Dear Mark Ruskell MSP

I am writing in support of your Proposal for a Members' Bill on 20mph zones. I am responding as an individual member of the public.

I fully support your proposal to replace the 30mph default speed limit on restricted roads with a 20mph limit. The recent implementation of 20mph zones in Edinburgh has made the streets nicer to walk and cycle on.

This proposal is the best way to deliver on its aims and on Scottish Government policy, which supports 20mph zones in residential areas. Currently local authorities must embark on an expensive, time consuming process to change the limit which can yield patchwork results, and also delays implementation. 30mph should be made the exception rather than the rule.

The proposal will make our streets safer, and therefore will unlock the potential for higher rates of walking and cycling, leading to modal shift and lower overall levels of air pollution and carbon emissions from the transport sector. A car overtaking at 20mph is only travelling 5-10mph faster than a bike, rather than 15-20mph faster, which makes a huge difference. There is also evidence that 20mph zones encourage smoother driving and therefore fewer emissions, particularly of NOx and PM from diesel cars.

A combination of advertising, signage, and police enforcement should be used to maximise compliance. Traffic calming measures such as speed humps should be avoided where possible due to their potential to cause stop/start driving. They may also cause erratic driving from motorists trying to dodge them.

The proposal has the potential to create financial savings for Scotland and in particular, for local authorities. The current model is inefficient. A change of the default limit would require just one Scotland-wide change and associated campaign rather than individual councils having to go through relevant Traffic Regulation Orders, launching targeted campaigns, etc.

Safer streets will make for more pleasant and socially cohesive urban environments with potential benefits to local businesses, happier residents, and more thriving communities. Fewer road casualties, the potential increases in walking and cycling, and the potential reductions in pollution will lead to a healthier and more active society, with associated cost savings to the NHS.

30% of people don’t have access to a car, and this is higher in urban areas, but yet our streetscapes our dominated by cars. Evidence also shows that people living in deprived communities are more likely to suffer in road crashes, so making streets safer will contribute to a more equal society.

I believe that the proposed bill can be delivered sustainably and without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impacts.

Thank you for considering my response.

Yours sincerely,

My response can be published without my name

I am happy to be contacted in relation to this submission

By submitting my response to Mark Ruskell MSP’s office, I understand that it will be shared with the Scottish Parliament Non-Governmental Bills Unit