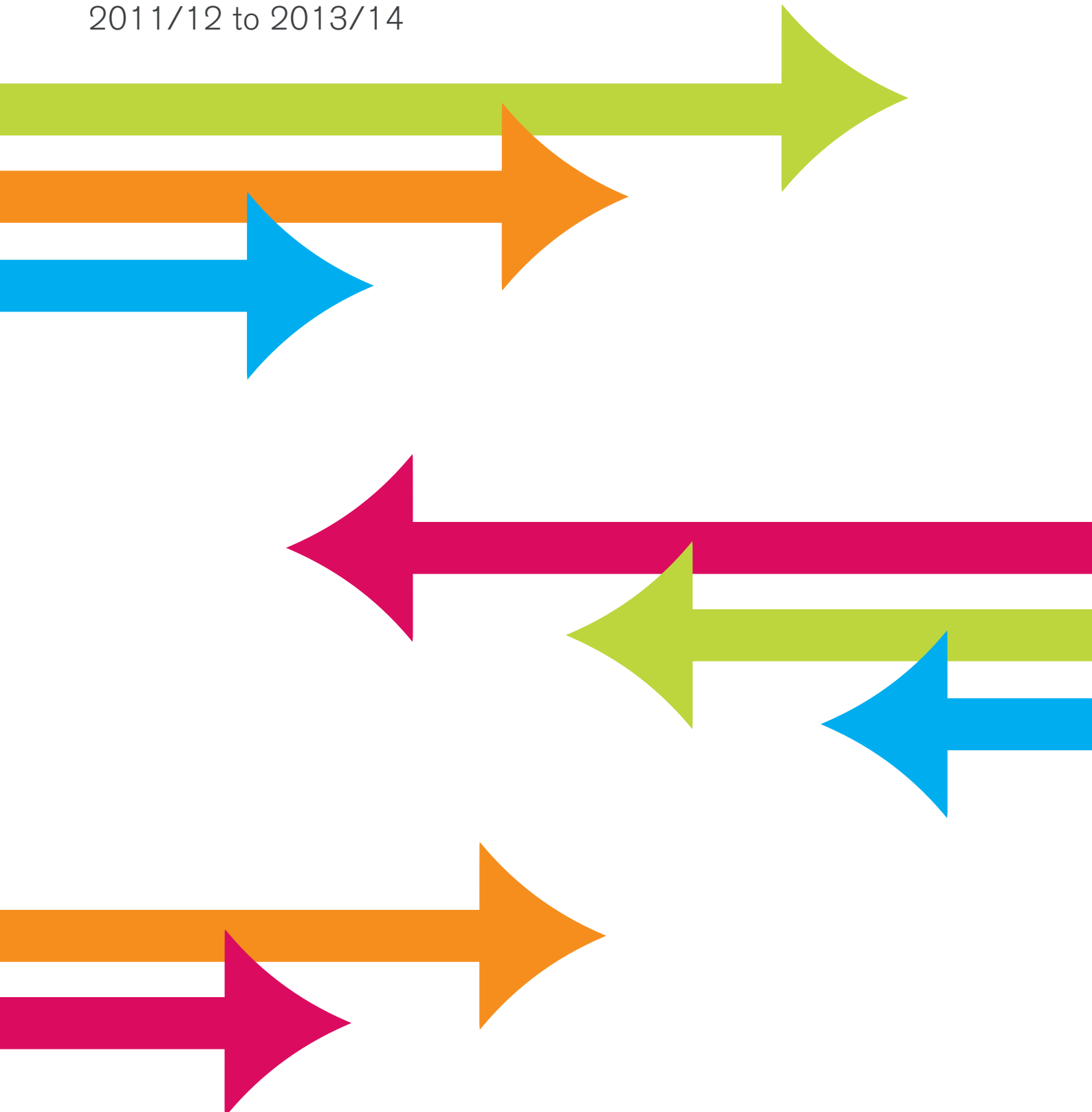




**Community
Transport
Association**

CTA UK STRATEGIC PLAN

2011/12 to 2013/14





INTRODUCTION

from the chair of the CTA

Community transport organisations and the CTA itself will face major challenges – as well as new opportunities – over the next few years. These include:

- the unprecedented squeeze on public spending, greater devolution of decision-making locally and the likely continued move from grant-aid to commissioned/competed services.
- a growing need for community transport, with an ageing population, tougher employment prospects and severe pressures on other forms of transport as public spending is scaled back.
- new opportunities to offer innovative, locally-driven, cost-effective community transport solutions, such as expanding the use of section 22 services and bidding to run services that local authorities or commercial operators can no longer provide.

To thrive, community transport organisations will need to be innovative and creative. They will have to show how community transport is part of the solution to local needs – demonstrating the “social value” they

provide. They will need to demonstrate high standards, professionalism and efficiency. They should be business-like, ensuring services are priced and funded on a sustainable basis, and that investment continues to protect existing services and to build capacity for the future.

But at the same time, the sector needs to retain its distinctive ethos and values, particularly its strong social objectives, community focus and the ability to mobilise volunteers.

The CTA will champion the community transport sector, nationally and locally, through these challenging times. We will support our members with information, guidance and professional services, promote the opportunities that exist and demonstrate professionalism and efficiency in everything we do. This strategic plan sets out how we intend to achieve that.

STEPHEN HICKEY

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

What it is and what it does

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT:

- provides essential, responsive transport services for a wide range of people and communities – often the most vulnerable in society. These are people who cannot use or do not have access to suitable cars, taxis or buses and who depend on community transport to get to the services and the social activities they require.
- is motivated by the values of good neighbourliness
 - the desire to help those in need to lead fuller, more active lives and to promote freedom, fairness and opportunity – rather than by profit.
- provides safe, accessible, cost-effective, flexible solutions, developed to meet specific local transport needs, and typically run by the community for the community on a not-for-profit basis.
- has a dual role of providing services directly to individuals and communities whose needs are not met by mainstream private and public transport as well as supporting a vast range of other voluntary and civil society organisations with their transport needs.
- shows what can be done when people take responsibility for solving their own problems. It mobilises and engages local communities, as it is provided by charities and voluntary organisations (which are often very small and local), and benefits from the experience and energy of volunteers who give freely of their time to help others.
- demonstrates what the UK government refers to as the ‘big society’ in action. Every day community transport organisations benefit from the energy and experience of thousands of volunteers across the country to answer the phones, schedule services, drive vehicles and ensure that passengers are safely transported. Local organisations also employ people where necessary, providing training and jobs in places where these are sometimes scarce.
- is demonstrably crucial to the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged people in both rural and urban areas. Where transport is limited, community transport gets people to work, to education, to church, to

hospital, to the shops and to visit friends. This gives people freedom, dignity and self-respect, allows them to fulfil their aspirations, stay independent in their own homes, and builds the bonds that keep families and communities strong.

WHAT TYPES OF SERVICES ARE DELIVERED BY COMMUNITY TRANSPORT?

Community transport organisations are very diverse. There are many levels of operation, ranging from tiny to large, and from those that rely solely on volunteers to those that employ many staff. The size and scale of each operation aims to be appropriate to local needs.

Although individual community transport organisations provide a different mix of services, the community transport sector’s ‘menu’, taken as a whole, is wide-ranging. It includes:

- **community car schemes**, where volunteers drive their own cars and have their mileage expenses reimbursed. This is a demand responsive, flexible and accessible transport service for individuals and groups who cannot access public transport, due to difficulties with mobility, illness, infirmity or restricted access.
- **group transport services**, door-to-door and dial-a-ride services for individuals, using minibuses operated under section 19 (section 10b in Northern Ireland) minibus permits.
- **“Wheels to Work”**, hiring out mopeds and bicycles and providing other transport services to enable people to get to work or apprenticeships, or to training that will lead to employment and long-term careers.
- **contracted “assisted travel” services**, such as home-to-school, non-emergency patient or social care transport, operated on a not-for-profit basis, with the same minibuses then used for community benefit outside the contracted hours.
- **demand-responsive or fixed route community bus services** operated under section 22, filling the gaps between traditional stage carriage bus routes.

THE CTA

What it is and what it does

THE CTA:

- is a UK-wide charity providing leadership, learning and support to member organisations, which in turn deliver innovative and flexible transport solutions to achieve social change in their communities.
- represents the voice of the sector to government bodies and to other major stakeholders, highlighting the importance of community transport for vulnerable individuals and isolated communities, the contribution which community transport can make both locally and nationally, and the issues which need to be tackled if the sector's potential is to be realised.
- promotes excellence by providing a range of services and support, including advice, training, e-based resources, publications, consultancy, events and project support for voluntary, community and accessible transport.

The CTA therefore aims to strengthen the work of our members, which include voluntary and community organisations, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives and mutuals, by creating an environment in which they can prosper and deliver high quality services to the people and communities who rely on community transport for their needs.

We also wish to reach out and support other civil society organisations which may not see themselves as providing community transport, but who nevertheless operate transport to meet their own purposes.

To find out more about the benefits of joining the CTA visit www.ctauk.org or call our membership team on 0161 351 1475.

THE CTA'S VISION IS:

"A fairer society where everyone, irrespective of where they live or their individual circumstances, has the mobility and accessible transport services they need to live full and active lives."

The CTA will promote this by:

- representing the views of voluntary and community transport organisations in the UK to influence governments at all levels, and build support and investment for our sector.
- inspiring and empowering our members across the UK through leadership, learning and support and encouraging active participation to bring about change.
- working towards a transport system which embraces accessible, community-based transport services to ensure a fairer society and sustainable communities.

THE CTA'S VALUES ARE:

- **Equity:** we promote equal opportunity, social justice and inclusive communities for all, through accessibility and diversity.
- **Integrity:** our relationships are based on trust, goodwill and support. We are responsible and efficient with our resources, and transparent in all that we do.
- **Pioneering:** we support our members, staff and trustees to push the boundaries and develop new ways of working. This includes assessing opportunities, removing barriers, taking risks and adopting a more entrepreneurial style in our work.
- **Engaging:** we use teamwork, co-operation and partnerships to connect with people and ensure that every encounter with the CTA is a positive one. We listen and respond to feedback, and promote quality in all that we do.

THE CTA'S STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND ACTIONS

The five broad strategic directions below, and the high-level supporting actions which flow from them will guide our work across the UK over the next three years.

The CTA fully recognises devolution and the different policies and approaches adopted by governments in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. To reflect this diversity, we will produce separate, more detailed annual business plans for each country. A CTA-wide annual business plan will set out specific activities which we wish to carry out across all four countries, such as membership engagement. These plans will be revised each year.

Our five strategic directions and high-level supporting actions are as follows.

1. SUPPORT AND WORK WITH OUR MEMBERS

At the heart of the CTA are our members. Our primary purpose is to support them by creating an environment in which they can develop and prosper, ensuring that we continue to offer the direct support and help that they require. To achieve this, we will:

- ensure that all of our members are kept fully informed on all policy, legal and technical developments which may present opportunities for them to improve their services, their performance or to ensure compliance.
- introduce a new membership engagement programme from 2012 with local and regional members' support networks in England, building on the success of our country conferences and regional roadshows.
- develop new ways of engaging with our members electronically, through further investment in our website, development of our online services and use of social media.
- refresh our training offer so that our members have access to innovative and relevant skills solutions to meet their needs.
- support members which face particular pressures, such as inappropriate commissioning practices and unfair competition.
- support volunteering across our sector and further develop specific support for our members which are voluntary organisations with no paid staff.

2. PROVIDE A NATIONAL VOICE

We aim to provide a national voice for our members, the wider voluntary and community transport sector, and for the individuals and communities our members serve.

We will ensure that all four governments understand the contribution community transport makes towards meeting the needs of disadvantaged people and how an inclusive transport system, which provides choice and access to the services that people require, can help achieve broader economic and social goals. To achieve this, we will:

- continue to engage with UK and devolved governments to ensure that community transport's contribution is reflected in national policies and legislation.
- contribute to specific policy debates to ensure that the contribution that community transport can make is fully recognised and that our members are aware of and understand what such policies may mean to them.
- ensure that the profile of community transport and the work of our members are more visible and that we communicate the importance of community transport and the contribution that it can make to a fairer society.
- promote equality and diversity throughout the CTA, to our members and in national policy and local transport provision.
- engage with other transport providers so that community transport plays its role in ensuring everyone can access the transport they need.
- widen the CTA's contact with government departments at all levels, key civil society partners and industry bodies.
- further build our evidence base on community transport and develop our State of the Sector reporting across the UK.
- ensure opportunities exist for our members at major international events, such as the Olympics, Paralympics and Commonwealth Games.
- engage with other voluntary organisations whose fundamental purpose is not transport itself, but for whom transport is crucial to their success.

3. CONNECT LOCALLY

Recognising the trend towards local decision-making and funding, we will encourage our members to actively engage with their local transport authorities. We will promote local networking and mutual support and facilitate strategic opportunities and initiatives in particular areas or communities. To achieve this, we will:

- follow through the implementation of the Local Transport Act 2008 with local transport authorities and with our members to encourage full use of the new provisions and opportunities contained in the Act.
- engage with our members, and with local and regional transport authorities, to support capacity-building initiatives across our sector;
- encourage our members to network, promote mutual support, skill-sharing and support local collaboration and consortia working.
- facilitate strategic opportunities and initiatives in particular areas or communities.

4. PROMOTE HIGH STANDARDS

We will promote high standards across our sector and help our members to demonstrate the quality and impact of their services. We will promote smarter procurement and better commissioning to enable better use of our members' transport resources, for example, by health and education providers, which will benefit society as a whole. To achieve this, we will:

- work with members and regulators to introduce and promote the CTA Quality Mark.
- promote the social enterprise agenda and provide relevant support and training to our members who wish to adopt a more entrepreneurial approach to their work, drawing on relevant experience such as our Rural Social Enterprise Programme in England.
- promote the use of social impact assessments and support members in using techniques such as social audit and social return on investment to demonstrate the value of their work.
- introduce a new "Member Pledge" as part of our application and renewal process to become a member of the CTA.

- promote innovation and best practice in procurement to members and commissioners of public transport services.
- encourage cross-sector working to demonstrate cost benefits delivered through community transport, for example, in relation to the NHS.
- promote a "Greening the Sector" initiative which encompasses our environmental policy work, training and a toolkit for members to assess their own environmental performance.
- ensure that community transport is recognised as part of the sustainable transport agenda and has the best possible access to green funding initiatives to achieve carbon reduction.

5. ENSURE AN EFFECTIVE UK-WIDE ASSOCIATION

We will continually improve the CTA's own internal organisation, efficiency and effectiveness. In challenging times, we must respond to the changing needs of our members, promote the sector vigorously, and secure the CTA's own financing and sustainability. To achieve this, we will:

- develop our membership programme and our offer to members, recognising the diversity in our sector and beyond, and recognising that different organisations have different needs.
- develop a communications strategy which encompasses printed media, the website, social networking and electronic communications.
- monitor the implementation of our recent Governance Review to ensure it achieves its purpose and delivers a CTA which is "fit for our future".
- develop our financial base, including the role of CTA Consultancy, to ensure that the CTA remains sustainable for the future.
- ensure that our organisational structure remains appropriate to deliver the strategic plan and the new challenges ahead.
- recognise and respond to the diverging political landscapes and policy directions in each country through our England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland teams.

MEASURING OUR IMPACT AND PERFORMANCE

We will produce an annual review and impact report on our work and we will measure our performance on a range of activity. This will include qualitative as well as quantitative measures. We will also seek feedback from our members in a variety of ways.

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Charity registered in Scotland no SC038518. VAT registration no 425 7711 50

CTA Trading Limited is registered in Cardiff no 2800636. VAT registration no 606742935.

Published by the CTA in March 2011.