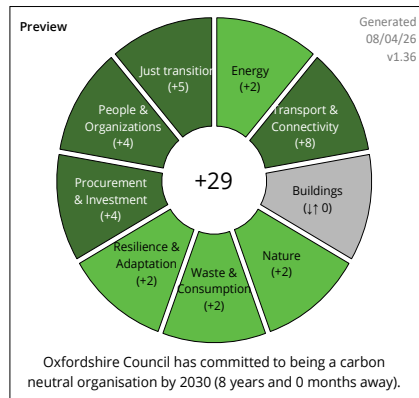


Summary

<b>Directorate and Service Area</b>	
<b>What is being assessed</b>	Oxford Congestion Charge Investment Plan – proposed investment of surplus congestion charge income into Park and Ride, bus, active travel and related supporting measures.
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	A new investment plan linked to the congestion charge, within an existing wider policy context of congestion reduction and support for sustainable travel in Oxford.
<b>Summary of assessment</b>	The plan would use surplus congestion charge income to support a package of measures intended to reduce reliance on private car travel and improve access to Oxford by bus, Park and Ride and active travel. The package includes a proposed Part 1 Park and Ride offer and a wider set of Part 2 measures covering staff travel support, hospital access, active travel and access to employment. Overall, the assessment indicates a positive climate effect, particularly through supporting public transport use, active travel and lower-car travel, although the scale of impact will depend on uptake, detailed delivery and the final decision on the Part 1 offer.
<b>Completed by</b>	Steer
<b>Climate action sign off by</b>	
<b>Director sign off by</b>	
<b>Assessment date</b>	08-Apr-26



## Detail of proposal

<b>Context / Background</b>	OCC has commissioned an EqIA and CIA to support the Cabinet decision on the Oxford Congestion Charge Investment Plan. The assessments cover both the recommended schemes and the alternative options within the investment plan, and consider both individual and cumulative impacts. The plan is structured in two parts, with Part 1 focused on the Park and Ride offer and Part 2 covering supporting measures, including staff travel support, hospital access, active travel and access to employment.
<b>Proposal</b>	The Oxford Congestion Charge Investment Plan would use surplus congestion charge income to fund a package of transport interventions intended to reduce car trips into Oxford and support lower-carbon travel. Part 1 remains subject to Cabinet decision and relates to the Park and Ride fare offer. The recommended option is a free Park and Ride return bus offer, although alternative Park and Ride pricing options are also under consideration. The package includes four main types of intervention. Fare-based and access measures include the proposed free Park and Ride return bus offer, free weekday Park and Ride parking for NHS and school staff, free weekday bus travel for NHS and school staff, and free bus travel for Connect to Work participants. Service provision and network enhancements comprise the proposed hospital express Park and Ride services. Active travel and enabling infrastructure would fund small-scale measures such as cycle parking and minor infrastructure upgrades. A reserve is also included to manage income risk and provide flexibility to extend or rescope measures if required.
<b>Evidence / Intelligence</b>	The assessment is informed by discussion with Oxfordshire County Council officers during development of the Oxford Congestion Charge Investment Plan, including consideration of the different package options and the measures considered most appropriate for inclusion. This has included review of the proposed Park and Ride offer, targeted staff travel support, hospital express Park and Ride services, active travel infrastructure, free bus travel for Connect to Work participants, and the alternative Part 1 options and reinvestment approach set out in the plan. At this stage, the climate assessment is therefore based primarily on the design and intended purpose of the proposed measures, and on officer input regarding how the package has been developed and refined. The assessment remains qualitative and proportionate to the current stage of development, recognising that some delivery details remain to be confirmed and that further scheme-specific assessment may be required as the programme progresses.
<b>Alternatives considered / rejected</b>	The principal alternatives considered relate to Part 1 of the investment plan, where four alternatives to the recommended free Park and Ride return bus offer have been identified. These options would generate different levels of savings, which could be reinvested in active travel, public transport infrastructure and additional fare discounts. A do-nothing approach would mean that surplus congestion charge income is not used to strengthen sustainable travel alternatives and would therefore not support the purpose of the investment plan.

Category	Impact criteria	Score (-3 to +3)	Description of impact	Actions or mitigations to reduce negative impacts	Action owner	Timeline and monitoring arrangements
Energy	Increases energy efficiency	1	Overall, the investment plan is expected to have a modest positive effect on transport energy efficiency, primarily through reducing private car kilometres and supporting more efficient shared and active travel choices.  Active travel and enabling infrastructure (Medium): The investment plan includes £500k for active travel infrastructure, such as cycle parking and minor upgrades. These measures may improve the efficiency of short and local trips by enabling some journeys, or parts of journeys, to be made by walking and cycling rather than by private car. This may be particularly relevant for first and last mile access to bus corridors and Park and Ride sites.	Maximise uptake of the free Park and Ride return bus offer, staff bus travel offers and active travel improvements through targeted communication and wayfinding. Where uptake is lower than anticipated, review barriers such as interchange quality, cycle parking provision and scheme visibility. Reflect energy-efficiency considerations in the detailed design of active travel works and in any future reallocation of Annex 3 savings.	OCC program me lead, active travel delivery team, public transport team and bus operators.	At scheme mobilisation and during delivery. Monitor uptake of Park and Ride, staff travel offers and active travel measures through routine patronage data, delivery tracking and periodic review as the programme progresses.
Energy	Promotes a switch to low-carbon or renewable energy	1	Fare-based measures (Medium): The free Park and Ride return bus offer, free weekday bus travel for NHS Overall, the investment plan is expected to support a shift towards lower-carbon transport, although it does so through travel behaviour and service choices rather than through direct energy interventions.  Active travel and enabling infrastructure (High): Active travel measures support zero tailpipe emission travel through walking and cycling and may also support greater use of lower-carbon micromobility where available. Practical measures such as cycle parking and minor route improvements may make these alternatives more attractive for journeys that might otherwise be undertaken by car.	Prioritise communications and supporting measures that encourage mode shift to lower-carbon travel, including clear promotion of the Park and Ride offer, staff bus travel measures and active travel improvements. If Annex 3 options are pursued, direct any savings towards additional bus fare discounts and active travel measures to retain a strong low-carbon outcome.	OCC program me lead, public transport team, active travel team and bus operators.	At programme launch and at future decision points on Annex 3 options. Monitor patronage, take-up of discounted products and the extent to which scheme changes appear to support lower-car travel over time.
Energy	Promotes resilient, local, smart energy systems	N/A	Fare-based measures (Medium): The fare-led measures within the investment plan may support a shift towards lower-carbon transport by			

			Overall, the investment plan is expected to reduce reliance on private car use for a range of trip purposes and may reduce the perceived need for car ownership for some users.	
Transport & Connectivity	Reduces need to travel and/or the need for private car ownership	3	<p>Active travel and enabling infrastructure (Medium):</p> <p>Active travel improvements may reduce dependence on the car for local journeys by making short trips more feasible without driving. The proposed cycle parking and minor upgrades may also strengthen access to Park and Ride and bus services, reducing the need to use a car for the whole journey.</p> <p>Fare-based measures (High):</p> <p>The strongest pathway is through fare and access incentives. The free Park and Ride return bus offer is explicitly intended to reduce car trips into Oxford. Free weekday bus travel for NHS and school staff, together with Overall, the investment plan is expected to support active travel directly through infrastructure funding and indirectly through measures that improve access and reduce dependency on private cars.</p>	<p>OCC program me lead, public transport team, active travel team, NHS and school partners, and bus operators.</p> <p>Retain a strong package of non-car incentives, including the free Park and Ride return bus offer or, if an Annex 3 option is chosen, reinvest savings in bus discounts and active travel. Ensure the hospital express Park and Ride services and staff travel measures are designed around real user needs so that non-car options remain credible alternatives to driving.</p> <p>Use the active travel allocation to prioritise small-scale measures that remove practical barriers to walking and cycling, especially around Park and Ride and bus access. Where Annex 3 savings are available, consider directing the additional active travel allocation towards locations that strengthen first and last mile access and support inclusive design.</p> <p>At scheme design, delivery and post-implementation review. Monitor delivery of infrastructure, observe use where feasible, and review whether the measures are supporting safer and more attractive access to hubs and destinations.</p>
Transport & Connectivity	Supports Active Travel	3	<p>Active travel and enabling infrastructure (High):</p> <p>This is the most direct positive pathway within the investment plan. The £500k allocation for active travel infrastructure is intended for small-scale, deliverable measures such as cycle parking and minor upgrades. These measures may improve safety, convenience and accessibility for walking and cycling and may support first and last mile access to Park and Ride and bus services.</p> <p>Fare-based measures (Medium):</p> <p>Fare measures may support active travel indirectly where they encourage more multimodal journeys. For Overall, the investment plan is expected to increase the attractiveness and use of public transport, particularly for Park and Ride, commuting and access to key destinations.</p>	<p>OCC active travel delivery team and program me lead.</p>
Transport & Connectivity	Increases use of public transport	3	<p>Active travel and enabling infrastructure (Medium):</p> <p>Active travel measures may increase the catchment of public transport by improving access to bus stops and Park and Ride sites without requiring car parking. Cycle parking and other small upgrades may be particularly valuable where access to a hub is currently difficult without driving.</p> <p>Fare-based measures (High):</p> <p>Free Park and Ride return bus offer, free weekday bus travel for NHS and school staff, and free bus travel for Connect to Work participants all reduce cost barriers to bus use. Annex 3 also identifies possible reinvestment Overall, the investment plan is expected to support transport electrification indirectly by strengthening demand for lower-emission public transport and supporting lower-emission access modes.</p>	<p>OCC public transport team, program me lead, bus operators and relevant delivery partners.</p> <p>Maintain clear communications on eligibility and use of the free Park and Ride return bus offer, NHS and school staff bus travel and Connect to Work support. Ensure the hospital express Park and Ride services are designed to be reliable and legible. If Annex 3 options are selected, use reinvestment in season ticket discounts, under-19 discounts, group tickets or disability concessions to sustain public transport attractiveness.</p>
Transport & Connectivity	Accelerates electrification of transport	1	<p>Active travel and enabling infrastructure (Medium):</p> <p>Active travel infrastructure may support greater use of e-bikes and other low-emission micromobility where available. Although the plan does not directly fund electrification assets, facilities such as cycle parking may help normalise electrified short-distance travel.</p> <p>Fare-based measures (Medium):</p> <p>Fare incentives may increase demand for zero-emission bus services by making bus travel more attractive relative to private cars. The most relevant examples are the free Park</p>	<p>OCC program me lead, public transport team and bus operators.</p> <p>Where service contracts, fleet decisions or supporting works are developed, continue to favour lower-emission fleet deployment and infrastructure where feasible. If future allocations support public transport infrastructure, consider whether those investments can enable lower-emission operations. Keep under review whether additional supporting measures are required to maintain a positive electrification effect.</p> <p>At service planning and future funding decisions. Monitor fleet composition where relevant, together with patronage on services expected to support lower-emission travel.</p>
Buildings	Promotes net zero new builds and developments		N/A	
Buildings	Accelerates retrofitting of existing buildings		N/A	

			Overall, the investment plan is expected to have an indirect positive effect on biodiversity and environmental quality through reductions in traffic-related pressures, although it does not include direct ecological enhancement measures.			
Nature	Protects, restores or enhances biodiversity, landscape and ecosystems	1	Active travel and enabling infrastructure (Medium): Active travel measures may contribute indirectly to a less traffic-dominated street environment where they support mode shift away from private car use. Lower traffic levels may reduce noise and air pollution in some locations, which may benefit urban environmental quality relevant to biodiversity.	Where active travel or public transport works are taken forward, identify opportunities to minimise adverse construction effects and, where proportionate, incorporate environmental enhancements. Monitor whether traffic or environmental pressures are displaced to other locations and consider local mitigation if this emerges as a material issue.	OCC program me lead, active travel delivery team and relevant scheme designers.	At scheme design and through delivery. Monitor implementation, local environmental feedback and any available traffic or air quality information relevant to areas affected by the measures.
Nature	Develops blue and green infrastructure	N/A	Fare-based measures (Medium): The free Park and Ride return bus offer and staff-focused free bus travel are intended to reduce car trips into Oxford. To the extent that these			
			Overall, the investment plan may improve access to green spaces by making non-car journeys easier and more affordable, although the scale of effect will depend on detailed connectivity and uptake.			
Nature	Improves access to nature and green spaces	1	Active travel and enabling infrastructure (Medium): Small-scale walking and cycling improvements may make local parks and green spaces easier to reach without using a car, especially for short leisure trips and local recreational travel.	Where active travel and bus measures are designed in more detail, consider whether they can improve access to parks and open spaces as part of wider accessibility benefits. If Annex 3 savings are reinvested in discounted group or under-19 travel, review whether those products also support affordable leisure access.	OCC program me lead, active travel team and public transport team.	At detailed design and service planning stages. Monitor uptake and user feedback where measures are likely to influence access to local destinations.
			Fare-based measures (Medium): Lower-cost bus travel and discounted micromobility may reduce affordability barriers to discretionary trips, including access to parks and open spaces. This may be particularly relevant where Annex 3 savings are redirected to additional bus fare discounts such as group tickets or			
			Overall, the investment plan is expected to reduce transport fuel consumption where it supports mode shift away from private car use, although wider material consumption effects are limited.			
Waste & Consumption	Reduces overall consumption	1	Active travel and enabling infrastructure (Medium): Where active travel improvements replace short car trips, they may reduce fuel consumption directly and support lower resource use per trip.	Maximise the extent of mode shift by maintaining a strong package of fare incentives and deliverable active travel measures. Review whether service performance or infrastructure gaps are limiting the programme's ability to reduce private car kilometres and associated fuel consumption.	OCC program me lead, active travel team, public transport team and bus operators.	During delivery and review stages. Monitor patronage, Park and Ride use and implementation of active travel measures as proxy indicators of reduced car-based fuel consumption.
			Fare-based measures (Medium): Measures such as the free Park and Ride return bus offer and free bus travel for targeted groups may reduce fuel consumption by shifting travel from private cars to shared public transport. This is likely to be most pronounced where the measure reduces inbound car travel into Oxford.			
Waste & Consumption	Supports waste prevention and drive reuse and recycling	N/A				
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience to flooding	N/A				
			Overall, the investment plan may provide a small positive contribution through transport flexibility and long-term mitigation, but direct adaptation effects are limited at plan level.			
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience to other extreme weather events (e.g., storms, cold snaps, heatwaves, droughts)	1	Active travel and enabling infrastructure (Medium): Active travel measures may increase local transport redundancy by providing an alternative to car-based access for short trips during some forms of disruption. Benefits are likely to vary depending on route quality, maintenance and the nature of the weather event.	Where active travel measures and service changes are developed, ensure they are designed and operated in a way that remains usable during typical weather disruption, including maintenance and operational planning where relevant. Keep under review whether the programme is creating practical alternatives to car use during disruption.	OCC program me lead, active travel team, public transport team and operators.	At scheme design and operational review. Monitor service reliability, user feedback and any issues arising during disruption events.
			Fare-based measures (Low): Fare measures may support longer-term mitigation through lower car use and emissions, but they do not directly improve adaptation to extreme weather. Their contribution is therefore secondary and diffuse.			

			Overall, the investment plan may provide a moderate positive contribution to transport and community resilience by reducing pressure on the road network and improving alternatives to private car travel.			
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience of council Service Provision and Network Enhancements Provision and Network Enhancements, communities, energy systems, transport infrastructure and/or supply chains	1	Active travel and enabling infrastructure (Medium): Active travel improvements may support local accessibility when car travel is constrained and may provide some network redundancy for short trips. This may be relevant to community resilience and access to local services.  Fare-based measures (Medium): Fare-led mode shift may reduce pressure on the road network and support more reliable access to services. Examples include the free Park and Ride return bus offer and staff-focused free bus travel, which	Use the programme to strengthen alternatives to private car access for key journeys, particularly through the hospital express Park and Ride services and staff-focused travel support. Review whether any communities or key destinations remain poorly served and whether targeted adjustments are needed.	OCC program me lead, public transport team, active travel team, NHS and school partners, and bus operators.	During mobilisation and periodic review. Monitor uptake, service performance and feedback from key destinations and user groups to understand whether resilience benefits are being realised.
Procurement & Investment	Procurement practices prioritise low-carbon options, circular economy and sustainability	N/A	Overall, the investment plan is expected to align positively with climate action and the path to net zero as it prioritises lower-car, lower-carbon travel choices and supporting infrastructure.			
Procurement & Investment	Investment being considered supports climate action/ is consistent with path to net zero	2	Active travel and enabling infrastructure (High): The dedicated active travel infrastructure budget is directly aligned with climate action because it supports zero tailpipe emission travel and may reduce short car trips.  Fare-based measures (High): The fare package is clearly framed around mode shift and reduced car travel. Key examples are the free Park and Ride return bus offer, free weekday bus travel for NHS and school staff, and free travel for Connect to Work participants. Annex 3 also shows that, if savings are generated, officers propose	Maintain the package focus on lower-car, lower-carbon travel. If changes are made to the Part 1 offer, use the Annex 3 reinvestment principles to preserve climate benefits through active travel, public transport infrastructure and additional fare discounts. Revisit the CIA as the programme evolves to ensure consistency with climate objectives.	OCC program me lead with input from the Climate Action team where appropriate.	At each major programme decision point and as individual schemes are refined. Monitor delivery against the agreed package and update the assessment if scope changes materially.
People & Organizations	Drives behavioural change to address the climate and ecological emergency	2	Overall, the investment plan is expected to support behaviour change through a combination of cost, convenience and access measures, with the strongest effects likely where incentives are most visible to users.  Active travel and enabling infrastructure (Medium): Improved active travel conditions may support behaviour change by making walking and cycling more practical for everyday journeys and for access to public transport.  Fare-based measures (High): Lower fares are one of the main ways this package could encourage people to use public transport instead of driving. Free return bus travel from Park and Ride sites, free weekday bus travel for NHS and school staff, and free travel for Connect to Work participants all make bus travel cheaper for the people using those  Overall, the investment plan may support some organisational change, particularly in relation to staff travel, but wider systemic impacts are likely to remain modest without complementary policy measures.	Develop a clear communication and engagement approach so that intended users understand the travel offers, eligibility and alternatives to private car use. Tailor messaging for key groups, including staff cohorts and Connect to Work participants, and review whether additional support is required where behaviour change is weaker than expected.	OCC program me lead, communications team, partner employers and bus operators.	Before launch and during implementation. Monitor product take-up, service usage and stakeholder feedback to assess whether behaviour change is occurring as intended.
People & Organizations	Drives organizational and systemic change to address the climate and ecological emergency	1	Active travel and enabling infrastructure (Low): Active travel measures may support workplace travel planning and commuting choices, but on their own they are unlikely to drive organisational or systemic change.  Fare-based measures (Medium): The targeted staff-focused measures may support employer-led change by making sustainable commuting more credible for NHS and school staff. Free weekday bus travel and free weekday Park and Ride parking for those groups may help organisations encourage lower-car travel patterns, although the plan does not require	Work with NHS bodies, schools and other partners to integrate the staff travel measures into wider travel planning and internal communications. Encourage partner organisations to promote sustainable travel choices so that the programme contributes to longer-term organisational change.	OCC program me lead with NHS, school and other partner organisations.	At implementation and through ongoing partnership engagement. Monitor participation by partner organisations and review whether the measures are influencing staff travel behaviour.

		Overall, the investment plan may support some green jobs and service innovation, although these effects are likely to be moderate and indirect at programme level.		
Just transition	Promotes green innovation and job creation	<p>Active travel and enabling infrastructure (Medium): Delivery of active travel measures may support jobs in design, construction, installation and maintenance. Although the works are relatively small scale, they may still support local supply chains.</p> <p>Fare-based measures (Low): Fare measures are less likely to generate direct new employment, although they may support service demand and revenue.</p>	<p>Where feasible, use the programme to support innovative but practical delivery models, such as new service approaches or integration between active travel and Park and Ride access. Keep expectations proportionate and ensure any innovation remains focused on deliverability and value for money.</p>	<p>OCC programme lead, public transport team, active travel team and delivery partners.</p> <p>During detailed scheme development and implementation. Monitor delivery activity and any evident operational or supply-chain benefits associated with the programme.</p>
Just transition	Promotes health and wellbeing	<p>Service provision and network enhancements (Medium): Additional service provision, particularly the hospital express Park Overall, the investment plan is expected to support health and wellbeing through a combination of active travel, improved access and reduced exposure to traffic-related harms.</p> <p>Active travel and enabling infrastructure (High): Active travel measures may increase walking and cycling and therefore physical activity, with associated wellbeing benefits. Small-scale improvements such as cycle parking and safer local links may be particularly relevant where they help people incorporate active travel into routine journeys.</p> <p>Fare-based measures (Medium): Fare incentives may support health and wellbeing indirectly by reducing car dependency and improving access to work, services and opportunities. Measures such as free bus travel for Overall, the investment plan may make a modest positive contribution to reducing poverty and inequality by lowering some transport cost barriers and improving access to employment, services and key destinations, although the scale of impact is likely to vary between groups and is better understood alongside the EqIA.</p>	<p>Design and target the measures so that they improve safe access to work, healthcare and everyday destinations, while also supporting active travel where feasible. For any emerging adverse effects, such as localised traffic pressures, consider whether targeted mitigation or adjustment is required as the programme progresses.</p> <p>Target the affordability elements of the package towards groups most likely to benefit. This includes maintaining free bus travel for Connect to Work participants, staff travel support, and, where Annex 3 savings arise, considering under-19 discounts, discounted group tickets and extended disability concession access. Use the EqIA and ongoing engagement to identify whether additional mitigation is needed for groups facing residual affordability barriers.</p>	<p>OCC programme lead, active travel team, public transport team, NHS partners and bus operators.</p> <p>During implementation and review. Monitor uptake, feedback from users and any available information on access, traffic conditions and scheme performance relevant to health and wellbeing outcomes.</p>
Just transition	Reduces poverty and inequality	<p>Active travel and enabling infrastructure (Low): The active travel allocation is relatively small and focused on deliverable measures such as cycle parking and minor infrastructure upgrades. On its own, this is unlikely to have a major distributional effect. However, where these measures improve safe and convenient access for local trips or first and last mile connections, they may help reduce the cost of travel for people who are able to walk or cycle rather than rely on paid-for motorised travel.</p> <p>Overall, the investment plan is expected to make a positive contribution to inclusion and participation by improving affordability, widening non-car access to key destinations, and supporting more people to travel for work, education, healthcare and other activities without relying on a private car.</p>	<p>Ensure that measures are easy to understand and practically accessible, with clear eligibility criteria and accessible communications. Use the hospital express Park and Ride services, staff offers and Connect to Work support to strengthen access to healthcare, employment and training. If Annex 3 savings are available, consider whether group, youth or disability-focused discounts can widen inclusion further.</p>	<p>OCC programme lead, communications team, public transport team, delivery partners and bus operators.</p> <p>At implementation and review of future funding choices. Monitor take-up of discounted products by intended cohorts, gather stakeholder feedback and revisit the EqIA and CIA as the programme develops.</p>
Just transition	Promotes inclusion and participation	<p>Active travel and enabling infrastructure (Medium): The active travel allocation may support inclusion by improving the practical usability of local walking and cycling routes and by making first and last mile access to bus stops and Park and Ride sites easier. Measures such as cycle parking and minor upgrades are unlikely to transform access on their own, but they may improve participation for users who are already close to key destinations or who need better connections to public</p>		