

Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme (SQPS) Summary Document

What is the Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme (SQPS)?

This is a legally binding partnership between Kent County Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to improve bus travel along the A20 London Road corridor. We provide improvements to the bus facilities (shelters, stops, traffic signals) and in return, bus operators provide a certain quality of service.

Any bus operator wishing to run local bus services along this route and use the facilities provided must comply with the service requirements set out in the Scheme. These requirements include how frequently buses run, the maximum amount you will have to pay for a fare and the emissions ratings of the buses.

What are the Objectives of the Scheme?

The Scheme provides all passengers will a higher quality bus service. As well as benefiting all current bus travellers, it is hoped these improvements will encourage more people to travel by bus and thus limit the increasing congestion on this corridor. In turn this will also help limit air pollution and contribute to the four Air Quality Management Areas nearby.

We are striving to ensure the level of bus provision is able to accommodate the ongoing housing and employment growth in the Medway Valley area. We are investing in a wealth of modern facilities for passengers, to make bus travel along this corridor a really attractive offer. The main bus operator, Arriva, have also invested heavily in 11 diesel-electric buses for Route 71. By setting out both our commitment to providing and maintaining these improved facilities and what we expect from the bus services which use them, we can lock in the benefits of investment (both ours and operators’).

What are the main improvements I will see?

- A Smart Travel product for the Maidstone area- making it easier to hop on and off the bus without using cash
- Real Time Information at bus stops with shelters telling you when the next bus will arrive
- Accessible buses- easy to get on and off, particularly for those with wheelchairs and pushchairs
- Vehicles adhering to EURO IV emissions standards- less air pollution
- Bus stops fitted with modern poles and flags
- Bus stops wheelchair accessible and fitted with raised kerbs
- Clearways and cages to make it easier for buses to pull up at stops
- Improved Traffic Signals- enabling more efficient flow of vehicles and making journey times more reliable
- Arriva’s 11 diesel-electric hybrid buses- reduced fuel consumption and engine emissions

What minimum service levels will I see?

Frequency of Buses

Maximum Fares

Punctuality and Reliability

No last minute timetable changes- unless necessary or to the benefit of passengers

Sufficient capacity for passengers

Drivers will be able to communicate with their control centre

CCTV on buses

Up to date information for passengers

Heating and ventilation

Accurate and Visible Route/ Destination Displays

Lighting on buses

Presentation of buses must be clean and tidy

Driver Training, Conduct and Appearance

Customer Care Policy for delays

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Bus Shelters

Maintenance of the corridor- street lighting, drainage, footways, etc.

Maintenance of Traffic Signal Faults

How will it work?

Kent County Council will manage the Scheme, apart from the provision of Shelters, and Street and Footway Sweeping, which will be managed by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

As shown in the map, the Scheme will run along London Road (A20) from the junction with Coldharbour Lane ("Coldharbour Roundabout"), in a westerly direction, to the junction with Ashton Way (A228) and Castle Way. The Scheme Area is approximately three miles in length.

Please take a look at the *Full Scheme Document* for more information.