

RMBC TRANSPORT LIAISON GROUP
Wednesday, 20th March, 2013

Present:- Councillor Smith (in the Chair); Councillors Andrews, Atkin, Barron, Beaumont, Dodson, Ellis, Falvey, Goulty, Sims, Swift, Whelbourn and Wootton; together with Mr. R. Cox (Stagecoach Yorkshire), Mr. B. Gilligan (First Group), Mr. S. Hewitson (Rotherham Community Transport Ltd) and Mr. A. Wright (South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive).

Apologies for absence were received from The Mayor (Councillor Pickering) and from Councillors Burton, Pitchley, G. A. Russell, R. S. Russell and Whysall; and from Mrs. G. Greensitt (South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive), Mr. S. Rands (Northern Rail), Mr. D. Stevenson (Stagecoach East Midlands) and Mr. R. Tudor (Robin Hood Sheffield Doncaster Airport).

15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 5TH DECEMBER, 2012

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Transport Liaison Group, held on 5th December, 2012.

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

16. MATTERS ARISING

After discussion of the minutes of the previous meeting, it was agreed that reports about the following issues shall be submitted to the next meeting of the Transport Liaison Group, to be held on Wednesday, 26th June, 2013:-

(1) In respect of each transport operator, a report explaining the operator's performance during the previous twelve months (June 2012 to May 2013), including (a) details of compliments and complaints received from the public about the operation of transport services; and (b) information about service punctuality and absences/'lost' bus and rail mileage.

(2) Further to Minute No. 169 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13th March, 2013, a report about the progress being made in response to the transportation issues raised by the Youth Cabinet and other young people as part of the Eleven Million takeover day.

17. UPDATES FROM THE TRANSPORT OPERATORS

(1) First Group

A number of timetable changes are taking place during April, 2013, to try and improve service punctuality (eg: the X78 Doncaster – Rotherham – Sheffield service and also services to hospitals). Ticket prices are to change, eg: an increase of ten pence for a single journey ticket. The

prices of weekly tickets will not reduce in Rotherham from £17 to £13, as operators prefer passengers to purchase the loyalty, longer period travel tickets.

Members expressed concerns about buses not arriving, especially the S33 service to Brinsworth and Treeton. Reference was made to the First Group service No. 14 at Maltby (which integrates with the Powells No. 18 service during the day time). Members asked that the route and timing of this service should be investigated.

Members questioned the increase in the prices of some tickets and the reasons why ticket prices in Sheffield tended to be cheaper than those in Doncaster and Rotherham. It was explained that unit prices are charged, depending upon market forces and business practices.

(2) Northern Rail – no report.

(3) Robin Hood Sheffield Doncaster Airport – the ownership of the airport is changing, so that the airport becomes part of Peel Airports Limited.

(4) Rotherham Community Transport – there are no planned changes to the door-to-door community transport services; details about community transport have been added to the new “Connect to Support” web site for Social Care in Rotherham.

(5) South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive

Changes to services X5 (Thurcroft, Dinnington, Kiveton Park, Sheffield), by the use of double-deck buses; withdrawal of service X12 (Rotherham to Barnsley via Thorpe Hesley and the M1 motorway), the majority of passengers have direct alternatives, although less direct services are available for passengers travelling to Barnsley; the withdrawal of the 18A service (Dinnington, Maltby, Doncaster) and partial replacement with additional journeys on service 18.

Planning meetings have continued between SYPTE, Borough Councillors and officers and operating companies to develop a voluntary bus partnership for Rotherham. The current timetable includes consultation on the proposals during the Summer, 2013 with a view to launching the partnership in early 2014.

Outcomes for SYPTE from the Eleven Million takeover day include:-

- Travel Master investigating ticketing options
- Young people to discuss safety concerns with Rotherham Interchange Manager and see customer safety processes in situ
- Investigating opportunities to include young people’s representation in SYPTE transport user groups, which will be reviewed this

financial year.

- Participation in South Yorkshire-wide young people's bus summit on 27 April 2013
- Maintaining dialogue between young people and the SYPTE

During the last six months, SYPTE has been in contact with forty outlets in the Rotherham metropolitan area to promote the use of public transport to employees. This scheme has involved providing individual journey plans and "taster tickets" to companies as diverse as the Park Gate Retail Centre, Rotherham General Hospital, Rotherham United Community Sports Trust, the Borough Council and schools. The SYPTE education personnel have promoted safe and sustainable travel in many of Rotherham's primary and secondary schools.

A small number of bus shelters have been improved with the use of steel mesh. This method of maintenance has produced a decrease in damage from vandalism and general wear and tear, which in turn reduces maintenance costs.

(6) Stagecoach East Midlands – no report.

(7) Stagecoach Yorkshire

No service changes have been made, although feedback from the travelling public is always being reviewed. There is an increase of ten pence for the price of a single journey ticket. The prices of daily and weekly tickets will not alter.

It is anticipated that a petition will be received about the alterations being made to services 108 and 109 (Rawmarsh). Reference was made to the difficult bus turning manoeuvres at the junction of Rosehill Road and Dale Road, Rawmarsh. Changes to the bus route may be implemented during July, 2013, so as to avoid the difficult bus manoeuvre.

Members expressed concerns about the punctuality of certain services.

It was noted that one outcome of the Eleven Million takeover day was the need for young people to have direct access, using public transport, from the Wath upon Dearne and Rawmarsh area to Meadowhall, instead of having to change buses at the Rotherham transport interchange.

The public consultation process about bus services to the Dearne area had also included services 19, 19A and 19B affecting Dinnington, which had been confusing for the travelling public. No significant changes were expected to be made to these services for Dinnington.

18. **UPDATES FROM RMBC TRANSPORTATION UNIT**

The Transportation and Traffic Manager reported on the proposal to install the South Yorkshire Intelligent Transport System (syITS) and the Urban Traffic Control (UTC) system in and around the Rotherham town centre. The principal purposes of this new technology and systems are to encourage and try and achieve a reduction in journey times and improved reliability of journey times on Rotherham's main highways.

Included in the new systems are traffic signal controls and the provision of information to vehicle drivers. The systems will enhance the traffic signal controls at the College Road and St. Ann's roundabouts and the large, variable message boards providing information for drivers, schemes which received European funding in 2008. Funding for the new systems is provided by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (ie: central Government funds) and also from the Local Transport Plan.

The new systems will link all the traffic signals in the Rotherham town centre area so that they do not act as independent junctions; the sequence of green lights will help to improve overall traffic flow and reduce traffic congestion.

Currently, the variable message boards, which provide advance warnings to vehicle drivers, are located at (i) A630 Rotherway; (ii) A629 Wortley Road; (iii) A630 Centenary Way and (iv) A630 Doncaster Road, Dalton. The funding will enable another seven variable message signs to be installed alongside Rotherham's main highways.

Journey times will be displayed for people (eg: to arrive at the town centre in 6 minutes), providing drivers with 'real time' travel information. After the removal of the Centenary Way fly-over, the proposed signalised junction serving the transport interchange and the new Tesco supermarket will also be linked into the new urban traffic control system.

Improved journey times have been achieved at: the 'Mushroom garage' roundabout (A630 Doncaster Road) and at the Whiston crossroads linking Moorgate with the A631 West Bawtry Road. These junctions use a "Mova control system" which detects and counts vehicles arriving at the junctions, in order to allow a longer time for the green lights to show, according to vehicle demand.

There are more than 100 signalised junctions/pedestrian crossings in the Rotherham area and the monitoring of them will take place from Riverside House.

An information leaflet explaining the new traffic control systems will be published and distributed before the date of the next Transport Liaison Group meeting (26 June 2013); the leaflet will include the locations of the additional variable message boards.

Members discussed the following issues:-

(a) Whiston crossroads – whether the waiting times for vehicles turning right from Moorgate into West Bawtry Road could be improved/shortened by the repositioning of the induction loop which is embedded beneath the carriageway surface;

(b) Broom Avenue ‘no through road’ onto the A6021 Wickersley Road – the implementation of this experimental traffic regulation order had caused some inconvenience by relocating vehicle traffic flows onto Ledsham Road; the Borough Council was hopeful of receiving further comments and feedback from residents and motorists before making any further decisions on the future layout of this highway junction; a report will be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Regeneration and Development;

(c) College Road roundabout – the urban traffic control system will monitor traffic flows on this roundabout and the traffic signals sequence will automatically change according to demand;

(d) Urban Traffic Control – the system could be beneficial in terms of reducing excessive vehicles speeds, because drivers will be halted by the sequence of red traffic lights;

(e) ‘Mushroom garage’ roundabout at the A630 Doncaster Road – transportation officers commented upon the sequence of traffic signals at this roundabout and explained the reasons why the signals appeared to favour the bus lanes even at times when no buses were present;

(f) Roundabout at Junction 1 of the M18 motorway at Bramley/Hellaby – it was noted that this motorway junction was the responsibility of the Highways Agency; it was agreed that the Highways Agency be asked to investigate whether any improvements could be made to the waiting times for vehicles crossing this roundabout, in view of the traffic congestion along the A631 Bawtry Road during the peak commuter hours; it was acknowledged that the congestion is possibly being made worse by additional vehicles displaced from the Anston and Todwick area as a consequence of the construction of the A57 highway improvement scheme. Members heard that future developments for the A631 corridor could include the provision of either a bus, or high occupancy vehicle lane between Addison Road and Denby Way, in order to address congestion issues.

Resolved:- That the information about the South Yorkshire Intelligent Transport System (syITS) and the Urban Traffic Control (UTC) system be received.