



**Making life better,
together**

Belfast Strategic Partnership



BELFAST ACTIVE TRAVEL

ACTION PLAN 2014 – 2020

Focusing on Life Inequalities

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Foreword | 4 |
| What we mean by Active Travel | 6 |
| Why Active Travel should be a priority | 7 |
| Where we are now | 10 |
| Where we want to get to and how we will get there | 12 |
| What we will do | 14 |
| How we will know if it is working | 25 |
| Appendix: 1 Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) | 27 |
| Appendix 2: Belfast Strategic Partnership - Central Priority | 29 |
| Appendix 3: Belfast Active Travel Action Planning Task and Finish Group | 30 |
| Appendix 4: Links to local, regional and national policies | 31 |
| Appendix 5: Timeline for all actions | 32 |
| Contact details | 35 |

Acknowledgements

Belfast Strategic Partnership would like to acknowledge the work of the Active Belfast Partnership and Belfast Active Travel Action Planning Task and Finish Group in driving and supporting the development of this action plan.

Foreword

Belfast is a city that is well suited to walking and cycling. Many local amenities such as schools, shops, places of employment and leisure opportunities are within a short distance from residential areas, with many of the journeys made in the city, within distances that could be easily walked or cycled, for most people.

Incorporating walking and cycling into everyday lives helps to meet many priorities. At an individual level, it improves both physical health and mental wellbeing, as well as releasing us from dependence on the car. Within communities, it helps connect people with places and services and makes streets safer for people. At a city level, it improves the vibrancy of the centre, opens up inviting places, supports retail and enhances the environment and in addition, it strengthens our regional economy.

Walking and cycling levels in Belfast have been increasing over the last decade, and now account for almost one in every five journeys to work taken in the city. This is in contrast to the rest of Northern Ireland where the trend for walking and cycling journeys have been declining.

In recent years much work has been undertaken across the city to support walking and cycling, including infrastructure improvement schemes and behaviour change programmes within schools, workplaces and communities. In addition, much has been done to promote public transport, encouraging more people to take public transport for all or part of their journey.

However, much remains to be done. For this reason, the Belfast Strategic Partnership set up a multi-agency Belfast Active Travel Action Planning Task and Finish Group to develop a coordinated approach to active travel.

There has never been a better time to take this work forward. The Department for Regional Development has created a Cycling Unit which is currently consulting on its draft Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland. In addition, the DRD Committee has been hearing evidence on the economic benefits of cycling, and the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety has issued a public health framework which highlights the contribution that active travel can make to improving health and wellbeing.

There will be challenges and difficult decisions to be taken as this work progresses. But, given the potential for active travel to reach across a wide range of interests, we believe there is merit in facing these challenges. Improving synergies with existing work, while incorporating 'early stage' integration for walking, cycling and public transport with new developments, will go some way to delivering the benefits of active travel.

Better connecting our communities to local services through enhanced walking and cycling networks and building confidence in children to walk or cycle to school by providing practical training, are just some examples of how we will develop a culture for Active Travel in Belfast.

This plan sets out our vision for active travel, building on existing work, identifying and prioritising new opportunities and by measuring the impact and success of our actions in a coherent and collaborative way. We believe this will give active travel the focus it requires to transform Belfast into an exemplar city for walking, cycling and public transport.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Rooney'.

Dr Eddie Rooney

Co-Chair, Belfast Strategic Partnership
Chief Executive, Public Health Agency
Chair, Belfast Active Travel Action Planning Task
and Finish Group

Being physically active every day is good for our health. As little as 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day can help to prevent obesity and reduce the risk of many chronic conditions including coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer. Physical activity can also improve our feelings of mental wellbeing and self-worth and improve social interaction and community engagement.

For the majority of people, walking and/or cycling are the easiest and most sustainable ways to include physical activity into their everyday lives. However, the majority of local journeys in Belfast (journeys shorter than 5 miles) are currently made using the car. Creating the conditions which help to replace these local journeys with walking and cycling will improve the health and wellbeing of people living, working and visiting Belfast.

Considerable work is currently underway to support Belfast to be a more active city and during the lifetime of this action plan, much of this work will

be realised including significant building and re-development projects. I believe that walking and cycling represents a fundamental strategic approach to increasing physical activity levels across Belfast.

The approach in developing this plan has required commitment and collective action from all partners. All partners understand that the challenges we face cannot be overcome by a single organisation and that success depends on identifying multiple opportunities to maximise Belfast as a more active, healthier and cleaner city. In doing this the city will meet one of the core aims of being a member of the World Health Organisation European Healthy Cities Network, by 'tackling the major public health challenges in the European region'.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Hassard'.

Andrew Hassard

Director of Parks and Leisure, Belfast City Council
Chair of Active Belfast

What we mean by Active Travel

“An approach to travel and transport by physically active, human powered modes as opposed to motorised ones”.

“Living a sedentary lifestyle can potentially contribute to increased risk of long-term health problems. Active Travel is an easy way for people to build physical activity into their daily life, for example walking or cycling instead of taking the car.”

Dr Michael McBride
Northern Ireland Chief Medical Officer

This action plan will focus on increasing the number of short journeys walked and cycled, and on integrating walking and cycling into public transport for longer or more challenging journeys .

Walking and cycling For short journeys

Walking and cycling are healthy, convenient, environmentally cleaner, cost effective and sustainable options for travelling short distances. In Northern Ireland, approximately 33% of all journeys taken are less than 2 miles long, with a further 17.5% of all journeys being between 2 and 5 miles long. Many of these could easily be walked or cycled by most people. However, currently 35% of all trips under 1 mile, 69% of all trips between 1 and 2 miles and 84% of all trips between 2 and 5 miles are made by car, either as a driver or a passenger. ¹

Integrating walking and cycling journeys with public transport

Public transport in the Belfast area is generally a convenient, cost effective and environmentally cleaner option for travelling longer distances or for trips which are more challenging (for example, trips involving steep climbs).

It is also worth noting that most journeys taken by public transport will include an element of walking or cycling, as part of the overall journey.

“We, in Northern Ireland, have among the lowest levels of walking and cycling anywhere in Europe. Yet experience from elsewhere demonstrates that there are significant benefits in adopting a more sustainable approach to transport and that real improvements to personal health and wellbeing, community spirit and the wider environment can be achieved when active travel is integrated into transport and planning policy from the very start.”

Danny Kennedy MLA
Minister for Regional Development

1. Travel Survey for Northern Ireland In-depth Report, 2010-2012

Why Active Travel should be a priority

Research and experience regionally, nationally and internationally have demonstrated the wide ranging benefits which can result from a significant change in travel behaviour, or modal shift, from the private car to walking and cycling.

Healthier people

- Being active everyday by walking and cycling, has many positive benefits for physical health including reducing the risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, obesity and type 2 diabetes. ²
- Active people are also more likely to experience good mental wellbeing and feelings of self-worth and have lower levels of smoking and substance misuse. ³
- Walking and cycling are simple ways for people to be more active every day and when adopted for short journeys to work or to the shops, are likely to be sustained. ⁴

Connected communities

- People living in heavily trafficked streets have fewer friends in their neighbourhood when compared to people living in lightly trafficked streets. ⁵
- The flow of pedestrians and cyclists can also create street life, which improves community safety. It can also encourage new groups to use the street and strengthen community cohesion. ⁶



2. NICE: Walking and cycling: Local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel and recreation (2012)

3. Scottish Executive: A Walking Strategy for Scotland (Consultation Document) (2012)

4. Royal Town and Planning Institute: London (2010) Good Practice Note: Delivering health communities

5. Appleyard, D (1969) The Environment Quality of City Streets: The residents viewpoint. Journal of the American Planning Association

6. Barton, H (2009) Land use planning and health and wellbeing. Land Use Policy 26S (2009)

A more vibrant city

- Walking and cycling can also positively benefit the local retail economy. A London study demonstrated that pedestrians and cyclists spent on average £93 per month compared to car drivers who only spent £56 per month. ⁷
- Replacing motorised journeys with walking and cycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions which contribute to air pollution. ⁸
- Walking and cycling can also reduce the noise levels within neighbourhoods leading to quieter communities. Evidence shows that children living in quieter communities have greater levels of reading skills, attention and problem solving abilities. ⁹

A stronger region

- Employees who lead a more active lifestyle report higher levels of productivity, work relationships, work-life balance and lower levels of work related overload, when compared to non-active employees. ¹⁰
- Active employees take fewer sick days than inactive employees. It is estimated that overweight and obesity are costing the NI economy approximately £197m a year in absenteeism. A population shift to active travel could bring significant benefits not just to health but also to the economy. ¹¹
- Some walking and cycling schemes can be quick to start, can be delivered with relatively small budgets, and within short timescales. They also make an important contribution to the local economy as the work tends to be carried out by small local engineering firms. ¹²
- Investment in walking and cycling has been found to have a median benefit to cost ratio of between 13:1 and 19:1, when health benefits are included. ¹³



7. Transport for London, Town Centre Study (2011)

8. Sustainable Development Commission (2010) Sustainable development: the key to tackling health inequalities. London

9. Matheson, M (2003) The influence of noise on psychological patterns and cognitive abilities in children.

10. Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing (2008)

11. Perry, Ivan et al 2012, The cost of overweight and obesity on the island of Ireland, Safefood.

12. Active Travel, Active Scotland (2012)

13. Davis, A (2010) Value for money: an economic assessment of investment in walking and cycling

Better connecting people to the places and services they wish to use, through the provision of 'fit for purpose' walking and cycling routes, improved links with public transport and extensive training and support programmes, will be key to increasing levels of active travel.

The impact of this increase will be significant in terms of the health and economic prospects of Belfast in the future. The more attractive our city is and the easier it is to travel to and around, the greater the opportunity for growth and prosperity.

These opportunities extend beyond Belfast city boundaries, to the surrounding areas included within the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan, by improving connectivity between walking and cycling routes and linkages with public transport

stations. This will contribute to and support the development of a better connected region.

There is clear evidence that the benefits of active travel are wide reaching and cut across a range of policies, strategies and plans.

A number of these documents at national, regional and local level have influenced the development of this Belfast Active Travel Action Plan. A summary list is set out in Appendix 4.



Where we are now

Over the past number of years many organisations have undertaken schemes of work, which have improved and enhanced opportunities to walk, cycle and use public transport within Belfast.

Organisations such as the Department for Regional Development and Department for Social Development have enhanced the city's infrastructure through the provision of cycle lanes and environmental improvement schemes, while Belfast City Council, Public Health Agency, Sustrans and Belfast Healthy Cities have encouraged and promoted walking and cycling as both recreational and commuter activities.

During this time the number of walking and cycling journeys to work, the distance travelled by walking and cycling and the average number of walking and cycling journeys per person have continued to increase in Belfast, as evidenced below.

However, we must be mindful that the starting point of this journey was relatively low; what we want to see now is a step change in the way that people travel, where walking and cycling and using public transport are seen as the norm.

Table 1: Change in method of travel to work (resident population) between 2001 and 2011

(Census 2001; Census 2011, Number of journeys, all persons (16-74 years) in employment and currently working)

| | 2001 | 2011 | Difference | % |
|----------------------|--------|--------|------------|-------|
| Walking (Belfast) | 15,992 | 17,249 | 1,257 | +7.9 |
| Cycling (Belfast) | 1,439 | 2,282 | 853 | +59.7 |
| Walking (rest of NI) | 50,839 | 39,941 | -10,898 | -21.4 |
| Cycling (rest of NI) | 4,530 | 3,970 | -560 | -12.4 |

Table 2: Difference in average distance travelled (in miles) per person per year by mode in Belfast between 2008 and 2012

(Travel Survey for Northern Ireland In-depth Reports; 2008-2010 and 2010-2012)

| | 2008-10 | 2010-12 | Difference | % |
|------------------|---------|---------|------------|-------|
| Walking | 216 | 221 | +5 | +2.3 |
| Cycling | 29 | 55 | +26 | +89.7 |
| Public transport | 389 | 403 | +14 | +3.6 |

Table 3: Average number of journeys per person per year by selected main mode, Belfast residents only

(Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2000-02, 2005-07, 2009-11 and 2010-12)

| | 2000-02 | 2005-07 | 2009-11 | 2010-12 |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Walking | 289 | 235 | 232 | 242 |
| Cycling | 8 | 10 | 12 | 15 |
| Public transport | 65 | 66 | 66 | 81 |

Walking levels in Belfast

Based on information from the Census 2011, Belfast has more walking journeys to work (15.7%) than other comparable cities such as Manchester (14.8%), Liverpool (13%) and Leeds (12%). Walking levels in Belfast are almost on a par with those of Cardiff (16%). ¹⁴

Copenhagen, like Belfast is today, was characterised by areas of dense traffic and car parks.

Now in Copenhagen 36% of journeys to work and educational institutions are made by bicycle and the city is benefiting from its reputation as a 'better bicycle city, a more liveable city'. ¹⁶

Cycling levels in Belfast

In contrast to Belfast's strong position regarding walking levels, current levels of cycling fall short of our comparable neighbours. Figures from the 2011 Census show the current level of journeys cycled to work in Belfast is 2.2%, compared to Manchester (4.2%) and Cardiff (3.9%). ¹⁵

Lessons we can learn from our European neighbours

Many other European cities have overcome the challenges that Belfast now faces in becoming a city for walking and cycling. Until the 1960s



¹⁴. Census 2011; Method of travel to work (resident population). All persons (16-74 years) in employment and currently working (excluding those working from home)

¹⁵. See note 14

¹⁶. Good, better, best. The City of Copenhagen's Bicycle Strategy 2011-2025.

Where we want to get to and how we will get there

Our vision is of a shared, connected city where people want to live, work and visit, a city for learning and commerce, a green, clean and healthy city. We want to see a city where walking and cycling are part of everyday living because they are convenient, attractive, enjoyable and safe, and are seen as fundamental to the development and success of the city and region.

By 2025, we aim to have increased the percentage of cycling journeys to work to 10% and the percentage of walking journeys to work to 20%. These targets are based on the level of success we have seen in recent years with increasing walking and cycling and also from benchmarking ourselves against similar cities such as Manchester, Leeds and Cardiff.

Realising this vision will need a change in our thinking on travel and the role that it plays in all aspects of our lives. A cultural shift towards walking and cycling as everyday travel options will help Belfast to develop into a city of choice, while reducing our reliance on private car journeys.

We recognise that journeys to work are only one area of our focus and that consideration must also be given to regularly measuring other everyday journeys which could be walked and cycled, including school journeys and trips to local services such as shops and leisure opportunities.

To achieve the cultural shift required to increase cycling and walking to these levels, we will:

- Work on coordinated approaches with partners;
- Develop a high quality network of dedicated walking and cycling routes, which connect people to places and services;
- Improve the integration between walking, cycling and public transport;
- Work with schools, workplaces and communities to increase walking and cycling levels;
- Work across departments and agencies to develop walking and cycling related health and wellbeing initiatives;
- Work with Belfast City Council and other agencies responsible for planning decisions, to ensure focus is given to walking, cycling and integration with public transport;
- Develop a robust monitoring and evaluation framework for all partners to use; and
- Support ongoing engagement with key stakeholders and interested partners.



Given the wide range of benefits that increasing walking and cycling can bring to our city and region, we would like to see the Regional Project Board for Public Health, champion an approach to evaluating the wider social benefits of this work, through the new Public Health Strategy; Making Life Better (2013-2023).

To realise the vision we have identified a series of actions which will form part of the first steps of our journey. We plan to take these actions forward in the next five years, conscious that we must adjust and adapt to new opportunities as they arise.

The actions set out are categorised under four themes, based on best practice from other areas. They are:

- Improving the walking and cycling network
- Building new skills for active travel
- Promoting opportunities for active travel
- Supporting others to prioritise active travel.

The actions have been prioritised by the Belfast Active Travel Action Planning Task and Finish Group into those which will be delivered in the first two years of the plan and for which we have already received commitment and those which we hope to progress thereafter. Reference has also been made to the extensive range of work currently being delivered across the city, which supports and complements this action plan. A summary of actions is presented in Appendix 5.



What we will do

Improving the walking and cycling network

We aim to:

Support the development and enhancement of a walking and cycling network across the city and improve the city's road environment to enable all road users to safely share space with mutual respect.

We will build on work already underway, including:

- Development of the Connswater Community Greenway, led by the East Belfast Partnership and funded by the Big Lottery, Belfast City Council and Department for Social Development.
- Implementation of the Belfast Public Bike Share Scheme, which will provide 300 bikes, spread across 30 docking stations in the main city centre area. The scheme is funded by the Department for Regional Development and led by Belfast City Council.
- Development of the Integrated Transport Hub for Belfast, providing a world class Transport Hub for the city, led by DRD and Translink.
- Streets Ahead Phase 3, led by DSD and Belfast City Council.
- Development of Rapid Transit routes in the East and West of the city with future extensions to the North and South of the city, led by DRD .
- Junction and environmental improvement schemes, led by DRD and DSD respectively.
- Development of a pedestrian and cycle bridge linking Ormeau Park and the Gasworks, led by DRD.
- Expansion of the Lagan View Lookout Bridge, led by DSD and Belfast City Council.
- Research undertaken by Queen's University Belfast and Belfast Healthy Cities, from the Knowledge Exchange Spatial Analysis and Healthy Urban Environments (KESUE) initiative.

In the first two years of the plan:

- The Department for Regional Development will lead on the development of design guidance for walking and cycling infrastructure, including the development of consistent, uniform signage and lighting standards.

*Key partners: **DRD**, BCC, DSD, Belfast Healthy Cities, others.*

- The Department for Regional Development will lead on the creation of a Cycling Framework for Belfast, to include a range of connected arterial and quiet routes, reflecting the design guidelines.

*Key partners: **DRD**, others.*

- The Department for Regional Development will lead on the development of two demonstration 'end to end' cycling routes, as part of the Cycling Framework.

*Key partners: **DRD**, BCC, DSD, Sustrans, CTC, others.*

- DRD will introduce a pilot 20mph zone within Belfast City Centre and will explore the potential for the inclusion of similar zones in line with the Cycling Framework for Belfast.

- Member organisations of the Task and Finish Group will install high quality street furniture and appropriate cycle parking at their workplaces and other facilities, with a particular focus on the demonstration 'end to end' routes and key sites open to the public.

*Key partners: **PHA, BCC, DRD, DSD, BHSCT, Translink, BHC, Sustrans**, others.*

- Translink will provide high quality secure bicycle parking at railway and bus stations, and park and ride facilities.

*Key partners: **Translink, DRD**.*

- The Department for Regional Development and Translink will explore the potential to pilot the carriage of bicycles on at least one bus route serving the city.

*Key partners: **DRD, Translink**, others.*

- Active Belfast will support the development of community bike hubs in areas with low levels of bicycle ownership.

*Key partners: **Active Belfast Partnership**, others.*

- Streets Ahead will ensure that adequate cycle parking is provided in Phase 3 of development.

*Key Partners: **DSD**, Belfast City Council.*

We aim to progress the following actions for years three, four and five of the plan:

- Align existing infrastructure improvement schemes and behaviour change programmes, including the Safer Routes to School initiative and the Active School Travel programme.
- Develop a potential bicycle hub, as part of the Integrated Transport Hub for Belfast.
- Use the demonstration routes, to explore the potential to inform policy and practice on safe routes for walking and cycling in relation to maintenance and cleansing.
- Improve integration between walking/cycling and public transport by :
 - Improving connectivity between major bus and rail routes and the walking and cycling network, including signage;
 - Explore the potential to increase cycle capacity on new rolling stock.
- Roll out the Cycling Framework for Belfast, with the creation of additional safe, continuous routes, in line with the Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland.



Building new skills for active travel

We aim to:

Enhance skills, knowledge and confidence of walkers, cyclists and road users

We will build on work already underway, including:

- Travelwise NI initiative aimed at promoting sustainable methods of travel including walking and cycling, led by Department for Regional Development (DRD).
- Enhancement of the Cycling Proficiency Scheme for primary school children, led by Department of the Environment.
- Active School Travel Programme, which delivers walking and cycling skills to primary and post-primary school children and supports schools to promote active travel. This programme is funded by DRD and Public Health Agency (PHA) and is delivered by Sustrans.
- The Active Belfast grants scheme, supporting individuals and organisations to be more active through walking and cycling, funded by BCC and PHA.
- Volunteer walk leaders training, led by PHA and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.
- Translink's bus driver and cycling education programme.
- Seminars on active travel and developing the links between planning and public health, led by Belfast Healthy Cities.

In the first two years of the plan:

- The Public Health Agency will pilot a Workplace Active Travel programme, delivered by Sustrans, which will enable key workplaces to lead by example in encouraging and enabling staff to walk, cycle and take public transport to work.

*Key partners: **PHA**, **BCC**, **BHSCT**.*

- Belfast City Council will provide practical training and information sessions to local businesses and students, linked to the Belfast Public Bike Share Scheme.

*Key partners: **BCC**, **Sustrans**, **CTC**, *others*.*

- The Active Belfast Partnership will support the development of a community based cycling skills development programme, in line with the proposed community bike hub.

*Key partner: **Active Belfast Partnership**.*

- CTC will support the development of trainers to deliver cycling skills development programmes including National Standards, Off-Road Cycling and Cycling maintenance.

*Key partners: **CTC**, Cycling Ireland, Sport NI, others.*

- Partner organisations will provide 'cycle aware' driver training courses for all staff employed as drivers of buses and larger goods vehicles, building on the programme developed by Translink.

*Key partners: **Translink, BCC, BHSCT**, others.*

- The Active Belfast Partnership will expand Healthwise (Physical Activity Referral Programme) to include walking and cycling.

*Key partner: **Active Belfast Partnership**.*

- The PHA will develop a framework for a pilot programme to support local communities to walk and cycle, aligned to the 'end to end' demonstration routes.

*Key partners: **PHA, BCC, Sustrans, CTC**, others.*

- Belfast Healthy Cities will facilitate training to local councillors and planners, on the Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT) for walking and cycling, with World Health Organisation advice and experts.

*Key partners: **BHC**, others.*

- Begin discussions on the potential to expand the National Standards Cycle Training to all P6 children in Belfast.

*Key partners: **PHA, DRD, DoE, DE**.*

- DRD will explore the possibility of developing a code of good behaviour for cyclists, walkers and drivers

*Key partners: **DRD, DoE, PSNI**, others.*

We aim to progress the following actions for years three, four and five of the plan:

- Support local communities to walk and cycle more through an Active Travel Communities programme.
- Encourage the use of the HEAT tool in active travel related planning proposals.
- Roll out a scheme of volunteer cycle leaders training.
- Increase the number of community bicycle hubs and 're-cycle' schemes.
- Support the development of an active travel programme for university campuses and further and higher education facilities.
- Work with road haulage industry and taxi companies on sharing road space safely.



Promoting opportunities for active travel

We aim to:

Increase public awareness of the benefits of active travel and the opportunities available, while promoting and enhancing the ethos and culture of walking and cycling.

We will build on work already underway, including:

- Annual Week of Walking and Week of Cycling initiatives, led by DRD.
- Promotion of local walking routes, led by Belfast City Council and Outdoor Recreation NI.
- Promotion of active travel routes by NI Greenways.
- 'Ride On Belfast' cycle to work day.



In the first two years of the plan:

- Belfast City Council will lead on a marketing campaign, promoting existing opportunities to walk and cycle in the city.

*Key partners: **BCC**, DRD, PHA, Sustrans, CTC, others.*

- Belfast City Council will coordinate a range of walking and cycling 'taster' sessions within its parks.

*Key partners: **BCC**, PHA, DRD, Sustrans, CTC, others.*

- Sustrans will deliver an annual citywide cycle challenge event, as part of the pilot Workplace Active Travel programme.

*Key partners: **Sustrans**, PHA, BCC, BHSCT, others.*

- Sustrans will work with local retail outlets, including coffee shops and bike shops, on the introduction of an incentives scheme for cycling.

*Key partners: **Sustrans**, PHA, others.*

- Belfast City Council will explore the potential of including distance and approximate walking / cycling time on all new street level signage in and around the city centre.

*Key partners: **BCC**, DSD, others.*

- DRD will develop a detailed map of walking and cycling routes across the city.

*Key partners: **DRD**, others.*

- DRD will explore the possibility of establishing an annual 'in town without my car' day or a mass family cycling event as a follow on from the 2014 Giro d'Italia.

*Key partners: **DRD**, PHA, and BCC.*

- Active Belfast Partnership will explore the potential to deliver an annual Active Travel Summit.

*Key partners: **Active Belfast Partnership**, BHC, CTC, Sustrans, others.*

We aim to progress the following actions for years three, four and five of the plan:

- Deliver a combined active travel challenge for all (schools, workplaces and communities).
- Explore the potential for the development of 'Walking / Cycling in Belfast' apps.
- Develop an active travel 'dashboard' to communicate progress against key targets.



Supporting others to prioritise active travel

We aim to:

Support organisations to develop and promote policies which support walking and cycling

We will build on work already underway, including:

- The Cross-sectoral Cycling Group established and chaired by the Minister for Regional Development.
- Development of a Bicycle Strategy for NI, led by DRD.
- The Northern Ireland Assembly All Party Group on Cycling.
- The development of a 'Bicycle Account' for Belfast, led by the DRD and Sustrans.
- The Belfast: Future City 'Initial Directions' proposal, led by Belfast City Council.

In the first two years of the plan:

- DRD will explore the potential of future legislation to enhance the role of active travel.

Key partner: DRD.

- All members of the Task and Finish Group will encourage the inclusion of active travel as an agenda item at appropriate meetings.

PHA, BCC, DRD, DSD, BHSCT, Translink, BHC, Sustrans.

- Belfast Healthy Cities will develop enhanced links between planning and public health.

Key partners: BHC, Queen's University Belfast, Planning NI, BCC, PHA, DRD, DSD, others.

- Sustrans and DRD will lead on work to produce a Belfast Bicycle Account which will develop into a biennial exercise to assess cycling attitudes and infrastructure in Belfast.

Key partners: Sustrans, DRD, BCC.

We aim to progress the following actions for years three, four and five of the plan:

- Explore the potential of utilising the transfer of planning powers, to encourage long term land use changes which support increased levels of walking, cycling and public transport.
- Explore the potential to incorporate design guidance for walking and cycling into relevant future planning policies and applications.
- Ensure the needs of walkers and cyclists are included early in all planning considerations.
- Work across agencies on the enforcement of on street parking.
- Develop support at all levels, for active travel.



How we will know if it is working

It will be important for us to monitor progress across a range of measures, in order to know if we are achieving the desired modal shift.

We will build on existing and developing monitoring work including the:

- Travel Survey for Northern Ireland;
- Census;
- 'Bicycle Account' for Belfast;
- Active School Travel questionnaire; and
- Workplace Active Travel Programme.

We will develop a framework for measuring walking and cycling levels, providing a more complete picture of active travel in the city. We will look for opportunities to engage and partner with local expertise including Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster.

The framework will include measures on the following:

- The amount and quality of the walking and cycling network;
- The number of bicycle parking spaces within the city centre, at bus and rail stations and in schools and workplaces;
- Changes in walking and cycling journey behaviour, including distances covered and average number of journeys taken; and
- Attitudes to and perceptions of walking and cycling.

The Belfast Strategic Partnership will undertake to collate monitoring across all actions contained within this plan and provide an annual report on progress made against each area of work. Organisations will report quarterly on progress made to ensure momentum is sustained.

A full review of this action plan will be carried out after the first two years, measuring progress on the agreed actions, adjusting as required to fit with local and regional priorities and making the most of available opportunities.





Appendixes

Appendix 1: Belfast Strategic Partnership

Belfast Strategic Partnership

The Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) was established by the Public Health Agency (PHA), Belfast City Council (BCC), and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) to provide a collaborative approach in addressing life inequalities in Belfast.

The BSP is led by the three Chief Executive Officers and has representation from a wide range of organisations, including the community, statutory, voluntary and private sectors.

The aim of the BSP is ***“to champion and lead the case for tackling life inequalities across all communities in the Belfast area”***.

Framework for Action to Address Life Inequalities (2011 – 2015)

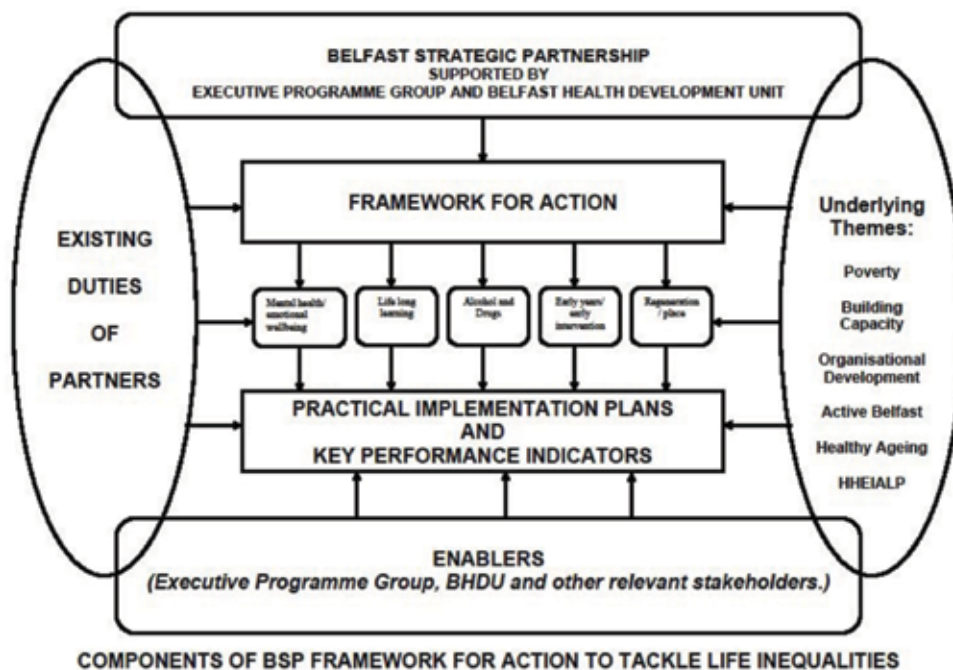
In 2011 a wide consultation process was undertaken across the city to identify the priority areas which the BSP would focus its efforts on to reduce the life inequalities people experience in the city. This process resulted in the development and publication of the Framework for Action to Address Life Inequalities 2011 – 2015.

Figure 1 shows the priority areas and underlying (cross cutting) themes supported by the BSP.

Belfast Health Development Unit

The Belfast Health Development Unit (BH DU) supports and drives the work of the BSP and will support the delivery of the Framework for Action.

Figure 1: Belfast Strategic Partnership: Framework for Action to Address Life Inequalities.



Vision

'All people and communities in Belfast can confidently expect to have access to the opportunities and resources they need to live longer, healthier lives.'

Mission

'To reduce life inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of people in Belfast by changing the way we work together. We do this by jointly harnessing the enthusiasm, efficiency and experience of our stakeholders to seek health and wellbeing gains in ways that we cannot do by working alone.'

Purpose

- To shape the future health and wellbeing priorities for Belfast
- To foster and take advantage of strategic opportunities to achieve better health outcomes
- To work together on areas where we can achieve the most impact
- To inform and influence future policy development
- To focus on the prevention of ill-health
- To develop and deliver an overarching health and wellbeing action plan for the city

Key Principles

To successfully reduce inequality and address the wider determinants of health we must:

- Maximise our combined impact by working better together
- Be accountable to others based on the results of our work
- Base our decisions and actions on evidence and learning from others
- Be open to innovative approaches and be prepared to work differently
- Encourage the active involvement of all stakeholders and strengthen relationships
- Build on the success of existing partnerships and programmes of work
- Engage with communities and seek to contribute to Community Planning
- Make effective use of our collective resources through better joint planning and priority setting
- Drive Equity in Health and Wellbeing through all of our policies
- Share our learning to change the way the public sector works.

'Making Belfast a Resilient City'

We will work to make Belfast a Resilient City, by:

- Improving the walking and cycling network
- Building new skills for active travel
- Promoting the opportunities for active travel
- Supporting others to prioritise active travel.

Appendix 2: Belfast Strategic Partnership - Central Priority

The central priority of the partnership is to strengthen the emotional wellbeing and resilience of individuals and communities in Belfast. Emotional Resilience refers to an individual's ability to adapt to stressful situations or crises that may have occurred in the past, present or into the future.

Active Travel is one of Belfast Strategic Partnership's Key Demonstration Projects, contributing to the building of Emotional Resilience. See Diagram 1 below.

Diagram 1:



Appendix 3: Belfast Active Travel Action Planning Task and Finish Group

| Name | Organisation | Role |
|---------------------|--|--------------|
| Dr Eddie Rooney | Public Health Agency / Belfast Strategic Partnership | Chair |
| Andrew Hassard | Belfast City Council / Active Belfast | Vice-Chair |
| Andrew Steenson | Belfast Health Development Unit | Lead Officer |
| Caroline Bloomfield | Public Health Agency | Member |
| Ciaran de Burca | Department for Regional Development | Member |
| Gordon Clarke | Sustrans | Member |
| Rose Crozier | Belfast City Council | Member |
| Joan Devlin | Belfast Healthy Cities | Member |
| Anne Doherty | Belfast City Council | Member |
| Andrew Grieve | Department for Regional Development | Member |
| Mandy Magee | Belfast Health and Social Care Trust | Member |
| Clifford McIlwaine | Planning Service NI | Member |
| Kevin Monaghan | Department for Regional Development | Member |
| Carol Ramsey | Department for Social Development | Member |
| Tom Reid | Department for Regional Development | Member |
| Ian Richardson | Cyclist's Touring Club | Member |
| Ciaran Rogan | Translink | Member |

Appendix 4: Links to local, regional and national policies

Summary of policies, strategies and plans.

| National policy and strategies | Regional policies, strategies and plans | Local policies, strategies and plans |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marmot Review – Fair Society, Healthy Lives, 2010 • Start Active Stay Active 2011 • Let’s Get Moving – A New Physical Activity Care Pathway for NHS • Every Child Matters: Change For Children Programme 2012 • NHS Choices: Mental Health and Wellbeing • Promoting physical activity and active living in urban environments: the role of local government, 2006 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DHSSPS Public Health Framework Making Life Better (2013-2023)) • A Fitter Future for All – Obesity Prevention Framework for Northern Ireland (2011 – 2021) • Programme for Government (2011 – 2015): Building a Better Future • Older People’s Strategy: Ageing in an Inclusive Society: • Sport Matters: The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation (2009 – 2019) • A Strategy to Improve the Lives of Disabled People: (2012 – 2015) (OFMDFM) • Learning Disability Service Framework • Northern Ireland Children and Young People’s Plan Plan (2011 – 2014) • Healthy Futures (2010 – 2015) (DHSSPS) • Regional Development Strategy 2035 (DRDNI) • Accessible Transport Strategy (2009 – 2012) • Building an Active Travel Future for Northern Ireland, DRD 2013 • Regional Transportation Policy for Northern Ireland (2002 – 2012) (DRDNI) • Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge – A 10 year strategy for Children and Young people (2006 – 2016) • Consultation on Priorities for Youth (DENI) • Planning Policy Statement 8 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation (DOENI) • Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland (Draft) DRD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Strategic Partnership – Framework for Action to Address Life Inequalities (2011 – 2015) • Belfast City Council – Draft Investment Programme (2012 – 2015) • Belfast City Council – Masterplan (draft) • Belfast City Council Transport Policy • Belfast Strategic Partnership – Active Belfast Strategy • Belfast Strategic Partnership – Emotional Resilience Strategy • Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan • Belfast City Council Investment Programme |

Appendix 5: Timeline for all actions

| Work that is happening now | Work planned for the first two years | Work we hope to progress for years three to five | By 2025 |
|---|---|---|--|
| Development of the Connswater Community Greenway | The development of design guidance for walking and cycling infrastructure | Align existing infrastructure improvement schemes and behaviour change programmes | <p>Belfast is a shared, connected city where people want to live, work and visit, a city for learning and commerce, a green, clean and healthy city. A city where walking and cycling is part of everyday living and fundamental to the growth and success of the city and region.</p> <p>10% of journeys are by cycling and 20% of journeys are by walking.</p> |
| Implementation of the Belfast Public Bike Share Scheme | The creation of a Cycling Framework for Belfast | Develop a potential bicycle hub, as part of the Integrated Transport Hub | |
| Development of the Integrated Transport Hub | The development of two demonstration 'end to end' cycling routes | Explore the potential to inform policy and practice on safe routes for walking and cycling | |
| Streets Ahead Phase 3 | A pilot 20mph zone within Belfast City Centre | Improving connectivity between major bus and rail routes and the walking and cycling network | |
| Development of Rapid Transit routes | Installation of high quality street furniture and appropriate cycle parking at key sites | Explore the potential to increasing cycle capacity on new rolling stock of fleet vehicles | |
| Junction and environmental improvement schemes | High quality secure bicycle parking at railway and bus stations, and park and ride facilities | Roll out the Cycling Framework for Belfast | |
| Development of a pedestrian and cycle bridge linking Ormeau Park and the Gasworks | Explore the potential to pilot the carriage of bicycles on at least one bus route | Support local communities to walk and cycle more through an Active Travel Communities programme | |
| Expansion of the Lagan View Lookout Bridge | The development of community bike hubs | Encourage the use of the Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT) in active travel related planning proposals | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Research undertaken from the (KESUE) initiative | A pilot 'Workplace' Active Travel programme | Roll out a scheme of volunteer cycle leaders training | <p>By 2025</p> <p>Belfast is a shared, connected city where people want to live, work and visit, a city for learning and commerce, a green, clean and healthy city. A city where walking and cycling is part of everyday living and fundamental to the growth and success of the city and region.</p> <p>10% of journeys are by cycling and 20% of journeys are by walking.</p> |
| The Travelwise NI initiative | Practical training and information sessions linked to the Belfast Public Bike Share Scheme. | Increase the number of community bicycle hubs and 're-cycle' schemes | |
| Cycle proficiency training for primary school children | The development of a community based 'cycling' skills development programme | Support the development of an active travel programme for university campuses | |
| The Active School Travel Programme | The development of trainers to deliver 'cycling' skills development programmes | Work with road haulage industry and taxi companies on sharing road space safely | |
| The Active Belfast grants scheme | 'Cycle aware' driver training courses for all staff employed as drivers of buses and larger goods vehicles | Develop a code of good behaviour for cyclists, walkers and drivers | |
| Volunteer walk leaders training | Expand Healthwise (Physical Activity Referral Programme) to include walking and cycling | Deliver a combined active travel challenge for all | |
| Bus driver and cycling education programme | Develop a framework for a pilot programme to support local communities to walk and cycle | Explore the potential for the development of 'Walking / Cycling in Belfast' apps | |
| Seminars on developing the links between planning and public health | Training on the Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT) for walking and cycling | Develop an active travel 'dashboard' to communicate progress against key targets | |
| Annual Week of Walking and Week of Cycling initiatives | Explore the potential to expand the National Standards Cycle Training to all P6 children in Belfast | Explore the potential to incorporate design guidance for walking and cycling into relevant future planning policies and applications | |
| Promotion of local walking routes | A marketing campaign, promoting existing opportunities to walk and cycle in the city | Ensure the needs of walkers and cyclists are included early in all planning considerations | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Promotion of active travel routes | A range of walking and cycling 'taster' sessions within its parks | Work across agencies on the enforcement of on-street parking | <p>By 2025</p> <p>Belfast is a shared, connected city where people want to live, work and visit, a city for learning and commerce, a green, clean and healthy city. A city where walking and cycling is part of everyday living and fundamental to the growth and success of the city and region.</p> <p>10% of journeys are by cycling and 20% of journeys are by walking.</p> |
| Ride On Belfast, cycle to work day | An annual citywide cycle challenge event | Develop support at all levels, for active travel | |
| The Cross-sectoral Cycling Group | Explore the potential of including the distance and approximate walking / cycling time to all new street level signage in and around the city centre | | |
| Development of a Bicycle Strategy for NI | Develop a detailed map of walking and cycling routes across the city | | |
| The Northern Ireland Assembly All Party Group on Cycling | Explore the possibilities of establishing an annual 'in town without my car' day | | |
| The development of a 'Bicycle Account' for Belfast | Explore the potential of an annual Active Travel Summit | | |
| The Belfast: Future City 'Initial Directions' proposal | Explore the potential of future legislation to enhance the role of active travel | | |
| | Encourage the inclusion of active travel as an agenda item at appropriate meetings | | |
| | Develop enhanced links between planning and public health | | |
| | Produce a Belfast Bicycle Account | | |



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