



Sustrans' asks for the 2021 English regional 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. The upcoming elections across England have never been so important.

Ask 1: Commit to increasing funding and delivery of ambitious walking 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.¹

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.²

Ask 2: Make 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.

* This does not include Sustrans' asks for the London Mayoral Election which can be found here: www.sustrans.org.uk/campaigns/our-manifesto-for-london-2021

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.³

Yet evidence suggests most new settlements and urban extensions are located and designed in ways that exacerbate car dependency.⁴

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

Design walking 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 and cycling inclusive.

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

Covid-19 has exacerbated inequity further and disadvantaged and marginalised groups have been disproportionately affected in terms of health, education and employment.^{6,7}

Walking 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.⁸ 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 host COP26 in Glasgow.

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.⁹

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

References

- 1 www.sustrans.org.uk/bike-life/
- 2 www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/TUC%20Jobs%20Recovery%20Plan_2020-06-17_proofed.pdf
- 3 www.sustrans.org.uk/media/6910/life-after-lockdown-briefing-paper-3-a-green-and-just-recovery.pdf
- 4 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/>
- 5 www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on
- 6 www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-review-of-disparities-in-risks-and-outcomes
- 7 www.instituteofhealthequity.org/about-our-work/latest-updates-from-the-institute/build-back-fairer
- 8 www.transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/1%20More%20than%20electric%20cars%20briefing.pdf
- 9 www.ippr.org/research/publications/transforming-the-economy-after-covid19
- 10 www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/nov/04/tiny-air-pollution-rise-linked-to-11-more-covid-19-deaths-study