

ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

TUESDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2023 AT 2.00 PM

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



Present:

Mayor Oliver Coppard (Chair)

Councillor Chris Read

Zoe Hands

Matt Kitchin

Andrew McGuinness

Ross Hitchcock

Lydia Horbury

South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined
Authority

Rotherham MBC

First South Yorkshire

Stagecoach Yorkshire

Confederation of Passenger Transport

TM Travel (and other small operators)

Bus Users

In Attendance:

Nick Brown

Bus Partnerships Project
Director

SYMCA Executive Team

Steven Pleasant

Healthy Life Expectancy Lead

SYMCA Executive Team

Tim Taylor

Director of Public Transport
Operations

SYMCA Executive Team

Stuart Owen

Marketing & Events Officer

SYMCA Executive Team

Karen Holmes

South Yorkshire Police

Graham Vidler

Confederation of Passenger Transport

Sarah Pugh (Minute Taker)

75 Chair's Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.

The meeting welcomed Graham Vidler, Chief Executive of the Confederation of Passenger Transport, Lydia Horbury, the new Director for England of Bus Users UK, and Karen Holmes from South Yorkshire Police.

76 Minutes & actions of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record, with the amendment at minute 67 that "Notes from

Enhanced Partnership Forums had now been circulated to Operators”.

Updates to the Action Log were noted as follows:

- An update had been shared with Officers by First Bus on the inclusion of punctuality data of school services in wider EP punctuality reporting,
- First were developing the idea of a Bus Awards in South Yorkshire and would be contacting the Mayor’s Office regarding this in the new year,
- On the ‘last bus guarantee’ – First and Stagecoach had confirmed that passengers are able to claim back the cost of a taxi but clarity was needed on small operators. The Mayor urged all operators to clarify their policies on this issue.

The Director of Public Transport Operations had liaised with the MCA Director of Skills to align driver job opportunities to areas of job losses in the region.

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Enhanced Partnership Programme Delivery Update

An Enhanced Partnership Programme Delivery Update was presented. It noted that a lack of Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding had prevented greater success of the Enhanced Partnership.

The Report proposed:

- That some better-defined priorities for the Enhanced Partnership be implemented, and that these be based on the most important issues to passengers, including the coverage of the network, punctuality, and a lack of real time information systems,
- That the proportion of buses which are live tracked by operator be a regularly reviewed performance indicator,
- That the Bus Promise be published and used as a method of monitoring the Enhanced Partnership Scheme,
- That marketing around the Enhanced Partnership’s achievements be increased and that greater data and information be shared between members,

It was noted that a revised Enhanced Partnership Scheme is not likely to be available for consideration until May or June 2024.

Members welcomed the report and expressed their commitment to working collaboratively towards its recommendations.

Operators requested that feedback from the Mayor’s public bus meetings be shared so that the issues raised can be addressed. The Mayor highlighted the needs of local employers, alignment of bus and tram times at Middlewood, and issues at hospitals as some of the biggest concerns raised.

ACTION: Marketing & Communications Officer, Project Director Bus Partnerships, operators - In advance of the February meeting, feedback from public bus meetings to be compiled with updates on which issues have been addressed.

A discussion was had on the use of available EP marketing funding. Awareness of the £2 fare cap, rolling out use of City Mapper and a need for

greater analytics capability at the MCA were all highlighted as possible uses.

Graham Vidler noted ongoing research which had identified a 7-8% increase in bus journeys as a result of the £2 fare cap nationally. **ACTION: Graham Vidler** to circulate research when published.

It was noted that the MCA would receive £7.82m in the next financial year following Network North announcements, but that beyond this there was no certainty in long term government funding.

ACTION: Director of Public Transport Operations to invite Operators to internal working group on the roll out of CityMapper, and to provide an update to members before the February meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

1. Notes the progress and outstanding issues across the Board's project deliverables and targets, as set out in the report.
2. Agrees that the Project Director (Bus Partnerships) completes the review of the current EP Scheme, in consultation with the EP Forum, Local Authorities, Bus Operators and SYMCA, with the aim of bringing final recommendations to the EP Board in May or June 2024. The aim will be to refresh the current scope and ways of working with a renewed focus on addressing passenger priorities
3. Approves and publishes the South Yorkshire Bus Promise (Appendix 4) and uses a consideration of how it is to be delivered, alongside addressing ongoing real time customer intelligence, as one of the starting points for the refreshed focus and work programme of the Board. As part of that work the Board agrees that:
 - 3.1 Partners share insights into the issues that are raised through passenger feedback and complaints. This information is used to develop a prioritised list of passenger priorities for improvement, as a direct input into the EP Scheme review, and as a basis for reporting progress to the EP Board in the future.
 - 3.2 SYMCA, operators and councils work to promote CityMapper as a mechanism for better understanding passenger demand; and use this data in the ongoing planning of the network and trialling of new service proposals.
 - 3.3 All future performance reporting to the EP Board includes reporting of vehicle tracking performance.

Requests the Project Director (Bus Partnerships) to develop and consult with partners on a revised overarching 'back to bus' marketing plan that draws from the recently commissioned customer insight work (set out in paragraph 3.6), for consideration at a future meeting.

EP Forum Update

A verbal update was provided on the Enhanced Partnership Forum, which noted:

- Disappointment from members that the Bus Promise had not yet been published,
- Concerns from members regarding cuts to services, and regarding the removal of the Zoom Beyond pass.

The Mayor shared his agreement with these concerns, but noted that the MCA Board had taken difficult decisions in order to protect existing bus services.

It was noted that the meeting had earlier agreed to publishing and rolling out the Bus Promise, and that communicating its aspirations would be key.

ACTION: Project Director Bus Partnerships, operators a meeting to be organised to collaborate on marketing and a release date for the Bus Promise.

Operators noted their commitment to growing the network based on usage data and patterns. **ACTION: Director of Public Transport Operations** to liaise with operators to produce insights on changes in journeys and passenger behaviour following the change to the Zoom Beyond Pass.

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Bus Operator Updates: First and Stagecoach

Updates on performance were provided by Bus Operators.

First Bus:

- A commitment was made to reporting on the live tracking of buses,
- Service reliability remained consistently ahead of the previous year, but traffic has a significant impact on punctuality,
- Changes are due to be made to timetables in January and it was hoped that journey times could be updated to address punctuality issues,
- The X1 and X10 services were amongst the most greatly impacted by roadworks. This is a difficult issue to address but greater work was needed to be agile to roadworks across the network.

A discussion was had on the difficulties of bus prioritisation on highways and pressure created by roadworks. It was noted that roadworks are often out of the control of Local Authorities and the MCA, and that the national skills shortage was exacerbating delays, but that perhaps more could be done to ease the pressures created on the network.

Stagecoach:

- There were 26 driver vacancies, and 68 people in driver training,
- 20 new double decker buses had gone into service in Sheffield, and 23 new electric buses were due to be delivered before March at Rawmarsh,
- Ambitious bids had been made to the ZEBRA fund for more vehicles in the region,
- Punctuality varied on days of the week and is greatly impacted by large events such as football matches. Therefore, creating timetables which reflect day-to-day conditions is very difficult,
- Since 1973 journey times are 36% slower in South Yorkshire, **ACTION: Matt Kitchin** to look in to whether the figure is this high in London,
- **ACTION: Mayor's Office** to write to Dawn, Operations Manager, to thank her for her work at Rawmarsh Depot.

ACTION: Operators agreed to producing shared data on punctuality across the network.

RESOLVED: to note the updates.

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Antisocial Behaviour Update

An update was presented on Antisocial Behaviour, which noted that:

- There are limited resources available to address antisocial behaviour on the network,
- The MCA was working with South Yorkshire Police, schools, and other partners to try to address broader issues which contribute to antisocial behaviour on the network.

Karen Holmes noted that operations had been ongoing in the most targeted areas to try to catch offenders, and that an increase in government funding aimed at addressing antisocial behaviour and violent crime had seen an increase in police visibility at interchanges.

Board members agreed that a focus on tackling the issues at root cause through community engagement and education would be a better and more sustainable approach.

It was noted that the integration of Police and Crime Commissioner powers to the MCA would create opportunities for linking priorities and addressing the wider causes of antisocial behaviour.

The Mayor thanked Karen for her continued work on this issue alongside the MCA.

Operators agreed that there was a need for greater data sharing between all parties to help to address these issues.

RESOLVED: To note the update.

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Items of Confidentiality

Slides used by operators contain commercially sensitive information and are not circulated.

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Any Other Business

None.

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

Signed

Name

Position

Date