

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	15 JUNE 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	16
TITLE:	CAR CLUBS		
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Sub-Committee about Car Clubs generally together with a summary of Car Clubs in Reading.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the report.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Car Clubs are in line with Reading's strategic objectives set out in the Local Transport Plan which has the vision to enable people to move around easily, safely, sustainably and in comfort by 'Better Connecting' Reading, specifically:

- To align transport and land use planning to enable sustainable transport choices, improve mobility, reduce the need to travel and preserve the natural environment.
- To provide affordable, accessible and inclusive travel options for everyone.
- To reduce carbon emissions from transport, improve air quality, and create a transport network which supports a mobile, affordable low-carbon future.

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1 Car Clubs provide an easy and affordable way to access a car. Cars are provided in local neighbourhoods and users pay a membership fee, book and pay on-line or by phone and use a local car and return it to the same parking space.
- 4.2 Shared mobility: using a mix of car club cars, 2+ car sharing (sometimes called ride sharing), shared bikes and public transport can be a viable alternative to owning a car. Apps, smartcards, online booking systems and mobile phones have made choosing, booking and using shared transport easier.
- 4.3 Car clubs provide their members with convenient access to cleaner vehicles (electric or hybrid) without the hassles and expense of ownership. Carplus, a not-for-profit, environmental transport non-governmental organisation, have calculated that those who drive less than 6-8,000 miles per year could save up to £3,500 a year by switching to a car club. Benefits to the environment include emissions reduction, improvements to air quality and encouraging individuals to increase their use of public transport, walking and cycling which reduces congestion.
- 4.4 Research by Co-Wheels Car Club has shown that for many young people car ownership is no longer an aspiration or universal goal. Patterns of car use and ownership have also responded to rising fuel prices and other cost increases in insurance, servicing and parking. Other factors such as climate change, have led to an increasing number of people making lifestyle changes that reduce their energy consumption and carbon emissions.
- 4.5 Members of Car Clubs are far more likely to use other forms of sustainable travel (3 times more likely to cycle regularly than the rest of the population, with train use more than double the national average and regular bus use a third higher than average). Estimates vary but up to 15 private cars are displaced from the nation's roads for every car club car. This includes cars which are physically sold or scrapped when the Car Club arrives, and also looking at how many members would have had to buy a car if it wasn't for the Car Club being there when their circumstances changed.
- 4.6 There are currently two Car Clubs in Reading: Co-Wheels and Carvenient. Co-Wheels have been running in Reading for a number of years and have built up a small fleet of cars parked off-street at Redlane Court off Addington Road, Cemetery junction, The Avenue Centre and the Magistrates Court. There are additional cars at the Civic Offices which are released for public use out of office hours. Two new on-street spaces are coming soon as part of the 'EasyGo' project which was reported to this committee in March 2016 and this

is summarised in 4.7 to 4.11 below. Carvenient Car Club has been running in Reading since August 2015 and has 3 cars located at the NCP Car Park in Garrard Street, Bright Street and Recreation Road in Tilehurst. They are hoping to expand in the future following a good initial response in Reading.

- 4.7 The EasyGo project built on the existing Co-Wheels Car Club in Reading by developing two new Car Club multi-modal nodes in Oxford Road and Caversham Centre which have significant connectivity to other sustainable modes of transport, including Reading's cycle hire scheme (ReadyBike), Reading bus services and walking and cycling routes. The two new cars at these nodes will be hybrid vehicles which use electric power when moving slowly around town and generate electricity using regenerative braking systems. Reading Borough Council in partnership with Co-Wheels was awarded £48,800 funding from the Department of Transport for the scheme as a Car Club Demonstration Project in March 2015.
- 4.8 A joint working group comprising of all stakeholders in the multimodal package: Co-Wheels, ReadyBike, Reading Buses and Better Points (a multimodal phone app encouraging sustainable travel already linked to Reading Buses and ReadyBike) have worked collaboratively to develop a multimodal package of ticketing, registration and promotions. A Smartcard called 'EasyGo' is being designed to unlock the cars, ReadyBikes, bus travel on Reading Buses and to promote the whole project in a way that makes the concept of multimodal travel easy to understand and something that enables people to make easier choices of how to travel. The Smartcard will also link to BetterPoints incentives to encourage sustainable travel.
- 4.9 The sites for the two Car Club bays and details of the project were reported to Reading Borough Council's Traffic Management Sub-Committee on 16 September 2015. The committee has given spending approval for the project and approval to take this forward through the statutory consultation (TRO) process. Work is progressing with the installation of the car bay and car on Oxford Road and Rectory Road, Caversham which is a short walk from the ReadyBike docking station and bus stops.
- 4.10 The EasyGo Smartcard and the car bays will be launched in the summer, after testing of the scheme by volunteers from council staff and users of ReadyBike, Reading Buses and Co-Wheels Car Club.
- 4.11 The scheme is funded by the DfT as a Demonstration Project and therefore the scheme is likely to be visited after the launch by other Local Authorities and Transport Operators who wish to learn from Reading's experience.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The delivery of this project will help to deliver the following Corporate Plan Service Priorities:

- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Public consultation has been undertaken through the statutory Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process for the new car club spaces.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The proposals for waiting and movement restrictions for the new EasyGo car club bays were advertised under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and reported to this committee in March 2016.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 The Council has carried out an equality impact assessment scoping exercise, and considers that the proposals do not have a direct impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

8.3 The scheme is being developed to be as inclusive as possible so that those who do not drive or do not wish to join a Car Club can still benefit from the wider EasyGo scheme to improve choices and to reward sustainable travel such as using ReadyBike and Reading Buses.

8.4 By promoting EasyGo, it is intended to make travel choices and switching between modes easier and to increase awareness of how to travel more sustainably. In this way, it is hoped to increase the awareness of potential students and other newcomers that they do not need to bring a car to Reading or buy a new car.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The scheme is funded through a grant of £48,800 from the Department for Transport for completion by the end of March 2016. A local contribution of £7,000 for the project will be funded through existing transport budgets.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

TM Sub reports September 2015, January 2016 and March 2016.