

Technological Change

Assignment 2

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Introduction: Open Rides

Open Rides will be the proposed business idea in this report that factors in the 3 principles of sustainability; economic, social and environment.

Open Rides is a carpooling service that will be presented as an app. The idea for this service is to hire drivers with electric cars that operate like taxis and Ubers, however, they pick up other customers along the route or from the same location who are going in the same direction, drop them off along the route, or drop them at the same destination. These will usually be customers who do not know each other, colleagues, people who are attending the same event, tourists, and urban residents.

This serviced will be introduced in Cardiff, with the potential to expand.

Research and analysis

There are only 2 carpooling apps that reach Wales; Bla Bla Car and Lift Share. Bla Bla Car very rarely has carpooling options within Wales and Lift Share has daily options within Wales (BlaBlaCar, n.d.).

Lift Share allows anyone over the age of 18 to sign up to be a driver or passenger through sharing an email address and says that users are responsible for their own safety, and no DBS or safety checks are required. Lift Share have an app for passengers and drivers to use, as well as their website, to book trips. Passengers receive a “suggested contribution” that they can pay, it is calculated based on the length of trip using HM Revenue and Customs Approved Mileage Payment Allowance. This amount can be adjusted by drivers, within a capped window. Lift Share allows drivers and passengers to leave each other ratings and reviews to help inform others on their experience. Profile pictures and bios can be added to a user's profile to help others feel more connected and comfortable with users. Their largest demographic are uni students and commuting workers and they have around 700,000 members all together (Lift share, 2025). Lift Share was launched in 1998 and have been growing in success since, such as winning 2 Queens Awards; one for enterprise and the other for “exceptional contribution to the environment” (Lift share, n.d.) (Barber, 2016).

Open Rides will be launched in Cardiff since it is a city centre with a growing population of 495,378 people, increasing the audience and network of this service (Review, 2024). Cardiff has a wide range of events and attractions such as, Cardiff Castle, Principality Stadium (sports and entertainment), Wales Millennium Centre, The National Museum etc, these events and attractions create high footfall within the city and often demand transportation from people within the city, and neighbouring area. Open Rides can accommodate this need and get people to the same destination. Many of these events can often lead to people needing accommodation, food, drink, souvenirs, other events,

and the event itself, which can all become quite expensive, so people may be

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looking for cheaper travelling options to help save money where they can, which is possible with Open Rides.

Cardiff Council released their Corporate Plan for 2025-28 which highlights a stronger fairer and greener city. This plan aims to;

- Transform their public transport and travel systems
- Create high quality, accessible employment opportunities
- Expand business districts and improve transport networks to better connect Cardiff to the rest of Wales
- Support the cultural sector and major events
- Ensure Cardiff remains a global destination for tourism, business, and culture.
- Tackle cost of living
- Support vulnerable groups

(Council, 2025), (Council, 2025).

Open Rides reaches all of this criteria and can help Cardiff reach its aim of becoming a stronger, fairer, and greener city. As part of this corporate plan Cardiff Council are providing funding to help kick start and grow the business if businesses meet the councils aims, this means Open Rides could be eligible for funding that could help with app development and payment systems (Gov, 2025). Cardiff Council also offer business advice and support for business startups such as financial advice, innovation support, sectors support, skill, recruitment, and training support, and third sector support, which Open Rides could utilise (Gov, 2025).

Cardiff also has a university that holds 33,000 students and 7,075 staff members (University, 2021) (GOV, 2024). Students can live on and off campus as well as travelling for placement, work experience, course related trips, see family and friends, jobs, nightlife, environmental concerns etc. Many students do not drive due to financial reasons, limited parking, unfamiliar roads, and friends becoming reliant on them. Because of this, other methods of transportation are needed that is affordable, reliable, safe, and environmentally friendly.

The largest age group in Cardiff is 20–24-year-olds (Gov, 2023). 70% of 13–28-year-olds from the UK agree that climate change is the biggest threat to civilisation (YouGov, 2024). This shows there is a concern about climate change within Cardiff and the younger demographic, which increases the demand for a service like Open Rides.

From a sustainability principles perspective there is opportunity for improvement or change within Cardiff. Although busses and trains are often sustainable, they do not

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always get you to a specific location, Open Rides can do this, as well as using all electrical vehicles, to make transportation more sustainable.

Justification

A 2024 survey conducted by PWC says that 46% of global consumers are actively buying more sustainable products and using sustainable services to reduce their effects on the environment, compared to 37% of consumers in their 2019 survey (PWC, 2024) (PWC, 2019). 86% of UK adults say they have made changes to their lifestyle to help combat environmental issues (ONS, 2023). These statistics show an obvious increase in consumers shift toward a more sustainability underpinned services and products. Notably this survey also found that 31% of consumers are trying to travel differently to be more sustainable (PwC, 2024).

Many are prioritising sustainability for different reasons such as experiencing the impacts of climate change first hand like extreme weather conditions, wanting to protect future generations, saving money by reducing waste and using less energy, health affected by, heat, air quality, food, and water. All different reasons are important, and Open Rides should consider all aspects when operating, to not only attract different types of customers but fulfil their environmental responsibility too.

Benefits and Drawbacks

Cardiff already has 2 carsharing apps as well as public transport which are both seen as sustainable options, this could be a drawback for Open Rides as people may favour these options more since they have been operating for multiple year and are trusted. What separates Open Rides from these services is the extra safety checks made on users, the use of all electrical vehicles and affordable prices.

Another drawback would be users not liking or feeling comfortable with the idea of sharing the lift with a stranger. To help overcome this issue passenger and drivers will have a 5-star rating system that all users can view of each other's profiles, if ratings are below 4 stars constantly the account will be reviewed and can be deactivate if a viable problem is detected. Chat rooms will also be created between the drivers and however many passengers for each ride, this way users can communicate specific location instructions, introduce themselves before the ride and users can introduce themselves etc.

Open Rides need to ensure they are taking accountability and holding themselves to their word on sustainability, alternatively they may be subject to greenwashing. 77% of

consumers say they will quit brands who are guilty of greenwashing, this could lose a large number of customers, and potential customers as well as damaging the businesses image and being morally wrong (NIQ, 2023). Green washing can be unintentional which is why it is important for Open Rides to hold monthly sustainability

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reports looking at their carbon footprint, their apps energy consumption, current environmental affairs and ensuring they are adhering to Cardiff's sustainable plan.

In Cardiff, drivers spend an average of 143 hours a year stuck in peak time traffic jams (around 19 full working days at a cost of around £1,056 per driver) (Council, 2020). Through sharing lifts using Open Rides this can lower the number of cars on the road, lower the number of trips as people are getting to the same place at the same time, reduce the number of hours stuck in traffic and therefore reduce carbon emissions contributed by cars and traffic congestions creating faster travel times.

Train fares in Wales rose by 4.6% during the start of this year, with most railcards increasing by £5 and adult day bus fares increasing by an average of 56p (Espiner, 2025) (Johnson, 2025). Increasing travel fares may deter the public from using these services. Whereas Open Rides will have low travelling costs, split between passengers, saving them money.

There has also been an increase of crime and antisocial behaviour on public transport. The British Transport Police have recorded 40,034 antisocial behaviour incidents between 2024-2025, which is a 24% increase from the previous year, with daily reports of racial abuse, physical and verbal assault, knife threats, and vandalism (Woodcock, 2025). One bus driver saying, "two weeks ago I had two windows broken on my bus, I got threatened with a knife - and that's all in a day's work". A Transport for the North conducted a survey that says buses are the most common form of public transport, however they are also where passengers feel the least safe. Low levels of safety on public transport could shift passengers to look for alternative methods of accessible transport which Open Rides can use to their advantage.

One of the three pillars of sustainability is social. Connection and human relationships are vital in sustainability as it helps build networks and share knowledge and resources to create solutions together. It helps to spread sustainability practices and behaviour that others can adopt as well as creating moral responsibility for one another's actions and consequences. Open Rides bring people together who have similar views on sustainability, or those who want to learn more, and can share viewpoints and advice to help strengthen insights and make sustainable practices more widespread.

The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are widespread goals that apply to all countries to take account of people, planet, and prosperity (Nations, 2015). Goal 8

is 'Decent work and Economic Growth' which Open Rides will contribute to by creating fair, inclusive and sustainable jobs for those in Cardiff (Nations, 2015).

Resources, Technologies, and Expertise

There are multiple resources, technologies and expertise needed to make this plan viable.

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Open Rides will need to hire drivers with electric cars, these job positions will be posted on Indeed, LinkedIn and social media. These drivers must have a valid driving license, DBS, and medical checks to ensure they are fit to drive. Cars will be inspected, and visible IDs will be displayed in all cars.

An app will be needed, which will require hiring of an app developer. The app will include an authentication code that passengers must give to the driver before they can enter the car and start the journey, this will help keep passengers and drivers safe and confirm booking. The app will have features mentioned before such as rating systems and chat rooms, as well as being easy and clear to navigate.

A payment system will have to be in place. Payments will be calculated by the length of the journey, fuel used, and cars miles per gallon, using a free online mileage calculator. Payments can be made with cash or using a Square's portable contactless card reader, which costs £22.80 (Shop, 2025).

TikTok, Instagram and Facebook social media accounts will be made as a form of marketing, this is a cost-effective and simple way to market and an easy way to reach people in the area and are most commonly used forms of social media (Kalum, 2025). Leaflets will be made, as another form of marketing, to be displayed within Cardiff University as this is one of the target audiences.

Working with a Welsh sustainable blog site such as Sustainable Wales and National Resource Wales to spread the word on this new service will be another form of marketing. If sites are happy to include information about Open Ride in their blogs this could help get the word out to potential customers.

General business and financial skills are an essential resource for this business. As identified before, Cardiff Council are providing free advice and support which could be used to support this business startup.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people or groups of people who are interested in or affected by a business's activity or decisions. There are two types of stakeholders; internal and external. Internal stakeholders work within the business, where are external

stakeholders do not, but are affected by their activities (Bitesize, 2024).

Types of internal stakeholders are shareholders/owners, managers, and employees.

Shareholders are needed in this business startup to clarify ownership and can help with funding. Shareholders and owners can use their experiences and knowledge to help make informed business decisions, as well as their network of connections to help the business grow and develop. Shareholders invest money into the business, increasing

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financial security and providing essential finances to help start up. Investing their own money and time means that larger amounts of effort will be put into helping the business succeed, since if it does not, they will lose money. Shareholders may also manage some financial statements and accounts to gain a better insight into the business's financial health; with this they can monitor business performance overtime to determine if a business is successful, and if not, what can change (Accounting, 2024).

Managers are needed in this business startup to implement decisions made by owners and oversee team members. Like shareholders, managers can help with some decision making that influences a business's activity and success, they are also the stakeholders that apply these decisions. Managers set and oversee targets and expectations for team member to follow that align with the business's goals. Managers work closely with team members to provide guidance and keep the team motivated to ensure the workplace is managed efficiently. Managers are the communication between employees and owners and are expected to voice issues and concerns between each communication channel, to help with business running's and success (Indeed, n.d.).

Employees are needed in this business startup to perform and carry out the service. Employees are needed as they carry out day-to-day labour for the business and work face to face with customers. Employees providing good customer service will contribute to the business's success, and strong employees will increase productivity and efficiency, creating more time to tend to customers. Employees can help create a good brand image and reputation as they are the face of the business.

Types of external stakeholders for this business are customers, local community, app developer, mechanics doing vehicle checks and government.

Customers are needed in the success of this business startup as they are the ones who are buying from the business. Customers can give positive or negative feedback to the business, which can help understand what is working and what is not working, which the business can then factor into their decision making to improve the businesses running's. If customers are happy with the service they have received, they may become

retained customers and therefore bring money into the business by using the service often. Customers can also help influence others to use the service by recommending it to businesses, friends, or family, helping bring in more customers.

The local community is needed in this business startup to help gain feedback, concerns, and knowledge of residents in the local area. Environmental groups or work and remote work groups may have an interest in this business and help spread the word to others, which will bring in customers. The local community could also help with employment as there may be job seekers. The local community can help with decision

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making to ensure that decisions meet the community's needs.

An app developer is needed in this business startup to help with the running of the business. An app developer can bring expertise to develop a platform for customers to easily use and access. This will help the businesses success as it is how customers will use and pay for the service and pay. A quality app may also create good reviews.

The mechanics who will carry out vehicle checks are also key in this business startup. The checks can create trust with customers using this service as they can ensure safety checks have been carried out on the vehicles they will be travelling. This can bring a piece of mind to customers and may prompt them to use the service.

The government is a stakeholder in this business as they can provide advice and financial support helping the business develop and grow. The government may pass new laws that may benefit customers or employees or increase business efficiency. The government also shares information about environmental goals, statistics, and regulations as well as information about the area. This can help ensure the business is staying up to date with current affairs and legislation.

Conclusion

The consumers shift towards more sustainably underpinned services creates high demand for innovative services like Open Rides, and Cardiff is a strong area to introduce the service due to the demographic, government goals, size of the area and the nature of current transportation methods.

Although a few drawbacks were identified, the stakeholders involved can help and support business decisions and running's to minus the impact of these drawbacks and bring success to this service.

The role of innovation and the relationship between technology, economic, social and culture when developing a sustainable business practice is critical, which is shown throughout this business model.

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