

# Intelligent app aiming to revolutionise

From a network of long distance cycleways to a smart app – Ben Comber and Gemma Gardner look at the latest transport ideas.

A new app is set to revolutionise travel around Cambridge, and the City Deal have decided that a city firm will receive the funding to deliver it.

Building Intellect, which operates out of the University of Cambridge West Cambridge site, has been developing a web app to improve transport in Milton Keynes. The City Deal has given it £85,000 to develop a Smart Cambridge mobile app for transport around Cambridge.

Ernst Kretschmann, chief operating officer for Building Intellect and technical lead for the project, said: "The vision of Motion Map itself is to have a tool that helps citizens in their local environment to find their way around and give them information about what's happening in their city."

The app will aim to offer more local insight than what is offered by map apps by Google and Apple.

Mr Kretschmann continued: "For this phase we're looking particularly into buses. The feedback that we're getting from users is that they will often use the car because they don't trust the bus system enough. They think the bus is always late, they don't know what's gonna happen. You can turn up at the bus stop and sometimes you might have to wait a minute and sometimes for half an hour, and one of the features that we'd like to offer in this phase is to show people where the buses are right now, when you'll have to go to the bus stop and whether you'll catch your onward journey or not, and if you won't, offer travel alternatives."

The buses already have the GPS systems on board that will inform the app. The display will be able to show where buses are in real time and will inform destination arrival time and when you'll be able to catch a connecting journey.

"We would like to have a predictive traffic congestion part of the application," Mr Kretschmann expanded, "so for example you could check at four o'clock how you're going to get home and the application will be able to tell you not to leave between 4.45pm and 5.15pm because there is congestion if you can, stay in the office a bit longer or leave a little earlier."

This could be in the app when it is launched in April next year, and further funding from subsequent City Deal tranches could realise some ambition expansions to the app.

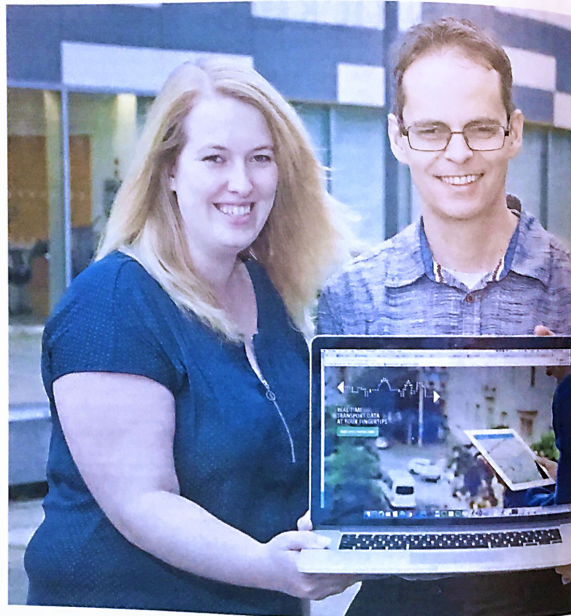
"The main focus now is to get more people using the public transport system but research has shown that in cities like Cambridge a lot of the congestion is actually caused by people not being able to find a place to park," said Mr Kretschmann. Some research, he said, suggests up to 40 per cent, meaning the app could go a long way to reduce this congestion cause. Future plans could see car users able to get real time updates on what parking spaces are available in the city, so no-one will have to crawl along the city roads trying to find a space.

Cycling routes will be included in the app for launch, but beyond the app could give a scenic route option, and tell cyclists where there is space available to park their bike. In Milton Keynes the app will aim to work with the Santander bikes that are available, telling users where bikes can be found or if an incoming bike is expected at a pick-up point near them.

There are also plans to develop individual planning and social network planning. Ideas include in-app rewards for using physical modes of transport and the ability to coordinate travel between friends and colleagues who are going to the same place.

But there are even more ambitious plans lined up. Mr Kretschmann revealed: "We'd like to support, if we can, a system where a pod would serve a particular square mile in a city, rather than being a driverless car, and operate on a small scale. So you'd be able to look one of these driverless pods like a park and ride system and you would drive your car into the city, the pod would be waiting for you in the space you want to park. You can park where the pod is parked and the pod takes you your last mile."

"There are pilot studies out there and they are getting closer to actually being trialled in the real world."



Smart Cambridge App developer Building Intellect from left Stacey Hayes, Ernst Kretschmann, Danella Krug and Adrien Duchemin, and below right the app in action at Milton Keynes

## Greenways

A web of high-quality cycleways linking Cambridge to its rural hinterland could be funded by the City Deal.

The cycle paths would take form as a comprehensive 'Greenways' network fanning out to villages, aiming to further increase local cycling rates as a means of tackling congestion.

'Greenways' are generally long-distance off-road routes for cycles, pedestrians and wheelchair users. A Greenways Review has been published this week by Cambridgeshire County Council and was welcomed by

the City Deal Board. Vice chair and South Cambs Cllr Francis Burkitt said: "I'm delighted by this report. It gives a vision for a world-class network of medium- and long-distance cycle routes linking the surrounding villages and Cambridge, which would be a huge asset to residents and an important contribution to reducing congestion."

"My fellow district councillors and I are often urged by our residents to lobby for improved, safe and off-road cycle routes into the city and we can now

see how that might be achieved. "This is a high-level report and individual parish councils and landowners may have views on slightly different route layouts, which will be gratefully received. "I hope that the City Deal will be able to pay for a lot of this." The report looks in detail at 12 possible Greenways, between Cambridge and Waterbeach, Horningsea, The Swaffthams, Bottisham, Fulbourn, Linton, Sawston, Melbourn, Haslingfield, Barton, Comberton and St Ives Greenway. Some of these routes already exist in part.

# city transport

## City Deal resignation

Professor Nigel Slater is to step down from the board of the Greater Cambridge City Deal to pursue his academic interests. Cllr Lewis Herbert, chair of the City Deal Board, said: "Nigel has played a valuable and active role in progressing the work of our unique partnership, bringing a fresh and academic perspective to solutions for overcoming the barriers to securing future prosperity and managing growth in Greater Cambridge."

"On behalf of the board, we respect his personal decision to pursue his academic interests and wish him well in this role in which he will, undoubtedly, continue to play a vital part in staking Cambridge as a world-leading city of innovation. "The City Deal is two years into an ambitious 15-year programme and it's perfectly natural board representation will evolve but this does not detract from the strong commitment of the five partner organisations to work collaboratively for the greater good of our city region – including on behalf of future generations. We look forward to working closely with Nigel's replacement when they are recruited."

The university's position on the board came under some scrutiny over the proposed introduction of a second busway to the west of Cambridge, an area over which the university and some colleges own land and could potentially stand to benefit in the future should the busway be built.

Helen Bradbury, parish councillor for Coton, said she

thinks the resignation is a result of a conflict of interests. She said: "I think there's a big problem with the governance of the board and it's that these three people seem not to be accountable."

The three council representatives on the City Deal board have the votes that make City Deal decisions. Mrs Bradbury said that "They have an enormous amount of power and an enormous amount of money to spend."

"What these three people can do, and what they did do last month on the 13th, is ignore." Mrs Bradbury said that the position of the university on the board alongside the three council members and LEP representative was justified, but said that the university should reconsider the way it operates as a board member.

Prof Slater has been the university's representative on the City Deal's board since January 2016, replacing its original representative, Professor Jeremy Saunders, the previous Pro-Vice Chancellor. Recruitment is now underway for his replacement. The university has reaffirmed its commitment to city and regional affairs, including in its role as part of the Greater Cambridge City Deal partnership.

The board's five representatives are Cllr Lewis Herbert, Cambridge City Council; vice chair Cllr Francis Burkitt, South Cambridgeshire District Council; Cllr Ian Bates, Cambridgeshire County Council; Mark Reeve for the LEP and Professor Nigel Slater for the university.



Opinion Penny Heath

## Protecting Cambridge's unique streets

Streets make up three-quarters of the open space of a city. They can be famously beautiful like the backs on Queen's Road, or they could be chic 'zones' in a new residential area.

Good streets should be practical, safe and attractive – designed primarily for people, not vehicles. Landscapers and architects need to work carefully within context and urban grain. We want characterful, preferably tree-lined streets. Engineers and architects need to work carefully within context and urban grain.

Protecting Cambridge's unique streets can be done. Trinity Street stands up well to the test of time. But modernising roads running into the city centre will require imaginative thinking with early genuine local involvement.

At the moment, mistakes are being made and there is not enough integrated design management. Outer Millingway Road now looks like an industrial estate – with its assault course of traffic lights, bleak crossings, incoherent cycle markings and no additional greening. The City Deal, shamefully never acknowledged conservation areas or suburbs in its consultation material.

Cambridge could follow Historic England principles for managing streetscape in sensitive areas. This would mean a traffic management strategy being part of a wider townscape management plan, based on careful urban design analysis of the character of the area. It would mean adopting a minimalist approach, and insisting that detailed designs, construction methods, materials and workmanship should be of the highest standard.

Townscape management between the authorities is confusing. Few residents know who's in charge or have a sense of ownership of their local 'streetscape'. There are around 20 different agencies able to interfere in the public realm, and many don't require planning.

The City Deal's 'environmental design guidelines' was a welcome initiative but the brief was flawed. Before it gets adopted, committees should get involved.

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## Railways

A call has been made for the Government to support improvements to commuter routes between Cambridge and London.

The London Standed Cambridge Consortium (LSCC) has written to Greg Clark MP, secretary of state for business, in support of the growth deal submissions from the four local enterprise partnerships (LEP) with a hand in the corridor.

The growth deal submissions call for improvements to the railway, the road network, housing and skills. Alex Jones, Chair of LSCC, said: "The LSCC believes the four growth deal bids all contain proposals that will provide strategic and practical support to help realise the corridor's potential and tackle the barriers to growth."

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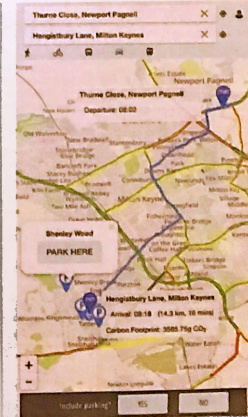
Alex Jones  
Chair of LSCC

Peterborough, Hertfordshire, London and South East – have called for priority to be given to the delivery of the West Anglia Taskforce's objectives. The taskforce want to improve rail connections between London, Standed and Cambridge, and unlock opportunities for economic

growth along the whole route. They also want to see trains travel from London Liverpool Street to Cambridge in 60 minutes – currently 90 minutes.

Operator Greater Anglia has promised to replace all trains by 2020, but says the infrastructure must follow. Mark Reeve, chairman of the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP, said: "The West Anglia Mainline provides an important link between Cambridge, Standed and London, as well as a number of rural stations close to key employment sites in our area. We need to see improvements to the line sooner rather than later to unlock further economic growth and to support the continued growth of Standed Airport."

The letter was submitted to ministers to make a case ahead of the Autumn Statement on November 23.



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