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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Environment and Regeneration Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>4 September 2014</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Acting Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>ERC/ENV/IM/14.200</b>
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Proposed Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme – Update 2</b>		

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## 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).

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee of 6 March 2012 gave approval for the promotion of a sQPS by the Council.
- 2.2 SPT drew up an initial draft Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme for Inverclyde in September 2012 for consultation.
- 2.3 Subsequent to the last Committee update on 1 May 2014, a meeting took place in June 2014 with SPT and TS. The Council indicated that they would wish an implementation date of December 2014. Subject to 2.7 below it is proposed to seek Committee's approval of the scheme on 15 January 2015 and thereafter the Inverclyde Council on 19 February 2015.
- 2.4 Also discussed at the meeting was Emission standards specified in the sQPS document for buses making journeys registered under the scheme.
- 2.5 It was agreed that the SPT lead officer would have responsibility for implementing the agreed changes and updating the scheme.
- 2.6 It was also agreed that respective Legal departments were to be consulted on the draft sQPS document.
- 2.7 The next stage will be a meeting in September 2014 with the relevant bus operators to consult with them as to the final draft sQPS proposals. Assuming agreement of the bus operators, Legal and Property Services will then draft the final version. The formal statutory consultation process can then be started. The Scottish Government sQP Best Practice Guidance (2009) recommends that the absolute minimum time allocated to formal consultation is twelve weeks.
- 2.8 Once the scheme is operational, it is a requirement of sQPS legislation to undertake annual reporting to the Scottish Ministers on the effectiveness of the scheme.

## 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

## **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 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.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 The sQPS document at present specifies that from 1 January 2015, 100% of journeys will require to be operated with low floor vehicles meeting EURO 3 engine standard buses (or with EURO 2 and CRT filter devices). Options were discussed at the meeting with SPT as regards smaller bus operators that do not meet this standard.

## **5.0 PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 The next stage will be a meeting in September 2014 with the relevant bus operators to consult with them as to the final draft sQPS proposals. It is proposed that the document is sent to them beforehand. After this meeting, assuming agreement of the bus operators, Legal Services will revise the draft final version into the final version. The formal statutory consultation process can then be started. The Scottish Government sQP Best Practice Guidance (2009) recommends that the absolute minimum time allocated to formal consultation is twelve weeks.
- 5.2 The formal statutory consultation involves the publication of a Notice that a sQPS is proposed for the area. Following publication of the Notice the organisations that should be consulted include all local bus operators likely to be affected by the scheme, neighbouring local authorities, Police Scotland and the Scottish Traffic Commissioner.
- 5.3 After the formal consultation is complete and any revisions to the scheme made, it would be then submitted to this Committee for approval and the Council thereafter. This process would also be required to be undertaken by the other parties to the agreement subject to their organisation's standing orders.
- 5.4 Once the scheme is 'made' the Council will publish a Notice of the finalised scheme within 14 days of the date on which the scheme was made. The date for commencement of operation of the scheme has to be at least 3 months after the scheme is made.
- 5.5 It is a requirement of sQPS legislation to undertake annual reporting to the Scottish Ministers on the effectiveness of the scheme.
- 5.6 SPT have advised that a Board be created for the management of the sQPS. An independent Chairperson was appointed in early March 2014 for the Glasgow City Council Scheme. It is SPT's proposal that this person should also chair Board meetings for the proposed scheme in Inverclyde.
- 5.7 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
N/A					

### 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 Statutory Quality Partnership (sQP) Best Practice Guidance, Executive Summary, Scottish Government, 2009.