

Enhanced Partnership Board

Tuesday, 29 August 2023

Review of Enhanced Partnership Documents

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
Reason why exempt:	Not applicable
Purpose of this report:	Discussion
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Has it been included on the Forward Plan of Key Decisions?	Not a Key Decision

Director Approving Submission of the Report:
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Report Author(s):
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Executive Summary

This report recommends a process for revising the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP), Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EPS) and Enhanced Partnership Terms of Reference. It also notes a change to the Chair of the EP Forum.

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

The Enhanced Partnership has been created to achieve a step change in the performance of the bus network in the South Yorkshire region. In time, its success will significantly enhance the passenger experience for public transport users. This in turn will support growth in bus patronage, and help it to achieve long-term financial sustainability.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

1. Agree to a review of the EP Scheme, with recommendations for consideration at the 19 December 2023 EP Board meeting.
2. Agree to a review of the EP Board terms of reference, with recommendations for consideration at the 19 December 2023 EP Board meeting.
3. Note a change to the Chair of the EP Forum, and thanks Dawn Badminton-Capps for performing the Chair role since its inception.

1. BSIP, EP Plan and EP Scheme review

- 1.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) has encouraged all local transport authorities to regularly update their Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs). The development of BSIPs was originally a pre-requisite for bidding for government funding under the BSIP programme. Although South Yorkshire prepared a BSIP and submitted a funding application, the region was unsuccessful in securing a share of the available funding. Nonetheless, DfT has made clear that any future funding allocations are likely to take account of the extent to which BSIPs are current and reflective of the latest situation locally.
- 1.2 Feedback from DfT on the South Yorkshire BSIP stated that it:
 - Provided a good analysis of the current bus offer, trends and comparisons with other relevant areas.
 - Included a range of proposals; interventions were reasonably detailed and covered the broad range of topics specified in the guidance. There was also evidence of good engagement, for example, the Bus Review 2020, which sought the views of a wide range of stakeholders.
 - Was underpinned by other strategies, such as the Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Bus Service Improvement Plan Economic Plan (SEP).
 - Could have been strengthened with more developed proposals to deliver significant additional bus priority improvements. DfT would also have welcomed more ambitious passenger growth targets based on current forecasts.
 - Was missing some data, for example, there was limited information on service frequencies of non-Key Route Network routes. DfT wanted more detail on the parking strategy, for instance, a commitment to address the availability and cost of parking across the region.
 - Could have been strengthened with more information on deliverability, particularly on the level of resource already in place or needed to deliver the plan.
- 1.3 Despite this feedback, it is questionable whether now is the right time to revise the BSIP. The process for revising the BSIP is likely to require a significant level of resource that is currently not available in SYMCA. More significantly, we are in the midst of assessing franchising as an alternative delivery model option. The decision on whether or not to pursue franchising will have a strong bearing on the nature of a future revised BSIP, and could impact the EP itself. Finally, the BSIP is effectively a strategy for improving bus services that should be viewed as part of wider integrated transport strategy. SYMCA is currently in the process of developing a new transport strategy in the form of the Local Transport Plan, and to revise the BSIP prior to this could be seen as premature.

- 1.4 For these reasons, we recommend that the BSIP is not revised at this point in time, and that any revision follows both the decision on franchising and the adoption of the new South Yorkshire Local Transport Plan.
- 1.5 The Enhanced Partnership Plan is a delivery plan for the BSIP. For the same reasons as set out above, we do not consider it an appropriate time to revise the Enhanced Partnership Plan. This should be revised in conjunction with, or shortly after, the revision of the BSIP.
- 1.6 In order to respond to the need to keep the EP programme fresh and up-to-date, however, we recommend that the EP Scheme is subject to a review. The EP Scheme contains commitments to specific, timed deliverables that are designed to implement the EP Plan. Although there have been two variations since it was first adopted on 1 April 2022, it is now somewhat out-of-date. Indeed, Paragraph 5.9 of the EP Scheme requires that the Scheme is subject to review by SYMCA at least annually. It is therefore proposed that a review of the EP Scheme is undertaken over the next 3-4 months, and is considered at the EP Board meeting on 19 December 2023. This allows time for required consultation under section 138F of the Transport Act 2000, including with the Traffic Commissioner and Competition and Mergers Authority.
- 1.7 The review of the EP Scheme will be an opportunity to incorporate relevant parts of the 'Refreshed EP'. The Refreshed EP contained a series of new and accelerated commitments in support of the EP Plan and BSIP. These were agreed by the EP Board in November 2022, but were never incorporated into the EP Scheme and therefore have no formal status. Although progress in delivering the Refreshed EP has been regularly reported alongside progress in delivering the EP Scheme, the status of the former has been somewhat ambiguous. The proposed review of the EP Scheme is an opportunity to remove this ambiguity by incorporating relevant Refreshed EP content into the formal EP Scheme.

2. EP Terms of Reference

- 2.1 The EP Board Terms of Reference make clear that the Terms of Reference should be reviewed annually. It states that any changes will be approved by Transport and Environment Board (TEB) or any other relevant formal governance boards.
- The South Yorkshire MCA has agreed to implement a number of governance changes which will require changes to the EP Board Terms of Reference. For example, the role of Vice-Chair of the EP Board is currently specified as the Local Authority Chair of the Transport and Environment Board (TEB), and under the new governance arrangements the TEB has been discontinued.
- It is therefore intended that a formal review is undertaken, and that proposed changes are presented to the EP Board on 19 December 2023 for endorsement, after which they will be submitted for approval to the governance structures that replace the TEB.

3. Change to the Chair of the EP Forum

- 3.1 The role of Chair of the EP Forum since its inception has been performed by Dawn Badminton-Capps, Director for England, Bus Users UK. This role has also involved

membership of the EP Board. Dawn Badminton-Capps has taken up a new role outside Bus Users UK, and will therefore no longer perform the role.

- 3.2 The EP Board Terms of Reference require that one Member of the EP Board is a representative of the EP Forum. In practice, this has been the Chair of the EP Forum since the EP Board was first created. The EP Forum Chair role has been temporarily taken up by Claire Walters, Chief Executive of Bus Users UK, pending the appointment of a successor to Dawn Badminton-Capps, which is likely to be from October 2023.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Board:
1. Agrees to a review of the EP Scheme, with recommendations for consideration at the 19 December 2023 EP Board meeting.
 2. Agrees to a review of the EP Board terms of reference, with recommendations for consideration at the 19 December 2023 EP Board meeting.
 3. Notes a change to the Chair of the EP Forum, and thanks Dawn Badminton-Capps for performing the Chair role since its inception.

5. Consultation on Proposal

- 5.1 Not applicable as a discussion paper only.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 Not applicable as a discussion paper only.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

- 7.1 No financial or procurement decisions are recommended in this paper. Any financial implications resulting from schemes and proposals referred to in this paper will be subject to their own financial and policy approval processes.

8. Legal Implications and Advice

- 8.1 Not applicable as a discussion paper only.

9. Human Resources Implications and Advice

- 9.1 Not applicable as a discussion paper only.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

- 10.1 Not applicable as a discussion paper only.

11. Climate Change Implications and Advice

- 11.1 Not applicable as a discussion paper only.

12. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

12.1 Not applicable as a discussion paper only.

13. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

13.1 Not applicable as a discussion paper only.