



# Cycling Charter

A Wales that Works for you



# Getting Ahead: A Welsh Liberal Democrat Cycling Charter

We have a vision of a new deal for cyclists in Wales. There has never been a better time to encourage cycling, nor greater interest. With an obesity crisis looming and climate change one of the greatest threats facing the planet, there is no better time to make cycling a major method of transport. As global temperatures rise, we know we need to lower our energy consumption, make less use of fossil fuels, and move to a more sustainable society. Our transport network is key in that transition, as we move to more sustainable transport, from bicycles to alternative fuel cars and buses. There are a number of public health crisis that cycling will help tackle. We know only 35% of Welsh children get the recommended hour of physical activity a day. This generation of children may be the first to have a life expectancy lower than their parents and by 2025 type 2 diabetes could cost the Welsh NHS £1 billion a year. We also know that there is strong evidence linking physical activity with improved academic achievement. But despite the obvious environmental, health, and educational benefits resulting from increased cycling, Wales is investing far too little in cycling and far too few Welsh people cycle. Far too many Welsh citizens feel cycling is not safe enough - this must change urgently if Wales is to become a cycling nation and reap the benefits this brings.

Wales currently only spends £3.93 per head per year on cycling, whereas the Netherlands spends £19 per head per year, an investment that has allowed the Netherlands to achieve a significant modal shift towards cycling. Scotland also dwarfs Wales for investment in cycling, investing £12 per head per year in cycling. For too long Welsh transport policy has been too focused on cars, with only 2% of Wales' transport budget being spent on cycling. How can we expect cycling to be a major method of transport if we're not willing to invest in it?

A report by Prof. Stuart Cole called for a cycling investment of between £10 and £20 per head. Westminster's Transport Committee recommended a figure of £10 per head by 2020 in England is essential to fund long-term development of cycling infrastructure and make our roads safer for cycling. Large-scale investment is essential if cycling is to become a safe, convenient and attractive method of transport across Wales.

Safety is one of the biggest concerns stopping people from cycling or walking more. It is the most significant factors stopping parents letting their children walk or cycle to school, whilst a Cardiff study found:

- ❖ Only 33% of people rate cycling safety as good or very good,
- ❖ Only 25% of people believe safety for children riding a bike is good or very good, and
- ❖ 82% of residents want better safety for people riding bikes.

Evidence shows that creating safe walking and cycling routes is effective in increasing cycling and walking to school. In England, creating new routes to and around schools led to an average 151% increase in children walking and cycling and has returned £10 of economic benefit for every £1 invested. There are large numbers of citizens who are willing to cycle or cycle more when the routes are safe enough, with more traffic-free routes and bike lanes.

This is why the Welsh Liberal Democrats would create an active travel fund to encourage the development of new active travel infrastructure across Wales. We will also make progress towards spending £10 per person per year on cycling investment. This investment in safe and convenient cycle routes could lead to a substantial increase in the amount Wales cycles, bringing substantial health, economic, environmental and educational benefits.

Although implementing safe cycling requires investment in safer cycling routes, this is not sufficient on its own to substantially boost cycling. We must also properly train children to cycle safely from a young age and extend 20mph zones wherever possible and convenient. The Welsh Democrats are committed to teaching every school child to safely cycle - we recognise that the best way to increase cycling is to normalise cycling to school and work for the next generation. If this is to happen, parents have to trust that their kids will be safe, trust that will only exist if children are given the proper training. Parents must also trust that their children will be safe from other road users, namely that other cars will not be going too fast. There is strong evidence to show that 20mph zones are much safer than 30-mph zones and that increased use of 20mph zones leads to far more cycling. In Bristol for an area wide 20mph pilot increased walking and cycling by 12% and caused 35% of people to feel safer. Separate evidence shows that 20mph streets have 40% fewer road casualties. We would work with local government to roll out 20mph zones in residential areas to ensure roads are safe for cyclists. Should speed limits be devolved to the Assembly, we will examine expanding default 20mph zones across Wales.

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We must also recognise that in some cases cycling only makes up a section of a commute and that therefore public transport must be bike friendly. We'd make it easier to combine rail and cycle travel, including taking your bike on the train. This would encourage people to cycle for parts of their commute in situations where it is inconvenient to cycle the whole commute.

Finally, we must ensure new developments, from new housing estates to business parks, are suitable for cycling and other forms of public transport, in an integrated way. There is no point in cycling to work if there's no where to lock up a bike in the area, or if there are no cycle paths that access it. We will ensure all major new developments include provision for sustainable, integrated public transport, including access to walking and cycle routes.

It is clear there is a large number of people across Wales want take up cycling or cycle more but need it to be safer and have better cycling infrastructure in place. Together these changes will dramatically increase the numbers of Welsh cyclists, bringing multiple health and environmental benefits in the process.

- 1** Create an active travel fund to encourage the development of new active travel infrastructure and make progress towards a target of £10 per person per year cycling investment.
- 2** Work with local government to roll out 20mph zones in residential areas.
- 3** Make a commitment to teaching every school child to safely cycle and encourage walking and cycling by providing support for route development and education programmes.
- 4** Make it easier to combine rail and cycle travel, including taking your bike on the train.
- 5** Ensure all major new developments include provision for sustainable, integrated public transport, including access to walking and cycle routes.



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