Your message:

I do not support an urban 20mph speed limit in urban areas.

A 20mph speed limit is becoming more widespread, and it seems to be a

fashionable agenda for local councils to apply to urban locations. The

grounds for applying a 20mph speed limit seem to be presented as being

related primarily to reducing the severity and chance of road collisions

occurring.

However the obvious impacts that a 20mph speed limit has on peoples everyday

lives is threefold:

-It increases all journey times for law abiding citizens. Advocates suggest

that the impact on journey times is small. That may be a reasonable

statement if the speed limit was limited only to residential\* streets. But

we’re talking about a default 20mph across entire urban areas so the

cumulative effect on a long journeys is actually very significant.

-It increases traffic density and increases likelihood of congestion. 20mph

results in a density of cars on the road that is 50% higher than at 30mph

for any given flow below the critical flow rate. The critical flow rate

(maximum number of cars per hour) that a road can carry is much reduced

because of the lower speed limit. As a result, congestion is more likely to

happen. There will also be fewer opportunities for cars to cross or enter

the flow of traffic (e.g. turning right).

-We’re not talking about criminalising uncommon and unacceptable behaviour

at the margins of the existing law (e.g. drink driving). This change will

criminalise the default behaviour demonstrated by the vast majority of all

drivers right now. Many will continue with this behaviour after the law

change and so expose themselves to potential prosecution. If you want to

alienate the public at large, then criminalising normal behaviour is a good

way to do it.

The evidence presented for improved safety at a default 20mph limit seems to

be very blunt and academic, and I suspect that towns and cities that have

adopted such a strategy for some time haven’t seen any significant

improvements in their casualty rates. While 20mph is a suitable speed for

narrow residential\* streets with limited visibility of the road edge (e.g.

due to parked cars), it’s inappropriate for busy lengths of road due to the

impacts previously mentioned.

\* = I use the term “residential” in a constrained way. A main road

fronted by residential houses with regular traffic flow is not applicable.

I’m referring to streets whose sole purpose is to serve access to local

residential properties.

My own anecdotes are as follows:

-Very few people pay attention to 20mph speed limits when the road is wide

and clear. 20mph feels inappropriately slow. My car is also driving in a

lower gear that is less fuel efficient. People that do observe the limit are

often subject to risky overtaking manuevres by less patient people.

-If 20mph speed limit is observed on a busy road, the road feels quieter and

less busy when the limit goes back upto 30mph, even when you have the same

number of cars.

-I feel less inclined to pay visits to Edinburgh, because of their default

20mph speed limit. Alternative access to Edinburgh (i.e. trains and busses),

results in even greater journey time, cost and inconvenience. As a result

there is an economic impact suffered by businesses not getting my spending

money.

-I’m more inclined to find alternative routes that get me to my

destination if it reduces journey time, even if alternative roads are less

safe than the main road that’s constrained by 20mph.

-Generally speaking I think that measures by the government to make life

slower and more inconvenient for ordinary people is not a sign of progress in

a modern world.

I fully support efforts to promote alternative modes of transport, especially

cycling and electric propulsion. However I don't think a blanket 20mph limit

is the way to do this. I think segregation of traffic is key, and I think

there would be better success here by two measures in law:

- Cycling on Pavements should be allowed by law (except where expressly

forbidden)

- Allowing electric scooters on the road / pavement, under the same rules as

bicycles, subject to contraints on weight and maxiumum speed.

On the latter point, I have observed in Norway a lot of transport being made

on small electric scooters for short distances. They are light, and even

more portable than bicyles (you can bring them with you onto busses, trains,

and not leave them parked in places where they could be stolen). It's a

shame that in the UK, those that are road legal are classed as mopeds, as as

such their use is virtually non existant.

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Greens

The Scottish Government will share your response internally with other

Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you

discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require

your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact

you again in relation to this consultation exercise? Yes