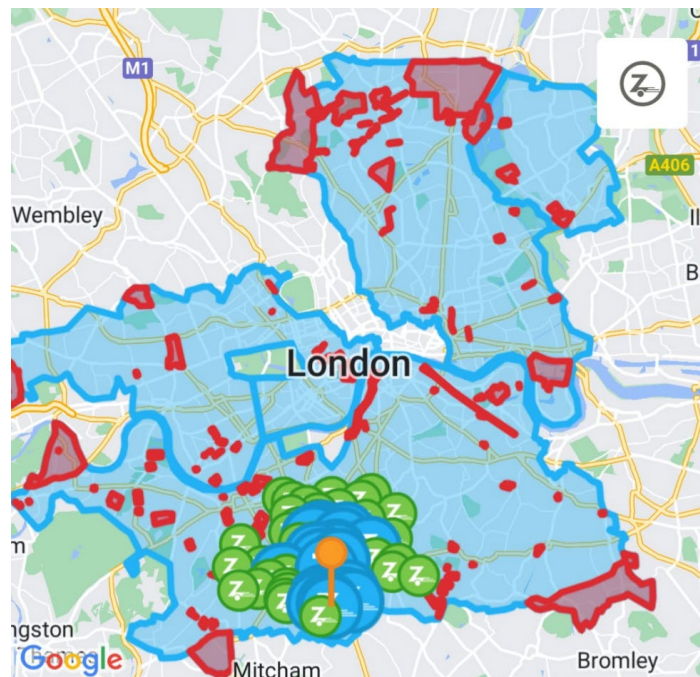


Deputation Request: Allowing Zipcar Flex in Camden

Background

Zipcar Flex is a car-sharing service that allows users to pick up and drop off vehicles at different locations, offering a flexible and convenient alternative to private car ownership. Currently, Camden is one of the few central London boroughs that does not permit this service.

Please see a map of Zipcar Flex sharing areas (in blue) available in London. Camden is one of the few areas where this service is unavailable.



Camden Council previously stated in its Transport Strategy that it does not support free-floating car-sharing models like Zipcar Flex. Reasons cited include:

- **Short trip distances:** Data suggests many trips made using floating car club vehicles are under 5-6km, which the council believes should be made by walking, cycling, or public transport.
- **Congestion and pollution concerns:** The council is concerned this model may attract more cars into the borough, increasing traffic and pollution.
- **Inconclusive evidence:** The council feels there is insufficient robust data to confirm the benefits of such schemes, particularly in a borough like Camden, where car ownership is already low, and public transport accessibility is high.

While these concerns reflect valid considerations, I believe they warrant a closer examination. Zipcar Flex could support Camden's goals rather than detract from them.

Why Zipcar Flex Should Be Allowed in Camden

1. Supporting Camden's Policy Objectives

- **Reducing Car Ownership:** Zipcar reports that each shared-use vehicle replaces 23.5 private cars. This aligns with Camden's commitment to reducing car dependency. Encouraging shared mobility services directly supports this goal.

- Minimizing Vehicle Trips: Unlike back-to-bay models, Zipcar Flex reduces unnecessary trips by enabling one-way travel, contributing to reduced traffic and emissions.

2. Addressing the 5-6km Concern

- While Camden is well-connected by public transport, some trips within this range require a car due to specific circumstances. For example:
 - Transporting heavy or bulky items.
 - Supporting individuals with mobility challenges, including elderly residents or young children.
- Rather than assuming all short trips should default to public transport, it is essential to recognize scenarios where car use is a necessity. Zipcar Flex allows these journeys without requiring car ownership.

3. Impact on Congestion and Pollution

- Evidence from other London boroughs shows that Zipcar Flex can operate without causing significant increases in congestion or pollution. In fact, its one-way model can reduce unnecessary return trips inherent in back-to-bay schemes.
- Camden's current prohibition may inadvertently force residents to retain private cars or use less efficient transport methods.

4. Public Demand and Equity

- Camden residents should have equal access to services already available in neighboring boroughs. Denying this option puts Camden at odds with broader trends in sustainable urban mobility and disadvantages its residents.

A Personal Perspective

As a former car owner, shared mobility services like Zipcar have been instrumental in reducing my reliance on private vehicles. However, Camden's prohibition of Zipcar Flex limits the full potential of these services. Had Zipcar Flex been available, I believe my decision to give up car ownership would have been even easier, and I suspect many residents would feel the same.

Call to Action

I urge Camden Council to revisit its stance and permit Zipcar Flex in the borough. This change would align with Camden's Transport Strategy objectives, address specific travel needs, and provide residents with a flexible, equitable, and sustainable mobility option.

Kind regards,

Milan Kecman

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]