



Sustrans' asks for the 2022 Welsh local elections

Sustrans' manifesto asks

The Covid-19 pandemic is a wake-up call that has both exposed and widened the vast inequity that exists 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.

This is why we call on local government to deliver ambitious leadership to ensure a sustainable recovery that is fair for all people in Wales. There is a unique opportunity to focus on walking, cycling and public transport services that serve all users equitably, creating a world-class legacy for future generations and delivering Tomorrow's Wales, for everyone.

Ask 1: Remove barriers on the National Cycle Network.

Councils across Wales have reacted to people's concerns about motorbikes and other illegal vehicles travelling along pavements and parks by installing physical barriers to stop them entering. But the spaces between these barriers often prevent legitimate travel – parents pushing buggies, wheelchair and mobility scooter users, or people on bikes or trikes wider or longer than the standard sizes.

The barriers discriminate against these people and create considerable inequities in who can use public space. Sustrans aims to remove or redesign all 16,000 barriers on the National Cycle Network across the UK to make it accessible to everyone, with no barriers in place for continuous travel by 2040.

This year, 28 barriers were removed from the Taff Trail. In response local recumbent cyclist Amanda Harris said:

“The ability to go out and exercise on my own, when I want, on my own terms, without having to rely on someone else is just priceless.”

1,500 barriers still exist across Wales. Let's give people space to move by working together to remove or redesign restrictive barriers of all kinds.

Ask 2: Create towns and cities that put people first by making 20-minute neighbourhoods a central principle in local planning, transport, health and economic policy.

This will lead to walkable neighbourhoods with more services and amenities within a 20-minute return walk of where people live. Attractive cycling and public transport networks will enable people to reach other areas. 20-minute neighbourhoods support local development, high streets, jobs and the local economy while reducing transport poverty and isolation.

Many of us have been living more locally since lockdown and have benefited from access to green space, shops and other services on our doorsteps. But too often people have been isolated. Everyone should be able to reach essential services, green space and connect with others, no matter their demographic background.

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.¹

Yet evidence suggests most new settlements and urban extensions are located and designed in ways that exacerbate car dependency².

By adopting the 20-minute neighbourhood concept in local plans you would support:

- vibrant, healthy and prosperous communities that engage citizens
- more journeys by foot, cycle and public transport because they are the most obvious and convenient option
- people living close to their place of work, shops and recreation; and children within walking, cycling or scooting distance of their school
- the most vulnerable members of society to easily access vital services, medical care and social spots.

Ask 3: Ensure every child in Wales has access to a cycle, and free cycle training.

Cycling is brilliant for children³ as:

- it helps them get the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day
- teachers report that pupils who walk and cycle to school are more alert and ready to learn than those who arrive by car
- it's fantastic fun and, for many children, it can feel much more exciting than travelling by car
- it can help them get to know their local area and feel part of it
- good travel habits learned young will last a lifetime
- people cycling breathe in less pollution from traffic than car drivers.

It's important that all children have access to cycles, and feel confident in riding them, to be able to tap into these benefits.

Cycle training develops skills and increases children's confidence on the road. As children gain the skills they need to stay safe, they can develop independence, discovering strategies and solutions for getting about themselves.

63% of people in Wales support free cycle training for school children.⁴

Children should get the chance to own a cycle, learn how to ride it and have the opportunity to use it safely on their way to and from school.

Ask 4: Build high quality walking and cycling routes for every town and city, based on Active Travel Network Mapping responses.

The key to successfully encouraging walking and cycling is to ensure that our roads, streets and public spaces are prioritised as places where people of all ages and all abilities can get around conveniently, confidently and safely without a car.

75% of residents in Bike Life cities across the UK support increasing space for walking and cycling on high streets.⁵

Achieving this will require providing suitable infrastructure for walking and cycling, by implementing a network of high-quality routes which adhere to the following five principles:

- Safety
- Directness
- Coherence
- Comfort
- Attractiveness

Well-placed routes, based on Active Travel Network Mapping responses, can help reduce social inequity by increasing access to jobs, education and services, whilst improving health and social inclusion.

References

¹ www.sustrans.org.uk/media/6910/life-after-lockdown-briefing-paper-3-a-green-and-just-recovery.pdf

² www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/the-project/transport-for-new-homes-report-2018/ and <https://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/the-project/garden-villages-and-garden-towns/>

³ The benefits of cycling for children and families, Sustrans, 2019.

⁴ <https://www.cyclinguk.org/press-release/63-people-wales-support-free-cycle-training-school-children-cycling-uk-survey-finds>

⁵ www.sustrans.org.uk/bike-life/