

## **Oxford ZEZ pilot amendments – six-week consultation**

### **Consultation survey report**

#### **Document control**

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## 1. Introduction

Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council launched a zero emission zone pilot in February 2022 to improve air quality, cut carbon emissions, and move towards zero emission travel in the city.

In autumn 2023 the county council consulted on some changes to the scheme. These were:

- Continuing the discounts for Blue Badge holders, disabled tax class vehicles, ZEZ business vehicles, and ZEZ residents' vehicles indefinitely by removing the discount end dates.
- Keeping the ZEZ pilot charges at their current level by removing the planned increase in daily charges from 1 August 2025.

A six-week consultation was available on the county council's digital Let's talk Oxfordshire platform from midday 12 September to 5pm 24 October 2023. Paper copies were available at Oxfordshire County Library.

The consultation was publicised by a letter-drop to all addresses within the ZEZ pilot area; an email to just over 100 stakeholders; notices in county and city councils' e-newsletters; and an email to city and county councillors.

We received 189 responses – 188 on the digital platform and one paper copy.

## 2. Proposed changes and reasons for them

Change	Reason
<b>Remove discount end dates</b>  The 100% discount for Blue Badge holders and disabled tax class vehicles, and 90% discount for ZEZ business vehicles is currently due to end in July 2025. The 90% discount for ZEZ residents' vehicles is currently due to end in July 2030.  We're now proposing to remove these end dates, so the above discounts would continue indefinitely.	Considering cost of living pressures, we don't think it is necessary or appropriate for these discounts to end on the dates shown, so we're now proposing these discounts will continue for as long as the pilot is in place.
<b>Remove increase in daily charges from 1 August 2025</b>  The ZEZ charges are currently due to double in August 2025. We're now proposing ZEZ charges should stay at the <a href="#">current levels</a> indefinitely.	Considering cost of living pressures, we don't think it is necessary or appropriate for the ZEZ pilot charges to double in August 2025, so the current charges will continue for as long as the pilot is in place.

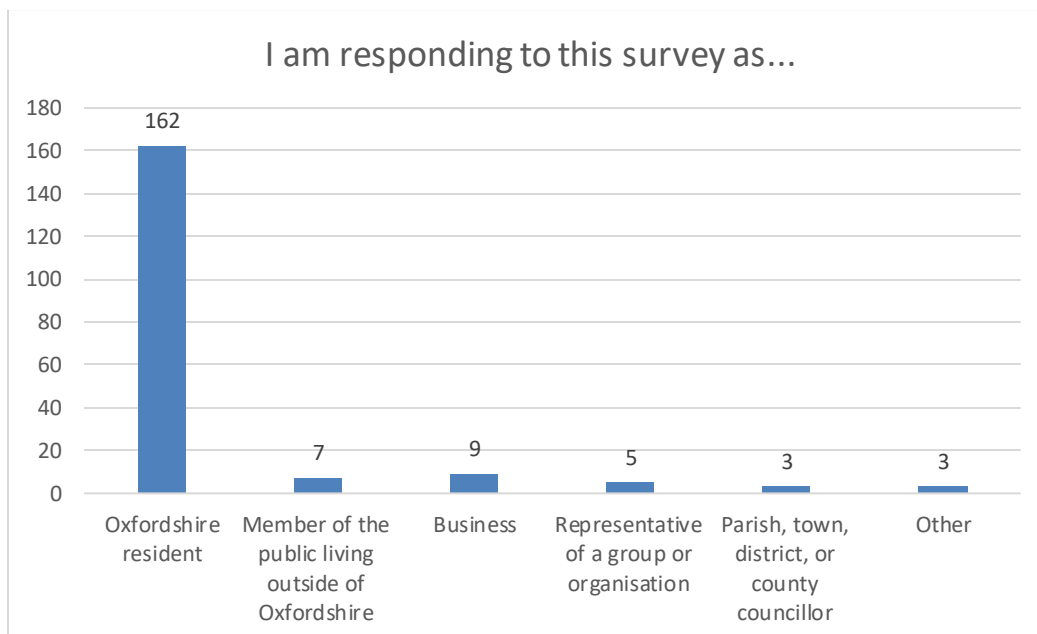
### 3. Overall results

The majority of respondents support the proposed changes to remove the **end dates** for discounts and to remove the increase in daily charges. Between 55 and 64 per cent of respondents definitely or somewhat agreed with the changes, while for each proposed amendment around 25 per cent definitely disagreed.

Some of those who definitely disagreed, appear to have misread the proposal to mean that discounts themselves rather than the **end dates** would be removed. Others objected to ‘watering down’ the ambition and purpose of the zero emission zone.

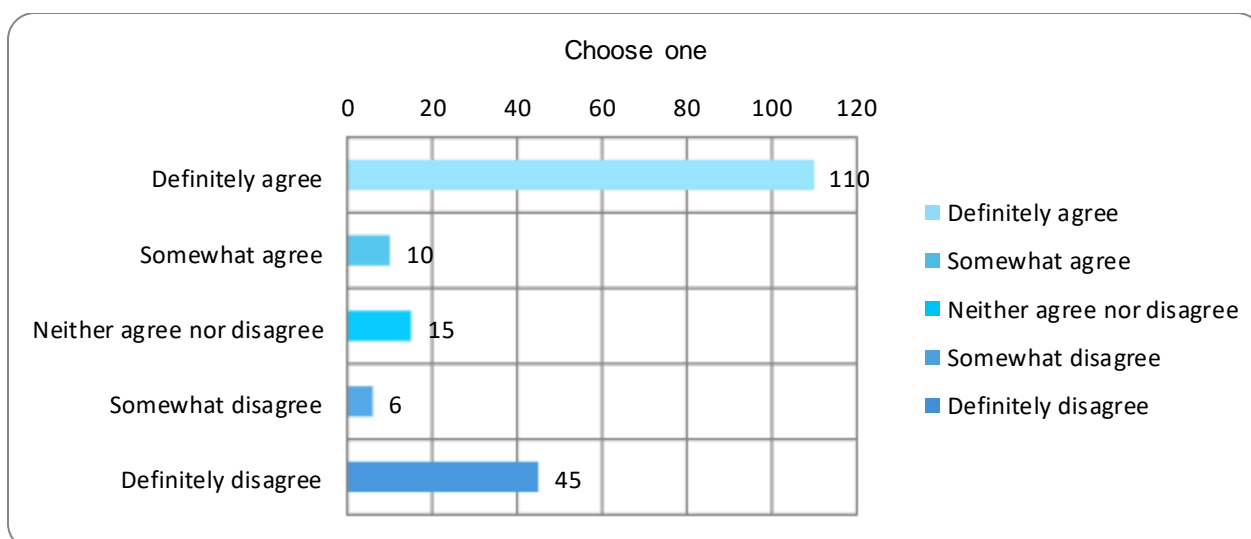
#### 3.1. Respondent profile

There were 189 responses altogether – 188 online and 1 paper survey. Majority of respondents were residents from Oxfordshire (162). 7 were members of the public outside of Oxfordshire; 9 represented a business; 5 represented a group or organisation; 3 were councillors; and 3 responded as ‘other’, clarifying they regularly travelled to the city for work.



### 4. Responses analysis

#### 4.1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove the discount end date for Blue Badge holders and disabled tax class vehicles?



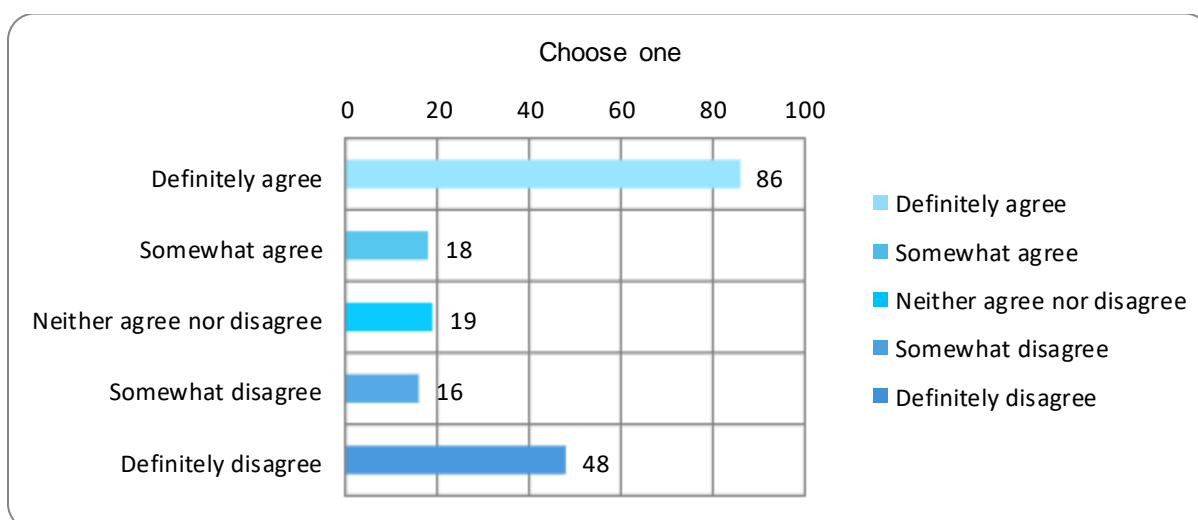
186 people responded to this question.

64.5% of respondents definitely or somewhat agree with the proposal to remove the discount end date for Blue Badge holders and disabled tax class vehicles.

24% (45 respondents) said they definitely disagree. Comments from this group varied. Some people objected to 'watering down' the ZEZ pilot while some had apparently misread the proposal to mean that the discounts, rather than discount *end dates* would be removed. E.g.:

*Really are you that prepared to cut the discount for these classes, then you should be ashamed.*

#### 4.2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove the discount end date for ZEZ businesses' vehicles?



187 people responded to this question. 55.6% of respondents definitely or somewhat agreed with the proposal to remove the end date from ZEZ business vehicles.

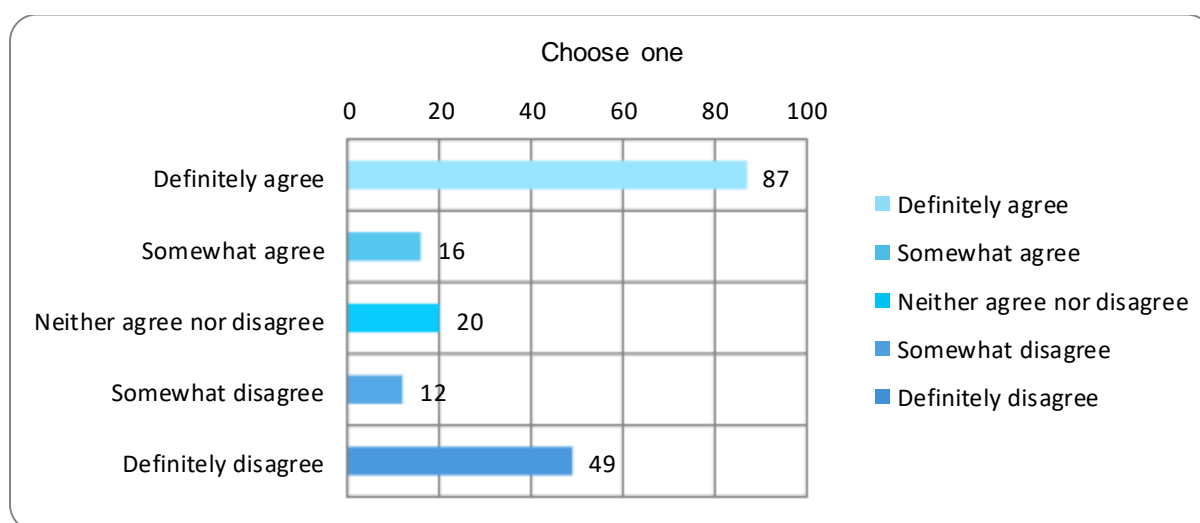
25.6% definitely disagreed. People in this group commented that removing the end date would remove the incentive from businesses to move towards zero emission vehicles. E.g.:

*There should be an end date to create a sense of urgency for businesses to adapt by electrifying their vehicle fleet or opting for alternatives such as e-cargo bikes. An option would be to delay the end date to give businesses enough time to adapt. However, removing it altogether removes the incentive/pressure on businesses, risking undermining the purpose of the ZEZ (especially as circulation in the current ZEZ is fairly limited anyway).*

Again, some respondents appeared to have misread the proposal to mean that the discounts, rather than the discount *end date* would be removed. E.g.:

*Again all these business that struggle to stay afloat and you won't [sic] to take more money off them. Trying to kill the high street are you?*

#### 4.3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove the discount end date for ZEZ residents' vehicles?



184 people responded to this question.

60% of respondents definitely or somewhat agreed with the proposal to remove the end dates from ZEZ residents' discounts.

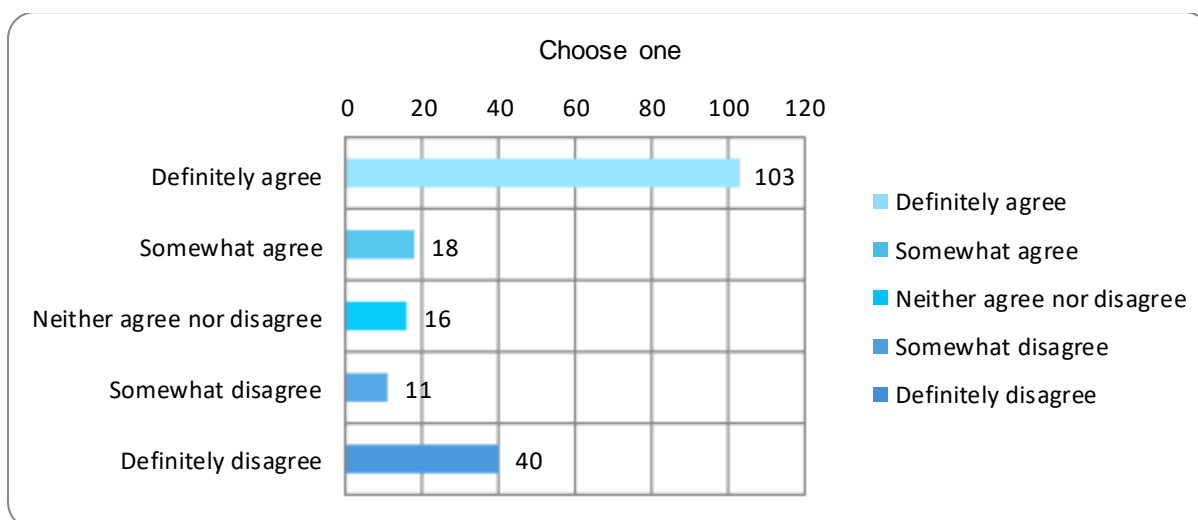
26.6% of respondents definitely disagreed with the proposal. People in this group commented that removing the end date was removing the incentive to move towards zero emission vehicles. E.g.:

*Residents have had plenty of warning. They need to plan ahead like the rest of us and use non-polluting forms of transport.*

Some respondents appeared to have misread the proposal to mean that the discounts, rather than the discount *end date* would be removed. E.g.:

*Why should residents be penalised for where they live. People will just move out of Oxford. But maybe that's your aim?*

**4.4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to continue the current ZEZ charges indefinitely, instead of doubling the charges in August 2025?**



188 people responded to this question.

64% of respondents definitely or somewhat agreed with the proposal to continue the current ZEZ charges indefinitely, instead of doubling the charges in August 2025.

21% of respondents definitely disagreed with the proposal. People in this group urged the council to provide stronger sanctions to encourage a shift to zero emission vehicles.

*The idea of paying to pollute is absurd and should not be allowed. Given the law as it stands charges should be progressively increased until users of polluting vehicles get the message.*

Some respondents used the comments to express that they disapproved of the entire ZEZ scheme. E.g.:

*I think the ZEZ should be removed. This pushes traffic into other routes which are too busy, this penalty also discriminates against the poorer people in our society who cannot afford new cars.*

## 5. Comments analysis

This chapter give a concise account of the comments give in the survey.

### 5.1. Disagreement with proposed changes

People who strongly disagreed with the proposed changes were primarily concerned about councils 'watering down' the zero emission zone or had misread the proposals to mean that the discounts themselves, rather than discount end dates would be removed. Similar kinds of comments were made on each of the proposed changes. Below is an example of a comments on removing the end date for the 100% discount from Blue Badge holders.

*This substantially waters down the ZEZ. Nobody needs to drive in the heart of Oxford - wheelchairs and mobility scooters are needed for the last mile anyway so why encourage more cars into the centre of Oxford. If the ZEZ expansion were to finally go ahead there may be a point in some discount around 50% (i.e. 10 pounds a day) but it being free just voids the claim of being a "ZERO" emissions zone. Other exemptions such as parking allowances that allow blue badge holders to park in the city centre will remain anyway.*

Example of a comment on the proposed change to remove the 90% discount **end date** from business vehicles within the ZEZ pilot:

*There should be an end date to create a sense of urgency for businesses to adapt by electrifying their vehicle fleet or opting for alternatives such as e-cargo bikes. An option would be to delay the end date to give businesses enough time to adapt. However, removing it altogether removes the incentive/pressure on businesses, risking undermining the purpose of the ZEZ (especially as circulation in the current ZEZ is fairly limited anyway).*

Example of a comment on the proposed change to remove the 90% discount **end date** for residents' vehicles within the ZEZ pilot:

*Public and active transport from the city centre is excellent. Residents should be encouraged to use it. Owning a car full-time is not usually necessary and requires parking space that could be put to better use.*

Example comment on the proposal to continue the current ZEZ charges indefinitely, instead of doubling the charges in August 2025:

*We have got to stick to the vision articulated in the Local Transport Plan adopted in July 2022. Come on Oxfordshire you can do this!*

## 5.2. Agreement on proposed changes

People who agreed with the proposed changes primarily saw them as a reasonable way to take into account the residents and businesses circumstances and capability to alter their travel arrangements or type of vehicle.

Example comment on proposed removal of the 100% discount end date for Blue Badge holders and disable tax class vehicles:



*These classes should never be charged for access (regardless of the current economic situation), as they may simply be unable to access other methods of transport.*

Example of a comment on the proposed change to remove the 90% discount **end date** from businesses who are based in the ZEZ pilot:

*Sensible not to impose any more hardship on city centre retailers and catering businesses.*

Example of a comment on the proposed change to remove the 90% discount **end date** for residents who live in the ZEZ pilot area:

*In the current cost of living crisis let's not make life even tougher for people.*

Example comment on the proposal to continue the current ZEZ charges indefinitely, instead of doubling the charges in August 2025:

*It is already high enough and increasing it is unlikely to deter the people who are already coming in and will only punish those who are already in a position of difficulty due to the cost of living.*

### 5.3. Other comments

People were invited to give any other comments they had on the zero emission zone pilot. Below is a compilation on suggestions they had.

The need to pay separately for each trip to the zone was found inconvenient:

*A key issue [.. ] is the process for paying to access the ZEZ. This is presenting a not insignificant administrative burden on the company based upon our relatively limited access to the pilot scheme area. When considering the second phase area this process will be significantly more burdensome.*

*We are interested to understand what plans are in place for a fleet or multiple vehicle payment method to assist business such as ours. Alternatively an account system where a retrospective bill could be sent to us on a monthly basis or a prepaid account that could be drawn down on.*

AND

*Cumbersome and time-consuming system, no account billable automatically, thus opening up the possibility of a £30 fine for a 40p (or 20p for a motorcycle) oversight. Has happened to me twice already. I WASN'T trying to avoid paying 20p! Extremely frustrating if we get the day wrong or just simply forget.*

There was concern that Blue Badge holder without an own vehicle end up paying extra when private hire vehicles pass the ZEZ charge to the customer:

*Not all disabled people who are eligible for Blue Badges can physically drive, or afford to do so or lucky enough to have someone to do so. Disabled passengers like myself using the cheaper as more efficiently run private hire*

*cars very much rely on them as their mobility aids. It is shocking that now to enter a ZEZ street I am paying £2 extra, as the driver is understandably faced no choice but to pass this onto the customers.*

There were concerns about the maturity of market and infrastructure to allow for a move towards electric vehicles:

*[...] there are several barriers that still exist for van operators looking to electrify fleets. Many operators cannot find suitable vehicle types on the market, and others have experienced long lead times due to limited quantities available.*

*There are still concerns over vehicle mileage range and reliability, with reports of inconsistent distances achieved between charges. The cost of electric vans, whilst becoming more competitive, is still between two and three times more expensive than conventional diesel or petrol engines.*

*As for HGVs, there are currently very limited zero-emission capable solutions available for HGVs between 7.5 tonnes and 14 tonnes and whilst there are manufacturers which are developing some electric alternatives for trucks, these need time to become affordable market-ready solutions. For heavier HGVs, significant further technological developments are required and in the absence of viable zero-emission alternatives for HGVs, the scheme will simply be a tax on vital commercial vehicles servicing Oxford town centre.*

And:

*While the idea of a total Oxford zero emission scheme is good, in practice there are issues e.g. not enough fast charging points for the whole of Oxford if everyone had an electric vehicle. Capacity of the grid to cope with the full extent of overnight charging and so on. In essence what is needed is a gradual introduction to roads which experience congestion and high levels of traffic.*

There was a concern about deliveries that require specific kind of care:

*Pharma products to pharmacies in the ZEZ consist of temperature controlled chilled vaccines such as covid and flu. [...] This applies to cancer treatments/childhood vaccines/organ rejections treatments and many more. They all need temp control and currently vehicles don't have the electric capacity to run a van and other sections of the vehicle at different temperatures. This is just another tax which ultimately has to be paid by the government in distribution charges and the cost of medicines. Other cities aren't implementing ZEZ's so why should Oxford?*

The project team also received a complaint whose sender asked their email to be included in the consultation. Their main concern was not being able to check if they had entered the ZEZ pilot area:

*I wish to complain about the implementation of the ZEZ pilot. This has significant flaws. I saw no prior notification on 23 Sept until a sign which I think said I was entering the zone. I was stuck in the flow of traffic in the flow of traffic at that point and therefore had no option to avoid entering. The website says to register a blue badge 10 days in advance of entering. This is not logically possible for people unaware of the scheme until they arrive as it should be possible to register a*

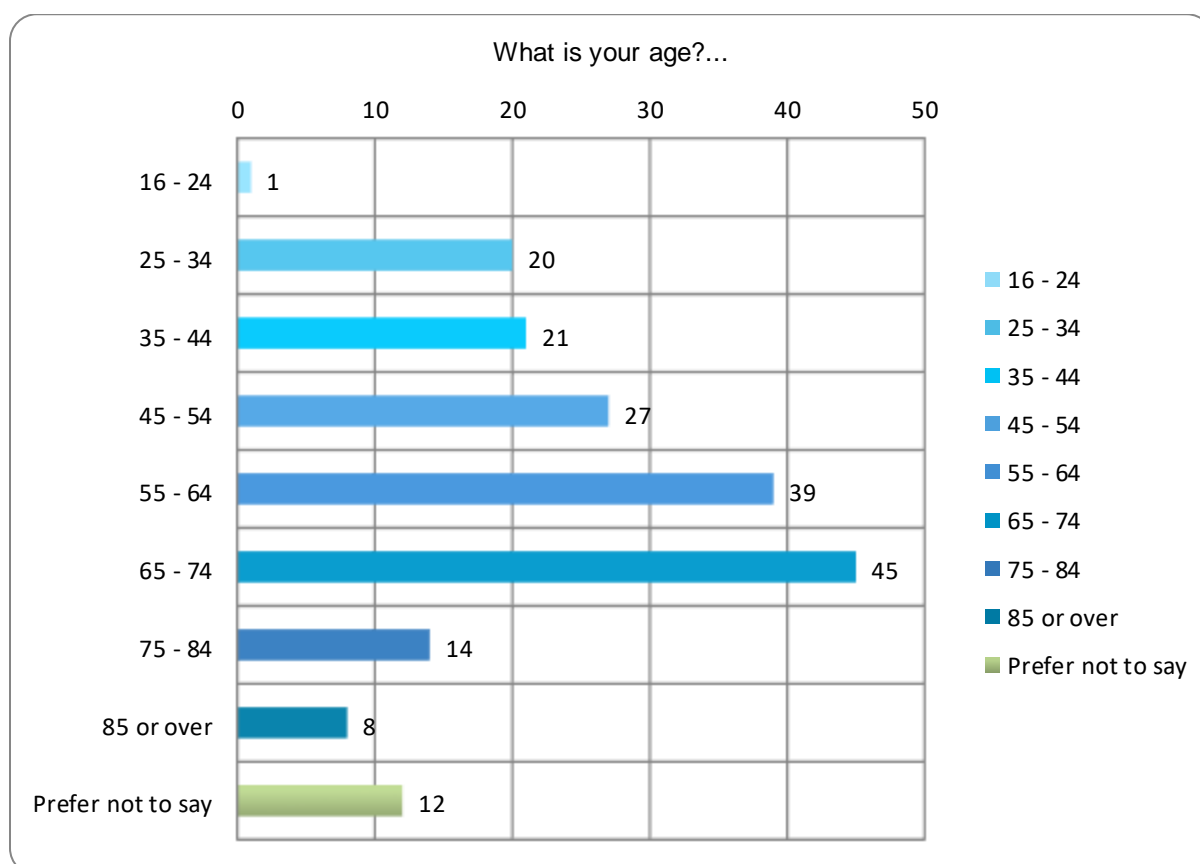
*badge at any time and this to be taken into account before a penalty notice is issued. It is an unnecessary rule and discriminates against the disabled.*

*There is no ability to view a database by car registration or other information to see if I actually went into the ZEZ. This means drivers could miss payments or pay unnecessarily.*

*The registration process for blue badge exemption does not include an option for a non-disabled driver carrying a disabled passenger. This is a serious and discriminatory omission.*

## 6. Demographic data

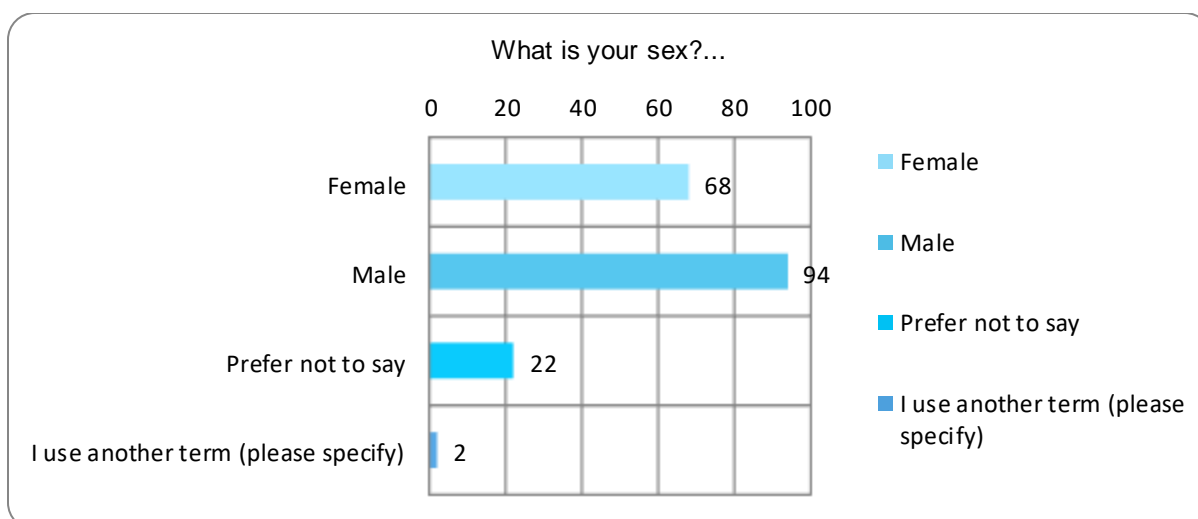
### 6.1 Respondents by age



187 people responded to this question.

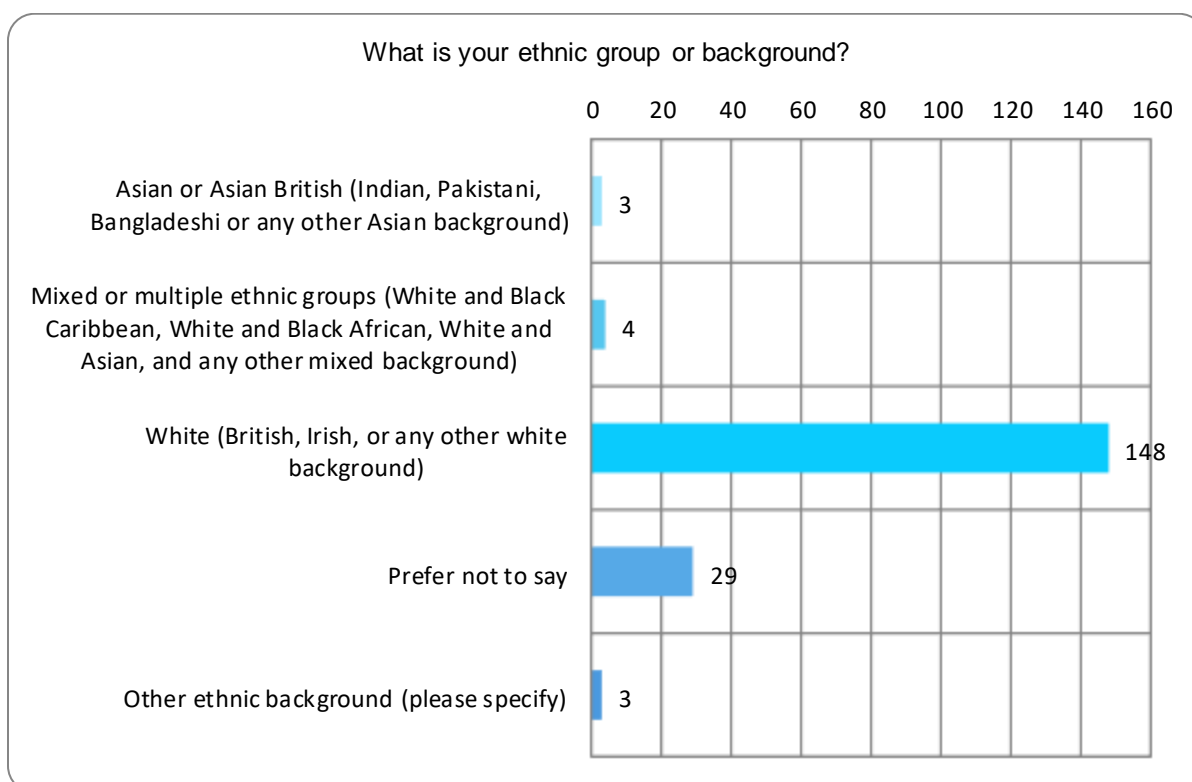
24% of respondents were between 65 and 74 years old; just under 21% between 55 and 64; and 14% between 45 and 54 years old.

### 6.2 Respondents by sex



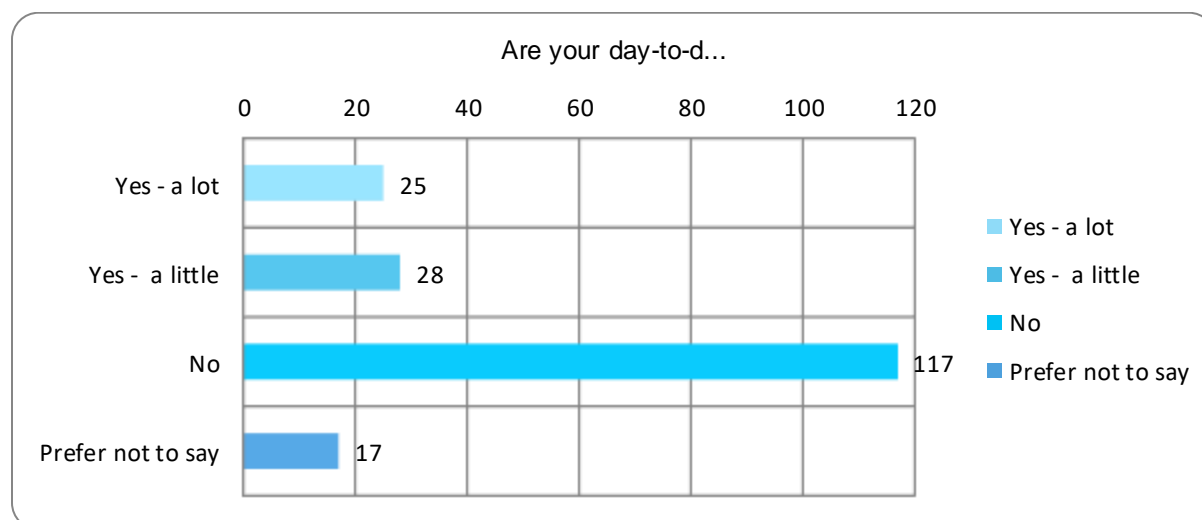
186 people responded to this question. Just over 50% identified as male, 36.5% as female; 1% as other and 12% preferred not to say.

### 6.3 Respondents by ethnic background



187 people responded to the question about their ethnic group or background. 79% of respondents were white; 15% preferred not to say; and only a few identified as being of other backgrounds.

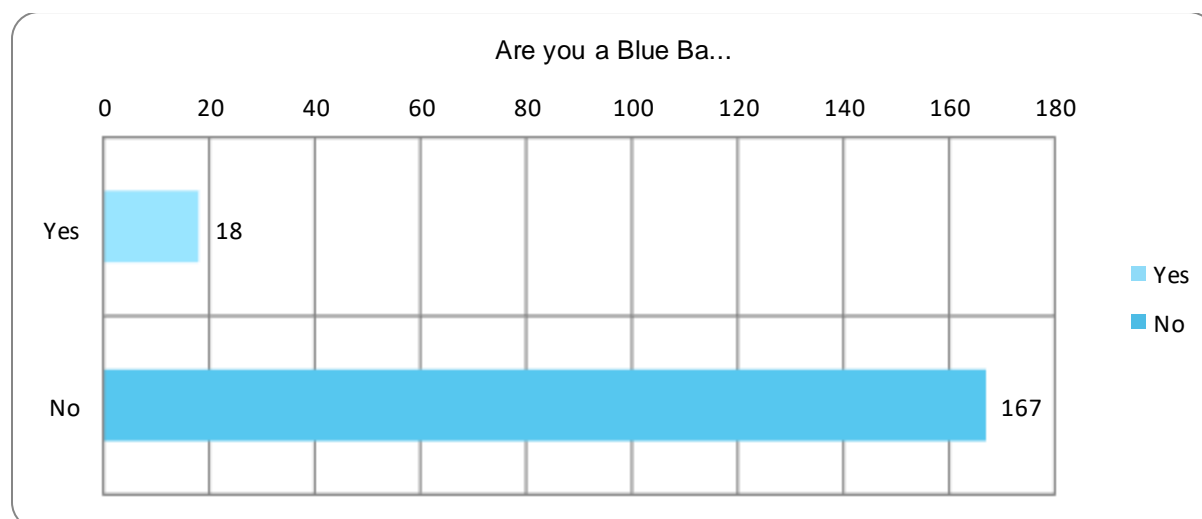
#### 6.4 Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?



187 people responded to the question whether their day-to-day activities are limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months.

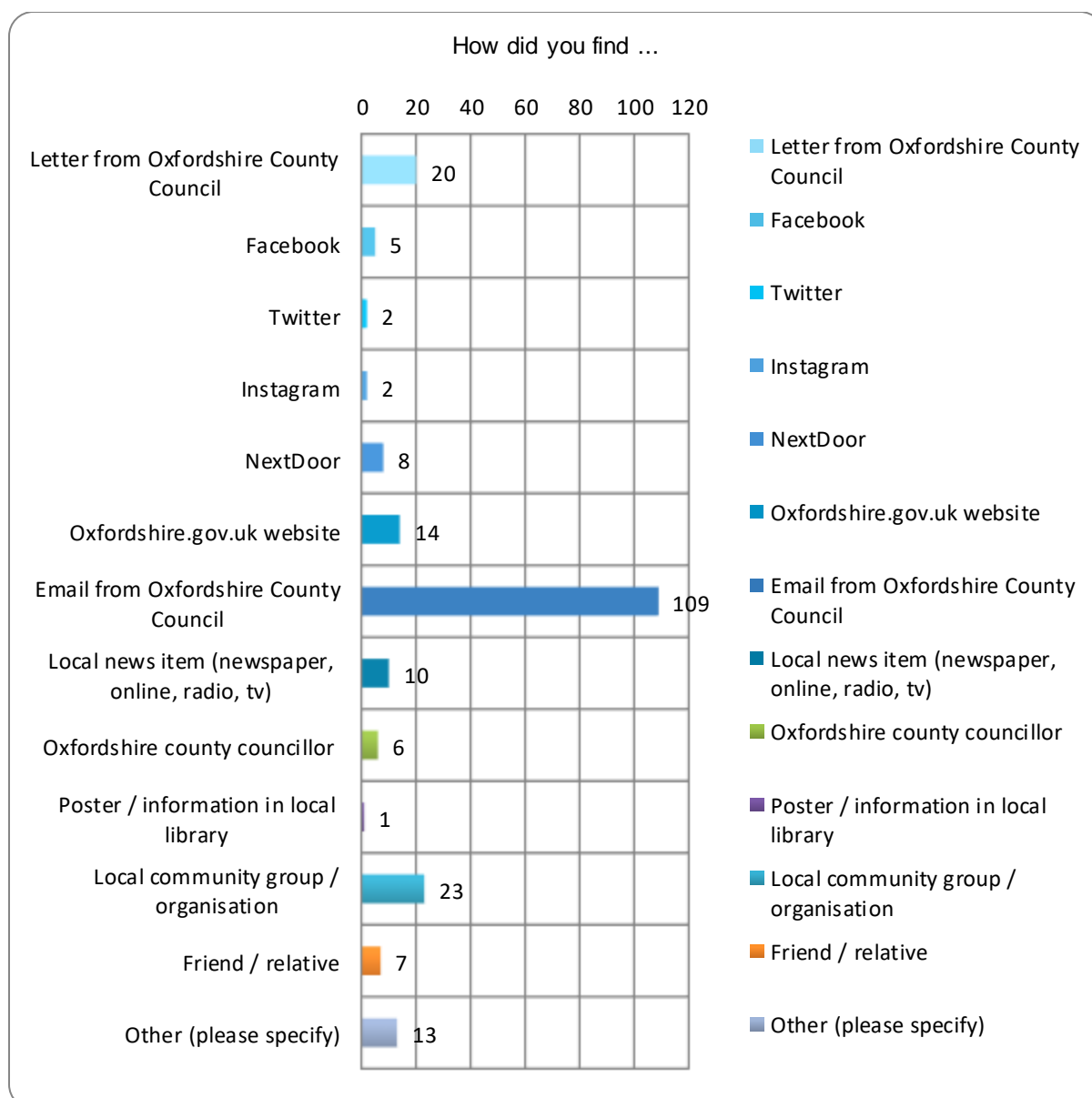
Majority of people, 67.3% said no; just under 15% said yes, a little; 13% said yes, a lot, and 9% preferred not to say.

#### 6.5 Are you a Blue Badge holder?



185 people responded to the question whether they were a Blue Badge holder. Majority, 90% were not, and 10% were.

#### 6.6. How did you find out about this consultation? (Choose all that apply)



Majority of respondents has learned about the consultation from an email. This could comprise the stakeholder emails as well as county council and city council's e-newsletters where the consultation was promoted.

## 7. Appendix

### 1.1 Consultation survey

### Survey for the consultation on Oxford zero emission zone pilot: scheme changes

We're consulting on proposed changes to the charging scheme in the zero-emission zone pilot (ZEZ pilot) in Oxford city centre.

If you would prefer to complete this survey online, it is available here:  
<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxford-zex-pilot-updates>.

Once you have completed this survey, you can return it to us for free (as no stamp is needed) by writing this address as **one line** in the middle of the envelope:

**Freepost OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Please also write '**ZEZ pilot consultation**' on the top left corner of the envelope, so we can easily identify what is inside the envelope.

All responses must be received by **24 October 2023** when the consultation closes.

**Alternative formats:**

We know that some people can't, or find it difficult to, take part in online consultations or need things in a different format such as large print, Easy Read, audio, braille or a different language, to have their say.

If you, or anyone you know needs an alternative format of the survey or consultation document, paper copies of the consultation document or help with sharing their thoughts, please email: [zez@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:zez@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or call Oxfordshire County Council's customer services team on **01865 792422**. Please note the council's customer services team are unable to answer any detailed questions about the consultations, but they can take your details and ask an appropriate member of staff to get in touch.

## **Introduction**

We're consulting on proposed changes to the charging scheme in the zero-emission zone pilot (ZEZ pilot) in Oxford city centre.

The ZEZ pilot was introduced in February 2022 on nine streets in Oxford city centre. You can find out more about the scheme on our main website at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/zez](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/zez)

## Proposed changes

The proposed changes and reasons for them are outlined below.

Change	Reason
<b>Remove discount end dates</b>  The 100% discount for Blue Badge holders and disabled tax class vehicles, and 90% discount for ZEZ business vehicles is currently due to end in July 2025. The 90% discount for ZEZ residents' vehicles is currently due to end in July 2030.  We're now proposing to remove these end dates, so the above discounts would continue indefinitely.	Considering cost of living pressures, we don't think it is necessary or appropriate for these discounts to end on the dates shown, so we're now proposing these discounts will continue for as long as the pilot is in place.
<b>Remove increase in daily charges from 1 August 2025</b>  The ZEZ charges are currently due to double in August 2025. We're now proposing ZEZ charges should stay at the <a href="#">current levels</a> indefinitely.	Considering cost of living pressures, we don't think it is necessary or appropriate for the ZEZ pilot charges to double in August 2025, so the current charges will continue for as long as the pilot is in place.

### Q1 – I am responding to this survey as...

- Oxfordshire resident ☐
- Member of the public living outside of Oxfordshire ☐
- Business ☐
- Representative of a group or organisation ☐
- Parish, town, district or county councillor ☐
- Other ☐

### 1a - Please give the name of the business you represent

### 1b - Please give the name of the group/organisation you represent



**1c - Please give your name and the parish or town/ward or division you represent**

**1d – If you answered other, please specify**

**Q2 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove the discount end date for Blue Badge holders and disabled tax class vehicles?**

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Definitely agree           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Somewhat agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Somewhat disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Definitely disagree        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q3 - Comments on Blue Badge holder and disabled tax class vehicle proposals**

**Q4 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove the discount end date for ZEZ businesses' vehicles?**

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Definitely agree           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Somewhat agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Somewhat disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Definitely disagree        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q5 - Comments on business vehicle proposals**

**Q6** - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to remove the **discount end date** for **ZEZ residents'** vehicles?

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Definitely agree           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Somewhat agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Somewhat disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Definitely disagree        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q7** - Comments on **residents' vehicles** proposals

**Q8** - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to **continue the current ZEZ charges** indefinitely, instead of doubling the charges in August 2025?

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Definitely agree           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Somewhat agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Somewhat disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Definitely disagree        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q9** - Comments on **continuing the current ZEZ charges**

**Q10** – Other **general comments**

### About you

We would like to know more about you so that we can understand more about our customers and residents, as it helps us to know if we are hearing the views of a wide range of people and communities.

These questions are optional.

All information given is anonymous and is governed by the [General Data Protection Regulations 2018](#).

#### **Q11- How did you find out about this consultation? (Choose all that apply)**

- ☐ Letter from Oxfordshire County Council
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ NextDoor
- ☐ Oxfordshire.gov.uk website
- ☐ Email from Oxfordshire County Council
- ☐ Local news item (newspaper, online, radio, tv) Radio advert
- ☐ Oxfordshire County Councillor District Councillor
- ☐ Parish or town councillor
- ☐ Local community news item
- ☐ Poster / information in local library Local community group / organisation
- ☐ Friend / relative
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**Q12 – What is your postcode?** Please provide the first four or five digits of your postcode (but not the letters at the end). e.g. OX1 1 or OX14 5.

**Q13 What is your age?** (Choose one option) \*

- ☐ Under 16
- ☐ 16 - 24
- ☐ 25 - 34
- ☐ 35 - 44
- ☐ 45 - 54
- ☐ 55 - 64
- ☐ 65 – 74
- ☐ 75 - 84
- ☐ 85 or over
- ☐ Prefer not to say

**Q14 What is your sex?** (Choose one option) \*

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ I use another term (please state here)

**Q15 What is your ethnic group or background?** (Choose one option)

- ☐ Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or any other Asian background)
- ☐ Black or Black British (Caribbean, African, or any other Black background)
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, and any other mixed background)
- ☐ White (British, Irish, or any other white background)
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other ethnic group or background (please specify)

**Q16 Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?** (Choose one option) \*

- ☐ Yes - limited a lot
- ☐ Yes – limited a little
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

**Q17 Are you a Blue Badge holder?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

## Data protection and privacy\*

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, we (Oxfordshire County Council) have a legal duty to protect any personal information we collect from you. Oxfordshire County Council is committed to open government and this may include quoting extracts from your consultation response in our report.

We will not however, disclose the names of people who have responded unless they have provided consent. For this purpose, we ask that you are careful not to disclose personal information in your comments – for example the names of service users or children. If you do not want all or part of your response to be made public, or shared with councillors, please state below which parts you wish us to keep confidential.

View Oxfordshire County Council's privacy notice online at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/privacy-notice](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/privacy-notice)

**Q18 Please use this space to tell us if there is any specific part of your response you wish to keep confidential:**

## Stay in touch

We invite you to sign up to get regular email updates on news, events, and developments from across the county.

**Q19 Would you like to sign up?** We invite you to sign up to get regular email updates on news, events, and developments from across the county. Any contact details you provide will be separated from the feedback you have shared in this survey.\*

- ☐ Yes, I'd like to receive updates about activities on Let's Talk Oxfordshire
- ☐ Yes, I'd like to sign-up to get regular updates on the county's news
- ☐ Yes, but I would only like to be kept informed about this consultation
- ☐ No thanks

**Q20 If you have chosen 'Yes' for 'Would you like to sign-up?', please provide your email address below, so we can contact you and send a link to our sign-up page where you can tailor which communications you receive:**

--

**Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions.**