

AtkinsRéalis



# High Level Car Club Guidance

Buckinghamshire Council

March 2026

Version 4.0

# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CAR CLUBS GUIDANCE

# Notice

This document and its contents have been prepared and are intended solely as information for Buckinghamshire Council and use in relation to providing high level guidance on the provision of Car Clubs within Buckinghamshire.

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This document has 22 pages including the cover.

## Document history

Document title: High Level Car Club Guidance

Document reference: Version 4.0

Revision	Purpose description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
1.0	Draft	CMack	CM	JBar	SJ	May 2025
2.0	Update	EM	CM	RM	SJ	Oct 2025
3.0	Update	MS	CM	RM	SJ	Dec 2025
4.0	Update	MS	CM	RM	SJ	March 2026



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# 1. Introduction

AtkinsRéalis have been commissioned to undertake a high-level review of Car Clubs, their implementation and their impact on parking provision in new developments and parking standards. For this report, Car Clubs are defined as a scheme which provides its members hire a 'private' vehicle. Cars are usually parked in reserved parking spaces specifically for Car Club vehicles, and are available for hourly, daily, and weekly hire at convenient times to the booker.

Car Clubs offer clear benefits for individuals, with cost savings and access to a range of low emissions, well-maintained, flexible use vehicles. Car Clubs also support policies to reduce congestion, improve air quality, reduce parking pressure and increase sustainable travel mode choices. Used in the right locations, they can be a very effective measure to promote sustainable development.

This report will outline the purpose, benefits and impacts of Car Clubs, using examples from various local authorities and their planning guidance and policies. The structure of the report is as follows:

- Section 2 – Best Practice and Benefits of Car Club Schemes
- Section 3 – Types of Car Club Schemes and Costs
- Section 4 – Impact on Parking Standards
- Section 5 – Location and Infrastructure Requirements
- Section 6 – Monitoring and Review



## 2. Best Practice / Guidance

Car Club schemes have become important in recent years, particularly with local authorities to achieve their strategic goals relating to climate change. The need to switch to more sustainable modes and reduce private car use has provided a strong case for the incorporation of Car Club schemes into new developments through the Travel Plan process.

Guidance documents have been produced both nationally and locally to help Local Authorities set out their own guidance for the introduction of Car Clubs. The guidance documents set out the leading research on Car Clubs in the UK. These documents include:

- (Department for Transport, 2023) Car Clubs: Local Authority Toolkit: [Car clubs: local authority toolkit - GOV.UK](#)
- CoMoUK (2022) New developments and shared transport: Cutting car dependency [6230798c0eedd6b324670851\\_CoMoUK New Developments Guidance.pdf](#)
- CoMoUK, (2023) Car Club guidance for local authorities: [Document > Car club guidance for local authorities](#)
- Milton Keynes Council, (2021) Car Clubs and Reducing Car Ownership: [Topic Paper\\_ Car Clubs and Reducing Car Ownership .pdf](#)
- Surrey County Council, (2018) Guidance on Car Clubs in new developments: [Guidance on Car Clubs in new developments](#)

An overall summary of the documents main points showed that:

- **Current Situation:** Many new developments are designed to prioritise car use but often neglect shared transport solutions.
- **Challenges:** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes sustainable development but it can be difficult for councils to refuse planning applications that lack robust shared transport integration; and
- **Opportunities:** Sustainable transport options, including Car Clubs and bike share schemes, can improve air quality and support 'gentle density'(Refers to creating compact, walkable neighbourhoods without high-rise developments). Recent legislative changes allow councils the opportunity to strengthen their shared transport priorities by aligning with Local Plans to better enforce shared transport requirements in new developments.

A summary of the documents note that there are several factors that influence the success of a Car Club in a development: These are:

- **Location:** Urban areas with high population density and easy access to local amenities.
- **Residential Density:** High-density residential developments with a high proportion of one and two-bedroom dwellings.
- **Accessibility:** Car Club bays should be easily accessed and visible to occupants and the surrounding neighbourhood.
- **Business Use:** Potential for daytime business use to complement residential use.
- **Public Transport:** Good accessibility to public transport.
- **Parking Constraints:** Limited parking within the development and surrounding streets.
- **Car-Free Developments:** Developments with no parking spaces provided.
- **Socio-Economic Factors:** Favourable socio-economic and demographic characteristics such as population density.
- **Existing Network:** Part of an existing car club network.
- **Sustainable Transport Measures:** Delivered as part of a coherent package of sustainable transport measures.



It is recommended that Car Clubs should only be considered in developments that require a Transport Assessment or Travel Plan and that Car Clubs should be secured via Planning Conditions, S106 agreements, or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). If parking is on-street, Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) will be required to be completed by the Developer and at their cost.

New developments should be designed to support a balanced approach to mobility, improving access to sustainable transport options while managing private car use. Thoughtful parking strategies, including appropriate restrictions and reduced ratios, can help encourage Car Club membership as a flexible and efficient alternative to individual car ownership.

It is key to identify how the scheme will be funded and who will be responsible, the documents identified the following activities:

- Council Activities: Costs associated with providing on-street spaces through the TRO process.
- Car Club Operator Activities: Start-up costs, ongoing maintenance, and booking service costs.

## 2.1 Benefits of Car Clubs to developers

A summary of the main points identified within each of the five documents discussed on page 5 set out the benefits for Car Clubs, these include:

- Helping to reduce parking pressures;
- Enabling developers to progress sites with limited space, which may have been previously impractical;
- Allowing an increase in the number of units or usable amenity space on the site, improving site viability and profitability;
- Offering residents convenience without the responsibilities or upfront costs of car ownership;
- Providing added value to new housing developments , with residents viewing Car Club vehicles as an added service;
- Making residential developments more attractive and marketable;
- Supporting Travel Plan objectives by reducing private car use, overall car miles travelled and local congestion;
- Offering an attractive, convenient alternative to private car ownership, encouraging greater use of public transport, walking and cycling, while still providing access to a vehicle when required (with each Car Club vehicle typically replacing 1 to 22 private cars);
- Improving environmental outcomes, as Car Club vehicles are more fuel-efficient and less polluting than the average private car, helping to reduce emissions and improve air quality;
- Enabling businesses to reduce reliance on staff using their own cars for work trips. Where Car Club vehicles are made available for business use.

## 2.2 Example Process

The Surrey County Council document provides example wording for TRO conditions related to Car clubs, unlike other examples reviewed. The Surrey County Council document outlines a process for the introduction of a Car Club scheme:

- In pre application discussions between the Developer, the Local Planning Authority, all parties agree that a Car Club should be provided as part of the proposed new development.
- A planning application is submitted including details of the proposed car club provision within the Transport Assessment and Travel Plan.



- Car Club provision is secured either via a Planning Condition or a S106 agreement:
  - a. By Planning Condition - A Car Club can be secured using a standard condition: *The development hereby approved shall not be [first occupied / first opened for trading] unless and until x Car Club vehicles have been provided for occupiers to use in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the Car Clubs vehicles shall be retained and maintained for their designated purpose(s). The submitted scheme will need to include details of the Car Club operator, the types of vehicle or vehicles to be provided, the parking bays and how these will be implemented, how the Car Club will be marketed to residents or business users, including any agreed membership discounts or offers.* The above details should also be included within the Travel Plan, where required.
  - b. By S106 agreement - The S106 agreement is a legal agreement between the Developer and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) which may be a Unilateral Agreement by the Developer detailing what they propose to provide, or may include several parties, and which secures funding for a range of schemes to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development. Although, many LPAs are moving away from the use of S106 agreements due to their adoption of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), S106 is still being utilised for the larger developments, for which Car Clubs are relevant.
  - c. Through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Where a S106 is not being provided confirmation will be sought that the necessary costs in connection with the Car Club requirements will be provided by the LPA from the CIL charge for that development.
- Once secured through the above methods, the Car Club will normally require on street parking provision, which will initially require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to “reserve” the parking space for Car Club use only. The TRO is initiated, processed and signed off by Local Authority at the request of the Developer or LPA.
- Highway works may be necessary to allow the Car Club parking bay to be installed or should an Electric Vehicle Charging Point (EVCP) be required. This is likely to require a S278 agreement (normally a mini-S278 for minor highways works). A S278 is an agreement that allows a developer to carry out works, make alterations or make improvements to the public highway, normally necessitated by a planning permission.
- Once a S278 agreement has been engrossed, and a TRO signed off, the final step is to apply for a Streetworks Licence to allow the works to take place. This is between the contractor carrying out the works and the Streetworks Team. It is used to agree the exact timing and traffic management requirements when the works take place. After the works have been completed and the Car Club has been installed for a period of time (as will be specified) the condition may be signed off by the LPA. The S278 works then enter a 12 month maintenance period and at the end of this period are then signed off.

**This is an example of how the Car Club TRO process could be undertaken and is not a definitive guide. The requirements outlined are an illustrative example to reflect the type of approach that Buckinghamshire Council could adopt.**

## 2.3 Summary

Table 2-1 provides a summary of the pros and cons of Car Club schemes:

**Table 2-1 - Car Clubs - Pros & Cons**

Pros		Cons	
Flexibility	Car Clubs provide the user with the flexibility of hourly or daily rental. Unlike standard car rentals, vehicles can be hired for 1 hour if only needed for a short trip.	Availability	Availability is very dependent on the area in which you live or work, lower provision in more rural areas may limit to access and availability, or options.  <b>Cities tend to mitigate this issue with higher provision across the area.</b>
Cost Saving	The membership required for Car Clubs tends to include fuel, servicing, insurance and breakdown cover, reducing the hidden costs of owning a vehicle.	Dependency	If the Car Clubs fleet is small, availability maybe restricted which could impact users.  <b>Latest local authority guidance and policy promotes the inclusion of Car Club spaces in development, which will help improve the availability of and number of vehicles in the area.</b>
Convenience	Cars owned and hired are usually available 24/7, so there are no restrictions allowing the user to collect/reserve the vehicle when convenient.	Usage Restrictions	Although this is very uncommon, some services may have restrictions on how far you can drive and where you can take the car. For longer journeys, car club rental/hiring may not be an option, limiting your travel plans.  EV car clubs may be unfamiliar to some users, leading to hesitation, and accessibility adaptations may be needed for those with disabilities to fully benefit from the service. Clear user guidance, onboarding help address uncertainties.
Sustainability	It promotes sustainable travel by actively reducing the number of vehicles needed for private car ownership. Drivers who travel rarely do not need to own a car.	Maintenance and Cleanliness	Due to the multiple users of the vehicle, and how often it is used, the condition of the vehicle may vary. Some members/users may not return the vehicle as clean or well-maintained as normally desired.  <b>Reporting functions allow the operators to check vehicles and help address issues found with vehicles.</b>
Range of cars	Car Clubs often maintain a fleet of newer vehicles, ranging from small cars for inner city driving, or large family cars for multiple occupants on longer journeys.	Costs	When starting up, subsidised membership fees tend to make joining a Car Club scheme financially viable for a limited period, but without subsidy, membership fees may be expensive

			<p>when compared to the amount the user books and uses vehicles.</p> <p>This in turn could make the scheme financially unviable and subsequently removed. Developers should subsidise and incentivise initial membership or usage credits to support scheme launch/ residents access.</p>
Location	Some Car Club vehicles are often parked near residential areas which is more convenient and reduces the need to travel to a car rental office location.	Liability	<p>If an collision occurs, that's the users fault, they may be liable for paying the insurance excess. This could negatively impact the financial viability of the scheme, resulting in its removal. Car club operators provide comprehensive insurance coverage that fully covers users for collisions, removing the need for residents to assume personal liability.</p>



## 3. Types of Car Club Schemes and Cost

### 3.1 Types of Car Club

In the UK, there are a number of commercial operators offering memberships in exchange for access to vehicles. Some of the popular and well-established commercial operators accredited by CoMoUK (Collaborative Mobility UK) (National organisation for shared transport) are:

- Enterprise Car Club
- Co Wheels
- Hiyacar

**Table 3-1 - Summary of Various Car Club Services**

	<b>Enterprise Car Club</b>	<b>Co Wheels</b>	<b>Hiyacar</b>
<b>Provision - Number of Vehicles/Locations</b>	1300 Vehicles	60 or More Locations	Hundreds of Vehicles
<b>Joining Fee</b>	Basic £10 Standard: Free Young Drivers (Under 22): £10	Basic: £10 Standard: Free Young Drivers (Under 22): £10	Free
<b>Membership Costs</b>	Varies by Location	Basic: Free Standard: £5 Young Drivers (Under 22): £7	Regular: Free Subscriber: £6.99 per Month
<b>Hire Charges</b>	Varies by Location	Basic: £7.50 per Hour Standard: £5.50 per Hour Young Drivers: £7.50 per hour	Varies (From less than £5 per hour) – Insurance and Booking fees are extra and calculated during booking.
<b>Mileage Charges</b>	Standard Plan: Car: 25p per Mile Van: 30p per Mile EV: 14p per Mile Young Drivers (Under 22): £7	From 14p per mile	Includes mileage allowance: 200 miles per day for regular members 500 miles per day for subscribers

Table 3-1 shows the various memberships and services that are offered through different operators. Some of these operators offer free registration but demand higher hire charges. By comparison, Zipcar offers a tiered subscription system which charges more for more premium status which reduces the hourly/daily charge which would be beneficial



for regular users. There are also variable mileage charges with Hiyacar and Zipcar including an initial mileage charge and then different rates for every mile over this. Hiyacar offers 500 miles per day for subscribers who pay a monthly membership fee.

Part of the accreditation process for CoMoUK is to ensure that Car Clubs meet emission standards.

For example, the Surrey Car Club requires the selected operator to provide vehicles that meet Euro 6 emissions standards and produce no more than 100g of CO<sub>2</sub> per kilometre. A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for the contract is to progressively reduce its average fleet emissions. Surrey County Council works with the preferred Operator to achieve this by providing the use of electric vehicle charging infrastructure on its own estate and, as the Highway Authority, on-street vehicle charging points. This has enabled Enterprise Car Club to introduce full electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles into their local fleet. When considering where to site new Car Club bays, locations should be chosen where it may be viable to install future electric vehicle charging points.

Whether Car Club vehicles are located in on or off-street bays, they must be made easily accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This is an important consideration in the siting of Car Club vehicles within new residential developments, especially when they are to be shared with people from outside new developments. They should not be prevented or deterred from using them through difficult access arrangements. Ideally the bays should be sited in an open and highly visible locations.

In deciding whether to locate Car Club bays on-street or off-street the following factors should be considered:

- Suitability of the roads in close proximity to the development (not more than 5 minutes' walk from the development);
- Is on-street parking controlled or uncontrolled;
- Suitability to implement a car club bay along with other S278 works in relation to the development;
- Feasibility of installing electric vehicle charging infrastructure to facilitate the use of ultra-low emission vehicles (see section on vehicles).

### 3.1.1 Summary

The services outlined above provide an indication on the variable nature of Car Club schemes and the requirements expected from its members. Some schemes provide different services which can be more feasible depending on what the users requires, whether it is irregular longer journeys or multiple short journeys. Some cheaper sign-on fees and monthly membership fees are more feasible for members depending on their level of usage. Gaining an understanding of the type of Car Clubs and their services is a key consideration for Buckinghamshire Council. How successful the incorporation of the schemes into developments depend on the type of offers provided to residents, or non-residents.

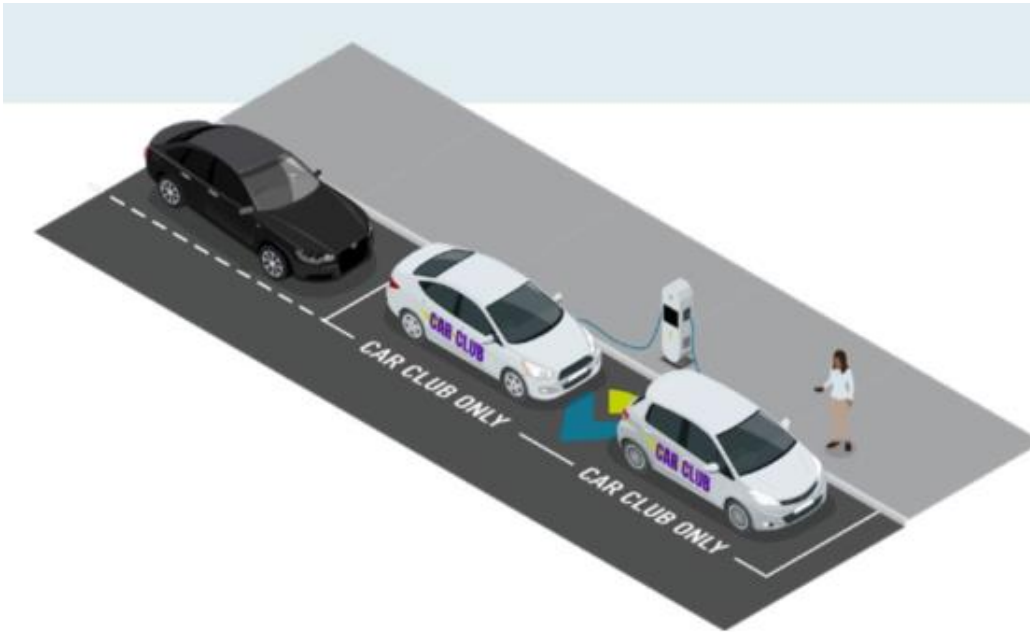
## 3.2 Type of Spaces/Operational Models for Car Clubs

### Back to Base

Back to base Car Club parking spaces require the user of the vehicle to return it to the exact space that it originated. The car will be required to be set back in the marked bay.



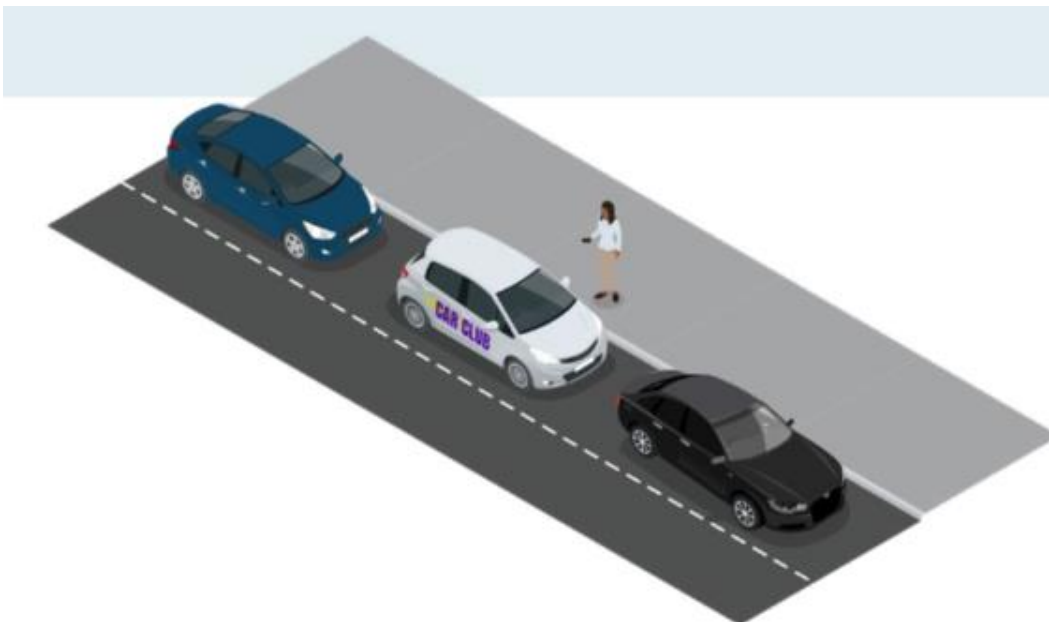
**Figure 3-1 – Back to Base space type**



**Back to Area**

An alternative model to Back to Base, Back to Area requires the vehicle to be returned to a geo-fenced areas across one or two streets. Cars are returned to any free space within this area and then it is the responsibility of the next driver to find their reserved vehicle using the app. This alleviates the issue of someone parking in the Car Club parking space and users being unable to return vehicles to their correct location.

**Figure 3-2 – Back to Area space type**



**One Way**

One-way operational models allow users to pick up the vehicle in one area and end in any space covered by the parking permit. This model is usually found beside back to base or back to area spaces.

## 4. Impact on Parking Standards

A review has been undertaken on the impact of introducing Car Clubs has on parking standards, and how including offsets for new developments in Buckinghamshire can reduce the number of spaces needed. The research that has been undertaken shows inconsistencies on the number of reduced vehicles that can be obtained from Car Club. This shows the complexities associated with parking and that the implementation of Car Clubs is required to be one of many measures to encourage private car use. Some of the findings are outlined below:

**CoMoUK – Car Club Annual Report (2023)** - Car clubs reduce the dependence of car ownership, estimated that for each Car Club operation, **26 private car vehicles are taken off the road**. Provision of car sharing bays must be assessed on the forecast modal splits of the proposed development.

**Figure 4-1 - CoMoUK Annual Car Club Report - Members Car Ownership survey results**



A 2019 report from Sustrans states that one car club car replaces over 20 private cars on the local road network. Furthermore in London, it was recorded that 15% of Car Club members had sold or disposed of a car in the last 12 months.

**CoMoUK – Car Club Guidance for Local Authorities** - Car Clubs reduce the dependence of private vehicle ownership. This document states that it is estimated that for each Car Club operation, **22 private car vehicles are taken off the road**. Provision of sharing bays should be assessed on the forecast modal splits of any proposed development. It should be noted that there are variations on the impact of Car Club impacts on the potential reduction on private cars.

**Surrey County Council** have set a recommended Car Club provision per development size. Depending on size and location, more than one vehicle may be required prior to first occupation. Alternatively, a phased approach could suitable so additional vehicles are required to be added once the initial cars have reached an agreed level of use. This is typically 20% or more.

SCC within their car club guidance have set out a car club provision standard for residential developments by size. Figure 4-2 provides an example of the discount associated with Car Clubs that other Council areas currently use. It is clear from the best practices review that the impact is dependent on the location and density of the development and therefore the provision set out in Figure 4-2 may not be suitable for other areas.

Figure 4-2 – SCC – Car Club provision by Residential Development Size

Development size	Recommended number of car club cars provided
1 to 50 units	Nil: Promote use of existing network of car club cars, if relevant
50 to 99 units	Case by case assessment
100 to 199 units	1 car
200 to 399 units	2 cars
400 to 599 units	3 cars
600 to 799 units	4 cars
800 to 999 units	5 cars
1000 units plus	6 to 10 cars

### 4.1.1 Rules of thumb on shared transport provision

The CoMoUK publication ‘New Developments Guidance’ presents a rules of thumb table for consideration of the reduction in parking ratios. Figure 4-3 below sets out a range of examples to draw upon when planning shared transport provision in new developments. The figures should not be taken as fixed allocations as the scale will depend on many factors and early engagement with Operators is always encouraged.

Figure 4-3 - CoMoUK Parking Provision – Rules of Thumb

	Scottish city	Outer London	Edge of English town
No of units	150	200	500
Current average parking ratio ranges	1.2	1	1.2
Proposed parking ratios	0.9	0.5	1
Reduction in parking spaces	45	100	100
Average cars displaced by car clubs vehicles from CoMoUK research	10	24	9
No of car club vehicles required	4-5	3-4	10-11
No of shared bikes required based on 1 bike to 10 units	15	20	50

## 4.1.2 Benchmarking of the Local Authorities

A review of selected local authorities parking standards on Car Clubs was also undertaken and is summarised in Table 4-1.

**Table 4-1 - Car Club Benchmarking**

<b>Council</b>	<b>Specific Car Club standards</b>	<b>Commentary on Car Club Standards</b>
<b>Oxfordshire County Council</b>	<p>Developers are expected to work with OCC and Local Planning Authorities to incorporate Car Clubs into the masterplanning process.</p> <p>Vehicles can be located on-street or within community facilities such as shopping centres, public car parks, churches or leisure centres.</p>	The document refers to the UK Governments Local Authority Toolkit.
<b>East Sussex County Council</b>	<p>The County Council supports the provision of Car Clubs in appropriate locations, mainly in major developments.</p> <p>They are considered a demand management tool to reduce the need for private vehicles.</p> <p>Car Club spaces need to be carefully located to maximize visibility and usage.</p>	<p>Car Clubs may be included as part of a Travel Plan to promote shared vehicle use and reduce single-occupancy car trips.</p> <p>Incentives may be provided to encourage residents or employees to use them.</p>
<b>Milton Keynes City Council</b>	<p>A ratio of 0.8 parking spaces per unit or less is conducive to successful Car Club integration.</p> <p>Each vehicle can remove an average of 6.1 private cars from the road.</p> <p>Car Club vehicles should be accessible to the wider community and be in visible and accessible areas.</p> <p>Assessment is case-by-case, considering local context and development scale.</p>	Only accredited providers are acceptable when being used to justify reduced parking provision.
<b>Central Bedfordshire Parking Standards</b>	<p>The membership fee for Car Clubs cover costs in relation to business operation.</p> <p>A management plan is required, this includes how the scheme will operate and those who are responsible for maintain the vehicles.</p>	The document covers the definition and purpose of Car Clubs. The two main models are back-to-base and one-way.
<b>Suffolk County Council</b>	<p>Developers are advised to engage with a car club operator early in the planning process to assess viability.</p>	<p>Car Club spaces should be clearly designated and conveniently located.</p> <p>Provision of Car Club vehicles can be used to justify reduced</p>

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May not be feasible in areas where public transport is already covered under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulation 123 list. private parking requirements in sustainable developments.

Strongly supported in principle by Suffolk County Council. Should be integrated into the overall parking and mobility strategy of the development.

Aligns with the county's goal to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Encouraged as part of residential Travel Plans.

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# 5. Location and Infrastructure Requirements

CoMoUK 2023 annual Car Club survey report states that 100% of vehicles are compliant with low emission zones. Furthermore, 35% of vehicles that are not fully electric are either hybrid or plugin hybrid. When considering a location for Car Club spaces, it is imperative that they are easily visible and have the existing infrastructure to supply EV charging points. Surrey County Council states that the location should be no more than 5-minute walk (400m) from a development, and CoMoUK advise that Club members should be able to benefit from vehicles within a 2–5-minute walk from their house to realistically avail of the service.

Minimum design standards recommend a minimum of 1.2m of footway, free from obstruction for pedestrians, and EV charging design standards require the charging point to be installed a minimum of 450mm from the kerb. These requirements suggest that a footway of 2m is required for an EV charging point to be installed for an on-street Car Club parking space. Car Club bays must meet the bay size requirements set out in the Buckinghamshire's parking standards.

The marked bay must have the standard upright Car Club parking sign (as shown below) and the relevant permit identifier, as provided by the TRO team.

Figure 5-1 – Car Club Permit Sign



The accompanying road marking legend saying 'CAR CLUB' or 'CAR CLUB ONLY' should also usually be provided, as shown in Figure 3-7.

Figure 5-2 – Car Club On Street Road Markings



## 6. Monitoring and review

Car Clubs implemented as part of new developments will need to be accurately monitored and reviewed. In the SCC guidance document it is recommended that a formal review of the performance of the Car Club is undertaken and reported after the first and second years of operation and this should, where possible, be incorporated as part of the Travel Plan monitoring process.

The Car Club provider should provide the council with a record of the number of hours a car is booked out in each 24 hour period and show this as a percentage of the total available hours over a month. A successful Car Club should show an average utilisation of between 20 to 25% sustained over a 6-month period.

If the Car Club is not reaching its utilisation targets there should be further discussions through the Travel Plan process on how to encourage increased use in the Car Club facilities.

Developers and operators should refer to Buckinghamshire Travel Plan Guidance and Parking Standards and engage early with Council officers to ensure implementation, management and review arrangements align with local requirements.



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