

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

THURSDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 2.00 PM

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



### Present:

Councillor Tim Huggan (Chair)  
Councillor Jeff Ennis OBE  
Councillor Douglas Johnson  
Councillor Hannah Kitching  
Councillor Sioned-Mair Richards  
Councillor Ken Wyatt

Sheffield City Council  
Barnsley MBC  
Sheffield City Council  
Barnsley MBC  
Sheffield City Council  
Rotherham MBC

### In Attendance:

Mayor Oliver Coppard

South Yorkshire Mayoral  
Combined Authority  
SYMCA Executive Team  
SYMCA Executive Team

Steve Davenport  
Tim Taylor

Director of Law and Governance  
Director of Public Transport  
Operations

### Apologies:

Councillor Joshua Bacon  
Councillor Jane Kidd  
Councillor Zahira Naz

Rotherham MBC  
City of Doncaster Council  
Sheffield City Council

### 89 Welcome and Apologies

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

### 90 Urgent Items/Announcements

None.

### 91 Items to be Considered in the Absence of Public and Press

None.

### 92 Declarations of Interest by any Members

None.

### 93 Change of Agenda Order

The Chair announced a change of agenda order and it was agreed to consider item 13 before item 5. The minutes reflect the order of the meeting.

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## **Any Other Business**

### a. Mayoral Scrutiny

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

The Mayor apologised that he had not been able to join the meeting in person and thanked Members for allowing him to participate virtually. He informed the Committee that he was attending a full day session as part of the Pathways to Work Commission in Barnsley which he had committed to earlier in the year. This would be a yearlong process exploring the reasons for economic inactivity in the area and would potentially lead to a regional response to the issue.

Since the previous meeting, he advised that a Mayoral campaign around bus funding had been launched. He had been holding public meetings across South Yorkshire to engage with communities about the challenges facing the region's bus network. 30,000 letters had recently been sent out to randomly selected households across the region inviting them to express an interest in the Citizen's Assembly, and of these, 100 would be chosen to participate. Participants would hold varying views on climate change as well as being demographically representative. The Assembly was expected to be run over a number of weeks later in the year. The Mayor hoped that the Citizen's Assembly would improve understanding of what South Yorkshire residents want from the compromises that would need to be made to achieve net zero by 2040.

Members informed the Mayor of concerns around the 10/10A bus service. The service had previously been used by people to get to the GP surgery on Duke Street which was no longer served. Members of the public had also brought attention to safety issues around double deck buses travelling down Donnington Road, a residential street in Sheffield. An accident involving a bus had already been reported. The Mayor observed he had been pleased when the 10/10A service had been reinstated and he was aware that there had been discussions between Stagecoach and the MCA about the route. He expressed frustration over the lack of control that the MCA had over public transport, especially when faced with further impending cuts.

**ACTION: The Director of Public Transport Operations to contact Stagecoach and explore possible alternative routes for the 10/10A service and write to Cllr Richards with details of the outcome of this.**

In response to a request for an update on the proposal to transfer the responsibilities of the Mayor and the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), the Mayor advised that he hoped to be able to share confirmation imminently. At present the dialogue between the MCA and Government was positive but ongoing.

**ACTION: The Mayor to ensure the Committee was informed as soon as possible should Government confirm that they will progress with the proposals to transfer the PCC functions into the Office of the Mayor.**

In terms of the recent decision by Sheffield City Council (SCC) to modify the Nether Edge Active Travel Neighbourhood, the Mayor stated that he understood that changes had been made to the scheme after taking public feedback into account and praised this approach. The Mayor reiterated his support for active travel and advised that the MCA was working to make sure that this was a viable option across the region. The MCA had recently expanded the team working on Active Travel and the Mayor had been working with the Active Travel Commissioner to develop plans for the next 12 months.

Regarding Doncaster Sheffield Airport (DSA), the Mayor reported that City of Doncaster Council (CDC) were currently in negotiations with Peel Group about a potential lease arrangement while also progressing parallel work on a compulsory purchase order (CPO) in the event that negotiations were not successful. Should an agreement be reached, the MCA had committed to providing financial assistance to support CoDC with its work.

The Mayor stated that he was ambitious for the tram in South Yorkshire and agreed that the network should ideally to connect both Barnsley and Doncaster. The main obstacle to this vision was funding, but this would be kept under review and progressed should any resources become available.

**ACTION: The Director of Public Transport Operations to communicate a timetable for the development of the tram network to the Committee.**

Internationally, the Mayor also reflected on the opportunities presented through Harvard Bloomberg, where he was working with mayors from around the world and keen to develop relationships. Due to the success of the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre, he had been invited to attend the opening of an equivalent in St Louis, America where he also hoped to be able to foster ties.

**ACTION: An update to be provided on the MCA skills agenda to be provided to the next meeting, and to include community education.**

(The Mayor left the meeting.)

95 **Reports from and Questions by Members**

None.

96 **Questions from Members of the Public**

None.

97 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting Held on 22nd June 2023**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023 be

approved as a true and accurate record.

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

**RESOLVED** that the Action Log be noted.

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

The Committee reviewed the latest Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

The Director of Public Transport Operations advised that the disused tunnel running underneath Woodbourn Road and Parkway Avenue was in a state of disrepair. The MCA was simultaneously exploring options of whether to infill the tunnel or whether it could be restored to improve railway connectivity as part of Restoring your Railways (RYR) schemes.

Members commended the approach to consider the potential future uses of the tunnel and noted that the heritage aspects should also be taken into account.

**ACTION: The Director of Public Transport Operations to bring a report to the Committee for consideration once a decision was made on whether to infill or restore the tunnel under Woodbourne Road and Parkway Avenue.**

**ACTION: The Committee to receive confirmation as to whether all four local authorities received allocations from the Rural Shared Prosperity Fund.**

**RESOLVED** that the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted.

100 **Committee Work Plan 2023/24**

Members considered the Work Plan for 2023/24.

It was noted that an impact evaluation of the £2 bus fare would be considered at the December meeting and Members felt that it could be useful to also assess the effects of the Zoom Beyond concession, following the decision to withdraw the concession from 1<sup>st</sup> November.

The Director of Public Transport Operations confirmed that some analysis had already been conducted, including a study of the origin and destination points. This had highlighted regular long-distance journeys, indicating that young people were using the concession to access education and work.

He added that although the publicly funded 18-21-year-old concession was ending, the MCA had approached operators to consider introducing commercial discounts to fill the gap in the market and discussions were ongoing.

Members agreed that updates could be considered during the informal briefing sessions that had been arranged for the Committee.

**ACTION: The Director of Public Transport Operations to bring an evaluation report on the impacts of the Zoom Beyond concession to the**

**Committee along with the update on the impact of the £2 fare cap, and other concessions.**

**RESOLVED** that the Work Plan 2023/24 be noted.

101 **Bus Franchising Assessment**

The Committee received an update on the Bus Franchising Assessment work.

The Case for Change had been completed and approved in October 2022 and the full assessment process was now ongoing. Although the MCA was accelerating this work as much as possible, it was a statutory process and the minimum requirements set out in legislation had to be followed. It was also important that the work be sound as it would be on this basis that a decision was made.

The assessment was exploring alternatives to the current situation. Once the business case was completed, it would be taken to the MCA Board to take a decision. Should the MCA Board decide to proceed to the next step in the process, an audit of the assessment would need to take place, followed by a public consultation and the selection of the preferred franchising model.

In response to questions, the Director of Public Transport Operations assured Members that the MCA was learning from the experiences of other combined authorities like Greater Manchester who were soon to be implementing their first franchised services. He anticipated that if franchising was approved it would be rolled out in stages similar to Manchester. It was anticipated that the decision as whether to proceed to Audit would be taken to an MCA Board meeting early in 2024.

**ACTION: The Acting Executive Director of Public Transport to provide an item on the Franchising Strategic Case to an informal briefing session of the Committee.**

**RESOLVED** that the Committee note the content of the slides.

102 **Tram Ownership Transfer**

The Director of Public Transport Operations presented an item on the Tram Ownership Transfer.

Responsibility for the tram network was due to revert to the MCA in March 2024. In anticipation of this, the MCA Board had taken the decision to establish a wholly owned subsidiary to run day to day operations. The MCA had established a Mobilisation Team to prepare for the transfer which would increase in resources and capacity as the deadline approached. A 100-day plan had also been created to follow the transfer, which would then merge into a business plan.

The Director of Public Transport Operations confirmed that the aim was a seamless transition. It was felt that imparting any unnecessary changes on day one would only increase the risk of disruption to passengers.

In response to questions, he advised that the Office of Road and Rail would need to approve an operator's licence and it was anticipated that the requirements for this would be met well in advance of the transfer date. In terms of finances, the MCA had already approved a multi-year level of revenue subsidy, starting at £7m for year one of operations. A series of asset renewal works are also due in the coming years, which would need to be planned in order to minimise the impact on passengers. He noted that if franchising were to be taken forward, the MCA would be able to better integrate connections between buses and the tram.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee note the content of the slides.

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

Signed .....

Name .....

Position .....

Date .....