



**DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY COMMUNITY TRANSPORT  
2022 – 2025 STRATEGY**

**DRIVING COMMUNITY COHESION AND GROWTH**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2022 – 25 Dumfries and Galloway Driving Community Cohesion and Growth Strategy sets out how Community Transport can transition from the current Public Social Partnership to “business as usual” so that it can be a key delivery partner for the new Public Transport Model that will be developed.

This Strategy builds on the successful Community Transport Public Social Partnership that has delivered a number of activities including the flagship project the volunteer car scheme for transporting patients to health appointments. The key statistics are:

- Number of Patients = 2,118
- Number of Journeys = 3,968
- Volunteer Driver Hours = 8,417
- Travelling to out of region (30%) and in region (70%) health appointments

The Strategy sets out the challenges that require to be overcome, a vision and future development required and what resources are needed to implement this strategy including financial investment. The vision for Community Transport in the region is:

***“increased and enhanced social, health and community transport services across the region, which are more frequently used by people isolated through location or circumstance, in order to improve their quality of life; and to widen the social and economic impact of community transport in these same communities.”***

The way forward for the on-going sustainability and development of Community Transport in Dumfries and Galloway, to enable it to grow and be able to play a key role in the new public transport model that is being developed, will require:

- Continued and strengthening partnership working
- Buy in from all statutory and community transport sectors as well as working in partnership with the commercial bus sector
- Resources, both financial investment and time
- Mainstream the Public Social Partnership and overcome the challenges identified

There is a requirement to build on the great work and success of the Public Social Partnership and continue to build the sector around the following 4 key pillars:

- ***Building the Infrastructure and Capacity Building*** – Through the establishment of a Regional Wide Community Transport Social Enterprise.
- ***Environmental Impact*** – Through better transport co-ordination from the establishment of the Transport Hub, transitioning the community transport fleet to low carbon and developing active and sustainable transport initiatives.
- ***Community Cohesion*** – Developing and providing transport solutions for local communities, develop volunteering opportunities and the development of an employability pathway programme.

- **Sustainable Growth** – Through a social enterprising approach to financial sustainability by providing transport and other solutions to local communities and key stakeholders.

To enable the development, and implement this 3 year strategy, will require the following:

- **Mainstream the Community Transport Public Social Partnership** – the volunteer car scheme, the transport hub, employability pathway programme and the volunteer development project.
- **Establish a Regional Community Transport Social Enterprise** - One of the key elements of this strategy is to develop a sustainable infrastructure for Community Transport in the region. To deliver this a Regional Community Transport Social Enterprise will be established. This will be an umbrella organisation, working in partnership with the current community transport operators.
- **Strategic Partnerships** – Building on the success of the PSP, it is important that there is continued buy-in from the current stakeholders as well as widening out the partnerships to Community Planning Partners, Health and Social Care, Integrated Joint Board, South of Scotland Enterprise, other key departments with Dumfries and Galloway Council, the Third Sector and the Commercial Bus Sector.
- **Core Funding for Community Transport Operators** - A annual grant funding pot is required to assist community transport operators in Dumfries and Galloway.

Community Transport assists key stakeholders in meeting the numerous Local, Regional and National Strategies and Policies, including the Regional Transport Strategy, National Transport Strategy, Older People and Social Isolation and Loneliness Strategies and NHS Recovery Plan. This is because Community Transport is not just about transport it is an enabler that has an impact across a number of policy areas such as access to health, preventative measures in relation to health and social care, rural economy, education, employability, social isolation and loneliness and just transition to low carbon.

However, the main opportunity is for Community Transport to be a key delivery partner in the development of a new sustainable public transport model that has been agreed for Dumfries and Galloway. Over the 3 years of this strategy there will be a requirement for approximately £1m investment. This will enable this strategy to be delivered so that Community Transport is:

- Sustainable and able to meet the challenges and opportunities now and in the future.
- Able to assist key stakeholders in meeting their policy aims including access to health and social care, reducing poverty, reducing social isolation and loneliness, rural economy, employability and community cohesion.
- Able to play a key part in the new Public Transport Model that is being developed, with Community Transport outlined as a key delivery partner.

With the current funding constraints on local and regional funding it is important that there is a strategic and holistic approach to the investment required. This should include a funding model where there are a number of funding partners, including Community Planning Partners, various departments within Dumfries and Galloway Council (e.g. social work, employability, communities), South of Scotland Enterprise, NHS Dumfries and Galloway and Health and Social Care Partnership. Funding should be secured as part of wider strategies including spend to save and key stakeholders looking at spending their budgets differently that will achieve efficiencies.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Public transport provides the residents and visitors of Dumfries and Galloway with the opportunity to learn, work, socialise and access key services. A sustainable and connected transport network is critical to the success of the economy by enabling businesses to grow and prosper in the communities.

Community Transport is a crucial, but frequently overlooked, part of the public transport network. It is a means of complementing existing transport provision. By doing so, community transport provides a valued and essential service, often for the most vulnerable in our society. It can provide efficient and effective transport solutions of both a general and specialist nature, whilst combating social and rural isolation.

In Dumfries and Galloway, Community Transport is seen as a key stakeholder and partner in the delivery of the new developing public transport model. This model is being developed over the next couple of years that will look to mitigate the consequences of potentially less commercial bus companies operating in the region and to address the challenges of providing high-quality services across dispersed rural communities to an ageing population.

This Strategy outlines what is required to ensure that community transport is able to assist in any new model. It will build on the success of the Community Transport Public Social Partnership (PSP) to make the PSP activities mainstreamed and sustained as well as embedding the PSP model principles into future developments.

## SECTION ONE – OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

### 1.1. What is Community Transport?

Community Transport is designed, specified and developed by the communities it services, and which is provided on a not-for-profit basis in direct response to the identified needs of those communities. It is about providing flexible, accessible and responsive solutions to unmet local transport needs, and often represents the only means of transport for certain user groups.

This is likely to include:

- People in rural areas where there is no public transport provision and other options are not practical
- People with reduced mobility who require support/assistance when travelling or to travel in adapted / suitably equipped vehicles.
- People on low incomes for whom alternative transport options are unaffordable

Some key features of community transport include:

- Third Sector, Charitable, Not-for-profit organisations
- Typically use minibuses, people carriers & cars
- Staffed by a mix of volunteer and paid staff
- Organisations vary by scale, size, fleet etc. and services delivered

The social purpose of community transport includes:

- Community Transport is not for profit
- Usually established to provide relief to communities they serve, who are in need due to age, mobility, mental and physical disability, illness and poverty.

This is achieved by operating affordable, reliable, accessible transport solutions to the local communities they serve.

Transport, though a major element of community transport's work, is a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. CT is first and foremost about people and their needs, not transport. This means it has an impact on:

- Reducing social isolation and loneliness
- Access to health care
- Being a preventative measure for health and social care
- Community cohesion
- Employability
- Environment

Community Transport cannot be fully self-sustainable as the non-profit aspect of community transport permit operation prohibits profit-making which creates barriers to sustainability and the complexity of the transport provided is more expensive than passengers can individually afford.

A report produced by the Department for Transport, the Community Transport Association and the Plunkett Foundation on an enterprising approach to rural community transport found that:

***“Rural Community Transport Operators are already very enterprising, in both the formal and informal senses of the word, and there is opportunity for them to be even more so. But the research also shows that social enterprise is not a silver bullet in the face of a challenging funding environment for the sector. The use of social enterprise approaches can be a way of increasing income streams for the benefit of both operators and customers, but it is not normally a way of eliminating the ongoing need for external support, be that from funders or volunteers.”***

Without community transport people within our rural communities would struggle with accessing essential services, may not be able to travel and in some cases may never leave their home. Community transport provision is critical for people to get out and about, improves their mental well-being and also impacts positively on their physical health.

Community Transport offers the following solutions:

**Group transport:** community transport groups hire out vehicles – often accessible minibuses – and drivers to take the members of voluntary groups on trips. Alternatively, voluntary groups can use their own drivers.

**Community bus services:** demand responsive or fixed-route transport services, available to the public, operating where commercial bus routes are not viable.

**Shopmobility:** loan or hire of wheelchairs and mobility scooters to allow disabled travellers to get around the shops when they visit local towns.

**Vehicle brokerage:** community transport organisations manage the sharing of a number of vehicles owned by several organisations in order to maximise the services that can be delivered.

**Wheels to Work:** scooters are loaned to geographically isolated people (often young people) to enable them to get to work, apprenticeships or training.

**Door-to-door Dial-a-Ride Services:** these are services for individuals who can't, or find it difficult to, use or access mainstream transport services. People are usually picked up from their homes and dropped off at their destination such as the doctor or the shopping centre. Each vehicle will carry several passengers going to and from different places.

A large percentage of community transport organisations also provide training especially, MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) for drivers and PATS (Passenger Assistance Training Scheme) for assistants. This is so that they can provide in-house training to their staff and volunteers and also sell the training to other organisations to help with sustainability.



There are a number of challenges within the sector, including:

**Sustainability and Funding** – As the sector is not-for-profit it requires an element of subsidy. It is also currently experiencing challenges in relation to increase in costs, particularly fuel and wage increases.

**Driver Training** – Changes in the driver licensing regulations created by European Legislation means that a driver who obtained their licence after 1 January 1997 is not able to drive a minibus under a Section 19 Permit under the majority of circumstances. This has resulted in drivers under the age of 43 not having D1 as an automatic entitlement on their licences as was the case in the past. Failure to address this issue will result in less people being able to drive minibuses in the future.

**Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers** – Particularly post COVID.

**Driver Shortage** – There is an overall shortage of qualified drivers in the transport industry in general. This was already an issue prior to COVID but has been impacted during and post COVID.

## 1.2. Why Community Transport Matters?

There are four main characteristics of why community transport matters:

**Accessible transport:** transport services for people with disabilities who find it difficult or impossible to use conventional passenger transport, e.g. dial-a-rides, dial-a-bus and social/health car schemes.

**Social deprivation:** transport for individuals and groups who may be characterised as socially deprived, e.g. minibus travel for people with low income, wheels to work services for people without cars who would otherwise be excluded from the skills development or jobs market and low cost MPV hire to families.

**Geographical isolation:** transport services for individuals and groups who are not well served by the conventional passenger transport network, e.g. community buses or car schemes for rural areas, services to remote parts of urban estates and services to areas without services at evenings or weekends.

**Community cohesion:** transport for community and voluntary groups enabling them to provide services and respond to the needs of the community, e.g. predominately group transport either with their own volunteer driver or a supplied driver, in minibuses or larger vehicles.

This is evidenced in the 2015 Scottish Government Research into the Social and Economic Benefits of Community Transport in Scotland that highlighted:

***“The extensive cross-cutting nature of CT is perhaps unique amongst transport services. The evidence demonstrates that CT is far more than a point-to-point transport service – the CT services examined show the importance of, for example, social interaction on the bus and the role CT plays***

***in encouraging often vulnerable people to attend medical and other appointments they would not otherwise make.”***

The Report also highlighted the following benefits, in the following areas, that outlines why community transport matters:

***Economic Benefit:*** from an economic perspective, the potential cost savings provided to social services, the NHS and local authorities, combined with the unremunerated productive hours offered by volunteers, suggests that CT generates significant economic benefits.

***Social Benefits:*** From a social perspective, the contribution of CT across a wide range of policy areas is clearly beneficial. Moreover, by tackling issues such as poor accessibility, social isolation etc. it can reduce the number of older people who are experiencing social isolation and loneliness. By giving older people access to their communities, enabling them to meet friends and to feel part of their community, CT operators ensure that less older people suffer from isolation. They are, therefore, less likely to develop the negative health consequences that come with those circumstances.

***Reducing Inequalities:*** CT is making an important contribution to reducing inequalities, a key item on the Scottish Government policy agenda.

***Poverty:*** It also plays an important role in tackling accessibility poverty by providing demand responsive and other transport services when mainstream transport is unviable.

***Wellbeing:*** CT services are seen as important in promoting wellbeing, quality of life and mental health

***Rural:*** CT was seen to support rural sustainability, by providing people in rural areas with access to key services.

The report concludes that CT offers a wide range of social, economic & health benefits, The services support the Scottish economy in terms of employment, productivity and rural sustainability. In addition, the cross-cutting nature of CT is perhaps unique amongst transport services.

By offering these benefits, CT is making a positive contribution to the Scottish Government’s attempts to reduce inequality.

Therefore, community transport matters because it has an impact on:

- Reducing social isolation and loneliness
- Access to health care
- Being a preventative measure for health and social care
- Community cohesion
- Employability
- Environment

This is going to be vital to the communities of Dumfries and Galloway as the demographics show that:

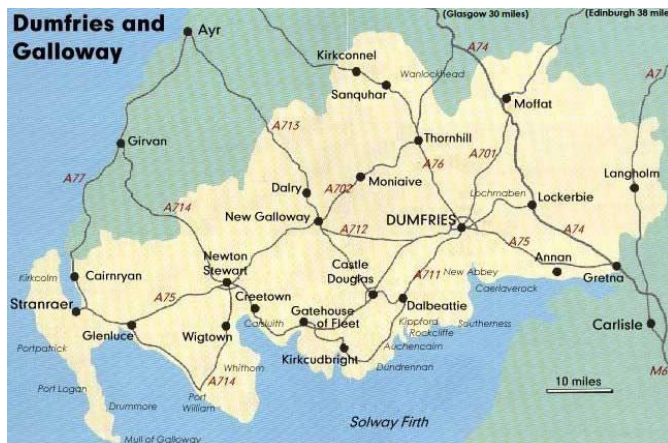
- Over 60 population will increase by 31% in 20 years
- 286 million unfulfilled trips in Scotland each year – MACS
- 25% of population long-term activity-limiting health problem or disability

### 1.3. Community Transport Provision in Dumfries and Galloway

There are a total of 12 organisations that either only provide community transport or deliver community transport solutions as part of their activities. These are:

- Annandale Community Transport Services
- Galloway Community Transport
- Wigtownshire Community Transport
- Thornhill and District Community Transport
- Cairn Valley Community Transport
- Dalbeattie Community Minibus
- East Criffel Community Transport
- The Order of St John
- Royal Voluntary Service
- Co-Wheels Car Club CIC
- Upper Nithsdale Minibus Project
- Kirkconnel Parish Heritage Community Minibus

#### Geographical Coverage



There is a good number of Community Transport organisations in Dumfries and Galloway and although the majority are small, there is a good geographical spread. The one area where there is a lack of community transport presence is in the Dumfries Town area.

#### What Services does Community Transport provide in Dumfries and Galloway?

Community Transport in Dumfries and Galloway provides a wide range of transport solutions to their local communities. These include:

- Volunteer Car Scheme to get patients to health appointments. Both local and out of area health appointments
- Group Transport to the local groups within their community

- Community Bus Services
- School Transport
- Individual Door to Door Transport
- Transport for Day Centres

There are also some of the Community Transport Organisations providing MiDAS and PATS training.

### Who Travels on Community Transport?

Community Transport is used by:

- Older People
- People with Disabilities
- Young People
- People on Low Incomes
- Members of the general public who travel on Community Bus Services

### Where do Communities that use Community Transport Travel?

Communities use community transport solutions to travel to:

- Social Outings
- Day Care Centres
- Health Appointments
- Shopping
- Education
- Sport
- Employment

### Funding

Community Transport is not alone in feeling the effects of the current climate and the challenge of finding sustainable funding is not new, but it remains a significant and complex challenge. The impact of COVID and the subsequent reduction on transport solutions community transport has been able to provide, the current increase in energy, fuel and staff costs, has only intensified these challenges.

The funding issues faced by community transport providers vary according to the size, scope and scale of the organisation. Community transport services cannot operate without some form of investment or public support and funding for the following reasons:

- The cost per trip is higher than in mainstream public transport, owing to the personalised and specialist nature of most community transport services.
- The non-profit aspect of section 19 and 22 prohibits profit-making, which creates barriers to sustainability.

- Charging passengers for all the costs would put the services beyond the reach of the very individuals and groups that community transport exists to service.

Funding is therefore a key concern to the sector, especially during this time of uncertainty arising from wider economic pressures. However, Community Transport in Dumfries and Galloway is not directly funded by any public sector organisations with most CT providers relying on external grant funding to remain sustainable, where these can be sourced, and income generation through charging.

The Council does provide funding support for the development of the CT Public Social Partnership including funding from Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Policy Development Budget.

## SECTION TWO – COMMUNITY TRANSPORT PUBLIC SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

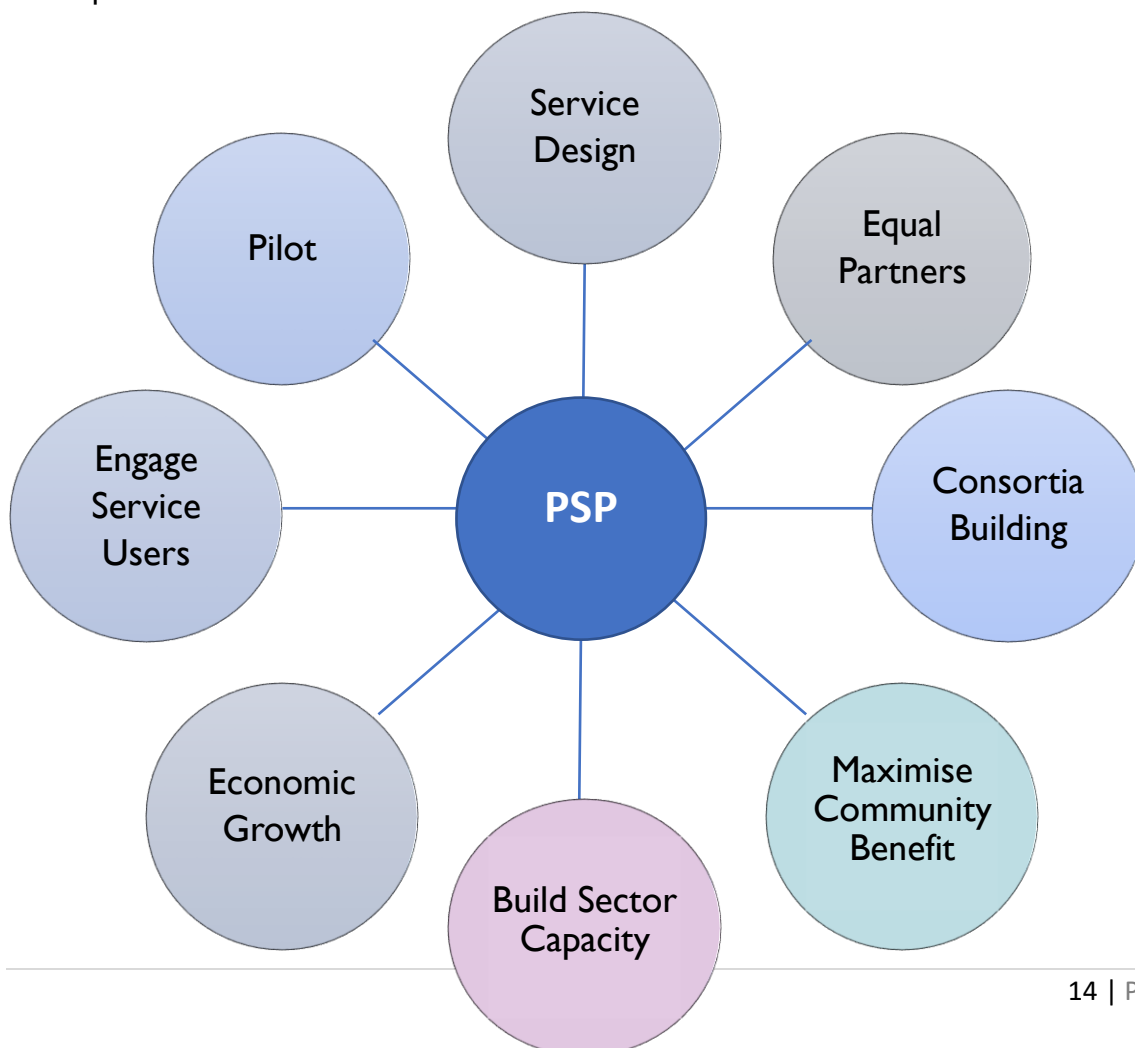
### 2.1. What is a Public Social Partnership?

A Public Social Partnership (PSP) is a strategic partnering arrangement that involves the third sector more deeply in the commissioning and design process.

The key features:

- Voluntary partnerships involving one or more organisation from both the public and third sectors, and potentially from the private sector
- Applicable to a range of services
- Based on co-planning approach where organisations jointly design services based on service user needs, with the model building in an opportunity to pilot services to ensure effectiveness
- Requires resources (financial and/or people) to be contributed by all parties
- The public and third sector organisations share responsibility for managing the PSP, designing and piloting the services
- Once piloted, any new service, that has been successful, can be competitively tendered

PSPs are about innovative engagement between the public and third sectors, focused on enhancing the social value and community benefit derived from the delivery of public services. The below diagram outlines the key themes a PSP is expected to reflect.



## 2.2. Dumfries and Galloway Public Social Partnership

### Background

In 2016, the Community Planning Executive Group invited a proposal for the improvement of community transport in Dumfries and Galloway.

Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway produced a Report - Community Transport in Dumfries and Galloway ***A State of the Sector Report and Improvement Plan*** in April 2016. This Report recommended that Community Planning Partners should:

- Investigate the potential of a Public Social Partnership approach
- Recognise the need for strategic funding for Community Transport with funding periods of at least 3 years.
- Explore the provision of support for training and recruitment of both paid and volunteer drivers and investigate the possibility of linking to the employment agenda.
- Continue to work with The Health and Social Care Partnership to embed transport in their planning to assist solving the problems people have in accessing health and social care services.
- Develop co-ordinated sub-regional trip knowledge and increased communication between Community Transport providers and partners, sharing of vehicles to use our capital assets to their full benefit by sharing vehicles during downtime

In November 2016 the Community Planning Executive Group approved the development of a Community Transport Public Social Partnership

### Overview

Since 2017, partners in Dumfries and Galloway have been developing and operating a Community Transport Public Social Partnership (PSP). The PSP model builds on the opportunity to pilot innovative services and ensure effectiveness. It develops clear sustainable routes for procurement and service delivery contracts and ensures that wider social benefits, such as assistance for passengers who are frail, are factored into the equation.

The Dumfries and Galloway Community Transport PSP is a partnership between the Statutory Sector (Dumfries and Galloway Council, SWestrans, NHS Dumfries and Galloway) and the Third Sector (Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway and the Community Transport Sector in Dumfries and Galloway).

The aims of the PSP are to:

***“Develop and design transport services to maximise the benefits to the community and develop the capacity of the community transport sector”***

There are three key work streams to take forward the aims:

**WS1 - Delivery of Community, Demand Responsive and Social Transport Services** - Focus on the design and development of innovative transport solutions that can be tested and piloted.

**WS2 – Health and Social Care Transport Hub** - Focus on the non-emergency patient transport (NEPT) provided for NHS Dumfries and Galloway (NHSD&G)

**WS3 - Community Transport Capacity Growth** - Focus on mitigating an impending gap in skills provision through driver training, volunteering and employment development and implementation of a Quality Assurance Framework, fleet renewal, sustainability and procurement opportunities

### **Progress to End of March 2022**

The PSP has been a huge success as outlined at the Dumfries and Galloway Council's Risk and Scrutiny Committee in January 2022:

***“Members noted that the PSP has been highly successful in supporting community transport across the region”***

It has:

- Built up good partnership working between the Statutory and Third Sector. Developing knowledge, trust and understanding between each sector.
- Raised the profile of Community Transport and its importance with Statutory Sector Partners.
- It has assisted with the on-going sustainability and growth of Community Transport
- Has increased the knowledge, expertise and capacity of Community Transport to deliver various transport solutions.
- Has delivered much needed services to local communities, involving users in service design – car scheme, 517 service.
- Has delivered a number of activities, including:
  - D1 Training Programme – 3 volunteers securing employment.
  - Development of a Quality Framework.
  - Delivered transport solutions – Volunteer Car Scheme(s), Bus Service.
  - Brought the CT providers together through the CT Network.
  - Built the foundations for the establishment of a Social Enterprise Organisation.
  - Beginning to look at low carbon vehicle solutions and volunteer recruitment marketing.
  - Developed an Employability Pathway Pilot ready to implement.



- Scoped out a pilot Transport Hub with NHS Dumfries and Galloway that is ready to implement.

The Volunteer Car Scheme for transporting patients to health appointments, both within Dumfries and Galloway and out with Dumfries and Galloway to appointments in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Ayrshire, has been the flagship project. This service has been operated by Annandale Community Transport Service and Galloway Community Transport.

The key statistics since the project started in 2018 up to December 2021 are:

- Patients = 2,118
- Journeys = 3,968
- Volunteer Driver Hours = 8,417
- Travelling to out of region (30%) and in region (70%) health appointments
- 75% of patients over 65 with 65% of the over 65 are aged 75+

The impact the scheme has can be illustrated by the following case study:

#### CASE STUDY – PATIENT EXPERIENCE

*“I am 86 years of age and live in Langholm with my wife. I have some trouble hearing but I have kept good health for most of his life.*

*Due to recent problems with my hip I had to travel to the Golden Jubilee Hospital in Glasgow. On their first visit there my wife and I took the car but got stuck in bad weather, spent 11 hours travelling in total. I arrived at the hospital with high blood pressure which was unusual for me and I believe it was caused by the stress of the journey.*

*When it was time for the actual operation, I was fortunate enough to be able to use the ACTS Out of Region Patient Transport Pilot which was a big relief for my wife and I following our previous ordeal.*

*It enabled me to avoid an increase in blood pressure by having to travel to the Golden Jubilee Hospital, Clydebank”*

### **PSP Challenges**

Although the PSP has been hugely successful and beneficial in Dumfries and Galloway there are a number of challenges that are required to be resolved. These include:

**Overall Investment** – If the progress and development that has been built under the PSP to date is to lead to a long-term sustainable transport provision then there will be a requirement for investment (time, resources and funding). This will be required to enable the Community Transport Sector to continue to deliver the services to its local communities, play a key role in any new public transport model, continue to build a holistic approach to transport through better co-ordination, employment and training for various transport roles and ensure that services are designed with the PSP model

around user engagement at its core. The main challenge with this is the financial squeeze on budgets and the lack of time and resources.

**Strategic Engagement** – One of the major successes of the PSP is the partnership built up with D&G Council, SWestrans, NHS D&G and recently the engagement with SOSE. Periodically the PSP has reported progress to Community Planning and the IJB. As recommended by the recent Audit and Risk Committee Review, “*it is important that engagement with CP Partners around future funding to be taken forward*”. There requires to be an overall strategic engagement plan going forward. However, this is difficult to achieve within the current resources available.

**CT Core Funding** – With budgets and finances under extreme pressure securing core funding for CT is challenging. It should not be down to just one partner, or a department within that partner (e.g. transport), to contribute to funding. However, without core funding that underpins the CT organisations their ability to play a larger part in any new public transport model could be impacted.

**Mainstream a Sustainable Volunteer Car Scheme** – This has been funded by Dumfries and Galloway Council over the last 5 years. However, there is a requirement for other key stakeholders to financially support this vital and successful scheme. Without this the long-term sustainability of the current services and any potential wider roll out will not happen.

**Implementation of Transport Hub Pilot** - has been scoped out with NHS Dumfries and Galloway that is ready to implement. However, to date this has not been able to be implemented mainly due to the challenges faced by NHS during COVID. However, this was an important work stream of the PSP and as such the implementation of the pilot requires to be taken forward. This will not only be important to NHS but will assist with Dumfries and Galloway Council’s new public transport model with a key component being the development of a transport hub.

## **Future of Dumfries and Galloway Community Transport PSP**

The work of the PSP to date has established a foundation, particularly through the partnership development, for Community Transport. However, over the next year there is a requirement to develop a sustainable way forward beyond the PSP. There is a huge opportunity for community transport to be a key stakeholder in the new Public Transport Model being developed.

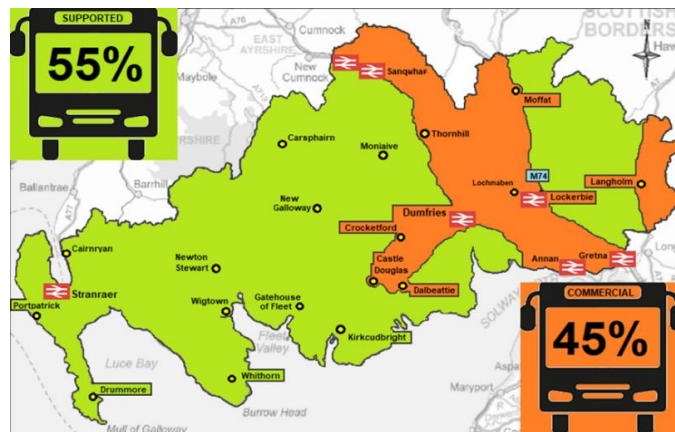
Therefore, there is a requirement to scope out and implement a strategy beyond the PSP, which this Strategy, under Section’s 4, 5 and 6, looks to address. The key requirement to take forward beyond the PSP are:

- Mainstream some of the successful activities
- Overcome the identified PSP challenges
- Continue to develop the capacity building projects, including the establishment of a Social Enterprise
- Embed the PSP Model of designing/redesigning services around service user engagement.

## SECTION THREE – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### 3.1. Some Key Statistics about Dumfries and Galloway:

- The population of Dumfries and Galloway is 149,200. 84% (124,700) of people live in the 150 settlements across the region with 30 or more residents.
- There are 3 types of local bus services in Dumfries and Galloway, providing 93 bus routes covering 11.1 million Km per annum. These are split:



- The socially necessary local bus services (supported) are at an annual net cost of some £3.2M
- Overall Dumfries and Galloway has 19 data zones<sup>4</sup> considered to be in the 20% most deprived in Scotland
- There are 37,880 people aged 65 years or older living in Dumfries and Galloway. This is 26% of the region's population (National Records Scotland, mid 2018 population estimate)
- The number of people in the region over the age of 65 is expected to grow by 29% 48,800 people by 2039. Within this, the number of people aged 85 and older is expected to grow by 108% from 4,480 people in 2018 to 9,340 people in 2039.
- Currently there are 48,500 people living with long term conditions of which, 12,500 people are living with 2 or more long term conditions. The number of people with a long term condition is increasing by an estimated 100 people per year.
- It is expected that 12,000 people aged 75 and older will be living alone by 2037

### 3.2. Local Strategies

The Dumfries and Galloway Anti-poverty Strategy outlined the following in relation to travel and transport:

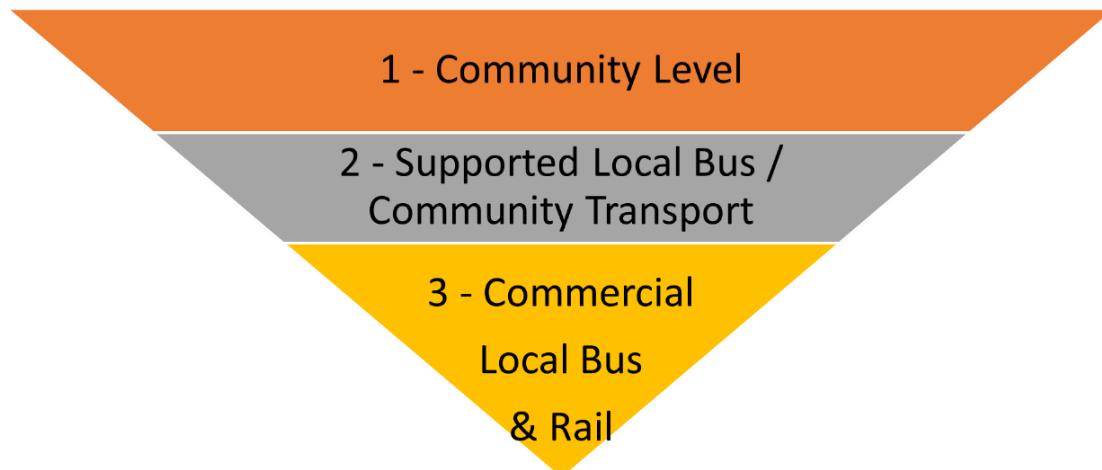
***“Our transport system must deliver the internal and external connectivity required to sustain and enhance the region’s economy and communities. It is about delivering genuine travel choices for our residents; providing access to jobs and public services; enabling goods to reach their markets; and providing the links that promote social inclusion and support quality of life. The cost of***

***rural living can be higher than urban areas with costs of transport, such as the need for vehicle ownership, to lead a more independent life and/or costs of public transport to access services not available locally. Transport is also a particular issue for our disabled citizens and we need to ensure that our services and fares are suitable for their needs.”***

The updated Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Strategy’s vision is for “A Dumfries and Galloway in which local action has driven poverty as low as possible; and has mitigated as far as possible the impact of poverty when experienced”.

***New Sustainable Public Transport Model Development*** – In June 2021, the Dumfries and Galloway Communities Committee agreed to the development of a sustainable delivery model utilising the opportunities available to provide our residents with a needs-based, coordinated, affordable and integrated network that allows easy transitions across modes.

This model sets out a draft 3 tier framework for delivering a public transport network for the region which incorporates all journey needs, outlined in the diagram below:



***Tier 1 – Community Level Provision:*** made up of a number of tailored and flexible services providing travel opportunities at community level linking directly to amenities/services or to a more structured/timetabled public transport option. This tier will take the learning and structures developed through the Community Transport Public Social Partnership (PSP) and expand across the region. This ‘mainstreaming’ of the PSP learnings will be a critical building block for the delivery of needs based transport.

***Tier 2 – Supported Local Bus and Community Transport Services:*** made up of supported bus services provided by bus operators, DGC Buses and Community Transport. This would include fixed or semi-fixed bus routes along with Demand Responsive Transport services that would either complement the current supported routes or be an alternative to these routes. One of the major aims of Tier 2 services would be to increase patronage of Tier 3 services through the development of Hub and Spoke feeder services to assist with the overall sustainability of commercial routes.

Tier 3 – Commercial Local Bus and Rail Services: made up of commercial bus routes and ScotRail services. They would operate on the main corridors where there is high passenger demand for these services. Tier 3 services would be operated, in the main, by the commercial bus sector and Train Operating Companies

A vital element of this new model will be co-ordinating, scheduling and planning resources more effectively particularly in Tier 1 but also across Tier 2 to ensure that these resources are used efficiently whilst delivering high quality and appropriate services to the travelling public. It will be key that journeys are integrated, with all key partners working collaboratively and that passengers have a simple and flexible way to book transport if needed. Therefore, development and establishment of a Transport Hub which creates an integrated single booking and scheduling point of contact will be an essential part of the new model.

### 3.3. Regional Strategies

***The Community Planning Partnership’s Local Outcomes Improvement Plan for 2017- 2027*** - is the highest level document setting the direction for the region. It sets out a number of outcomes including:

- Learning opportunities are available to those who need them most.
- Health and wellbeing inequalities are reduced.
- People are safe and feel safe.
- People are well connected.
- Individuals and communities are empowered

***Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)*** – SWestrans are currently developing their new Regional Transport Strategy. A key development stage of this is the Case for Change Report that has been published and will shortly be going out to consultation. A set of six draft RTS Strategic Objectives have been developed as follows:

- To facilitate and encourage safe active travel for all by connecting communities and travel hubs.
- To improve the quality and sustainability of public transport within, and to / from the region.
- To widen access to and improve connectivity by public transport within and to / from the region.
- To improve integration between all modes of travel and freight within and to / from the region.
- To provide improved, reliable, resilient, and safe road based connectivity for the movement of people and goods within the region, and to key locations including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Carlisle and Cairnryan.
- To reduce the impact of transport on the people and environment of the region.

***South of Scotland Regional Economic Strategy Delivery Plan (2022 – 2025) – Delivering a Greener, Fairer and Flourishing South of Scotland*** – Published in November 2021, a key action under the Thriving and District Communities theme is that *“the region to rapidly enhance transport connectivity within key locations, establish*

*new and innovative models of public transport delivery and build on road and rail investments, to improve connections within and out with the South of Scotland.”*

One of the key challenges and barriers in the South of Scotland is the lack of good transport connectivity. We will undertake a strategic high level review of transport proposals including potential public transport improvements; and active travel.

Other major themes outlined in the strategy are:

- A low carbon society, increasingly resilient to the effects of climate change.
- Vibrant, growing and connected places shaped by empowered communities
- Significant percentage of spending power being retained locally.
- Greater equality of opportunity for all, with people reaching their full potential
- Improving the health and welfare of those who are most disadvantaged within the region
- Building the capability and capacity of social enterprises and the Third Sector
- Investing in social infrastructure and education to enhance life prospects
- Activating Communities & Social Enterprise - Communities have a key role to play in shaping places, tackling local challenges and developing social and economic equity, by harnessing local expertise, capacity and self-subsidiarity and need greater and more sustained support to enable this to happen. - There are significant imbalances between the opportunity and ability for social enterprises and the Third Sector to build capacity and make a difference which requires targeted action, systemic change and greater flexibilities introduced within public procurement.

### 3.4. National Strategies

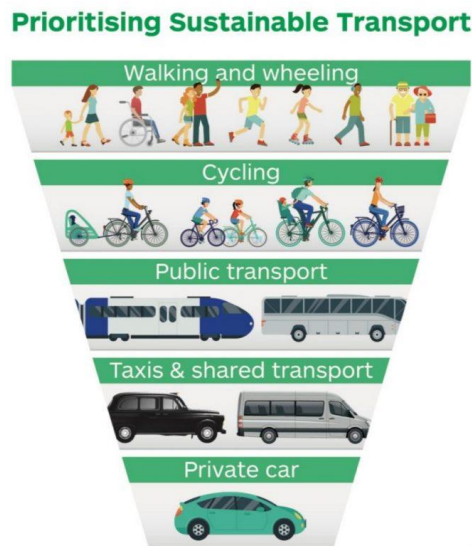
***The National Transport Strategy (NTS2)*** published in February 2020 sets out an ambitious and compelling vision for Scotland’s transport system for the next 20 years. There are four priorities to support that vision:

- reduces inequalities
- takes climate action
- helps deliver inclusive economic growth
- improves our health and wellbeing.

The overall Vision is:



The NTS2 establishes a ‘Sustainable Travel Hierarchy’ that defines the principles upon which future transport investment decision making and services should be planned. It defines the priority which will be given to each mode of transport in future investment planning and is shown below that prioritises walking & wheeling and cycling, with investment to support the single occupant private car being the lowest priority.



There are a number of other strategies, policies and innovations around transport including:

- A Just Transition to move to low carbon transport
- 20% reduction in car kilometres by 2030
- 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- Mobility As A Service
- Active and Sustainable Transport

**NHS Recovery Plan 2021 – 2026** – This Plan sets out key headline ambitions and actions to be developed and delivered now and over the next 5 years. The impact of addressing the Covid-19 pandemic meant many health and care services had to be suspended or reduced in scope and scale. This affected almost all aspects of NHS care.

As a result, there are many people who are waiting longer for the care they need. Addressing this backlog of care, while continuing to meet the ongoing urgent health and care needs of the country, is the central aim of this recovery plan. Whilst the NHS has sought to prioritise and maintain essential services, such as urgent, emergency, mental health, maternity and vital cancer care throughout the pandemic, we know that many people have had treatment delayed. The pausing of non-urgent elective procedures and screening, while unavoidable as part of our pandemic response, has resulted in delays to routine treatment and it has significantly lengthened waiting times for many patients.

Primary and community care services, such as general practice, pharmacy, dentistry and eye care, have also been greatly impacted and are under significant pressure. Getting services back on track and tackling backlogs of care for patients as quickly as

possible is essential, and this Plan sets out how this will be done that safely and effectively, while being open and transparent about the scale of the challenge the NHS faces over the next few years.

***The Equality and Human Rights Commission “Is Scotland Fairer Report on the State of Equality and Human Rights in Scotland” (2018)*** – Found that disabled and older people continue to face problems accessing all forms of public transport. One priority aim was “public transport supports the economic and social inclusion of disabled and older people.”

***A Fairer Scotland for Older People: Framework for Action*** – “Community transport plays an important role in providing flexible and accessible community-led solutions in response to unmet local transport needs, and often represents the only means of transport for many vulnerable and isolated people, often older people or people with disabilities.” “Tackling social isolation and loneliness - remaining active and engaged in communities is a clear priority for older people, and there is much the Government and partners can do to make this possible. Issues as diverse as making public spaces safe and welcoming, ensuring availability of transport at affordable prices...”

***A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Delivery Plan*** – “Action - Increased availability of accessible and inclusive transport and services”

***The Key to Life – Learning Disabilities Scottish Government Strategy*** – “Public transport and buses are very important for people with learning disabilities.” “try to make public transport easier for people with learning disabilities to use”.

### **3.5. Summary**

Community Transport can assist key stakeholders in meeting the numerous Local, Regional and National Strategies and Policies outlined above. It, as an enabler, has an impact across a number of policy areas such access to health, preventative measures in relation to health and social care, rural economy, education, employability, social isolation and loneliness, active and sustainable travel and just transition to low carbon.

There can be little doubt that in Dumfries and Galloway the ability of people and communities to access transport is a major cause of disadvantage. This report is concerned with tackling that disadvantage and proposing the means by which we might achieve an improvement in public transport services, specifically those provide by Community Transport providers.

Community transport can mitigate the cost of loneliness and isolation through providing older people with access to health and other services, and to social opportunities.

The work of Community Transport, particularly access to affordable, reliable, accessible transport solutions, will contribute to a number of Scottish Government’s equality and human rights action plans and strategies.



## SECTION FOUR – COMMUNITY TRANSPORT.... FUTURE JOURNEY

The way forward for the on-going sustainability and development of Community Transport in Dumfries and Galloway to enable it to grow and play a key role in the new public transport model that is being developed will require:

- Continued and strengthening partnership working
- Buy in from all statutory and community transport sectors as well as working in partnership with commercial bus sector
- Resources, both financial investment and time
- Mainstream the Public Social Partnership and overcome the challenges identified

### 4.1. Four Key Pillars

There is a requirement to build on the great work and success of the Public Social Partnership and continue to build the sector around the following 4 key pillars:

- ***Building the Infrastructure and Capacity Building*** – Through the establishment of a Regional Wide Community Transport Social Enterprise. In August 2019, an event was held with the Community Transport Sector in Dumfries and Galloway which was attended by 8 CT Organisations. The outcome of the event was a recommendation to establish an umbrella Social Enterprise using the ‘hub and spoke’ model with the new organisation being the hub and the CT providers the spokes. It was agreed that this was the best model to assist the sustainability of the CT Sector as well as assisting with the significant transport challenges that communities face.
- ***Environmental Impact*** – Through better transport co-ordination from the establishment of the Transport Hub. transitioning the community transport fleet to low carbon and developing active and sustainable transport initiatives.
- ***Community Cohesion*** – Developing and providing transport solutions for local communities, develop volunteering opportunities and the development of an employability pathway programme that will look at key areas in relation to developing skills for drivers, schedulers, transport managers and mechanics. This will assist the whole transport sector in the region to build capacity of transport staff where there is a shortage.
- ***Sustainable Growth*** – Through a social enterprising approach to financial sustainability by providing transport and other solutions to local communities and key stakeholders such as SWestrans, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Health and Social Care Partnership and NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

## 4.2. Vision for Community Transport

The vision for Community Transport in the region is:

***“increased and enhanced social, health and community transport services across the region, which are more frequently used by people isolated through location or circumstance, in order to improve their quality of life; and to widen the social and economic impact of community transport in these same communities.”***

## 4.3. Mission of Community Transport

The Mission is to operate a quality, sustainable, and consistent Demand Responsive, Social and Community Transport network across the region to those that need it. This will be achieved by:

- a) Maintaining and setting standards within the Network.
- b) Providing comprehensive support and capacity building training from operational to management issues.
- c) Integrating the community transport sector to deliver transport solutions across the South West of Scotland.
- d) Being a key partner in the designing of transport solutions for communities, building on the Public Social Partnership, integrating the model into any design.
- e) Deliver transport solutions on behalf of commissioning organisations including SWestrans, NHS Dumfries and Galloway and Dumfries and Galloway Council.
- f) Being a key partner in assisting in the development and operation of the Integrated Transport Hub.

## 4.4. Approach

A human rights-based approach will be at the centre of this strategy. This approach is as follows:

- **Participation:** Transport plays a vital role in all our lives. It enables us to get to work, education or training; to see friends and family; to take part in leisure activities; to access health appointments and so much more. The transport solutions that will be provided aim to ensure that our local communities are able to participate in everyday activities, especially where mainstream public transport does not meet people’s requirements. Our transport will be affordable as it is important that no matter what level of income people should not have to make trade-offs between spending on transport and spending on other essential items such as food or fuel.
- **Accountability:** Any transport service should be accountable, with people and communities able to influence the delivery of services. It should be clear who people need to contact when transport is not meeting their needs and who is accountable for making sure that standards are met. Using the Public Social Partnership Model, as a community based sector, our ethos is designing and delivering transport solutions with the heart of the local communities needs instrumental in what we deliver.

- ***Non-discrimination and equality:*** Transport should be explicitly designed to be inclusive, taking into account the different needs of older and disabled people, particularly in relation to issues such as caring responsibilities, access to health services and participation in public life. Using the Public Social Partnership Model, these groups of transport users will be part of the design process.
- ***Empowerment and Legality:*** Access to suitable transport is not in itself set out as a human right in international conventions, but it is a necessary requirement in order to achieve other human rights such as the right to work, right to education, right to take part in cultural and public life and the right to the highest standard of physical and mental health. A huge impact on empowering people to live their lives and be able to access vital services and activities can be the barrier of accessing transport. We aim to provide access to suitable transport solutions, whether passenger or non-passenger, to meet the needs of our community. Access to suitable transport, no matter your level of income or where you live, should be seen as a necessary requirement in order to achieve other human rights.

## SECTION FIVE – WHAT IS REQUIRED?

To enable the development, and implement this 3 year strategy, will require the following:

### 5.1. Mainstream the Community Transport Public Social Partnership

The work of the PSP to date has established a foundation, particularly through the partnership development, for Community Transport. However, over the next year there is a requirement to develop a sustainable way forward beyond the PSP.

During the first year of this strategy, it will be important to transition the successful Community Transport Public Social Partnership into “business as usual”. However, to be able to do this, will require a number of the following activities to be mainstreamed:

#### A Sustainable Volunteer Car Scheme

The Volunteer Car Scheme for transporting patients to health appointments, both within Dumfries and Galloway and out with Dumfries and Galloway to appointments in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Ayrshire, has been the flagship project.

However, without sustainable funding then the continuation and expansion of this service will not be possible and will have to end. This has been a vital service to over 2,000 patients since the service commenced and it has highlighted the importance and value of volunteers with over 8,400 volunteer hours to date.

***The Annual funding required to continue and expand the service is £50,000 per annum and £150,000 over the 3 years of this strategy.***

#### Implementation of the Transport Hub

Over the next year it is important to implement the pilot of the Transport Hub in partnership with NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

The development of the Hub will create an integrated single booking and scheduling point of contact through the establishment of a Transport Hub. This will assist in addressing the transport needs of passengers. This will be achieved by using the collaborative economy model by working with a number of transport providers, including Dumfries and Galloway Council, Community Transport Operators and NHS Dumfries and Galloway, to make better use of their transport fleet downtime.

The idea is to make use of a collaborative digital platform that will:

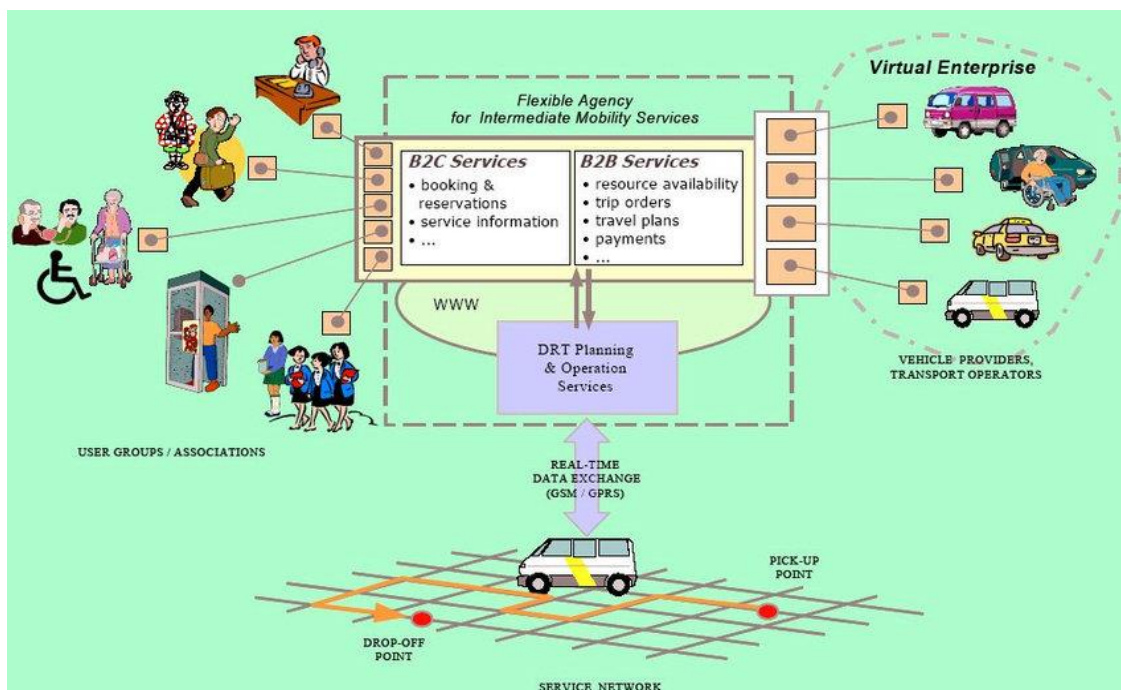
- Assist with transport needs of communities to access employment, training, leisure activities and health and social care
- Schedule and book transport matching supply with demand
- Ability to allocate journeys in real-time
- Make better use of resources from Local Authorities, Community Transport and NHS by utilising their spare vehicle capacity and downtime
- Design transport solutions to meet the needs of communities.

The overall vision of the project is to make use of the collaborative economy model by working with key transport providers. The interactive web based scheduling and booking solution will enable us to match up supply, resources available from Local Authorities, Community Transport Operators and NHS, to demand, transport requirements of communities to enable them to access employability and training, health, social care services and leisure activities.

It will reduce unnecessary duplicate journeys and provide efficiencies for key stakeholders through economies of scale. This will see:

- The establishment of an integrated transport hub that will be a single point of contact for booking, scheduling, planning and designing transport solutions
- Make use of a web based interactive digital solution to co-ordinate, schedule, plan and allocate resources and journeys of partners to make more efficient use of these, reduce duplicate journeys and free up capacity to deliver innovative and bespoke transport solutions to the region's communities.
- Provide the facility for real time allocation of journeys and resources to meet demand.
- Provide passengers with digital apps to book and schedule transport that is linked to the scheduling system.

As the project develops, particularly with the establishment of the new proposed Public Transport Model, it will allow for the flexibility to create a “virtual hub” in the future through a ‘trip broker’ facility as outlined in the below diagram:

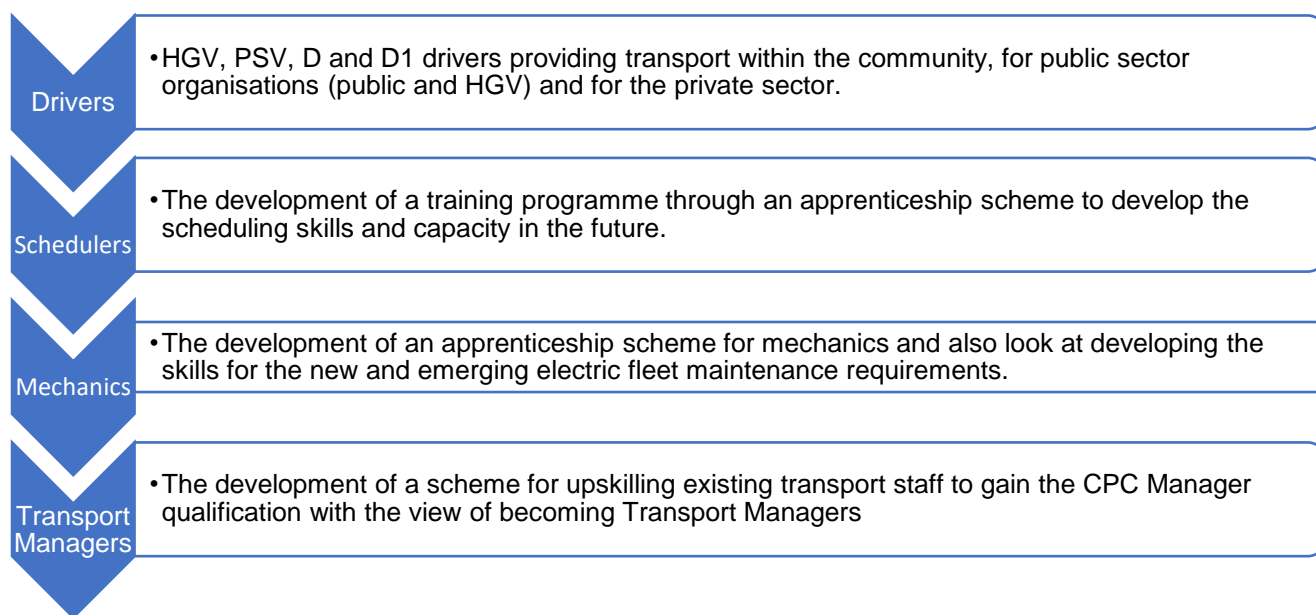


***There is an initial £40,000 capital funding required for the initial set up of the Hub. The annual expenditure funding required to operate the Hub for NHS Dumfries and Galloway activity will be £50,000 per annum and £150,000 over the 3 years of this strategy.***

## Employability Pathway Programme

The Public Social Partnership will be implementing an employability pathway programme pilot over the next year. If this is successful, it is envisaged that this will be mainstreamed over the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year of this strategy.

This overall project will look at four key areas in relation to developing skills:



***The Annual funding required is £50,000 per annum and £150,000 over the 3 years of this strategy.***

## Volunteering Development Project

The Public Social Partnership will be scoping out the development of a pilot volunteering project over the next year. If the project is successful, it is envisaged that this will be mainstreamed over the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year of this strategy.

The majority of community transport providers in the region rely heavily on volunteers, particularly drivers, to provide their services. The demographics of people driving for community transport throughout Scotland is male, retired and over 65.

Therefore, the pilot project will scope out, develop and implement a volunteer strategy for community transport. This will include recruitment, marketing and training of volunteers and will look at widening the demographics and diversify the people volunteering for community transport, including the recruitment of more young people and women.

***The Annual funding required is £25,000 per annum and £75,000 over the 3 years of this strategy.***

## 5.2. Establish a Regional Community Transport Social Enterprise

One of the key elements of this strategy is to develop a sustainable infrastructure for Community Transport in the region.

To deliver this a Regional Community Transport Social Enterprise will be established. This will be an umbrella organisation, working in partnership with the current community transport operators. The diagram below outlines the potential services that the social enterprise would aim to deliver.



The Strategic Goals will be to:

1. Increase the use of community transport services across Dumfries and Galloway.
2. Support the Community Transport Organisations across Dumfries and Galloway through a CT Network.
3. Increase the productivity and cost-effectiveness of Community Transport
4. Raise and maintain the community transport-related skills and qualifications of the staff and volunteers of member organisations through the development of a Training and Learning Centre.
5. Transition to a low carbon fleet, where possible.

6. Develop a Hub and Spoke Model for the delivery of transport solutions for the communities of Dumfries and Galloway.
7. Be a key partner in the delivery of the new Public Transport Model
8. Develop commercial opportunities as part of the long term social enterprise sustainability strategy.

This “hub and spoke” model will provide:

- economies of scale - shared resources.
- commissioners, stakeholders and service users one point of contact.
- development of transport focused on social inclusion and need throughout the region allowing providers to concentrate on service delivery.
- cross area/region projects.
- a joined-up sector.
- monitoring of the sector to improve quality and availability.
- a solid and sustainable volunteer base.
- opportunities for innovation and piloting – e.g. electric fleets.
- development of community programmes - e.g. employability pathways for transport – drivers, schedulers, mechanics, transport managers.
- delivery of transport solutions.
- the CT Sector in Dumfries and Galloway opportunity to:
  - capacity build through key programmes such as volunteering and employability.
  - administer and provide core funding to the Sector.
  - provide opportunities to deliver commissioned transport solutions in their local area through the “Hub and Spoke” model
  - develop innovative projects - car clubs, e-bikes, electric vehicles.
- transport solutions for key stakeholders such as the Council and NHS.
- a key delivery partner for the Integrated Transport Hub.

It will seek to achieve a range of social impacts including, but not exclusively:

- Improved access to places and public services for disadvantaged groups.
- Increased feeling and experience of travelling safely.
- Improved mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- Reduced isolation for disadvantaged groups.
- Reduction in CO2 emissions through the operation of a low carbon fleet.
- People feeling more connected to and within their community.
- Better use of community assets (places, transport, services).
- Increased employability for trainees and volunteers.
- Increased sustainability in other CT operators and third sector non-CT organisations.
- Increased impact and value for money in the delivery of public services.

***The Annual funding required is £100,000 per annum and £300,000 over the 3 years of this strategy.***



### 5.3. Strategic Partnerships

One of the major successes of the PSP is the partnership built up with Dumfries and Galloway Council, SWestrans, NHS Dumfries and Galloway, the Community Transport Sector, Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway and recently the engagement with South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE).

Throughout the lifespan of the Public Social Partnership, it has reported progress to Community Planning and the IJB and regularly reports to SWestrans. Going forward, particularly as we transition the PSP into becoming “business as usual” and we look at delivering this strategy, it is vital that there is continued buy-in from the current stakeholders.

However, it will be equally important to look to widen out discussions and have input from more key stakeholders including Community Planning Partners, Health and Social Care, Integrated Joint Board, South of Scotland Enterprise and other key departments with Dumfries and Galloway Council where community transport can assist with meeting policy objectives such as access to health and social care, community cohesion, employability, active and sustainable travel and social isolation and loneliness.

As recommended by the recent Audit and Risk Committee Review into the Public Social Partnership ***“it is important that engagement with CP Partners around future funding to be taken forward.”***

Therefore, it is important that as part of transitioning from the PSP and to ensure that this strategy is taken forward strategically, that the current PSP Steering Group is revised with a new Steering Group, involving all key stakeholders, is established. The remit of this Group should be to have overall responsibility for implementing this strategy, scope out where community transport can assist with meeting their own organisation’s strategic objectives and developing an overall strategic engagement plan going forward.

### 5.4. Core Funding for Community Transport Organisations

Due to being not-for-profit and having to adhere to the Section 19 and 22 Permit legislation for operating which prohibits profit making, community transport services cannot operate without some form of investment or public support and funding.

Dumfries and Galloway Council have been a great financial supporter of the PSP, but Community Transport in Dumfries and Galloway is not directly funded by any public sector organisations with most CT providers relying on external grant funding to remain sustainable, where these can be sourced.

One of the recommendations of the Community Transport in Dumfries and Galloway A State of the Sector Report and Improvement Plan in 2016 was to recognise the need for strategic funding for community transport with funding periods of at least 3 years.

This is even more important than ever, particularly the impact of COVID and the subsequent reduction on transport solutions community transport has been able to

provide, the current increase in energy, fuel and wage costs, that has only intensified the need.

Therefore, an annual grant funding pot is required to assist community transport operators in Dumfries and Galloway. Without core funding to underpin Community transport organisations their ability to play a larger part in any new public transport model will be impacted.

***The Annual core grant funding required is £50,000 per annum and £150,000 over the 3 years of this strategy.***

## **5.5. South of Scotland Wide Community Transport Development**

Dumfries and Galloway borders Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire and the Borders areas. Transport does not recognise borders and therefore it will be important that as this strategy is developed that we look to scope out how the development in Dumfries and Galloway can link into the wider South of Scotland community transport development.

Therefore, we will look to work with key stakeholders such as South of Scotland Enterprise, Local Authorities, NHS and Community Transport Providers to explore any future regional wide community transport development.

## SECTION SIX – INVESTMENT AND FUNDING

### 6.1. Investment Required

The below tables outlines the 3 year investment required to deliver this strategy.

<b>Development</b>	<b>Year One</b>	<b>Year Two</b>	<b>Year Three</b>
Mainstream Volunteer Car Scheme	£ 50,000	£ 50,000	£ 50,000
Transport Hub:			
Set up Capital Costs	£ 40,000	£ 0	£ 0
Annual Running Costs	£ 50,000	£ 50,000	£ 50,000
Employability Pathway Programme	£ 50,000	£ 50,000	£ 50,000
Volunteer Development	£ 25,000	£ 25,000	£ 25,000
Social Enterprise Operating Costs	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
Core Grant Funding for Community Transport Operators	£ 50,000	£ 50,000	£ 50,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£365,000</b>	<b>£325,000</b>	<b>£325,000</b>

The 3 year funding outlined above does not cover any capital funding required to transition the Community Transport Sector to low carbon vehicles. This will have to be developed as part of a low carbon replacement strategy.

### 6.2. Investment Strategy

It will be important that the investment required is secured to enable this strategy to be delivered so that community transport is:

- Sustainable and able to meet the challenges and opportunities now and in the future.
- Able to assist key stakeholders in meeting their policy aims including access to health and social care, reducing poverty, reducing social isolation and loneliness, rural economy, employability and community cohesion.
- Able to play a key part in the new Public Transport Model that is being developed, with Community Transport outlined as a key delivery partner.

With the current funding constraints on local and regional funding it is important that there is a strategic and holistic approach to the investment required. As outlined in this strategy community transport is not about the transport itself. Therefore, there is a requirement for:

- A funding model where there are a number of funding partners, including Community Planning Partners, various departments within Dumfries and Galloway Council (e.g. social work, employability, communities), South of Scotland Enterprise, NHS Dumfries and Galloway and Health and Social Care Partnership.

- Funding should be secured as part of wider strategies:
  - Spend to Save – With a sustainable infrastructure for Community Transport through initial investment will be able to deliver services on behalf of stakeholders that will be more cost effective in the long term.
  - Within the context of current funding constraints, key stakeholders look to spend their budgets differently e.g. transport.

Without investment, the Community Transport Sector will not be able to:

- Continue to deliver the services to its local communities.
- Play a key role in any new public transport model.
- Continue to build a holistic approach to transport through better co-ordination, employment and training for various transport roles.

## **SECTION SEVEN – CONCLUSION**

The 2022 – 25 Dumfries and Galloway Driving Community Cohesion and Growth Strategy sets out how Community Transport can transition from the current Public Social Partnership to “business as usual” so that it can be a key delivery partner for the new Public Transport Model that will be developed.

The Strategy sets out the challenges that require to be overcome, a vision and future development required and what resources are needed to implement this strategy including financial investment.

As outlined in Section Three, Community Transport assists key stakeholders in meeting the numerous Local, Regional and National Strategies and Policies including the Regional Transport Strategy, National Transport Strategy, Older People and Social Isolation and Loneliness Strategies and NHS Recovery Plan.

This is because Community Transport is not just about transport it is an enabler that has an impact across a number of policy areas such as access to health, preventative measures in relation to health and social care, rural economy, education, employability, social isolation and loneliness, active and sustainable transport and just transition to low carbon fleets.

There can be little doubt that in Dumfries and Galloway the ability of our people and communities to access transport is a major cause of disadvantage. This strategy is concerned with tackling that disadvantage and proposing the means by which we might achieve an improvement in public transport services, specifically those provided by Community Transport providers.