
Report To:	Environment and Regeneration Committee	Date:	15 January 2015
Report By:	Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration and Resources	Report No:	ERC/ENV/IM/14.213
Contact Officer:	Robert Graham	Contact No:	01475 714824
Subject:	Proposed Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme – Update 3		

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 A number of meetings and discussions have taken place since then with SPT and TS regarding this matter. At the meeting in June 2014 the Council indicated that they would wish an implementation date of December 2014. A draft programme was prepared by Inverclyde after the meeting to comply with this timetable.
- 2.4 An informal consultation meeting with the bus operators took place on 3 October 2014. A number of issues were raised at the meeting which required to be considered and a further informal bus operator meeting took place on 21 November 2014.
- 2.5 Subsequent to this meeting one of the bus operators raised a number of issues regarding operating low floor buses in Branchton which are being considered. In addition there are a number of legal issues regarding the sQP document that require to be resolved between the respective Legal departments of the Council and SPT.
- 2.6 At the present time it is not known exactly how long these issues will take to resolve but is planned that the formal statutory consultation process takes place in January/February 2015.
- 2.7 After review and further consultation, if necessary, it is proposed to seek Committee's approval of the scheme on the 5 March 2015 and thereafter Council on 9 April 2015. The scheme will also require to be approved by SPT and Transport Scotland.
- 2.8 The specified date for commencement of operation of the Scheme has to be at least 3 months after the Scheme is made and is planned for Sunday 12 July 2015.

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 will specify that from 12 July 2015, 50% of all journeys on “in scope” services to be operated with low floor vehicles with engines meeting EURO 3 engine emission standards (or with EURO 2 with TfL approved CRT devices). The document specifies further emission standards required from 1 January 2016, 1 January 2017 and 1 January 2018.

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 After the formal consultation is complete and any revisions to the scheme made, it would then be 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 organisations' standing orders.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 It is a requirement of sQPS legislation to undertake annual reporting to the Scottish Ministers on the effectiveness of the scheme.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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		

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.