RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

RESTRICTED ROADS (20 MPH SPEED LIMIT) (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM CYCLING UK SCOTLAND

Cycling UK Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. Cycling UK Scotland is part of Cycling UK, the national charity representing the interests of cyclists across the UK. Our response has been formatted to set out our answers to the questions as they are presented in the survey.

1. Do you support the proposed reduction in the default speed limit on most urban and residential streets in Scotland from 30mph to 20mph?

Cycling UK Scotland fully support this proposal.

2. Do you think reducing the default speed limit on most urban and residential streets would enhance road safety?

Cycling UK Scotland believes this proposal will enhance road safety for a number of reasons, these include:

Our members, along with anybody else using a bicycle on Scotland’s roads are of course at some risk of being involved in an incident with a motor vehicle. At lower speeds drivers have more time to react to these incidents however they occur and can take action to avoid a collision. At 20mph, the average stopping distance is 12 metres, rising to 23 metres at 30mph according to the UK Highway Code. In addition as the bill itself states, the severity of injuries is reduced where these occur at lower speeds.

3. Do you think the reducing the default speed limit on most urban and residential streets would have a positive or negative impact on you or your organisation?

A speed limit reduction could only have a positive outcome, not only for the pragmatic safety reasons noted above, but by changing the nature and physical dynamics of our streets. An additional benefit of lower speeds limits comes from the perception of safety, how people ‘feel’ on our streets. If it is assumed streets are about moving and facilitating people, and not only about people who are inside motor vehicles, then streets become inclusive places people can choose to be, rather than attend only for the reason for getting something or as a way of moving onto to somewhere else. Arguably, one reason out-of-town shopping centres are popular is because once people are out of their cars they enter an environment free of motor traffic, and all of the implied threat and disruption to their routine this can bring. The out of town shopping experience; public, safe and busy with people is something that should be nearer the normal situation within our urban street environment.

Other benefits will come from more people likely to choose walking and cycling on our streets, meaning better health, a reduction in illnesses such as heart disease,
sickness due to poor air quality, diabetes and a reduction in the burden on NHS Scotland due to less severe injuries from collisions and a generally healthier population.

Lower speed limits may also help our local town centres and their businesses. The nature of retail is changing and a reduced speed limit may help by promoting our currently suffering town centres as a place to visit and dwell, and not just shop. As the charity Living Streets has highlighted in their report The Pedestrian Pound, the introduction of 20mph limits has widespread benefits that pays for themselves many times over.

4. If the Bill is passed, should its roll-out be accompanied by a national awareness campaign?

This appears to be a sensible measure and any campaign should be evidence based. It should include making the public aware of the benefits of rebalancing our streets in favour of all people and not just those in motor vehicles, as well as the overall social cost savings such a scheme will bring.

5. Should Police Scotland be required to take additional enforcement action, over and above that used to enforce the current 30mph limit, following the introduction of a 20mph limit on most urban and residential streets in Scotland?

It is likely that a vigorous enforcement campaign would be required, and this should be expected to be resourced as such.

6. If the Bill is agreed, how long should local authorities be given to complete the roll-out of the new 20mph limit?

Given the current challenging funding environment for local authorities in Scotland it would be sensible to allow two years for implementation of this scheme. However, Cycling UK Scotland feels such legislation should be supported with the funding necessary for its roll-out and implementation in the first instance.

7. Do you have any comments on the impact that the Bill might have on the following issues:

Human rights or equalities for any particular group of people

Sustainable development

Island, rural or remote communities

Such a bill, and the effects of the implementation of this bill can only be a positive influence on all of these subjects.

8. Is there anything else that should be included, or removed, from the Bill?

No.