



# WEST MIDLANDS

A MANIFESTO FOR WALKING

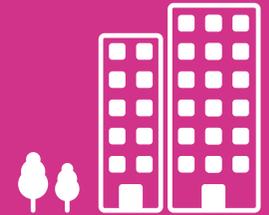


LIVING  
STREETS



# A MANIFESTO FOR WALKING 2021

## WHY CHOOSE WALKING?



Walking is good for our minds, our bodies and our cities, towns and villages. It connects us to ourselves and to others, to education, to economic and social life. Everyone across the West Midlands should be able to choose an active, healthy and stress-free life without a car.

During the COVID-19 lockdowns, millions of people rediscovered the simple act of walking – the oldest, cheapest and greenest transport there is. They walked for exercise and to maintain their physical and mental health, they rediscovered their local high streets and walked around parks, canals, commons and rivers. But people still struggle with narrow, cluttered, uneven pavements; crossings that prioritise cars rather than people; and growing numbers of speeding vehicles.

Our members and the people we work with have told us they want Mayoral candidates to reduce pedestrian deaths and injuries, tackle air pollution and carbon emissions, get more families walking to school and improve our pavements so everyone can use them safely.

## WE ARE CALLING ON CANDIDATES TO PLEDGE TO:

**End pedestrian deaths and injuries on roads** >>

**Tackle air pollution** >>

**Make school streets safe** >>

**Make walking easier and cut clutter on pavements** >>

## LIVING STREETS

The pandemic has highlighted social and health inequalities and made them worse. People from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups and people on low incomes – already at greater risk from air pollution – have been hardest hit by COVID. The loneliness of older adults and disabled people has worsened.

The West Midlands is in the midst of climate, air pollution, public health and road safety crises:

- Pedestrians account for 40% of fatalities on built up roads and 33% of serious injuries<sup>1</sup>. In 2019, 545 pedestrians were killed or seriously injured on the region's roads<sup>2</sup>.

- Birmingham holds six of the top ten sites for poor air quality across the West Midlands region (including sites in Staffordshire and Worcestershire) and up to 900 people die prematurely each year in the city as a result of air pollution<sup>3</sup>.

**It doesn't have to be like this.** We can redesign our the West Midlands around people, not cars. The change has begun through the Government's Active Travel Fund. Now is the time to keep up momentum. We will only meet our net zero carbon goals, and improve air quality and road safety by getting more people walking instead of driving. West Midlands can show leadership by delivering on this manifesto and appointing a Walking and Cycling Commissioner.



<sup>1</sup> In 2019 there were 82 people killed on built up roads in the West Midlands. Of these 33 were pedestrians; similarly there were 1433 people seriously injured on built up roads in the region, of these 477 were pedestrians. Data extracted using the custom download tool Road traffic statistics - About (dtf.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> This includes pedestrians killed or seriously injured on motorways and non built up roads

<sup>3</sup> Worst West Midlands pollution spots revealed | Express & Star (expressandstar.com)

## WE ARE CALLING ON ALL MAYORAL CANDIDATES TO PLEDGE TO:

### END PEDESTRIAN DEATHS AND INJURIES ON ROADS

Almost half of the people killed on built up roads in the West Midlands are pedestrians<sup>4</sup>. Progress towards the Vision Zero target of significant reductions in people killed and seriously injured on all roads, leading to zero deaths, must be accelerated.

Mayoral candidates must commit to:

**Cut pedestrian deaths by introducing a default 20mph speed limit in built-up areas<sup>5</sup>.**

**Improve our crossings and junctions, making sure there is a pedestrian crossing at every signalised junction.** Almost half (46%) of deaths and serious injuries to pedestrians in the West Midlands occur at junctions on built up roads<sup>6</sup>. The next Mayor should audit crossings across the region to address safety issues. Everyone should be able to cross the road in a single stage, with minimal waiting time and time to cross.

**Create a new Child-Friendly Streets Fund to cut rat-running.** Traffic will fall, more children will play out, air pollution will be lower, and walking and cycling will become the natural choice for everyday journeys.

<sup>4</sup> Reported road casualties for Great Britain, custom download Road traffic statistics - About (dft.gov.uk)

<sup>5</sup> There is an estimated 2.5% risk of death on impact at 20mph compared to 7% at 30mph and 31% at 40mph., Department for Transport (2010) [http://nacto.org/docs/usdg/relationship\\_between\\_speed\\_risk\\_fatal\\_injury\\_pedestrians\\_and\\_car\\_occupants\\_richards.pdf](http://nacto.org/docs/usdg/relationship_between_speed_risk_fatal_injury_pedestrians_and_car_occupants_richards.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> 235 pedestrians were killed or seriously injured at or near a junction on built up roads in the West Midlands out of a total 510 pedestrian KSIs on built up roads. Data extracted using the custom download tool Road traffic statistics - About (dft.gov.uk)

<sup>7</sup> The Mayor's Transport Strategy envisages the proportion of journeys by cars, vans and private hire vehicles declining from 37% of 26.7 million per day in 2015 to 20% of 33 million in 2041. This means that car, van and private hire vehicle journeys are targeted to fall from 9.88m in 2015 per day to 6.6m in 2041. By 2024 car, van and private hire vehicle journeys should have declined by 12%; we are calling for them to fall by 20% (ie to 7.9m) by that date. Although this is expressed as a percentage, in reality it is the actual numbers of journeys by car, van and private hire vehicle that we aim to see reduced.

### TACKLE AIR POLLUTION

In the West Midlands, everyone is breathing dirty air from motor traffic. A radical change is needed to shift people out of their cars and on towards walking, cycling and public transport. Birmingham is making positive progress through its Clean Air Zone proposal - but more needs to be done.

To achieve reductions in vehicle numbers, Mayoral candidates must commit to:

**Prioritise the climate emergency**– improve access to public transport and green networks, and ensure the cost of driving reflects its real impact on all to reduce car, van and private hire vehicle and taxi journeys by 20%<sup>7</sup>.

Work with boroughs to **remove and reallocate parking spaces to other uses** (such as parklets, cycle hangars and other community assets);

**Invest in public transport.** The West Midlands is already investing significantly in green public transport. The next Mayor should continue to prioritise this investment, particularly in buses.

**Introduce low emission zones,** increase controlled parking zones across the region, and prepare for next generation road charging.

# WE ARE CALLING ON ALL MAYORAL CANDIDATES TO PLEDGE TO:



## MAKE SCHOOL STREETS SAFE

More families will choose to walk to school on safer streets. We must transform routes to schools, so they are safer, cleaner and less congested.

Walking to school sets healthy habits for life. With one in four cars at the morning peak on the school run, it cuts carbon emissions and air pollution too.

Candidates must commit to:

**Create a walk to school fund** for the West Midlands to transform routes to school so they are safer, cleaner and less congested, supporting increased physical activity and better health.

**Invest in behaviour change** and accreditation schemes across the region.

**Make School Streets the default option** and create at least one in each ward.

**Improve routes to school** through default 20mph speed limit, better crossings and more greenspace.

## MAKE WALKING EASIER AND CUT THE CLUTTER ON PAVEMENTS

More people will walk when streets are safer, accessible and welcoming to everyone. Prioritising the development of a footways network to complement the cycle network, and cutting the clutter from pavements, will increase space for walking.

Mayoral candidates must commit to:

**Build a walking network** with easy, attractive and low pollution routes and extend this to town centres across the region. The network should invite visitors, residents and workers to walk between transport interchanges and attractions, taking the pressure off public transport and reducing reliance on taxis.

**Cut pavement clutter.** Our pavements are littered with A-Boards, electric vehicle charging points, badly placed signage and refuse sacks. The Mayor should wage war on clutter, increase space for walking and make walking safe for disabled people, older residents and parents with buggies.

**Prioritise investment in walking infrastructure** to complete the network. Invest in crossings and improved access to green spaces and public transport.

**Develop car-free areas.** Many cities and towns (Oslo, Barcelona, Brighton and York) are making large areas car-free, especially where there are large numbers of people on foot. Space reallocation that prioritises walking and cycling has sped up through the pandemic. The Mayor should support local authorities to develop car-free zones in the West Midlands.

<sup>9</sup> Reported road casualties for Great Britain, custom download Road traffic statistics - About (dft.gov.uk) for Greater Manchester local authorities: Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan.

<sup>10</sup> 16 pedestrians were killed at or near a junction on built-up roads in Greater Manchester of a total 21 pedestrian killed. Data extracted using the custom download tool Road traffic statistics - About (dft.gov.uk)

<sup>11</sup> <https://cleanairgm.com/air-pollution#your-health>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2003/300/made>

<sup>13</sup> Campbell, L. (28 January 2020) 'Manchester cycle network plan could be national blueprint, says Burnham', The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jan/28/manchester-cycle-network-plan-could-be-national-blueprint-says-burnham> Accessed on 11/02/2020



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