

The Highland Council
Community Services Committee
20 August 2015

Agenda Item	17
Report No	COM 45/15

Transport Programme

Report by Director of Community Services

Summary

As part of the Council's Transport Programme, mainstream school transport and public bus service contracts have been retendered in Sutherland. This report presents the outcomes of the retendering process. The report also outlines for Members the intended process for conducting the tendering of such services across the rest of Highland; the intended process for determining future community transport grants; and the current position with regards to the Lochaber action learning project's principal initiative, the Lochaber Transport Advice and Bookings Service.

1. Background

1.1 Highland Council's Transport Programme has emerged from the process of identifying ways to reduce expenditure over 2015-19. Led by Highland Council under the sponsorship of the Director of Community Services, the Programme has participation from NHS Highland, Scottish Ambulance Service, Highland Third Sector Interface, the Community Transport Association, Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership and Voluntary Action Lochaber (VAL are the operators of the Lochaber Transport Advice and Bookings Service on behalf of the Transport Programme).

2. Sutherland Re-tendering Outcomes

2.1 Community Services Committee of 4th June 2015 approved the recommendation within [Report No. COM/22/15](#) to permit the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Community Services Committee, to decide the level of public transport provision and therefore on which public transport options to award for Sutherland. The recommendations prepared by Officers were considered under the delegated authority process on Wednesday 22nd July 2015.

2.2 Recommendations prepared by Officers for Sutherland school transport provision were assessed by a Tender Board comprising the Director and the Finance Manager (Proxy) of Community Services Directorate, the Head of Resources and the Finance Manager of Care and Learning Directorate, and the Head of Procurement (Proxy). This Tender Board also met on Wednesday 22nd July 2015.

- 2.3 The recommendations made by Officers and approved through the delegated authority process for public bus transport contract awards are available at **Appendix 1** of this report. **Appendix 2** carries the school transport recommendations made by Officers and approved by the Tender Board.
- 2.4 The savings target for the re-tendering of mainstream school and public bus transport services in Sutherland is £252,236 from 2014-15's expenditure of £1,677,000. During the preparations for the procurement process it was determined by Officers that Route 916 (Tongue-Thurso), full value £95,366, should substantially be held back for the rest of Highland tender process to the value of £89,584 as the bulk of its activity is in the Caithness area. The balance (£5,782) was added into Sutherland Route 803 (Melness – Thurso) specification. This resets the total value of current baseline contracts in Sutherland to £1,587,416 and the savings target to £238,112.
- 2.5 The current position with regard to the recent Sutherland transport route approvals is summarised in table 1. The new contracts will come into force on 26th October 2015 and run until 31st December 2021.

Table 1 – Interim Sutherland Re-tendering Outturn

Routes	Current / Estimated Total Annual Value	New Total Annual Value	Monetary Difference	% Difference
School	£475,885	£368,951	£-106,934	-22%
Dial-a-Bus	£193,834	£178,406	£-15,428	-8%
Public Bus	£387,982	£252,217	£-135,765	-35%
TOTAL	£1,057,701	£799,574	£-258,127	-24%

- 2.6 There are a number of positive aspects to note from the routes approved thus far:
- There was increased competitiveness in tendering for routes in North Sutherland which was a significant factor in reducing costs.
 - All public contracts awarded are for wheelchair accessible vehicles at a marginal cost of £6,300 over the non-accessible options for the same timetables (it should be noted that some routes were already wheelchair accessible).
 - The Melvich - Bettyhill and Lairg – Dornoch routes are awarded as public service contracts (hitherto they were school bus contracts which the operators had chosen to open to the public).
 - A completely revised Contract 804 (summer only service) is Durness-based and provides links between Durness, Ullapool and Lairg, albeit only in the school summer holidays, with good ferry connections at Ullapool on Fridays and Saturdays, and train connections at Lairg.
 - Contract 805 (Durness – Inverness) increased to operate every Saturday.
 - Contract 806 (Durness – Lairg) gains a Friday evening service northbound from Ardgay station, connecting with the train.

- Contract 806 will carry bike racks, giving capacity for two bikes.
- Contract T.12 (North Sutherland subsidised taxi) is dedicated to the Bettyhill area on three afternoons and the Melvich area on two afternoons, with the aim of improving its availability and reducing dead mileage.
- T.19 (Rosehall area dial-a-bus) introduces a service specific to the Rosehall area on Mondays.

2.7 There are some routes for which Officers did not recommend approval under the delegated authority process nor to the Tender Board; these routes are listed in **Appendix 3**. The principal reasons for routes not being recommended for approval are threefold: that no tenders were received; that no validly priced tenders were received; or that routes showed a significant increase in cost.

2.8 For this set of routes the Tender Board and the delegated authority process, as appropriate, approved Officers' recommendations for negotiated procedures to be undertaken. Each of the 21 contractors who submitted a bid for one or more of any of the Sutherland routes will be contacted to invite them to consider submitting a bid for one or more of the 11 routes available through the negotiated procedure. Meetings will be held on 13th (Drummuie) and 14th August (Inverness) to discuss the requirements with contractors who express an interest. Pricing and timetables will be invited for the end of August 2015 and evaluation will occur thereafter.

2.9 To consider Officers' recommendations following the negotiated procedures the Tender Board has been set for 30th September; and as a continuation of the process to consider Officers' recommendations for public bus services in Sutherland, decisions under delegated authority will occur at a meeting scheduled for 1st October 2015. There is no guarantee that the negotiated procedures will secure savings on current contract prices or on suppliers' proposed contract prices.

3. Highland Transport Services Tendering

3.1 Planning is underway to prepare for the tendering of mainstream school and public bus services across the rest of Highland. The principal activities are noted in table 2.

Table 2 – Key Stages, Rest of Highland Tender Process

Activity	Timing
Draft proposals for consultations	August 2015
Consultations with Members	September 2015
Consultations with general public	October and November 2015
Consultations with suppliers	October and November 2015
Consultation data reporting	December 2015
Revise proposals	January 2016
Prepare invitation to tender materials	February 2016
Procurement phase	March – August 2016
Contracts issued	September 2016
Contracts commence	January 2017

- 3.2 The savings target for this activity was originally set at £1,642,353 against 2014-15 baseline expenditure of £11,602,657. Two earlier Transport Programme initiatives (seeking contract variation opportunities and examining Lochaber home-to-school provision for efficiencies) did not yield sufficient returns. The balance of targets and baseline contract values for these will be incorporated into the rest of Highland tender process. As noted at paragraph 2.4 part of Route 916's value also has to be incorporated into the rest of Highland current contract value and target resetting. These adjustments produce a new savings target of £1,873,311 against baseline expenditure of £13,172,848.
- 3.3 Component parts of the consultation meetings with members will involve:
- An overview of the current mainstream school and public transport services currently supported by Highland Council.
 - Savings targets – for the Transport Programme generally and each specific area.
 - Looking to the future – discussion on views, ideas, gaps/needs, and how to accomplish desired change with a lower budget.
 - An overview of the consultation activity planned for the public and suppliers and the transport tender process.
- 3.4 The consultations with the public and suppliers will also involve an online component. This will allow comment on some provisional transport services proposals which will be developed and it will provide a platform for fresh ideas and views to be expressed.
- 3.5 Consultation feedback will be fed into the design of route specifications to put to the market through the tender process.

4. Community Transport

- 4.1 Community transport grants were awarded to twenty-three organisations for 2015-16; including the allowance set aside to support training needs and repairs (£31,513) Highland Council's 2015-16 budget for community transport is £416,961.
- 4.2 Community transport, that is the provision of transport by the Third Sector, will continue to form part of Highland Council's transport mix and it is proposed that Officers report to the Community Services Committee in November 2015 with a determination on the following key aspects to inform the community transport grants process for 2016-17:
1. The total funding Highland Council will have available to support community transport activities undertaken by properly constituted groups with transparent governance.
 2. Funding being prioritised for groups delivering practical transport solutions in their communities.
 3. The period over which community transport grants ought to be offered.
 4. The criteria Highland Council should utilise for assessing community transport grant applications.

5. When the next call for community transport grant applications will take place. Provisionally, Officers estimate that a call could be run over November to mid-December 2015 with the Community Services Committee of February 2016 being asked to approve grant award recommendations.
- 4.3 Highland Council is mindful of the commitment in the Compact with the Third Sector to provide 3 months' notice to community groups regarding any possible change to their funding from the Council. It is proposed that if Community Services Committee approves the details to be submitted at the 5th November Committee meeting that communication be immediately issued to the community transport sector (including representative organisations the Community Transport Association and Highland Third Sector Interface) to inform them of the detail of a new call for grant applications. This communication would also specifically advise current grant recipients that this provides formal notice that grant circumstances may be different for their group from 1st April 2016 and that all current grant recipients should undertake planning for different future scenarios for their operations. This approach provides 5 months' notice of a potential change.
- 4.4 The communication would additionally state that Highland Council understands that community transport groups may be anxious about the outcome of a new call for community transport grants which will be a competitive process assessed against the criteria to be conveyed in the guidance accompanying the new call. Where community transport organisations currently in receipt of a grant have concerns that may impact upon their ability to take part in the new process, they can make contact with Highland Council's Transport Unit to discuss these.

5. Lochaber Action Learning Project

- 5.1 On 6th August 2015 the Transport Programme Board assessed the project to date and provided direction regarding the future of the transport hub concept.
- 5.2 By way of a brief background to the principal initiative operating within the Lochaber action learning project, the operational phase of the Lochaber Transport Advice and Bookings Service (LTABS) began on 16th June 2014 and will conclude on 9th October 2015. The purpose of LTABS is to address transport-related problems in the provision of health and social care services as experienced by individuals, communities and health and social care professionals; and also those transport deficiencies which negatively affect social inclusion opportunities within communities.
- 5.3 LTABS is set up on the hub principle as a single point of contact for all transport enquiries, open to all people and organisations. Preparations for launching the service and ongoing liaison have involved developing knowledge of and relationships with Third Sector transport groups, commercial transport operators, as well as the statutory health and social care sector. LTABS has scoped the region, building a database of all available transport and profiling operators willing to subscribe to the LTABS concept.

- 5.4 The LTABS initiative has been established by the Integrated Transport Provision Project (now part of the Transport Programme) which involves NHS Highland, Scottish Ambulance Service, Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership, Highland Council and Voluntary Action Lochaber (operators of LTABS on behalf of the other project partners). Highland Council contracts with Voluntary Action Lochaber for the delivery of the LTABS service. Funding for the initiative is via Scottish Government, Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership and Highland Council.
- 5.5 The report considered by the Transport Programme Board is available at **Appendix 4**. Discussion and agreement arising from the Transport Programme Board has directed that:
- The projected underspend should be applied to maintain the Lochaber Transport Advice and Bookings Service until 31st December 2015.
 - That the project review, as attached at Appendix 4, should be sent to Scottish Government under the cover of a letter co-signed by the Chief Executives (and equivalent) of the project partners.
 - That the submission to Scottish Government should convey the potential to expand the project in the first instance to Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross area (as defined by NHS Highland's operational areas).
 - That the submission to Scottish Government should seek an opportunity to discuss the prospects for expanding and financing the project during 2016.
 - That the submission to Scottish Government should convey a commitment from the project partners to, should a funding solution be developed to operate the expanded service for another year, undertake a joint analysis during 2016 of the opportunities for delivering Highland-wide net benefit.

6. Implications

6.1 Resource

To develop the school and public transport tender process across Highland there will be significant call upon staff resources from Transport Co-ordination Unit (including transport area offices) and the Procurement Unit, and concentrated support from Policy Unit and Ward Management surrounding the consultations phase.

6.2 Legal

Contract documentation and grant award agreements will be products of the transport services work outlined above.

6.3 Equalities and Rural

Equalities and Rural Impact Assessments will be undertaken as part of the Highland school and public transport tender process.

6.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever

The determination of route specifications for the Highland school and public transport tender process will seek to produce efficient vehicle workings. Maintenance of public transport services also helps to reduce car mileage.

6.5 Risk

- The accomplishment of savings for the Highland school and public transport tender process is an uncertain process due to market dynamics.
- There are infrastructure developments occurring in various parts of Highland which may put pressure on the Council's work to contain transport expenditure. These include new health site developments at Broadford and Aviemore and new Council offices at Fort William.
- It is uncertain to what extent the report produced for the Transport Programme Board evaluating the Lochaber transport hub concept will result in an agreed solution being found to extend the project into 2016.

6.6 Gaelic Implications

There are no specific Gaelic implications; school transport for Gaelic Medium education will be included in the Highland school and public transport tender process.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

- (i) Note the interim Sutherland retendering process out-turns.
- (ii) Approve the outline timetable and key steps for the rest of Highland school and public transport tender process.
- (iii) Approve the approach being proposed for developing the community transport grants process.
- (iv) Note the efforts being made to secure a future for the transport hub concept being trialled presently in Lochaber.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 20th August 2015

Author: Stephen Graham

APPENDIX 1

Public Bus and Dial-a-Bus Transport Routes Approved under the Delegated Authority Process on 22nd July 2015

Public Bus Routes

Route No.	Description	Current/Estimated Annual Price for Current Option	New Annual Price	Monetary Difference	Percentage Difference	Community Services Budget	Care and Learning Budget
800-0A	Melvich – Bettyhill (Farr High School)	£79,500	£42,750	-£36,750	-46.2		£42,750
803 -3A	Melness - Thurso	£86,482	£48,960	-£37,522	-43.4	TBC by the Transport Unit	TBC by the Transport Unit
804-4	Durness – Lairg via Lochinver and Ullapool	£35,800	£10,260	-£25,540	-24.9	£10,260	
805-3A	Durness - Inverness	£4,400	£12,493	+£8,093	+183.9	£12,493	
806-1AV	Durness – Lairg via Kinlochbervie & Scourie	£111,500	£51,700	-£59,800	-53.6	TBC by the Transport Unit	TBC by the Transport Unit
901-0A	Lairg/Ardgay - Dornoch	£70,300	£86,054	+£15,754	+22.4		£86,054
TOTALS		£387,982	£252,217	-£135,765	-34.9	TBC	TBC

Note: Route 916, current value £95,366 has been substantially deferred into the rest of Highland tender process. Those aspects of it which occurred in Sutherland (£5,782) have been incorporated into a revised Route 803 specification as quoted in the table above. The remaining balance of Route 916 costs (£89,584) will be tendered under the rest of Highland process.

Dial-a-Bus/Subsidised Taxi Routes

Route No.	Description	Current/Estimated Annual Price for Current Option	New Annual Price	Monetary Difference	Percentage Difference	Community Services Budget	Care and Learning Budget
T.02-1	Assynt Area	£43,600	£36,948	-£6,652	-15.3%	£36,948	
T.05-0	Dornoch Area DAB	£34,300	£34,300	£0.00	0%	£34,300	
T.06 -0	Ardgay/Lairg & Rosehall DAB	£29,300	£27,100	-£2,200	-7.5%	£27,100	
T.12 -2	North Sutherland DAB	£44,100	£39,850	-£4,250	-9.6%	£39,850	
T.13-0	Durness Area DAB	£18,900 + school route run separately at £23,634 = £42,534	£24,807.50	-£17,726	-28.5%	TBC	TBC
T.19	Rosehall Area DB	New separate route no current cost	£15,400	+£15,400	100%	£15,400	
TOTALS		£193,834	£178,406	-£15,428	-7.9%	TBC	TBC

Route to be Re-tendered

The Invitation to Tender documentation and Contract Specification combined two existing routes into one for the purposes of the retendering process. The current route T.01, the Kinlochbervie subsidised taxi service and the current 8100/4 Kinlochbervie High School route both presently undertaken by Mr. Allan Bruce, were combined into route T.01-2. The Tender Board determined, however, that the communications to Mr. Bruce's organisation surrounding the tender process had not been sufficiently effective. As a result a new procurement for this route's requirements will be conducted via an Open Procedure. New tenders will be invited from the open market and any previously interested tenderers will be required to re-compete. This will allow Mr. Bruce's organisation to compete fairly as originally intended for the opportunity to operate the services. The current value of the two routes combined is £82,285.

APPENDIX 2

School Transport Routes Approved by the Tender Board on 22nd July 2015

Route No.	Description	Current/Estimated Annual Price for current option	New Annual Price	Difference £	% Difference	Community Services Budget	Care and Learning Budget
4700/1	Tain Royal Academy	£42,800	£39,500	-£3,300	-7.7		£39,500
4700/3/F	Tain Royal Academy (Feeder)	£18,186	£19,000	+£814	+4.5		£19,000
4703/1B	Gledfield Primary	£20,938	£21,660	+£722	+3.4		£21,660
8000/3 Option A	Farr High	£48,596	£23,370	-£25,226	-51.9		£23,370
8000/4/F	Farr High	£7,776	£9,500	+£1724	+22.2		£9,500
8003/1 Option D	Melvich Primary (Award Delayed)	£27,400	£16,188	-£11,212	-40.9		£16,188
8004/3	Tongue Primary	£40,124	£21,280	-£18,844	-46.9		£21,280
8100/2 Option B	Kinlochbervie High	£41,772	£30,400	-£11,372	-28.3		£30,400
8100/5/F Option A	Kinlochbervie High (Feeder)	£16,144	£11,590	-£4,554	-28.2		£11,590
8104/1 Option B	Scourie Primary	£15,551	£13,680	-£1,871	-12		£13,680
8200/5/F Option A	Ullapool High (Feeder)	£29,300	£19,000	-£10,300	-35.2		£19,000
9000/5	Dornoch Academy	£21,667	£15,200	-£6,467	-29.8		£15,200
9000/6	Dornoch Academy	£34,200	£31,350	-£2,850	-7.8		£31,350
9001/3/G	Bonar Bridge Primary	£6,999	£6,840	-£159	-2.3		£6,840

Route No.	Description	Current/Estimated Annual Price for current option	New Annual Price	Difference £	% Difference	Community Services Budget	Care and Learning Budget
9100/4	Golspie High	£43,667	£49,371.50	+£5,704.50	+13.1		£49,371.50
9100/7/F	Golspie High	£6,594	£2,808	-£3,786	-42.6		£2,808
9105/1	Lairg Primary	£6,999	£2,375 + £1064 of parental expenses = £3439	-£3,560	-50.9		£3,439
9105/2 Option A	Lairg Primary	£11,400	£5,035	-£6,365	-44.2		£5,035
9106/2	Rogart Primary	£13,607	£13,300	-£307	-2.3		£13,300
9107/1 Option C	Rosehall Primary	£22,165.40	£15,300 + parental cost of £1140 = £16,440	-£5,725	-25.8		£16,440
TOTAL		£475,885	£368,951	-£106,934	-22.47		£368,952

Award Delayed:

Route 8003/1, recorded in the table above, is presently undertaken in-house by Highland Council, the minibus driver being the school's Janitor. The decision to delay the award of this route is based on it not having been possible to speak with the School Head Teacher prior to the summer holiday period.

APPENDIX 3

Routes Approved by Tender Board and Delegated Authority Board on 22nd July 2015 for Negotiated Procedures

Route Number	Description	Current Annual Value
4700/2/F	Tain Royal Academy	£5,320
4700/4/G/F	Tain Royal Academy (Feeder)	£8,892
8203/1	Lochinver Primary	£38,000
9000/4 Option A	Dornoch Academy	£21,667
9100/1 Option B	Golspie High	£76,670
9101/1	Brora Primary	£16,720
807	Lochinver – Ullapool	£65,000
809	Drumbeg – Lochinver – Ullapool	£78,500
814	Lochinver	£19,000
815	Ullapool – Lochinver - Drumbeg	£12,000
900 Options 1 and 2	Lairg - Tain	£60,000
906	Lairg – Helmsdale/Golspie	£41,100
TOTAL		£442,869

APPENDIX 4

Lochaber Transport Advice and Booking Service - Project Review and Future Opportunities, August 2015

Executive Summary

Over the 12-month operational period:

1. Transport Requests and Solutions

- LTABS received 157 requests for assistance, and provided solutions for 135 of these requests.
- 30 social category requests were received, 28 of which were provided with a solution.
- 127 of the requests were for healthcare-related transport, and 107 solutions were provided.
- The project in Lochaber also enabled the renal transport trial to occur. As a result of renal patients being conveyed to and from their treatment by care home minibuses Scottish Ambulance Service was able to conduct other patient transport activities and to reduce the number of cancellations; the net outcome over the period February-June 2015 was that 8 more inpatient journeys took place and 29 more outpatient journeys took place.

2. LTABS' Costs

- The operational costs (12 months) £61,495
- Set-up costs (3 months) £17,369
- Extended operational phase (4 months) £20,497
- £99,361

3. Financial Benefits

- The financial benefits by way of cost-avoidance for NHS Highland (expressed as ranges) from the project are:
 - Ensuring 107 patients met their appointments £14,663 - £15,958
 - SAS conveying more patients (annualised) £15,935 - £21,266
 - Total £30,598 - £37,224
- Comparing the 12-month operational costs and benefits there is a net negative financial value of £24,271 - £30,897

4. Other Benefits

- The social inclusion solutions.
- Supporting the community transport forum.
- The tangible links with clients, transport providers and the health and social care sectors.
- Establishing a focal point for the public and health and social care sectors to approach for transport advice and assistance in exploring the potential for a solution which may not be accessible for other individuals or organisations to create.
- Reducing the time spent by health professionals in organising ad-hoc transport requirements for patients.

5. Future Costs

- Projected 3-year operational costs, with progressive geographic expansion to cover all of Highland by end of year 3 are:
 - Year 1 (2FTE) £59,184 Aim: Expand to cover Skye, Lochalsh & SW Ross
 - Year 2 (3FTE) £83,004 Aim: Expand to cover 2 more NHS Highland areas
 - Year 3 (4FTE) £105,408 Aim: Complete coverage Highland (5 more areas)

6. Future Benefits

- Accepting the limitations of the approach being used in this section, a straight-line extrapolation of the financial benefits accomplished during the current operational year (and expressed in section 3 above) could produce potential future savings/cost avoidance increments to NHS Highland of:
 - Year 1 £30,598 - £37,224
 - Year 2 £61,196 - £74,448
 - Year 3 £152,990 - £186,120

Main Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The operational phase of the Lochaber Transport Advice and Bookings Service (LTABS) project began on 16th June 2014 and will conclude on 9th October 2015.
- 1.2 The purpose of LTABS is to address transport-related problems in the provision of health and social care services as experienced by individuals, communities and health and social care professionals; and also those transport deficiencies which negatively affect social inclusion opportunities within communities.
- 1.3 The LTABS initiative has been established by the Integrated Transport Provision Project which involves NHS Highland, Scottish Ambulance Service, Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership, Highland Council and Voluntary Action Lochaber (which operates LTABS on behalf of the other project partners).
- 1.4 As the project has unfolded requests for transport for health and social care purposes, and in particular for health-related appointments, have consistently formed the majority of the assistance sought from LTABS. As a result, the benefits to the community and to the project partners are being substantially derived from solutions created to ensure people can get to and from health appointments, and frequently hospital appointments from isolated parts of the community.

2.0 Establishing LTABS

- 2.1 LTABS is set up on the hub principle as a single point of contact for all transport enquiries, open to all people and organisations. Preparations for launching the service and ongoing liaison have involved developing knowledge of and relationships with Third Sector transport groups, commercial transport operators, as well as the statutory health and social care

sector. LTABS has scoped the region, building a database of all available transport and profiling operators willing to subscribe to the LTABS concept.

- 2.2 A community transport forum has been established involving all current community transport providers as well as potential new providers. This has helped all participants to form a better understanding of the needs of the community as well as establishing a channel through which to share the common operational needs and concerns being experienced by all of the groups. Networking through this forum has opened up opportunities for the groups to communicate between themselves, a positive development within the Lochaber community transport sector.
- 2.3 LTABS also participates in the Lochaber Transport Forum which is open to all transport operators, commercial and community based, to ensure LTABS maintains an awareness of local transport developments and issues, and to keep LTABS to the forefront within the local transport sector.
- 2.4 All Community Councils were canvassed for their support and to explore what they saw as the problem areas affecting their transport needs. All of these developments are augmented by the wide-ranging insight into community issues which VAL is aware of and concerned with through its primary third sector interface role.
- 2.5 With this large database of information and the strong links to transport groups LTABS has responded to requests creating a range of transport solutions. Some solutions have involved complex multi-part transport plans, others have involved exploring a client's eligibility for travel to healthcare funding support, and other solutions have involved LTABS liaising with the healthcare providers to secure appointment times which enable clients to use established transport services.
- 2.6 The majority of requests for transport have been for medical appointments. LTABS seek to not only find transport solutions but also to educate both members of the public and NHS departments as to the problems encountered in traveling to appointments as well as, where appropriate, the long term solutions available. This has led to a more pragmatic approach to fulfilling NHS appointments where LTABS interacts, on behalf of clients, with the healthcare and transport providers to provide a mutually beneficial solution; and in providing a solution will seek to empower and educate clients to resolve similar, future transport needs.

3.0 LTABS Skills

3.1 The current LTABS team brought skills and experience with them which, combined with the LTABS approach to problem-solving, has enabled a high solutions success rate of 84% for healthcare-related requests and of 86% for all requests. LTABS has made considerable use of the team's capabilities which include:

- Effective customer service
- A firm grasp of rural transport issues
- Building links and working relationships with people and organisations
- Partnership working to create opportunities
- Database development
- Data analysis to support solutions

4.0 Facilitating NHS Appointments

4.1 LTABS has been capturing data for requests for transport throughout Lochaber. The majority of these requests (80%) have been to access NHS Highland's services.

4.2 Between July 2014 and June 2015 there have been 127 such requests out of a total of 157, which either came from members of the public or from NHS services. LTABS has sourced a solution to the travel problem on 107 occasions (84% success rate).

4.3 NHS departments as well as GP practices (such as Mallaig, Glen Mhor and Tweeddale surgeries) have utilised LTABS skills to source transport solutions, enabling NHS personnel to focus on medical care. In dialogue with NHS hospital and community health personnel it was identified by medical practitioners that they waste precious time sourcing transport for patients.

4.4 Actively working with the requester, transport links, NHS Highland and Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) LTABS enables medical appointments to be kept. The cost of a missed appointment at an NHS hospital outpatient clinic is estimated in 2013/14 to have been £161¹, cost of a day patient 2013/14 £202¹ and the average GP appointment 2013/14 £108². Table 1 overleaf illustrates the extent to which LTABS has helped NHS Highland to avoid incurring costs by ensuring appointments are fulfilled.

Table 1 – Costs Avoided by NHS Highland - LTABS' Facilitated Healthcare Appointments

Healthcare Purpose	Number of Transport Solutions	Proportion of Healthcare Transport Solutions	Cost Avoided July 2104 – June 2015	
			Outpatient ¹	Day Patient ¹
Appointments to Clinics, Raigmore Hospital	28	22%	£4,508	£5,656
Appointments to Clinics, Belford Hospital	46	36%	£7,406	£9,292
Appointments to Outpatient Clinics, Out of Area Hospital	5	4%	£805	£1,010
Appointments to GP Practices, Lochaber ²	18	14%	£1,944	-
Sub Totals			£14,663	£15,958
Journeys to Care Homes	8	6%		
Dental Appointments ⁴	2	2%		
Failed to Arrange Transport	20	15%		
Totals	127	100%	£14,663	£15,958

Notes:

- <http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Finance/Costs/>
- <http://www.england.nhs.uk/2014/03/05/missed-appts/>
- [Dental Practices may charge for patients not attending appointments. M&S Dental Care Practice in Fort William applies charges ranging from £52 for not attending a routine check-up to £400 for not attending a root canal procedure.](#)

- 4.5 Thus LTABS support over one full year for those seeking to attend healthcare facilities has enabled NHS Highland to avoid costs associated with missed appointments in the range of £14,663 - £15,958.
- 4.6 The complex nature of finding transport solutions in an area with poor transport links and a large isolated elderly population has been testing for LTABS with an average request resolution time of 3.46 hours. An example of the assistance the team endeavours to provide to ensure a safe and complete travel plan is given below. This travel plan involved other members of the family and as part of the aim to educate and empower the public they were

encouraged to contact the bus company if the client needed transport in the future for a similar situation.

Example of a complex request

Previously we had contacted the consultant to see if the appointment time could be changed. If we could move the appointment then the client would be able to get the bus from Lochaline to FW bus station. The consultant has given a better appointment time for this appointment. On Thursdays there is no service from Drimnin to Lochaline so this travel option relies on the client being able to get a lift to catch the bus at 09.30. Once the client arrives at the Fort William bus station they can then get the Car Scheme to the medical centre.

We contacted the client to discuss the option of getting a lift to Lochaline from Drimnin on a Thurs morning. After contacting the client it has been made clear that public transport is not an option, as the client uses a trolley to walk. As this is the only transport option for the client other than a taxi we will contact the bus company and request the driver helps the client on and off the bus and allows more time for them.

The travel plan is as follows

**Client to get a lift to Lochaline for 9.30a.m. Thurs to catch bus. Shiel Buses to notify driver that the client will be travelling and will require assistance. Once the client arrives at Fort William bus station at 10.52 they will get a car to the medical centre. The client forgets things and has to write everything down so we thought it best if the Car Scheme contacts them.*

- 18.03.15 : I also called Lina at Citylink Fort William asking her if it would be ok for her to make sure that the client gets on the 14.50 bus back to Lochaline and they told me they would gladly help us.

5.0 Renal Transport Trial

- 5.1 The renal trial has run as a collaborative operation involving NHS Highland, Scottish Ambulance Service, LTABS and Highland Council, with LTABS administering the progress of the trial. It has run from Monday 5th January 2015 to evaluate an alternative approach to providing renal patient transport utilising NHS Highland care home minibuses. The approach being trialled frees up the SAS Patient Transport Services (PTS) vehicle which in turn has reduced the number of patient transport cancellations which SAS has had to make.
- 5.2 Table 2 illustrates the impact of the SAS PTS vehicle being more available in Lochaber during February – June 2015. These improvements have been accomplished despite the local SAS team being one person short.

Table 2: SAS Patient Transport Cancellations, February – June 2014/15 Comparison

Issue	February – June 2014	February – June 2015	Net Outcome
Cancellations of Inpatient transport due to no SAS resources	13	5	8 more Inpatient journeys took place
Cancellations of Outpatient transport due to no SAS resources	54	25	29 more Outpatient journeys took place

- 5.3 As cancellations tend to occur at short notice Table 3 overleaf seeks to illustrate how these patient transport improvements might impact upon NHS Highland cost avoidance. The cost figures quoted in paragraph 4.4 above are used to extrapolate the outpatient component whilst cost figures provided by NHS Highland are applied to the inpatient component (Belford General Medicine £637 per occupied bed day and Belford General Surgery £766 per occupied bed day).

Table 3: Cost Avoidance Impact

Category of Journey	Range of Cost Avoided During Trial February – June 2015	Range of Cost Avoidance Potential for One Full Year
29 Outpatient Journeys or 29 Day Patient Journeys	£4,669 or £5,853	£11,205 or £14,059
8 Inpatient Journeys (General) or 8 Inpatient Journeys (Surgical)	£5,096 or £6,128	£12,230 or £14,707
Outpatient + General Inpatient or Day Patient + Surgical Inpatient	£9,765 or £11,981	£23,435 or £28,766

- 5.4 Thus the gross cost avoidance impact of the renal trial is in the range £9,765 - £11,981 for the 5 months of the trial period, and in the range £23,435 - £28,766 when extrapolated to a full year.
- 5.5 Please note the cost avoidance figures assume one patient only per journey. In reality, for the outpatient and day patient journeys, it is likely that more than one person would be transported per journey, enhancing the cost avoidance potential. Further benefit would be gained from not having to reschedule missed appointments within the hospital system.

- 5.6 The costs incurred by NHS Highland in running the renal transport trial can be estimated as follows:

Table 4: Renal Patient Transport trial – Cost to NHS Highland

Cost Category	Cost incurred During Trial February – June 2015⁴	Cost Extrapolation for One Full Year
Staff ¹	£1,407	£3,327
Vehicle ²	£577	£1,365
Mileage ³	£1,188	£2,808
Total Costs	£3,172	£7,500

Notes:

1. Hourly pay rate of £9.14 applied – an average of SAS, NHS Highland and Highland Council driver rates - applied pro rata to the 7 hours per week the care home drivers are involved.
 2. SAS vehicle costs (repair and maintenance, insurance, etc.) of £30 per day applied pro rata to the 7 hours per week the care home minibus is utilised for renal patient transport.
 3. SAS mileage cost of £30 per 100 miles applied. Total mileage per week for the renal runs undertaken by care home minibus = 180 miles
 4. February – June 2015 = 22 weeks
- 5.7 Taking the net view from Tables 3 and 4 above the renal transport trial benefit to NHS Highland of cost avoidance over cost incurred is in the range £6,593 - £8,809 for February – June 2015, with an annual potential benefit in the range £15,935 - £21,266.
- 5.8 Feedback from the patients using the trial to attend renal appointments is that they prefer the trial vehicles as they are wider and more comfortable than the SAS patient transport vehicles. They also state that the service feels more personal as they are picked up by the same person for each appointment. Feedback from the renal patients is instructive - welfare and comfort of the patients attending these appointments is very important as their treatment and condition can adversely affect the way they feel.
- 5.9 NHS Highland and Scottish Ambulance Service are working together to produce a report which will define how the template established by the trial could be adapted and implemented in Lochaber as a permanent feature of renal patient transport and care.

6.0 Social Inclusion

- 6.1 The LTABS team have utilised their skill sets to resolve transport problems for other purposes including transport to lunch clubs, shopping trips and social group events. There have been 30 (19% of all requests) such requests with the team failing to resolve only 2 (6.6% of the 30 requests) of these. Part of the project's remit is to support solutions which reduce social isolation; 23 (14.6% of all requests) requests come into this category. A common factor in the client base is that normal commercial transport is either not suited to their

condition or there has been a condition that prevents the normal usage of the transport. LTABS actively communicates with the transport providers on behalf of clients and arranges any special needs that are required to ease their travel-related stress.

6.2 Table 5 summarises the social transport aspect of LTABS' work.

Table 5: Transport for Social Purposes

Request Type	Number	Proportion of Requests	Examples
Social Inclusion	23	76%	Shopping, Active Citizen, Lunch Clubs
Social Care	2	7%	Private Care Home
Other Requests	3	10%	Airports, Vet's
Unresolved	2	7%	Education, Sport
Totals	30	100%	

6.3 The social transport solutions have produced welcome benefits within Lochaber:

- Transport costs have been sourced for two lunch clubs enabling at least 20 people for each club to be picked up and taken to and from a central point within the community for a luncheon meeting then returned home. This is playing a major role helping the attendees to maintain links within their communities and delivers recognised benefits for physical and mental health.
- Lochaber Sensory Care (LSC) has a significant role within the locality, providing support and services for socially isolated people and those with sensory impairments. Their Social Group organises trips to events and places of interest in the Highland area as well as a lunch group at a local hotel within Fort William. LTABS has worked with LSC to develop transport for these events and trips which has led to groups of between 10 – 20 elderly people participating in community activities whom might otherwise have had fewer opportunities to do so.
- Transport has also been arranged for representatives from many countries to view Active Citizen Projects within the Lochaber area. LTABS sourced a local transport solution saving time and costs for the organisers. The visits led to an international perspective being introduced to Lochaber, educating, supporting and inspiring local social groups.

7.0 Project Costs

7.1 Total project costs of £116,821 were projected when planning the Lochaber Transport Advice and Bookings Service, as depicted in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Projected Costs for Operating LTABS Initiative

Set-up Phase (3 months)	
Projected costs	£16,262
Financed by Scottish Government	£16,262
Operations Phase (12 months)	
Projected Costs	£77,171
Financed by:	
Scottish Government	£50,000
Highland Council	£13,586
HITRANS	£13,585
Tertiary Phase (max. 4 months)	
Projected Costs	£23,388
Financed by:	
Highland Council	£11,973
HITRANS	£11,415
Total Project	
Projected Costs	£116,821
Financed by:	
Scottish Government	£66,262
Highland Council	£25,559
HITRANS	£25,000

7.2 The contract Highland Council operates on behalf of the project partners with Voluntary Action Lochaber has a maximum value of £114,621 over the three project phases; a further £2,200 was budgeted for Highland Council project management travel expenses:

- Set-up Phase, Mid-March to Mid-June 2014 £ 15,662
- Operations Phase, Mid-June 2014 to Mid-June 2015 £ 75,971
- Tertiary Phase, Mid-June to 9th October 2015 £ 22,988
- Sub Total £114,621
- Project Management, Mid-March 2014 to 9th October 2015 £ 2,200
- Total £116,821

7.3 Projected spend within the contract to 9th October 2015 is indicating an under-spend of around £15K. This money is currently ring-fenced as a restricted fund within Voluntary Action Lochaber's accounts. There is also a likely underspend of circa £1,600 in the project management travel expenses. Therefore there is likely to be a total underspend in the region of £16.5k by 9th October 2015. Table 7 conveys forecast expenditure details.

Table 7: Forecasted Project Expenditure to 9th October 2015

Cost Elements	Project Budget March 2014 – October 2016	Forecast Expenditure March 2014 – October 2016	Projected Underspend (Subject to Projected, Related Bills)
Recruitment	£1,500	£590	£910
Salaries & Associated costs	£85,390	£85,515	(£125)
ICT Set up & Monthly Costs	£3,933	£1,330	£2,603
Equipment	£1,300	£1,260	£40
Rent & Utilities	£3,166	£3,166	£0
CEO Time	£4,666	£4,375	£291
Travel Costs	£1,000	£1,075	(£75)
Partner Contribution Time	£2,666	£1,250	£1,416
Training	£1,000	£0	£1,000
SROI	£3,000	£0	£3,000
Contingency	£7,000	£800	£6,200
Sub-Totals	£114,621	£99,361	£15,260
Project Management Travel	£2,200	£594	£1,606
Totals	£116,821	£99,955	£16,866

7.4 The funding for the project secured from The Scottish Government (for the NHS and SAS contributions) has been fully spent. The project is now utilising the funding contributed by HITRANS and Highland Council.

- 7.5 Options for using the projected underspend:
- Return the balance of funding to HITRANS and Highland Council.
 - Apply the underspent finance to continue the LTABS project until the end of December 2015 to allow additional time for resolving and implementing a future service.
 - Consider applying the sum as a transitional contribution to the NHS environment if a successor service can be established imminently.

8.0 Future of LTABS

8.1 As the Lochaber action learning project nears its contractual conclusion key questions are:

- Will the service be operated in some capacity post-project?
- Under which organisation's remit will the service be operated?
- Where will the funding come from?
- Will service delivery be through an in-house or third party channel

8.2 Should the project partners determine that the service can be sustained into the future a phased development approach might be considered appropriate, such as:

Year 1

Utilise the capacity and potential within the existing staffing structure (2 Full Time Equivalents, FTE) to expand the LTABS service to include Skye, Lochalsh and Ross-shire.

Year 2

Expand services to include, perhaps, Badenoch and Strathspey, with the introduction of a further area (e.g. rural Inverness) in the second part of year 2. This could be accomplished with the addition of one FTE staff.

Year 3

Provide a comprehensive transport advice and booking service for the whole of Highland. The hub operation might require 4 FTE staff at this juncture.

8.3 Specific opportunities for development will be informed by:

- An analysis of unmet healthcare transport demand across Highland (which SAS has undertaken to contribute to).
- The potential for **virtual co-location** of a transport hub service with the SAS Inverness Control Centre.
- NHS Highland developing a corporate view on its engagement with patient transport issues.
- New infrastructure developments at Aviemore and Broadford, and further into the future at Fort William.
- The NHS environment working together to identify and to examine other opportunities where substitution of SAS PTS transport with alternative transport solutions (potentially care home minibuses) might enable greater patient transport benefits to emerge.

- 8.4 Table 8 considers potential future costs over a 3-year period. The costs are based on the services being delivered from the existing An Drochaid site in Fort William. This would allow Voluntary Action Lochaber (VAL) to operate with lower operational costs, defraying service costs within the wider VAL business areas.

Table 8: Future Cost Projections for Transport Hub Service

Cost Elements	Year 1 – 2FTE	Year 2 – 3FTE	Year 3 – 4FTE
Salaries & Associated Costs	£48,000	£67,666	£88,500
Telephone & Internet	£1,200	£1,500	£2,000
Stationery & Administration	£1,200	£1,300	£1,500
Office Rental	£2,400	£2,500	£3,000
Travel	£500	£500	£600
Contingency	£1,500	£1,500	£2,000
Sub Totals	£54,800	£76,856	£97,600
Management Fee (8%)	£4,384	£6,148	£7,808
Totals	£59,184	£83,004	£105,408

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 LTABS has applied significant effort to build positive working relationships with the public, with community representative organisations, with transport providers, with the health sector and with social care providers. The networks established are tangible, built on a pragmatic approach to seeking effective use of existing transport resources.
- 9.2 The hub concept, enlivened by LTABS, has been a constructive influence in pulling together the contributions required to produce the positive results which have been much appreciated within Lochaber. With fair backing the LTABS approach can be applied to similar problems being experienced in many other parts of Highland.