

OCC (Sonning Common & Henley South) councillor's report

Shiplake – 8th September 2025

Oxford Congestion Charge Proposal

Following public consultation the temporary Oxford congestion charge scheme was supported to cabinet by Place Scrutiny on 27th August – subject to a recommendation for more flexibility in the use of net benefit funds.

Although some 300 thousand people could be affected, the consultation only received some 7 thousand responses – albeit with 65 thousand visits to the website. Just under 5 thousand responses registered opposition.

No better or indeed really any suggestions were made for a better scheme. All Oxfordshire residents would receive permits for 25 days per annum and Oxford City residents would receive 100. Additionally permits would be provided for those with specified needs – such as disabled, carers, SEND and even clubs such as Ice Hockey. Cars would be affected but not commercial vehicles including vans.

The scheme is framed as a temporary congestion charge for cars in Oxford. The proposed scheme would involve a £5 daily charge for cars entering six specific locations during certain hours, with exemptions for permit holders and other eligible groups.

The consultation will run until August 3rd, with a final decision on the scheme expected in September. If approved, the scheme could be implemented as early as autumn.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

- **The Charge:** A £5 daily charge would apply to cars entering six locations in Oxford.
- **Locations:** The charging locations include Hythe Bridge Street, St Cross Road, Thames Street, St. Clement's Street, Marston Ferry Road, and Hollow Way.
- **Charging Times:** St. Clement's Street, Thames Street, and St. Cross Road would be affected from 7am to 7pm daily. Marston Ferry Road and Hollow Way would be affected from 7am to 9am and 3pm to 6pm, Monday to Saturday.
- **Exemptions:** Blue Badge holders, carers, and other groups will be eligible for permits that exempt them from the charge.

It may be that park and ride charges would be discounted or even free during November and December as the scheme begins.

This scheme comes in the wake of Network Rail indicating that the Botley road bridge works could continue for up to 18 months.

When investment in a new fleet of electric buses was agreed by UK Gov, bus companies and OCC, it was agreed as a condition that congestion and bus travel times should improve by 10% - with anti-congestion measures. However the Botley Road problems have caused delays in action and in fact the Abingdon road (from Redbridge Park & Ride) to Oxford City times had worsened by 17%! The bus companies were bitterly complaining.

Finally it was decided that action could wait no longer and this proposal was launched.

Councillor Priority Fund

This fund supports councillor priorities in local areas.

The fund has re-opened and the County budget has provided £10,000 per councillor over the 2025-27 financial years to support local community projects.

The application closing deadline will be 5pm on 30th November 2025.

Shiplake represents about 17% pro rata of the Sonning Common & Henley South division – so say £1.7k.

Applicant will be required to open an account to submit their application form. It would be helpful to have some liaison before submission to consider opportunities and any competing bids.

(I attach guidance from OCC.)

Local Government Re-organisation - Update

Government have indicated that ordinarily the new Strategic Authorities will be on the same area basis as the local NHS structure for the Integrated Care Board.

They intend for there to be public consultation on unitaries and new council structures following final submission at the end of November 2025. Following consultation and final decisions by the Government, there will be elections in May 2027 to the new “shadow” councils. The existing councils will continue until April 2028 when the new councils will take over.

NB Due to the summer period and holidays there is a limited amount to report this time!

[Leigh Rawlins](#)

County Councillor (Sonning Common & Henley South)