

MCA - ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

TUESDAY, 9 AUGUST 2022 AT 2.00 PM

SOUTH YORKSHIRE MCA, 11 BROAD STREET WEST,
SHEFFIELD, S1 2BQ



PRESENT:

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| Mayor Oliver Coppard (Chair) | South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority |
| Councillor Chris Read | Rotherham MBC |
| Pat Beijer | Director of Public Transport Development (SYMCA) |
| Kevin Belfield | Commercial Director, First South Yorkshire |
| Stephen Edwards | Corporate Director of Public Transport (SYMCA) |
| Matt Kitchin | Managing Director, Stagecoach Yorkshire |
| Andrew McGuinness | CPT |

IN ATTENDANCE:

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| Gabriella Kocsis | Minute Taker (SYMCA) |
| Sarah Pugh | Minute Taker (SYMCA) |
| Tim Taylor | Director of Public Transport Operations (SYMCA) |

APOLOGIES:

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| Dawn Badminton-Capps | Bus Users UK |
| Nigel Eggleton | Managing Director, First South Yorkshire |

9 Chair's Welcome and Introductions

The Mayor welcomed all to the meeting and invited attendees to introduce themselves.

Apologies were noted as above.

The Mayor suggested that the agenda be amended to allow item 7, EP Targets Report to be taken first to allow as much discussion as possible. Members agreed to the change of order.

10 Minutes & actions of the previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting.

RESOLVED that open actions were noted and those completed were signed off by members.

EP Targets Report

The Enhanced Partnership Plan suggested targets for 2024/5 as follows:

- 77 million passenger journeys per annum
- 99.5% reliability
- 4% reduction in journey times on corridors where interventions are planned
- 92% average passenger satisfaction.

In addition, the suggested monitoring programme included the following indicators:

- Punctuality
- The proportion of the bus fleet that is zero emission (starting from a baseline of 0%)
- A value for money tracker of the average daily and weekly fare across South Yorkshire.

As part of the regular reporting cycle, a dashboard showing progress against these targets and indicators was prepared. This paper summarised the key issues arising and any actions to be considered by the Board.

ACTION: Members to share their views on the appearance and content of the dashboard with the Director of Public Transport Operations.

A discussion was had around the targets for 2024/5. Mayor Coppard noted that he felt that these targets would not be achieved due to the challenges facing buses in South Yorkshire. Members discussed whether the target should be a hard number or if a percentage of modal travel would better demonstrate the shift in travel choices.

ACTION: M Kitchin and K Belfield to report back to the Board with a projected bus patronage figure following the service cuts in October.

Members noted the difficulty in recruiting and retaining bus drivers. K Belfield noted that First's shortfall at the Olive Grove depot was 72 drivers. This was a national problem with 7-8% shortfall nationwide. This shortage was attributed to a change in priorities relating to employee work/life balance.

A discussion took place around reasons for reduced bus patronage, such as working from home, continuing safety and wellbeing concerns and the recent effects of extreme weather on travel patterns. Possible recovery options were considered, including: encouraging more events in the local area to stimulate demand; reviewing the cost of car parking in relation to bus fares; and working with local business to provide extras to ticket holders (retailer discounts, vouchers, etc.).

ACTION: Officers to collate the information on the reasons for reduced bus patronage and possible recovery options for members to decide on during the next meeting in October.

Members discussed the wide range of data currently available on both users and non-users of public transport and discussed whether the best use is being

made of it to understand current and potential travel demand. Members also considered how existing data could be shared between bus operators and the MCA to help with decision-making.

ACTION: SYMCA to share economic intelligence on travel patterns with bus operators.

Members noted that currently there was little data on passengers and their end travel goals. It was suggested that the Development Group could work on this. Members were informed that there is a company in Sheffield (The Flow) who focus on this area.

The Board considered potential passenger groups who could use the bus more frequently if the service was improved. Members also shared their concern that usage by holders of the elderly concession pass was still significantly below pre-COVID levels, and the ways in which greater use could be encouraged.

ACTION: EP Development Group to create a piece of work which explores better data in terms of travel flows and public movement.

ACTION: Democratic Services Officer to add 'EP Targets Report' onto the November agenda for members to review the targets following the impact of the changes to be made in October.

RESOLVED that the Board:

1. Note the contents of this paper in relation to the delivery of the Enhanced Partnership targets and indicators
2. Provide feedback on the format and approach to the Dashboard
3. Note any expectations on Board members to provide support and decision making where their contribution is required to deliver the targets agreed.

12 **Progress with EP Scheme**

The South Yorkshire Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme was approved by the MCA in March 2022 and commenced on 1 April 2022. The Board agreed to allow a variation of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EPS) in June 2022, driven by further information about funding and delivery.

This paper summarised the progress made in delivering the components of the Scheme, upcoming milestones, risks and issues and any actions to be considered by the Board.

Section 2 of the paper was discussed, and members agreed that it would be helpful to articulate the benefits of the key changes in EPS delivery more clearly to South Yorkshire residents.

RESOLVED that the Board note the contents of this paper in relation to the progress with the Enhanced Partnership Scheme and agree to provide support when required.

New EP Schemes Proposed Priorities

Based on Government guidance at the time, the current EPS only included elements for which funding was already known and committed at the time of its preparation in November 2021. Once more information was available on future central and devolved funding for bus improvements, the intention was to develop further Enhanced Partnership Schemes. This paper summarised the start of this process for early input from the Board.

Out of 40 priorities activities considered, 7 were already included in the current EPS, and 6 were in development with funding being sought through the Levelling Up Fund. There were 27 remaining activities that could form part of future EPS's.

A discussion was held amongst members on the activities listed in Appendix A. It was agreed that some were open to interpretation and could be further refined to identify more specific interventions.

Cllr Read mentioned the gap in activity between October 2022 and March 2024, as demonstrated in Section 2.1, and stressed the need for some action in this timeframe.

ACTION: Officers to look at which of these priorities could be delivered in the next 4-6 months and prepare a paper with suggestions to be agreed on at the October meeting.

It was agreed that 3 priorities (ref 6, 7 and 22 as on Appendix A) could be delivered together as one project to provide consistent presentation of all relevant tickets and travel information with consistent branding regardless of the underlying provider.

ACTION: Officers to further investigate and plan this work prior to the next meeting for members to comment on.

It was also suggested that work could be undertaken with local retailers to allow for bus customers to have access to discounts with a valid ticket. The Director of Public Transport Development and the Director of Public Transport Operations advised members that some initial thinking was underway on this and that they had already met with a potential provider. It was agreed that contributions to this work from the LEP would be helpful.

ACTION: P Beijer and T Taylor to follow up on their meeting with the provider and commence research into similar providers.

ACTION: Officers to engage with L Nickson and the LEP about retailer discounts for bus users.

RESOLVED that the Board note the contents of this paper and provide a steer as to what activities it would prefer to see in future Enhanced Partnership Schemes.

14 **Approval of Variations to EP Schemes**

The Board discussed the Forum Membership Proposal which needed to be established no later than 30 September 2022 to support the creation of the Customer Charter. Given the importance of the work and the need to formally constitute the Forum it was felt that the original deadline should be reviewed. The Board was asked to approve a variation: either of the implementation date or to adapt the language to suggest 'draft'.

ACTION: P Beijer to consider which variation option is best suited and prepare the EP Scheme Variation for EP Board approval in correspondence.

RESOLVED that the Board approved the variation to the EP Scheme.

15 **Forum Membership Proposal**

The MCA Board met on 21 March 2022 and agreed as part of the Enhanced Partnership (EP) arrangements to be implemented from 1 April 2022, an EP Forum would be set up to provide customer representation. Membership of the EP Forum was considered at the first EP Board meeting and the Board determined that Forum membership should be broadened to ensure the wider South Yorkshire community would be represented. This had resulted in a list of 28 representatives (Appendix A) to make up the Forum, which must be established no later than 30 September 2022.

Concerns were raised during the writing of the paper about how functional a forum could be with so many members, so three sub-groups which would meet separately every 6 months were suggested.

A discussion was had around the need for further thought to be given to the timings of the meetings.

ACTION: Officers to work through a timeline of key dates that may affect the timings of Forum meetings.

RESOLVED that the Board approve the EP Forum membership representation as set out in Appendix A and consider the proposed thematic meetings as discussed in Section 2 and set out in Appendix B.

16 **Notification of matters of bus operator confidentiality for meeting records**

This part of the meeting was not minuted due to the consideration of confidential information.

17 **Matters arising**

Members were reminded that it was 'Catch the Bus Month' in September.

The possibility of using the Adult Education Budget to uplift driver shortages was discussed in reference to a case study in West Yorkshire.

ACTION: Officers to discuss with AEB colleagues and bring an update to the next meeting in October.

I, the undersigned, confirm that this is a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed

Name

Position

Date