
Report To:	Environment and Regeneration Committee	Date:	1 May 2014
Report By:	Acting Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration and Resources	Report No:	ERC/ENV/IM/14.193
Contact Officer:	Robert Graham	Contact No:	01475 714824
Subject:	Proposed Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme – Update		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the latest position as regards the promotion of a Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme (sQPS) with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and Transport Scotland (TS).
- 1.2 To seek Committee's approval for delegated authority be given to the Head of Environmental & Commercial Services to agree a sQPS in consultation with the relevant officers.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee of 6 March 2012 gave approval for the promotion of such a scheme by the Council.
- 2.2 SPT drew up an initial draft Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme for Inverclyde in September 2012 for consultation. This document specified road maintenance standards that had to be agreed to by the Council and two traffic management proposals to assist with bus operations within the scheme area. Also required was the introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) by the Council.
- 2.3 In early 2013 the Council wrote to Transport Scotland to inform them of the proposed sQPS and to advise of the road maintenance requirements proposed by SPT that Transport Scotland would have to consider on the A8 and A78 trunk roads within the scheme area. A meeting took place between all parties in July 2013 to discuss the requirements of implementing a sQPS.
- 2.4 However, Transport Scotland advised in October 2013 that a new maintenance contract was in place with Scotland Transerve and at that time contract details were not available to outside bodies. The Council wrote to Transport Scotland in February 2014 highlighting that the making of a Quality Partnership Scheme was high on the Council's agenda and seeking a commitment to its promotion. Agreement as regards maintenance standards was also sought.
- 2.5 Transport Scotland wrote in March 2014 stating that required maintenance standards for the sQPS are mostly met by the new trunk road maintenance contract for the A8 and A78 roads and that the standards set out in both documents are very similar.
- 2.6 The next stage will be a meeting with the relevant bus operators to consult with them formally as to the sQPS proposals.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Committee note the current position as regards the promotion of a Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme within Inverclyde.

3.2 That delegated authority is given to the Head of Environmental & Commercial Services to negotiate the Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme for Inverclyde in consultation with the Head of Legal & Property Services and the Head of Finance.

Ian Moffat
Head of Environmental & Commercial Services

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 A Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme (sQPS) is a statutory agreement between parties to provide improved bus infrastructure and services. The Council in partnership with SPT and Transport Scotland intend to promote a sQPS covering the Port Glasgow, Greenock and Gourock route corridor and from Greenock Town Centre to its boundary along the A78. Also included would be Kilblain Street and Port Glasgow bus stations.
- 4.2 The above route corridors and bus stations match where there has been substantial public investment in bus infrastructure over several years eg raised kerbs, bus bays, new bus shelters, new bus stops and information cases.
- 4.3 This investment is likely to continue in Inverclyde over the next few years funded by SPT.
- 4.4 Bus operators wishing to participate in a sQPS must give a written undertaking to the Traffic Commissioner that they will provide the specified standard of service when using the facilities. The specified standards may, for example, include vehicle requirements and minimum frequency of service when using the facilities. The level of fares, timetables and routes served cannot be included in a sQPS and will remain wholly controlled by the bus operators.
- 4.5 Adherence to the commitment by the bus operator then becomes a condition of continued registration. The Traffic Commissioner is empowered to act against any operator who fails to meet the condition of registration.

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 It is proposed that the next stage will be a meeting with SPT to discuss Transport Scotland's response to the maintenance requirements and to finalise the draft sQPS document. A meeting will then be organised to consult formally with the relevant bus operators.
- 5.2 SPT have advised that a Board be created for the management of a sQPS. An independent Chairperson has been appointed in early March 2014 for the Glasgow City Council Scheme. It is SPT's intention that this person should also chair Board meetings for the proposed scheme in Inverclyde.
- 5.3 The Board is an officer based group and its likely composition is representatives from bus operators, SPT and the Council.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 6.1 Ongoing maintenance of bus infrastructure is the responsibility of the Council. All costs will be contained within existing budgets and/or future SPT grants.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs / (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Roads	Revenue	2014/15	£38,000		

Legal

6.2 Legal and Property Services are supportive of the content of this report.

Human Resources

6.3 There are no implications for Human Resources in this report.

Equalities

6.4 A Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme will improve the level of bus services and buses to the benefit of the travelling public and especially among groups including the elderly, mobility impaired and parents with prams that make more use of bus services.

Repopulation

6.5 Improved bus services and buses will contribute to the overall appeal of Inverclyde as a preferred place to reside.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 a) Legal Services have been consulted on this report.
- b) Finance Services have been consulted on this report.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None