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MCA - TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2022 AT 10.00 AM

11 BROAD STREET WEST, SHEFFIELD, S1 2BQ



PRESENT:

Councillor Chris Read (Co-Chair)
Peter Kennan (Co-Chair)
Councillor Joe Blackham
Councillor Robert Frost
John Dowie
Stephen Edwards

Rotherham MBC
Private Sector LEP Board Member
Doncaster MBC
Barnsley MBC
SYMCA Executive Team
SYMCA Executive Team

IN ATTENDANCE:

Alex Forrest	Senior Programme Manager (Rail)	SYMCA Executive Team
Ellen Hinsley	Minute Taker	SYMCA Executive Team
Leanne Richardson	Senior Programme Controls Officer	SYMCA Exectuve Team
Chloe Shepherd	Head of Strategic Transport	SYMCA Executive Team
Rachel Sprigg	Rail Development Manager	SYMCA Executive Team
Richard Sulley	Net Zero Project Director	SYMCA Executive Team
Gareth Sutton	Chief Finance Officer/S73 Officer	SYMCA Executive Team
Sue Sykes	Assistant Director - Procurement, Contracts and Programme Controls	SYMCA Executive Team
Tim Taylor	Director of Public Transport Operations	SYMCA Executive Team

APOLOGIES:

Sarah Norman Barnsley MBC

49 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.

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

Members declared interests in projects relating to their Local Authority areas.

51 **Urgent items / Announcements**

The Chair announced that as the Corporate Director of Public Transport would be leaving the MCA at the end of the year, this would be his last meeting. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked him for all his work and support over the past 7 years and wished him luck for the future.

Public Questions of Key Decisions

A member of the public had raised the following issues, to be considered with regards to the Broom Road cycle way:

- *The plan removes 2 bus stops to incorporate a bus/HGV lane, despite benefitting only 3 buses daily but permanently inconveniencing potential passengers. This lane introduces a merging traffic hazard approaching the roundabout.*
- *The plans give no indication of the steep slopes at Clifton roundabout, significant when reviewing the scheme for approval.*
- *The design team said that they deliberately decided not to seek the views of the local cycling community. Current cycle traffic is minimal; take up depends on current cyclists finding the scheme satisfactory and spreading the word, more likely if endorsed at the design stage.*

In response, the Chair advised that the bus lane already existed and was used by 33 buses daily. It also provided a vital link between deprived communities in the east of the borough with Rotherham.

Taking the constraints of the highway into account, it was not possible to provide cycleways and maintain the bus lane whilst still providing existing distribution of bus stops. The decision to maintain bus priority had been considered to be of greater importance than the relatively small catchment of the two bus stops to be removed.

It was common for merging manoeuvres to take place at the end of bus lanes and already occurred under the existing arrangement. The results of a Stage 2 Road Safety Audit had revealed no issues related to arrangements at the end of the bus lane.

Specific consultation with existing cycling groups was not undertaken. The public consultation did receive responses from a number of cycling groups and cyclists, of those that responded; 75% indicated support, and 58% indicated strong support for the proposals. In addition, 69% of cyclists indicated that they would cycle more as a consequence of the proposals, as did 39% of respondents from the local area.

The Chair noted that the scheme was due to be considered at item 12, under Programme Approvals.

Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October be approved.

Matters Arising / Action Log

RESOLVED that the Action Log be noted.

Fiscal Event Update

The Executive Director of Infrastructure & Place provided a brief update on the fiscal event in November.

The Department for Transport (DfT) was currently working through the consequences of the fiscal event, during which budgets were mainly rolled forward. However, it was expected that all departments absorb current inflation, effectively cutting budgets by around 10%. The implications of this had caused various programmes to be suspended while Government deliberated on which would progress at what level. There was also uncertainty around a number of key infrastructure schemes including Midland Mainline Electrification, HS2 to Leeds and the National Highways work on the A1 and A1M.

The Mayor had written to the Secretary of State setting out a range of issues facing South Yorkshire and seeking a meeting for further discussion. The MCA was also raising concerns with Government through various channels.

RESOLVED that the Board note the Fiscal Event Update.

Rail Issues Update

The Board was presented with updates on a number of current rail issues.

The Rail Development Manager advised that the rail industry was recovering following the covid pandemic with the north showing stronger improvement than the south. Leisure travel had rebounded well but commuter travel was still significantly lower than pre-covid.

The December timetable change had been implemented including a number of reinstated services from Northern. TransPennine Express (TPE) had also extended the route to Liverpool. Due to the continuing industrial action, the full effect of the timetable changes would not be seen until 9 January.

It was noted that TPE had experienced a catalogue of issues leading to widespread cancellations. Currently around 30% of services were being cancelled. The MCA was monitoring this and had put pressure on DfT to look at possible measures to be put in place. Government had recently released a statement setting out a package of support for TPE and Northern.

The MCA was also engaging with operators and Transport for the North to ensure South Yorkshire would benefit from the May timetable changes.

Members requested that the possibility of introducing a stop at Barnsley in the service from Sheffield to Leeds be explored. The Rail Development Manager also confirmed that the link from Thorne South had been reinstated on a 2 hourly service although it was not running during the strikes.

Action: The Rail Development Manager to investigate services between Sheffield and Leeds which do not currently stop at Barnsley and explore the possibility of this stop being introduced.

Action: The Rail Development Manager to circulate the timetable of the Thorne South link to the Doncaster Member.

The Executive Director of Infrastructure & Place added that the TPE service was particularly bad on the Southern route which affected Sheffield and Doncaster. The Mayor was due to meet the Managing Director of TPE to raise our serious concerns.

The Senior Transport Manager (Rail) informed the Board that the first anniversary of the publication of the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) had been marked by joint publicity between the Mayor and the Mayor of West Yorkshire commenting on the lack of progress since its publication and demanded clarity on the HS2 route to Leeds. This had received widespread media coverage.

The MCA was currently awaiting Government's decision on three Strategic Outline Business Cases (SOBC) for Restoring Your Railway schemes. Two had been submitted for the reintroduction of passenger services on the Don Valley (Sheffield) and Askern Line (Doncaster) and one for a new station at Waverley on the border of Sheffield and Rotherham. The Barrow Hill Line (Chesterfield to Sheffield) scheme was progressing to Outline Business Case. This could include up to three new stations in the first phase and ultimately enhance the passenger offer by rail or tram.

There was some uncertainty on whether or when Great British Railways (GBR) would go ahead following the deferment of legislation on its establishment. This had also delayed the decision on the headquarters, for which Doncaster had been shortlisted.

The Director of Public Transport Operations added that a meeting had recently been held with the Manchester Task Force. There had been constructive discussions on the loss of the direct service from Sheffield to Manchester Airport and the Task Force had committed to continue this in the new year. A newsletter on rail developments was planned to provide updates and keep people informed.

(The Chief Executive left the meeting.)

The Co-Chair commented that a huge amount of effort had been put into the Doncaster GBR bid.

RESOLVED that the Board note the contents of the Rail Issues Update.

57 Bus Operations Update

57a Performance

The Director of Public Transport Operations presented an update on the performance of the reduced bus network introduced in October.

It had been anticipated that the changes to the bus network would deliver significant improvements to both punctuality and reliability. There had not been a noticeable difference in punctuality and while reliability had increased, it was

still well below the Enhanced Partnership target of 99.5%. Operators had been presented with this data at the last Enhanced Partnership Board but had objected to some of the interpretation.

Disappointingly, fare rises had been recently announced by TravelMaster (9%) and Supertram (8%) from January. Stagecoach had also confirmed plans for a fare increase, which was expected to be in line with other operators.

RESOLVED that the Board note the Bus Performance Update.

57b **£2 Fare**

The Board received an update on the £2 Fare which had been implemented by the MCA in November.

The Director of Public Transport Operations informed Members that the £2 fare was performing well and had shown week on week growth. Throughout November there had been an increase in the number of people travelling on Fridays which was now the busiest day of the week.

1.25 million sales of the £2 fare had now been made and more than half of these were in the wards in the bottom third of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation measure in South Yorkshire, positively demonstrating that the scheme was supporting those most in need.

Members were pleased with the success of the £2 Fare. In response to questions, the Director of Public Transport Operations advised that a controlled migration would be required to transition from the successor Government fare cap at the end of March 2023 to ensure patronage levels were maintained. The MCA had challenged operators to build on the success of the £2 fare as it was considered that the increased patronage generated by the scheme would be negated unless there was an attractive alternative.

Action: The Director of Public Transport Operations to provide an update on the means of transition from the fare cap at the next meeting.

Action: The Director of Public Transport Operations to put together a summary of the success of the scheme to be communicated to the business community.

RESOLVED that the Board note the £2 Fare Update.

57c **Refreshing the Enhanced Partnership**

The Executive Director of Infrastructure & Place introduced an item on how the MCA and operators could work together to drive improvements to the South Yorkshire bus network.

A number of actions had been identified which the MCA would be working through at pace, particularly around simpler, better value fares and passenger information and communication. A Bus Partnerships Project Director had been appointed to lead on this work.

Operators had also agreed in principle to explore possible growth initiatives in parts of the region.

RESOLVED that the Board note 'Refreshing the Enhanced Partnership'.

57d **South Yorkshire Bus & Coach Driver Training and Retention Programme Proposal**

The Corporate Director of Public Transport informed the Board of the development of a bus driver training programme through the Adult Education Budget (AEB).

The Education, Skills & Employability Board had recently approved the use of £385,000 AEB funds to allow the MCA to commission a programme aiming to increase the supply of bus and coach drivers and support operators in retaining their new staff.

A three stage programme was proposed comprising of:

1. An awareness raising and myth busting campaign and training programme;
2. An SME bus driver training programme leading to PCV certification/licence;
3. Programme alumnus networking sessions for a period up to 6 months from completing the programme.

The programme would also require operators that have benefitted from the programme to develop driver retention action plans to help mitigate the loss of talent in the region. The possibility of requiring candidates to commit to a minimum period of employment as a bus driver was also being explored.

The Board welcomed the programme and questioned whether ex-servicemen or ex-offenders' charities had been approached as a source of candidates. The Corporate Director of Public Transport advised that any candidates have to meet certain requirements to be able to drive public service vehicles, but CPT was doing some work in this area.

RESOLVED that Board Members note the content of the report presented to the Education, Skills & Employability Board on 12 December 2022.

58 **Assessment of "Gold Card" Scheme for Free Rail Travel for Elderly ENCTS Card Holders**

The Board considered the options, costs and recommendations relating to free rail travel for Senior English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) passholder's resident in South Yorkshire.

Since the removal of free train travel for elderly ENCTS passholders in the region, there had been a continued campaign calling for its reinstatement. More recently, a scheme where passholders paid a set fee for an annual pass had been suggested as an arguably cost neutral alternative. The current arrangements allowed elderly ENCTS passholders a 50% discount on rail in addition to free bus and tram travel in the region.

Earlier in the year the MCA had undertaken market research with eligible residents to explore their appetite for an annual pass and the additional number of trips this would generate. The results of this work indicated that the scheme could cost the MCA around £2.87m per year based on a £10 price and £188k based on £20 and that the risk of cost escalation was uncapped.

In response to questions, the Director of Public Transport Operations advised that should such a scheme be implemented, Northern as the principal operator, would require the MCA to reimburse any fares that they would have received from concessionary journeys.

Members were supportive of such a scheme in principle but given the financial risks involved did not feel that they could commit to it at this stage. There was a great deal of uncertainty around funding for the next 6 months and considerable resources had already been dedicated to supporting the bus network. It was therefore decided to defer the item for 6 months, when it could be reviewed to determine whether a scheme was financially viable. In the meantime, work on a cost neutral pass would continue and various options, such as a capped version of the scheme would be explored.

RESOLVED that the Board:

1. Defer the decision on 'Assessment of "Gold Card" Scheme for Free Rail Travel for Elderly ENCTS Card Holders' for 6 months.
2. Support the recommendation that SYMCA continue to engage with train operating companies (TOC's) and the Department for Transport (DFT), as well as seeking support from Northern Mayors to lobby for TOCs to consider options for a cost-neutral Goldcard scheme.

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Net Zero Progress Report

The Net Zero Project Director introduced a progress report on the proposed activities being undertaken as part of the Net Zero Programme.

Energy/carbon retrofitting activity was currently taking place across the region, generally targeted at social housing with funding provided by Government, local authorities and housing associations. It was recognised that, in order to meet the MCA's decarbonisation aspirations and wider aims, work on housing retrofit must be expanded.

Although the project was still in the initial stages, recruitment was planned for a Retrofit Programme Lead to further develop this work. It was also planned to run some demonstration projects to test interventions across different areas in the short to medium term.

The Board welcomed the report and supported the proposals that had been identified. Members also requested an update on issues such as electric vehicle charging and electric buses.

Action: The Net Zero Project Director to provide a further update on net zero progress relating to transport at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the Board note the key proposals set out in Appendix A for progressing the Strategic Case for the South Yorkshire Housing Retrofit Programme.

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Programme Approvals

The Board considered the progression of 7 schemes through the assurance process.

The Manvers Way and Forge Island Footbridge projects were seeking progression to full approval and award of funding, and the Broom Road project was requested to be endorsed to the MCA for full approval and award of funding.

Progression was sought for approval of the Elsecar and Barnsley Active Travel Hubs schemes from Outline Business Case to Full Business Case with the release of development funding.

The approval of the progression of the Rotherham Mainline Station scheme was requested, and endorsement to the MCA Board for approval of the Meadowhall Mobility Hub scheme from Strategic Business Case to Outline Business Case and the release of development funding.

The Board raised concerns around the benefit cost ratio (BCR) of the Broom Road project. The Assistant Director of Procurement, Contracts & Programme Controls advised that although the BCR of the project was poor, it was a strategic priority for Rotherham. In this case, it was considered that the strategic importance outweighed the BCR.

RESOLVED that the Board consider and approve:

1. Progression of 'T0022 – Manvers Way' Full Business Case (FBC) to approval and award of £1.03m grant from Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix A1;
2. Progression of 'T0026/1 – Forge Island Footbridge' FBC to approval and award of £1.0m grant from TCF to RMBC subject to the conditions set out in Appendix A3;
3. Progression of 'CRSTS3/2 (T0033) – Elsecar Active Travel Hub' from OBC to FBC and release of development costs of £0.05m from CRSTS funding to BMBC subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix C1;
4. Progression of 'CRSTS52 – Rotherham Mainline Station' from Strategic Business Case (SBC) to Outline Business Case (OBC) and release of development cost funding of £1.0m from City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) to RMBC subject to the conditions set out Assurance Summary attached at Appendix C1;
5. 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.

The Board consider and endorse:

6. Progression of 'O0047/CRSTS28 – Broom Road' to MCA for FBC approval and award of £3.6m grant from Active Travel Fund 2 (ATF2), City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) and Gainshare to RMBC subject to the conditions set out in Appendix A2;
7. Progression of 'CRSTS3/3 (T0030) – Barnsley Active Travel Hub' to MCA from OBC to FBC and release of development costs of £0.24m from CRSTS funding to BMBC subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix B2;
8. Progression of 'CRSTS17 – Meadowhall Mobility Hub' to MCA for approval of progression from Strategic Business Case (SBC) to OBC and release of development cost funding of £0.26m from CRSTS to South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) subject to the conditions set out in Assurance Summary attached at Appendix C2.

The Board note:

9. Endorsement by Assurance Panel of the withdrawal of TCF scheme 'T0025 – Doncaster Road' for RMBC due to the scheme no-longer being financially viable and the £1.7m TCF funding be ringfenced to RMBC to be used to support remaining TCF schemes.

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Programme Performance

The Board received information on the latest performance information on the Transforming Cities Fund 2 (TCF2) and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programmes being delivered on behalf of the MCA.

The MCA currently had 86 projects within the TCF and CRSTS programmes with an aggregate value of £621.54m.

The TCF2 programme consisted of 34 schemes with:

- 12% were in delivery with a value of £11.75m;
- 32% had been fully approved and were going into contract with a value of £57.52m;
- 15% were undergoing final assurance ahead of submission for approvals;
- 38% remained in development.

The current forecast expenditure for the current financial year is £59.51m. This is significantly behind the base budget of £137m. There had been concerns around whether all TCF2 activity could be delivered March 2023, however, the final tranche of TCF funding had since been rolled into the new five-year CRSTS.

CRSTS had 60 schemes within the programme with an aggregated value of £490m.

- 15% were fully approved or already in delivery;
- 1% was undergoing final assurance;
- 11% were developing full business cases;
- 73% were in early development.

The current forecast spend for the current financial year was broadly on budget at £33.69m.

Action: Members requested that a comparison with the original budget profile be included to enable the Board to better identify slippage at programme level.

RESOLVED that the Board consider the performance information provided:

1. To advise on any additional information that would assist in monitoring performance; and,
2. To identify future performance deep-dives or significant areas of risk.

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Business Processes Update

The Executive Director of Finance & Investment provided overview of the processes used in the delivery of the MCA's capital programmes.

He informed the Board that concerns around how long it was taking capital programme schemes to be delivered. A review had been undertaken to find any areas where the process could be streamlined. A number of issues had been identified, including:

- Lack of capacity;
- Lack of resource for early-stage at-risk feasibility works;
- A need for improved collaboration between delivery agents and the MCA;
- A need to embrace technology to allow for more efficient processes;
- A need to review governance arrangements, including both the Assurance Framework and decision-making processes.

In response to these issues the MCA had taken a number of steps:

- A Project Feasibility Fund had been created to allow for at-risk investment in scheme feasibility and design, allowing authorities to get ahead of funding cycles (£24m);
- The Project Feasibility Fund has been complemented by the release of CRSTS revenue to further support capacity and capability shortfalls (£10m);
- A Programme Management Office has been created within the MCA to better support collaboration and assist each authority with the progression of schemes through MCA processes;
- A project management system had been implemented where all business cases would be submitted, developed and processed reducing the need for paper process and allowing real-time collaboration;
- The Assurance Framework would be reconsidered as part of the review of the MCA which was currently taking place.

RESOLVED that the Board note the Business Processes Review.

Any Other Business

The Board was made aware that after the meeting on 9 February 2023, the next meeting was not scheduled until 29 June 2023. The Executive Director of Infrastructure & Place stated that a significant number of project approvals would require consideration in the interim.

Action: The Democratic Services Officer to explore the possibility of arranging an additional meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED that:

1. An additional meeting to be arranged, if possible; and
2. If further required, the Board agreed that investment decisions within its remit and needing to be made between its meeting on 9th February 2023 and before its meeting on 29th June 2023, be taken (in accordance with the Boards Terms of Reference) by the Head of Paid Services (or their nominated representative) in consultation with the Lead Chief Executive Local Authority Member and the co-Chairs.

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

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