

Minutes of the 148th Imtac Meeting

Date and time: 21st February 2024 at 1pm

Place: Hybrid meeting held at the Crescent Arts Centre, Belfast and via ZOOM.

Present: Bert Bailie [BB] (Chairperson), Aaron McKane [AMc], Andy Boal [ABo], Jackson Minford [JM], June Best [JB], Terry McCorry [TMc], Christine McClements [CMc], Eileen Drumm [ED], Rebecca Bamford [RB], Nigel Flynn [NF], Paula Meenan [PM], Dermot Devlin [DD], Sam Bell [SB], Lynsey Burrows [LB], Vivien Blakely [VB].

Observers: Scott McClenaghan [SMc] (Department for Infrastructure), Hannah Brown [HB] (Consumer Council), Danielle Campbell [DC] & Rosanna Jack [RJ] (both Translink), Brian Drury [BD] (Equality Commission).

Secretariat: Michael Lorimer [ML].

Apologies: Hayley Smallwoods [HS], Sean Murphy [SM], Andrea Brown [AB], Alison Lockhart [AL].

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 BB welcomed everyone. He asked everyone to introduce themselves.

1.2 ML introduced himself and updated members on activities relating to work with Disabled People's Organisations independent and separate to his work for Imtac including speaking at a Social Security event in Westminster and plans to travel to Geneva in March.

2. Chairperson's update

- 2.1 BB briefed members about discussions at recent Business Committee meetings including the launch of the members recruitment process, the ongoing review of the Policy & Procedures Manual and discussions around resources and future Work Programme reflecting the restoration of an Executive.
- 2.2 BB updated members about meetings with Belfast City Council and DfI Roads about pavement café licensing guidance, participation in DfC research into barriers to employment for disabled people and a CIHT workshop around designing public realm for all.
- 2.3 BB informed members that the proposed meeting with DfI Permanent Secretary has been cancelled. A meeting with Minister O'Dowd has been requested and agreed with date to follow. BB also updated members about plans to write to other Ministers and the Chairperson of the Infrastructure Committee.

3. Observer updates

- 3.1 DC informed members that the Disability Equality Training for the Senior Leadership Team will take on the 1st March with Chris Conway to attend the next Imtac meeting following the training.
- 3.2 DC updated members on ongoing engagement around the development of the Belfast Transport Hub. JB welcomed the inclusion of a spending area at the station.
- 3.3 RJ updated members on the procurement of new double deck buses, indicating the procurement working group will be asked to meet shortly.
Action 1: RJ to circulate details to members of arrangements for a meeting of the bus procurement working group.
- 3.4 ML asked that any further members interested in taking part in guided journeys as part of Senior Leadership Training let him know

as soon as possible. RB and LB indicated they would like to take part.

Action 2: ML to confirm arrangements for guides for the Translink training.

- 3.5 SMc updated members on the developments since the restoration of the Executive including the agreement from Minister O'Dowd to meet with the Committee. He explained that Judith Andrews has been in post as Sponsor Unit Director for a short period and would like to attend a future meeting.

Action 3: ML and SMc to liaise to arrange opportunity for Judith Andrews to meet the Committee.

- 3.6 SMc briefed members about ongoing budget pressures, plans to work with ML on developing the Imtac Work Programme and progress with the reviews of Concessionary Fares and Community Transport.

Action 4: SMc to provide a further update on the Community Transport Review at the next meeting.

- 3.7 BD updated members about an IMNI stakeholder meeting held to inform additional information UKIM will provide to the CRPD Committee in advance of the UK Government giving evidence on the 18th March in Geneva.

- 3.8 BD briefed members on steps taken by the Commission in relation to clarifying whether the Disability Strategy will be progressed and in what format, following the formation of an Executive and the Commission's response to the DoH consultation on hospital parking charges.

Action 5: BD to share the weblink to the Commission hospital parking response.

- 3.9 ML provided an update on plans for Deaf and disabled people's organisations to be represented at Geneva, highlighting that disabled people from Northern Ireland will be involved in all activities.

3.10 HB updated members in changes in Departmental staff coordinating the Electric Vehicle Taskforce and the work of the Consumer Subgroup in drafting a paper on charging infrastructure for dwellings without driveways.

3.11 HB briefed members about a current survey (<https://www.consumercouncil.org.uk/news/air-travel-survey-special-assistance-services>) on people's experiences of assistance services at airports. Closing date for the survey is the 15th March 2024

4. Forward planning discussion on future priorities including 2024 / 2025 Work Programme and managing workload

4.1 ML briefed members on the likely additional pressures on the Imtac workload following the restoration of the Executive and Assembly, indicating that he and SMc are to meet in March to discuss Work Programme Planning. SMc indicated it was too early to identify Minister's priorities.

4.2 Members highlighted the importance of ensuring work already undertaken on the Disability Strategy in the previous mandate is progressed. BB indicated that correspondence for Minister Lyon has already been drafted. The Climate Change Act was also highlighted as a key issue.

Action 6: Letters to Ministers Lyon and Muir to be finalised and sent as a matter of urgency.

4.3 BB asked all members to consider how they can assist with increased workload including attending meetings, events and assisting with projects / tasks.

Action 7: Members to consider how they can support with increased Imtac workload and feedback to ML.

5. Imtac Policy papers

- 5.1 BB asked members for comments on the last draft of the policy paper about the future role of the car for mobility with a view to finalising the paper for publication. Members asked that the section on engagement be amended to include reference to carers.

Action 8: Members to feedback final comments on the draft future role of the car for mobility policy paper in the next 7 days with a view to publication shortly afterwards.

- 5.2 ML briefed members on two papers relating to public realm papers in Ballycastle and Rathfriland. Members expressed support for the focus on improving places for people and reducing the impact of traffic in both locations. Members recommended that specific mention be made in the Ballycastle report supporting the removal of cobbles in the Diamond.

Action 9: Members to feedback final comments on the draft public realm papers in Ballycastle and Rathfriland papers in the next 7 days with a view to publication shortly afterwards.

6. Update on access to health and transport task

- 6.1 ML updated members about the rationale for delaying progressing the health and transport task including proposed engagement events in March and the proposal to carry the task over into next year's programme.

- 6.2 JB briefed members on the favourable reception from the Regional Disability Forum for Health and Social Care to the proposed task. Members highlighted the urgency in providing better transport links to health services.

- 6.3 RB outlined the need to take time to consider how best to take the task forward, indicating a desire to talk to MACS about how they conducted and financed their project.

Action 10: ML to introduce RB to MACS Convenor Linda Bamford.

Action 11: ML to arrange a meeting with BB, RB, JB and TMc to discuss taking the transport and health task forward.

7. Working groups and other updates

- 7.1 ML provided updates on participation in projects connected with autonomous vehicles including a pilot in Belfast Harbour Estate.
- 7.2 ML updated members on recently received redrafted guidance from DfI Roads relating to regulation of pavement cafes. ML highlighted continued concerns around the circumstances where footways can be reduced below 2m and whether additional footway width beyond 2m will be required in areas where people gather or queue.
- 7.4 ML highlighted significant ongoing work including the Belfast Transport Hub with Translink and the need to keep members informed.

Action 12: ML to provide a regular update to members on Translink activities.

8. Current consultations

- 8.1 ML briefed members about the call for evidence by DfI on a future Focused Review of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) on the issue of Climate Change.
- 8.2 ML outlined comments from HS around concerns about assessing equality impact and contribution to Global Sustainable Development Goals. Other members highlighted the potential impacts of additional costs associated with changing the SPPS.
Action 13. ML to draft and circulate an issues paper on the Climate Change SPPS consultation in the next 7 days for member comment.

8.3 CMc briefed members on her comments on the draft Belfast City Council Changing Places Toilet Policy. Members overwhelmingly supported the comments.

Action 14: Members to feedback comments on her Changing Places Toilet paper to CMc in the next 7 days.

Action 15: Imtac agreed to support and endorse CMc's Changing Places Toilet paper in a format to be agreed.

9. Minutes of the last meeting / matters arising

9.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

Proposed: Vivien Blakely Seconded: Terry McCorry

9.2 ML indicated that a further meeting about footbridge provision at Jordanstown halt has been scheduled for 7th March 2024.

9.3 All actions reviewed and have been completed or addressed during meeting.

10 Any other business

10.1 AB introduced a paper highlighting issues for Half Fare Smartpass users and the new Translink ticketing system. ML highlighted equalising concessions for older people and disabled people resolves these issues as proposed in our response to the 2023 concessionary fares consultation. Members expressed support for AB and the issues he is raising. Members supported proposals to circulate the final paper to the Department and Translink and to discuss with Minister O'Dowd.

Action 16: Members to feedback comments on AB's draft paper in the next 7 days prior to its submission to the Department and Translink.

11 Date, time and venue of next meeting

11.1 The next meeting and Imtac AGM will be held on the 26th June 2024, at 1pm in the Crescent Arts Centre.

List of actions

- Action 1: RJ to circulate details to members of the bus procurement working group.**
- Action 2: ML to confirm arrangements for guides for the Translink training.**
- Action 3: ML and SMc to liaise to arrange opportunity for Judith Andrews to meet the Committee.**
- Action 4: SMc to provide a further update on the Community Transport Review at the next meeting.**
- Action 5: BD to share the weblink to the Commission hospital parking response.**
- Action 6: Letters to Ministers Lyon and Muir to be finalised and sent as a matter of urgency.**
- Action 7: Members to consider how they can support with increased Imtac workload and feedback to ML.**
- Action 8: Members to feedback final comments on the draft future role of the car for mobility policy paper in the next 7 days with a view to publication shortly afterwards.**
- Action 9: Members to feedback final comments on the draft public realm papers in Ballycastle and Rathfriland papers in the next 7 days with a view to publication shortly afterwards.**
- Action 10: ML to introduce RB to MACS Convenor Linda Bamford.**
- Action 11: ML to arrange a meeting with BB, RB, JB and TMc to discuss taking the transport and health task forward.**

Action 12: ML to provide a regular update to members on Translink activities.

Action 13. ML to draft and circulate an Climate Change SPPS consultation issues paper in the next 7 days for member comment.

Action 14: Members to feedback comments on her Changing Places Toilet paper to CMc in the next 7 days.

Action 15: Imtac to support and endorse the final comments of CMc Changing Places Toilet paper in a format to be agreed.

Action 16: Members to feedback comments on AB's draft paper in the next 7 days