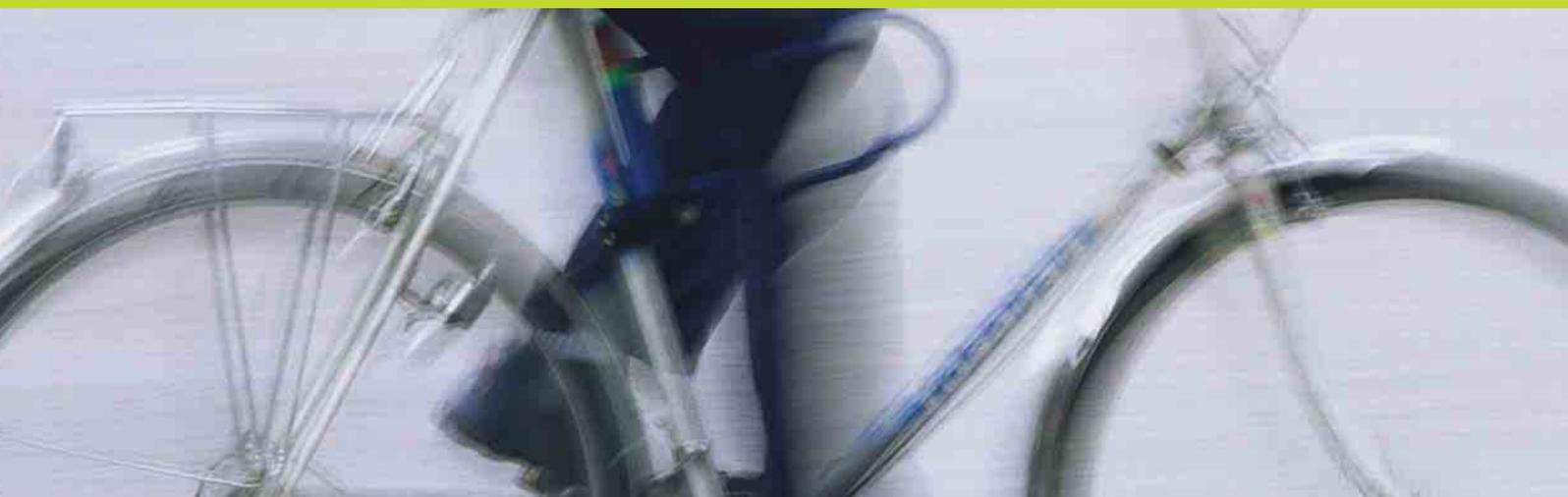


Sustainable Transport for Wales



Time for change

The publication of a Wales Transport Strategy by the Welsh Assembly Government presents a unique opportunity to deliver a transport system for Wales that is sustainable, fair and promotes the health and well-being of the Welsh population.

This is a summary of a report compiled for Sustrans Cymru by Transport for Quality of Life, to coincide with the launch of the strategy consultation. It sets out a vision to make the most of this opportunity and bring about the sustainable and socially equitable transport system that the people of Wales need and deserve. The purpose of the paper is to inform and influence the important debate that now needs to take place.

Do the actions match the words?

Sustainability is prominent in the Assembly Government's policies but actual expenditure tells a different story:

- 76% of the Assembly Government 2005/6 budgeted expenditure for transport was for roads.
- The Assembly Government plans to subsidise air services and fund road projects to boost Cardiff airport.
- Less than 2% of the Assembly Government's 2005/6 budget for transport was for walking and cycling.
- Less than 16% of the Assembly Government's 2005/6 transport budget went on buses and community transport.

- Under 2% of the Assembly Government's 2005/6 transport budget was allocated to road safety.
- 'Smart measures' to promote sustainable transport represented just 0.05% of the transport budget in 2005/6.

The Assembly Government is about to take over financial support for the rail franchise in Wales. But even after adding in the new money the Assembly Government will receive and spend on the railways in future years, roads will still consume 65% of the budget.

In contrast, the Scottish Executive has committed to spend 70% of their budget on public and other sustainable modes of transport.

“a vision to bring about the sustainable and socially equitable transport system that the people of Wales need and deserve”

Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity working on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport to the benefit of health and the environment.

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Handbrake turn required

Sustrans wants an environmentally sustainable and socially equitable transport system for Wales. The present transport system in Wales is neither. In fact we are heading towards a transport system which is even more environmentally destructive, unfair and damaging to our health. The good news is that the new legislation on transport in Wales provides an opportunity for our policy-makers to execute a handbrake turn and head towards a positive future for transport in Wales

What's the problem?

The UK Government believes that emissions of carbon dioxide will have to be cut by 60% by 2050 to avert catastrophic climate change, yet carbon emissions from transport are growing faster than emissions from any other sector. Meanwhile, our increasingly car dependent lifestyles are serving to make us less physically active and more prone to life-curtailling illnesses – only 28% of the adult population of Wales gets enough physical exercise and physical inactivity costs Wales about £500 million per annum.

What's the solution?

To protect our environment, improve our health and for the Welsh economy to thrive in an increasingly oil-scarce world, Wales needs a transport strategy that decouples economic growth from traffic growth. It should centre on policies to give companies and the public options to go about their business with less dependence on cars and lorries. This means a radical and visionary approach, setting a wholly new direction.

Is it possible?

The vast majority of journeys in Wales are short, with 63% less than five miles. Yet even on these short journeys, cars are the dominant mode. It is important to challenge the conventional thinking that 'strategic' means infrastructure for long-distance travel. Actions focussed on short journeys offer the most effective strategy to tackle environmental, social and economic issues. Moreover, helping people to reduce their car use for local journeys can dramatically improve the efficiency and reliability of long journeys. Many long-distance road routes suffer due to congestion at key nodes, congestion which generally comprises a great deal of local traffic.

A new course will benefit Wales

The sustainable transport reforms described here would give us a better quality of life and a more vibrant, twenty-first century economy.

A healthier, fitter population.

Wales, like many developed countries, is experiencing an epidemic of obesity, to such an extent that today's children could

have a lower life expectancy than their parents. There are tremendous benefits for public health from creating the opportunities for more people to walk and cycle for short trips.

A socially inclusive society.

A quarter of households in Wales do not have a car. The current transport system serves the needs of the old, the young and disabled people very poorly.

A vibrant economy.

The key transport issue for businesses is unreliability due to congestion. The most effective way to get our roads flowing freely, and to increase reliability for businesses, would be through a combination of demand management, good alternatives to the car, and support for people to make smarter travel choices. Tourism is an important earner for Wales, and tourism using sustainable travel offers major opportunities. It is especially beneficial to local economies because people travelling by non-car modes purchase more goods locally.



What would a truly sustainable and fair transport strategy look like?

The answer does not lie in complicated solutions, nor even in major new infrastructure, but in simple proven measures to provide sustainable travel choices. It does however imply a major shift away from the current bias of funding roads.

Help people make smarter travel choices

'Smart' measures are highly effective at reducing travel by car, increasing use of sustainable travel modes, and improving transport efficiency. Smart interventions combine targeted investment in sustainable transport (for example, new bus services, bus priority measures, cycle links to schools and workplaces and so on) with marketing, information and incentives for people to change their travel behaviour. This can be done through workplace and school travel plans, and through initiatives such as Sustrans' TravelSmart programme, which has cut car use by 9-14%.

The Smarter Choices research published by the Department for Transport concluded that if these measures were implemented intensively over ten years, they could reduce car traffic by 11 per cent overall, and 21 per cent in urban areas at peak times. Smart measures are also excellent value for money, costing about 1.5 pence per car kilometre taken off the road. This represents a benefit-cost ratio of 10:1, far higher than most other transport schemes.

The researchers that carried out the Smarter Choices study estimated that revenue funding of about £5 per citizen per year would be required to make a significant impact on traffic levels. This suggests that revenue funding of £15 million per year would be needed to deliver a large scale Smart Choices Programme for the whole of Wales. In addition, capital funding would be needed for measures such as traffic calming and cycle routes as part of safe routes to school schemes, hospital and workplace travel plans, and so on.

Shift short car trips to walking and cycling

More than half of car trips are less than five miles. Even in rural areas a high proportion of car trips are short. Making more of these trips by foot or bike would cut traffic, and make us healthier.

Each region of Wales should develop an Active Travel Action Plan. These should include comprehensive cycling and walking networks within every town and city and linking them together, as well as routes radiating from small market towns to link them to their surrounding villages. Concentrated funding should be available to create Cycling Demonstration Towns, with European levels of funding for cycling, equivalent to about £5-10 per citizen per year over at least a decade. The action plans should be supported by smart interventions to encourage people to travel actively through campaigns like Walking the Way to Health, which has now set up over 350 walking schemes and encouraged over a million people to walk more. Cycling to school should be a specific target – the Bike It project in England, managed by Sustrans, has quadrupled cycling to schools, and provides an excellent model.

Make public transport more attractive

Good bus and train services are vital to enable people to use their cars less, and to provide access to shops, jobs, education and services for people who do not have a car. Unfortunately, public transport is often perceived as an option of last resort, rather than what it should be – a high quality option of first choice for everybody.

There are good examples. In rural Gwynedd, the concentration of settlements in valley corridors has helped sustain relatively high levels of bus use, and the local authority and bus operators have worked together to develop this market. In Pembrokeshire, the Pembrokeshire Greenways consortium has developed five new bus routes along the coast, which in 2005 carried over 45,000 people, avoiding 20,000 car trips. We need to turn these isolated examples of good practice into the norm.

The regional transport consortia are the logical bodies to take on the role of determining the overall shape and quality of bus and rail services. In the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark, regional authorities already have this role. They are able to ensure that bus and train times are synchronised, with regular departure times, and integrated information and through-ticketing between buses and trains. Learning from this, the Assembly Government, regional transport consortia and local authorities should develop region-wide demonstration projects, to show what an integrated bus and rail network could be like. Such demonstration projects could use 'Quality Contract' powers for buses and the Assembly Government's newly acquired powers to specify rail services.

Evaporate traffic – information & communications technologies instead of travelling

Through video-conferencing and telephone-conferencing, the Countryside Council for Wales cut car travel by 82,000 miles in nine months, reducing mileage claims by £32,800. Over 7500 BT employees work partly or wholly from home or an office close

What a sustainable transport strategy should not do

to home, and on average have each cut their car travel by 193 miles a week. BT says that teleworking has enabled it to reorganise its offices, saving £180 million a year.

Thousands of public sector workers travel many miles by car in Wales every day, to reach their offices or on travel for business. The Assembly Government should increase its own teleworking and teleconferencing, and encourage other public sector bodies to lead by example. The Assembly should offer grants for telephone and video-conferencing facilities plus advice on how to overcome perceived obstacles to teleworking, such as managers' uncertainty about how to monitor employees who are working away from the office.

Make efficient use of limited road space

Measures that give drivers the option to leave their cars at home must be accompanied by demand management. Otherwise the road space freed will simply fill up with more traffic.

Demand management actions should re-allocate road space to pedestrians, cyclists, buses and green space. Only minimal car parking should be permitted as part of new developments. Local authorities should introduce a levy on workplace car parking, with the income going to green modes of travel. Charging for road use has been shown to be a potentially highly effective option, and the Assembly Government should continue to back a pilot road user charging scheme for Cardiff. Income from charging should be invested in better public transport and better facilities for walking and cycling.

Reduce carbon emissions from the vehicles on our roads

Wales should have a campaign like the 'gas-saving' ('Sprintsparen') campaign in Austria which includes popular events such as fuel-efficient driving competitions. We should also make sure that speed limits in Wales are enforced, as new

evidence shows that simply keeping within the speed limit could reduce carbon emissions significantly.

Save lives

In 2004, over 200 people were killed on the roads in Wales, and over 13,000 were injured.

The Assembly Government should invite proposals from local authorities and regional transport consortia for funding of town-wide 20mph demonstration projects. In an impact at 20mph, only 1 in 20 pedestrians are killed; if the vehicle speed is 30 mph about 8 in 20 pedestrians will be killed and if the vehicle speed is 40 mph about 18 in 20 pedestrians will be killed. There should also be a specific focus on road safety on rural roads.

Enable access to daily facilities

For people without a car, it is now more difficult to reach the places that we need to visit on a daily basis – shops, school, our workplaces, healthcare, post offices, banks – than at any time in the last fifty years. The Assembly Government should require the regional transport consortia to undertake a full accessibility planning process and back them with funding to tackle the problems they identify. This process analyses gaps in transport and service provision, identifies solutions to these, and makes them happen.

Time for change

The new powers vested in the Assembly Government, and the shift to develop the role of the regional transport consortia, offer a welcome and hugely important opportunity to chart out a new course towards a sustainable transport policy for Wales. As the Assembly Government launches a consultation on the new Wales Transport Strategy, we call for radical shift away from the old, failed policies and towards a new set of policies based on respect for the environmental limits of our planet and social justice.

No more subsidy for flying

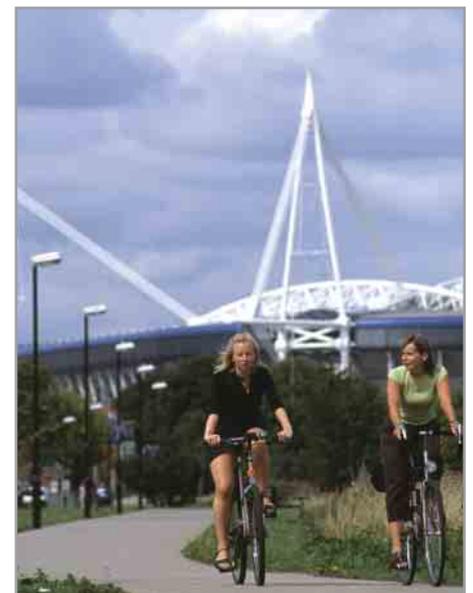
Aviation is the least sustainable form of transport and the fastest growing source of carbon dioxide. The planned North-South Wales air services are aimed at an exclusive market, mainly business travellers. Support for air travel will do nothing to tackle social exclusion and the difficulties experienced by disadvantaged groups who struggle to access basic facilities and work opportunities.

No new M4

The official appraisal study of options to relieve congestion on the M4 showed that the worst possible option is the Assembly Government's plan to build a new M4 between Magor and Castleton. This appraisal showed that a wide-ranging package of enhanced public transport plus traffic restraint measures could reduce traffic by 58% against the 'do minimum' case – more traffic reduction than by building a new M4.

No more road-building

The Assembly Government's Trunk Road Forward Programme currently lists a total of 47 road schemes. A roads programme on this scale is inconsistent with principles of sustainability and social justice and moreover it will not be effective at tackling congestion, because new road capacity quickly fills up with additional traffic, caused by people making new or longer trips.



July 2006 **Based on a report to Sustrans Cymru by Transport for Quality of Life, available at www.sustrans.org.uk/wales**

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