

## Bristol Walking Alliance: 2021 WECA mayoral election asks

The Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) is a consortium of organisations and individuals that campaigns to improve Bristol's walking environment. Our website is at <https://bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk/>

BWA has written to the four WECA mayoral candidates seeking the following commitments on walking in their election manifestos:

### General manifesto commitment

Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) is asking for a general commitment to give **increased support to walking as a mode of travel**, as expressed in the Bristol Transport Strategy, or similarly:

***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)***

### Specific manifesto commitments

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

- 1) acknowledge and promote walking as a distinct and important mode of travel, with the level of commitment and funding shown by Manchester and other cities;
- 2) be open and transparent in developing transport policy. Give organisations like BWA a voice through a regular communication channel with WECA officers and the Transport Board;
- 3) align transport policy with climate emission and air quality aims. Give more priority to active travel and less to road-building. Fund a major programme of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) schemes;
- 4) put sustainable travel and place-making at the heart of spatial strategy, including adoption of the 15-minute walkable neighbourhood principle and a programme of Liveable Neighbourhood schemes;
- 5) implement the Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy, with priority given to a network of green, attractive walking routes within cities and out to the countryside.

Some background on each of these five separate areas is given below.

### Background

#### **1. 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. We would like walking investment separately assessed and significantly increased.

**2. Be open and transparent in developing transport policy. Give organisations like BWA a voice through a regular communication channel with WECA officers and the Transport Board.**

BWA has regular meetings with Cllr Kye Dudd, Bristol City Council's Cabinet member for transport and co-chair of the Transport Board for Bristol's One City Approach. We also have regular meetings with officers in the Council's city design and transport departments. We would welcome similar arrangements with WECA.

**3. Align transport policy with climate emission and air quality aims. Give more priority to active travel and less to road-building. Fund a major programme of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) schemes.**

WECA's Joint Local Transport Plan 4 provides for the vast majority of expenditure to continue to go towards road-building. The 2020 Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan identified £105 million of walking improvements but there is a WECA commitment so far to expenditure of only £10m on both walking and cycling. We would like to see significant transport budget commitment to active travel and public transport, in line with the climate emergency.

**4 Put sustainable travel and place-making at the heart of spatial strategy, including adoption of the 15-minute walkable neighbourhood principle and a programme of Liveable Neighbourhood schemes.**

*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 is supporting a Liveable Neighbourhoods campaign in Bristol and would welcome WECA support and funding.

**5. Implement the Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy, with priority given to a network of green, attractive walking routes within cities and out to the countryside.**

The *Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy 2020-2030* was produced and endorsed last year by WECA, Bristol City Council, BANES, and the South Gloucestershire and North Somerset District Councils. See <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Joint-Green-Infrastructure-Strategy-%E2%80%93-June-2020..pdf>. It includes an Action Plan for 2020 to 2023 at section 8. While the focus is on the creation of ecological networks, there is a commitment to create a network of active travel routes and improve accessibility to green spaces. Local authorities are expected to take the Strategy forward collectively and individually. Bristol City Council has started to do so. BWA would like priority given to identifying and creating green walking routes within the city and out to the countryside.

***Bristol Walking Alliance  
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