

## Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

### Restricted Roads (20mph Speed Limit) (Scotland) Bill: Key Themes Arising from the Online Survey

#### Introduction

On Friday 9 November 2018, the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee issued a [call for views](#) on the Restricted Roads (20mph Speed Limit) (Scotland) Bill. This was accompanied by an online survey, which offered a convenient way for people interested in the Bill to make their views known to the Committee. The survey posed nine substantive questions and was open for responses until Monday 28 January 2019. This briefing highlights key themes emerging from the survey responses.

#### Understanding this Analysis

There are a number of issues that should be considered when reading this analysis:

- **Respondees were self-selecting:** Generally, most people and organisations responding to the survey are likely to have an existing interest in road safety and transport. This means that the views expressed may not match those of the population as a whole and should not be read as such.
- **Complexity:** While the goal of the Bill is straightforward, it proposes amendments to a complex system of legislation. This complexity may have acted as a barrier to responses from individuals and organisations that do not have access to technical expertise. SPICe produced a briefing on the proposals, but this is unlikely to have been seen by many respondents.
- **Stakeholders:** The proposals in the Bill are of interest to a wide range of stakeholders, with often competing priorities and views. Unanimity of views on any issue is unlikely, which will be reflected in the analysis.
- **Timescales:** Given the high number of responses received, and relatively limited time available for analysis, this paper can only focus on identifying “key themes” emerging from the responses.

#### What are “key themes”?

In addition to presenting a graphical summary of responses to the survey questions, this analysis aims to highlight key issues and concerns about the proposals in the Restricted Roads (20mph Speed Limit) (Scotland) Bill raised by multiple respondents to the online survey. It is not intended to be a comprehensive summary of every issue raised, but to outline matters of concern to a number of survey respondents.

It is worth noting that this is only one of several strands of evidence gathering on the Restricted Roads (20mph Speed Limit) (Scotland) Bill being undertaken by the

Committee, with views also being gathered through meetings with stakeholders, written submissions and oral evidence sessions.

### Who responded?

A total of 6585 responses were received, 98% of which were submitted by individuals. A more detailed breakdown of responses by category of respondent is set out in the table below.

Category of respondent	Number of responses
Individual	6453
Community Council	24
NGO	50
Business	42
Public transport operator	3
Universities and Colleges	9
Local Authority, Regional Transport Partnerships and local authority joint boards	5

The NGO category includes a wide range of bodies, principally local and national campaign groups, resident’s groups, school parent councils, local development trusts and a number of membership organisations and professional bodies.

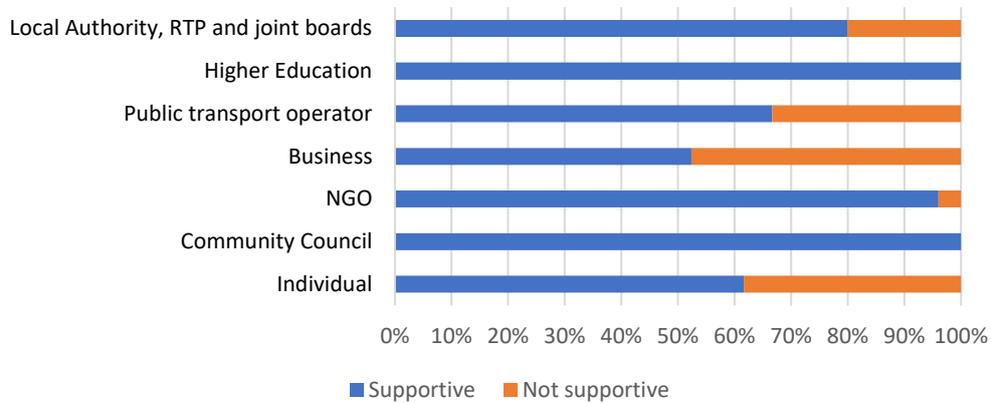
### Views on the proposed reduction of the default speed limit on restricted roads from 30mph to 20mph

The first survey question asked: “Do you support the proposed reduction in the default speed limit on most urban and residential streets in Scotland from 30mph to 20mph?” Offering “Yes” and “No” as possible responses. Responses, broken down by category of respondent, are set out in the table below:

Group	Yes	No
Individual	3977	2476
Community Council	24	0
NGO	48	2
Business	22	20
Public transport operator	2	1
Universities and Colleges	9	0
Local Authority, Regional Transport Partnerships and local authority joint boards	4	1

The proportion of respondents answering either “Yes” or “No” to this question, by category of respondent, is illustrated in the graph below:

### Proportion of respondents supportive/not supportive of lowering default speed limit to 20mph, by category of respondent



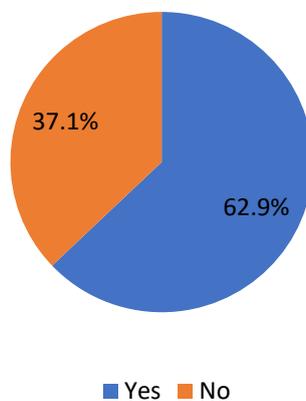
### Option to skip further questions

After completing the first question, survey respondents were offered the chance to jump straight to the end of the survey, without answering any further questions. 1046 (15.9%) of respondents chose to jump to the end of the survey.

### Road Safety

Respondents who chose to answer additional questions were then asked “Do you think reducing the default speed limit on most urban and residential streets would enhance road safety?” 3486 said “yes” and 2057 said “no”, as illustrated in the pie chart below:

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



Respondents were also asked to briefly outline the reasons for their answer, with 4300 making some additional comments. The key points raised by those in favour of reducing the default speed limit to 20mph include:

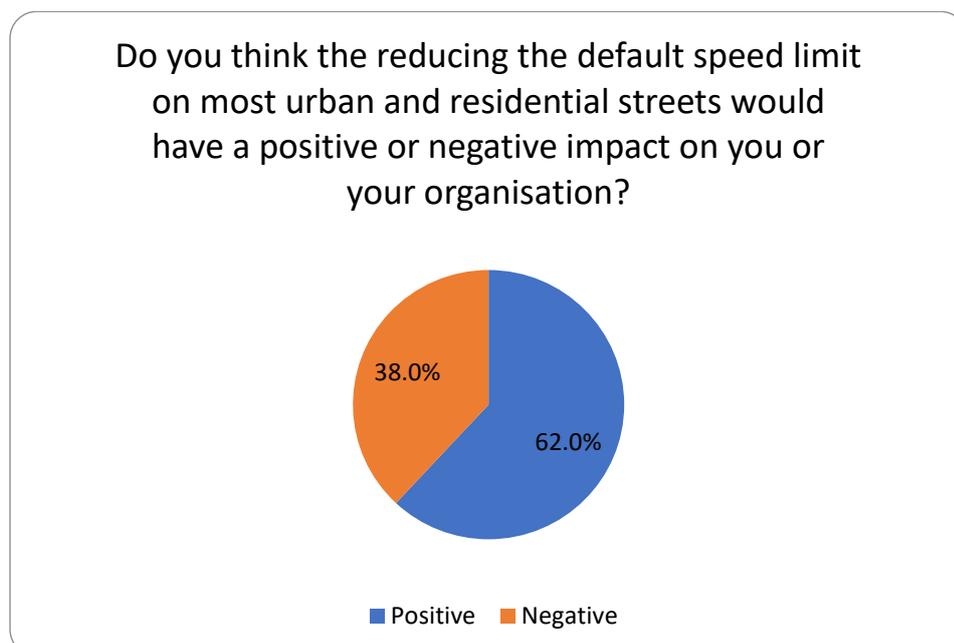
- Research shows that the likelihood of collisions falls as vehicle speeds reduce
- Research shows that the severity of pedestrian and cyclist injury/likelihood of fatalities falls as vehicle speeds reduce
- Research shows that fear of road danger, including fear caused by high vehicle speeds, is a key reason why people choose not to walk or cycle
- Reducing vehicle speeds will encourage people to switch to sustainable modes of travel, particularly walking and cycling

The key issues raised by those in favour of retaining the default 30mph limit include:

- The majority of drivers will not obey a 20mph speed limit
- The 20mph limit will not be enforced, leading to a general flouting of the law
- The lower speed limit will increase driver frustration, leading to more dangerous overtaking manoeuvres and “road rage”
- Drivers will need to focus on their speedometer rather than the road ahead, increasing the possibility of collisions
- The lower limit will lull pedestrians and cyclists into thinking roads are safe, meaning they pay less attention to traffic – which will lead to more collisions

### Personal and organisational impact

Respondents were asked “Do you think that reducing the default speed limit on most urban and residential streets would have a positive or negative impact on you or your organisation?” 3314 thought it would have a positive impact and 2035 a negative impact, as illustrated in the pie chart below:



Respondents were asked to briefly outline the reasons for their answer, with 3668 making some supporting comments. The key points raised by those who thought reducing the default speed limit to 20mph would have a positive effect include:

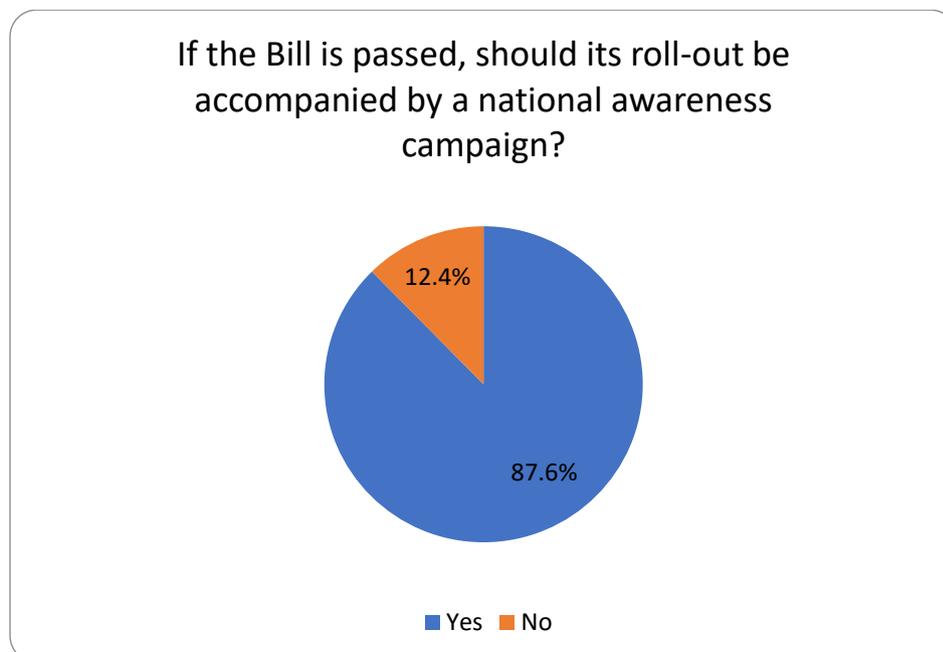
- Streets will be safer for children
- Streets will be safer for cyclists and pedestrians
- Streets will be safer for older and disabled people
- Streets will feel calmer and more pleasant, with reduced vehicle noise and air pollution

The key issues raised by those who thought reducing the default speed limit to 20mph would have a negative impact include:

- Slower speeds will increase traffic congestion
- Journey times will be longer, which may have an impact on businesses meeting deadlines
- Driving at 20mph uses more fuel and will lead to increased emissions
- There would be more tailgating, poor driver behaviour and “road rage”

### **National Awareness Campaign**

Respondents were asked, assuming the Bill was passed, whether its roll-out should be accompanied by a national awareness campaign. 4777 respondents thought that there should be such a campaign, while 674 were opposed to such an idea, as shown in the pie chart below:



Respondents were also asked “Why do you think this and do you have any suggestions on the nature of such a campaign?” 3330 respondents made comments on this issue.

Two main points were raised by those who opposed the idea of a national awareness campaign, namely:

- The Bill should not be passed, the default speed limit should remain at 30mph
- Any awareness campaign would be a waste of taxpayer’s money, which would be better invested elsewhere

Those in favour of a national awareness campaign considered that:

- A campaign is essential to ensure everyone is aware of the new speed limit
- Without a campaign, drivers could claim ignorance of the new speed limit

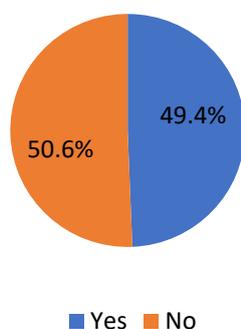
Ideas for a national awareness campaign include:

- The campaign should be clear and unambiguous, focusing on the fact that 20mph is the new, legally enforceable limit
- The campaign should utilise multiple channels, including social media, billboards, mail shots to all households, television and radio
- The campaign should be positive - clearly setting out the road safety and quality of life benefits from introducing the new limit
- The campaign will need to be long running, similar to that for drink driving
- The campaign will need to be backed up by robust, ongoing enforcement

## **Enforcement**

Respondents were asked, assuming the Bill was passed, whether Police Scotland should be required to take additional enforcement action following the reduction in the default speed limit to 20mph, over and above what currently takes place on restricted roads. Views on this were almost evenly split, with 2679 respondents in favour of additional enforcement and 2748 against, as illustrated in the pie chart below:

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?



Respondents were also asked why they either supported additional action, or no new action. Those who supported additional enforcement action were also asked to say what form they think that should take.

Key issues raised by those opposed to additional enforcement action include:

- Police Scotland should focus its scarce resources on more important issues
- It is simply a means of making money from motorists
- Enforcement should be concentrated on roads outside of schools

Key issues raised by those in favour of additional enforcement action include:

- Without additional enforcement, the new speed limit would be widely flouted
- The full benefits of the lower speed limit will only be realised with additional enforcement, which will produce greater compliance than currently happens in areas with 20mph limits

Ideas relating to additional enforcement include:

- Significant roll-out and use of urban average speed cameras
- Use of covert speed cameras
- Use of advisory, vehicle activated, speed limit signs
- On-the spot fines for drivers exceeding the new limit
- Enforcement should involve a short introductory period where warnings are given for minor breaches of the new limit (the suggested period for warnings ranging from a few weeks to a few months), followed by robust enforcement using fixed penalty notices and court action, where necessary

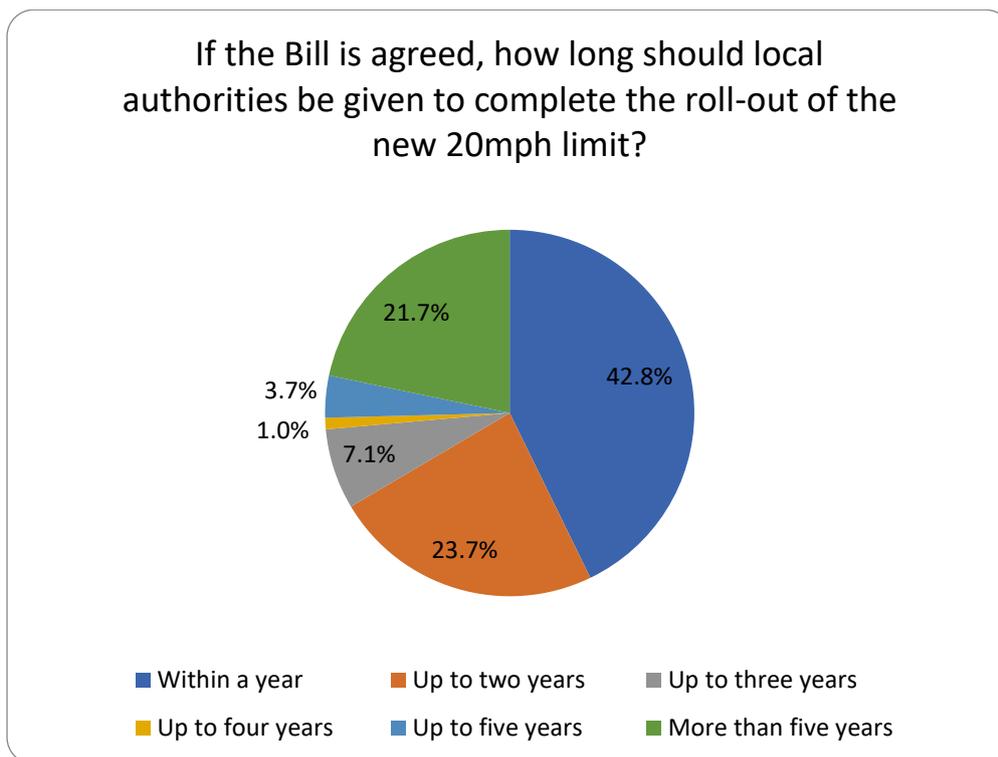
- The current enforcement of urban speed limits is insufficient, any increase would be welcome

### Roll-out period for the reduced speed limit

Respondents were asked, assuming the Bill was passed, how long a period should elapse before the new limit came into force, with six possible answers – as set out in the table below.

Time period	Number of responses
Within a year	2289
Up to two years	1266
Up to three years	380
Up to four years	54
Up to five years	198
More than five years	1161

The proportion in favour of each option is illustrated in the pie chart below:



Respondents were also asked to explain the thinking behind their answer, with 3253 providing some comment. Comments generally fell into two broad categories, those who favoured implementation as quickly as possible (the 66.5% who favoured implementation within two years) and those who favoured as long a period as possible, or no implementation at all (the 25.4% who favoured implementation up to five years or longer).

Those in favour of implementation as quickly as possible argued that:

- The quicker the new limit is introduced, the quicker the benefits will be realised
- There is no practical reason why it should take more than one to two years to roll-out the necessary signage and undertake a public awareness campaign
- A lengthy delay between the passage of the Act and implementation of the new limit could lead to driver confusion about the appropriate speed limit

Those who favoured an implementation period longer than four years, or no change to the speed limit, argued that:

- The speed limit should not be reduced
- Local authority budgets are already overstretched and this should not be a priority
- It will take years for local authorities to plan for and implement the change
- Given ingrained habits, driver education about the new speed limit will take years

### **Impact on significant policy areas**

Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on the likely impact of the proposals in the Bill on three significant issues. Key themes raised in response to these questions are summarised below:

#### **Human rights or equalities for any particular group:**

##### ***Positive impact on human rights:***

- Research shows that disadvantaged groups, young people and ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected by traffic collisions and vehicle generated air pollution. Reducing vehicle speeds will have a significant positive impact on these groups.
- Reduced vehicle speeds will help elderly and disabled people walk safely within their neighbourhoods, particularly allowing them to safely cross the road.
- Reduced vehicle speeds will help children exercise their right to play outdoors.
- Disadvantaged groups, women and ethnic minorities are less likely to hold a driving licence or have access to a car. Reducing vehicle speeds will assist these particular groups by making the urban environment more welcoming.
- Reduced vehicle speeds would increase rates of cycling by women and other groups currently put off by higher vehicle speeds.

### ***Negative impact on human rights:***

- Reducing the speed limit would infringe the human rights of drivers, particularly professional drivers, to travel without undue interference from the state.

### **Sustainable development:**

#### ***Positive impact on sustainable development:***

- Reduced vehicle speeds help smooth traffic flow, reducing air and noise pollution.
- Reduced vehicle speeds make walking and cycling more pleasant, helping to increase modal share for sustainable modes.
- Reduced vehicle speeds will encourage the development of more walking and cycling infrastructure, as more people choose to travel using these modes.

#### ***Negative impact on sustainable development:***

- Reduced vehicle speed limits lead to longer journey times, more congestion and increased vehicle emissions.

### **Island, remote or rural communities:**

#### ***Positive impact on island, remote or rural communities:***

- Reducing, often very high, vehicle speeds through villages on long-distance routes would produce a road safety benefit for residents and visitors.
- Slower vehicle speeds would be of particular benefit to residents of places without pavements.
- There would be little practical impact, as the proposal applies to urban areas.

#### ***Negative impact on island, remote or rural communities:***

- Reduced vehicle speeds would cause vehicles to take longer to pass through villages, increasing air pollution.
- Reducing vehicle speeds would extend long-distance journey times, making remote areas more difficult to access and have a negative impact on rural businesses.

### **Anything else?**

Finally, respondents were asked if there was anything else they wanted to see either added to, or removed from, the Bill. 1182 suggestions were made. Given the limited scope of the Restricted Roads (20mph Speed Limit) (Scotland) Bill, the great majority of suggested additions fall outwith its scope – meaning they cannot be

included. The only key issue suggested for inclusion that falls within the scope of the Bill is for the Scottish Government to commit funds to implement the proposals in the Bill and increased speed limit enforcement.

Key requests for additions to the Bill, which fall outwith its scope, include:

- Introduce a presumed liability regime for traffic collisions. This would mean that following a collision between a motorist and a cyclist or pedestrian, the motorist would be presumed to be liable for injury, damages or loss, unless they can demonstrate otherwise. The same would apply in cases where cyclists collide with pedestrians.
- Introduce a workplace parking levy.
- Reduce the default speed limit for single carriageway rural roads to 50mph.
- Increase default motorway speed limit to 80mph.
- Physical traffic calming measures should be used to reduce speeds, particularly in accident black spots.

Requests for deletions, or amendments reducing the scope of the Bill include:

- The Bill should be withdrawn
- 20mph limits should not apply at night, when roads are quiet
- 20mph limits should only apply outside of schools

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