

our clean air policy

The Oxford Bus Company (OBC) and its parent company, The Go-Ahead Group, take very seriously their obligations to the community and the environment. We publish an annual Environmental and Social Report, copies of which can be downloaded from www.oxfordbus.co.uk (for the company report) and at <http://corporateresponsibility.go-ahead.com/> (for the group report).

Buses are a vital part of the economic and social life of Oxford, and we believe that our role in the context of air quality is to minimise the effect of buses in the central area. Our contribution to the improvement in air quality should come from reducing emissions from buses rather than reducing the number of buses or their routeing, which would inconvenience the public and may encourage people to use less environmentally friendly modes of travel.

We operate 152 buses and coaches on a mixture of work in and around the city – local bus services, Park & Ride and express services to London, Heathrow and Gatwick. We are the largest bus operator in the city, carrying over 18 million passengers a year.

We support the Oxford Transport Strategy (OTS), a joint policy between Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council. OTS introduced a number of radical measures in the centre of the city, but it also recognised that the effect of buses in the area had to be minimised. It should be noted, however, that OTS addressed principally traffic management rather than air quality.

From 1994, we partnered Oxfordshire County Council and Southern Electric in the operation of four electric buses, used on a route serving environmentally sensitive parts of the central area. The reliability of these vehicles was poor and the experiment was eventually terminated. In any case, the relatively low carrying capacity of these buses meant that this form of motive power was not at that time a solution in Oxford, which has huge passenger flows.

As the electric bus project was underway, we concluded that, although the search for alternative fuels continued, for the medium term at least, diesel engines would be the only economic source of motive power. Therefore, we began to explore how diesel engines could be made cleaner. Modern diesel engines are inherently much cleaner than those manufactured, for example, 20 years ago and since 1993, ever-improving “Euro” standard engines have been mandatory in new buses and heavy commercial vehicles.

We’ve already made huge progress in tackling the major pollutants:

OBC emissions 2000 - 2005					
	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5
Hydrocarbons (t)	8.00	11.00	7.20	5.50	4.10
Carbon Monoxide (t)	28.00	31.00	23.10	18.20	13.00
Oxides of Nitrogen (t)	133.00	145.00	132.90	121.30	118.00
Particulate Matter (t)	1.20	2.00	1.00	0.70	0.52

For details, see [how we’ve already tackled the pollutants](#).