

Car Clubs

Key information

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Introduction

The London Assembly Transport Committee is investigating the use of car clubs in London.

Investigation Aims and Objectives (Terms of Reference)

- To explore the distribution and use of car clubs across London.
- To examine how car clubs could help to reduce the need for private car use and ownership in London and contribute to the Mayor's Transport Strategy targets.

Key Issues

- The key target set out in the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS), published in 2018, is for 80 per cent of all trips in London to be made on foot, by cycle or using public transport by 2041. The MTS supports the provision of car clubs for residents when paired with a reduction in the availability of private parking, to enable more Londoners to give up their cars while allowing for infrequent car travel in inner and outer London.
- TfL states that car clubs offer an alternative model to private car ownership. In 2022 TfL conducted a review of its car club policy and made six commitments, stating it would work closely with London Councils, boroughs and car club operators to take these forward.

- Car clubs require parking provision, either through dedicated parking bays or on-street parking permits, to operate. The London Plan refers to car clubs in the context of residential parking. It states: “Car clubs count towards the maximum parking permitted because they share many of the negative impacts of privately-owned cars.” However, the Plan also states that in some areas car club spaces can help support lower parking provision and car-lite lifestyles by enabling multiple households to make infrequent trips by car.
- Car clubs operate in every borough in London and there are currently five car club providers operating in London: Enterprise Car Club, Co-Wheels, Community Car Clubs, Hiyacar and Zipcar. However, availability of car club cars is not evenly distributed across London, there is a much higher concentration of car club cars in central areas of London compared to outer London.
- Private car ownership also varies across London, households in outer London are more likely to own or have access to a car than those in inner London. Centre for London reported in 2023 that 69 per cent of households in outer London have access to or own at least one car or van, compared to 42 per cent in inner London.
- CoMoUK, a national charity dedicated to the social, economic and environmental benefits of shared transport, estimate that in London in 2023 one car club car replaced around 15 private cars in real terms, and around 32 private cars when factoring in car purchases that were deferred as a result of car clubs. In its annual car club report CoMoUK reported that in 2023 there were 258,570 active car club members in London and that London’s car club fleet consisted of 2,946 publicly available cars and 50 corporate car club vehicles.

Key Questions

- How can car clubs be used to support the Mayor’s Transport Strategy target for 80 per cent of all trips in London to be made on foot, by cycle or using public transport by 2041?
- How can increased availability of car clubs help support a reduction in private car ownership?
- What types of journeys are car club cars used for in London?
- What could be done to improve availability of car clubs in outer London boroughs?
- What policies are needed to support car clubs in London?
- What are the main challenges around car clubs, and how inclusive are they?

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