

PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

– 22 April 2026

Temporary Congestion Charging Scheme Monitoring

Report by the Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

Executive Summary

1. The temporary congestion charge scheme was approved by Cabinet on 10 September 2025 and started operating on 29 October 2025. It is designed to reduce traffic in the city while Botley Road remains closed, helping buses to be quicker and more reliable and walking and cycling safer and more attractive. The previously approved traffic filter trial will take over from the congestion charge when the Botley Road reopens.
2. The impacts of the temporary congestion charge are being monitored closely and reports are published monthly on the council's website here:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/oxfords-temporary-congestion-charge-cars/temporary-congestion-charge-monitoring-data>
3. So far, the data indicates that the temporary congestion charge has resulted in faster journeys by bus, increased park and ride use and reduced congestion in many parts of the city. There have also been increases in traffic and journey times, mostly on outer roads, including parts of the ring road. This is largely as predicted in the modelling and forecasting report produced as part of the suite of evidence documents. Overall, it is still too early to draw any firm conclusions about the scheme impacts. Detailed monitoring will continue.

Data Monitoring

4. Data about the impact of the temporary congestion charge has been published on a monthly basis since the start of the scheme. Amongst other things, the monitoring data covers changes in traffic volumes, vehicle journey times, bus journey times, Park & Ride usage, footfall, income received from the payment of daily charges and Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) and the number of permits issued for cars to drive for free through charging points.

Traffic flows, journey times (including bus journey times)

5. The latest published data (February 2026 compared to February 2025) shows reductions in traffic flows and journey times on a number of inner routes but some increases elsewhere, mainly on certain outer roads and parts of the ring road. The scale of the decreases and increases varies according to time and location. The biggest decreases in traffic flows and journey times are on roads with charging points or on roads leading to charging points, for example, Abingdon Road, Hollow Way, St Clements, Hythe Bridge Street, Marston Ferry Road and Cowley Road. See the [monitoring pages of the council's website](#) for all the detail.
6. Bus journey times have improved most notably on Abingdon Road, St Clements Street, Morrell Avenue and Iffley Road. Places where bus journeys are taking longer include London Road, Windmill Road, Woodstock Road and Banbury Road. In certain areas where there has been more traffic following the start of the congestion charge, for example on Banbury Road, there has been a steady improvement, with bus journey times improving compared to the early months of the scheme and with reductions in overall journey times in morning peak journeys.

Income from the scheme

7. The data also covers how much income is being generated by the scheme and the number of permits for cars that have been approved. At the time of writing, from 29 October to 28 February the total income generated by the scheme before operating costs was £2,551,571 (£1,234,046 from congestion charge payments and £1,317,525 from penalty charge notices).
8. At the time of writing, the income from the temporary congestion charge is being spent on the free park and ride bus journey offer in addition to scheme implementation and administration. This offer is until the end of May this year; on 21 April 2026, Cabinet will decide how to spend net income from the start of June 2026.

Permits issued

9. As of 17 March, a total of 110,565 temporary congestion charge permits had been issued. Of these, 32,916 were for Oxford residents and 54,465 were for Oxfordshire residents living outside of the city. More than 10,600 permits had been issued to Blue Badge holders and 4,074 to community health or care workers. Full details of all the various permits issued allowing cars to drive through the charging points for free are on the monitoring webpages.

Footfall and spend data

10. Currently, footfall data is only available for Queen Street, which shows that footfall has increased slightly over the period to the end of February 2026. Officers are currently exploring opportunities to obtain data across a wider area. Footfall and spend data across the city will be published once it has

been checked and validated. More detail about this is available in the [press release](#).

Cycle data

11. There is currently no data available that captures reliable information from consecutive years for comparison. The data available to the council needs to be validated prior to being published.

Park and ride and bus use

12. Monitoring shows that the congestion charge is supporting motorists to use park and ride sites. Bus company data shows that overall, year-on-year passenger numbers on all types of services are approximately 8% up since the introduction of the congestion charge. A third of this increase is on park and ride services and the remaining two-thirds on non-park and ride services, with significant growth on routes serving the city from areas like Didcot, Abingdon and Wallingford. The monitoring webpages give details of the daily maximum occupancy for each park and ride site compared to the same month in the previous year. In most cases, maximum occupancy is higher after the start of the temporary congestion charge.
13. A number of bus routes in and into Oxford have been enhanced as a result of the introduction of the temporary congestion charge and other complementary measures.

Customer Engagement

14. The council has received a significant number of customer enquiries about this scheme. Since the launch of the temporary congestion charge, the customer services team has responded to 25,246 emails, 13,587 phone calls (of which 2,231 were payments) and made 994 outbound calls.
15. In response to the high volume of enquiries, the council has implemented an automated chat function on the public website. This has been created using only information from the council's website and so is wholly accurate. Within the past month, it has responded to 2,643 enquiries, only 4% of which required escalation to a member of staff for further information.

Other Updates

16. To support the congestion charge, officers have been working with private schools to allow private school shuttle buses to pick up and drop off children at park and ride sites. This will help parents make more sustainable travel choices to further tackle congestion at peak times. Officers have also been working with a state school that has requested more scooter and cycle parking, as they have reported a rise in children walking and wheeling to school since the start of the congestion charge.

Financial Implications

17. There are no finance implications raised by this report as it summarises the data monitoring that has been carried out since the Congestion Charge was introduced.

Comments checked by:

Matthew Kocak, Finance Business Partner Manager

Legal Implications

18. There are no legal implications raised by this report as it summarises the data monitoring that has been carried out since the Congestion Charge was introduced.

Comments checked by:

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