

SOUTH YORKSHIRE TRANSPORT USERS GROUP

19 APRIL 2018

PRESENT: J Hoare (Chair)
I Jenkinson (Sheffield TUG), M Payling (Member of the Public),
N Spetch (Vice-Chair/Rotherham TUG), M Turner (Sheffield
Transport For All) and D Wrottesley (Hope Valley Rail User
Group)

B Ashton (TM Travel), L Eades (Stagecoach Supertram),
S Edwards (SYPTTE), M Farmer (SYPTTE), F Johnson
(Stagecoach), S Radford (First), G Richards (SCR Combined
Authority), T Taylor (SYPTTE), N Wragg (Stagecoach
Supertram) and A Wright (SYPTTE)

Apologies for absence were received from J Whittington
(Barnsley TUG) and J Brightmore (Sheffield TUG)

1 OPEN AND WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted as above.

3 BUSINESS UPDATE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Steve Edwards, Executive Director gave the Group a SYPTTE business update.

The Group noted the SYPTTE's organisational priorities which were:

- Promote the use of public transport and maximise patronage.
- Make the most of new technology.
- Work with partners to reduce the impact public transport has on air quality and the environment; and
- Get the best return for the region from investment in public transport.

The Group noted that the fall in bus patronage continued. This was a countrywide problem and causes included the increase in home working and internet shopping. The PTE were working hard to encourage use of public transport and to make it more accessible.

Among key activities at the moment was the mayoral election on the 3rd May 2018. The role of the mayor included being the Chair of the Combined Authority; the mayor also had specific transport powers through the Bus Services Act, although the Combined Authority would still have the final decision on these matters.

The refurbishment of Rotherham Interchange would begin in the near future, prior to that a temporary interchange would come into service at Forge Island. It was expected that the refurbishment would be complete early 2019.

The PTE is preparing to launch an Active Travel Campaign in July which it was hoped would encourage people to incorporate walking or cycling along with the use of public transport into their daily commute or leisure activities.

The Retail and Information Strategy had been released which ensured the visibility of the range of products available. Improved technology would be used to provide better information.

The Customer Insight programme had been updated. The customer surveys had previously been paper-based; this had now been replaced by a combination of telephone and online surveys which would be continuous. Buzz boxes had been placed at main sites to enable customers to leave real-time feedback; these were proving to be very successful.

The Group were reminded that Bus Partnerships were in place in all four districts.

The Buses for Sheffield brand was launched early in 2018, allowing for a more consistent identity across the city. A launch event/photo opportunity will be held in June.

117 Low Emission Bus Scheme funded vehicles (including retro-fitting of existing vehicles) would be added to the Sheffield fleet.

With regard to rail services S Edwards informed the Group that the new franchises were becoming embedded with new identities, station investments and additional services.

New trains would be rolled out on the network from late 2018.

Government approval had been received for the Hope Valley capacity scheme but funding was awaited.

The Tram Train launch to Rotherham was planned for the second half of 2018.

Revised tram timetables commenced from January 2018 with much improved reliability.

Re-railing phase 2 would start from May 2018 and would be delivered in stages through till the summer 2020.

The Board were reminded that the PTE was funded through a levy of the 4 local authorities in South Yorkshire and had seen significant reductions in funding for several years. For the 2018/19 financial year, funding had been reduced by 3%; 3 year projections saw further cuts of 2½% for 2 years followed by 1½% in year 3; it would be challenging to find more savings.

The Capital programme for 2018/19 was £21.6m which would be spent on three projects: Rotherham Interchange, re-railing of the tram network and commissioning the Tram-Trains.

N Spetch commented that more work needed to be done to link the modes of public transport; rail, tram and bus. He felt that public transport should be looked at as a single industry and should be in competition with the car not itself.

S Edwards informed the Group that work was ongoing in the Sheffield City Region through the Transforming Cities Fund looking at an integrated approach to public transport across the region and to move away from the traditional footprint.

Patronage across all modes was also being looked into with the focus on people who did not currently use public transport.

S Edwards also commented that there was a big debate around air quality at the moment and there could be significant changes in the type of vehicles allowed in urban centres in the future.

The Chair thanked S Edwards for an interesting and informative presentation.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2018

With regard to minute 9, T Taylor informed the meeting that C Cocken from Transport for the North had been unable to attend today's meeting. She would be invited to a future meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2018 were agreed as a true record.

5 BUS

It was reported that a lot of work was going in to promoting the Buses for Sheffield initiative which was being marketed as One Network, One City. The formal launch would be sometime in May.

In Doncaster, key attractions were promoted, whereas in Rotherham the publicity was all around the temporary relocation of the bus station to Forge Island. In Barnsley work was focused on increasing awareness of ENCT passes.

Tenders in Rotherham would be awarded in the near future; there was not expected to be any significant changes.

N Spetch enquired if there was still conflict with the carrying of wheelchairs and prams.

F Johnson replied that it was still sometimes a difficult area.

T Taylor commented that the Government had made commitments in this area – he would forward a link to the Group:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-signals-commitment-to-improving-bus-access-for-wheelchair-users>

F Johnson informed the Group that bus services would be affected by several events over the next few months. These were the Tour de Yorkshire cycle race, the re-railing work for Supertram and the closure of Manchester Road in Stocksbridge for six weeks.

6 RAIL

The Group were introduced to Melissa Farmer, the recently-appointed Rail Development Manager for SYPT. She informed the Group that her role was to maximise the benefits of the South Yorkshire rail network and represent the Sheffield City Region and SYPT's interests on external bodies such as Transport for the North.

M Farmer commented that she believed rail services across the North could be improved, for example later trains between Sheffield and Manchester.

With regard to the new rail timetables from May, N Spetch commented that there were substantial changes and that new timetables in May were unnecessary and unwarranted as there would be further changes in December.

7 SUPERTRAM

N Wragg informed the Group that there would be overhead and rail work that would mean replacement buses between Fitzallan Square and Meadowhall on the weekend of 20-23 April.

He would pass further information on regarding the re-rail project when it became available.

<https://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/RailReplacement/>

I Jenkinson queried whether contactless payment could be used on Supertram.

N Wragg replied that the current handheld ticket machines could not accept contactless payments in part due to limitations on battery life; alternatives were being explored.

8 SHEFFIELD CITY REGION TRANSPORT STRATEGY REFRESH AND CONSULTATION: NEXT STEPS

The Group were informed that the consultation on the Transport Strategy had closed on 1 April 2018. Feedback was being collated and a final version of the Strategy and an implementation plan would be prepared for approval. Findings are set to be published in late summer.

9 FORWARD PLANNER: ROTHERHAM INTERCHANGE CLOSURE DATES

Members were given a leaflet detailing the changes at Rotherham Interchange.

From looking at the image on the leaflet, M Turner expressed concerns regarding wheelchair access.

T Taylor would look into the matter and get back to M Turner.

There are no proposals to move the boarding points to avoid the columns, including doors or 'external' kerbs, as it would not be cost prohibited. Logically SYPTE would also need to realign the runway to ensure that the doors (if moved) would still be aligned to the doors of the buses which could potentially lead to the loss of a stand within the Interchange.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

N Spetch requested that geographical route maps were reinstated on bus timetables; this was noted.

Now SYPTE has switched to Windows 10, discussions will be held with IT to see if it is possible.

The Group were informed that journey assistance cards had been launched on the website; members were supplied with an example of these.

11 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meetings of the Group would be held on 19th July 2018, 18th October 2018, and 17th January 2019.