

Minutes of the 137th Imtac Meeting

Date and place: 30th June 2021, ZOOM meeting.

Present: Bert Bailie (Chairperson), Jean Dunlop, Aaron McKane, Christine McClements, Brian Murray, Eileen Drumm, Paul McCloskey, Alison Lockhart, Andy Boal, Terry McCorry, Dermot Devlin, June Best, Dave Morton, Sam Bell, Jackson Minford, Vivien Blakely.

Observers: Attracta Tremers (Department for Infrastructure), Naomi Roberts (Equality Commission), Terry Butler (Translink), Hannah Brown (Consumer Council).

Secretariat: Michael Lorimer

Apologies: Diane Marks, Patrick Malone (Disability Action).

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 Bert welcomed everyone to the meeting including new members and observers. He asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Chairperson's Updates

2.1 Bert updated members about changes to the Imtac Sponsor Team since the last meeting. Stuart Glimore and Attracta Tremers have taken over Imtac responsibilities from Orla Campbell, Sean Coulter and Scott McClenaghan.

2.2 Bert briefed members about two recent meetings with Minister Mallon. The first meeting was to discuss issues around the Disability Strategy and concerns around the accessibility of public transport linked to the new Public Service Agreement (PSA). The second meeting was a joint meeting with 6 other organisations to discuss addressing pavement parking. Follow up actions from each meeting are being progressed.

- 2.3 Bert updated members on a meeting with Terry Butler and David Cowan from Translink. Discussions included the removal of the 24 hour notice, trial of low floor coaches, trialling digital timetables and the new PSA. It was also agreed to arrange a catch up meeting between the Chair and Chris Conway.
- 2.4 Bert updated members on a request from the Executive Office inviting Imtac to contribute to pre consultation on a COVID Recovery Plan.
- 2.5 Bert briefed members on Business Committee activities including the proposed development of a welfare / safety policy recognising the potential implications for members of virtual activities and meetings.

3. Observer updates

- 3.1 Naomi updated members on the work of IMNI including commissioning videos highlighting specific articles of the UNCRPD and research into gaps in public policy to inform the examination of the next UK State Party report.
- 3.2 Naomi also updated members on the development by the Commission of guidance for public bodies around making the public appointments process accessible and inclusive. There has also been positive engagement with the Public Appointments Forum.
- 3.3 Hannah highlighted a recent case involving an assistance dog owner and booking requirements required by EasyJet and updated members about discussions with Guide Dogs NI to undertake some awareness work with airlines.
- 3.4 Hannah updated members on plans by the Consumer Council to consumer test the websites of local airports and Translink. Imtac members are encouraged to take part in the testing.
Action: Hannah to liaise with Michael over arrangements.

- 3.5 Hannah highlighted a several cases where people had been refused access to flights for being unable to wear a face covering. She asked members to feedback any similar experiences.
- 3.6 In the absence of Terry Butler, Michael provided an update on the plans to remove 24-hour notice requirements on Ulsterbus and Goldline services on the 26th July. He highlighted accessibility issues identified at several bus stops following an assessment which will prevent wheelchair users accessing services. More information will be made available approaching the 26th.
- 3.7 Michael also updated on the locations of the trials of digital timetable information at bus stops including several with text to speech facilities. Michael will work with Terry to ensure members can take part in the trial.
- 3.8 Paul asked for clarification from Translink around arrangements for people living in Dungiven to access bus services once the proposed Park & Ride is opened.
Action: Terry Butler to provide clarification.
- 3.9 Aaron highlighted recent difficulties experienced by somebody with autism travelling by bus.
Action: Michael agreed to discuss with Aaron and look at potential options including ticketing.
- 3.10 Members asked about the move to cashless payments on Metro. Michael indicated this was discussed at the recent meeting with Translink.
Action: Michael to discuss with Terry Butler and update members on potential implications.

Terry Butler joined the meeting.

4. Work Programme 2021 / 22 – prioritisation of tasks

- 4.1 Members were asked to discuss prioritising the development of papers associated with Task 2 of the Work Programme. Although

access to taxis and the street environment were highlighted as particularly pressing issues members urged that a flexible approach be taken.

Action: Members to feedback further comment over the next 7 to 10 days. Papers to be progressed prior to the next Imtac meeting.

- 4.2 Michael briefed members on plans for engagement, meetings, and other activities. The desire is to restart face to face meetings as soon as it is safe but that the choice to attend remotely will be retained.

5. Disability Strategy – Update and discussion

- 5.1 June briefed members about progress with the development of the Disability Strategy and her role as Co-Chair of the Co Design Group. She expressed concerns about the tight timescales restricting discussion of key issues and the lack of engagement with the Cross Departmental Working Group. June indicated recent developments suggested some flexibility with timescales. [Terry Butler declared an interest as a member of the Cross Departmental Group].

- 5.2 Michael who attends the Co Design Group to support June, highlighted the dissatisfaction of members with the accessibility of the Co Design process. He highlighted the role Imtac has played, working with other disabled people's organisations in developing proposals around a vision for the Strategy, outcomes and an approach to language and terminology. He noted the frustration that more detail on the emerging Strategy has still not been made available.

Action: Michael to circulate proposals on the vision and outcomes to members.

- 5.3 Members expressed frustration about the process including the lack of wider engagement with Deaf, disabled, older people and carers in developing the Strategy.

Action: It was agreed to arrange a session to discuss detailed proposals for the Disability Strategy once these are available and to invite DfC officials to attend.

6. Other updates

- 6.1 Michael updated members on the A4N meeting in April including a joint approach from the advisory Committees to Motability asking for a meeting to discuss concerns. Imtac will host the next meeting on 17th August with member representation from Imtac to be confirmed.
- 6.2 Alison and Michael updated members on the initial meeting of the new IMNI Disability Forum. Frustration with the development of the Disability Strategy had featured. Michael (who declared his interest as Chairperson of the new Forum) highlighted the importance of the approaching examination of the State Party Report, particularly in relation to the response by Government to the pandemic (Article 11).
- 6.3 June and Michael provided a brief update on post Brexit arrangements for travel with assistance dogs. Both highlighted the likelihood of imminent announcements on potential solutions to issues with current arrangements. A meeting with DAERA officials is planned for 5th July.
Action: Michael to circulate an update following the DAERA meeting.
- 6.4 Terry Butler provided a further brief update on Translink activities including proposed routes for the trial of low-floor coaches.
- 6.5 Members were asked to note the other updates contained in the meeting papers and contact Michael with any questions after the meeting.

7. Minutes of last meeting / Matters arising

7.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

Proposed: June Best Seconded: Dave Morton

7.2 There were no further matters arising.

8. Any other business

8.1 Following his attendance on behalf of Bert at a TEO workshop Michael gave members further details about the draft content of the proposals for an Executive COVID Recovery Plan. He indicated that Deaf and disabled people and carers had not been identified as hardest hit by the pandemic. He indicated he had raised his concerns about this at meeting with TEO and the omission had been acknowledged. Members expressed the frustration that Deaf, disabled people and carers appear to be invisible in society and agreed this must be challenged in the strongest possible terms.

Action: Given the time restrictions members agreed Michael should submit comments on behalf of the Committee. Michael to keep members updated on opportunities to make further contributions to the development of the plan.

8.2 Bert took the opportunity to thank Sam, Nuala and Daryl for the contribution to the work of Imtac. He asked members to stay for the AGM (following a comfort break) and invited observers to attend if they wished to.

9. Dates of future meetings

9.1 Wednesday 29th September 2pm – 3.30pm
Wednesday 1st December 2pm – 3.30pm