

Sheffield City Region Levelling Up Fund Transport Bid Executive Summary

The proposed Sheffield City Region (SCR) Levelling Up Fund bid is a package of important community-level enhancements that will improve passenger experience of everyday travel across the region. It will address some of the inequalities of public transport infrastructure that exist and by improving them, encourage more people to choose to travel by public transport, walking and cycling. It recognises that passengers see a transport system holistically rather than mode specific terms.

Local residents will be able to access employment, services and leisure more readily and the investment will support vibrant connected neighbourhoods, stronger towns and city centre renewal.

Details of the bid are provided in the table below. In summary we are seeking Levelling Up Funding from Government to make improvements to include:

- Increased passenger access to 'live' journey information
- Making sure contactless payment technology is available on buses and trams
- Off-board payment machines
- Investment in EV community transport
- Upgrading transport shelters to improve accessibility and make sure they represent the communities in which they're situated
- Giving passengers additional seating support at stops and in shelters
- Increased bus priority on roads
- Investing in Active Travel to encourage alternative, sustainable journey types

It puts passengers firmly at the heart of transport improvement and lays solid foundations ahead of future complex and transformational projects that will be determined by a programme of analysis underway in response to the Bus Review.

Strategic fit

Regional Overview

The SCR is polycentric city region comprising of four strong local authorities: Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, and Sheffield. Each with their own unique identity and geography. Public transport is crucial to the region's prosperity.

1. It supports the regional economy and vibrant neighbourhoods, towns and Sheffield city centre.
2. It helps our transition to a zero-carbon future
3. It provides opportunities for our people

The benefits of recent economic growth in the region have not been felt evenly by the population and has been challenged by the pandemic. Significant inequality remains with economic and social deprivation widening. On average, full time workers in the Sheffield City Region receive £57 less in gross weekly pay than the national average and some wards are some of the most deprived communities in the country. Going

forward, national research confirms that a strong, reliable public transport network is integral to inclusive economic growth and the prosperity of towns, cities, and regions.

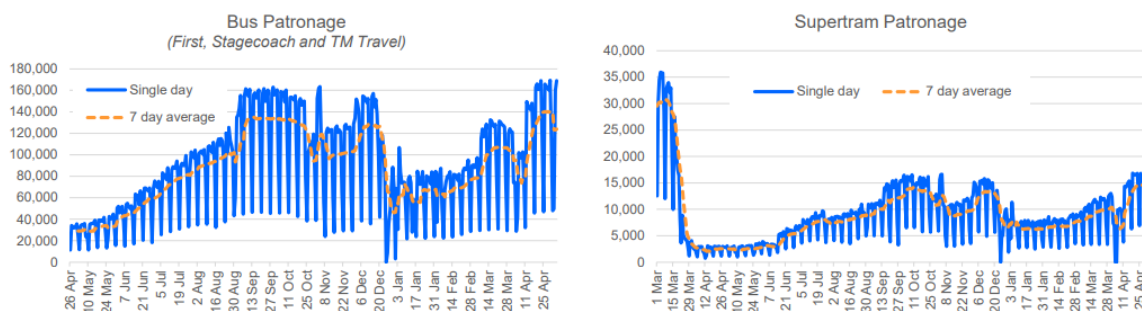
The Sheffield City Region Strategic Economic Plan sets out our commitment to creating vibrant and resilient places across South Yorkshire and the importance of a transport system that connects communities to opportunities. This includes ensuring that our main population centres are better connected to one another and to future sites of major employment.

Public transport will also help in our response to the climate emergency. Public transport, especially buses, should play an essential role in encouraging cleaner, greener travel. A high proportion of residents (71%) of SCR residents travel to work by car, and this trend has increased since 2001. Currently, half of all trips under 2km are made by car; more worryingly a quarter of all trips under 500m are also made by car. We need a quality public transport offer to encourage people to make the switch to sustainable travel.

Furthermore, there is direct correlation between social disadvantage and physical mobility because of the barriers that poor public transport can create in accessing education, employment, and training. All four of the local authorities in South Yorkshire are in the bottom half of the [social mobility index](#) – with Doncaster and Barnsley two of the least socially mobile places in the country. Better public transport needs to play its part in tackling inequalities in the region, by providing reliable and frequent services that connect people to opportunities in their communities and beyond.

Put simply, the biggest opportunity for future transport investment is to better connect the areas of transport poverty, with those areas of opportunity by public transport and active travel modes, allied to achieving significant mode shift away from the private car on key corridors that could stifle future growth ambitions.

Sheffield City Region Bus Improvement Programme



The pandemic has had a drastic impact on the public transport system with operator commercial vulnerability exacerbated as patronage plummeted after lockdown and social distancing measures were enforced. With restrictions slowly lifting and passengers returning to non-essential travel, now is the time to rebuild our public transport system with passengers at the heart of every improvement we make as part

of the region's recovery. In March 2021 the MCA agreed a £3.2m investment of Gainshare funding in:

- Replacing community transport buses with electric vehicles
- Upgrading bus shelters
- Installing electronic displays at bus stops

This Levelling Up Fund bid proposes to build on what is already underway but seeks to scale up the investment so that more passengers, in more communities, on buses and trams can enjoy the benefits of an improved public transport system.

The challenges exacerbated by the pandemic were not new as the South Yorkshire [Bus Review](#), led by Clive Betts MP, highlighted. The review deliberately assessed the bus system from a passenger perspective and gathered significant amount of evidence through different forms of stakeholder engagement. The feedback from passengers was clear. The current public transport system in South Yorkshire is not fit for the 21st Century.

The Bus Review provided the MCA with a robust case for change and in July 2020, the SCR MCA responded to the Bus Review with an ambitious plan of sector-leading analysis to explore opportunities to make public transport better, simpler, and easier. At the heart of the response is the MCA's determination to make public transport a more attractive option to people.

Whilst more time is needed to complete detailed analysis, this should not delay immediate passenger improvement.

The bid also takes forward the ambition set out in the LEP's [Strategic Economic Plan](#), published in January 2021 which stated, "a reliable, efficient and affordable transport system is a crucial driver of economic growth".

The Government's National Bus Strategy marked a shift away from the current deregulated system towards a greater level of public influence in the operation of buses through an Enhanced Partnership which is also being considered by the MCA today. This Levelling Up Fund proposal will lay the foundations for more ambitious, transformational bus projects that will be set out in a Bus Service Improvement Plan in the Autumn – the suggested principles of which will be:

- Passengers at the heart of the system
- Reliable and punctual services
- Transport that is accessible to all
- Fast and connected network
- Simple fares and ticketing
- Environmentally sustainable journeys
- An effective network for the 21st Century

Delivery

The fund requires some activity to be delivered in 2021/2022 and that all money be spent by 31st March 2024. Delivery feasibility has been a key determinant in shaping the contents of the proposal.

Detail of bid proposal

| <i>A quality passenger experience bid</i> | Value |
|---|--------------|
| <p>High quality transport shelters – Modernisation and Improvement Programme We will renew up to 1500 bus shelters which are 20 years old or more and in need of replacement or modernisation and up to 100 tram shelters to improve passenger experience from the start of their journeys. This will mean a major boost to our ten-year programme of renewals: to include -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more seating for passengers who need additional support while waiting to travel, • accessible boarding by raising curbs and installing tactile paving • replacing electric power with solar panels and battery supply • providing passengers with more local travel information including active travel routes • sympathetically upgrading shelters to reflect the communities in which they are situated | £15m |
| <p>Giving customers ‘live’ journey information – we will install approximately 1000 passenger information displays using real time journey information including service occupancy data. They will be installed in priority areas to be determined as part of the current work to develop our Bus Service Improvement Plan</p> | £8m |
| <p>Faster and more reliable journeys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sheffield - we will tackle congestion at one of the city’s busiest traffic hot spots – a key cause of reliability and punctuality issues for buses which use the route. Chesterfield Road Bus Corridor will add public transport capacity and look to enhance roads and bus lanes to complement the existing Better Bus Area scheme. ○ Rotherham - road improvements linked to the local authority’s own constituency LUF bid. Includes improved bus priority measures such as traffic signal improvement at Warren Vale ○ Doncaster - A18 corridor improvements to improve traffic congestion ○ Barnsley - A635 Quality Bus Corridor enhancements – we will tackle congestion at one of Barnsley’s busiest roundabouts; providing additional capacity for public transport; linked to one of the Council’s priority schemes in the TCF. Includes measures such as dedicated bus lanes and traffic signal improvements | £16.5m |
| <p>Making sure contactless payment is offered across the entire network – this project seeks to upgrade the remaining payment machines so that contactless payment methods are provided on all services</p> | £350,000 |
| <p>Providing off-board payment – we will install 20 payment machines across the region to improve passenger access to off-board ticket payment. This will also speed up boarding times for operators but also offer inclusive travel for passengers who still need to pay by cash</p> | £640,000 |

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| Upgrading community transport fleet to zero emission buses – this project will upgrade the fleet of SYPTE managed community transport vehicles and install the necessary infrastructure to accommodate EV charging | £3.5m |
| Improving accessibility and connectivity of the Trans Pennine Trail – an increasingly important component of the region’s travel to work network, complementing significant leisure use. Use of the trail has doubled over the last 18 months and it requires upgrade and investment to support this growing commuter and leisure use and to access other parts of the transport network | £5m |
| Total | £49m |
| The values in the table will be subject to further refinement ahead of the bid submission | |