



SCOTS

Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland

Chair of SCOTS
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Mr Edward Mountain MSP
Convener Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

19 March 2019

Dear Mr Mountain

Restricted Roads (20mph speed limit) (Scotland) Bill

Thank you for the opportunity afforded to SCOTS (the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland) to give evidence to the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee on the Restricted Roads (20mph speed limit) (Scotland) Bill.

Having reviewed the Official Report from the REC Committee on Wednesday 6 March 2019, and the evidence session attended by Michael Matheson, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity; and Donna Turnbull, Road Safety Policy Manager, and Stuart Wilson, National Operations Manager, from the Scottish Government, I wish to provide some further supporting evidence on behalf of the Society for the consideration of the REC Committee.

There were two lines of questioning at the above evidence session that we would wish to respond to:

1. The number of restricted roads in Scotland

It may be accurate to state that "We do not know the number of restricted roads in Scotland", however this is not a question that has been asked of Roads Authorities to date in the consideration of this Bill.

Our understanding from the SCOTS members, which is supported by the recent survey of the Society's members (provided to the REC Committee following the evidence session), is that 50% have the data available on affected roads and 29% have no or limited asset data to allow roads to be identified. Whilst the survey response rate was only 14 from 32 authorities (44%), the responses to the committee suggesting that "only 21 percent of local authorities already have the data to

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hand...[which] means that nearly 80 per cent do not have the data” is not evidenced or considered accurate.

As stated in the Official Report, “it is a major undertaking for any local authority to collect the data”, which SCOTS is in agreement with. This is why SCOTS has been working closely with COSLA and Transport Scotland on the implementation group that has provided data and advice on the Restricted Roads (20mph speed limit) (Scotland) Bill. We will continue to work with the group and the Society’s members to develop the required data on the extent of roads affected by the Bill.

SCOTS have a strong track record of developing joint approaches that involve collection and interpretation of data in order to better manage and maintain our transport networks, but we have to manage within available resources. For the proposals in the Bill to become effective there is a requirement for enhanced and co-ordinated resource to be deployed to collect, monitor and maintain the data required.

2. TRO Process

The evidence given to the REC Committee has highlighted the inconsistency in the current application of 20mph speed limits across Scottish local authorities. Responses from local authorities to the consultation Restricted Roads (20mph speed limit) (Scotland) Bill did highlight the existing TRO process as being an impediment to the use of 20mph speed limits.

Reference was made to the work that we have been doing with SCOTS and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities looks at the existing TRO process. This relates predominantly to the provision in the Transport (Scotland) Bill to Pavement Parking and the need to process TROs for this purpose.

Whilst the streamlining of the TRO process is welcome in general and is supported by the consultation responses to the 20mph Bill, our latest understanding from SCOTS members, which is supported by the recent survey of the Society’s members, is that 50% are in favour of ‘blanket’ approaches for ease of TRO implementation with 29% considering the existing process of implementing Traffic Regulation Orders for 20mph limits to be more resource and cost effective.

An equal 36% responded ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to whether they have assessed the impact of implementing 20mph speed limits in your area (either under existing TRO process or proposed 20mph Bill), with 29% responding with ‘in part’.

The top three reasons given for those who have assessed the impact in part were ‘awaiting 20mph Bill’ (33%); ‘lack of staff resource’ (20%) and ‘low priority’ (13%), with only 7% suggesting that the TRO process is too costly, difficult or long.

The corresponding top three responses those who have not assessed the impact were ‘lack of staff resource’ (43%), ‘awaiting 20mph Bill’ (29%), and ‘low priority’ & ‘low demand’ (13% each), with 0% suggesting that the TRO process is too costly, difficult or long.

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As with the building of evidence on the extent of roads affected, SCOTS will work closely with COSLA and Transport Scotland on the implementation group, and support the proposed questionnaire from Transport Scotland on streamlining the TRO process to aid the Pavement Parking provision on the Transport (Scotland) Bill and the fullest application of 20mph speed limits through the Restricted Roads (20mph speed limit) (Scotland) Bill or other mechanism.

As has been stated in the evidence sessions, adequate funding must be provided to support local authorities to deliver the raised expectations on the fullest application of 20mph speed limits either through the Restricted Roads (20mph speed limit) (Scotland) Bill or any other mechanism. SCOTS provided a Cost Report on the implementation costs of the 20mph Bill, which was referenced in the Financial Memorandum. The call for views by the REC Committee has identified the need for the costs associated with the implementation of the 20mph Bill to be reviewed, which the Society would be happy to contribute to as part of the continued information gathering detailed above.

In summary, the Society maintains its general support of the Restricted Roads (20mph speed limit) (Scotland) Bill and its intentions. SCOTS will review its position following the report on Stage 1. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you or the REC Committee have any questions or require anything further.

Yours sincerely



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