

Minutes of the 128th Imtac Meeting

Date and place: 12th June 2019, The Mount.

Present: Bert Bailie (Chairperson)

June Best, Sheelagh McRandal, Vivien Blakely, Sam Bell, Andy Boal, Alison Lockhart, Joe Kenny, Brian Murray, Nuala Crilly, Paul McCloskey, Dave Morton.

Observers: Orla Campbell & Ciaran Crilly (Department for Infrastructure), Naomi Roberts (Equality Commission), Jenny Redman (Consumer Council).

Secretariat: Michael Lorimer

1. Introductions and apologies

- 1.1 Bert welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone present to introduce themselves.
- 1.2 Apologies were given and accepted from Aaron McKane, Diane Marks, Jean Dunlop, Terry Butler, Francis Hughes and Orla McCann.

2. Observers updates

- 2.1 The new Head of Accessible and Community Transport Branch, Orla Campbell, introduced herself to members explaining her personal and professional interest in accessible travel.
- 2.2 June Best explained the genuine concerns about the impact of a no deal Brexit from guide and other assistance dog owners living in Northern Ireland. Orla and Ciaran agreed to discuss how the Department could assist in addressing the concerns.

Orla left the meeting.

2.3 Jenny briefed members on the recent short video presentation given by the Consumer Council at the recent CAA Accessibility Conference and thanked June and Michael for their assistance. Jenny informed members that the Consumer Council will be submitting a response to the Aviation Strategy and updated members on plans for the coming year including site visits to P&O and the North West.

Action: Following discussion members agreed a short response should be submitted to the Department for Transport on the Aviation Strategy proposals.

2.4 Naomi updated members on proposals from the Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMNI) to improve engagement with and the involvement of disabled people in its work. Naomi also briefed members about recent correspondence with DfC and the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) and proposed plans under the Equality Commission future Corporate Plan that is still to be agreed.

2.5 Michael briefed members on a meeting he attended with representatives from IMNI to discuss proposals for engagement and involvement. Michael expressed his reservations about the proposal for the stakeholder group to have an open membership.

2.6 Ciaran informed members that Tom Reid has been appointed as the new Director of Public Transport Services Division. Ciaran welcomed the publication of this year's Imtac Work Programme and highlighted his personal interest in the Rathlin and Strangford ferries audit. Ciaran also provided an update on pavement café licensing explaining that the Department is still finalising its guidance. In the interim councils using guidance previously published by the Department for Communities (DfC).

2.7 Members asked Ciaran if an evaluation of the Integrated Transport Project has been undertaken and discussed the Work Programme and the situation regarding pavement café licensing.

Action: Following discussion it was agreed to (1) write to the DfC requesting its pavement cafe guidance be screened

retrospectively for equality impact and (2) publish the Committee’s evaluation paper setting out areas where Imtac “agrees to disagree” with the agencies involved.

Action: Ciaran agreed to check whether any evaluation of the Integrated Transport Project has been undertaken.

- 2.8 In the absence of Terry, Michael updated members about the completion of Portrush station and progress with the Changing Places facilities at Lanyon Place as well as user testing of the new Translink website.

3. Chairpersons and other updates

- 3.1 Bert thanked June and others for their work during his absence in March. Bert updated members about recent meetings and events including meeting with Department officials Sian Kerr and Orla Campbell, David Cowan from Translink, Airporter and Belfast City Council to discuss off-street parking. An introductory meeting with Chris Conway will take place in July and a suitable date is to be agreed with Kevin Doherty from Disability Action. A meeting is also planned in August with MACS and DPTAC.
- 3.2 Bert also highlighted proposals to make changes to the current recruitment policy to ensure a consistent number of members are appointed each year. Proposals will require the agreement of the Department and potential changes to the MoU. Bert confirmed it was the intention to have revisions agreed to enable the 2019 recruitment process to commence in September.
- 3.3 Sheelagh briefed members on the final spend for 2018/19 and the agreed budget for 2019/20, thanking the Department for allowing the under spend last year to be carried over but stressing the importance of spending this years budget. Sheelagh also briefed members on the outcome of meetings and discussions with the new auditors, Dawson & Company. The Business Group has agreed to adopt the auditors’ report.

- 3.4 Sheelagh briefed members about the development of the proposed website funded by the Big Lottery, explaining the extensive work that has gone into developing a design brief and tender pack. Following agreement at the Business Group the packs have been sent to three companies.
- 3.5 Joe and Michael briefed members on the recent second meeting of the Translink Accessibility Working Group. Resulting actions include review and revision to the current Access and Station Guides, further engagement around future vehicle design and initiating a campaign about priority seating.
- 3.6 Michael briefed members about the public meetings in March and the issues identified in the follow up report. Bert thanked June and other members for their contribution to the meetings.
- 3.7 Michael briefed members on two recent meetings with the United Retired Members Belfast Branch and Disability Committee, the Commissioner for Older People about Glider vehicles, the DfI Walking and Cycling Unit about access to Belfast City Centre and meeting in Omagh to discuss bus design organised by Aaron McKane. Michael also briefed members on a presentation he had given with June alongside the Department about Glider to the recent NICS Live event.

The meeting stopped for a short break. Ciaran Crilly left the meeting.

- 3.8 Bert asked members to consider and vote on 3 working draft names for the proposed new website – Get Out and Go, Accessible Travel NI or Travel Able NI. Get Out and Go received no votes, Accessible Travel NI 9 votes and Travel Able NI 2 votes.
- 3.9 Michael briefed members about the latest draft of Airporter's proposed Access policy referring to the limited legal requirements placed on the operator by both the DDA and bus licensing. Members expressed frustration about this situation and asked that discussions with the Department about strengthening legal

protection should be a priority. Members discussed the draft Access Policy and asked that Airporter (1) reduce the notice period to 24 hours and (2) ensure the policy makes clear that it is the choice of a wheelchair user whether to use a taxi or transfer to seat on the Airporter vehicle. It was further agreed that it should be made clear that Imtac's input to the Airporter Access Policy was not an endorsement and that the reasonable adjustment put in place by Airporter could still be challenged by individuals using the DDA.

- 3.10 Members were asked to consider issues which should form the agenda for the planned two Members Information & Development Days.

Action: Following discussions the following issues were agreed: DATS and rural transport services, vehicle standards, commercial bus licensing, taxi regulation, extension of audio visual information on buses outside Belfast and the Translink Ticketing Project.

4. Current papers

- 4.1 Michael briefed members about the rationale for and the findings of the draft report looking at Blue Badge usage in Belfast City Centre.

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

- 4.2 Michael briefed members about the discussion paper identifying issues with the current application and renewal process for concessionary travel. During discussion members expressed support for proposals to make the application and renewal process more accessible and usable including making transition between concessions easier.

Action: Michael agreed to draft proposals and undertake targeted engagement with stakeholder groups affected.

5. Draft Annual report

- 5.1 Bert asked members to consider the draft Annual Report and submit comments and indicated once finalised he will request a meeting with the Permanent Secretary.

Action: Members to submit comments on the draft Annual Report in the next 7-10 days.

6. Minutes of the last meeting/matters arising

- 6.1 The minutes were agreed subject to an amendment to those in attendance
- 6.2 Michael indicated that cost was a barrier to implementing the proposed audio visual system on Glider halts (3.4) and that the proposed language and style guide (6.2) will be drafted and circulated soon.

7. Any other business

- 7.1 Paul raised concerns about the impact of funding reductions on community transport services.

8. Time, date and location of next meeting

- 8.1 The next meeting will be held at 12.30pm on the 18th September 2019 at St Columbs Park House in Derry.