

**Minutes of the  
114<sup>th</sup> Imtac Meeting**

**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015, The Mount, Belfast

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

June Best, Peter Livingstone, Sam Bell, Sheelagh McRandal, Samantha Browne, Jim Nash, Moira Heap, Paul McCloskey, Joan Harbison, Eimear McCracken, Bert Bailie.

**Observers:** Keith Walsh (DRD), Ciaran Crilly (DRD), Terry Butler (Translink), Jenny Robinson (Consumer Council)

**Secretariat:** Michael Lorimer

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

- 1.1 Apologies were given and accepted from David McDonald, Joe Kenny, Henry Mayne, Nan Carville, Ursula Marshall, Vivien Blakely, Naomi Roberts (Equality Commission), Ann Gamble and Francis Hughes (both Age Sector Platform).
- 1.2 Max asked members to take a short pause for thought in recognition of bereavement experienced by two committee members during the summer.
- 1.3 Max informed members that today was Keith Walsh's last Imtac members. Max asked that the minutes record thanks and best wishes to Keith from the Committee.

## **2. Proposals for changes to Imtac operations and structures**

- 2.1 Max and Michael briefed members on proposals for short-term and longer term changes to Imtac and operations and structures most of which are being driven by reduced budgets.
- 2.2 Members recognised the need to reduce meetings to make savings during the current year. During discussions members did suggest prioritising an outreach meeting. Members also asked that stand alone meetings to discuss specific issues / projects be maintained. Michael indicated that these would be held if the relevant agency covered the costs of meetings.
- 2.3 Members recognised the potential opportunities in proposals to broaden the role and remit of Imtac. Members and the Department highlighted the significant practical and governance issues associated with making some of the suggested changes. Max indicated that proposals for longer term changes would form part of discussions about changes to the current Memorandum of Understanding between Imtac and DRD. Imtac members will be kept informed of these discussions and asked to approve any future changes.
- 2.4 Members agreed the following short-term changes: (1) Working Group meetings will be suspended for the rest of the financial year, (2) Imtac hold up to two additional meetings during the financial year, (3) the current Convenors of working groups and Business Group remain in place until any structures are agreed and (4) the vacant Personal Mobility Group Convenor be filled at the December Imtac meeting.
- 2.5 Max outlined a proposed change to the start time of future Imtac meetings. Because of the distances travelled by some Imtac members it was agreed to start future meetings at 12.30pm.
- 2.6 Members discussed the broader issue of making savings. Michael agreed to continue to look at options to reduce meeting costs. Max

highlighted the additional communication costs following this years recruitment. Max indicated that the Department will be informed of these additional costs and that resource issues with staffing, the website and other communication costs remain outstanding.

### **3. Chairpersons and policy updates**

- 3.1 Max updated members on the delays to publication of the Annual Report because of current political uncertainties. It was agreed to monitor progress over the next few weeks but to seek a meeting with the DRD Permanent Secretary if there is no resolution. The report will be published after any meeting.
- 3.2 Michael updated members on a number of key policy developments including the development of taxi driver training, the introduction of Audio Visual information on Metro buses, plans to introduce changes to the Blue Badge Scheme, work with Transport NI officials to review the accessibility of taxi ranks, progress with the development of guidance around the licensing of pavement cafes and the publication of the DRD Bicycle Strategy and plans for cycle routes in Belfast City Centre.
- 3.3 Michael agreed to keep members informed of the proposed development of a smartphone app in relation to the AudioVisual project and to provide more information on changes to the Blue Badge Scheme.

### **4. ATS update – initial discussion of consultation document**

- 4.1 Max welcomed Ciaran to his first Imtac meeting. Ciaran briefed members on the publication of the ATS 2025 consultation and the response to date.
- 4.2 During discussions members acknowledged and welcomed the prominence in the consultation of the key priorities highlighted in the advice given by Imtac. It was agreed that Imtac should meet to discuss a response in more detail before the closing date of the

consultation and that the meeting should focus on detailed discussion of key Imtac priorities.

**Action: Michael to arrange a suitable date and venue and draft a discussion paper for the meeting.**

## **5. Observers updates**

- 5.1 Jenny updated members on plans by the Consumer Council to undertake visits to local ferry terminals. Jenny also informed members about work with Autism NI to develop a factsheet on rights when travelling by air. Members expressed an interest in this factsheet. Michael updated members on contact from City of Derry airport seeking assistance.
- 5.2 Terry updated members on the introduction of recent service changes. Terry indicated that is planned to introduce audio visual systems on all Metro buses by the end of October. Terry informed members there will be delays in introducing new double decked coaches.

## **6. Current consultations**

- 6.1 Michael briefed members on proposed changes to increase the minimum unladen weights for scooters and powerchairs. Members agreed that Imtac should respond welcoming the changes.
- 6.2 Michael briefed members on the consultation proposing to extend age discrimination legislation to goods, facilities and services. Members agreed that Imtac should respond welcoming the extension of rights and supporting the inclusion of people under 16 years old. Members were asked to consider any specific transport implications and forward these to Michael.
- 6.3 Michael briefed members on proposals from the Department for Transport to amend the current guidelines for the use of tactile pavement. Members agreed that the proposals were in the main sensible. Other issues with current guidelines, such as the use of

tactile paving at dropped kerbs at accessible parking bays were discussed. It was suggested that opinions be sought from Transport NI before Imtac finalises its response.

## **7. Minutes of the last meeting / Matters arising**

7.1 The minutes were agreed.

7.2 Max informed members that the Blue Badge paper (6.1) has now been published.

## **8. Any other business**

8.1 Max highlighted to members the publication of the report detailing progress made with the implementation of the Executives Disability Strategy. Members expressed disappointment about the lack of any genuine positive change resulting from the strategy. .

## **9. Date of next meetings**

**Michael to confirm date in early November to discuss the Accessible Transport Strategy.**

**The Committee will then meet on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015 at 12.30pm at the Mount.**