

What's mine is yours

Is it even remotely possible for a city the size of London to ever be completely car-free? If not, could car clubs be the answer to getting at least some of the ever denser traffic off the roads? In the first of two articles, Zipcar's **Mark Walker** highlights some of the UK capital's boroughs that are doing their level best to make the seemingly unachievable achievable; while **Kevin Borrás** talks to the company's general manager about the culture of sharing and how it's thinking electric

The London Borough of Hackney has recognised that car clubs can provide an excellent alternative to the private car and in 2013 Hackney launched its City Car Club. Car Club drivers on average generate less than half of the carbon dioxide emissions and local air pollutants compared with the average London household with at least one full car license holder. Therefore, increasing car club membership can assist Hackney Council in achieving its modal shift and its carbon dioxide and local air pollution targets.

Car ownership has continued to drop in Hackney, one of London's poorest boroughs, where the proportion of households that are car-free has risen to 64.6 per cent, up from 56 per cent in 2001, with just 170 motor vehicles per 1000 inhabitants. Despite the population of the



Increasing trips by car clubs can assist Hackney Council in achieving its modal shift and its carbon dioxide and local air pollution targets

borough increasing by 44,000 during this period the actual number of cars owned by Hackney residents has decreased by 3200. Hackney believes that this is partly as a direct result of the expansion of car clubs throughout the borough. Currently Zipcar, the world's largest car sharing club, operates from 95 locations with 147 vehicles and has had a growing presence in the borough for several years.

City Car Club now occupies 12 bays with 13 vehicles. Car club membership in the borough reached 8800 for Zipcar in May 2014, representing a

48 per cent growth in the last 2 years. There are a total of 160 vehicles in the borough with 80 per cent of residents now within a 3 minute walk of a bay and 90 per cent within a 5 minute walk of a bay.

Hackney's Mayor Jules Pipe made a political commitment in his 2010 Mayoral Manifesto that every resident should have easy access to a car club bay. As a direct result of this political commitment it meant that the Council's Transport Team saw car clubs as a key priority and ever since they have been proactively

Car clubs condensed

Currently, the UK has one of the highest car club memberships in the world with more than 160,000 members. The majority of these are in London, with the greatest density being in Inner London boroughs such as Westminster, Islington, Wandsworth, Lambeth and Hackney. Of the 33 London boroughs, 25 have car clubs, and many have incorporated them into their transport infrastructure in innovative ways.

London has the largest Zipcar network in the UK, with more than 1,500 cars across many of the London boroughs. Zipcar members benefit from: 60 miles of free fuel, insurance, maintenance, roadside assistance, road tax and the Congestion Charge when travelling in London. Car clubs are one of the most cost effective and simple measures that will help solve London's congestion, pollution and carbon challenges. They help with the drive for cleaner air and reduced carbon emissions, because they operate newer cars with the latest technologies and increasingly offer ultra low emission or electric vehicle options.

From local use to day trips, holidays and when your business needs requires some extra capacity



working with operators and ensuring coverage continues to expand.

BAYING FOR MORE

What Hackney has been doing to progress car clubs in the borough:

- New promotional signage – bi-directional signage has been installed, facing pedestrians on the footway at each bay in the borough. The sign is double-sided and positioned to face the footway, therefore viewable by pedestrians walking by the parking space. The promotional signage is placed at each existing bay operated by Zipcar and City Car Club to raise awareness of car sharing as an alternative to private car use, to encourage use by local residents.
- Installed cyclehoops on all bay signage to enable residents cycling

to the bay to securely park their bicycles

- Waived parking permit fees to all operators that occupied new bays during the 2013/14 financial year
- Ensured that all new developments over a certain size secure contributions to new bays and membership for all residents.

CAR CLUBS IN ISLINGTON

The London Borough of Islington, to the north of the city, was one of the UK's car club pioneers, helping to establish the first permanent on-street car club bays as part of the London City Car Club in 2003. Growth was rapid, and Islington soon boasted one of the highest market shares of any car club city in the world. There are currently over 9,000 members using 169 Zipcars.

Islington's main impetus for establishing a car club was to reduce the negative impacts of car use, and to relieve the borough's parking pressures. Car clubs represent a positive parking story, which is rare in such a dense urban area. Elected members were strongly supportive from even before the launch, and have remained enthusiastic. The success of Islington's car club network has no doubt made a substantial contribution towards reducing car ownership in the borough – 65 per cent of households in Islington do not own a car (2010 figures), up from 48 per cent in 2001.

The popularity of Islington's car club undoubtedly owes much to its central location, making travel to work and leisure destinations easy. A high-quality public transport network

A brief history of car-sharing

Stakeholders from across London and the Car Club industry convened at London's City Hall earlier this year to discuss how London can continue to grow the number of car club members. The event built on the incredible growth of car clubs in the UK capital in recent years, with 86 per cent of the UK's 164,000 car club members now in London.

London is already the leading car-sharing city in Europe but now wants to lead the way in developing and promoting car clubs to set an example for all other global cities to follow. Encouraging further use of Car Clubs was a key recommendation from the Mayor's Roads Task Force, which was set up in July 2012, to help deliver a template for world-class streets and roads fit for the future.

London's roads are already under pressure, and maintaining a highly functioning road network is central to ensure it retains its position as a world-renowned economic capital.

With the population forecast to grow by 14 per cent, potentially bringing thousands more cars on the road in the next decade, car clubs are a part of the solution to this challenge.

MAKING SPACE

Previous research carried out by CarPlus earlier this year showed that every car club car effectively removes around 17 privately owned cars from the streets. Car club members also tend not to commute by car or drive so much during rush hour, helping them save on average £3,000 (€3,600) per year. Therefore, by encouraging more boroughs to include Car Clubs into their transport planning, boroughs can help reduce the number of short car journeys, reducing congestion and vehicular emissions from their roads. To help expand the number of car clubs further across London, boroughs that already have successful car clubs have published new best practice guidance to help

other London boroughs. The best practice guidance covers a range of ways in which boroughs can further encourage Car Club use, including:

- Using new build and refurbishments as an opportunity for installing more car club bays;
- Installing more bays that are in locations that are more visible and easily accessible to residents and local businesses;
- Promoting car clubs in their local boroughs in partnership with operators to enable greater take up.

Forecasts from the Car Club industry suggest that, with sustained investment by all stakeholders, including the Car Club industry, London could see up to 1 million car club members by 2020.

Transport Minister Baroness Kramer said: "Car clubs can help reduce congestion and carbon emissions through less private car ownership, whilst still giving people

makes owning a car unnecessary for most people, and traffic congestion makes it usually faster to travel by public transport (or even by bicycle or on foot!) than by car for many journeys. But occasional access to a car is useful for many, and the car club has provided a more convenient and more affordable alternative.

Another part of this success has come from strong transport and planning policies at both the local and regional levels. In the early days, financial support from Transport for London allowed Islington not only to establish a basic borough-wide network of bays, but also to implement a number of innovative marketing activities such as the production of booklets to promote the car club to residents and businesses. This basic network made it possible for Islington

to require Section 106¹ contributions from developers to pay for additional car club bays and subsidised membership for new residents of car-free housing, who would be ineligible for on-street residential parking permits. Section 106 contributions have formed an ongoing funding stream Islington has used to expand the initial spatter of bays to the current comprehensive network where every Islington resident has a car club vehicle within a five-minute walk of their home.

Over the years, Islington has fine-tuned its car club parking management to reduce the costs of expanding the network and to assist the operator in providing a high-quality service for its members. Initiatives include:

- Car club information boards to draw attention to car club bays and reduce illegal parking;

the freedom and flexibility to use a car when they need it. The success of car clubs in London has shown how these clubs can offer people more choice about how they travel.”

MAYORAL APPROVAL

Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, is also fully behind the concept: “London has one of the biggest Car Club markets in the world and the potential for further growth is huge. Our Roads Task Force is fully supportive of this forward-thinking industry, one which offers massive benefits in terms of reducing congestion, improving air quality and reducing competition in the battle for kerbside parking. We know that just one car club vehicle can reduce up to 17 privately owned cars, and that car club users tend to make smarter travel choices such as cycling, walking and public transport. This is a really exciting time for the Car Clubs industry in London and I

urge all London boroughs to get on board and support its development.”

Leon Daniels, Managing Director of Surface Transport at TfL, has first-hand experience of the benefits of car sharing: “The use of Car Clubs in London has grown massively in recent years and we continue to support car clubs across London as a way to help reduce congestion. I am a regular user and welcome this positive action to further encourage use across the capital.”

Nick Lester, Corporate Director of Services for London Councils, concludes: “The success of car clubs in many London boroughs shows how effectively they can meet Londoners’ transport needs, and reflects the partnership work of councils and car club operators. We hope boroughs will be inspired by the best practice framework launched today to position car clubs as an integral part of their transport infrastructure for the future.”



From finding the nearest vehicle...



...reserving it there and then...



...and unlocking the car at the roadside – all from your mobile phone

NOTE

¹ Under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, contributions can be sought from developers towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure, the need for which has arisen as a result of a new development taking place.

- Allowing car club vehicles to park in residential bays within the parking zone where they are based;
- Avoiding objections by knowing where proposed bays are likely to be most suitable;
- Short-term offer of 'Vouchers for Permits', where residents could swap their parking permit for £200 (€252) worth of car club membership and use (or towards a bicycle).

The final important success factor has been Islington's partnership with Zipcar as the borough's exclusive operator of dedicated on-street car club bays since 2006 (when the company was called Streetcar). Working together as partners, the two have not only managed to overcome challenges, but have also proactively pursued innovations to improve the service and increase membership. This work led to London Transport Awards for Partnership of the Year (2008 with Streetcar) and Innovation (2010 – Vouchers for Permits), as well as a 'Highly commended' at the National Transport Awards (2010 – Vouchers for Permits) and a Gold Award at the Green Apple Awards 2010.

From April 2015, Islington will need to commence a new car club contract after the current exclusive contract with Zipcar has expired. Islington is currently considering whether the borough can sustain multiple car club networks, and it is hoped that electric vehicles will be made available to Islington car club users.

CAR CLUBS IN SOUTHWARK

In 2010, with cross party support, Southwark Council launched an ambitious programme to roll out a car club network within the borough. There are currently 120 Zipcar vehicles in Southwark that provide a more sustainable alternative to private car ownership for an increasing number of members. Southwark has seen a 40 per cent increase in membership in the past two years and, currently,



For maximum positive impact on making London more liveable, car club use needs to be mainstream

there are over 7,700 members in the borough.

The reasons for the network are obvious to Southwark:

- Reduced vehicle emissions from cleaner vehicles and fewer car trips mean improved air quality leading to streets that are more attractive for walking and cycling;
- Reduced congestion and parking pressure as a result of fewer cars and trips equates to liveable streets for residents, businesses and visitors;
- Less pressure upon space means greater opportunity to reallocate road space to the majority of households who don't have a car;
- They provide a highly economic alternative to owning a private car, therefore saving residents money.

With an increasing population and thousands of new homes planned to be built, Southwark recognises the opportunity to introduce existing and new residents to the benefits of car clubs when they move in. Most new planning consents, over a certain size, require developments to build a new car club bay that will also be available to the wider public.

Southwark is committed to exploring all new opportunities to expand the car club network through close

working with operators and partners across the capital.

Zipcar has long seen the potential for car clubs in London and has played a major part in establishing the strong membership base that already exists today. For maximum positive impact on making London more liveable, car club use needs to be mainstream. To achieve this will require all the relevant bodies – the Mayor's office, TfL, all the Boroughs and the car club operators – to come together, to form and to execute a clear and bold strategy for car clubs – one that all Londoners can get behind. Zipcar is fully committed to working with the city and playing its part in this alliance to make London a recognised leader in smart urban mobility and ensuring the capital becomes an even better place in which to live and work. ♻️

FYI

Mark Walker is general manager of Zipcar UK

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Hybrid theory

Mark Walker, general manager, Zipcar UK talks to Kevin Borrás

How does the concept of car-sharing fit into the overall concept of the smart city?

Let's take the modern city that we know, first of all. As more and more people move to cities they become increasingly polluted and congested places which if we don't do the right thing and encourage people to make smart choices will make cities less desirable places to live. There's simply too much demand for spaces to park cars in so there's parking stress to deal with as well. What we now know about car club members is that their behaviour changes – the way they choose to get around the city changes. Whereas a car owner might use their car almost by default most of the time, after all they have paid for it and it's sat there outside their house, a car club member, who is paying to use that car only for the time they need it makes much more rational choices on a trip by trip basis as to which form of transport to use.

What that means is, and we have lots of data that proves this, is that their use of the car goes down, reducing congestion and relieving pollution and the use of all forms of public transport, walking and cycling increases. Car club members make seven times fewer short trips, under 5 miles, than car owners. This is really important in a city like London that is actively planning to reduce the space it gives to cars...what we are trying to do is broaden the general understanding of what car clubs can do and take the concept mainstream.

Could you talk about the correlation between car sharing and the upsurge in electric vehicles? What is the market like for EV sharing?

Electric vehicles are a really interesting area and people often think that car clubs and electric vehicles together almost intuitively as they are both seen as "good things," environmentally at least.

However, it's actually a rather complex issue. If you take the car club model we will have several people using the same car for a number of undefined trips every day. At the end of each trip the car has to be ready for use by the next member and that includes having enough 'fuel in the tank'. Some people may only want to go 5 miles to the nearest DIY store, other people may need to go 200 miles to visit their aunt. With the kind of electric cars that have been available until very recently that has been something of an operational challenge for us and of course a member experience challenge as well. What is increasingly encouraging is that the electric cars that are coming onto the market,

"We think we have a real role to play in getting a lot of people to experience electric car driving for the first time"



particularly plug-in hybrids, are solving the range problem. That means short trips around town can run on the battery and longer trips out of town can use conventional fuels. If the electric engine doesn't have enough charge left you simply flick into the conventional engine.

We are constantly looking for ways to make it work but the economics have been a real challenge for us as electric cars have been so expensive, even with a little subsidy thrown in. We also have to consider the unknown residual value of electric cars as there isn't a second-hand market yet. So up until now it's been rather difficult but we are working hard with the manufacturers and the infrastructure providers for the charging posts and indeed with the cities to build the right kind of alliance to make it work.

We think we have a real role to play in getting a lot of people to experience electric car driving for the first time. The cars are good, so if we can get a good number of drivers experiencing them first hand we believe that they will be converted and they will talk positively about it to their friends and family and that will create a positive atmosphere around electric vehicles generally.

As the largest carsharing company in the UK, could Zipcar become something of a lobbyist for the electric vehicle sector, deliberately or otherwise?

I don't think we will solve the range anxiety part of the issue

but the car manufacturers themselves are doing everything they possibly can to increase their vehicles' range as it's in their interests to, but where we have an interesting role to play is more within the city itself where there are specific short trips that are still best suited to the car. It could be you are carrying a heavy load, taking lots of small children to an event or the trip you want to make is very difficult or complicated on public transport. In that case the car is the best option but wouldn't it be nice if you were able to make that trip in an electric car that has zero tailpipe emissions?

That's where we have a role to play. It is quite complex as you have multiple people using the cars in the course of a day who have to be mindful of the charge...where we have used electric cars in the past we've encountered problems where people just haven't plugged them in and logistically you start to divide up your fleet. You end up with some cars that you can only do short distances in, the remainder have total flexibility, but if you happen to live near to one of the electric cars but you want to take a longer trip you will have to go further to find a car that will allow you to do that. All these things play into how well the service is working for the members, so for us it's a step by step approach and I think this is where the plug-in hybrid may well come into its own, just in getting everyone over the line in understanding how good electric cars can be.

But what about charging points – there quite clearly aren't enough and this is going to have to change. I live in a quite densely populated South London suburb and I honestly couldn't tell you where the nearest EV charging station is. Perhaps more to the point, if you live in an apartment on the second floor, let alone the 10th, how do you charge your electric car?

I have done exactly that – I've had the cord running along the pavement and up through my living room window. In a city like London a lot of people live in terraced houses or flats and the only parking available is on-street so that's just not sustainable. That's how London works and that's how our service works so for us to roll out more electric cars we need charging points on pavements. To date there aren't very many and there are also different plug types for different vehicles and for whatever reason the charging posts can be quite temperamental.

More often than you would like you find they aren't working and you have to report a fault – up until now the charging infrastructure has been somewhat temperamental but I hope that now there will be more reliable infrastructure and of course much more of it.

One of the topics we address in *Thinking Cities* is smart logistics for the smart city. Some cities have tried adopting unconventional time-windows for deliveries but what can a company like Zipcar do to help this situation? You

have Zipvan, so are there long-term plans for Ziptruck?

There's a real demand for vans by the hour and whereas most of the existing van and truck rental side of the market is set up for trade users, when it comes to domestic use where people need to take household rubbish or garden waste to the dump or pick up a large piece of furniture from a store, those people will only need that van for a short period of time and often just at the weekend. And yet, most of that market is set up for daily rentals and they close at lunchtime on Saturday! You are basically stitched into a two-day reservation for maybe a six-hour job. We know for sure that there's demand for an hourly rental business, and we know we want to trial an electric van. For a city like London the number of deliveries being made is incredible, especially with the advent of internet shopping so if we can get more of that demand into electric vans we would definitely like to capture that market.

We've talked about public membership of car clubs, but what does Zipcar offer to businesses?

Thousands of business use Zipcar in the UK today and they can be divided into a few different categories: one category we are very popular with is the small start-ups. Less than 10 employees, cash is very tight, and the last thing you want to do is get into a three-year car lease agreement so those business like the idea of paying for transport as and when they use it.

Zipcar for Business is ideal for them and we set up the account in the name of the business with registered drivers. It's a proper business account with a variable cost model and it suits start-ups perfectly. For businesses that are perhaps better established but still don't like the idea of purchasing car fleets or getting committed to a lease, we can offer them an exclusive use period. If they know that every Tuesday morning they go to the market to pick up goods and bring them back again we can guarantee that cars will be available in those slots.

At the bigger end where we can really have impact the case study we always cite is Croydon Council who switched from what we call a grey fleet where people used their own cars and received an allowance and claimed a mileage rate to a scheme where they brought in two dozen Zipcars for business travel purposes.

It's had an amazing effect – the number of employees driving for business has gone down by 50 per cent and the emissions have gone down by 40 per cent, as has the number of business miles travelled. They save £500,000 (€630,000) a year on transport costs. What councils can do is integrate that with a lift share system for commuting to work. This means that you are also getting reduced commute miles into the council offices on top of the reduced council miles driven – they are huge and real savings and Croydon are looking to expand that scheme. 