

Mobility & Access Committee Scotland (MACS)
Main Committee meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 27 July 2010
Conference Room 2, Victoria Quay

Present:

Anne MacLean, Convener

Members:

Andrew Holmes (AH)
James Glover (JG)
John Ballantine (JB)
Clare Byrne (CB)
Bob Benson (BBenson)
Muriel Masson (MM)
Annette Monaghan (AM)
Jane Horsburgh (JH)
Jane Steven (JS)
Grahame Lawson (GL)

Secretariat:

Bill Brash, (BBrash) Sponsor Team Leader.
Judith Ballantine, Secretary.
Sarah Guy, Assistant Secretary.

Observers:

Brian Juffs, (BJ) Scottish Government Senior Bus Policy Adviser

Apologies:

Steven Boyd (SB)
Heather Fiskin (HF)
Shonagh Terry (ST)

Caroline Britt (Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee)

Welcome and Introductions

1. The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

Apologies

2. Apologies were received from Shonagh Terry, Steven Boyd and Heather Fiskin

Minutes of the last meeting

3. JG pointed out that he had not been recorded as being present at the previous meeting, when in fact he had been. The Secretary apologised and advised that she would amend this accordingly. **ACTION – Secretary**

4. There were no additional amendments noted.

Matters arising

5. JG referred to paragraph 6 in the minutes of the previous meeting and noted that he would liaise with the Secretary to take this forward.

ACTION - JG/Secretary

6. JS referred to paragraph 4 and requested that the Secretary send her a copy of the NTS refresh consultation document when it issues in August.

ACTION - Secretary

7. With reference to paragraph 7, JH noted that contact had now been made with the Keith Robertson at the Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF) in order to try and gain a place on the working group they have set up to consider the design and accessibility of the Forth Replacement Crossing. She advised that she would also make links with the appropriate official in Transport Scotland.

8. In relation to paragraph 10, JS noted that there was no more work at present to take forward on the White Paper, "Your Scotland Your Voice".

9. AM noted that in paragraph 13 the initials AM had been used instead of "The Convener", which could result in confusion.

10. BBenson wished to record his thanks to the Convener for the work she undertook on his behalf in relation to the discussion on the Disability Equality and Awareness Raising Working Group at the previous meeting in April. On the back of this he also re-iterated his request for a future development day for MACS Members. The Secretary advised that she would consider this further and discuss with the Convener. **ACTION – Secretary**

11. In relation to paragraph 32, the group agreed that it would be more helpful for the Secretariat to produce a crib sheet once the work streams for the next 12 months have been established.

12. The Convener updated the group in relation to paragraph 53. She said that Halcrow were moving towards a consultation phase, liaising with the local business community and landowners. She advised that she would speak to Neil Wands at Transport Scotland for further details on this.

ACTION - Convener

13. The Convener offered clarification regarding paragraph 54, saying that nominations for a Member to attend DPTAC were no longer required since it had emerged that the incumbent's appointment is for 3 years.

Secretariat Update

14. The Secretary noted that as of 2 August 2010, Transport Directorate as part of the Scottish Government would cease to exist, and would merge with Transport Scotland, a Scottish Government Executive Agency. BBrash noted that there would be opportunities for closer and more joined up working as a result of the merger, and that these could be discussed in more detail later. The Convener noted that she would also like to discuss Shared Surfaces under Any Other Business.

Convener Update

15. The Convener thanked everyone for the work that they had contributed to the annual report.

16. The group discussed the Community Transport Association and how a member might be represented on the National Transport Strategy (NTS) Stakeholders' Group. JG was not aware of anyone who would add value. AH disagreed, saying that the needs of DRT and CTA cannot be ignored.

17. BJ noted that the level at which decisions regarding the CTA are made. He thought that John MacDonald and Sheila Fletcher (CTA) were raising its profile, and that perhaps this negated the need for a representative on the NTS stakeholder group. BBrash advised that he would speak to the team in Transport Strategy responsible for the NTS Refresh, to establish whether they would wish new representatives on the group, or even to establish a new group altogether. This might offer an opportunity for a representative such as John MacDonald to get involved. BJ agreed with this. He thought that the impending merger with Transport Scotland would also facilitate this. AH thought that if there was going to be an official group, then a CTA representative should be included. The Convener suggested that MACS maintain a watching brief in relation to this.

18. BJ went on to talk about the 3 recent meetings with the DRT forum. He said that he listened to views which were at variance with those expressed by JS and AH. He thought that there was more, and better focus on this subject at local authority level. He wasn't convinced that elevating this to the level of central government would be helpful. AH could not see how the provision of DRT would work on a geographical basis. He thought that given the recent SG announcement to support the Scottish Ambulance Service it was important that MACS had a view on the provision of DRT/CT.

19. JS highlighted para 6.5.7 in the annual report, noting that as MACS has committed to carrying out an audit this would need to be done. The Convener thought that this paragraph should be re-worded. AH suggested removing the sentence "This will involve a single data collection exercise.

20. It was also agreed that it would be useful to include a glossary in the report detailing all the acronyms used. BBenson also pointed out that it would be important to equality-proof it.

21. On the basis of these amendments, everyone agreed that they were happy for the report to be published. The Convener advised that Janet Egdell, Head of Transport Strategy agreed that it would be appropriate for her to see the Minister prior to MACS appearance at the Transport Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee in the autumn. JB asked the Convener whether she would like other Members of MACS to accompany her to Committee. She advised that she would be more than happy for Members to attend and sit in the public gallery.

Presentation and Q&A on the Scottish Government's current Blue Badge consultation exercise.

22. BBrash gave a presentation setting out some of the background and statistics relating to the Blue Badge scheme as it stands currently in the UK. He went on to list the aims of the consultation exercise and explained which aspects of the scheme are potentially to be reformed. These include eligibility criteria; eligibility assessments; enforcement; badge design and security; administration; organisational badges and concessions.

23. He outlined the legislation required to make these changes, as well as the next steps involved in considering the consultation responses and producing a report, hopefully by the end of this year. Members asked the questions listed below and the following responses were given.

Q. What is an organisational badge?

24. A. An organisational badge is used by an organisation (e.g. hospital, nursing home) who have a number of people who wish to travel who fit the criteria and require the use of a blue badge.

Q. Why is the photograph on the rear of the badge?

25. A. The photograph is not displayed on the front of the badge because there are concerns that it could make a person who has mobility difficulties more vulnerable, particularly if it is dark or they are parked in an isolated location.

Q. What are the “financial benefits” of the badge?

26. A. Blue Badge holders do not pay for car parking in the vast majority of municipal car parks. There is also no requirement to pay the London Congestion Charge or bridge tolls in England and Wales.

Q. Is the application/assessment process problematic for a transgendered person?

27. A. A person applying for a blue badge will have to provide supporting identification such as a driving licence or the award of Disability Living Allowance letter from Department for Work and Pensions, therefore any Blue Badge application will be in the name that they are known as legally.

Q. What will the implications be for blue badge holders if they are no longer able to park on double yellow lines?

28. A. Some local authorities are finding that increasing amounts of congestion is being caused by cars parking on double yellow lines, the main purpose of which are to ensure smooth movement of traffic and no parking where visibility might be a problem or cause an accident. Some local authorities are considering replacing some double yellow lines with red lines, meaning no parking under any circumstances there, which will hopefully create a safer road environment. However, we are aware that this particular change will encounter a lot of scrutiny.

Q. How can you determine whether a badge holder is a driver or a passenger (in respect of the coding)? Lots of badge holders are both.

29. A. The code is merely to provide a bit more information at first glance. If someone uses their badge as a both a driver and a passenger then the code could reflect this.

Q. Are you looking at the criteria on which both automatic and discretionary badges are considered?

30. A. Yes.

31. The group went on to discuss in more detail the ramifications of ending the practice of using a blue badge to park on double yellow lines. JG asked what alternative provision would be made for Blue Badge holders who will no longer be able to park on double yellow lines. He thought that the policing of disabled parking spaces would need to become more stringent. AH agreed that abuse of disabled parking spaces in recent years has risen exponentially. He wondered whether more badges were abused which had been awarded on a discretionary basis or an automatic basis. He also thought that it would be interesting to discover whether or not geography played a part.

32. MM referred to the possibility of reducing the time for which a badge holder could park on double yellow lines to, for example, 3 hours. She noted that very often when she needs to park on double yellow lines, she is undertaking an activity which lasts more than 3 hours. She also pointed out that there is much more emphasis on the use of the photo when using the badge on the continent.

33. GL asked that MACS be kept up to date with the Blue Badge consultation process.

General Discussion on next year's priorities

34. The Convener advised that she would use the recommendations in the annual report as a basis on which to build the plans for next years' work streams, where there were still objectives to pursue.

35. **Recommendation 3: MACS recommends that all local authorities, RTPs and transport operators implement the Staff Training Guidance that MACS is preparing in conjunction with DPTAC.** The Convener suggested that MACS write to the Traffic Commissioner advising that there is new, slightly revised guidance and that it would be helpful to meet to discuss it.

36. BJ noted that every bus driver must have achieved their Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) by August 2013. He suggested that MACS approach GoSkills to obtain information about the CPC training and what it involves. JS advised that Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) is aware of its responsibility to promote training – she wondered how this might be disseminated in a way that would result in consistency across the board. BJ noted that the Traffic Commissioner is speaking at the Confederation of Passenger Transport Conference in September (as is the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change). It was suggested that it would be beneficial for a MACS Member to attend also.

37. **Recommendation 6: Planning authorities should ensure that during the design and construction stage of any shared surface schemes, an access consultant should be employed who engages with disabled people and advises on suitable inclusive design features.** The Convener noted that as part of her experience on a planning committee she is aware of the commitment in the designs for the new village of An Camas Mor in the Highlands, whereby all buses will have low level access.

38. **Recommendation 7: The Scottish Government should form a multi-disciplinary working group to monitor the implementation of shared space and shared surface streets, with the aim of measuring effectiveness, and to help disseminate any good practice.** The Convener thought that MACS should approach the Minister and ask him to form a group who will do this, that they can sit on. BJ thought that MACS should speak to SCOTS about this possibility. AH thought that this might result in unpredictable outcomes.

39. **Recommendation 8: Transport Scotland's DDA Good Practice Guide should be followed by all local authorities** – AH thought that Transport Scotland should be issuing an advice note to this effect.

40. GL noted that “The Red Book” (New Roads and Street Works Act 1991) is supposed to be used by all those carrying out road works. He said that a revised version is being produced, which MACS might encourage Transport Scotland to be involved in.

41. **Recommendation 9: If there is a failure to find suitable resolution to the problem of parking at Glasgow Central Station, Glasgow City Council should be approached and asked to provide a solution.** It was agreed that MACS should go on to make the wider point to the Minister.

42. AH noted that not all of the recommendations in the annual report are for the Minister. It was agreed that the recommendations should be listed at the end of the publication, making the context clear as well as who they are aimed at.

43. **Recommendation 10: TIE should engage more fully with disability organisations, particularly with regard to using Haymarket as a hub.** AH thought that a more specific recommendation was required, as the rail regulators would not consider additional additions of stops. JG agreed with this. BBenson suggested that Recommendation 10 should say that “MACS will be doing....” as opposed to suggesting that other organisations should be undertaking objectives. He went on to say that there is an expectation that MACS is speaking to disabled people and disability organisations as well as Ministers. If there is a lack of clarity then a better narrative is required. The Convener agreed that the problem goes back to the initial tram work carried out and that this still needed to be noted. JB thought that this recommendation would read better if it was worded “TIE should be encourages....” It was agreed that TIE had carried out significant consultation on the design of the trams and related accessibility, but not as much regarding JH agreed that TIE had carried out a lot of engagement with disability groups initially, routes were discussed, but it appears as though some changes were made between the initial mock up being presented and the final decisions being taken. Engagement was very good at the start of the process but this did not last.

44. AH pointed out that this is the recommendation which MACS are most likely to be questioned upon. However, he thought it important to note that a tram simply cannot travel through Waverly Station. He thought it important to acknowledge therefore that MACS does not want to run the risk of Haymarket NOT becoming a hub. He suggested some form of accessible, frequent travel between Waverly Station and the nearest tram stop. The Convener did not agree that this was the best solution.

45. The wording of the recommendation was revised as follows:

“the Minister should encourage TIE to continue to engage with disability organisations and other stakeholders throughout the development of the Edinburgh Trams project.”

46. BJ stated that the Trams will have limited penetration – the majority of public transport journeys in Edinburgh will still be made by bus. He thought that TICC would likely point this out when MACS appear in front of them in the autumn. JH also pointed out that all people need to have access to transport wherever they go.

47. GL thought that once the recommendations in the annual report were listed it would become obvious how they sit. The Secretary agreed that she would consider how they dovetail and how they should be presented.

ACTION – Secretary

48. BBenson noted that there was a need to consider communications strategies in relation to the annual report, and particularly how to handle TICC, the media and agree any lines to take.

49. BJ noted that the rail franchise for post 2014 is beginning to be considered. BBrash noted that David Middleton, CE of Transport Scotland had previously intimated that MACS could be involved.

50. **Recommendation 11: The Scottish government Ferries Review should consult representatives of disabled organisations – including MACS – prior to the report being finalised.** It was agreed that this recommendation was self evident, and the phrase “disabled organisations” was changed to “disability organisation”.

51. The Convener asked BBrash to outline Transport Strategy/Transport Scotland’s current aims. He thought that these would centre around the Blue Badge Scheme, the Ferries Review and the Cycling Action Plan. However he noted that with the current restrictions on spending, Ministers would be required to make tough decisions. The impending spending review as well as the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2011 would be the main influencing issues. BJ said there was a need to make recommendations to Ministers which don’t cost significant amounts of money. The Convener agreed that there is nothing in the report which is asking for much money to be spent.

Reports from members from meetings attended

52. Members had provided reports in advance on the following events attended: City of Edinburgh Council’s Active Plan Action Plan; Transport in North Northumberland and the DPTAC Main Committee and Rail Working Group Committee Meetings. MM asked for clarification on whether or not DPTAC were losing 10 members. It was acknowledged that many of their appointments are coming to an end in the near future, and that there is a freeze on recruitment currently.

53. It was agreed that MACS would consider Ferries issues as a group on a temporary basis.

Date of next meeting

54. The next meeting of MACS takes place on Tuesday 26 October at 11am in Victoria Quay.

MACS Secretariat

September 2010