

**Minutes of Policy and Research Working Group Meeting held from 1000hrs on Tuesday 16 January 2007 at the River House, Stirling**

**PRWG Members:** John Moore, Chair  
Roderick McLeod  
Trevor Meadows

**Also present:** Sandra Falconer – Secretariat

**1. Welcome and apologies**

Apologies were received from Fiona who was unwell.

Apologies also received from Mairi O'Keefe who, for personal reasons, was taking a leave of absence from work with MACS until April 2007.

**2. Minutes of previous meeting:**

**Minutes of meeting on 12 December 2007**

The minutes of the previous meeting on 12 December were accepted without amendment.

**Matters arising (not covered elsewhere):**

**Regional Transport Partnerships:**

**Communication**

**RTS Consultations**

These two items have been taken together as the discussion was interlinked.

Members considered that it was important to establish good communication and close working relationship with Regional Transport Partnerships if MACS was to influence future investment and improvements in transport provision for people with disabilities in Scotland. This was seen as particularly relevant in view of the SE announcement on 10 January 2007 that the Rural Community Transport Initiative (RCTI) would cease on 31 March 2008 and that a new enhanced DRT budget would be introduced and managed by RTPs with effect from 1 April 2008.

Members agreed that in the first instance the Convener should write to Eric Guthrie to clarify that TACTRAN was still happy to develop a 'model framework', which would form the

basis of its engagement with MACS, and that he was happy for MACS to inform other RTPs of this arrangement.

**ACTION: Secretariat/Convener**

The Chair would feedback to the Main Committee in the afternoon proposing that once a response had been received from TACTRAN that the Convener would then approach the other RTPs in response to their draft Regional Transport Strategies to encourage a close working partnership whereby MACS could:

- Work with the RTPs through the life of the Regional Transport Strategies and assist in reviewing and improving the strategy as it progressed;
- help improve understanding within RTPs of the transport needs of people with disabilities through the development of papers and advice (involving close working between Services and Policy and Research WGs);
- evaluate and inform strategies within each RTP and link these to the MACS Aims and Vision;
- provide advice on relevance of different transport schemes and how they fit together;
- identify themes and commonality within the different Regional Transport Strategies;
- provide support and feedback advice to Scottish Ministers on areas where further investment was required.

**ACTION: Chair**

Thereafter the Convener would write to the Transport Minister to advise him of the proposal for the special relationship with RTPs

As MACS had already been involved and consulted at the various stages leading to the development of the draft RTSs (in most of the RTP areas), members considered that the approach outlined above would produce a more productive and beneficial outcome in the longer term than purely concentrating on responding to individual aspects of the respective draft strategies.

**ACTION: Secretariat/Convener**

The Chair made members aware of the report Alan Rees had submitted following attendance at the workshop held by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) to discuss their RTS and recorded the WG's gratitude to Alan for this.

*(Post meeting note: Alan has now e-mailed his report to the Secretariat and this will be included in the next weekly update for members' information.)*

**MACS survey  
Draft Pls**

The WG agreed that further consideration would be given to progressing these two items when the review of the DHC report at Item 4 below had been completed as this would help inform how these items should be taken forward.

The Secretariat had previously drawn members' attention to the 'Inclusive transport performance index' research proposals, which had been prepared by DPTAC's Personal Mobility and Local Authority Working Group. Members agreed that the Secretariat should submit comments on the proposal suggesting a review of the proposed Pls to ensure they monitored outcomes that would provide a way of measuring improvements.

**ACTION: Secretariat**

**3. MACS Communication Strategy – implementation (Paper 1 PRWG 7 - 2006).**

Since the last meeting members had had an opportunity to review the person and role specifications for MACS members alongside the MACS Aims and Vision. The consensus view of members was that although it was possible the specifications could be interpreted in different ways (as there was insufficient depth in the information given) the emphasis was very much on advising Scottish Ministers on policy and to influence and constructively challenge policy development. This would therefore be used as the basis of a revised External Communication Strategy, which Roderick agreed to prepare for the next meeting.

It was recognised that a hierarchy of internal communication was also needed to ensure MACS operated effectively and it was agreed that a separate internal communication strategy should be developed.

After discussion the Chair agreed to feedback to the Main Committee advising that the PRWG would table a briefing paper at the next Main Committee meeting,

which would focus on communication with those who could influence change and:

- Advocate a better targeted hierarchical approach;
- Identify the key people (e.g. Scottish Ministers, Civil Servants and Transport Scotland, RTPs etc) MACS should be communicating with and how;
- Identify appropriate/alternative methods of communication with various parties (e.g. exploring the development and use of a suite of briefing/position/discussion papers with feedback facilities on the MACS' website);
- Ensure that MACS was in a position to extract/absorb relevant information from stakeholders (e.g. LAs, RTPs, Transport Operators etc) and to convey key, timely and balanced advice to Scottish Ministers on the interventions that were needed and would help achieve the MACS' vision.

**ACTION: Roderick McLeod**

In addition members agreed a standard introductory paragraph, on the role of MACS should be developed by the Secretariat for use by members appearing before parliamentary committees.

The Secretariat agreed to identify key contacts within the SE and to provide details in time for the next PRWG meeting.

**ACTION: Secretariat**

**4. Project Final Report - Actions required to bring about change and improve the mobility of disabled people in Scotland**

It was agreed that the Secretariat would develop a draft Executive Summary paper based on the comments/views recorded from previous meetings. The paper would be presented and discussed as a main agenda item for the next PRWG meeting.

**ACTION: Secretariat**

**5. DHC Guidance on DRT services**

Members were concerned that the importance of the DHC guidance on the planning and provision of DRT services had rocketed since the SE announcement on 10 January 2007 that the Rural Community Transport Initiative (RCTI) would end on 31 March 2008. As the only piece of DRT guidance available on the SE website, members were of the view that it should be professionally evaluated to ensure it was appropriate.

It was agreed that the Secretariat would approach Ewan Jones, former MACS member, to ascertain whether he might be in a position to review the guidance. The Chair would also seek Main Committee agreement to allow the Secretariat to check what costs would be involved in employing a consultant to provide a critique.

**ACTION: Secretariat/Chair**

## **6. Research**

### **6.1 MACS' research Alternative methods of Assessing Eligibility for concessionary fares.**

A scoping paper for a pilot project to test the viability of self-assessment had been submitted on 19 December to SE for consideration. Trevor had spoken to the Sponsor team just prior to the meeting and had been advised that unfortunately as it would not now be possible to progress this sufficiently to allow 50% of the available funding to be spent in this financial year it would be held over and considered during 2007/2008.

The Secretariat agreed to monitor SE progress/consideration of the proposal and feedback to members. The Secretariat was also asked to copy the proposal to Cathy Peattie MSP, at the Equal Opportunities Committee as she had expressed an interest in the project.

**ACTION: Secretariat**

### **6.2 General:**

#### **6.2.1 SE web publication Availability of Transport Accessibility Information for Disabled People (research Series)**

This research had been published by SE as a 'web only' publication on 15 September. The Secretariat had been in touch with the SE officials dealing with this report and agreed to monitor progress of the actions taken by SE as a result of the publication. The Secretariat would in due course identify whether there are any issues for MACS to get involved in and determine how any actions should be taken forward.

**ACTION: Secretariat**

#### **6.2.2 SE research programme**

Representations had been made directly to the Project Managers for those projects PRWG had expressed an interest in to ensure early consultation and involvement of MACS in the identification and development of future research projects.

As a result the draft specification for the 'Evaluation of National Concessionary Travel in Scotland' project had been received and circulated to all MACS members on 13 December. The comments received from Alan Rees and John Moore had been submitted to the SE on 22 December and had been included with the members' papers for information. The SE did not yet have a date for the issue of tenders for this project but had advised that because of the likely costs that it would have to go through the EU Journal. Members expressed concern that this might turn out to be a number crunching exercise based on information retrieved through the SMART cards. The Secretariat undertook to request sight of the final tender specification before it was issued.

The Secretariat had been informed that the project specifications for the others had not yet been developed and given assurance that MACS would be consulted on project developments. The Secretariat agreed to keep members informed of progress.

**ACTION: Secretariat**

#### **7. Audit Scotland Report**

Members had some concerns about the level of understanding of the role concessionary fares played in social inclusion conveyed in the Audit Scotland Report and thought it would be beneficial to develop a relationship with Audit Scotland whereby MACS could offer advice on such issues.

The Secretariat undertook to draft a letter to Audit Scotland explaining MACS' role/agenda and inviting Audit Scotland to consult MACS where appropriate.

**ACTION: Secretariat**

#### **8. Update of Action Plan and discussion of discussion of future work programme**

The Secretariat agreed to draft an updated Action Plan and future work programme for the next meeting.

**ACTION: SECRETARIAT**

#### **9. Date of Next Meeting**

The next PRWG meeting will be Wednesday 14 February (venue to be confirmed).

**Secretariat  
January 2007**