

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Cabinet

Meeting held 22 August 2012

PRESENT: Councillors Julie Dore (Chair), Isobel Bowler, Jackie Drayton, Mary Lea, Bryan Lodge and Jack Scott

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Leigh Bramall, Jackie Drayton, Harry Harpham and Mazher Iqbal.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

There were no items identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st August, 2012 were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

4.1 In response to questions submitted by Mr. Martin Brighton on the use of Council – supported community buildings for commercial meetings, the openness and transparency of community group accounts, the South Yorkshire Digital region and alleged proxy voting at Tenants' and Residents Association meetings, Councillor Julie Dore (Leader) stated that she would respond to Mr Brighton in writing.

4.2 Council Response to Public Enquiries

4.2.1 Mr. Nigel Slack referred to the failure of the Council to respond to various e-mails he had sent to the Council's Commercial Director, on issues he had raised at previous meetings of Cabinet concerning Public Services – Private Profits. Such a failure to respond might not only be construed as a either a lack of interest or a failure in openness and transparency, but also as a breach of the City Council's target of 10 days set for answering correspondence. He, therefore, asked when he would receive a response to the issues he had raised.

4.2.2 Councillor Bryan Lodge (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources) responded that he did not know why Mr Slack had not received a

response given that the Council had a target of responding to public queries within 10 days. He indicated that he would follow up Mr Slack's concerns and ensure that he received a response as soon as possible.

4.2.3 Mr Slack also asked why he had not yet received a response from Councillor Dore on matters he had raised at the Cabinet meeting on 1st August, 2012 concerning the public questions procedure.

4.2.4 Councillor Julie Dore (Leader) apologised to Mr Slack, indicating that she had interpreted Mr Slack's e-mail as a statement not a question. She offered to meet with Mr Slack to discuss the issues he raised and she stressed that she, and the Council, were keen to promote the involvement of local people in local democracy, adding that she would respond to Mr Slack as soon as possible on the options the Council was considering on this particular matter.

4.3 Action taken by City Council, South Yorkshire Police and other Agencies

4.3.1 Mr. Saleh Mohamed Ali asked why the Cabinet had not responded to the issues he had raised at the Cabinet meeting on 23rd May, in relation to action taken against him by the South Yorkshire Police and other agencies?

4.3.2 Councillor Julie Dore (Leader) responded that these were personal issues and were not appropriate for consideration in a public meeting. She had, however, held several meetings with Mr. Ali as had a number of agencies over the last few months. Cabinet had responded to Mr Ali's concerns as much as it could but, in the main, the issues he raised were police matters.

4.3.3 The Executive Director, Communities, responded further to Mr Ali, indicating that representatives of the City Council, the South Yorkshire Police and other agencies had met with him on the issues he had raised, some of which had been resolved, whilst others remained to be substantiated and about which there had been a difference of opinion with Mr. Ali. Further work was being carried out between the agencies to resolve the matters outstanding and the Executive Director stated that he would be happy to hold further discussions with Mr Ali to try and address his concerns.

4.4 Sheffield Bus Agreement

The following questions were asked in relation to item 9 on the agenda – Sheffield Bus Agreement and answers were given as indicated, as part of the presentation of the report of the Executive Director, Place on the Agreement:-

4.4.1 Removal of Bus Service No. 43

4.4.2 Mavis Sheahy drew the Cabinet's attention to the fact that the No. 43 bus service had been withdrawn in the Arbourthorne area leaving local people with access to the No. 79 bus service travelling along East Bank Road, which was particularly difficult for older people due to the hilly nature of East Bank Road.

4.4.3 Roy Mitchell, SYPTE, responded that the No. 43 service had been withdrawn sometime ago by TM Travel and Stagecoach had replaced it with No. 79 bus service. He added that the number of passengers who had used the No. 43 service had been low and, therefore, it had not been possible to continue the service. However, the problems that some older people might face in accessing the No.79 service were acknowledged and the SYPTE had arranged for the pre-booking of transport from the Community Transport Service for those older residents who were finding it difficult to access the service. However, it would not be possible to restore the conventional bus service Ms. Sheahy referred to.

4.4.4 It was suggested that Councillor Julie Dore and Councillor Jack Scott as Councillor representatives for the Arbourthorne area would pursue the matter further.

4.5 Re-routing of Bus Service No. 123

4.5.1 Ms. Nancy Grayson, Chair of the Westminster Tenants' and Residents' Association, referred to the re-routing of the No. 123 bus service removing the service from by-passing the Hallamshire Hospital, causing a reduction in accessibility to the Hospital for older people. She added that 95% of residents on the Westminster estate were 75 years of age and over and felt that the re-routing of the bus service could have a disproportionately negative impact on local residents in terms of access to hospital services.

4.5.2 Roy Mitchell, SYPTE, responded that it was proposed to reduce the number of buses run by First and Stagecoach on main routes where there was an oversupply as was the case on Ecclesall Road. The new No. 123 bus service would run at 20 minute intervals instead of 30 minute intervals but would not serve the hospital or Ecclesall Road. However, it was possible to catch a No 123 bus and change once onto a bus very close to where passengers would alight from the No. 123 service in order to access the Hallamshire Hospital. The alternative would be to catch a No. 51 bus to the back of the hospital.

4.6 Public Consultation

4.6.1 Mr Neil Fitzmaurice expressed concern that that the SYPTE were not keeping the public fully informed about the different stages in the development of the buses strategy and that the implications of adopting Voluntary Contracts and Voluntary Partnerships had not

been mentioned at various public meetings. He asked whether the SYPTE could ensure that consultation with the public is undertaken prior to any Agreement being finalised and that the monitoring of the Agreement had considerable passenger input, possibly through the Community Assemblies, to which representatives of bus operators could be invited, from time to time. He also suggested that the comments of Passenger Focus should be taken up as regards the qualitative aspects of the Agreement.

4.6.2 Dick Proctor, City Council Transport Vision and Strategy Manager, responded that the qualitative aspects raised by Passenger Focus would be considered through a jointly shared performance network and that information on the Agreement would continually be updated on the Sheffield Bus Agreement web-site. Roy Mitchell, SYPTE, responded that the SYPTE would respond positively to requests for consultation and, indeed, the SYPTE was proposing to hold further meetings with residents on why certain routes had changed, which showed that it was going out of its way to explain changes.

4.7 Bus Service No. 66

4.7.1 Ms. Jean – Marie Bellamy expressed concerns about the proposed discontinuation of the No. 66 bus service, referring to the fact that, although residents had been told that the No. 13 bus service was a replacement for the No. 66 service, High Green – Sheffield, the new bus took a very different route and would involve an extra 15 minutes on the journey time to Sheffield. She stated that High Green had very strong links with Halfax/Penistone Road due, in part, to bus links enabling High Green residents to work in the area, and use the facilities and the college at Hillsborough. The new number 13 would miss most of this route, instead going through Grenoside village, Fox Hill and now on the busy Middlewood Road.

4.7.2 Ms. Bellamy added that the no. 66 route should be put out to tender as Service No. 13 was not considered to be a replacement service. The proposed routes had been designed for purely commercial reasons as confirmed by First and the SYPTE without any regard for the High Green community which was within the top 10% of the most deprived areas in the UK. The consultation and petition response to changes to the 66/13 & 77 High Green/Chapelton to Sheffield routes totalled around 2,000 against the changes, with only 8 people in favour of them. This was in contrast No. 4 service which travelled through an affluent area of Sheffield and was immediately put up for tender but much fewer objections.

4.7.3 Ms Bellamy believed that the consultation was flawed and felt that, if the Sheffield Bus Partnership was so important the above issues should be addressed in full and not be rushed.

4.7.4 In response, Roy Mitchell, SYPTE, indicated that, in terms of reliability

and financial performance, First had indicated their concerns but had now agreed to re-instate the High Green–Chapelton service, but the bus companies saw no merit in extending the service to Sheffield when it was proposed to run the No. 13 service at a frequency of 20 minutes. Taking the package overall, a service (No. 13) would be available for High Green to Hillsborough including the Hillsborough Transport Interchange and the SYPTTE understood why First wished pursue this. The service could not be put out to tender as it was run on a commercial basis and, therefore, would be a waste of public money. No commercial bus service had been proposed for Psalter Lane and, therefore, it was felt that tenders could be invited for a service including this route.

4.8. Sheffield on the Move

- 4.8.1 Mr Alan Kewley, Sheffield On the Move Focus Group, commented that he believed that there had been inadequate consultation on and opportunity to scrutinise the Partnership proposals which, he believed was vital. He stated that the Focus Group accepted the principle of agreeing the Voluntary Partnership but he suggested that the process seemed rushed, and that there had been difficulties in obtaining information, including the terms of the Agreement and that this should be released in the public domain in order to promote openness and transparency. He therefore asked that the Focus Group see a draft of the Bus Agreement and its implications prior to the signing of the Agreement.
- 4.8.2 Dick Proctor, Transport Vision and Strategy Manager, responded that it was necessary to re-register buses by 31st August, 2012 in order to launch the Partnership by 31st October, 2012 and, therefore, there was a need to progress matters as a matter of urgency. However, this should not be viewed as the end point for any changes. He added that one of the reasons why the Council supported the Integrated Transport Authority view to favour a Voluntary Partnership Agreement was the proposed reduction in bus fares. The proposals set out in the Partnership Agreement could also commence at the end of October, 2012, whereas Quality Contracts involved a statutory process lasting three years before implementation with the financial/commercial risks sitting with the Integrated Transport Authority, SYPTTE and City Council.
- 4.8.3 He added that as much information as possible had and would be provided to the public, but some of this information was quite confidential and could not always be released. In terms of the detail of any Agreement, this was still to be prepared. The SYPTTE had now paused work on Quality Contracts, but there was a clear sense of the remaining work which would be required to be undertaken if ever it was felt that Quality Contracts needed to be re-considered.

6. **ITEMS CALLED-IN FOR SCRUTINY**

There were no items called-in for scrutiny from the meeting of Cabinet held on 1st August, 2012.

7. RETIREMENT OF STAFF

7.1 The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report on Council staff retirements.

7.2 **RESOLVED:** That this Committee-

(a) places on record its appreciation of the valuable services rendered to the City Council by the following staff in the Portfolios below:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Years' Service</u>
<u>Children, Young People and Families</u>		
Peter Grayson	Educational Audiologist	37
<u>Communities</u>		
Maria Bartletta	Social Worker	37
Anne Broomhead	Care Manager	29
June Cawthorne	Support Worker	40
Diane Copp	Support Worker	40
Margaret Ellison	Support Worker	36
Hilary Frith	Care Manager	26
Pamela Kappes	Senior Practitioner	29
Alison Langford	Social Worker	29
Cheryl McClure	Home Support Service Manager	28
John McWilliam	Training and Development Consultant	34
Olive Shaw	Care Manager	25
Susan Shephard	Care Manager	23
Pamela Wait	Care Manager	25

Pamela Wilson	Care Manager	26
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Place

Ronald Dyson	Litterbin Driver, Street Force	29
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Bob Stevenson	Assistant Head of Design and Build – Street Lighting	44
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(b) extends to them its best wishes for the future and a long and happy retirement; and

(c) directs that an appropriate extract of this resolution under the Common Seal of the Council be forwarded to them.

8. SHEFFIELD BUS AGREEMENT

8.1 To review the progress of plans for the “Sheffield Bus Agreement” – a Voluntary Partnership approach to improving the bus offer in Sheffield, principally through network design changes, new ticketing products and by reducing the price of the more expensive fares and to seek authority for the City Council to enter into the Partnership, and to endorse specific further work.

8.2 **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:-

(a) notes the results of the public consultation and work to date on the options for delivering a new Bus Agreement for Sheffield;

(b) endorses the Voluntary Partnership Agreement option as the preferred delivery vehicle at the present time, noting that South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYLTE) work on the Quality Contract option is to be suspended to allow the Partnership Agreement to progress; and

(c) agrees to the principle of the Council being a co-signatory to the Sheffield Bus Agreement and endorses further work to facilitate a City-wide launch in October 2012.

8.3 **Reasons for Decision**

8.3.1 Improved Public Transport will contribute to the objectives of ‘Standing Up for Sheffield’ and the Sheffield City Region Transport Strategy.

8.3.2 Under Statutory Quality Partnership Schemes (SQPS), the Council/SYLTE improve the physical facilities on, or along, the line of a bus route(s) and in turn for using these facilities bus operators must meet certain physical attributes in their services. Under these schemes, 35% of passengers benefit from reduced fares, whilst under Quality Contracts, over half of passengers could pay more. A Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) can be planned for 28 October 2012, but a Quality Contract still needs a statutory

process lasting up to 3 years.

8.3.3 The completion of a VPA, will mean that financial and reputational risks lie mostly with operators whereas, under Quality Contracts, the main financial risks would be with the South Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority, SYPTE and the City Council.

8.3.4 The VPA is currently planned as a 5 year Agreement. However, Quality Contract type franchises (e.g. rail) typically last 10 years. The world has changed considerably since last consultation on “Bus Vision” and it is very difficult currently for anyone to commit to a 10 year contract.

8.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

8.4.1 Quality Contracts (QC) - this option replaces the existing on-street competition with a franchised network option which is put in place, following a tender process. SYPTE specify the franchise but the associated risk sits within the public sector.

8.4.2 Do Nothing – This option is not considered in this report but in view of the falling bus patronage across many parts of the County is not considered an option.