

Sustrans launches Scotland's Manifesto Asks

Sustrans Scotland is getting in early by publishing its 2021 manifesto which contains all the points they would like the new parliament to address.

Ahead of the Scottish Parliamentary Election on 6 May 2021, they have made six requests hoping that this will ensure a green and sustainable post-Covid recovery. They want a recovery which is fair for all, which tackles climate change and improves health and wellbeing.



Local Access Onl on the Quiet Route in Bruntsfield. Photo: © 2021, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

They would like these transformational commitments included in party manifestos which will allow more people to use active travel for everyday journeys leading to a greener healthier and more inclusive place.

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, cycling and creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness and wellbeing.

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.

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 to a high quality walking and cycling network.
- Supporting the tourist industry in rural and island Scotland and making every day journeys easier for locals.

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 allow 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.

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.

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

John Lauder, Sustrans Deputy CEO and Executive Director of Scotland said: "Sustrans' vision for a Scotland where more people have the choice to walk, wheel or cycle for more of their everyday journeys has never been more relevant. The last year has showed us the potential of a society in which everyone is able to walk, wheel or cycle safely in their neighbourhoods. Now imagine a society where schools, shops and workplaces are within easy reach; our towns are accessible, green and vibrant; and a sustainable walking, wheeling and cycling network is reliable and affordable for all."

"The Scottish Government have talked about creating this kind of society, but the ambition has not been matched with the required funding, nor by a national plan to deliver this on the ground and create change at pace. 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 want to see the next Scottish Government inspiring and leading local authorities, making it easier for statutory bodies and the communities they serve to change their local areas for the better. We want to see health, social and environmental impact being key criteria for transport investment decisions. This will ensure a green and sustainable economic recovery that is fair for all people in Scotland. Ambitious rhetoric is no longer enough. Funding and delivery must match ambition. The time to act is now."

Sustrans explain some of the terms used above:

20 Minute Neighbourhoods

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

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 cycle, wheel and walk and enable children to become more independent.

School Streets

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.