

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY GROUP
Wednesday 25 October 2023

Present:- Councillor Allen (in the Chair); Councillors Aveyard, Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Browne, Griffin, Keenan and McNeely.

Also present were Nathan Broadhead (SYMCA), Paul Hodgkinson (First Group), Gavin Roome (Stagecoach Yorkshire) and Adrian Parkinson (Rotherham Community Transport).

Apologies for absence were received from The Mayor (Councillor Taylor), Councillors Beck, Clark, Z. Collingham, Cusworth, Ellis, Foster, Hoddinott, Lelliott, Mills, Pitchley, Yasseen and Jepson (Anston Parish Council).

60. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 26TH JULY 2023

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th July, 2023.

Agreed:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th July, 2023, be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

61. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Arising from Minute No. 52 (Rotherham Railway Station Ticketing Office), although there was no response to the ending of the consultation regarding the ticketing office staff, Councillor Griffin requested that a discussion take place at the next meeting.

Agreed:- (1) That the outcome of the consultation be reported to the next meeting.

(On 31st October, 2023, it was confirmed that the proposal to close ticket offices had been scrapped - [Plans to close rail ticket offices in England scrapped - BBC News](#))

Arising from Minute No. 52 (City Fibre), Councillor Griffin raised the issue of works taking place in his Ward and the impact on bus services. It had become clear that City Fibre did not consult with the public before commencement of any works.

Matt Reynolds, Head of Transport Infrastructure Service, explained that there were formal statutory processes in place that undertakers had to comply with to make temporary changes to the highway network. All relevant organisations were informed and the SYMCA liaised with the bus operators.

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Simon Moss, Assistant Director, Planning, Regeneration and Transportation, confirmed that work undertaken by City Fibre was not a Council contract and funded by themselves. There was still a year left on their rolling programme of works with the next phase being in the Wath area.

One.Network was a publicly available website made up of a map showing exactly where there were permits in place at the moment – City Fibre, Yorkshire Water etc.

The Chair suggested that the website be included in the Neighbourhood bulletins to raise awareness of it in the communities.

Agreed:- (2) That an article be included in the Neighbourhood bulletins on One.Network.

Arising from Minute No. 52(2) (Changes to No. 10 Bus Service), Nathan Broadhead, Bus Partnership and Development Manager, SYMCA, reported that the No. 10 service was fully funded by the SYMCA since being cancelled by First Bus in 2022. There had been a minor timetable change to accommodate re-routing of an essential school bus journey as well as other re-routing. The timetable changes had been communicated in advance and unfortunately affected one passenger in particular, however, they had been essential to accommodate bus movement.

Arising from Minute No. 53 (1), the email will be forwarded to all Members relating to the level of young people that may be affected by the removal of the Zoom Beyond bus pass.

Agreed:- (3) That the information be forwarded to all Elected Members. *(The following information was received after the meeting – “As of September 2023 there were 4,472 Zoom Beyond travel passes in circulation where the address is specified as ‘Rotherham’.*

I don't have specific journey data for Rotherham, however for South Yorkshire as a whole, in the last 12 months, there were 2.3m journeys made by around 37,000 passholders using the Zoom Beyond concession.” Information sent by Paul Foers, Commercial Analytics Manager, SYMCA.)

(4) That Northern Rail be asked if the film around encouraging reporting and raising awareness of unwanted sexual behaviour across the rail networks could be shared to Elected Members once it was available (Minute No. 56 refers).

(Following the meeting Northern Rail supplied the link – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IA44zrHaW30>)

62. QUESTIONS ON TRANSPORT ISSUES

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

In response to the question submitted by Councillor Castledine-Dack and answer received, Nathan Broadhead reported that anti-social behaviour covered all areas of South Yorkshire and particularly increased at this time of the year resulting in some bus services being pulled from certain areas.

SYMCA and the operators funded a South Yorkshire Police Sergeant. The Police helped/supported and worked with the operators including a Trojan Bus Scheme where they travelled on business. There was an increased presence at the moment in key areas with Dinnington Interchange being one of them. It was difficult for the operators as they had to protect their drivers, vehicles and passengers; they did not pull out of estates until the point where they were putting people's lives at risk. No services had been pulled from Dinnington but they were missing parts of the route. The Police had action plans specifically for that.

Simon Moss, Assistant Director, Planning, Regeneration and Transportation, reported that, from the regeneration perspective, Dinnington was part of the Levelling Up Fund Scheme looking at the public realm in Dinnington High Street. Consideration was being given as to how better open those elements of public realm so there was more natural surveillance of the Interchange and the urban realm was more open. The anti-social behaviour element was part of the consideration.

In response to the question submitted by Councillor Pitchley and answer received, Nathan Broadhead gave a current update on what may be possible but as yet could not be confirmed.

First Bus had made the commercial cuts for the removal of services in south Rotherham which was a decision they could make. SYMCA were now spending £21M, where they used to spend £7M, on public services and buying back the vast majority of the south Rotherham network. SYMCA had replaced buses on an hourly basis which was the standard they replaced services on.

However, there was an option to look at re-routing service 26 so the journeys that normally ran to Wales before going to Thorpe Salvin could go via Swallownest first.

Discussions had taken place with the operator. From now until mid-December that was on a temporary timetable because of the major roadworks taking place at Harthill and Woodall. After that point, probably January 2024, options were being considered to reinstate something for Crystal Peaks from the Aston/Swallownest area. It would not be all the

way from Rotherham or provide a link from Crystal Peaks to Rotherham but it may be possible to link the service 26 into Swallownest through Swallownest High Street, potentially around some of the estates as well.

In response to the question submitted by Councillor Hoddinott and answer received, Nathan Broadhead reported that, following on from Matt's comments in the previous Minute, there was a really good process with the 4 South Yorkshire district, bus operators, SYMCA and the respective Highway Teams. However, it could be challenging at times.

**63. SOUTH YORKSHIRE MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY
TRANSPORT - UPDATE**

Nathan Broadhead, Bus Partnership and Development Manager, gave the following presentation on the bus services update and contract awards:-

Background

- Approval at 31st July SYMCA Board to tender evening and Sunday bus services at a lower frequency to ensure maximum coverage
- Tender exercise commenced in August with deadline of 31st August
- In order to remain within budget, frequency of evening and Sunday services to a mixture of 60, 90 and 120 minute frequency
- Tenders assessed, contract award recommendations prepared and produced together with implications at a service level
- Contract awards issued to operators on the basis of the recommended approvals who had then registered changes ahead of the 29th October service change date
- Confirmed annualised budget of £5.9M available for evening and Sunday tenders

Initial Tender Analysis

- For tenders from operators for evening and Sunday services – total costs £5.82M compared to budget of £5.9M
- Able to protect all of the evening and Sunday network based on affordability albeit at reduced frequency and with some service amendments and combined services to maintain coverage
- Evening and Sunday services which had not run since October 2022 had not been tendered and were not proposed to be reinstated
- Average cost per passenger by local authority ranged from £0.80 to £1.52 with a regional average of £1.17 but the highest overall was £31.25
- On the high cost per passenger services, other better value for money solutions would continue to be explored and replaced where possible

Implications

- The final set of contract awards for evening and Sunday services were the last remaining component of bus service tenders which took SYMCA through to as a minimum April 2025
- Been able to protect daytime tendered services to July 2026, non-statutory school services to July 2025 and evening and Sunday services to March 2025
- Total tendered service budget increase from £7M in 2020/21 to £18.75M for 2023/24, expected to raise to £21m in 2024/25
- Retention of hourly or better frequency on a number of services across Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield with First and Stagecoach at no extra cost to the MCA
- The new total mileage provided overall was 84.16% of current evening and Sunday mileage being operated (83.70% for evenings and 85.05% Sundays)
- Higher than the expected outcome of the process which would have been nearer to 50% had all services reduced to a 2 hourly frequency
- Belief that in some case operators were seeking to protect their commercial day time services by retaining (at their own cost) improved frequencies in particular to make services remain as attractive as possible to passengers that relied on evening (or Sunday) services to fulfil their journeys
- Not been able to protect all services at current frequencies and seeing an approximate 16% reduction in frequency for evening and Sunday. Each local authority had services which would reduce frequency
- Some passengers would still face a reduction on their current hourly service to every 2 hours
- Need to ensure operators ran the lower frequency contracts reliably to avoid unacceptable gaps in service

Implications for Rotherham

- Retention of 20 services in the evening and 21 services on Sunday
- Reduction in frequency in the evening to 87.9% of current frequency and 90.2% on Sunday
- 94% of current passenger demand in the evening protected and 97% on Sunday
- Average cost per passenger combined for evening and Sunday services of £1.42

Recommendations and Next Steps

- Leaders had been taken through the outcome of the tender process as well as briefings of Executive Directors and/or senior transport officers
- Stakeholder communications updated and issued on the basis of the information contained within the briefing
- Work with SYMCA Communications Team to ensure consistent messaging on the reason for the changes and how they related to the funding changes in South Yorkshire. The Mayoral Bus campaign had run throughout September and October

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- Timetable changes and customer-facing information had started being prepared from 18th September in readiness for timetables to be updated online and at bus stops around 2 weeks ahead of the service change date
- 100% of digital (PDF) timetables updated on the Travel South Yorkshire website for passengers
- Timetable printing to distribute to stops commenced on 13th October with timetables at stops updated between 17th-26th October
- The service change came into effect on Sunday, 29th October

South Yorkshire Fare Changes – came into effect as from 1st November, 2023 Bus Fare Cap

- A child single fare would change to £1 instead of 80p with a valid Zoom under 16 or 16-18 pass
- The adult single fare cap remained at £2. The fare cap remained in place until December 2024

Zoom Beyond 18-21

- 80p fare would be withdrawn
- A new flat fare of £1.50 would be available for Zoom Beyond cardholders on services run by First, Stagecoach and TM Travel and £2 on Supertram

For more information go to travelsouthyorkshire.com/farechanges

Discussion ensued on the presentation with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- SYMCA had done everything it could to protect the network. The pressures that existed were completely out of their control
- Publication of the changes to the Zoom card had been seen in communities

Agreed:- That the presentation be circulated to all Members.

64. BUS OPERATORS - UPDATE

First Group

Paul Hopkinson, Network and Schedules Manager, reported that First had no commercial changes coming up but had managed to maintain some of the Rotherham services at the previously level before the tendering round. Some services were being reinstated albeit at 2 hourly frequency on a Sunday.

Operationally, the staffing situation in Rotherham and Sheffield was fairly stable. Patronage was steady at 80% of pre-Covid levels.

Stagecoach

Gavin Roome, Commercial Manager for Stagecoach Yorkshire, reported, that the next service change date was 29th October. As well as all the tender changes, a raft of punctuality improvements was taking place on very much all of the other services Stagecoach operated in the Rotherham area as well as other districts in South Yorkshire.

The staffing situation at Rawmarsh depot was currently in a very good position with passenger numbers around 75-80% of pre-Covid levels.

The electric buses were due to arrive in the first quarter of 2024 primarily on the 22X and 221 routes both of which originated in Rotherham. Work would be taking place at the Rawmarsh depot to get it ready for the vehicles.

The buses were part of the DfT ZEBRA – Zero Emission Bus for Rural Areas – funding with the aim of getting electric buses, with the support of bus operators, within certain areas. Rawmarsh Hill was perfectly placed being within the Clean Air Zone and linking the Growth Corridors from Rotherham and Dearne Valley. A successful bid was submitted for the vehicles.

A further round of funding had been announced - ZEBRA2 – and was being led by SYMCA working with bus operators to ascertain what options were available for future rollout. It did necessitate the buy-in from operators.

Discussion ensued on the practicalities of the vehicles in periods of heavy rain such as what had experienced locally during Storm Babet. Gavin undertook to provide feedback.

Agreed:- That feedback be provided to the next meeting on the reliability of electric buses during periods of adverse weather.
(Information received following the meeting – “It's still relatively early days, but from our latest experience across the UK there are no known areas of concern. Our latest electric buses are performing very well indeed.”)

Rotherham Community Transport

Adrian Parkinson reported that the service was running at 75-80% pre-Covid levels. There had been a recent leaflet drop in a number of areas advertising the provision.

It continued to provide services to local communities for those members of the public that could not use conventional transport.

65. RAILWAY OPERATORS - UPDATE

Due to a family bereavement, Richard Isaacs, Northern Rail, was unable to attend the meeting.

66. RMBC TRANSPORTATION UNIT - UPDATES

Matt Reynolds, Head of Transport Infrastructure Service, gave the following powerpoint presentation:-

Moor Road Cycleway

- Now complete

Manvers Bridge

- Completed ahead of programme and under budget
- Hoping to be operational very shortly

Recent Events

- Working tirelessly since Friday, 20th October to try and make sure that, from a transport perspective, routes were managed as much as possible
There had been last minute changes to bus routes where there had been flooding
- Trying to get roads back open as safely as possible working within the confines of getting the drainage, traffic signals up and working and the roads safe for use. However, a lot of people had abused some of the restrictions and therefore got stuck having gone through flood water. This was despite road closure signs
- It was hoped to get thing back to normal as soon as possible

Transforming Cities Schemes

- All on site

HS2 and Network North

- Development of a Network North
Improved connectivity between towns and cities known as Northern Powerhouse Rail
- Electrification between Sheffield and Manchester
Hope Valley Line improvements and 42 minute journey time
- Electrification between Sheffield and Leeds
Links to the HS2 to Leeds Terms of Reference but safeguarded land still exists
- Road Schemes
A shift in narrative and road building schemes mentioned for the first time for a long time
Road schemes had a place certainly for unlocking existing congestion but were timebound. Parkway widening was a good example – provides short term relief on congestion but would fill up at some time. A more sustainable approach was to re-mode people/change perceptions and find alternative ways of getting around. First time in long time that Government committed to building road schemes
- Bus Funding
Money made available to local bus services and the fare cap extension

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- HS2
Was still happening but between London and Birmingham

Network North (DfT document - Transforming British Transport) for Rotherham

- Rotherham Mainline Station
Connections to Leeds, Newcastle, Birmingham and potentially London
- Waverley Station – Sheffield to Lincoln
- Barrow Hill Line Re-opening
Existing freight line
Sheffield to Chesterfield potentially link into Stocksbridge
- £2 Bus Fare Cap
Extended to the end of 2024
- Bus Service Improvement Plans
Noted to fund hundreds of 'new' local bus routes
- Potholes
£8.3bn to fix potholes nationally. Within the northern area it was £3.3bn
- Supertram Renewal and Extensions
Not clear what this meant
Supertram was returning to public ownership as from the new financial year
- Local Transport Funding
CRSTS2 allocations had been increased from £0.9bn to £1.4bn for South Yorkshire
- Contactless Smart Ticketing – across the country

Network North Reflections

- Not actual funding commitments – not costed or included in the Autumn Statement
- Much of it was already funded so already budgets in place
- Not northern – it was national
- Ambiguity around status. No consultation or subject to formal testing
- Still required business case assessments
- There was a distinct lack of strategic clarity
- No mention of Doncaster Sheffield Airport

Bus Service Improvement Plans

- Established after Covid to strategically manage declining bus patronage
- Aligned to investment in bus priority and other measures in the National Bus Strategy
- Asked to be ambitious to harness funding for local bus services
- Linked to either an Enhanced Partnership or Bus Franchising
- April 2022 South Yorkshire bid received £0
- October 2023 confirmed additional funding to improve bus services:
 - 'Get Around for £2' cost of living support scheme will be extended from 1st November to 31st December, 2024

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- £3.1M for South Yorkshire in both 2023/24 and 2024/25 for bus services improvement with an additional £7.8M revenue allocation in 2024/25

Plan for Drivers – sets out what the Government expect to see

- 30 point plan aimed to make driving easier
- Appears to be contradictory to other policies – Gear Change and the National Bus Strategy as well as planning policies
- Bus Lanes
- 20 mph zones – only where they are needed and enforceable
- 15 minute neighbourhoods and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods
15 minute neighbourhoods had been misrepresented many times – the aim was to try and get people to use services that were within 15 minutes of their home
Low Traffic Neighbourhoods – been in place for a number of years some of which have been very successful
- Calls for more enforcement (permits for utility companies etc.) but also less enforcement (disobeying traffic laws etc.)
- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Guidance awaited

Local Neighbourhood Road Safety Schemes

- Tranche 1 moving into delivery
- Tranche 2 moving into project mandate stage
- Managing major increases in costs

General Updates

- Closure of rail station ticket offices
No feedback as yet
Rotherham's response submitted as well as contribution to SYMCA's response
- Local Transport Plan Update
Guidance still not released and not sure given recent announcements
Looking to do some engagement and consultation early to define local needs and thoughts

67. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to report.

68. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That a further meeting be held on Wednesday, 6th March, commencing at 10.00 a.m. held via Microsoft Teams.