

Minutes of the 119th Imtac Meeting

Date: 21st March 2017, The Mount, Belfast

Present: G. Max O'Brien (Chairperson)

Dave Morton, Diane Marks, Sheelagh McRandal, Joe Kenny, Brian Murray, Sam Bell, Nan Carville, Jean Dunlop, Vivien Blakely, Paul McCloskey, Moira Heap, David McDonald.

Observers: Anne Tohill & Ciarán Crilly (both DfI), Terry Butler (Translink), Brian Drury (Equality Commission), Francis Hughes (Age Sector Platform).

In attendance: Victoria Keely & Rhona McAuley (both Cedar Foundation)

Secretariat: Michael Lorimer

1. Introductions, apologies and consideration of absences

- 1.1 Max welcomed Anne Tohill to her first Imtac meeting.
- 1.2 Max reminded members to submit expenses claims before the end of the financial year.
- 1.3 Apologies were given and accepted from Ursula Marshall, Joan Harbison, Jim Nash, Henry Mayne, Anne Scott, Jenny Robinson, Scott Kennerly, Orla McCann and Ann Gamble.

2. Chairpersons and other updates

- 2.1 Max briefed members on recent positive meetings with officials from the Department and the former Minister, Chris Hazzard.

- 2.2 Anne Tohill briefed members on the position of the Programme for Government and the budget in light of the current political uncertainty.
- 2.3 Max highlighted the importance of working with the Department to ensure that a budget and work programme for Imtac are in place for the coming year.
Action: Michael asked that members send any comments on the 3rd draft of the 2017/18 Work Programme in the next 7 days.
- 2.4 Ciarán updated members on the development of the new Accessible Transport Strategy (ATS). Ciarán indicated that the Department intends to begin discussions shortly with Imtac on the Committee's input into finalising the ATS.
- 2.5 Michael updated members on developments in relation to the Integrated Passenger Transport Project, changes to driver licensing and testing, public realm projects in Portrush, Derry and Lisburn, the High Street, Belfast cycling proposals, the development of the Belfast and North West Transport Hubs, the review of renewals of the Blue Badge for people with life long conditions, the campaign highlighting the legal requirement for taxi drivers to carry assistance dogs and the Guide Dogs, Cedar Foundation, and PSNI campaign on pavement parking.
- 2.6 Members asked whether substantive comments submitted by Imtac on the Belfast Transport Hub had been taken on-board. Terry indicated that it is proposed to include a Changing Places facility at the Hub and provide a connecting bus service to the city centre.
- 2.7 Members agreed that Imtac could not directly support the pavement parking campaign given it condones parking on the pavement if a minimum of 1.5m of the pavement is left clear. It was suggested that Government as a whole could play a bigger role in

encouraging staff not to park on pavements. Parking across dropped kerbs was also identified as a major related issue.

- 2.8 Members discussed proposals from the Department for bus lanes connected with Belfast Rapid Transport (BRT) to operate from 7am to 7pm. It was agreed to support the proposal from the Department as long as it included provision for taxis and cars to enter the bus lanes for a short period to pick up and drop off older and/or disabled passengers.

Action: Michael to feedback comments to the Department.

- 2.9 Members agreed to defer agreeing a position on taxis using BRT bus lanes until a future meeting.

- 2.10 Members discussed issues emerging from the recent engagement event with Translink about the Integrated Ticketing Project. It was agreed that the proposed 5 key issues form the basis of the Committee's advice.

Action: Michael to develop a detailed paper and circulate for comment.

- 2.11 Members received an update on the licensing of pavement cafes. After discussion it was agreed that a reminder should be sent to Newry, Mourne and Down Borough Council (NMDBC) in relation to correspondence from the Committee and that Department for Communities (DfC) should be contacted on equality screening of its guidance.

Action: Michael to contact NMDBC and DfC.

3. Portrush walking audit

- 3.1 Michael briefed members on the report into walking routes in Portrush Town Centre.
- 3.2 During discussions members broadly welcomed and supported the findings of the draft report. Members requested that the report be used to inform Imtacs advice in relation to the public realm scheme

in Portrush and requested that a meeting be arranged with Council officials and the design team as a matter of urgency.

Action: Members to provide comments on the draft paper in the next 7-10 days.

Action: Michael to arrange a meeting with council and design team representatives.

4. Belfast Bicycle Network consultation

4.1 Michael briefed members on the consultation on the proposed Belfast Bicycle Network as well as the key issues the Committee may want to highlight in its response.

4.2 Members broadly supported the suggested approach. Tackling unacceptable cycling behaviour was identified as particularly important. Members also requested that Imtac recommend that the Department establish a formal mechanism for stakeholders, including Imtac, to comment on the development of specific routes.

Action: Michael to draft a response and circulate to members for comment.

4.3 Members discussed broader issues of conflict between cyclists and disabled people and older people. It was agreed that there might be merit in facilitating discussions between cycling organisations and Imtac and other organisations representing disabled people and older people, to promote a mutual understanding of issues and concerns.

Action: Michael to make informal contact with cycling organisations.

Cedar Foundation representatives joined the meeting.

5. Cedar Foundation Insight Project

5.1 Representatives from the Cedar Foundation briefed members on the background and activities relating to its Insight Project.

Members also received an update on the Pavement Parking Campaign.

5.2 Brian Murray gave members an overview of issues emerging from the project including feedback on Travel Wallets and support for free travel for people who cannot drive for medical reasons. A report on the findings is to be published shortly. Ciarán Crilly (DfI) requested a copy of their report when it was completed as he had been involved in the launch and distribution of his Department's Access Travel Wallet.

5.3 In response clarification was sought on whether the project had identified difficulties for people accessing services to connect with mainstream public transport. Members also questioned why only PSNI officers could leaflet vehicles parked on the pavement. In closing members welcomed the findings of the project as it reflected many issues that have been raised on a consistent basis by the Committee.

6. Observer updates

6.1 Terry indicated that Translink issues have been covered previously. Michael said that concerns have been raised with him about the Translink Scooter Policy and suggested he forward details to Terry.

6.2 Brian briefed members on the Equality Commissions role in presenting issues to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As part of the UK Independent Mechanism in relation to UNCPRD the Commission was part of the UK delegation that submitted a main UK report with a supplementary report highlighting Northern Ireland issues.

Action: Brian agreed to share copies of both submissions with members.

7. Minutes of last meeting

7.1 The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

8. Any other business

8.1 Members were reminded about the public meeting in Omagh on the 29th March.

9. Dates of future meetings

9.1 Michael agreed to forward dates for the remaining 2017 meetings. Max indicated that these dates might be subject to change.