**Sheffield TRANSPORT 4 ALL – 30th January 2020**

**Sheffield Town Hall**

1. **Welcome/Apologies/note of previous meeting/matters arising**

**Present**

James Martin (JM) – Meeting Chair

Alan Thorpe (AT)

Craig Williams (CW)

Paul Savage (PS)

Sandra Brasher (SB)

Simon Middleton (SM) – First Bus

Kevin Sharp (KS) – Stagecoach Bus

Nigel Wragg (NW) – Stagecoach Supertram

Maxine Myers (MM) – Northern Rail

Olivia Trevor (OT) – Safer Places Co-ordinator

Councillor Douglas Johnson (DJ)

Paula Turner (PT) – SYPTE

Cate Jockel (CJ) – SCC Transport Planning

**Apologies**

Shel Turner (MT) – Chair

Stacey Anderson (SA)

Grace Parry (GP)

Simon Ovenden (SO)

Councillor Abdul Khayum (AK)

Councillor Ian Auckland (IA)

**Note of previous meeting** on 24th October 2019 was agreed as an accurate record.

**Matters arising**

* Bus operator reps to T4A: welcome to Simon Middleton from First Bus and again to Kevin Sharp from Stagecoach Bus.
* T4A input to SCR Mayor’s Bus Review: JM had submitted the supplementary material earlier this month, as well as a letter about the practical difficulties experienced with making submissions, on behalf of the group. The Review officer had been in touch about the letter and JM and CJ were arranging to meet her to discuss. *(Post-meeting note: meeting held late Feb).*
* James has also submitted a ‘Visual Accessibility Guide for Bus Interiors’, which was an improved version of previous work shown to the group and fulfilled requests for depiction across multiple operators.
* Accessible Travel Policies for rail operators: now required by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to be implemented by April 2020.
* For tram-train operators, we noted that Supertram is intending to consult with T4A in 2020.
* Safer Places: partnering up with Supertram – there will be posters & leaflets on the trams in Feb/March.
* Transforming Cities Fund: CJ noted that the bid had been submitted from Sheffield City Region (SCR) to DfT at the end of November & a funding decision was expected in March 2020. So hopefully more at the next meeting.
1. **Bus and tram-train punctuality: identifying issues and mitigations**

JM had raised this item. Following personal experience of more bus services missing or running late in recent months, he has been looking at SYPTE’s complaints data to see whether this is a city-wide issue - there has been an increase in complaints about punctuality. He asked operators for their perspective:

First Bus: SM agreed that First has had some issues and highlighted reasons including: short of drivers across Sheffield & Rotherham; parts for vehicles especially Wright Buses (went into administration in the autumn tho now taken over & situation is improving); and staffing in engineering department. All these are now improving – some new drivers (9) starting next week; some newer buses (26) recently delivered; staff changes in engineering department. Collectively these should see things start to improve.

Stagecoach Bus: its’ experience is no worse than usual: October to December is when there are always more problems with punctuality.

Stagecoach Supertram & tram-train: both were affected by the November floods & 1 tram-train vehicle was out of action. The situation is ok now.

Experience from group members:

* AT – his experience has been ok except when there are football matches, roadworks or between 5.30 and 6.00 p.m. His service is the 120 which is one that is prioritised by the operators along with the 52.
* PS – the 97/98 has been worse than usual. If a 97 doesn’t turn up in the evening, it is an hour til the next one so he has to ring family for a lift. Also the 218 does not always stop. PT noted the importance of reporting problems – they are used. E.g. they feed through into the figures that JM has used for this piece of work.
* CW asked whether there could be more real-time (RT) displays at bus stops – they are generally very useful. PT responded that they are useful but also expensive to fit and cannot be put at stops where there is no electricity supply (or more cost if this is put in). And not all RT displays (such as in the city centre CONNECT stops) are compatible with REACT technology.
* In the past, due to the cost to users of buying REACT fobs, the audible element was not much used. Although there is now a cheap REACT app available on phones, there are also many apps available which use the realtime data direct without the need for electronic stop displays.
* It’s also possible to use a smartphone to read the QR code on bus stop paper timetables to get a link to live departures on the TSY website.
* And there is also Your Next Bus – for a small charge each time used.
* NW noted that the organisation Transport for the North (TfN) is doing some work on how to improve disruption messages across the north of England (NB Sheffield City Region is a member of TfN).
* PT added that new technology will help increasingly – and she will check whether there are any plans to enhance the messaging capacity of the RT displays e.g. to give more info on cancellations.
* But there are always issues when disruption is unplanned/an emergency. TravelLine staff get all advance notices. But in unplanned/emergency situations, it will be the operators who usually inform SYPTE & not vice versa. Passengers may pick things up from social media. Aim is to get things to TravelLine asap as well as getting messages out on twitter feeds & travel disruptions info on TSY.
* Which applies to:

1. **Bus stop relocation in emergency situations & impact on accessibility: recent experience**
* JM had raised this item in relation to recent problems when Waingate was closed – for quite a long time - to fix a steam pipe on the CHP network and buses were using different CG stops to normal but not always the one that they were supposed to use: different drivers doing different things. How can this be improved for the future?
* PT outlined the agreed process for disruption information: Councils (and in some cases Yorkshire Water and other utilities suppliers) notify SYPTE of disruptions. The PTE informs the operators and suggests temporary diversions/stop changes. Operators confirm what diversion they will use – if SYPTE does not hear back from them, it is assumed that they will operate as the PTE has proposed.
* SYPTE then puts yellow notices’ out on the affected stops and puts the information onto the ‘disruptions’ page of the TSY website.
* In the case of short notice emergency works. it is not always possible to get notices out ahead of works. Sometimes emergency works also result in operators and drivers not being aware of short notice stop changes. However SYPTE does work with operators to give them information as soon as possible so that they can inform drivers. Occasionally, it is possible that individual drivers may miss some information, but as much as possible is done to minimise this.

JM also raised issues about emergency situations related to tram/tram-train such as recent flooding. NW noted the use of the bottom line on the real-time display screens for messaging. Also with tram-train, work closely with Network Rail & Northern to enable passengers to complete journeys. AT asked whether drivers could announce to passengers that it was better to get the train or the tram-train if the other one had issues.

1. **Rail – Northern Rail Accessibility User Group**

JM welcomed MM and introduced the item. He noted that he was a member of this group which meets quarterly – the last meeting was 10th December and had discussed plans for coping with Pacers having to be used for longer than expected & after the accessibility regs change; and also mobility scooters on trains. He then handed over to MM who discussed:

1. Accessibility regs (PRM TSI) from 1st Jan 2020. Northern had expected to meet this date but due to some electrification projects and delivery of new trains running late, it had to go on running Pacers which are not compliant in relation to accessible toilets; AV passenger info; colour-contrast or placement of handrails and info signs. The alternative of not running services would have been worse. So lots of work went into customer service: communication before travelling; info to staff to be helpful/be aware; huge role for assisted travel teams. More new trains are expected in Feb and all by May, so Pacers can then be retired. Some other train models need refurbishment to meet the regs – 1200 carriages across all operators – these should be sent for refurb before the end of 2020. So timescales are very tight – operators need new rolling stock to be delivered.
2. A more accessible website for Northern. This will include looking at the booking process from start to finish, including booking passenger assistance.
3. Mobility scooter scheme. MM noted that Northern has been quite draconian in the past and not accepted scooters, due to issues with stations and rolling stock design. She noted that Northern has many different train types and contrasted with TPE which only has 2. However, Northern is now considering introducing a mobility scooter scheme on 8 routes which have new or refurbished rolling stock.
4. A ‘baby on board’ scheme is also being investigated: more info at a later meeting.

Comments from group members:

* AT raised the difficulties that VIPs have in getting advice/help from on-train staff – 2-way ‘invisibility’.
1. **Rail – accessible travel policy guidance – consultation on accessibility of rail replacement transport**

JM introduced the item & ran through a short presentation. This follows on from his involvement in developing the accessible travel policy guidance for rail operators with the Office of Road and Rail (ORR). The ORR was challenged on what happens with rail replacement services and hadn’t considered it – hence an additional consultation on this.

The main problem is the availability of accessible coaches – there are only around 600 potentially available across the UK. Coaches are more suitable than buses for these journeys. 3 options are presented, one being no change. The preferred option for ORR is around strengthening the guidance and requiring operators to demonstrate reasonable efforts to source compliant vehicles alongside additional info requirements.

JM proposes a response that this is largely ok but there should be a target for reaching 100% accessibility for pre-planned rail replacements with 100% required for short-distance trips now and phased improvements for longer trips where a coach is better suited.

Also ORR should consider the full journey – from the station to the replacement vehicle (include in station audits), guide-dog space - and, for longer-distance journeys, access to toilets (e.g. leave station toilets open even if station not operational).

Also training for staff – accessibility travel policy standards for this are more in-depth than CPC for bus/coach staff.

1. **AOB**
2. Older adults and public transport. CJ had been contacted by the ‘Age Better in Sheffield Better Journeys Co-ordinator’ who had set up a meeting in Feb to discuss creating a video aimed at bus drivers about the key issues for older adults accessing public transport. CJ will send on details to PT, JM, DJ, SM.
3. NW reported that (1) there are new ticket machines on the trams which take cards and (2) track replacement works May to Sept in Gleadless area.
4. DJ reported that there seem to be some problems with the Northern General ref bus access: he has raised with hospital management.
5. AT reported to SM that the AV announcements on First’s 120 buses don’t always work.
6. AT reported a Rotherham issue: trips & falls apparently linked to the tactile paving at the new interchange. The lack of retention of CCTV made it difficult to ascertain what the problems and the tactiles were believed to be within specification. However, there is obviously an issue so a site visit is to be held.
7. PT informed the group of a new hashtag set up by VIPs - #askdon’tgrab
8. JM raised an issue for MT about how First’s taxi booking service should work when she is not able to get on a bus because the wheelchair user space is taken. SM will report back.

1. **Next meetings**

April 23rd – (post-meeting note: cancelled due to COVID-19)

July 23rd

October 22nd.