

P-06-1506 We call for an end to further public funding for cycle paths and cycle Infrastructure in Wales.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 14 Gorffennaf 2025
Petitions Committee | 14 July 2025

Reference: SR25/11625-2

Introduction

Petition Number: P-06-1506

Petition title: We call for an end to further public funding for cycle paths and cycle Infrastructure in Wales.

Text of petition: Substantial sums have already been directed towards cycling projects, managed by organisations like Sustrans, courtesy of the Welsh Labour Party. While cycling paths provide benefits to a small segment of the population, the allocation of these funds comes at the expense of far more critical areas like healthcare and education that serves the broader population. We believe that taxpayer money should be redirected to support these essential services that benefit everyone, not niche projects.

Between April 2021 and March 2024, Sustrans (A charity) received £3,879,376.26 from the Welsh Government. Reference: GOV.Wales



In 2020, the Welsh Government announced a £38 million investment in active travel across Wales, marking the largest ever investment in local active travel improvements in the country. Reference: Sustrans

Additionally, in November 2024, Sustrans Cymru was awarded a new contract to deliver the Welsh Government's Active Journeys programme, continuing its work to support children and young people across Wales in traveling sustainably and actively. Reference: Sustrans

These substantial investments highlight the significant funding already allocated to cycling infrastructure and related programmes in Wales.

Investing in critical areas that serves the broader population is essential for the well-being of Wales. Let's prioritise what truly matters and ensure that public money is used where it can make the greatest difference for the many, not the few.

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.

Mae'r testun uchod yn cael ei gyflwyno gan y deisebydd. Mae'r tîm deisebau yn gwneud pob ymdrech i sicrhau ei fod yn cadw ei lais dilys. Nid yw'r testun hwn wedi'i wirio am gywirdeb, neu wallau, a gall gynnwys barn neu honiadau heb eu gwirio.

1. Background

The [Wales Transport Strategy](#) puts walking and cycling at the top of the sustainable transport hierarchy. It also sets a target for 45% of journeys to be made by public transport, walking and cycling by 2040 up from the 32% estimated in 2020. [Net Zero Wales](#) also sets a target to increase trip mode share of active travel to 33% by 2030 and at least 35% by 2040.

The [Active Travel Wales Act 2013](#) places a duty on the Welsh Government and local authorities to continuously improve active travel provision (which includes provision for walking, cycling and [wheeling](#)) through securing new and improved active travel routes and related facilities. It also requires local authorities to prepare [Active Travel Network Maps \(ATNMs\)](#) every three years showing existing active travel routes, alongside new proposed routes.

The Welsh Government supports local authorities with annual funding to deliver active travel schemes - the majority of which is distributed through the [Active Travel Fund](#). This includes a core allocation for local authorities to make small scale continuous improvements. The remainder is competitive funding for larger, developed schemes. [Transport for Wales \(TfW\)](#) administers the fund.

Funding has [increased significantly in recent years](#), although this has [not necessarily translated into increased rates of active travel](#).

1.1. There has been a shift in priorities from cycling to walking

In June 2024 [the Welsh Government told the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee \(CCEI\)](#) there's "a new emphasis...that active travel funding can be used for pedestrian movements, walking, to support high-quality pavements".

In a November 2024 [paper provided to the CCEI Committee](#), the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales, Ken Skates MS (the Cabinet Secretary) outlined "new priorities for walking, wheeling and cycling". The paper stated **[emphasis added]**:

*Underpinning these priorities will be a hierarchy of users founded on social justice and inclusion, with the most vulnerable walkers and wheelers at the top. Investment decisions will be based on this hierarchy. **In practice this will mean that infrastructure for walking and wheeling will take priority.***

Further details were explored during the CCEI Committee's scrutiny of the 2025-26 draft transport budget where the Cabinet Secretary stated:

...the active travel funding for 2025-26 has been maintained...But we are placing an emphasis in 2025-26 on fixing streets, improving pavements, a focus on walking to and from school, making sure that streets are safe for all...So, there is a much stronger focus moving forward on walking and wheeling—and by 'wheeling' I mean pushing a pram; I mean being in a wheelchair—because this is about inclusive movement, it's about inclusive travel, and that's what we're going to be focusing on.

In 2024 the Cabinet Secretary also set out his intention to devolve “responsibility, decision making and the funding to the regions”. From 2026-27 a number of transport related grants, including the Active Travel Fund would be merged and allocated on a regional basis to support the delivery of Regional Transport Plans. Cycling.UK has voiced concern that investment in cycling infrastructure could be lost if the funding for active travel is not ring-fenced.

On 1 July the Welsh Government set out its 2026-27 budget approach. It is not clear at this stage whether plans to move to regional based funding will still go ahead.

2. Welsh Government action

In his letter to the Chair dated 12 June 2025, the Cabinet Secretary reiterates his focus on walking and wheeling and states that:

Most schemes that have been funded [by the Active Travel Fund to date] benefit walking and wheeling as well as cycling; in fact, there were more schemes focussed solely on walking and wheeling than schemes that were focused solely on cycling.

The letter also provides details on funding to Sustrans as raised by the petitioner.

3. Welsh Parliament action

In addition to the approach to active travel being raised several times in the Senedd as highlighted earlier in this brief, the Public Accounts and Public

Administration Committee (PAPAC) has recently undertaken an inquiry on active travel more generally.

The Committee undertook its inquiry in response to a 2024 report on active travel from Audit Wales which found that:

Despite increased spending through its Active Travel Fund and a new delivery plan, the Welsh Government remains a long way from achieving the step change in active travel intended [through the Act and]...approaches to monitoring and evaluation do not currently go far enough to enable robust tracking of progress or an overall assessment of value for money.

The report made ten recommendations to the Welsh Government, all of which were accepted.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.