

# Oxford Zero Emission Zone

## Proposed local charging scheme for the 'Red Zone'

### Formal consultation

March/April 2020

Consultation deadline: 15 April 2020

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# 1. Summary & background to the scheme

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1. Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council are proposing to create a Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) in Oxford city centre, starting in December 2020. The ZEZ would be based on a road user charging scheme.
- 1.2. The proposed ZEZ is shown on the map on page 10. The zone is referred to as the “Red Zone”. Future phases of the ZEZ, if implemented, would cover other areas of the city but these do not form part of this scheme and will be consulted on separately in future.
- 1.3. Zero emission vehicles (defined in section 5) would be able to drive in the zone free of charge. Other vehicles would be permitted in the zone but would have to pay £10 per day (rising to £20 per day from August 2025) to drive in the zone between 7am and 7pm. There would be discounts and exemptions for some road users, including residents and businesses in the zone.
- 1.4. The ZEZ would lead to cleaner air, quieter streets, contribute to action on climate change, and allow the councils to gain useful experience and information to inform future, larger phases of the ZEZ.
- 1.5. The ZEZ Red Zone is just one part of the councils’ plans to make the transition to zero emission transport.

## BACKGROUND

- 1.6. The ZEZ is part of Oxfordshire County Council’s [Local Transport Plan](#) (2015 - see Oxford Transport Strategy, page 18) and Oxford City Council’s [Local Plan](#) (due to be adopted in 2020).
- 1.7. 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.
- 1.8. This consultation is a final formal consultation on the proposed ZEZ for the Red Zone. Responses to this consultation will be reported to the councils’ Cabinets in summer 2020, and will inform their decisions about the scheme.

## THE CASE FOR CHANGE

- 1.9. Vehicle emissions cause significant harm to human health<sup>1</sup> and contribute to climate change<sup>2</sup>; action is required to reduce vehicle emissions.
- 1.10. The ZEZ would reduce traffic volumes, encourage uptake of zero emission vehicles, and lead to other positive behaviour changes all of which would reduce vehicle emissions.
- 1.11. Early adoption of a “zero emission” standard creates certainty and ultimately delivers greater emissions reductions than adoption of less stretching “low emission” standards
- 1.12. The pollutant of most concern in Oxford city centre is nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). 75% of NO<sub>2</sub> in Oxford comes from transport. The table below shows NO<sub>2</sub> levels at various locations in and around the Red Zone. The legal limit for NO<sub>2</sub> is 40 microgrammes per cubic metre (µg/m<sup>3</sup>) of air. However, there is no ‘safe’ level of NO<sub>2</sub>.
- 1.13. Road transport accounts for 16% of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Oxford.

Location	Average nitrogen dioxide (µg/m <sup>3</sup> ) in 2018
High Street near Oriel Street	44
New Road	29
St Aldates Town Hall	39
Park End Street	32
Bonn Square	23
Speedwell Street/St Aldates junction	35
Speedwell Street near Littlegate Street	30
Queen Street	26
George Street near bus station entrance	42
George Street/Magdalen Street junction	37
High St near Turl Street	28
Hythe Bridge Street	29

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-air-pollution/health-matters-air-pollution>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.who.int/sustainable-development/transport/health-risks/climate-impacts/en/>

## WHY A ZEZ?

- 1.14. The Zero Emission Zone is one of a range of measures proposed in the [Oxford Transport Strategy](#) to improve air quality in Oxford. The ZEZ is consistent with Oxford City Council's [Air Quality Action Plan 2013](#) (page 23) and [Low Emission Strategy](#). The ZEZ is not being progressed to the exclusion of other options and improvements identified in these plans, but rather alongside them.
- 1.15. A transition to largely zero emission transport is inevitable over the long-term as technology improves and vehicle emission standards improve. The government is consulting on [a plan to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars](#) from 2035. In Oxford, our narrow streets, limited road network and unique historic environment have made finding solutions to the problems of congestion and pollution a high priority for decades. Oxford pioneered Park & Ride in the 1970s and was one of the first UK cities to tackle traffic growth by restricting traffic and increasing parking charges.
- 1.16. The ZEZ is designed to accelerate the pace of the transition to a fully zero emission transport system in Oxford (alongside the wider measures referred to above) by creating a direct incentive for road users to switch to zero emission vehicles, and/or make other positive changes to their travel behaviour.

## WHY A CHARGING SCHEME?

- 1.17. The 2017 [ZEZ Feasibility Study](#) considered a number of implementation options for the ZEZ. These were developed and consulted on during [2017](#) and [2019](#).
- 1.18. The [January 2020 consultation](#) set out the reasons (page 9) why a charging scheme has been chosen as the basis for the Red Zone (and possibly also the future Green Zone).
- 1.19. Having considered and consulted extensively on a number of different approaches to the ZEZ, the councils consider that a charging scheme represents the fairest balance between accelerating the transition to a zero emission transport system and maintaining access for residents, businesses and visitors.

## 2. Legal basis

- 3.1. As local traffic authority for Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire County Council has powers under the Transport Act 2000 to introduce a “local charging scheme” to achieve local transport objectives.
- 3.2. The Transport Act 2000 requires the county council to consult on the charging scheme before introducing it. Together with previous consultations, this document forms part of the council’s consultation on the scheme.
- 3.3. 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 scheme or initiatives which directly or indirectly facilitates the achievement of local transport policies.

## 3. January 2020 consultation

### OVERVIEW

- 2.1. The councils consulted informally on proposals for a local charging scheme for the ZEZ Red Zone during January 2020. Approximately 900 responses were received to the consultation. A summary of the consultation feedback, the councils' responses, and the resulting changes made to the scheme is available in the "consultation documents" section of the main consultation web page.
- 2.2. The consultation results reveal a mix of views. As in previous consultations, some feel the scheme is unreasonably stretching, while others feel it is not sufficiently ambitious. 29% thought the proposed level of charge for non-compliant vehicles was too high, 22% thought it too low, with the largest group expressing a view believing the proposed charging level to be 'about right' (42%).
- 2.3. There was a similar spread in views over the proposed hours for implementing charges, albeit only 15% thought the hours of charging should cover less of the day, with 38% believing the charging period should be extended and 30% feeling the proposed hours are 'about right'.
- 2.4. Support for the proposed discounts and exemptions for vehicles registered to residents and businesses within the zone, and for Blue Badge holders was greater in each case than opposition to that proposal.
- 2.5. Based on the attitudes to the charge levels, exemptions and hours, there is no clear case to change any of these aspects of the scheme.

### EXPECTED BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

- 2.6. Based on the five tables above, of the 418 people who said they currently drive in the ZEZ, 62 (15%) said they would pay the charge and continue to use a non-compliant vehicle in the zone. The remaining 85% said they would change vehicle, mode, time, or not enter at all, meaning they would not be emitting any pollution in the ZEZ during the scheme's proposed charging hours. This would lead to a very significant reduction in vehicle emissions in the zone.

- 2.7. 14% said they would enter the zone in a non-compliant vehicle outside the charging hours (i.e. enter between 7pm and 7am). This suggests that there would be relatively low level of ‘displacement’ of emissions to other times of day. Pedestrian and cyclist numbers between 7pm and 7am are much lower than during the day, so overall exposure to pollution would be greatly reduced even if there is some increase in emissions overnight.

## CHANGES IN RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

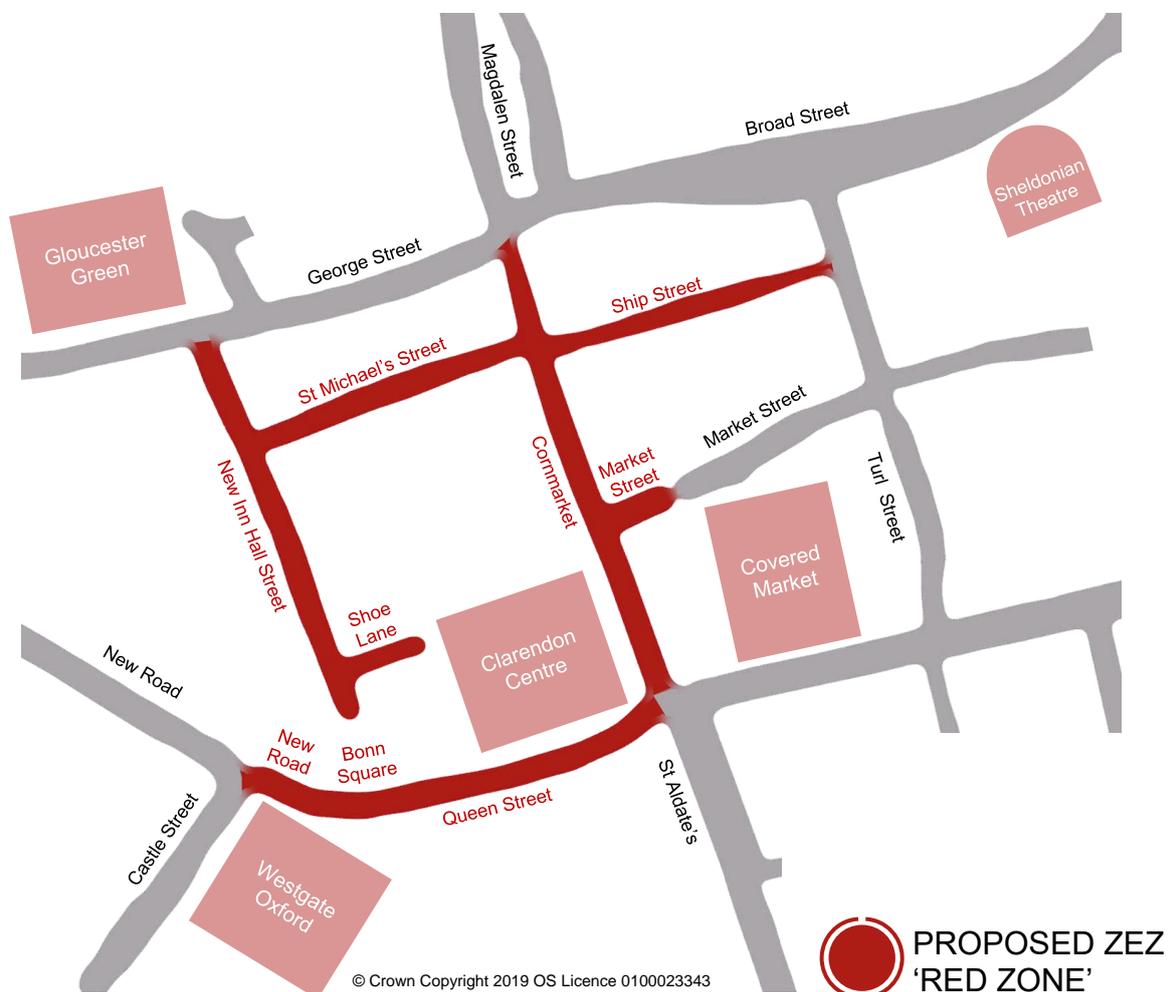
- 2.8. Some changes to the scheme are suggested in response to the consultation feedback:

Change proposed	Reason
8 week “soft launch” phase introduced (Scheme implemented but no charges payable or penalty charges issued until 1 Feb 2021)	To address concerns about the scheme starting in the run up to Christmas 2020, a key trading period for city centre businesses
Start date for second phase changed to summer 2025	To address concerns about the scheme starting in the run up to Christmas 2024, a key trading period for city centre businesses
Commitment to work with ZEZ residents and businesses to develop supporting measures	To address concerns that support is required to help people comply
Blue badge holder discount extended to include international equivalents.  The councils will explore whether it is necessary and feasible to broaden this exemption to cover people with disabilities who do not hold a Blue Badge or equivalent.	To address concerns raised about the impact on access for people with disabilities  <i>Table continues overleaf</i>

Change proposed	Reason
Disabled tax class vehicles exempt in all years	To address concerns raised about the availability and cost of specially adapted vehicles for people with disabilities
Discount for disabled people applied from 2025 (£10 charge instead of £20). This will be reviewed by the end of 2024 to establish whether any charge is appropriate.	To address concerns raised about the impact on access for people with disabilities
Commitment to review zero emission standard for large vans and lorries in light of Ultra Low Emission Truck (ULET) standard, when available	To address concerns about consistency with national guidance
Exemptions for certain special vehicle categories	To address concerns about availability of alternative options where mode shift or re-timing is not possible and ensure consistency with Clean Air Zones and London ULEZ

## 4. Streets affected

- 4.1. The map and table below show the area that would be included in the ZEZ. Non-compliant vehicles used in these streets between 7am and 7pm on all days of the week would be subject to the ZEZ charges unless exempt.



Street	Length
New Road	Between Bonn Square and its junction with Castle Street
Bonn Square	Whole length
Queen Street	Whole length
Cornmarket Street	Whole length
New Inn Hall Street	Whole length
Shoe Lane	Whole length
Market Street	From its junction with Cornmarket, extending east for 40 metres
Ship Street	Whole length
St Michael's Street	Whole length

## 5. Zero emission standard

- 5.1. The criteria for a vehicle to be regarded as ‘zero emission’ and allowed free entry into the ZEZ are below. These allow fully electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, and some plug-in hybrids capable of zero emission driving.
- 5.2. The criteria are based on the government’s [plug-in grant eligibility criteria](#).
- 5.3. All vehicles not meeting these criteria would be subject to charges when driving in the zone, unless they qualify for an exemption or discount (see section 6).

Description	Criteria to qualify as ‘zero emission’
Car Motorhome	CO <sub>2</sub> emissions less than 50g/km  AND  70 miles zero emission range
Moped Motorcycle Quadricycle	CO <sub>2</sub> emissions 0g/km
Van or other commercial vehicle below 3.5 tonnes  Minibus below 5 tonnes	CO <sub>2</sub> emissions less than 75g/km  AND  At least 10 miles zero emission range
Coach, bus or minibus over 5 tonnes  Vans , lorries and other commercial vehicles over 3.5 tonnes	CO <sub>2</sub> emissions at least 50% less than the equivalent conventional Euro VI vehicle of the same category  AND  At least 10 miles zero emission range  <i>Requirements for this category will be reviewed once a national Ultra Low Emission Truck standard has been defined (expected to be during 2021).</i>

## USING A COMPLIANT VEHICLE IN THE ZEZ

- 5.4. Drivers of vehicles with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 0g/km (in most cases, all-electric vehicles without a petrol or diesel engine of any kind) would be able to enter the zone free of charge without registering their vehicle details with the county council. The council would use vehicle number plates to check vehicles' CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- 5.5. Drivers of vehicles with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions greater than 0g/km, but which meet the requirements for free entry in the table above (e.g. hybrid vehicles), would need to contact the county council to register their vehicle as compliant by providing their vehicle details. This would only need to be done once: after a vehicle has been registered as compliant it may be used in the zone free of charge at any time.
- 5.6. Registration is required for vehicles with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions greater than 0g/km because there is currently no way of identifying such vehicles' zero emission range using standard available vehicle data.

## 6. Proposed phasing of charges

- 6.1. Vehicles not meeting the zero emission standard set out in section 5 would be subject to charges if used in the ZEZ between 7am and 7pm, on all days of the week.
- 6.2. Charges would be introduced in four phases:

Phase	Charges, exemptions & discounts See section 7 for details of charges, exemptions and discounts
<p><b>PHASE 1:</b> 1 December 2020 to 31 January 2021</p>	<p>This is a 'soft launch' phase, proposed in response to concerns about the December launch date originally proposed.</p> <p>During this period no charges would be payable and no penalty charges would be issued. Reminders would be sent to drivers of non-compliant vehicles entering the zone during the charging hours to inform them that a charge would apply to their vehicle after 1 February 2021.</p>
<p><b>PHASE 2:</b> 1 February 2021 to 31 July 2025</p>	<p>£10 daily charge for non-compliant vehicles Transitional exemptions and discounts would apply Permanent exemptions would apply</p>
<p><b>PHASE 3:</b> 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2030</p>	<p>£20 daily charge Reduced transitional exemptions and discounts would apply Permanent exemptions would apply</p>
<p><b>PHASE 4:</b> 1 August 2030 onwards</p>	<p>£20 daily charge Transitional exemptions and discounts no longer apply Permanent exemptions would continue to apply</p>

## 7. Proposed daily charges

Proposed daily charges 7am to 7pm, on all days on the week				
Vehicle description	PHASE 1 1 December 2020 to 31 January 2021	PHASE 2 1 February 2021 to 31 July 2025	PHASE 3 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2030	PHASE 4 1 August 2030 onwards
Proposed charges for ZERO EMISSION vehicles, as defined in section 5				
All vehicles	£0	£0	£0	£0
Proposed charges for NON-COMPLIANT vehicles <u>not</u> qualifying for an exemption or discount (exemptions and discounts are on page 15)				
Car Motorhome	£0	£10	£20	£20
Moped Motorcycle Quadricycle				
Van or other commercial vehicle below 3.5 tonnes  Minibus below 5 tonnes				
Coach, bus or minibus over 5 tonnes  Vans, lorries or other commercial vehicles over 3.5 tonnes				

Proposed daily charges 7am to 7pm, on all days on the week				
Vehicle description	PHASE 1 1 December 2020 to 31 January 2021	PHASE 2 1 February 2021 to 31 July 2025	PHASE 3 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2030	PHASE 4 1 August 2030 onwards
<u>Transitional</u> exemptions or discounts				
ZEZ residents' vehicles	£0	£1 (or £250 per year)	£2 (or £500 per year)	£20
Vehicle registered to and operating from businesses in the ZEZ <sup>3</sup>	£0	£0	£10	£20
Blue Badge holders or international equivalent <sup>4</sup>	£0	£0	£10 <sup>5</sup>	£20
<u>Permanent</u> exemptions or discounts				
Disabled tax class vehicles	£0	£0	£0	£0
Hackney carriages licensed by Oxford City Council				
Registered local bus services				
Emergency service vehicles				
Historic tax class vehicles				
Hearses				
Military vehicles				
Agricultural and similar vehicles <sup>6</sup>				
Recovery vehicles				
Special vehicles <sup>7</sup>				
Community transport vehicles <sup>8</sup>				

<sup>3</sup> The councils are exploring the number of vehicles per business which would be eligible for this discount

<sup>4</sup> The councils will explore whether it is necessary and feasible to broaden this exemption to cover people with disabilities who do not hold a Blue Badge or equivalent.

<sup>5</sup> Subject to review by 31 December 2024

<sup>6</sup> Based on definitions used in the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994 for exemptions from vehicle excise duty – these will include vehicles used between different parts of land, tractors and certain agricultural vehicles, mowing machines, steam powered vehicles, now ploughs and gritters.

<sup>7</sup> Based on definitions used in the Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994 for exemptions from vehicle excise duty - these vehicles include digging machines, mobile cranes, mobile pumping vehicles, works trucks and road rollers

<sup>8</sup> i.e. those operating under community bus permits or permits relating to public service vehicles used by educational and other bodies

## PAYMENTS & ENFORCEMENT

- 7.1. The 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.
- 7.2. Drivers or registered keepers of vehicles with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions greater than 0g/km used in the zone during the charging hours would need to pay the required charge, or register for a discount:
  - Before entering the zone; OR
  - By midnight on the day after entering the zone.
- 7.3. Payments and registrations would be accepted by a variety of methods; we expect the majority would do this online. The zone would be enforced using cameras equipped with automatic number plate recognition technology.
- 7.4. Registered keepers of vehicles for which the correct charge has not been paid (or a discount granted) may be sent a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) by post. The maximum penalty would be £120, with a 50% discount for prompt payment.

## 8. Supporting schemes

- 8.1. The city and county councils intend to introduce schemes to support residents and businesses in the ZEZ in making the transition to zero emission vehicles. The councils will work with residents and businesses to develop and implement supporting schemes.
- 8.2. The scale and nature of supporting schemes will depend on the income raised by the ZEZ, which would not be known until the scheme has been in operation for some months. However, supporting schemes could include:
- Grants and/or financing for vehicle charging points and/or zero emission vehicles
  - Electric car/van clubs
  - Freight consolidation or transfer schemes, including use of cargo bike schemes
  - Discounts or reserved spaces in car parks outside the ZEZ (e.g. Park & Ride sites)
  - Funding to trial new ideas or ways of working (for example exemplar delivery & servicing plans)
  - Innovative ways of managing moving in and out days for students.

## 9. Summary of scheme impacts

9.1. The main expected impacts of the scheme are summarised in the table below.

Summary of main impacts (+ positive and - negative)	
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ Lower traffic volumes</li> <li>✦ Reduced nitrogen dioxide emissions</li> <li>✦ Reduced particulate emissions</li> <li>✦ Reduced carbon dioxide emissions</li> <li>✦ Reduced traffic noise</li> <li>✦ Better walking and cycling environment</li> <li>✦ Improved townscape and historic environment</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduced access</li> <li>- Reduced affordability of access</li> <li>- Potential for reduced access for people with disability if charges apply to people qualifying for Blue Badges from 2025</li> <li>✦ Lower traffic volumes</li> <li>✦ Reduced accidents</li> <li>✦ Increased physical activity</li> </ul>
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potential increased direct costs to businesses (charges)</li> <li>- Potential increased indirect costs to businesses (compliance costs)</li> <li>- Potential increased product or service costs for customers</li> <li>- Potential reduced customer choice as a result of the three points above</li> <li>- Potential increased direct costs to residents (charges)</li> <li>- Potential increased indirect costs to residents (compliance costs)</li> <li>✦ Improvement of overall city centre retail and business environment</li> </ul>

## 10. Project timetable

Activity/phase	Dates
Formal consultation deadline	15 April, 23:59
Review consultation feedback, finalise proposals and draft reports to Cabinets	15 April – 31 May
Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet decisions on the scheme	Summer 2020
<b>If approved:</b>	
Scheme implementation	July – December 2020
Phase 1: 'soft launch' phase	1 December 2020 – 31 January 2021
Phase 2 charging period	1 February 2021 – 31 July 2025
Phase 3 charging period	1 August 2025 – 31 July 2030
Phase 4 charging period	1 August 2030 onwards

## 11. Tell us your views!

11.1. This is the final consultation planned on the ZEZ Red Zone: please give us your views on the proposals.

11.2. There are several ways to respond:

How to respond	
Complete our online questionnaire (preferred)	<a href="http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/zeroemissionzone">www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/zeroemissionzone</a>
Email us	<a href="mailto:its.team@oxfordshire.gov.uk">its.team@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>
Write to us	Zero Emission Zone Oxfordshire County Council New Road Oxford OX11ND

11.3. A printed version of the online questionnaire is available on request. Please call us on 01865 792422 if you would like one.