

Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative

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30th March 2005

Regional Strategy Team

C.4
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Dear Sirs

**Response to 'A Healthier Future, A Twenty Year Vision for Health and Well Being
in Northern Ireland 2005 to 2025.'**

Enclosed is hard copy of our faxed response for the consultation.

Yours faithfully



**The Steering Group
Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative**

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Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative

Response to 'A Healthier Future, A Twenty Year Vision for Health and Well being in Northern Ireland 2005 to 2025.'

The Northern Ireland Cycling Initiative (NICI) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation 'A Healthier Future'.

The NICI is campaigning for:

- Improved cycling infrastructure to provide safe convenient cycle routes suitable for people of all ages and abilities,
- Linking homes to school, work, shops, public transport and amenities.
- Highlighting cycling as a cheaper, healthier, cleaner alternative to the car.

In Northern Ireland 65% of all journeys are less than 5 miles¹. Such journeys are healthier by bicycle than car and in congested urban areas many would be faster by bicycle².

Cycling and walking are sustainable, socially inclusive, neighbourly ways to travel and easily integrate exercise into the daily routine on a cost neutral, non-interventionist basis.

The health benefits of cycling and walking are well known, documented and accepted³.

Inter-Departmental co-operation, particularly between DHSSPS and DRD is weak.

The outcome of this weakness is the health benefits arising from properly funded, promoted, coherent, safe and attractive cycling and walking networks are not realised.

Cycling is extraordinarily effective as a public health intervention⁴, estimates of the benefit : cost ratio range from a healthy 3 : 1 up to more than 14 : 1.

NICI believes it is crucial for a 20-year health strategy to succeed, sustainable and non - obesogenic travel modes must be at the core of health and transport policies rather than confined to the periphery.

¹ Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 1999-2001, published January 2003

² Average Travel Speeds in NI published by DHSSPS 2003, Belfast - Single A Class Road Speed 15.5mph, B Class Road Speed 10.9 mph.

³ See the House of Commons Health Select Committee Report on Obesity and Dr Harry Rutter's work

⁴ Dr Alison Hill Programme Director of the South East Public Health Observatory.