

Mobility & Access Committee Scotland (MACS)

Main Committee meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 28 April

Conference Room 4, 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, MACS Secretary, Scottish Government
Jean Goldie, Assistant MACS Secretary, Scottish Government

Jimi Adeleye (JA), Department for Transport. Secretary, Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC).

Introductions

1. The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting. She introduced Jean Goldie, who had recently been appointed to the post of Assistant MACS Secretary. She also welcomed Jimi Adeleye, Secretary of the Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) who was attending as an observer.

Apologies

2. No apologies were received.

Minutes of the previous meeting/points of action

3. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

4. The Convener considered the action points from the previous meeting. There was a brief discussion on some of the points, but it was agreed that all of them had been actioned.

MACS Remit & Aims

5. The group discussed re-wording MACS' Remit in order that it more accurately reflects the Committee's aspirations.

6. SW had suggested some changes to the wording of the Aims, which the Secretary shared with the rest of the Committee. After some discussion the Secretary agreed to e-mail SW's suggestions to Members to allow them to submit their comments to the Secretariat.

ACTION – Secretary.

7. JA advised that he would share a copy of the text outlining DPTAC's Remit. He went on to outline DPTAC's aims and objectives.

8. The MACS remit, in comparison with the respective legislation was discussed, as was the possibility of re-defining it so that it would be more in line with the legislation. JA suggested having a more overarching remit (e.g. "Our role is to.....") with additional detail included later on in the document and website.

9. The group went on to have a brief discussion on the abolition of quinquennial reviews of Non Departmental Public Bodies.

MACS Work Programme

10. AM advised that the current Horizon Scan would be used as a basis on which to build the Work Programme. Various work-streams were suggested as items which should appear on the work plan, and were discussed as follows:

11. National Transport Stakeholders (NTS) Group: AM attends this, and provided Members with an update on the most recent meeting.

12. Ferries Review: MACS will take forward any further issues which emerge from the Ferries Review. Jean Dunlop will no longer be the DPTAC contact for the review as her term of appointment ends in June.

13. Edinburgh Trams: BB suggested that MACS visit the mock up of the Tram. JB advised that he will circulate a report on the Edinburgh Trams to Members.

ACTION - BB to organise

ACTION – JB to send paper to MACS Secretariat

14. JC suggested that in addition to this, a list of ongoing, tram-work related changes would also be helpful. JA asked whether information was available to those with disabilities detailing the current diversions in Edinburgh City Centre. It was noted that Lothian Regional Transport had produced a leaflet showing bus route diversions currently in place.

15. Equality Duty Bill: JG advised that the Bill was published on 27 April and that there are major implications for public sector organisations, particularly in the transport arena. It also provides useful information for Regional Transport Partnerships and Regional Transport Authorities. JG offered to produce a briefing paper on the Equality Duty for the rest of the Committee.

ACTION – JG

16. JB made it known that he would shortly be meeting the Equality Sub-Committee of the Law Society of Scotland. Work on the Equality Bill may be something that they would wish to feed in to. JG suggested that helpful links could also be made with Regional Transport Partnerships.

17. Commonwealth Games: The Secretary provided an update on her recent discussions with the Scottish Government team with policy responsibility for the Commonwealth Games. She said that they had agreed that it would be possible for a MACS Member to get involved with the sub-group dealing with Transport. JC asked whether there was a requirement to liaise with EA - it was agreed that there was. Similarly JA noted that there was much that DPTAC was doing to take forward similar work in relation to the preparation for the Olympics.

18. Concessionary Fares: BB advised that the publication of the Concessionary Fares report was now imminent, and that a link to it would be placed on the MACS website.

19. Disabled Persons' Parking Places (Scotland) Act 2009: BB gave an outline of the enforcement aspect of the Act, and clarified that the provisions do not apply to off-street parking, including supermarkets. However, the Act will allow local authorities to approach private car park owners including supermarkets, and ask if they wish them to assist in enforcing their disabled parking places.

20. A more general discussion continued more generally. JB raised the questions that he had submitted to the Secretariat prior to the meeting, about the previous MACS Members' action points and work plan. A discussion about this ensued, and it was agreed that much of the previous work plan is now historical.

21. JA advised that much of DPTAC's work plan involves keeping a watching brief and that it looks to work emanating from Scotland in order to ascertain best practice.

22. JC made it known that that the original, stand alone MACS website, from the time that MACS was situated in Dunfermline, was still live. The Secretary advised that she would investigate having the site removed.

ACTION – MACS Secretary

23. The discussion on the proposed work plan continued. AM mentioned Demand Responsive Transport and the post code lottery and other geographical inequalities which currently exist. JB advised that in the recent DfT taxi consultation he had mentioned that there was a requirement for funding for DRT. JA thought that good practice existed in Scotland compared to Wales, but agreed that more funding was required. BB noted that Regional Transport Partnerships should be monitoring what goes on in relation to Demand Responsive Transport.

24. JB mentioned taxi card schemes and cited the research the previous committee Members carried out. He believed that the SG should provide funding for a national taxi card scheme. AM pointed out that not all communities support the taxi card scheme, many would prefer community transport schemes instead. A discussion ensued regarding what is appropriate in different geographical areas.

25. JA advised that DPTAC consider EU legislation and the international dimension/aspect. He wondered to what extent MACS would do so. JC asked whether MACS was able to deal with international issues or whether this would more naturally fall to DPTAC. BB advised that we liaise with DPTAC on this area.

26. JG asked how this should be shaped in to a new work programme. AM advised that the MACS Secretariat (BB and JMB) would consider previous work as well as current priorities and create a new work programme. It would be circulated amongst Members, and comments should be e-mailed to the Secretariat, the aim being to have a draft version for the August meeting. JG agreed that e-mail comments would be helpful but was unsure whether a draft would be available by August. It was agreed that as long as there was a reasonable draft to work with by August then this would be helpful.

ACTION – all Members

MACS Input in to National Conversation.

27. AM outlined progress on the National Conversation, and the work of the Calman Commission. She advised that she had raised the issue of Sewell motions in relation to the EHRC and its possible further devolution in Scotland. She suggested that JB may be able to assist as part of his role with the EHRC Committee within the Law Society of Scotland. JB advised that he would provide contact details for the individual involved with the EHRC sub-group, and get in touch with them to establish how we might consider this further. It was suggested that this was something that JB and JG might take forward together.

ACTION – JB/JG

28. BB initiated a discussion on the work of the Calman Commission and why MACS was not invited to respond, and the work of the National Conversation and why MACS was obligated to respond. JC thought that MACS should provide a neutral, non-political statement. AM agreed. It was also agreed that a Member would be identified to attend the National Conversation event in Stirling in June.

ACTION - Secretariat

29. JA asked what Scotland would wish to do with further devolved EHRC power. AM gave an example of legislation relating to resolving problems where a transport operator had refused to take assistance dogs. Legislation which addressed this existed in Scotland first.

30. BB advised that the MACS Secretariat would share DPTAC minutes with MACS Members.

ACTION – MACS Secretariat

Single Outcome Agreements

31. BB outlined MACS' requirements and obligations in relation to the Scottish Government's Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs); how they will sit with the MACS Work Programme once it is established, and how NDPBs will adhere to them generally. BB highlighted the 15 National Outcomes, and in particular "We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need", which has relevance to MACS and its future work programme. The group discussed how the work MACS might take forward would relate to this. BB re-iterated the importance of prioritising the work plan to make sure that it relates directly to these particular outcomes. The group then went on to discuss the seven "Purpose Targets".

32. BB gave an overview of how the SG is structured under the current administration. MACS and its outcomes will relate to both the Government's Wealthier and Fairer and Safer and Stronger Strategic Objectives. The two National Indicators which relate to transport at a basic level are: "Reduce the proportion of driver journeys delayed due to traffic congestion" and "increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active travel." While these are the most pertinent examples some of the other National indicators also have some relevance to Transport.

33. JC felt that these were distractions to MACS' aims and objectives and would detract from any progress the Committee might make. The Convener advised that because MACS is a Ministerial body, it requires to take on board the Strategic Objectives and National Outcomes.

34. BB also pointed out that the Convener would possibly be asked to attend the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee after the summer recess. In the event that they were to ask questions about what MACS is doing in relation to the Objectives/Outcomes she would need to be able to respond.

35. AH re-iterated the Convener's remarks and agreed that SOAs are inevitable, however he thought that there would be benefit in considering this at a more strategic level. The Committee agreed that there is a need to demonstrate to Ministers that MACS is doing a job and demonstrating credibility. JG agreed with the points made in relation to being guided broadly by the National Outcomes and more specifically by the Indicators.

36. BB stated that LAs had acknowledged that measuring outcomes would be the most difficult part of the SOAs. JB asked whether MACS would be entering into agreements with Ministers in relation to SOAs. AM and BB advised that all NDPBs are required to. JA advised that DPTAC also recognised the political climate that we are all operating in; however, he did agree that such obligations can place a heavy burden on NDPBs, and could also be a distraction from the Committee's main aims. BB noted the differences between MACS and DPTAC's obligations, the main one being that MACS operates within the SG's Concordat with local authorities.

37. SW voiced concerns about how these processes work, she was of the opinion that the Outcomes and Indicators had a top heavy structure. She thought it was more important to establish how MACS related to individuals.

38. JG agreed with this, and expanded, saying that he identified a need to try to obtain information from individuals about specific issues, but that MACS needs to decide whether it does this through networks or an evidence base, and if so where does this info come from? AM thought that the Designing Streets Consultation was a helpful way to prompt individuals to contribute. SB said that MACS was like a pyramid with information flowing in the wrong direction but he thought that this would improve in time by raising MACS' profile. SW wondered whether there was a direct way of letting Access Panels know how to liaise with MACS. BB advised that all Access Panels would all be contacted regarding the impending appointment round. JB added that other organisations would be keen to send relevant information to us if we ask for it. BB stated that once the work programme is better established it will become clearer how these all link together.

39. JB pointed out that a lot of this type of work had been carried out by the previous MACS Committee as well as SATA. BB agreed that it would be helpful to gather together all previous research/work in order to avoid duplication of effort.

40. A discussion ensued between JC and AM regarding working with and supporting stakeholders such as Transport Scotland and the Scottish Rail Accessibility Forum - it was suggested that it might be helpful to have more effectively defined structures/terms of reference. Establishing a work programme would also assist with this. It would also allow us to assess what is reasonable and how much involvement we wish to have with other bodies etc.

MACS' relationship with DPTAC

41. JA provided an update on DPTAC's recent activity. DPTAC welcomed working with MACS and indicated that DPTAC would welcome greater collaboration. He also acknowledged the deficit in DPTAC Members as several of them are leaving at the end of June, and it will take newly appointed Members the best part of a year to become fully cognisant of all of the issues.

42. BB advised that he would speak to SPT re the Glasgow Underground Consultation meeting. JA advised that he would provide details of this event.

43. AM commented on DPTAC's website, she was surprised that it's format was not white text on a blue background. JA acknowledged this and said that there were new regulations in place which meant that the format of the website may have to change. SW asked about the composition of DPTAC and JA advised what the process was for appointment. The Committee discussed the differences in Scotland, in particular being unable to specify Member's profiles in order to obtain a more diverse committee using the appointment process. AM and BB outlined OCPAS regulations which govern why we can't do this.

Presentation from Members on events attended since last committee meeting

James Cohen:

44. JC first of all spoke about the Scotrail/Network rail contracts. BB advised that we need to speak to Transport Scotland and establish who should be liaising with whom. It's clear that there is a lack of communication between Scotrail and Network Rail, and it may be that protocols are not being properly followed. AM noted that we don't always have the capacity to respond to each problem Patrick Nyamurundira raises and that he should contact the MACS Secretariat and not individual Members. BB will speak to Chris Clark at Transport Scotland.

ACTION – BB

45. JA asked whether MACS should be consulted over Access for All Funding. JC advised that TS has the power to spend that money. When MACS was not up and running, they continued making decisions on how best to spend the money. There was further discussion regarding adaptations for stations. AH advised that there had been a lot of bad project planning in relation to those.

46. JC went on to speak about the mock-up of the new Trans Pennine expressway train, which he had also attended. He noted the inaccessibility of the lock on the lavatory door. He will attend a demonstration of the design of the new door in May.

Steven Boyd:

47. SB attended Inclusion Scotland's Edinburgh Roadshow on 20 February. He advised that there had been a discussion on the Edinburgh Stations as well as accessibility at other stations. Much of the evidence given was anecdotal.

Susan Wood:

48. SW attended Department for Transport's Consultation on Improving Access to Taxis event on 30 March. She felt that there was a general perception that the taxi lobby are committed and helpful. She noted that the other consultation events had also been attended by some taxi operators who were not particularly interested in adopting changes in relation to recent legislation on disabilities.

49. JB agreed, adding that it was clear that the taxi operators thought that the costs involved are higher than they actually are.

50. JG thought that it might be helpful to approach licensing boards as they are covered by the Disability Equality Duty. JB suggested that they adopt the policy of setting a date by which time all taxis must be 100% compliant. AM asked how this would work in areas with no black cabs. AM advised that in some areas, several local providers will purchase an accessible taxi and then share it. JG suggested that we should discuss this with COSLA at a future meeting.

51. SB suggested that the new £2k Government Scrappage Scheme might encourage some taxi drivers to purchase new accessible vehicles.

Bus Perceptions Research:

52. Carol Brown (Senior Researcher, Scottish Government's Transport Strategy Analytical Services Division) outlined the research which was to be carried out during the summer. It will examine the perceptions of those who use buses infrequently. The work will involve qualitative survey work (focus groups) interviewing groups of non bus users. She outlined the aims of the research, which will consider barriers to use. However, she noted that the researchers do not want to focus solely on negative issues.

53. Although the same objectives will exist for all the focus groups, CB felt it important to note in the research choosing not to use a bus is very different from not being *able* to use a bus. AM felt it important to note that groups with disabilities should be asked how they would wish to be consulted. CB agreed with this.

54. She went on to outline the expressions of interest that had been received, and advised that she had now gone out to tender. It was likely that the contract would be awarded in June and the report would be completed in October. The Research Advisory Group consists of her, the MACS Secretary and a Bus Policy colleague. SW, JC & JB welcomed the research and noted that Access Panels will be very interested in the findings. AM asked questions about the regional variations in different geographical areas. CB advised that this had been noted in the specification, which she hoped would pull out the rural/urban tensions. JB initiated a discussion on the poor quality of bus services in rural areas.

55. JA advised that DPTAC would also be very interested in the outcome of the research. He asked whether it would refer to concessionary fares. CB advised that while it would cover groups which used it, it would not focus directly on the scheme itself.

AOB

56. AM gave an update on the ongoing recruitment round.

Date and time of next meeting:

57. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 25 August at 12 noon in Victoria Quay, Edinburgh.

Transport Strategy Division
June 2009

LIST OF ACTION POINTS:

	Action	Committee Member responsible	Status	Deadline
1	E-mail revised Aims and Remit to Members (para 6).	Secretary		August 2009
2	Organise visit to Edinburgh Trams (para 13).	BB		October 2009
3	Send report on Edinburgh Trams to MACS Secretariat (para 13).	JB	Completed	August 2009
4	Produce briefing paper on Single Equality Duty Bill (para 15).	JG		August 2009
5	Organise removal of duplicate MACS website (para 22).	Secretary	Completed	ASAP.
6	All Members to comment on MACS draft work programme (para 26).	All Members	Draft work plan to be issued imminently.	August 2009
7	Take forward discussions with EHRC sub committee of Law Society for Scotland (para 27).	JB and JG.		August 2009
8	Identify MACS Member to attend National Conversation Event in Stirling (para 29).	Secretary.	Completed.	May 2009
9	Distribute minutes of previous DPTAC meetings to MACS Members (para 30).	Secretary.		August 2009
10	Discuss with Chris Clark of Transport ways to establish correct lines of communication between MACS/Transport Scotland/Scotrail/Network Rail (para 44).	BB		August 2009