

MOBILITY ACCESS COMMITTEE SCOTLAND (MACS)

MAIN COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 31 January 2008

Video conferencing Room, Victoria Quay

Members Present:

Roderick McLeod (Chair)
Jean Dunlop (by phone)
Fiona McCall
George McKendrick
John Moore
Alan Rees
Jim Adeleye (DPTAC Representative)

Apologies:

Trevor Meadows (Convener)
Mairi O'Keefe (Deputy Convenor)
Bryan Alexander
Jane Horsburgh

Secretariat:

Emma Sinclair
Richard Lyall
Alison Dewar

Also present from the Scottish Government were:

John Ewing, Director, Transport Directorate
Fiona Locke, Strategy and Policy Branch, Strategy Division
Bill Brash, Local Authority and Partnerships Branch, Strategy Division

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 Members and visitors were welcomed and introductions made around the table. John Ewing explained that within Transport Directorate, Fiona Locke had taken over responsibility for the joint PVS/MACS Secretariat. The Secretariat would be run by Transport Directorate staff, Lynne Duff and Alison Dewar who were based in Victoria Quay. The rationale was that that Fiona's team, which deals with overall the implementation of the National Transport Strategy, could mainstream disability and mobility issues alongside the delivery of transport policy.

1.2 **Action:** Bryan Alexander had sent apologies as he had been snowed in. Secretariat to reimburse costs of the un-used train ticket. Jean Dunlop to be reimbursed for the costs of calling in to the meeting.

2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

2.1 The Chair sought formal approval of the minutes of the last meeting from the Committee. The minutes were approved.

3. Future of Mobility and Access Committee Scotland

3.1 The main item for discussion was the announcement made by the First Minister, the previous day, in his statement on Effective Government. John Ewing explained that in relation to MACS, the First Minister had announced that he planned to bring together the functions carried out by MACS with the functions carried out by Passengers' View Scotland (PVS). The Scottish Government believed there were benefits in focusing efforts and energies by strengthening the links between PVS and MACS.

3.2 In discussion, MACS members made the following points:

- the move to amalgamate MACS and PTUC could be seen as marginalisation of disability/mobility issues;
- under legislation, the Convenor of MACS must be a disabled person;
- the changes were likely to be viewed with scepticism by the disabled community;
- there was a need to maintain the influence by disabled persons on the process of government;
- there was a need to ensure the interaction which currently exists with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC);
- MACS focus has been on "access life issues" and what happened once journey had been completed;
- MACS was about offering balanced advice to Ministers after listening to the views of disabled persons and talks to transport providers;
- MACS was interested in those who "cannot make the journey" ie getting people mobile as well as those who already travelled and had difficulties doing so;
- PVS's view was too narrow, remit has to be wide enough to encompass disability issues and all forms of mobility;
- MACS views would be under-represented with a reduced membership on PVS; and
- what number of MACS members would be invited onto PVS?

3.3 In responding to Members' concerns, John Ewing made the following points. He stated that the Scottish Government had recognised that there were two bodies looking at similar issues and therefore a high degree of overlap. PVS already had a high degree of interest in accessibility issues and amalgamating the two bodies would give a reinforced voice on the broader mobility agenda to Ministers and transport operators.

3.4 John confirmed that Ministers regarded mobility and accessibility as very important. The legislation required the Convenor of MACS to be disabled. However, whether someone was disabled or not, they could have accessibility issues and an understanding of the issues affecting disabled transport users and others eg the

elderly, women with children. John gave an assurance that the Scottish Government would consider the recruitment process and adhere to the rules of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointment Scotland (OCPAS) to ensure there would be reasonable representation of disability and mobility interests on the reconstituted PVS to allow these issues to be heard in an integrated way. He added that it seemed likely that undertaking a limited recruitment of existing MACS members and selecting a balanced membership of people with knowledge and understanding of disability issues would be the best way forward in the transitional period. John also indicated that it would be necessary to work closely with the Convenor of PVS, John Elliot to create an accessibility sub-committee of PVS. At a UK level, the PVS and accessibility sub-committee would engage with colleagues in DPTAC.

3.5 John Ewing said the whole journey dimension was where the Scottish Government was working towards in terms of the 15 national indicators within the National Performance Framework. Transport was an important enabler to ensuring we took a holistic view to fulfil its aspiration that we all live longer, healthier lives.

3.6 John said that PVS was not a lobby group and had been established to give Ministers a balanced and considered view of issues for travellers and the users of transport services. This was very much in common with the MACS approach.

3.7 John agreed that ensuring the remit was wide enough was an important point and that the legislation needed to be right on that. John asked members to draw up a list of the Committee's key areas of involvement to allow the PVS remit to be suitably amended to cover disability/mobility interests.

3.8 John suggested that an early meeting between MACS and PVS would provide an opportunity to discuss the benefits of amalgamation to get a better outcome for disabled people.

3.9 John spoke of the intention to increase the Committee of PVS from 12 – 15 members to keep it to a manageable size. As the memberships of all MACS members were due to expire shortly, he wanted to devise a process whereby current MACS members would have the opportunity to express an interest in serving on PVS and would develop an appropriate recruitment structure to allow that to happen. John added that officials were liaising with OCPAS about the process necessary to limit the initial recruitment to existing MACS members.

3.10 Jimi Adeleye, representing DPTAC, said the future structure of MACS was a matter for the Scottish Government. He reported that research up to 1985 had shown a gap in hearing the disability voice on transport matters and DPTAC had been established. Jimi said that DPTAC would be happy to advise on the future shape of the PVS and would continue to work with the Scottish Government on disability/mobility issues affecting transport users in the UK(GB).

3.11 Discussion turned to the next meeting of MACS to be held on 21 February. MACS members agreed they would submit a single response to the Scottish Government. The Chair sought a statement from the Scottish Government on the process of the merger and the proposals where there could be negotiation, in order that a considered opinion could be reached by MACS members.

3.12 The Chair asked that a senior representative from Transport Directorate be available for part of the meeting to provide the Committee with up to date information. John Ewing said he, Diane McLafferty or Fiona Locke would be able to attend depending on diary commitments.

3.13 **Action:** Members to draw up a list of the Committee's key areas of involvement.

3.14 **Action:** The Scottish Government to provide a statement on the process of the merger for MACS members.

3.15 **Action:** Senior representative to be available to attend 21 February meeting. Any papers or agenda items to be copied to Lynne Duff and Alison Dewar.

4. Services Working Group

4.1 Alan Rees reported on his work in relation to buses and taxis. He also gave an update on the taxi card survey, trains and station accessibility. The consultation on First Scotrail's code of practice on rail had been updated. He pointed out that there were ongoing issues about wheelchair users on trains and cyclists. There was an issue which required to be addressed – travel only worked for wheelchair users if they booked ahead to reserve the space. He also expressed unhappiness about the service provided by the Secretariat in relation to maintaining the MACS website.

4.2 Alan said he had been invited to represent MACS on the 2014 Commonwealth Games Steering Group. It was agreed that local representation by disability interests would be more appropriate for the Steering Group rather than MACS representation.

4.3 Alan had been invited to speak at Shopmobility UK Conference on 15 February. It was agreed that Alan would attend and that his overnight expenses would be covered. Alan also pointed out that there was a forthcoming blind/partially sighted conference which Jane Horsborough would be attending. Alan concluded his report by informing members about Jackie Baillie's Private Members Bill on parking enforcement and the Ferries Working party which had not made much progress.

4.4 **Action:** Secretariat to contact the 2014 Commonwealth Games Committee. Secretariat to check flights are booked and expenses sorted for Jane Horsborough's attendance at conference.

5. Policy and Research Working Group

5.1 John Moore said the Concordat with Local Government identified COSLA as a major stakeholder in the new landscape. It was agreed that MACS would write to COSLA in terms of raising awareness of the MACS agenda.

5.2 On DRT, it was noted there was no longer a ring fenced budget but guidance and would follow on this. Funding to local authorities was no longer ring-fenced and

guidance would be issued by the Scottish Government. The Committee were keen that the work started by Paul Beecham on travel patterns of disabled was finished and the results handed to the new body.

5.3 John spoke about self assessment of concessionary fares. The working group felt it required to be scoped out and it should be taken forward as work for the future body.

5.4 **Action:** John to provide appropriate wording for a letter to COSLA for the Secretariat. He also reported back on the MACS Survey. However, no action was to be taken at present. John had been asked by the Secretariat to provide a draft letter for the Secretariat to send to COSLA. It should be noted that this was a change in practice from the previous Secretariat who would have provided a first draft. As this was a complex process the new Secretariat were looking for guidance on content from the Chair of the Policy and Research Working Group. (Subsequent discussion during the course of the meeting held on 21 February, passed the responsibility for producing the draft letter to COSLA to the Acting Chair.)

6. DPTAC update

6.1 Jimi Adeleye reported that DPTAC had made progress on getting Chris Akabusi's programme onto their Minister's agenda. There were a large number of requests for DPTAC to respond to consultations coming through. Organisations now expected DPTAC to comment and respond to every consultation.

7. AOB

Proposed Date of Next Meeting

7.1 **Action:** Secretariat to make arrangements to allow Trevor Meadows and Mairi O'Keefe to phone in to the meeting on 21 February.

The Committee were keen to set up meeting dates for each month till June.

7.2 **Action:** Secretariat to circulate provisional meeting dates to June.

As it was Emma's final day in the Secretariat, MACS members recorded their thanks and wished her well in her new post.

Thanks were also given to Roderick McLeod for assuming the role of Chair so effectively in the absence of both the Convenor and Vice-Convenor.