



Proposed Restricted Roads (20mph Limit)
(Scotland) Bill

Executive Summary

■ Why 20mph?

For over a decade communities have been making the case that ‘twenty is plenty’ for the streets where we live. 20mph speed limits have been shown to reduce the number of serious and fatal road traffic accidents, encourage more people to walk and cycle and reduce vehicle emissions. With newly devolved powers over speed limits coming to the Scottish Parliament we have a clear opportunity to act to effect change that would protect public health and our living environment.

Current Scottish Government guidance favours 20mph for residential streets.¹ However, while some local authorities have taken action to roll out 20mph in localised areas, the approach across Scotland has been piecemeal so far. The current process to lower speed limits in urban areas is complex, time-consuming and costly for councils.

We already put 20mph limits around schools for children’s safety but our roads are used by many vulnerable users who deserve the same protections, such as elderly and disabled individuals, cyclists and motorcyclists.

This Bill intends to make it easier for local authorities to pursue and implement 20mph speed limits for the benefit and safety of us all.

The benefits

■ Reducing serious road traffic accidents . Driving at lower speeds gives drivers more time to react to their surroundings and reducing the likelihood of a serious collision. The most recent figures for road traffic accidents in Scotland show that travelling too fast or exceeding the speed limit were contributory factors in 11% of all reported accidents and 19% of fatal accidents in 2015.² A Transport Research Laboratory study found that the number of accidents could be expected to fall by between 4% and 6% for each 1mph reduction in average speed.³

Improved health. Lowering speed limits encourages walking and cycling, boosting people’s health. Regular exercise has clear associated health benefits, helping people maintain a healthy weight, lowering the risk of heart disease and even boosting mental wellbeing. A 20-minute bike ride to work could use the same amount of calories as a cappuccino, a bar of chocolate or small glass of wine.⁴ With quieter roads and slower traffic more people may feel confident to regularly walk and cycle around our streets.

Air pollution will be reduced. Cars produce harmful emissions that damage our respiratory health and contribute to climate change. Both petrol and diesel cars see significant decreases in emissions of particulate matter (microscopic particles emitted from exhaust pipes) which are known to contribute to heart and lung disease.⁵

Tackling inequality. A review of Fife’s Council’s 20mph rollout highlighted that more deprived areas have shown a greater reduction in casualties compared to wealthier areas. Casualties fell by 34% in deprived communities compared with 20% in more affluent neighbourhoods. 20mph speed limits can have a greater positive impact in Scotland’s more deprived communities.

What this Bill will do

This Bill will reset the current default national speed limit from 30mph to 20mph for restricted roads.

Roads that are close to housing, walkways or busy public spaces will automatically have the current 30mph speed limit replaced with a 20mph limit.

This change will replace the current complex process councils have to follow to create 20mph roads. Councils will still be able to use their discretion to designate some roads in built up areas as suitable for 30mph where appropriate, for example to maintain a network of faster ‘through-routes’.

Councils will also continue to have the option to put in place additional traffic calming features on 20mph roads, such as speed bumps, to tackle blackspots where there is judged to be a high risk to pedestrians.

Financial implications

Evidence from the rollout of previous 20mph schemes across the UK suggests that it is significantly cheaper to have a national 20mph default limit rollout as opposed to each local authority implementing their own scheme, such as Edinburgh’s recent 20mph rollout.

We estimate a national default limit to cost in the region of £4.3m compared with an estimated £17.2m if every local authority in Scotland were to replicate an Edinburgh-style 20mph scheme. Full detail for these figures is provided in the consultation document.

These figures also include the costs of an accompanying awareness raising campaign, which we recognise to be a key element for encouraging the public to adopt 20mph as a new norm.

Next steps for this consultation

You are invited to respond to this consultation by answering a set of questions and providing any other comments that you consider appropriate.

You are encouraged to submit your responses via the Scottish Parliament’s Smart Survey system at: www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/20mphSpeedLimits/

It is also possible to submit your response electronically by sending them to:

mark.ruskell.msp@parliament.scot or by

post to:

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All responses should be received no later than 15/09/2017

¹ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/6105/20-mph-good-practice-guide-19-december-2014-version-to-bepublished.pdf>

² <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/20223/j452722.pdf>

³ <http://www.20splentyforus.co.uk/UsefulReports/TRLREports/trl421SpeedAccidents.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/what-you-can-do/use-your-car-less/health-benefits-walking-and-cycling>

⁵ http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/189051/Health-effects-of-particulate-matter-final-

