

Schedule WP4

Marketing, Information and Communication

Strategic Marketing Plan

Information Products Strategy

Customer Service Plan

Rotherham Bus Partnership **Strategic Marketing Plan**

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1. This document outlines the Strategic Marketing Plan principles to support the launch of the Rotherham Bus Partnership in South Yorkshire, for the benefit and use of all parties within the Partnership (RBP) – South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE), Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC), First, Stagecoach Yorkshire, and all other bus operators within the area.
- 1.2. The implementation of a Rotherham VPA follows the successful launch of Sheffield Bus Partnership in October 2012, which has delivered positive patronage increases during its first year, reversing long term market decline, and supported the long-term vision of improving bus services/offer across the region.
- 1.3. The Plan will support scheme implementation in July 2014, through agreement of all parties in the WP4 working group, and will be used to form the basis of tactical marketing campaigns over a 5 year period.
- 1.4. A range of factors may influence the 5 year Strategic Marketing Plan. Where possible, marketing activity will account for these, but the level of impact remains unknown at this stage. These include:
 - 1.4.1. The continuing launch of Smartcard technology across the region, including all operators and TravelMaster
- 1.5. This Plan is to be implemented alongside the Information Products Strategy and Customer Service Strategy to ensure consistency, and capitalise on cross-functional and cross-organisational synergies and requirements.

2. Interdependencies

- 2.1. Effective implementation of this Plan relies upon timely and accurate information from other Work Packages within the Rotherham Bus Partnership, specifically from WP1 Operations and WP3 Ticketing & Development, being provided on an ongoing basis to allow any Marketing and Information changes to be properly proposed and considered, as well as communicated to the public.
- 2.2. Clarity and communication of the decisions made within all of the other Work Packages, Project Board and Steering Group is essential to all messages communicated in the customer proposition.
- 2.3. Interdependency with TravelMaster – communication plans/branding/messages communication and promotion of ticketing aspects of the project will be dependent upon the timely provision of information on the ticket product range confirmed by TravelMaster, particularly the creation of a bus only, Rotherham wide multi operator ticket. These messages will be managed and implemented into the overall RBP communications by WP4. WP4 understands that, where a promotional campaign details a particular TravelMaster product, proposals and materials containing this element will be circulated to TravelMaster panel for information and feedback purposes.

3. Overall Aims

The overall aims of the Strategic Marketing Plan are:

- To ensure that existing transport users are prioritised when making amendments to any service, route or ticketing option within the Rotherham VPA.
- To maximise a range of communication channels across all parties to notify the public of any changes, as per a plan agreed by all parties.
- To segment new or lapsed customers to determine the key customer groups to target with specific tactical or behavioural change initiatives during the lifetime of the Rotherham VPA.
- To commit each party on an annual basis to carry out a number of joint marketing activities that will support and drive forward the RBP and its specific objectives.

Both the Project and Marketing Campaign Objectives have been provided in this Plan to ensure alignment and a common thread between them.

3.1. Project Objectives

- 3.1.1. **Stimulate 0.35% of an overall 1.85%** passenger growth throughout Rotherham in year 1 of the Rotherham Bus Partnership.
- 3.1.2. Achieve a further contribution of 0.1% towards an annual passenger growth target of 1.25% throughout Rotherham in years 2 to 5 of the Rotherham Bus Partnership.
- 3.1.3. To provide a customer proposition that provides better service through network design and changes, frequency, ticketing and customer service standards etc., that satisfies the aspiration of providing quality bus transport for those with or without access to a car, as well as encouraging an increase in bus use and a move towards modal shift from car to bus.
- 3.1.4. To actively involve and maximise stakeholder engagement to drive improvements, regular communications and any specific needs arising at the time of changes – particularly during times of consultation.
- 3.1.5. To develop a comprehensive comms plan that works to achieve more positive than negative media coverage, both public and trade, on an ongoing basis.

3.2. Marketing Campaign Objectives

- 3.2.1. Generate and deliver increased patronage to help RBP achieve Project Objective through both tactical and behaviour change marketing initiatives
- 3.2.2. To provide information and communication about the Rotherham network and ticketing offer outlined by the Rotherham VPA to existing, lapsed and non-bus users
- 3.2.3. To provide information and communication about the Rotherham Bus Partnership, its values and function to existing, lapsed and non-bus users.

4. Tactics and Approach

4.1. Specific pre-launch, launch and post-launch marketing and communications campaigns will be devised using this Plan as a basis. Campaigns will be created in line with the objectives detailed above

4.1.1. Campaigns will differ depending upon population concentration, demographic and the level of changes to the geographical area (during launch particularly)

4.1.2. Whilst retaining a common theme, the creative approach will vary across tactics i.e. between marketing channels and information products

4.1.3 Participating partners will investigate the feasibility and where appropriate promote ticket information within WP4:-

- Participating partners will work together to determine the fare and ticket information

4.2. RBP marketing collateral and campaigns will reference the Travel South Yorkshire website for Rotherham Bus Partnership information, as is the case for Sheffield Bus Partnership. Individual operators and RMBC will also host dedicated pages on their websites to provide easily accessible customer charter information as well as increase awareness of partnership working and support of Rotherham VPA. Individual operators also commit to providing promotional space on board buses for purposes of Rotherham Bus Partnership information and marketing.

4.3. In Year 1, there are four phases of communication to consider when developing the tactical marketing campaigns:

4.3.1. 'Corporate' launch – media/stakeholder engagement

4.3.2. Information provision – alignment with Information Products Strategy and "Business As Usual" service change activities for July 2014

4.3.3. Marketing and communication of the Partnership network – to existing bus users in July 2014

4.3.4. Marketing and communication of the Partnership network and ticketing (if required) proposition, targeting new (lapsed/non) users once the new network and ticketing structure is established. Proposed as of September 2014.

4.3.5. Future years' plans will be developed in partnership with all concerned on an annual basis.

4.4. Key messages – literature content and design will be developed and approved in conjunction with all parties, referencing any lessons learned from previous campaigns. This includes copy checking of materials by the Advertising Standards Authority to ensure clarity of messaging and avoidance of potential customer

complaints. This may also include TravelMaster panel where appropriate (i.e. initiatives promoting specific TravelMaster products).

- 4.5. Communication of all ticketing options, including (but not limited to) the TravelMaster product range. At the time of writing, it is intended through Information Products Provision Proposals that information about all available tickets throughout Rotherham will be provided as part of the communications programme, in addition to the TravelMaster/ Rotherham Area VPA tickets. The tactical marketing plans will address how this is positioned to ensure clarity, both in terms of messaging and dissemination, and referencing prices where appropriate.
- 4.6. Tactical plans will consider key dates such as timetable registrations or any media 'in-charge' dates to ensure that all required timescales and milestones are adhered to.
- 4.7. Information gathered from tactical and behaviour change campaigns will be shared rightfully among all Partners in Rotherham VPA and be used to build databases of bus users/potential users/targets.

5. Communication Tactical Aims - segmented by communication phases & deliverables

5.1 Consultation Phase (04 November – 02 December 2013)

- 5.1.1 Communicating proposed network changes to current, lapsed and new bus users as well as stakeholders throughout the Rotherham VPA Area
- 5.1.2 Encouraging and facilitating feedback from stakeholders and customers through website, printed literature, drop in's and Traveline
- 5.1.3 Collating feedback from stakeholders and customers and feeding this information back to relevant Work Packages, Project Board and Steering Group within Rotherham Bus Partnership

5.2. Pre-launch – until July 2014

- 5.2.1 Communicating and encouraging awareness and acceptance of network changes throughout various stakeholder groups
- 5.2.2 Promotion of the Rotherham Bus Partnership, aims and public benefit to customers and stakeholders
- 5.2.3 Communicate and generate awareness of the forthcoming changes to services and/or ticketing offers to existing users

5.3 Post launch – August 2014 until the end of year 1.

- 5.3.1 Communication and promotion of any further changes to the network after the consultation period – We Listened to Your Feedback etc.
- 5.3.2 Promotion of positive improvements – people who have benefited from the changes – PR, Case Studies etc

5.3.3 Identify areas of potential passenger growth and targeted communication/promotion – e.g. direct mail, email depending on household volumes

5.3.4 Create and implement behaviour change strategies and initiatives throughout Rotherham VPA to encourage and generate modal shift from car to bus, contributing to the VPA growth objectives outlined in 3.1.1

5.4 Year 2

5.4.1 Communication and promotion of the Rotherham Bus Partnership 1 year on

5.4.2 Positive reinforcement of changes, communication on passenger growth to stakeholders, trade and customers

5.4.3 We Are Still Listening– number of network changes reduced but alterations to the network where customers feedback to make improvements

5.4.6 Smartcard options/online ticketing – ease of use/convenience in line with operator and TravelMaster launches throughout 2014

5.4.7 Create and implement behaviour change strategies and initiatives throughout Rotherham VPA to encourage and generate modal shift from car to bus, contributing to the VPA growth objectives outlined in 3.1.1

5.5 Year 3 – 5

5.5.4 Smartcard options/online ticketing – ease of use/convenience in line with operator and TravelMaster launches throughout 2014

5.5.5 Create and implement behaviour change strategies and initiatives throughout Rotherham VPA to encourage and generate modal shift from car to bus, contributing to the VPA growth objectives outlined in 3.1.1

5.5.6 Any future project extensions/benefits

6. Communication Channels

6.1 Each strategic and tactical campaign implemented by the Rotherham Bus Partnership will require a variety of communication channels to be employed by all parties. Partners agree to provide owned channels where appropriate to campaign objectives. These could include, but are not limited to:

- On bus communication through operator vehicles (internal and external)
- Interchanges and Travel Information Centres throughout Rotherham VPA Area
- Websites of all parties
- Bus Stops across the Rotherham VPA area where practical to do so
- RMBC communication channels

6.2 External communication and publicity are equally important elements of the communication channel mix, and again will be determined by each individual activity or campaign, but could include, but are not limited to any of the following:

- Outdoor advertising targeting bus users, lapsed and non users through bus externals, 48 sheets, 6 sheets, street talk, door drops and bus rears
- Direct marketing, including direct mail postal drops
- External events – city centre, shopping centres, on bus, community events, street teams
- Print advertising in local press and trade press etc
- Website communication and advertising
- Online marketing tools including online advertising and email marketing

6.3 Stakeholder and Media Relations and general PR activity will be important throughout all phases and as part of an ongoing engagement programme with all interested parties. The range of activity will be determined by the nature of the channels, and could include but are not limited to

- Member Working Group presentations and attendance
- Written and verbal briefings to key stakeholders on an ongoing basis
- press releases and media briefings
- award submissions, if felt appropriate
- events and sponsorships

6.4 Different parties will lead and coordinate elements of the supplementary delivery plan, dependent upon experience and resource, as well as considering Lessons Learned throughout Sheffield Bus Partnership.

7. Budget

A supplementary delivery plan provides further detail as to planned tactical marketing activity.

All parties are in agreement that the minimum spend for Rotherham is £160,000 – an investment of £40,000 per party, which applies up to/and inclusive of 31st March 2015. Any further marketing and communications expenditure will be fully justified through appropriate documentation to Operations Group, for agreement by all parties. Future budgets and activity will be determined by the success or otherwise of initiatives implemented during the period, and as dictated by individual party budgeting cycles.

The budget assigned to the Rotherham Area VPA is to be utilised to add value to existing business as usual commitments of all parties, and where it has been identified that specific ‘new’ products are required in order to support the overall objectives. The budget will also cover the development of the campaign creative that will be used to promote the scheme and ticketing options. The members of WP4 are clear that additional support is necessary to communicate service changes to those areas most affected by the changes

At the stage of presenting this Plan proposal (1st July 2014) full costings and availability of the specific channels has yet to be fully determined and procured and so a full breakdown of how the budget is to be used will be able to be provided at a later stage.

This budget does not include any costs for evaluation, and it is expected that this will be incorporated into the WP5 – Intelligence actions.

8. Measurement and Evaluation

Measurement and evaluation metrics for each tactical and behaviour change marketing communications campaign are to be based upon the objectives set in section 2. These are likely to include:

- Patronage trends
- Website visits, click through's and website traffic
- Redemptions and collected data etc
- Any direct measurements from media activities
- Feedback from customers/stakeholders

9. Summary and Conclusion

- 9.1** All parties share equally in the responsibility for accuracy, timeliness and development of marketing campaigns as per the agreed approach.
- 9.2** All parties must agree to specific campaign objectives and the timely provision of any associated performance monitoring data or profiling information that will enable a full and accurate evaluation to be compiled
- 9.3** A 'lessons learned' and set of recommendations to be produced as a result.
- 9.4** All parties within Work Package 4 believe that the activities prescribed in this document and the individual marketing campaign delivery plans and budgets will help contribute towards achieving the growth targets specified in the Objectives of this plan.

Information Products Strategy (Rotherham)

Introduction

Partnership agreement for the provision of Service Information in Rotherham.

Participating partners agree to work together in the preparation and dissemination of timely and accurate service information. In line with the objectives of the Agreement, participating partners will seek to increase use of bus services across the Rotherham district by ensuring that current and potential customers have the right information, at the right time and in the right format allowing customers to make informed travel choices.

1. The Partnership Service Information Product Suite

- 1.1. On behalf of the partnership SYPTTE will manage the provision of customer facing service information products in printed and electronic format for display in appropriate touch points, which include; interchanges, rail stations, travelsouthyorkshire.com website, information centres, Park & Ride sites, bus stops. See appendix 1 for product list.
- 1.2. Participating partners will work together to develop the Partnership Service Information Product suite in line with customer intelligence.
- 1.3. Participating partners agree to actively promote the Partnership Service Information Product suite across their respective on and offline customer communication channels.

2. Registration Information

- 2.1. Participating Operators and the Executive will agree to an electronic timetable transfer protocol (Preferably EBSR) for all registration data which will be used without modification to help ensure consistency of information between Executive and Operator produced products.
- 2.2. Where operators do not have EBSR capacity, they and the Executive agree to work towards that, or at least the provision of data electronically by some other means at the 56 day registration point.

3. Real Time Passenger Information

- 3.1. Participating Operators and the Executive will work together to develop an electronic transfer protocol to help facilitate the testing and final upload of real time data, with the aspiration being that all real time track detail should be signed off by both participating Operators and the Executive prior to final upload.
- 3.2. Participating Operators will support the process of informing customers of service cancellations through using the Yorkshire wide real time administration tool to highlight cancellations in a timely manner.

4. Fare and Ticket information

- 4.1. Participating partners will investigate the feasibility and where appropriate promote ticket information across the Partnership Service Information Product Suite.

- 4.2. Participating partners will work together to determine the fare and ticket information that should be displayed within the Partnership Service Information Product Suite.

5. Service Change Publicity

- 5.1. In consultation with the participating Operators, the Executive will communicate service change information in advance of service changes in a variety of formats to meet customer need, channels will include:
 - Printed service change poster will be available in the Executive's Interchanges and Information Centres where appropriate.
 - Electronic service change information will be displayed in an appropriate format and location on the Executives, participating Operators and Rotherham Council web sites.
 - Email alerts to customers registered to the Executives timetable updates service and eMarketing service.
- 5.2. Participating partners will work together to review the approach in the communication of service change information to ensure customers channels remain appropriate.
- 5.3. Working with the Executive participating Operators will provide a concise description of any proposed changes which will include the proposed benefits for the customer in a format suitable for use within service change communications.
- 5.4. Participating partners will actively promote the Executives online timetable updates service on their customer facing web site to encourage customers to sign up to receive free service change email alerts.

6. Timetable Leaflets

- 6.1. The Executive will provide timetable leaflets for those services operating within the agreement on behalf of the partnership to meet customer need.
- 6.2. Participating partners agree to reduce the provision of printed timetable leaflets and promote and provide where practicable alternative electronic information products and services.
- 6.3. Participating Operators and Rotherham Council will promote where appropriate on their customer facing web sites the online timetables produced by the Executive.
- 6.4. Participating Operators and the Executive will consult with each other on format and content of timetable leaflet products for the area covered by the agreement prior to a significant change in format or design.
- 6.5. Participating partners where required will work together to determine presentation data rules and the services that are appropriate for display as a combined composite timetable.

7. At Bus Stop Information

- 7.1. The Executive will provide bus service information at bus stops for those services operating within the agreement.
- 7.2. The Executive will investigate the feasibility of displaying ticket information at bus stops
- 7.3. The Executive will investigate the feasibility of displaying town centre stop maps

and service change information in advance of service changes at bus stops where space and distribution is available.

- 7.4. Participating partners where required will work together to determine presentation data rules and the services that are appropriate for display as a combined composite timetable.

8. Partnership network maps

- 8.1. Participating partners will work together to develop a network map leaflet that is suitable to communicate service changes to customers and promote the launch of the agreement.
- 8.2. Participating partners will agree on print volumes and when a reissue is required of the partnership network map leaflet.
- 8.3. Participating partners will share the costs of the printing and design creative work for the production of the partnership network map leaflet.

9. Operator Service Information Products

- 9.1. Where the Executive does not produce an equivalent service information product, participating Operators and the Executive will discuss to determine the validity of displaying Operator service information produced products in the Executive Information Centres and on the Travel South Yorkshire website.

10. Data Processing, Accuracy, Quality and Timeliness

- 10.1. On behalf of the Partnership the Executive will continue to process registration data to facilitate the provision of the Executive information product suite.
- 10.2. Participating Operators will continue to submit registrations for services to change on the dates set out in the service change agreement and with full timetable and route information being supplied with a minimum of 56 days' notice. Exceptions to this should only be in unavoidable circumstances, e.g. SYPTE tenders, schools, diversions, road works and cross boundary services.
- 10.3. Participating Operators and the Executive will work together to develop a protocol and processes for Operators to check the accuracy and quality of the registration data to agreed timescales, resolve any issues in a timely manner etc.
- 10.4. The Executive will continue to accurately process registrations received on time (i.e. min 56 days' notice) to meet the deadlines for production of all information products and availability to the public. Registrations will be verified and queries referred to Participating Operators where necessary. The Executive will require the timely cooperation of the Participating Operators to resolve any issues during the processing stage so that publication deadlines can be met.

11. Printing and Distribution Costs

- 11.1. The cost of printing and distributing information products developed for the agreement that are in addition to the products produced in Appendix 1 will be shared between the partners.
- 11.2. Production of any new versions outside of pre-agreed service change dates which

are the result of changes to services or correction of inaccuracies that have been previously signed off will be met by the participating partner causing the new version to be required. This will include labour, printing and distribution costs incurred as a result. Exceptions to this apply to changes as a result of diversions, road works, cross boundary services.

12. Marketing and Branding

12.1. The Executive Information Products Suite will support where appropriate the key customer messages and associated creative material developed for the Agreement.

13. Equality and Accessibility

13.1. In line with the Equality Act 2010, through the provision of customer facing information products produced for the agreement participating partners will work together to ensure that there is no prejudice or discrimination against any protected group including gender, disability, age, sexuality, race, religion and sexual orientation.

14. Changes to the Partnership Service Information Product Suite

14.1. Participating partners agree to periodically review initiatives for targeting new customers and informing existing customers of change. Projects that are put forward where joint funding is required will need to consider the expected impact, viability, sustainability, available resources and marketing.

14.2. The Executive will engage partners as required on the development of changes to the Partnership Service Information Product Suite and customer channels listed in Appendix 1.

15. Market research and customer insights

15.1. Participating partners will share market research findings and customer feedback to drive changes to the format, content and design of the Partnership Information Product Suite.

15.2. Participating partners will work together to develop the provision of service information in line with customer intelligence.

Summary

The shared responsibility for accuracy, timeliness and development of service information will provide a cohesive platform to communicate service information to customers across multiple customer touch points.

APPENDIX 1

Products	Location
Printed Leaflets and Guides	
Bus Timetable Leaflets	<i>Information Centres and Website (PDF)</i>
Bus Timetable Credit Cards	<i>Information Centres</i>
Hospital Guides	<i>Information Centres and Website (PDF)</i>
Bank Holiday Leaflet	<i>Information Centres and Website (PDF)</i>
Christmas / New Year Leaflet	<i>Information Centres and Website (PDF)</i>
Service Change flyer	<i>Information Centres</i>
Rotherham network map	<i>Information Centres and Website (PDF)</i>
Printed Posters	
Interchange stand departures (Head of Queue)	<i>Rotherham Interchanges</i>
Bus stop timetables	<i>Rotherham Bus Stops</i>
Geographic Location Map	<i>Rail stations, Park and Ride sites</i>
Onward Journey Map	<i>Rotherham Interchanges</i>
Service changes	<i>Rotherham Interchanges</i>
Spider Network Map (SNM)	<i>Rotherham Interchanges</i>
Destination Finder	<i>Rotherham Interchanges</i>
Rotherham City centre stop map	<i>Rotherham Interchanges.</i>
District network maps	<i>Rotherham Interchanges</i>
Electronic and Web	
Travelsouthyorkshire.com	<i>Website</i>
Passenger Information Displays	<i>Rotherham Interchanges, Rotherham Bus Stops, Mobile, Website</i>
YourNextBus	<i>Mobile application, SMS, Website</i>

Register for Timetable Updates email service	<i>Website</i>
SYPTe emarketing system	<i>Website</i>
Journey Planner	<i>Mobile, Kiosk, Website</i>
Interactive Public Transport Map	<i>Website</i>
Interactive Kiosks	<i>Rotherham Interchanges</i>

ROTHERHAM AREA VPA **CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN**

INTRODUCTION

In order to ensure the Rotherham Area VPA is a customer focused and customer responsive service we need to involve customers in developing the services by a range of methods including encouraging, analysing, and, responding to customer feedback.

Customer feedback is a key element in understanding customer view. It allows a basis upon which to build customer focussed services and so encourages high customer satisfaction and advocacy so building patronage from recommendations.

The customer viewing the partnership as a single face will be a challenge to deliver as commercial concerns dictate individual corporate branding and processes. This plan accepts these challenges yet looks to deliver a consistent partnership “face” to our customers. This allows for the combined experience and expertise to be utilised but under a single partnership face for the customer.

The Customer Service Plan looks to deliver this through a partnership Customer Charter and the supporting process behind it delivered in a consistent way by all partners.

THE CUSTOMER CHARTER

All parties agree to promote and support a Customer Charter of shared promises. This Charter is to align the offer to the customer and stands along with parties’ corporate charter (when relevant). The Customer Charter includes:

1. Safety and bus standard assurances.
2. Service standards re timekeeping, last bus etc.
3. Commitment to publicise performance and any actions to address under performance.
4. Customer experience promises including being welcoming, friendly, helpful etc.
5. Equality of treatment and respect for all customers.
6. Encouragement to customers to provide feedback including contact channels.
7. Commitments to investigate, respond and address feedback.
8. Compensation arrangements when service standards are not met
9. Provision of accurate, timely information by a variety of channels.
10. Consultation on future service changes.

A copy of the Customer Charter is attached as **Appendix 1**.

1. Safety and bus standard assurances

To ensure customers can travel safely and in a clean environment.

2. Service standards re timekeeping, last bus etc.

To align with performance standards in other schedules.

3. Commitment to publicise performance and any actions to address under performance

Parties agree to publicise relevant performance information on partnership and individual external communications channels in an open and transparent way including actions to and timescales to address.

4. Customer experience promises including being welcoming, friendly, helpful etc

Parties agree to provide staff training and support to enable their staff services to be welcoming, friendly, and helpful and put in place measures to address underperformance.

5. Equality of treatment and respect for all customers

Parties agree to provide staff training to ensure that all customers regardless of ability, gender, age, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief are treated equally.

6. Encouragement to customers to provide feedback including contact channels

Parties agree to actively promote and encourage customer feedback arrangements and to widely publicise in a positive manner the importance of customer feedback.

7. Commitments to investigate, respond, and, address feedback

Parties agree to a common response standard of guaranteeing a response within 5 working days of receipt to all feedback. For simple queries this will comprise of a full response whilst for more complicated feedback requiring investigation then an acknowledgement will be sent including a timescale for full resolution.

Parties also to agree a common standard of recording, tracking, and, resolving customer feedback in order to present a unified face to the customer. In the longer term a shared system of recording feedback will be investigated and a business case developed to deliver a shared customer feedback system.

Parties will work together to develop a voice, tone of response, and, generic phraseology to be used when responding to customer feedback to ensure that confusion is not caused to customers by different parties responding in providing different information to similar feedback.

8. Compensation arrangements when service standards are not met

Compensation arrangements where services fail to reach promised standards due to parties' service failures should be fairly compensated. This is proposed to be a minimum of a relevant day ticket in compensation for each day's service failure. Insurance or legal compensation claims will continue to be dealt with by way of each party's internal legal and insurance processes.

9. Provision of accurate, timely information by a variety of channels

This is provided within the Information Products Strategy contained within WP4.

10. Consultation on future service changes

This is provided within the Service Change Protocol within WP1.

11. Points of Customer Contact

SYLTE will provide a range of customer contact channels to enable customer feedback to be given. The Parties may wish to utilise these channels and/or provide to extend the contact touch points by providing additional direct customer service contact points within their own organisations. These contact points are expected to conform to the response times and standards of response as earlier stated.

12. Comments received by one Party but pertaining to another Party

Comments received by one Party but which pertain to another will be responded to by either:

- a) Responded to by the receiving Party on behalf of the other Party in line with pre agreed arrangements.
- b) Passed urgently onto the second Party to respond and the customer informed of this action.

13. Appeals

Each Party will provide details of an appeals process customers can avail upon if not satisfied with the initial response. This appeals process will include a level of appeal to an independent external organisation dependent upon the Party's relevant governance arrangements. Parties agree to abide by the decision made by the appeals processes.

Details of the appeals process will be published on partners and partnership web sites.

14. Sharing information

All Parties agree to conform to the Data Sharing Agreements when sharing customer's information in order to respond to feedback.

Non-personal information including disruption information etc. will be widely shared throughout the Rotherham Area VPA in order to mitigate delays or disruptions caused to services and so to customers. Parties will provide such known disruption or delays information to the SYPTE Contact Centre who will review and update electronic information systems as soon as practicable. Information regarding the ending of such disruptions will similarly be provided in order to return to business as usual state.

15. Business Intelligence

In order to learn from customer feedback SYPTE will provide to the Parties a monthly review of feedback received and, when available, details of the resolution and improvements delivered. In order to maximise this intelligence Parties agree to provide sufficient detail of feedback received directly by them, and responses/actions to add to this holistic analysis.

16. Last Bus guarantee

Partners will continue to work together to ensure that no customers are left without transport by the failure of the last journey opportunity which may be the last bus of the day or the last bus on a part of a route where no later one is available.

17. Customer Service Training

The Parties agree to provide Customer Service training to all customer contact staff to ensure both awareness of expectations, and ability to deliver, the Customer Service Plan. The Parties agree to train all customer contact staff to a level of customer care training of at least NVQ level 2 or Driver CPC. Should customer service issues be regularly identified then partners agree to reconsider and address any training gaps identified.

18. Summary

This Customer Service Plan seeks to ensure the Rotherham Area VPA can deliver a high level of customer service and be a learning organisation who considers positively customer feedback as an importance source of business development intelligence. This plan will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Rotherham Area VPA Customer Charter – our promises and commitments to you

We are Rotherham Area Bus Partnership

We are South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE), the bus service operators in Rotherham and, Rotherham Borough Council all working in partnership to make travelling in Rotherham by bus an attractive choice, good value and as easy as possible.

Putting the customer at the heart of what we do

We put our customers at the heart of everything we do. We actively listen and take positive action from what you say so we can review our services to better meet your needs. We are always looking for ways to improve our services for you, so when you feel that things could be better let us know and we will work to put things right whenever we can.

Why have a Customer Charter?

Our Customer Charter lets you know what we do, why we do it, and how you can make a difference. We want to be easy to deal with and we want to know and understand your opinions about the services we offer to allow us to better meet your needs. The Customer Charter lets you know what we promise to you, how important your feedback is and what you can expect from us when you give us any feedback.

Our promises and commitment to you

We promise:

- our staff will be welcoming, friendly, helpful and polite to you,
- we will train all our staff to have customer service skills so they treat all customers fairly and with respect,
- our vehicles and facilities will be safe, regularly serviced and clean,
- we will let you know the standards to expect and openly share both how we perform and how we'll address shortfalls,
- we will provide information about our services and ensure it is clear, free of jargon, up to date, and accurate,
- we will make contacting us easy by offering a range of ways for you to contact us,
- we will listen to what you say, fully investigate, and try our best to answer all your queries and concerns,
- we will make sure your feedback is reported to the Partnership Management Board,
- we will learn from your feedback and tell you what we've done as a result,
- we will regularly review this Charter to make sure it meets your needs.

Your invitation to 'Tell us what you think'

We'd really like to hear your thoughts and suggestions about travel in the Rotherham Bus Partnership area. By giving us your feedback we will know what is working well for you, and what is not, so that we can keep reviewing and improving our services.

Whether your feedback is about our staff, services, your positive experience, or you want to highlight areas for improvement, you can tell us what you think by contacting us in any of the following ways:

- Visit travelsouthyorkshire.com and complete an online form by clicking onto 'contact us' on the menu banner
- Email traveline@sypte.co.uk
- Call Traveline on 01709 51 51 51
- Pick up a form by visiting a Travel South Yorkshire Information Centre, or use an interactive kiosk

You can also contact the larger bus service operators directly at:

First Customer Services
Midland Road Garage
Midland Road
Rotherham
S61 1TF

☎ 01709 566 000
✉ firstgroup.com

TM Travel
Halfway Bus Garage
Station Road
Halfway
SHEFFIELD
S20 3GZ

☎ 0114 263 3890
✉ www.tmtravel.co.uk

Stagecoach Yorkshire
Unit 4 Eldon Arcade
Barnsley
S70 2JP

☎ 01226 202555
✉ yorkshire.enquiries@stagecoachbus.com
✉ stagecoachbus.com/customerservice

We aim to respond to your feedback as quickly as possible, and will get back to you within seven days of receipt. Often we'll reply on the same day that we hear from you.

If we need to pass your feedback onto to another organisation we will let you know who it has been passed to, why, and what response you can expect.

Our response to customer feedback

We are committed to making changes and improvements to our products and services as a result of customer feedback. To let you know about the actions we have taken, we will display information about your feedback in our interchanges, at bus stops, on all parties' websites and through other communication channels.

Consultation groups

Because it is important that we know what you think about our services and the type of information or products you need, we hold regular customer focus groups and carry out public consultation to discuss your thoughts on public transport. If you are interested in taking part in this please let us know.

Removing barriers

If you have hearing difficulties and would like to contact us, you can phone us on 01709 515151 using a Typetalk service or visit travelsouthyorkshire.com and use the Browsealoud facility.

Stagecoach Yorkshire have a dedicated contact number for anyone with a disability. The disability helpdesk can be reached by calling 0845 266 6606 or by email Yorkshire.Disabilityhelpdesk@Stagecoachbus.com

If you have difficulties with your sight, we will send you upon request information in a format you are able to use. If we need to write to you we can do so in large print, Braille, or we can record the letter in an audio format.

If English is not your first language then when you phone our contact centre on 01709 515151 we will arrange for a translator over the telephone. If you write to us in the language you speak, we will try to answer in the same language.

Appeals process

South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive

If you contact us and are not satisfied with our response, you can contact the Head of Customer Services, using the details below, who will review your concern:

Head of Customer Services
11 Broad Street West
Sheffield
S1 2BQ

Email: nigel.cairns@sypte.co.uk

When we receive your letter or email we will reply within ten working days. If we can't give you a full reply, we will write to you explaining why and when you can expect this.

If you are still not satisfied after this you can write to the Combined Authority, the governing body which oversees public transport in South Yorkshire.

You can write to them at:

**The Deputy Clerk (Policy)
The Joint Secretariat
18 Regent Street
Barnsley
S70 2PQ**

They will respond to you within 20 working days. If they can't give you a full reply, they will write to you explaining why and when you can expect this.

The [Local Government Ombudsman](http://lgo.org.uk) can also consider some complaints about SYPT or Sheffield City Council's activities. Their details are on the Ombudsman website lgo.org.uk or you can call 0300 061 0614 or text 0762 480 4999

First ,Stagecoach and TM Travel appeal arrangements

If after contacting us you are dissatisfied with our response there is an independent organisation that can review your complaint. You can contact them by writing to:

**BAB, c/o Bus Users UK
PO Box 119
Shepperton
TW17 8UX**