

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 10 March 2021  
**Report of:** Tom Bridgman, Executive Director -Development  
**Title of Report:** Oxford Zero Emission Zone Pilot– outcome of formal consultation and final scheme recommendation

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	Cabinet is asked to support the introduction of a Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) Pilot in Oxford City centre, including supporting Oxfordshire County Council in their legal implementation of the scheme. It is also asked to note the outcome of the joint public consultation on the ZEZ Pilot.
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Tom Hayes, Deputy Leader; Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Zero Carbon Oxford
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24
<b>Recommendations:</b>	That Cabinet resolves to:
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Support</b> the introduction of the Zero Emission Zone Pilot in Oxford City Centre as outlined in Appendix 5;</li><li>2. <b>Support</b> Oxfordshire County Council in their legal implementation of the scheme outlined in Appendix 5;</li><li>3. <b>Note</b> the content of consultation report and outcomes of the recent public consultation on the Oxford ZEZ Pilot; and</li><li>4. <b>Delegate</b> authority to the Executive Director for Development, in consultation with the Head of Financial Services and the Head of Law and Governance, to enter into legal agreement with Oxfordshire County Council in relation to the treatment of surplus funds raised from the scheme and related matters.</li></ol>

## Appendices

- Appendix 1: Extent of the ZEZ Pilot
- Appendix 2: Extent of the ZEZ
- Appendix 3: Summary of ZEZ Pilot proposal for Consultation
- Appendix 4: Oxford ZEZ Pilot Consultation Report
- Appendix 5: Final ZEZ Pilot scheme for approval
- Appendix 6: Equalities & Climate Impact Assessment
- Appendix 7: Risk Register

## Introduction

1. This report outlines a final proposal for a local charging scheme for the Oxford Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) Pilot in selected city centre streets. The ZEZ is to be rolled out in phases, anticipated to start in August 2021 with the creation of a Zero Emission Zone Pilot (ZEZ Pilot) in a small area of Oxford city centre; a map of the zone is at Appendix 1.
2. The ZEZ Pilot aims to reduce air pollution levels, tackle the climate emergency, and improve the health of residents, workers and visitors in Oxford and beyond. It will allow Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council to gain useful experience and information before introducing a larger ZEZ in Oxford city centre in spring 2022. The extent of the larger ZEZ is shown in Appendix 2. There will be a separate consultation on proposals for the larger ZEZ in summer 2021.
3. Public Health England advises that '*there is no evidence of a threshold for health effects*' from air pollution and that local authorities should "*seek to lower population-level exposure and reduce everyone's exposure to air pollution, as well as targeting 'hotspots'*"<sup>1</sup>, to maximise health benefits. In January 2020, a study from Centre for Cities<sup>2</sup> showed that the estimated absolute number of attributable deaths caused by PM2.5 alone in Oxford in 2017 was 55. Nitrogen Oxides NOx (NO2 and NO) are the pollutants of most concern in Oxford and the city continues to see breaches of the legal limit for this pollutant.
4. In January 2021 Oxford City Council became the first UK local authority to set out a voluntary citywide air pollution target of 30 µg/m<sup>3</sup> of NO<sub>2</sub> to be achieved, by 2025 at the latest- going beyond the current legal target set out by the UK Government of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and public health: A guide to using the review to help choose or plan interventions, Public Health England, 2020

<sup>2</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/332854/PHE\\_CE\\_010.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/332854/PHE_CE_010.pdf)

5. Transport is a major source of emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) in Oxford. Vehicle emissions also contribute to climate change, with road transport accounting for 16% of carbon dioxide emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>) in Oxford.
6. The ZEZ Pilot would introduce daily charges, depending on a vehicle's emissions, of between £2 and £10 per day from August 2020, with charges rising to between £4 and £20 from August 2025 onwards. Charges would be applied to non-zero emission vehicles travelling within the zone between 7am and 7pm, 7 days a week.
7. Discounts of 90% would apply to ZEZ residents' and businesses' vehicles, with 100% discount for Blue Badge holders (or their international equivalents) and Disabled Tax Class vehicles. These are 'transitional discounts' and would apply only temporarily. Permanent discounts (100%) would apply to other vehicles including emergency, agricultural and other special vehicles.
8. The ZEZ Pilot 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 Pilot. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras will be used to enforce the zone.
9. 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 either before entering the zone or by midnight on the day after entering the zone.
10. The ZEZ Pilot proposals were recently subject to a final formal consultation, which took place between 20th November 2020 and 17th January 2021, having been delayed from March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Before this, there was a consultation on proposals for the ZEZ Red Zone (covering the same area as the ZEZ Pilot) in January 2020. Outcomes of this consultation, as well as discussions with businesses affected by the proposals over the last two years, have informed proposals for the ZEZ Pilot.
11. As with previous ZEZ consultations, feedback from the formal consultation reveals a mix of views. Across all themes the largest proportion of respondents (typically 35-to 50%) tended to agree with the ZEZ Pilot scheme as it is currently proposed. Many respondents thought the scheme could be more ambitious in terms of the area covered (larger), charging hours (longer) and discounts offered (fewer, more limited).
12. The main concerns raised, including by those less supportive of proposals, are about the scheme's impact on city centre access, consequences for the local economy and the scheme's effect on particular groups: residents and businesses within the ZEZ Pilot and also those with more limited mobility and particular access needs.

## **Background**

13. In 2015 Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan set an ambition to start a Zero Emission Zone in Oxford from 2020 with the aim of reducing air pollution. Over the last few years, Oxford City Council have developed the ZEZ proposals in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and through extensive public and stakeholder consultation.
14. The ZEZ is just one part of the transport strategy for Oxford. Other parts of the strategy (such as Connecting Oxford) are more focused on traffic and congestion reduction but will also help reduce emissions. Together, Connecting Oxford and the ZEZ aim to create an efficient, high-capacity, zero emission transport system for Oxford with public transport and active travel at its heart.
15. The ZEZ is to be rolled out in phases, starting in August 2021 with the creation of a Zero Emission Zone Pilot (ZEZ Pilot) in a small area of Oxford city centre; a map of the zone is at Appendix 1. The intention is to then introduce a larger Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) in spring 2022 (subject to the outcomes of separate consultation). The extent of the larger ZEZ is shown in Appendix 2.
16. The overall aim is to reduce (and eventually largely eliminate) transport 'tailpipe' emissions in Oxford city centre. This will reduce air pollution levels, tackle the climate emergency and improve the health of residents, workers and visitors in Oxford and beyond. The ZEZ has a significant role to play in supporting the City Council plans to tackle the climate emergency by enabling 'net zero carbon'. It is also a core part of the council's recently adopted Air Quality Action Plan 2021-25.
17. The transition to largely zero emission transport is inevitable over the long-term as both technology and vehicle emission standards improve. On 18 November 2020, the government confirmed that the UK will end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030 as part of its '*Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution*'.
18. There have been several studies produced over the years that have tried to estimate the true health impacts of air pollution in Oxford. In April 2014, a report issued by PHE presented estimates of local mortality burdens associated with particulate air pollution. The report showed that long term exposure to anthropogenic particulate air pollution in Oxford was responsible for 6% of all deaths of people aged 25 and over. In January 2020, a study from Centre for Cities<sup>3</sup> showed that the estimated absolute number of attributable deaths caused by PM2.5 alone in Oxford in 2017 was 55.
19. In December 2020, an inquest into the death in 2013 of nine-year-old Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah found that exposure to high levels of air pollution in Lewisham contributed to her death. The verdict is highly significant because it is the first time a specific individual's death has been directly linked to poor air quality.

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/332854/PHE\\_CE\\_010.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/332854/PHE_CE_010.pdf)

20. The pollutant of most concern in Oxford city centre is nitrogen dioxide ( $\text{NO}_2$ ), with a high proportion (40%) of oxides of nitrogen ( $\text{NO}_x$ ) emissions in Oxford coming from road transport.
21. The ZEZ is therefore designed to accelerate the pace of the transition towards a zero emission transport system in Oxford and is one of a range of measures being developed by the councils to improve air quality in the city and beyond. Another is Connecting Oxford, which aims to (amongst other things) reduce motorised traffic levels; with the ZEZ minimising emissions from the traffic that remains as well as encouraging road users to make other positive changes to their travel behaviour. Our view is that both schemes are required in order to deliver significant reductions in congestion and air pollution. The interconnected impacts of the two schemes are being modelled and assessed throughout 2021 and 2022. The monitoring of the ZEZ impact in 2022 will be taken into account when Connecting Oxford is implemented from 2023.
22. A charging scheme is considered to represent the fairest balance between accelerating the transition to a zero-emission transport system and maintaining access for residents, businesses and visitors. It also mirrors the approach taken in London and other UK cities, where more polluting vehicles are charged rather than banned. The use of charges also means requirements can be gradually increased over time as the availability and affordability of zero and low emission vehicles improves. A charging scheme may also generate income which can be used to support the transition to zero emission vehicles, for example, by providing vehicle charging infrastructure and schemes to improve walking, cycling and public transport.
23. Vehicles registered as local bus services and hackney carriages (licensed by Oxford city council) are subject to separate emissions requirements agreed with the councils back in 2019.
24. An informal consultation on proposals for a local charging scheme for the area previously referred to as the ZEZ Red Zone (now the ZEZ Pilot) was carried out in January 2020. The consultation results revealed a mix of views: some felt the scheme was unreasonably stretching, while others felt 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%).
25. In response to the feedback from the January 2020 ZEZ consultation, the experience of COVID-19 and the spring lockdown, and the feedback from the temporary bus gates survey in the summer, the councils have made several changes to the ZEZ proposals. The ZEZ Pilot will now have the same requirements as those proposed for the wider ZEZ, rather than the two zones having different requirements. This will allow the wider ZEZ to be accelerated, delivering greater overall benefits sooner, whilst also making the scheme more flexible for residents and businesses in the ZEZ Pilot area.

26. An expansion of the ZEZ (map in appendix 2) is currently planned to come into effect in spring 2022 with a public consultation on the scheme planned for summer 2021.

### **Outcome of Formal Consultation**

27. ZEZ Pilot proposals were published as part of a period of formal consultation on the scheme between Friday 20 November 2020 and Sunday 17 January 2021. A summary of the proposals put forward is at Appendix 3. Note, we began a final consultation on the Red Zone (now Pilot) in March 2020, but this was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

28. In total, 885 responses were received via the online survey, with a further 34 responses by letter and email. A detailed analysis of the online survey responses is at Appendix 4.

29. The majority of respondents are Oxford residents – mostly living outside the proposed ZEZ Pilot area (73%) with a minority stating they live within the ZEZ Pilot area (5%) – and individuals living outside of Oxford (14%). The remainder of responses are made up of people completing the survey as or on behalf of businesses (5%), groups/organisations (2%) and in their capacity as a councillor (<1%).

30. The following tables provide a summary of the overall responses to the scheme design covering the ZEZ Pilot area, charges, charging hours, discounts and views on measures to support the transition to zero emission vehicles, with detailed analysis of all responses at Annex 6.

*Table 1 – views on the size of the ZEZ Pilot area*

The streets included are about right	More streets should be included	Fewer streets should be included	Don't know
37%	32%	25%	6%

*Table 2 - views on the ZEZ Pilot charges*

Vehicles Type	About right	Too low	Too high	Don't know
Ultra Low Emission Vehicle	48%	12%	30%	10%
Clean Air Zone Compliant Vehicles	42%	16%	31%	11%
Others	36%	19%	35%	10%

*Table 3 - views on ZEZ Pilot charging hours*

About right	Too long	Too short	Don't know
38%	37%	20%	5%

*Table 4 - views on ZEZ Pilot discounts*

Vehicle	About right	Too big	Too low	Don't know
Blue Badge Holder	49%	10%	24%	17%
Emergency service	48%	4%	23%	24%
ZEZ Pilot resident	42%	16%	27%	15%
Recovery	41%	10%	20%	30%
Community transport	40%	10%	21%	29%
ZEZ Pilot businesses	39%	19%	24%	18%
Hearse	39%	10%	20%	31%
Military	34%	16%	19%	31%
Special*	34%	9%	16%	41%
Agriculture	32%	18%	17%	33%
Historic tax class	28%	23%	18%	32%

31. All respondents to the survey were asked to indicate (from a list of options) up to five factors that would help them transition to zero emission travel. The results are presented in Table 7.

*Table 5 – views on measures to support the transition to zero emission vehicles*

Measure	% of respondents supporting this measure
Grants and/or financing for vehicle charging points and/or zero emission vehicles	63%
Small scale walking and cycling improvements	53%

Small scale public realm improvements and improved pedestrian areas	42%
Freight consolidation	39%
Electric car/van clubs	30%
Innovative ways of managing moving in and out days for students	23%
Funding to trial new ideas or ways of working (for example exemplar delivery & servicing plans)	18%

32. The main comments from respondents who said “other” and/or gave additional information regarding views on supporting the transition to zero emission vehicles are given below. The number of responses is given in brackets.

- Large scale walking & cycling schemes (78)
- Improvement of public transport (54)
- More charging points/the availability of charging points (41)
- Electric cars are too expensive (33)
- Electric cars also pollute the air in other ways (13)
- Better infrastructure for car parks/free car parking (12)
- Large scale traffic improvements (10)
- Large scale public realm improvements (9)
- I don't believe this is where the money will go (6)

33. All respondents to the survey were asked to give their views on the proposed larger ZEZ. A summary of the 10 most common themes raised are given below. The number of responses is given in brackets.

- Good idea/supportive of this idea (190)
- Scrap it/don't want (189)
- Stopping access to facilities in Oxford (125)
- Consider making the ZEZ larger (115)
- Disconnects city residents (80)
- I welcome this/approval/support (77)
- It should be implemented earlier (59)
- Cleaner air/less pollution (52)
- Needs infrastructure for electric cars (43)
- Causes delays/traffic congestion elsewhere (40)
- Reduces traffic/less congestion (26)

34. 34 pieces of correspondence (emails and letters) were also received regarding the consultation. A third of these (11) were from residents with the remainder coming from representatives of various groups/organisations (17) including transport groups and trade organisations, 2 businesses and one councillor.

35. The main concerns raised (mentioned by 2 or more correspondents) were as follows:

- Negative effect on local businesses
- Lack of electric vehicle infrastructure, e.g. EV charging points
- Effect of charges on low-income residents/families
- Will create congestion in other areas
- Access for deliveries
- Rushed proposals without proper consultation
- Access to healthcare services, e.g. GPs, hospitals
- Public transport infrastructure more of a priority e.g. bus routes, bus emissions

### **Officer responses and proposed changes**

36. As with previous ZEZ consultations, feedback from the formal consultation reveals a mix of views. Across all themes the largest proportion of respondents (typically 30-50%) tended to agree with the ZEZ Pilot scheme as it is currently proposed.
37. Other respondents (typically 10-30%) thought the scheme could be more ambitious in terms of the area covered (larger), charging hours (longer) and discounts offered (fewer, more limited).
38. The main concerns raised, including by those less supportive of proposals, are about the scheme's impact on city centre access, consequences for the local economy and the scheme's effect on particular groups: residents and businesses within the ZEZ Pilot and also those with more limited mobility and particular access needs.
39. The area covered by the ZEZ Pilot is already very restricted, with no through traffic routes and some part-pedestrianised streets (Cornmarket and Queen Street). The only public car parking provided in the area is for Blue Badge holders. The pilot scheme therefore is not expected to affect wider access i.e. those travelling through the city centre, rather it mainly affects those with a destination in the ZEZ Pilot area, such as residents and business within the zone and those accessing Blue Badge car parking.
40. For ZEZ Pilot residents' vehicles a 90% discount is proposed, and which will apply to August 2030. A 90% discount is also proposed for vehicles registered to and operating from businesses in the ZEZ Pilot, with this applying to August 2025. These are considered sufficient notice periods for residents and businesses within the ZEZ Pilot, with several schemes also to be developed to support the transition to zero emissions. These discounts apply to residents' and businesses' "own" vehicles only. The vast majority of vehicles coming into the area to service a home or business (e.g. deliveries, tradespeople etc.) will not benefit from these discounts.
41. For Blue Badge holders (or international equivalents) and Disabled Tax Class vehicles, a 100% discount is proposed until August 2025, with a review of this discount to take place in consultation with affected road users and to be decided by December 2024. Any extension to this discount would require a further public consultation.

42. The formal consultation sought views on broadening the Blue Badge Holder discount to cover people with disabilities who do not hold a Blue Badge or equivalent, for example, people with a disability of a temporary/transient nature, such as mental health issues or a broken leg. Whilst this was supported by some who responded to the consultation, there is currently no recognised mechanism available to facilitate this. A local scheme would therefore need to be devised, but this would likely be difficult to administer and could be open to abuse. It is therefore not proposed to change the scheme so that those with temporary disabilities have an exemption or discount. Other charging schemes such as London's Congestion Charge and ULEZ do not provide any exemptions/discounts for people with temporary disabilities.
43. It has been suggested that discounts should be made available for construction traffic, especially for projects that are currently or soon to be underway, however, it is not proposed to give discounts for construction traffic. The ZEZ scheme will encourage construction traffic (goods and staff) to consolidate and/or use less-polluting vehicles and/or enter the zone outside of the charging hours.
44. Some churches in the ZEZ Pilot area are concerned about the negative impact the charges will have on increasing travel costs for staff/volunteers. There may be other organisations whose business is supported by people working in a voluntary capacity. It is however not proposed to give discounts to people driving to churches. There is not considered to be sufficient difference to other city centre businesses to justify subsidising such journeys. Other charging schemes such as London's Congestion Charge and ULEZ do not provide any exemptions/discounts for churches. Behavioural change will be encouraged by the ZEZ scheme with churches also eligible to apply for discounts for any vehicles that they have registered to their premises in the Pilot area.
45. Concern has been raised that the ZEZ Pilot could impose unfair financial burden on those people carrying out health or caring duties for people living in the zone, whether in a professional or personal capacity. It is therefore proposed to offer a 100% discount to professional care and health workers' vehicles whilst carrying out formal duties. Exact details of this discount are to be developed ahead of scheme implementation. It is not considered feasible to extend this discount to include non-professional carers.
46. Some Private Hire companies/drivers have invested in cleaner vehicles in the last few years and in some cases have a large fleet of hybrid electric vehicles which, fall into the £4 'CAZ' charging band for the ZEZ. Some Private Hire operators do not feel it is fair that they will need to pay £4/day to drive in the ZEZ Pilot (and – if it is approved – the wider zone) and have asked for a 100% discount. Officers consider that Private Hire vehicles should pay a ZEZ charge, as they contribute to city centre transport emissions and no alternative 'path' to a zero emission fleet has been agreed for these vehicles, as it has for Oxford-licensed Hackney carriages and local buses. However recognising their public transport contribution officers recommend a 50% discount is applied for petrol-electric hybrid private hire and non-Oxford

Licenced Hackney carriage vehicles emitting less than 100 g/km CO<sub>2</sub> until August 2025.

47. The consultation material stated that the charging bands would apply to all vehicles including powered two-wheelers such as mopeds and motorbikes. Following consultation feedback highlighting challenges with the application of Euro standards to powered two wheelers, officers have confirmed that the data held by DVLA would be insufficient in many cases to determine a powered two-wheeler's Euro standard.
48. Officers consider powered two-wheelers should nevertheless pay a ZEZ charge (other cities have simply exempted them). To avoid the DVLA data problems, officers recommend all powered two-wheelers are charged solely according to the level of CO<sub>2</sub> they emit, without reference to Euro standards. The number of vehicles that this will affect in the Pilot scheme will be small and the introduction and operation of the scheme will enable this aspect of the charging system to be monitored ahead of the wider scheme being developed.
49. It is proposed that the county council, as charging authority, may from time to time grant limited temporary exemptions to deal with planned road closures where normal compliance with the scheme is not possible. Such exemptions will be granted only if there is no other route available that would allow the driver to avoid entering the Pilot ZEZ.
50. It is recommended that the county council have the ability to grant a 100% discount to the ZEZ charge for students driving into the Pilot ZEZ area only for the purpose of delivering or collecting personal belongings at the beginning and end of each of the three university terms. This discount is only proposed for students who are considered by their colleges to be suffering acute financial hardship. The colleges will be asked to apply to the council for the discount on behalf of the students in question.
51. Appendix 5 sets out the final ZEZ Pilot scheme as proposed. These final proposals take account of the consultation feedback and include the changes highlighted in the section above.

### **Financial implications**

52. The cost to finalise the scheme design and then implement the ZEZ Pilot is currently estimated to be £211,000 (£295,400 with contingency). A grant for £150,000 has been awarded to the council from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and which will be used to cover most of the scheme implementation costs, with other costs to be shared equally between the city and county councils.
53. The scheme will generate some income which is estimated to be equivalent to around £260,000 per annum, though the final amount will depend on the actual behavioural responses to the scheme.

54. Income raised by the scheme will be used to cover ZEZ Pilot operating costs, including maintenance, technical support, scheme administration and enforcement. The ZEZ Pilot scheme may not generate substantial net proceeds after covering implementation and operating costs, but it is intended that if any net proceeds are generated then it is intended that this will be used to pay for schemes to help residents and businesses in the ZEZ Pilot make the transition to zero emission vehicles, and on other schemes that promote zero and low emission transport in the city. The Transport Act 2000 requires that net proceeds are only used for schemes that facilitate the achievement of local transport policies.
55. Any shortfall in income raised in regards to implementation costs of the scheme will be covered by reserves. In addition to this, £23,000 over 2 years have been added to the budget for the City Council's share of running costs.
56. Income would be received by the charging authority (Oxfordshire County Council) who would be responsible for ensuring the requirements of the Transport Act 2000 are met. It has been agreed that the city council will receive a share of net proceeds in proportion to its contribution to the costs of implementing the ZEZ, assumed to be 50%. A legal agreement is being completed which will set out the terms of any spending, likely to include an arrangement where all decisions on what to spend the money on are decided jointly with the option for the city council to use funding on schemes which they can implement on their own.

## **Legal issues**

57. The charging scheme needed for the ZEZ Pilot would be introduced by Oxfordshire County Council as they, as local transport authority, hold the powers to do so pursuant to Part III of the Transport Act 2000. The ultimate legal responsibility for the scheme therefore rests with Oxfordshire County Council and not Oxford City Council. The monies generated as a result of such schemes may only be used for limited purposes in connection with local transport policies. The proposed legal agreement between Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council will govern the use of the monies that will or may be transferred by Oxfordshire County Council to Oxford City Council.
58. The Council has a statutory duty to review and assess local air quality, within the programme of Local Air Quality Management established under requirements within Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. The Council is also required to prepare an Air Quality Action Plan with a view to reducing air pollution. This scheme contributes to the Council's duties under the Environment Act 1995.

## **Level of risk**

59. A risk register is available in appendix 7.
60. Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for procurement of enforcement and back office services related to the introduction of the ZEZ Pilot. A risk has been highlighted by the County Council in relation to the delay in getting DfT approval for ZEZ signage and the back-office systems in place in time for an August launch. The County Council are currently seeking to mitigate risks associated with this.

## **Equalities impact**

61. There is a clear and pressing need to take action to reduce air pollution as soon as possible, with the ZEZ Pilot scheme designed to do that whilst also recognising the impacts of Covid-19 on residents and businesses. The pilot scheme only effects a small part of Oxford city centre with changes already made from previous designs to reduce the requirements for residents and businesses within the zone including 90% discounts.
62. The ZEZ Pilot scheme is expected to provide positive environmental benefits through reduced traffic levels and emissions from transport which will support a better walking and cycling environment in the city centre. These benefits are likely to accrue particularly to those living and working in the ZEZ Pilot area. The scheme may also generate income to pay for schemes to help residents and businesses in the ZEZ Pilot make the transition to zero emission vehicles, and on other schemes that promote zero and low emission transport in the city. This will help to increase the overall accessibility of the city centre, with increased active travel also contributing to mental, physical and more general wellbeing benefits.
63. The main negative impacts of the scheme are its effect on access and affordability of access for those travelling within the zone between 7am and 7pm and using a non-zero emission vehicle. However, these negative impacts are not considered to be significant given only a small area of the city centre is proposed and is already very restricted i.e. is not a through route. Drivers without Blue Badges cannot park in the ZEZ Pilot currently (there are public car parks close to the ZEZ Pilot which are unaffected by the charges). There is also very little workplace parking within the ZEZ Pilot, with the city centre also highly accessible by bus (including Park & Ride) and train.
64. The ZEZ Pilot area does include some public Blue Badge car parking. For Blue Badge holders, disabled tax class vehicles (and their international equivalents), the scheme has been designed to minimise impacts through the proposed 100% discount for Blue Badge holders and disabled tax class vehicles until August 2025. It is proposed to review this in consultation with affected road users, with any extension to this discount subject to a further public consultation and decided by 2024. Before this, proposals will also be monitored including through liaison with groups representing people with disabilities to identify whether anyone with disabilities is not benefitting from this discount and is being negatively affected. It is also worth noting that there is other public parking available for Blue Badge holders in the city centre which is unaffected by the ZEZ Pilot charges.
65. An Equality and Climate Impact Assessment (ECIA) has been completed for the ZEZ Pilot scheme and is at Appendix 6 using Oxfordshire County Councils assessment for impact of transport schemes. The ECIA has been used to determine its potential impacts on protected characteristics and was informed by responses to the formal consultation.

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**Background Papers:** None