

**MINUTES OF THE  
112<sup>th</sup> Imtac MEETING**

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015, The Mount, Belfast

**Present:** G. Max O'Brien (Chairperson)

June Best, Vivien Blakely, Joe Kenny, Joan Harbison, Nan Carville, Sheelagh McRandal, Bert Bailie, David McDonald, David Mann, Henry Mayne.

**Observers:** Keith Walsh (DRD), Terry Butler (Translink), Naomi Roberts (Equality Commission), Jenny Robinson (Consumer Council)

**Secretariat:** Michael Lorimer

**1. Introductions, apologies and consideration of absences**

1.1 Apologies were given and accepted from Francis Hughes, Ann Gamble, Jim Nash, Peter Livingstone, Moira Heap, Sam Bell, Dermot McCluskey, Scott Kennerly.

**2. Observers updates**

2.1 Jenny updated members on the recent visits to the Belfast Airports and activities to promote passenger rights when travelling by air and sea. Future visits to ports are currently being explored.

2.2 Members asked about plans to visit the City of Derry Airport and the new cruise ship terminal in Belfast. Michael asked Jenny to help promote Imtac's Training Workshop on the 30<sup>th</sup> March to local airports.

2.3 Keith briefed members on the soft engagement in relation to the new Accessible Transport Strategy including focus groups

attended by around 200 people. It is planned to consult on emerging proposals around June/July with a final strategy published by the end of 2015.

- 2.4 Keith informed members that the report into the 2013 Blue Badge consultation was published on the 9<sup>th</sup> March. Keith also updated members on the roll out of AV on buses starting with Metro routes 4 and 7. Resources are still to be identified for Phase 2 of the roll out.
- 2.5 Members asked about the make-up and formats of the focus groups. Members also asked for details about the AV roll out. Michael informed members a launch was to take place on the 24<sup>th</sup> and agreed to circulate details to members.  
**Action: Michael to circulate details of the launch of AV.**
- 2.6 Terry updated members on the proposed design of 12 new low-floor double deck coaches and the refurbishment of the Enterprise. Terry also informed members that a consultation on proposed service rationalisation will be launched in the next week.
- 2.7 Members asked Terry if issues around the position of poles restricting access to the wheelchair users' space have been resolved. Members asked for more information about the Enterprise refurbishment.  
**Action: Michael to circulate information about the Enterprise refurbishment.**
- 2.8 Naomi updated members on the recent access to goods and services case involving a guide dog owner. Naomi also updated members on the "Every Customer Counts" project which has been running in Newtownards. The project has included training provided by Disability Action.
- 2.9 Members asked the Commission to share any evaluation reports arising from the project. Members asked whether the training

provided as part of the project had been subject to a tendering process.

### **3. Chairs update and update on 2015/16 funding and Work Programme**

- 3.1 Max briefed members on the delay to the 2015 members recruitment. The process is to be launched by the end of March.
- 3.2 Max briefed members on the difficult funding environment and explained that Imtac has been required to submit a draft work programme and draft Budget without fully involving members. Max explained that £9000 of savings have been identified by the Business Group. Final settlements are yet to be confirmed by the Department.
- 3.3 Members expressed concerns about the impact of reduced funding on meetings and support available to members. Max explained that the reductions in funding will mean Imtac has to be flexible about how it operates. Max made clear that further reductions in funding would make fulfilling Imtac's role very difficult.

### **4. Work programme tasks**

- 4.1 Michael briefed members on the latest draft of the paper looking at Blue Badge fraud. Michael explained that since the redraft the Department had published the way forward on reform of the Blue Badge Scheme. It was agreed that the paper should be redrafted to take account of the Departments recommendations.  
**Action: Michael to redraft the paper and circulate to members for comment. A final version of the paper to be agreed by the end of April 2015.**
- 4.2 Michael briefed members on the draft report on the accessibility of the pedestrian environment covered by Phase 3 of the Belfast Streets Ahead project. The report was developed following a site visit to the area in February.

**Action: Max asked members to submit comments on the draft paper in the next 7 to 10 days.**

## **5. Taxis Act Implementation**

- 5.1 Michael O'Neill (DoE) briefed members about recent developments around implementation of the Taxis Act including the rejection by the Assembly of proposals for single tier licensing. Michael explained that discussions are ongoing with MLA's but that the Department was hopeful on a gaining agreement on a way forward. Michael updated members on proposals for accessibility regulations. It is hoped these will be laid before the Committee at Stormont in the next week. Michael Lorimer updated members on constructive discussion with DVA about taxi driver training.
- 5.2 Members asked a number of questions relating to the accessibility regulations. Max thanked Michael for briefing members and offered Imtac's support in resolving current issues.

## **6. Consultations**

- 6.1 Michael briefed members on the draft position on kerbs. Members asked that it be made clear that kerbs provide all pedestrians with a degree of separation from traffic. Members also asked that the section relating to kerb heights should be strengthened, making clear that kerbs under 100mm should not be used under any circumstances.
- Action: Members were asked to submit final comments in the next 7 days.**
- 6.2 Members discussed the draft Transport NI policy. It was agreed that the Imtac position on kerb heights should be used in responding to the draft policy. Members also asked that the language used in the draft policy be strengthened.
- Action: Michael to submit a response based on the Imtac position and members comments.**

6.3 Michael updated members on recent meetings with DSD around Guidance on Pavement Café Licensing. Recommendations for improvements have been submitted to DSD. Members expressed concerns that as drafted the guidance does not meet the Ministerial assurance that pedestrians would be protected. It was agreed to await revisions to the Guidance, however members agreed to raise the issue with the DSD Minister if concerns are not addressed.

## **7. Minutes of the last meeting**

7.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

## **8. Any other business**

8.1 Max informed members that Imtac was now on Twitter. A social media policy is currently being developed.

8.2 Max informed members that Imtac was currently being required to go through the charity registration process.

## **9. Date of next meeting**

**9.1 The next meeting will be held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at 1.30pm at the Mount.**