

## ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP BOARD

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

FRIDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 10.00 AM

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



### Present:

Mayor Oliver Coppard (Chair)

Zoe Hands  
Matt Kitchin  
Andrew McGuinness  
Barclay Davies  
Ross Hitchcock  
Nick Brown  
Paul Castle  
Tim Taylor

South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined  
Authority  
First South Yorkshire  
Stagecoach Yorkshire  
CPT  
Bus Users  
TM Travel (and other small operators)  
SYMCA Executive Team  
Barnsley MBC  
SYMCA Executive Team

### In Attendance:

Sarah Pugh (Minute Taker)

### Apologies:

Councillor Chris Read  
Pat Beijer  
Claire Walters

Rotherham MBC  
SYMCA Executive Team  
Public Bus Users

### 66 Chair's Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Apologies were noted as above.

### 67 Minutes & Actions of the Previous Meeting

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> August be approved as an accurate record.

Updates were provided on the action log as follows:

- Local Authority representatives have been invited to all meetings of the Board, and work was ongoing to look at how their involvement in the Board could be strengthened.
- Work is ongoing regarding the outcomes of the Stagecoach Innovation Day.
- Notes from Enhanced Partnership Forums had now been circulated to Operators.
- A letter has been written to Dawn Badminton-Capps to thank her for her work on the Enhanced Partnership.

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## **Bus Operator Updates**

The Chair invited updates from Bus Operators.

### First

First Bus noted that they were working towards 98% reliability on their services, and highlighted specific services in Sheffield which needed the most improvement.

They noted that punctuality was currently at 79.7% but was generally improving. School routes were highlighted as suffering the most delays.

On recruitment, it was noted that First are 23 drivers short, but are hoping to fill those roles in the next few months.

Doncaster was noted as being the 5<sup>th</sup> best First depot in the country in terms of customer satisfaction, with complaints in the region lower than the national average. The Sheffield depot is at 35<sup>th</sup>.

Officers welcomed the positive direction, and offered to discuss the issue of punctuality of school services further.

**ACTION: Zoe Hands to contact Tim Taylor to discuss dedicated school bus punctuality performance reporting.**

### Stagecoach

The following figures were noted:

- Passenger journeys were up 2.2%, and mileage up 3.9%,
- 89.6% of services were punctual, and service reliability was at 96.3%.

Significant work had been done on strengthening the Stagecoach workforce, and a team of engineer apprentices had been recruited, as well as new roles for highly skilled engineers.

20 new vehicles had been invested in for Sheffield, and a new fleet of electric buses was expected to arrive around Easter 2024.

Service changes on 29<sup>th</sup> October had been largely successful and had created

the opportunity to correct some running times.

Future opportunities for collaboration were noted as better use of partnership marketing budgets, and bids to ZEBRA 2 funding.

Marketing of the 65 bus route as one of the most scenic in the UK had seen a 33% increase in patronage.

**RESOLVED** that the Bus Operator Updates be noted.

69 **Update on First's Use of Prospective Scheduling Software to Improve Punctuality**

The item on First's Use of Prospective Scheduling Software to Improve Punctuality was presented to the Board as part of item 3, Bus Operator's Updates.

Current performance across First services was noted alongside the aim for 90% punctuality. Services with the best performance were highlighted.

Officers welcomed this positive direction and queried whether data is held on the specific causes where punctuality is a problem. It was confirmed that this information is potentially available, and First is looking to work with SYMCA on particular problem areas such as bus lanes which are not enforced well.

The Mayor offered to support any initiatives to raise recognition of good services and recognition of the work of drivers. **ACTION: Zoe Hands to contact the Mayor regarding periodic recognition of drivers.**

It was noted from the recent interim Transport Focus survey that South Yorkshire has higher satisfaction ratings than many other metropolitan areas, which is a testament to the good work of drivers.

**RESOLVED** to note the update.

70 **EP Forum Update**

The Board received a progress report on the work of the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Forum, noting that the most recent forum has considered different techniques for engagement in bus services.

Key points the Forum wished to be reported back to the Board had been:

- The Bus Promise, and an ask about when this would be finalised and published.
- Zoom Beyond, and queries about how the ending of the original scheme could be mitigated.
- Opportunities to share best practice across regions, including looking at use of ZEBRA Government funding.

It was noted that operators had introduced a commercial low fare offer for young people, and recent data had shown more long-distance trips using Zoom Beyond passes, suggesting that there are many more kinds of user than

students alone.

**ACTION: Operators, Project Director Bus Partnerships to share details with the Mayor of how the last bus taxi promise contained in the Bus Promise is implemented and how passengers access it.**

**RESOLVED** to note the update.

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## **EP Progress Update**

The Bus Partnerships Project Director updated the Board on progress against the agreed EP project deliverables and targets.

The following highlights were noted:

- Based on a 6-month interim Transport Focus survey, customer satisfaction in South Yorkshire is in line with the rest of the country, despite lower levels of government funding,
- The IPort bridge project was soon due for completion
- The City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) bus priority programme was progressing, and work was ongoing to allocate remaining Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding across Local Authority schemes,
- Runway resurfacing had taken place at Sheffield and Meadowhall interchanges,
- Frequency of some routes on the network had been maintained commercially, to partially offset some of the impacts of the recent tenders,
- The £2 fare cap has been extended until December 2024,
- Operators were providing a commercial replacement for the Zoom Beyond pass.

The following issues were noted:

- Revenue funding from Government for bus services continues to be low in South Yorkshire, and the Network North funding package of £7.82m is not multi-year and only for 2024/25,
- There had been an increase in anti-social behaviour on the network, exacerbated by darker nights and events such as bonfire night and Halloween. Work was ongoing to address this, and South Yorkshire Police's contribution had been valuable.
- Patronage and punctuality are not reaching performance targets, but punctuality rolling averages were expected to increase following initiatives such as First's use of Prospective analysis.

**ACTION: The Mayor to write to PC Karen Holmes to thank her for her work to tackle anti-social behaviour on the network.**

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The Board notes the updates on the delivery of specific commitments in the EP programme and performance against agreed network targets provided.

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## **Update on Review of EP Documents**

The Board received an update on the Review of EP Documents, noting that:

- Amidst the LTP review and bus franchising assessment work, it was not an opportune time to review the BSIP or EP Plan,
- The EP Scheme is being refreshed,
- The Terms of Reference for the group would be reviewed in light of MCA governance changes.

A query was raised around the level of Network North funding and how this might be used in the region. A response was given that although the Network North funding for South Yorkshire was roughly in line with other metropolitan areas, by head of population, the big disparity from previous BSIP and BSIP plus funding was still unaddressed. The government has not yet clarified how the Network North funding could be used.

Members agreed to lobby collectively for clarity from Government on the use of Network North funding.

**RESOLVED** to note the update.

73 **Items of Confidentiality**

None.

74 **Any Other Business**

The Board thanked Barclay Davies for stepping in for Bus Users UK in supporting the Enhanced Partnership. It was noted that Lydia Horbury has now been appointed as Director for England at Bus Users UK and would be invited to future meetings.

Andrew McGuinness noted the success of the Route to Success driver programme in West Yorkshire, which had seen 100 new drivers employed. He noted that the South Yorkshire programme began 18 months after West Yorkshire, and that he hoped to see similar successes.

**ACTION: Director of Public Transport Operations to contact SYMCA Skills Team to align opportunities to recent areas of job losses in the region.**

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

Signed .....

Name .....

Position .....

Date .....