

MCA - TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

THURSDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2021 AT 10.00 AM

VIRTUAL MEETING



Present:

Councillor Chris Read (Co-Chair)	Rotherham MBC
Peter Kennan (Co-Chair)	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Councillor Chris Lamb	Barnsley MBC
Karen Beardsley	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Sarah Norman	Barnsley MBC
Stephen Edwards	South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive
Martin Swales	MCA Executive Team
Sue Sykes	MCA Executive Team
Joe Gardner	MCA Executive Team
Alex Forrest	South Yorkshire MCA
Mayor Ros Jones CBE (Reserve)	Doncaster MBC

In Attendance:

Pat Beijer	Director of Transport Operations	South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive
Alex Linton	LTP Programme Manager	Local Transport Plan
Chloe Shepherd	Senior Programme Manager	MCA Executive Team

Apologies:

Councillor Dominic Beck	Rotherham MBC
Councillor Douglas Johnson	Sheffield CC
Councillor Paul Wood	Sheffield CC

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

None.

5 Minutes of the last meeting held on 21 October 2021

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st October 2021 be agreed as a true record.

6 Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North

A Forrest presented a report which set out the key outcomes of the Government's Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North that impacted on South Yorkshire and how the MCA proposed to respond to the plan to maximise the benefits for the region.

The Board was informed that following publication of the IRP, MCA officers had been assessing the implications for the region and discussing a proposed response. A table had been produced showing the expected and actual IRP outcome, which was attached at Appendix A. Work was now focusing on next steps.

The report contained details of press releases, media interviews and meetings by the Mayor, Leaders and the MCA since the publication of the IRP.

The next stage of the MCA response would be to develop a response to Government. This would focus on schemes that were already funded or in the pipeline and deliverable and were 'no regrets' i.e. they would provide shorter term benefits whilst not ruling out major longer term investment. The response would be discussed with MCA Local Authority Leaders, business groups and other key partners.

Members noted and discussed the summary of expected and actual outcomes of the IRP for South Yorkshire which were detailed at Appendix A.

P Kennan commented that he thought it was important that the business voice was heard during the process of formulating a response to Government.

From a LEP point of view, the concept of protecting a route was understood but a definite timescale was needed as to when the areas concerned would be out of blight.

Within the IRP there was a promise of investment of £3.5bn in the East Coast Mainline but no clarity as to how this would be spent – there was a need to push for investment in Doncaster to remove the existing bottleneck.

There was little mention of freight which was really important to the region's inter-modal logistics sector which was also a concern, and the levelling-up

agenda should also be included in the response.

It was noted that there would be further discussion in the new year with the LEP and business groups before going back to Ministers.

The slides from a recent Business Advisory Group would be circulated to TEB members.

Cllr Lamb commented that the lack freight within the IRP was concerning especially given the region's carbon ambitions which could not be achieved without the use of rail freight.

He also expressed concerns that taking out the Dearne Valley Parkway station would have an extremely detrimental effect on the plans to invest £100s of millions in the Goldthorpe area.

A Forrest replied that the Dearne Valley Parkway Station Board was continuing to meet and that the work that was funded for this financial year was continuing but would cease at the end of the year. A decision would have to be made as a City Region as to whether further funding could be found locally to continue the work. Discussions would continue in the new year.

Mayor Jones made comments around the problems blighting was causing in Mexborough and other places on the route. Pressure needed to be exerted to get a decision as to when, or if, it would be removed.

Furthermore, the East Coast Mainline was not guaranteed to be part of early interventions. Improvements around Doncaster station were crucial to remove the current bottleneck. This was an issue that needed to be highlighted.

The Chair commented that it was important to make the key issues extremely clear and home in on the crucial interventions that would invigorate South Yorkshire.

It was agreed that an update would be brought to the next meeting.

RESOLVED – That the Board note the report and agree to the proposed next steps as set out in the report.

7

ZEBRA bid

The Board was reminded that SYMCA had submitted an Expression of Interest (EoI) to DfT in July 2021 as part of DfT's Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) fund. The South Yorkshire proposal detailed plans for the first Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) roll out across the whole of South Yorkshire.

Later in July SYMCA were notified that they had been successful and that the submission could progress to Full Business Case (FBC). SYMCA was currently progressing the development of the FBC with a deadline for submission to DfT of 31st January 2022.

The report gave details of the funding available, the terms of the ZEBRA

scheme and costs which the SYMCA would need to cover.

All operators were asked whether they wanted to collaborate with SYMCA on the ZEBRA project but only Stagecoach accepted.

A workshop was held to discuss options for the ZEB routes and the preferred scheme was to electrify Stagecoach's 221 and 22x services which covered Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster. In addition to this the MCA were working up a ZEBRA proposal in Sheffield which involved the introduction of a city centre shuttle bus. This proposal would require up to £400k per annum revenue support, Sheffield City Council (SCC) was currently working to identify a future source of this funding.

It was noted that SYMCA would bid for up to £6.8m of ZEBRA funding. A further £6.95m of funding was provisionally allocated from the City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement.

The Group discussed the practicalities of the project, the benefits and the risks.

It was suggested that the possibility of a solar powered electric charging station at the depot in Rotherham should be looked in to reduce costs and the carbon footprint.

Concerns were expressed that the Sheffield city centre shuttle bus could be in competition with other modes of public transport and that any additional revenue costs associated with this remained with SCC; the Board sought assurance that this would not be the case.

RESOLVED – That subject to assurances around the concerns voiced above, the Board:

- (i) Note the latest ZEBRA proposals.
- (ii) Endorse the continued development of the ZEBRA business case based on the information provided in the report.
- (iii) Note that approval to submit the final business case to DfT would be sought through the January 2022 Mayoral Combined Authority meeting.

8

City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement

A Linton presented a report which provided an update on the status of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) and the next steps to meet DfT requirements.

The Board was reminded that the Government Spending Review included announcements regarding a number of transport funding streams for SYMCA, including the CRSTS provisional award of £570m for the five-year settlement period April 2022 to March 2027.

Following the award announcement the MCA Executive Team had met with Treasury and DfT on a number of occasions to discuss next step

requirements. SYMCA was now required to submit a programme level Business Case by mid-January 2022 before the award was formally confirmed in March.

Since the report was written a workshop had been held with DfT and HMT and SYMCA Executive Officers which scrutinised the planned programme and discussed the concerns of DfT and HMT.

It was a robust challenge across the programme looking at the themes, the intentions to deliver and the structures in place for delivery. The discussion had been healthy and productive, it had been an opportunity for the government to test and also for officers to understand more of what government were looking.

The themes discussed were predominantly bus and active travel and whether the programme demonstrated these as a high enough priority. There were also comments on the delivery schedule and the importance of early delivery – officers would revisit delivery schedules in light of these comments.

Official feedback was awaited and would be fed into the Business Case which was on track to be submitted mid-January with a decision expected in March.

RESOLVED – That the Board note progress on the work required to take forward the CRSTS submission including the requirement to seek further information from all project sponsors and for completion of this within short timescales.

9

Programme Approvals

J Gardner presented a paper which requested full approval of four schemes and progression of two schemes from Strategic Business Case (SBC) and Outline Business Case (OBC) to Full Business Case (FBC) and also requested delegated authority to enter into the necessary agreements for the schemes.

With regard to the A631 Rotherham to Maltby Bus Corridor, the Board expressed concerns at the BCR of 0.20 which would not normally be acceptable. Appendix B notes: “A BCR of 0.20 would not normally be acceptable if referenced to the Department for Transport’s Value for Money Framework. However, the scheme aims - reducing journey times to make buses more attractive for residents and businesses - will contribute to the three goals of the Programme. These are to improve access to economic opportunity, achieve a cleaner and greener Sheffield City Region and deliver a safer, more reliable and accessible public transport network. The alignment with MCA objectives is strong enough to regard this scheme to be of strategic importance”. In addition the BCR calculation does not consider journey time savings, car travel impact or reliability benefits which could enhance the case for this scheme.

Conditions of approval include the requirement for the FBC to incorporate: monetised reliability benefits as part of a “wider BCR” and a more detailed Strategic Case to address this issue

RESOLVED - That the Board approve:

- (i) Progression of 'T27 South Yorkshire Rail Station Improvements' to MCA for full approval and award of £3.45m grant from Transforming Cities Fund to South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix A1.
- (ii) Progression of 'O43 Goldthorpe Station Access' to full approval and award of £0.55m grant from Active Travel Fund 2/Gainshare to Barnsley Metropolitan Council subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix A2.
- (iii) Progression of 'O44 Elsecar Station Access' to full approval and award £0.58m grant from ATF2/Gainshare to BMBC subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix A3.
- (iv) Progression of 'O46 Warmsworth to Conisbrough Active Travel Link' to full approval and award of £1.0m grant from ATF2/Gainshare to DMBC subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix A4.
- (v) Progression of 'D31 Community Transport Electric Minibus' SBC for approval to proceed to FBC for Gainshare funding to SYPTE subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix B1.
- (vi) Progression of 'T5 A631 Rotherham to Maltby Bus Corridor' OBC to proceed to FBC for ATF/Gainshare funding to RMBC subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix B2.
- (vii) 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 in ii) to iv) above subject to funding being available.

10 **Transport Performance Report**

S Sykes presented a report which provided the Board with the latest performance information on Transport and Environment capital programmes being delivered on behalf of the MCA.

The Board noted that the SYMCA currently had 54 projects which fell within the remit of the Transport and Environment Board. The schemes were resourced from various funding streams with an aggregate value of £235.47m.

The expenditure baseline for 20221/22 was initially set at £102.51m with the latest forecasts suggesting outturn expenditure of £58.27m. This would generate a material underspend of £44.24m (43%),

Members were informed that of this value, £24.89m (56%) was funded from conditional government grant and consents would likely be required to roll forward funding unspent at the year-end to future periods.

Tables within the report highlighted the forecast full-year expenditure profiles set against the baseline targets and the forecast full-year expenditure which showed that claims totalling only 3% of the forecast had been received, processed and paid to date.

S Sykes informed members that, with regards to the Transforming Cities Fund, further review meetings had been held with all partners and the forecast had now dropped to c. £12m.

There had been further slippage in ATF2, this fund was supposed to be defrayed by the end of the financial year but officers had spoken to the DfT and given assurances that the schemes could be completed and DfT had agreed to a 6-month extension.

Of particular concern was the underspend on the Get Britain Building Fund which had to be defrayed by March 2023. All partners across all schemes were suffering from inflation and supply chain delays. One of the options to ease the situation had been identified as looking at freedoms and flexibilities within the local authorities.

The Board acknowledged that it was a very worrying situation. S Sykes commented that officers were talking to government and trying to find ways to mitigate the situation. It had been made clear that the funding streams had to be delivered, however the government were now willing to listen to suggestions.

It was suggested that processes needed to be refined and shortened to reduce bureaucracy whilst still demonstrating good governance, this would be discussed further in the new year.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

11 **Consultations on the Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership**

C Shepherd presented a report which provided an update on the Enhanced Partnership process and proposed public consultations.

It was noted that a period of consultations with bus operators had commenced on 17 November and would be followed by a period of public consultation early in 2022. Once both consultations were complete, the MCA would consider the consultation responses and determine whether to make any amendments to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Enhanced Partnership Scheme before they were formally made.

RESOLVED – That the Board notes the progress of entering Enhanced Partnership arrangements and endorses the approach to the public consultations planned for early January 2022.

Any Other Business

S Edwards gave an update on current operational challenges which included:

- The advice to work from home had had an adverse impact on passenger numbers.
- Industrial action by Stagecoach drivers – it had been announced that if the dispute was not resolved beforehand, continuous strike action would begin on 1st January 2022. At the moment, school services were being maintained along with a small number of commercial services.
- Rail industrial action was likely to lead to disruption and cancellations.
- Changes to First bus services from 2nd January 2022, predominantly impacting services in Sheffield, would result in scaling back of services after 7pm.

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