

## **RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE**

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

#### **SUBMISSION FROM ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL**

##### **What is this?**

A short survey by the Scottish Parliament's Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee to gather the views of individuals and organisations on the proposals in the Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Scotland) Bill.

##### **Why should I respond?**

The Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Scotland) Bill would reduce the default speed limit on most urban and residential streets in Scotland from 30mph to 20mph and would therefore apply to all street-lit Class C and unclassified roads (*except where roads have been de-restricted or are restricted under the relevant sections in Part VI of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984*). This change would impact on many people's daily travel choices and the Committee wants to hear your views on these proposals.

##### **Do you support the proposed reduction in the default speed limit on most urban and residential streets in Scotland from 30mph to 20mph?**

- Yes - I support the reduction from 30mph to 20mph

##### **Do you think reducing the default speed limit on most urban and residential streets would enhance road safety?**

- Yes

Why do you think this?

- Lower speed limits tend to result in lower collision and casualty rates and less casualty severity, where they are adhered to. 20mph speed limits on specific roads have reduced average speeds already, reduced collision, casualty rates and severity, engendered a more respectful environment amongst all road users and encouraged more people to consider alternatives to motorised vehicles for travel such as walking and cycling. Lower speed limits in urban areas which are consistently adhered to would improve the sense of safety, place and confidence within communities, even where there is no casualty history. Enhancements in real and perceived road safety would encourage more active and sustainable travel which has many positive impacts including on personal health and wellbeing.

##### **Do you think the reducing the default speed limit on most urban and residential streets would have a positive or negative impact on you or your organisation?**

- Mostly positive for the community but mixed for the organisation.

Why do you think this?

- A greater use of lower speed limits, on appropriate roads, that are enforced and adhered to would be welcome by most communities as a positive safety initiative that would improve the environment of where they live, work, visit etc. It would also encourage more active and sustainable travel which has many positive impacts including on personal health and wellbeing.
- As the roads authority, the safety of road users is paramount so in principle this appears to be a positive proposal. However, this Council is the lowest funded council in Scotland, and like other authorities, is expecting to receive new duties and responsibilities through the new Transport Bill with unknown additional financial support for these and the public's expectation of the delivery of this initiative may significantly outstrip our ability to deliver. There will be a significant exercise to assess all possible roads to identify which would meet the requirements, to design, procure and install replacement signing and revoke existing 20mph where no longer necessary and remove the relevant redundant signage. There will also be significant numbers of signage needed at the interface of the strategic (A- and B-class network) with the new default 20mph. Local monitoring would also be expected. It is expected that this will not be a straightforward exercise of replacing existing 30mph signs with 20mph signs. There will therefore be a requirement for the Scottish Government to fully fund this initiative and there will be a need to recognise as well that this may take several years to deliver and could cost in the order of £1M to £1.5M. The suggested total cost to local authorities in Scotland is around £20M, and it is suggested that most of this would be needed up front to implement the initiative over a couple of years. In addition, the public will expect these lower speed limits to be enforced, so we anticipate Police Scotland will exert pressure on local authorities to introduce additional measures to enable the speed limits to be more self enforcing, such as traffic calming in order to reduce the additional burden of enforcement on their officers. Even in those cases where the roads authority thought this was appropriate and possible, this would require the Scottish Government to also fully fund the necessary resources for this – which is currently unquantifiable but could easily exceed the total cost of the signage.
- Lower speed limits could potentially reduce the number and severity of collisions with the many structures on the roads network, saving local authorities money and communities time relating to incident traffic management and repairs.

**If the Bill is passed, should its roll-out be accompanied by a national awareness campaign?**

- Yes

Why do you think this and do you have any suggestions on the nature of an such campaign?

- The default 30mph speed limit has been recognised by generations of drivers and therefore a thorough and sustained national campaign over a continuous period of time will be necessary to ensure this lower speed limit achieves the same recognition and compliance. It is also considered that education of all

drivers and new drivers needs to be included, with legible benefits and impacts of non compliance front and centre. Other successful campaigns for similar generational change in driver behaviour should be studied to help define the awareness campaign. This campaign should be extended beyond the suggested 2 to 3 years.

**Should Police Scotland be required to take additional enforcement action, over and above that used to enforce the current 30mph limit, following the introduction of a 20mph limit on most urban and residential streets in Scotland?**

- Yes

Why do you think this and what, if any, additional action would you like to see taken?

- It is not clear what level of enforcement action is routinely undertaken by Police Scotland so visible and regular enforcement will be necessary to ensure public confidence that the initiative will deliver its objective, particularly given the level of investment that will be required across the country to implement it. Enforcement should apply to all vehicles on the road, including non-motorised classes of vehicle.

**If the Bill is agreed, how long should local authorities be given to complete the roll-out of the new 20mph limit?**

- More than 5 years

Why do you think this?

- With the additional new duties and responsibilities already coming to local authorities through the Transport Bill, additional responsibilities regarding 20mph will make the roll-out of this initiative challenging in a shorter time frame, particularly with no details around what commitment there will be from Scottish Government to fully fund them. We expect the Scottish Government to fully fund the implementation of both the 20mph legislation and all duties/ responsibilities and implementation of the coming Transport Bill.

**Do you have any comments on the impact that the Bill might have on the following issues:**

- Human rights or equalities for any particular group of people - there should be no significant impact on these groups.
- Sustainable development - there should be a positive impact as the lower speed limit would make active and sustainable travel more attractive at the outset which could encourage an improvement in the quality of development proposals relating to how people will move around.
- Island, rural or remote communities – no comment.

**Is there anything else that should be included, or removed, from the Bill?**

- The draft Bill suggests the 20mph would be applicable to all classes of motorised vehicles but not to non-motorised vehicles such as horse drawn vehicles or pedal cycles. It is considered that ALL vehicles both motorised and non-motorised vehicles should be subject to the 20mph speed limit. The safety and perceived safety of all road users is important and therefore the benefits of this initiative could be significantly diluted if communities expect a low speed environment on the road network but some vehicles are exempt and continue to exceed the 20mph
- “With the additional new duties and responsibilities already coming to local authorities through the Transport Bill, additional responsibilities regarding 20mph will make the roll-out of this initiative challenging in a shorter time frame, particularly with no details around what commitment there will be from Scottish Government to fully fund them.

But I think we need to be saying we expect the government to fully fund this change.