

Title of meeting: Traffic and Transportation Decision Meeting

Date of meeting: 16th July 2020

Subject: Car Club: Portsmouth

Report by: Tristan Samuels, Director of Regeneration

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To highlight the opportunities from developing a car club in Portsmouth, following approval of the capital costs in the Air Quality Improvements, Capital Programme.
- 1.2 To seek approval to further develop and procure a car club for Portsmouth, for proposed launch in early 2021.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation:

2.1 Notes the contents of this report;

2.2 Approves the development of a car club for Portsmouth, including further research and market testing followed by the undertaking of a procurement process to establish a car club provider.

3. Background

- 3.1 Portsmouth City Council recognises the urgent need to make improvements to the local environment and air quality, with a Climate Emergency being declared by the Council in March 2019, and much work underway to improve air quality. Following a High Court ruling in 2018, Portsmouth City Council was issued three Ministerial Directives relating to improvements to air quality, and are currently developing an Air Quality Local Plan. As transport emissions can account for up to half of the air pollution in the city, Portsmouth City Council recognises the

need to find ways to reduce short private car journeys and create modal shift to more sustainable modes of travel.

- 3.2 A number of main roads in Portsmouth suffer from severe congestion, particularly at peak times, due to the concentration of housing and employment in the city, high visitor numbers, and the geographical layout, with only three roads on and off the main island area. With car ownership in Portsmouth showing a steady increase over recent years, there is increasing pressure on the road network, and also the availability of on-street residential parking spaces.
- 3.3 This high volume of vehicles in the city is contributing to air pollution, with some locations exceeding current legal limits for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). Poor air quality has a negative effect on public health, and can have a disproportionate effect on those most vulnerable, such as people with pre-existing health conditions, children and older people.
- 3.4 The work of the Air Quality Local Plan has involved the collection of transport data, and evidence collected to date highlights that emissions from road traffic account for around half of the NO₂ pollution in the city. Measures that reduce the reliance on the private car and cut the number of vehicles on the city's roads will therefore be of benefit in helping to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors.
- 3.5 The introduction of a car club in Portsmouth would help reduce residents' reliance on the private car. A car club is a scheme where a car(s) is parked in an identified location either on-street or in car parks and is accessible for use by anyone who has become a member of the scheme. These vehicles generally have a dedicated parking bay, and are located close to homes or workplaces, enabling easy access. Different tariffs are offered including pay as you use.
- 3.6 It is hoped that delivering a car club scheme alongside a package of alternative transport choices such as prioritising walking and cycling through reprioritising road space, and transforming public transport, would reduce the need for car ownership by some residents across the city.
- 3.7 Car club membership in Portsmouth could also be offered to the local business community for use a pool cars, and would be particularly useful to those with limited private parking for employees, further reducing the reliance on private vehicles in the city for commuting.
- 3.8 The city council want to take the lead on developing the car club to ensure it best meets the needs of our residents whilst being delivered in alignment with our emerging transport strategy for the city as being developed through the new Local Transport Plan 4. It would also support the work being undertaken on the Air Quality Local Plan
- 3.9 Enterprise car club currently operate four vehicles from their site in Fratton (three cars and one van), three cars at St Mary's Hospital for use by hospital

staff and four cars at Cosham with an existing customer for use by their staff. The council are not aware of any other car clubs currently operating in the city.

- 3.10 A car club scheme was previously launched in Portsmouth in 2005, run by the operator City Car Club, particularly focussing on the development areas of Gunwharf Quays and Admiralty Quarter. When this operator withdrew from the city, the operator Commonwheels began operating a car club in 2008, running three cars; two located at Isambard Brunel car park to operate as PCC pool cars and one at Admiralty Quarter for public use. This scheme ceased operation due to concerns over its financial sustainability.

4. Benefits of a car club

- 4.1 There are many positive benefits of car clubs. Evidence suggests that each car club vehicle will replace between 5- 10.5 privately owned vehicles^{1,2}. There is also evidence that the distance in miles driven by car club members tends to reduce, with a fall by approximately 800 miles annually compared to before membership of the car club³.
- 4.2 Once fully established, a wide number of benefits could be gained from this scheme such as:
- Improvements to local air quality
 - Facilitate car free development
 - Reduced pressure of on-street parking spaces
 - Easy access to a vehicle, without having to own one
 - Easy to use system to book and pay for vehicle use
 - Reduction of the number of privately owned vehicles in the city
 - Reduction in the cost of travel for car club members, through not having to own a personal vehicle.
- 4.3 The development of a car club would have additional benefits given the current situation with the Covid-19 pandemic, providing an alternative means of travel to public transport, for people who may not have access to a private car, particularly for longer journeys.

5. Potential operational details of a car club

- 5.1 Whilst still in the early stages of consideration, and without details being fully finalised, there are a number of operational details that the car club would be likely to provide, or which would be required in order to fully support its operation.
- 5.2 Members who have signed up to the car club would have access to cars from a fleet of shared vehicles. Dedicated parking bays, which would require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in order to be introduced, would be marked up solely for the use of car club vehicles, and would be largely located on-street, close to the resident's home or place of work. Some dedicated bays may also be located in

public car parks. Vehicles are usually available 24 hours a day and can be booked out in various way, such as by booking online or via a mobile app.

- 5.3 We would encourage inclusion of vehicles with a high Euro standard and hybrids, with electric vehicles being introduced gradually as the scheme expands, in order to be as environmentally friendly as possible. This standard of vehicles would be outlined in the procurement process.
- 5.4 By providing this mixture, it is hoped that residents would be encouraged to become a member of the scheme, having access to the vehicle that they would feel most comfortable driving. Members would benefit from the opportunity to try driving a hybrid or electric vehicle, for those that have never done so before. Plug-in hybrid and electric vehicles would require fast charging infrastructure to be installed alongside the relevant car club parking bays.
- 5.5 It is important that suitable locations are determined for the car club dedicated parking bays, in order that they are easily accessible to users, and close to local amenities. Areas with dense housing numbers and limited on-street residential parking would particularly benefit from such a scheme. Certain areas of Portsmouth are known to have high levels of multiple car ownership per household, for example in areas where there are concentrations of houses of multiple occupation (HMO's), and it is considered that a car club would help to reduce the need for this high level of car ownership, through offering a realistic and affordable alternative. A car club would also support students from the University of Portsmouth in having access to a vehicle without having to bring a car to the city, and businesses with high employee numbers who have limited access to private parking. They may also help to mitigate parking pressure at new development sites.
- 5.6 A further consideration would be that the car club be supported by good walking, cycling and public transport services. Car club members would be likely to rely on such modes of travel for some shorter local journeys, particularly if they no longer have access to a private vehicle. The car club would link into the proposed works of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and would integrate with any future cycle hire scheme to ensure that the overall package would encourage a reduction in private car ownership.
- 5.7 In order for a car club to be economically viable, it would require a high level of usage of the car club vehicles, so consideration of the most suitable locations would be essential. By encouraging a mixture of residential and business use, the vehicles would be most likely to be fully utilised. It is likely that initially, business use of the car club would be more commercially viable than resident's usage, as encouraging behaviour change for residents to consider getting rid of their private vehicle to use a car club vehicle, is likely to take longer to achieve widespread take up. The car club scheme would therefore look to balance both residential and business need.
- 5.8 A new parking strategy for the city is under development, which will consider parking elements in further detail. This strategy is being undertaken alongside a

new Parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to ensure a joined up approach between planning and transport. Car Clubs will be considered within future developments as part of the Parking SPD.

6. Proposed Timescales

- 6.1 Initially, there had been an aim to strive for the launch of a car club in Portsmouth in autumn 2020, following a procurement process. However, due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, consideration has been given to the most appropriate time to launch the scheme, taking into account the impact of Covid-19 on journeys, travel and transport, and the Government advice around this.
- 6.2 Some car club providers have reported a reduction in use during the initial months of lockdown, and the full effect of Covid-19 on car club usage moving forward is currently unknown.
- 6.3 There are potentially some concerns around sharing vehicles between members of different households, and a potential reduction in travel demand, both for work, with a likely increase in working from home, and for personal journeys, at least in the short term. A car club does however provide an alternative means of travel for people who do not have access to a private vehicle, and may encourage some people to get rid of a second vehicle, particularly if they will be potentially travelling less in the future.
- 6.4 In order to address concerns around sharing vehicles between members of different households at the current time, some car share providers have introduced temporary measures to address concerns, such as ensuring each vehicle is cleaned in between each rental, and advising users to only use the service for essential journeys.
- 6.5 There are still a number of uncertainties regarding Covid-19 and the effect it will have on travel in the future, and a flexible approach has been necessary when considering the timings of the development of a car club scheme in Portsmouth.
- 6.6 It is therefore proposed that research and development continues on a car club, with a proposed launch date of early 2021, following a procurement process, subject to the changing situation with Covid-19.

7. Case Studies

- 7.1 Some initial research has been carried out on car clubs already in operation in other cities, with some examples given below. Whilst these schemes vary in numbers of vehicles, they each have a considerable fleet size, suggesting that they are operating successfully and providing a useful service at each location. Current levels of usage are likely to have been effected by Covid-19 however.
- 7.2 Nottingham: Enterprise Car Club

In 2019 there were 21 car club vehicles available, of which 60% were hybrid or electric, and the vehicles averaged 4.8 seats per vehicle. The majority of vehicles are centred around the city centre and key trip generators such as shops and the train station. The approximate population density of this area based on the 2011 Census is 81.8 people per km². This car club was launched in 2014 with eight vehicles. Membership deals are offered to residents to encourage residential use.

7.3 Bristol: Enterprise Car Club and Co-Wheels

In 2019, there were 109 car club vehicles available within Bristol with the distribution largely centred around the city centre. Of these 109 vehicles, approximately 72 were operated by Enterprise Car Club and 41 were operated by Co-Wheels. Approximately 30% of these vehicles were electric or hybrid and have an average of 4.6 seats per vehicle. The approximate population density of this area, based on the 2011 Census, is 93.6 people per km².

7.4 Norwich: Co-Wheels

In 2019 there were 51 car club vehicles available within Norwich and distributed close to the city centre and residential areas to the west and south west of the city centre. Vehicle fleet was approximately 10% hybrid or electric vehicles and had an average of 4.4 seats per vehicle. The approximate population of this area is based on the 2011 Census and is 58.6 people per km².

7.5 Brighton and Hove: Enterprise Car Club

In 2019, there were 126 car club vehicles available within Brighton, and of these approximately 30% were hybrid or electric vehicles. These vehicles had an average of 4.8 seats per vehicle. The distribution was geographically very even, although there were some gaps in vehicle coverage, tending to be in residential areas beyond 1 to 1.5 kilometres from the coast. The approximate population density of this area is based on the 2011 Census and is 126.8 people per km².

8. **Links with other plans/strategies**

8.1 Given the wide benefits that could be achieved through a car club in Portsmouth, this project would support a number of Portsmouth City Council plans and strategies, including:

- The emerging Portsmouth Air Quality Local Plan
- The emerging Local Transport Plan 4
- The Emergency Transport Plan
- The emerging Parking Strategy
- The emerging Parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- The draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
- The Air Quality Strategy
- Electric vehicle charge point infrastructure

9. Next Steps

- 9.1 Whilst some research into the benefits and operation of car clubs has already been carried out, further research is required. This will take the form of market testing and reviewing the details of different car club schemes that are already in operation, and reviewing the lessons learnt from these schemes. This exercise will help to set out the specifications that would be required for a Portsmouth based car club. Further research into the effects of Covid-19 on car club usage will also be undertaken, as this information becomes available.
- 9.2 Meetings have previously been held with both a car club operator and interested community group in regards to providing a car club in Portsmouth. Further meetings are proposed to speak to other car club providers, widening the knowledge of the potential schemes that could be offered in the city.
- 9.3 These initial stages would feed into a full procurement process to be undertaken, for the procurement of a car club provider for the city. Whilst still in the early stages of planning, it is anticipated that the following approximate timeline would be likely for the development of the scheme:
- July 2020 - market testing/ peer review
August 2020 - specification development
September 2020 - tender advert
October/November 2020 - tender evaluation and tender award
November to January 2021 - mobilisation including TRO and bay marking
Early 2021 - launch

10. Reasons for recommendations

- 10.1 The city council want to take the lead on the development of a car club to meet the needs of residents, and to align with the emerging transport strategy for the city being developed through the new Local Transport Plan 4.
- 10.2 The development of a car club in Portsmouth would support a reduction in reliance on private cars by residents, supporting the climate change emergency and improvement to air quality.

11. Integrated impact assessment

- 11.1 An IIA has been produced for this scheme, which whilst not yet in development, will be being progressed imminently, with peer review and soft market testing commencing shortly. Within the IIA, this scheme impacts positively on the following sections:

Section A - Communities and Safety

A3 - Health

A4 - Income deprivation and poverty

Section B - Environment and climate change

B1 - Carbon emissions

B2 - Energy use

B4 - Natural environment

B5 - Air Quality

B6 - Transport

Section C - Regeneration of our city

C3 - Economy

12. Legal implications

- 12.1 The proposals within the recommendations in this report are within the powers of the City Council.
- 12.2 The procurement of a car club provider will need to be undertaken in accordance with procurement regulations and the Council's contract procedure rules.

13. Director of Finance's comments

- 13.1 The capital costs of the car club will be met from the £220,000 approved in the Council's capital programme. The exact extent of the scheme is currently not known as a preferred contractor has not been selected and the exact nature of the business model is also unclear.
- 13.2 There is a possibility that the car club may have ongoing revenue costs, the cost of this is as yet unknown and a full financial appraisal that sets out the impact and how it is to be funded will need to be undertaken prior to committing the Council to any agreement.

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Signed by:

Appendices:

Appendix A: Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
¹ Comouk annual car club survey London 2016-2017	https://como.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Carplus-Annual-Survey-of-Car-Clubs-2016-17-London.pdf
² Como annual car club survey Scotland 2017-18	https://como.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Carplus-Annual-Survey-2017-18-Scotland-Final.pdf
³ Como annual car club survey England and Wales 2017-2018 ¹¹	https://como.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/EW-report-v4.0.pdf
Report to Traffic and Transportation Cabinet 24 November 2009	https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet%20Member%20for%20Traffic%20&%20Transportation/20091029/Agenda/tt20091029r07.pdf
	https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet%20Member%20for%20Traffic%20&%20Transportation/20080327/Agenda/tt20080327r3.pdf

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: