

# Minutes of DPTAC Main Committee Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> September 2006

## Chair

Neil Betteridge

## Members

Pravin Amin  
Ann Bates  
Sean Bolton  
Vidur Dindayal  
Jean Dunlop  
Roger Hewitt  
Grahame Lawson  
Judith Jesky  
Tomi Jones  
Marilyn Lister  
Nicola McLeish  
Alan Norton  
Dai Powell  
Carol Thomas

## Observers

Will Bee	Disability Rights Commission
Nigel Dotchin	Department for Transport /Mobility and Inclusion Unit
Tim May	Department for Transport /Mobility and Inclusion Unit
Richard Creese	Department for Transport /Mobility and Inclusion Unit
Jean Wilson	Mobility Access Committee Scotland
Lynne Duff	Scottish Executive
Barbara Vincent	Department for Work & Pensions
Gregor Kerr	Department for Regional Development Northern Ireland

In attendance

Andy Kirby	Secretary
Sandra Duncan	Secretariat
Gary Kemp	Secretariat
Michael Parsons	Secretariat
Harriet Samuels	Secretariat
Karl Rich	Human Engineering
Finola Austin	Human Engineering
Lorna Pearce	Transport Research Laboratory
Tracy Savill	Transport Research Laboratory
Celia Reed	Department for Work & Pensions
Anthony Youngman	Support Worker
David Hewitt	Interpreter
Gill Rutherford	Interpreter

**Agenda item 1: Welcome, introductions and apologies**

1. DPTAC Chair Neil Betteridge welcomed everyone to the third DPTAC meeting of the year. Neil welcomed the new members: Marilyn Lister, Nicola McLeish and Dai Powell who were attending their first meeting. Unfortunately, Wendy Morrell, the other newly appointed member, was unable to attend the meeting.
2. The meeting also received apologies from DPTAC members: David Finnegan, Tom Pey, Katherine Phipps, Keith Richards and Richard West. Apologies were also received from the following observers: Denise Maguire and Mike Spearing.

**Agenda item 2: Minutes of Previous Main Committee Meeting**

3. Members approved the amendments subject to correcting the spelling of Pravin's name. The Secretariat was asked to place the minutes on the website.

**Action point 1:** Secretariat to place corrected minutes of 14 June 2006 Main Committee meeting on the DPTAC website.

### **Agenda item 3: Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda**

4. Neil advised members that the consultation document on the draft 2007-10 Strategy was about to be published, and he thanked them for their further comments on the draft. It would be available on the website and in a range of accessible formats. There would be a 12 week consultation period.
5. Neil reminded members that they had agreed to invite the Olympic Transport Authority (OTA) to make a presentation on the draft Olympic Transport Plan. However, he understood that the plan had been delayed, pending a full environmental impact assessment. Consequently the December meeting would fall within the plan's consultation period and the OTA would be invited to provide a presentation at that meeting and members would be able to comment.
6. It was agreed members should be presented with draft terms of reference for the Olympic Working Group at the next meeting.
7. Neil thanked members for their comments on the draft Annual Report. The Secretariat was in the process of making the necessary changes. The report would shortly go to the Secretary of State for agreement of the foreword before being designed and published.

**Action Point 2:** Secretariat to invite Olympic Transport Authority to make a presentation at the December meeting.

**Action point 3:** Katherine Phipps and the Secretariat to draft terms of reference for the Olympic Working Group.

### **Agenda item 4: Research on Accessibility of Land Based Public Transport**

8. Karl Rich and Finola Austin from Human Engineering gave a presentation on their work with Guide Dogs for the Blind for the Department for Transport (DfT) on establishing how effective standards are for accessible land based transport vehicles.

9. A copy of the presentation is attached to the hard copy of the minutes at Annex A and is available as a PDF file from the Secretariat.
10. During the discussion that followed the presentation, Karl advised members they were planning to use London, Manchester and Glasgow as part of the research because they all had new or renovated infrastructure, along with modes of transport complying with the accessibility regulations. Several members were concerned that similar findings might emerge from these three areas which all had Passenger Transport Executives, and that it would be useful to include a rural or commuter community.
11. Vidur Dindayal mentioned the need to look at websites, timetables and other sources of information as well as the vehicles themselves.
12. Judith Jesky recommended that the researchers should ask industry to justify the number of times their procedures fail to support disabled people. Those failures, such as staff not meeting a disabled person off an arriving train, often discouraged disabled people from undertaking further trips.
13. Neil thanked Karl and Finola for their interesting presentation and invited members to provide the secretariat with written comments on the research.

**Action point 4:** Members to provide the Secretariat with their written comments on research on accessibility of land based public transport.

**Agenda item 5: Access to Air Travel for Disabled People: 2005 Monitoring study**

14. Tracy Savill, from the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), provided members with a presentation on research for the Department for Transport assessing how well the UK aviation industry was complying with the recommendations contained in the Department's Code of Practice "*Access to Air Travel for Disabled People*".

15. A copy of Tracy's presentation is attached to the hard copy of these minutes at Annex B and is available as a PDF file from the Secretariat.
16. Neil invited Tim May, MIU, to comment. Tim advised members that the Department wanted to analyse how the lifting of the transport exemption would compare with the new European Regulation, and that this process would benefit from detailed discussion at the next DPTAC Aviation Working Group.
17. Will Bee explained that the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) had issued its press release as a reaction to the Department for Transport's press release but had not by then had time to fully digest the detail of the DfT/TRL's report "*Access to Air Travel for Disabled People: 2005 Monitoring Study*". The press notice had expressed the Commission's concerns that Ministers had not fully committed themselves to taking forward the findings of the research.
18. Tim noted that Ministers would need to take a view on whether they needed to lift the Part 3 exemption. He took the opportunity to clarify the Department's recent press notice; confirming that it had not said that Ministers had decided to continue with the voluntary code but that they needed to consider whether it would be necessary to take further action such as lifting the exemption. If they did not decide to do so, then revising the voluntary code along the lines suggested by the researchers was an option.
19. It was agreed to circulate a copy of the DRC's press release with the minutes. This is attached as Annex C.
20. Will acknowledged the new European regulation might close some of the current loopholes. A third of calls the DRC received on transport concerned air travel. Will expressed concerns that the regulation might not cover websites or travel agents and that a more robust statement from the DfT was needed.
21. Tim May advised members that travel agents were already covered by the provisions of the DDA which suggested work needed to be done to improve currently regulated services.

22. Tracy advised members TRL were interested in DPTAC's views on how the recent heightened security measures had impacted on disabled travellers.
23. Neil explained that DPTAC had already written to the Department's transport security policy section regarding essential equipment disabled travellers might need during travel. Neil thanked members for responding so promptly to the recent security alert with their views.
24. Neil advised members that the Aviation Working Group would have to consider how best to take forward comments made about the research.

**Action point 5:** Secretariat to advise TRL of issues for disabled flyers during heightened states of security.

**Action point 6:** Keith Richards to consider how best to carry forward members' comments on the research.

**Action point 7:** Secretariat to circulate Disability Rights Commission's press release on Access to Air Travel for Disabled People with the minutes attached as Annex C.

### **Agenda item 6: Update on Office for Disability Issues and Equality 2025**

25. Celia provided members with a presentation on the work of the Office for Disability Issues (ODI). A copy of the presentation is attached at Annex D.
26. Celia confirmed that ODI had established a Board of Management which included Miranda Carter (Mobility and Inclusion Unit). The ODI had been looking at developing practical and creative measures to break barriers to independent living. Initially they would be focusing on the public sector.
27. Celia advised members the ODI was looking to work closely with other Government Departments and advisory bodies.

## **Agenda item 7: Mobility and Inclusion Report**

28. Nigel advised members that the deadline for comments on the First Rail Package relating to the revision of the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations would be 16 October.
29. The MIU would shortly be consulting on the second round of 'small bids', for accessibility improvements to railway stations, for this and the next financial year.
30. Nigel also advised members that the implementation of the European regulation on aviation was in hand.
31. The recent heightened state of security at airports had led to MIU developing a better relationship with the Department for Transport's security unit. Nigel hoped that disabled travellers would benefit as a result.
32. The powers to inspect Blue Badges would come into effect on 29 September. Consultation on secondary legislation that, among other things, would allow children under two needing bulky medical equipment would be the subject of consultation shortly.
33. Nigel advised members that Ministers had agreed in principle to paying members and the Department had drafted an impact assessment and a one clause bill that could be handed out to a Member of Parliament winning a place in the draw for Private Members' Bills. If this failed they would seek a suitable slot in the legislative timetable.
34. Nigel agreed to report back to DPTAC on the publication timetable for research on Community Transport and Social Inclusion.
35. After Nigel had finished his report, Neil invited Will Bee, DRC, to update members on the publication of best practice guidance to industry following the lifting of the Part 3 exemptions. Will advised members that drafting advice for the car hire industry had proved to be particularly difficult. Three of the other documents should be ready by the end of September.

36. Carol Thomas asked Nigel if, given Transport for London's progress with their proposed roll out of audio/visual announcements on buses, there was any update on introducing legislation/regulation requiring operators to provide audio/visual announcements on their buses. Carol also asked if MIU's regular report to the Committee could report on progress on visual/audio announcements.
37. Nigel advised members that although there was no progress to report, the MIU had identified it as a workstream needing to be progressed. Nigel agreed to include an update in MIUs quarterly report to DPTAC.

**Action point 8:** MIU to include an update on audio/visual announcements in their quarterly report.

### **Agenda item 8: Reports from DPTAC Chair and Working Group Chairs**

38. Members received these reports. In answer to a question from Sean Bolton, Graham Lawson reported that DPTAC's position paper on the hot topic of road user charging had been published and noted by the trade press.

### **Agenda item 9: Progress Report on 2005-06 Work Programme**

39. Neil reported that 21 of the 25 tasks were under way. In addition, DPTAC has responded to eleven consultations this year, seven of them in the last three months.
40. Neil advised members that the paper recommended that the priorities for the next twelve months should be to:
- Draft the Work Programme for 2007-08
  - Publish the DPTAC Annual Report 2005-06
  - Begin consultation on the draft 2007-10 DPTAC Strategy
  - Seek Ministerial decision on lifting of the DDA Part 3 exemption for maritime transport
41. Ann Bates thought that on the rail side at least, DPTAC should attempt to be more pro-active. The number of consultations in progress made this difficult.

## **Agenda Item 10: Scoping the Work Programme and research for 2007-08**

42. Neil advised members he needed to know their views on the draft timetable for possible research projects for 2007-08.
43. Members needed to consider their capacity for another research bid bearing in mind that the Home Zones and On Board Wheelchair research would be complete by the end of the financial year. The education research would however need input from most working groups for the next two years.
44. Grahame Lawson recommended that DPTAC should develop measures to quantify the improvements taking effect for disabled people, if at all, as a result of the Disability Equality Duty.
45. Carol advised members that Tom Pey would submit a paper before the next meeting recommending a research bid regarding a form of training for disabled people.
46. Members agreed that Working Group Chairs would forward their recommendations on new and continuing work programme and tasks to the Secretariat according to the timetable set out in the paper.

**Action Point 9:** Working Group Chairs to forward ideas on next years work plan to the Secretariat according to the timetable set out in the paper.

**Action point 10:** Members to develop bids further and submit them to the Secretariat, including Tom Pey on travel training, Grahame Lawson on indicators and Ann Bates on rail passenger handling.

**Action point 11** Members to notify secretariat of possible research bids through Working Group Chairs.

## **Agenda item 11: Future of Access Directory**

47. Neil provided members with a brief background to the Directory. It had been commissioned in 2001 to act as a database of guidance on access and the built environment. It had details of over 850 UK and international publications.
48. The site received some 250 visits per month, compared to 8000 for DPTAC's and 4000 for the MIU site. Reviewing the site and updating it for the next six months would cost around £8,000. To regularly update the site would cost around £12,000 per year.
49. Neil asked members if they thought the directory should remain a DPTAC priority; or given its emphasis on the built environment, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment should be persuaded to take it over; or it should be discontinued.
50. Members thought the idea of the Directory was a good one in principle. However, because of the search engine the site was often difficult to use. The site should be advertised better and potential users surveyed to find out what they needed/wanted from the directory.
51. Members agreed CABE should be asked to take responsibility for at least the built environment element of the site. If they did not wish to do so then DPTAC should consider developing a separate transport site.

**Action point 12:** Explore potential for Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment to take on the Access Directory. If unsuccessful explore costs of a fully accessible directory on transport only.

## **Agenda item 12: Draft Calendar 2007-08**

52. Neil explained the draft agenda had been set having taken account of other meetings such as the Inclusive Environment Group and the DRC, school holidays and the need to distribute meetings through the year. He said the paper also gave details of the new member allocations to working groups.

53. Members approved the draft calendar.

**Agenda item 13: Any other business**

54. Members debated whether they wished to continue sending Christmas cards to other organisations and individuals that worked with DPTAC. They agreed that the benefit of keeping in touch with and thanking contacts was worth the cost.

**Action Point 13** DPTAC to issue non-denominational Christmas cards.