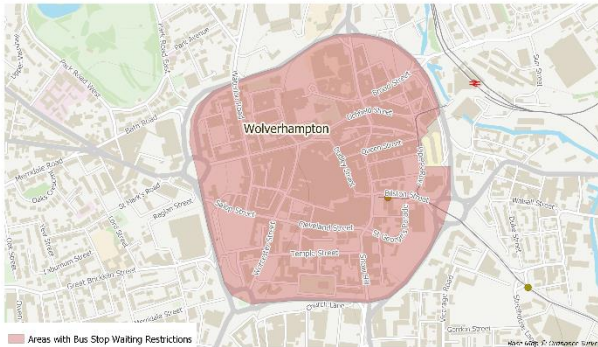


13th January 2023

Background

Where

The Wolverhampton Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme (AQPS) applies to a zone within the ring road, excluding the site of Wolverhampton Bus Station.



What

The AQPS enshrines minimum service standards for bus operators and the highways and transport authorities as relates to buses.

The Wolverhampton scheme began in 2018 for a period of 10 years and has been successful in improving bus services, air quality and the passenger experience.

Why

Since the making of the AQPS, the West Midlands Enhanced Partnership (EP) Scheme has been developed and expanded. The EP Scheme is delivering on the Bus Service Improvement Plan which covers the entire WMCA area.

Due to the way the legislation is constructed, an AQPS and EP Scheme cannot overlap.

The standards set in the AQPS already exist (or will shortly come into effect) in the current version of the EP Scheme (Variation 002), the Customer Charter (March 2023) or exist in other extant legislation.

Furthermore, under an EP Scheme, it is possible for WMCA to have local bus service registration powers delegated to it (for services operating wholly within the EP Scheme area). This is not possible within an AQPS area.

Therefore, it is proposed that the AQPS is revoked.

Revocation will allow the service standards in the area shown above to be managed in a single scheme, for ease and simplicity. It will also allow WMCA to implement specific route requirements on particular bus services and, for applicable routes, use its delegated registration powers to independently enforce the standards set out in the EP Scheme.

The process for revoking an AQPS is the same as making the scheme and so stakeholder consultation was required.

Consultation

Who

Legislation requires the following entities to be consulted:

- Relevant bus operators
- Passenger representative groups
- Wolverhampton City Council
- The Traffic Commissioner
- Chief of Police
- Transport Focus
- The Competition and Markets Authority
- The Public

How

This was largely done through email, with an offer of a meeting to discuss any concerns. It has also been mentioned at other meetings involving similar parties.

The exception to this is the public consultation, which comprised a notice in a local newspaper, a social media post and a webpage to submit feedback.

When

The public consultation ran from 16/10/22 to 10/01/2023. Consultation with other entities has been carried out during this same period.

Summary of Responses

The following entities provided the following summarised response(s). Otherwise, there were no objections received:

Operators

Two operators responded regarding a specific vehicle emissions exemption.

WCC

Support the revocation of the AQPS to allow the EP Scheme to take effect, subject to the conditions being preserved via the EP Scheme.

The Public

The majority of comments related to bus service reliability.

The remainder were asking for detail on AQPS standards.

Conclusion

There were no categorical objections received toward the revocation of the AQPS.

The limited feedback received was either supportive or not relevant to revocation.

Next Steps

Given the lack of objection and the lack of pertinent concerns that were expressed during consultation, and the benefits available by transferring the area into the EP Scheme, it is TfWM's intent to continue with the revocation.

There will be a short break (of a few weeks) between the revocation of the AQPS and the EP emissions standards coming into force on 1st May 2023. This delay is due to other dependencies.

Further Information

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