

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.

A Viable Rail Network in Remote Areas

Providing and maintaining a rail network in remote areas is an important but high cost element of the rail system. Making the most of the investment in the network in the North of Scotland has been the goal of the Highland Rail Partnership. Viable rail services in sparsely populated areas depend on: understanding the market, delivering attractive journey times and costs, ensuring reliable times and frequencies, and ensuring a sufficient coverage of routes and stations, including co-ordination with bus services.

Working with leading survey company Count-on-U's, DHC interviewed over 2000 passengers and reviewed the changes in trip patterns around Inverness. The work found that the rail services were supporting many communities, and growing rail patronage was closely related to rural development.

The economic assessment showed that improved train frequencies added value to the rail network, and that there was scope for further improvements. The timing of services was critical to ensure attractive trip options for the main growth markets: commuters, shoppers, and tourists.

Comfort, lack of stress and being able to work when travelling were the main attributes of rail use, and train staff were praised for their high level of customer service. The use of some older train units on the routes led to customer satisfaction issues, as people expected the higher level of comfort from new units on all services. This suggested that consistency in the level of service, not just overall improvements should be an important factor.

The Highland Rail Partnership has now consolidated its role within the regional transport body Hitrans and has ambitious plans for improving services and expanding the network to further improve the value of rail in the North.



Making Connections Internationally

Cross sectoral transport delivery is one of the next frontiers in most developed countries, but is a difficult agenda. Better connectivity in networks, and improved access to opportunities for people and businesses, are common aims. To share knowledge and review the state of the art practice, people from more than 15 countries met at a conference in Munich in April 2008.

As transport moves away from meeting the demand for travel to wider sustainable development aims, the global challenges of travel demand management mean that even difficult problems need to be tackled. Every country has its own political and administrative systems, and detailed approaches to planning access to opportunities need to be tailored to these. In contributing to the development of the UK approaches, DHC has drawn from international best practice, and the need for international dialogue in this evolving field continues.

Transport with Care

The Scottish Ambulance Service is contracted to provide transport for people with specific medical needs. As the Service seeks greater efficiencies, it is working with partners elsewhere in the NHS, within Councils and with other transport providers to help facilitate a more integrated approach to delivery.

DHC has been commissioned to help partners in South West Scotland co-ordinate delivery of high care services for the ambulance service, care homes, community transport, and other linked services. The work is feeding into a national programme demonstrating best practice.



Household Travel Times to Local Services in Wales

Access to services had traditionally been included in indices of deprivation (IMD) by looking at the distance to key local services such as GPs and post offices. However digital maps of roads and footpaths and electronic national public timetable databases now allow travel times to be used to represent access more accurately.

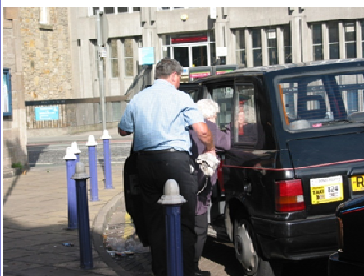
In 2006, DHC helped Scottish Government calculate travel times from each of the 42,000 the census output areas for the Scottish IMD. A more detailed approach was taken for the Data Unit in Wales in 2008 . Travel times were calculated to eight categories of local service types for all 1.2 million households in the Country.

The work demonstrated the advantages of point based accessibility measures. These are set to play a greater role in the future, allowing more accurate representation of real journey options, with travel by all available modes, and including in the analysis all barriers and opportunities that affect travel choices.

Personalising Travel

Today's consumers are becoming more demanding. Mass travel markets of the past have been replaced by smaller groups of consumers, united by mindsets, aspirations and preferences. To face these challenges more personalised approaches are needed when providing and promoting transport. DHC has been a leading provider of personalised travel planning solutions for over a decade. Building from the personal journey plans given to school children as part of induction packs when starting school, the firm has now extended the delivery of these solutions to many contexts with journey plans for NHS patients, staff travel plans for business and agencies, and household travel plans.

As consumers become more discerning across all areas of their lives, a more optimal blend of cost, time, comfort and reliability will be needed and personalised journey information will increasingly be needed to manage the culture change.



Door to Door Transport in Dundee

Community transport in Dundee has the potential to play a greater role in ensuring higher quality travel opportunities for older and disabled people. To map out a viable approach, DHC consulted local stakeholders and analysed trip patterns.

Dundee Community Transport are now working closely with the City Council to provide better value demand responsive transport solutions that meet the needs of all people in the area.

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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