

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY GROUP
Wednesday 13 May 2026

Present:- Councillor Williams (in the Chair); Councillors Adair, Ahmed, Allen, Bennett-Sylvester, Bower, Brent, Clarke, Elliott, Fisher, Harper, McKiernan, Rashid and Sutton and Bob Croxton (Treeton Parish Council).

Also present were:-

Matt Hodson	Stagecoach
Lucy Hudson	Head of Service, Transport and Highways Design
Sarah Loy	SYMCA
Michael Moore	First Bus
Andrew Simpson	Assistant Director Projects, SYMCA
John Young	Stagecoach Rotherham
Dawn Mitchell	Governance Advisor, RMBC

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ball, Baggaley, Currie, Garnett, Sheppard and Taylor; Town Councillor Biggins (Maltby Town Council), Sam Millington (SYMCA) and Dave Skepper (Stagecoach).

58. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11TH FEBRUARY, 2026

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th February, 2026.

Agreed:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 11th February, 2026, be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

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

There were no matters arising.

60. 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 that had been included in the agenda pack.

Further to question 2 from Councillor Baggaley, he had also requested that a map be provided of the diversion route and that a meeting was arranged between SYMCA/First Bus/Treeton Parish Council and Ward Councillors to ensure that the bus diversion route was for the best.

In response, Andrew Simpson had provided a map. He also stated that

the route of the shuttle bus service for Treeton would run from Treeton to Aughton crossroads, then along Pleasley Road to Whiston Crossroads, along West Bawtry Road to Canklow and then Canklow Road and Westgate into Rotherham Town Centre. The map showed the route compared with the usual route of service 95. Anyone wanting to travel between Treeton and Catcliffe would need to change to service 95 at a bus stop between Canklow and Rotherham. A route for the shuttle bus, which also served Brinsworth and Catcliffe, following the route of service 95, had been investigated but this would add 15 minutes to the journey time between Treeton and Rotherham increasing the through journey from around 25 minutes to around 40 minutes.

Further to questions, 2, 3 and 4 relating to the closure of Mill Lane, Treeton, Councillor Adair asked if SYMCA could provide more information with regard to the timetable for the revised bus service.

Further to question 7 from Councillor Bennett-Sylvester, he acknowledged the response that had been received from Rotherham Community Transport, however, he had received further communication from the Gateway Club. Apart from the last minute cancellation of service, there was the matter of lack of communication with service users which, given the nature of the service users, was a real issue. From third party reports, Socialise was also experiencing the same problems.

The Service was felt to be focussing on its school transport contracts and the others losing out which raised the issue of overall sustainability of the service. It was noted that the Interim Transport Service Manager was carrying out work on alternative provisions for it.

Sarah Loy, SYMCA, reported that regular meetings were held with all the community transport operators across South Yorkshire as they were SYMCA funded. Any issues around Rotherham Community Transport should be forwarded to Sarah so that they could be raised them at the meetings.

Agreed:- (1) That Rotherham Community Transport be requested to attend the next meeting to give an update on this matter.

(2) That the Interim Transport Services Manager be requested to keep the Transport Advisory Group informed of any progress made on finding an alternative provision.

(3) That any issues regarding Rotherham Community Transport be forwarded to SYMCA and they be raised in their meetings with the community transport operators.

Further to question 8, Councillor Bennett-Sylvester raised concern with the answer provided by First Bus as he had been there and it did not match the experience on the day.

It was noted that this matter would be discussed outside of the meeting.

61. SOUTH YORKSHIRE MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY TRANSPORT - UPDATE

Andrew Simpson, Assistant Director Projects, SYMCA, gave the following updates:-

Bus Network Update

Recent Changes to the Network

- Service 114 (First Bus) Rotherham-Stag had had additional journeys introduced during the evening on Mondays to Saturdays and during the day time and evening on Sundays starting Sunday, 12th April, 2026
- Service 207 (First Bus) Sheffield-Brinsworth-Rotherham had been re-routed in Attercliffe on journeys towards Sheffield due to a one-way temporary road closure of Attercliffe Road starting Monday, 12th January 2026 and expected to be until Monday, 12th October 2026
- Service X3 (First Bus) Sheffield-Rotherham-Doncaster had been re-routed in Attercliffe on journeys towards Sheffield due to a one-way temporary road closure of Attercliffe Road starting Monday, 12th January 2026 and expected to be until Monday, 12th October 2026
- Service X20 (Globe) Barnsley-Doncaster had been re-routed to serve Wath upon Dearne with changes to the time starting Monday, 13th April 2026

Forthcoming Changes in Rotherham

- Services 26 and 26A (TM Travel) Crystal Peaks-Thorpe Salvin will have minor changes to the times to assist with punctuality starting Monday, 27th July 2026
- Service 70A (TM Travel) Sheffield-Woodhouse-Meadowhall will be run by First Bus instead of TM Travel starting Sunday, 26th July 2026
- Service 71 (TM Travel) Sheffield-Harthill will have additional journeys introduced during the early morning and during the evening, daily from Sunday, 26th July 2026
- Service 226 (Stagecoach) Barnsley-Thurnscoe will have minor changes to the times from Saturday, 25th July 2026

School Bus Service Changes

- Service 620 (Stagecoach) Maltby-Dinnington (Dinnington High School) will have minor changes to the times from Tuesday, 1st September 2026
- Service 664 (L.L.Travel) Low Valley-Wath upon Dearne (St. Pius X High School) will be run by Wilfreda Beehive instead of L.L. Travel starting Tuesday, 1st September 2026

General Update

- SYMCA had secured agreements to stabilise the network until

September 2027

- Free School MiCard Travel Update
 - 18,514 of young people have a MiCard – 110% of the target uptake
 - Over 1.7m journeys had been made with a Barnsley MiCard
 - 64% of the journeys were being undertaken by residents from 3 of Barnsley's most deprived deciles
 - Total child travel in Barnsley was up 63% compared to the same period last year
 - 17 year olds made up the largest age group of those with a MiCard reaching 2,723
 - Sheffield was considering going live in 2027

Bus Franchising Update

Rollout 2027-2029

- The rollout was in 3 tranches Sheffield and Doncaster in tranche 1 (September 2027, Barnsley and Rotherham were tranche 2 and the latter part of Sheffield in tranche 3

Areas of Focus: Main Workstreams

- People
- Tap and Go Cards
- Increasing safety
- Networks
- Quality of the bus – for tranches 1 and 2 in the process of procuring a new EV fleet

Procurement Timeline

- Phase 1 - 2027
- Phase 2 - 2028
- Phase 3 – 2029

Where we are today

- The People's Network was now launched; new transport brand built around the communities it served
- All 6 bus depots were now in public ownership
- Secured additional £33.4m of Government funding that would put 187 electric buses on South Yorkshire's roads
- The search was on: procurement to identify the operators who would run services and the manufacturers who would build the fleet was live

Fleet Specifications

- At the end of 2025 over 3,500 people told SYMCA their priorities were:-
 - More space for wheelchairs, people with disabilities, people with pushchairs
 - Low floor, lowering bus, ramps
 - Priority seating
 - Visual and audio next stop announcements

- CCTV, more cameras, visible cameras
- More hand holds/grab rails
- More visible easier to push stop buttons

Day One Network

- When buses come back under public control, the network will stay broadly the same at first. There would be targeted improvements to some routes and timetables but SYMCA was not redesigning the whole network

Day 1 Enhancements Provide

- Tangible improvements passengers will notice immediately without destabilising the network
- A clear focus on more buses running on time
- A more efficient and effective use of resources and assets
- Deliverable change that avoided over-promising and built confidence in franchising

Approach to Development

- Engagement with local authorities to understand aspirations and priorities
- Responding to known local priorities and customer feedback
- Independent assessment of the network
- Reviewed the known gaps and opportunities for efficiency improvements in the network
- Asking for public feedback until 17th May

What this means for Rotherham – Phase 2 from 2028

- Rotherham services being franchised in 2027 as part of Olive Grove and Leger Way:

Service	Origin	Destination		Current Depot	Current Operator
137/ 137A	Sheffield CC	Rotherham	1.1 OG	Rawmarsh	Stagecoach Yorkshire
70/70A	Sheffield CC	Rotherham	1.1 OG	Halfway	TMTravel
71/71A	Sheffield CC	Harthill	1.1 OG	Halfway	TMTravel
207	Sheffield CC	Rotherham	1.1 OG	OG	First SY
626	Wales High	Crystal Peaks	1.1 OG	Halfway	TMTravel
X1/X2	Sheffield CC	Maltby	1.1 OG	OG/LW	First SY
X3	Sheffield CC	Doncaster CC	1.2 LW	LW	First SY
X5	Sheffield CC	Dinnington/ Doncaster	1.1 OG	OG	First SY

X7	Sheffield CC	Maltby	1.1 OG	Halfway	TMTravel
X11	Sheffield CC	Doncaster	1.1 OG	OG/LW	First SY
X20	Doncaster CC	Barnsley	1.2 LW	Carlton	Globe Holidays

Sheffield CC = Sheffield City Centre
 OG – Olive Grove
 LG = Leger Way

- Other local bus services would be Phase 2 (Autumn 2028). School services would mainly be 2029 but a small number in earlier years

What this means for Rotherham – Phase 2 from 2028

- Advance Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC), Sheffield Business Park and surrounding employment areas from 2027
 - Doubling service frequency from Sheffield to AMRC
 - 3 buses per hour compared to 2 buses per hour between Rotherham and AMRC and extending a service to cover more areas
 - A new direct link between Rotherham and Sheffield Business Park
 - Doubling service frequency from Meadowhall to AMRC
 - Doncaster-iPort-Maltby-Hellaby-Rotherham-AMP-Sheffield Corridor (Service X11) to be a permanent service with additional journeys including a Sunday service
- Crystal Peaks and Meadowhall
 - Improving access to amenities with reinstated service links
- Hospital links
 - Improved co-ordination of services and looking at options to achieve a 10 minute service to/from the hospital
- Equality of service
 - Fixing gaps in service and span of operation caused with the closure of Midland Road
 - Rotherham communities were not impacted due to the legacy decision made by First
- Electrification
 - Prioritising RMBC's AQMA areas and recommending X3 (Fitzwilliam Road) was a priority for electrification

Next Steps

- Electrification of depots would begin later this year getting ready for the new electric buses
- Finalising operator procurement i.e. the operators who would run services for Phase 1 (Doncaster and Sheffield). The process would take until the end of 2026 to complete with an announcement early in 2027
- Announcement of manufacturer(s) who would build the buses would

- be made later (summer 2026)
- Engagement survey now live to gather feedback on proposed principles for the network to check that SYMCA were focussing on the right priorities for day one. The survey was open until 17th May 2026

Demand Responsive Travel (DRT) Update

- RMBC project with SYMCA developing a 12 month Pilot of a Demand Responsive Transport Service focussed on South Rotherham
- Funded through SYMCA's Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) to provide short term support to existing services
- The Service would support connections for:
 - Rotherham Hospital and access to the Town Centre
 - Shopping employment destinations, Dinnington, Meadowhall, Crystal Peaks
 - Local rail and tram interchanges
- Where other services could support travel expectations customers would be directed to them
- DRT would be offered where no other public transport options were available
- Pick-up and drop-offs would operate with physical and virtual stops
- The contracted booking agent, VIA, was a leading operator of demand responsive transport. They would provide day-to-day operations, routing and scheduling technology, a customer Smartphone App and a staffed call centre
- Start date was July 2026

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked a question with regard to connectivity of the different major bus routes and whether it could be looked at.

Andrew Simpson advised that at the present time network stabilisation was the priority. Once the franchising had taken place all the factors, including connectivity, would be looked into and determined whether to be feasible. All the requests were being logged and would be considered in September.

Agreed:- (1) That the updates be noted.

(2) That the Group be updated on the progressing of the franchising at its October meeting.

62. BUS OPERATORS - UPDATE

Michael Moore, First Group, reported that punctuality for Rotherham Town Centre services was good at 85-90% and the other services, which ran in and out of Sheffield and Doncaster, which had a lot of variability, was 78-92%.

Michael shared John's comments with regard to the height of the vehicles and the challenges of some of the road network. First Group had first

generation electric vehicles which had battery packs on the back of the bus but they were no longer manufactured. There had been various discussions with local authorities but it came back to the point of low bridges. The only real option was to lower the height of the road.

There had been some challenges in terms of the X3 service which ran from the Doncaster garage. First Group colleagues in Doncaster had been taking industrial action that was still progressing. Currently extended dialogue was taking place with the trade union with the strikes currently suspended. It was hoped it would soon be resolved.

In order to minimise some of that impact in terms of the uncertainty to the customer, First had taken the decision to move all the X2 services into Sheffield. The X2 from Sheffield to Maltby and Rotherham had been split between Sheffield and Doncaster but everything was now in Sheffield and added to that all the Rotherham work had been relaunched on a rota for Rotherham drivers. It was hoped that it would attract more staff from South Rotherham which had been a struggle to recruit since the closure of the Midland Road garage.

First was working with SYMCA in terms of protecting and maintaining the network. There would not be any fundamental changes to service patterns.

Councillor Fisher asked whether there was any appetite in South Yorkshire for a smaller fleet or whether it was the standard model and capacity of single and double decker buses?

Michael replied that First would continue running its fleet until franchising but understood that SYMCA was under consultation for fleet suggestions, model etc. Clearly one of the challenges was the number of authorities which were progressing with franchising plans, some more aggressive on fleet renewal/new fleet than others. However, that did create a challenge as there were only so many vehicle manufacturers and their capacity to create vehicle numbers in the space of a year.

Andrew stated that it may be that the anchor fleet would never fit the infrastructure; this was where the small-medium operators could possibly come in and it may be a consideration that they picked up the gaps. There were factors that needed to be taken into consideration e.g. commerciality, access, cost effectiveness of lowering the workload in relation to demand and realistically look at where the niche market could be and how the gaps could be filled.

Stagecoach

John Young, Stagecoach Rotherham, reported that service delivery continued to show strong performance. In the last period the operator mileage was 99.85%, lost mileage at 0.15% (290 miles) and punctuality was between 85-88%. These figures had been fairly representative for the last 6 months.

Stagecoach no longer made summer adjustments so there would be no summer timetable.

There would be some timetable changes in July as SYMCA had alluded to at Minute No. 61. However, these were very minor changes.

The Barnsley MiCard had been extremely successful. Stagecoach had had concerns initially with regard to possible anti-social behaviour etc. but it had not really materialised. The passenger numbers spoke for themselves and were really positive to see.

Stagecoach had had their electric vehicles for 2 years and still performing extremely well. The most benefit was seen when a complete depot was converted to electric vehicle operation because you could really start to think about doing things differently and realising all the benefits that electric vehicles brought in every way. A single decker electric vehicle was higher than a single decker diesel engine vehicle which meant sometimes they could not be used on particular routes i.e. Chesterfield and Rotherham (Kilnhurst) so unless a network was changed or a supplier designed a vehicle that was sufficiently low that would be a challenge.

The mileage of an electric vehicle varied depending on the weather i.e. in cold/ wet weather with the use of heaters/demister/wipers and in very hot weather with the use of the air conditioning. Typically 2/3s of Stagecoach's scheduled bus workings could be achieved without a vehicle having to recharge.

Out of the 20 scheduled bus workings 7 of them had to return to the depot around 6.30 p.m. and get a 45 minute boost in order for them to go back out. Obviously the future was unknown as the vehicles aged but currently the typical range was approximately 250 miles.

Stagecoach worked closely with SYMCA and protecting the network between now and the start of franchising.

Rotherham Community Transport

There was no-one in attendance from Rotherham Community Transport.

63. RAILWAY OPERATORS - UPDATE

Richard Isaac, Northern Rail, had contacted the Governance Advisor advising that, due to circumstances out of his control, he was unable to join the meeting.

64. RMBC TRANSPORTATION UNIT - UPDATES

Lucy Hudson, Head of Transportation Infrastructure, gave the following verbal update on the work of the Transport Infrastructure Service:-

Consultations

4 consultations had gone live:-

- Rotherham East/Fitzwilliam Road 27th April-5th June
2 consultation events – 13th May at the Clifton Learning Partnership 2.30-4.30 p.m. and the Unity Centre 5.30-8.00 p.m.
Mowbray Library 1.00-4.00 p.m.
This was the second round of consultation on this issue
- Broom Road/Wickersley Road
12th May-22nd June
A consultation event had taken place the previous day which had been very well attended. The next was on 26th May 2.00-6.00 p.m. at Broom Methodist Church
- A6022 Proposed Improvements
13th April-5th June
Maps and diagrams were available on the website.
- A633 Broad Street
13th April-22nd May

Transportation Capital Programme

- Report had been approved by Cabinet
- Set of pedestrian crossings had been funded for design and build

Minor Works Programme

- Added an extra £80,000 for minor works across Rotherham
- Collating of the information minor works would be stored in a centralised electronic data base which would help to report on issues and collate the information provided

Treeton Main Crossroads

- Funding had been secured for a study
- A working group had been established of interested/concerned people so the study would be on the actual problems being experienced and a scheme devised for what was actually wanted and needed
- The working group met monthly

Ward Road Safety Plans

- Funding to develop 2 tranches over 2 years
- An All Member Seminar was to be arranged to describe each of the Ward Road Safety Plans and which Wards were in which tranche

Structures Repairs

- Fleet Bridge and Old Flatts Bridge – the DfT had recently released a funding opportunity so currently going through the process to try and secure extra money to do more work on Fleet Bridge

There had been feedback that some areas had not received letters/leaflets regarding the consultation. Some had been delivered by hand and others by Royal Mail. It was planned to carry out another hand delivery of leaflets.

Councillor Bower had attended the Broom Road/Wickersley Road consultation event the previous day which had been very well attended. It was a big scheme that residents like some bits of and realised that there were issues in the area that needed to be dealt with. However, the overwhelming majority did not see the benefit of the cycle lane expansion and there was an element of resignation that it would get built any way and that they would be completely ignored.

The Chair reiterated his statement made at Council that no decisions had been made with regard to the cycle lane extension and it was not a far gone conclusion. He urged Members to emphasise that the consultation was a meaningful process and encourage residents to take part and give views on particular aspects of the scheme.

Lucy echoed the Chair's statement and encouraged residents to submit their views on the scheme.

65. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to consider.