

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

THURSDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2023 AT 2.00 PM

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



Present:

Councillor Tim Huggan (Chair)	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Joshua Bacon	Rotherham MBC
Councillor Jeff Ennis OBE	Barnsley MBC
Councillor Hannah Kitching	Barnsley MBC
Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Christine Gilligan Kubo (Reserve)	Sheffield City Council

In Attendance:

Clare Monaghan	Executive Director of Policy and Strategic Development	SYMCA Executive Team
Pat Beijer	Executive Director of Transport (Acting)	SYMCA Executive Team
Adam Bottomley	Senior Lawyer	SYMCA Executive Team
Nicola Marshall		
Fliiss Miller	Director of Skills	SYMCA Executive Team

Ed Clancy	South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority
Mayor Oliver Coppard	South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority

Apologies:

Councillor Douglas Johnson	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Jake Kearsley	City of Doncaster Council
Councillor Jane Kidd	City of Doncaster Council
Councillor Zahira Naz	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Ken Wyatt	Rotherham MBC

103 Welcome and Apologies

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

The meeting was not quorate but members proceeded with an informal discussion.

104 **Urgent Items/Announcements**

None.

105 **Items to be Considered in the Absence of Public and Press**

None.

106 **Declarations of Interest by any Members**

None.

107 **Reports from and Questions by Members**

None.

108 **Questions from Members of the Public**

None.

109 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting Held on 21 September**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

110 **Matters Arising/ Review of Action Log**

Updates to the Action Log were noted:

- The matter regarding the 10/10a bus route was now resolved,
- Timeline for tram development would be addressed in the substantive Tram Mobilisation item on the agenda,
- On the decision of whether to infill the Woodborne Road Tunnel it was noted that a follow up inspection had been requested from Sheffield City Council, and that it was expected a contractor would be appointed before the end of this financial year.

111 **Review of latest Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

A discussion was held on the proposed Safe Place to Sleep Programme. This a programme seeking to address the number of children in the region without their own bed to sleep in and would look to provide basic provisions to the most in need families. The Committee welcomed this initiative and noted examples in Scotland and Scandanavia of provisions made available for new born babies, as well as previous grants made by the South Yorkshire Fire Authority to Barnsley hospital.

A question was raised around the Transport Levy and it was noted that Local Authorities had agreed to a year-on-year increase to the fund, which would

receive formal approval as part of the MCA Budget process.

112 **Committee Work Plan**

ACTION: Scrutiny Officer - The Committee asked that the following items be added to the Workplan:

- The Mayor's Safe Place to Sleep programme,
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

A question was raised about the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. A response was given that the MCA was currently appointing members to an Advisory Board, and that the Strategy could be developed from February.

113 **Police and Crime Commissioner Powers**

An update was provided on the transfer of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) powers by the Executive Director for Policy & Strategic Development, noting that:

- The Order would be laid in Parliament the following week to affect the transfer of Police and Crime Commissioner powers to South Yorkshire's Mayor,
- It was expected that the Constituent Councils would provide their consent to the Order by the end of the week,
- A formal Programme Board had been established to manage the transfer of functions,
- Seven working groups had been established to deliver the transfer of day-to-day functions.

A question was asked on the possible appointment of a Deputy Mayor for Police and Crime, and what their role would be. A response was given that this is a decision which the elected Mayor would take after taking up Office, but that having a Deputy Mayor is not mandatory. The appointment of this role would also be subject to consultation with the Police and Crime Panel.

A question was raised around use of PCC funding and any possible changes to back-office functions. A response was given that PCC funding is ringfenced for that purpose. All PCC staff would be TUPE'd (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment rights) to the MCA, and that there were no plans to change their staffing structures or functions.

114 **Skills Update**

An update was provided on the MCA's Skills agenda by the Director for Skills, noting that:

- The Combined Authority has an annual skills revenue budget of approximately £55 million,
- South Yorkshire has a post-industrial economy, with productivity challenges across sectors.

It was asked whether the MCA stipulates which industries skills funding is targeted at. A response was given that this is partially decided by providers but that the MCA negotiates delivery plans with providers and can procure for

specific provision as needed.

A question was asked regarding community education, and how to involve learners who are less driven to engage in adult learning. It was responded that that Local Authority partners are commissioned to deliver programmes, who – where appropriate - subcontract to community organisations who can distribute funding in the most appropriate way for each place.

It was asked how the amount of funding for skills in South Yorkshire compares with the national average. A response was given that there is a mix of devolved, delegated, funding which was bid for by the MCA and use of the MCA's gainshare allocation, but that South Yorkshire was mid-table in terms of funding per resident when compared with nationally with the devolved adult education budget.

It was noted that year-on-year underspend on skills provision was declining, and that the MCA is working to ensure that funds go as far as possible without any duplication of provision.

A question was asked about Multiply funding, and whether the late award of this had had an impact on Value for Money across the programme. A response was given that this is a 3-year programme but that in the first year there had been a significant underspend due to the late award. However, the programme was now in year 2 and spend forecasting had greatly improved.

It was added that the short-term nature of all skills programmes is a challenge for mobilising schemes, which the MCA continues to raise with Government. It was hoped that with the development of an MCA Skills Strategy there would be a clearer pipeline of schemes ready to deliver as funding is made available.

115 **Active Travel**

A verbal update was provided on Active Travel by Ed Clancy, Active Travel Commissioner, and the Active Travel Programme Director.

It was noted that:

- Increasing walking, wheeling and cycling in South Yorkshire is a priority for the MCA as it improves residents' health, reduces carbon emissions and creates nicer places for people to live,
- Co-production with communities was important to addressing barriers to active travel,
- There was good practice across the region with much delivery on track, and that a strong relationship had been built with Active Travel England,
- Improvement was needed in the development of a refreshed strategic plan and a pipeline of schemes.

An overview was given on the development of a new strategic plan which would form a part of the Local Transport Plan. It would focus on:

- Integrating types of journeys, such as walking and public transport,
- Improved infrastructure, and supporting residents to use new infrastructure,
- A piece of research which had been commissioned to create clear

- shared plans for active travel with communities,
- Working with key partners to engage lesser heard communities in this work.

An overview was given of £160m of Active Travel schemes on the pipeline to date, and in particular the Bennetthorpe Active Travel Scheme was highlighted, which had seen a doubling of cyclists using the route.

ACTION: Active Travel Programme Director to circulate slides used to members.

A concern was raised about use of off-road bikes and quad bikes in communities, and it was asked how active travel plans could work to address these issues. A response was given that the MCA was keen to involve experts in the delivery of active travel ambitions, and that barriers to use of off-road routes need to be looked at to ensure appropriate use of all routes. It was noted that the growth of e-scooters presented a challenge, but that the MCA would need to be ready to foster responsible use in future.

It was added that there are many community groups in the region supporting young people and adults to engage in leisure walking, running and biking.

It was asked how much involvement the MCA engages with planning applications to promote cycling. A response was given that new powers had been given to Combined Authorities to allow greater collaboration and input into the planning process for things like this, and that the MCA was committed to doing so.

A question was raised around engagement from Local Authority partners; it was noted that engagement had been very positive, and that the strategic plan would acknowledge that different approaches would be needed across the region to create infrastructure which works for all.

A question was raised around integration of methods of travel such as cycling and the Tram. The Active Travel Commissioner responded that there are many examples of schemes which may not work in South Yorkshire and so careful consideration would be needed for the development of any new scheme.

116 **Tram Mobilisation**

An update on Tram Mobilisation was presented, noting that:

- Governance arrangements had been established for the operating organisation to be in place from the first day of operation,
- Oversight of risk would sit with the MCA Audit Standards and Risk Committee,
- The incumbent pension provider would remain in place, and the MCA was currently in the process of acquiring audit services for the operating company.
- A year-one Business Plan had been developed to mobilise systems and processes for new operations and to ensure regulatory and legal compliance,
- A significant asset renewal programme would also be undertaken within

this period and would be addressed within the business plan.

A question was raised around safety for road users around tram tracks, and the renewal of and maintenance of tracks. A response was given that the operating company would continue to be responsible for maintenance, and that this is divided between them and Highways England.

ACTION: Executive Director Public Transport to look into issue raised on road maintenance and concrete repairs on the tram tracks in the Hillsborough ward.

ACTION: Executive Director Public Transport to look up how much road surface the MCA is responsible for maintaining around tram tracks.

117

Mayoral Scrutiny

The Chair welcomed the Mayor to the meeting and invited him to update the Committee.

The Mayor noted some recent events and significant pieces of work which he had undertaken since the previous Committee meeting:

- Over 20 public bus meetings had been held,
- He had attended Labour and Conservative Party Conferences,
- He had attended COP28 as part of a City Region Mayors' delegation,
- He had visited St Louis to speak about the region's advanced manufacturing capabilities and to build greater links with South Yorkshire,
- The Minister of State for Transport had visited South Yorkshire following Network North announcements.

Cllr Ennis highlighted the North South divide in England, and disproportionate funding across northern regions, and asked about the Mayor's ambitions for greater devolution. The Mayor responded that the roll out of devolution had been piecemeal, but that he continues to lobby government for greater devolution in South Yorkshire, including for business rate retention and a 'single pot' settlement. He added that the Northern Mayors have lobbied together and continue to support each other on several issues such as ticket office closures.

Cllr Kitching asked what the next steps in in Bus Franchising would be. The Mayor responded that if agreed to by the MCA Board, the MCA's assessment of Franchising would be subject to an external audit which he hoped would happen early next year. This would be followed by a public consultation and a final decision on Franchising by the MCA Board.

ACTION: Scrutiny Officer to add Bus Franchising to the Committee Workplan.

Cllr Richards asked about the transfer of Police and Crime Commissioner powers, and how the role of Deputy Mayor might work. The Mayor noted that none of this process had been confirmed, and that this would be a decision taken by whoever is elected Mayor. He noted that in other regions an open recruitment process had been conducted for the role, but that the Mayor would

be ultimately responsible for any work as the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Cllr Bacon asked about the purpose of Mayor's public bus meetings. The Mayor responded that the deregulation of buses in the 1980s had negatively impacted the whole system and had instigated a decline in funding for places like South Yorkshire.

Cllr Bacon also challenged whether City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funding was being used equally across the region. The Mayor responded that the Government determines much of how CRSTS funding is spent.

The Mayor added that he is committed to making sure all communities in the region receive better transport links and infrastructure, and that the first round of CRSTS was distributed on a per capita basis, but that not enough funding had been allocated to be spent everywhere in South Yorkshire. He noted that he continues to lobby government to commit to greater transport funding for the region, including the release of funding previously allocated to a Doncaster Sheffield Airport rail link.

Referencing a recent media story, Cllr Huggan asked whether the Mayor intended to bid for the Commonwealth Games to take place in South Yorkshire. The Mayor responded that he would like to do this if Government was also willing to invest in it.

Cllr Huggan also asked whether there are any bus services paid for by the MCA which operators have been failing to run. The Mayor responded that he hoped this would not be the case, but that he would seek to find out any instances. **ACTION: Mayor Oliver Coppard** to find information on any tendered services not being delivered by operators.

Cllr Huggan also asked about future expansion of the Tram network. The Mayor noted that expansions of the tram for example, to Chesterfield or new park and rides, would be a long way in the future but that the MCA is working towards being in a better position to roll out more aspirational plans for the tram network.

Cllr Ennis expressed disappointment that not all MPs in the region were lobbying Government for greater funding for South Yorkshire and stated that he would be writing to MPs to call on them to support the Mayor to get a better deal for the region.

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

Signed

Name

Position

Date