

Cycling UK Cymru briefing – Senedd election 2026

Investment in Active Travel

To support a healthier, fairer and more sustainable Wales, the next Welsh Government must increase investment in schemes that enable people to walk, wheel and cycle – i.e. active travel. This investment should be delivered through ringfenced multi-year funding for both capital infrastructure (e.g. high-quality cycle paths) and revenue projects (e.g. community cycle training, bike access schemes, local travel planning).

Cycling UK's manifesto asks

The next Welsh Government should deliver:

- **Sustained, ring-fenced, multi-year funding** and invest **at least 10% of the total transport budget** towards cycling, walking and wheeling. This funding must cover both capital projects (like new high-quality cycle paths) and ongoing costs (such as behaviour change projects to enable more people to cycle).
- **Clear public reporting** showing the health, climate, transport benefits, and value for money of active travel investment. This is essential to guarantee that investment is inclusive, evidence-led, publicly accountable, and delivers results in terms of **lives improved**, not just miles of paths built.

Context

Wales showed positive ambition on active travel through the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, which requires local authorities to plan and deliver networks for walking and cycling, but more action is needed to turn ambition into delivery and more active travel journeys.

Funding from Welsh Government to deliver active travel schemes amounted to £65m in 2024/25, approx. 3.5% of the transport budget – overall funding levels have remained relatively stable in recent years. Government currently plans to distribute this funding to councils through regional Corporate Joint Committees but without safeguards needed to ensure it is spent on active travel projects.

The [Welsh Government's Active Travel Delivery Plan \(2024–27\)](#) recognises that increasing walking and cycling trips is key to meeting targets for net-zero by 2050, improving public health, and reducing inequalities in access to education and employment. However, [Audit Wales](#) criticised government for not collecting enough data to show if the money spent has achieved these .

Evidence and Impact

- Level of investment: [Research by IPPR](#) calculated that to create world-class cycling infrastructure governments need to spend at least 10% of transport budgets on active travel.
- Increased cycling: High-quality cycle routes work and increase the number of people cycling for journeys. [Cycleway1 in Cardiff](#) is connecting communities and allowing people to cycle.
- Economic return: For every £1 spent on cycling and walking schemes in the UK, [£5.62 worth of benefits](#) are achieved on average.
- Health and wellbeing: Regular active travel can cut the risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and depression. Increasing cycling is an action in the Welsh Government's [Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales](#) plan.
- Equity and inclusion: Active travel infrastructure improves access to education, jobs and services, [particularly for low-income households where car ownership is limited](#).

Conclusion

Wales's active travel legislation set the foundations for making journeys active and sustainable - thereby transforming lives and neighbourhoods. But current spending remains below what is needed to meet national ambitions, and positive progress will falter without a step change in commitment.