

Angus Council Response to Proposed Restricted Roads (20mph Limit) (Scotland) Bill

1 Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposal to replace the current 30mph default speed limit on restricted roads with a 20mph limit?

- Partially supportive

The impact of injury and fatal RTCs to society is significant, and on a daily basis RTCs across Scotland affect our communities. Road deaths are an obvious tragedy for the families involved. In addition, the cost of a fatal road accident in Scotland is £1.95 million, serious accidents £225,000 and minor accidents £22,500. Clearly a significant reduction in accidents or the severity of accidents would be welcome and would assist the national aim, echoed in our Community Partnership desires, to reduce the number of road accidents

To be fully supportive of the proposal we would need to receive clarity on how the project would be funded and how such proposals would be enforced leading to a change in culture which is not currently exhibited where we as a council have introduced advisory '20's plenty' or 20mph speed limits.

Angus Council has introduced 20 mph zones/speed limits located predominantly close to schools and within residential areas in the various towns in Angus.

The majority of 'restricted roads' are currently subject to 30mph speed limit whilst the proposal is to change the legislation to make all 'restricted roads' subject to 20mph speed limit.

The current arrangement requires a TRO to amend the speed limit on a restricted road whether to increase or decrease. The nature of restricted roads can vary significantly and not all roads within that category would benefit from a reduction in speed limit to 20mph.

Unlike some authorities Angus Council has no current policy to reduce speed limits in built up areas to 20mph and as such if the 20mph proposals were implemented then in order to retain 30mph speed limits on 'restricted roads' these proposals would require the lengthy TRO process with associated costs of time and resources.

2 Could the aims of this proposal be better delivered in another way (without a Bill in the Scottish Parliament)?

Yes

An alternative to the proposed blanket speed limit reduction could be some form of simplification of the TRO procedure or taking it one step further could be the removal altogether of the need for a TRO in respect of restricted roads perhaps with some form of public consultation replacing the formal TRO procedure.

This option would allow 30mph speed limits to be retained where it was felt appropriate and simplify the process for reducing other roads to 20mph or vice versa.

3. What do you think would be the main advantages, if any, of the proposal?

Research appears to show that the introduction of 20mph speed limits can have benefits in terms of reducing the likelihood of accidents and reduce the severity of injuries arising from accidents. Any such reduction would be welcome and the benefits to society in the cost avoidance of accidents would reduce some of the burden on the health services, emergency services and councils.

Reduced traffic speeds can encourage 'active travel' by foot, cycle, etc. and improve safety and amenity particularly for vulnerable road users such as the elderly, children, pedestrians, cyclists, etc.

Increasing the coverage of 20mph speed limits across Scotland may save lives, reduce serious injuries and encourage walking and cycling with positive benefits to individuals and health service budgets.

4. What do you think would be the main disadvantages, if any, of the proposal?

Angus Council currently apply 20mph speed limits in residential areas and other areas where a particular risk to vulnerable roads users has been identified. It is felt that having been specifically chosen to have the reduced speed limit with associated signing then drivers will appreciate that care should be taken in these affected areas. If all roads are 20mph speed limit then the 'special' nature of these areas will be lost.

There are potentially significant cost implications for the council in the implementation of the proposals on the ground. Current 30mph speed limit signs would require to be replaced by 20mph speed limit signs and existing 20mph speed limit signing would become redundant. Repeater signing arrangements would require be considering and clarified in any new legislation. As noted below physical measures to reduce traffic may be necessary with associated costs

The reduced speed limit may have a negative impact on some road users by extending journey times with associated fuel costs particularly in relation to public transport and businesses. This may be less of a concern in heavily trafficked areas where traffic speeds are already low but in Angus where traffic flows are generally low this may be seen as a disadvantage arising from these proposals.

5. What other measures do you think would be needed to maximise compliance with the new national 20mph speed limit on restricted roads, for example in relation to advertising signage and police enforcement.

If the change in speed limit is to be effective it will require a culture change in attitude to driving in towns involving intensive national publication/advertising of the changes and government guidance/education for all roads users prior to its introduction. As with the introduction of seat belt or mobile phone legislation it is

likely to take some time before drivers adjust their behaviour and become more compliant with the restrictions.

Sadly legislation such as seat belts, mobile phone use or drink drive limits continue to be flouted by some drivers. Signing alone is unlikely to be adequate to ensure the required speed reductions to 20 mph, and the current 30mph limit is often exceeded, with our communities regularly seeking enforcement or engineering interventions. Our experience within Angus is that schemes such as '20's plenty' have in some areas been insufficient to change behaviour. Increased traffic calming may be necessary if appropriate for 20mph speed limits to be self-enforcing however not all roads affected by the new 'restricted roads' proposals would be suitable for road humps or other traffic calming measures. There would be a financial impact on councils for the introduction of such measures.

In order to maximise compliance Police enforcement is a key issue which will have significant resource implications for Police Scotland which they may be unable to meet. The possible introduction of speed cameras or other technology to assist with this may have to be considered and would likely involve significant expense even if feasible to deploy. Public expectations would be raised that by the introduction of such limits by national government, that there would be enforcement and/or engineering to ensure limits are observed. Given the current continued austerity within the public sector and the other challenging priorities for service delivery in across Community Partners the opportunity to fulfil these expectations without significant funding is unrealistic.

6. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have?

Scottish Government - No comment

Local Authorities - Some increase in costs

For local authorities where 20mph speed limits are currently uncommon there would be increased costs in relation to alterations and introduction of new traffic signs.

Local authorities who wish to retain some 30mph speed limits will incur costs in the promotion of TROs to implement this.

If cultural change does not work then physical traffic calming measures may be requires/expected by our communities to deliver the change and this would have significant cost implications for local authorities.

Motorists - No comment

Other - Police Scotland funding may be impacted and we defer to Police Scotland

7. Do you believe there will be any other benefits to reducing the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph?

Reducing speed limits to 20mph may have amenity and health benefits by encouraging more walking and cycling.

Lower speeds would result in less traffic noise. Better air quality would be of general health benefit to all but particularly those with respiratory conditions.

8. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on the following protected groups (under the Equality Act 2010): race, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, age, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity?

Positive

The reduced speed limit would likely be of benefit to pedestrians particularly children, disability groups and the elderly.

9. Could any negative impact of the proposed Bill on any of these protected groups be minimised or avoided?

Not to our knowledge.

10. Do you consider that the proposed Bill can be delivered sustainably i.e. without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impact?

No comment

11. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal to establish a 20mph default speed limit on restricted roads?

No further comments.