

Minutes of the 144th Imtac Meeting

Date and time: 22nd February 2023 at 12pm

Place: Hybrid meeting held at the Crescent Arts Centre, Belfast and via ZOOM.

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

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

.Secretariat: Michael Lorimer [ML]

In attendance: Liz Loughran [LL] (Department for Infrastructure)

Apologies: Vivien Blakely [VB], Andrea Brown [AB] (Disability Action).

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 BB welcomed everyone including Sean Murphy who was attending his first meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

2. Chairperson's updates

2.1 BB informed members he represented Imtac at the Translink event to mark the retirement of Terry Butler.

2.2 BB briefed members about meetings with the Department including the Public Transport Policy Team, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan Team and the new Director with responsibility for walking, wheeling and cycling matters. He also

briefed members about his attendance at a future of transport seminar and a Business Committee meeting held in January.

- 2.3 BB highlighted the delay to annual recruitment for members because of issues with accessing the Imtac website. ML explained he was attempting to resolve these issues as soon as possible.

3. Observer updates

- 3.1 SC repeated a request that members raise any Departmental issues for update in advance of future meetings.

Action 1: ML to circulate a reminder to members for issues for Departmental update at least two weeks before future meetings.

- 3.2 Members asked for an update on the extension of the free concession to people currently in receipt of the half fare concession. ML informed members that officials have indicated an intention to consult on options for the future of the Concessionary Fares Scheme but cautioned that changes would probably require an Executive.

- 3.3 BD updated members of recent settlements in cases supported by the Equality Commission. He briefed members on the next steps in preparing a submission to the UN Committee including planned sectoral engagement on key issues.

- 3.4 Members highlighted the importance of a UN rapporteur visiting Northern Ireland as part of the examination process. Members also asked for statistics on the number of cases supported by the Commission on disability matters compared with the number of enquiries made.

Action 2: ML and BD agree to liaise over the statistics requested and provide an answer by the next Imtac meeting.

- 3.5 HB highlighted the recent useful visit to Coleraine station to view a range of buses and thanked RJ for organising. She also informed

members that the Consumer Council has responded to the recent consultation on the NITHC Disability Action Plan and that the response is available on the Consumer Council website

- 3.6 RJ highlighted the visit to Coleraine to view buses and thanked ML for organising participants. She briefed members on the creation of a step free journey planner on the Translink website and encouraged members to try it and provide feedback. RJ also updated members on plans to undertake a PR piece on the provision of Changing Places Toilets at Translink stations and thanked CMc and ML for their participation. Finally, RJ informed members that she would be taking maternity leave and that the name of a replacement should be known shortly. BB asked that the minutes record best wishes from the Committee to RJ.
- Action 3: ML to circulate a link to the Translink step free journey planner and members to provide any feedback.**

4. Policy Papers

- 4.1 ML briefed members about the redraft of the paper on the impact of investment in public realm schemes including the addition of illustrative images. Members highlighted the importance of the quality of footways and the frequent provision of dropped kerbs and accessible crossing opportunities. Members also asked for an update about proposals for a scheme in Magerha.

Action 4: Members to submit comments on the public realm paper by 3rd March 2023.

Action 5: ML to seek an update from Mid Ulster Borough Council on the planned public realm scheme for Maghera.

- 4.2 ML briefed members about the background and the content to a report on surveys on the use of Blue Badges in Belfast City Centre. Members asked that caution be adopted when referring to a post covid situation. Members also raised issues around the general provision of accessible parking and access to it. ML suggested a policy paper on these issues could form part of next year's Work Programme.

Action 6: Members to submit comments on the draft Blue Badge Survey Report by 3rd March 2023.

4.3 BB asked that discussion on the final paper be deferred after lunch and the next agenda item.

5. Discussion topic: Impact of climate change on policy and services

5.1 BB welcomed LL (Director of DfI Climate Change) to the meeting. LL gave members an overview of the Department's and wider Government's developing approach to addressing the provisions of the Climate Change Act, passed by the Assembly in 2023 which include a just transition to net zero. She outlined an approach focused on prioritising (1) substituting trips, (2) encouraging a shift to more sustainable modes and (3) encouraging a shift to more sustainable fuels and stressed the change required and timescales are extremely challenging.

5.2 Members raised a series of issues including the limited range of electric vehicles, the availability of charging infrastructure in towns and rural areas, the limited availability of electric vehicles and the cost of switching. Members also questioned whether the switch to electric vehicles have the positive impact on the environment claimed and what support will be made available to transport providers such as taxis to switch.

5.3 LL made clear that the switch to EVs was the lowest priority for Government and that substituting trips and encouraging shifts to more sustainable modes will be given greater emphasis. She again stressed the scale of the challenges involved. ML stated the need for honesty about the challenge including a clear recognition that "stick as well as carrot" will be required.

5.4 BB thanked LL for her contribution to the meeting and stated that there was an open door for the Department to engage with the

Committee on meeting the challenges presented by Climate Change.

4. Policy Papers - continued

- 4.4 ML briefed members on the draft policy paper on the provision of demand responsive transport services. BB asked members to focus particularly on the final section of the paper.

Action 7: Members to submit comments on the draft demand responsive transport paper by 3rd March 2023.

6. Working Group and other updates

- 6.1 With regard to the recent visit to Coleraine Bus Station, ML updated members on the proposals to undertake further assessments of Translink vehicles including new Foyle Metro vehicles and proposed to delay a comprehensive report until all this work is complete.

- 6.2 Members were briefed about a hybrid event with Councils to be held on 29th March 2023 in the Mount. ML confirmed that a Changing Places Toilet will be provided if requested in line with Imtac policy.

Action 8: ML to circulate details of the event and members are encouraged to circulate to their own contacts within councils.

- 6.3 Members were briefed about a hybrid Cycling Workshop to be held on the 22nd March 2023 in partnership with Wheels for Wellbeing. Although focused on officials from the Department ML highlighted the potential for other stakeholders to attend virtually.

- 6.4 JB briefed members about her participation into a disabled citizens' inquiry into walking and wheeling led by Sustrans and Transport for All.

6.5 ML updated members on changes at DPTAC. Keith Richards term as Chairperson has ended and Matthew Campbell-Hill has been appointed as the new Chairperson.

7. Minutes of the last meeting / Matters arising

7.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

Proposed: Dave Morton

Seconded: Andy Boal

7.2 BB highlighted difficulties publishing papers caused by the issues with the lmtac website.

7.3 It was agreed that a meeting should be sought with the new Director within the Department with responsibility for Bolder Vision.

Action 9: BB and ML to arrange meeting with Department about Bolder Vision.

8. Any other business

8.1 BM raised issues about Airporter route changes following the recent takeover and concerns about limitations on Smartpass usage on the 212 service.

Action 10: ML and HB to discuss the Airporter issue and report back.

Action 11: RJ to clarify any changes to Smartpass usage on the 212 service.

8.2 CMc raised concerns about the impact of changes to structure of the health service on people with limited travel options. It was agreed this is an issue that should be part of the next lmtac work programme.

Action 12: ML to circulate a request to members for work programme tasks and issues.

8.3 BB asked members to provide initial feedback on the new venue and a proposal to start future meetings at 1pm. Feedback from

those in the meeting was positive as was the proposal to start at 1pm.

Action 11: Members to feedback issues around the venue to ML as soon as possible.

9. Dates for the next meeting

9.1 The next Committee meeting and the AGM will be held on the 28th June 2023.

List of actions

Action 1: ML to circulate a reminder to members for issues for Departmental update at least two weeks before future meetings.

Action 2: ML and BD agree to liaise over the statistics requested and provide an answer by the next lmtac meeting.

Action 3: ML to circulate a link to the Translink step free journey planner and members to provide any feedback.

Action 4: Members to submit comments on the public realm paper by 3rd March 2023.

Action 5: ML to seek an update from Mid Ulster Borough Council on the planned public realm scheme for Maghera.

Action 6: Members to submit comments on the draft Blue Badge Survey Report by 3rd March 2023.

Action 7: Members to submit comments on the draft demand responsive transport paper by 3rd March 2023.

Action 8: ML to circulate details of the event and members are encouraged to circulate to their own contacts within councils.

Action 9: BB and ML to arrange meeting with Department about Bolder Vision.

Action 10: ML to circulate a request to members for work programme tasks and issues.

Action 11: Members to feedback issues around the venue to ML before the next meeting.