

Car Clubs

Advice for Development Control and Planning Officers



Photo courtesy of Stroud Valleys Community Car Club

What is a Car Club?

A Car Club is an organisation that offers vehicles to its members for short term hire by the hour. Members pay a small annual or monthly membership fee then have access to vehicles that can be booked and used at short notice. The cars are parked so that they are easily accessible to members. A number of car clubs exist in cities on the continent and in London, Bristol, Bath, Edinburgh and other UK cities. In Gloucestershire, there is the Stroud Valleys Car Club.

Why are we promoting and encouraging the development of car clubs?

Car Clubs support our Local Transport Plan as they encourage a reduction in car ownership and car use. As Car Clubs mean that you only pay when you use the car (apart from a small membership fee) members of the scheme tend to use the car only when necessary and will walk, cycle or use public transport. There may also result in a boost to local trade as car club members tend to use more local services rather than drive to out-of-town shopping centres.

Car clubs can also:-

- Reduce parking space requirement
- Supply cars as pool cars for businesses

Types of development suitable for car clubs

Car clubs have the best chance of success in areas where parking for private cars is limited or non-existent. New developments that would benefit from a car club will include:-

- Car free housing, where car ownership is not permitted but membership of a car club is allowed.
- Low car housing – developers can have increased densities or amenity space when the need for parking is reduced.
- Mixed use developments (residents use the cars evenings & weekends, businesses use the cars during the working day).
- Residential developments where we wish to reduce the potential impact on the highway network (by restricting parking availability and offering the facility of a car club).

Contributions toward a car club should be considered for any development with more than 50 residential units or smaller developments where the characteristics would result in a successful car club (e.g. strictly limited parking provision).

Contributions that should be sought from developers

Contributions could cover:-

- Cost of car purchase:- e.g. an average £12K per vehicle (at least 2 vehicles per development should be provided)
- Insurance for first 3 years (£800 per year per car)
- Contribution towards booking systems and administrative costs (£4,600 per year)
- Highway works (parking bay creation, marking and signing plus traffic order (at least 2 per development) (£2,000 per space)
- Membership fees for each new occupant for first 3 years (e.g. £140.00 per person per year)

Contributions should be taken by the County Council or the LPA and then assigned to the relevant department or car club operator as appropriate in order to implement the scheme.

Planning Obligations: The Principles

Are requests for contributions sound in terms of the five principles?

Principle	Relevance of a car club
Necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms	The availability of a car club will help reduce the number of car trips generated by the development that would be expected if each occupier owned their own vehicle.
Relevant to planning	The provision of a car club will benefit occupants of the development in the future.
Directly related to the proposed development	The car club vehicle(s) would be for use by the occupiers of the development.
Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development	Contributions in relation to a car club are not excessive in comparison with other costs.
Reasonable in all other respects	It is reasonable to expect the developer to provide facilities related to the development that mitigate the effect of the development on the highway network. As a car club will potentially help reduce car trips and parking spaces required this meets the requirement.

Contributions sought for car clubs should not detract from contributions sought for improvements to walking, cycling and public transport as these are all complimentary is a sustainable transport package.

Policy background to support the decision.

- Gloucestershire County Council Local Transport Plan (LTP2) 2006-2011.
- PPG3 (Housing) & PPG13 (Transport).
- Smarter Choices – Changing the way we travel. (Department for Transport, 2004).
- Guidance on Planning Obligations (ODPM Circular, 05/2005).

More Information?

Car Plus. www.carclubs.org.uk
 Stroud Valleys Community Car Club (<http://www.svccc.co.uk/>)