

**MINUTES OF THE
111th Imtac MEETING**

- Date:** 11th December 2014, The Mount, Belfast
- Present:** G. Max O'Brien (Chairperson)
Peter Livingstone, Sam Bell, Sheelagh McRandal, Bert Bailie, Moira Heap, David McDonald, David Mann, Henry Mayne.
- Observers:** Keith Walsh (DRD), Terry Butler (Translink), Orla McCann (Disability Action).
- Secretariat:** Michael Lorimer

1. Introductions, apologies and consideration of absences

- 1.1 Apologies were given and accepted from Francis Hughes, June Best, Ann Gamble, Eimar McCracken, Vivien Blakely, Jim Nash, Nan Carville, Joe Kenny, Dermot McCluskey, Scott Kennerly, Naomi Roberts.

2. Chairpersons, Treasurer and Convenors updates

- 2.1 Members received an update on progress with the Public Transport Survey. The response to date has been excellent.
- 2.2 Members received an update about the recent meeting with the Belfast Rapid Transit Team. The Committee endorsed the concerns of members who had attended the meeting about the proposed 80mm step from halts into vehicles. The Committee agreed that new infrastructure should provide level access. Members asked that engagement with the BRT Team continue.

- 2.3 Members received an update on the announcement by Minister Kennedy on the roll out of audio-visual information on Metro buses. Members welcomed this positive development.
- 2.4 Members received an update on the DRD pilot in the Dungannon area relating to integrating transport. The Department is now examining a series of options for rolling out the lessons learned from the pilot. Members asked for a briefing from officials when the options are refined.
- 2.5 Members received an update on a recent meeting with DVA about new requirements for taxi drivers to undertake mandatory disability awareness training.
- 2.6 Members received an update on a recent meeting with the DRD Cycling Unit to discuss the draft Bicycle Strategy.

3. Work programme tasks

- 3.1 Members received a briefing on the latest draft of the paper summarising the findings of seven walking audits undertaken by Imtac. Members asked that the section on roads user hierarchy be amended to ensure that it is understood that pedestrians should be considered first.
Action: Max asked members to submit final comments on draft paper in the next 7 to 10 days.
- 3.2 Members were briefed on the first draft of the updated paper on Blue Badge misuse and fraud. It was agreed to include developments in Wales and the Republic of Ireland and to stress the importance of political buy in the redraft.
Action: Max asked members to submit comments on draft report in the next 7 to 10 days. Michael to prepare draft for the next Personal Mobility Group.
- 3.3 Members were briefed on the first draft of a report into Blue Badge use in Belfast City Centre.

Action: Max asked members to submit comments on draft report in the next 7 to 10 days. Michael to prepare draft for the next Personal Mobility Group.

4. Update on proposed ATS 2025 / Observers updates

- 4.1 Max asked that Terry Butler be allowed to give the Translink update prior to the update from the Department on the ATS as Terry had to leave. Terry briefed members on the likely significant impact on services of the budget reductions to Translink proposed by the Department in the draft Budget for 2015/16.
- 4.2 Keith briefed members on progress developing a successor document to the current ATS. Soft engagement is ongoing and will continue over December and January. This and the survey results will be reviewed in early 2015 with a consideration of equality impact. There will be a consultation on the draft Strategy although the timing may be influenced by the May election. A final Strategy is likely to need Executive approval. Keith indicated that the Department will keep Imtac informed of developments through planned monthly meetings. Following discussion it was agreed that the Department should seek more detail feedback from Imtac in early 2015 when information from engagement and the surveys have been gathered.
- 4.2 Keith updated members on a range of DRD issues. In relation to the pedestrian environment Keith reaffirmed the commitment from Transport NI (TNI) to work with Imtac and others to improve provision and explained that TNI are currently drafting Guidance around kerb heights. TNI plans to consult with Imtac and others before the guidance is finalised. Keith briefed members on current actions taken by TNI to combat Blue Badge misuse and plans for potential future actions. Keith updated members on the Blue Badge Review. Recommendations are still being finalised but the Department is considering taking aspects of the Review forward in advance of Welfare Reform decisions. Keith updated on the role

out of Audio Visual on Metro buses. Funding has been secured to begin the roll out in 2014/15. Further funding will need to be identified in 2015/16. This will involve fitting the system on 294 buses and 191 key bus stops. In the future all new Metro buses will have the systems fitted.

- 4.3 Orla briefed members on the likely budget reductions for Disability Action services resulting from the DRD draft Budget for 2015/16.
- 4.4 Members welcomed the proposed guidance on kerb heights and asked that the Department look at taking the views of more organisations. Members asked a series of questions about the roll out AV on Metro including how bus stops will be chosen. Michael suggested he contact Michael Deery in DRD to ascertain what engagement the Department proposes with Imtac and others during implementation. Max asked Keith to forward a written copy of his update to be used to inform the drafting of the Blue Badge paper.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 Michael briefed members on the content of the consultation on the DRD draft Budget and Savings Proposals for 2015/16. During discussions there was a consensus that the savings proposals disproportionately impacted on disabled and older people and that the consultation had significantly under-estimated this impact. It was agreed that the Imtac response should highlight this impact on disabled and older people and recommend ways the Department could reduce it. Suggestions from members included not fully protecting the Concessionary Fares Budget. Max indicated that Imtac are likely to face a reduction in budget and suggested that he and the Business Group handle initial discussions with the Department.

Action: Michael to draft a response and circulate it for comments. Comments back as soon as possible due to the short time frame.

5.2 Michael briefed members on the consultation on Phase 3 of the Belfast Streets Ahead project and the recent meeting with the DSD and their design consultants. It was agreed that the response should reflect issues discussed at the previous meeting. Michael agreed to keep members informed about proposed future meetings including an audit of streets included under the project.

6. Minutes of the last meeting / Matters arising

6.1 The minutes were approved as accurate.

6.2 Members were asked to note matters arising.

6.3 Michael informed members that the implementation of the Taxis Act (7.2) would be subject to further delay.

7. Any other business

7.1 Michael briefed members on proposed visits to local airports in January organised by the Consumer Council. Michael agreed to circulate details.

7.2 Max thanked everyone for their support over 2014 and wished everyone a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

8. Date of next meeting

8.1 The next meeting will take place on Thursday 12th March 2015 starting at 1.30pm in the Mount.