

DHC designs and delivers practical solutions which improve travel opportunities for people and businesses.

Clients find that when DHC gets involved things start to happen. Even where schemes have been stalled for some time, our solution focused approach gets to the core issues.

The firm was set up in 1996 to make connections by supporting businesses and communities with affordable solutions to accessibility and transport challenges.

From large infrastructure, to the smallest community travel or transport problem, our tailored approach ensures that we add value by working closely with clients and their partners.



The Direction of Travel is Digital

The Digital Economy is a growth area combining knowledge and technology sectors. A study to look at how the forthcoming changes would affect society was led by Dundee University and included DHC on the management group.

Building an inclusive digital economy will connect travellers, vehicles and services. The study established how

the digital economy would impact on travel. The range of factors involved include changing travel patterns, better informed travellers, more flexible transport, impacts of e-commerce, and tele-working.

Increasing flexibility through the use of ICT has the potential to reduce travel demand by virtue of e-access, or managing demand through travel plans, traffic management etc., but also to increase it, if people make extra trips to take advantage of their increased choices and options.

Increased use of ICT to improve connections could deliver reduced costs and travel time, improve safety and the amount of information available to customers and reduce the impact on the environment. Coupled with the increased competitiveness the digital economy brings to business, this would have the effect of increasing accessibility for people and dramatically improve their quality of life.

The main lessons learned were:

- New rules and new approaches needed due to the changing markets and opportunities
- There are opportunities to secure shared benefits from flexible approaches
- A step change in soft measures needed to manage customer relationships
- Time use when travelling is changing and productivity increasing

The findings are now being taken forward as part of the University of Aberdeen Digital economy research hub.

Integrating social marketing into transport delivery

DHC is managing a research team to learn lessons from the Scottish Government's Smarter Choices Smarter Places (SCSP) investment programme. The team includes specialists from Aberdeen University and ITP and the programme aims to encourage behaviour change to improve health, save money, improve the local environment and promote stronger communities

The research describes public attitudes towards, and perceptions of, travel choices, identifies the scope for the investment to deliver desirable social and environmental outcomes and provides feedback to local authorities delivering the programme to help them make the programmes more effective.

The research uses existing knowledge and primary research to gauge the views of local people and shows that most people want to support transport improvements.

A Dialogue for Transport Equality

The South West Scotland Transport Partnership (SWestrans) is subject to public sector equalities duties. DHC was contracted to undertake surveys to identify equalities needs in the area.

Many of the problems faced by the equalities groups are common to everyone. The work found that although there are no specific equalities issues that challenged SWestrans current delivery plans, there are some issues that are of relatively higher priority for equalities groups. These include door-to-door transport, public transport information, customer service standards from bus drivers, and the cost of public transport for low income groups.

Many of the problems cannot quickly be resolved, but will depend on building partnerships, seeking funding from other organisations, and building substantial new programmes into future delivery plans. This includes priorities such as major road investment, improved road maintenance, and public transport infrastructure improvements. The findings of the work have now been adopted into transport delivery programmes.



New Ideas in Rural Accessibility

DHC and TAS were commissioned by the Local Authority Improvement and Development Agency to produce guidance to help rural, local authorities make decisions on achieving cost-effective, long term transport solutions that would meet the priorities of local areas and communities.

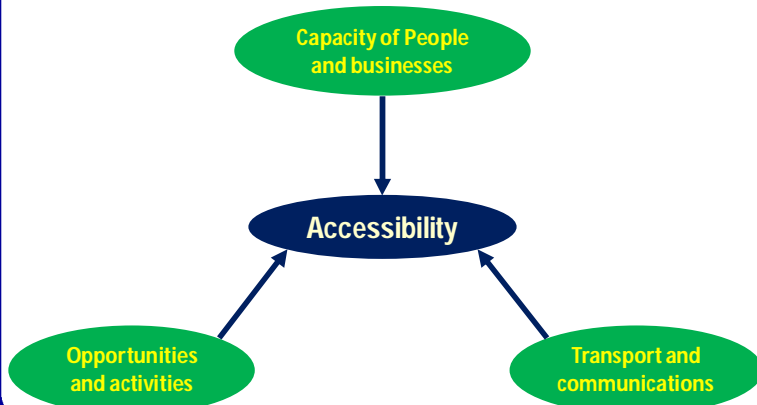
The action learning with the local authorities reviewed current practice and shared experiences. By identifying problems and opportunities and facilitating group debates to calibrate practice the results of the work are creating a unique resource of leading ideas in rural transport delivery.

Achieving stability between evidence-led practice, political needs, community wishes and business needs, includes assembling sufficient funding to ensure financial sustainability. This is particularly important at the current time with many authorities experiencing declining budgets.

Accessibility Planning Underpins Local Transport Funding

With Single Outcome Agreements and Local Area Agreements increasingly determining the availability of funding for local transport, DHC's pioneering work in accessibility planning is helping authorities maintain and grow their transport budgets. By demonstrating how investment plans help people access work, training

healthcare and other services accessibility planning processes are now mainstreamed as the leading toolkit for maintaining the sustainability of transport investment.



Evidence based delivery lies at the heart of all DHC projects. In the transport sector evidence is one of the most effective mechanisms for building bridges between modes, sectors, and people.

For an approach to consultancy that is more effective, and which delivers better value, contact any of the DHC team.

We work with a wide network of partners across the UK so can resource most consultancy requirements including large programmes, and dealing with almost any specialist topic.

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