

DfT-DPTAC Main Meeting

07/12/18 11.00 – 15.00

Attendees:

DPTAC

Keith Richards, Will Bee, Sue Sharp, Mike Brace, Helen Dolphin, David Chrimes, David Mapp, Chris Price, Sharon Brennan, Jessica Ugucconi, Niki Glazier, Tanvi Vyas

DfT

[REDACTED]

Observers

[REDACTED]

Key Points and Actions:

1. Welcome and Introductions – Keith Richards

- 1.1 Keith welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies noted were: Dave Partington, Matthew Smith, Roger Mackett, and Bryan Matthews.
- 1.2 Keith asked for disclosure of any conflicts of interest. None made.
- 1.3 Keith is aiming for DPTAC to collaborate more together, with more opportunity for informal discussions outside of the main and working group meetings. **Action:** Keith to arrange informal discussions with DPTAC members on how to make this work.

2. Buses and Taxis – Catriona Henderson and [REDACTED]

- 2.1 The Group held a preliminary discussion, prior to Catriona and [REDACTED] arrival (DfT Buses and Taxis Team), to structure their questions. Keith said that he had met with Catriona in the morning, and the discussion had gone well.
- 2.2 Will outlined the questions DPTAC planned to raise with the Team when they arrived. Individual members proposed further issues they hoped to

raise, this included refusal of guide dogs in taxis and PHVs, and use of technology to assist real-time information (RTI) on buses.

- 2.3 Catriona and ██████ introduced themselves to the group. The Buses and Taxis Team have been working on: funding, buses open-data, safeguarding issues for taxis and PHVs, assisting the Future of Mobility work, community transport, and the Buses and Taxi Accessibility Agenda.
- 2.4 Catriona acknowledged that there is room for improvement for both bus and taxi/PHV services in terms of accessibility.
- 2.5 Catriona noted that Nusrat Ghani is due to attend the Transport Select Committee in the New Year. It is believed the Minister will propose developing a Buses Strategy. This would incorporate measures to improve the travelling experience of disabled passengers. If such a strategy goes ahead it is unlikely to be in place before 2020.
- 2.6 Catriona provided an update on the Buses and Taxis Team structure. /this has been revised to boost staff resource available to deal with accessibility issues.
- 2.7 Catriona detailed three priorities for buses: accessible information on buses, wheelchair spaces, and driver training.
 - 2.7.1 In terms of accessible information: the Buses and Taxis Team have been evaluating over 2,000 responses to the buses consultation. Additionally, ██████ has been working on the ITS commitment to invest £2 million of DfT funding for AV on buses.
 - 2.7.2 In terms of wheelchair spaces on buses: DfT are expected to amend regulations during 2019, with guidance for bus operators issued at the same time. The Buses and Taxis Team have been working with the Accessibility Team within DfT to raise public awareness of wheelchair space regulations, as part of the ITS Public Awareness Campaign.
 - 2.7.3 In terms of training: the Buses and Taxis Team are aware of concerns over uptake of disability awareness training, despite EU regulation which requires this. DfT are looking into enforcement and best practice guidance for this.
- 2.8 Catriona detailed the priorities for Taxis and PHVs. The Buses and Taxis Team have been reviewing the Task & Finish report on taxis and PHVs, which makes a number of recommendations. Some of those recommendations would require amending legislation. The Buses and Taxis Team will be exploring this, which would involve the 165/167 Lists. The Buses and Taxis Team will respond to the T&F Report in early 2019.
- 2.9 **Questions from DPTAC:**

Mike Brace asked: (Taxis) - What are the Buses and Taxis Team doing to address complaints on refusals of assistance dogs?

In response, Catriona said –

- DfT would like to see greater levels of driver training to address this issue. This may involve amendments to primary legislation. From a passenger perspective, non-compliance of taxi/PHV drivers is an enforcement issue for the LAs. Passengers should contact the LA in the case of non-compliance.

Will Bee asked: (Buses) – Are you able to give an indication of the bus industry's thoughts on amendments to services, such as open bus data, and AV information?

In response, Catriona said -

- Industry have expressed concerns, with a risk of buses being taken off the road due to budget constraints. However, ministers are committed to updating services. The Buses and Taxis Team will review the necessity of some proposed service specifications, such as a requirement for visual information being visible from every place on the bus. ██████ noted that the Buses and Taxis Team need a solution to ensure information is easily accessible, but want industry to adopt methods that suit them.

David Chrimes asked: (Buses) - Outside of London, what is the Department doing to ensure RTI is provided in rural areas when a bus will take a prolonged period to arrive?

In response Catriona said –

- The Buses and Taxis Team are due to respond to the Accessible Information for Buses consultation in 2019. The Buses and Taxis Team will work on addressing RTI at bus stops. This needs to be thought about practically, due to the number of bus stops in England.

Helen Dolphin asked: (Buses) - Will there be a way to know whether a wheelchair space is available via RTI?

In response Catriona said –

- This information isn't currently available, but the Buses and Taxis Team will be reviewing this in the future. ██████ noted that operators are thinking of using RTI in this way. ██████ noted that the DPTAC Local Travel WG previously raised concerns with this technology as it could provide misleading information when a wheelchair space may become available. A passenger may refrain from taking a bus as the space was previously occupied prior to arriving at the stop. ██████ asked for DPTAC's revised view on this. **Action:** Will to consult with the Local Travel WG on this.

Sharon Brennan asked: (Buses) - Is there an update on the Department's action following the Paulley case?

In response, Catriona said –

- The Buses and Taxis Team plan to publish a response in 2019.

Tanvi Vyas asked: (Buses) - Is there an update on the Department's actions following the Task & Finish Group recommendations on the use of wheelchair space on buses?

In response, Catriona said –

- The Buses and Taxis Team will provide an update in 2019. The next steps will be to amend the regulations and guidance simultaneously. This is planned for autumn 2019.

Helen Dolphin asked: (Buses) – Is the Department working to address the issue of wheelchairs sliding or toppling over when on a bus?

In response, Catriona said –

- TfL has been carrying out recent work on bus information lately. ██████ noted that this is a known issue, but the Department is constrained at what they can do about this. There's an ITS commitment to review the wheelchair standard across transport modes, this is a long-term action.
Action: Catriona will ask TfL whether their research links into this issue.

Keith Richards asked: (Buses) - As wheelchairs change (larger, heavier, different technology), and more people use motorised scooters, what is the vision for how a future bus industry will accommodate these? What can industry do, what laws need changing, what technology can be adopted?

In response, Catriona said –

- She would like to have a separate session with DPTAC on this. The challenge is working within the regulatory framework. The bus industry outside of London is de-regulated, and the Government is not looking at addressing this. **Action:** Secretariat to work with Buses and Taxis Team to organise a session for mid-2019.

Jessica Uguccione asked: (Taxis) - What is the Department looking to bring forward in primary legislation?

In response, Catriona said –

- The 165/167 lists, and if legislation was to be amended DPTAC would be consulted. ██████ noted that there's currently no obligation for an operator to accept an assistant dog booking, the Buses and Taxis Team will be looking at reviewing this. ██████ noted a piece of research due to be published on guide dogs and PHV refusals. **Action:** Secretariat to share this report with DPTAC once published.

Will Bee asked: (Taxis) - Is it not better to ensure LAs have a balanced fleet to set standards of customer care, and an efficient mechanism for LAs to enforce this?

In response, Catriona said –

- The Buses and Taxis Team will be testing such issues with DPTAC.

Mike Brace asked: (Taxis) - If a passenger has been refused, who do they report this to? How will the Department collect refusal data?

In response, ██████ said –

- Researchers are looking at number of ways into this, including interviews with passengers. It's accepted that it's difficult to collect this data. Additionally, passengers should always contact their LA when they've experienced a refusal. **Catriona** noted that the Buses and Taxis Team may work with Guide Dogs to publicise the refusal process for passengers.

2.10 The group conducted a post meeting discussion once Catriona and Robert had departed. Keith was pleased with the format of the meeting and the points raised.

2.11 It was noted that primary legislation amendments take a long time, and DPTAC would like to understand whether any work involving buses and taxis is going to happen in the meantime.

2.12 It was noted that accessibility needs to be central to The Buses Strategy. **Action:** DPTAC to write to Nusrat Ghani prior to 2019 to raise this point.

2.13 It was noted that the proposed bus driver training plans may not be consistent, as a separate cross-modal training package are being developed by DfT's Accessibility Team. ██████ clarified that there's an ITS commitment to create non-compulsory disability awareness training for transport operators. The idea is that it will be helpful, and primarily intended for smaller operators with little resource to produce their own training already.

3. Self-Driving Vehicles Consultation – Jessica Ugucioni

- 3.1 Jessica presented the Law Commission's review of autonomous vehicles. Jessica noted that it's important to have a wide range of input from disability groups on the consultation. Jessica has asked members to involve relevant stakeholders in this consultation, and to seek their input. The consultation opened on 8 November and closes on 8 February 2019. **Action:** DPTAC members to respond to the consultation (whether using the online citizenspace portal, email or other convenient means) and to also invite other relevant stakeholders to comment on the review.
- 3.2 Jessica noted that autonomous vehicles need to have the capabilities to identify all road users, such as those who are visually impaired or have non-visible disabilities.
- 3.3 Jessica noted that most development and testing has been focussed on urban areas, rather than rural.
- 3.4 It was noted that self-driving vehicles could be a full agenda item for a future DPTAC Main Meeting. **Action:** Secretariat to arrange a more comprehensive DPTAC meeting on autonomous vehicles.

4. ITS Public Awareness Campaign – [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

- 4.1 [REDACTED] introduced himself as a Senior Campaign Manager in DfT.
- 4.2 [REDACTED] presented an update on the ITS Public Awareness campaign to the group, and asked the group if they agreed with the main objectives of the ITS campaign.
- 4.3 [REDACTED] detailed the timelines for the campaign up to August 2019. [REDACTED] noted that his team have conducted research into social media trends. 8.6 million UK social media posts have involved the term 'disability'. However, the terms associated with both 'disability' and 'transport' have been low.
- 4.4 [REDACTED] presented a sample of the findings from the social media research. [REDACTED] noted that 47% of social media posts involving disability were negative. This involved social media trends which raised issues from particular modes of transport. [REDACTED] noted that many posts were from online forums (such as Money Saving Expert, and newspaper websites such as the Guardian and Daily Mail) with long posts from passengers discussing disability.
- 4.5 Keith noted that this research is important as part of an assessment of the impact of the ITS over the years, and to identify any gaps that may have otherwise been missed.
- 4.6 It was questioned whether all disability groups had been covered in the research, such as those with visual impairments who don't have access to some services. [REDACTED] noted that social media is a self-selecting audience that by its nature can be a barrier to those with some disabilities. [REDACTED] aims

to cover more disability groups in the desk-based research phase and asked the group to:

- 4.6.1 Share/contribute to a forward grid of key moments to build a drumbeat of public activity
- 4.6.2 Recommend any sources of research that might inform campaign development
- 4.7 █████ noted that the stakeholder forum will bring together experienced groups with knowledge of accessibility issues, such as DPTAC. There will also be smaller groups that will identify day-to-day, specific issues.
- 4.8 █████ noted that the campaign has up to £2 million funding in 19/20.
- 4.9 The group noted that social media can be a negative influential factor which often prevents disabled users from travelling. The campaign has the opportunity to showcase the accessibility services available in order to encourage people to travel.
- 4.10 █████ noted that he's also been working with Transport Scotland to consider a broader campaign.

5. Inclusive Transport Leaders Scheme – █████ █████

- 5.1 █████ presented the Inclusive Transport Leaders Scheme to the group. The accreditation scheme will be ranked by bronze, silver, and gold. There's a number of criteria that operators must perform to achieve an accreditation.
- 5.2 The bronze and silver accreditations will be self-assessed. The gold accreditation will be judged by an external organisation which has been validated by DfT. There will be checks and balances of the bronze and silver schemes, the Accessibility Team are currently looking into the best way to do this. Insufficient DfT resource prevents judging all bronze and silver assessments.
- 5.3 █████ noted that there's no defined budget allocated to the scheme. The group noted that DfT will be helped if they had a budget in order to roll-out and properly monitor the scheme. DPTAC suggested either inviting a 3rd party to host the scheme, or at least the Department should charge operators for applying to and being part of the scheme. █████ will consider both these points.
- 5.4 The following points were noted:
 - 4.4.1 Operators may focus on the criteria that will get them the award, and this may be to the detriment of other accessibility services.
 - 4.4.2 It's important that the scheme has credibility, as it has the potential to build confidence for disabled passengers to travel.

- 4.4.3 The scheme could be incorporated into operator licences, such as the contracts for TOCs.
- 4.4.4 A slow roll-out will be more manageable. This could potentially focus on one mode of transport.
- 4.4.5 The Department will need to research more thoroughly into the self-assessment aspect of the scheme. It was noted that self-assessment can work, as long as transport operators justify why they have accredited themselves such a standard.
- 4.5 ██████ noted the next steps: to present this to the ITSG, followed by a testing and feedback process for the BETA model. The scheme is planned to be launched in autumn 2019. **Action:** Secretariat to feed back DPTAC's recommendations to ██████ ██████ in DfT's Accessibility Team, and to arrange a more detailed discussion between ██████ and DPTAC when necessary.

5 Round-up – Keith Richards

- 5.4 ██████ welcomed ██████ ██████ to the group. ██████ is joining the Accessibility Team on the 17th December to take over from ██████ ██████ post.
- 5.5 ██████ noted that this will be ██████ last DPTAC meeting for at least 6 months. ██████ has attained temporary promotion to another team in DfT.
- 5.6 The next DPTAC Main Meeting will be on the 14th March 2019.