

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 26 September 2024

### Community Transport Update

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**Is the paper exempt from the press and public?**No

**Reason why exempt:** Not applicable

**Purpose of this report:** Discussion

**Is this a Key Decision?** No

**Has it been included on the Forward Plan of Key Decisions?** Not a Key Decision

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**Portfolio:**Travel & Transport

**Portfolio Holder:** Mayor Oliver Coppard

**Lead Chief Executive:**Martin Swales

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**Director Approving Submission of the Report:**  
Melanie Corcoran, Executive Director of Transport

**Report Author(s):**  
Tim Taylor, Director of Public Transport Operations.  
[tim.taylor@southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk](mailto:tim.taylor@southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk)

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### Executive Summary

The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority provides grand funding of £1.657m towards Community Transport services across the region. These provide public transport options for passengers who are unable, or do not have access to the general bus network. These services use fully accessible vehicles and can take passengers from home to local destinations like supermarkets or town centres without the need to get to a bus stop.

In February 2024, SYMCA officers provided an update to Overview and Scrutiny Committee members on the role Community Transport plays and some of the challenges it faces. This paper and accompanying slide pack provides a follow up to that initial meeting.

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

Where residents are unable to access the general bus network due to mobility, health or accessibility issues, Community Transport provides a safety net of services which allow them to still make essential and discretionary journeys. This allows them to remain local services and avoid social isolation.

### **Recommendations**

That the OSC members:

1. Note the progress made since the update provided in February 2024
  2. Offer views on future approach to Community Transport service configuration to help inform the Business Planning process for 2025/26.
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### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee were briefed on 06 February 2024 on the role of Community Transport services across South Yorkshire and some of the challenges it faces in operational delivery.
- 1.2 Following this private briefing, members requested that a follow up update be provided on progress made and also forward-looking plans for services in to 2025/26.
- 1.3 This paper is a cover paper to accompany the following slides to be presented during the meeting.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 The accompanying slides set out the latest position on Community Transport service delivery and some options available to SYMCA to inform further service improvements.
- 2.2 OSC members should be mindful that the current level of grant allocation has not changed since 2014/15, and services have been subject to inflationary cost pressures in the decade since. Consideration will need to be given about an increase in the allocation relative to any notable changes in scope to service delivery.

### **3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal**

#### **3.1 Option 1**

- 3.2 Consider the potential range of options and provide views from members on the suitability of changes to the scope of Community Transport services. These views will then be used to inform discussions with Community Transport service providers to prepare and finalise the business plan for 2025/26.

### **3.3 Option 1 Risks and Mitigations**

3.4 Any changes in costs associated with varying the scope of Community Transport services will need to be considered alongside wider SYMCA Transport budget pressures for 2025/26.

### **3.5 Option 2**

3.6 Do nothing, retain current levels of Community Transport service provision.

### **3.7 Option 2 Risks and Mitigations**

Doing nothing will retain current levels of service but will not necessarily provide passengers with the connectivity they need based on their changing needs and demographic.

### **3.8 Recommended Option**

Option 1.

## **4. Consultation on Proposal**

4.1 Not applicable.

## **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 The Community Transport Business Plan for 2025/26 needs to be endorsed by SYMCA by the end of December 2024 to allow for an indicative grant allocation to be included in the transport revenue budget starting in April 2025.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice**

6.1 See timeline in 5.1 above.

## **7. Legal Implications and Advice**

7.1 There are no specific legal implications resulting from this paper.

## **8. Human Resources Implications and Advice**

8.1 Should there be a significant change in scope resulting from work to revise and review the 2025/26 Community Transport Business Plan, there may be a requirement to allocate additional resources to manage their contract delivery. This will need to be captured as part of the SYMCA annual business planning process for 2025/26.

## **9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice**

9.1 Community Transport provides services to users who frequently experience problems with accessing the mainstream bus network as a result of mobility, age and/or disability. As such, any changes made to the scope and availability of

Community Transport services should be carefully considered in this context and where required, an Equality Impact Assessment undertaken.

## **10. Climate Change Implications and Advice**

10.1 Community Transport helps contribute to reducing tailpipe emissions by improving use of public transport services, and where possible using resources to transport multiple passengers simultaneously. In addition, SYMCA have provided 11 fully electric minibuses for use and these zero-emission vehicles further improve air quality and reduce harmful particulate emissions in the region.

## **11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice**

11.1 There are no specific ICT implications resulting from this paper.

## **12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice**

12.1 Should the scope of Community Transport services changes as a result of endorsing the 2025/26 Business Plan, it is recommended that a campaign of passenger awareness is undertaken to encourage further patronage uptake.

## **List of Appendices Included**

A Community Transport Update