



Cynulliad Hinsawdd
Climate Assembly

Expert Witness

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What is your passion / specialism / position on solutions to the climate crisis?

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute. Sustrans works in partnership, bringing people together to find the right solutions. We make the case for walking and cycling by using robust evidence and showing what can be done. We are grounded in communities and believe that grassroots support combined with political leadership drives real change, fast.

You can join us on our journey at www.sustrans.org.uk

We have two strategic priorities:

Paths for everyone: A UK-wide network of traffic-free paths for everyone, connecting cities, towns and countryside, loved by the communities they serve.

Liveable cities and towns for everyone: Places that connect us to each other and what we need, where everyone can thrive without needing a car.

The following examples of work should support the Assembly in developing local solutions to climate change.

Active Travel Network Maps

As part of the Active Travel Act passed in 2013, local authorities need to update their existing route maps for walking and cycling, and their future maps every three years showing how they will develop routes and infrastructure. Sustrans is working with local authorities around Wales to produce these maps. You can have your say on these maps via the commonplace, as your input will mean the local authority is hearing from you as members of the local community how to support your journeys by bike and foot. [Blaenau Gwent's consultation is open at the moment, so make sure to have your say!](#)

School Streets

Our School Streets programme tackles the congestion, poor air quality and road safety concerns that many schools experience. We do this by restricting motor traffic at the school gates for a short period of time, generally at drop-off and pick-up times.



The 'School Streets' approach is being trialled by a growing number of UK towns and cities, including here in Wales.

Sometimes called 'Healthy School Streets', 'School Exclusion Zones' or 'Car-Free School Streets', they lead to more children walking and cycling to school.

The result is a happier, safer and healthier street environment for everyone. Our role at Sustrans Cymru is in engaging in meaningful consultation with the children, parents and local residents to raise questions about how to create healthier spaces for our children. Please email our Education team on education@sustrans.org.uk for more information on how Sustrans can support you to implement School Streets.

[You can read about our recent community consultation and engagement work with Fairfield Primary in Penarth.](#)

Active Journeys

Our Active Journeys programme in Wales is helping children across the country to safely, easily and confidently travel to school by foot, bike and scooter.

We support school champions and collaborate with Local Authority contacts to help improve routes and develop whole-school approaches to active travel.

A range of engaging activities helps to build the confidence, enthusiasm and skills needed to help form new active travel habits.

These activities and lessons support schools' efforts in achieving Eco-Schools and Healthy Schools awards as well as working towards Sustrans School Mark award which recognises excellence in sustainable travel. [Find out more about the programme and how to join it here.](#)

A Barrier-free Wales by 2025

What we mean by barriers are those gates and structures found at the entrance of paths or the National Cycle Network that physically stop people who need the mental and physical benefits of public green space the most.

They prevent young families and people who are older or disabled from getting to their local green spaces and from moving actively and sustainably around their neighbourhoods.

It would be a relatively small, low-cost measure that all local authorities and private landowners can carry out to remove restrictive barriers and access controls.



This will have a big impact on making walking, cycling and wheeling more inclusive, but they may have been overlooked in the current climate. [Read Amanda's story to understand the difference this work can make.](#)

[Find where your nearest access to the National Cycle Network is.](#)

Thinking about critics and/or alternative views to that which you have put forward above – what would others say about your perspective and idea?

Electric vehicles and hydrogen are the long awaited solution to our problems.

The advancement of Electric Vehicles (EVs) and hydrogen present an important opportunity to reduce some of the environmental and social impacts of motorised vehicles powered by traditional combustion engines. EVs should be part of the solution but only after other transport options are improved.

EVs do have significant disadvantages, like:

- They do not reduce the number of cars on the road, this means congestion will remain an issue
- An important part of the pollution by cars is Particulate Matter, which is produced when braking and will remain with electric vehicles
- They require a lot of energy to be produced – the carbon footprint of their production is problematic
- Electric vehicles alone will not support us to move away from our dependency on the private car – which is essential if we want to tackle climate change
- With regards to fairness, electric vehicles are expensive, and a much less accessible option for most people than genuine accessible, cheap and regular public transport.

Whilst we would support investment in EV charging points, particularly in rural areas (the option of car clubs should also be explored further here!); there are more pressing and needed investments in transport that would deliver fairer outcomes. We need better investment from the government and local authorities in having a joined up public transport and active travel network, with cheap, accessible and reliable options. Even when it is unrealistic to have train lines built to connect remote parts of the valleys, it is still more realistic to invest in schemes like [demand-responsive bus services](#) or [community transport](#), than to invest in charging points that will charge vehicles only the wealthiest can afford.



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Use this final part of your presentation to help Assembly members better understand your position in relation to others and what that means for addressing the question that they have been set.

How do we make sure cycle lanes are safe and maintained?

This is the role of the local authority, the Active Travel Network Maps mentioned above and the [consultation currently open in Blaenau Gwent means you can feed back to the council where issues need solving and routes need improving.](#)

What does Sustrans do and how can it help us in Blaenau Gwent?

This should hopefully have been answered in part one, ATNM work, School Streets and Active Journeys will be of interest.

Do they still teach cycling in schools to feel more confident?

Our Active Journeys programme (see above) does this and more.

How feasible is it to encourage cycling given geography of the area/people's abilities/weather?

E-bikes and E-cargo bikes will be a big part of the solution here. The Welsh Government is about to pilot a scheme to test this, in collaboration with ourselves. [Read more here](#) or sign up to [an event we are running next week on e-cargo bikes for businesses here.](#)

What ways has France made public transport more convenient - any examples?

In the region where I am from, the local authority has pushed for a massive investment in a joined up bus and rail network, where one ticket covers the whole of the network, and regular, cheap and accessible services (with small and big buses depending on the route) cover a wide rural area and link well to the city and to train stations. The timetables have been coordinated so that there is a joined up way to enable travelling between modes. There has also been an organic development of car-sharing in France in general (through Blablacar), but local authorities and local councils have taken advantage and seen this as a great opportunity for transport. In collaboration with the company, they have installed special infrastructure in villages and towns with dedicated and labelled 'meeting points'. [Here is a map of those meeting points.](#)