

Minutes of the 120th Imtac Meeting

Date: 6th September 2017, The Mount, Belfast

Present: G. Max O'Brien (Chairperson)

Dave Morton, Joe Kenny, Paul McCloskey, Sam Bell, Moira Heap, Jim Nash, Brian Murray, Jean Dunlop, Nan Carville, Vivien Blakely, Sheelagh McRandal.

Observers: Anne Tohill, Ciarán Crilly and Lillian Hanna (all DfI), Terry Butler (Translink), Naomi Roberts (Equality Commission), Scott Kennerley & Jenny Robinson (both Consumer Council).

Secretariat: Michael Lorimer

1. Introductions, apologies and consideration of absences

- 1.1 Apologies were given and accepted from Ursula Marshall, Henry Mayne, Anne Scott, David McDonald, Diane Marks, Francis Hughes and Ann Gamble.
- 1.2 Max informed members that Joan Harbison has resigned from the Committee.

2. Chairpersons and other updates

- 2.1 Max proposed a delay to the annual recruitment whilst the new Imtac website is finalised. Michael updated members on the website. Members agreed the proposal.
- 2.2 Max briefed members on the successful public meeting in Omagh in March.

- 2.3 Max briefed members on the ongoing political uncertainty and the impact on the work of Imtac and others. Max informed members that the Imtac Work Programme and budget for 2017/18 has been agreed with the Department and thanked officials for their support. Anne restated the importance and value the Department places on the work of Imtac.
- 2.4 Max updated members on a video conferencing call with the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS).
- 2.5 Max and Michael updated members on developments in relation to the Taxis Forum. A working group has been established which includes accessibility. The Group met in August and addressing issues of availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV's) has been identified as a priority. The impact of training requirements is another issue. Michael indicated that a significant number of disabled people have contacted Imtac about availability of WAV's.
- 2.6 Members received an update on a recent Integrated Passenger Transport Project workshop hosted by the Department in Dungannon. Imtac members and the secretariat attended the workshop. The consensus is that whilst the objectives of the project remain good, significant challenges remain.
- 2.7 Michael updated members on changes to minibus driver licensing and proposals to introduce Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL). The Department plans to hold workshops later in the year to look at making GDL as accessible as possible.
- 2.8 Michael updated members about public realm schemes in Derry, Strabane, Lisburn, Portrush and High Street Belfast. Derry and High Street are proving problematic and further consultation and meetings will be required.
- Action: Members asked to be kept informed of developments including meetings.**

- 2.9 Michael updated members on Imtac's input into the review of renewal periods for the Blue Badge Scheme.
- 2.10 Michael updated members on the current situation on proposals to allow both Category A and B taxis in bus lanes in Belfast.
- 2.11 Members received an update on the Belfast and North West Transport Hubs. Michael explained concerns raised by Imtac with the Department following a review of the Belfast Hub planning application. Anne Tohill outlined steps taken by the Department to address the Committee's concerns including confirmation that the Belfast Hub includes a Changing Places toilet. Michael informed members he had requested a meeting with Translink to discuss the proposed redevelopment of Portrush station.
- Action: Michael agreed to send the Department details of standards for Changing Places Toilets.**
- Action: Members asked to be kept informed of developments including meetings.**
- 2.12 Members were briefed on the development of an entitlement card for people with sight loss by Belfast Trust. Discussions have been held between the Department, Translink and the Trust about the potential to link the card and smartpasses for people with sight loss. Members discussed the issue of the growing numbers of awareness and entitlement cards and the potential confusion this could create for service providers. The consensus opinion was that the Department's Travel Wallet could be recognised as a universal indicator that individuals may require assistance. As previously agreed use of any assistance card or wallet is purely an individual choice and should not be a requirement.

The meeting stopped for lunch.

3. Current papers

- 3.1 Michael briefed on the draft terms of reference for the proposed Translink Accessibility Working Group. During discussions

members raised queries about membership, status of the group and resources.

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

3.2 Michael briefed members on the draft report about off-street parking in Belfast City Centre. Members welcomed the report. Questions were asked about how the final report will be used.

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

3.3 Michael took members through the discussion paper about the proposed assessment of the NI Direct website. During discussions members highlighted issues including the impact of poor broadband infrastructure, whether or not people obtain the information they are looking for and what options are available if information is not available.

Action: Michael to draft an assessment prior to the next Imtac meeting.

4. ATS 2025 and Observer updates

4.1 Ciarán updated members on progress made in developing the ATS and associated action plan. Final approval and publication will have to wait until a Minister is in post. Anne explained the importance of aligning the ATS with the outcomes and indicators of the draft Programme for Government (PfG), including obtaining commitments for inter-departmental working.

4.2 Terry informed members Translink has introduced 45 new vehicles to be used on Foyle Metro, Goldline and Belfast Metro. Terry updated members about the introduction of new information screens in bus stations and a pilot of a new audio and visual information system in Lisburn Bus Station. Terry informed members that to date 370 scooters have been assessed under the scooter policy with only 6 refusals. A member highlighted issues he had in relation to getting an assessment. Michael indicated that

the feedback he had received that people are frustrated about the time it takes to arrange an assessment and suggested Translink should look at ways of streamlining the process.

Action: Terry to forward details of the Lisburn pilot.

- 4.3 Scott briefed members on research undertaken by the Consumer Council into people's experiences using taxis. He thanked Imtac for its help with interviews with disabled people about their experiences. Scott updated members on a request from City of Derry Airport for assistance in identifying issues for people with hidden impairments. Jenny briefed members of the recent site visits with Translink and a proposed ferry journey with Stenaline in October

Action: Members to receive taxi research and a report into the Translink visit once these are available.

- 4.4 Naomi updated members on the outcome of the recent UNCRPD investigation into the UK in Geneva. Specific mention has been made in the report to the difference in legislation in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.

Action: Michael agreed to send members a summary of the outcome of the investigation.

5. Current consultations

- 5.1 Michael briefed members on the current Department for Transport (DfT) consultation on a draft Accessibility Action Plan. Following consultation members agreed that Imtac should respond to issues in the Action Plan, which have implications for Northern Ireland.

Action: Michael to forward details of proposals to members and to draft a response for comment.

6. Minutes of the last meeting/Matters arising

- 6.1 The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

6.2 Members discussed the response of the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to the Committee complaint regarding the equality screening of their pavement café policy. Members agreed that Imtac should refer the issue to the Equality Commission. Michael updated members on discussions with Transport NI (TNI) regarding its guidance on highway considerations and pavement cafes. TNI has offered further dialogue with Imtac and others. Members agreed to accept this offer.

Action: Michael to draft letter to the Equality Commission and keep members informed of developments and meetings.

6.3 Michael updated members on plans to work with the Cycling Unit to engage with cycling organisations.

Action: Michael to forward details of meetings to members.

7. Any other business

7.1 A member raised an issue relating to the closure of a road and pavements for resurfacing, creating access problems for residents, care workers and others. Michael explained that discussions with TNI officials indicate that policy is to maintain access. A general discussion took place about problems associated with contractors.

Action: Michael agreed to identify the most appropriate way for members to raise concerns with the Department.

8. Dates of future meetings

8.1 The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 17th October 2017 at the Mount starting at 12pm.