

Scottish Elections 2021

Sustrans Scotland Manifesto Asks for Political Parties

The Time To Act Is Now



Foreword

Sustrans Scotland's vision for a Scotland where more people have the choice to walk, wheel, cycle or take public transport for more of their everyday journeys has never been more relevant.

Imagine a society in which everyone is able to walk, wheel or cycle safely in their neighbourhoods and between their communities. Schools, shops and workplaces are within easy reach, and our towns are accessible, green and vibrant. Communities and settlements are connected by high quality on and off-road walking and cycling paths which link to a public transport network that is accessible, reliable and affordable for all.

Prior to the pandemic we saw a growing consensus in civic society about the importance of growing sustainable and active travel measures across Scotland to help tackle health, environmental and inequality issues. Indeed, many policy positions which had been published by Government had indicated as much, through the adoption of positions such as the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy.

This consensus has grown over the last year. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit and Scotland went into lockdown, we were asked to stay at home, avoid public transport and only make essential journeys. This highlighted how important good connections within our communities are and how much we rely on easy access to essential shops and services - things we previously took for granted. Cars disappeared from our roads overnight and where they could, people walked for recreation and cycled short journeys.

Local Authorities around Scotland, in partnership with Sustrans Scotland, delivered a roll-out of measures including protected cycle lanes, widening pavements and closing streets to vehicle traffic to create safe spaces for those who wanted to travel by bike or move around their communities sustainably. Green space was revalued as essential for people's health and wellbeing, and time spent in nature was recognised as boosting immunity and improving mental health.

However, whilst we saw many people adapt their living, working and travel patterns in a way that would have previously been unimaginable, many others were disproportionately impacted by this crisis, with the greatest impact on the most vulnerable in our society. We want to see a world where people are connected via sustainable transport and active travel, and where not having a car does not affect your ability to be included in society.



Despite ambitious announcements made by Government during the pandemic, and it now being clear the importance and scale of the work needed to roll out high quality sustainable and active travel measures across Scotland, the ambition has not been matched with the required funding needed to create change at pace. We need to start delivering ambition on the ground if we are going to make real effective change.

This is why we call on the next Scottish Government to deliver ambitious leadership to ensure that sustainable and active travel funding is prioritised in planning and policy decision making. We are calling for the next Scottish Government to provide the needed financial and political support at the beginning of next parliamentary session to deliver policies on the ground now.

In particular we want to see the Government inspiring and leading Local Authorities, making it easier for statutory bodies and the communities they serve to change their local areas.

This will ensure a green and sustainable recovery that is fair for all people in Scotland and will help tackle climate change, improve health and wellbeing, reduce inequalities and help stimulate inclusive economic growth.

The time to investigate, consider and explore is over. Ambitious rhetoric is no longer enough. Funding must match ambition. The time to act is now.

John Lauder,
Sustrans Deputy CEO and Executive Director
of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland.

Ask 1

Continued funding to enable walking, wheeling and cycling and deliver high quality infrastructure.

At least 10% of the total Transport Budget should be spent on walking, wheeling and cycling and creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness and well-being.

Sustrans believes that the ambition of having policies which prioritise the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, where public transport and active travel options are the preferred choice for people making journeys, has to be matched with equally ambitious funding.

The only way we are going to get a much larger proportion of the population of Scotland to walk, cycle and wheel for more of their short, everyday journeys is if there is sufficient safe, separated and good quality active travel infrastructure in place to allow them to do so. Equally important is having the right behaviour change programmes to support this shift. For short to medium length journeys we need same ambition for links to public transport hubs, of course, those public transport options need to be efficient and available.

And the only way the Scottish Government, Local Authorities, public sector bodies and 3rd sector partners are going to be able to deliver this infrastructure on the ground, is if there is sufficient capital and revenue funding to support it.

Whilst we welcome the investment that is already being made in sustainable and active travel measures, we believe that to deliver on the priorities; outcomes and vision of tackling climate change, improving health and wellbeing, reducing inequalities and help to stimulate inclusive economic growth, significantly more investment is required to deliver these policy priorities on the ground.

We are asking for an increase in the share of the overall Scottish Government Transport Budget going specifically to sustainable and active travel, to bring it up to a minimum of 10% of the overall budget. The reality is that current spending on roads is several times the spending on active or sustainable travel and that has to change.

“The Scottish Government’s pursuit of a road building programme that may produce more, rather than fewer, car journeys may make achieving the desired reduction in car travel more difficult.”- SPICe¹

Transport Budget in 2021²:

- **£3.9 Billion** overall Transport Budget
- **£826 Million** Motorways and Trunk Roads (21.1% of total budget)
- **£105 Million** Sustainable and Active Travel (2.6%)

As can be seen above, currently only 2.6% of the total Transport Budget is spent on sustainable and active travel versus almost a quarter of the total budget for motorways and trunk roads. We believe to deliver the proposed sustainable travel policy priorities, a significant shift in budgets from roads to sustainable and active travel must be made.

We want each party to pledge that they will spend at least 10% of the total transport budget each year on active and sustainable travel measures.

¹ Back to the future: Reducing car travel in Scotland, SPICe, 2020, accessed Jan 2021 <https://spice-spotlight.scot/2020/12/16/back-to-the-future-reducing-car-travel-in-scotland/>

² Scottish Budget 2021-22, Scottish Government, 2021, accessed Feb 2021 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-budget-2021-22/pages/0/>

Ask 2

Help local authorities create towns and cities that put people first.

Make it easier for local authorities to create liveable cities for everyone by incorporating 20-minute neighbourhoods as a central principle in a streamlined planning process; putting the services people need within a 20-minute walk, building communities, supporting high streets and the local economy.

All people in cities and towns should live within a 20-minute walk from their everyday amenities like schools, shops, green space, and health services. **Sustrans wants to see the 20-minute neighbourhood concept as a central principle of the planning system.** This would support:

- vibrant, healthy and prosperous communities that engage citizens
- places with clean air and green space for all to live and play in
- more journeys on foot, wheels, or by bike 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
- people having access to green space and children having space to play
- places are accessible and welcoming for disabled people and older people
- the most vulnerable members of society are easily able to access vital services, medical care and social spots.

Any development of 20-minute neighbourhoods **must link to housing policy, planning policy, transport policy and wider environmental policy.** It must also have an economic development focus that includes our most disadvantaged communities. It must be accessible to all. It must also have an environmental and place focus.

In addition, **20-minute neighbourhoods can only be delivered with Local Authority leadership.** Local streets are the statutory duty of councils. The Scottish Government works in collaboration with local authorities on the creation of 20-minute neighbourhoods through



Sustrans' [Places for Everyone](#) programme. We have therefore gained huge experience of the practicality of delivering change to local areas and recommend a renewed emphasis on supporting LA's to deliver change at the pace required. **Change is required to planning procedures and a cultural shift is required at elected member level to help Local Authority officers deliver.**

It is worth noting that the **majority of journeys recorded in Scotland in 2018 were short.** The Transport and Travel in Scotland Results from the Scottish Household Survey³ shows that 16% of journeys were under 1 km, and more than half (53%) of journeys were under 5 km. The majority of journeys were also of short duration. 67% of journeys lasted up to 20 minutes and only 19% of journeys lasted more than half an hour.

We want every party to pledge that they will make it easier for local authorities to create liveable cities for everyone by incorporating 20-minute Neighbourhoods as a central principle in a streamlined planning process.

³Transport and Travel in Scotland- Results from the Scottish Household Survey, Transport Scotland, 2019, accessed Jan 2021 <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/transport-and-travel-in-scotland-results-from-the-scottish-household-survey-1/4-personal-travel/>



What is a 20-minute neighbourhood?

A 20-minute neighbourhood is one that it is easy for people to meet most of their everyday needs (services/facilities/green space) within a short, convenient and pleasant 20-minute return walk. 10 minutes there, and 10 minutes back.

People make fewer journeys on foot than they used to because the distances to the things they need have become longer and less accessible. In many cases, it is simply the perception of distance.

Sustrans believes that walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure should be accessible for everyone, regardless of their physical ability, ethnicity or age. Our vision for mobility is one that:

- removes physical barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling, such as gates, bollards or infrastructure that can't accommodate wheelchairs or adapted cycles
- makes everyone feel welcome regardless of their gender, ability, age or ethnicity
- ensures walking and cycling are seen as "normal" activities by everyone in society.

By making sure that neighbourhoods are compact and contain a mix of different shops, services and facilities, we can make it fundamentally easier for more people to access services, facilities, public transport links and jobs in local areas. In some cases services and amenities may be shared between neighbourhoods, depending on the density of the area. One destination may be meeting the needs of a wide range of local communities. This is especially the case in smaller towns and villages where amenities will not be as concentrated as a city. 20-minute neighbourhoods may be difficult to implement in extremely rural villages and public transport options between these villages will be essential.

In a 20-minute neighbourhood, although it will be possible to make driving trips these will not be as direct as walking, cycling or public transport journeys, which will have dedicated routes. Less traffic will mean safer environments for people to walk, wheel and cycle and enable children to become more independent.

What needs to be in a 20-minute neighbourhood?

We consider the following to be the minimum features of a 20-minute neighbourhood:

Destination and services

- Food retailers and supermarkets
- Education, including early years, primary school and nearby secondary schools
- Health services, such as a pharmacy, GP and dentist
- Financial services, such as post office or bank
- Employment and jobs either within the neighbourhood or nearby
- Public open space, such as parks and recreation grounds
- Space for children to play
- Entertainment, such as leisure, culture and entertainment facilities.

Transport provision

- Public transport, including access to a regular bus, tram or train service
- Walking and cycling infrastructure
- Walkable access to a local centre
- Designed for low speeds, reduced traffic, and limited car parking.

Inclusivity

- A mix of diverse housing types to suit different life-stages from childhood to older years
- Accessible to all
- Genuinely affordable and social housing present.

Ask 3

Link communities with a Scotland-wide active travel highway network.

- Create, repair and improve a Scotland-wide active travel highway network so that every town of 10,000 residents or more are connected.
- Supporting the tourist industry in rural and island Scotland and making every day, short journeys easier for locals.

In the 1960s we built the trunk road network, now in the 2020s we must make the bold decision to build an equivalent trunk network for walking, wheeling and cycling. To convert car journeys to active journeys, **we will need to see a Scotland-wide network of active travel highways that not only provide direct active travel routes between towns and cities but also link small rural settlements together, and connect neighbourhoods within towns and cities as well.** A network that links towns and cities, connects neighbouring communities and scoops up people making short journeys along the way.

Such a Scotland-wide active travel highway network needs to be delivered at scale and at speed. In order to do this, **it needs to be placed on a statutory footing similar to the trunk roads network.** We recommend that it be considered as part of the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) and funded through the Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP). Sustrans has made a detailed and evidenced submission to STPR2 on this subject.

More importantly Sustrans wants to highlight the value for money of investing in a new Scotland-wide active travel highway network. **We estimate the cost to deliver this on the ground over a thirty year period would be around £2 billion.** The average 'Benefit Cost Ratio' (BCR) for walking and cycling projects (UK and non-UK) is an incredible 13:1. Evidence from the UK and abroad shows cost benefits of investing in an active travel highway networks:

“Environmental and other interventions to facilitate increased population physical activity through cycling and walking are likely to be amongst the ‘best buys’ across many areas of public policy i.e. public health benefits, cost savings for health services and for transport planning. The significant Benefit Cost Ratio values reported here should have a substantial influence in informing national transport ambitions.”

- Department for Transport⁴

A study conducted by Goudappel Coffeng (*Cycle freeways, what are the benefits?* 2011) confirmed that cycle highways in the Netherlands could lead to major savings. Each year, cycle highway routes could save €40 million for congestion-easing, €100 million for health expenses and €4 million for a reduction in pollution emission nationwide. The overall figure of €144 million could even rise up to €358 million in a scenario where half of the bicycles are e-bikes. These figures should be compared to an estimated one-time construction cost of €700 million.

We want each party to pledge that they will fund, from the beginning of next parliament, the delivery of an active travel highway network and make sure the funding for this is as ambitious as the vision, in addition to current investments in active travel.

⁴ *Claiming the Health Dividend: A summary and discussion of value for money estimates from studies of investment in walking and cycling*, Department for Transport, UK Government, 2014, accessed Jan 2021 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/371096/claiming_the_health_dividend.pdf

Ask 4

Support safe ways to make healthier, cleaner commutes in cities and towns.

- Each city in Scotland should have a high quality and separated main cycle network that allows safe daily commutes and reduces dependence on private motor vehicles.
- This will tackle climate change, improve health and wellbeing, reduce inequalities and help stimulate inclusive economic growth.

Although connecting towns and cities with an active travel network is vital, equally vital is being able to move across and connect different parts of cities by separated, safe and high quality active travel infrastructure⁵. There are multiple reasons for this, including helping taking cars off roads, which help tackle climate change, noise and air pollution, improving health, reducing inequalities⁶ and stimulating inclusive economic growth.

In addition, Cycling UK⁷ highlight that separated cycle lanes in cities are:

Good for business

- improving town centres and high streets for pedestrians and cyclists can increase retail sales by up to 30%.

Reduce congestion

- two weeks after opening, the cycle superhighway corridors in London were moving 5% more people per hour than they could without cycle lanes.

Fantastic value for money

- The average 'Benefit Cost Ratio' (BCR) for walking and cycling projects (UK and non-UK) is an incredible 13:1.

Get more people cycling

- In London, the total distance cycled increased by almost 5% in the year 2018/19; but tellingly, where new cycle lanes had been installed, increases of up to 53% were recorded.

- **Seville** showed a significant increase in bike use after installing the right infrastructure. The average number of bikes used daily in the city rose from just over 6,000 to more than 70,000.

What the public wants

- Sustrans' 2019 **Bike Life report** showed that 77% of residents in UK cities support building more protected roadside cycle lanes, even when this could mean less space for other road traffic.

Getting more people on their bikes for their daily commute is an important factor in improving the general health of the population⁸. Research cited in our 2018 report - **Active Nation: The health benefits of cycling and walking in Scotland** shows that **regular cyclists reduce their risk of developing cardiovascular disease by 46% and cycling to work reduces the risk of cancer by 45%**.

Having separated cycling lanes connecting the whole city means that more disadvantaged areas of cities become linked with city centres, where jobs, services and facilities are often found. This means opening up opportunities for locals and help tackling inequality. Installing attractive infrastructure can also help with how people view their communities. It is important, however, to recognise that the right bike hire schemes and subsidies must be present in these neighbourhoods so that the individuals who live there can maximise the opportunity of having the right infrastructure on their doorstep.

⁵ Transforming cities, The potential of everyday cycling, Bike Life, Sustrans, 2019, accessed Feb 2021 <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/2940/2940.pdf>

⁶ Inclusive city cycling Women: reducing the gender gap, Bike Life, Sustrans, 2018, accessed Feb 2021 <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/2930/2930.pdf>

⁷ Six reasons to build cycle lanes, Cycling UK, 2020, accessed Jan 2021 <https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/six-reasons-build-cycle-lanes>

⁸ Association between active commuting and incident cardiovascular disease, cancer, and mortality: prospective cohort study, BMJ, 2017, accessed Feb 2021 <https://www.bmj.com/content/357/bmj.j1456/article-info>



Costs

Sustrans estimates that the cost to deliver the right high quality, separated active travel network infrastructure across all 7 cities in Scotland is around **£400 million over the next 10 years**.

To put that into perspective, all councils in Scotland spent £381 million in 2018/19¹¹ on all roads and transport costs, over one year. This figure is around average of the transport budgets spent by all councils over the last five years. This means that if we take this figure over next 10 years, all councils will spend roughly £4 billion on transport and roads over that period of time. Sustrans is asking for around 10% of that total to deliver high quality, separated active travel networks in each of the seven cities of Scotland, over the same time frame.

“...green infrastructure can be viewed as a way of creating functional and viable routes within urban areas by providing locations and opportunities that promote, attract and engage users.” – Ian C Mell⁹

“Well planned infrastructure investment can not only transform how we all live and work, but it has a notable benefit for those areas which have been left behind over the years.” – CECA¹⁰

We want each party to pledge to properly fund and support local authorities and partners to deliver a high quality and separated main cycle network across each city of Scotland by the end of this decade.

⁹ *Green infrastructure: concepts, perceptions and its use in spatial planning*, Ian C. Mell, 2010, accessed Jan 2021, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/40036997.pdf>

¹⁰ *The social benefits of infrastructure investment*, CECA, 2018, accessed Jan 2021 <https://www.ceca.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cebr-CECA-report-The-Social-Benefits-of-Infrastructure-Investment-FINAL-December-2018-compressed-2.pdf>

¹¹ *Scottish Local Government Finance Statistics 2018-19*, Scottish Government, 2020, accessed Jan 2021 <file:///C:/Users/andrew.lindsay/Downloads/scottish-local-government-finance-statistics-2018-19.pdf>

Ask 5

Make streets around our schools safer and healthier.

Ensure School Streets are rolled out in Local Authorities across Scotland to help tackle the congestion, poor air quality and road safety concerns that many schools experience.

School Streets tackles the congestion, poor air quality and road safety concerns that many schools experience. It is done by restricting motor traffic at the school gates for a short period of time, generally at drop-off and pick-up times. Sometimes called 'Healthy School Streets', 'School Exclusion Zones' or 'Car-Free School Streets', **they lead to more children walking and cycling to school. The result is a happier, safer and healthier street environment for everyone.**

How do they work?

School Streets vary from place to place. In most cases, traffic is restricted for 30-60 minutes at either end of the school day. Warning signs are placed and the street becomes a walking and cycling zone. Residents and blue badge holders have access, but through traffic is banned.

Local circumstances are important. Councils can choose to use automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras to enforce the School Street. Other councils can place bollards or temporary barriers to block access.

School Streets work best when they are community-powered. Grassroots support combined with political leadership is the key to success. Work has to be done with stakeholders, including decision-makers, parents, pupils and residents, to ensure the aim of the scheme is understood and to gain local support. Trials can be used to test what is possible and demonstrate the impact of School Streets.

Sustrans has found that once a school community has experienced the calm, traffic-free environment of a School Street, **there is widespread support for permanent implementation.**

Do they work?

Research by Sustrans¹² on School Streets in 2020 has found closing roads to cars to create space for walking, cycling or street play, benefit people's health and safety. And it doesn't cause problems to local traffic flow either.

So what were our main findings?

- School Streets cut car traffic on surrounding streets
 - » In almost all examples of School Streets, the total number of cars on streets around the school and local area, reduced significantly.
- No sign of nearby road safety problems
 - » There is no evidence to show that if cars move out of the roads around a school, that they cause road safety problems elsewhere in the local area.
 - » Putting that in the language of transport planners: no studies showed any negative impacts on road safety from motorised traffic flows being adjusted.
- Safer streets equal more children walking or cycling
 - » As streets become safer, more children start walking or cycling to school, leading to even less traffic. A virtuous circle.
- Health benefits are clear
 - » There is a huge boost to children's daily and weekly physical activity levels when they have an active school run.
- Most parents and local residents support School Streets

And this support usually grows after any trial period.

As our research shows, more schools should think about taking up School Streets, to help make a difference in people's health and wellbeing. We believe that Central Government, Local Authorities and the local community each have a role in promoting and supporting the delivery of School Streets.

We want each party to pledge to deliver School Streets across the whole of Scotland, where they are needed.

¹² School Streets research finds road closures benefit health, air quality and congestion, Sustrans, 2020, accessed 2021 <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/opinion/2020/august/school-streets-provide-solution-to-inactivity-congestion-and-air-pollution>

Ask 6

Support making cycling available to everyone.

- Ensure every child in Scotland has access to a cycle and leaves school with the ability to cycle safely.
- Support cycle hire schemes across urban areas and specific programmes and support for people in less-advantaged communities.

Only around two thirds of children in Scotland meet the daily recommended 60 minutes of activity.¹³ Cycling is brilliant for children - it helps them get the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day, amongst many other benefits¹⁴:

- many teachers report that kids 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 kids, can feel much more exciting than travelling by car
- cycling can help kids get to know their local area and feel part of it
- good travel habits learned young will last a lifetime
- cyclists breathe in less pollution from traffic than car drivers¹⁵

It's important that all children have access to bikes to be able to tap into these benefits. That is why **we are asking for a pledge to make a cycle accessible to all children in Scotland** whose parents may not be able to afford to get one. This would be done via a combination of working with local cycle charities, bike recycling organisations, vouchers and other subsidies.

Many disadvantaged neighbourhoods have fewer local amenities and poorer public transport provision. This combination means that everyday services may be harder to reach. Cycling could help accessibility

to jobs, services and facilities and more must be done to increase access to bikes for people in these communities. **Sustrans is asking for a pledge to increase the provision and subsidise bike hire schemes in these areas.** It is vitally important to connect these communities to other parts of the cities via active travel networks and having the ability to hire a bike for a very affordable price opens up opportunities and can reduce inequalities.

Many people in urban communities have no car and have no access to storage facilities for a bike. Therefore it becomes vitally important that bike hire schemes are proliferated in densely populated areas of cities to provide a healthier and more sustainable option for people to commute and make journey across the city. Therefore we **ask that more bike hire schemes are rolled out across cities in Scotland** to help proliferate sustainable travel.

We want each party to pledge to make a cycle accessible to all children in Scotland.

We want each party to pledge to adequately fund and deliver more bike hire schemes across cities in Scotland and to pledge that schemes in the most deprived areas are sufficiently supported/subsidised.

¹³ Scottish Health Survey 2019, Scottish Government, 2019, accessed Jan 2021, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2019-volume-1-main-report/pages/10/>

¹⁴ *The benefits of cycling for children and families*, Sustrans, 2019, accessed Jan 2021, <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/get-active/2019/everyday-walking-and-cycling/the-benefits-of-cycling-for-children-and-families>

¹⁵ *Cyclists 'exposed to less air pollution than drivers' on busy routes*, Guardian, 2018, accessed Jan 2021 <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/13/cyclists-exposed-to-less-air-pollution-than-drivers-on-congested-routes-study>

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Summary of Sustrans Scotland Manifesto Asks for Political Parties

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About Sustrans

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

We are engineers and educators, experts and advocates. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.

Sustrans works in partnership, bringing people together to find the right solutions. We make the case for walking and cycling by using robust evidence and showing what can be done.

We are grounded in communities and believe that grassroots support combined with political leadership drives real change, fast.

Join us on our journey. www.sustrans.org.uk

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