



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Nicola Sturgeon  
First Minister  
T4.25  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

05/06/19

Dear

*Nicola,*

I am writing to ask for your government's support for the general principles of the Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Scotland) Bill to allow it to proceed to Stage 2.

As you will know, the Bill would switch the national default speed limit in built-up areas from thirty to twenty miles per hour. This proposal is based on extensive evidence of the benefits, specifically:

- **Reduced accidents** - every 1mph reduction in average speed reduces road traffic accidents by 4-6%.
- **Lives saved** - an average of 7 children are killed per year on roads in Scotland. Reduced speed limits in urban areas can make a huge difference. Bristol Council estimate that their 20mph roll out saves 4 lives per year.
- **Inequality addressed** – lower speed limits have a particularly big impact in poorer communities, where children are three times more likely to be killed or injured by cars. When Fife Council rolled out 20mph speed limits, casualties fell by 34% in poorer communities and 20% in more affluent neighbourhoods.
- **Active travel boosted** – your government's target is for 10% of journeys to be by walking and cycling by 2020, but we're currently at 1%. Reducing the speed limit in built up areas to 20mph has been shown to result in a significant increase in walking and cycling.

Mark Ruskell MSP, Mid-Scotland and Fife  
MG.17, The Scottish Parliament  
EH99 1SP

Whilst the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee's Stage 1 report recommended against the Bill, I believe it was fundamentally flawed. The Committee's principle objection is that this is a "blanket measure", however I believe this to be an irrelevant observation given that the matter at hand is the national default speed limit, which by definition applies nationwide.

The national speed limit can also be adjusted by Local Authorities on a case by case basis, and this would continue to be the case if it was lowered to 20mph. The Committee's report also raises concerns about costs without giving equal due to the financial benefits arising from this proposed legislation. I welcome, however, that the Stage 1 report's shortcomings were recognised by three Committee members.

Unless this Bill is passed it will continue to be a postcode lottery for children when it comes to safer streets. I believe that all children across the country should be given this basic protection and I note that this is increasingly the direction of travel elsewhere. Indeed, just last month, the First Minister of Wales committed to introducing a twenty default while London is already rolling out the lower limit. It would be deeply disappointing to see Scotland lagging behind on such a vital public safety issue.

So far I have seen no alternative proposal from the Scottish Government to deliver a consistent approach to 20mph delivery nationwide.

Child safety, cycling, walking, environmental and health organisations all back the Bill, and polling consistently shows that the Scottish public are supportive of the Bill. The majority of councils, including Glasgow City Council, have given their backing to the Bill. The only organisations opposing it represent sections of the motoring lobby.

This is a simple but effective means of improving and saving lives. I believe that the Scottish Parliament should put the interests of local communities and children first, and not be cowed by vested interests. I hope you agree and that you and your party will back advancing this Bill to Stage 2.

I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Mark Ruskell MSP.