

## **Minutes of the 124<sup>th</sup> Imtac Meeting**

**Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018, The Mount, Belfast

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

Paul McCloskey, Jean Dunlop, Vivien Blakely, David McDonald, Sheelagh McRandal, Dave Morton, Anne Straghan, Nuala Crilly, Brian Murray, Sam Bell, Alison Lockhart, Anne Scott, Bert Bailie.

**Observers:** Ciarán Crilly (Department for Infrastructure), Jenny Robinson (Consumer Council), Naomi Roberts (Equality Commission), Orla McCann (Disability Action).

**Secretariat:** Michael Lorimer

Prior to the start of the meeting Max reminded members to complete the Register of Interest forms and return to Michael.

### **1. Introductions and apologies**

1.1 Apologies were given and accepted from Moira Heap, Joe Kenny, Andy Boal, Diane Marks, Ann Gamble, Francis Hughes and Terry Butler.

### **2. Observers updates**

2.1 Ciaran updated members on plans to develop an Action Plan linked to the Programme for Government, based on issues that emerged from the previous public consultation on the new Accessible Transport Strategy. Ciaran also provided an update on the Belfast Transport Hub project, stating issues raised by Imtac have been addressed in the emerging designs. He indicated that the outcome of the recent judicial review has created some uncertainty around whether or not the Department can make planning decisions for the Belfast Hub.

- 2.2 Members discussed issues around the planning process and the Belfast Hub and highlighted the need for any action plan associated with the Accessible Transport Strategy to focus on the development of accessible services.
- 2.3 Jenny informed members the report into the recent site visit to City of Derry airport is being finalised. Over the next year further site visits to the 3 local airports are planned as well as a similar event with Glider. Jenny highlighted the Consumer Council's summer travel campaign and the planned attendance of the Council at the Disability Exhibition
- 2.4 In response members raised issues about awareness of "Sail and Rail" and the unwillingness of airlines to use air bridges at local airports.
- 2.5 Michael gave the Translink update provided by Terry Butler. Renovations currently being made to Central Station will now include a Changing Places Toilet. Members welcomed this development. Members discussed progress around other recent issues including the wheelchair user priority poster and bus procurement.
- Action: Members agreed to seek a meeting with Terry Butler and David Cowan with a view to establishing regular meetings between Imtac and Translink to progress key issues.**

### **3. Chairperson and other updates**

- 3.1 Max briefed members on the meetings held since the last Imtac meeting including the Imtac member's meeting, the Coleraine public meeting, a meeting with Kevin Doherty from Disability Action, a meeting with Chris McClean (DfI) and the Glider vehicle event.
- Action: Following feedback from the Coleraine meeting members agreed that in future Imtac should seek to ensure venues for public meetings have a Changing Places Toilet.**

Orla McCann joined the meeting.

3.2 Max and Michael updated members on the outcome of discussions with the Department around this year's Imtac work programme and budget. This includes the restoration of the Imtac grant to £68,000 which will help to reduce the pressure on main Imtac meetings and enable the Committee to do more outreach work. David asked that the minutes record the Committee's thanks to the Department. Max explained that he, Michael and the Business Group would develop proposals for changes to Committee structures and operation over the summer.

**Action: Michael to circulate copies of the Work Programme.**

3.3 Max informed members that proposed changes and comments have been received from the Department on the current Memorandum of Understanding. The Business Group will meet in early July to agree its response. Michael explained that as part of the review advice to members around claiming expenses and receiving gifts and hospitality have been strengthened.

**Action: Michael to send out revised guidance to members.**

3.4 Max asked Orla to provide an update from Disability Action. Orla highlighted the impact of a reduction in funding to DATS services including proposed reduced hours of operation and a rise in fares. Disability Action is undertaking research into the impact of the DATS service and encouraged members to take part.

3.5 Some members highlighted the importance of DATS services and how funding reductions are already being felt. Other members highlighted difficulties they and others have accessing DATS services. Michael explained Imtac has to represent both perspectives in its work.

**Action: Michael and Ciaran agreed to discuss how the Department proposes to address the future of DATS and rural community transport services.**

- 3.6 Michael updated members on the publication of lmtac papers, a recent meeting to discuss the proposed new Translink website, current public realm schemes and the Better Bedford Street Project.
- 3.7 Michael and Bert proposed that the Committee resubmit an application to the Big Lottery Awards for All programme for a project to develop an online resource for older people and disabled people around travel and transport. Bert informed members other funding options were also being explored.  
**Action: Members agreed to resubmit the proposal.**  
**Proposed: David McDonald      Seconded: Alison Lockhart**
- 3.8 Michael updated members on a recent meeting with the Equality Commission to discuss ongoing issues wheelchair users are encountering booking accessible taxis. Michael highlighted the need to encourage wheelchair users to complain to the Commission where companies do not allow pre-booking of their vehicles. Michael also updated members on plans to launch the survey around disabled peoples and older people's experiences using taxis. Members asked that more thought be given to how the survey is promoted and distributed.  
**Action: Michael and Ciaran to raise promotion of the survey with the appropriate officials within the Department.**
- 3.9 Michael provided an update about the Glider service including the vehicle, halts, training and promotion of the service. Members provided feedback on the recent vehicle viewing. The consensus was in future all buses needed to include flexible space. Members asked for confirmation that the flexible space on Glider can be used by a wheelchair user if required.

The meeting stopped for a short break.

Sam Bell left the meeting.

## 4. Commercial Bus Permits

- 4.1 Michael took members through issues raised in the discussion paper around the current Commercial Bus Permit scheme. Members agreed that currently the Scheme does not give due recognition to accessibility issues. Members agreed (1) the Department should include much more detail around accessibility in future guidance about permits, (2) in future operators must be required to demonstrate what steps are being taken to ensure services will be accessible, (3) operators must be required in future to provide evidence that vehicles meet accessibility requirements and (4) the Department must ensure that, if used, vehicles under 22 seats are also required to meet accessibility requirements.
- Action: Michael to develop a draft paper and circulate to members for comments.**

Ciaran and Naomi left the meeting.

## 5. Current papers

- 5.1 Michael briefed members on the 3<sup>rd</sup> draft of the paper on station and halt accessibility.
- Action: Members to provide further comments in the next 7-10 days.**
- 5.2 Michael briefed members on the report on the pavement café audits and the next steps in contacting councils. Max explained that recent correspondence from the Equality Commission has indicated that the Commission will not be investigating Imtac's complaint against Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. Michael expressed his disappointment and raised concerns about the Commission's own position regarding pavement café in published advice under its "Every Customer Counts" campaign.
- Action: Members to provide comments on the pavement café audits paper in the next 7-10 days.**

**Action: Members agreed to write to the Equality Commission regarding the recent decision and its own guidance.**

- 5.3 Michael briefed members about a draft response on proposals for a public realm scheme in Dromore town centre. Members agreed a shared surface approach on Bridge Street cannot be supported.

**Action: Members to provide further comments in the next 7-10 days.**

## **6. Minutes of the last meeting**

- 6.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

## **7. Any other business**

- 7.1 Members raised concerns about the impact of funding reductions to rural transport.

## **8. Date of future meetings**

- 8.1 It is planned to hold the next meeting in Derry/Londonderry on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Time and venue of the meeting to be confirmed.**