



# Candidate pack for Executive Director of External Affairs



# Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in becoming Sustrans' new Executive Director of External Affairs.

Working across all four UK nations, Sustrans is committed to making it easier to walk, wheel and cycle. We work for and with communities to create healthier places and happier lives for everyone. Now is an exciting time to join Sustrans as we begin to shape our new five-year strategy in 2024 and look to complete a rebrand for 2025.

We are now seeking an Executive Director of External Affairs with experience gained in complex and dynamic organisations to join our senior leadership team at this incredibly pivotal time. In the face of ever-changing political and societal apathy and enthusiasm towards the environment, as campaigners for fair funding in active travel, we have inspiring stories to tell about the positive impact sustainable travel has on people's health and wellbeing. As we renew our focus on actively engaging with our employees, supporters, partners and volunteers, you will be responsible for playing an integral role in our new strategy development and delivery, including the strategic development for our brand.

We need an experienced strategic communications leader with high emotional intelligence and an inclusive approach who is both comfortable working with a skilled and experienced executive team and can lead an external affairs team that includes internal communications, brand, media, policy and public affairs. Externally focused, you will be well connected with your finger on the pulse, adept at influencing senior players in the UK and national governments and working closely with key stakeholders, with the ability to operate effectively at both national and regional levels.

If you join us, you will get to work in a friendly, energised, collegiate and high trust environment with a diverse group of talented, creative and dedicated colleagues across the UK. We are open on your sector background and where you live. As long as you can access the railway network, and with our dynamic approach to hybrid working, you can be based anywhere in the UK for this role.

If you have the ambition, drive and determination to take on this fantastic opportunity, we'd love to hear from you.  
Best wishes

**Xavier Brice, Chief Executive**



# About us

Since 1977, Sustrans has been committed to making it easier to walk, wheel and cycle throughout the UK. Over this time, we have been working with and for communities to create healthier and happier lives for everyone. We have focussed on people with different and seldom-heard voices to develop solutions that work for all. Across the UK we involve communities in shaping our towns and cities. Together we campaign for and create spaces where everyone can move around safely and give people the tools and confidence to get out of their cars. We inspire people to change the way we all travel every day, forging closer connections with our neighbours and reducing traffic to create a better environment and more sustainable society for everyone. We are the stewards and custodians of the National Cycle Network: over 12,000 miles of signed paths and routes for exploring outdoors. The National Cycle Network provides a vital backbone to the country, connecting communities to each other and helping neighbourhoods come to life.

Of course, our work wouldn't be possible without the commitment and dedication from our 850 employees, 3,500 volunteers and 40,000 supporters – we all work together to make change happen. Whilst proud of our achievements so far, we are continuing to pave the way for change in our communities.

Sustrans' aim is to make it easy to leave the car at home, as how we currently choose (or are forced) to travel is ruining our environment and contributing towards climate change. Of the UK's total emissions (2019), nearly 25% were caused by road transport vehicles.

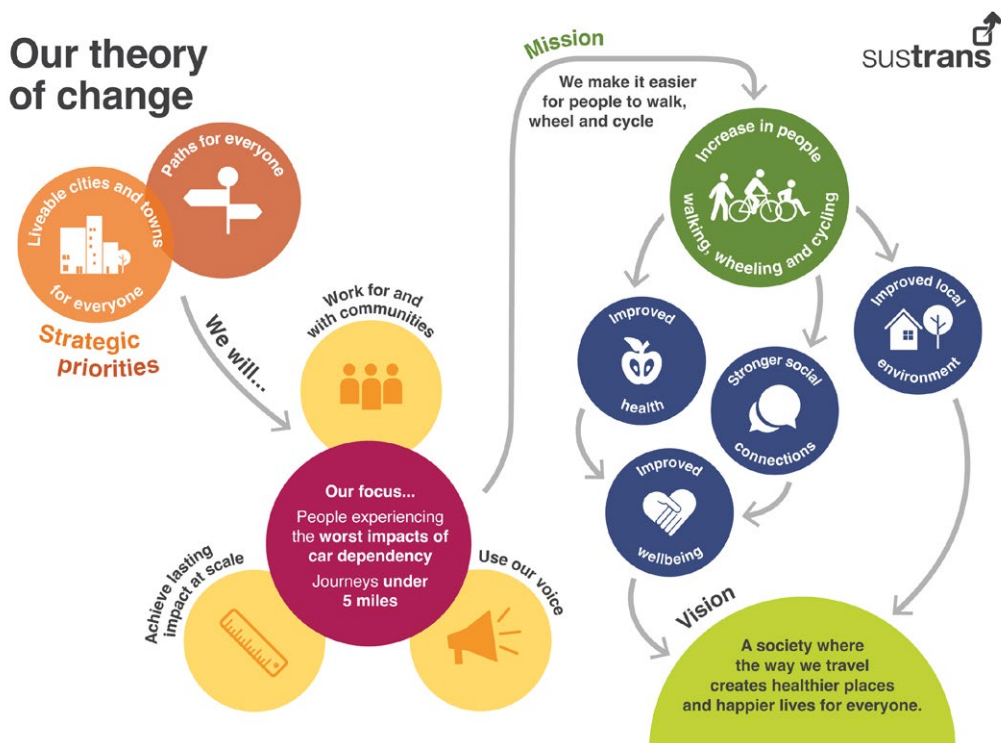
This issue disproportionately affects people from marginalised groups and those living in areas with high deprivation, particularly in inner cities. Air pollution is the biggest environmental threat to health in the UK and communities already at risk of poorer health are being further disadvantaged by higher exposure to polluted air. Living near busy or dangerous roads can also prevent people from accessing green and public space. Because of these challenges, our focus is on our two strategic priorities:

**Paths for everyone** – growing a UK 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 having to use a car.

The changes we want to see include:

- Radically reduced traffic speed and volume.
- Creation of sociable spaces where people can easily interact.
- Better connection of people to green and public space.
- Transport and planning policy that puts people first.
- Heritage of the places we work in to be valued and enhanced.
- Cities and towns that are inclusive and safe for all.



# Job description

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<b>Job title:</b>	Executive Director, External Affairs
<b>Reports to:</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>Dimensions of role:</b>	Revenue and cost budget: ~£2m Team headcount: ~25 FTE

## Role purpose

The Executive Director for External Affairs is accountable for strategy, delivery, and operational performance of Sustrans' external affairs portfolio across the UK. There are two key elements to this role:

- **Strategic Communications:** Guardianship of Sustrans' brand, profile, and reputation, identifying potential risks to the charity's reputation from adverse publicity, and setting the long-term strategic direction for brand development. This aspect of the role also includes responsibility for the strategy and execution of internal communications across Sustrans.
- **Policy & Public Affairs:** Responsible for our UK-wide influencing strategy and ensuring that we have the specialist resources in place to deliver on it across the charity, with particular responsibility for influencing UK government and UK-wide partners and other organisations, working closely with the Chief Executive.

The postholder will act as a spokesperson and ambassador for Sustrans. They will also provide high-level strategic counsel to the Chief Executive, Chair, and other senior leaders within the charity, as appropriate, on matters related to the charity's reputation, profile and its external environment.

As part of the Charity's Executive team, the postholder will share collective responsibility for the strategic leadership and operational management of Sustrans and will be expected to deputise for the CEO when required.

## Role-specific Accountabilities

### Strategic Communications

- Provide strategic leadership and oversight of Sustrans external communications strategy, including brand, media (traditional and social) and internal communications/engagement.
- Set and direct the delivery of strategic communication planning and activities including external communications, brand, media (traditional and social) and internal communications.
- Accountable for the management of UK-wide strategic communications, brand, media, design and internal communications teams.
- Develop and maintain close collaboration with communications colleagues across the four nations in the UK.
- Develop and maintain strong relationships with journalists and commentators.
- Develop and maintain strong relationships with existing and prospective partners.
- Undertake wider, senior spokesperson role for Sustrans in the media.
- Ensure relevant regulatory obligations and good practice guidance is met in this area.

### Policy, public affairs & advocacy

- Provide strategic leadership and oversight of Sustrans' policy, advocacy and influencing strategies, including the development of key public campaigns, approach to political advocacy, and development of Sustrans' policy and calls to action.
- Accountable for the management of UK-wide policy and advocacy colleagues.
- Maintain close collaboration with policy and partnership colleagues across the four nations of the UK.
- Develop and maintain strong relationships with key decision makers and partners.
- Ensure relevant regulatory obligations and good practice guidance is met in this area.

### Fundraising, supporter engagement & business development

- Provide support to the Charity's business development, fundraising and supporter engagement functions (led by the Executive Director, Finance & Resources) to ensure that we have a consistent outward facing story and messaging.
- Maintain close collaboration with fundraising and supporter engagement staff in geographies and other functions, including providing strategic advice to other directors with external facing, income-generation roles.
- Undertake an ambassadorial role for Sustrans; for example, cultivating where appropriate key relationships with key stakeholders/individuals.

## Core Accountabilities

### Strategic Leadership

- Work collaboratively with Executive colleagues to drive the charity forwards and to be accountable to the Chief Executive for the strategic leadership and operational management of Sustrans' external affairs portfolio.
- Own the External Affairs business plan and budget, ensuring appropriate development and timely delivery, and support other Executive Directors to achieve their business priorities by working in effective collaboration.
- Ensure that the work performed by the External Affairs team is impact-led, materially contributing to Sustrans' vision, mission, strategic priorities and 'for everyone' principles.
- Be accountable for performance against External Affairs' KPIs for our strategic priorities across the UK.
- Lead the External Affairs teams, improving the employee net promoter score and ensuring high levels of inclusivity, performance, engagement and productivity.
- Drive greater levels of workforce diversity, moving towards mirroring the general population demographic profile of the nation/region.
- Contribute to and ensure the delivery of initiatives arising out of IoM (improving our operating model) and other Sustrans' workstreams and initiatives.
- Develop effective and productive working relationships internally and with external partners and connections.

### People leadership

- Lead, inspire and hold to account direct reports and their teams by creating an inclusive, high-performing environment in which colleagues and volunteers can both deliver and excel.
- Apply and promote best-practice in people leadership, management, engagement and development.
- Work closely with the Executive Director of People & OD to improve the employee and volunteer net promoter scores through effective engagement and support.
- Reflect and embed Sustrans' 5 values in all aspects of work:
  - Including everyone
  - Having the courage to question
  - Acting local, thinking big
  - Getting things done, together
  - Always learning
- Ensure own and others' mandatory training requirements are met.

### Diversity and inclusion, health & safety, safeguarding

- Drive greater levels of workforce diversity, moving towards mirroring the general population demographic profile of the nations and regions that we work in.
- Support and comply with Sustrans' policies and procedures for the management of health and safety, safeguarding, equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring best practice at all times.

### Other

- From time to time, to lead Sustrans-wide projects as a member of the Executive Team.
- Perform any other duties consistent with the nature and grade of the role as agreed with the CEO.

## Working Conditions

- Extensive and regular travel across the UK for external and internal meetings, including to the Charity's offices and projects will be expected. The post-holder will also be expected to look for ways to save time and money whilst still meeting objectives through the effective use of communications technology. The post-holder will be expected to be flexible in the ways hours are worked to perform the role effectively.
- The provisions of the Hybrid Working Policy will apply. The post-holder can be based anywhere in the UK, within reach of the railway network.

## Special Note

- This job description does not form part of the contract of employment but indicates how that contract should be performed. The job description may be subject to amendment in the light of experience and in consultation with the post-holder.

# Person specification

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## Experience

- Significant experience of a senior role in PR, communications and/or marketing in a large, complex organisation.
- Experience of developing and implementing a compelling brand proposition for a national organisation.
- Experience of acting as a media spokesperson.
- Experience of developing and maintaining an impactful digital communications strategy.
- Experience of developing and executing an internal communications and engagement strategy.
- Experience of providing expertise, advice and briefing to senior leaders in response to emerging reputational issues.
- Experience of working with national and local government in at least one nation in the UK, and some experience of working in other nations.
- Experience of working collaboratively across organisational functions, and across geographies.
- Proven track record of inspiring and leading teams to deliver high performance.
- Proven track record of leading teams successfully through change.
- Proven track record of strengthening diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Ideally, experience of interfacing with a non-executive Board.
- Ideally, previous experience as an Executive/Board Director.
- Ideally, experience of working in the voluntary sector.

## Skills & abilities

- Effective and proven leadership skills that inspires teams and individuals, evidenced by experience and/or recent high-quality training and development.
- Excellent communication, presentation, and engagement skills.
- Ability to balance an understanding of the big picture with the need to focus on detailed information.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- An ability to influence a wide range of individuals at senior level.
- An ability to think and act strategically.
- Ability to act as a spokesperson for the organisation.
- Financial acumen and budget management skills.
- Ability to generate respect and trust of and with others.
- Resilience.
- Emotional intelligence.

## Knowledge

- Excellent understanding of the media environment and the news agenda, as it relates to Sustrans' work.
- Excellent understanding of digital communications.
- Understanding of campaigning and how to influence government policy.
- Understanding of the policy and funding environment relating to Sustrans' work.
- Understanding of relevant organisations and political structures across the UK, in particular the work and structures of the four national Governments.
- Knowledge of sustainable transport, including the broad issues, opportunities and solutions to achieving our vision across our geographies.
- Understanding of charity governance and funding.

## Other

- Identification with and commitment to the vision and mission of Sustrans.
- Able to reflect and practice all of Sustrans values during the course of their work: *including everyone, having the courage to question, acting local thinking big, getting things done together, always learning.*

# Sustrans Executive Team

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## External Affairs Senior leadership structure

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# Terms of appointment

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## Salary

The salary for this role is up to £95,000 per annum on a full-time permanent basis. Starting salary subject to experience.

## Location

Extensive and regular travel across the UK for external and internal meetings, including to the Charity's offices and projects will be expected. The post-holder will be expected to be flexible in the ways hours are worked to perform the role effectively.

The provisions of the Hybrid Working Policy will apply. The post-holder can be based anywhere in the UK within reach of the railway network.

## Employee Benefits

### Flexible working

Start and finish times can be agreed between you and your line manager. Flexibility of working hours may be required to meet the needs of the organisation, however Sustrans offers flexibility for staff and work/life balance through condensed working hours, 9-day fortnights and other working pattern arrangements.

For full-time staff, the normal working hours are 37.5 hours per week, Monday to Friday. Some roles do cover work on a weekend.

Some posts are offered on a part-time basis and there is also potential for job sharing of certain roles.

### Pay

Sustrans pay and grading system offers a competitive starting salary and progression.

We also offer a London Weighting Allowance of £4,195 for all those living within a London Borough (32 local authority districts plus the City of London).

### Annual Leave

We offer a full-time annual leave entitlement of 28 days per annum plus bank holidays (pro rata for part-time staff and those joining partway through the year). There is also an annual leave purchase scheme in place which allows staff to buy an extra week (pro rata for part-time staff) of annual leave.

### Pension

Sustrans believes it's important that we help you save for your retirement so access to a Group Personal Pension scheme is available for all staff. This is a scheme that both you and Sustrans contribute towards.

All new staff will be enrolled, with a 5% or 6% of basic salary contribution being matched by Sustrans.

There is the option to opt-out of the scheme.

There is also the opportunity of paying your pension contribution through a salary sacrifice scheme.

### Learning and Development

Sustrans supports and develops staff to ensure they have the necessary skills, knowledge, abilities and behaviours.

There is an internal schedule of training on key skills relevant to Sustrans staff.

There is also scope to attend ad hoc training for employees who are working to develop specific skills.

### Enhanced Maternity and Paternity Pay

Sustrans offers staff who meet the criteria for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) an enhanced maternity pay of 12 weeks at full pay, followed by 27 weeks of statutory maternity pay.

Enhanced paternity pay is offered for 2 weeks at full pay for those staff meeting the criteria for Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP).



## Staff Volunteer Day

Sustrans has always worked in close partnership with communities, encouraging volunteer input to help achieve our vision.

We recognise the immense benefits of volunteering both to individuals and to a community, or the environment and encourage staff to take part in volunteering.

Sustrans offers staff paid time off their normal day-to-day roles to volunteer their time to a cause of their choice.

## Be Supported

As part of Sustrans' commitment to staff wellbeing, staff are offered a confidential 24/7 support service which can provide information, advice and support for both work-related concerns and anything happening outside of work such as medical worries, information about finances and advice on family and childcare.

Be Supported is a service which is completely free to use, it is impartial and confidential.

## Bike, Computer and Season Ticket Loan

An interest-free loan to purchase a bike, computer or season ticket can be arranged up to the value of £1,000.

## Discount benefits

As a member of staff, you will receive access to a range of discounts with outdoor and cycling equipment retailers and Sustrans shop.

We are also members of the Green Commute Initiative and CycleScheme who both offer cycle to work schemes.

## Death in service benefit

A death in service benefit to the value of three times your annual salary.



# How to Apply

We hope you will consider making an application. If you have questions about the appointment and would find it helpful to have an informal conversation, please contact [chris.milo@starfishsearch.com](mailto:chris.milo@starfishsearch.com) and we will be happy to arrange a call. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/sustrans-edea/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

We would also be grateful if you would also complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date: Monday 16th October 2023

Preliminary interviews with Starfish (online): w/c 30th October 2023

## Final shortlisted candidates

Conversation with Xavier Brice, CEO (online) w/c 13 November 2023

Meetings with Sustrans senior teams (online): Monday 20th November 2023

Final Panel interviews (in person, London): Friday 24th November 2023

