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. Scottish Government policy already supports 20 mph zones in built up areas, but since they are expensive and time consuming to implement, implementation has been only patchy. The area where I live is a patchwork of 20 and 30 mph zones, for no obvious reason. This patchwork also makes it harder for drivers to remain aware of the speed limit. A default of 20 mph in built up areas would be simpler, more consistent and less confusing.

The proposal will make our streets safer. Pedestrian fatalities at 20 mph are far lower than at 30. Safer streets will have many knock on benefits. One is that it will allow children to reclaim their streets as play spaces and encourage active, outdoor play. In the area where I live there are many young families and traffic speed is a significant factor in leading people to keep their children inside. Safer streets will also 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. There is also evidence that 20 mph zones encourage smoother driving and therefore fewer emissions, particularly of NOx and PM from diesel cars.

I do not see any disadvantage with the proposal.

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 and damage to cars.

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.

Thirty percent of people don’t have access to a car and yet our streetscapes our dominated by cars. Evidence also shows that people living in poorer communities like my own are more likely to suffer in road crashes and suffer disproportionately from air pollution, so making streets safer will contribute to a more equal society.

There is no negative impact of the Bill on equality.

I strongly 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.

Kind regards

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.