

Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development
Committee

Meeting held 24 October 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Denise Fox (Chair), Ian Auckland (Deputy Chair),
Lisa Banes, Mike Chaplin, Neale Gibson, Mark Jones, Abdul Khayum,
Cate McDonald, Mohammed Mahroof, Ben Miskell, Robert Murphy,
Moya O'Rourke and Martin Smith

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 No apologies for absence were received.

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 In relation to Agenda Items 7 (The Future of Supertram), 8 (Update on the Sheffield Bus Partnership) and 9 (Sheffield Transport Strategy 2018-34 – Assessing Sustainable Travel Options [Supertram, Sheffield Bus Partnership, Sheffield Cycling Inquiry]), Councillor Neale Gibson declared a personal interest as Cabinet Advisor for Transport and Development, and opted not to speak on any of the items.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26th September 2018, were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 There were no questions raised or petitions submitted by members of the public.

6. THE FUTURE OF SUPERTRAM

6.1 The Committee received a presentation from Ben Gilligan (Director of Public Transport, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive [SYPT]) on the future of Supertram. Also in attendance for this item were Councillor Jack Scott (Cabinet Member for Transport and Development), Tom Finnegan-Smith (Head of Strategic Transport and Infrastructure) and Greg Challis (Senior Transport Planner).

6.2 Ben Gilligan reported on the history and context of Supertram, and referred to recent updates with regard to the system. He referred to the tram patronage from 2004/05 to 2017/18, and reported on the receipt of funding from the Department for

Transport towards the production of an Outline Business Case regarding the future of the existing Supertram network, which was expected to be submitted in 2019. The key issues under consideration related to asset condition and renewal, the size and shape of the network, and the role it played in the broader transport network. Mr Gilligan concluded by referring to the consultation on the Outline Business Case, which would run for a six-week period, ending on 5th November 2018.

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

- The reduction of around two million passenger journeys were thought to have been due to inefficiencies in the timetable and people moving to use other forms of public transport.
- Whilst Stagecoach operated the Supertram network, and the SYPTE owned the assets, the SYPTE did not receive any income from Stagecoach, with Stagecoach carrying all the commercial risk. The SYPTE continued to fund various small-scale improvements to the network, such as replacing signal heads.
- Although Stagecoach was able to set aside a provision of £6 million in respect of potential future losses, it was not envisaged that the Company was making large profits from the operation in Sheffield. The Company's accounts were available for inspection on the Company House website.
- All tram stops were now fitted with the Passenger Information System, which allowed for the display of real time information. Whilst there had been a number of technical problems when the system was first introduced, it was now operating considerably better, with the information displayed being around 95% accurate. The original installation of the system had been funded by the SYPTE, with ongoing maintenance costs being funded by Stagecoach.
- The consultation on the Outline Business Case comprised an essential part of the process of selecting a preferred option. The SYPTE had undertaken a large survey around six months ago, particularly targeting non-public transport users, more specifically employers, with the aim of attracting commuters. The results of the survey were very complex, and could be provided to Members on request.
- The survey had been designed to meet the requirements of the Department for Transport funding, therefore, there were restrictions on what could be included without overly complicating the message.
- When bidding for Government funding, there was a need to prove that there would be a return on any investment, as well as a need to show that any expansion/improvements to the system were required. The difficulties in providing such assurances was possibly one of the reasons why Sheffield had not received Government funding to expand the network, unlike Manchester

or Nottingham. A further reason as to why the network was not expanded in the 1990s was due to the fact that, given the extent and cost of the works required, light rail systems could not be funded locally, and the Government, at that time, was not willing to commit funding to such schemes.

- Performance regarding passenger numbers in respect of the Bus Rapid Transit system was exceeding all forecasts.
- It was generally accepted that if there was no tram system in the City, this would result in an increase in the number of car journeys.
- Growth was forecast in the revenue and volumes as part of the Outline Business Case.
- In terms of the age and condition of the current tram fleet, whilst the physical condition and appearance of the trams was reasonably good, there were issues in that the manufacturers of some of the trams' parts, such as the compressors, had become obsolete. This had resulted in the requirement for a considerable amount of work in terms of reverse engineering, and looking at alternative solutions. Following assessment of this work, it had been identified that purchasing new trams would be the most cost-effective option in the long-term.
- There were other examples across the United Kingdom where light rail systems were operated in a similar manner to Sheffield, where a commercial operator ran the network as a concession, such as Croydon.
- The concession to Stagecoach in terms of the operation of the tram network would end on 26th March 2024.
- Stagecoach provided the SYPTTE with data regarding passenger numbers, together with information regarding safety and infrastructure work to the network on a monthly basis.
- The possible provision of a light rail link to Stocksbridge was beyond the scope of the current planned works.
- The issue of allowing cyclists to take their cycles on trams had been debated on a number of occasions. It had been determined that, as there were no suitable storage facilities, this practice would be non-compliant with the legislation that covered tramways, and would potentially result in conflict between cyclists and wheelchair users. Cyclists believe that new trams should have the facility for storing cycles safely, as it was currently being done in Edinburgh, and that there should be a further trial.
- There were no immediate plans to introduce a facility for card payments on trams. It was accepted that it was a gap in the service, particularly now that the facility was available on buses, but it would be up to Stagecoach to decide on this.

- Patronage on the trams was calculated by passenger transactions. It was accepted that this was not always 100% accurate, particularly in that when trams were particularly busy, the conductor was not able to get to all passengers to collect their fare. This has raised the issue as to whether it would be cost-effective having an additional conductor on trams at particularly busy times. This had been identified as a common problem over the last few years, and the patronage figures were not adjusted to take this into account.

6.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information reported as part of the presentation, together with the responses to the questions raised; and
- (b) thanks Ben Gilligan, Councillor Jack Scott, Tom Finnegan-Smith and Greg Challis for attending the meeting, and responding to the questions raised.

7. UPDATE ON THE SHEFFIELD BUS PARTNERSHIP

7.1 The Committee received a presentation from Ben Gilligan (Director of Public Transport, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive [SYLTE]). Also in attendance for this item were Councillor Jack Scott (Cabinet Member for Transport and Development), Tom Finnegan-Smith (Head of Strategic Transport and Infrastructure) and Greg Challis (Senior Transport Planner).

7.2 Ben Gilligan reported on the background to the Sheffield Bus Partnership, following its launch in 2012. He reported on the original objectives of the Partnership, and on the Better Bus Area, a key element of the original Partnership, which included a range of capital and revenue schemes, including Penistone Road, Heeley Bottom, improved urban traffic control and audio visual on buses. Mr Gilligan reported on performance, including punctuality and reliability by year, passenger volumes, emissions and key challenges. He concluded by referring to future steps which included, amongst other things, a vehicle retrofit programme, joint regulation of services, simplified fares and tickets, network simplification and enhanced bus priorities.

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

- Whilst the majority of bus drivers were friendly and helpful, there was always going to be a small percentage who were not, despite the efforts of the operators. There had always been a struggle for consistency in terms of drivers providing excellent customer service, and it had been identified that there was a need for more consistent training for drivers, both in terms of their attitudes and knowledge of their routes.
- Capital investment in terms of the bus service was the responsibility of the operators. Whilst it would be ideal to have a fleet of brand new vehicles, the SYLTE was dealing with a number of commercial partners, who had to be

mindful of the costs involved. It was considered that Sheffield had done very well in terms of the £40 million investment in new vehicles since 2012.

- The SYPTE had the responsibility for repairing and replacing bus shelters, and had recently allocated £150,000 for shelter renewals across South Yorkshire (£80,000 in Sheffield), which represented approximately 35 new shelters. It was accepted that there was a need to respond as quickly as possible to deal with damaged bus shelters.
- Monthly punctuality and reliability figures were provided and reviewed at the Bus Partnership Operational Group meetings.
- Problems caused by buses blocking roads, by doubling up, represented a major issue for the Partnership. Consideration was currently being given to having someone in the City Centre to deal specifically with issues such as this, which would, in turn, assist traffic flow. Representatives of the two main bus operators and the Council worked together in the Urban Transport Control Centre, based in the Town Hall, which allowed for dialogue between the two parties.
- Whilst it was accepted that having additional conductors on the buses would make it safer for passengers, as well as helping in terms of fare collection, this would have a major cost impact for the operators, and would be a decision for them to take.
- One of the reasons for the reduction in bus patronage was due to a shift to taxi use, on the basis that it was more flexible in terms of the route, perceived as being safer and, with the ability to book and pay for taxi journeys via an app, it was a lot simpler. Also, if there were a number of people wanting to reach a similar destination, it often worked out cheaper.
- Customer safety was viewed as paramount by the Partnership, and it worked closely with the police, requesting that they target their resources on the tram network where required. The SYPTE was funding a role to co-ordinate activity between transport operators and South Yorkshire Police as part of the TravelSafe Partnership, which was also part-funded by operators.
- The X17 (Sheffield to Barnsley, via Meadowhall) continues to run on the motorway, thereby helping to speed up journey times.
- Drivers were continually reminded about their responsibilities in terms of leaving their engines running (known as idling) whilst waiting at stops. All drivers were measured on this, and questioned on their actions where necessary. The new Euro VI buses, of which there will be 117 next year, and which were fitted with the engine cut-out facility, would help to reduce CO2 emissions.
- The commissioner of the KPMG report “Trends in English Bus Patronage” was the Confederation of Passenger Transport, the industry trade body.

- Following an initial period of growth in terms of passenger volumes, the general trend has been one of decline, driven by the English National Travel Concessionary Scheme (ENCTS) market, with fare-paying passengers having increased, and significant growth noted in child travel. The key factors driving this were changes in employment patterns, reduced need to travel, relative costs of taxis and the increasing prevalence of online shopping. The growth of 1.3 million more fare paying passenger journeys over the lifetime of the Partnership had been driven by the work of the Partnership, specifically with regard to the improved co-ordination of marketing and investment, and low fares.
- Future steps include network simplification, with greater co-ordination, requiring fewer buses, as well as quicker journey times.
- Total bus mileage was down by 10% as a result of efficiencies and measures to reduce city centre bus movements to improve air quality.
- The proceeds from the sale of multi-operator tickets were shared between the bus operators.
- The budget in respect of concessionary travel was underspent last year. This money did not go to the operators, but the SYPTTE identified a number of ways of allocating it to deliver benefits to passengers, including additional support for job seekers.
- The reduction in concessionary journeys disproportionately affected low frequency bus services, which were generally used by more elderly people.
- In terms of the future steps, the reference to the planned joint regulation of services referred to the joint corridors where a number of different operators ran services, and the plan was for one operator to take the lead to organise this route to allow for improved traffic flow and scheduling.
- Around 2015, when the major network change took place, there were a number of issues, such as incorrect vehicle capacity and overcrowding. These issues, together with the network changes and the changes to the national economic position at that time, were all contributing factors to the reduction in bus patronage. The Partnership was continuing to look into this issue, and hopefully would be able to find some answers.
- The Partnership regularly monitored capacity on bus routes, and the operators would make any required changes, such as putting double-deckers on some routes during rush hour, and when children were travelling to and from school. The Partnership had been working closely with the Council, following the withdrawal of the operator, Bright Bus, which operated a number of school services, to look at where extra provision in terms of services was required and the SYPTTE stepped in to fund a number of additional services.

- Bus operators had, and would no doubt continue to experience problems with regard to anti-social behaviour. The Partnership would look into the problems and react where necessary. The operators would only withdraw services where there were particular problems as a last resort. The Partnership would request the police to direct resources to problem areas.

7.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information reported as part of the presentation, together with the responses to the questions raised; and
- (b) thanks Ben Gilligan, Councillor Jack Scott, Tom Finnigan-Smith and Greg Challis for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised.

8. SHEFFIELD TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2018-34 - ASSESSING SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL OPTIONS (SUPERTRAM, SHEFFIELD BUS PARTNERSHIP, SHEFFIELD CYCLING INQUIRY)

8.1 The Committee received a report of the Head of Strategic Transport and Infrastructure on the Sheffield Transport Strategy 2018-34 - Assessing Sustainable Travel Options (Supertram, Sheffield Bus Partnership, Sheffield Cycling Inquiry).

8.2 The report indicated that in July 2018, the Cabinet had endorsed a new long-term Transport Strategy for Sheffield, setting out how the City proposed to deal with projected increases in population, homes and jobs to 2034. This report set out the implications of the new transport policies for the City, and how they fitted strategically with Sheffield City Region's recent draft Transport Strategy, and Transport for the North's wider ambitions.

8.3 In attendance for this item were Tom Finnegan-Smith (Head of Strategic Transport and Infrastructure), Gregg Challis (Senior Transport Planner), Councillor Jack Scott (Cabinet Member for Transport and Development) and Ben Gilligan (Director of Public Transport, SYPTE).

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

- The Strategy looked at what Sheffield would look like in the future, in terms of population, housing and employment, and set out a number of proposals in terms of both constraints and opportunities. If the Council was aware of a major development in the City, it would liaise with the SYPTE and bus operators in terms of looking at modifications to existing services, or the introduction of new services. A similar process had taken place in respect of the development of the Advanced Manufacturing Park some years ago. Many of the proposed changes were long-term developments, hence the Strategy running to 2034. The Strategy also linked in with a number of the Council's long-term strategies, such as the Clean Air Strategy.
- The 15-year timeline in respect of the Strategy had been chosen as it tied in

with a number of the Council's development ambitions and proposals, as well as matching the term of the Local Plan and a number of major national developments, such as HS2.

- A further, expanded briefing paper on cycling, including what had been learnt since the 2014 Cycling Inquiry and progress with the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), would be circulated to Members, as part of the Committee's Work Programme 2018/19.
- As part of the Strategy, the Council planned to increase cycling rates based on modelling using the Department for Transport's propensity tool showing where the greatest uplift could be delivered. A South Yorkshire Cycle Action Plan, setting out a strategic sub-regional network, had been drawn up, which had subsequently helped inform the ongoing production of the LCWIP. Sheffield was amongst the first tranche of cities to develop such a Plan, with support from the Department for Transport, and it was hoped that development would be completed by the end of the 2018/19 financial year.
- Information on the economic benefits of living or working on, or close to, a tram route could be made available to Members. A recent study in Nottingham, following a light rail extension to the City's University, had showed an economic uplift on the corridor.
- One of the objectives of the Strategy was to make sure that new developments, including residential and business, were served well by public transport.
- Whilst rail-based transport projects provide more certainty in terms of patronage and sustainability, they were also more expensive than other modes of public transport, as well as taking a longer time to deliver. Bus Rapid Transit schemes could also assist, such as in Bristol.
- Whilst bus operators made commercial decisions about how early or late to run because of low passenger numbers, these services were often deemed not economically viable. The SYPTE funded a number of first and last services from its tendered services budget. There was a need to ensure that this budget was allocated in the most effective manner.
- The Strategy was explicit in terms of the need to move away from being a 'car first' city, and good public transport was key to creating a sustainable and vibrant city.
- The Bus Partnership had been renewed on a 12-month rolling basis in October 2017, and the Strategy envisaged that a full review of public transport services, and how they were operated, would be undertaken in 2019.
- The Traffic Management Act 2006 (Part 6), which would grant local authorities the power to enforce local traffic regulations, such as the obstruction of yellow box junctions, had not yet been, and showed no sign of being, enacted by the

Government.

- Whilst data from HMRC was not available, strategic transport modelling was undertaken using DfT trip rate forecasts and the most robust evidence to support funding bids. It was possible to supply a schedule of changeover times to this modelled picture to understand network implication and future demand for travel.
- Planning processes required that the numbers of car parking spaces were determined as part of planning approvals for major developments, which would also be consistent with guidelines set out in the Local Plan.
- Whilst the vision in respect of Transport for the North was to be welcomed, it was considered that their proposals were not sufficient for Sheffield, in that they did not recognise any future transport plans for the City itself, hence the need for a Sheffield-specific strategy. There was consistency between the two strategies when it came to economic “agglomeration” ie making it easier for people to access jobs in order to increase the pool of skills available to employers and opportunities for employees.
- The Strategy contained similar targets, and took a similar approach to other major local authorities, such as Manchester and Bristol, committing the city to creating mass transit routes. Whilst not necessarily being innovative, such proposals could prove controversial as they would require greater priority for public transport at the expense of other road users, with consequences such as the restriction or removal of parking in certain instances. There would be significant change if bus stops were relocated or removed, and ticketing simplified.
- The next stage in respect of the Strategy would be to set out details of transport projects to be brought forward, in line with the principles. Work with regard to this was still ongoing, but would be brought back before Members in 2019.
- The Working Group which worked up the Sheffield Transport Vision had been chaired by Councillor George Lindars-Hammond (Cabinet Advisor for Transport at that time). The Group met around three to four times, with its findings being fed into the Transport Vision agreed by the Cabinet at its meeting in December 2017. Notes of meetings of the Group could be made available.

8.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) thanks Councillor Jack Scott, Tom Finnegan-Smith and Greg Challis for attending the meeting, and responding to the questions raised; and

- (c) requests that:-
- (i) this item be retained on its Work Programme, and reviewed at some stage in the future;
 - (ii) a further briefing paper on cycling be submitted to a future meeting;
 - (iii) the Mayor of Sheffield City Region be invited to a future meeting to share the City Region Transport Strategy; and
 - (iv) the Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice Nicholson) looks into the possibility of inviting representatives from bus operators in the City to a future meeting.

9. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

9.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer, which set out its Work Programme for 2018/19.

9.2 Members raised a number of issues they would like to see included on the Work Programme, including cycling, flooding, skills strategy, recycling and Brexit.

9.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) approves the contents of the Work Programme for 2018/19; and
- (b) requests the Policy and Improvement Officer to look at including the items now mentioned as part of the Work Programme.

10. INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION ON THE DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY AT MOUNT PLEASANT, SHARROW LANE - UPDATE

10.1 The Committee received and noted a report of the Executive Director, Place, containing an update of the meeting held between Councillor Olivia Blake (Cabinet Member for Finance), the Chair of this Committee and representatives of Avenues to Zero, following the Committee's decision made in respect of the Call-in of the Cabinet Member Decision on the Disposal of Property at Mount Pleasant, Sharrow Lane, at its meeting held on 13th March 2018.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 28th November 2018, at 5.00 pm, in the Town Hall.