

Our proposals for *your* manifesto 2016

Prosperity and well-being in Northern Ireland

The actions needed to get more people walking, cycling and using public transport



Why Sustrans' work is relevant:

Sustrans is an evidence-based organisation. Our Research & Monitoring Unit scrutinises all our programmes to show the effectiveness of our work. Volunteers also play a key role in our daily work on the ground, helping on our greenways and promoting the message of sustainable transport. Our manifesto is relevant to the current and anticipated work of numerous Government Departments.

Regarding cycling, two recent publications show people want to cycle and that Government supports this sustainable mode of transport. Sustrans' *Bike Life* survey interviewed more than 1,100 people in greater Belfast and found the majority (63%) either cycle or wants to cycle, but the biggest barrier is safety¹. The Department for Regional Development's Northern Ireland Bicycle Strategy – *Changing Gear* – identifies the fact that people need both freedom and confidence to cycle and the solutions to these are respectively, better infrastructure and training².

An invitation to talk

Sustrans is a leading UK-wide charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of our daily journeys. We work with families, communities, employers, policy-makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in. Encouraging more people to get on their bikes or travel actively has significant health, environmental and economic benefits.

We welcome the opportunity to talk about our manifesto so please contact our Policy & Media Advisor, Anne Madden or our Northern Ireland Director Gordon Clarke.

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Our vision

Our vision is for a culture of walking and cycling to develop in Northern Ireland making it a vastly more pleasant place for people to live and move through. There will be truly liveable villages, towns and cities with access on foot and by bike at the heart of travel to school, work and for pleasure. More people on foot and bike especially for short trips means less congestion, less noise, less pollution and communities fit for life – improving our economy, health and overall happiness.



Safe places

More people walking and cycling reduces traffic, making our town centres and communities safer.

Prosperity for all

A more active, healthy population will help improve the economy.

Improved environment

Active travel and public transport reduces congestion and air pollution.

Active & healthy people

Active travel improves health and fitness, and saves money.

¹ Read more on Bike Life survey at www.sustrans.org.uk/bike-life

² Read the Northern Ireland Bicycle Strategy, *Changing Gear* at <https://www.drndi.gov.uk/publications/bicycle-strategy-northern-ireland>



Our key asks

Priorities for Government in Northern Ireland should focus on how economic prosperity can be underpinned by a well-being strategy. Active travel can help deliver both. It benefits both employers and employees through reductions in sick leave, increased productivity, reduces inequalities and encourages access to employment and services.

We would like:

- **For our children and young people, support the development and expansion of the Active School Travel Programme by including on-road cycle training for all P6 pupils, the provision of safe routes to school and on-site cycle parking.**
- **Address cycling safety concerns by investing in joined-up urban cycling networks, segregated cycle lanes and secure cycle parking provision.**
- **Support rural regeneration by the further development of the National Cycle Network, including the development of traffic-free Greenways.**
- **Plan for the future by introducing an Active Travel Bill into the statutory planning process. This would incorporate active travel provision in land-use planning and new developments.**

We believe if the above key points from our manifesto were implemented this would transform active travel in Northern Ireland.

Funding

We want the next Programme for Government to include a long-term commitment to invest in Active Travel and public transport. Specifically we call on Government to allocate a separate annual budget for cycling of £12.5m, split 70/30 between capital for infrastructure and revenue for behavioural change programmes. We recommend a dedicated, minimum annual budget for cycling of £10m for urban areas and £2.5m for rural areas.

The recently published Belfast Bike Life report demonstrated very strong public support for investment in cycling, with some 84% calling for Government to spend significantly more.

In order to maximise investment we also call on Government Departments and agencies with an interest in Active Travel to continue to work together to share resources and build on the good work that is already underway.

Appropriate provision and funding for Active Travel should be included in all major public infrastructure projects such as roads, hospitals and schools. Private sector developments should also include Active Travel provision including 'planning gain'.



Education & Young People

- Continue the Active School Travel Programme on a long-term basis, to include investment in safe routes to schools and on-road cycle training for pupils.
- Develop a separate active travel scheme that targets teenagers/young adults in community settings.
- Offer all P6 children (9 & 10 year olds) Bikeability on-road cycle training.
- Install high quality cycle parking at all schools to encourage cycling as a form of transport.
- Introduce and enforce 20mph zones around all schools.



Communities

- Develop community Active Travel programmes for disadvantaged areas to encourage more walking and cycling, to improve health and access to employment, community facilities and shops.
- Address inequalities in cycling through significantly increasing the percentage of cyclists who are female, young people and the elderly.
- Promote the One Path shared use programme on traffic-free walking and cycling routes.
- Introduce community-led street design initiative eg. DIY Streets project, which has been successful in the rest of UK and improves the public realm by creating streets for people.

Workplaces

- Introduce a programme of Smarter Choices to encourage employees to walk, cycle or take public transport to work. Support promotional events such as Sustrans' Active Belfast Challenge.
- Provide incentives to employers to develop Active Travel Workplace Plans and ensure they are implemented. Encourage employers to provide shower/changing facilities to encourage active travel.
- Provide secure bike parking at key destinations in town and city centres and transport nodes.
- Offer Bikeability on-road cycle training and basic bike maintenance to all participants in the Cycle to Work Scheme.





Bicycles & Cycling

- As many as 61% of households in Belfast do not have a bicycle, increase bike ownership and use across Northern Ireland by actively promoting the Cycle to Work Scheme.
- Develop a new scheme for the low paid or unemployed to access bikes and address inequalities.
- Support and promote bicycle recycling.
- Support the development of 'bike pool schemes' at colleges, universities and employment locations.
- Support the introduction of e-bikes by making them available through the Cycle to Work Scheme.
- Support the development of the Public Bike Share Scheme in Belfast and the introduction of the scheme in Derry~Londonderry and elsewhere as appropriate.
- Provide National Standard cycle skills training in support of bicycle provision schemes.



Safety

- Support safety initiatives for driver awareness of vulnerable road users similar to Sustrans' work with lorry and bus drivers 'Travelling in Harmony' e.g. taxi drivers; farm traffic.
- Implement a zero tolerance approach to speeding and aggressive driving on all key routes for vulnerable road users.
- Ensure adequate resources for the PSNI to police our roads to ensure safe conditions, particularly for the most vulnerable users – pedestrians and cyclists.
- Belfast Bike Life survey found the greatest barrier to cycling is safety – the public want better infrastructure with a joined-up network of segregated or traffic-free routes.





Infrastructure

- Ensure funding is allocated for active travel infrastructure for all major new developments eg. roads, hospitals and schools.
- Develop the cycle network at community, town and regional levels so they are joined up, including a Walking & Cycling Masterplan for Belfast and the implementation of the Walking & Cycling Masterplan for Derry~Londonderry.
- Provide more segregated cycle lanes alongside roads by redistributing road space.
- Provide for the development and maintenance of key walking routes, including footways in towns and cities.
- Develop a network of Quietways to provide safe and direct cycle routes through back streets, parks or along waterways in towns and cities.
- Provide more high quality cycle parking at schools, public facilities and workplaces.

Rural Regeneration

- Develop new traffic free greenways (including cross border routes).
- Upgrade and extend the National Cycle Network (NCN) with a comprehensive review to facilitate rural regeneration. Review maintenance and management standards and responsibilities for the NCN.
- Pilot quiet lanes on rural roads by introducing 40mph speed limits.
- Invest in Euro Velo Route 1 which will tap into tourism potential underpinned by a Bicycle Tourism Strategy.
- Support the development of a Cycling Tourism Masterplan.

Public Transport

- We want to see continued investment in public transport including the ongoing development of Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT).
- Provide behavioural change programmes such as Personalised Travel Programmes, focused on workplaces and communities, in support of new public transport developments such as BRT and the Integrated Transport Hubs.
- Promote multi-modal journeys by providing safe walking and cycle routes and quality bike parking at rail stations, park & ride facilities and key bus stops. Provide bike racks and greater storage on public transport.
- Develop Active Travel Hubs within the proposed redevelopment plans for Great Victoria Street and Derry~Londonderry railway stations and at key urban/community locations.



Legislation

- Introduce an Active Travel Bill (similar to Wales) to ensure Active Travel is embedded in the statutory planning process.
- Introduce a default 20mph speed limit in towns and cities (with main arterial routes remaining at 30mph).
- In the event of changes to taxi regulations, ensure status quo remains for use of bus lanes so they are not overrun by private hire taxis.
- Ensure there are adequate powers and enforcement capabilities to tackle inconsiderate and irresponsible pavement and cycle-lane parking.



**Active Travel is
a cost-effective
investment in the
environment and
public health.
Sustrans has the
evidence for this.**

**Want to
know more?**

For more information or to talk
about our proposals contact:

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