RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

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

SUBMISSION FROM SCARBTER HARBOUR TRUST

Scrabster Harbour Trust is generally supportive that 20 mph speed limits should be applied in the right environment.

However, The Trust would question whether the proposed legislation and the policy direction would benefit our current situation.

Scrabster Harbour is a busy and growing commercial port on the North coast of Caithness catering for a variety of sectors including ferry, fishing, energy, cruise, general cargoes and leisure. The A9 Trunk Road starts in Scrabster and a short stretch runs through the port. The speed limit on this stretch is 30 mph.

The Trust Board has been concerned for some time regarding road safety on this stretch. Traffic includes residents, members of the public, customers of the local hotel, pub and restaurants plus harbour traffic including the ferry vehicles. There are also three junctions along the stretch were traffic joins or leaves the A9.

Safety would be improved if the speed limit was reduced from 30 mph to 20 mph.

In the past we have made representations to Police Scotland, Highland Council and Transport Scotland. The general response has been disappointing. As the collision / accident history for our location is low, we were advised that any request for a speed restriction would not be considered for several years, and that the process could be difficult and protracted.

This policy approach based on accident statistics appears flawed and not in line with risk management principles where the probability and impacts are assessed and appropriate mitigation put in place.

The Harbour Trust would wish for the committee to be aware of our situation and consider whether there are wider circumstances to be taken account when considering speed restrictions.