

Draft version 00.03 - Strategic Plan 2021/24

Foreword

This strategy takes MACS into my second term of appointment as Convener and will be the foundation of our work for this final term. Over the period of this strategy we want to build on our previous work, experience and knowledge to improve accessible travel and make door-to-door journeys easier, more affordable and achievable for disabled people and older people in Scotland.

During my first term as Convener, MACS produced and promoted the tag line; that transport needs to be Available, Accessible and Affordable. Our triple A check. Achieving this goal remains at the heart of our work.

MACS spent the last four years building on our credibility and raising our profile. We did this by extending our stakeholder networks and refining our areas of engagement to position ourselves more strategically to better influence policy and service design and provision. We have also extended our reach to ensure we hear and amplify what people are telling us needs to change to allow all of us to live independent lives, with equal opportunities, and choices, that enable everyone to flourish and reach their full potential.

Our work is underpinned by the voices of disabled people, their and our lived experiences.

With our vision of, “a Scotland without the barriers that isolate and exclude disabled people from making their choice of successful door to door journeys”, we will focus our resources to ensure that at the heart of our strategy and work plans is the recognition of the heavy, but unnecessary, burden inaccessible and unaffordable transport places on the physical, mental and material wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

We will continue to advise Scottish Ministers on aspects of policy, legislation and practice affecting the travel needs of disabled people to enable them to take account of the broad views and lived experiences of disabled people as a corner stone of their work.

Our refined strategy and objectives have been heavily informed by the impact of and response to the global health pandemic (C-19) and the disproportionate effect this has had on disabled people, their carers and families. We will remain alert to these and future impacts of C-19 on disabled people and any other significant changes (such as EU Exit). In response we will work with our partners and stakeholders to ensure disabled people and older people are not left behind.

We continue to work towards the five ambitions of “A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People”, progressing the Connected Scotland Strategy (reducing social isolation and loneliness) and we look forward to serving on the delivery board of the National Transport Strategy (NTS2). We previously contributed to the work of the NTS2 Steering Group and the Reducing Inequalities Sub Group and we welcome our position on the NTS Delivery Board to allow us to oversee and add our expertise to the progress of this crucial strategy.

This involvement will also allow us to build on our learning and the experience gained from our position on Transport Scotland’s Transport Transition Plan National Advisory Group and the Transport Equalities Network, which were formed to guide us through the transport elements of the route map out of lockdown.

MACS is encouraged to see our work and “asks” around equality, inclusion and a human rights based approach come through so strongly in the 2020 Programme for Government (PfG). We were also particularly pleased to see the inclusion of the term “wheeling” not only being picked up in the NTS2 but also, for the first time, in PfG. To ‘wheelies’ this signals that consideration is being given to the need for well maintained, uncluttered pavements and pathways, dropped kerbs and step free access and routes.

We worked hard and messaged strongly for this shift and welcome this firm commitment and the recognition of transport as an enabler i.e. access to suitable transport, no matter your level of income or where in Scotland you live, should be seen as a necessary requirement in order to achieve other human rights such as the right to work, right to education, right to take part in cultural and public life, and right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Source: Transport and Poverty in Scotland, Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019.

MACS will reassess our focus annually following PfG commitments. We will first seek to influence its content and then work from these commitments and the progress made, to support wider Ministerial objectives and policies and improve travel and transport for disabled people and older people.

Linda Bamford
National Convener
Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)

Background:

The Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) is a non-departmental advisory public body. Within the founding legislation the Scottish Ministers have defined the overall aim for MACS as follows:

“MACS will consider such matters relating to the needs of disabled persons in connection with transport as the Committee think appropriate and give advice to Scottish Ministers”.

In doing so, the Convener aims to ensure, that MACS’ policies and actions supports the wider strategic policies of the Scottish Ministers. This aligns with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between MACS and Transport Scotland (TS), our Sponsors. MACS Strategic Remit is:

- To give Scottish Ministers advice on aspects of policy, legislation and practice affecting the travel needs of disabled people.
- To take account of the broad views and lived experiences of disabled people when giving advice.
- To encourage awareness amongst disabled people in Scotland of developments which affects their mobility, choices and opportunities.
- To work closely with SG and ensure our work programme complements the work being undertaken by the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Committee (IMTAC), the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), the Equality and Human Rights Commission and other organisations, voluntary and statutory.
- To promote the travel needs of disabled people with designers including transport planners and operators so that these are fully taken into account in the development of vehicles and infrastructure and delivery of services.

- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our work against the above aims and objectives in improving travel opportunities for disabled people in Scotland.

MACS Vision

"MACS believes in a Scotland without the barriers that isolate and exclude disabled people from making their choice of successful door to door journeys"

This paper provides the Committee's Strategic Plan for 2021/24. It has been developed based on the Committee's engagements and discussions over the past year and particularly since lockdown in March 2020.

The Committee has been asked by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Mr. Michael Matheson MSP, for its views in relation to the progress of the Accessible Travel Framework Annual Delivery Plan and more recently on some elements of the work of the Transport Transition Plan (TTP) Advisory Group and Transport Equalities Network (both chaired by Transport Scotland). The later two groups were formed in response to C-19 to assist with transport transition planning for the stages of the route map out of lock down.

It is anticipated that the work of these groups will feed into the "shifted" starting point of the National Transport Strategy (NTS2). MACS will be represented on this Delivery Board.

MACS responds to requests for advice from Scottish Ministers across portfolio in the recognition of the cross cutting element of transport as an enabler, but also develops its own work programme to scrutinise progress of the Accessible Travel Framework (ATF) Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) and the NTS2. Our work promotes the importance of specific issues in reducing inequalities (a key pillar of the NTS2) to provide a public transport system that aligns with the Tripe A check produced by MACS. That is that public transport is: Available, Accessible and Affordable for all. Our high level objectives seek to define the strategic approach MACS will take with its engagement in these specific areas. The time scale for this work is based on the knowledge that a reduction in inequalities will span more than one year though the high level objectives will be revisited annually to sense check against progress, lag areas and needs.

In working to progress the above, MACS will also take into account the commitments made by Scottish Ministers through PfG and the need for inclusive and accessible infrastructures to enabled the first and last mile of journeys (example, from home to bus stop and inter modal connections) as part of the holistic journey.

In order to do its work the Committee routinely engages with external stakeholders to gather evidence, exchange information with our colleagues across the UK, carry out research and publish guidance and reports. The Committee also responds to appropriate consultations to inform policy and service development.

Our Values

We are ambitious

We are not afraid to take on difficult issues and speak up in pursuit of positive change. We underpin our approach by drawing from lived experience, listening and responding to the voices of disabled people, continuing our research to build on our existing knowledge and a commitment to learning and continuous improvement.

We connect

We work collaboratively and are informed by the knowledge and experience of those we work for and with. We are visible, accessible, empathetic and compassionate in our interactions and value quality relationships based on honesty, understanding, support and an appetite and willingness for positive change. We keep disabled people and their needs at the centre of our work.

Our independence is a valuable asset, but we recognise that working with others makes us all stronger.

We are courageous and honest

We say what is right and not what is easy to help to drive progress and positive change. We constructively challenge where needed and work with others to find solutions to make transport and travel more accessible and affordable. We welcome challenge and feedback in order to improve our own work.

We act with integrity and transparency

We take personal and collective responsibility for our work and actions and how we use our resources and limited capacity. We are transparent, trustworthy, consistent, and open about our successes and failings.

Context

In preparation for the developing our 2021/24 strategic plan MACS reached out to a range of stakeholders, including disabled people (experts by experience), Disabled People Organisations (DPOs), Disability Organisations (DOs), Scottish Ministers, Local Authorities, Public Bodies, Transport and service planners and providers. This included reaching out via themed roundtables, attending conferences, workshops, surveys, webinars and listening through social media platforms.

In the midst of this work the C-19 outbreak happened and MACS, like other organisations across Scotland, had to respond rapidly to the impacts. Our work began to change significantly as a result. It quickly became clear that the response to the crisis and the subsequent approach to recovery would need to be a major focus and as such relationships with TS were solidified through the policy areas and by involvement in the TTP Advisory Group and Transport Equalities Network (TEN).

Evidence shows that disabled people and older people have been disproportionately affected by C-19. Changes to public transport provision and Spaces for People initiatives added further challenges to travel.

PfG announcements and aspirations refocused thinking around 20 minute neighbourhoods, inclusive active travel, the critical role transport plays in the review of adult social care services and protecting, supporting and widening our flagship concessionary travel scheme (affordability). For MACS our specific focus includes what these commitments mean and how we ensure disabled people and older people will not be left behind.

With the longer term impacts of C-19, these changes and the actions taken to respond to the pandemic, are now becoming clearer and certain areas need specific focus to reduce inequalities and realise the new starting point for NTS2 and where the ATF links into this.

There have been calls from across society to grasp the opportunity to fundamentally reshape our society, rather than trying to go back to how things were (building back better, building forward better, social justice, human rights based policies). All these concepts are focused on the idea that we can't go back to how things were and we must reduce inequalities in travel and transport needs with more urgency.

This has therefore had an impact on MACS strategic plan and the reassessment of our high level objectives.

High Level Objectives

We have identified five high level objectives. Under each high level objective we set out what MACS plans to do in order to progress it and how we will know if we are making progress.

Objective 1: To build on the commitment in Programme for Government (PfG) to promote a fair, accessible and inclusive Scotland.

What will we do to deliver this priority?

MACS will:

- Secure meetings with Scottish Ministers and Officials to keep this need prominent.
- Work from PfG commitments to anchor our work in agreed areas of PfG to support Ministerial policies
- Use external engagements, consultation responses and core key messaging to better understand and work with stakeholders to progress identified areas of PfG
- Discuss the benefits and gaps in PfG with Scottish Government officials and Ministers to inform the focus of future PfGs

How will we know if we have made progress?

MACS will have made progress in delivering this objective if:

- The PfG language and commitments remain strongly focussed on equality, accessibility, human rights and the needs of disabled people.
- Areas identified in PfG are delivered with access, inclusivity and reducing inequalities front and centre.
- Disabled people travel more often and with ease.

Objective Two: To work across Cabinet and Ministerial portfolios to ensure the need for an accessible transport system is recognised and cited as an enabler.

What will we do to deliver this priority?

MACS will:

- Identify relevant Ministers to inform, advise and gain commitment from.
- Work with colleagues from Transport Scotland to develop inclusive plans.

- We will prepare briefings to articulate the key areas for discussion to optimise these opportunities and look to work with SG officials to progress actions from meetings.

How will we know if we have made progress?

MACS will have made progress in delivering this objective if:

- We gain cross cabinet commitments and buy in to the accessible travel agenda and transport as an enabler.

Objective Three: To ensure that the Scottish Government makes it clear that public bodies and local authorities have a duty to respect the legislation regulating improvements of the accessibility of public transport service provision and the surrounding infrastructures.

What will we do to deliver this priority?

MACS will:

- Hold the Scottish Government to account, as an exemplar, in mainstreaming Equality Impact Assessment (EqIAs) in their own work.
- Engage with local authorities, public bodies and transport service providers to advocate compliance with their Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), including the Fairer Scotland Duty and the need to conduct meaningful EqIAs before any services changes, developments or withdrawals. We will advocate this approach in order to identify, mitigate and manage any negative impacts or consequences to disabled people of any changes and/or service developments.
- Work to promote that places are more inclusive to everyone and underpinned by the Place Principle ethos and follow good practice design guidance.
- We will promote discussion on the “20 minute neighbourhoods” aspiration from PfG, to better understand what this means to disabled people and older people and work with stakeholders to ensure the needs of those we represent are central in plans.
- Support and make clear the need to involve disabled people in designing the places they live and the services they use.
- Seek to ensure that places and services are designed by learning from direct and lived experience (experts by experience) to assist with getting it right.

How will we know if we have made progress?

MACS will have made progress in delivering this objective if:

- Places are more inclusive and comply with good practices guidance.
- MACS work plans and engagements add to and assist with the Connected Scotland Strategy outcomes and the 5 ambitions of A Fairer Scotland.
- MACS involvement scrutinises and challenges stakeholders organisation's compliance with their PSED resulting in strengthened compliance Nationally.
- More disabled people have the ability and confidence to use public transport and complete successful door-to-door journeys more often.

Objective Four: To advocate for engagement with MACS when developing or revising policy, plans or contracts by officials to gain expert advice and ensure accessibility is given a priority consideration. This includes using procurement and franchise opportunities when awarding contracts to promote accessibility in transport provisions.

What will we do to deliver this priority?

MACS will:

- Seek policy, contracts and/or franchise opportunities to give expert advice to ensure accessibility is front and centre to improve transport accessibility and design more inclusive infrastructures (including adopting Place Principle).
- Work constructively with officials to design inclusive plans, which will form a framework for future developments (examples: Transport Transition Plans, Infrastructure Investment Plan, National Transport Strategy 2, Strategic Transport Projects Review 2, Islands Delivery Plan, Islands Connectivity Plan, the Accessible Vehicle and Equipment Scheme, Mobility as a Service)

How will we know if we have made progress?

MACS will have made progress in delivering this objective if:

- Policy, legislation, contracts and the good practice guides acknowledge the importance of accessibility and the travel needs/experiences of disabled people.

Objective Five: To review the National Transport Strategy and the Accessible Travel Framework Annual Delivery Plan on an annual basis, acknowledging progress, identifying blockages and gaps and make recommendations to assist with the delivery of commitments.

What will we do to deliver this priority?

MACS will:

- **Contribute to the progress of the NTS2 through the NTS Delivery Board.**
- **Review and scrutinise the progress of the ATF and the NTS2 on an annual basis to identify progress, barriers and make recommendations aimed at escalate the delivery of the commitments.**
- **Work with TS to input to the scope and design of their work (on invite).**
- **Work across TS Policy Teams to promote that accessibility and inclusivity is at the heart of their work to reduce inequalities.**

How will we know if we have made progress?

MACS will have made progress in delivering this objective if:

- **We provide an update to the Transport Secretary on an annual basis.**
- **We meet regularly with the ATF Team and other TS Policy Teams to input to their work areas and provide advice and recommendations where appropriate.**
- **We add to the work of key groups feeding into the Reducing Inequalities pillar of the NTS2 (i.e. NTS2 Delivery Board, TTP Advisory Group, TEN, ATF Steering Group, Islands Delivery Board).**