

**INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STAKEHOLDER GROUP (ITSG)
MINUTES OF THE 6th MEETING
Wednesday 11 October 2006, EUROPA HOTEL, BELFAST.**

Present:

Gerry McGinn	Permanent Secretary, Department for Regional Development (DRD), Chair
Doreen Brown	Deputy Secretary, DRD, Chair
Eddie Burns	The Automobile Association
Lisa Fagan	Friends of the Earth
John Gillvray OBE	Construction Employers Federation
Professor Julian Hine	University of Ulster
Chief Inspector Brian Kee	Police Service of Northern Ireland
Prof Austin Smith	Transport Research Institute
Michael Lorimer	Transport Advisory Committee
Eddie Lynch	General Consumer Council
Keith Moffatt	Chief Executive, Translink
Bryan Myles	Community Transport Association
Seamus McAleavey	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Carla McCambridge	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Catherine McCambridge	Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Tom McClelland	Cycling Forum
Geoffrey Perrin	Institution of Civil Engineers

In attendance:

Wesley Shannon	Road Safety and Vehicle Standards Division, Department of Environment (DOE)
Mike Thompson	Director, Regional Planning and Transportation Division, DRD
Brian White	Director, Ports and Public Transport Division, DRD

Apologies:

Barbara Anderson	Confederation of British Industry
Peter Bunting	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Stephen Costello MBE	General Consumer Council
Mark Dunn	Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Frank Hewitt	Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Karen Magill	NI Independent Coach Operators Association
Joe Murphy	Irish Congress of trade Unions
Eamonn O'Donnell	NW Taxi Proprietors
Eric Porter	Institution of Highways and Transportation
Rajesh Rana	Transport 2000
Sinead Rice	Royal Town Planning Institute
Prof Austin Smyth	Transport Research
Tom Wilson	Freight Transport Association Ltd

ITSG Secretariat:

Gregor Kerr
Janet Watson

1 Opening Remarks

Gerry McGinn, DRD, welcomed members to the sixth meeting of ITSG.

2 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the fifth meeting were agreed. There were no matters arising.

3 Apologies

Apologies were received as noted.

4 Reform of Public Administration

Dr Andrew Murray (Roads Service) and Brian White (Ports and Public Transport Division) gave a presentation on the implications of the Review of Public Administration for Roads Service and Public Transport respectively..

Professor Julian Hine asked if local councils would be given the power to develop

local transport strategies and, if so, how would the services across Northern Ireland be integrated? Mr White said that the Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) would provide a consensus view to ensure integrated services. Dr Murray added that the oversight role for central Government had not yet been established and that it would be a decision for Ministers.

Eric Porter said that integration and co-ordination would be essential. While the number of councils is to reduce from 26 to seven, Roads Service would effectively increase from 1 provider to 7.

Concerns were expressed that the proposals would increase the cost of governance and that if funding were not ring fenced there would be no guarantee of service levels or standards. Mr McGinn said that DOE were considering the complex issue of local funding. Dr Murray said that ensuring local accountability was very important to Ministers and that councils would be answerable to their electorate. Mr White said that he did not believe that the proposed arrangements would necessarily be more complex than at present. Public funding would continue to support public transport and the change from capital to revenue funding would create a level playing field between private and public transport operators with funding going to the service provider.

Clare McCambridge asked whether unions would be consulted on the proposals and whether routes would be protected to prevent cherry-picking by private operators. Mr White said that consultation with the workforce would be an important part of the process. Mrs Brown said that, while routes would not automatically be protected, councils would have a responsibility to work in the best interests of their electorate. Mrs Brown also said that Transport NI was not a new body, but a change to DRD's internal structures. While a three tier structure had been agreed, the detail had yet to be resolved and the unions would be consulted as part of that process.

Eamonn O'Donnell asked if taxis would be included when considering public transport. Mrs Brown said that taxis were an important part of the public transport system in both rural and urban areas.

Prof Smith said that previous experience showed that, as in London, the regulator should be at arms length from government, not integrated in it. He also said that information was needed on the operating costs of individual routes to determine funding decisions to be made. Mr White agreed that monitoring was important but did not feel that a "London" model was required.

Michael Lorimer asked whether there was a danger that the advances made in the provision of accessible services, such as the Rural Transport Fund and the Door-to-door service being introduced by DRD, would be diluted by dividing services among the 7 councils. Mr White said that the PTA would have responsibility for ensuring the accessibility of services which would 'be planned and delivered at local level.

5 Review of the Regional Transportation Strategy

Mr Mike Thompson (Regional Planning and Transportation Division) gave a presentation on the Department's plans for the Review of the RTS.

Bernard Clarke said that public transport patronage targets should be considered and bus priority and enforcement issues included to improve bus speeds and prevent disruption to scheduled services.

Prof Smith said that the modal split between roads and public transport was very important. The level of investment in Public Transport appeared to be down on balance and the speed of progress was much faster in Dublin.

Michael Lorimer said that consultation would be important, consultation on the Accessible Transport Strategy had produced several important changes. He also believed that more would need to be done to improve transport in rural areas.

Lisa Fagan said that the Sustainable Development Strategy and the need to mitigate against climate change should be key considerations and should shape the objectives and key outcomes for the revised RTS. Funding for public transport would be increasingly important to encourage modal shift,

Julian Hine suggested that mode 25 / 50 year share targets should be set.

Tom McClelland questioned the current level of expenditure on roads and asked that all the benefits of active transport (eg the health benefits of walking and cycling) be included in the Review.

Eric Porter said that both freight and public transport use the road network and that road improvements had a wider benefit.

Eddie Lynch welcomed the review and said that consultation would be very important. Public Transport passenger / non-passenger surveys should be considered.

Eamonn O'Donnell said that the contribution that taxis made to public transport provision should be recognised.

Mr Thompson thanked everyone for their contributions and suggested that the ITSG could form the basis of a Panel of Experts to help inform the Review.

6 Any Other Business

Mrs Brown thanked all those who gave presentations and asked members to let the ITSG secretariat know about any issues they want to follow up on.

7 Next Meeting

The next meeting of ITSG will take place on a date to be arranged by the Secretariat.

Gregor Kerr

Regional Planning and Transportation Division
October 2006