

# IMPLEMENTING A SHARED **ELECTRIC VAN SCHEME** FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

## PROJECT STEPS

- 1 ESTABLISH LOCAL INTEREST
- 2 WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?
- 3 CHOOSE THE RIGHT VEHICLE
- 4 SECURE FUNDING
- 5 PARKING & CHARGING
- 6 ACCESSING THE VEHICLE
- 7 MONITORING USAGE
- 8 WHAT NEXT?



# CLEAN AIR VILLAGES PROGRAMME

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This case study was commissioned by Cross River Partnership (CRP), a non-profit and impartial partnership organisation delivering projects that positively contribute to the social, environmental and economic health of London.

This case study was developed as part of the Clean Air Villages 2 project, funded by Defra's Air Quality Grant. The project aims to reduce emissions in 13 hotspot 'villages' of poor air quality across the London Boroughs of Lewisham, Camden, Hammersmith & Fulham, Lambeth, Wandsworth, The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and the City of Westminster. Within these villages, CRP is working with businesses and communities to make deliveries and servicing more efficient, using both individual and collective action.

In 2020-21, the project is expanding into new areas as part of [Clean Air Villages 3](#).

For more information about the project, and to access further resources and case studies, please visit: [crossriverpartnership.org/projects/clean-air-villages-2/](https://crossriverpartnership.org/projects/clean-air-villages-2/)



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

 **CROSS RIVER  
PARTNERSHIP**  
**CLEAN AIR VILLAGES**

  
**Lambeth**

# INTRODUCTION

In this best practice document you will be guided, step-by-step, through the processes, challenges and solutions to setting up the Brixton shared electric van scheme. From establishing initial interest from businesses, to ensuring the successful management of the vehicle.

**London Borough of Lambeth, Zipcar, Brixton BID** and **Cross River Partnership (CRP)** worked together to implement **London's first shared electric van scheme**. Free for businesses to use for the first year, the vehicle forms part of an innovative pilot aiming to address attitudes towards electric vehicles (EVs) and promote the concept of shared vehicles.

“

SHARED ELECTRIC VEHICLES AND CARGO BIKES ARE VITAL IN HELPING LOCAL SMALL BUSINESSES TRANSITION TO LOW-CARBON WAYS OF WORKING.

”

Councillor Claire Holland  
London Borough of Lambeth





“ THE **NEW SHARED ELECTRIC VAN** IN BRIXTON HAS ENABLED SMALL BUSINESSES RIGHT ACROSS LAMBETH TO WITNESS THAT IT’S **GOOD BUSINESS SENSE** TO USE SHARED TRANSPORT, AS WELL AS BEING **BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT** THAN OWNING YOUR OWN VEHICLE. ”

**COUNCILLOR CLAIRE HOLLAND  
LONDON BOROUGH OF LAMBETH**



1

# ESTABLISH LOCAL INTEREST AND REQUIREMENTS

Engage with the local business community to find out whether a shared EV would be useful, how they might use it and what type of vehicle they would need.

## ! CHALLENGE

As the first scheme of its kind, it was often difficult to convey the shared vehicle concept to businesses, particularly while details of the scheme were still being negotiated and finalised.

## ✓ SOLUTION

The Brixton EV has helped to raise the profile of shared van schemes for businesses, and provides a useful example to facilitate replicating this idea elsewhere.

Extensive business engagement conducted by CRP was facilitated by funding as part of Defra's Air Quality Grant. Without this, a local authority may require support to gather this information.

## + ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



NEXT STEP ➔

1

## ESTABLISH LOCAL INTEREST

## + ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CRP conducted business engagement in Brixton through workshops, meetings, door-to-door visits and an event hosted in the market. Local businesses were surveyed to determine the interest in a shared EV.

Businesses were asked about their existing vehicles and behaviour, including:

- Size and payload
- Typical time of use
- Average mileage
- ULEZ compliance
- Current attitude towards EVs

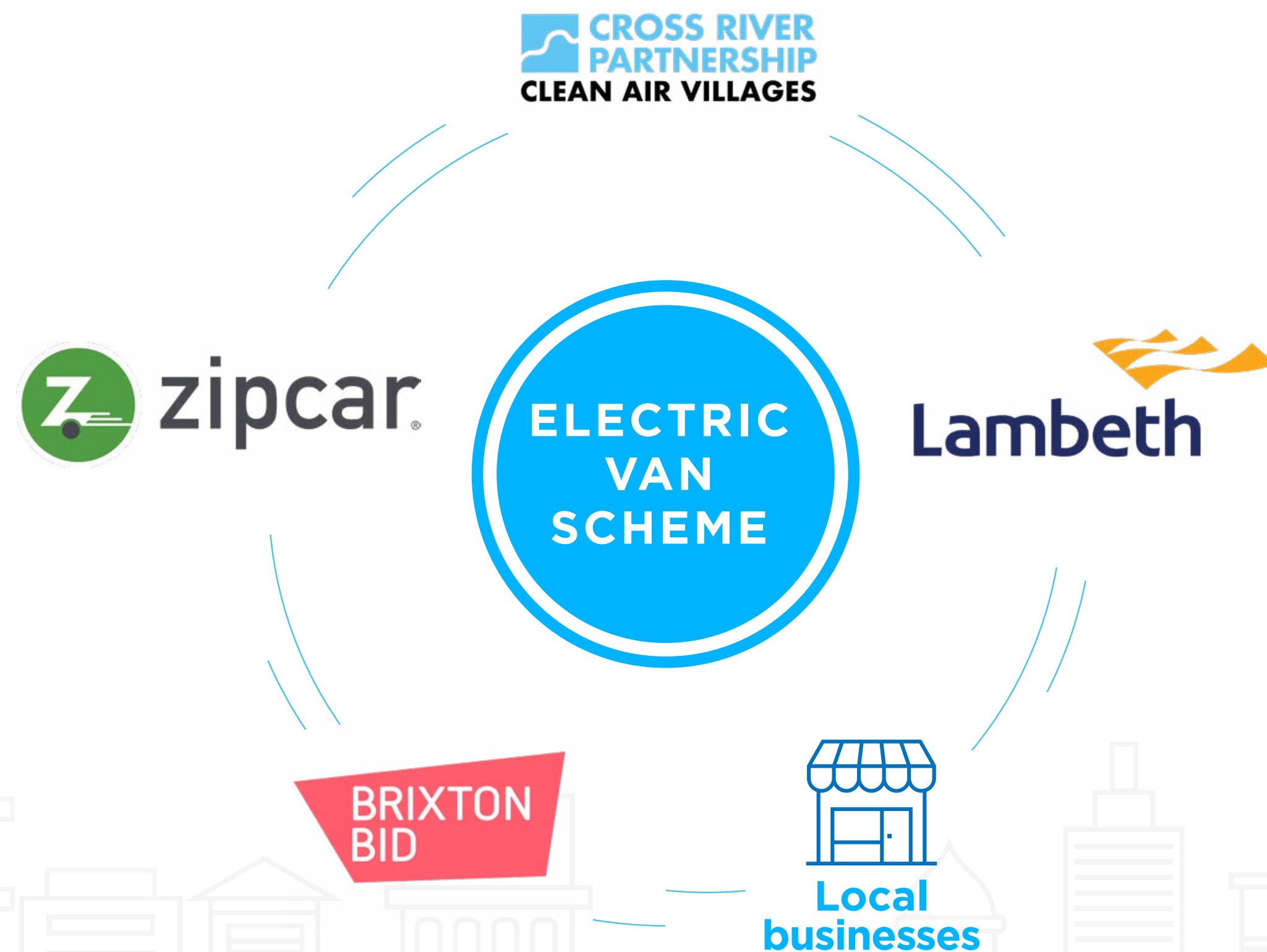
This baseline data was collected to identify vehicle requirements, as well as to monitor the impact of the scheme in reducing local emissions and changing attitudes towards EVs.





## 2 ARE THE RIGHT PEOPLE INVOLVED?

Work out which stakeholders (both internally and externally) need to be involved to ensure the funding, management and communication of the project are delivered effectively.



➕ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION







2

## ARE THE RIGHT PEOPLE



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Which local authority departments and teams were involved in the setup?**

-  Environment Team (internal lead)
-  Finance, legal and democratic services
-  Market trading team
-  House traffic management officers
-  Highway engineers
-  Parking team

CRP - monitoring and engagement responsibilities (see step 7).



 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

BRIXTON  
BID

  
Local  
businesses





# 3

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT VEHICLE

Contact vehicle suppliers early to obtain costs, specifications and lead times. The type of van required will be affected by lead times, so try to establish this as soon as possible.

### ! CHALLENGE

Local businesses in Brixton required varying vehicles sizes, with many market traders using vans with a payload of at least 3.5 tonnes. Larger vans available on the market are typically very expensive and were unavailable at the time of the project.

### ✓ SOLUTION

The decision was made to utilize a small van, recognising that this option was more feasible, and that the scheme would not be able to support the needs of every business.

### + COLLABORATION WITH ZIPCAR

### ! CHALLENGE

Owing to higher associated costs, when compared with diesel and petrol equivalents, Zipcar did not have a fully electric van in their fleet prior to the project.

### ✓ SOLUTION

Keen to be involved, Zipcar contacted vehicle manufacturers to obtain costs and lead times for acquiring a small EV for the project, ultimately selecting the Renault Kangoo ZE.

### ! CHALLENGE

At the time, lead times associated with the supply of the Renault Kangoo ZE caused a substantial delay to the implementation of the scheme.

### ✓ SOLUTION

Vehicle suppliers should be contacted as soon as possible to prevent unnecessary delays. Where possible, work with providers that already have, or are planning to acquire, EVs in their fleet.





## COLLABORATION WITH ZIPCAR

Zipcar were chosen as the vehicle operator as their brand familiarity helped secure confidence from local businesses to sign up.

By collaborating with an existing vehicle sharing company, with a booking system already in place, many of the initial barriers in setting up the scheme were avoided.



fleet prior to the project.

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### CHALLENGE

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### SOLUTION

Vehicle suppliers should be contacted as soon as possible to prevent unnecessary delays. Where possible, work with providers that already have, or are planning to acquire, EVs in their fleet.

# 4

## ENSURE THE RIGHT FUNDING IS IN PLACE

Funding may be required to cover business engagement, lease of the vehicle management and marketing of the scheme, installation of a charge point (where applicable) and ongoing monitoring of the impacts.

### ! CHALLENGE

Capital funding to cover the vehicle lease and electricity to charge was not available within the Defra Air Quality Grant.

### ✓ SOLUTION

The London Borough of Lambeth were able to secure funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

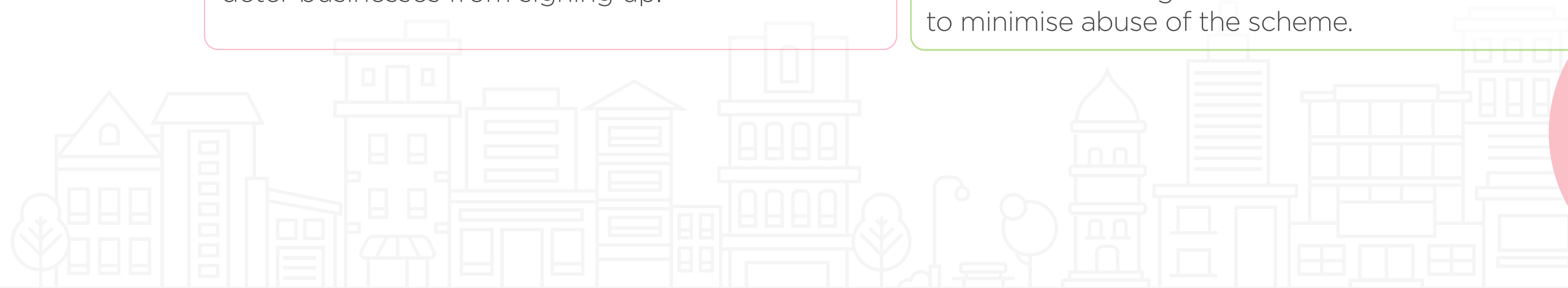
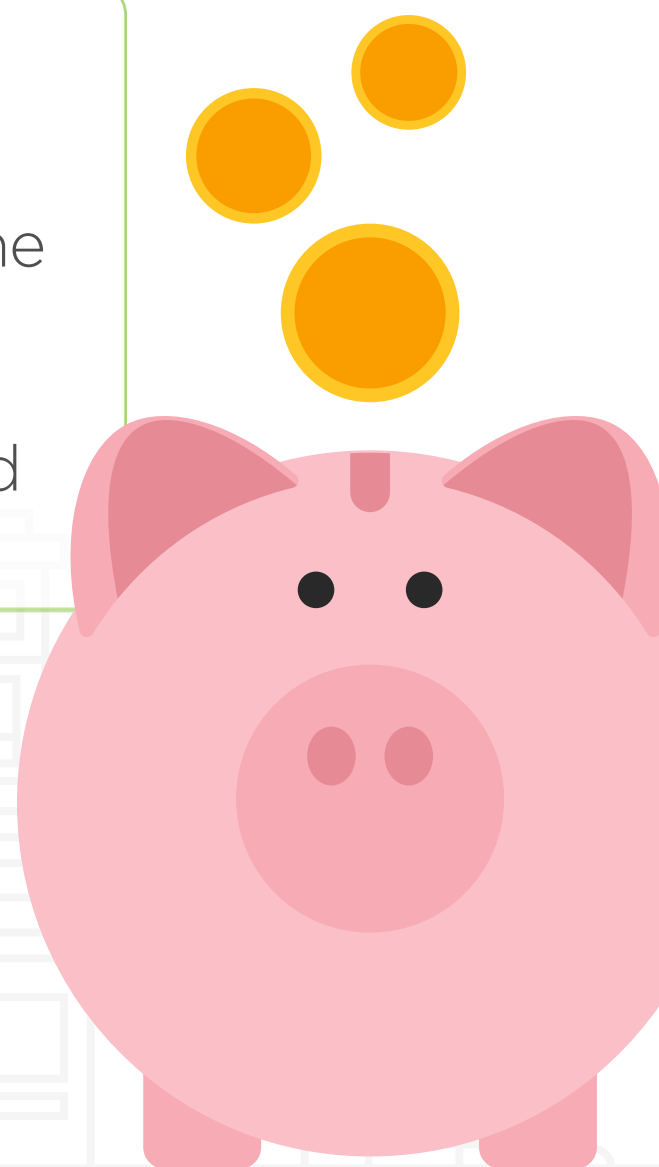
### + ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### ! CHALLENGE

There were concerns that providing a vehicle for free could lead to abuse of the scheme, while including a cost was expected to significantly deter businesses from signing up.

### ✓ SOLUTION

It was agreed by project partners that making the scheme free to begin with was the best way to achieve the behaviour change that the project set out to do. A registration form was introduced to minimise abuse of the scheme.





4

## ENSURE THE RIGHT FUNDING

## ⊕ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The London Borough of Lambeth explored funding opportunities to cover the costs of Zipcar leasing an EV, guaranteeing exclusive availability for Brixton businesses. With the CIL-funding secured, the costs of the vehicle and the electricity to charge it were covered, ensuring it could be free for businesses to use for one year. The cost of the scheme came in at just under £1,000 per month.

Several OLEV grants are available for the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and TfL have an EV delivery plan to invest in expanding rapid chargers across London. For more information on grants click [here](#).



## 5 WHERE SHOULD THE EV BE PARKED?

Identify any local parking bays with a charge point suitable for the vehicle. It might be necessary to install new charging infrastructure or convert a parking bay, which may result in additional costs and delays.

### ! CHALLENGE

The designated charge point needed to be at least 7kW and close to the centre of Brixton to ensure the vehicle was convenient for businesses to use.

### ✓ SOLUTION

An existing charge point was found to be suitable, saving the need to install new infrastructure which would have caused a significant delay.

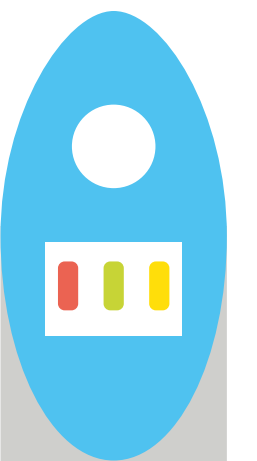
### + CONVERTING THE PARKING BAY

### ! CHALLENGE

The Traffic Management Order (TMO) process can take at least 3 months. This may be longer if there are objections, which may arise if the conversion of a residential parking bay is required.

### ✓ SOLUTION

If the conversion of a parking bay is required then this process should be initiated as early as possible.





5

## WHERE SHOULD THE

## ⊕ CONVERTING THE PARKING BAY

The parking bay associated with the identified charge point needed to be safeguarded for use by the shared EV. The London Borough of Lambeth were able to raise an experimental Traffic Management Order (TMO) to convert this from a resident bay to an exclusive EV car club bay.



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then this process should be initiated as early as possible.

NEXT STEP







## HOW WILL THE EV BE ACCESSED?

Be clear on how users will access and use the vehicle, outlining the sign-up process required and establishing an agreement of fair-use.



### CHALLENGE

Electric vehicles operate differently to petrol and diesel vehicles, including the way in which these are re-fuelled. In many cases, businesses may never have previously operated an electric vehicle.



### SOLUTION

It is recommended that first time users hire the EV for a 'test drive', to get to grips with how it works and how to charge it. Clear user instructions are also available inside the vehicle all times.



### HOW DO BUSINESSES SIGN-UP?





## HOW DOES A BUSINESS SIGN-UP

For a business to use the van, they must complete the following process:

### 1. Contact CRP and complete a registration form.

This is an important initial step in ensuring that a business understands why the shared van scheme exists and agrees to use it fairly.

### 2. Open a Zipcar Business Account (free for the first year).

If the business is eligible, CRP then approves their access with Zipcar. Steps 1 and 2 only need to be completed once, afterwards a business can jump straight to step 3 when looking to hire the vehicle.

### 3. Reserve the EV directly through the Zipcar app.

### 4. Unlock the car using your phone and drive!



# 7 MONITORING HOW THE EV IS USED

Collect vehicle reports to track how the EV is being used and measure the success of the scheme, as well as to identify behaviour that may constitute misuse.

During the sign-up process, CRP gathered details from businesses about their current vehicle ownership and use and their intended use of the EV. Combined with regular vehicle reports from Zipcar, this information is used to measure the emissions savings as a result of the scheme.

## ! CHALLENGE

The van is vulnerable to improper or excessive use, which would significantly impact others wishing to hire the vehicle.

## ✓ SOLUTION

CRP reserve the right to remove access to the vehicle where misuse is observed. A limit on the number of hours each business can use the EV each month may also be introduced to ensure fair and equal use.

## + ADDITIONAL INFORMATION





## 7 MONITORING HOW THE EV IS USED

### + ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A total of 46 businesses have expressed an interest in the EV since December 2019. 17 of these businesses have completed the sign-up procedure with CRP and Zipcar, and 13 have since used the van regularly.

Organisations that use the EV are wide ranging, from art galleries and restaurants, to landscape architects and film makers. Within the first three months the van has driven over 2000 miles!

The business's thoughts on the sharing concept, an important part of the Brixton EV, were made clear during a feedback workshop which CRP hosted. Two of the EV's top users, Abdul Barweshid and Stafford Geohagen, who are key members of the Brixton business community, use the van for trips to markets in the early hours of the day, as well as local deliveries, and have given positive feedback regarding use of the van and the simplicity of booking the vehicle.



#### Feedback from other users:

- “I like the fact I don’t have to worry about petrol and contributing to pollution.”
- “A really good service and a really good asset.”
- “Very futuristic.”
- “We are very thankful for the opportunity you have given our company. We need more outreach to SMEs to lead the way in reducing air pollution.”



## 8 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

To ensure ongoing success of the scheme, and therefore a sustained impact, make sure you establish who will be responsible for promotion, monitoring, and maintenance in the long term.

CRP have an important role in monitoring and promoting the vehicle scheme among businesses in Brixton. Funded as part of Defra's Air Quality Grant, CRP's involvement in the scheme will conclude in May 2020.

### ! CHALLENGE

Who should be responsible for the long-term management of the scheme?

### ✓ SOLUTION

Brixton Business Improvement District agreed to take over management of the scheme from June 2020. It was important to ensure that such an agreement was in place to secure the continued management and success of the scheme.

