

Minutes of Policy and Research Working Group Meeting held at 1030hrs on Wednesday 14 March 2007 at the Dunfermline Business Centre, Dunfermline

PRWG Members: John Moore, Chair
Fiona McCall, Deputy Chair
Trevor Meadows
Roderick McLeod

Also present: Sandra Falconer – Secretariat
Ruth White – Secretariat (part of meeting)

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from Mairi who was unable to attend.

2. Minutes of previous meeting:

2.1 Minutes of meeting on 16 January 2007

The minutes of the previous meeting on 14 February 2007 were accepted without amendment.

2.2 Matters arising (not covered elsewhere):

2.2.1 Audit Scotland Report

A response to John Moore's letter of 13 February had been received the previous day from Audit Scotland indicating that they would be willing to meet with members to explore and discuss opportunities for MACS to work with Audit Scotland to develop public performance reporting in the area of transport. Members welcomed this as a valuable link and suggested that Audit Scotland be included as a key stakeholder within the revised Communication strategy.

➤ **ACTION: Secretariat to:**

- **check on suitable dates for a meeting involving all of PRWG in Dunfermline in April or May;**
- **add Audit Scotland to list of stakeholders in Communication Strategy.**

2.2.2 DHC Guidance on DRT services

Members noted that the evaluation paper had been circulated to the full committee and no comments had been received.

The Secretariat explained that since the last meeting advice from the SE (following a check to ascertain whether they were proposing to develop further DRT guidance) was to the effect that SE had no evidence that the current web based guidance was not sufficient and that there was no need for MACS to pursue this at this time.

Trevor reported that he had met the Secretary, Emma Sinclair, on 28 February to discuss this development and Emma had since proposed a remit for a project to provide a better evidence base which could be used to go the SE on the quality of the SE guidance whilst incorporating some of the key issues relating to DRT guidance. The remit had been circulated by Emma to the Chairs of each of the Working Groups and the Convener for comments. No comments had been received and the remit was tabled for consideration by the other PRWG members.

Members considered and discussed the suggested project remit and the advice from the SE and reached a view that the project was not appropriate and that it was more important that guidance be developed to ensure RTPs were equipped to make the right decisions.

The Secretariat reported that Paul Beecham had estimated the cost of developing the 20 sections identified as required to provide comprehensive guidance at £20k which equated to £1k per section.

The Group agreed that the original consultant should be asked to expand on the detail given for each topic and that this could then be used as part of a briefing note for Ministers (including Ministers for Transport, Communities and Health). They also agreed that he should be asked to prepare the section on 'Strategic Context' as this was particularly important.

- **ACTION: Secretariat to:**
- **approach Paul Beecham to expand on the detail given on the list of sections required;**
 - **commission Paul Beecham to develop the 'Strategic Context' section of the guidance in this financial year.**

(See also notes and action at Item 5.2)

2.2.3 SE response to EOC report

The link to the SE response to the EOC report had been included in the weekly update on 2 March with a short summary on the responses to the transport recommendations. MACS had been mentioned in the responses to several of the recommendations.

The Secretariat advised that the Minister for Communities was scheduled to appear before the EOC on 20 March to discuss the SE response to the report. The Clerk to the Committee had indicated that they would welcome any comments MACS wished to submit in relation to this and that this would be included in the legacy document for the new Committee which would be established after the elections in May.

- **ACTION: The Secretariat to:**
 - **monitor Ministers' appearance before EOC and report back to the WG on this and agree way forward;**
 - **check whether the EOC support staff will change.**

(Post meeting note: Clerk to EOC confirmed that there will be some change in personnel.)

3. Project Final Report - Actions required to bring about change and improve the mobility of disabled people in Scotland (Paper 1 PRWG 3-2007)

Members considered the paper and suggested a few amendments to this before it was finalised and presented to the Main Committee.

- **ACTION: Secretariat to amend summary paper as discussed and then circulate this to PRWG members for comments to allow presentation as a final document at the next Main Committee meeting.**

4. **MACS Communication Strategy – implementation** (Paper 2 PRWG 3 - 2007)

A few minor amendments were suggested to the Communication Strategy and Roderick agreed to introduce and explain the rationale behind the new strategy to the Main Committee in the afternoon.

- **ACTION:**
 - **Secretariat to amend the Communication Strategy as discussed;**
 - **Roderick to take the lead in the afternoon discussion with the Main Committee to seek endorsement of the new strategy and approval for its publication.**

5. **Regional Transport Partnerships:**

5.1 Communication

John explained that a response to the letter sent by the Convener to Eric Guthrie on 28 February (copy included in members' papers for information) was awaited.

- **ACTION: the Secretariat would monitor for a response to this and the invitations to the other RTPs for closer working relationship and bring responses to the attention of the WG in due course.**

5.2 RTS Consultations

John reported that responses had been sent to all seven of the draft Regional Transport Strategies and that a copy of the last of these - the response sent to TACTRAN on 6 March - was included in the members' pack for information.

He explained that the deadline for submission of the Regional Transport Strategies was 31 March 2007 and that the Minister for Transport then had 3 months to approve or return the strategies. The SE would evaluate the strategies against the relevant SE guidance, the National Transport Strategy and whether they meet the necessary Equality Impact Assessment requirements.

Members expressed concerns that:

- the money being allocated within the proposed new DRT budgets for RTPs was set at the current level of funding;
- insufficient funding would therefore be available to generate regional DRT schemes

- the development of Travel Despatch Centres (TDCs) was a huge piece of work;
 - RTPs did not have the required level of knowledge or expertise to set up TDCs or DRT schemes;
 - There appeared to have been no consultation with RTPs over the proposed funding changes (members were aware that COSLA had written expressing their unhappiness with the proposal and seeking a meeting with the Minister to discuss).
- **ACTION: Secretariat to:**
- **check whether Minister had agreed to meet COSLA;**
 - **Draft a letter for Committee to send to the Minister highlighting the concerns outlined above.**

(Post meeting note: Meeting between Minister and COSLA originally scheduled for 15 March was postponed and new date has been agreed as at 20 March.)

(See also notes and action at Item 2.2.2)

5.3 MACS survey

Members noted that the scoping of the methodology which would identify the needs of disabled people and lead to transport solutions and Performance Indicators had been included on the work programme for 2007/08.

Jane Horsburgh had provided a copy of the Guide Dogs publication 'Functionality and the needs of Blind and Partially –Sighted Adults in the UK: The Survey Instrument' to help in this. The Secretariat had reviewed the publication and provided members with an extract for them to consider whether this would be useful in the development of the methodology proposed.

- **ACTION: Members to consider whether the extract from the Guide Dogs publication would be useful in relation to the proposed project.**

6. Research

6.1 MACS' research Alternative methods of Assessing Eligibility for concessionary fares.

It had been agreed at the last meeting that John and Trevor would consider whether they could develop the project specification for the self-assessment pilot rather than commissioning a consultant to do this. The Secretariat had drafted two project specifications using the information from the scoping paper and explained that this was in line with the advice received from the SE

research team that the evaluation of the viability of self-assessment had to be independent of the pilot. The drafts had been sent to John and Trevor the previous day for comments.

➤ **ACTION:**

Secretariat to:

- **Copy the drafts specifications to Roderick and Fiona for comments;**
- **On receipt of members' comments:**
 - **update the draft;**
 - **seek advice form SE Research and Procurement teams on whether specifications were sufficient**
 - **submit specifications to the SE sponsor team to confirm the commissioning process.**

6.2 General:

6.2.1 SE web publication Availability of Transport Accessibility Information for Disabled People (Research Series)

Members noted that the Secretariat would review the document to identify areas where possible MACS action/involvement was desirable/appropriate and that this was included in the 2007/08 work programme.

6.2.2 SE research programme

Members noted that:

Representations had been made directly to the Project managers for those projects PRWG had an interest in to ensure early consultation and involvement of MACS in the identification and development of future research projects.

Comments on the draft specification for 'Evaluation of National Concessionary Travel in Scotland' project had been submitted to the SE on 22 December and the SE had advised that the project specification was still being finalised and that this would be copied to MACS when completed. SE was still looking to post the advert in the EU Journal sometime in March with a view to the work beginning in June.

The project specifications for the other 3 projects the WG had inquired about had not yet been developed and all 3 would now be held over and included in the 2007/08 Research Programme which should be available in June 2007.

- **ACTION: The Secretariat to continue to monitor developments and keep members informed of progress.**

6.2.3 Abuse of off-street parking

The Secretariat advised that the draft report of the SE research on tackling the abuse of off-street parking, which had been conducted in three stages, had been copied to MACS for comments by 23 March.

Bryan Alexander had been involved in the research and had been asked for his comments to allow the Secretariat to prepare a draft response for circulation and comments from members.

The SE was proposing to issue good practice guidance within the next few months and the Secretariat would monitor this.

The Secretariat also advised that The SWG had responded to Jackie Baillie's Bill on enforcement of the parking for blue badge holders suggesting that finalisation of the Bill should be held pending publication of this research report to allow the findings of the research to be taken into account.

7. Update of Action Plan and discussion of future work programme (Paper 3 PRWG 3 – 2007)

Members were content with the draft work programme subject to a few minor amendments.

- **ACTION: Secretariat to amend and finalise the work programme.**

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next PRWG meeting will be Wednesday 11 April at the Dunfermline Business Centre.

**Secretariat
March 2007**