

Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) is asking for commitments, in 2021 local election manifestos, to give **increased support to walking as a mode of travel**, as expressed in the Bristol Transport Strategy:

Walking to be safe, pleasant, accessible and the first choice for local journeys and combined with public transport for longer journeys. [Bristol Transport Strategy 2019]

BWA proposes the following could be specific manifesto commitments to be carried out over the next four years:

- **Acknowledge and promote walking as a distinct and important mode of travel that requires the level of commitment and funding shown by Manchester and other cities.**
- **Identify, prioritise and improve pedestrian routes, including those along main roads and to work, to schools, to shops, to healthcare and to parks.**
- **Remove obstructions to walking that deny access to many, including bins on footways, and introduce a London-style ban on pavement parking.**
- **Extend School Streets to all primary schools on suitable roads.**
- **Create Liveable Neighbourhoods across Bristol, piloting two of them within two years and implementing four per year subsequently.**

Some background on each of these five separate areas is given below, and we would be happy to discuss them further if that would be useful.

Acknowledge and promote walking as a distinct and important mode of travel that requires the level of commitment and funding shown by Manchester and other cities.

Cities like London, Birmingham and Manchester have committed significant portions of their transport budgets to improving the walking environment. Their contributions include providing networks of walking routes, segregating pedestrians and cyclists, measuring the healthiness of streets and creating liveable neighbourhoods. So far WECA has only committed £10 million to longer-term walking and cycling improvements, though their 2020 Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan identified £105 million of walking improvements alone. We would particularly urge that walking and cycling investments are separately assessed and funded.

Identify, prioritise and improve pedestrian routes, including those along main roads and to work, to schools, to shops, to healthcare and to parks.

To increase the proportion of journeys made on foot, pedestrian routes need to be direct and uninterrupted. There is a backlog of pedestrian crossings awaiting installation. Lights-controlled crossings should be timed to minimise pedestrian delays. Continuous footways or other measures, giving pedestrians priority when crossing minor side-roads alongside main routes, should be installed whenever road improvements are being made. Regular maintenance of pavements, including gritting in winter, is as important as carriageway maintenance.

Remove obstructions to walking that deny access to many, including bins on footways, and introduce a London-style ban on pavement parking.

Pavement obstructions include parked cars, commercial and domestic bins, overgrown hedges, A-boards, temporary building works and street clutter. Obstructions particularly affect the old, the young, those with visual or physical impairments and those using wheelchairs, mobility scooters and children's buggies. This is more than a transport issue – it needs support from council departments concerned with development, business and waste too. For example, where bins cannot be stored off the pavement, parking bays could be re-used to introduce landscaped on-street bin collection points. Legislation, currently under discussion, should be used to extend a London-style pavement parking ban to our city streets.

Extend School Streets to all primary schools on suitable roads.

The two pilot schemes for School Streets in Bristol, where motorised traffic is suspended at the beginning and end of the school day, should be rapidly extended to all primary schools on roads where this is possible. School Streets make walking to school safer and healthier. Further promotion of active travel and its health benefits, including support for walking buses, should be used to significantly reduce the number of car trips associated with getting to and from school.

Create Liveable Neighbourhoods across Bristol, piloting two of them within two years and implementing four per year subsequently.

Liveable Neighbourhoods (also called low-traffic neighbourhoods) have been successfully introduced in London, and form the basis of their transport policy for reducing car dependency. They aim to improve conditions for walking and cycling and to reduce traffic dominance. They are based on the Healthy Streets Approach, which sets out ten indicators that show whether streets are healthy, safe and welcoming for everyone. BWA supports the Liveable Neighbourhoods for Bristol campaign, but recognises their introduction will require effective community engagement.

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