

Case Study

Woking Borough Council Slashes Mileage, Carbon And Grey Fleet Costs through Car Hire

Introduction

Woking Borough Council strives to be at the forefront of carbon reduction and cost reduction. Many of its 320 employees, particularly those involved in planning and housing services, regularly travel for work and most of the journeys are of short distance and duration.



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The Challenge

Historically, Council employees used their own cars for these work journeys and claimed mileage reimbursement (the 'grey fleet'). However, this can lead to increased costs and higher carbon emissions as it relies on employees using their own private vehicles: cars that may not be particularly new, well-maintained or low-emission.

There were two main groups of employees who drove for business – essential users who regularly drove a personal car for business, and occasional

users. The former received a lump sum car allowance plus mileage reimbursement, while the latter received reimbursement only.

The Council believed that it could reduce the carbon footprint of transport as well as cost by changing employee thinking and behaviours, discouraging grey fleet mileage and developing a better, more innovative solution to business travel. The Enterprise CarShare programme run by Enterprise Rent-A-Car was selected to help bring this about.



David Johnson, corporate strategy manager at Woking Borough Council

“ Enterprise CarShare has helped us change how employees think of business trips and take a more considered approach to their travel planning. ”

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The Solution

Rental, and specifically car sharing, was chosen as the solution for Woking Borough Council. Working with the Energy Saving Trust and the Enterprise CarShare programme, the Council based two vehicles near its head offices in Woking as a 'virtual' car pool.

These were primarily targeted at occasional users, whose reimbursement option was removed completely (with a few exceptions, such as employees based outside Woking town centre). In addition, the mileage allowance for essential users was also modified so that they were encouraged to use either CarShare vehicles or a leased car.

David Johnson, corporate strategy manager at Woking Borough Council, notes: "We wanted everyone to buy in to the thinking behind our car sharing programme. We knew that mileage reimbursement was seen by many as a discretionary 'perk' so we brought the unions in from the beginning. That way they knew that we were providing alternative means of transport at no cost to employees rather than trying to reduce benefits.

"They grasped this immediately, as well as the environmental benefits

of the Enterprise cars, and this got them on board from day one."

The Council also worked with employees to change behaviour and manage demand, encouraging them to think about journey

planning and why they had to travel in the first place – so that rather than several different trips spread over a week, employees organised their time to do them all during the period for which they had the CarShare vehicle booked out.

The Results

The Council introduced the Enterprise CarShare initiative in early 2010 and the results since then have been very impressive. The CO2 footprint for employee business travel has dropped by 37 per cent (around 1.2 tonnes of CO2 per year) and grey fleet mileage has fallen by 14,000 miles a year, some 25 per cent.

And thanks to better journey planning and more consideration over whether trips are actually necessary, the Council has saved thousands of pounds with no reduction in its services to the local community.

David Johnson adds: "Enterprise CarShare has helped us change how employees think of

business trips. Without the perceived perk of mileage reimbursement and how it can encourage them to drive more than they need to, our employees take a more considered approach to their travel planning. In fact, many now see the programme as an additional staff benefit.

"We've been able to drastically cut down the grey fleet, reducing our costs and carbon footprint, and get employees thinking about when, why and how they travel. We're driving a real cultural change."

In fact, the programme has proven so popular that the vehicles are now also being made available to staff and members of the public outside working hours.

“ We've been able to drastically cut down the grey fleet, reducing our costs and carbon footprint – getting employees thinking about when, why and how they travel. **”**

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