

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY GROUP
Wednesday 26 July 2023

Present:- Councillor Beck (in the Chair); Councillors Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Castledine-Dack, Griffin, Pitchley and Sansome.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Andrews, Ball, Baker-Rogers, Brookes, Browne, Burnett, Z. Collingham, Cooksey, Cusworth, Elliott, Fisher, Havard, McNeely and Wyatt and Mr. C. Jepson, Anston Parish Council.

50. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 May 2023.

Agreed:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2023 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

51. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

52. 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 had been included in the agenda pack.

- In response to the question submitted by Councillor Bacon and answer received, the Chair advised that this question had been raised on several occasions before, the X5 bus service was the main bus that serviced the South and South-West side of the Borough, however demand from Todwick was too low to justify the service.
- In response to the question submitted by Councillor Griffin and answer received, Councillor Griffin asked whether there had been an Equality Impact Assessment completed to take into consideration disabled people's usage of Rotherham Station and to what extent there would be consideration within the consultation, to people's concerns regarding the closures. The Chair advised that Rotherham Council had written to the relevant authorities on this matter, with an aim of preventing the decision and to ensure the correct due process would be followed to close the ticket office.
- In response to the question submitted by Councillor Griffin and answer received, Councillor Griffin advised that the answer received did not cover the question asked. The question was regarding City Fibre and whether information had been provided to

users of public transport regarding diversions, an example was provided of the number 21 bus service in Whiston that had been diverted for a few days.

- The Chair raised a question as to what the process was for bus companies to be made aware of utility companies or other relevant companies creating diversions on roads. Andy Wright from South Yorkshire Combined Authority (SYMCA) advised that SYMCA had regular dialogue and notifications of disruptions, including the duration and nature of the works on the highway from all four districts including Rotherham. SYMCA engaged with the relevant transport operators to advise of the disruptions, agree diversion routes and ensure notices provided on the effected bus stops. A challenge to this process was that often organisations such as City Fibre did not comply with the anticipated schedule of work, this led to SYCA requesting a revised schedule and re-communicating this to transport operatives and transport users.
- In response to the question submitted by Councillor Pitchley and answer received, it was advised that the number 27 bus service was ceased as the result of a commercial decision, due to low demand and alternative bus service provisions were available.
- The Chair advised that there had been a change to the number 10 bus service timings that serviced Maltby to Doncaster with no notice. The Chair requested an action to reflect this due to the challenge bus service users are facing as a result of the change, for example accessing the prison and health services in Doncaster.

Agreed:-

- 1) That the Head of Transport Infrastructure Service review the process and coordination regarding notifications of disruptions to the highways process.
- 2) That the Group lead for Transport Planning Policies liaise with First Buses regarding the changes to the number 10 bus service timings.

53. BUS SERVICE CHANGES UPDATE

Andy Wright from SYCA gave a verbal update to the group on bus service changes.

- Regarding the challenges moving forward, bus patronage was 75% to 80% of pre-pandemic levels, this was affecting commercial sustainability on some routes and had led to the reduction in frequencies of services and service withdrawals. There was no evidence to suggest that the reduction in frequencies of services and service withdrawals would increase.
- An area of concern was the reduction in the purchase of the elderly

people's passes and these highlighted the challenges faced by different age and mobility profiles in accessing public transport, caused by a variety of reasons such as confidence in the safety of travel due to it being a confined space.

- Community transport was also facing the same challenge as patronage was drastically reduced compared to pre-pandemic levels.
- The SYMCA awarded a significant number of tenders for a three-year duration for daytime services. SYMCA were unable to commit to funding evening and Sunday services due to the required total cost being 11 million pounds a year and the SYMCA only had 4 million pounds available to contribute.
- There were on-going discussions with the leaders of four main transport operatives with the SYMCA regarding how to progress and ensure longer term provisions on evening and Sunday services.
- There had been a published paper considered by the SYMCA which sought tenders for a reduced frequency at those times, to ensure a minimum of an hourly service on evenings and Sundays for employment sites and routes past hospitals. This process had begun and there would be formal sign off from SYMCA on the 31st of July with the changes being implemented from the 1st of November.
- To be able to implement the changes discussed, the SYMCA considered policy changes, this included reviewing the offer of the young person's Zoom discount fare, with the intention of raising the fare from seventy pence up to one pound from the 1st of October.
- Another policy change considered was withdrawing the Zoom Beyond offer, which enabled people between the age of eighteen to twenty-one to travel for eighty pence. Once approved, the two policy changes would relieve an estimated amount of two and a half million pounds of savings for SYMCA, which would then be re-invested to secure additional bus services.
- The Department for Transport had confirmed that additional funding of 3.1 billion would be allocated to the SYMCA for the financial year, with a further 3.1 billion anticipated, but not yet confirmed for the period of 2024 to 2025.
- Although this was not an insignificant amount of funding, it was a significant reduction to the level of funding that the MCA had received in previous years. The funding allowed the SYMCA to support existing services and purchase additional tendered services. The funding was welcomed, and the MCA were progressing discussions with operators to secure services going forward to ensure stability.

The Chair thanked Andy Wright for the update and welcomed questions from members which led to the following discussion points being raised:

- There was an annual budget agreed, with longer term forecasting

as contracts covered a period of three years on average and were not re-tendered annually.

- The transportation market was a de-regulated market and operators worked on a commercially viable basis. The cost-of-living crisis had increased costs and decreased profitability. There had been a reduction in patronage, increase in fuel cost and an increase in labour costs.
- The bus operators would determine whether a particular service was commercially viable and would withdraw services that were not.
- The SYMCA role was to fill as many of gaps within the networks as possible, within the financial resources that were available.

Agreed:-

- 1) That information be provided by the SYMCA to all members in writing, relating to the level of young people that may be affected by the removal of the Zoom Beyond bus pass.
- 2) That the link to the website containing the information on the changes considered by the SYMCA be provided to all members via email.

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

This item was covered in minute number 54.

55. BUS OPERATORS - UPDATE

1) First Group:

There was no representative in attendance from the First Group gave a verbal update to the group.

2) Stagecoach:

Joel Musgreave from Stagecoach provided a verbal update to the group.

- Stagecoach was in a state of transition focusing on moving forward from October.
- Stagecoach was now the biggest bus operator in Rotherham and had recently re-introduced many bus services, such as the 114 and the 138 service, which were both services that Stagecoach did not operate before.
- There had been changes made to the 223 service which was now the 227 service, because of local requests to operate a service to Swinton via Wath.
- The operator was covering more area and there had been no reductions in services.

- There were positive steps to re-instate services for the benefit of local communities and there was currently a patronage of 73%.

The Chair thanked Joel Musgreave for the update and welcomed questions from members which led to the following discussion points being raised:

- Stagecoach endeavoured to cover as many areas as possible that were previously served by other operators and had been withdrawn. Stagecoach was open to discussions around potential new services and were happy to engage and amend routes within the resources available.
- There were no formal consultations scheduled before November and any changes to proposed bus routes would be consulted on in due course. Consultation resources had been diminished post-pandemic. The aim was from November that the service would get back to a level playing field and there would be more active participation in engagement and consultation activities.
- The SYMCA stated that there was a challenge around obtaining government grants that had previously helped to sustain services throughout the pandemic, these were reducing and the SYMCA recognised that operators had financial support through these grants.
- There were risks associated with reductions in revenue support that the operators had previously and the knock-on effect to the viability of services in the future. There would always be a risk of further reductions.

3) Rotherham Community Transport:

There was no representative in attendance from Rotherham Community Transport to provide an update.

Agreed:- That the Chair contacts First Group to discuss future attendance at Transportation Advisory Group meetings.

56. RAILWAY OPERATORS - UPDATE

Richard Isaac from Northern Rail gave the following verbal update:

- There was a major piece of work being undertaken around the future of stations across the industry that was launched earlier in July.
- The consultation period for the future of the stations was due to close today but had been extended due to the size of the network for two further days and would end on the 28th of July.
- Colleagues were encouraged to comment on the impact of the proposed changes to the staffing of rail stations.
- It was highlighted that the timings of the new role of "Journey Maker" for attendance at several stations in South Yorkshire, were

not set in stone and were yet to be decided.

- There would be a full equality impact assessment completed for every station impacted by the proposed changes.
- Northern Rail were looking at the mobilisation of the changes from early next year and employees at Northern Rail had been advised of the voluntary redundancy process.
- In context, of the 149 stations where Northern had a staff ticket office across the network, the proposed changes would reduce that number to 18. This included the proposal for no staff ticket office at Rotherham, Swinton and Meadowhall.
- There would be a "Journey Maker" in attendance at these locations, however the hours would be drastically reduced from the current staffing hours.

The Chair thanked Richard Isaac for the update and welcomed questions from members which led to the following discussion points being raised:

- The consultation was industry wide, and members were advised to comment on the consultation and have an input into the "Journey Maker" availability at the stations. The "Journey Maker" would be there to assist customers and there was the opportunity within the consultation period to amend the current proposed hours for this role.
- There was industrial action scheduled for Saturday 29th July which would result in services being significantly reduced. The key route strategy would be run and this would affect services on Friday as they would finish earlier and services would start later than usual on Sunday.
- There was a strike by a trade union scheduled for the following week and this would impact service delivery for a further few weeks. This would have a big impact on customers as it would coincide with the summer holidays.
- Northern Rail were hoping to engage with engineering links from colleagues within the Rotherham area around opportunities for Northern Rail's engineering depots in Leeds and Hull. There would be a visit there in autumn to highlight the engineering opportunities that were available in the industry.
- There was a shortage of engineers in the industry and Northern Rail were hoping to engage and open opportunities up to young people in South Yorkshire, an update on this would be provided to the group in due course.
- The Railway Guardian App had been re-launched and it was recommended that colleagues download and share the app to raise awareness across their networks.
- A group of young people from Bradford City Football Club were in the process of creating an awareness raising film on the app. This was predominately young women between the age of sixteen to twenty and the film was focused on the need to report unwanted sexual behaviour across the rail network.
- This was part of a national scheme to encourage people to report

incidents of this nature, to ensure better intelligence for operators to address unwanted sexual behaviour on the network if it became apparent.

- The short film would be made available to members towards the end of September.

Agreed:- That Northern Rail would share the film around encouraging reporting and raising awareness of unwanted sexual behaviour across the rail network to all members once it was available.

57. RMBC TRANSPORTATION UNIT - UPDATES

Matthew Reynolds, Head of Transport Infrastructure Service presented a presentation to the group.

The presentation gave an overview the following content:

An update on activities completed since the previous meeting, which covered the following:

- All RMBC TCF schemes that were in delivery.
- Moor Road, Manvers cycleway which was nearly complete.
- CRSTS feasibility ongoing.
- Successful bids, which included the Active Travel Fund 4 relating to studies for active travel infrastructure in Wath and Dinnington.

An update on the LNRS Tranche One, which covered the following:

- Schemes defined and approved in 12 of 13 wards.
- Schemes that were moving into design and delivery.
- Programme.

An update on the LNRS Tranche Two, which covered the following:

- 12 wards that were not prioritised in Tranche One only.
- Letter sent seeking information.
- Officer would meet members in each ward in September to define and agree schemes.

An update on other block funding, which covered the following:

- Minor works, there were eleven schemes across the Borough with a value of £60k.
- Collision Investigation Prevention, including two schemes, one at Bawtry Road, Brinsworth junction with Atlas Street at a value of 1.5 thousand and the second Hard Road, Thurcroft junction with Penny Hill Lane at a value of 37 thousand.

A general update, which covered the following:

- HS2 Terms of Reference were Released by the Department for Transport to look at options to serve Birmingham to Leeds.
- There were various options, including the Eastern Leg (M18).
- The Mainline Station was part of the case.
- Closure of rail station ticket offices included Rotherham and

Swinton. Rotherham Council had objected and provided direct letters to Secretary of State and Rail Delivery Group.

- The National Highways Future of the Strategic Road Network was discussed, Rotherham Council had reinforced their objection to all lane running and smart motorways.
- The use of technology for driver safety and enforcement was discussed.
- Consideration of local highway need and interaction was discussed.
- Greater understanding of the growth agenda and future plans.
- Environmental improvements to the Motorway assets were discussed.
- A Local Transport Plan Update, including the update to the statutory transport plan (LTP).
- Guidance would be released but focus was expected on active travel, public transport, electric vehicles, technology, and carbon reduction.

The Chair thanked Matthew Reynolds for the update and welcomed questions from members. No questions were raised.

58. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to be considered.

59. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved: That the next meeting be held on Wednesday 25 October at 10.00am.