

MCA - TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

THURSDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2021 AT 10.00 AM

VIRTUAL MEETING



Present:

Councillor Chris Read (Co-Chair)
Peter Kennan (Co-Chair)
Councillor Joe Blackham
Councillor Douglas Johnson
Karen Beardsley
Martin Swales
Stephen Edwards

Rotherham MBC
Private Sector LEP Board Member
Doncaster MBC
Sheffield City Council
Private Sector LEP Board Member
MCA Executive Team
SYPTE

In Attendance:

Steve Davenport
Joe Gardner
Jenny Holmes
Charli Taylor
Alex Linton
Chloe Shepherd
Pete Zanzottera
Dame Sarah Storey
Stephen Carter
Alex Forrest
Tracey Brewer
Jonathan Spruce
Melissa Farmer

MCA Executive Team/SYPTE
MCA Executive Team
MCA Executive Team
MCA Executive Team
LTP
MCA Executive Team
MCA Executive Team
MCA Executive Team
MCA Executive Team
MCA Executive Team
Barnsley MBC
External
SYPTE

Apologies:

Councillor Chris Lamb
Sarah Norman
Councillor Dominic Beck

Barnsley MBC
Barnsley MBC
Rotherham MBC

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were noted as above.

2 Declarations of Interest by individual Members in relation to any item of business on the agenda.

Members declared interests in respect of item 11 regarding schemes in their own council areas.

3 Urgent items / Announcements

None.

4 Public Questions of Key Decisions

It was noted that Councillor Read and P Kennan now had signed off a response to a public question presented at the September Board meeting.

It was agreed that the response be circulated to Board Members.

5 Minutes of the last meeting

The Chair requested that the minutes of the previous meeting be included in future agenda packs.

C Marriott acknowledged the request and provided assurances to the Board that minutes of the previous meeting would be included in future agenda packs.

6 Active Travel Update (Verbal)

The Chair welcomed Dame Sarah Storey to the meeting.

Dame Sarah Storey thanked the Board for their recent letter of congratulations.

Dame Sarah reported that she had observed the use of an electric single-person vehicle whilst staying at the accommodation village at the Tokyo Olympic Games. She informed the Board that she was considering highlighting its use at the next DfT Board meeting, to enquire if these vehicles could either be imported, or built in the UK, or even better, built in South Yorkshire.

In relation to Active Travel, Dame Sarah reported that she had been very busy and had also taken the opportunity to meet with Mayor Jarvis.

At a recent School Streets visit in Barnsley, several challenges had been raised to her. The main concerns raised were in relation to other people's vehicles parked outside people's homes when dropping off and collecting children from school.

Dame Sarah felt that it would be a good opportunity to expand the School Streets programme across the region. There were a number of good trials currently taking place on school streets, for example in Barnsley and Doncaster.

Councillor Johnson invited Dame Sarah to attend a School Streets visit in the Sheffield area.

The Board were informed that there would be a number of updates next month, which included the announcement around the Comprehensive Spending Review and any announcements from the COP26 summit.

A number of schemes were now reaching completion including the 'Grey to Green' scheme in Sheffield.

On 17 September, Dame Sarah had joined South Yorkshire Police's Road Policing officers in the Rivelin Valley for a 'Close Pass' operation targeting drivers who overtake cyclists too closely. The operation had received national press coverage. Dame Sarah was pleased to note the good work being undertaken by South Yorkshire Police and hoped that the Force would replicate this operation in other areas.

In addition, Dame Sarah had talked to Dr Billings (South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner) at the operation who had stated that, road safety and speeding now featured as a priority in his Police and Crime Plan.

Inspector Kevin Smith had informed Dame Sarah that he was very eager to undertake an operation entitled 'Top Deck', which utilises the top deck of a bus to look for other motoring offences.

Dame Sarah informed the Board that she had recently met with the national lead for fatal collision investigation, Detective Chief Superintendent Andy Cox. There was now an opportunity for collaboration cross-borders where there are roads which need policing from South Yorkshire into Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire.

Dame Sarah said that there was a lot of focus on being able to support the reduction of the greatest harm, whilst active travel facilities were being built. She felt that the region should use education opportunities to ease the challenges people face when walking and cycling.

The Board discussed recent media coverage around Active Travel in the local press. Following discussion, it was agreed that further work needed to be undertaken with businesses to showcase the good work they are undertaking around Active Travel.

Dame Sarah added that it may be a good opportunity to invite local press from Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley to a Wheels for All Centre to observe how bikes are helping people with disabilities.

In response to a query from P Kennan, P Zanzottera reported that Government feedback on the Active Travel fund bid had not yet been received.

The Chair thanked Dame Sarah for her updates.

7 Update on Public Transport Patronage (Verbal)

S Edwards delivered a presentation to update the Board on patronage trends across the region and update on the work being undertaken to support people back to the public transport network.

In summary, the following key points were noted:-

- Nationally, passenger journeys had been in steady decline, particularly in metropolitan areas.
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in a significant reduction in

passenger numbers.

- Following the easing of Government restrictions bus and Supertram passenger numbers in South Yorkshire were slowly beginning to recover. These were currently around 75% pre-COVID levels.
- There was a common trend across the four districts in relation to bus patronage with concessionary travellers and child travellers being the highest.
- England National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) users had also followed a similar pattern across all four districts.
- There was a gap in the leisure travel market across all four districts.
- There were currently concerns around fare payer travellers, with significant variation across the four districts. Barnsley and Doncaster had seen very similar patterns over the entire COVID period and had seen the highest, consistent level of fare payer passenger numbers.
- In comparison, Sheffield had seen the lowest number of fare payer passengers. This was due to the different economies across the region and many office workers now working from home.
- There was now a challenge to get fare payer passengers back onto the transport network.

In relation to the operating environment, the Board was informed that bus services had only been able to operate through the pandemic as a result of Government support.

Whilst First and Stagecoach had positively engaged on the development of the BSIP, operational delivery remained challenging, which was driven by a number of factors, which included:

- Reduced medium-term demand for services and uncertainty over future government support;
- Pressure to reduce services levels to a sustainable level;
- Operating costs and pressure on fares;
- Short-term issues with driver retention and recruitment;
- Potential consolidation in the market; and
- Potential for industrial action.

To support operators, a programme of planned promotional activity had been developed to encourage travellers to use bus and tram services. This included:

- A COVID- Recovery marketing campaign
- ZOOM beyond 18-21 Travel Pass
- ZOOM Under 16 and 16-18 Travel Passes
- Summer Discount Scheme, which had been very popular and over subscribed
- Christmas Bus Campaign
- Wider policy development

The Board requested that a copy of the presentation be circulated to Members.

ACTION: S Edwards

In response to a question from Councillor Johnson, S Edwards confirmed that the Bus Recovery Grant would terminate on 31 March 2022. Government had stated that there would be no further funding for light rail. It was expected that there would

be some revenue support for bus services, however it was yet to be confirmed. There was a risk that there could be a shortfall in funding for 2022/23.

Councillor Johnson asked if bus driver shortages were anticipated to be a long term issue. In addition, he queried if funding could be provided to help operators run driver training courses.

S Edwards said that it was currently an area of challenge for the operators. Due to driver shortages there had been a number of short notice service cancellations being made. To address this, a number of short-term timetables would be introduced at the end of October. He agreed to have a discussion with the operators around the support which could be provided to them to try and help mitigate the current challenges.

P Kennan said that he would undertake a task to develop some key messages to businesses around using the bus instead of the car.

S Edwards said that he produced a weekly report setting the current scene and main issues. He agreed to include Board Members on the circulation list. **ACTION: S Edwards**

The Chair thanked S Edwards for his presentation.

8 **Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)**

A report was considered which requested the Board's support for the South Yorkshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), which all Local Transport Authorities are required to produce by the end of October to gain access to further funding for local bus services.

A draft confidential copy of the BSIP for South Yorkshire had been circulated by email for the Board's consideration.

The draft BSIP had been developed alongside the four Local Authorities, bus operators and a number of the key stakeholders identified through the Bus Review.

The Board was informed that discussions were currently ongoing with the Mayor and Leaders and therefore, the BSIP was still a 'live' document and further changes could be made prior to its final submission to the DfT.

Following feedback obtained from the Board and discussions with the MCA's Legal Team, C Shepherd provided the Board with an overview of the additions / amendments made to the BSIP following the September Board meeting.

Councillor Johnson said he was concerned around the ambition of the BSIP, especially with current declining levels of patronage.

S Edwards replied that it would be difficult to return patronage levels to pre-COVID, but there was a consistent and incremental level of growth contained within the BSIP.

Councillor Johnson abstained from agreeing the recommendation set out in the report. He thanked officers for the work undertaken to date.

RESOLVED – That the Board endorses the Bus Service Improvement Plan, for delegated approval by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leaders and Mayor, prior to submission to Government.

9

Rail Update

A briefing report was delivered to provide the Board with an update on current rail related matters.

The Board was informed that train operators had reported passenger levels were now at 70% versus pre-COVID levels. During the summer, both operators had seen spikes in the leisure market with overcrowding being reported on trains to key tourist locations.

Northern Rail was currently exploring communications aimed at the commuter market and those currently working from home.

The Board noted that the Government's Integrated Rail Plan was anticipated to be published in October 2021, and would provide greater clarity on Government's investment plans related to HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) investment. Government was also embarking on the transition to Great British Railways, an arm's length railway body which will subsume the responsibilities of Network Rail, most rail functions of DfT and many operator roles.

The Board noted that there had been significant work undertaken by the Manchester Recovery Task Force on a new rail timetable as well as progress on key South Yorkshire schemes and stations. Further details were presented in the report.

In addition, the report provided the Board with updates on the following matters:

- Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail and Great British Railways;
- Network Rail Continuous Modular Strategic Planning (CMSP);
- Hope Valley Line capacity scheme upgrade;
- East Coast Mainline Timetable Consultation;
- Second train per hour on the Penistone Line;
- Second express Sheffield – Leeds service;
- Cross Country - to seek the restoration of the Reading to Newcastle via Doncaster service;
- Restoring Your Railways Bid;
- Station Improvements; and
- Community Rail activity.

P Kennan informed the Board that there was a possibility of a bid coming forward for the Great British Railways Headquarters to be based in Doncaster.

Within Network Rail's Continuous Modular Strategic Planning (CMSP), P Kennan said that it was important for the Board to note what the impact may be

in relation to the Doncaster Sheffield Airport Gateway East rail link and a tram train connection to Doncaster.

In relation to the Hope Valley Line capacity scheme upgrade, the Board was disappointed to note that, due to congestion at both the Sheffield and Manchester ends of the line, at present, there was no guarantee that a third fast train would be delivered from this scheme alone.

P Kennan felt that pressure should be put on Network Rail to review their booking horizons for the sale of rail tickets in advance of travel. He asked if officers could take this up with Network Rail. **ACTION: M Farmer and A Forrest.**

P Kennan also said that the poor performance of East Midlands Railways was of concern, especially around industrial action, fleet problems, crew shortages, poor performing trains and their fares structure.

M Farmer said that she would be attending an East Midlands Railways conference shortly and agreed to raise the issues highlighted above.

P Kennan reported that the first new intermodal express rail freight service from Immingham to Doncaster iPort would be launched on 22 October.

RESOLVED – That the Board noted the update report and discussed key issues.

10 **Highways Capital Maintenance Allocation of the 21/22 Grant**

A report was presented which informed the Board that, in January 2021 the SYMCA Board had approved the distribution of a predicted Highways Maintenance allocation for this financial year.

On award, the allocation had increased, and there was a restructuring of the allocation breakdown, but no changes to grant conditions. The report therefore proposed a method for distribution of the revised award.

Following discussion, the Board agreed to apply the formula for distribution which was used when the original forecast allocation was approved by MCA to the revised settlement value and allocate the funding to the three recipient local authorities as per Table 1 set out at section 1.8 of the report.

RESOLVED – That the Board agreed the formula for distribution of funding which was agreed by MCA for the predicted allocation is applied to the full value of the actual award received.

11 **Programme Approvals**

A report was submitted which sought approval to progress 11 schemes with early release of development cost funding, subject to conditions set out in the Assurance Summaries; release of development cost funding for 1 scheme; and approval of 2 project change requests. The report also requested delegated authority to enter into necessary legal agreements for the schemes.

RESOLVED – That the Board considered and approve:

- i) Progression of “T17 Doncaster Station to College” to full approval and award of £0.41m grant from Transforming Cities Fund (TCF2) to Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix A1;
- ii) Progression of “O49 City Centre Cycle Hub” to full approval and award of £0.30m grant from Active Travel 2/Gainshare (ATF2/Gainshare) to Sheffield City Council (SCC) subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix A2;
- iii) Progression of “D29 Bus Shelters” to full approval and award of £1.11m grant from Gainshare to South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE) subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached Appendix A3;
- iv) Progression of “D30 Passenger Information Displays” to full approval and award of £0.67m grant from Gainshare to South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE) subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached Appendix A4;
- v) Progression of “T13 A630 Bus Improvements” Outline Business Case (OBC) to Full Business Case (FBC) and the release of development cost funding of up to £0.27m from TCF2 to SYPTTE subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached Appendix B1;
- vi) Progression of “T10 Barnsley Station Access Improvements” OBC to proceed to FBC and the release of development cost funding up to £0.19m from TCF2 to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix B2;
- vii) Progression of “T17/3 Bennethorpe to Hallgate Cycleways” OBC to proceed to FBC and the release of development cost funding up to £0.05m from TCF2 to DMBC subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix B3;
- viii) Progression of “O50 Netheredge Crookes” OBC to proceed to FBC and release of development cost funding up to £0.06m from ATF2/Gainshare to SCC subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix B4;
- ix) Progression of “T14 West of Doncaster Active Travel” OBC to MCA for approval to proceed to FBC and release of development cost funding up to £0.05m from TCF2 to DMBC subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix B5;
- x) Progression of “O50 Sheaf Valley Route” OBC to MCA for approval to proceed to FBC and release of development cost funding up to £0.05m from ATF2/Gainshare to SCC subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix B6;

- xi) Progression of “T8/1&3 City Centre to Attercliffe and Darnall Active Travel” OBC to MCA for approval to proceed to FBC and release of development cost funding up to £1.2m from TCF2 to SCC subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix B7;
- xii) Release of development cost funding of £0.08m for “O45 Thorne and Moorends” from ATF2/Gainshare to DMBC in line with the details attached at Appendix C;
- xiii) Project change requests as detailed in Appendix D; and

Delegated authority be given to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Section 73 and Monitoring Officer to enter into legal agreements for the schemes covered above and enter into the necessary legal grant agreements.

12 **Any Other Business**

None.

In accordance with Combined Authority’s Constitution/Terms of Reference for the Board, Board decisions need to be ratified by the Head of Paid Services (or their nominee) in consultation with the Chair of the Board. Accordingly, the undersigned has consulted with the Chair and hereby ratifies the decisions set out in the above minutes.

Signed

Name

Position

Date