

SOUTH YORKSHIRE TRANSPORT USERS GROUP

Wednesday 25 November 2020

PRESENT:

J. Hoare	(Chair)
N. Spetch	(Vice Chair/Rotherham TUG)
D Wrottesley	(Hope Valley Rail User Group)
I. Jenkinson	(Sheffield TUG/Member of the public)
Murray Wilson	(Member of the public)

GUESTS:

R. Cowling	(SYPTTE)
T Taylor	(SYPTTE)
C. Whittaker	(SYPTTE)
C.Sadler	(SYPTTE)
A Forrest	(SCR)
N Wragg	(Supertram)
John Young	(Stagecoach)
Alison Bell	(Northern)
David Jones	(Cross Country)

1. ELECTION AND CHAIR

The election of Chair and Vice-Chair took place. J Brightmore nominated the current holders, John Hoare and Nigel Spetch, to continue in their roles, this was seconded by D Wrottesley.

2. OPEN AND WELCOME

The meeting was opened, and apologies given for it being sometime without a meeting but due to current pandemic, has been a difficult time for all.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Jenny Holmes.

4. IMPACT OF COVID-19

TT talked around the last 9 months since the pandemic hit and the significant impact it has had on public transport. There has been a significant drop in patronage, initially due to the total lockdown and then again as different messages have been passed through central

government regarding how and when to travel. Current patronage levels are around 30-40% of pre-Covid numbers.

Funding is in place via DfT to make up any revenue shortfall experienced by operators and this will continue until approximately March/April 2021. 95% of the original network is now back in operation. Post Covid looking realistically at around 80% of pre-Covid network.

Face covering compliance is generally good and there are posters around Interchanges and bus stops to remind people of this.

Due to the pandemic, the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) activity has temporarily stopped.

Members of the group discussed their person travel experiences during the pandemic and praised the operators for how they responded to the emergency and worked hard to provide services.

5. **BUS REVIEW UPDATES**

TT confirmed that the Bus Review report had been published in July and endorsed by the MCA. This activity has now resulted in a 7-part plan. See link below for more information.

<https://moderngov.sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/documents/s3965/Bus%20Review%20Response%20Work.pdf>

NS asked if the network analysis will consider latent demand and not just focus on the current network. TT confirmed it would. It can't just look at the existing network and what is required to fulfill this, it needs to look at opportunities to join up communities along with demand generation, what services are sustainable, and which will need financial support.

DW asked what Government support is being given to operators to purchase Electric vehicles. TT confirmed that the government should be announcing their Bus Strategy in the new year. JY advised the cost of electric vehicles is currently prohibitive but in South Yorkshire there are a high number of Euro 6 vehicles or older vehicles which have been retrofit which have low emissions. TT advised that the Bus Review will be added to a future agenda as things develop.

6. **INTEGRATED RAIL PLAN**

Alex F updated the groups on the Integrated Rail Plan which was published in July 2019 and the projects being progressed.

Four bids were submitted as follows:

- Barrowhill Line – shortlisted and currently working on outline business case.
- Don Valley Line

- North Midland Line being resubmitted
- Askern Line

Discussions were held around some of the projects within the plan.

7. **BUS**

John Young, Stagecoach, gave an update on bus operations, patronage, customer compliance for wearing a face covering and social distancing etc. Stagecoach is currently using all of the vehicles available in their fleet with some vehicles redeployed to help key workers and school services.

Special Christmas services will run in Sheffield, similar to previous years. Details will be available at www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/christmas. No other services changes are planned in the short term.

8. **TRAM**

Nigel Wragg, Supertram, gave an update on tram operations. All trams currently in service but carrying far less patronage. Face covering compliance high. Enhanced cleaning regime, especially for touch points, and a mist clean at night. Some staffing issues which have impacted on some services as staff test positive or self-isolate from track and trace. Up to date timetables can be found at <https://www.stagecoachbus.com/supertram>

The 3-year Rail Replacement programme has now been completed.

9. **TRAIN**

Alison Bell, Northern, advised services levels are around 90% of pre-Covid levels and performance is generally good. Current customer patronage is very low, approximately 20%. Face covering compliance very good with a campaign to monitor especially in school areas. Enhancing cleaning regime in place. Buses are on standby for the University students returning home for the Christmas period, if needed. The next timetable change will be on 13 December and will see an increase in service provision – subject to staff availability as a result of testing positive or self-isolating from track and trace.

David Jones, Cross Country rail, advised they have similar approach to Northern regarding cleaning and face coverings. Currently operating at 70% of pre-Covid timetable provision – consciously didn't ramp up services to 100%, focus is more on capacity through the city region. Student movements for Christmas return home is a challenge but the customer message it to book in advance and check before you travel.

10. **MEMBERS ITEMS**

BTUG:

1 Bus Review - when SCR are planning to inform the public discussion around the review and formal launch. The group would like to be consulted and have chance to comment/contribute.

Still to be confirmed from a timing perspective but the public will be consulted.

2. Have there been any discussions about reintroducing free local rail travel for ENCTS pass holders now that franchising is coming to an end?

Conversations around free local travel are still continuing.

3. Is the Mayor considering free travel pre 9.30am during lockdown as was introduced for the first lockdown in March?

The decision was taken not to reintroduce free pre 9:30 travel as it was used for specific purposes like early shopping etc. which are not in place during the 2nd lockdown.

DTUG:

1. Askern Rail Station – Need more than verbal support from SCR/SYPTE and request they engage with TOCs to progress.

Alex F confirmed that the bid for funding for the Askern line is being resubmitted and they are engaging with Graham Moss (Friends of Askern Station) the Mayor and the TOCs in regards to opening the line but still lots of work to do to progress it.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Meeting to be arranged for January between chair, vice chair and SYPTE to look at forward plan.

Future group meeting dates to be circulated.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Thursday 21 January 2021, 10.30am

Thursday 29 April 2021, 10.30am

Wednesday 21 July 2021, 10.30am

Wednesday 20 October 2021, 10.30am