

Transport and the Environment Board

14 June 2021

South Yorkshire Bus Improvement Programme Update

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

Director Approving Submission of the Report:

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Executive Summary:

This report provides an update on the development of the South Yorkshire Bus Improvement Programme (SYBIP) developed in response to the Bus Review and considers the links to the recently published National Bus Strategy (NBS) and Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) guidance. This report presents the first set of outputs from Work Package 1 (WP1) for discussion to shape their development and to ensure their alignment to the requirements of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

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

The recommendations of the Bus Review and the policy approach articulated in the NBS aim to improve the bus service offered to residents, visitors, and businesses in the region.

Recommendations:

- Note the linkages between the South Yorkshire Bus Improvement Programme (SYBIP), WP1 outputs and the requirements of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

- Discuss the emerging objectives identified and note their role in the wider SYBIP
 - Note the following phases of work and next steps in the development of the BSIP
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1. Background

- 1.1 The Bus Review published in 2020 highlighted the challenges within the South Yorkshire bus system and made a series of wide-ranging, evidence-based recommendations for improvement. In January 2021, the Board agreed a paper that outlined how the 7-Point Plan developed in response to Bus Review was to be reconfigured in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, with work starting on Work Package One (WP1), which would provide details on what a 'good' bus network looks like.
- 1.2 The publication of the National Bus Strategy "*Bus Back Better*" in March 2021 (NBS) articulated several requirements including;
- An ambition for every Local Transport Authority (LTA) and bus operator in England to be in a statutory Enhanced Partnership (EP) or a franchising arrangement;
 - LTAs entering EP arrangements need to develop Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) with clear targets;
 - A greater focus on more ambitious bus priority schemes in urban areas to make services faster, more reliable and more attractive to passengers; and
 - Ambitious goals for simpler fares, integrated ticketing, modal integration, digital information, and zero emission vehicles

The requirements outlined in the NBS and the aims of the 7 Point Plan are closely aligned, which means South Yorkshire are well positioned to develop our improvement plans for bus.

- 1.3 As WP1 will provide many of the inputs required for the South Yorkshire BSIP, we have aligned the various components of the work programme following the publication of BSIP guidance in May. The first set of WP1 outputs are the objectives for the South Yorkshire bus network, which have been produced by the Route Analysis workstream and form a key input to the BSIP for October. A discussion around the objectives is sought from the Board, following which the outputs will be refined and work will move on to developing a network that will deliver the regions objectives.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Alongside the articulation of DfT's policy position on bus, the NBS set out some specific requirements of Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and key deadlines that must be met in order to continue to receive Government subsidy for local bus services and to access transformational funding in the future. These are;
- If a formal franchising process has not yet started (as is the case in South Yorkshire), the LTA needs to commit by the end of June 2021 to develop an Enhanced Partnership.
 - The Enhanced Partnership Plan will need to be agreed by April 2022 and the first Scheme implemented by this date.

- The LTA needs to prepare its first BSIP by the end of October 2021.

As an Enhanced Partnership is a statutory arrangement (under the 2017 Bus Services Act) between a LTA and local bus operators, the MCA is due to discuss this issue on the 7 June 2021 and a verbal update on the decision will be provided to TEB.

2.2 An Enhanced Partnership has two components, a Plan and a Scheme or Schemes. The EP Plan sets out the geography the Partnership applies to, the vision and objectives of the Partnership and the monitoring and reporting arrangements. The Scheme or Schemes set out the interventions and projects that will be delivered to achieve the objectives set out in the Plan.

2.3 Having reviewed the recently issued guidance on the BSIP that is required by the NBS, it is clear that there is a significant overlap between the two documents, and so our approach is that the South Yorkshire BSIP will act as the EP Plan, setting out the geography covered by the EP arrangements alongside;

- Identifying the network that LTA wants to see
- Setting targets for passenger growth and network satisfaction
- Identifying “ambitious” bus priority measures
- Setting targets for journey times and reliability improvements
- Outlining plans for fares, ticketing and integration
- Setting targets for carbon reduction

Government requires the submission of a BSIP in October 2021 and that the document is produced in partnership with bus operators and local stakeholders.

2.4 The South Yorkshire Bus Improvement Programme (SYBIP) was established following the publication of the Bus Review and prior to the publication of the NBS. It draws together the following elements of the 7 Point Plan alongside the specific work required to develop the BSIP and take forward the Enhanced Partnership;

- Route Analysis – to identify the level of service and connections required
- Quality Analysis - To quantify the quality of service passengers require
- Environment Analysis - Investment to deliver the MCAs net zero commitments
- Pricing Analysis - Ensure our pricing and ticketing framework and review concessions, to ensure they meet passenger needs
- Model Evaluation - Legal and financial implications of changing current delivery model
- Cost Model - A financial planning exercise involving Local Authorities and bus operators to produce a new cost model to achieve the 7 Point Plan objectives
- Governance - Begin the process for integrating the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE) fully within the Sheffield City Region MCA

The Route, Quality and Environment Analysis workstreams form WP1 and is in the process of being delivered.

- 2.5 The outputs from WP1 will form many of the inputs required for the development of our BSIP. The programme of work for WP1 has been reviewed alongside the BSIP development timeline, to crosscheck the information required will be available at the right time. The first outputs from the Route and Quality Analysis workstreams will set out the objectives underpinning the development of the network we would like to see, and the role of bus.
- 2.6 The articulation of South Yorkshire's priorities for the bus network and the role of the bus is important, as this will be used as a reference point for the development of the wider improvement programme. The BSIP also requires the articulation of a vision and objectives for the South Yorkshire bus system, therefore developing a set of objectives is critical to the wider bus improvement programme.
- 2.7 A workshop was held on 19/05/21 with Local Authority partners to gather information and views to inform discussions regarding the objectives that should be delivered by the South Yorkshire's bus system. This discussion was shaped by the existing policies relating to public transport in the region, to ensure the outputs reflected the work undertaken to date. The session indicated a set of priorities and the attributes that partners would like to be considered as part of a better bus system.
- 2.8 A meeting was held with Bus Operators on 26/05/21 to gather further information and views on the outputs of the discussion with partners and to identify whether there were any gaps. The operators added to the draft outputs and showed strong support for those areas identified by partners that related to the application of existing policy. Support was particularly strong for aligned land use policy and the role of parking policy in supporting efficient bus operation. Appendix 1 summarises the outcome of the initial discussions held with Local Authority partners and Bus Operators, to inform today's discussion.
- 2.9 To date, information and views have been sought from partners and bus operators to ensure the draft objectives reflect policy as well as operational challenges. The evidence from the Bus Review and customer insights from the Quality Analysis workstreams have also been used to inform this process to ensure customer needs are also reflected. The Board are now asked to discuss and develop the draft objectives, following which the outputs will be refined and work will progress to developing a network that will deliver the regions objectives.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 Option 1

The Board may decline to agree a shared set of objectives for the South Yorkshire bus network. This approach is not recommended due to the need for shared objectives in the development of the wider WP1 bus improvement work and the requirement for shared objectives in the BSIP and as part of the Enhanced Partnership.

3.2 Option 2

The Board may wish to see a smaller number of shared objectives that focus on a specific area of policy.

3.3 Option 3

The Board may wish to prioritise the objectives placing emphasis on certain aspects of policy, to better reflect the needs of the region.

3.4 Option 1 Risks and Mitigations

There is a strategic risk presented by the current lack of agreed objectives and vision for the South Yorkshire bus system. In agreeing a set of shared objectives, the impact of this strategic risk will be lessened, enabling a coordinated improvement of the bus system to be delivered.

3.8 Option 2 Risks and Mitigations

There is a strategic risk presented by the current lack of agreed objectives and vision for the South Yorkshire bus system. In agreeing a narrower set of shared objectives, the region can focus its response to improving the South Yorkshire bus system and potentially increase the impact of a smaller number of interventions delivered in the future.

3.12 Option 3 Risks and Mitigations

There is a strategic risk presented by the current lack of agreed objectives and vision for the South Yorkshire bus system. By prioritising a set of shared objectives for the region, the impact of this strategic risk will be lessened as activity aimed at delivering a better bus system can be targeted accordingly. A prioritised list allows a wider policy remit to be retained but also directs future activity based upon the priorities identified.

3.13 Recommended Option

Option 3

4. Consultation on Proposal

4.1 Views and information were sought from Local Authority stakeholders and bus operators to inform today's discussion.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision:

5.1 Following the discussion at today's meeting, the objectives will be revised accordingly and work will progress on the development of a network that will deliver them, ahead of the submission of a draft BSIP in October 2021.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

6.1 The procurement of support to deliver WP1 was secured following an open procurement exercise. The decision to enter EP arrangements will be taken by the MCA and if agreed, this will enable the continued receipt of local bus subsidy and enable access to future transformational funds.

7. Legal Implications and Advice

7.1 An EP is a statutory arrangement (under the 2017 Bus Services Act) between a LTA and local bus operators. Operators have been Invited to participate in the preparation of the EPP and EPS in accordance with 138F(4) of the Bus Services Act. The MCA is due to discuss this issue on the 7 June 2021. If it agrees to

proceed a formal notice of intention to prepare an EPP and EPS will be issued to persons in the MCA area. The notice will set out the proposed geographical area of the EPP and a contact point at the MCA for further information in accordance with section 138F(1)(a) Bus Services Act.

8. Human Resources Implications and Advice

8.1 There are no HR implications as a result of this paper.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

9.1 The agreement of a set of objectives will underpin the improvement of the South Yorkshire bus system for all residents, businesses and visitors.

10. Climate Change Implications and Advice

10.1 The Board are asked to share their policy priorities to inform the shared set of objectives for South Yorkshire's bus system. The Board may wish to prioritise those policies that have a stronger impact on the climate or to narrow the objectives in support of those that focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In any event, improving the regions bus system will provide a viable alternative to the private car and could support the regions climate ambitions.

11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

11.1 None as a result of this report.

12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice. Please also refer to consultation undertaken as per Section 4

12.1 None

List of Appendices Included

A Emerging Objectives for Bus

B Acronyms

Background Papers:

None