

SOUTH YORKSHIRE TRANSPORT USERS GROUP

THURSDAY 17 OCTOBER 2019

PRESENT:

J. Hoare	(Chair)	I. Jenkinson	(Sheffield
N. Spetch	(Vice Chair/Rotherham TUG)	TUG/Member of the Public)	
J. Brightmore	(Sheffield TUG/Ramblers)	M. Payling	(Chair of DTUG)

GUESTS:

P. Hopkinson	(First)	R. Cowling	(SYPTTE)
R. Isaac	(Northern)	L. Fannon	(SYPTTE)
D. Ellis	(Stagecoach)	A. Wright	(SYPTTE)
A. Bray	(Cross Country)	C. Duckenfield	(SYPTTE)

APOLOGIES:

D. Leech	(Cllr, Barnsley)	Jo Kaczmarek	(SCR)
M. Farmer	(SYPTTE)	F. Johnson	(Stagecoach)
T. Taylor	(SYPTTE)	N Wragg	(Supertram)

1. OPEN AND WELCOME

The meeting was opened by the Chair and introductions took place around the table.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr D Leech, F Johnson, M Farmer, T Taylor.

J Hoare commented that District Group attendance appeared to have fallen over recent meetings and a further look should be taken to make sure they were being represented.

Action: R Cowling to check on representation of District Groups

Post meeting note: R Cowling confirmed that a maximum of two representatives (generally the Chair and vice chair, if there is one) are invited to the SYTUG.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 18 JULY 2019

J Hoare/N Spetch met with the Sheffield Cabinet Member for Transport who offered to meet with the Group. Overall this was a friendly meeting, but no real progress was being made due to the continued constraints of Government funding.

Agreed it would be advantageous to meet with Mayor Dan Jarvis or a representative from his office soon.

The minutes were then agreed.

4. FORWARD PLANNER

Bus Review

In the absence of Jo Kaczmarek, R Cowling provided an update on the Bus Review which closes tomorrow (having had an extension from August). No information yet on when feedback will be available.

The point was raised again that public transport should not be reviewed as a single entity. 'Integration' will be the facilitator for modal shift and until that happens then numbers will continue to dwindle.

The Operators confirmed they were awaiting the outcome of the Bus Review before commenting. No timescale was given for when an update would be received.

**Action: J Kaczmarek to provide an update on the outcome of the Bus Review to the next meeting.
To be provided at 23 April meeting.**

5. BUS

a) Bus Operator Updates

First

- Confirmed upcoming changes in November to Service 6/6a changing to Service 9/9a and an additional Sunday morning journey on Service 135.
- Members asked what was happening with First nationally as well as with Wright Bus Company going into administration and pulling out of the area. Was Sheffield safe? P Hopkinson explained the preference for First was to split the country into 3 sections which are currently on the market awaiting a suitable offer. With regards to Wright Bus, a buyer has now come forward and the situation regarding supplier parts has improved.

Stagecoach

- Will be introducing new single deckers on Service 25 in Sheffield to replace the older DART vehicles which are being withdrawn.
- They are also introducing a new Stagecoach Gold Service X1 on Sunday 27 October linking Chesterfield and Nottingham.

Both Operators were asked whether their buses were modern enough to meet SCC Clean Air Zone proposals. First confirmed they had been pre-planning for an emissions fleet upgrade over the past 2/3 years and only a small percentage do not meet CAZ standards.

Stagecoach are working with Defra to retrofit the V90 to upgrade them to Euro 6 standard.

Although the cost of upgrades was subsidised by grants, Members asked whether actual operation of the vehicles would prove to be an additional cost on the business. Operators confirmed that it would be, but that this was a contingency built into the cost of service provision and the operators are standing this. It was also a condition of the funding agreement with DEFRA/DfT.

b) September Service Changes

A Wright provided an update. Unrest in some areas of Sheffield due to a large batch of renewals involving changes to the commercial network. In the short term this created issues of unreliability and service delivery was not quite as good as customers deserve or SYPTE expect. There had been high interest in the changes and twice as many comments were received in July and August than was usual.

Changes being made in October/November are small, mainly putting things right and responding to feedback such as early journeys to work and fine tuning.

Next changes are due January 2020 and SYPTE is already in discussions with First/Stagecoach for next year.

Tenders for the expected September 2020 changes on the Barnsley network are due out January 2020 (9 months ahead).

SYPTE's Budget Approval process is currently underway and whatever the outcome (more, same or cuts) SYPTE will try to deliver as best they can.

c) First's Tap & Cap Pilot in Doncaster - Update

This enables passengers to pay by card/device and travel as many times per day/week as they wish for a capped fare. The idea being that no cash transactions equates to a shorter boarding time and reduced delays. Early indications are well received, and the trial is working well.

This is the second area in UK after Aberdeen and is a national aspiration. The trial is due to last 6 months and if it proves to be a success then it will be rolled out to the rest of the County.

Action: A Wright to give an update to the next meeting on the roll out.

First has reported a reduction of on-bus cash transactions by 25% (from 75% to 50%). Transaction values at SYPTE's ticket vending machines in Doncaster increased between March and December. It is anticipated that First will roll out Tap & Cap in other South Yorkshire districts during 2020, but no firm dates have been set and they are looking into utilising a system compatible for all operators.

There was a discussion on SYPTE's £287k underspend and whether this money was transferred into tendered services. A Wright explained that this was not the case as there was always a difference between forecast and spend, and the money was given back.

J Brightmore explained that STUG members were frustrated at the September cuts particularly Service 31 in Walkley which was causing confusion and perhaps the underspend could have been used for this tendered service. A Wright clarified that this was a commercial service and although we were aware of the issues, there was no definitive answer at present, but he was working to preserve commercially sustainable network. For tendered services we have to prioritise where to spend and there is a Criteria to determine this as there may be higher need elsewhere. SYPTE always works hard to keep services operating where possible.

The issue of dwell time and driver changeover was also raised, and it was suggested that there may be a need to invest in technology whereby drivers simply had to swipe when entering the vehicle so all data could be loaded beforehand. The Operators explained that unfortunately technology is not there yet, and ticket machines are currently state of the art. It was agreed that the emphasis is too much on running time and not enough on turning time and perhaps more dialogue is needed with ticket machine companies. First are in talks to speed up boarding but the problem is data machines now hold a lot more information than they used to.

6. **TRAM**

In the absence of Nigel Wragg, R Cowling provided a brief update on the following items:

a) Rail Replacement

The works have been completed for this year and are due to recommence in April 2020.

b) Tram -Train

- The first Anniversary Event approaching.

- Park & Ride availability at Parkgate is being looked at. Supertram are to take on the Forge Island site at Rotherham Station.
- Interim extensions to current parking at Parkgate are due to open November 2019. Long term this is in the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) bid for a permanent Park & Ride at Parkgate. This is all part of the highway network scheme to take traffic off the A633.
- Members asked about the possibility of a Station between Rotherham and Meadowhall. L Fannon replied that this was some way off but was included in SCR's Integrated Rail Plan (IRP).
- A Tram-Train stop at Magna is included in the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) bid this is dependent on it being delivered within the 3-year delivery time.

c) Contactless Payment pilot

Eight ticket machines are currently trialling and have been successful as far as we know.

7. TRAIN

In the absence of M Farmer, A Wright gave an update on the following 2 items:

a) Update from Train Operators

- Removal of Northern's franchise - M Farmer is meeting with Mayor Dan Jarvis to understand the implications and react accordingly.
- Retention of Pacer trains - The commitment was to have them out by 2019 but Northern have announced they will now be in service until 2020. Discussions are taking place between DfT and Northern for mitigation proposals regarding the units' non-compliance with Person of Reduced Mobility regulations.

b) Hope Valley

Mayor D Jarvis has publicly asked for the start date for the Capacity Upgrade scheme to be brought forward and not delayed until 2022. Discussions are currently ongoing at a higher level.

c) Askern Station

L Fannon gave an update on Askern Station.

Background is that the line was closed in the 1960s as part of the 'Beeching' cuts so there is no passenger service although freight still runs at around 5 trains per day. Pressure from the Friends of Askern Station (FOAS) to reinstate the station and passenger services has

resulted in Consultants being appointed to look at the feasibility of constructing a new station.

There were a number of options with the preferred one being a 'staggered station'. Estimated cost of this is £6M (station, 2 platforms, car park and footbridge) which is comparable with other stations.

FOAS then asked for demand work to be explored (i.e. examine the catchment area of Campsall, housing, levels of patronage and whether this would extract demand from bus services and Bentley and Adwick Rail Stations).

Value for Money for the scheme was 'poor' with a low Benefit Cost Ratio and issues include capacity on the tracks and available pathways, specifically Shaftholme and Knottingley which are pinch points on the existing network.

Also, is there an appetite for an Operator to run the station? SYPTE are struggling at present to get any informed feedback from Operators.

The scheme is currently at pre-GRIP stage and is included in the IRP under 'Further Investigation Work in the Next Five Years' then a judgement call will be made on whether to take this further.

J Hoare thanked L Fannon for her update and suggested it would perhaps be useful for her to attend the next DTUG meeting or provide a brief for the meeting. M Payling agreed.

Action: L Fannon to provide a brief for the next DTUG meeting in January.

Action: R Cowling to circulate a copy of SCR's Integrated Rail Plan

Plan can be found at [https://d2xjf5riab8wu0.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/SCR Integrated Rail Plan.pdf](https://d2xjf5riab8wu0.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/SCR_Integrated_Rail_Plan.pdf)

L Fannon added that SCR have also asked SYPTE to look at interventions and extra capacity at car parks including Bus Park & Ride. A consultant is about to be appointed.

Northern

R Issacs then read a position statement on behalf of Northern (copy attached to the minutes).

I Jenkinson then asked how the Pacer units fit with disability regulations due to come into force in January 2020. R Isaac responded that dispensations are being sought from the DfT to address non-compliance but that Northern will aim to meet customers' needs at all times.

It was then asked whether the RMT dispute was now settled. R Issacs confirmed that Northern were still in discussions with the Union but was confident that this will be resolved shortly.

Members asked whether there had been an update on the ticket machine/penal fare situation at Kiveton Park. It was asked whether staff could be asked to take a discretionary approach and perhaps additional ticket machines be provided? Currently penal signage is still in place with no concessions.

Action: R Isaac will take this issue back to Northern.

Members asked for an update on Penistone line platform lengthening due December 2020. Will single coach 153's need to be modified to 150 Sprinters for use on this length?

Action: R Isaac to provide an update at next meeting.

R Isaac then congratulated the Community Rail Partnership (CRP) who won first place at the Community Rail Awards for the 'Dwell Time' project. Thanks were also recorded for the CRP volunteers who attended the Community Rail Conference in Leeds. An outcome of this conference was that a website is due up in the next 2 weeks where a film about South Yorkshire stations excelling in Community Rail will be posted.

Action: R Isaac to send website details to R Cowling.

<https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/community>

Further Community based plans for 2020 include partnership between the English Football League and schools in the region, to introduce pupils to stations, rail travel and acceptable behaviour.

Members asked about the increasing use of self-service mobile ticketing and whether a policy will be introduced whereby when the system is not working passengers will not be penalised. Operators acknowledged that this would be outside customer control and should be treated with compassion/understanding and not penalised.

A Bray also explained that with most Mobile Apps the ticket came as a download so therefore there should be no problem. If there were major problems the Operators would also be aware/affected and be unable to check tickets so a common-sense approach would be taken. As the majority of tickets are bought in advance and therefore not internet reliant on the day, this should not be a problem.

Cross Country

A Bray then gave a Cross Country operations update. The Cross Country franchise is due to end December 2019, but they have been granted an extension to October 2020 so business as usual.

Currently awaiting direction regarding the Direct Award from DfT about what this will look like/time period. Big issue is overcrowding. Little to do at present but ensure journeys are as comfortable as possible.

Waiting for Williams Review announced before more information given.

No consideration had been given to passenger growth. In 13 years this has increased from 30M to 42M passengers per annum with no equivalent increase in capacity.

Members agreed that it was nice to have a representative from Cross Country and asked if a Network Rail representative should be invited to the next meeting to answer questions regarding Hope Valley and perhaps TransPennine Express could be invited too.

Action: R Cowling to speak to Tim Taylor about inviting NR/TPE to a future meeting.

8. AIR QUALITY

Rotherham and Sheffield have consulted on the introduction of Clean Air Zones. In Sheffield this is within the Ring Road and in Rotherham covers three corridors: A633, A629 and A630. External Consultants are currently being appointed to carry out the Consultation. A meeting is being held on 18 October regarding the next steps.

Action: A Wright to circulate an update note following the 18 October meeting.

SCC and RMBC were reviewing the feedback from the consultations to finalize their joint submission to government for additional funding to support further retro fitting of vehicles required to achieve compliance. SYPTE has supported SCC/RMBC to assess and quantify the current level of Euro 6 vehicles within the Sheffield and Rotherham bus fleet. Currently there are circa 240 Euro 6 compliant vehicles representing 41% of the fleet. Further retro fit funding for an additional 55 vehicles will be made available early in 2020 and a further meeting is scheduled for 24 January.

Working at getting financial assistance for retrofit. Community Transport Services are a challenge due to their fleet composition and volume of passenger movements.

9. MEMBERS ITEMS

R Cowling announced there were no major items and that questions were mainly regarding First's performance and unreliability.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

As part of Destination Green strategy to reduce CO₂ emissions Northern will be renewing station LED lights resulting in a 70% reduction in carbon emissions.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

16 January 2020