

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY GROUP
Thursday 26 May 2022

Present:- Councillor Beck (in the Chair); Councillors Aveyard, Bennett-Sylvester, Castledine-Dack, T. Collingham, Cooksey, Griffin, Haleem, McNeely, Sheppard, Wyatt and Fenwick-Green.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Allen, Alam, Atkin and Jepson.

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2022

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Transportation Advisory Group that had been held on 30 September 2021.

Agreed: - That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2022 be approved as a true record of proceedings.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES (NOT COVERED BY THE AGENDA ITEMS)

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

3. QUESTIONS ON TRANSPORT ISSUES

The Transportation Advisory Group noted the questions and answers on transport matters that had been submitted in advance of meeting that had been included in the agenda pack.

4. SOUTH YORKSHIRE MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY TRANSPORT UNIT - UPDATE

There was no update available as the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Transport Unit had been unable to send a representative to the meeting to provide an update.

5. BUS OPERATORS - UPDATE

Stagecoach

John Young provided an update on Stagecoach services including:

- How passenger numbers were now at 70% of pre-pandemic numbers, concessionary passenger numbers were lower at 55-60% of pre-pandemic numbers.
- A national campaign was being planned to encourage passengers to return to using services.

- The Government funding that had been in place during the pandemic to enable transport providers to maintain services would be remaining in place until the end of September 2022. Discussions were taking place with the SYMCA Transport Unit with regards to what services would look like past September.
- There were adequate staff, including drivers, to maintain reliable services across the network.

The Chair noted that the passenger numbers detailed were average numbers across the network and that as such some services would be being used by much higher numbers of passengers than others. The Chair noted his concern for how this would impact on the provision of services when the financial support from the Government ended.

First Group

Paul Hopkinson provided an update on First Group services including:

- How similarly to Stagecoach, passenger numbers were now at 70% of pre-pandemic numbers, concessionary passenger numbers were lower at 55-60% of pre-pandemic numbers. The slow return of concessionary passengers was an issue of particular concern.
- Staffing was still an area of concern, particularly on Sheffield services.
- Discussions were taking place with the SYMCA Transport Unit with regards to what services would look like past September when financial support from Government ended. It was noted that difficult decisions on the provision of services would need to be made.

Members asked whether there were any plans to expand the scheme that was currently in place in Doncaster that enabled passengers to use a payment card for multiple short journeys over a day with the overall price capped at the cost of a day ticket. Paul Hopkinson noted that he was not aware of any plans to expand the scheme but advised that he would check and confirm to members after the meeting.

Members noted their concern regarding the reduction of weekend services and how this would impact on resident's ability to get to work. Paul Hopkinson assured members that these concerns would be taken into account. John Young noted that work was being carried out to establish priorities for services and advised that access to employment would be a key factor in these considerations.

Agreed: - That the updates be noted.

6. RAILWAY OPERATORS - UPDATE

Northern

Lisa Maloney provided an update on Northern services including:

- The new timetable that had been introduced at the start of May was working well.
- The latest available figures showed that 66% of services arrived on time with 98% of services arriving within 15 minutes of the scheduled arrival time.
- Overall passenger numbers were at 80% of pre-pandemic levels. Season ticket journeys were at 40% of pre-pandemic levels. Leisure travel journeys however remained strong.
- It was hoped that following driver recruitment and training, and subject to the bids for finance that had been made that services that had recently been cut could be reinstated from December 2022.
- The RMT Union had voted for strike action. There were currently no further details on how this would impact Northern services. It was noted that the RMT would have to give two weeks' notice of any planned strike action. Members were advised that Northern would be looking to negotiate a solution in advance of any strike action taking place.

The Chair noted with concern the issue of the non-collection of fares on busy services and the implications that this would have on revenue and the sustainability of services. Lisa Maloney advised that these concerns would be looked into.

Members noted their concern about the cuts in rail services from Swinton noting the dissatisfaction that this had concerned locally. Lisa Maloney noted that it was hoped that these service reductions would be temporary and had been made in order to ensure service reliability in the face of difficulties regarding staffing. It was noted that it was hoped that services would be reinstated later in 2022.

Agreed: - That the update be noted.

7. DONCASTER SHEFFIELD AIRPORT - UPDATE

Agreed: - That the Minutes of the meetings of the Doncaster Sheffield Airport Consultative Committee included in the agenda pack be noted.

8. RMBC TRANSPORTATION UNIT - UPDATES

Andrew Moss, Interim Head of Transport Infrastructure, attended the meeting to provide a progress report on the work of the RMBC Transportation Unit.

The progress report provided information on:

- The Integrated Rail Plan. Further to the government's decision at the end of 2022 not to approve the IRP, updates on remaining rail projects such as the Sheffield-Leeds Corridor improvements were expected. This was now expected in September 2022.
- The formation of Great British Railways (GBR) has already been announced relating to the proposed changes for the management of the rail network moving from the Network Rail model to the Great British Railways model. A consultation had been launched in February to identify the location of the new GBR Headquarters, of which Doncaster was among many other potential authorities to submit their bid and Rotherham Council has made clear its support for the Doncaster bid.
- Discussions were taking place with operators and SYMCA regarding the provision of bus services once Government financial support ends in September 2022.
- The government has issued a new guidance for the refresh of local transport plans. Consultation activity would start to take place over the coming months within the City Region.
- The continuing work regarding submitting bids for additional funding on the capital programme for the development of a station at Waverley and the development of a station in the north of the Borough.
- SYMCA's bid to Government to for its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) had been unsuccessful with no funding having been granted at all. It was noted that the SYMCA remained committed to progressing the bus corridor improvement schemes that were already in the pipeline under the City Regions Sustainable Transport Settlement. (CRSTS) programme

Members asked whether the decision by Government not to award any funding in support of the Bus Service Improvement Plan could be appealed. Andrew Moss advised that feedback on the bid would be received in due course and may be used by SYMCA to formulate a revised bid to Government for funding.

Members asked whether there was a start date for the start of the consultation on the A630 Doncaster Road TCF Scheme. Andrew Moss

advised that the consultation should start during Summer 2022.

Members asked for further information regarding the cost of public transport and that in some circumstances that using a taxi could be cheaper. J Young (Stagecoach) advised that public transport costs in the region were amongst some of the lowest in the country and that there were a range of competitively priced group travel tickets available that made using public transport a good value way of getting about. Andrew Moss explained the current challenges underpinning the comparison of public transport costs with motoring costs.

Agreed: - That the update be noted.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business for consideration.

10. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Agreed: - That the next meeting of the Transportation Advisory Group be held on Wednesday 27 July 2022 at 10am as a Microsoft Teams meeting.