

Minutes of the 142nd Imtac Meeting

Date and time: 21st September 2022 at 12pm

Place: Hybrid meeting held at the Mount Business & Conference Centre, Belfast and via ZOOM.

Present: Bert Bailie [BB] (Chairperson), Aaron McKane [AMc], Terry McCorry [TMc], Sean Murphy [SM], Andy Boal [ABo], Dave Morton [DMo] Jackson Minford [JM], June Best [JB], Eileen Drumm [ED], Sam Bell [SB], Vivien Blakely [VB], Christine McClements [CMc], Dermot Devlin [DD], Alison Lockhart [AL]

Observers: Attracta Tremers [AT] (Department for Infrastructure), Hannah Brown [HB] (Consumer Council), Brian Drury [BD] (Equality Commission), Rosanna Jack [RJ] (Translink).

Secretariat: Michael Lorimer [ML]

In attendance: Amelie Sundberg (VIA)

Apologies: Diane Marks [DMa], Jean Dunlop [JD], Andrea Brown [ABr] (Disability Action).

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 BB explained the new meeting format and asked that the usual introductions be delayed until the second part of the meeting.

2. Discussion topic: Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)

2.1 BB welcomed Amelie Sundberg [AS] to the meeting. AS took members through a presentation highlighting the concept of DRT, the work of VIA in this area and some good practice examples from GB and beyond.

2.2 Following the presentation a lively question and answer session took places. Issues raised included journey times and operational hours, integration with other modes, integration of ticketing, access

for friends, carers and families, vehicle accessibility, green credentials of services and the need for a passenger rather than an operator focus.

- 2.3 In summing up ML asked members to consider, in light of the presentation and discussion, what changes should be made to the Imtac paper Flexible Future, published on 2012.

Action 1: Members to consider priorities and issues for inclusion in the revision and updating of the Flexible Futures paper.

- 2.4 BB thanked AS for her presentation and contribution to the meeting.

AS and DD left the meeting.

3. Chairperson's updates

- 3.1 BB updated members on meetings with Minister O'Dowd, the Head of the DfI Sponsor Unit and attendance at a recent meeting of DPTAC. He highlighted planned meetings with the Translink CEO, the newly appointed Head of DFI Roads and the next meeting of the A4N Liaison Group hosted by DPTAC.
- 3.2 BB confirmed to members that the review of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Imtac and the Department has been completed and signed. He also confirmed that a letter of offer for grant funding until the end of March 2023 has been received and accepted.
- 3.3 BB asked members to submit any outstanding expenses as soon as possible. He also highlighted the importance of indicating whether members intend meetings in person or virtually and starting future meetings on time.

4. Observer updates

- 4.1 BD updated members on delays to the UK UNCRPD state examination. The UN has asked UKIM to consider an interim

examination on progress with the 3 key issues from the previous examination. UKIM have been offered two deadlines for submission of reports, January 2023 or September 2023. IMNI is seeking views from DPOs including Imtac on the two timelines.

Action 2: Members to feedback views on the UN examination deadline to AL or ML.

- 4.2 BD updated members on the recruitment of a new Equality Commission CEO following the retirement of Evelyn Collins.
- 4.3 HB updated members on planned site visits to City of Derry Airport and Stena ferries. She also highlighted the availability of sea and air travel access guides.
- 4.4 HB highlighted the current taxi fares consultation and initial discussions with ML about the Imtac priorities. The Consumer Council will be making a substantive response.
- 4.5 AT confirmed that Minister O'Dowd has written to Translink following the meeting with Imtac acknowledging progress made but highlighting the need for further progress around issues such as high floor coaches.
- 4.6 RJ highlighted a number of current issues including the user testing of low-floor coaches, the development of a step free journey planner, the roll out of audio visual on buses, a review of the current scooter policy, a review of access at stations and halts and a new disability workplace scheme being considered by Translink.
- 4.7 Members asked for further information from the Equality Commission about the number of enquiries from disabled people and the how many enquiries result in action / cases.
Action 3: BD to seek a response from colleagues to the query.
- 4.8 Members asked RJ about the roll out of EV buses in Derry, non-digital alternatives for the step free journey planner, plans to use

six car trains off peak and issues with toilet odour in the accessible area of older trains.

Action 4: RJ to seek clarification from colleagues on use of six car carriages and toilet odours.

4.9 Members suggested that ferry guides should include details of onward transport connections in Scotland.

5. Taxi Policy Paper & Fare Increase Public Consultation

5.1 ML outlined the background to the fares increase consultation, suggesting that the Imtac position on the previous fares increase has not changed. He highlighted that many of the other pre-COVID barriers disabled people and older people face accessing taxis remain and have been exacerbated by both the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. He recommended the Committee stress the importance of addressing these barriers when responding to the current consultation, linking the response to a revised taxis policy paper.

5.2 Members highlighted their own recent experiences of using taxis including discriminatory charging (£100 for a 7 mile return journey), a reduction in the availability of WAVs, refusal of access by WAV drivers at Belfast ranks and impact of rising costs and availability on rural communities. It was agreed that Imtac must be proactive in raising these issues and concerns and not accept further excuses for inaction.

Action 5: Members to submit comments on the draft Taxi Policy paper in the next 7 days.

Action 6: ML to draft a response to the fares increase consultation and circulate to members for comment.

Action 7: A meeting to be sought with DVA and Taxi Policy officials to discuss issues and seek publication of research report.

6. Working Groups and other updates

- 6.1 JB updated members on the recent People, Streets and Places Working Group meeting. Actions agreed include a site visit to look at cycle / pedestrian infrastructure in Newtownabbey, progressing a report on the impact of investment in public realm schemes based on schemes Imtac has inputted to, reviewing research into the barriers to cycling for disabled people and contacting Wheels for Wellbeing to explore the potential for webinars on the issue and working with Guide Dogs and RNIB to develop a webinar on street works.
- 6.2 AB and DM updated members on a positive introductory meeting with RJ and confirmed dates have been set for future TAWG meetings.
- 6.3 ML highlighted other updates including correspondence from Minister Hargey about progressing the Disability Strategy. JB expressed concerns about the Strategy being progressed without appropriate input from the Co-Design Group

7. Minutes of last meeting / Matters arising

- 7.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.
Proposed: Vivien Blakely Seconded: Dave Morton
- 7.2 Members discussed delays to progressing issues around colourful crossings, engagement and promoting the New Approach paper due to the political situation and the summer break.
Action 8: It was agreed to circulate the Colour Crossings Statement to councils and relevant Ministers before the next meeting.
Action 9: Actions around engagement and promotion of the New Approach paper to be progressed as soon as possible.

8 Any other business

- 8.1 JB highlighted discussions between Guide Dogs, the Departments of Health, Infrastructure and Economy around issues relating to E-Scooters.

9. Dates for future meetings

- 9.1 The next meeting will be held at 12pm on Wednesday 7th December 2022

List of actions

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