

RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

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

SUBMISSION FROM SUSTRANS SCOTLAND

Introduction

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.

Sustrans Scotland strongly endorse the bill to replace the current 30mph default speed limit on restricted roads with a 20mph limit. Our [submission to the initial consultation](#) set out the numerous, widespread and significant benefits of default 20mph speed limits. These include public safety, collision reduction, increasing walking and cycling and local economic benefits.

We believe that the case for 20mph speed limits is now well-established. The content of this response will focus on public safety and why a national bill is the correct approach for creating safer streets in Scotland, rather than the current local, bit-by-bit approach.

1. Public Safety

- 1.1 The primary reason Sustrans Scotland support 20mph speed limits is public safety.
- 1.2 Slower speeds are proven to create safer conditions for all people (to varying degrees depending on mode of transport), but especially for people walking and vulnerable people.ⁱ
- 1.3 There is extensive evidence of the safety benefits of 20mph speed limits. Evidence from the South Edinburgh pilot area points to a reduction in casualties of 20%.ⁱⁱ A 2009 study of London speed limits found that the introduction of 20mph zones was associated with a 42% reduction in road casualties.ⁱⁱⁱ The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents notes both the 'size of the reductions and the consistency of results'.^{iv}
- 1.4 Evidence is clear that any reduction in average speeds reduces the frequency and severity of collisions. Every 1mph decrease in average speed is associated with a 4-6% decrease in collisions.^v There is also evidence that the severity of collisions is reduced.^{vi}
- 1.5 The safety benefits of 20mph limits are well-established. In addition to the impact on public safety, the above data contributes to reasons set out below why a national rather than local approach is likely to be most effective.

2. A national approach to reduce road casualty inequalities

- 2.1 Reducing road traffic collisions, injuries and fatalities is a social justice concern, with people in the most deprived areas being the most at risk of injury and fatality and with the most to gain from slower streets.
- 2.2 Between 1997-2016, children in the most deprived 3/5 of the population in Scotland were consistently more likely to be involved in road traffic incidents and to be admitted to hospital as a consequence.^{vii} This implies both an increased frequency and severity of collisions for those in most deprived 60% of the population.

- 2.3 20mph speed limits can benefit people at all levels of socioeconomic status. However, they are particularly effective in disadvantaged communities. 20mph limits implemented in the most deprived areas of London halved the number of casualties.^{viii} It is therefore important to ensure that as many communities as possible, especially disadvantaged communities, benefit from slower streets.
- 2.4 A review of the current bit-by-bit approach to implementation by the Department for Transport found the location of 20mph zones and limits was not correlated with levels of social deprivation.^{ix} A national approach ensures widespread slower streets in areas of deprivation.
- 2.5 Whilst acknowledging that some disadvantaged communities are located on non-restricted roads and that this is not a complete solution, the bill has the capacity to improve the safety of a large proportion of streets across Scotland in an equitable manner.
- 2.6 As an equality consideration, it is also instructive to note the relatively low car ownership in deprived communities. Only 37 per cent of households with net incomes between £6,001 and £10,000 have access to a car.^x The groups least likely to own a vehicle are most likely to be injured or killed by a vehicle.
- 2.7 A national bill for 20mph streets reduces the postcode lottery and ensures as many people as possible, and the most at risk groups, benefit from safer streets.

3. A national approach to reduce health inequalities

- 3.1 20mph streets have been proven to increase levels of walking and cycling.^{xi}
- 3.2 Walking and cycling offer proven health benefits making it important to ensure that all communities are given the safe choice to travel actively to avoid health inequalities. 20mph has been shown to encourage walking and cycling in all communities, regardless of level of deprivation. A study of a slower streets scheme in a deprived community on the outskirts of Glasgow found that 20% of residents said they walked more as a result.^{xii}
- 3.3 A national 20mph bill will widely encourage more walking and cycling and help to counter inequalities in the profile of people most likely to walk and cycle. For example, the most affluent decile are currently three times more likely to cycle than the most deprived in Glasgow.^{xiii}
- 3.4 The Marmot Review argued that ‘targeting [20 mph] in deprived residential areas would help lead to reductions in health inequalities’.^{xiv} It is important that all people, regardless of socioeconomic status, are given safe streets in order to encourage walking and cycling and distribute the health benefits of active travel more equally within the population.^{xv}
- 3.5 We note that the report of the Active Travel Task Force recommended that 20 mph speed limits should be mandatory in residential and school areas.^{xvi}

4. National approach for more effective Implementation

- 4.1 It is the view of Sustrans Scotland that an unambiguous, national approach to make 20mph a default will be most effective in achieving behavioural change to slower streets.
- 4.2 Sustrans Scotland note the overwhelming support of the public for the bill, with 81% of respondents to the consultation in favour of slower streets.^{xvii} There is public support and consent for slower streets, making behavioural change more achievable.
- 4.3 The bill proposes 20mph limits and does not mandate physical traffic calming measures. The success of the bill will therefore rely on people changing their behaviour to reduce their speed, which requires clear understanding of speed limits by the general public.
- 4.4 A reported problem with 20mph compliance is motorist confusion.^{xviii,xix,xx} This approach will mean a greater proportion of urban streets are 20mph and speeds will be more consistent nationally than a local, bit-by-bit approach. This should be simpler for motorists to understand and easier to comply with.
- 4.5 It is instructive to draw a distinction between the proposed approach and blanket 20mph schemes. This is not a blanket approach to 20mph, in which every road in a designated area becomes 20mph, for the reason that many arterial roads will be automatically exempted as non-restricted or can be exempted by the choice of local authorities. This means that speed limits will still vary between road types, but there will be a more consistent approach to setting speeds on restricted roads than is currently in place.
- 4.6 A national bill reduces the number of changes between 20 and 30mph limits in streets that are similar. The bill would replace a system where local authorities can decide to implement speed restrictions in different ways in their respective areas, with lower overall coherence. For this reason, we expect that a national approach, including a national awareness campaign, will lead to greater public comprehension and support compliance with slower speed limits.
- 4.7 Sustrans Scotland note that 20mph limits, though broadly effective, are more effective in some areas than others. Enforcement is to be encouraged in all areas. There will remain areas that will require both physical traffic calming and enforcement to reduce speeds successfully.

5. A national approach to reduce community severance

- 5.1 Slower residential streets have the capacity to reduce community severance, which can occur when people living or moving through an area feel cut off from some areas of their community due to motorised traffic creating a physical or psychological barrier.^{xxi}
- 5.2 Community severance is affected by traffic volume, speed, road design and resident perceptions of the road.^{xxii} Higher traffic speed and volume reduces physical activity, social contacts, children's play and access to goods and services.^{xxiii}
- 5.3 Sustrans Scotland's work contributes to creating places that prioritise people over vehicles. Our experience tells us that 20mph streets are a significant tool in achieving this and countering severance.
- 5.4 As evidenced above, slower streets encourage more people to walk and cycle in their community. Evidence from the Edinburgh pilot suggests that more children are allowed to play outside.^{xxiv} 20mph areas help to increase social interactions, make it easier for people, particularly children and older people, to cross roads and reduce traffic noise levels.^{xxv}

- 5.5 A national bill contributes to achieving numerous policy goals for the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland, including Designing Streets^{xxvi} and the Place Standard Tool.^{xxvii}

6. Conclusion

Sustrans Scotland support the bill for 20mph streets on the case for public safety. We believe that the public safety case alone merits a national approach.

In addition, several significant co-benefits of slower streets would benefit from a national level of implementation and we strongly encourage the Committee to support the bill for Safer Streets.

ⁱ The Marmot Review (2010). *Fair Society, Healthy Lives*. Available:

<http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review/fair-society-healthy-lives-full-report-pdf.pdf>

ⁱⁱ City of Edinburgh Council (2015). *Busting the myths around Edinburgh's 20mph roll-out*. Available: https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/1743/busting_the_myths_around_edinburghs_20mph_roll-out

ⁱⁱⁱ London Assembly (2009). *Braking point: 20mph speed limits in London*. Available:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/london-assembly/london-assembly-publications/braking-point-20mph-speed-limits-london>

^{iv} The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (2018). *20mph zones and limits*. Available:

<https://www.rospa.com/road-safety/advice/drivers/speed/20mph-zones-and-limits/>

^v Transport Research Laboratory (2010). *The effects of drivers' speed on the frequency of road accidents*. Available: <https://trl.co.uk/reports/TRL421>

^{vi} Transport Scotland (2014). *Good Practice Guide On 20 Mph Speed Restrictions*. Available: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/6105/20-mph-good-practice-guide-19-december-2014-version-to-be-published.pdf>

^{vii} Understanding Glasgow (2018). *Road casualties trend in Glasgow*. Available:

https://www.understandingglasgow.com/indicators/transport/road_casualties/child_road_casualties_deprivation

^{viii} The Marmot Review (2010). *Fair Society, Healthy Lives*. Available:

<http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review/fair-society-healthy-lives-full-report-pdf.pdf>

^{ix} Department for Transport (2018). *Review of 20 mph Zone and Limit Implementation in England*. Available:

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20091004041453/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/research/rsrr/theme4/20mphzoneresearch.pdf>

^x Scottish Government (2015). *Scottish household survey 2015: annual report*. Available :

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-people-results-2015-scottish-household-survey/pages/8/>

^{xi} 20's Plenty For Us (2018). *20mph Limits Encourage Walking And Cycling*. Available:

http://www.20splenty.org/20mph_limits_encourage_walking_and_cycling

^{xii} Morrison D S, Thomson H and Petticrew M (2004) Evaluation of the health effects of a neighbourhood traffic calming scheme. *Journal of Epidemiological Community Health* 2004;58:837–840

^{xiii} Glasgow Centre for Population Health (2017). *Active travel in Glasgow: what we've learned so far*. Available: http://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/6007/Active_travel_synthesis_final.pdf

^{xiv} The Marmot Review (2010). *Fair Society, Healthy Lives*. Available:

<http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review/fair-society-healthy-lives-full-report-pdf.pdf>

^{xv} Rui, Ancaes, P. *et al.* (2016). *Urban transport and community severance: Linking research and policy to link people and places*. Available:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214140516302171>

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- ^{xvi} Transport Scotland (2018). *Active Travel Task Force Report*. Available: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/42284/active-travel-task-force-june-2018.pdf>
- ^{xvii} Scottish Parliament (2018). *Proposed Restricted Roads (20mph Limit) (Scotland) Bill*. Mark Ruskell MSP. *Summary of Consultation Responses*. Available: http://www.parliament.scot/S5PrivateBillsProposals/20180924_FINAL_Summary_of_consultation_responses.pdf
- ^{xviii} The Sun (2017). *Britain's Most Confusing Road Markings*. Available: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2720299/edinburgh-road-30mph-limit-20mph/>
- ^{xix} Aberdeen Evening Express (2016). *Aberdeen motorists confused by conflicting speed signs*. Available: <https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/fp/news/local/motorists-confused-by-conflicting-speed-signs1/>
- ^{xx} Bournemouth Daily Echo (2010). *Motorists confused by 30mph and 40mph speed limit signs at Bakers Arms roundabout*. Available: https://www.bournemouthecho.co.uk/news/8363265.Motorists_confused_by_30mph_and_40mph_speed_limit_signs_at_Bakers_Arms_roundabout/
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- ^{xxii} Rui, Anciaes, P. et al. (2016). *Urban transport and community severance: Linking research and policy to link people and places*. Available: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214140516302171>
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- ^{xxiv} City of Edinburgh Council (2014). *South Central Edinburgh 20mph Limit Pilot Evaluation*. Available: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/40218/item_73_-_south_central_edinburgh_20mph_limit_pilot_evaluation
- ^{xxv} The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (2018). *20mph zones and limits*. Available: <https://www.rospa.com/road-safety/advice/drivers/speed/20mph-zones-and-limits/>
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- ^{xxvii} NHS Health Scotland (2018). *The Place Standard Tool*. Available: <http://www.healthscotland.scot/tools-and-resources/the-place-standard-tool>