COMMUNITY TRANSPORT INQUIRY
SEIL AND EASDALE COMMUNITY COUNCIL
WRITTEN SUBMISSION

Community transport, do we need a more strategic approach?

Strategic planning is obviously beneficial in enabling groups such as our local car scheme with volunteer drivers to operate with more continuity and certainty. A group of volunteers responds as best it can to local need, but any decisions regarding overall provision across the area or increasing cover to match public transport cuts must be decided by those with power to effect change, i.e. strategic planners at government or local council level.

Are you seeing a growing demand for community transport provision?

An ageing population and increased pressure on public services (reduction in subsidised bus services, changes to patient transport provision) inevitably cause greater demand for community transport.

Do your local NHS bodies work closely with community transport providers?

The local car scheme works closely with the two medical practices in the area, less so with the local hospital. Mostly, the scheme operates directly with the passenger, responding to requests as they arise.

Has your community transport group experienced funding difficulties?

Yes! The need for continuity of funding is stressed to ensure stability of provision, and to encourage the setting up of schemes, since no-one wants to put effort into a project only to have funding pulled away. In particular, a return to the provision of ring-fenced funds from the Scottish Government Rural Community Transport Initiative would be welcomed.

If local community transport schemes are to continue then long-term funding is essential. If they do not receive funding, it is hard to see what equally cost-effective scheme could replace them. No scheme would leave vulnerable members of the community isolated and at risk.

Do you think that Community Transport should fall within concessionary fare schemes?

Community Transport is different to a subsidised bus service: it is a much more tailored response to an individual’s needs. Since the local scheme is operated by volunteers, there can be no question of a Public Service
Contract; it is a community provision not a statutory provider. Security of funding, for the reasons stated above and to allow successful applications for third party grants, is the priority to enable flexible, well-used and cost effective Community Transport schemes to flourish.

Seil and Easdale Community Council
18 April 2013