

SOUTH YORKSHIRE TRANSPORT USERS GROUP

20 OCTOBER 2015

PRESENT: J Hoare (Chair)
L Booth (Rotherham TUG), J Brightmore (Ramblers - Sheffield Group), R Fieldhouse (Huddersfield-Penistone-Sheffield RUA), I Jenkinson (Sheffield TUG), M Payling (Member of the Public), N Spetch (Vice-Chair/Rotherham TUG), M Turner (Sheffield Transport For All), M Wilson (Member of the Public) and D Wrottesley (Hope Valley Rail User Group)

N Broadhead (SYPTE), C Cocken (SYPTE), A Midgley (SYPTE), K Platts (SYPTE) and G Richards (SCR Combined Authority)

W Kyte (East Midlands Trains)

Apologies for absence were received from A Bell (Northern Rail) and D Young (SYPTE)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the October meeting of the Group. Apologies were noted as above.

C Cocken informed the Group that future meetings would be held at Broad Street West; the Group's Terms of Reference would be update to reflect this.

2 SYPTE BUDGET 2016/17

The Chair welcomed Kate Platts, Head of Financial Services at SYPTE, to the meeting who would update the Group on the 2016/17 budget setting process in the absence of D Young.

The Group were informed that the 2016/17 budget setting process would follow the same stepped process as in previous years leading up to presenting the budget for approval to the Combined Authority in February 2016.

The Local Authorities were looking for a further 10% savings, followed by 10% in both of the following two years. All areas were being considered for potential further savings/efficiencies or additional income.

As was the case last year it was inevitable that policy choices would have to be made which would have a direct impact on customers; the results of the recent 'Have Your Say' consultation were currently being analysed including questions around the importance of discretionary concessions (i.e. disabled, elderly, child) and the importance of access to education, jobs, leisure etc. The results would be

used to inform the policy decision process, taking into account the equality impact assessment which was currently being prepared.

The Chair commented that there some difficult decisions to be made. With regard to the discretionary concessions, it was unfortunate that the consultation pitched one section of the community against another (e.g. was the disabled more important than the elderly or children).

M Turner agreed stating that any cutbacks in this area would add to social exclusion.

The Group noted that the cutback to the elderly concessions had already had an impact, although some Operators now had a fixed fare for early morning hospital appointments.

The Chair commented that the complaints were essentially at the Government who were imposing the funding cuts and forcing Authorities to make difficult decisions; he thanked R Platts for her attendance at the meeting.

3 SCR DEVOLUTION DEAL

N Broadhead informed the Group that the SCR Devolution deal had recently been signed but had still yet to be ratified.

The Group discussed the implications of this on areas including networks, ticketing, bus partnerships, public consultation and the effect of having a SCR Mayor.

4 SHEFFIELD TRAIN STATION

The Chair welcomed W Kyte from East Midlands trains to the meeting.

W Kyte informed the Group that the East Midlands franchise had recently been extended a further 2½ years to March 2018 with the possibility of a further 12 month extension.

The Group noted:

- Buffet cars were to be reintroduced.
- Extra staff on trains and stations.
- Advance fares frozen.
- Investment in Community and Partnership lines.
- Alfreton station to be redeveloped, including an accessible footbridge.
- Construction of a new station at Ilkeston to begin in 2016 (after being delayed by the discovery of newts).
- Plans to extend the award-winning cycle hub to 500.
- Re-development of the taxi queuing area.

In response to a question from a member of the Group, W Kyte informed the Group that the new franchise did not include the requirement for Sheffield station to be a 'closed gate' station. This had been in the original franchise but had caused a public backlash as it would have necessitated closing the footbridge to the public.

Although this could reappear in a future franchise there would be no gating in the life of the current franchise.

The Group discussed the difficulties of wheelchair access at the station and the length of the walk from the drop-off points. It was noted that there were no plans for improvements in the current franchise although it could be included in the new franchise.

M Turner commented that the station staff were always very helpful and friendly and asked that her comments be passed on.

The Group commented on the lack of information on bus travel at the station. W Kyte replied that he would be happy to provide racks for bus timetables and to host a display screen for live bus information, although the provision of this would be the responsibility of SYPTE.

I Jenkinson questioned whether the train information displays in the station were controlled locally. W Kyte replied that Sheffield was the only station to have live announcements; most information was automated but could be overridden. It was suggested that the live announcements could be used more effectively to avoid confusion at times of planned engineering works.

The Chair thanked W Kyte for his attendance at the meeting, commenting that it had been very informative.

5 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 JULY 2015

A member questioned whether it was intended to invite members from the non-South Yorkshire areas of the Sheffield City Region to join the Group; C Cocken confirmed there were no such plans at the moment.

With regard to recruiting a member from the Barnsley area to the Group, it was felt that the creation of the Barnsley Bus Partnership may generate some interest and to leave further attempts at recruitment until then.

The minutes of the meeting of the Group held on 21 July 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

6 UPDATE FROM OPERATORS

The Group noted that arrangements were in place for the launch of the Sheffield Bus Partnership network changes on 1 November 2015; timetables were currently with the printers and would be available in the near future.

7 MEMBERS ITEMS

There were no Members items.

8 TRANSPORT COMMITTEE BRIEFING

The Group noted a written update from the Combined Authority and Transport Committee meetings from July to September 2015.

9 FORWARD PLANNER

In response to a question from a member, C Cocken informed the Group that the Tram/Train project was back on track after the delays to be delivered in 2017.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Group would have a rail focus and it was intended to invite someone from the Tram/Train project to update the Group on developments.

At a recent meeting with the Chair, Richard Allen, Northern Rail's Commercial Director, had agreed to attend a meeting of the Group. C Cocken would invite him to the January meeting; it was suggested that the date of the meeting should be flexible to fit around his availability.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Meeting dates for 2016 were agreed as follows:

19 January 2016 (AGM) (subject to Richard Allen's availability)
19 April 2016
19 July 2016
18 October 2016

Meetings to be held at the offices of SYPTE, Broad Street West, Sheffield, commencing at 10.30am.