbridge Road.

8.8 New Broadway

- 8.8.1 Almost 80% of premises on New Broadway are accessible and are among the best in Ealing Broadway for disabled access. Most of the buildings on this part of the road have taken steps to improve their entrances. Budgens, for example, has a ramp that allows wheelchair access.
- 8.8.2 The buildings are substantially larger than those found in other parts of Ealing Broadway, which allows more room for customers with restricted mobility. The Iceland store is a good example of this, as it has enough space between the aisles and the tills to allow safe and reasonably comfortable access.
- 8.8.3 The cinema, with a steep step on its entrance and heavy doors, is far more difficult to negotiate.
- 8.8.4 Some of the smaller restaurants and cafes do have open doorways but limited space inside due to the layout of the tables and chairs. This is a familiar pattern across the whole of Ealing Broadway.
- 8.8.5 The Town Hall is fully accessible and well signed. The Church on the corner of Spring Bridge Road is also accessible for disabled visitors.
- 8.8.6 The pedestrian area is wide and reasonably level. There is some street furniture, including shop signs, yet the area is far easier for disabled shoppers than other parts of Ealing.

8.9 Spring Bridge Road

- 8.9.1 Spring Bridge Road is the most problematic from an access point of view. There is only one accessible building along the road. The road surface is extremely difficult for disabled people to travel along safely. The footpath slopes upwards, (from Uxbridge Road, adjacent to Christchurch School) and is very narrow in places, with an uneven surface. Dropped kerbs are limited to the areas next to the car parks.
- 8.9.2 There are a small number of shops currently operating on Spring Bridge Road, with only one building accessible for wheelchair users. All of the others have a series of steep steps leading up to the door.
- 8.9.3 The difficult nature of the road surface combined with the inaccessible entrances of the shops makes Spring Bridge Road unapproachable for the majority of disabled people.

8.10 Bond Street

- 8.10.1 About 50% of premises are accessible on Bond Street, and together with Spring Bridge Road and the Mall, it proved to be the least wheelchair friendly area of Ealing Broadway.
- 8.10.2 The footpath itself is quite narrow, the surface is poorly maintained, with uneven paving, awkward slopes and with many shop signs, bollards and other street furniture blocking the pavement.
- 8.10.3 The shops themselves are often older buildings, many having large steps and narrow doorways preventing wheelchair access. The layout of many cafes and restaurants makes it very difficult for disabled people to manoeuvre comfortably.
- 8.10.4 Inaccessible buildings include:
- YMCA shop
 - Oxfam charity, and
 - Thames Valley University medical building.
- 8.10.5 There were some exceptions in Bond Street, with the Old Orleans bar / restaurant being the best example of a building with accessible facilities. The entrance is wide and flat, there is ample space inside for disabled people to move comfortably. There is also a disabled toilet. The only difficulty is the section of the bar that has steps leading up to some of the tables.
- 8.10.6 A barrier free physical environment makes things far easier for disabled people to get around. Bond Street is an example of how these barriers, including signs outside shops and parked bicycles, can present quite a hazard for disabled people.
- 8.10.7 Bond Street could be improved by a level pedestrian area and small ramps that would allow access to the shops. Furniture could be moved around inside the cafes or restaurants if necessary. Presently, far too many premises on Bond Street do not meet the requirements of disabled people.

8.11 The Mall

- 8.11.1 The majority of buildings here are inaccessible. The retail outlets along the Mall appear to be among the oldest buildings in Ealing Broadway, which may explain the limited access to the shops in this area.
- 8.11.2 Almost all of the shops on the north side of the Mall, heading towards Ealing Common, are inaccessible, with steep steps and narrow, cramped doorways the main problem. Newer premises, or buildings that have been refurbished recently, are generally better as they have been designed with disabled access

incorporated at planning level. The Slug and Lettuce and The Lodge bar / restaurant both have good access to their buildings since recent renovations and change of ownership. Both have ramps leading into seated area to allow wheelchair access.

- 8.11.3 A significant number of shops are small, independent traders with far less financial resources than the large multinational chain stores. Shop managers have suggested that they are unable to make adjustments to their facilities because of the cost and disruption to their business. The Cancer Research charity shop was an example of this.
- 8.11.4 However, there are examples of large, well known companies who do not have adequate facilities for disabled customers. KFC and the Allied Irish Bank (soon due to close in any case) are two such examples.

8.12 High Street

- 8.12.1 On High Street, 67% of the premises are accessible. The public footpath on the western side of High Street is narrow and constricts room for disabled people, especially as there are several shop signs lining the road. The paving area adjacent to the shopping centre is wider and easier to access.
- 8.12.2 The Post Office has a slightly narrow entrance and floor space but is accessible for wheelchair and scooter users. Inside there is not a great deal of space, but there are three tills that are easily accessible to disabled customers.
- 8.12.3 The Royal Bank of Scotland also has good facilities for disabled people. This is another example of how major companies are more likely to be able to provide a higher standard of accessibility.
- 8.12.4 The majority of the shops on the High Street, mainly independent retailers, are accessible. However, the small size of many of the properties restricts movement once inside.
- 8.12.5 However, the shops at the far end of the High Street (heading towards South Ealing) are quite mixed and inconsistent in their access for disabled people. While a number of premises have made adjustments to allow disabled access, it is rare to come across two or three shops in a row that are accessible. In the majority of buildings a disabled customer would have to rely on staff or a helper for assistance in open the door and entering.

8.13 Haven Green

- 8.13.1 The premises on Haven Green are 56% accessible. There is no access for wheelchair users at Ealing Broadway station. The roads adjacent to the station, where the majority of the bus stops are, are tricky for disabled people, especially those who are unfamiliar with using wheelchairs or scooters.

- 8.13.2 The pedestrian area is narrow in places and is extremely busy at peak times, which may well discourage disabled shoppers from attempting to access the area. The area adjacent to the railway station (heading south towards Uxbridge Road) features a parade of shops, of which the majority are accessible. In contrast, the shops heading north are mainly older buildings with limited access for disabled people.
- 8.13.3 The least accessible section of Haven Green is the parade of shops directly opposite the rail station (on the western side of the road, heading south towards Uxbridge Road). Here, all but three of the fifteen premises would prove very difficult to enter, and in most cases impossible due to the steep steps leading up to the door. To make matters worse, the paving area slopes downwards (towards Uxbridge Road) and there are numerous shop signs causing an obstacle along the road.

8.14 Ealing Business Improvement District

- 8.14.1 Ealing Business Improvement District (BID) has already been identified as a stakeholder in Task Note 2. Their work around Ealing Broadway Town Centre accessibility includes:
- Pavement / kerb improvements – Ealing BID actively lobby LB Ealing to improve the paving and pedestrian area in the town centre. This provides scope for a Shopmobility scheme to work in partnership in accessing funding for improvements to the pavements, repair street furniture, drop kerbs, and introduction of more benches in the town centre.
 - Shop Accessibility – work is undertaken with local traders to ensure their outlets are accessible for shoppers of all mobility needs. This includes advice on display and merchandising so that mobility equipment users can manoeuvre around the shop easily. They also provide advice on access into the shop itself through the use of ramps.
- 8.14.2 There would be scope to work in partnership with Ealing BID around issues of town centre accessibility in order to enable mobility equipment users to get around the town centre and in and out of all shops easily.

8.15 Conclusions

- 8.15.1 Typical of many town centre environments, Ealing presents considerable challenges to people with disabilities and older people with diminishing mobility. There is no consistent level of accessibility, and therefore no assurance that any Shopmobility user would be comfortably able to visit all the shops and premises that they might wish to. Ealing is characterised by:
- Public buildings that have been made accessible

- Shopping centres that meet very high standards overall
- Major name retailers having made concerted efforts to achieve accessibility
- Small retailers in older shops having no adequate access
- Retailers generally not allowing for the needs of users of mobility equipment in terms of internal arrangements and layouts
- Rail and Tube station that is difficult to negotiate for disabled passengers
- Pavements that in some cases need improvements
- Lack of pedestrianised zones
- Heavy traffic flows through the town centre via A4020 and B455.

8.15.2 In some cases, solutions to access difficulties need not be expensive or disruptive, although small businesses may not wish to spend money unless they are legally obliged to. Ealing Council clearly has both a public obligation and a strategic role to play in effecting improvements on this level.

9.1 Town Centre Development Framework Event

- 9.1.1 Ealing Council held a Town Centre Development Framework event on 4th July 2007. This was aimed at getting local people and groups involved in developing a strategy and framework for the development of Ealing Broadway town centre.
- 9.1.2 Marianne Downing, Senior Economic Development Manager, Ealing Council proposed the following:
- A move away from the notion of a metropolitan town centre to one divided into 3 areas - Ealing Broadway, the stretch of Uxbridge Road between Ealing Broadway and West Ealing (which is office blocks & new apartments), and West Ealing itself.
 - Removing the small car park outside Ealing Broadway station (see 4.8 above), in order to increase pedestrian access and movement.
- 9.1.3 She also noted that at any given point, there are up to 200 unused car park spaces in the town centre. She found that even on a very busy Saturday afternoon, only 1/3 of all car parks were full. This is because most people do not know about smaller car parks in the area and tend to migrate to the larger, prominent car parks. This is also due to a lack of car parking facility signage.
- 9.1.4 The average weekly retail spend by pedestrians was reported to be £91 and £61 by drivers.
- 9.1.5 Tibbalds consultants are recommending the removal of the Medus car park (also known as the BBC car park), to create space for a bus interchange / layover point.
- 9.1.6 Transport for London is currently conducting an Interchange study into pedestrian congestion in the Ealing Broadway area.