



Arriva Southern Counties  
Invicta House  
Armstrong Road  
Maidstone  
Kent ME15 6TX

Tel +44 (0)1622 697000  
Fax +44 (0)1622 697001

[www.arriva.co.uk](http://www.arriva.co.uk)

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **ARRIVA SOUTHERN COUNTIES INVESTS £750,000 IN NEW BUSES FOR TUNBRIDGE WELLS TO BROMLEY ROUTE**

Arriva Southern Counties has given customers on its Tunbridge Wells to Bromley route an early Christmas present in the shape of five brand-new Optare Versas representing an investment of £750,000.

The buses are based at its depot in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and follow hot on the heels of an £1.8 million investment in twelve similar buses at Southend-on-Sea, Essex last month.

The Tunbridge Wells buses are now running on Service 402 which provides a basically-hourly service from Tunbridge Wells to Bromley which runs via Tonbridge and Sevenoaks, passing through the Kent countryside and into the south eastern fringes of greater London where it runs under a TfL London Local Service Agreement.

They replace mid-life Dennis Dart SLFs which will be cascaded elsewhere in the Southern Counties fleet to allow the withdrawal of older vehicles as the company heads towards 100% low-floor operation.

Branded for 'the 402', the 11.1 metre Versas each carry special messages relating to some of the journey purposes which can be undertaken on the route, such as shopping in Tunbridge Wells or Bromley, or having a day out in Kent from south east London.

The service enters the London low emission zone at the northern end of the two-hour long route and the new buses are fitted with Mercedes-Benz engines to Euro 5 specification which will continue to be compliant after tightening of the LEZ conditions occurs in January 2012.

One further Versa is due for imminent delivery and will be used at Maidstone depot on the services between Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells which were enhanced in September.

This initiative originated as part of an aborted Kick Start Scheme in 2010 where, in conjunction with Kent County Council, Arriva was awarded funding to invest in further growth of the service.

Soon afterwards the funding was withdrawn as part of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review but Arriva and KCC decided to go ahead despite the lack of central government funding and the Versa will be owned by KCC.

The final deliveries of 2011 for Arriva Southern Counties will be a batch of six Wrightbus Door Forward StreetLites which are expected to arrive shortly and which will be allocated to Gillingham depot for use on one of the local Medway Towns services.

Ends

***For more information please contact Richard Lewis, regional publicity manager, on 01622 697000, or Arriva plc's Corporate Communications Department on 0191 520 4106. For media enquiries outside of office hours, Arriva can be contacted via its 24-hour media pager service on 0762 392 0615.***