

## **Minutes of DPTAC Main Committee Meeting 8 March 2007**

### Chair

Neil Betteridge

### Members

Pravin Amin

Ann Bates

Sean Bolton

Vidur Dindyal

Jean Dunlop

David Finnegan

Roger Hewitt

Judith Jesky

Grahame Lawson

Marilyn Lister

Nicola McLeish

Wendy Morrell

Alan Norton

Tom Pey

Katherine Phipps

Dai Powell

Carol Thomas

### Observers

Natalie Salmon

Nigel Dotchin

Disability Rights Commission

Department for Transport Mobility &  
Inclusion Unit

Sam Waugh

(part-time)

Maureen Sparks

(part-time)

Gregor Kerr

Department for Transport Mobility &  
Inclusion Unit

Department for Transport Mobility &  
Inclusion Unit

Department for Regional Development  
Northern Ireland

Barbara Vincent

Department for Work & Pensions

### In attendance

Andy Kirby

Sandra Duncan

Gary Kemp

Michael Parsons

Harriet Samuels

Anthony Youngman

David Hewitt

Gill Rutherford

Norma White

Caroline Wood

Malecia Johnson

Secretary

Secretariat

Secretariat

Secretariat

Secretariat

Support Worker

BSL Interpreter

BSL Interpreter

Palantypist

DfT Eddington team

DfT Eddington team

### Apologies

Tomi Jones	DPTAC Member
Keith Richards	DPTAC Member
Richard West	DPTAC Member
Will Bee	Disability Rights Commission
Lynne Duff	Scottish Executive
Mike Spearing	Welsh Assembly

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

1. Neil Betteridge welcomed members, officials and observers to the first DPTAC Main Committee meeting of 2007. Neil particularly welcomed Natalie Salmon who was representing the Disability Rights Commission in place of Will Bee.
2. Neil invited members to review DPTAC's activity in the last report for the current year, to consider what had been the Committee's achievements, and to agree DPTAC's strategy for the next three years, together with the work programme for the coming year.

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

3. Members agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2006 subject to an amendment on page 13, paragraph 38 to change the number of local authority areas awarded funding for innovative plans to tackle local congestion including road user charging from 10 to 9.
4. The Secretariat was asked to arrange for the minutes of the previous Main Committee meeting to be placed on the DPTAC website.

**Action point 1: Secretariat to amend minutes of Main meeting held on 6 December 2006 to change the number of local authority areas awarded funding for innovative plans to tackle local congestion including road user charging from 10 to 9.**

**Action point 2: Secretariat to arrange for the minutes of the previous Main Committee meeting to be placed on the DPTAC website.**

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

5. Neil Betteridge reported that he was awaiting the outcome of a meeting between Sir Bert Massie, Chair of the Disability Rights Commission and LTI, the manufacturers of the London taxi, before requesting a joint meeting with Ministers to discuss DPTAC's taxi position paper. Neil would report back to Members on any developments.
6. David Finnegan raised concerns about reports that local licensing authorities were issuing licences for converted Multi-Purpose Vehicles (MPVs). Such vehicles could be inaccessible to some disabled people because of the increased ride height and suspension of the vehicle which could make them uncomfortable for travelling.
7. Tom Pey reported that Guide Dogs would shortly be analysing a questionnaire sent by DPTAC to all local licensing authorities about how prepared they were for the lifting of the Part 3 exemption, which included issues around the carriage of assistance dogs.

**Action point 3: Neil Betteridge to arrange a joint meeting with Sir Bert Massie, Chair Disability Rights Commission and the Minister to discuss DPTAC's taxi position paper and report back to Members.**

### **Agenda item 4: Adoption of 2007-10 DPTAC Strategy**

8. Neil Betteridge reminded Members that in December 2005, DPTAC members had held a strategy day to discuss the strategic direction of the Committee. This had led to the production of a draft strategy, which DPTAC had consulted on with stakeholders in the autumn of 2006. The consultation period had closed just before the end of the year, and the Secretariat had analysed the responses.
9. Neil reported that there had been substantial agreement on DPTAC's aim and the overall focus of our strategy. Those who had responded had suggested that the strategy could be further improved by being more specific with measurable indicators, by clarifying priorities and by simplifying the wording. Neil suggested also including in the aim the need for disabled people to have a good quality of travel experience, as well as accessible travel at an appropriate cost.

10. Roger Hewitt asked if the strategy document would be made available in accessible formats. The secretariat confirmed that the document would be made available in audio versions and in Braille on request and placed on the website along with an 'easy read' version that would contain pictures.
11. Members agreed the strategy document subject to making some small agreed amendments. The Secretariat was asked to arrange for the strategy to be amended, published on the DPTAC website and brought to the attention of the organisations and persons who had asked to be kept updated on its development, in addition to those who had responded to the consultation.
12. Neil thanked Members for their suggestions and hard work in producing the strategy, and also the Secretariat for putting the final document together in a clear and simple format.

**Action Point 4: Secretariat to arrange for the DPTAC strategy to be:**

- **published on the DPTAC Website**
- **made available in alternative formats including an 'easy read' version**
- **brought to the attention of those who have asked to be updated on its development, including those who responded to the consultation.**

**Agenda item 5: Reports from DPTAC Chair and Working Group Chairs**

13. Neil Betteridge asked members whether they had any questions on the Chairs' reports. He thought it might be useful for members to suggest how useful they found these reports, and whether they could be improved.
14. Neil pointed out the opportunity members and observers had in using the reports as a general resource to find out what DPTAC had been doing in areas of the work they might not be familiar with. Neil invited Ann Bates and Jean Dunlop to report on a meeting they had attended at Gatwick Airport the previous day with the British Airport Authority (BAA) and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).
15. Ann Bates reported that the meeting with BAA had been held to discuss the provisions to be included in the specification of requirements for a tender BAA would be issuing shortly to for providing assistance services to disabled people at airports. The meeting was very productive and it was agreed that the draft

specification would be submitted to the Chair of the DPTAC Aviation Working Group for comment before the tender process began.

16. The meeting with the CAA had enabled an exchange of information about consumer issues in relation to CAA's provision of services to persons with reduced mobility. CAA was particularly interested in promoting pan-disability issues and discussed producing a leaflet as a training tool for staff to raise awareness and establish good practises.
17. Nigel Dotchin reported that the US Department of Transport guidance had applied US carriage rules (for UK carriers only) to limit the carriage of assistance animals in aircraft cabins to "recognised assistance dogs only". Previous guidance allowed for "any assistance animal" to be allowed onto flights which could have included animals such as ferrets. This was a welcome recognition of the appropriateness of UK legislation.
18. The European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) meeting which both Keith Richards and Nigel had attended in February had agreed guidance for pilots in relation to their authority to determine restricting the number of persons with reduced mobility (PRM) from travelling on any one flight. ECAC is the meeting of the Civil Aviation Authorities from all EU member states. The current operational rules for pilots, known as JAR-Ops (soon to become EU-Ops) are open to interpretation and this leads of inconsistency in the treatment of PRMs. The new ECAC guidance means that restrictions would only apply to people who were "not self sufficient" and described as "completely immobile". The quota of PRMs within the above category being allowed to travel on each flight would be proportionate to the number of floor level exits within the aircraft.
19. Ann Bates asked how someone who was "completely immobile" would be defined. Nigel explained that people who were not fully independent but reliant on others for feeding, taking medicine and using toilet facilities would be within that category.
20. Roger reported that in the past a group of deaf people had been refused permission to take a flight because they were all travelling together.
21. Nigel confirmed that the ECAC guidance on interpreting the operational rules for pilots on their powers to restrict the number of PRMs travelling on any one flight would only relate to those people in the category of someone who is "completely immobile". Under the

proposed guidance, deaf people outside of that category travelling together would not be denied the right to travel.

22. Neil Betteridge said that it would be useful for the MIU to inform DPTAC of emerging ECAC and EU policies on guidance to pilots regarding their authority to restrict carriage of PRMs, and on any impact this might have on revisions to the UK aviation code of practice.

**Action point 5: MIU to inform DPTAC of emerging ECAC and EU policy guidance to pilots on their authority to restrict carriage of PRMs and any impact this might have on revisions to the UK Aviation code of practice.**

### **Agenda item 6: Progress Report on 2006-07 Work Programme**

23. Neil Betteridge reported that DPTAC had continued to make good progress with the work programme within the various working groups.
24. The specification for an on-board accessible toilet was nearing completion and guidance on inclusive design of ships and ports for the maritime sector was being finalised in readiness to go out to consultation. The development of inclusive design resource materials for teaching design and technology in secondary schools was at an advance stage in its development and testing. The research on front line training for transport staff had been let. The Rail Working Group had also considered a number of dispensations from the Code of Practice.
25. Neil reported a recovery in the number of DPTAC website hits from the usual December decline with the figure from February of 6951 average hits per day. Neil noted that DPTAC had responded to 31 consultations so far this year, including some received at very short notice and others such as the Olympic Transport Strategy that were very large – over 200 pages in that case. Neil considered that the draft Olympic Transport Strategy had required a detailed and meticulous response, and DPTAC's treatment had been particularly comprehensive, persuasive, constructive and helpful. Neil commended Members and the Secretariat for producing such a high quality response.
26. All this represented a huge volume of work by the members and the secretariat. There were no suggested priorities for the work plan as

it only had three weeks to run before the start of the new plan in April. Neil asked members for any further comments on progress or priorities.

27. David Finnegan asked for clarification about the reports from the Cabinet Office that some government websites including DPTAC's would be axed. Neil confirmed some unfortunate wording in the Cabinet Office report of its launch of a progress report on "Transformational Government". It had stated that at least 551 government websites (including DPTAC's) were to be "axed" (leaving only 26), to make access to information easier for citizens and businesses.
28. DPTAC and a number of other advisory bodies had not been consulted before the announcement, and Neil commended the secretariat for its swift action in resolving the issue with the Cabinet Office. The Cabinet Office later apologised that their wording had been misleading and confirmed that it was not the intention to include non government departmental body websites within the changes at this stage.

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

29. Neil Betteridge asked Nigel Dotchin to update members on any developments on the MIU report since its circulation with the agenda papers. He asked to be updated with respect to the ministerial announcement on possible changes to the Blue Badge scheme for children under two, which had been made the previous week, the new structure and name of the Mobility and Inclusion Unit and, any progress being made on the next round of DPTAC appointments.
30. Nigel reported that the DRC had launched a regional campaign "GOJO" with the aim of increasing disabled people's confidence in public transport. The campaign aimed to connect disabled 16-25 year olds with user-friendly public transport and to persuade bus and train companies that the best way to make a return on their investment would be through increased confidence and passenger use, especially amongst young users.
31. The consultation on the revisions to the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulation had been put on hold for a few months whilst the implications of incorporating the European Unions Technical Specification for interoperability into the regulations were being considered.

32. The MIU would be consulting at the end of March on the implications of the European Commission directive on the Rights of Persons with Reduced Mobility travelling by air. The consultation would propose a complaints body (possibly the Disability Rights Commission and its successor the Commission for Equality and Human Rights) and an enforcement body (possibly the British Airports Authority).
33. The MIU would discuss with Ministers and DPTAC Aviation and Maritime Working Group Chairs the lifting of the Disability Discrimination Act Part 3 exemption which applied to maritime and aviation transport.
34. Nigel explained that the DfT was undergoing restructuring and a new focus would be that of incorporating accessibility and equality within strategic planning and transport policy. The MIU would undergo changes from 1 April 2007 to reflect the new role. Some of its rail staff would be integrated into the DfT rail divisions. The Unit's name would be changed to the Accessibility and Equalities Unit. The MIU would keep DPTAC informed of developments. Neil thanked Nigel for his update and invited Members' comments.
35. Tom Pey asked for an update on the government commitment to bring into regulations provisions for audio and visual announcements on buses which he believed that Ministers had agreed to. Transport for London was currently progressing a major programme to introduce the system on all its bus routes in London.
36. Nigel replied that the duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 which had come into force in December 2006 had made it unlawful for operators of transport vehicles to discriminate against disabled people and it was envisaged that bus and coach operators could be expected to instruct drivers to announce stops on request to assist disabled passengers. Neil proposed that DPTAC would need to monitor developments.
37. David Finnegan asked for an update on proposals to kitemark wheelchairs for use on public transport. David emphasised the need for manufactures to be involved in the process and asked for the item to be put on the agenda for the next DPTAC Main Committee meeting in June. Nigel reported that the meeting with stakeholders to discuss kitemarking arranged for January had been postponed but would be rearranged. The CEN European standards committee also had a working group looking into the issue.
38. Neil Betteridge reminded members that DPTAC had been involved in correspondence with the parent of a child under two who had

recently undergone operations to correct hip dysplasia which was a temporary condition. The family had been refused a Blue Badge. The parents had been lobbying the Government to extend the Blue Badge scheme to include the condition. The case had been featured on the consumer programme 'Watchdog' and Gillian Merron the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport had appeared on the programme.

39. Sam Waugh provided an update on the case and on developments with the Blue Badge review. Sam explained that the Minister had announced that the Department for Transport would be putting forward recommendations from the Blue Badge Scheme review to include children under two with certain medical needs by September 2007.
40. The MIU would also be undertaking an independent three month review of the Blue Badge Scheme which would
  - incorporate evolving smart card/chip technology
  - develop a Blue Badge strategy building on the review to take forward recommendations
  - publicise strategies to tackle scheme abuse and
  - establish clear policy aims for the blue badge scheme.
41. The review would also cover the final reports on Blue Badge research projects looking at the Central London exemption, establishing a database of Blue Badge holders and extending the scheme to other groups of disabled people. DPTAC would be consulted throughout the process.
42. Nigel Dotchin reported that the next DPTAC review of membership and appointments to Main Committee would be in place before the summer. Neil thanked Nigel and Sam for their updates.

**Action point 6: MIU to discuss with Ministers and DPTAC Aviation and Maritime Working Group chairs the lifting of the DDA Part 3 exemption which applies to maritime and aviation transport.**

**Action point 7: Secretariat to advise members of the re-organisation within the MIU effective from 1 April 07.**

**Action point 8: MIU to report back to DPTAC June Main Committee, the outcome of the re-arranged meeting with stakeholder groups to discuss kitemarking of wheelchairs for use on Public Transport.**

**Action point 9: MIU to consult with DPTAC at an early stage of and throughout the three month review of the Blue Badge Scheme.**

**Agenda item 8: Eddington Report presentation**

43. Neil Betteridge introduced Caroline Wood and Malecia Johnson of the DfT Eddington Team who gave a presentation on the Eddington report and its implications for transport for disabled people.
44. Caroline explained that the Eddington Study had explored the long-term links between transport and the UK's economic productivity, growth and stability in the context of sustainable development. The focus has been on 2015 and beyond, making sure existing networks performed well to meet the changing needs of the UK economy. Economic growth would lead to rising transport demand which, if left unchecked, could generate congestion & reliability problems which would start to dampen growth.
45. By 2025, the annual additional costs of congestion in England to businesses alone could be some £10-12 billion, or £22-24 billion for all road users. Road congestion in England was set to rise by some 30% by 2025; 13% of traffic would be travelling in very congested conditions. Rail travel was projected to rise in excess of 35% by 2026 with many more rail services, particularly on key commuter routes, running at or in excess of capacity. Passenger air travel was set to more than double by 2030 leading to airport capacity constraints and reduced reliability; and shipping demand was expected to outstrip capacity beyond 2020.
46. The study had determined that the UK had broadly good connectivity which reduced the need for completely new links. Benchmarking suggested the UK compared well with Europe. Fundamentally the transport network was in the right place, connecting the places that mattered. However our network was underperforming: congestion and reliability problems were widespread, and 89% of road congestion was in urban areas. So improving network capacity and performance had been identified as the key strategic issues.
47. The recommendations from the study suggested that the government should focus policy and sustained investment on improving the performance of existing networks, in those places that were important for the UK's economic success, making the most effective contribution to economic growth especially getting the price

right for congestion charging schemes. In assessing the potential costs of different policy options, policies needed to take account of social and accessibility impacts.

48. Other recommendations included changes to the current planning system for major infrastructure projects which could take too long, be unpredictable and costly, and forego the economic benefits that justified the project in the first place. The planning system should be reformed for major schemes and an independent planning commission established to take final planning decisions on individual planning schemes.
49. Vidur Dindayal commented that the modal shift from car to public transport would lead to more congestion on trains and buses which would mean increasing capacity in those modes.
50. Caroline confirmed that Eddington had considered the impact of modal shift on availability of alternative public transport. One of the key recommendations was the need to invest in public transport beforehand. Buses had been identified as having particular potential.
51. Carol Thomas mentioned the importance of planning policies that would link transport into local facilities and services such as schools, hospitals and housing. Caroline confirmed that Eddington fully recognised that transport could not be looked at in isolation from strategic planning policies.
52. Neil Betteridge thanked Caroline for her presentation and concluded that the Eddington Report had a number of implications for DPTAC to consider. These included the emphasis on smaller scale infrastructure improvements, the streamlining of planning and consultation processes, the support for road pricing and the emphasis on the potential of the bus network in some parts of the country. Neil asked that the Eddington Review Team raise awareness of DPTAC's role to advise on inclusive transport policies during contact with their stakeholders when taking forward recommendations from the Eddington Transport Study.

**Action point 10: Eddington Review Team to raise awareness of DPTAC's role to advise on inclusive transport policies during contact with their stakeholders when taking forward recommendations from the Eddington Transport Study.**

## **Agenda item 9: Adoption of DPTAC Work Programme for 2007-2008**

53. Neil Betteridge explained that in December members discussed and agreed five general tasks not allocated to specific working groups: two Aviation Working Group tasks, four Education and Training Working Group tasks and four Personal Mobility and Local Authority Working Group tasks. These included current and new research projects.
54. Members were asked to approve the addition of tasks for the remaining Working Groups. Neil pointed out the revised new work programme would contain 20 proactive and 6 reactive tasks, which was the direction that members had wanted to move in for some time.
55. Working Group Chairs were asked to comment on the proposals and members were asked for their comments on the rest of the Work Programme.
56. Jean Dunlop reported that the Maritime Group were awaiting the draft EU Directive on the rights of Persons with Reduced Mobility Travelling by Sea. This would have an impact on the future work of the group in relation to revising the guidance on inclusive design for ports and ships.
57. Ann Bates commented that the volume of reactive tasks the Rail Group receive would have an impact the capacity to address the proactive tasks.
58. Tom Pey reported that the Taxi Working Group in consultation with the MIU would be revising the DPTAC guidance to taxi drivers once the Disability Rights Commission had published its guidance on the lifting of Part 3.
59. Members agreed the Work programme for 2007-2008 and the Secretariat were asked to place the programme on the DPTAC Website.

**Action point 11: Secretariat to arrange publication of the DPTAC work programme 2007-2008 onto the DPTAC website**

## **Agenda item 10: Discussion of future Main Committee presentations**

60. Members were asked to consider what presentations they would like to be made to Main Committee over the coming year.
61. Tom Pey mentioned that the Equal Network was developing assistance technology and it might be interesting to be updated on development and its potential uses within the built environment.
62. Grahame Lawson mentioned best practice by Norfolk County Council in developing its Disability Equality Strategy. Norfolk had taken a partnership approach and had formed a Norfolk partnership which was made up of representatives from various councils, the police and housing associations from within the local areas.
63. David Finnegan mentioned that researchers at IBM had developed a system (LAMA) to make public announcements available to people on a mobile phone. LAMA had been designed to be used in busy places like airports, stations and hospitals. After a user had signed up for the service, public service announcements at these places would be delivered to people's handsets.
64. Ann Bates mentioned the value of possibly developing a concordat with the Equality 2025 group.
65. Neil Betteridge mentioned a possible presentation from Trevor Phillips on the Equalities Review or Sir Bert Massie, Chair of the Disability Rights Commission.
66. Neil asked members to contact the Secretariat with any further ideas on priorities for presentations to be made at future Main Committee meetings.

**Action point 12: Members to contact the Secretariat with any further ideas on priorities for presentations to be made at future Main Committee meetings.**

## **Agenda item 11: Scoping DPTAC Annual Report 2006-2007**

67. Neil explained that Working Group Chairs would be asked to start thinking about their contributions to the next DPTAC annual report which would cover the period from April 2006 to March 2007. Members were presented with a short paper which offered possible approaches.

68. Neil noted that the simplest approach would be “if it isn’t broken then do not fix it” and that would be to follow the format and structure that had been adopted for the past three years. The paper also included some more radical suggestions.
69. In considering options, members were asked to focus on what would be most useful to stakeholders who would need a readable summary of DPTAC's work over a period of 12 months.
70. Members made reference to the potential for more illustrations, distribution opportunities such as at the Mobility Roadshow, and the possibility of asking stakeholders how we could improve it.
71. Members were asked to feed back to the Secretariat any further comments on what should be included in the DPTAC annual report 2006/2007.

**Action point 13. Members to feed back any further comments on what should be included in the DPTAC annual report 2006/2007**

#### **Agenda item 12: Any other business**

72. David Finnegan asked members to reconsider the value and feasibility of holding a Main Committee meeting outside London as an opportunity to meet with local disability groups. Neil Betteridge said that he would discuss the possibility with the Secretariat and inform members of the outcome.

**Action point 14: Neil Betteridge and Secretariat to consider holding a Main Meeting outside London to meet with local disability groups and inform members of the outcome.**

73. Neil thanked members for their contributions to the meeting and wished them a safe journey.

#### **Dates of Main Committee meetings 2007**

7 June  
13 September  
13 December