

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

**Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development
Committee**

Meeting held 27 July 2016

PRESENT: Councillors Steve Wilson (Chair), Ian Auckland (Deputy Chair),
Lisa Banes, Neale Gibson, Dianne Hurst, Talib Hussain,
Abdul Khayum, Robert Murphy, Andy Nash, Chris Peace,
Martin Smith and Paul Wood

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Helen Mirfin-Boukouris and Ben Miskell.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 16th March 2016

4.1.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th March 2016, were approved as a correct record and, arising therefrom, further to an issue raised by a member of the public (Diana Stimely) regarding information she had received from the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTe) indicating that, other than proposed changes to Service 72/72A, there were no other planned service changes, Councillor Chris Peace referred to an e-mail all Councillors had received from the SYPTe on 8th July 2016, setting out details of other planned bus network changes, to take effect from 4th September, 2016, and queried when such changes would be announced publicly.

4.1.2 The Chair referred to a question from a member of the public, which had been received prior to the meeting. Annette Quigley questioned what the planned changes were to Services 35 and 70 and when would the SYPTe be consulting local residents on the proposed changes. In terms of Service 35, Mrs Quigley stated that, as it only ran once an hour, when it was late, or didn't turn up at all, it caused problems for users, particularly the elderly and disabled. She queried why the proposed changes had not followed the normal Sheffield Bus

Partnership process.

- 4.1.3 In response, Stephen Edwards, Executive Director, SYPTE, stated that the changes made in November 2015 had been made as part of a major network review. The changes now referred to (Services 35 and 70), were not deemed as major network changes, therefore would go through the normal Bus Partnership process in terms of communications and consultation. Allan Riggall (First South Yorkshire), stated that the change to Service 35 (Sheffield to Wincobank) had been replaced by Service 70, with the route being extended from Wincobank through to Meadowhall, and confirmed that there would still be two buses an hour on this route and the changes were an improvement for users, with no loss or reduction in service.
- 4.1.4 Dick Proctor, Transport Planning Manager, Sheffield City Council, stated that, in the light of the apparent confusion in terms of the bus changes now referred to, it could be a good time to review the communication sent by the SYPTE and Sheffield Bus Partnership, in the light that it appeared as though some of the recent changes had not gone through the robust process as had been the case in the past.
- 4.1.5 Councillor Mazher Iqbal, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport, stated that local residents in the Tinsley area had also been confused and frustrated in terms of changes to Service 69, which had resulted in a number of complaints, mainly relating to the reduction of buses per hour, from two to one, being referred to local Ward Councillors. He commented that, following the major network changes in November 2015, he and other Councillors had been led to believe that there would not be any further major changes for some time, and expressed his dissatisfaction at the apparent lack of consultation with regard to the changes now referred to. He concluded by stating that, in the light of the problems facing some local residents, some of whom were considered to be isolated, the relevant bus operators should be requested to reconsider the changes.
- 4.1.6 Stephen Edwards stated that the changes to Service 69 were linked to the planned introduction of the new Service X1, as part of the Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) Project, and there had been communication on these changes through the BRT Project Board, which Sheffield City Council and the SYPTE were members of, with discussions being held for several months.
- 4.1.7 Councillor Paul Wood stated that there had been a large increase in the number of complaints received by Councillors in connection with some bus services, and questioned how the SYPTE planned to make improvements in terms of taking the public's view into account, and whether there was a need to look at current processes to ensure that

customer feedback was fed into the Partnership appropriately. Mr Edwards stated that he accepted that there may be a need to look at improving dialogue between the different partners.

- 4.1.8 Kevin Belfield (First South Yorkshire) stated that it was disappointing to hear that so many people were dissatisfied with the recent changes to bus services, particularly as the bus operators had implemented a number of measures to ensure improvements were made with regard to punctuality and reliability, which had been considered to be a positive move. He referred specifically to changes to Service 38, which would re-introduce a bus service onto a road that became unserved in November, 2015, and would reduce isolation of local residents. Councillor Abdul Khayum indicated that a number of representations had been received in connection with Service 38.
- 4.1.9 In response to comments raised by Councillor Ian Auckland, who queried how making a change to an existing hourly service could not be classed as a major change, Allan Riggall stated that, in connection with the changes to Service 69, two-thirds of residents in the Tinsley area would see bus services doubled in that area, which would also include Services 70 and 71 being diverted to serve part of the estate.
- 4.1.10 Councillor Chris Peace referred to the e-mail sent to Councillors on 8th July 2016, stating that there was reference to the fact that there could be an impact in terms of the proposed changes, although there were no details of this, neither was there any explanation for the reasons behind each of the proposed changes. It was stated that all the details with regard to reasons for the changes had been sent to the SYPTE's Communications Team, and would be referred to Members of the Committee. Stephen Edwards added that it was apparent that communication with Councillors in respect of the specific changes, had not been as good as it should have, and that the Bus Partnership would review this.
- 4.1.11 Councillor Lisa Banes raised concerns with regard to certain communities being isolated as a result of recent changes to bus services, namely Service 38 (Meadowhall to Hillsborough), and indicated that the Bus Partnership needed to give more consideration to how the public were able to travel round the City, and not just concentrate on increasing patronage. Councillor Banes stated that the service link around Longley Hall, which was withdrawn in November 2015, should be replaced, based on the level of customer feedback she had received. Allan Riggall stated that the latest change reduced isolation that had been created in November 2015, by re-instating a service in part of the estate currently not served. Longley Hall would continue to have an hourly service to Firth Park, as well as a bus every 10 minutes on Service 97/98.
- 4.1.12 John Young (Stagecoach Sheffield) stated that the Bus Partnership

did not wish to discourage the public providing feedback in terms of bus services. He added that, following the changes in November 2015, punctuality levels were at their highest ever, and that around 75% of all bus service changes were made to improve punctuality. There would always be a need for changes to be made, with the majority involving measures to improve punctuality. It was imperative that operators kept a close watch on this as it was of the utmost importance to passengers. Mr Young stated that he also accepted that there was clearly a need for improved communications in terms of service changes, together with the reasons for them.

4.1.13 Further to queries raised by Councillor Ian Auckland, it was stated that the SYPTE was not able to publish operators' statistics, for data protection purposes, but would be happy to share such data between the Bus Partnership. It was agreed that copies of the letters sent in response to the six petitions received by the Council in connection with the bus changes made in November 2015 would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

4.1.14 In response to a query by Councillor Andy Nash, relating to how information was communicated to the public, it was stated that the SYPTE continued to encourage the public to register with the SYPTE to receive email alerts, which would include details of service changes. In addition, details of proposed changes had been advertised at relevant bus stops.

4.1.15 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information now reported, together with the comments now made and the responses to the questions raised; and
- (b) in the light of the concerns now raised, requests the Sheffield Bus Partnership to:-
 - (i) review the changes made to Services 38 and 69, and ensure that proper consultation has been undertaken with the public and local Ward Councillors, in the areas concerned;
 - (ii) review the manner in how such changes are relayed to Councillors in an attempt to ensure that the problems and issues now referred to are not repeated;
 - (iii) refresh the process within the Partnership with regard to minor/major changes, communication and sign off; and
 - (iv) inform the Committee of the outcome in terms of points (i) to (iii).

4.2 18th May 2016

- 4.2.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18th May 2016, were approved as a correct record

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

- 5.1 There were no further public questions or petitions from members of the public.

6. SHEFFIELD BUS PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

- 6.1 The Policy and Improvement Officer, Alice Nicholson, submitted a report attaching a report of the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTe) Bus Performance Update, which had been considered by the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority Transport Committee on 4th July, 2016. The report contained details in terms of key performance highlights and key actions for 2016/17 and attached, as appendices, statistical information in terms of patronage, punctuality, reliability, feedback and scorecards.

- 6.2 In attendance for this item were Stephen Edwards and Nathan Broadhead (SYPTe), Kevin Belfield and Allan Riggall (First South Yorkshire), Ian Jenkinson (Sheffield Community Transport), John Young (Stagecoach Sheffield), Tom Finnegan-Smith (Head of Strategic Transport and Infrastructure, Sheffield City Council) and Dick Proctor (Transport Planning Manager, Sheffield City Council).

- 6.3 Stephen Edwards provided a brief summary of the report, highlighting that performance in terms of punctuality had recovered, and was now at its highest level for some time, there had been a reduction in the number of people qualifying for free travel under the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS), which had therefore resulted in a reduction in the number of passengers travelling in this category, and there had been an increase in patronage in terms of younger people as a result of more attractive fares.

- 6.4 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-

- The Government had recently announced additional funding in terms of low emission vehicles, and Sheffield had been successful in securing £1.3m of this funding. The Sheffield Bus Partnership and the wider South Yorkshire region were committed to using such buses. Efforts would be made to ensure that such buses were used in areas having high pollution levels. Efforts were also made to ensure that, during quieter periods, when there were less buses on the road, that the low emission vehicles were used. The average age of vehicles had

reduced since last year, following the purchase of new buses. The general life expectancy of a bus was 15 years, at which time it would be scrapped. A number of buses at this age had been removed from service after the recent network changes and at the present time, 99.9% of buses in Sheffield were DDA compliant.

- It was accepted that the statistical information set out in the report now submitted was not up to date. This was due to the deadlines in terms of the meeting of the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority Transport Committee.
- The aim of the Bus Partnership to increase patronage by 2% a year for the next five years, had been set with a number of circumstances in mind. A number of factors, such as the reduction in footfall in the City Centre and the change in the general economic climate, have meant that these have been adjusted to reflect the current situation.
- The figure of 5% in terms of the target to reduce customer feedback was used as an indicator, and there was no specific target to reduce such feedback. Again, whilst there was no specific target figure, the Partnership aimed to reduce the level of negative customer feedback.
- The SYPTE was primarily funded through funds from the Government. The reduction in the number of people eligible for free travel under the ENCTS had resulted in a reduction of such funding over the last few years.

6.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the comments now made and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) thanks the representatives of the SYPTE and the bus operators for attending the meeting, and responding to the questions raised; and
- (c) requests (i) the SYPTE to supply more up to date performance information and (ii) bus operators to share individual service information on reliability and punctuality.

7. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17

- 7.1 The Policy and Improvement Officer submitted a report attaching the Committee's draft Work Programme for 2016/17.

7.2 RESOLVED: That subject to the amendments now made, which would be incorporated into the draft Work Programme to be submitted to the Committee's next meeting, the draft Work Programme now submitted, be approved.

8. BUS SERVICES BILL - BRIEFING

8.1 The Committee received and noted a briefing note on the Bus Services Bill, which had been introduced into the House of Lords on 20th May 2016, and which set out information on five sections set out in the Bill, relating to Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes, Franchising, Advanced Ticketing Scheme, Enhanced Partnership Schemes and Open Data Provisions.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 26th October 2016, at 5.00 pm, in the Town Hall.