

DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Bus Vannin Accessibility Steering Group Meeting Tuesday 3rd August 2021 at 3pm The Boardroom, Sea Terminal Building

Present:

Mrs C Christian, MHK (Chair), (CC)

Mrs J Poole-Wilson, MLC (JPW)

██████████ (KW) [via Teams]

In attendance:

██████████ Director of Transport Services (IJL)

██████████ Deputy CEO, Department of Infrastructure (EC)

██████████ Project Officer & Note Taker (SC)

1.	Apologies No apologies were received for the meeting.	
2.	Minutes of the Last Meeting Minutes of the last meeting were agreed subject to two minor amendments being made to Section 11.	SC
3.	Matters Arising	
(i)	<u>Data</u> SC reported that she had been unable to obtain a copy of the TAS Report produced for the former Department of Tourism & Leisure in 2008/2009. It was suggested that the report be Googled; that TAS and/or Public Records be requested to obtain a copy.	SC
(ii)	<u>Current Legislative Position</u> Mrs Poole-Wilson thanked SC for providing the information regarding the 1951 National Assistance Act, and the 2011 Social Services Act. It was reported that it was understood that the current benefits system related back to the eligibility criteria within the 1951 Act. Mrs Poole-Wilson reported her intention to write to the Cabinet Office regarding the need to address a number of issues, including a standardised language approach for protected characteristics across Government.	JPW
(iv)	<u>Tynwald Debate</u> It was noted that IJL had provided the information regarding the 19 inaccurate points raised in the Tynwald debate.	

<p>(v)</p> <p>(vi)</p>	<p><u>Equality Stakeholder Workshops</u></p> <p>SC reported that the Cabinet Office had advised that stakeholders at the Equality Act workshops had not given permission to be contacted by other Departments. It had been suggested that the stakeholders be contacted by Cabinet Office in the first instance, and asked to get in touch directly if they wished to engage with the Department.</p> <p>It was agreed that SC would request a list of organisations that had participated in the Disability Equality stakeholder workshops from Cabinet Office.</p> <p><u>Best Practice</u></p> <p>It was noted that IJL had been unable to locate a copy of the UK best practice accessibility report in his electronic files.</p> <p>EC agreed to contact the BIC to request a copy.</p>	<p>SC</p> <p>EC</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Approval of Terms of Reference</p> <p>The Terms of Reference circulated in advance of the previous meeting were formally agreed.</p> <p>It was noted that the Minister had made a commitment at the July sitting of Tynwald to publish a copy of the Terms of Reference once they have been formally agreed.</p>	<p>SC</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Public Consultation on Accessibility</p> <p>The Group considered the public draft consultation on Accessibility to Bus Vannin services, and made a number of suggested additions and changes.</p> <p>It was agreed that the consultation be published on the Consultation Hub, but that it be checked that the Hub was accessible. Should this not be the case, it was agreed that Sight Matters (the new name of the former Manx Blind Welfare), be asked to assist.</p> <p>It was noted that the introductory information to the consultation should be clear that the Department had already consulted regarding concessionary fares, and that this consultation was about the barriers to accessing Bus Vannin services.</p> <p>It was agreed that a link to the consultation be sent to appropriate voluntary organisations, with a request that they forward it to their members for completion. It was agreed that this would include those organisations that had participated in the Equality Act stakeholder groups and the groups SC had contacted regarding the Concessionary Fares consultation.</p>	<p>SC</p> <p>SC</p> <p>SC</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Agreement of Methodology to form Focus Groups</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding the methodology and process to form stakeholder and/or focus groups. Mrs Poole-Wilson suggested that that this was about the phrase used in connection with people with disabilities:</p>	

	<p><i>"nothing about us, without us".</i></p> <p>Mrs Christian requested that both a large stakeholder group and focus groups be progressed during the summer period.</p> <p>It was noted it was important to establish exactly what information was required from the stakeholder and focus groups. It was suggested that a number of focus groups take place at charity headquarters, for example, at the headquarters of Sight Matters, although it was also noted that there would also need to be meetings at locations not connected with specific charities.</p> <p>It was agreed that there was a need to obtain the list of organisations that participated in the Equality Act workshops, for the next meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that the number of engagement activities would be dependent upon available resources.</p> <p>It was agreed that a focus group be held with mobility scooter and wheelchair users, and that the focus of the meeting would be the CPT Code and what help those people need to use the bus. It would important, as part of that workshop consultation process, to advise that it is recognised that not all bus stops are accessible.</p>	<p>SC</p> <p>SC/EC</p>
7.	<p>Steering Group Membership</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding the Minister's suggestion that [REDACTED] be invited to attend a meeting of the Steering Group.</p> <p>Mrs Poole-Wilson talked about the benefits of having volunteers around the table, with the potential to form smaller working groups. She suggested that volunteers may also be willing to undertake some of the workload.</p> <p>It was agreed that there was a need to expand the Group, to include one or two members with disabilities, who would be willing to represent the views of others and their lived experiences.</p> <p>EC suggested that going forward, there could be a larger role for a panel of people with disabilities, as there were accessibility issues not just within Bus Vannin, but across the Department, and indeed the Isle of Man Government. It was noted that both the Citizens Forum, and the Isle of Man Constabulary Inclusion Scrutiny Group, could be useful models.</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding the feasibility of appointing additional members to the working group within the Purdah period, and it was agreed that this be included within the Ministerial Decision paper.</p>	<p>SC</p>

8.	<p>Progress on Making the Bus Network Accessible</p> <p>IJL reported that approximately 50 bus stops have been made accessible, and that there are plans to make another 27 bus stops accessible next year.</p> <p>IJL further reported that although he continued to submit revenue bids to undertake a bus stop audit, these continue to be unsuccessful. Mr Watterson reported on the need for a comprehensive policy regarding buses, and that the service has been subjected to regular budget cuts. He suggested that it was not possible to deliver a quality service with the current funding levels.</p> <p>IJL reported that there were other issues preventing accessibility at bus stops, including the need for legislation to prevent parking in bus stops.</p> <p>Mrs Poole-Wilson suggested the need to humanise messaging to the general public, raising awareness of the impact actions such as parking in disabled bus stops have upon the lives of people with disabilities. Mrs Poole Wilson suggested a need to make a case about communications, and referred to her intention to raise these issues with the Cabinet Office.</p>	JPW
9.	<p>Future Meetings</p> <p>It was noted that a further meeting had been scheduled for later in the month, and it had agreed at the previous meeting that this would be chaired by Mrs Poole-Wilson.</p> <p>EC advised that this would no longer be appropriate, as Mrs Poole-Wilson has since declared her intention to stand in the general election to the House of Keys. It was also noted that it was not appropriate for either Mrs Poole-Wilson or Mrs Christian to attend that meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed that Mrs Maska MLC undertake the role of Chairperson on an interim basis. Mrs Maska already has some understanding of disability issues, given that she worked extensively with Mrs Poole-Wilson to agree the draft equality clauses in the Road Transport Licencing Bill.</p>	SC/EC
10.	<p>Timeline</p> <p>The draft timeline was noted, and agreed that it would be updated. Mrs Christian requested that a bus stop audit be included on the timeline.</p>	SC
11.	<p>Close</p> <p>The meeting closed at 5.30 pm</p>	