

From: TOM MCCLELLAND [tom.mcclelland@btinternet.com]
Sent: 24 June 2006 22:22
To: Sub Regional Transport Plan
Subject: Draft Sub Regional Plan response from the Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative

Dear Sirs

The Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative thanks the Department of Regional Development for providing the opportunity and courtesy of inviting responses to the Draft Sub-Regional Plan.

The NICI is a local voluntary organisation funded by its own members and is affiliated to the Irish Cycling Campaign Network, the Cycling Campaign Network of Great Britain, the European Cycling Federation and Living Streets, the pedestrians campaign group.

We campaign for:

- Improved infrastructure to provide safe convenient cycling for people of all ages and abilities,

- Linking homes to school, work, shops, public transport and amenities.

- Cycling as a cheaper, healthier, cleaner alternative to the car.

In Northern Ireland 65% of all journeys are less than 5 miles. Such journeys are healthier by bicycle than car and in congested urban areas many would be faster by bicycle.

Cycling and walking are sustainable, socially inclusive, neighbourly ways to travel and easily integrate exercise into the daily routine.

We congratulate the Transportation Unit on producing a comprehensive detailed document.

We note the common problems found by local transport studies that include

- variability in the standard of provision for pedestrians

- limited provision for cyclists

- under developed local bus networks, unattractive to potential users

- limited management of parking demand.

The major drivers for change in the urban areas arise from

- concerns over road safety in Northern Ireland

- economic and demographic forces

- trends in the availability and use of different transport modes

We are concerned the study has overlooked the issues of

- sustainability and carbon impacts

- climate change and environmental degradation caused by over reliance on motorised transport

- appallingly low levels of physical activity in Northern Ireland

The NICI welcomes the walking and cycling measures outlined in the draft.

We note with regret that European experience has shown that the levels of spending to promote significant levels of cycling must be at two to three times that of the level described in the Draft SRTP.

We believe the Draft SRTP does not fully address the health issues and benefits arising from an active travel policy. We note the Draft has not been subject to a rigorous and detailed Health Impact Assessment.

We also note recent research published by Sustrans shows the more successful European towns and cities are less reliant on the car.

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland recently published a review of health impacts of transport. Amongst many of the review's findings speed limit reduction was shown to have a highly significant reduction of road traffic injuries. Road surface changes did not demonstrate a certain effect of reducing personal injuries.

The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People recently published research which showed spending on school transport cost the Department of Education £65million per year and the private car accounted for 66% of all journeys to school by mode.

It is unclear from the Draft STRP what account has been taken of these findings and what effect the Plan will have on the journey to school.

The NICI have calculated that at the present rate of spending on cycle provision it will take 300 years for Northern Ireland to have a coherent urban cycle network.

Research has shown that fear of traffic suppresses both walking and cycling.

NICI urges the Department to implement with vigour area wide 20mph speed limits to encourage more cycling on road carriageways, walking on pavements and reduction of road traffic injuries.

T McClelland

— on behalf of the NICI Steering Group