

South Yorkshire Transport User Group

Minutes

18 April 2024



Present:

I. Jenkinson	Chair/Sheffield TUG
J. Brightmore	Sheffield TUG
C. Khan	Sheffield TUG
N. Spetch	Vice Chair/Rotherham TUG
J. Sharp	Rotherham TUG
G. Arthur	Barnsley TUG
F Jackson	Doncaster TUG
F. Postlethwaite	Barnsley TUG
J. Morton	Sheffield TUG
B. Riley	Sheffield TUG
S. Bennett	Sheffield TUG
D. Wrottersley	Sheffield TUG

Guests:

N. Wragg	Supertram
L. Etheridge	East Midlands Rail
J. Young	Stagecoach
H. Roberts	SYMCA
R. Cowling	SYMCA
S. Gibson	SYMCA

1. Open and welcome

The meeting was opened, and all were welcomed. Introductions were made around the table and with those joining the meeting virtually.

2. Apologies for absence

Cllr J. Higginbottom, G, Roome

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of 18 January 2024 were accepted as a true record.

Matters arising:

- RC to resend the minutes to J. Morton
- F. Postlethwaite advised the group that residents had met with Stagecoach to discuss the issues with Broadway bus services and that no further progress had been made. Their campaign continues to reinstate services for the community.

4. Update from operators

Tram:

N. Wragg advised the group that Supertram is now (since 22 March) under MCA ownership/operation. It's BAU in terms of operation and a 10% discount on some tram only fares have been introduced for the first 100 days of operation. There have been some changes to bus and tram tickets and customers will need a TravelMaster ticket for multimodal travel.

Praise was given to Supertram for their service/operation over the past decades. F. Postlethwaite welcomed public control on the tram network.

A discussion was held around additional provision on match days or events and venues in Sheffield.

Train:

Northern – no update due to no representative in attendance.

Cross Country – no update due to no representative in attendance.

EMR – L. Etheridge advised that patronage has increased over the last quarter over the industry average (by as much as 13%) despite challenges such as the weather, industrial action, engineering works etc. Performance is at 97.6%.

EMR are undertaking a £60m refurbishment programme across their fleet.

The opening of a second platform at Dore & Topley should see result in some reliability improvements.

J. Brightmore raised concerns about the lack of carriages on some services. Where there should be four carriages, only two are provided.

ACTION: L. Etheridge to investigate specifics but advised that there are not enough carriages to provide four along full routes and services are often split to provide additional capacity onwards.

Bus:

Stagecoach – J. Young advised that patronage recovery is being assisted by the £2 fare cap. Overall reliability performance is at 97.9% against a target of 99.5%. April service changes are minimal – mainly to address punctuality issues.

Concerns over road conditions affecting services.

Derbyshire service changes will be introduced from 12 May:

- 65 – Meadowhall – Buxton – minor changes to address punctuality. Rote around Meadowhall will run direct via Brightside to improve journey times. Patronage growth is good.
- X17 minor timetable changes with a couple of journeys per day serving Matlock Farm Park.
- Dearne Valley – 23 new electric buses as part of ZEBRA 1 funding on two key routes - 22X (Rotherham) and 221 (Doncaster).

A question was raised about changes to the 52 route and how people would find out about the changes. J. Young advised no changes have been made recently. Changes have, however, been made to First service 52a which has been extended. SYMCA make customers aware of upcoming changes via posters at bus stops and within interchanges, via social media, emails to those registered for service change updates, email to councillors and MPs and a press release. Updated timetables are also posted at bus stops and operators put posters on buses. The TSY website has a dedicated webpage for service changes (www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/servicechanges) and customers can visit the page to view and print timetables and plan their journeys etc.

G. Arthur asked if Stagecoach keep a record of services that fail to operate? J. Young advised that as an operator they plan to run every journey as timetabled, but staff shortages are still a challenge although have improved. Training new drivers takes time. Sickness levels have increased and vehicles can break down or be held up in traffic etc.

Availability of vehicle parts is also a problem. E.g. issues with a damaged windscreen have resulted in a vehicle being out of service for eight days

G. Arthur asked if buses and trains have posters about how to complain/comment. J. Young advised details are on posters on their vehicles. Escalation can be through Bus Users UK. SYMCA also have details on their website and the Traveline number is on every bus timetable at stops. We also direct people to our online Tell US What You Think form via social media.

J. Young advised that Stagecoach are conducting a marketing campaign for the launch of their electric buses. All buses will have a message on the back to catch the eye of car users. Approximately one third of the population are unaware of the £2 fare cap and operators are aware of this and are working to target this audience and encourage mode change.

Concerns were raised about the route of services 57/57a. J. Young advised that if there is a driver shortage they will work to minimise overall disruption to customers e.g. try not to miss journeys on low frequency services. Stagecoach is trying to address punctuality issues on services 57/57a but unfortunately longer routes are more likely to experience delays. They need the help of the local authority.

A discussion was held around the provision of paper timetables. J Young advised they are tailing paper timetables on Chesterfield services with a view to provision elsewhere.

Timetables are also available at www.travelsouthyorkshire.com. Simply type the service number you need into the Timetable Finder or enter an Area e.g. Stocksbridge to produce the relevant information. All timetables can be printed as A4, easy to read documents.

ACTION: J Young and H. Roberts to discuss provision of paper timetables within our interchanges.

5. Supertram under public control since 22 March

R. Cowling advised that as mentioned by N. Wragg, Supertram is now under public control; with new branding to reflect South Yorkshire industrial heritage. The change in ownership forms part of our wider ambitions to position Supertram as part of a fully integrated public transport network for South Yorkshire and will help us reach our net zero goal.

A new TSY ticketing app (TSY mobile) was also launched with over 11,00 registered users and over 10,000 tickets sold.

New faster, lighter, hand held ticket machines for our conductors, allow them to be more efficient. They can move through the tram faster to sell more tickets and help to address fare evasion.

We have also been asking for feedback from our customers via an [online survey](#) which is open until 30 April. Paper copies also available in our interchanges.

6. Feedback from EP Forum

F. Postlethwaite provided an update on recent discussions at the forum:

The March meeting looked at:

1. The EP Plan (BSIP) which is being rewritten to submit to Government for funding.
2. The Bus Promise – a link has been provided on the SYMCA website at <https://www.southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk/explore/transport>. Click on South Yorkshire Enhanced Partnership from the list and you can open the link from there. It is currently quite hidden, but the forum hopes to see it displayed on stops, vehicles and within interchanges etc. soon.
3. Quick wins were discussed and information provision on bus stops was raised.

ACTION: R. Cowling to circulate a copy of the Bus Promise with the minutes.

ACTION: F. Postlethwaite to raise the route maps and printed timetables at the next EP Forum meeting.

7. Franchising

R. Cowling advised that work continues on franchising assessment which is progressing to the Independent Audit to proceed with the Franchising Scheme. There will be a 12 week public consultation so people can have their say before SYMCA takes the decision as to whether to implement the Scheme. Further information will be issued when available.

8. Disbanding of the district TUGs and format of future SYTUG meetings

R. Cowling advised the group that of the proposal to disband the local TUGs with a view to maintaining the SYTUG meeting but changing the focus and agenda - championing the interests of the wider groups and feeding into the delivery of the Mayoral and organisational priorities and objectives.

Generally, the group were in favour of the proposal. They asked that:

- Agenda items be submitted before the meeting so that they can be investigated in advance for discussion at the meeting.
- The agenda to be timed to ensure each item can be addressed and ensure the meetings don't overrunning.
- The meetings to have a more strategic approach
- Specific travel experiences, not relevant to the rest of the group, be avoided
- Specific items raised directly at the meeting will not be discussed
- More focus on county wide issues rather than individual routes.

9. Any other business

C. Khan shared his experience when travelling by bus recently and expressed his concern over the driver's behaviour. R. Cowling advised that this has been escalated with the operator.

N. Wragg advised that the operator will investigate any reported incident and if any misconduct is identified or witnessed through this investigation, appropriate action will be taken. Any outcome of misconduct taken by the operator against the driver, however, is private and confidential.

10. Date of next meetings:

Thursday 18 July 2024, 10.30am
Thursday 17 October 2024, 10.30am