

City centre low emission zone (LEZ) Equality impact assessment

1. Introduction

1.1. This document assesses the impact of the proposed LEZ on different social groups to identify any discriminatory or socially exclusive effects. In line with county council and national guidance, this assessment covers the following:

- Disability and health
- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Socio-economic status
- Religion
- Location (urban/rural)

2. Analysis

2.1. The tables at the end of this assessment contain the analysis of the impacts of the proposed scheme on different groups.

3. Conclusions

3.1. The proposals will significantly reduce emissions from buses in central Oxford and prevent older, more polluting buses from being used in future. This will be a major health benefit for all those spending time in the city centre, particularly residents.

3.2. People suffering from asthma or other respiratory conditions are particularly susceptible to the effects of air pollution and the proposals will therefore be of particular benefit to them.

3.3. The proposals are not considered to have any discriminatory effects arising from differences of religion, race, or gender.

3.4. The LEZ will increase bus companies' operating costs because newer and less polluting vehicles are more expensive than older more polluting vehicles. This could lead to some bus services being reduced in frequency or withdrawn completely, or increased fares.

3.5. If the proposals result in worsened bus services or increased fares, this will have a particularly negative effect on people who are unable to

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use a car for transport. This includes people with certain disabilities (including older people with disabilities), people below driving age, and people who cannot afford to buy and run a car.

3.6. If the proposals result in worsened bus services or increased fares, the most likely services to be affected are infrequent services serving rural areas. The groups listed in 3.5 are therefore likely to be particularly affected if they live in rural areas.

3.7. The proposals include a number of features to protect bus services, including:

- Exemption for very low frequency bus services
- Temporary exemption for Euro IV buses currently in use
- Temporary exemption for commercial bus services withdrawn close to the compliance deadline
- Permission for retrofitted pollution abatement equipment to be used on existing vehicles, rather than purchasing new vehicles

3.8. These features have been included specifically to minimise or prevent worsening of bus services or increased fares and are considered to mitigate negative impacts to an acceptable level, given the significant wider benefits of the proposals.

Disability and health

Table 1: People with a disability that increases their reliance on public transport	
Potential negative effects	Mitigation
Fare increases Reduced bus service frequency Loss of bus services NOTE: these are risks only and may not materialise	The proposals include a number of features to protect bus services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemption for very low frequency bus services • Temporary exemption for Euro IV buses currently in use • Temporary exemption for commercial bus services withdrawn close to the compliance deadline • Permission for retrofitted pollution abatement equipment to be used on existing vehicles, rather than purchasing new vehicles

Table 2: People with respiratory health problems
Positive effects
Overall levels of exposure to nitrogen dioxide will be reduced, which will be of particular benefit to people with respiratory health problems.

Age

Age-related health problems and disabilities are covered in the section above.

Table 3: People below driving age (including children travelling to school)	
Potential negative effects	Mitigation
Fare increases Reduced bus service frequency Loss of bus services NOTE: these are risks only and may not materialise	The proposals include a number of features to protect bus services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemption for very low frequency bus services • Temporary exemption for Euro IV buses currently in use • Temporary exemption for commercial bus services withdrawn close to the compliance deadline • Permission for retrofitted pollution abatement equipment to be used on existing vehicles, rather than purchasing new vehicles

Socio-economic status

Table 4: People unable to afford to buy and run a car	
Potential negative effects	Mitigation
Fare increases Reduced bus service frequency Loss of bus services NOTE: these are risks only and may not materialise	The proposals include a number of features to protect bus services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemption for very low frequency bus services • Temporary exemption for Euro IV buses currently in use • Temporary exemption for commercial bus services withdrawn close to the compliance deadline • Permission for retrofitted pollution abatement equipment to be used on existing vehicles, rather than purchasing new vehicles

Location

Table 5: People living in rural areas – particularly those in one of the groups identified in Tables 1, 3 and 4	
Potential negative effects	Mitigation
Fare increases Reduced bus service frequency Loss of bus services NOTE: these are risks only and may not materialise	The proposals include a number of features to protect bus services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemption for very low frequency bus services • Temporary exemption for Euro IV buses currently in use • Temporary exemption for commercial bus services withdrawn close to the compliance deadline • Permission for retrofitted pollution abatement equipment to be used on existing vehicles, rather than purchasing new vehicles

Religion, race and gender

The proposals are not considered to have any discriminatory effects arising from differences of religion, race, or gender.