

South Yorkshire Transport User Group

Minutes

18 January 2023



Present:

J. Hoare	Chair/Doncaster TUG
N. Spetch	Vice Chair/Rotherham TUG
G. Arthur	Barnsley TUG
I. Jenkinson	Sheffield TUG
D. Wrottersley	Sheffield TUG
J. Brightmore	Sheffield TUG

Guests:

M. McGowan	First South Yorkshire
D. Ellis	Stagecoach Yorkshire
J. Young	Stagecoach Yorkshire
N. Wragg	Supertram
A. Bray	CrossCountry
L. Maloney	Northern
A. Wright	SYMCA
R. Cowling	SYMCA

1. **Open and welcome**

The meeting was opened, and all were welcomed. JH thanked RC for all her hard work and commitment.

2. **Apologies for absence**

No apologies received.

3. **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

4. **Update from operators**

Tram:

NW advised Supertram is currently running at around 65 - 75% of pre-covid patronage levels. There has been a decline in concessionary travel, the commute pattern has changed, leisure travel is good.

The October timetable changes have stabilised and reliability has improved as a result of the changes. Strikes have affected Tram Train journeys with more strikes proposed for 1 and 3 February. Currently no impact expected on Tram Train services.

Essential maintenance works are taking place in the evenings. Any impact on tram or Tram Train services will be reported on the Stagecoach Supertram website and customers will be kept updated through Supertram social media channels and posters on tram stops.

Train:

Northern – LM reported industrial action has impacted performance with more ASLEF and RMT (drivers only) strikes on 1 and 3 February resulting in no trains being able to run. Customers advised to check before they travel.

Patronage averaging 80-90% pre Covid levels with leisure patronage at 90-100%.

A points failure at Horby Junction affected services Barnsley to Leeds and Wakefield Kirkgate. A temporary fix is in place enabling services to resume with a full fix planned in March.

NS commented that trains were busy at Kiverton Park. LM advised that Northern were looking at increasing capacity where possible, stating football matches cause an increase in patronage.

A comment was also made regarding the replacement bus service at Hope Valley – traffic delays as driver loads luggage.

ACTION: LM to investigate why conductors are not provided on replacement buses.

Cross Country

Industrial action affected services. Patronage averaging 70% of pre-Covid levels and increasing. Commuter travel still low.

Minor timetable changes introduced in December with further alterations in May 2023, following stakeholder discussions.

Government discussion re Cross Country franchise – contract ends October '23 with a 1-year extension option.

Bus:

First: Mayor's £2 fare cap introduced in November to end December 2022 ahead of National fare cap scheme which will run from January – March 2023. Noted an increase in single fare purchases but minimal impact on patronage increase.

Fares – Tap out readers being introduced in Doncaster. London experience Tap on and tap off so pay best value day ticket/weekly ticket for journeys made. Only available on First tickets currently. Tap on Tap off under testing with a go live yet to be confirmed. It was acknowledged that when introduced the new system will have teething problems as

customers and the operator adjust to the new process. Customer service teams will be able to help with queries.

Stability – driver availability issues are being overcome, Doncaster performing better. First is working on ensuring that the services currently running are reliable.

JB advised he'd seen an improvement in reliability of services in Sheffield.

Stagecoach: Patronage remains around 80% overall with, 72% paying adults and 60% ENCTS. Driver recruitment and training is ongoing and working on staff retention by way of rewards and recognition and shift work etc. still some way to go.

20 new vehicles have been introduced into the region, replacing old fleet. The network is stable, but punctuality is challenging in Sheffield particularly Ecclesall Road and Stocksbridge areas – high traffic volumes and slower journey times. Looking at what can be done to improve performance.

5. Covid recovery funding for bus and tram

Government funding is due to end at end March. There's still a need for Government funding and guidance is awaited from DfT – short timeframes with lots of planning required.

IJ asked what operators would like to see from Government post-March i.e. the same scheme?

JY advised he'd like to not have to rely on Government funding and to gain long term stability so can operate commercially.

AW advised SYMCA is awaiting Government feedback/announcement re: funding which is needed to support services going forward.

6. Franchising update

RC ran through a presentation regarding franchising updating the group on progress to date and next steps.

7. Members items escalated from district user groups

None

8. Any other business

- The group asked for the dates of meetings for the rest of the year to be circulated

ACTION: RC to add remaining 2023 meetings to the calendar and circulate dates to the group.

Post-meeting note – Dates circulated.

- The group acknowledged Tim Taylor's contribution to the group – crucial at an unprecedented time in transport.

9. Dates of future meetings

Wednesday 19 July 2023, 2.00pm

Thursday 19 October 2023, 10.30am.