

MCA - TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

THURSDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 10.00 AM

11 BROAD STREET WEST, SHEFFIELD, S1 2BQ



PRESENT:

Councillor Chris Read (Co-Chair)	Rotherham MBC
Peter Kennan (Co-Chair)	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Councillor Robert Frost	Barnsley MBC
Councillor Mazher Iqbal	Sheffield City Council
Sarah Norman	Barnsley MBC
John Dowie	SYMCA Executive Team
Councillor Christine Gilligan Kubo (Reserve)	Sheffield City Council

IN ATTENDANCE:

Alex Linton	Head of Transport Development	SYMCA Executive Team
Chloe Shepherd	Head of Strategic Transport	SYMCA Executive Team
Richard Sulley	Net Zero Project Director	SYMCA Executive Team
Sue Sykes	Assistant Director of Procurement, Contracts & Programme Controls	SYMCA Executive Team
Tim Taylor	Director of Public Transport Operations	SYMCA Executive Team
Ellen Hinsley	Minute Taker	SYMCA Executive Team

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Joe Blackham	Doncaster MBC
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64 **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and apologies were noted as above. Due to a misunderstanding, Cllr Iqbal and his reserve, Cllr Gilligan-Kubo were both in attendance. It was noted that Cllr Gilligan-Kubo was able to participate in the discussion but would not count towards quorum or any items requiring a vote. Cllr Blackham joined the meeting virtually but was unable to hear the proceedings due to technical difficulties and left the meeting when these issues remained ongoing.

65 **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.

66 **Urgent items / Announcements**

None.

67 **Public Questions of Key Decisions**

None.

68 **Minutes of the last meeting**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2022 be approved.

69 **Matters Arising / Action Log**

RESOLVED that the Action Log be noted.

70 **Future Developments - Bus**

70a **Transition from the Fare Cap**

The Director of Public Transport Operations informed the Board that the Mayor's Fare which ran between November and December 2022 had been a success for cost of living, but less so for patronage growth. It was noted that a greater proportion of those using the scheme lived in the lower quartile of deprived wards (using the IMD scale) in South Yorkshire, indicating that those that are most susceptible to cost of living pressures were benefiting from the scheme the most. But there was less evidence of patronage growth, with large-scale shifting of existing ticket purchases to singles from period tickets, reports of growth on specific longer-distance services, but limited net growth across the market as a whole.

He advised that continuing the existing scheme would be unsustainable as estimated costs were around £4.7m per year. However, it was essential to agree an alternative commercially funded approach to avoid tariffs reverting to previous levels. Several options were being explored by the Enhanced Partnership, including an increased fare cap or a single fare structure.

In response to questions, the Director of Public Transport Operations advised that it would take considerably longer to generate a noticeable shift towards public transport in the public's behaviour. Members discussed whether the cheaper fares, increased simplicity or the promotion of the scheme had had the biggest impact.

The Board also considered how to communicate with the general public. Members felt it was important to ensure that passengers were aware that the MCA had submitted bids for both Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Levelling Up (LU) monies to improve public transport but had been rejected by Government. The MCA had provided substantial funding to protect as much of the network as possible but there had still been a loss of around 15% of the

network. Ultimately, the MCA did not have the money to continue this level of financial support and would need some form of Government assistance.

ACTION: The Executive Director of Infrastructure & Place and Director of Public Transport Operations to contact the business community about likely upcoming cuts to the bus network in South Yorkshire. The possibility of a coordinated message from the business community to Government to be explored.

RESOLVED that the Board:

1. Endorse and recognise that the scheme provided essential support to those most in need during a cost-of-living crisis;
2. Support the recommendation to engage with bus operators to agree a viable exit strategy from the fare cap when it ends in March 2023;
3. Request that a final evaluation of the locally-funded fare cap scheme is shared with TEB members when complete.

70b

Award of Tendered Bus Service Contracts Post-July

The Board received an update on the proposed approach to tendered bus service contracts post-July.

At present, Government covid-related funding was due to end on 31 March 2023. The MCA Board had agreed to support the current network until July, whatever happened to Government funding.

The Director of Public Transport Operations advised that although Government had been due to confirm in January whether they planned to continue covid support for the bus sector, they had yet to make an announcement.

Given the uncertainty surrounding future funding it was intended to put 3 year contracts in place to replace the current short term versions. Tenders were planned to be issued to replicate the existing tendered services as well as those which were previously unsuccessful, up to a total annual contract value of £18.75m, a significant increase on preceding years. The results of the public consultation undertaken in 2022 would be used to prioritise services to be protected.

Members were cautioned that even if Government funding was extended, there were still numerous issues facing the network and difficult decisions would need to be made.

The Director of Public Transport Operations added that local authorities would be kept informed throughout the tender process. It was proposed that once Government had confirmed future funding, a meeting with Leaders be held to outline the extent of the network which could be secured. Leaders would also be consulted prior to contracts being issued and tenders awarded.

ACTION: The Director of Public Transport Operations to compile an information sheet on the amount of Government and MCA funding currently supporting the bus network to be circulated to Members of the Board.

RESOLVED that the Board:

1. Acknowledge the complexity and uncertainty of the funding landscape, compounded by the late decisions from Department of Transport (DfT) on any extension to Bus Recovery Grant (BRG) funding.
2. Support the proposal to continue to use the prioritisation of bus service types as defined by the public engagement undertaken in August 2022 ahead of anticipated cuts originally due in October 2022.
3. Support the approach that SYMCA officers allocate the full available budget to protect bus services on the basis of the priorities set out.
4. Support the timeline of tendered service contract tender issue and award.

(Cllr Blackham left the meeting.)

71 **Appointment of an Active Travel Commissioner**

The Executive Director of Infrastructure & Place informed the Board of the appointment of Olympic medal winning cyclist, Ed Clancy as the new Active Travel Commissioner.

During his first week in post, he would be visiting all four districts and getting to know local communities and their issues in order to help shape the next stage of Active Travel across the region.

In response to questions, he advised that the Active Travel Commissioner reported directly to the Mayor, his support team would be part of MCA and therefore be subject to the same governance arrangements.

The Board welcomed the appointment of the new Active Travel Commissioner and looked forward to working with him as an ambassador for the green agenda.

RESOLVED that the Board note the appointment of Ed Clancy as the Active Travel Commissioner.

72 **Active Travel Fund Update**

The Head of Transport Development provided an update on the opportunity presented by the Active Travel Fund 4 (ATF4) allocation.

Guidance had been released to the MCA under embargo ahead of the public launch of ATF4. Active Travel England (ATE) had given an indicative allocation of £5m for South Yorkshire and was encouraging submissions of up to £15m to inform future funding rounds.

Only construction funding and development funding schemes were eligible for inclusion. ATE had identified a focus on areas with poor health outcomes and high levels of deprivation.

Work with local authorities was underway to shortlist relevant schemes in time for the submission deadline on 24 February.

RESOLVED that the Board endorse the submission of a bid and the process for this as outlined in the report.

73 **Net Zero Progress Report**

The Net Zero Project Director updated Members on net zero progress across transport.

As there was no single area which would allow the MCA to meet the net zero ambition of 2040, action would need to be taken across multiple fronts. Work was ongoing to give insight into where effort and resources could be focussed for the biggest impact.

It had been identified that although the transport sector was not the single biggest contributor to the region's carbon emissions, it was the most reluctant to change.

The electric vehicle chargepoint programme was underway with 38 sites expected to be completed by the end of March. Work on decarbonising public transport was also ongoing, however it would not have the desired effect unless more people were to switch from private vehicles to public transport.

A refresh of the Local Transport Plan was planned, which would amongst other things, reflect the strategy for Net Zero.

ACTION: The Net Zero Project Director to circulate the slides to the Committee.

In response to questions the Net Zero Project Director advised that a sustainable vision would see fewer cars used less often. Electric vehicles would only be part of the solution.

A housing retrofit programme was also being explored to look at how the MCA could encourage people who could afford to retrofit their homes and attract private finance to provide support where needed.

RESOLVED that the Net Zero Progress Report be noted.

74 **Programme Approvals**

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

The Edlington and Bennethorpe to Hallgate cycle route projects were seeking progression to full approval and award of Transforming Cities Funding (TCF).

Progression to Business Justification Case (BJC) and release of £1m from the Mayor's Sustainability Fund (MSF) was sought for the Active Travel Crossings.

Darton Active Travel Route and Wombwell to Worsborough TPT link were requesting permission to progress from Strategic Business Case (SBC) to Outline Business Case (OBC) and award of City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS).

The endorsement of the A61 Chesterfield Road Bus Priority and Penistone Rail Station Park & Ride schemes to the MCA Board for approval to progress from SBC to OBC and the release of development costs.

The Board also noted the withdrawal of the North Bridge Cycle Connector to High Street due to the scheme no longer being financially viable. The remaining TCF funding was to be ringfenced to Doncaster MBC to be used to support the remaining schemes.

The Assistant Director of Procurement, Contracts & Programme Controls advised that there were 3 large TCF schemes which would be moving through the process shortly which may not be able to be considered at the MCA Board or Transport & the Environment Board due to the timings. It was noted that the issue of investment decisions within the Board's remit needing to be made between its February meeting on but before its June meeting, be taken by the Head of Paid Service (or their nominated representative) in consultation with the Lead Chief Executive Local Authority Member and the Co-Chairs.

RESOLVED that the Board consider and approve:

1. Progression of 'T0014/1 – West of Doncaster Active Travel (Edlington)' Full Business Case (FBC) to approval and award of £0.38m grant from Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) to Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix A1;
2. Progression of 'T0017/3 – Bennethorpe to Hallgate' FBC to approval and award of £1.26m grant from TCF to DMBC subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix A2;
3. Approval of 'MSF0005 – Active Travel Crossings' Business Justification Case (BJC) and award of £1m grant from Mayors Sustainability Fund (MSF) to South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA), subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix B1;
4. Progression of 'CRSTS08/01 – Darton Active Travel Route' Strategic Business Case (SBC) to Outline Business Case (OBC) and release of development costs of £0.16m against scheme costs of £1m from City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC), subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix C1;
5. Progression of 'CRSTS05/01 – Wombwell to Worsborough TPT Link' SBC to OBC and release of development costs of £0.15m against scheme costs of £1.1m from CRSTS to BMBC, subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix C2;
6. 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:

7. Progression of 'CRSTS11 – A61 Chesterfield Road' to MCA for approval of progression from SBC to OBC and release of development costs of £0.25m against scheme costs of £10m from CRSTS to Sheffield City Council (SCC), subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix C3;
8. Progression of 'CRSTS49 – Park & Ride – Penistone Rail Station' to MCA for approval of progression from SBC to OBC and release of development costs of £0.75m against scheme costs of £4m from CRSTS to SYMCA, subject to the conditions set out in the Assurance Summary attached at Appendix C4.

The Board note:

9. Endorsement by Assurance Panel of the withdrawal of TCF scheme 'T0017/4 – North Bridge Cycle Connector to High Street' for DMBC due to the scheme no-longer being financially viable and the remaining £0.79m TCF funding be ringfenced to DMBC to be used to support remaining TCF schemes.

75 Programme Performance

The Assistant Director of Procurement, Contracts & Programme Controls provided an update on the latest performance information on TCF2 and CRSTS programmes being delivered on behalf of the MCA.

The MCA currently had 115 projects within the TCF and CRSTS programmes with an aggregate value of £736.30m.

The TCF2 programme now consisted of 32 schemes.

- 34% schemes in delivery with a value of £52.30m.
- 18% schemes fully approved and going into contract with a value of £13.62m.
- 1 scheme undergoing final assurance ahead of submission for approvals; and,
- 37.5% schemes remain in development.

It was noted that more schemes are now beginning to move into the contracting and delivery stages. The agreement to allow more local flexibility at the last meeting had also enabled schemes facing inflationary pressures to progress.

CRSTS has 66 schemes within the programme with an aggregated value of £482.19m.

- 15% are fully approved or already in delivery.
- 8% are developing their full business cases (FBC).
- 77% are in early development.

The current forecast spend amount for this financial year is broadly on budget at £31.18m. This relatively strong performance was considered to be due to lessons learnt from the TCF.

RESOLVED that Board members 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.

76 **Any Other Business**

The Executive Director of Infrastructure & Place reminded Members of the Transport Summit due to take place on 1 March. He observed that it would be a good opportunity to reflect on the areas where progress was being made and what more could be done.

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