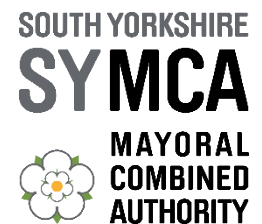


South Yorkshire Transport User Group

Minutes

17 October 2024



Present:

I. Jenkinson	Chair
C. Khan	Member of the public
J. Brightmore	Member of the public
D. Wrottersley	Member of the public
D. Vickers	Member of the public
Cllr J. Morton	Parish councillor
S. Bennett	Member of the public
N. Spetch	Vice Chair
G. Arthur	Barnsley TUG
F Jackson	Member of the public
I. Joustra	Huddersfield Penistone Sheffield Rail Users Association

Guests:

J. Young	Stagecoach
N. Wragg	Supertram
A. Bray	Cross Country Trains
R. Cowling	SYMCA
V. Greenwood	SYMCA
J. Sutherland	SYMCA
S. Owen	SYMCA
F. Halder	SYMCA
G. Ricchetti	SYMCA
M. Muntus	SYMCA
L. Omotayo	SYMCA
K. Wright	SYMCA
A. Knott	SYMCA

1. Open and welcome

The meeting was opened, and all were welcomed. Introductions were made around the group.

2. Apologies for absence

3. Transport integration

R. Cowling reminded the group that this is a subject that they requested as a standing item on the agenda and highlight some of the things SYMCA and the Mayor have done and are working on towards transport integration. It's obviously not something that can be achieved overnight but we are taking steps.

- **Supertram public ownership and rebranding**

South Yorkshire needs a public transport network that supports economic growth, employment and improves the lives and serves the needs of our residents. We've taken South Yorkshire's tram back into public control as a first step towards Mayor Oliver Coppard's vision of an integrated public transport network which would bring together tram, bus, active travel, rail and air travel.

The mayor would also like to develop a new visual identity for our transport network. This work is at an early stage, but we will be seeking public views as part of this process. Starting with the rebranding of Supertram.

- **Franchising – public consultation**

S. Owen advised the group that SYMCA is starting a process of public consultation on proposals to franchise the bus network. There will be a 12-week consultation period from Wednesday 23 October until Wednesday 15 January 2025.

There are short and long version documents and questionnaires and we would like to hear as many views as possible about the proposals in the consultation to help shape a brighter future for public transport in South Yorkshire. Feedback from this consultation, will help to create a more reliable, efficient, and accessible bus network for everyone.

There are a number of public information drop-in events across South Yorkshire which are taking place throughout the consultation period. There will be people available at each event to answer questions and provide copies of the questionnaire to be filled in.

All the information and how to take part is available at southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk/bus-reform. Further information about the consultation is also available by following us on X [@TravelSYorks](https://twitter.com/TravelSYorks), via posters and leaflets in our Interchanges and posters at P & R sites, via an email alert to all of our customers who have subscribed to our e-newsletter, via press releases and by calling Traveline on 0800 952 0002.

Please help us to promote this public consultation and encourage participation in your communities, and with family and friends.

- **TSY Mobile app improvements**

J. Sutherland advised the group that the public had requested a one-stop-shop for all their travel needs, so the TSY Mobile app was developed. The app features

include easy-to-follow journey planner with interactive current location and route maps, live route updates, real time departure and arrival information, bus, tram and train tracking, mode preference when planning a journey; i.e. tram, train or bus options, highlighted walking and cycling options. The group was asked for feedback.

N Spetch asked if there was a feedback feature so that if someone could work out a journey plan better manually could they suggest improvements to the app. J. Sutherland advised that a feedback feature within the app is being developed.

D. Wrottersley asked how walking times are determined. J. Sutherland advised that they are currently based on average walking speed. App improvements are being investigated to allow consideration of individual walking speeds.

- **Active travel**

V. Greenwood presented slides to show the Year of Active Travel campaign activities completed (including the Mayor's Walk and Wheel Challenge with schools, SY By Bike, and the Mayor's parkrun challenge etc.) and what is planned for next year.

Action: R. Cowling to share slides

Q. How are we incorporating this into bike carriage on trains and trams etc.?

A. We are working with the operators to see what improvements can be made.

Q. How is SYMCA working with LA's to get them onboard and align plans and works?

A. Regular workshops ongoing with the LA's.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

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

Matters arising:

- F. Postlethwaite raised concerns about the lack of paper timetables and the impact of digital exclusion.
 - K. Wright advised that customers can contact Traveline on 0800 952 0002 to request a paper copy and that large font versions are available for accessibility.
- F. Postlethwaite advised that SYMCA had arranged for a tendered bus service to cover some of the issues raised around Broadway and offered her thanks to SYMCA and the Mayor.

5. Service Information – product development

A. Knott shared early concept designs for developing existing customer information products and asked for the groups feedback. Each product, ranging from Maps to Head of Queue bus stop information, was discussed and the group provided their feedback to help with developing the designs before introducing the new/updated products.

We are asking people to help us shape the future of customer information and the current projects under review are available on our website at travelsouthyorkshire.com/en-GB/LandingPage/info-product-feedback. We will keep updating this page so please take a look and have your say by completing the surveys for each product.

6. Transport Integration

N. Spetch reminded the group of the importance of improving transport links/integration including timetables and fares. We need better coordination of the multimodal travel options, including active travel to provide good transport links. N. Spetch advised that to provide a fully integrated transport system of bus, tram, train and active travel services with adequate facilities for bike or scooter storage etc. will take funding and maybe changes to legislation to achieve. We want services to be better linked so that buses will wait if a tram or train is delayed to ensure customers can catch their connecting services.

More extensive Park & Ride facilities required and we need to ensure that it is cheaper to park at them and travel by public transport to our towns and cities than it is to park in the city/town centre.

It's important to keep this on the agenda to keep pushing for progress.

7. Operator general items of note or updates

Tram:

R. Cowling advised that Supertram came under public control in March and SYMCA is investing around £5m this year to future proof and extend the lifespan of the tram network.

Rail replacement works, one element of a multi-million-pound investment in the tram system, are part of our ongoing investment in Supertram. Works took place in the city centre in May/June and will continue over the summer school holidays from 20 July until 1 September. Details and the impact on tram services are available at <http://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/networkimprovements>.

Train:

Northern – no update due to no representative in attendance.

TPE – D. Fox updated the group on the King's speech re the new Government making improvements to rail.

Business and performance is improving and service cancellations reducing. Strike action and incidents on the network still affect performance.

N. Spetch stated Overcrowding is still an issue and sometimes he can't even get onboard.

D. Fox advised that assessments and monitoring of loadings take place. Unfortunately, units have been taken out to accommodate driver training but capacity is being addressed. Passenger counting equipment is onboard and guards report issues.

Cross Country – A. Bray advised overcrowding is being addressed on their services and they are expecting a bust summer period.

A full refurbishment of vehicles is taking place with new uniform for front line crew being rolled out.

EMR – L. Etheridge advised that patronage continues to grow despite challenges such as the weather, industrial action, engineering works etc. Performance is at 96% within 5 minutes of scheduled times.

A £60m refurbishment programme across the fleet has been launched.

Bus:

Stagecoach – G. Roome advised that the public engagement relating to the September service changes proposals took place between 5 and 16 July. 127 comments were received and changes will be implemented from w/e of 31 August. Timetables for all services are available at travelsouthyorkshire.com/.

Staffing is good at Rawmarsh depot and is improving in Sheffield. Electric buses have been launched with the full fleet currently on the road. Chesterfield ZEBRA bid has been approved which will benefit South Yorkshire from the cross-boundary services.

Comments were made regarding the lack of details for the proposals in the consultation so it wasn't easy to provide feedback.

Praise was given to Stagecoach – J. Young for taking notice of requests for timetables in Sheffield Interchange.

8. Magna Tram Station

Works are hoped to start on the construction of Magna Station and Park & Ride soon which will impact on Tram Train services. Services will terminate at Meadowhall and not serve Parkgate in Rotherham over the weekends. A replacement bus service will be provided. Further details to follow when the programme has been confirmed.

9. Feedback from EP Forum

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

- Confusion over the use of disability passes outside of the hours of 09:30 and 23:00 were cleared up. South Yorkshire allows disabled ENCTS pass holders to travel at all times free of charge. Other areas are restricted to the above hours of eligibility.

- Stagecoach confirmed that ENCTS pass holders can travel free on their service before 09:30 to attend hospital appointments if they have proof of their appointment.
- Discussion held around public consultations and the need for a joint consultation to make it easier for customers.

10. Franchising (aka Bus Reform)

R. Cowling advised that work continues on franchising assessment:

- SYMCA's preferred option is for franchising with depot and fleet ownership
- The next stage in the process is for an Independent Audit to review our business case before we can proceed with the Franchising Scheme.
- We are currently half way through this process which is expected to end at the end of August with a view to presenting the findings to the September MCA Board meeting.
- The Mayor's manifesto states he wants to make a decision on franchising in one year
- The next stage will be a 12-week public consultation exercise which will start no earlier than late September 2024 so people can have their say before SYMCA takes the decision as to whether to implement the Scheme.

11. Members items

F. Postlethwaite: Public consultations - An EP Forum meeting earlier this year discussed ways of ensuring this process is effective in engaging the public - I feel the recent consultation on planned changes to bus services highlighted some of the issues.

R. Cowling advised that SYMCA will work with operators to try to improve the process. Unfortunately, the general election meant that SYMCA could not issue information on changes to tendered changes until 5 July, resulting in a very short consultation period as the services have to be legally registered prior to implementation.

12. Any other business

- Thanks was given to I. Jenkinson for good chairing and timekeeping of the meeting.
- It was noted that Visual and audible onboard announcements will be required by law on buses and local coaches by October 2026. The government committed £4.65 million in funding for small operators to make the necessary upgrades.

10. Date of next meetings:

Thursday 17 October 2024, 10.30am

Thursday 16 January 2025, 10.30am

Thursday 17 April 2025, 10.30am

Thursday 17 July 2025, 10.30am – virtual meeting pending meeting room availability

Thursday 16 October 2025, 10.30am - virtual meeting pending meeting room availability