



Car Club Parking Charter

Introduction

The aim of the Parking Charter is to aid the successful development of car clubs by smoothing the implementation and management of parking bays. Specifically to:

- increase best practice amongst local authorities
- and increase customer satisfaction through improved reliability and reduced incidences of parking problems.

1. Over arching supportive council policy for car clubs

As the development of a car club involves many sections of the council and is reliant upon support from elected members through to parking attendants on the ground, the Charter proposes that the first step to success is to achieve a supportive cross department policy. With reference to existing aims on sustainability and carbon reduction the policy statement should show that the contribution that car clubs can make to these agendas should take higher priority than conflicting targets such as revenue generation from parking spaces.

Proposal: To adopt a cross department policy to support car clubs

2. Cross department briefings

It is proposed that any authority which is setting up a car club arranges for each team involved in the process from transportation through to development control and the parking teams to be given briefings on the cross department policy agreement, benefits of the initiative and any specific issues relating to their role as early as possible to ensure their full support for the process.

Proposal: To carry out a series of department briefings including enforcement teams.

3. Effective communications

Effective communication is important both in the implementation stage and in relation to management of bays. Officers, council contractors and car club operators need to be clear of the expected timeframes involved in the set up phase to ensure fast delivery. Similarly good connections between the parties will allow any problems with the bays on a day to day basis to be resolved most effectively.

Proposal: Local authority partners to commit to setting up clear lines of communication with the operators and to ensure any contractors responsible for outsourced parking management and enforcement are fully informed

4. **Options for members faced with blocked bays**

As a result of illegal parking in car club bays, operators need to offer members an alternative course of action. Current solutions available in London are not consistent; some boroughs indicate that if operators contacted them they can direct members to park in Resident Bays. While the option of parking in alternative bays where specific notification is required works to a certain extent, this often results in PCNs which have an administrative burden on operators and Councils. Importantly, where these PCNs are not cancelled by Councils they have to be passed on to members causing loss of goodwill and reputation for Car Clubs. Others allow this option without notification such as RBKC and Lambeth. In RBKC this concession applies to the whole borough, in Lambeth it applies to the parking zone closest to the bay. Discussion at the seminar showed there was concern over the cost of these options and possible theft of permits. An alternative solution was proposed where a visitor permit is available within the vehicle to be used in this circumstance although this is not favoured by the operators as it causes more confusion with the members and would be harder to implement.

Proposal: To offer either zone / residents permits for all car club cars.

5. **Penalty Charge Notices**

- “Innocent” members

Proposal: to eliminate incidences by providing residents / zone permits – see above.

- “Guilty” members
 - Where members are at fault Councils will not currently accept Car Club nomination of driver. (As they also don't currently for hire car drivers without a signed agreement, e.g members of the Hertz Gold Card).
 - This results in Car Club bearing liability for all PCNs, at the increased cost, and so having to pay without giving member chance to appeal. This has a hugely erosive effect on Car Club reputation and goodwill.

Proposal: To support Carplus to lobby for:

(a) a London-wide solution through liaison with the ALG to allow operators to nominate drivers. To seek support in this initiative from BVRLA.

(b) Car Clubs to be permitted extended period to pay such PCNs at the reduced rate or to lodge an appeal.

- Operators
 - Where PCNs issued as a result of a breakdown in the management or use of the bay, for suspensions, or permit failures, PCNs are often issued which the operator is held responsible for.
 - It is rare for the operator to get the physical PCN issued to the vehicle, so first knowledge of the PCN is when Notice to owner received – at this point the charge can no longer be paid at the reduced rate.
 - This results in Car Club bearing liability for all PCNs, at the increased cost, and so having to pay without giving the operator (or even the member)

chance to appeal. At this point large cost liabilities are accumulated by the operator, which penalise the way in which these cars are operated.

Proposal: to allow Car Clubs extended period to pay or appeal PCNs at reduced rate

6. Vehicle Permits

- Registration Specific
 - Where Permits are registration specific to a vehicle (with a registration number) it creates difficulties in various situations and additional administration and cost, often resulting in bookings which operators are unable to honour, again damaging the reputation of reliability and convenience of Car Clubs. These situations include
 - Temporary replacements in cases where cars are damaged or involved in crashes.
 - Backfill – where cars are taken on long bookings it is often necessary to put another car in place to serve other members in the area.
 - Vehicle Churn – Cars are constantly being replaced to keep the fleet new, but every time a registration specific car needs to be replaced there are significant logistical hurdles.

Proposal: To have permits that are not vehicle specific but contain some reference to Car Clubs or the Operator to mitigate the risk of theft and reduce their value; eg 'Car Club Only'. The permit will also have the bay specific number on it (eg IS-01) which would again reduce the risk of theft.

Alternatively temporary visitor permits could be used in this situation as long as parking attendants were able to detect this was a car club car in the bay not another resident. This would be possible by the livery or looking for the smart card detector.

- Validity of Permits
 - Where permits are valid only in the Car Club bay it creates a disadvantage against car ownership. As a resident and car owner many prospective members can unload or park outside their houses during their bookings, but as a car club member they would receive PCNs for doing so.

Proposal: To offer either visitor or zone permits for all car club cars.

7. Temporary Bay Suspensions

Bays are suspended for access to adjoining property, filming, or temporary road closures. Poor communication can result in operators discovering such closures after the event. This can lead to car club cars receiving PCNs, being clamped or even being towed away. Putting up a notice on the bay is not adequate communication.

- Communication

- Current communication where a notice is put up in bays is not sufficient as, by definition, Car Club Bays are not manned nor are they visited between each booking.
 - Often cars are parked before suspension starts and then receive tickets next day.
 - Unless permits are overtly valid in Residents bays members are not aware of any other options and so park in the suspended bays.
 - Need timely communication of all suspensions or preclusions of use of bays form suspensions teams so the operator can arrange for cars to be moved.
- Alternative Bays
 - Even where nearby resident's bays allowed as temporary alternative, huge logistical issues getting each member to inform operator where they have left car and informing next member.
 - Unless permits allow use of Residents bays PCNs accumulate quickly creating admin and cost for operators and councils.
 - This can make operations unviable for period of suspension meaning booking not honoured.
 - Need better understanding of the knock on effects of suspension of Car Club Bays on growth of the concept.

Proposal: Copies of TTROs and other proposed actions that will require suspension of car club bays should be communicated by borough staff or consultants by e-mail to operator's designated person 5 working days before suspension of the bay, or in emergency situations at least 48 hours beforehand.

This obligation is a recommended element to the contract between a car club operator and local authority.

8. Signage and Lining of Bays

- CPZ bays commonly have limited hours of enforcement resulting in perception by members of public that all bays are available for use at peak Car Club times in evenings and some weekend days.
- This perception by the public results in high incidence of cars being parked in Car Club bays with severe knock on effects for the smooth operation of the service.
- The bays would benefit from more distinctive signage and overt mention of the fact that bays are unavailable for public use 'AT ANY TIME'.
- Distinctive signage also reduces the frequency of people parking in Car Club bays and removes any doubt as to operation of the bays. This might include the newly approved car club logo plus an information board. It has the additional benefit of providing information on-site for interested prospective members and educating members of the public of the existence of Car Clubs, which is especially beneficial in high foot-fall sites.
- If the bays are surface treated with a colour (in addition to the 'Car Club Only' sign on the road), this has been shown to reduce incidences of illegal parking.

Proposal: To adopt the new more distinctive car club sign and ideally use information panels, surface treatments and the extra panel stating "at any time".