

MINUTES OF THE

90th Imtac MEETING



Date: 17th September 2009 at The Mount, Belfast

Present: Frank Caddy (Chair)
William Stewart
Elizabeth Black
David McDonald
Ann Collins
Kellie Armstrong
Ann Gamble
Laura Slater
Norma Moore
Henry Mayne
Terry Butler
Max O'Brien
Anita Gracey
Barbara Fleming
Francis Hughes
Etta Mann
Neil Gillan

Apologies: Andrew Murdock
Dessie Ferguson
Ronnie Patterson
Ryan Simpson
Alan Preston
Olaf Hvattum
Kevin Doherty

Observers: Janet Watson (Mobility Inclusion Unit)
Gavin Hamilton (Mobility Inclusion Unit)
Andrew Adams (Ports & Public Transport)
Deborah Howe (Equality Commission)
Oonagh Smyth (Equality Commission)

In attendance: Stephanie Pressaugh (KPMG)

Secretariat: Michael Lorimer

Prior to the meeting Frank informed members that Joe McCusker has resigned from Imtac due to work pressures. Frank welcomed Laura Slater who has been co-opted on to the Committee to replace Joe.

1 Minutes of the last meeting

1.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

3 Matters arising

3.1 AV on Buses

Frank updated members on lobbying undertaken by disabled people at Stormont. The Regional Development Committee has now written to the Minister asking for the pilot to be progressed.

3.2 DRD Disability Action Plan

Michael informed the Committee that a meeting with the Equality Unit is planned for October. He asked for volunteers to attend the meeting

All

3.3 Annual Report

Michael informed members the Annual Report will be published once the easy read version is finalised. This should be in the next few weeks.

3.4 Vehicle specification/Bluebird

Frank informed the Committee that due to a mix up Imtac has yet to receive a reply from the Department to the letter regarding vehicle specification. Members will receive a copy when it is received. Members discussed the recent viewing of the Bluebird minibus. A discussion took place on the suitability of these vehicles for door2door type services. Kellie indicated that London Dial-a-ride had cancelled an order for low-floor minibuses but confirmed this was due to reliability not operational issues.

Michael

3.5 Concessionary Fares

Frank updated members on correspondence with the DRD regarding the Concessionary Fares Scheme. A response to the Departments queries is being drafted. Max and Ann expressed dissatisfaction with the nature of correspondence from DRD

Michael

4 **Draft Access & Mobility Study**

4.1 Members were updated on the draft Study and discussions between the Personal Mobility Group and the Regional Access Committee. It has been agreed by both to respond with a series of constructive recommendations rather than simply criticise a poor Study which does not address the concerns of disabled people and older people.

4.2 Members expressed a desire for Imtac's response to reflect dissatisfaction with the draft study as well as being constructive. In particular it was felt that the statutory duties of public bodies in relation to disabled people should be highlighted.

4.3 Michael went through the recommendations. Committee members endorsed these. Subject to the above members asked that a response be submitted to DSD.

Michael

5 **Response to the Equality Commission Code of Practice**

5.1 Deborah and Oonagh left the meeting.

5.2 Members discussed and approved the draft response as presented. Henry and Laura welcomed the comments on alternative formats as this had been an issue during the development of the Code and the consultation.

5.3 Deborah and Oonagh rejoined the meeting.

Policy Statement on Shared Surfaces

6.1 Michael gave members an overview of the issue of shared surfaces and a background to the draft statement. Members

discussed and approved a number of suggested amendments put forward by Andrew Murdock of Guide Dogs.

- 6.2 Henry raised concerns about access difficulties posed by traditional streetscapes with kerbs for many disabled people. During discussions these difficulties were recognised, however it was agreed that until alternatives are proved to be safe they remain the least bad option. The paper was approved and adopted.

Working group updates

- 7.1 Ann gave members an update on the work of the Personal Mobility Group including the results of the latest Baywatch survey and work on wayfinding technologies.
- 7.2 Ann particularly stressed progress around working with Disability Action on Mobility Centre correspondence. Ann emphasised that this was an issue that members felt strongly about.
- 7.3 The Public Transport and Information and Training Groups will meet after this meeting. Updates will be provided at the next meeting.

ATS update

- 8.1 Gavin gave an update on the number of responses received by DRD to the recent ATS consultation and the nature of issues being raised. DRD are awaiting a response from the Regional Development Committee
- 8.2 David asked whether the responses will be published. Gavin indicated that they would not but are available under freedom of information.

Imtac Review update

- 9.1 Frank updated members on the process of the Imtac review. KPMG has now been awarded the contract to undertake the review. The Review team will engage with the Business Group of Imtac, selected members and selected stakeholders from a list supplied by Imtac.

- 9.2 David expressed concerns over how an effective review of Imtac could take place over a matter of weeks. For example how does this allow time to engage affectively with disabled people.
- 9.3 Max expressed a desire to know more about the methodology of the review. He also stressed the need for the consultants to have received disability equality training and to have knowledge of issues. Officials indicated this could be provided under freedom of information.

Any other business

- 10.1 Members were asked to note a submission endorsed by the Business Group to the Regional Development Committee inquiry into sustainable transport. A discussion took place. Francis raised concerns about any proposals looking at concessions. Michael reiterated that nothing in the paper was designed to be firm proposals merely ideas to stimulate debate.
- 10.2 Andrew raised the issue of the new tender for door2door services. He informed the Committee that the Department was looking to undertake a survey of members around some changes to the service including a reduced evening provision using taxis. This would enable the Department to respond better to problems over demand for the service. Andrew informed the Committee that consultation had taken place with Disability Action about the questionnaire.
- 10.3 Frank read members an email from Olaf reflecting concerns of older people in North Belfast about their service. He welcomed the acknowledgement from Andrew that meeting demand was a problem. Members expressed concerns about the proposed changes. Frank raised concerns about consultation with Disability Action given they are an operator of services. Michael reminded the DRD of Imtac's position that taxis should not be used to deliver door2door services.
- 10.4 Kellie updated members on the delays to rolling out rural dial a lift. Andrew informed members that the pilot could be extended to include parts of the Ards Peninsula.

10.5 Terry gave members an update on progress with a range of Translink activities.

10.6 Michael distributed copies of the latest newsletter and the Consumer Council Air travel guide.

Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting will be 3rd December 2009, 1.30pm at the Mount.