

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

THURSDAY, 22 JUNE 2023 AT 2.00 PM

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



Present:

Councillor Joshua Bacon
Councillor Jeff Ennis OBE
Councillor Tim Huggan
Councillor Douglas Johnson
Councillor Hannah Kitching
Councillor Zahira Naz
Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards
Councillor Ken Wyatt

Rotherham MBC
Barnsley MBC
Sheffield City Council
Sheffield City Council
Barnsley MBC
Sheffield City Council
Sheffield City Council
Rotherham MBC

In Attendance:

Oliver Coppard	Mayor of South Yorkshire	
Martin Swales	Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service	SYMCA Executive Team
Gareth Sutton	Executive Director of Resources & Investment	SYMCA Executive Team
Steve Davenport	Director of Law and Governance	SYMCA Executive Team
Joseph Quinn	Innovation Project Director	SYMCA Executive Team
Tim Taylor	Director of Public Transport Operations	SYMCA Executive Team

Ellen Hinsley (Minute Taker)

Apologies:

Councillor Jane Kidd

City of Doncaster Council

74 Welcome and Apologies

The Monitoring Officer opened the meeting, welcomed all Committee members, and noted apologies as above.

75 Nomination of Chair

Two Committee Members stood for the vacant position of Chair:

- Cllr Douglas Johnson
- Cllr Tim Huggan

Cllr Huggan was elected to the position with over half of the votes.

76 **Urgent Items/Announcements**

None.

77 **Items to be Considered in the Absence of Public and Press**

None.

78 **Declarations of Interest by any Members**

None.

79 **Reports from and Questions by Members**

None.

80 **Questions from Members of the Public**

None.

81 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting Held on 23 March**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2023 be approved as a true record.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the outgoing Chair Cllr Colin Ross, and congratulated him on taking up the position of Lord Mayor of Sheffield City Council.

82 **Matters Arising/ Review of Action Log**

The Action Log was presented, and updates to open actions, and closed actions were noted.

Questions were asked around the future of the £2 bus fare cap extension beyond October 2023, and it was noted that policy decisions on this would be dependent on government funding and a decision on bus franchising.

On the impact report of the £2 fare cap, the Committee asked that the report be shared outside of meetings once completed, and that any feedback be incorporated into an updated report presented to the December meeting
ACTION: Director of Public Transport Operations.

RESOLVED that updates to the Action Log be noted.

83 **Review of latest Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

RESOLVED: that the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted.

84

Update on Transport

The Committee was provided with an update on Transport. The South Yorkshire bus network had undergone a turbulent period as a result of COVID-19, and Government had been providing short-term funding support to maintain services. Since this period, extensions to Government funding had largely been communicated at short notice, and a further funding extension of approximately £6.3 until March 2025 had recently been announced.

The MCA had therefore not used financial reserves which had been put aside to protect general services and school bus services, allowing the extension of the £2 fare cap until October 2024, and greater protection of priority services. However, the funding extension would not fund the total cost of at risk services across the network.

It was noted that, in comparison, West Yorkshire Combined Authority had received £77m worth of BSIP funding from Government to deliver its bus network.

This difference in funding was due to South Yorkshire not being awarded Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus (BSIP) funding, though it had bid for approximately £300m. It was noted that BSIP funding had originally been awarded for the transformation of bus networks but had subsequently been permitted for use in running day-to-day services.

The MCA was continuing to develop the quality of its bids for Government funding, and to lobby Government for additional support for the bus network, but had been advised that there is currently no funding available beyond what has been distributed.

The MCA was therefore working to develop a multi-year plan to determine how it will use available resource to support priority services, and concessions beyond September 2023, with a decision being taken by the MCA Board Meeting in July.

Questions were asked around the future of disabled persons bus passes, and the criteria for their allocation. A response was given that Local Authorities have a statutory obligation to provide disabled persons bus passes and are responsible for setting criteria for receipt. **ACTION: Director of Public Transport Operations** to circulate further information on qualification criteria for disabled persons bus passes.

Further detail was requested on how a longer-term plan would be developed for protecting the network. A response was given that following responses to a public consultation in October 2023, routes which serviced travel to school, workplaces and healthcare were prioritised for protection. In collaboration with the Local Authorities, this would now be revisited and each service would also be individually analysed, as well as the cost per passenger, assessment of equality impacts and options for backfilling any gaps.

ACTION: Director of Public Transport Operations to circulate information on

any processes followed when withdrawing or reinstating services to better support elected members to engage in this exercise.

It was asked how these difficulties align with the assessment of a Franchised Bus Service in South Yorkshire. A response was given that if approved a franchised service would take a significant amount of time to implement, but that stability of the network was a priority for the MCA regardless.

RESOLVED that the update on Transport be noted.

85

Mayoral Introduction

The Chair welcomed the Mayor to the meeting and invited him to address the Committee.

The Mayor gave an update to the Committee on his recent work including:

- Attendance at the Transport for the North (TfN) Board where he had discussed the Hope Valley Train line and services to Manchester Airport,
- Furthering the work of the Integrated Care Partnership,
- Development of Place Investment Plans alongside the Local Authorities.

A question was asked around public transport access to Manchester Airport from South Yorkshire. The Mayor gave a response that he was continuing to lobby TfN and train operators to restore connections to airports. He also noted the closure of Doncaster Sheffield Airport and the potential for transport links if it is re-opened.

Further detail was requested on the work of the Integrated Care Partnership. The Mayor responded that the Integrated Care Strategy had been launched, and a Health Action Advisory Panel had been established which was considering options for early years provision in the region. The Panel would produce a report advising Local Authorities on how to boost healthy life expectancy in the region.

It was asked whether the Mayor had yet met with Sheffield Young Carers

ACTION: The Mayor to follow this up.

Members asked about proposals to merge the responsibilities of the Mayor and the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Mayor responded that no decision had been made on this yet, but negotiations were ongoing with Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) officials. If this change was approved, a Mayor with Police and Crime Commissioner functions election would take place in South Yorkshire in May 2023. The Mayor welcomed engagement with local communities and stakeholders including the Scrutiny Committee on how this can function well. **ACTION: Chair** to include Police and Crime Commissioner on the Committee's work plan.

It was asked whether there were also ambitions to also combine the Fire Commissioner's role with the MCA. The Mayor responded that it would be too difficult to pursue this alongside Police and Crime Commissioner, but that the MCA would work with future Governments on what is possible.

A question was asked on Bus Franchising, and how the Mayor planned to ensure support across the region for a franchised model. The Mayor responded that he is committed to fixing public transport in South Yorkshire, and that his personal view is that this should be done through Bus Franchising, but needed to follow a statutory process the outcome of which cannot be predetermined. However, the process for taking a decision on this is lengthy, and he is committed to engaging partners throughout it.

A member raised difficulties experienced by users of buses such as lateness, cleanliness and antisocial behaviour. The Mayor agreed with these issues and attributed them to the privatisation of the bus network.

It was noted by a member that franchising does not bring more money in to the network, it was asked how this could be achieved. The Mayor stated his ambition to campaign for more Government funding, but noted that South Yorkshire is not presently able to raise money via a local precept to fund the network.

The Mayor stated that briefings could be provided to members to help them better understand how the bus network is operated.

86

MCA Review

A report on The MCA Review and New Governance Model was presented, and the growing significance of the Audit, Standards & Risk and Overview & Scrutiny Committees was highlighted.

A new governance model led by the Mayor and with Leaders holding portfolio responsibilities, with proposals to streamline decision making had been approved by the MCA Board in June.

It was asked whether the Leaders would receive additional allowances to deliver these new responsibilities. It was responded that they would not, but that Leaders would be well supported by Officers and Chief Executives in delivering this work.

It was asked whether the 8 portfolio areas had been allocated. A response was given that final confirmation of portfolios would be agreed by the MCA in September, but that the Mayor would be principally responsible for public transport.

Members raised questions about possible changes to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Monitoring Officer noted that the Government was due to publish a new Scrutiny Protocol before the end of the year, which would influence the operation of the Scrutiny Committee.

ACTION: Chair to include Scrutiny Protocol on the Committee's work plan.

RESOLVED that the Update on the MCA Review be noted.

87

Place Based Investment Plans

The Committee was provided with an update on Place Based Investment Plans.

An overview was provided on the South Yorkshire Renewal Fund which was to be financed by the Gainshare settlement.

Gainshare funding is a long-term commitment which provides more flexibility than other funding streams. In addition, the MCA had been granted powers to borrow for all its functions which would allow the MCA to better time investment.

Each Local Authority had been asked to develop a Place Based Investment Plan, which provide a framework for prioritising investments across South Yorkshire to meet collective aspirations to grow the economy in a strong, green and fairer way.

It was noted that Sheffield City Council continued to develop its Place Based Investment Plan.

The MCA was currently supporting Local Authorities to bring forward these schemes for delivery.

A question was raised regarding the level of funding allocated to housing and infrastructure in the region. A response was given that the MCA was delivering a number of schemes and working with institutional investors in this area.

RESOLVED that the Update on Place Based Investment Plans be noted.

88

Investment Zone Update

The Committee was provided with an Investment Zone update.

An Investment Zone report was presented, which noted that at the Spring Budget 2023, the Chancellor had announced that 8 MCAs in England, including South Yorkshire, had been invited to co-design Investment Zone (IZ) proposals with Government.

The selected MCA areas could receive £80m of funding over five years beginning in 2024/25, to be used flexibly between spending and tax incentives.

DLUHC had confirmed 5 thematic gateways to be completed:

- Vision statement
- Lead sector and geography
- Governance and partnerships
- Intervention design
- Delivery approaches

Advanced Manufacturing had been proposed as South Yorkshire's lead sector, and a corridor between Sheffield city centre and Rotherham town centre had been identified for the special core. Opportunities for spaces in Rotherham and Doncaster were also being identified.

Geography, key interventions and use of funding would be agreed alongside Government in the coming weeks.

A final proposal would be agreed by the MCA Board.

RESOLVED that the Investment Zone update be noted.

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

Signed

Name

Position

Date