

## Why are you proposing a Zero Emission Zone (ZEE) in Oxford?

Air pollution contributes to cancer, asthma, stroke and heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and changes linked to dementia. Outdoor air pollution shortens up to 36,000 lives every year in the UK. In its [Clean Air Strategy 2019](#), the UK government called air pollution a major public health risk in England which causes more harm than passive smoking. In January 2020, a study from Centre for Cities found that at least one in 17 deaths in Oxford is related to air pollution.

The legal limit for NO<sub>2</sub> is 40 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m<sup>3</sup>) of air and despite a 29 per cent reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> levels across Oxford over the last 10 years, parts of the city centre in 2019 were still failing to meet this legal limit and health experts have warned that there is no safe level for NO<sub>2</sub>.

The majority of emissions and air pollution in Oxford city centre are generated by motorised traffic. Road transport accounts for 68% of NO<sub>x</sub> emissions and 16% of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions in Oxford. Moving to emission free transport solutions, through the introduction of a zero emission zone, is therefore the most effective solution to our air pollution problems and will contribute to action on climate change.

Adoption of a “zero emission” standard creates certainty and ultimately delivers greater emissions reductions than adoption of less stretching “low emission” standards.

Oxford City Council has a legal duty to monitor the air quality within Oxford and a report is produced annually. See the [latest Air Quality Annual Monitoring Report](#). The draft Air Quality Action Plan for Oxford sets a local target of “30 by 25” – i.e. 30 µg/m<sup>3</sup> NO<sub>2</sub> across Oxford by 2025, hence a stricter target than the nationally set legal target of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>

## Why are you now proposing to introduce a Zero Emission Zone Pilot and how does this differ from the previous Red Zone?

The area covered by the Zero Emission Zone Pilot (ZEE Pilot) covers the same area as the “Red Zone” referred to in previous consultations. The main change is that the ZEE Pilot will now have exactly the same requirements as those proposed for the wider ZEE (previously the Green Zone).

We are proposing to introduce the smaller ZEE as a pilot phase to allow it to be tested out before it is expanded in 2022. The ZEE Pilot would also lead to cleaner air, quieter streets and contribute to action on climate.

We are now proposing different charges based on the emissions of the vehicle entering. This recognises the positive contribution low emission vehicles make to reduced air pollution, while the most polluting vehicles will pay the most to enter.

## Why are you proposing a charging scheme?

Following extensive feedback from stakeholders and further technical work it was clear that our previously proposed scheme based on parking and loading restrictions was unlikely to lead to the changes in behaviour and air quality which we are seeking to achieve. Furthermore, a charging scheme provides greater flexibility and can be adapted to cater for the needs of residents and businesses in the area using discounts and exemptions, and may generate some income which can be used to help residents, businesses and others switch to zero emission vehicles.

Charging schemes are being introduced across the country including in Birmingham, and London already successfully operate charging schemes which have seen significant improvements in air pollution.

## How have people been consulted?

The councils consulted on initial proposals for a ZEZ in 2017, published updated proposals in January 2019, and consulted informally on final draft proposals (focused on the Red Zone charging scheme) in January 2020. We began a final consultation on the Red Zone in March 2020, but this was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As well as public consultations we have continued to have discussions with affected organisations, businesses and individuals.

The consultation in January 2020, resulted in approximately 900 responses, and several changes have been made to the proposals based on the feedback provided as well as experience of COVID-19 and the spring lockdown, and feedback from the temporary bus gates survey in the summer.

## Will the implementation of the ZEZ Pilot just spread air quality problems to the suburbs of Oxford?

It is expected that introducing even the a ZEZ Pilot will improve the quality of air within Oxford overall *and* beyond due to the restrictions on vehicles that can use the centre. Vehicles entering the city centre travel to other parts of the city and county, so the emissions benefits will extend beyond the zone.

A larger city centre ZEZ will be introduced in 2022, with the ZEZ expanded to cover the whole city by 2035.

## What will the impact of the revised ZEZ Pilot be on private vehicles?

The proposed Zero Emission Zone Pilot would see entry into the zone charged for from 7am-7pm, for any vehicle (including private cars) which are not 100% zero emission. Any Zero Emission Vehicles would be allowed free entry. We are proposing discounts for residents living in the zone, blue badge holders and vehicles registered to business within the zone.

Some changes have been made to the previous scheme including reducing the ZEZ requirements for residents and businesses in the ZEZ Pilot area compared to the January 2020 proposals. This is in recognition of COVID-19 impacts on the city centre.

## When will I need to replace my car?

The government is consulting on a plan to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2035. In Oxford, private cars that are not zero emission are proposed to be charged for entry on all roads in the ZEZ Pilot area from August 2021 including Cornmarket Street, Queen Street, New Inn Hall Street, St Michael's Street, Ship Street and Market Street from 7am to 7pm.

## What happens to residents who live in the larger ZEZ zone and who don't have a zero emission vehicle?

The next major stage of the ZEZ after the ZEZ Pilot would be the larger zone to be introduced in 2022, covering most of Oxford city centre.

It is currently proposed that the ZEZ Pilot and larger ZEZ will have the same requirements and discounts, with the amount of the daily charge depending on the emissions of the vehicle.

The wider ZEZ, subject to further technical work and will be subject to full public consultation in 2021.

## How will tradespeople/utilities be able to access my business/property for emergency repairs?

For the ZEZ Pilot, the restriction would be part-time so access by a non-zero emission vehicle would be possible outside the restricted times. We also expect the industry to adapt in a similar way to the courier sector which has introduced business models based around the bike and low/zero emission vehicles. If people do have to enter the zone with a non-compliant vehicle, they will be able to pay a daily charge for access.

## Will disabled drivers of vehicles that do not comply with the ZEZ be exempt?

It is recognised that people with disabilities have a greater need than others to use their cars to access the city centre. Therefore, it is proposed that Blue Badge holders (or international equivalents) and Disabled Tax Class vehicles will receive a 100% discount on entry into the zone up to at least 1 June 2025. The discount thereafter is to be decided by December 2024. The discounted period will allow time for drivers with disabilities to change their cars to compliant vehicles or make other travel arrangements to access the city centre.

## Will the ZEZ cause alterations to bus routes / stops?

The ZEZ Pilot will not affect bus routes or bus stops, but instead we are working with bus companies to update their fleet.

## How will I receive deliveries to my business located within the Zone?

Through the previous public consultation and engagement with impacted businesses we have gathered information about the challenges associated with deliveries within the zone. This is one reason why we are now proposing a part-time Zero Emission Zone in 2020 from 7am to 7pm, and applying a charge for non-compliant vehicles rather than banning them completely. Lower charges for low emission vehicles will also now apply in the ZEZ Pilot which reduces the ZEZ requirements for businesses compared to the January 2020 proposals, in recognition of COVID-19 impacts on the city centre.

Deliveries in non-zero emission vehicles may be made free of charge outside of zone operating hours. If deliveries are made within these hours in a non-complaint vehicle a charge will be applied.

There are a number of zero emission delivery companies already operating in Oxford and it is anticipated this market will develop to accommodate deliveries within the zone.

Vehicle registered to and operating from businesses in the ZEZ will get a 90% discount on any charges until 1 June 2025.

## Will emergency vehicles be banned from entering the zone if they are not zero emission?

A 100% permanent discount will apply to emergency vehicles but this will be reviewed at a later date. We will work with emergency services to reduce emissions from their fleets.

## Will catering vans around Oxford be banned from the city centre?

Under current proposal all vehicles will be required to be zero emission in the city centre from August 2020 during the hours when restrictions apply, to be allowed to enter for free. This would include catering vans.

## Will motorbikes and mopeds be charged entry to the zone?

Yes, motorbikes and mopeds will be charged entry to the zone if they do not meet our criteria for Zero Emission Vehicle.

## How will the restrictions be legally implemented and enforced?

The ZEZ Pilot charging scheme would work in a similar way to the London congestion charge and ultra-low emission zone.

Signs would be installed around the perimeter of the zone and on the routes into the city to notify drivers of the ZEZ.

Drivers driving or parking and using a non-compliant zero emission vehicles in the zone during the charging hours would need to pay the required charge :

- Before entering the zone; OR
- By midnight on the working day after entering the zone.

Registrations for discounts would need to be made and approved **before** entering the zone to ensure any required supporting documentation has been provided and approved.

Payments and registrations would be accepted by a variety of methods; we expect the majority will do this online.

The zone would be enforced by enforcement cameras, using automatic number plate recognition technology.

Taxi emission requirements are implemented through the city council's taxi licensing powers and will be enforced by the city council. The bus emission requirements will be implemented through the application of a Traffic Regulation Condition (TRC) to bus operators' operating licences and enforced by the Traffic Commissioner.

## Will hybrid vehicles be allowed in the ZEZ?

Only vehicles emitting 0g/km CO<sub>2</sub> would be allowed to enter the zone free of charge. The majority of hybrid vehicles do not meet this standard. Hybrid vehicles would still be able to enter the zone, but would have to pay a charge.

## What are the next steps for implementation for the ZEZ Pilot?

Following the public consultation, any necessary changes will be made to the draft charging order for the ZEZ Pilot. The councils will then make decisions about whether or not to implement the scheme in March 2021. If approved, the ZEZ Pilot would come into effect on 1 August 2021.

## Why are you proposing to include HGVs in the early stages, where you excluded them in previous proposals?

HGVs contribute 15% of NO<sub>x</sub> emissions in the city centre while they only account for 5% of vehicle kilometres undertaken in the city centre. So while they only make up a small percentage of the traffic movements, their emissions are high.

While there are currently very limited zero emission alternatives to diesel HGVs it is possible to move some deliveries on to smaller zero emission transport modes. Oxford already has a number of zero emission delivery companies operating and it is anticipated this market will develop to accommodate deliveries within the zone. Where it is not possible to undertake the deliveries in any other vehicle other than by HGV, deliveries must take place outside the hours where restrictions will apply in the city centre to be undertaken for free, or alternatively a charge will apply.

We will review zero emission standard for large vans and lorries in light of Ultra Low Emission Truck (ULET) standard, when available

## What is a “zero emission vehicle” for the purposes of this scheme?

A zero emission vehicle is defined as one which emits 0 g/km CO<sub>2</sub>. This is usually fully electric or hydrogen vehicles.

## What is a “Ultra Low Emission Vehicle” for the purpose of this scheme?

A Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEZ) is defined as one which emits less than 75 g/km CO<sub>2</sub>.

## What is a “Clean Air Zone compliant vehicle” for the purpose of this scheme?

A Clean Air Zone (CAZ) is defined as Euro 4 petrol and Euro 6 diesel vehicles.

## How do I find out what emission standard my vehicle is?

The following online checkers give an indication of the emission standard/Euro status of your vehicle. This is for guidance only.

For CO<sub>2</sub> emissions:

<https://www.gov.uk/get-vehicle-information-from-dvla>

For Euro standard:

<https://www.hpi.co.uk/content/diesel-news-the-future-of-diesel/hpi-euro-emission-standards-checker/>

## Why does the larger ZEZ exclude some parts of the city centre?

The zone boundary needs to allow routes for non-compliant vehicles to turn safely and without blocking the road, which is why some streets are not included.

## Why are you not requiring buses to be zero emission sooner?

Euro 6 buses have been found to reduce NO<sub>2</sub> by 99.5%, which is why we have seen a significant improvement in air quality in recent years. The city already has its first 100% electric double decker buses operating in the city. However moving the full bus fleet to zero emission operation requires significant infrastructure and vehicle investment, and the technology for intensive bus operation across a range of urban and inter-urban route lengths is not currently proven or affordable, so we are planning to implement a zero emission fleet in partnership with bus operators by 2035 at the latest, with an ambition to work together to achieve this by 2030 if possible.

## I have heard that electric cars still contribute to pollution, so how will that help reduce air pollution?



An overview of the environmental benefits of zero emission vehicles has been provided on the [Go Ultra Low website](#).

## Will classic cars be restricted from entering Oxford under the proposals?

In line with London's Ultra Low Emission Zone, we are currently proposing a 100% discount for vehicles with historic tax classes (i.e. historic vehicles which qualify for vehicle tax exemption). Non-exempt vehicles will be allowed entry through payment of the charge if they are not zero emission.

## What will happen with the income raised by the ZEZ Pilot charging scheme and what will it be spent on?

How much income the ZEZ Pilot will raise will not be known until it has been in operation for some months. Income raised by the scheme may be used to cover the costs of implementing and running it. Any funds left over once these costs have been covered must be spent on schemes or initiatives which directly or indirectly facilitate the achievement of local transport policies. This is a requirement of the legislation that allows the scheme to be introduced.

The city and county councils intend to use ZEZ income to pay for schemes to help residents and businesses in the ZEZ make the transition to zero emission vehicles, and on other schemes that promote zero and low emission transport in the city. The councils will work with residents and businesses to develop and implement supporting schemes.

## Will vehicles entering the ZEZ Pilot during the student move-in/out weekends be charged?

We recognise that we may need to give short-term discounts or exemptions for non zero emission vehicles to help deal with special access requirements such as this. These would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis as and when they arise.

Depending on the level of income raised by the ZEZ supporting measures could include innovative ways of managing moving in and out days for students.

## Will you be increasing the number of bike racks in the ZEZ Pilot area, to allow for more sustainable travel options?

The councils are continuing to provide additional cycle racks in and close to the ZEZ Pilot area. Any income raised by the scheme after operating costs are paid for could be used for more cycle racks.

## Will this push more traffic to outside of the zone, and the ring road?

The ZEZ Pilot area does not include any through traffic routes; nearly all the traffic in the zone has a destination in the area, and traffic volumes are relatively low. We do not therefore expect any significant displaced traffic.

## Will vehicles involved in scheduled maintenance work during the day such as road works, construction, and utility works be charged?

We recognise that short-term discounts or exemptions may be needed to deal with special access requirements such as this. These would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis as and when they arise.