

Going Green: Nottingham's hi-tech transport becomes EU model

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Keeping growing populations moving in urban areas, while limiting environmental damage, is a major challenge across Europe. But the English city of Nottingham is speeding ahead with success thanks to its innovative use of green transport technologies - and it's now a model for others to follow.

Nottingham is famous for the legend of Robin Hood and lace-making. But it's also helping to revolutionise how we get around.

Harnessing the power of new technologies, Nottingham is shaking up thinking about [city](#) travel - investing in a transport system which aims to cut congestion and pollution and get people from A to B faster.

Encouraging drivers to get out of their gas-guzzling cars and onto buses, bikes, trams and trains remains a challenge in most UK cities.

But in Nottingham, the tide appears to be turning. This thanks, in part, to a new levy which sees businesses charged for providing workplace parking.

The city's public transport system carried 75 million passengers last year. Almost 9 out of 10 public transport journeys (89%) were made by bus in 2014/15 and that figure is increasing - bucking a general decline elsewhere in the country.

"We have made improvements to our bus stations and bus stops,

including the introduction of realtime travel information. We have also brought in a smart, multi-modal, multi-operator 'Kangaroo' ticket which can be used on buses, trams, trains and to hire bicycles," explained Richard Wellings, Senior Public Transport Officer at Nottingham City Council.

"These changes have all improved the passenger experience and strengthened the network."

Dr Evtim Peytchev, Reader in Wireless, Mobile and Pervasive Computing at Nottingham Trent University, says the city has attracted a number of externally-funded projects thanks to its "advanced" use of travel technology.

"Nottingham has been at the forefront of installing GPS-based [public transport](#) information systems and mobile device information systems. It is now moving towards wireless device use for urban traffic control," he commented.

As part of its green commitment, Nottingham is the first city in the UK to have stringent environmental standards for all buses entering the centre.

Forty-nine electric vehicles operate on council-tendered services. And, in 2017, the city will also boast the country's first fully electric Park and Ride service, with the arrival of 13 single-deckers manufactured by Chinese company BYD.

In addition, a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) is being considered for Nottingham city centre, which will limit bus stops to low-emission vehicles.

All of this is not going unnoticed. As part of the European

REMOURBAN (REgeneration MOdel for accelerating the smart URBAN transformation) project, Nottingham has been chosen as a "Lighthouse" city - to help guide others in Europe along the same road.

It aims to show how an urban area can integrate infrastructure - mobility, energy and ICT - to meet population demands against a backdrop of environmental challenges.

As part of the plans, Nottingham will develop an all-electric "TourLink" summer bus service. The feasibility of recharging the vehicles with power generated by the burning of city waste is being explored. This would help to add carbon savings of around 40 percent, compared to diesel buses.

"The route will link Nottingham's iconic Green's Windmill with other key tourist attractions and, at the same time, expose visitors to electric bus technology," explained Wellings.

"GPS-controlled technology will also provide an audio-visual experience - immersing passengers in a narrative which combines history, art, sustainability and the city's forward-thinking future."

The European project will also see Nottingham piloting a project to cut the number of delivery trucks in the city centre.

Under the "Last Mile Logistics" plans, lorries will pull into a consolidation centre on the outskirts of the city, where goods will be transferred to electric vehicles for the last leg of their journey. The idea is to cut the number of diesel-gurgling trucks in the centre.

More eco-friendly hire cars are set to come to Nottingham too. The City Car Club, which offers vehicles for hourly rent, is due to be extended to the project's demonstration district of Sneinton.

Nottingham Trent University will be working alongside the City Council, to advise on intelligent mobility and sustainability as part of REMOURBAN.

"The success of the project will be judged against its usefulness and ease of replicability," said Peytchev, "therefore it is expected that it will be very easy to deploy the solutions used in Nottingham in other EU cities."

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