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MCA - ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

TUESDAY, 21 MARCH 2023 AT 2.00 PM

SOUTH YORKSHIRE MCA, 11 BROAD STREET WEST,
SHEFFIELD, S1 2BQ



PRESENT:

Mayor Oliver Coppard (Chair)
Councillor Chris Read
Dawn Badminton-Capps
Ian Humphreys
Matt Kitchin
Andrew McGuinness
Pat Beijer
John Dowie

South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority
Rotherham MBC
Public Bus Users
First Yorkshire
Stagecoach Yorkshire
CPT
SYMCA Executive Team
SYMCA Executive Team

IN ATTENDANCE:

Nick Brown
Tim Taylor
Ellen Hinsley
Kevin Belfield

Bus Partnerships Project Director
Director of Public Transport Operations
Minute Taker
Commercial Director

SYMCA Executive Team
SYMCA Executive Team
SYMCA Executive Team
First Yorkshire

APOLOGIES:

None

42 **Chair's Welcome & Apologies**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

43 **Minutes & Actions of the Previous Meeting**

Regarding Minute No. 39a, the First Representative advised that following the previous meeting he had found that there was no policy in place within First to provide onward travel for wheelchair users. This had been raised internally and was currently being explored.

It was noted that a Wheelchair Promise was intended to be included in the Customer Charter, the final version of which was planned to be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

ACTION: The First Representative to seek to resolve internal agreement for the onward travel for wheelchair users in time for the next Board meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January be approved.

44

Update on EP Programme Delivery

The Bus Partnerships Project Director informed the Board of progress against agreed targets and deliverables to improve bus services.

The current network performance was still failing to meet the Enhanced Partnership (EP) targets:

- 61m passenger journeys per year (target of 77m).
- 78.9% punctuality (target of 95%).
- 97.5% reliability (target of 99.5%).

There had been good progress in areas such as the installation of bus shelters and real time displays, electric buses, and new ticketing equipment. However, there were concerns around the lack of progress in network development, punctuality, and ticket simplification.

The Executive Director of Infrastructure & Place added that a critical part of turning the network around and improving public perception would be operators attempting growth initiatives. In response, operators advised that the last year had been focussed on recovery and although capacity had now improved, it was not yet feasible to look at expansion. The development of the network was a longer term goal.

The Chair also challenged operators on the progress of the deliverables assigned specifically to them as many operator owned actions had stalled.

Cllr Read also requested that EP commitments to progress a Demand-Responsive Transport pilot be recognised and that a location in the region be identified along with suitable funding to commence service testing.

ACTION: The Executive Director of Infrastructure & Place to explore alternative funding options to run a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) pilot scheme.

The Bus Partnerships Project Director advised that work on the development of a single source of journey planning information was ongoing with potential providers currently being explored. The Bus Users Representative highlighted that the EP Forum had identified this as a key priority.

The First fleet had been fitted with 'tap and cap' technology but was not planned to be switched on until Government's £2 fare cap came to an end. Although Stagecoach was rolling out 'tap and cap' nationally, it had not yet been confirmed when the technology would be implemented on their South Yorkshire fleet.

ACTION: The Stagecoach Representative to write to the Chair, setting out the plan for the delivery of 'tap and cap' within Stagecoach.

The MCA exploring the procurement of a number of electronic ticketing machines (ETMs) which could be leased out to smaller operators where they

were not yet installed. It was noted that ETMs also tracked vehicles in real time and would therefore improve the accuracy of this data.

On ticket simplification, TravelMaster products were being reviewed to try and make these tickets more attractive to passengers and prompt a shift in sales. This could then provide a justification for operators to withdraw their own equivalent products.

ACTION: A Working Group, including the Executive Director of Infrastructure & Place, the Bus Partnerships Project Director, Operator and TravelMaster Representatives to be set up to look at progressing the EP scheme and refreshed EP programme deliverables. An update to be provided to the next meeting.

ACTION: The Bus Partnerships Project Director to arrange a meeting with appropriate local authority colleagues to discuss bus priority measures and agree a coordinated approach.

RESOLVED that:

1. Board members note the slippage in the delivery of the EP programme reported in this paper, and the slow improvement of performance indicators which in all instances remain below the agreed targets.
2. All partners in the EP are again strongly encouraged to step up the delivery of agreed measures. Without comprehensive delivery, it is likely that agreed targets will not be reached, and the bus network will continue to be in a state of crisis.
3. Operators to inform the EP Board of their plans to grow the network by trialling new services or service enhancements on a commercial basis.
4. The Board agrees that a formal variation to the EP Scheme is commenced and brought back to the next EP Board meeting.
5. The EP Board reports to the next Transport and Environment Board with an outline of progress based on this and other papers at this Board meeting.

45 **Update on Mayor's Priorities**

The Board were updated on the progress of two Mayoral priorities in the EP Programme, ticket simplification and the improvement of real time information available on a mobile phone.

A programme of work was underway to improve live web-based information which was expected to deliver improved real time data on a mobile phone by May 2023. A Travel South Yorkshire (TSY) app was planned to follow by March 2024 driven by the need to deliver tram retail. This will include wider information functions for bus and tram including real time by mid-late 2024.

The work on ticket simplification had focused on mapping product types, modelling the price point to which multi-operator products would need to be reduced to ensure no passengers are disadvantaged should operators decide to remove operator-own tickets. Early indications were that there would be negative impact on operator revenues if no passengers were to be financially disadvantaged.

The Director of Public Transport Operations added that another option to explore as part of fare simplification would be the prices of the single fare stages given the success of the fare cap. A transition to a sustainable model would be needed once the Government scheme came to an end as currently planned in June 2023.

RESOLVED that:

1. Board members note the update provided in this paper.
2. Operators continue and intensify efforts to achieve a very high rate of tracking of buses.
3. All parties continue the current engagement on ticket simplification and work to ensure multi-operator ticketing becoming the preferred ticket for the majority of consumers based on price and simplicity.

46 **Operational Group Update**

46a **Use of Prospective Scheduling Software to Improve Punctuality**

(K. Belfield joined the meeting online.)

The Board received an item on First's use of scheduling software to improve punctuality.

The software allows an operator to select a desired punctuality performance and frequency, and recommends an optimised timetable and the vehicle numbers required as a consequence. This clarifies trade-off choices between punctuality, frequency, journey times and resource requirements.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that trials conducted in other areas had been positively received. In South Yorkshire, First was currently in the process of registering services and it was anticipated that the effects would be seen soon after implementation. Services which were being chosen to trial the system were those where punctuality was consistently poor.

ACTION: The First Representative to provide an update on the use of Prospective Scheduling Software, confirm when it is planned to be implemented in South Yorkshire and its effects on punctuality to be brought to the September meeting.

RESOLVED that the Use of Prospective Scheduling Software to Improve Punctuality be noted.

(K. Belfield left the meeting.)

46b **Antisocial Behaviour Update**

The Director of Public Transport Operations outlined the measures being taken to address the recent increase in antisocial behaviour across public transport network, in particular:

- Missiles had been thrown at buses in Thurnscoe which had led to shortened services in the area since October 2022.

In response, a multi-agency response group had been convened to coordinate on the issue as well as directly tackling the perpetrators. It was hoped that evening services would resume in the area the following month.

- At Barnsley Interchange, a number of incidents of violence and disorder between groups of young people had been recorded between late 2022 and early 2023.

To address this the MCA had increased the levels of security staff on site and South Yorkshire Police had engaged with the known individuals.

Operators welcomed the multi-agency approach and noted their thanks to the MCA and partners.

RESOLVED that the Antisocial Behaviour Update be noted. Post-meeting note: services are to be reinstated in Thurnscoe area to 9pm from 17 April 2023.

47 **EP Forum Update**

47a **EP Forum Updates**

The Board was provided with an update on the work of the EP Forum, including:

- The Terms of Reference had been updated to clarify the role of the Forum.
- It was felt that membership was representative of South Yorkshire and consistency in attendance had improved.
- The work on the Customer Promise was almost complete and covered all stages of the journey from planning to completion.
- Simplified ticketing had been identified as a key priority.
- Concerns had been raised that no bus review of the network had been undertaken to get the public's views on where people want to travel by bus.
- The Forum was keen for their feedback to be taken into account and considered by the Board.

The Director of Public Transport Development advised that a suggestion had been made to provide QR codes on board buses which would link to the web-based real time data once launched. This was supported by Members who also emphasised the importance of communicating the launch with the travelling public.

ACTION: The Director of Public Transport Operations and Bus Partnerships Project Director to plan the dates of any proposed future network changes and the related stakeholder engagement periods into the EP Forum meeting schedule to ensure adequate contribution from the Forum and operators.

RESOLVED that the EP Forum Update be noted.

48 **Development Group Update**

48a **Update on Bus Priority Measures**

The Board was updated on progress with delivering bus priority measures in South Yorkshire.

Providing buses with priority was an important way to improve punctuality across the network, delivering shorter journey times and making services less expensive to run. Enabling buses to avoid the worst areas of congestion was also a visible way to attract people to public transport and bring in more farebox revenue. Therefore, implementing bus priority measures was one of the key components of the EP programme.

ACTION: Members suggested that a bus priority plan for the network as a whole be considered at the meeting to be arranged with local authority colleagues (above). Progress to be reported at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that:

1. Board members note the update provided in this paper.
2. All partners continue and step up engagement on delivering bus priority programmes at the district level, to maximise the benefits to bus services and ensure that available funds are fully utilised.
3. Once identified, additional bus priority schemes are added into future variations to the EP Scheme.
4. The EP Board receives regular reports on delivery of bus priority programmes.

49 **Items of Confidentiality**

None.

50 **Any Other Business**

The Board was informed that Bus Users UK would be promoting September as the second "Catch the Bus" month and welcomed any involvement from Members.

The CPT Representative raised the possibility of a representative from TM Travel attending future meetings in an observer capacity.

ACTION: The Director of Public Transport Development to explore the possibility of a representative from TM Travel attending future meetings, either with voting rights or in an observer capacity.

The Chair thanked all for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.

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

Signed

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Name

Position

Date

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