



# Sustrans' asks for the 2022 English local elections\*

## Sustrans' manifesto asks

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a wake-up call that has both exposed and widened the vast inequities that exist between people and places. At the same time the climate crisis has not gone away. It's imperative that we take urgent action now to create jobs, meet net-zero commitments and improve health.

Towns, cities and regions will be at the heart of building back better. Healthier, fairer places and better transport will underpin the UK's recovery. We must act now. The upcoming elections across England could not be more important.

### Ask 1: Commit to increasing funding and delivery of ambitious walking, wheeling and cycling schemes

This should include making temporary schemes permanent, prioritising local walking and cycling infrastructure plans, and ensuring residents and businesses are engaged and consulted. The National Cycle Network should also be improved for everyday journeys in urban areas and to better connect people to nature and green space.

**75% of residents in Bike Life cities across the UK support increasing space for walking and cycling on high streets and 59% support restricting through-traffic on residential streets.<sup>1</sup>**

Across the UK, cycling and walking could create 103,000 jobs in the next two years, many of which are good for immediate job creation, requiring non-graduate workers.<sup>2</sup>

### Ask 2: Make 20-minute neighbourhoods a central principle in local planning, transport, health and economic policy

Making sure that people can access the services that they need within a short walk from home will be crucial to reducing our dependency on private cars, so tackling the problems associated with congestion, air pollution and carbon emissions.

\* This does not include Sustrans' asks for the London Mayoral Election which can be found here: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/campaigns/our-manifesto-for-london-boroughs-2022/>

**65% of UK adults agree that people should be able to meet most of their everyday needs within a 20-minute walk from their home.<sup>3</sup>**

Yet evidence suggests most new settlements and urban extensions are located and designed in ways that exacerbate car dependency.<sup>4</sup> 800 meters is a distance that can be walked or wheeled in approximately 10 minutes by most people, making a round trip 20 minutes. Considering the proximity of services to developments, like new housing, during the site allocation process is one way in which local authorities should begin to make this change.

### **Ask 3: Ensure policy and investment in walking, cycling and public transport prioritises people who are disadvantaged or marginalised**

Design walking, wheeling and cycling plans to address, and be evaluated against, how they reduce inequity. Prioritise infrastructure improvements in more isolated neighbourhoods, especially those which suffer from deprivation. Back this up with programmes and support for disadvantaged and marginalised groups to make walking, wheeling and cycling inclusive.

**The Marmot Review published in February 2020 reported that inequalities have grown in the last 10 years across the UK.<sup>5</sup>**

Covid-19 has exacerbated inequity further and disadvantaged and marginalised groups have been disproportionately affected in terms of health, education and employment.<sup>6,7</sup>

Walking, wheeling and cycling can help reduce social inequity by increasing access to jobs, education and services, whilst improving health and social inclusion.

### **Ask 4: Take immediate action to make local transport zero-carbon, improve air quality and create low-carbon jobs**

This must include steps to reduce car use as well as electrifying vehicles.<sup>8</sup> We must also continue existing commitments to reduce air pollution, including introducing Clean Air Zones and take more action to tackle particulate matter. This must be done fairly and alongside improvements to make walking, cycling and public transport more attractive than driving.

The opportunities to create low-carbon jobs and industries across all sectors have never been greater. National and local government action is required to ensure the UK is leading the way on reducing GHG emissions as we hold the COP26 presidency.

**Investing in a green economic recovery could create 1.6 million new jobs in Britain as the Covid-19 crisis subsides, including 230,000 jobs in public transport, walking and cycling.<sup>9</sup>**

Air pollution already costs thousands of lives across the UK, and recent evidence shows air pollution is linked to more Covid-19 deaths.<sup>10</sup> Preventative action must be taken.

## References

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