

# Working with Government – CTA Scotland Conference 2024

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## Highland Council: Support for Community Transport



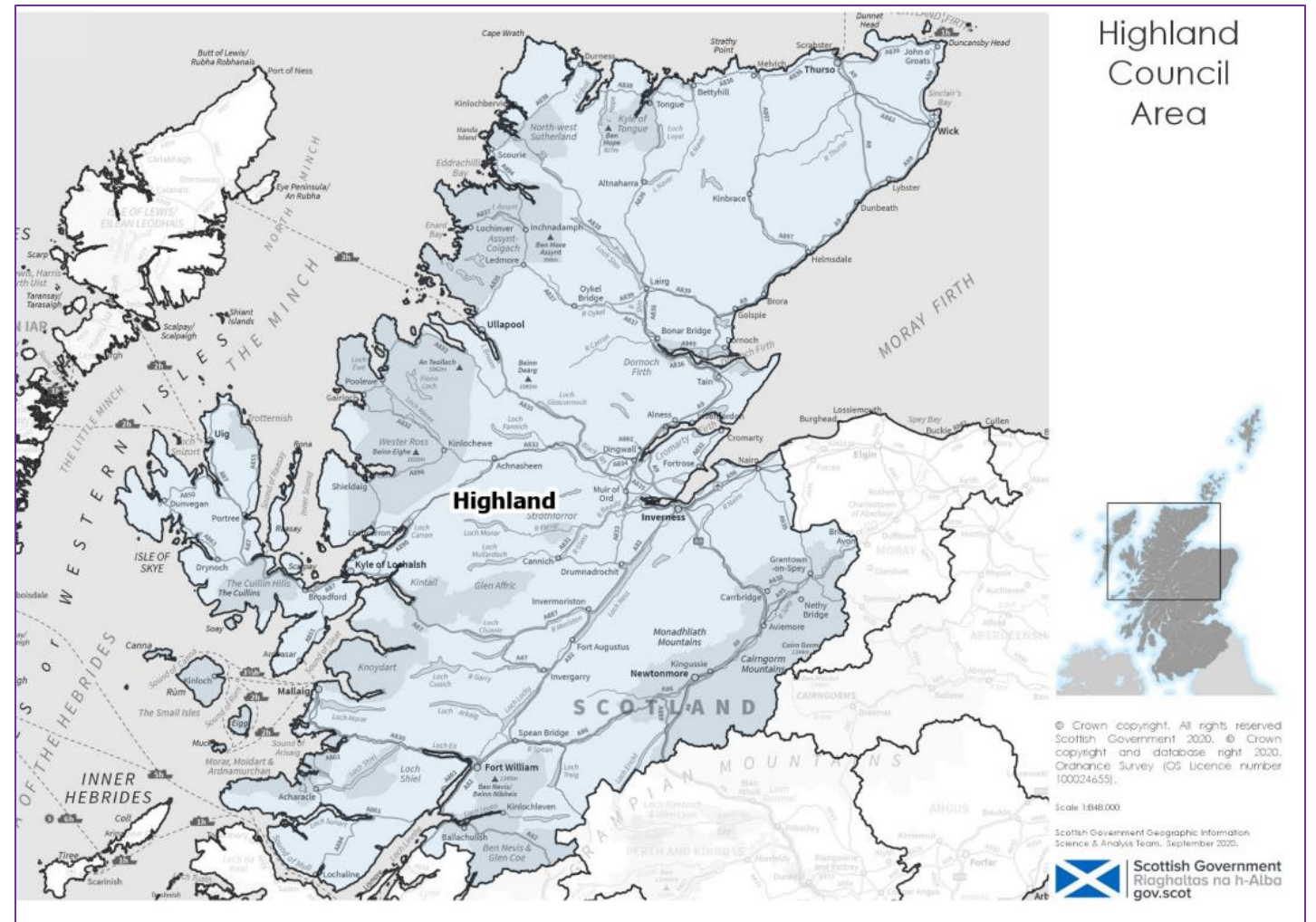
**Laura Carpenter**

*Senior Transport Officer (Network & Community), Highland Council*

# Background: Highland Council profile

## Highland Council: At a glance

- The Highland Council covers 26,484 km<sup>2</sup>
  - 20% larger than Wales – and nearly the size of Belgium
  - 33% of the land area of Scotland
- Population of 235,540 (7<sup>th</sup> highest in Scotland)
- Lowest population density: 8 persons/km<sup>2</sup>





# Background: Highland Council passenger transport network

- Bus services – approximately 50% commercial
- 61 Highland Council bus contracts
- 10 demand-responsive transport contracts
- c.450 home-to-school transport contracts
- **28 Community Transport grant agreements**



# Community Transport Grants: Highland Council



- Established methodology for evaluation and award of applicant organisations
- Monitored with quarterly claim forms and progress reports
- Diversity of operating models – community-led solutions for transport needs
- Grants cover between 5% and 95% of operating costs for recipient organisations

# 2024-2027 CT Grants Cycle: Facts and Figures

- 29 applicant organisations; 28 grant awards

- Total amount requested:

Year 1	£631,202
Year 2	£701,082
Year 3	£742,600

- Total budget allocation/award: (Year 1) £398k
- Provision for annual inflation – particularly important as the budget for CT grants had remained static for over a decade
- Awards ranging from £1,200 to £40,000 per year



# Community Transport: Delivery of Contract Services

- Shortage of contractors and/or high-cost routes present opportunities for innovation
- Provision of a vehicle from HC: enables usage of the vehicle for community needs outwith contract journey times
- There are currently four projects in place:
  - Two providing DRT contract services
  - Two providing home-to-school transport



# External funding: CBF and UKSPF

- Focus on vehicle provision
- £350,000
  - £300k CBF
  - £65k UKSPF
- Enabling provision of 9 vehicles to CT groups (MPVs and Minibuses)



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# Barriers and Concerns: CT funding

- Budget limitations and pressures
- Uncertainty beyond three-year grant cycle
- Perceptions: value and importance of CT is often misunderstood
  - HC budget survey identified CT as a potential budget savings (i.e., cutting the budget for CT grants entirely)
- Value for money is difficult to fully quantify for community transport



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# Community Transport funding: Looking to the future

- Rolling CT grant cycle – proposal at November 2024 Committee
- Identifying new opportunities
  - Contracts/potential savings
  - External funding
- Advocating and making the case for continuing CT support



*Kessock Bridge at sunrise*

# Any Questions?

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# Thank you!

