**Minutes of the 152nd Imtac Meeting**

**Date and time:** Wednesday 26th February 2025 1:00 - 3:30 pm

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

**Present:** Bert Bailie [BB] (Chairperson), Dave Morton [DMo], Jackson Minford [JM], Eileen Drumm [ED], June Best [JB], Rebecca Bamford [RB], Terry McCorry [TMc), Sam Bell [SB], Christine McClements [CMc], Hayley Smallwood [HS], Dermot Devlin [DD].

**Observers**: Scott McClenaghan [SMc] (Department for Infrastructure), Hannah Brown [HB] (Consumer Council), Andrea Brown [ABr] (Disability Action), Conor Tinnelly [CT] (Commissioner for Older People).

**Secretariat:**  Michael Lorimer [ML]. Angela Reid [AR].

**Apologies:** Paula Meenan [PM], Barbara Fleming [BF], Vivien Blakely [VB], Danielle Campbell [DC] (Translink), Brian Drury [BD] (Equality Commission).

**1 Welcome, introductions and apologies**

1.1 BB welcomed everyone and asked people to introduce themselves.

**2 Chairpersons updates**

2.1 BB updated members on a request to meet with new Infrastructure Minister, Liz Kimmins. He told members the request has been granted with a meeting set for the 12th March. He indicated that a letter of thanks will be sent to Minister O’Dowd.

2.2 BB updated members on correspondence to Minister Lyons sent in November 2024 requesting a meeting to discuss the Disability Strategy. Following a request for an update from the Secretariat in January, the Minister has declined the request, offering a meeting with officials instead. BB informed members this offer has been accepted and a suitable date is being sought.

2.3 BB informed members that correspondence has been received from DfC, seeking support from Imtac in running a feedback session to identify issues to inform the new Disability Strategy. A decision will be taken on whether to hold a session in due course.

2.4 BB updated members about a meeting planned between Imtac, the Department and Translink on the 26th March, explaining this was a follow up to the meeting with the Permanent Secretary in November.

2.5 BB briefed members on other meetings held including the Business Committee, a workshop on Active Travel, and the Health and Transport Steering Group. He indicated that a meeting with the Department Sponsor Team was due.

**3 Observers Updates**

3.1 SMc briefed members on the recent Ministerial change with Liz Kimmins replacing John O’Dowd.

3.2 SMc informed members that the consultation on the overall draft Budget has been published, with Departments awaiting the outcome before finding out allocations. He indicated applications have already been sought from both RTF and TPPD funded organisations.

3.3 SMc briefed members on the work of the Including People Group within the Department including a meeting planned with Translink and Imtac on the 26th May and progress in the delivery of DET to the Department’s Senior Leadership Team. He indicated that the Group planned to engage with older and disabled people’s representative groups to identify issues. BB suggested DET could be promoted perhaps by having reps from other Departments at the DET training .

**Action 1: SMc to raise with colleagues the potential to replicate the work of the Including People Group in other Departments.**

3.4 SMc highlighted the ongoing process in working with Imtac to develop next year’s Work Programme.

3.5 ML indicated that as part of the delivery of DET, he would be seeking people to undertake guided journeys with the Department’s Senior Leadership Team.

**Action 2: Members interested in undertaking guided journeys as part of the delivery of DET to contact ML.**

3.6 AB informed members that the funding application for DATS has been submitted to the Department, highlighting rising costs including the rise in National Insurance.

3.7 AB highlighted the recent launch of the Community Transport Association, State of the Sector Report.

**Action 3: AB to send the State of the Sector Report to ML for circulation to members.**

3.8 ML read an update from DC highlighting the launch of the priority seating video, meetings to discuss street works connected to Grand Central, a proposed revisit to York Street and planned meetings to discuss rail halt accessibility, public realm at Saltwater Square, assistance at Grand Central and the phase 2 roll out of Navilens. ML also highlighted plans to review the tactile guidance surfaces at Grand Central.

**Action 4: ML/DC to circulate priority seating videos to members.**

3.9 CT briefed members about responses developed on the Department of Health Outcomes consultation, DAERA Just Transition Commission consultation, the review of Architecture and Built Environment Policy and the Active Travel Delivery Plan consultation. CT indicated that the new Commissioner should be in position soon.

3.10 HB updated members about ongoing research projects including about vulnerable customers and transport, thanking AR for her assistance. HB also indicated the Consumer Council Forward work programme will be published soon for consultation.

3.11 Members highlighted concerns about the use of the label vulnerable.

**Action 5: Members and secretariat to liaise with HB around alternative terminology to vulnerable.**

**4 Imtac Draft Policy Papers**

4.1 ML briefed members on the draft policy paper on pavement parking, highlighting proposals to legislate as well as interim actions. He highlighted a recommendation to form a taskforce similar to Wales.

4.2 Members broadly supported the paper, highlighting pavement parking as an area where progress can be made. Members did raise concerns about the practicalities of banning parking on the footpath in certain streets, stressing the need for exemptions should be more clearly made in the paper. Bringing the public along was seen as important. Particular issues in student areas were also highlighted.

**Action 6: Members were asked to submit further comments by close of play on 4th March 2025.**

4.2 ML briefed members about the report on proposals for a public realm scheme in Strabane, highlighting the desire to retain on street parking as a barrier to improvement.

**Action 7: Members to submit comments on the draft Strabane paper in the next 7 to 10 days.**

**5 Other updates including the access to health and transport task**

5.1RB gave members an update about the Health and Transport survey report, highlighting both qualitative and quantitative feedback. RB stressed the impacts on rights, emotional wellbeing and the economy.

5.2 RB set out the next phase on the project including roundtable engagement events planned for March and April to discuss issues and identify solutions. Members suggested careful wording is required to ensure that more difficult, longer term solutions are not dismissed.

**Action 8: ML/AR to circulate invitations to members to the roundtable events.**

5.3 BB drew members attention to the current Department of Health consultation on Creating a Network for Better Outcomes which has been receiving media attention before it closes on 28th February. It was noted that some of the outputs of the Health and Transport survey report reflect concerns being expressed on the consultation proposals about impacts of rurality and access to services. After a discussion it was agreed that ML should draft a response

**Action 9: Members agreed that a final response to the hospital consultation should be signed off by the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.**

5.4 ML updated members about the ongoing review of the Bus Stop Design Guide and proposals to review Planning Policy Statements on Parking and Transport Assessments.

**6** **Current consultations**

6.1 BB highlighted the draft response to the Active Travel Delivery Plan consultation. Members broadly welcomed the response. It was suggested that the final response should give more prominence to issues around E Scooters.

**Action 10: Members to provide any final comments on the Active Travel consultation before close of play on the 27th February 2025.**

6.2 BB asked members to consider the review of the Architecture and Built Environment Policy. Members criticised the short consultation period and the online feedback form which does not allow the questions to be viewed without completing the survey. Members broadly agreed that the policy did not currently adequately address issues around accessibility and inclusion.

**Action 11: ML to seek clarification about the consultation questions and circulate to members.**

**Action 12: Members agreed that a final response to the Policy review should be signed off by the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.**

6.3 ML briefed members about the proposed Private Members Bill sponsored by Danny Donnelly MLA relating to the UNCRPD. ML indicated that the proposed Bill was very limited in nature. Extensive discussion took place with members around the merits of the Bill. It was agreed that views and opinions of other stakeholders would be sought prior to deciding about whether to support the Bill or not.

**Action 13: Members agreed that BB, JB and ML should review and decide how to respond to the Bill consultation.**

**7 Forward planning discussion on future priorities including 2025 / 2026 Work Programme**

7.1 ML briefed members on considerations for development next year’s Work Programme. He highlighted the impact on Deaf, disabled and older people of likely further cuts from Westminster including benefit cuts. A lengthy and detailed discussion took place around priorities, recognising that existing projects and good relationships with stakeholders will carry over to next year’s work programme.

**Action 14: ML to circulate drafts of the 2025/26 Work Programme to members for comment and further input.**

**8 Minutes of the last meeting**

8.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

**Proposed: Jackson Minford Seconded: Rebecca Bamford**

**9 Any other Business**

9.1 Members raised issues around meeting venues.

**Action 15: It was agreed to look at the potential of hosting the next Imtac meeting at the Ulster Museum.**

**10 Date, Time and Venue of Next meeting**

* Wednesday 25th June 2025, 1pm, Committee & AGM, venue to be confirmed.

**List of Actions**

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