

## Open Meeting

**Minutes of the Open Meeting held at 1.15 pm on Thursday 15th May 2008 at the St Paul's Centre, Perth**

**Present:** Stanley Flett (Chair) (Individual), John Ballantine (Individual), Chris Clarke (Transport Scotland), Chris Crockette (Inclusion Scotland), Bob Edwards (Highland Council), Jan Goodall (DATAG/DCT)), Fiona Johnson (North Lanarkshire Disability Forum and Access Panel), Maggie Killin (Individual), Lillian Lawson (Scottish Council on Deafness), Mina MacDonald (DATAG), Pat McGuigan (Glasgow Access Panel), Ryan McQuigg (Leonard Cheshire Disability), Trevor Meadows (Fife Council), John Moore (LCTS), Tom Patullo (DATAG/DCT), Raine du Puy (Perth & Kinross Access Group), Alan Rees (Individual), Jim Ritchie (Individual), Terry Robinson (Individual), David Taylor (JMP), Caroline Tumath (Quarrier's), Muriel Williams (Handicabs and Individual), Sarah Wixey (JMP), Yvonne Wylie (Quarrier's), Alistair Young (Transport Scotland).

**In attendance:** Sign Language Interpreters

**Apologies:** Donald Anderson (Glasgow CIL), Fiona Anderson (NorthLink Ferries), Paul Cross (Individual), Claire Fitzsimmons (Halcrow), Lena Gillies (ENABLE), Margaret Gilroy (Individual), Douglas Gilroy (National Federation for the Blind), David Griffiths (ECAS), Fiona Johnson ((North Lanarkshire Disability Forum), Maggie Lawson (Badenoch & Strathspey TC), Mac Logan (Individual), Mina MacDonald (Individual), John MacDonald (Community Transport Association), Jackie Maceira (West Dunbartonshire Access Panel), Patrick Nyamurandira (First ScotRail), Liz Rowlett (SDEF), Jean Smith (Cumnock & Doon Valley Access Panel), John Yellowlees (First ScotRail),

### **1. Introduction**

Stanley Flett took the Chair, warmly welcomed those present and invited them to introduce themselves.

### **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies from those named above were accepted.

### **3. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Full Meeting on 4th February 2008 in the Forth Valley Sensory Centre, Falkirk, had been circulated and were approved.

#### **4. Matters arising**

##### **(a) Local and Regional Transport Strategies.**

Alan Rees regretted that he had not yet sent a letter to the Minister about the likely negative impact of the Concordat between the Scottish Government and COSLA on transport strategies and the provision of services. The CTA had been very active on the matter because with the withdrawal of central funding and ringfencing, many local CT services were threatened under local authority cut backs. Trevor Meadows said that local authorities were having to concentrate on their statutory duties. Bob Edwards said matching funding for RTPs, including capital projects, had dried up. Jan Goodall said Dundee did not have a local transport strategy. It was agreed to keep the situation under review.

##### **(b) National concessionary bus travel scheme**

A review of the scheme had begun and Halcrow was undertaking research on behalf of Transport Scotland. Alistair Young of Transport Scotland said it was clear that there were winners losers under the scheme and these were issues for the review. Trevor Meadows said that MACS had considered a number of weaknesses in the scheme including eligibility and the use of the medical model. It had proposed research into self-assessment. Others pointed out that the process for getting rail travel concessions was simpler.

##### **(c) Bus design**

Doug Fleming of Stagecoach would be speaking at the next meeting and members could voice their concerns about the lack of standardisation.

##### **(d) MACS/PTUC**

Alan Rees reported on the following efforts to prevent the amalgamation of MACS with PTUC:

- a core working group had been established consisting of Stan Flett, Maggie Killin and Alan Rees from SATA, Bill Scott from Inclusion Scotland and Liz Rowlett from SDEF. John Ballantine and John Moore also joined the group at a later stage.
- this group had a number of meetings with MSPs and /or were in contact through their parliamentary aides - Des McNulty, Sarah Boyack and Johann Lamont (Labour) and Alison McInnes (Lib.Dem)
- questions were raised in parliament by MSPs Des McNulty, Johann Lamont, George Foulkes (all Labour), Alison McInnes (Lib Dems) and Patrick Harvie (Greens)
- group members wrote to Ministers and individual MSPs
- letters were written to Anne McGuire (MP and Minister for Disabled People), DPTAC and EHRC in Scotland
- press releases were issued and interviews given
- a Briefing Note was prepared and circulated
- a submission paper was sent to the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee, the Equalities Committee and the Subordinate Legislation Committee

in anticipation of two SSIs being laid before the parliament.

John Moore commented that it was important to understand that the remits of MACS and PTUC were not the same. Trevor Meadows thanked SATA for its support and said Ministers and officials did not understand the mobility needs of disabled people or the scale of latent demand. He was finding it very hard to connect with the MACS/PTUC secretariat or to communicate with James King, the newly appointed Convener of PTUC following the resignation of John Elliott.

**(e) Taxi/phc booking office licensing**

Alan said that there had been a consultation on this matter in June 2005 and the results published on the Scottish Government website in December 2005. He was however unsure of what action had been taken since then but would try to find out.

**5. Information exchange**

**(a) First Scotail**

John Yellowlees of First ScotRail sent the following report.

- A franchise extension announced last month lengthens First ScotRail's tenure by three years, taking us through the Commonwealth Games, in return for £70m investment in additional services. A £1m community fund will help bring back into use vacant accommodation at our stations.
- The summer timetable commencing 18 May sees Alloa served from the following day by a new hourly service seven days a week to and from Glasgow. The operation of the 15-minute interval service between Waverley and Queen Street is extended by one hour through the introduction of additional services in both directions at 06.45 Mondays-Fridays and 1915 Mondays-Saturdays.
- Forthcoming blockades for essential engineering works will see buses replacing trains throughout 5-20 July between Edinburgh and Bathgate and 19-3 August between Kilmarnock and Carlisle. Stan Flett please note that buses will also replace trains Dundee-Aberdeen over the weekend of 26/27 July to allow completion of the Montrose resignalling, allowing northbound trains to use the nearside platform.
- Step-free access has been completed to the westbound platform at Presonpans. REACT is complete at Larbert and Kirkcaldy. Queen Street REACT is subject to the granting of Listed Building Consent.

Patrick Nyamurandira had also sent a reminder that this year's Access for All small schemes fund is open to all groups who have projects to improve access at stations. Groups planning a bid are invited to speak to him so that as the station operator ScotRail can understand and help facilitate that they have in mind.

Alan Rees reported that Audit Scotland was reviewing the First ScotRail franchise and responses were invited by July. There were also current DfT consultations on Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations, the Code of Practice on Train and Station Design and a Guide on the writing of Disabled People's Protection Policies. The Management

Committee had formed six subgroups to consider responses to consultations such as these.

**(c) Describe Online**

Terry Robinson said online guides had now been completed for Kings Cross/St Pancras, including the underground stations.

**(d) Inclusion Scotland Conference on Housing**

Chris Crockette gave details of the 'Homes for Life' conference to be held in Glasgow on 17th June.

**7. Presentation: Improving Public Transport Accessibility for Disabled People by Dr Sarah Wixey, JMP Consultants Ltd - UK**

Sarah gave a power point presentation on this 2 year research project known as 'PTaccess'. It is being funded by the European Commission under the 6th Framework Programme: Priority Area 2.4: Quality of life issues relating to disabled people. It started in February 2007 and ends in January 2009. JMP were project partners with FGM-AMOR in Austria, Technische Universitat Dresden in Germany and the Independent Living Institute in Sweden.

The aims and objectives of PTaccess were:

- To provide a comprehensive overview of the status quo regarding the accessibility of urban and rural transport systems for disabled people within each of the 25 member states.
- To provide a collection of examples of best practice regarding accessible public transport.
- To examine any evidence of a correlation between social exclusion, inaccessible public transport systems and disabled people's access to employment.

The first stage had been to do a desk-top search on key laws and regulations in the EU, then to conduct interviews and finally to undertake case studies. So far some very general conclusions were that:

- There was a very unequal spread of service provision across the EU
- Access was better in urban areas than in rural areas
- Access was not just a matter of technical provision
- Fully accessible public transport was a long way off although improvements had been made

A newsletter about the project can be found on the website [www.ptaccess.eu](http://www.ptaccess.eu)

Questions and comments to Sarah concerned announcements on buses, where the UK stood in relation to other countries, the need to include older people with mobility difficulties who did not see themselves as disabled people, the importance of measuring not just systems and transport provision but their use and outcomes in terms of greater mobility, needs other than employment eg social needs and access to health and other services and finally the barriers presented by unsympathetic attitudes and

misinformation..

A copy of Sarah's power point slides is circulated as an attachment.

Stan Flett thanked Sarah for her presentation and the meeting expressed its appreciation.

#### **8. AOCB**

There was no other competent business.

#### **9. Closure**

In closing the meeting at 3.30 pm, Stan Flett again thanked Dr Sarah Wixey for her presentation and the contributions from other speakers.

#### **10. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be the AGM and Full Meeting starting at 1.30 on 18th September 2008 at the Forth Valley Sensory Centre, Camelon, Falkirk

Alan Rees MBE

Secretary/Treasurer. SATA

30.06.08