

## **Minutes of the 154<sup>th</sup> Imtac Meeting**

<b>Date and time:</b>	Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2025 1:00 - 3:15 pm
<b>Place:</b>	Hybrid meeting held at the Crescent Arts Centre, Belfast and via ZOOM.
<b>Present:</b>	Terry McCorry [TMc] (Chairperson), Dave Morton [DMo], Jackson Minford [JMd], Eileen Drumm [ED], Christine McClements [CMc], Hayley Smallwood [HS], Julieanne Crothers [JC], Caroline Dorsett [CD], Johnny Harvey [JH], Dermot Devlin [DD], Rebecca Bamford [RB], Paula Meenan [PM].
<b>Observers:</b>	Brian Drury [BD] (Equality Commission), Scott McClenaghan [SMc] (Department for Infrastructure), Hannah Brown [HB] (Consumer Council), Rosanna Jack [RJ] Dannielle Campbell [DC] (both Translink), Frances Campbell [FC] (Community Transport Association).
<b>In attendance:</b>	Chris Conway (Translink)
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Michael Lorimer [ML]. Angela Reid [AR].
<b>Apologies:</b>	Vivien Blakely [VB], Sam Bell [SB], Barbara Fleming [BF], Cinzia Savonitti [CS], Jonathan Mitchell [JM], Anna Doran [AD] (Commissioner for Older People)

### **1 Welcome, introductions and apologies**

- 1.1 TMc welcomed everyone, including Frances Campbell attending her first meeting as observer from CTA. TMc asked people to introduce themselves, declaring any interests as appropriate. TMc also indicated that the secretariat would be using AI to help with minute taking.

## **2 Presentation and conversation with Chris Conway**

- 2.1 TMc welcomed and thanked Chris Conway for coming to the meeting. Chris gave members an overview of the ongoing commitment from Translink to ensuring services are accessible and inclusive. He pointed out a commitment to ongoing improvement, recognising that the organisation does not always get everything right. Chris acknowledged the importance of engagement with Imtac and others when making changes.

### ***Ticketing***

- 2.2 Members asked for better information and flexibility in using the Half Fare Smartpass. Chris indicated that improvements could be made around information provision, but indicated that more flexibility with ticketing would be dependent on discussions with DfI.

### ***Online information***

- 2.3 Members raised issues around accessing appropriate information about services and asked for improvements to information about the accessibility of services on the Translink website. Chris indicated that this was being looked at through a project involving DC. DC indicated that Imtac will be involved in the project.

### ***Accessibility***

- 2.4 Members asked about plans to improve accessibility at key rail halts and the importance of extended rail services to more parts of the West. Chris indicated that budgets were extremely restricted for capital projects but indicated that a rail access audit underway would identify work to be done and help with prioritising resources. He welcomed the publication of the All Island Rail Review and whilst acknowledging the long term nature of proposals he stressed the importance of maintaining momentum.

### ***Complaints***

- 2.5 Members raised issues about how complaints from disabled people around accessibility are handled, suggesting a dedicated channel be created. Chris indicated that all complaints are taken

seriously by Translink, indicating that Translink work with the Consumer Council to assess complaints handling. HB indicated that assessment include a selection of complaints related to accessibility.

**Action 1: ML to work with HB to arrange a meeting with members and the Consumer Council to discuss handling of complaints.**

### ***Grand Central***

- 2.6 ML asked why rail announcements have been switched off at Grand Central. Chris and DC explained the rationale was because of the sheer number of announcements. ML indicated the negative impact the change has had on some passengers. It was agreed further engagement was required with Imtac and people impacted.
- 2.7 Members raised issues around the temporary drop off and pick up arrangements at Grand Central and asked whether links with Shopmobility were being developed. Chris acknowledged that the arrangements during the build of Grand Central had been challenging. He indicated that drop off facilities and a taxi rank are proposed to be operational when Durham Street opens in November and that engagement with Imtac has taken place on these facilities. DC briefed members on an agreement with Shopmobility Belfast to provide mobility equipment on request at Grand Central.
- 2.8 Members expressed concern and disappointment at the provision of a mobile, inaccessible “NOOK” at Grand Central rather than a dedicated quiet space, explaining that current provision was potentially both inequitable and discriminatory. Chris explained current provision was what could be provided with space and budgetary constraints, explaining further changes would require additional funding from DfI. After further discussion, where members challenged whether this approach reflected a commitment to inclusive design, it was agreed to explore other options for a quiet space in the station or public space outside.

## ***Goldliner***

- 2.9 A member highlight a recent experience of traveling on a Goldline coach where the driver didn't know how to deploy the passenger lift or secure a wheelchair user. Because of these issues the service was delayed over an hour and the member could have faced serious injury when his chair moved during the journey. The member indicated this was not his first negative experience on a Goldline coach. Chris expressed his concern at the experience and indicated that refresher training for drivers may be required. He informed members that work was being progressed on bus procurement with low-floor double deck coaches and Metro vehicles with two wheelchair user spaces two positive developments. Chris indicated that finding a suitable low-floor alternative for high floor coaches is proving difficult. TMC asked for clarification on procedures for evacuation of a wheelchair user from a high floor coach in, for example, the event of a fire on board.

**Action 2: Translink (DC &RJ) to provide feedback on evacuation procedures for wheelchair users using high floor coaches.**

## ***Training***

- 2.10 ML asked about plans to improve training provided to all staff. Chris highlighted the challenges as well as the opportunities to provide training to over 2500 staff, indicating that he was open to suggestions for improvements.

## ***Glider***

- 2.11 Members asked for an update on changes to procedures following the recent settlement with a wheelchair user travelling on the Glider. Chris indicated changes introduced requiring drivers to check their destination with a wheelchair user when boarding Glider.

- 2.12 TMc thanked Chris for his time and his contribution to the discussions, indicating he hoped he would come back to a future meeting.

Chris Conway left the meeting.

### **3 Chairperson's updates**

- 3.1 TMc updated members on the meeting with the Sponsor Branch in July including the agreement of budget, including additional resource to cover salary increases, and publication of the Imtac Work Programme. He indicated that the current Memorandum of Understanding with the Department is being reviewed.
- 3.2 TMc indicated that following the adoption of the Annual Report in June a meeting was requested with Minister Kimmins. The meeting will take place on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025.
- 3.3 TMc briefed members on the meeting of the Business Committee in August including the review of policies and procedures.
- 3.4 TMc thanked the secretariat for their work in co-ordinating multiple consultation responses over the summer period.

### **4 Observer updates**

- 4.1 DC updated members on proposed site visits to test two wheelchair spaces and hearing loop provision on buses, projects around off board information and onboard bus audio visual and changes to the Translink website. She welcomed the first meeting of the Working Group.
- 4.2 HB provided an update on site visits to local airports including the recent visit to Belfast City Airport. She highlighted the upcoming trip on Stenaline on the 6<sup>th</sup> October, thanking Imtac members for their participation in both.

- 4.3 AB highlighted Disability Action's ongoing contribution to the review of Community Transport services and informed the Committee of a new driving assessment rig and accessible vehicle secured by the Mobility Centre with funding from the Motability Foundation.
- 4.4 FC informed members of the ongoing contribution of the CTA into the review of community transport services and highlighted to members the upcoming Community Transport week, titled "Beyond the Minibus".
- 4.5 BD indicated to members that the full settlement about the recent case involving the Glider was available and he committed to keeping members updated on any other outcomes from the case. He explained that the Commission was preparing for the publication of the Disability Employment Strategy and Disability Strategy.
- 4.6 SMC updated members of the meeting between Imtac and the Sponsor Team in July, the meeting with Minister on 6<sup>th</sup> October and review of the MoU. He briefed members on changes at the top of the Department with the retirement of both Permanent Secretary, Denis McMahon and Deputy Secretary, Judith Andrews and the implications for the Department. Scott told members that phase two of the review of community transport services was ongoing.

## **5 Current consultations**

- 5.1 ML provided members with an overview of the consultation on the Climate Action Plan, highlighting concerns that the transport proposals focused on the switching of existing vehicles to zero emission fuels. He explained this would do little to address the wider inequalities in the transport system or just transition commitments.

**Action 3: ML to draft a response to the Climate Action Plan focused on transport proposals, recommending a more balanced approach to reach Net Zero including encouraging more sustainable travel and reducing the need to travel.**

**Members also agreed to recommend a specific plan / strategy focused on inclusion and accessibility linked to a just transition.**

- 5.2 ML briefed members on a consultation around sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) in new developments.

**Action 4: ML to draft a short response welcoming SuDS but highlighting the importance of not creating barriers for people during their design and installation.**

## **6 Other updates**

- 6.1 DM gave members an overview of the recently published Mencap report “No Journey Left Behind” to which he contributed. Members pointed out that people with difficulties are not eligible for free travel in Northern Ireland.

- 6.2 ML provided members updates on two projects sponsored by the National Centre for Accessible Transport; a research report into the transport and regulatory systems across the UK and feasibility study into establishing an inclusive micromobility scheme.

- 6.3 ML briefed members on activities involving the Department including the further delivery of DET to officials, discussion around arrangements for rail replacement services, meetings to discuss the review of community transport, tackling pavement parking, and the application process for concessionary fares.

- 6.4 ML updated members about meetings with Translink to discuss pick up and drop off facilities at Grand Central and cycle parking provision at stations. Members were asked to discuss how to respond to feedback received from Translink about the Committee’s report on Grand Central.

**Action 5: Members agreed to provide further feedback on comments from Translink regarding Grand Central with a view to continuing dialogue about improvements required.**

- 6.5 ML informed members that an online engagement event is being organised with Danny Donnelly MLA to discuss his Members Bill and wider CRDP incorporation. The event will be held on the 10<sup>th</sup> October.

**Action 6: ML / AR to circulate details of the CRDP engagement event.**

- 6.5 Explained there had been delays to the Transport to Health task but that it was hoped that progress will be made in the next few weeks to establish a new timeline for its delivery.

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

- 7.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

**Proposed: Dave Morton      Seconded: Julieanne Crothers**

- 7.2 ML indicated that it was still proposed to hold a social event to thank Bert Bailie and June Best.

## **8 Any other Business**

- 8.1 There was no further business.

## **9 Date, Time and Venue of Next meeting**

- 9.1 The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025, at 1pm, online and in person at the Crescent Arts Centre, Belfast.

## **List of Actions**

**Action 1: ML to work with HB to arrange a meeting with members and the Consumer Council to discuss handling of complaints.**

**Action 2: Translink (DC &RJ) to provide feedback on evacuation procedures for wheelchair users using high floor coaches.**



- Action 3: ML to draft a response to the Climate Action Plan focused on transport proposals, recommending a more balanced approach to reach Net Zero including encouraging more sustainable travel and reducing the need to travel. Members also agreed to recommend a specific plan / strategy focused on inclusion and accessibility linked to a just transition.**
- Action 4: ML to draft a short response welcoming SuDS but highlighting the importance of not creating barriers for people during their design and installation.**
- Action 5: Members agreed to provide further feedback on comments from Translink regarding Grand Central with a view to continuing dialogue about improvements required.**
- Action 6: ML / AR to circulate details of the CRDP engagement event.**