WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM CARPLUS

Developing Car Clubs in Scotland – The Benefits: An Introduction to the Transport Scotland Funded Programme

This briefing paper outlines the progress of the Developing Car Clubs in Scotland (DCCS) programme to date and identifies the contribution made by car clubs to reducing transport related carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions.

In November 2010, funding for the DCCS programme was approved by Transport Scotland. This programme is managed by Carplus, an environmental transport NGO with a decade of experience of car clubs and car-sharing. It aims to expand the availability of car clubs by helping to expand existing provision and kick-starting new car clubs across Scotland as part of the Scottish Government’s support for energy efficiency and carbon reduction in Scottish transport.

Car clubs promote behaviour change by complementing other modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. Car clubs provide access to fuel efficient, low emission vehicles and ensure that household or workplace transport costs are minimised and transparent. The DCCS programme aims to develop this alternative to car ownership as a convenient option in communities across Scotland by 2020.

Through the DCCS programme, Carplus is supporting Aberdeen City Council in facilitating a new car club in Aberdeen and developing a pilot project in Dundee. Carplus is also supporting the expansion of existing car clubs in Glasgow and Edinburgh and supporting the development of car clubs utilising council vehicles and reducing council fleet costs (e.g. Fife Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council).

In support of car club developments in small towns and rural areas, the DCCS programme has provided funding and technical assistance to develop 5 community car club projects including: Anstruther in Fife, Dunbar in East Lothian, Fintry in Stirlingshire, the Isle of Bute in Argyle and Bute and Mallaig in the Highlands.

In addition, Carplus is currently working with a number of rural communities across Scotland to develop car clubs, including: Comrie in Perth and Kinross, Creetown and Moffat in Dumfries and Galloway, Inverbervie and Laurencekirk in Aberdeenshire and Lochwinnoch in Renfrewshire.

Through the DCCS programme Carplus has been able to support the expansion car clubs across Scotland and there are now 5,670 car club members in Scotland using 123 car club vehicles.

In large parts of Scotland the car is often the only practical and convenient transport option. 95% of Scotland is rural in nature and 18% of Scotland’s population live in rural areas where access to essential services may be limited and where walking, cycling and public transport may not always be practical transport options. Car clubs provide a practical, cost effective option for rural communities, recognising the need for access to a car whilst reducing overall car use.

It takes at least two to three years to establish a car clubs with sufficient membership to be a viable business that can support itself in the long term. Therefore, if Scotland is to have an effective programme that will ensure the successful development of car clubs across Scotland, it requires commitment to continued investment.

Benefits of Car Clubs

Scottish car clubs directly contribute to reducing transport related CO2 emissions:

- Car club vehicles are on average 29% more fuel efficient than the average car and therefore save 148 tonnes of CO2 per year in terms of fuel efficiency alone
- Car clubs reduce the overall number of car journeys – 75% of members drive less often than once a week
• Car clubs reduce the number of cars on Scotland’s roads – an average of 25 private cars are taken off the road for every car club car because new members frequently sell their own car or put off buying one
• Car club members are far more likely to walk, cycle, use public transport and share car journeys rather than travelling by car alone

Car clubs offer economic benefits to both individual members and their and their local community:
• Reducing transport costs, especially where a privately owned car, or a second car, is no longer required as a result of car club membership
• Offering employers an alternative for business travel.
• Encourage both formal and informal ride sharing as an alternative to single occupancy car use

Car clubs support development in rural areas and empower communities:
• Providing improved transport choices in communities where access to public transport may be limited or nonexistent
• Encourage rural communities to work together to build social enterprises
• Supporting local businesses by providing options for business travel and encouraging the use of local community resources

Carplus undertakes a survey of all car club members in collaboration with the Transport Research Laboratory with support of operators each year. All figures: Carplus Annual Survey of Car Clubs 2010/2011, May 2011 unless otherwise stated.

For more information on car clubs, the DCCS programme or Carplus, please contact:

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1 Grant of £200,000 provided in 2010/11 and £350,000 provided in 2011/12.
2 Figures from Scottish car club operators and pilot projects, October 2011.
4 Calculated based on direct emissions from combustion of fuel based on estimated distance travelled using UK DEFRA/DECC average emission factors and data for company reporting August 2011. Calculations available upon request.