

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

THURSDAY, 14 MARCH 2024 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 Douglas Johnson	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Hannah Kitching	Barnsley MBC
Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards	Sheffield City Council
Councillor Ken Wyatt	Rotherham MBC

In Attendance:

Martin Swales	Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service	SYMCA Executive Team
Steve Davenport	Director of Law and Governance	SYMCA Executive Team
Gareth Sutton	Executive Director of Resources & Investment	SYMCA Executive Team
Pat Beijer	Director of Public Transport Development	SYMCA Executive Team
Clare Monaghan	Executive Director of Policy and Strategic Development	SYMCA Executive Team
Andy Gates	Assistant Director - External Affairs	SYMCA Executive Team
Laurie Heykoop	Senior Economic Policy Manager	
Sarah Pugh	Democratic Services Officer	SYMCA Executive Team
Tim Taylor	Director of Public Transport Operations	SYMCA Executive Team
Ellen Hinsley	Minute Taker	SYMCA Executive Team

Apologies:

Councillor Jake Kearsley	City of Doncaster Council
Councillor Jane Kidd	City of Doncaster Council

118 Welcome and Apologies

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

119 **Urgent Items/Announcements**

None.

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

None.

121 **Declarations of Interest by any Members**

None.

122 **Reports from and Questions by Members**

None.

123 **Questions from Members of the Public to the MCA**

None.

124 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting Held on 14th December and Action Log**

The Director of Public Transport Operations provided an update on the maintenance and renewal of tram tracks and the associated track slab.

The Board was informed that the road surface in between the tracks and 18 inches outside of the rails was currently the responsibility of Stagecoach Supertram and would transfer to South Yorkshire Future Trams Ltd (SYFTL) a wholly owned subsidiary of the MCA on 22nd March. As the tracks need constant maintenance, the MCA had invested in technology to better monitor this, and an ongoing maintenance programme would continue.

In response to comments from Members on the recent partial closure of the tram network, the Director of Public Transport Operations advised that a double rail break had been identified in the embedded rail at Manor Top and contractors were engaged to carry out the repairs as soon as possible. However, due to the limited number of specialist contractors there had been a delay of around a week. A replacement bus service was adopted during this time. The importance of the need for the work being undertaken in a safe and compliant manner was stressed.

ACTION: The Director of Public Transport Operations to share details of the call off contracts in place between rail-related specialist contractors and the MCA.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2023 be approved.

125 **Mayoral Scrutiny**

The Chair welcomed Mayor Oliver Coppard to the meeting.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Mayor discussed the Safe Space to Sleep Programme (SSTSP). The MCA had recently approved an investment of £2.2m to guarantee a cot, bed or Moses basket to children under 5 years old in the region. The MCA was working with national charity, Baby Basics who could provide further support where needed.

It was anticipated that this work would lead to further insight and support the case for a longer-term intervention in this area.

ACTION: The Mayor to provide further information to the Committee on:

- **Whether a new type of bed will be provided once a child is ready to transition to the next type (i.e. Moses basket to cot).**
- **Whether beds will be returned and re-used.**
- **Whether families can reuse a bed if they have another child.**
- **Confirm how many families were expected to benefit from the scheme.**

He noted that Local Authorities also had complementary schemes such as the baby packs which had recently been launched in Rotherham. Members expressed the hope that the other Local Authorities could learn from Rotherham's experience and launch similar projects.

Members discussed the possibility of including the temperature cards which had been developed in Barnsley and gave guidance on the correct sleeping temperature for babies as well as dangerous temperatures around the home.

ACTION: The Mayor to contact the Chief Fire Officer, Barnsley Hospital and Baby Basics to look into providing temperature cards as part of the SSTSP.

ACTION: The Mayor to provide the local authority contacts for the SSTSP to Committee Members.

Members welcomed the MCA Board's recent decision to progress to an external audit of the Bus Franchising Assessment. The Mayor confirmed that there was support for Franchising from across South Yorkshire, and that he felt that the work done by the MCA had demonstrated the benefit for the region.

The Mayor considered that the Year of Active Travel focused more on encouraging behaviour change and promoting how members of the public can travel more actively. He was intending to run in every Park Run in South Yorkshire and had recently attended a school in Hunters Bar with the Active Travel Commissioner to help children check their bikes. He had also met with officers from across the local authorities when they attended an event at the MCA to share their experiences and learn from each other. The Mayor added that he was also wanting to support more Park Runs and was planning to attend junior Park Runs with the Active Travel Commissioner.

In terms of further devolution, the Mayor confirmed that he currently had no plans to take on the Fire Service given the scale of transition currently taking place at the MCA. Whereas the Homes England Strategic Place Partnership fit in well with the MCA's existing powers around housing. It was anticipated that

this partnership would enable the MCA to work with developers to tackle challenging development sites.

The Mayor informed the Committee that if re-elected, he would look to appoint a Deputy Mayor to focus and lead on the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) functions full time. This person would ultimately be accountable to the Mayor. He added that the Committee would have a role to play in scrutinising the PCC functions.

(The Mayor and Cllr Bacon left the meeting.)

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

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted.

127 **Review of Committee Work Programme**

RESOLVED that the Committee Work Programme be noted.

128 **Update on South Yorkshire Airport City**

The Executive Director of Resources & Investment informed Members of the work taking place on South Yorkshire Airport City.

The MCA had considered the Outline Business Case (OBC) for South Yorkshire Airport City at its February meeting. The OBC focussed on 3 principal issues:

- Taking control of Doncaster Sheffield Airport (DSA) through a lease agreement with Peel Group.
- Re-establishing aviation and procuring an operator to run DSA.
- Using the airport as an anchor for growth at the wider Gateway East site.

Following approval at MCA Board, a Full Business Case was now being prepared by officers at City of Doncaster Council (CDC) with support from the MCA. Simultaneously, negotiations to lease the land were in progress between CDC and Peel Group, and a procurement exercise to identify a private operator was underway.

The Executive Director of Resources & Investment confirmed that there were operators interested in running the airport, these had been shortlisted and were currently preparing final bids.

The wider goal of South Yorkshire Airport City was the opportunity to create a sustainable aviation hub at Gateway East, building on the existing strengths of the region such as advanced manufacturing and translational research. As part of South Yorkshire's Investment Zone, there were additional tools available to the MCA at Gateway East.

Members agreed that the opportunity presented by South Yorkshire Airport City could drive significant growth and provide considerable benefit for the region but cautioned that the risk was correspondingly great.

ACTION: The Executive Director of Resources and Investment to bring a follow up report on South Yorkshire Airport City to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Executive Director of Resources and Investment clarified that £138m was made available for the delivery of the Doncaster Place Investment Plan. Although the airport was a major part of Doncaster's Plan, the £138m funds were not limited to use solely on the airport.

RESOLVED that the update on South Yorkshire Airport City be noted.

129 **Bus Franchising Update**

The Director of Public Transport Development presented an update on the progress of the work on Bus Franchising.

Earlier in the week the MCA Board had taken the decision to proceed to independent audit, the next stage of the statutory process. The preferred option in the franchising assessment had been identified as Franchising option B, where the MCA would own the fleet and depots, giving the MCA greater strategic control over the network.

The Financial Business Case had found that Franchising option B was affordable over a 30-year period. This was based on a £350m capital expenditure for fleet, depots and mobilisation which would be funded from City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement 2 (CRSTS2) grants. Any revenue surplus generated would be retained until around 2040 and used to reinvest in buses and other network improvements unless more capital funding is made available.

Once the independent audit had been concluded, the MCA Board would decide whether to progress to the next stage, a public consultation. The final decision would then be made by the Mayor on behalf of the MCA.

ACTION: The Executive Director of Public Transport Development to circulate Bus Franchising slides to Members.

RESOLVED that the Bus Franchising Update be noted.

(The Director of Public Transport Development left the meeting.)

130 **£2 Bus Fare Impact Evaluation**

The Director of Public Transport Operations introduced an item on the £2 Bus Fare Impact Evaluation.

Market research had been commissioned to evaluate passenger awareness and response to the £2 fare cap on bus and tram as it was considered important to evaluate and understand the benefits and outcomes generated.

Whilst the MCA funded the bus fare cap from 1st November 2022 to 31st December 2022, a total of 1.9m trips were made on bus at a cost of £884,000.

On tram, there had been a total of 5.13m fare cap trips on the network to date, saving pass holders around £3.7m. In total, the MCA had so far paid almost £2.2m fare cap reimbursement to Supertram.

Across both bus and tram users, 15 out of 28 respondents said that they were making journeys that they previously made with other forms of transport. As a result of the fare cap people have made savings of £115 on average.

It was found that awareness of the fare cap was lower than hoped, with 42% being fully aware of the £2 single fare cap on buses, 6% somewhat aware and 52% are not at all aware.

It was noted that an evaluation of the Zoom Beyond scheme would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that Members:

1. Recognise the benefits of the local and national £2 bus fare cap and the locally funded £2.80 tram fare cap.
2. Support the need for further market research into the fare cap on bus and tram in Autumn 2024.
3. Endorse the need to agree an exit strategy for the national £2 bus fare cap when it ends on 31 December 2024, and the tram fare cap which is due to end on 30 November 2024.

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Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Members received an update on the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) a new statutory duty for MCAs.

As the 'Responsible Authority', the Mayor of the MCA is required by law to lead, prepare, publish, review, and republish a LNRS. The LNRS is intended to 'identify locations to create or improve habitat most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment'. A parallel piece of work, Biodiversity Net Gain, is also taking place across local planning authorities.

ACTION: The Senior Sustainability Manager to circulate a list of the LNRS Advisory Panel Members and the bodies they represent to the Committee.

A number of stakeholder engagement workshops were due to be held across the region during spring and summer, as well as a public survey for those unable to attend.

ACTION: The Senior Sustainability Manager to invite Committee Members to LNRS workshops.

It was noted that a period of public consultation would be required for the LNRS, which would then need to be approved by the MCA Board. The LNRS was due for publication by March 2025.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the attached update on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Safe Place to Sleep Programme

The Assistant Director of External Affairs presented an overview of the Safe Space to Sleep Programme (SSTSP).

Health inequalities is a particularly acute issue in South Yorkshire with multiple, complex causes. The MCA and partners worked together to identify an entry point where an intervention could provide the most benefit and provoke a conversation about the wider problem.

It was hoped that the SSTSP would lead to improved understanding of the issue and underpin a business case for further investment in this area.

ACTION: The Assistant Director of External Affairs to bring a progress report back to a future meeting of the Committee.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that access to the SSTSP was through Baby Basics existing referral network. This would also enable Baby Basics to provide further support as well as signposting to other organisations.

ACTION: The Assistant Director of External Affairs to provide details to all South Yorkshire Councillors and schools on how to refer people to the SSTSP and Baby Basics.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the attached update on the Safe Place to Sleep programme.

Committee End of Year Report

Members were presented with the End of Year Report which outlined work of the Committee over the course of the year.

An improvement plan for 2024/25 was set out in the report, with the aim of improving Committee effectiveness, and working towards implementation of the Scrutiny Protocol.

Members had appreciated the informal briefing sessions in between formal meetings which provided more depth of knowledge of specific areas. The Committee noted their thanks to Officers for their work to develop the Overview & Scrutiny function at the MCA over the past year.

The Committee noted their disappointment that Doncaster Members had not attended meetings as it was felt that the Committee should represent all 4 districts.

RESOLVED that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

1. Consider the draft report and provide any extra feedback for inclusion in the final version,
2. Note that following the March 2024 Committee meeting, statistics and recommendations in the report will be updated in time for submission of the Chair's report to the MCA Board AGM.
3. Recommend a finalised/ completed report to the MCA Board.

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

Signed

Name

Position

Date