Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)
Main Committee meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 22 April 2019
Conference Room 2, Victoria Quay Edinburgh

Present:

Naghat Ahmed
Linda Bamford, Convener
Audrey Birt
Marsali Craig
Joanne Fairweather
Sheila Fletcher
Susan Fulton
David Hunter
George Mowat-Brown
Hussein Patwa
Keith Robertson
Hilary Stubbs
Fraser Sutherland
Michael Tornow
John Whitfield

Secretariat:

Karen Armstrong – Deputy Sponsor
Douglas Adams - Secretary
Aga Lysak – Secretary

In attendance:

John Howie, Place and Equality Team NHS Health Scotland

Apologies:

Phil Pool, Department for Transport (DfT)
Agenda Item 1 - Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Convener welcomed all attendees and noted apologies from Phil Pool of the Department for Transport (DfT).

Agenda Item 2 - Minutes of the previous meeting, matters arising and action points

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting of 22 January 2019 had been previously agreed electronically. Given the sensitivity around the Motability discussion, the Committee agreed with the proposed change in wording to Action Point 5, suggested by David Hunter i.e. that MACS should advise Scottish Ministers, rather than recommend to Ministers that MACS should have a role in the future governance and strategy of the Motability scheme.

**Action Point 1** – Secretariat to amend Action Point 5 from the January 2019 meeting to read: “Once the round table consultation exercise with Scottish Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) has been completed, MACS will advise Scottish Ministers that MACS should have a role in advising on the future governance and strategy of the Motability scheme”.

2.2 It was agreed that all action points from the January meeting had been captured and discussions and updates followed on the actions not yet completed:

2.2.1 Action Point 1 - it was agreed this action could be closed and moved to the Roads, Infrastructure and Active Travel Workstream for monitoring. Further decisions on this issue would be escalated, as appropriate, by the Workstream Lead to the Committee by way of an escalation paper and to facilitate collective decisions moving forward.

2.2.2 Action Point 5 – it was noted that this action would be closed after the meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People, Ms Somerville.

2.2.3 Action Point 10 – it was confirmed that the round table discussion involving Claire Smith, Laura Murdoch, Sheila Fletcher and representatives from the TS Bus Team to discuss issues around buses has been scheduled for 19 June 2019. Therefore it was agreed that this action point could be closed and Sheila Fletcher would give the Committee an update from the meeting at the July 2019
Committee meeting under the Bus and Community Transport work-stream briefing.

2.2.4 Action Point 12 – Karen Armstrong confirmed that although social listening is more linked with social media, it was important to establish how to engage with new passengers and not focus on the existing ones only. The importance of verifying information and avoiding false information was also highlighted. This action point was now closed.

2.2.5 Action Point 15 – Karen Armstrong had shared ScotRail’s Guidance on Passenger Assist, which provides detailed information to passengers on what to do and what help is available in the event of disruption during journey.

2.2.6 Members discussed the importance of strengthening transport providers’ internal communication to ensure that all service providers are aware of passengers’ needs throughout the journey.

2.2.7 It was also confirmed that the unavailability of station facilities should be clearly communicated to passengers so they can make informed decisions about their journey. For example, if a lift is out of order within a station then it would be helpful to passengers to announce this information on the train.

2.2.8 Karen Armstrong confirmed that she is working with the Transport Scotland (TS) Communications Team on communicating the improvements to the scheme and promoting examples of good practice. Karen agreed to feed-in MACS’ comments to Patrick Nyamurundira, Transport Scotland Rail Accessibility Manager, whom she meets on a monthly basis.

**Action Point 2** – Karen Armstrong to raise with Patrick Nyamurundira the importance of strengthening internal communication within the Passenger Assistance service to ensure that any updates are clearly and effectively communicated to passengers throughout their journey. Karen will update the Committee at the July meeting.

**Agenda Item 3 – Convener’s update**

3.1 The Convener began by reminding Committee members of the new reporting template now being used. She explained that the new format is intended to make it easier to link workstreams’ workload with
strategic remit and recommendations, and gather evidence to help inform the production of the MACS Annual Report. She confirmed that the new format was still bedding-in and she invited members to provide comments and feedback.

3.2 The Convener confirmed that it would not be her intention to go through each of her updates under the 10 recommendations, but to pull out and focus on a few areas and leave time for members to raise any questions, or highlight issues for discussion either from the update of actions and engagements under the 10 recommendations, or within the update brief on the emerging issues/horizon scanning element of her briefing.

3.3 In relation to recommendation 6, the Convener stated that she had recently attended a meeting with Alison Irvine, Director of Transport Strategy and Analysis for TS, on the Scottish Transport Analysis Guide (STAG) procedures. Alison had offered MACS the opportunity to review this document.

3.4 Keith Robertson composed MACS’ response to this document and this had been sent to Aga Lysak for submission to Alison Irvine. The most important element of these procedures is the positioning of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), which is now at the start of any consultation process for procurement.

3.5 The discussion moved onto the continuing issues around the lack of accessible buses in rural areas. Joanne Fairweather and Sheila Fletcher had recently undertaken several bus journeys and noted a wide variation in the vehicles used by different operators. Joanne and Sheila are going to produce a report that incorporates pictures of the different types of buses used on rural and urban routes to evidence some good and not so good examples in terms of accessibility. This report will be shared with TS and other stakeholders to instigate a discussion on the lack of a common standards across the bus industry and in the hope of identifying and sharing best practice examples.

3.6 Sheila Fletcher highlighted that there is a flaw in regard to how different modal operators interpret the term “accessible”. There was agreement that there is a requirement for a proper definition of what is meant by “accessible” as it currently seems to singularly focus on wheelchair access. Hussein Patwa proposed that this term should be made more inclusive to incorporate other impairments, such as audio, visual and cognitive disabilities. It was noted that bus accessibility would be discussed in more detail under Agenda Item 6.
3.7 The Convener explained that she had already highlighted to Claire Smith that there is an issue with how this term “accessibility” is interpreted, and that stakeholders had requested that this be taken forward through the TS Accessibility Steering Group.

3.8 The Convener highlighted that the MACS Annual Report is due to be submitted to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity by 30th June 2019. Aga Lysak advised members that discussions with the report publishers APS on the production of the report are still on-going due to the lack of certainty around budgets for 2019-20.

3.9 The Convener thanked the other Committee members for accompanying her during the recent spate of meetings with Scottish Government (SG) Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.

3.10 She confirmed the breadth of issues that had been covered during these meetings to ensure the need for accessible public transport and accessible infrastructures was cited within each Ministers portfolio areas and to enable the connected policies and strategy deliverables. The meetings had been an opportunity to discuss this with Ministers and ensure the needs of disabled people were central.

3.11 The Convener expressed her thanks to her colleagues, who supported her at these meeting and particularly as their presence allowed the Convener to “tap into” their underpinning knowledge to support MACS position.

3.12 The Convener confirmed that the Ministerial meeting had all been very fruitful and their suggestions and recommendation had been well received by the Ministers.

3.13 The Convener informed the Committee that she is currently trying to facilitate a meeting with the SG official responsible for Integrated Joint Boards. Claire Smith is currently trying to identify the most appropriate official and will arrange a meeting with them on behalf of the Convener. Audrey Birt said that Alison Taylor in the Health Directorate Integration Team might be a good initial contact point.

3.14 There was a consensus reached that there are growing issues around Transport to Health and this is something that MACS needs to investigate. Susan Fulton commented that Local Development Plans
produced by Councils take into account both Housing and Transport strategies, and this is referenced within the Planning Framework.

**Agenda Item 4 - Sponsor Team update**

4.1 Karen Armstrong gave an overview on the work currently being undertaken by the Sponsor Team.

4.2 The Accessible Travel Conference held at the Scottish Exhibition Campus (SEC) on 7th March 2019 had been very well received and there had been over 4,000 engagements on social media.

4.3 She informed the Committee that the proposed Ministerial journey to Perth and Kinross will not be going ahead due to other Ministerial business. Karen Armstrong proposed that she and Mark Hoskins should meet with the Centre for Inclusive Living Perth and Kinross to discuss some of the issues, which they wanted to raise with the Minister.

4.4 The Convener reminded Karen that the initial invite for the journey had come from the previous Transport Minister (Mr. Humza Yousaf) after an article that the Centre for Inclusive Living, Perth and Kinross had written to reflect on a train journey highlighting what worked well and where improvements were needed.

4.5 Karen Armstrong stated that she was working with colleagues in the Education Directorate to refresh the School Transport guidance as Accessibility is not currently mentioned in the document. The revised guidance will reflect the TS Accessibility Team’s aspiration of ensuring that children and teenagers are able to attend educational establishments confidently and independently.

4.6 Karen Armstrong concluded her update by outlining that she and Aga Lysak will be conducting work on the Thistle Card as part of the Accessible Transport Framework delivery plan. She has been liaising with members of the Scottish Youth Parliament and there is evidence that disabled students drop-out of their courses due to the lack of public transport options available. Her intention is to work with the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) so that disabled students are informed of the public transport options that are available to them when they commence their course at the start of the new term. This approach will be trialled at six universities in Scotland in the coming months.
Agenda Item 5 - Guest speaker – John Howie from NHS Health Scotland

5.1 John Howie thanked the Committee for the invitation to present to them and he outlined that his presentation would cover the Place Standard tool, which had been launched in 2015. The tool is currently available as an online tool but it is also offered in the form of a printed booklet and an App. The purpose of the tool is to support the delivery of high quality places and it looks at existing environmental assets as well as areas for improvement.

5.2 There are 14 dimensions included within the tool and users are asked to answer a headline question using a scoring matrix of one to seven. The user is subsequently asked to complete follow-up prompt questions and they are also able to enter descriptive text.

5.3 Since its launch, the tool has been adopted internationally and the World Health Organisation (WHO) plans to produce its own version to assess “Health Cities”. The tool is subject to an on-going improvement process and there are aspirations to create a more accessible version by the end of 2019.

5.4 An international conference to discuss the use of the Place Standard tool organised by NHS Health Scotland is being held in Glasgow on Monday 10th June. John agreed to send details of the conference to Aga Lysak so that these can be circulated to the Committee.

Action Point 3 – John Howie to send details of the international conference on the Place Standard tool to Aga Lysak for dissemination to the Committee members.

5.5 Keith Robertson commented that he was involved in the “Place Standard tool” consultation and he felt that both designers and architects could make more use of this tool to help inform planning decisions.

5.6 The Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to contribute to future versions of the tool and advocate its use.

5.7 John Whitfield queried if there were specific target audiences for this tool and if there were any checks built-in to avoid potential bias. John Howie replied that he would encourage the use of guidance such as the National Standards for Community Engagement in conjunction with the tool to mitigate the possibility of bias.
5.8 Hussein Patwa asked if there are agreed definitions of what is meant by the terms “healthy life expectancy” and “healthy”. John Howie replied that the definition used for the purpose of the tool was that the individual was “beyond the absence of disease”. There are 14 dimensions that have a role to play in health and a sense of wellbeing.

5.9 Michael Tornow asked if the descriptions used for the Transport and Safety section of the tool prompted people completing the survey to think about accessibility when answering questions on public transport.

5.10 John Howie confirmed that under the headline question, there are prompts advising the user to think about the impact on other parts of the population, such as disabled people.

5.11 Susan Fulton asked if users of the Place Standard tool were encouraged to complete EqlAs. John Howie said that although it is a standalone tool, he would always encourage decision makers to use other assessment tools to help inform the decision making process.

**Agenda item 6a - Update from Hilary Stubbs on the Ferries and Aviation Workstream**

6.1 Hilary Stubbs began by stating this was the first update since the workstream title had been altered to “Ferries and Aviation” to reflect the more strategic approach that is being adopted particularly around air travel. Instead of focussing on issues on individual ferry and airline routes, the workstream in future will concentrate on more overarching themes and the journey as a whole.

6.2 She outlined that most of the past quarter had been taken up producing MACS response\(^1\) to the Aviation 2050 consultation issued by the DfT. This had been a comprehensive consultation and as such MACS ensured that the submission was detailed and robust, covering all areas that could add value to the experience of disabled people travelling by air. The final submission from MACS is available on the website.

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6.3 A response\(^2\) had also been submitted to The National Islands Plan consultation. Hilary said that this was an interesting consultation as it included a proposal for the creation of an Island Impact Assessment. She will continue to keep a watching brief to ensure that there is a requirement for an EqIA to be completed incorporated into the Plan.

6.4 George Mowat-Brown asked other Committee members if they had recently travelled through Edinburgh Airport since the introduction of the new exit for travellers not going through customs. He said that the new arrangements were confusing, and there appeared to be no obvious way of exiting the terminal other by descending three flights of stairs.

6.5 Keith Robertson confirmed that it is possible to exit via the main baggage and reclaim hall and the problem is the lack of new signage and wayfinding. Hilary agreed to contact Edinburgh Airport to seek clarification on the new exit arrangements, and raise the issue of the lack of clear signage informing customers on how to exit the terminal.

| Action Point 4 – Hilary Stubbs to contact Edinburgh Airport to seek clarification on the new exit arrangements, and raise the issue of the lack of clear signage on how to exit the terminal. |

Agenda item 6b - Update from Sheila Fletcher on the Bus and Community Transport Workstream

6.6 Sheila Fletcher began her update by welcoming Susan Fulton, as she would be contributing to the work of this workstream.

6.7 Sheila Fletcher and Joanne Fairweather had undertaken a fact-finding mission in Kilmarnock the previous day to view a new type of bus. She informed the Committee that the design of the vehicle was geared around passengers using a wheelchair, and little thought had been given to passengers that may have difficulty stepping up onto the bus i.e. there was a 12 inch gap between the kerb and the bus.

6.8 The ramp to enable wheelchair users to board the vehicle is at the rear door and this will cause issues when the bus is using Kilmarnock bus station and potentially other bus stations. This is due to the pavements in the station not being long enough to reach the rear door area and therefore the pavements will need to be extended for easy access to the new vehicles. She explained that the bus driver also has

to clamp any wheelchair into position on the bus, and the driver that demonstrated this seemed slightly uneasy about invading a wheelchair user’s personal space.

6.9 The Convener asked if there has been time factored into the bus timetable to reflect the time taken to use the ramp to enable a wheelchair user to board and alight the vehicle. Sheila replied that no time has been built-in, but there is no requirement for a wheelchair user to book in advance when they want to travel.

6.10 Sheila and Joanne had also been aboard one of Lothian Buses new 100 seat buses and had noticed several flaws in the design. For example, a rear door has been reintroduced and there is an audio announcement made when these doors are closing.

6.11 However, it was noticed that a passenger needs to be able to move quickly to alight from the vehicle and this could be problematic for some passengers with limited mobility.

6.12 Sheila stated that there are other issues i.e. the lack of any ramp at the rear door for alighting from the vehicle. The bus driver has to manually lower and retract the ramp fitted at the front of the bus as there is no remote operated hydraulic mechanism.

6.13 Aga Lysak informed the Committee that Local Access Panels had not been consulted before the introduction of the new buses and there is frustration in Edinburgh about this lack of engagement.

6.14 Joanne Fairweather advised the Committee that she had undertaken a journey on a new double-decker bus introduced on the Elgin to Aberdeen route. It takes between three to four hours for the journey to be completed and she noted that there are no toilet facilities on the bus.

6.15 Sheila and Joanne had taken a substantial number of pictures of the buses that they have travelled on recently. Sheila confirmed that their intention is to write a report for submission to Laura Murdoch and officials in the TS Bus team to highlight the multitude of different vehicles being used by operators in Scotland. The report will also identify the issues created by the current legislation on bus design.

6.16 Sheila informed the Committee that DfT had recently issued new guidance on Community Transport and this has major implications for operators in Scotland. A new rule has been introduced limiting
operators whose main business is not transport to either a 10-mile radius, or to a maximum journey length of 10 miles.

6.17 Michael Matheson, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity had written to the DfT highlighting the disproportionate impact that this rule will have in Scotland. As it currently stands, this will rule out a large number of voluntary organisations from operating and could lead to an increase in social isolation. However, this rule is currently the subject of a judicial review and Sheila confirmed she will maintain a watching brief on the outcome of the review.

6.18 Audrey Birt asked Sheila if she had received a response from the Chief Executive of Lothian Buses to a letter which she had previously sent regarding their policy on the carriage of mobility scooters. Sheila replied that no reply had been forthcoming and she would e-mail Lothian Buses to request a response to her letter.

**Action Point 5** – Sheila Fletcher to e-mail Lothian Buses to request a reply to her letter regarding the company’s policy on the carriage of mobility scooters and update the Committee on the outcome of her request.

**Agenda item 6c - Update from David Hunter on the Planning and Strategy Workstream**

6.19 David Hunter began by advising the Committee that there will be a consultation by TS on the new Transport Strategy, which will likely open at the end of May. He is happy to take the lead on drafting MACS response with the assistance of fellow Committee members.

6.20 He asked the Committee to consider what MACS main asks should be from the Strategy as this is a valuable opportunity to propose solutions rather than just highlighting problems.

6.21 He suggested that MACS perhaps goes beyond the principle of accessibility becoming embedded into decision making processes, and instead makes some specific requests that could be incorporated into the Strategy.

6.22 MACS will also need to make a submission to the TS Strategic Transport Projects Review. This is an opportunity to make a pitch for national investment in smaller projects such as bus stops and pedestrian crossing, rather than the normal big ticket items, such as motorways.
6.23 Sheila Fletcher advised the Committee that she recently attended two consultations held by the Poverty Alliance to gather information for the development of the National Transport Strategy.

6.24 There was a consensus that the requirement for meaningful EqIAs needs to be embedded at contractual level and this is something that MACS will continue to advocate.

6.25 The Convener advised the Committee that this is activity that she has been working on with Sheila and there is a need to keep the focus on the requirement for meaningful EqIAs to be completed to improve accessibility.

6.26 David provided a brief update on the status of the Motability report. The Convener and David Hunter were going to meet Shirley Anne-Somerville, Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People, on Thursday 25th April to discuss the report.

6.27 A second round table event with Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs) will be set-up within the next six months to discuss progress made in relation to Motability and some of the suggestion for improvements from attendees at the roundtable discussion in March 2019.

Agenda item 6d - Update from Hussein Patwa and Marsali Craig on the Rail Workstream

6.28 Hussein Patwa stated that he had given a presentation at an event in Glasgow organised by Transport Scotland (via Heather Cowan) to engage stakeholders on Mobility as a Service (MaaS). He also confirmed that Sheila Fletcher had given a presentation at the event in Perth as both sessions were part of the initial engagement.

6.29 He confirmed that he is also investigating the possibility of presenting at the main MaaS event which will be held in June 2019.

6.30 Marsali Craig informed the Committee that she had held a very successful meeting with Andrew Marshall-Roberts of ScotRail and she is currently reviewing the actions that came out of the meeting.

6.31 The Accessibility Toolkit for Rail had just been completed and Hussein thanked Fraser Sutherland for his valuable contribution in completing this document.
6.32 Hussein and Marsali both welcomed Susan Fulton to the Rail workstream and said her experience and expertise will make telling contributions in this area.

6.33 During an open discussion, Michael Tornow pointed out that there is no braille on the buttons for opening the internal doors on the new 385 trains and Hussein and Marsali agreed to look into this.

6.34 George Mowat-Brown asked what the implications will be in the new method of measuring delays to trains and its effect on people using wheelchairs. Hussein replied that there is no grace period and it is too early to determine if the new method of measuring delays will put added pressure onto train staff. He agreed that this is something that he will keep a watching brief on going forward.

6.35 David Hunter asked if MACS would be responding to the Williams Rail Review\(^3\) and Hussein confirmed that he would provide a response to David as soon as possible. The closing date for submissions is the 31\(^{st}\) May.

### Action Point 6
Hussein Patwa to provide David Hunter with information to inform MACS response to the Williams Review before the closing date of 31\(^{st}\) May.

6.36 There was a discussion on the Access for All Station improvement programme announced early in April 2019 and the small amount of investment at Scottish stations. It was noted that MACS is not a consultee for this programme, and it was agreed that MACS should investigate how to become involved in the decision making process for future improvements.

6.37 Hussein agreed to raise this through his contacts within DfT and the MACS Secretariat were asked to contact the relevant TS officials responsible for Rail to request involvement.

### Action Point 7
Hussein Patwa will liaise with appropriate contacts in DfT to request that MACS are invited to be consultees for future decisions around the Access for All Station improvement programme.

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\(^3\) [https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/williams-rail-review](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/williams-rail-review)
**Action Point 8** – MACS Secretariat to contact relevant TS officials with responsibility for Rail and ask that MACS are invited to be consultees for future decisions around the Access for All Station improvement programme.

6.38 David had recently read some material produced by Transport Focus and he wondered if MACS should ask them to undertake some research, or act as a mystery shopper for the Passenger Assist scheme.

6.39 Hussein replied that this was an excellent suggestion and the Rail Workstream will consider if this is an option.

**Action Point 9** – The Rail workstream to consider if Transport Focus can undertake some research, or act as a mystery shopper for the Passenger Assist scheme.

6.40 Following the reduction in the notice period required for booking Passenger Assistance, Michael Tornow asked how ScotRail will validate that it is working as per the new policy.

6.41 Hussein replied that ScotRail produce monthly statistics on the number of passenger complaints as well as statistics on the use of Passenger Assist. Keith Robertson said that he was aware that complaints around the Passenger Assist scheme are now being collected under the General Complaints process, and therefore specific figures on Passenger Assist scheme complaints may no longer be produced.

6.42 Hussein agreed to ask ScotRail for information on the statistics collected in relation to complaints on the Passenger Assist scheme.

**Action Point 10** – Hussein Patwa to contact ScotRail to clarify if specific statistics on complaints about the Passenger Assist scheme are still being collected.

6.43 Fraser Sutherland raised a point regarding the information contained in the Sponsor team update paper in relation to the refitting of High Speed Trains (HSTs). The Sponsor Team update stated that ScotRail is looking at contingency plans beyond 1st January 2020 and Fraser asked what these contingency plans are and why are these required. Fraser had recently met with Andrew Marshall-Roberts of ScotRail and there had not been any mention of contingency plans during their discussion.
6.44 There was agreement that this question should be put to Andrew Marshall-Roberts in ScotRail for clarification.

**Action Point 11** – Fraser Sutherland to clarify what ScotRail’s contingency plans are in relation to the refitting of the HSTs and why these plans are required.

**Agenda item 6e - Update from Keith Robertson on the Roads, Infrastructure and Active Travel Workstream**

6.45 Keith confirmed that he is working with Sustrans on the evaluation of funding applications for Accessible Streetscapes.

6.46 Keith also confirmed that himself and Naghat Ahmed have been appointed to the Working Group for development of George Street in Edinburgh.

6.47 Keith highlighted that there are several issues with the design of the current Blue Badge. He and Naghat are going to meet with Karen Armstrong and Robert Wyllie of the TS Accessibility Team to discuss how the current design can be improved.

6.48 Hussein Patwa asked if there was any progress on the discussions around using low energy beacons in cities. Keith replied that he would be able to provide an update once he had attended the next Roads for All meeting on 7th May.

6.49 Keith provided an update on the timeframe of the Inclusive Mobility and Tactile Surfaces work. The deadline for completing the research is the 23rd September but there is no funding in place for writing the report in this financial year.

6.50 As the new financial year has just started, the tender for Inclusive Street Design has just been issued and this will have a knock-on effect on the revision of the Good Practice Guide.

**Agenda Item 7 – Any Other Business (AOB)**

7.1 There was no other business and the meeting concluded at 15:00.
Action points for the meeting held on 23 April 2019

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