

Cross Party Group Older People, Age and Ageing

Wednesday 21st February 2018 13.00 - 14.30

Committee Room 4 Scottish Parliament

Minutes

1. Present

MSPs: Sandra White; Richard Leonard, Annie Wells

Organisation	Name
Age Scotland	Derek Young, Simon Ritchie
Forget-me- Not Gardens	Patricia Eason
Community Transport Association	John MacDonald
Luminate	Anne Gallacher
Pilton Psychological Society	Sue Northrop
Generations Working Together	Kate Samuels
Scottish Older People's Assembly	Betty Milton
Scottish Seniors Alliance	Bill Johnston
Scottish Pensioners Forum	Rose Jackson, Eileen Crawley
Action on Hearing Loss Scotland	Alan Daziel
Edinburgh Association Community Councils	Ian Clement
Trust Housing Association	Rohini Sharma Joshi
Borders Seniors Network	Diana Findlay
Transport Scotland	Tom Davy, Robert Wyllie
Outside the Box	Anne Connor & Christine Ryder
Scottish Parliament MSP's Assistant	Amanda Gordon

Welcome

Sandra White welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from: Arwind Salwan, Paul Eadie, Lilian Woolfries, Eileen Wallace, Susane Cameron-Neilson, Avril Hepner, Rachel Matthews, Andrew Senew, Iona Beange, Paul Comley, Glenda Watt, Tom Berney, Pat Scrutton & Paul Thomas.

2. Note of previous meeting

Minutes of the CPG on Older People, Age and Ageing meeting held on the 28th November 2017 meeting were accepted as accurate.

The minutes of of the joint meeting held with the CPG on Accident Prevention and Safety are being prepared by the Secretariat of the Accident Prevention group and will be circulated when they are available.

3. Matters Arising

Amendment NC44 to the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill, was asking for the UK Government to make arrangements for an independent evaluation of the impact of the Act and Brexit upon the health and social care sector across the 4 Nations. This was successful.

Technology and the benefits system was raised and an agreement between the Scottish Government and COSLA was released in a press release.

Joint Meeting with Accident Prevention & Safety CPG took place on 17th January. RoSPA (Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents) are making safety of older people one of the priorities for their work. There will be a series of events over the coming year. The first one will be on 23rd May.

4. Presentations

The group heard short presentations from the invited guests, which were followed by a question and answer session.

John MacDonald, Director for Scotland, Community Transport Association

In the UK the Community Transport Association has a membership of around 1700 voluntary organisations and around 170 are in Scotland. If transport is not commercial or run by a public body then it is community transport and tends to be provided by the voluntary sector, not for profit. Community transport services are usually run by a board of trustees, tend to only employ a couple of people and rely mostly on volunteers.

Lots of different services are offered all over the country with approximately 250 individual services, group transport, dial a ride and volunteers using their own cars to transport people.

For the most part the function of community transport is to allow people to access local services, NHS, health appointments, shops and days out. The key is that it is very local: they are not usually scheduled therefore are responding to the person. Community transport sits somewhere between a bus service and a taxi service: it doesn't have the immediacy of a taxi and it is not a regular bus service so you need to think a few days in advance.

The benefits to the people who use community transport is great; it is an opportunity to meet with other people and socialise on the journey, it tends to be the same driver so familiarity of the service, the vehicles are accessible and the volunteers are patient understanding that it can take a bit longer to get to, in and out of the vehicle and they also offer assistance to carry shopping etc. They can be like a mobile community centre!

Tom Davy, Head of Bus and Local Transport Policy, Transport Scotland

Bus services are a regulated market for both commercial and private companies. Transport Scotland is currently looking at the Franchising Regulation and the existing statutory powers that we currently have to do this. A new draft Transport Strategy will be published later this year for consultation, the aim is by the summer, after which meetings and workshops will be organised throughout the year to give people an opportunity to feed into the consultation.

Transport Scotland can provide funding examples are bus operations grants and new greener buses funding. Local Authorities can also subsidise bus services.

The use of buses has been declining since the 1960's for many reasons although the decline is not as steep at the moment. ¾ of all bus journeys are concessionary travel. Bus companies are reimbursed around £190M per year for concessionary travel. Around 3000 responses were received for the latest consultation on concessionary travel.

Bus services work better when the bus company and the local authority are working well together.

Robert Wyllie Accessibility Policy Officer in the Transport Accessibility and Road Safety Office, Transport Scotland

Robert's team is currently working on the Accessible Travel Action Plan. All the work they are doing to make change happen on the ground is done in co-production. They need to involve the travel companies as well as the people who use the services so everyone understands what is required on all sides as they have 45 actions to take forward from the framework.

Responsibilities include improving the network - ie more drop kerbs, tactile pavements and to optimise the blue badge process as currently it is not as good as it could be. The Minister has a clear commitment to improving the blue badge process so we are currently talking to all involved to see how we can make it better.

Discussion

- The main areas of the discussion centred around the use of the Thistle Card and it's need for greater publicity.
- The concessionary travel consultation, low income especially women, the increased demand with bank closures and the lack of available bus services in rural areas to use the concessionary travel pass.
- There was also a discussion around how transport is not always as much of a priority when budgets are being stretched and how quite often transport links are an after thought when it comes to building hospitals etc especially if statutory services running in the area.
- There was also a discussion on how Community Transport should be included in the new transport strategy, the consultation on licences which may make it difficult for community transport providers to continue and volunteers car insurance if using it for voluntary purposes.
- Sandra White MSP reminded everyone that CPG members and others can raise amendments to Bills as they are going through Parliament, and said that she would raise the Thistle card with the Minister.

5. Topics for future meetings

CPG members suggested several topics for meetings later this session or in the next Parliamentary session:

- Data Protection changes that come into force in May

- Role of Community Councils
- Planning and Housing, including issue of houses being built without enough consideration of the social, health & intergenerational needs of the community
- Further updates on transport and the integration of health & social care.

6. AOCB

Consultation on Social Isolation & Loneliness

Derek Young, Age Scotland, reminded the group that the consultation on the Draft Social Isolation and Loneliness Strategy is open until the 27th April. He also urged the group not to waste this opportunity to have their say and make a difference. A link to the consultation is below.

<https://consult.gov.scot/equality-unit/connected-scotland/>

Ministerial Round Table

Derek mentioned the Round Table meetings that Jeanne Freeman, Minister for Equalities, is having with Age Scotland, SOPA and other organisations that are promoting opportunities for older people. It was agreed that it would be good to have an update from the Equalities Team on this work.

Generations Working Together Conference

Kate Samuels, Generations Working Together informed the group of their upcoming conference on Wednesday 7th March at Strathclyde University. A link for more information about this and other work GWT do is below.

<https://generationsworkingtogether.org/>

Community Empowerment & Dementia Conference

Sue Northop, Dementia Friendly Communities East Lothian, wanted to share information about a recent seminar she was part of organising about Community Empowerment and Dementia. The link to the presentations and a blog from the seminar can be found below.

<https://memoryfriendly.org.uk/programmes/shifting-paradigms-in-dementia/community-empowerment-and-dementia/>

<http://foss.stir.ac.uk/2018/02/22/changing-thinking-dementia-scottish-universities-insight-institute-conference-31-january-2018/>

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 23rd May 2018 , 13.00 to 14.30

The topic for the meeting will be Trading Standards and the exploitation of older people and mis-selling.