

Enhanced Partnership Board 4 October 2022 Item 9 – EP Scheme Progress Report

Executive Summary

The South Yorkshire Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme was approved by the Mayoral Combined Authority in March 2022 and commenced on 1 April 2022.

This paper summarises the progress made in delivering the agreed components of the Scheme, upcoming milestones, risks and issues and any actions to be considered by the Board.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

SYMCA's Strategic Economic Plan and Transport Strategy both underline the importance of the bus network to businesses, residents and visitors in South Yorkshire, whilst the independent Bus Review indicated a number of issues with the current network. The Service Improvement Plan includes a range of short-, medium- and long-term actions aimed at supporting the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and providing the bus network that South Yorkshire needs to achieve its aims for a stronger, fairer and greener region. The Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme is a means of delivering the short-term actions within the Bus Service Improvement Plan

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board notes the contents of this paper in relation to progress with the Enhanced Partnership Scheme and provides support where this is required.

1. Background

- 1.1 The South Yorkshire Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP) and Scheme (EPS) was approved by the Mayoral Combined Authority in March 2022 and commenced on 1 April 2022. Effective and timely delivery of the components of the EPS, and any interventions included in other EPSs that may be agreed, is critical to the achievement of the objectives of the EPP.
- 1.2 As part of the regular reporting cycle to the Enhanced Partnership Board, the EP Development Group receives and discusses a regular EPS Programme Monitoring

Report. This paper summarises the key issues arising and any actions that to be considered by the Board.

- 1.3 It should be noted that the activity discussed in this paper does not represent the totality of the activity underway across South Yorkshire by all partners to improve bus services. The EP Development Group has started collating information on bus initiatives undertaken by all parties in the Enhanced Partnership to provide a fuller picture to the Board, with a progress monitoring mechanism.

2. Summary of Key Changes in EPS Delivery

- 2.1 *Develop new forum for passenger representation, to include bus user groups, representatives of disabled people and local business groups* – The Mayor has invited all members of the EP Forum to a first meeting on 28 September 2022, which will revolve around starting the development of a new Customer Charter.

Implementation of a common branding across South Yorkshire transport network – An initial rollout plan was discussed at the EP Development Group on 7 September 2022 and will be progressed to develop a proposal for the EP Board.

Service changes to be limited to twice per year – The August 2022 EP Operating Group meeting agreed to limit service changes to twice a year, with typical dates agreed to be the first Sunday after Easter and the last Sunday before the start of a new school year. (NB: October 2022 changes count as a service change).

Price rises limited to once a year – Operating Group agreed price rises once a year in January, except for 2023 when a price change might be implemented in March to fall in line with the rail industry.

A61 bus priority road widening scheme – The scheme is currently awaiting planning permission, which has been delayed (planning application submitted in December 2021). The granting of this permission will determine the delivery timeline, but preparatory and mobilisation work continues to progress in the meantime, assuming construction work can commence after Christmas holidays in early 2023. There is a funding shortfall to deliver both phases, with the Project Manager exploring alternative options to deliver Phase 2.

Introduction of pilot DRT service in at least one area &

Consider new types of service as part of review of tendered services, using electric vehicles &

Fleet replacement and retrofitting to achieve a net zero fleet &

Create a single source of information to plan journeys – A LUF2 bid has been submitted to DLUHC in early August 2022 to support these priority activities via a DRT technical platform and electric buses and investment proposals to digitise customer information to create consistency and easy access to information at bus stops and other key locations. Work is progressing on developing the OBC for submission to DLUHC in “autumn 2022” (no deadline given).

Partners were invited at the EP Development Group on 7 September 2022 to bring forward ideas for bus routes for further rollout of electric buses, which has some earmarked capital funding available from SYMCA’s CRSTS allocation. Bus operators were invited to put forward their interest in partnering with SYMCA in the acquisition and operation of further electric buses.

3. Key Milestones Achieved during Last 2 Months

- 3.1 Proposed EP Forum members received an invite from the Mayor to participate and the first meeting has been scheduled for 28 September 2022.
- 3.2 The EP Operating Group have agreed dates and timings around annual fares changes and service changes twice a year, completing two of the EP Scheme components.
- 3.3 The LUF2 bid was submitted by SYMCA to DLUHC in early August 2022, which if successful could support some of the currently unfunded priority activities.
- 3.4 The EP Development Group have selected a top 6 of priority activities and nominated leads from all partners to further develop these into concepts for consideration by the EP Board to adopt as new EP Schemes.

4. Key Milestones Planned for Next 2 Months

- 4.1 *Commence work on a new Customer Charter to apply across the whole network – the EP Forum will be tasked with starting the development of a new Customer Charter and will present this back to the EP Board in due course.*

Review existing Voluntary Partnership Agreements and retain or enhance operational requirements – Operators are to review existing VPAs, undertake 'gap' analysis of any standards/requirements not covered in the current EPS and to review proposals arising from 'gap' analysis of existing standards.

Review the removal of single operator products in most localised areas – Operators to start undertaking this review taking into consideration the £2 flat fare initiative recently announced by Government.

Review premium levels on multi operator ticket products – Operators to start undertaking this review taking into consideration the £2 flat fare initiative recently announced by Government.

These milestones will be brought together with the work on demand recovery action planning, with a view to hold a separate joint meeting during the week commencing 11 October.

5. Key Risks/Issues

- 5.1 Key risks at this point are considered to be:

- Ensuring sufficient momentum is maintained in delivering the EP Schemes with limited resources (funding and people).
- Immediate action planning in the short term needs to be done in parallel, considering the community impact of imminent bus service changes and the need to drive forward improvement initiatives that can materially improve customer demand in the short term in order to achieve the EP Targets.

6. Action(s) Required from Enhanced Partnership Board

- 6.1 For the EP Board to ensure all partners in the Enhanced Partnership to recognise the EP Scheme components agreed and assigned to them, ensuring progress is being made (and reported back on) in line with the dates and scope agreed.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

- 7.1 None as a result of this paper.

8. Legal Implications and Advice

- 8.1 None as a result of this paper.

9. Human Resources Implications and Advice

- 9.1 None as a result of this paper.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

- 10.1 The EPP sets out the region's plans for improving accessibility across the bus network and on board our services and the EPS is the means by which these improvements will start to be delivered.

- 10.2 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, in agreeing any actions relating to the EPP and the EPS, the Board should have due regard to the need to:

- i. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- ii. Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- iii. foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

11. Climate Change Implications and Advice

- 11.1 The EPP sets out the scale of change required to meet the region's net zero targets by 2035. At present the region does not have any zero emission buses and the EPP identifies the trajectory, costs and initial projects that could begin the transition from diesel to alternative fuels – some of these initial projects are included in the EPS.

12. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

- 12.1 None as a result of this paper.

13. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

- 13.1 None as a result of this paper.

List of Appendices Included – Appendix A EPS1 Progress Monitoring Report v12