

MCA - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

THURSDAY, 20 JANUARY 2022 AT 2.00 PM

11 BROAD STREET WEST, SHEFFIELD, S1 2BQ



Present:

Councillor Colin Ross (Chair)	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Jeff Ennis	Barnsley MBC
Councillor Dianne Hurst	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Bryan Lodge	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Jo Newing	Barnsley MBC
Councillor Thomas Singleton	Rotherham MBC
Councillor Martin Smith	Sheffield City Council

In Attendance:

Christine Marriott	Interim Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager	MCA Executive Team
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Apologies:

Councillor Barry Johnson	Doncaster MBC
Councillor Ken Wyatt	Rotherham MBC
Martin Swales	MCA Executive Team

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were noted as above.

2 Urgent Items/Announcements

None.

3 Items to be Considered in the Absence of Public and Press

None.

4 Declarations of Interest by any Members

None.

5 Reports from and Questions by Members

None.

6 **Questions from Members of the Public**

None.

7 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting Held on 26 October 2021**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2021 be agreed as a true record.

8 **Matters Arising**

The Committee considered the Action Register.

Response to the Bus Review – Parking in bus lanes – this was an operational issue which should be implemented at local authority level. Enquiries should be made to each authority with regards to enforcement and any fines issued.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions – in the ‘Prohibitions, Restrictions, Exemptions’ column the word ‘open’ had been replaced by ‘not exempt’. **Action complete.**

Climate Emergency – Monitoring Public Engagement/Consultation – Cllr Ross had written to the author of the public question. **Action complete.**

Bus Service Improvement Plan – response received from the co-Chairs of the Transport Board. **Action complete.**

Progress of the concept of the Levelling Up Fund – Item placed on Work Plan for 2021/22. **Action Complete.**

RESOLVED – That the Committee noted the Action Register.

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

The Committee considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

It was noted that for clarity, as mentioned previously, the word ‘open’ in the final column had been replaced by ‘not exempt’.

Cllr Smith noted that there were several upcoming decisions on the Brownfield Housing Fund. He would welcome more information on the Fund in the form of a presentation or discussion. It was agreed that this would be useful. The Chair and C Marriott would contact relevant officers to determine the best format i.e. a presentation in a meeting or a separate workshop. **Action: Cllr Ross and C Marriott.**

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted.

(ii) That the Committee receive information on the Brownfield Housing Fund in a format to be determined.

Evaluation of the Concessionary Bus Fare Reduction in August 2021

A report was considered which provided an evaluation of the concessionary fare reduction in August and September 2021.

Members were reminded that in August and September 2021, SYMCA had agreed to discount the majority of TravelMaster products by up to 25% for a period of eight weeks.

The discount was intended to encourage patronage to return to public transport as well as stimulate economic recovery in the region's towns and cities.

It was noted that the discount period commenced on 2nd August 2021 until 27th September 2021 which covered a month of the summer holidays, the return to school and universities in September.

As the summer sale was agreed with shortened timescales there was no time to deliver a new marketing campaign, SYMCA marketing and communications officers re-used an existing campaign with adjusted messaging.

Since the discount period ended, officers had analysed the results and the findings were detailed within the report. This included the amount of tickets and days travel sold, the cost in subsidy to SYMCA and the most popular tickets. The Committee noted that the period covered by the discount coincided with the removal in prior weeks of final Covid-19 restrictions and a shift of public attitude to the safety of public transport generally.

The report contained a comparison of discount sales versus forecast sales for the period. However, it was acknowledged that, as there was no access to single operator own products and ticket sales, it was impossible to know if the discount generated additional trips and patronage or just transferred customers to the cheaper product.

Interchange footfall had also been analysed during the discount period. This showed an overall increase of 16% compared to the 8-week period prior to the discount period. However, it was noted that footfall in the 8-week period after the discount ended rose a further 16%.

Members were informed that, due to the short timescales available prior to launch and the relatively short time the discount was available, no direct customer research was undertaken. Data was available from social media channels, details of which were contained within the report.

T Taylor commented that due to the factors mentioned above, it was a challenge to prove definitively that the discount had generated additional trips and patronage.

The Committee discussed at length the difficulties of making a judgement on the success of the discount scheme without direct data. There had been a noticeable increase in the number of 1-day TravelMaster tickets purchased which could be attributed to the scheme, but no evidence of how many of these were additional trips.

It was noted that the operators would have the details of people who had purchased annual TravelMaster tickets and it was suggested that the operators be approached for these details so market research could be conducted into what had motivated the purchase.

T Taylor agreed that this would be helpful. He would contact the operators and bring any further information back to a future meeting. **Action: T Taylor.**

The Committee acknowledged that there had not been enough time to prepare for the launch of the scheme and to arrange for meaningful market research/publicity but felt unable to endorse the benefits that the discount scheme had generated due to a lack of evidence. If further positive information could be provided, they would be happy to endorse the scheme in the future.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

11 **Mayoral Scrutiny**

S Batey presented a report which provided an update on key priorities that Mayor Jarvis had set with the Executive Team for the remainder of his term and where activity was underway. The report covered:

- Covid-19
- Follow up to the publication of the Integrated Rail Plan.
- Forthcoming Levelling UP White Paper and fighting for South Yorkshire's fair share of the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- Strengthening relationships with India.
- Flooding: South Yorkshire Flood Catchment Plan.

The Chair queried why India was important.

S Batey replied that certain areas of India had strong synergies with South Yorkshire such as healthcare technologies, sustainable fuel and clean energy solutions and was central to the MCA's trade and investment strategy. The MCA were also involved in Europe and the US and had engaged with China since 2017 with the LEP and others which had resulted in a trade mission.

Following the disappointment with the contents of the IRP, S Batey confirmed that the Mayor had written to the Secretary of State pressing for progression and agreement of programme packages that would benefit South Yorkshire. This included schemes that were already in forward programmes or not dependent on the IRP such as the third fast train per hour to Manchester resulting from the already committed Hope Valley line upgrade and also the electrification of the Midland Mainline.

With regard to Levelling Up it was noted that the Mayor continued to lobby government for greater devolution and resources and decision-making to local leaders.

The Mayor along with SY council leaders and local MPs had written to the Secretary of State to demand that South Yorkshire receive its fair share of the Shared Prosperity Fund.

With regard to the South Yorkshire Flood Catchment Plan which was to be submitted to the MCA Board for approval the following week, the Chair suggested that, as the Plan now contained full details on schemes, priorities and funding streams, Members may wish to study the Plan and bring any areas of interest to the Committee's attention.

Members questioned about the possibility of bus franchising, which the Committee were supportive of investigating the feasibility of.

S Batey replied that the focus was on developing an Enhanced Partnership at the moment as this was a statutory requirement, but this did not preclude the MCA investigating franchising further down the line. A report on the subject would be discussed at next week's MCA Board meeting.

The Chair commented that the Committee's March meeting would be the last one that Mayor Jarvis would attend. Due to a clash with a Sheffield CC meeting this would likely be moved to a morning meeting and hoped that this would fit with the Mayor's schedule.

The Chair thanked S Batey for the update.

12 **Integration of MCA and SYPTE - Update**

A report was considered which provided an update on the progress of the integration of the MCA and PTE.

The Committee was informed that the Programme Board had set two milestones to support integration prior to the new financial year 2022/23.

- Agree and mobilise an integrated operating model and organisational design.
- Agree with government the order to formally dissolve the PTE as a legal entity.

The work to agree the integrated design and operating model had concluded and all employees had been briefed in December. Directors were now in the process of meeting all teams, with HR, to undertake detailed clarification session.

The proposal of having the new organisational design and operating model mobilised by 31st March 2022 was on track. Planning for additional activity linked to embedding a single way of working, corporate culture and values was planned to commence in April 2022.

Government had confirmed that it was not in a position to pass the order to dissolve the PTE until after the May elections. This meant that, although the organisation would operate as a single body from April 2022, there were several matters of finance and governance that would have to be continued, for

example a separate set of the accounts would need to be produced for the PTE for 2022/23 and the PTE bank accounts would have to be kept open to transact its legal obligations.

Members acknowledged that the integration would give enhanced responsibilities for the committees of the MCA as their scope would be widened to consider public transport. The Audit, Standards and Risk Committee had created a sub-Panel to focus on integration and public transport to ensure that risks and assurance was maintained during the transition.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would need to consider how to develop its future work programme to take account of the public transport remit whilst balancing the scope of scrutiny responsibilities.

The report gave details of the next steps including mobilising the integrated design and model in consultation with staff and the Trades Unions and implementing longer term change which included embedding and realising the benefits of the integration.

The Chair commented that the Betts report had been highly critical of SYPT's performance and response to customers and questioned how the Committee could be assured that the new organisation would not just have a different name but would operate differently and be more responsive.

R Adams commented that within the PTE the Customer Service function had other responsibilities. In the new organisation Customer Service would be a sole function and would focus on customers, residents and businesses who were at the forefront of the Corporate Plan. It was intended to build a culture with greater innovation matched by clear lines of accountability.

D Smith commented that every member of the PTE had been spoken to and there was no shortage of desire or motivation. The issue had been the organisational arrangements. In the new organisation there would be one directorate whose focus would be operational customer service with a clarity of purpose; there should be demonstrably different outcomes.

Cllr Smith commented that it would be important that the Directorate had the responsibilities and budget to make the necessary improvements.

RESOLVED – That the Committee:

- (i) Note the update and the governance assurance undertaken.
- (ii) Agree to consider the role of the OSC and the forward work programme in light of the additional MCA responsibilities for public transport.

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

Signed

Name

Position

Date