

Mobility & Access Committee Scotland (MACS)

Main Committee meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 20 January

Room 2D-46, Victoria Quay

Members present:

Anne MacLean (AM) (Convener)

John Ballantine (JB)

Steven Boyd (SB)

James Cohen (JC)

James Glover (JG)

Andrew Holmes (AH)

Susan Wood (SW)

Also present:

Bill Brash (BB), Scottish Government

Judith Ballantine (JMB), Scottish Government (Secretary)

Fraser Stewart (FS), Scottish Government Public Appointments Team

Ian Bruce (IB), Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments Scotland (OCPAS)

Introductions from Members and Secretariat and welcome from the Convener.

1. The Convener (AM) welcomed everyone to the meeting, and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

2. The group discussed the news release that was issued on 19 December, announcing the appointment of the new MACS committee Members. Two minor errors were noted; AM pointed out that she is a Trustee of the Royal National Institute for the Blind (Scotland) and not the Vice Chair, and JB stated that he was a member of the Edinburgh Access Panel, which was not been recorded. Secretariat undertook to change these details on the MACS website.

Action - Secretariat

3. AM outlined MACS' recent history, including the unsuccessful merger with PTUC. She felt it important to acknowledge that MACS would now be under scrutiny, particularly in the current financial climate.

4. The group agreed with the Convener of the need to make sure that there is no duplication of effort with other bodies in the work that MACS elects to carry out.

Appointment round for a further 8 Members.

5. BB explained that FS from the Scottish Government (SG) Public Appointments Unit, and IB from the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPAS) were attending the meeting in order to suggest ways in which the forthcoming appointment round might be tackled. The aim being to increase the number of potential applicants.

6. BB cited the MACS regulations, in particular that MACS should consist of a Convener as well as 9 -14 Members in order that it is quorate. He mentioned that the Minister is keen to see the new appointment round commence as soon as is practicable. BB felt it important to consider which groups and organisations should be approached as well as re-visiting the application form, in order to produce a more easily accessible version. He was keen though that this did not result in a "two-tier" committee, whereby those who had been appointed during the original round felt that they had been required to satisfy a more demanding criteria.

7. The group discussed the fact that the current application process might be perceived by some as being too complex, which may deter applications. Different ways of trying to simplify this were discussed, including seeing more candidates at interview stage and basing appointments solely on that, as opposed to operating a strict sift programme. It was suggested that other ways of addressing this might be to interview everyone who submits an expression of interest, although this could prove time consuming. It was acknowledged that while there was a need to meet the OCPAS code of practice, they would consider exceptions put to them.

8. IB suggested a more strategic approach, including creating a skills matrix to clarify which skills the committee already possesses and which areas it would be desirable to strengthen. Diverse skills would result in better delivery across the committee. He suggested the following actions:

- Establish precisely what MACS is going to do;
- Establish the skills the committee possesses and the skills in which it is lacking;
- Derive a person specification from the above information, and establish what strategy should be employed to attract desirable individuals to the committee.

9. Timescales for the appointment round were discussed, and it was felt that it was unlikely that MACS would see the additional members in place within 6 months. Hopefully new appointees would attend the October MACS meeting, and if it not then at the very latest they would be appointed by the end of 2009.

10. JC asked where recruitment advertisements would appear, and whether the SG can publish these more widely, in order to reach more

relevant bodies and organisations. AH felt that the problem was not where the adverts appeared but how they are distributed once they reach these organisations. JG noted that "Diversity Delivers" offers some very helpful ideas in this respect. BB and AM discussed different ways of targeting organisations, e.g. universities and Insight Radio. SB suggested that there may have been individuals on the public body shadowing course he had attended who could be approached. IB was very much in favour of this and was also keen to advertise on public transport/dial a ride/taxi services/bus and rail magazines/the Metro. JB suggested that City of Edinburgh Council or Glasgow City Council might be involved, as could SCVO. A general discussion on publicity ensued including ideas such as an open forum/networking event.

11. SB summed up the discussion noting the need to establish:

- How to attract individuals?
- How to select them?
- How to make the application form easier to complete.

12. AM stated that it would be desirable if the person specification did not change too significantly. It was however recognised that the issue of strategic thinking need to be addressed.

13. JC suggested the possibility of setting aside two posts for individuals with a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act, for which applicants did not need to go through the established process of application, sift and interview. In this scenario, the appointment could then be offered based on discussions with the applicant. FS expressed concerns re a two-pronged recruitment exercise.

14. Everyone agreed that the committee was not in a position to decide today what skills are needed in new members. BB therefore suggested that the Secretariat would create a skills matrix and ask Members to complete it. Everyone agreed that this would be beneficial in order to establish exactly what is lacking.

Action - Secretariat

15. IB and SF exited at this point.

Administrative arrangements and the role of MACS Secretariat

16. JMB outlined the administrative arrangements that the Secretariat was putting in place in order to support the committee. An information pack was given to each member, containing contact details for the Secretariat and other Members, as well as information to assist with claiming expenses, and guidance on remuneration.

17. JG asked whether he would need to complete a self assessment form. Secretariat advised that they would confirm.

Action – Secretariat

Horizon Scan

18. BB gave the committee an overview of a draft horizon scan. The previous work programme was also discussed briefly. AM advised that she was keen to see “on the ground” changes within MACS. SW felt that MACS needed to identify work streams it could take ownership of and drive forward. Members introduced other issues such as the Single Equity Duty and noted that this should be added, although JB thought that this was too long term.

19. JG thought that the 2014 Commonwealth Games should be added to the horizon scan, as should Charlie Gordon’s Members’ Regulation of Bus Services Bill. Secretariat agreed to establish the deadline for the consultation on the Bill.

Action – Secretariat.

20. JB offered to input into the Ferries Review. The committee felt that given that he is involved in his review through his position as Treasurer of SATA, it would mean that there would need to be a clear differentiation between his two roles. It was agreed that when the concluding work of the Ferries Review was published it would be appropriate for MACS to feed in then.

21. BB advised that currently there is a DPTAC member doing this, but that she will require to be replaced in June when her term of appointment ends. It was noted that John Ballantine would be an appropriate MACS member to recommend for appointment to replace her.

22. JC suggested that the Trams should also feature on the Horizon Scan. AM felt that any concerns could be dealt with through the Edinburgh Access Panel. She noted the need to be involved in the Glasgow Airport Rail Link (GARL) due to Glasgow Airport affecting transport across Scotland. She acknowledged that while Edinburgh is the capital city, if we start looking at projects in specific geographical areas this might set a precedent for considering local projects as opposed to more strategic ones. JC thought that the trams were a major transport initiative, impacting on areas further afield than just Edinburgh. He thought it might be useful to be kept informed, as opposed to having constructive input. It was agreed that the trams would be included in the horizon scan on this basis.

MACS Remit/Vision

23. AH’s concerns related to:

- Direct access to vehicles;
- Mobility issues for the elderly.

BB pointed out that the overriding access issue is within the transport arena and not wider access issues. The group discussed related issues including the environment and Homezones, considering to what extent MACS has an

interest in the environment beyond transport. AH re-iterated that there are many mobility access issues for the elderly.

24. The group agreed that the current definition is too open ended. They agreed to send thoughts on Aims/Visions to the Secretariat.

Action – all Members.

MACS Work Programme

25. BB provided copies of the SG National Performance Framework (NPF) and the initial discussion focussed on how the MACS work programme might relate to it. The group agreed that the NPF was aspirational. BB suggested that considering the NPF and the Horizon Scan together might help shape the work programme, and help establish exactly where MACS might sit in the bigger picture.

26. The group discussed GARL, with particular reference to the issue of platform 11a in Glasgow Central Station. SW advised that as she was already engaged with this through her work with the Glasgow Access Panel and that she would provide regular feed back to the Committee.

27. The issue of MACS considering upgraded railway stations and how accessible they are was discussed. AH asked how much was known regarding the level of inaccessibility. There was discussion on whether SG ASD had ever collected stats on accessible routes. BB thought there had been some research done to ascertain why certain routes do not get used (due to their inaccessibility). Secretariat agreed to ask ASD to consider. JG suggested that they might like to give a presentation on the sort of statistical information available, and what other (external) research has been carried out. It was noted that consideration should be given to any previous research carried out by MACS.

Action – Secretariat.

28. BB mentioned the Blue Badge scheme reforms being carried out in England and Wales and advised that he would feed back in relation to those.

29. He also spoke about Jackie Baillie's Member's Bill - the Disabled Persons' Parking Places (Scotland) Bill - and set out the main details and timescales. He said that public expectation would require managing, particularly the risk that the resulting Act would immediately resolve all the problems which currently occur with disabled parking.

MACS Stakeholders – (incl. DPTAC, PVS, EHRC, Transport Scotland)

30. DPTAC – Secretariat advised that they would feed back from each meeting and put the related papers on the MACS website.

31. PVS – Secretariat agreed to approach James King, Convener of PVS, to request that AM attend the PVS main committee meeting on 4 June as an observer.

Action – Secretariat.

32. EHRC – JG advised that during his time with the Disability Rights Commission a member of staff had attended a previous MACS meeting as an observer. He suggested that they might be willing to attend a future meeting and give a presentation on UK-wide transport/accessibility issues. JG advised he would provide contact details.

Action – JG.

33. Transport Scotland – Members were asked who would wish to represent MACS when dealing with TS, which would initially see involvement with the Rail Accessibility Forum, chaired by Chris Clark. JC volunteered. It was noted that he would feed back to MACS using the standard template, which Secretariat would provide, along with the minutes of the last meeting.

Action – Secretariat.

34. Secretariat agreed to consider what they could do to raise the profile of MACS amongst stakeholders.

Action – Secretariat.

Dates of next meetings.

35. The dates of the next meetings were agreed as follows:

Tuesday 28 April;

Tuesday 25 August;

Tuesday 27 October.

All meetings will be held in Victoria Quay in Edinburgh and will commence with lunch at 12 noon, likely to conclude by 3.30pm.

Any other business

36. As the Convener of the Committee does not have access to e-mail; she advised that she could be contacted either through the Secretariat, or directly by phone. Any suggestions for future agendas etc should also be submitted to AM via the Secretariat.

37. JB asked when the first annual report will be produced, BB advised that it would be expected at the end of 2009 and that the format should be one of advice to Ministers and not a verbatim account of MACS' activities.

**MACS Secretariat
5 February 2009**

MACS main committee meeting – 20 January 2009 – Points of Action

	Action	Committee Member responsible	Status	Deadline
1	Change members' details on MACS website (para 2).	Secretariat (JMB)		Immediately
2	Create & issue skills matrix to members (para 14).	Secretariat (BB/JMB)	Completed	Immediately
3	Complete skills matrix (para 14).	All Members	Completed	30 January
4	Establish whether MACS Members require to complete tax self assessment forms (para 17).	Secretariat (JMB)		
5	Add Commonwealth Games and Charlie Gordon's Member's Bill to MACS Horizon Scan and re-issue to Members (para 19).	Secretariat (JMB)	Completed	30 January
6	Members to consider current MACS Aims/Vision and send any changes to MACS Secretariat (para 24).	All Members		April 2009
7	Arrange for MACS Convener to attend PVS Main Committee meeting on 4 June as observer (para 31).	Secretariat (JMB)	Awaiting response from PVS Convener	
8	Organise presentation from Scottish Government Transport Analytical Services Division on accessible transport (para 27).	Secretariat (JMB)		
9	Provide MACS Secretariat with details of EHRC representative who may be able to give presentation on UK-wide transport accessibility issues (para 32).	JG	Completed	
10	Provide JC with feedback template and minutes of last meeting prior to Rail Accessibility Forum	Secretariat (JMB)		February 2009

	meeting (para 33).			
11	Consider how best to raise the profile of MACS amongst stakeholders (para 34).	Secretariat (BB/JMB)		April 2009