

**MINUTES OF THE THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE
ACCESSIBILITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport**

Leeson Lane, Dublin 2

5th September 2018

Attendance

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| Kevin Doyle (Chair) | Dept. of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) |
| Eilis O'Connor | DTTAS |
| Peter Carney | DTTAS |
| Brendan Lennon | Deaf Hear |
| Donie O'Leary | Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG) |
| Elaine Howley | DSG |
| Linda Campbell | Fáilte Ireland |
| Nóirin Clancy | Inclusion Ireland |
| Mairead Hayes | Irish Senior Citizens Parliament |
| Fiona Kelty | National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI) |
| Niamh Fawl | National Disability Authority (NDA) |
| Sarah O'Donnell | Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) |
| Eilish Mulhern | Road Safety Authority (RSA) |
| David Lane | Bus Éireann (item 2) |
| Lynda Maguire | Bus Éireann (item 2) |

Apologies

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| Declan O'Leary | Sport Ireland |
| Joan Martin | City and County Managers Association (CCMA) |
| Sarah Fischer | Commission for Aviation Regulation |
| Joan Carthy | Irish Wheelchair Association |
| Jackie Mullen | National Transport Authority (NTA) |

1. Introductory remarks & tour de table

Chair noted apologies.

2. Bus Éireann Presentation

Bus Éireann (BÉ) gave a detailed presentation covering a range of accessibility issues – a copy of which is appended to these minutes.

Arising from the presentation the following main issues were discussed:

(a) Proposed policy for mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs

Concerns and questions raised in relation to the proposed policy included:

- the use of the term 'permit' – it suggests that people are being 'allowed to travel' when they have an entitlement to access public transport;
- the importance of consultation with disability groups and the language used when communicating what is being proposed and why;
- some powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters may not meet the specifications – how do you provide transport for their users?;
- suggestion that BÉ look at what they do in other countries.

BÉ response:

- they are using the presentation to the ACC to consult on the proposed policy and will also be consulting with their Disability User Group;
- proposed new policy is aimed at improving the current position whereby mobility scooters are not allowed (although some drivers do facilitate on occasion), by moving to a situation where mobility scooters/motorised wheelchairs will be carried on city and town services where they meet the size, weight, fuel and restraint requirements, following assessment and approval;
- proposed policy is based on the system in place in Dublin Bus;
- bus ramp weight capacity is 300kg and BÉ has to assess whether a mobility scooter/motorised wheelchair can safely use it. The ramps on buses available on the market do not allow for heavier mobility scooters/motorised wheelchairs to be used – it is a health and safety issue;
- an EU report which examined the bus industry in Europe, including accessibility for people with disabilities, shows that other countries are grappling with the same type of issues. BÉ will forward a copy of the report to the DTTAS for circulation;
- acknowledged the concerns in relation to the term 'permit' and agreed to amend in light of suggestions for alternative wording – e.g. Certificate of Assessment;
- they would welcome any further feedback on the proposed policy – contact details are on the last slide of the presentation.

(b) Driver Training

- Driver training is essential and not just training for example on lifting and carrying but also training in softer skills and in relation to hidden disabilities.
- Needs to be consistent policy and training in relation to buggies using the wheelchair space and giving priority to wheelchairs.
- The use of plain English is really important for people with intellectual disabilities.

BÉ response:

- The NTA has allocated funding to BÉ for training – this training is in addition to CPC training.
- 1,600 staff have to be trained - training will be delivered in line with roll out of accessible routes.

- The JAM card which was developed by the NOW Group in Northern Ireland enables people with a learning difficulty, autism or communication barrier tell others that they need 'Just a Minute' – working with NTA to see if it can be introduced here.

(c) Accessible routes/vehicles/bus stops

- There was a suggestion that more than one wheelchair space on buses is required. It was also noted that given the available space on the lower deck of buses there is a balance to be struck between the requirements for wheelchairs and seating for those with mobility issues.
- There is a need to be careful with language - saying vehicles are 100% accessible when they may be wheelchair accessible only.
- Bus stops - identify where low floor accessible buses are suitable for and then prioritise those routes where low floor accessible buses are not suitable.
- The news that on-board announcements are coming on stream was welcomed – this should be treated as a priority.
- Concerns were expressed about the livery for the new bus fleet - the importance of the outside of buses, as well as internal hand poles, being clearly visible was emphasised.
- That bus poles are going to be blue instead of current yellow was raised – this has already happened in Cork – who decided on blue?
- Clarification was sought on whether it is clear on the BÉ website which routes are accessible.

BÉ response:

- the NTA is responsible for the expansion of PSO services – significant investment is being made in new and more frequent services;
- the NTA also funds fleet for PSO services – there are some vehicles on the market which can accommodate 2 wheelchairs;
- in time the livery of all buses on PSO services, regardless of transport operator, will be the same and carry the Transport for Ireland logo;
- the NTA has taken over responsibility for bus stops/shelters and, as with vehicles, the plan is to have all bus stops the same colour;
- timeline for roll out of on-board announcements – Waterford in October, Cork by end 2018 and on other parts of the network on a phased basis over the first half of 2019;
- information on accessible routes is available on BÉ's website and the Customer Care Information line is open from 8.30 to 18.00 hrs 7 days a week.

DTTAS advised in relation to the livery for the new bus fleet, that on foot of NTA engagement with disability representatives, facilitated by the NDA, the internal hand poles will be changed to yellow and the livery design will include a full yellow front on the bus. A picture of the new outside livery was shown to the Committee members.

Parking in bus bays

- It was suggested that vehicles parked in bus bays should be towed away, and that their drivers be required to pay a fine to get their vehicles returned.

- Enforcement is needed in relation to illegal parking of vehicles in bus bays and it was suggested that penalty points should apply to this offence.
- DTTAS said it would raise these suggestions with the Road Safety Division of the Department.

The Chair thanked the Bus Éireann representatives for their presentation and engagement with the Committee.

3. Minutes and actions from Meeting on 30 May 2018

Minutes from 30th May 2018 meeting were agreed. Actions were reported on as follows:

| No. | Action | Outcome | Responsible |
|-----|--|---|--------------------|
| 1. | IR to forward its presentation material for circulation to ACC members. | Done | IR and Secretariat |
| 2. | IR to refer the quality control issues raised around audio visual announcements to its Chief Mechanical Engineer. | Update received from Irish Rail conveyed to the meeting. | IR |
| 3. | IR to look into having a system for recording complaints , including how they were handled and publishing these results, possibly in its Annual Report. | Update received from Irish Rail conveyed to the meeting. | IR |
| 4. | Check whether statistical data about the numbers of passengers with disabilities using different carriers, can be shared with the Committee. | CAR advised in advance of the meeting that permission of the airlines had not been obtained yet. CAR will follow up. See below re air bridges arising from this action. | CAR |
| 5. | Circulate contact details for the European Civil Aviation Conference. | Done | CAR |
| 6. | DTTAS & NTA presentations to NDISSG to be circulated and put on accessibility webpage. | Done | Secretariat |

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| 7. | Circulate NTA's Local Link Rural Transport Programme Strategic Plan 2018 -2022. | Done | Secretariat |
| 8. | Comments on public consultation process for public transport policy review to be brought to attention of relevant DTTAS staff. Alert members of the ACC to the public consultation when it happens. | Done Consultation hasn't started yet. | Secretariat |
| 9. | Circulate information on the consultation on new colours for Dublin buses and information about the Bus Connects project. | Done. DTTAS provided details of changes to new livery (see 2(c) above). Proposals on Bus Connects are currently out to public consultation. See below for discussion on this action. | NTA |
| <u>Actions carried over</u> | | | |
| 1. | Undertake a high level review to identify a number of suggested solutions to address immediate problems in the vicinity of Connolly Station/Busáras/Luas - Ongoing | NTA engaging consultants to examine and propose possible solutions. TII to liaise with NTA. Ongoing | NTA in conjunction with BÉ, TII, Transdev, DCC, Irish Rail and Dublin Bus |
| 2. | Circulate details of current Community Car schemes -RTP team in NTA has been asked for an update. | Carried forward to next meeting – NTA rep not in attendance. | NTA |
| 3. | Liaise about Pilot project on pedestrian access routes to Drogheda bus station. | Not suitable as a transition zone project. TII is working on a document for transition zones on the outskirts of towns. | CCMA and TII |
| 4. | Send report on access to Drogheda bus station issue, to | Done. | NCBI |

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| | CCMA representative. | | |
| 5. | Arrange for presentation on Sport to ACC. | Scheduled for November meeting. | Sport Ireland & Secretariat |

Air bridges

- Following extensive discussion on this issue at the May meeting, there was a suggestion that air bridges should be required for busy routes. It was noted that the CAR representative was not in attendance to respond.
- DTTAS pointed out that this would be difficult to enforce unless it was an EU requirement.

BusConnects

- There is a lot of concern about the BusConnects proposals e.g. older people having to walk further and change buses – people don't understand what is involved and find it is hard to follow.
- A member who had attended one of the NTA's Information Sessions on the proposals reported that the NTA said they will look at the issues that are being raised during the consultation process. The NTA is encouraging people to complete the online form to ensure their views are heard.
- DTTAS emphasised that proposals are at design stage and that the public consultation will inform the final design.
- It was highlighted that the BusConnects on-line form was not accessible for screen readers and that this had been raised with the NTA. DTTAS will follow up with NTA to ensure this is addressed.

4. DTTAS update - Developments since last meeting

- **Appointment of Directors with direct personal experience of disability to public transport company boards - announced by Minister on 3 August.** Appointees are:

Diarmuid Corry – Bus Éireann

Liam O'Rourke – CIÉ

Kevin Kelly – NTA

Suzy Byrne – Irish Rail

Elaine Howley – Dublin Bus

The Chair congratulated Elaine on her appointment.

- **Irish Rail Accessibility App** – Minister has secured additional funding for this project. **The Accessibility App is a project for DART users with disabilities** which is aimed at addressing some of the key communication breakdowns that occur with the current phone call process. The technology will allow them pre-book a journey that confirms they will have Operative assistance at their departure and arrival stations and provide them with support in an emergency.
- **Minister launched new evening Local Link services on 22 June** – 65 additional services across all counties – 23 are extensions to existing regular public transport services and 42 are demand responsive services. The vehicles used in the provision of the services are accessible.
- **Launch of ‘Linking People and Places’ on 25 June by Minister and Minister of State** ‘Linking People and Places’ outlines the investment committed by Government across the transport, tourism and sport sectors to deliver upon Project Ireland 2040. €25 billion will be invested in infrastructure for the three sectors over the next 10 years. ‘Linking People and Places’ documents are available on the Department’s website under Publications.

5. Work Programme Updates

- County and City Managers Association
- Commission for Aviation Regulation
- National Disability Authority
- National Transport Authority
- Road Safety Authority
- Sport Ireland
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland

The main points arising from the discussion on the Work Programme updates are as follows:

NDIS Actions of universal relevance to public bodies/Departments

- Prior to the meeting the issue was raised of agencies not reporting on the NDIS universal actions in their progress reports.
- This raises questions about how progress on these actions should be monitored and reported on e.g. should the ACC have a role in this process?
- It was noted that this is an issue which is relevant to all Departments/agencies – some limited enquiries suggest that other Departments’ ACCs are not currently monitoring / reporting on these universal actions for agencies under their remit. DTTAS would need to link in with the Department of Justice and other Departments to see how this might best be addressed;

- The ACC Work Programme focusses on progressing transport, tourism & sport specific actions for which the DTTAS and/or its agencies have lead responsibility.
- DTTAS has over 30 agencies under its remit – significant task to monitor and obtain progress reports from all of them - would they need to be represented on the ACC?
- As this issue is wider than the DTTAS and its agencies, the DSG representatives undertook to raise it at the DSG.

Quality of agencies progress reports

- Views were expressed that the quality and content of the progress reports received from agencies was very mixed, for example, one report had the same generic response for each action.
- In the context of the National Positive Ageing Strategy, it was commented that it would be useful to know why accessible bus stops are not being installed and the role of local authorities in this regard was raised.
- Reference was made to the NTA's role in providing funding for accessible bus stops and local authorities responsibility for land acquisition and engaging a contractor to carry out the works.
- The Chair referred to his membership of the National Age Friendly Advisory Group and that he would raise the issue of the role of the CCMA in relation to accessible bus stops at the Advisory Group.

Pedestrian Safety

- The location of bus stops and pedestrian access/safety issues were raised – this is becoming more of an issue with LUAS and the planned Metro.
- The RSA said its role is to educate about road safety but added that when contacted by people about specific road safety concerns, they write to the relevant county council on their behalf. In this regard, the RSA will give the NCBI its email contact address and will also cc the CCMA representative.

Fáilte Ireland

Fáilte Ireland reported that it is involved in an accessibility pilot project in Killarney. To capture information and updates on these types of initiatives which are not related to any specific action under the NDIS, it was agreed that for future meetings the agency progress report template will be sent to Fáilte Ireland.

6. User Group Referrals

None were received.

7. Any Other Business

OCS User Group

The NCBI reported that OCS which operates the airport assistance scheme in Dublin Airport, has set up a User Group. At a meeting of the User Group attended by NCBI, the difficulties experienced by people with disabilities were raised but OCS did not appear to have the authority to do anything about a number of them. The question was asked whether there is still a Dublin Airport User Group in existence – DTTAS will check this.

8. Date of next meeting

The next ACC meeting is on 28th November.

9. Actions agreed at meeting/carry over actions

| No. | Action | Responsible |
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| 1. | BÉ will replace the word 'permit' with suggested alternative wording in its proposed policy on motorised scooters/motorised wheelchairs. | BÉ |
| 2. | BÉ will forward copy of EU report on the bus industry in Europe to the Secretariat for circulation. | BÉ & Secretariat |
| 3. | DTTAS to raise issue of penalty points for illegal parking in bus bays with its Road Safety Division. | DTTAS |
| 4. | Check whether statistical data about the numbers of passengers with disabilities using different carriers, can be shared with the Committee. | CAR |
| 5. | Alert ACC members to public consultation on the review of public transport policy when it happens. Ongoing | Secretariat |
| 6. | Undertake high level review to identify possible solutions to address problems in the vicinity of Connolly Station/Busáras/Luas. Ongoing | NTA in conjunction with BÉ, TII, Transdev, DCC, Irish Rail and Dublin Bus |
| 7. | Circulate details of current Community Car schemes. | NTA |
| 8. | Follow up with NTA re. accessibility of BusConnects online form. | DTTAS |
| 9. | Raise issue of reporting mechanism by agencies on NDIS universal actions with DSG. | DSG representatives |
| 10. | Raise issue of the role of the CCMA in relation to accessible bus stops with the National Age Friendly Advisory Group | DTTAS member of NAFAG |
| 11. | RSA to provide email contact address to NCBI and cc CCMA representative re pedestrian safety concerns | RSA |
| 12. | Progress report template to be sent to Fáilte Ireland | Secretariat & Fáilte Ireland |

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| | to provide updates for future meetings | |
| 13. | Check if Dublin Airport User Group is still in existence. | DTTAS |