

RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

RESTRICTED ROADS (20 MPH SPEED LIMIT) (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM PATHS FOR ALL

Summary

We welcome the Bill as an important means of improving road safety and encouraging walking and cycling.

- 20mph limits bring road safety benefits that encourage sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling.
- 20mph limits will improve the local environment making for safer and better places to live and work in.
- Making the streets safer and more pleasant will encourage more cycling and walking, especially for local trips.
- This will not only bring road safety benefits but will also help to improve overall health and wellbeing, reduce congestion, improve air quality and have positive local economic benefits.
- There will be a need for a national awareness campaign.
- The legislation should be introduced alongside work to enhance and promote the walking environment and promote walking in support of the National Walking Strategy.

Comments

In 2018 a study by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) found road casualties could fall by between 531 and 755 incidents a year - saving between one and five lives - if the speed limit in built-up areas dropped from 30mph to 20mph.

We consider that the Bill will support the delivery of measures to improve walking and cycling environments – and the delivery of the Scottish Government’s Active Scotland Delivery Plan, National Walking Strategy, The Cycling Action Plan for Scotland and the Long-term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland.

The main advantages of the proposals are:

- Clarity from a common approach across the country - creating a new norm and removing a confusing patchwork of 20 or 30mph zones.
- Safer streets that encourage more active travel.
- Cleaner air - NICE recommends urban speed reduction for better air quality. NICE guidance says 20mph limits without physical measures in urban areas help “avoid unnecessary acceleration and deceleration”.

There are relatively high levels of public support for 20mph limits and the benefits they bring – and this tends to increase after implementation (e.g. in Fife and

Edinburgh). That said, the proposals are likely to attract negative attention from parts of the media and individuals and this will need to be carefully managed. There will also be a need for enforcement and social marketing to show the benefits and enable a culture shift to a new norm where 20mph is the default in restricted streets.

We agree that there will be a need for a national awareness campaign – ideally as part of a wider campaign to encourage sustainable travel – particularly walking and cycling. We would be pleased to support such a campaign.

We consider that the legislation sends a clear signal that walking and cycling are valid modes of travel and reduces the assumption that vehicles should dominate our public spaces. Its delivery will need to be supported by measures encouraging behaviour change. This will be largely through locally-based initiatives such as those demonstrated by the Paths for All Smarter Choices Smarter Places Programme funded by Transport Scotland.

Potential financial benefits from the legislation include:

- Improved local environments in towns – making them more attractive and places to spend more time - increasing spend by visitors
- Increasing physical activity through active travel has the potential to reduce burdens on health and social care for the NHS / Local Authorities
- Reduced casualties - saving money in health care / social costs – reducing speed reduces serious or fatal injuries
- Improving health through improved air quality and the consequential savings to health budgets
- The proposals are likely to be less costly than piecemeal development of 20mph zones and the associated high levels of consultation as is occurring now.

The legislation will have a positive impact in addressing inequality in Scotland:

- Lower income groups are less likely to be drivers and so will benefit more from the Bill.
- Children and young people, and older people are the most likely to be injured as a result of cars in built-up areas. Reducing accident rates will positively impact these groups.
- Physical activity - participation in sport varies by age, gender, deprivation and household income, but when we include walking for recreation, the gap narrows. Walking is therefore a good leveller and helps tackle health inequalities. Making our communities more walkable will support this.

The introduction of 20mph zones will also improve air quality; reduce CO2 emissions; save households money and improve health. We do not consider that there are any negative impacts on sustainability.

“Regular physical activity helps to keep children a healthy weight and contributes to greater wellbeing. The Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Scotland) Bill marks a significant step in the right direction towards achieving safer roads for all, and thus, safer spaces for children across Scotland to spend their all-important recreational time outdoors.” Professor Steve Turner of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

Paths for All

Paths for All is a Scottish charity founded in 1996. We champion everyday walking as the way to a happier, healthier Scotland. We want to get Scotland walking: everyone, everyday, everywhere.

Our aim is to significantly increase the number of people who choose to walk in Scotland - whether that's for leisure or walking to work, school, the shops or to a nearby public transport hub. We want to create a happier, healthier Scotland where physical activity improves quality of life and wellbeing for all. We work to develop more opportunities and better environments not just for walking, but also for cycling and other activities, to help make Scotland a more active, more prosperous, greener country.

Our work supports the delivery of the Active Scotland Delivery Plan, National Walking Strategy, The Cycling Action Plan for Scotland and the Long-term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland, community and workplace health walking, path network development and active travel policy development. We are a partnership organisation with 30 national partners. Our funders include the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Macmillan and The Life Changes Trust.