



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

**Wednesday 20 February 2019**

**Session 5**



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**RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE**

**6<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2019, Session 5**

**CONVENER**

\*Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*Peter Chapman (North East Scotland) (Con)

\*John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green)

\*Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con)

\*Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)

\*John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)

\*Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD)

\*Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab)

\*Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)

\*Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab)

Eric Bridgstock

Neil Greig (IAM RoadSmart)

Tony Kenmuir (Scottish Taxi Federation)

Martin Reid (Road Haulage Association)

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)

Paul White (Confederation of Passenger Transport)

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Steve Farrell

**LOCATION**

The James Clerk Maxwell Room (CR4)



# Scottish Parliament

## Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

Wednesday 20 February 2019

*[The Convener opened the meeting in private at 08:31]*

10:22

*Meeting suspended until 10:46 and continued in public thereafter.*

### Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Scotland) Bill: Stage 1

**The Convener (Edward Mountain):** Good morning and welcome to the sixth meeting in 2019 of the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee. I ask everyone to ensure that mobile phones are on silent.

Agenda item 3 is the Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Scotland) Bill. This is our second evidence-taking session on the bill, and we will take evidence from motoring, road and passenger organisations. I welcome Neil Greig, policy and research director, IAM RoadSmart; Paul White, deputy director, Confederation of Passenger Transport Scotland; Tony Kenmuir, chairman, Scottish Taxi Federation; Martin Reid, policy director, Scotland and Northern Ireland, Road Haulage Association; and Eric Bridgstock, independent road safety researcher, on behalf of the Alliance of British Drivers.

For the benefit of those of you who have not given evidence before, I should say that members will ask a series of questions and, if you would like to come in, you should try to catch my eye. I will not necessarily get you in on every single question—there are quite a lot of you—but I will do my utmost to do so. Do not touch any of the buttons in front of you as they will be operated for you. Keep your eye on me once you start talking because, sometimes, when you get passionately involved in a subject, you may wander on for a bit, so if you see me wagging my pen, it probably means that you ought to come to the end. The pen can fly out of my hand to attract your attention if you are not paying attention. Hopefully, you will all get a chance to come in.

Before we go any further, I invite members to declare any relevant interests.

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** I draw attention to an entry in my register of interests, which shows that I am a

member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists—now known as IAM RoadSmart.

**The Convener:** As no other members have made a declaration, we will move on to the first question, from Gail Ross.

**Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** We have some of your written evidence, but could you briefly outline whether you support the move from 30mph to 20mph on restricted roads, and give us the reasoning behind your answer?

**Neil Greig (IAM RoadSmart):** We do not support the bill because of the blanket nature of its intention to change everything in an unfocused way. We are not against a 20mph limit where it is required—that limit is very popular on roads outside schools. A few years ago, we did a survey of several thousand drivers, and 49 per cent said that they could not support 20mph becoming the new 30mph; 21 per cent said that they could support that; and a big chunk in the middle, about 20 per cent, said that they did not know yet.

There is no huge anti-20mph feeling among drivers, but the approach in the bill is too broad brush. If you have an issue with a street and you want to change behaviour, you have to change the look and feel of that street. The evidence from the Department for Transport and from various studies is quite clear: just putting up signs—Edinburgh is perhaps an example of that—does not have a huge impact on behaviour.

A number of studies have come out recently, such as the Atkins study down south, all saying basically the same thing: a 20mph limit without changing the character of a road does not really change driver behaviour. We would rather see a targeted approach, not a blanket approach.

**Paul White (Confederation of Passenger Transport):** The CPT's membership is divided on the issue. I think that all our members are supportive of the bill's aims. For some members, particularly urban operators, getting to 20mph, never mind 30mph, is aspirational. Other members are worried about the impacts on their business, particularly in marginal services, where an increase in journey times could lead to reduced patronage and make a service non-viable.

There is a bit of a mix of views, but we support the bill's aims. Perhaps elements can be changed—either in the supplementary guidance or in the bill itself—that would make the legislation more palatable to more of our members.

**Tony Kenmuir (Scottish Taxi Federation):** I speak for just over 23,000 public hire taxi drivers. I have not seen a single response in favour of the bill. Having said that, I highlight that the responses

are generally supportive of 20mph where it is appropriate.

The feeling is—I imagine that this will be a very consistent message—that the blanket approach is likely to cause a lack of compliance. There is a likelihood of increased compliance if the 20mph limit is applied specifically where required.

**Martin Reid (Road Haulage Association):** Our position is very similar to that of the other panellists. Our members' response has been along the lines of objecting to having a blanket approach. Nobody has a problem in principle with 20mph speed limits, if they are used to protect the vulnerable and where there are known hot spots and problem areas. It is the blanket nature that people find unpalatable rather than the 20mph limit itself.

**Eric Bridgstock:** I make it clear that I am here today because the ABD has not got anyone who could be here today. I am an independent in this field. ABD contacted me last week on the basis that it knew that I had done work on this issue in the past.

Neither ABD nor I support 20mph limits generally on the basis that there is no evidence at all that that makes anything safer from a casualty point of view or in relation to collisions. In fact, it makes things worse, because people are lulled into a false sense of security on the road if they are walking or whatever. There are lots of other reasons in addition to that, which I am sure that we will go into later.

**Stewart Stevenson:** I have just heard almost every witness use the term "blanket nature" in relation to the ban. In fact, the bill applies to "restricted roads". In other words, it does not apply to anything that is an A or a B road; essentially, it applies to the housing estates and the side roads off main roads. I wonder whether, in making the comment "blanket nature", the witnesses are talking about what the bill says, or whether they are making a more general objection to a universal 20mph limit in all urban areas. I want that to be clear, particularly in relation to IAM's survey. Was that in the context of this bill's limited objective or in the context of, basically, all roads in urban areas?

**Neil Greig:** It was in the context of all roads in urban areas. The survey question was:

"do you agree or disagree that all current 30mph limits should be replaced with a 20mph limit?"

**Stewart Stevenson:** Right. That is what I thought.

**Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD):** I think that Stewart Stevenson is slightly misdirecting the panel. The bill applies not only to urban roads but to all our villages in our country

areas. A 30mph road through a village is not affected, but every road and lane off that road would be a restricted road. It applies not only to urban areas but to rural areas

**Stewart Stevenson:** Correct.

**Gail Ross:** It is correct that the bill applies only to restricted roads. Some local authorities already have 20mph limits outside schools and in certain housing estates and areas like that, as has been mentioned by panellists. Variable speed limits at different times of the day were mentioned in our previous evidence session on the bill. Is that possible, or is it just confusing?

**Paul White:** I will answer with our experience of bus lanes. If speeds are varied, it muddies the water. We have lobbied in Edinburgh for set times—for example, 7 am to 7 pm, seven days a week—so that people know that the time is set. If you are looking for a mindset change, it would help if you make it as easy as possible to comply. If you were to set different times, I worry that it would add to confusion and create a lack of compliance.

**Tony Kenmuir:** A 24/7/365 approach is possibly more of an issue for us, because there are taxi drivers across the nation driving at all times of the day and night. Driving at 20mph on a dual carriageway with no other vehicle in sight for a mile in front and a mile behind does not make any sense to anybody. We are in favour of a timed approach. However, I am inclined to agree with the point about bus lanes. Nobody uses them at any time—everybody moving to the left because a clock has changed does not happen and is never likely to.

The signage in the RAC report looks very practical and is a much better solution than a 24/7/365 approach to 20mph limits.

**Neil Greig:** We can get hung up on fixed speed limits. Other parts of Europe use variable limits; France, for example, varies the speed limit with the weather. The issue is that roads should be self-explaining. If you have to put in extra technology to explain why the limit is there, you have lost the narrative. It should be clear to people why they should do that speed at that time, whether it is because pedestrians are there or because of the nature of the road. That goes back to the concept that there will be an issue in convincing people about a change in speed limit if the character of the road has not changed. In addition, the technology would be very expensive.

**The Convener:** Eric Bridgstock wanted to come in.

**Eric Bridgstock:** Drivers need to be told about hazards—such as a school—but they do not need to be told what speed to go. I have seen no

evidence that a 20mph limit is positive. It makes things worse from a safety point of view. Signs can come on to say “Beware: there is a school here”—or a hospital or whatever—but a change in the speed limit would be a negative.

**Gail Ross:** Other members will ask about safety. I will continue this line of questions. Local authorities have the power to issue a traffic regulation order to turn a 30mph limit into a 20mph limit. Would an alternative approach be to streamline the system to make that easier to do now?

**Martin Reid:** One of our concerns with the TRO system—even in its current form—is that local authorities face resource shortages across the board. Adding this suggestion to what are already troubled waters could mean that authorities take the easiest options because of resource constraints and just take a blanket approach rather than looking at individual roads. Anything that could mitigate that would be very welcome, probably at the next stage of the bill when more detail will be forthcoming. If the proposal is to be dealt with under the TRO system that already exists, we would have concerns about the ability of local authorities to carry that out.

**Gail Ross:** If local authorities have the ability to carry it out at the moment, surely making the process easier and quicker would be good for them, because it would take less time and resource.

**Martin Reid:** Why would changing the process make it quicker? They already have an established system.

**The Convener:** I think that the point that the deputy convener is making is that the process to reduce the limit to 20mph is quite laborious. The suggestion is that, if that process was quicker and easier, it would make the requirement for a blanket 20mph limit superfluous, because authorities could quickly and easily target the areas in question. Tony Kenmuir, do you agree with that point?

11:00

**Tony Kenmuir:** It seems logical. I am not clear what the alternative to the TRO process would be.

**Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con):** I want to follow up the TRO issue, which is important. If the current system means that you have to apply for a TRO to reduce the limit on a road to 20mph, presumably the same would be true in the obverse—if you wanted to increase the limit to 30mph. Do you have a view on whether there would be an additional or a reduced workload if you did it the other way round?

**Paul White:** I refer to the evidence that you received in your previous evidence session. The

quantity of roads that you would be looking to change to 30mph limit roads would be slightly less, so the workload would be slightly less as a percentage.

On TROs, I support streamlining as long as it does not affect any consultation with key stakeholders who are impacted by a TRO. If the bill is enacted, there should be a period of time before measures are introduced when you consult stakeholders, such as the people on this panel, to decide which roads should retain the 30mph status, and the relevant TROs should be in place before the 20mph zones are introduced.

**Neil Greig:** The feedback that I am getting from local authorities is that the cumulative effect of everything that is happening is causing them a resource issue. If measures on pavement parking, low-emission zones and the bill all came in at the same time, they would struggle. If the bill goes through, we would like to see a streamlined process, which would make things easier for local authorities, given all the other things that they have to do day to day, such as fixing potholes.

**Jamie Greene:** Indeed. Presumably there would need to be a mapping exercise to work out which roads people wanted to change.

Many reasons have been given to explain the rationale behind the bill. In responding to my question, I ask you not to focus on air quality, journey times or congestion, because my colleagues will ask other questions about those issues. I will focus specifically on road safety, which is perhaps at the nub of this.

What are your views on the effect of the reduction from 30mph to 20mph on road safety for all road users—drivers and vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians?

**Eric Bridgstock:** I hinted earlier that the whole thrust of the 20mph approach is to encourage people to feel safer whether they are walking, cycling or whatever. That is less the case for drivers—they just have to look at their speedometer to make sure that they are under 20mph, although the evidence is that the actual speeds do not change very much; we are talking about speeds of 1mph less.

The more you encourage people to feel safer, the less care they take. It is evident in any 20mph zone that I have driven through—certainly in St Albans where I live—that people wander across the road without even looking, despite there being pelican crossings, because they are encouraged to feel safe. The evidence seems to be that casualty numbers go up. Manchester cancelled the next stage of its 20mph roll-out because the casualty reductions in the 20mph zones were less than those in the remaining 30mph zones.

**Jamie Greene:** Do you have a view on what percentage of accidents or collisions are caused by excessive speed? Do you have any statistics on that?

**Eric Bridgstock:** What do you mean by excessive speed?

**Jamie Greene:** Above the speed limit.

**Eric Bridgstock:** I do not have an answer to that.

**Jamie Greene:** Okay. It would be helpful to get one.

**Eric Bridgstock:** I point out that speed above the speed limit cannot in itself cause anything. I hinted in my paper that changing the speed limit to a lower or higher limit does not automatically make the road more or less safe.

**Jamie Greene:** What in your view is a safe speed? Is it an arbitrary number that the Government dictates to drivers, or is there some other method of determining it?

**Eric Bridgstock:** A safe speed is whatever is appropriate to the conditions. A safe speed on the motorway in fog might be 30mph even though the speed limit is 70mph. A safe speed in a 20mph zone could presumably be 30mph, given that it was previously 30mph.

**Stewart Stevenson:** I want to pursue what Mr Bridgstock said. He is essentially suggesting that if we make people safer, they will act more recklessly. I first heard that argument in the 1960s, when measures to make fitting seat belts in cars compulsory were introduced. It is generally acknowledged that fitting seat belts in cars made everyone feel safer. Is there evidence that that led to an increase in accidents and in reckless or careless driving?

**The Convener:** We are back to Eric Bridgstock.

**Eric Bridgstock:** I am not sure of the evidence, but I am certainly aware of the arguments. One argument is that putting a spike in the middle of the steering wheel would mean that everybody drove a lot more safely, because it is a clear sign that they would be hurt if an incident occurred.

**Stewart Stevenson:** Forgive me, but you cannot turn the argument upside down to suit your purposes—which, I hasten to add, I fundamentally disagree with. I asked a simple question. I and others argue that the most important contribution to safety and to preventing injury and death on our roads has come from the introduction of compulsory seat belts, which made everybody feel safer. I simply ask whether that major initiative to make people feel safer caused them to drive more recklessly.

**Eric Bridgstock:** I suspect that that has been the situation in some cases.

**Stewart Stevenson:** You suspect that in some cases, but you adduce no evidence of any kind whatever to sustain your argument that making people feel safer makes them more reckless. I will leave it there, convener.

**Eric Bridgstock:** Can I respond?

**The Convener:** You can respond.

**Eric Bridgstock:** I started driving when seat belts were being made compulsory, so I have always driven with a seat belt, except when I hired an MGA in Scotland in 2012—it had no seat belts, no power steering and no anything. For the first few miles, I felt unsafe to be driving without a seat belt. I was careful, but it was an old car.

**Jamie Greene:** I say with respect to Mr Stevenson that we are taking evidence not on whether seat belts are good but on whether reducing speed limits to 20mph would improve road safety. Does the panel have views on whether the approach that the bill takes would have an effect on road safety, including drivers' perceptions?

**Neil Greig:** The evidence is growing all the time that the difference would be small. A 20mph speed limit does not make much difference to safety—there is no huge increase in safety—because the roads that are involved were often safe before the limit was reduced. To change the number of people who are killed on our roads, rural roads should be targeted. Few pedestrians and cyclists are killed in our towns and cities, although some are, and that is clearly to be avoided.

From the Atkins study that we have talked about and all the other studies, it is difficult to pick out safety benefits, if they are the key thing that is being looked for. Studies now show that speeds are coming down by 1mph or 2mph, but the reductions are often imperceptible—locals do not notice them. A recent speed compliance survey by the Department for Transport showed that 81 per cent of drivers in 20mph zones were breaking the speed limit, so such zones have a huge compliance issue.

We need more research and evidence, but there is a growing body of evidence that 20mph zones are not having the intended impact on road safety or—unfortunately—on encouraging active travel. We do not see a 20mph speed limit creating a huge improvement in road safety; it does not make much difference, because many of the roads that are involved were safe before.

**Paul White:** In simple terms, being hit by a bus or a car that is travelling at 20mph is less damaging than being hit by a vehicle that is going at 30mph, when the braking distance is longer. I

completely agree that the evidence is inconclusive or points to a speed reduction that is not huge, but we are in the early stages and we are looking at schemes that have not operated for very long. If attitudinal change occurs down the line, perhaps speeds will come closer to and ideally be below 20mph, which we hope would bring the safety benefits. The evidence is inconclusive at the moment.

**The Convener:** I call Claudia Beamish.

**Jamie Greene:** Sorry—

**The Convener:** You can finish your questions before I bring in Claudia Beamish.

**Jamie Greene:** Our questions might complement each other. I am keen for the committee to look at the bill as objectively as we can and to take an evidence-based approach to what has happened. Scotland would not be the first place in the world to introduce such speed limits—they have applied in Edinburgh for a reasonable time and have been introduced in other cities and parts of the United Kingdom. Is the panel aware of evidence from what has happened to suggest that accident levels have gone up or down and that safety levels have improved or decreased? Given that the concept is not new, surely we can use the existing evidence to inform our decision.

**The Convener:** Neil Greig is offering to answer.

**Neil Greig:** The evidence is inconclusive, that is the problem. If it was clear, we would throw our weight behind it, but it is inconclusive. We are getting an increasing number of studies, from Portsmouth, Manchester, parts of London and Edinburgh—although we have still to see the long-term benefits in Edinburgh. Lots of studies are being done and the research is coming up with the same thing time and again: the safety benefits are pretty inconclusive.

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** I will build on what Jamie Greene asked, to tease out some more issues around safety, which is obviously very important, wherever the bill goes.

My understanding is that the Atkins report does not come to any substantial conclusions. It has been highlighted that perhaps it is early days, but it is clear from the evidence that the report presents that the wider the 20mph roll-out is, the higher the reduction in casualties. That has been seen in the Brighton case study, which is the area case study in the report that has the highest change in the number of collisions and casualties.

There is a national inconsistency across Scotland in regard to 20mph roll-outs. As I understand it, from the written evidence and from today's evidence, most of the panellists' organisations say that 20mph is appropriate in the

right places. Why then do the people of the Borders, which is in my region, not deserve safer streets when we already have them in Edinburgh?

**The Convener:** Who would like to start on that quite lengthy question?

**Claudia Beamish:** Sorry, but I needed to preface it with the report.

**Tony Kenmuir:** I do not claim to be an expert in road safety; I am an expert in the practicalities of shifting people around from one place to another. However, I was very closely involved in the consultation in Edinburgh and we monitored very closely what happened in the 16 test areas around the city. I think that the reason why evidence of a change in road safety is inconclusive is that there is very little change in driver behaviour and the speed that they are moving at in the first place. In a couple of the areas that were restricted in Edinburgh, the average speed went up a little bit and in some areas, it went down a little bit. The overall effect was to change the speed of the traffic from 21.5 to 20.5mph. In respect of the actual speed at which traffic is moving, I know that a taxi moves on average at about 13mph in the course of a 12-hour shift.

I do not think that anybody would deny the people of the Borders safe streets, but we are talking about the practicalities of the fact that, in the streets around a school when there are lots of parents picking up and dropping off and lots of kid moving around, people generally move quite slowly anyway. Therefore, changing the speed limit from 30 to 20mph when the traffic is moving around at 3 or 4mph is academic. The issue for me across the board, which I think reflects the views of our members, is that changing the speed limit from 30 to 20mph is pretty much an academic exercise, because traffic mostly moves in line with the conditions anyway. That is my point of view.

**Claudia Beamish:** If we take an area where there is a school, once you are in the school zone the speed limit is 20mph, but there are residential streets around about where children are crossing the road and going away from school. Would a 20mph blanket arrangement, apart from in the case of exemptions, not send a clear message that it is an appropriate speed to stick below?

**Tony Kenmuir:** It is a question of paying regard to the reality, and the reality is that the traffic does not get up to 30mph anyway. The signs can be whatever people want them to be, but all the evidence shows that that does not actually change average speeds or driver behaviour. I do not know if that changes people's perceptions.

**Peter Chapman (North East Scotland) (Con):** I will take a different tack and ask about vehicle emissions and air quality. Will they change for the better or for the worse if we move to a blanket

20mph? There are mixed views on whether the move will make emissions better or worse. What impact does the panel think that a move to a default 20mph on restricted roads would have on vehicle emissions and air quality in our towns and cities?

11:15

**Martin Reid:** We have had a look at this and we cannot find any evidence to say that there is a massive difference in emissions. There would be a slight reduction in particulates, because of things such as tyre wear and so on. However, we have not been able to find any evidence that the switch from 30 to 20mph would make any difference or that a truck's emissions would be better or worse.

**Paul White:** I agree with Martin Reid. We have moved from one topic where the evidence is inconclusive to another one where it is rather inconclusive, although Peter Chapman raises a good point about the areas where air quality is a real issue. In those urban corridors, the average speed for buses is far below 20mph. Perhaps if 20mph zones brought a smoother flow of traffic with less acceleration and deceleration and you had a conversation with the council about other measures to help buses, such as priority at the lights to allow buses a smoother journey, that would bring down emissions.

**Martin Reid:** That is a key point—the stop-start nature of congestion is what causes the majority of the problems in that area. The free flow of traffic would make the biggest difference to emissions, rather than a 20 or 30mph speed limit.

**Peter Chapman:** If we go to a 20mph speed limit, would it allow the traffic to flow more freely? We have heard some evidence that on motorways, for instance, if you reduce the speed limit in congested areas from 70 to 50mph, the traffic moves better. Would the 20mph speed limit allow that to happen in towns?

**Martin Reid:** I do not know whether we can extend that argument from the motorways to the towns. In the case of the 20mph zones that exist just now, we understand why they are there, so driver behaviour changes.

Our members will not be in the 20mph zones in city centres as much as the members of the other groups represented here so I will defer to the other witnesses' expertise on that side of things. However, for a heavy goods vehicle in Edinburgh city centre, there is a strong likelihood that it will not get to 20mph on any of the roads coming in.

**The Convener:** Tony Kenmuir, do you want to comment on that? I think you intimated that the average speed of taxis in Edinburgh is about

13mph. Did I get that wrong or is that what you said?

**Tony Kenmuir:** That is correct. The emissions that we generate are generally caused because we are crawling around at low speed; changing the speed limit from 30 to 20mph is academic if you are stationary. Emissions would be reduced if we could all get to a cruising speed and keep it going. Wouldn't that be nice?

**John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green):** I thank all the panel members for their written submissions and their evidence today. As a number of colleagues have said, your opinions are valued, but we are seeking to hear an evidence base for them. We are not interested in erroneous opinions or opinions that are unsupported by robust research findings.

Mr Bridgstock, you have a number of colourful phrases in your submission. The widely accepted figure of 40,000 deaths a year being directly attributable to poor air quality you describe as a "zombie statistic" that is simply not true—

**Eric Bridgstock:** Can I come back—

**John Finnie:** If you will let me finish—I see that you find it amusing; I do not find that amusing.

**Eric Bridgstock:** That is not my statistic. It is not my quote. It is from the ABD—from Brian Gregory.

**John Finnie:** And you are speaking for the ABD—

**Eric Bridgstock:** I am supporting the paper but I did not write that piece. It came from the ABD.

**John Finnie:** Right—so you are speaking in support of the paper—

**Eric Bridgstock:** I am supporting the paper; I did not write it.

**John Finnie:** That is fine. Views are important and I am not suggesting that everyone does endless research, but there has to be some evidence base for those views.

I am trying to understand the value that we would place on your opinions given that, in your submission, you say:

"Pollution levels are illegal because we made it illegal, not because it's dangerous".

For the avoidance of doubt, you attribute that comment to a transcript of a BBC "Sunday Politics" programme at 25 minutes 34 seconds in. Is it your view that urban pollution is not dangerous?

**Eric Bridgstock:** I say again that I did not write that part of the paper, but I am prepared to answer the question.

There is a similar argument in relation to speed limits. For a long time, we have had a 30mph speed limit, which has generally been agreed to be the right speed. We are now saying that we want to change the speed to 20mph. Therefore, exceeding 20mph would be illegal when two years ago 30mph was perfectly legal.

**John Finnie:** We are specifically talking about air quality. Correct me if I am wrong, but the paper that I have cited is the one that you are speaking to. You attribute that comment to a BBC programme, and your paper has a link to that programme. Do you agree with the statement:

“Pollution levels are illegal because we made it illegal”?

Perhaps more worryingly, do you also agree with the statement that pollution levels are not dangerous?

**Eric Bridgstock:** I think that pollution levels have been getting better for years and years, because we have been making all manner of changes to cars. Vehicles are generally cleaner, so my understanding is that pollution levels are improving.

**John Finnie:** Is pollution dangerous? Is poor air quality dangerous?

**Eric Bridgstock:** It is what it is. I am not an expert on that. Safety is my thing.

**John Finnie:** That is grand. Thank you.

**Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP):** A number of respondents to the online survey raised concerns about the reduced speed limit increasing journey times and worsening traffic congestion. Do you have a view on that? I am sure that Tony Kenmuir has—he has already said that we are all travelling around at 13mph anyway.

**Tony Kenmuir:** Yes. The truth is that I do not believe that changing the speed limit would have a significant effect on journey times. I do not think that it does in Edinburgh, where I have personal experience of driving a taxi.

**Richard Lyle:** Is that not just the situation in Edinburgh? What about Motherwell, Bellshill or Dumfries? Would the average speed in those areas not be higher?

**Tony Kenmuir:** My experience, and the feedback from our members, is that, where a 20mph speed limit is in place, and it is, for example, late at night when a road is not congested, nobody particularly abides by that limit anyway.

I tend to refer to what actually happens in the real world. In the real world, we are not complying with the 20mph limit; therefore journey times are not being significantly affected and the cost of taxi journeys is not being significantly impacted. On a

journey of several miles in which somebody is driving a consistent 20mph rather than 30mph, that would moderately affect the overall journey time and the cost. However, in the real world, I do not think that that happens—or at least, not enough to measure its impact.

**Martin Reid:** We have had no feedback whatsoever from members to say that journey times have increased in 20mph zones or, indeed, in most cases, where speed limits have dropped. Take the A9 as an example. Journey times have moved slightly, but the driver experience has balanced that out. It is a better drive now. Drivers tend to make provision for the additional 10 or 15 minutes that it will take between Perth and Inverness.

On the urban argument, I believe that Fife and Clackmannanshire are two of the areas that have adopted the 20mph approach. Again, I reiterate that we have had no adverse feedback from members to say that journey times are longer in those areas.

**Paul White:** Journey time reliability and punctuality are so important to bus operations. I have no evidence to present to you, but I know from discussions with operators that they found that the zones have perhaps increased journey times, but only marginally. In discussions with local authorities, they have been able to suggest measures that could be put in place to mitigate that small increase.

**Richard Lyle:** When I asked this question at our previous meeting, quite a lot of comments were made on Twitter. I asked whether bus times and timetables would be affected. I am now assured that they will not be and that reducing the limit to 20mph would improve things, given the stop-start traffic flow. Mr Kenmuir said that taxis are going at only 13mph on average anyway.

In your opinion, would reducing the default speed limit on restricted roads to 20mph have any specific impact on bus operators, logistics companies and taxi operators? We got an answer to that last week. I would like to hear your answer to it, given that you operate taxis going at 13mph.

**Tony Kenmuir:** I do not believe that it will have any measurable effect on journey times.

**Paul White:** I clarify that I was referring to certain operators that have experienced 20mph zones. I would not like my comments to be taken to mean that the introduction of the bill across all restricted roads would have zero impact on all operators, because that is not what I am saying at all. There are certainly CPT members, particularly in rural areas, who have voiced concerns that there would be an impact. I do not know whether those concerns will be proved to be correct, but I

make it clear that I was not saying that there would be no impact.

On costs, if there is an impact on journey times and you have to put more resource in to retain frequencies, that generates a cost in drivers, fuel and vehicles. If the bill encourages active travel, that might lead to an increase in bus patronage—that would be the hope. I am therefore unsure what the impact will be.

**Martin Reid:** I return to the point that there are vastly fewer HGVs on such roads in the first place. My concern is about the more unregulated industries, involving vans that are brought in to do multi-drops in a number of different areas within those zones or within residential areas. The compliance side of that gives me concerns. As far as haulage goes, as my colleague from the CPT said, until we know which roads are likely to be affected we cannot say with any degree of certainty what will be the impact on journey times. On the urban side of things, we have had no feedback from members to say that journey times are being impacted, because of the nature of the roads that they are on, and the understanding that that speed limit is there for a purpose.

**Jamie Greene:** I want to follow up Mr Lyle's line of questioning. If you are focusing purely on cities where average journey times are perhaps already below 30mph anyway, it is easy to see why there is only a nominal effect. However, we know the roads that the measure will apply to, because that is stated in the bill, and that the experience might be different across other parts of Scotland. The RAC, which is not represented here today, stated in evidence to us that the potential impact on urban congestion from reduced speeds and longer journey times might increase emissions—that goes back to our previous line of questioning. I do not think that we ever really got to the nub of whether slower speeds increase emissions. Do you agree or disagree with the RAC's comments on that?

**Neil Greig:** "Inconclusive" is the word of the day. The evidence is inconclusive on emissions and congestion. I have seen no real evidence to show that the journey times would change in a way that people would notice. The studies so far show that the speed limit and driver behaviour in 20mph zones reduce speeds, particularly at the top end—if the speed starts at 28 or 29mph it comes down to 26 or 27mph, but the difference is imperceptible and people just do not see it. If you do not see any difference and it is not causing any issues, people think that, given that journeys can be stop-start, they will not have a problem with it. You have highlighted that when it comes to villages and rural areas, there is absolutely no research to back up the decision making. There is a lot of research on urban areas, but there is very

little research on villages and less-populated areas, and that is not very helpful I am afraid.

**Eric Bridgstock:** As an engineer, my view is that if a village has a 30mph limit, a driver who has to go a mile at 20mph will probably be in a lower gear—revving harder with more emissions—and doing that for longer. It is a double whammy, which will put out more emissions. Others have spoken about acceleration and deceleration, but once a driver has come down to 20mph and dropped into third gear, rather than staying at 30mph, the vehicle must put out more emissions.

11:30

**Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP):** Good morning, panel. I hope that we all agree that we want our citizens to live and work in safe and healthy environments. Over the decades, that has not necessarily been the case. Our streets have been taken over by the car and the car has become king. Pedestrians and children playing have to jump out of the way of cars, rather than car drivers realising that they should give way to pedestrians and to children playing.

In the written evidence, we have seen suggestions that the liveability of our neighbourhoods and streets would increase with 20mph limits. Given our problems with obesity and active living, surely it would be a good thing to make our streets more liveable—to make them places where people feel safer about taking more exercise and where our children go out to play—and without cars flying through them, as happens now. I would like to hear panellists' views on that.

**The Convener:** Would Tony Kenmuir like to answer? I am sure that he drives around Edinburgh at 20mph. We will then go to Neil Greig and Paul White.

**Tony Kenmuir:** I agree with all that Maureen Watt has said, which seemed to be about the number of cars—fewer cars on the streets and fewer cars parked—rather than about reducing the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph. We all want our children and grandchildren to breathe cleaner air and to be safe. I am not sure that reducing the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph would reduce the volume of traffic, which is what was reflected more in Maureen Watt's points.

**Neil Greig:** We think that the benefits of 20mph zones have been oversold as the solution. They are only part of the solution. Healthier people, less traffic and less pollution is a great ambition that we would all like to see being fulfilled. If children are going to get out to play in the streets, we will have to spend more money to change the character of the roads: we would have to invest in play streets and in changing the engineering of roads. Car

drivers would have to be clear that they are not meant to be there, which they would understand; most drivers take their driving-speed cues from the environment that they drive through. If they drive through a street that has been relaid with chicanes and planting and is clearly meant to be a shared space, they drive slowly.

Our main concern in the debate is that 20mph limits are seen as the answer—and that is it. Part of the answer must also be further investment in segregated spaces and shared spaces. If a person on a bike is overtaken by someone who is driving at 26mph, as opposed to 30mph, they are still being overtaken by a tonne and half of metal that is very close to them, which puts off older and younger people from getting out on bicycles.

The answer has to include more than 20mph limits. I am not convinced that you need to start with a 20mph limit; you could go straight to investment and target it. Not every street has cars rushing through it; these days, most accident black spots have been dealt with. The answer is to invest more in making the cityscape look better as a shared space, so that car drivers will get the message.

**Paul White:** I agree very much with my colleague and with Maureen Watt's statement. I sympathise with the concern that the car is king; 20mph limits are but one element of what I hope would be a series of policy interventions to tackle the problem.

If we want to build on what has been done, we have to prioritise active travel, including walking, cycling and bus travel, in accordance with the travel hierarchy. It is about giving people the option to walk and cycle, and it is about maintaining bus speeds and making bus travel attractive. A 20mph limit is part of the solution, but it will not on its own have the impact for which we hope.

**The Convener:** Maureen, do you want to hear from anyone else?

**Maureen Watt:** Everyone should have the chance to give their views.

**Eric Bridgstock:** Maureen Watt's description is a perfectly valid one, but it seems to describe the same picture that leads to people feeling that they can lower their guard. We can say that a street is safer, yet it still has people going along it at 24mph, and kids should not be playing where there are cars. Crossing the road is one thing, but playing in the street is quite a different matter. The street is there for all manner of uses—lorries, taxis, cars, buses, cycles and people. It is not a case of one versus the other.

**Martin Reid:** I agree that we should try to make urban streets as safe as possible. I have two kids

and I am more than happy when they are out playing because, apart from anything else, they are not under my feet. It is very important that we create safe spaces.

My situation is slightly different from the situations of other panel members. Nobody gets in a lorry other than to use it for delivering freight: people do not do so for recreation or for going to the shops. The number of vehicles—predominantly cars—that are on the roads contributes heavily to congestion, which we have touched on. If we had the infrastructure and if the public services were up to speed to encourage people to use other modes of transport and take up active travel, that would make everybody's lives a bit better.

**Richard Lyle:** For years, I have seen adverts on the television that say, "Speed kills". I know of a child who was knocked down by someone who was driving at 20mph. The child survived, but if the person had been driving at 30mph, the child would have been dead. Therefore, does the panel not agree that speed kills?

**The Convener:** Paul White is nodding. It is always dangerous to do so, because if you nod it looks as though you want to contribute and I will bring you in. Having given you a moment to think, do you want to answer that question?

**Paul White:** It is a straightforward yes. Speed kills. Will the bill bring speeds down to 20mph? Maybe it will not, but I agree that speed kills.

**Richard Lyle:** That has been proved. We asked earlier about evidence and it has been proved that someone who is hit by a car at 30mph will bounce back and hit their head on the road, but if we reduce the speed of a car, and they get hit at 20mph, they have more of a chance. I know of a specific case in which that happened, and the child, who was aged three at the time and would now be about 30, survived. Do you agree that Mr Ruskell's proposal to have a 20mph limit could possibly save people's lives?

**Eric Bridgstock:** I honestly do not think that it will, for the simple reason that—as we have seen—all the surveys and reports so far say that the mean speed of a car in a 20mph zone is perhaps 1mph less than it is in a 30mph zone. It is not speed that kills—it is bad driving. A driver who is going at 20mph and who is half asleep is more likely to hit a child than is an alert driver who is going at 30mph.

There is a reason not to mix up travelling speed with impact speed. Was the child hit at 20mph? In the instance that Mr Lyle mentioned, do we know what the driver was doing when he saw the child, and did he brake hard to the point at which he hit the child? Do you know more details? Is there an example of a child who was killed in which it can

be claimed that, if the speed limit had been 20mph, the child would have survived? In the instance that has been mentioned by Mr Lyle, was it the case that the driver was driving dangerously or illegally, perhaps by driving above the speed limit, anyway?

**Richard Lyle:** The person was travelling at 20mph and the child walked right out in front of him from between two cars that were parked along the road. The driver did not have time to brake, and hit the child at 20mph. However, the child survived.

**Eric Bridgstock:** The driver was driving according to the conditions. For example, where I live in St Albans there are roads on which there are cars parked down each side. Even if the speed limit on them is 30mph, I would not drive at more than 20mph. Sometimes I have done 15mph. I do not like looking at my speedometer at such times, because I am too concerned about what is at the side of the road.

**The Convener:** It is dangerous to examine individual cases without having all the information to hand. We will move on to the next question, from Mark Ruskell, then we will move on to John Finnie.

**Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green):** I have a supplementary question. I was interested to hear Neil Greig's views about 20mph zones. As an organisation, IAM RoadSmart supports having such zones outside schools. However, we know from Automobile Association reports that 80 per cent of road accidents involving children do not happen there but happen in residential areas. Why do you not support 20mph zones in every residential area in which children live?

**Neil Greig:** That is because we would prefer limited resources to be targeted at locations in which there is a real and quantified problem.

**Mark Ruskell:** So, you would target resources at areas where children are not being run over rather than at those where children live, and where they are being run over?

**Neil Greig:** We would target streets on which there is a problem with high speeds, children are crossing the road and there are accidents involving injury. Unfortunately, the way in which road safety engineering works is that we cannot quantify a life saved; a problem must exist before we do anything about it. That may be the wrong way of going about things, but that is the way it works, given our limited resources.

If 20mph zones are to work, they should be self-explanatory and there should be engineering measures to make that happen. We cannot take a blanket approach whereby we expect to change

driver behaviour just because we have put up signs. I would have loved for the Atkins report and others to have come back and said conclusively, "Yes—this works. People are slowing down, and there are fewer crashes and lower emissions." Unfortunately, however, that is not the answer that we are getting from the reports.

**Mark Ruskell:** What proportion of residential streets in urban areas should be 20mph zones?

**Neil Greig:** I think that nearly all residential streets are 20mph zones anyway—

**Mark Ruskell:** "Nearly all residential streets" should be 20mph zones. Right.

**Neil Greig:** They are automatically because they have dead ends or car parking, and the vast majority of local people drive on them at 20mph. However, if you are saying that 20mph is the speed that you want people to go at, you would have to consider physical restrictions as well. As I have said, 81 per cent of people who drive in 20mph zones break the speed limit. The issue is where we put our resources. We are not convinced that a blanket approach will make any difference—and we would like to make a difference.

**Mark Ruskell:** Can I just ask one—

**The Convener:** You have had three questions so, to be fair, I would like to move on to John Finnie. A few other members also want to come in.

**John Finnie:** Thank you, convener.

We often want to hear witnesses' views on awareness-raising campaigns that would accompany legislation that might be passed. If this bill were to be passed, do you believe that there should be such a campaign? If so, what format should it take?

**The Convener:** Who would like to answer that?

**Neil Greig:** I agree 100 per cent. For me, the most disappointing finding from the studies is about the lack of awareness among people who have had such zones—I will not say "inflicted" on them, because in many cases they have asked for them—put in when they did not understand what they were about or what they themselves were supposed to do. Campaigns need not be about targeting all drivers, which we can do nationally through Road Safety Scotland. The key to success with such zones is raising awareness of what we expect local people to do. Often, they do not understand why zones have been put in or what they are supposed to do, so they end up being against them when they are actually there for their benefit.

I would certainly support an awareness-raising campaign. It has been a long time since the 20mph, 30mph, 40mph campaign to which

Richard Lyle alluded. We could do with a refresh of that, as well. However, for us, the approach should be about consultation and raising awareness among local people where such measures are not working so well.

**The Convener:** Does Tony Kenmuir want to come in on that? Following John Finnie's question, should we have a campaign to make taxi drivers or drivers of passenger-carrying vehicles aware that the speed limit is now 20mph?

**Tony Kenmuir:** Communicating messages is always problematic. The simple answer is that drivers should know where to look for the speed limit signs on any street, so if we change them they should see them. Beyond that, I am not certain how to answer that question.

**The Convener:** Does Paul White want to come in on that?

**Paul White:** I had not considered that aspect. There is public awareness and there is the awareness of those who are professional drivers and carry passengers. Companies will feed that into their training and awareness so that the professional drivers are aware, and they will expect drivers to adhere to speed limits. Perhaps for the public, who do not know why the vehicle in front of them is travelling at 20mph, there could be adverts on the backs of buses.

11:45

**Eric Bridgstock:** Awareness campaigns should be aimed at all road users. I re-emphasise what I said earlier, which was that they should avoid the mistake of making vulnerable road users feel too safe, which will lead them to take less care.

**John Finnie:** How likely is it that a campaign would increase driver compliance with the reduced speed limit? As has been mentioned, "RAC Report on Motoring 2018—the frustrated motorist" states that compliance on 30mph roads is 39 per cent, and in 20mph areas it is 39 per cent. The Atkins report found that the so-called acceptable speed—using the "10 per cent plus 2" rule—in 20mph limit zones, is broadly similar to that in 30mph areas. In answering that question on the likelihood of increasing compliance through an awareness campaign, what evidence do you have—other than anecdotal evidence—to counter that claim regarding the level of compliance?

**Neil Greig:** You have to be aware that the RAC report is a self-reporting study. When people are asked, "Do you comply with the 30mph limit?" of course, they are all going to say yes. The study to which I am referring, and can share with the committee—

**John Finnie:** But 61 per cent said that they did not comply! *[Laughter.]*

**Neil Greig:** Exactly. "Vehicle speed compliance statistics Great Britain: 2018" which was published just a few weeks ago, has traffic count measurements of actual speeds on the road, and it says that 81 per cent of drivers break 20mph limits. That is the overall figure—it varies among areas. That underlines the issue.

If you ask people what they do, they all say that the limit is great and that they support it, but what do they actually do when they go out and drive? They break the speed limit. It is a difficult issue and it underlines the need to get the message over. That goes back to my earlier comments about the need for the road to help drivers; the road has to explain to people why they should be driving at that speed, otherwise in free-flowing traffic conditions there is, as we see, very low compliance.

**John Finnie:** I wonder, given the organisations that are represented here, whether we are all being quite accepting of the situation. We just say "Oh, well. That's the law, but folk just aren't adhering to it." Surely the statistics are alarming.

**Neil Greig:** Absolutely. In fact, we said in our press release that 81 per cent non-compliance is terrible. That undermines confidence in speed limits and enforcement. In other surveys that we have done, people have said that they are not keen on strong enforcement of the 20mph limit. They are happy to see enforcement through physical measures, awareness campaigns and so on, but when there was talk of police cameras and police, support fell off substantially. You have to be careful about that.

I have no evidence that would allow me to say, hand on heart, that lack of support for compliance with speed limits is affecting people's behaviour elsewhere and causing more crashes, but we worry about confidence in speed limits being undermined because of lack of compliance with current limits.

**Jamie Greene:** My question on the issue of compliance, signage and driver perception follows on from those of other members. I have been thinking over the conundrum of what would be safer in reality. Would it be the status quo, in which the road has a 30mph limit for its entirety, but has signage at appropriate hot spots to designate them as 20mph, or would it be the new world in which the road has a 20mph limit along its entirety, with no further signage to designate reductions or hot spots? Which of those would be a safer environment?

**The Convener:** Who would like to answer that? Martin Reid looked away. That is also dangerous.

**Martin Reid:** I should give up poker. That is a really difficult question because in the current systems we move from 60mph to 40mph to

30mph, or 50mph to 30mph, quite regularly. The truthful answer is that I do not know.

I suspect that keeping the same speed limit across the board would probably turn out to be safer, but that does not take into account factors such as driver frustration. I think that if there were no other vehicles on the road it would be difficult to stick to 20mph.

**Neil Greig:** I would take the contrary position. On a long stretch of road, I would prefer the parts where there is an issue and where it is clear that there has been a problem to be targeted, instead of just having one consistent message that does not highlight to drivers that there is anything to be aware of, but just suggests that the whole road is safe, when it is not.

**Stewart Stevenson:** My question is just for Martin Reid. Are you familiar with the psychological phenomenon of ennui? In a driving context, that is the phenomenon whereby, if someone drives consistently at the same speed all the time, they become desensitised to the speed that they are driving at. There is some research that is not specific to driving but which applies to other environments that suggests that it is of benefit for there to be periodic variations, to reset people's attention to what is going on. Are you familiar with that concept? Do you think that it would apply in this context?

**Martin Reid:** I will be honest: as I said previously, I am not 100 per cent convinced either way. My suspicions are along the lines that I have outlined but, as an industry, we constantly face variations in speed limits. As Neil Greig pointed out, when there is a drop in the speed limit for a specific reason, which is clearly outlined and understandable, people will comply with that.

**Eric Bridgstock:** As I said earlier, drivers need to be told what the hazard is. They will drive more slowly if there is a genuine reason for doing so, but I think that the approach of telling people to go at a slower speed when there is no apparent change in the environment will fail. If drivers are told that there is a sharp bend ahead, they will slow down, but if they are just told to slow down, they will think, "Why is that?" Knowing that there is a sharp bend or a junction coming up is much more important to a driver than being told to slow down for no apparent reason.

**Mike Rumbles:** I want to move on from compliance to enforcement, although the two issues are linked. The Scottish Parliament information centre's briefing on the bill, which is available to MSPs and everybody else, says that research on the effectiveness of a 20mph limit in south Edinburgh concluded that when the speed limit was 30mph, the average speed was 22.8mph—in other words, the vast majority of

drivers were obeying the law—but when the limit was reduced to 20mph, the average speed was 20.9mph, which meant that most drivers were breaking the law. Because we are talking about the criminal law, that meant that most of those drivers were criminals. The average speed was reduced by 1.9mph.

In addition, the bill would mean that all repeater signage in the 20's plenty areas would have to be taken down; I am not sure that everybody is aware of that. All repeater 20mph signage would have to be removed. What problems would that create for enforcement of the criminal law?

**Martin Reid:** In such a situation, the policing of the policy is vitally important. We know from our dealings with Police Scotland how underresourced it is, so enforcement will be an issue. Alternative options such as speed cameras have been mentioned, but they all have a cost attached to them. There would be very little point in implementing a 20mph limit unless there was a punitive element.

I will not speak for my colleagues, but the question that we keep coming back to is whether it would be better to consider having targeted areas in which there would be a stricter requirement than other areas and ensuring that those targeted areas were properly policed.

**Neil Greig:** Going back to a point that I made before, when we asked people how they would prefer 20mph speed limits to be enforced, 45 per cent said that they would prefer enforcement by signs only, 24 per cent preferred road humps, 14 per cent preferred speed cameras, 4 per cent preferred enforcement by traffic police, and 13 per cent said that there should be no enforcement and we should leave it to drivers to conform. There is a fall-off in support for strong enforcement of 20mph zones. It would be important to see how sensitive to that the police were in their approach to enforcement; they have said quite publicly that at the moment they do not really enforce the 20mph limit in Edinburgh.

Resource is a big issue, but it is really a question of public support. If we started booking people doing 25mph at 3 o'clock in the morning on a wide-open road, when the character of the road had not changed for years and there were no pedestrians around, we would risk the public support that is very important for such measures to work.

**Tony Kenmuir:** We would all be safer if there were no cars, but I suppose that we are just trying to figure out where the practicalities are. If my daughter did not ride a horse, she would not have fallen off it and broken her collarbone.

I understand the argument that hitting something at 20mph does less damage than

hitting it at 30mph, but I am beginning to think a wee bit about prohibition—a great example of a law that nobody really adheres to, nobody can really enforce and everybody pretty much ignores until eventually the decision is reversed.

Looking at all the evidence that we have gathered over the past few years and at all the consultations that we have been involved in, does changing the speed limits from 30mph to 20mph really change the speed of the traffic? No. Does it improve safety? Not that we can evidence. Does it reduce emissions? Not that we can evidence. I have spoken to MSPs individually about this. I know that it would not change average speeds much, but it might bring down top-end speeds; I have not really seen evidence of that either, but I have heard the argument and it is possible.

My position, and that of our members, is that everybody accepts that people are likely to pay more attention if there is a focus on specific areas. That is more likely to have an influence on people's behaviour than a very broad-brush approach whereby enforcement is not possible, signage disappears and, in the real world, nobody's conduct is likely to be affected.

**The Convener:** Eric Bridgstock, would you like to come in briefly before we move on?

**Eric Bridgstock:** I do not wish to put words in Mike Rumbles's mouth, but what he said sounded like an argument not to roll out the policy at all, because there will be a very small change in actual speeds: they will still be just over 20mph. As Tony Kenmuir said, there will be no change to emissions either, so I wonder what the benefit of the criminalising approach is. In fact, if the normal margin of 10 per cent plus 2mph were applied, no one would be prosecuted in those areas at the previous average speed of 22.8mph, let alone at the new average speed of 20.9mph after the introduction of the 20mph limit. It is a curious argument to use in support of that limit.

**Mike Rumbles:** No one has commented on my point that if we pass this law, all the 20's plenty repeater signs will have to be removed, so there will be only one sign in the 20's plenty zone. Do you think that that will have an effect on compliance and enforcement?

I was taken by Tony Kenmuir's comment about prohibition. When we produce laws of the land, they should have public support, because they will be undermined without it. Do you think that that will happen in this case?

**Eric Bridgstock:** I agree: I am sure that it will happen. People need to know what the speed limit is.

**Neil Greig:** That is a fair point. The compliance figures that I cited suggest that not having 30mph

repeater signs is an issue, because people break the speed limit and claim that they do not know what it is.

12:00

On awareness campaigns and enforcement, there could be an opportunity to take the approach of introducing 20mph speed awareness courses. Rather than issuing tickets, penalties and fines, you could get people in and get the message over to them. If people do not understand why the 20mph limit is there, we should get them in and put them in a room to do such a course. Speed awareness courses work for other limits. A 20mph speed awareness course is being developed south of the border. If we introduce such courses up here, they could be an opportunity to educate people and raise awareness.

**John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):** I realise that we are going over the same ground but approaching it from different angles. My angle relates to the financial memorandum. We are talking about a cost of some £20 million. Is this the best thing that we could do with £20 million? It seems to be my role on the committee to ask such questions.

If we are going to include only restricted roads, the cities will be full of main roads that are still 30mph roads, but all the side roads will be 20mph roads. If you are going along a major road at 30mph, you might turn into a minor road and see a sign that says 20mph, and when you get to the end of that road you will see a sign that says that the limit is going back to 30mph again. There will be a big cost in that signage for councils. From a cost point of view, would it not be better just to make the whole of Glasgow a 20mph area, because that would be cheaper for the council? I am interested in your views on that.

A kid might think that because they are on a side road and the traffic is going at only 20mph they can be more relaxed, but once they go round the corner on to the main road, the limit will be 30mph. From a safety point of view, would it not be both cheaper and safer if we just said that roads in small towns and big cities will all have 20mph limits?

**Neil Greig:** In the overall scheme of things, when it comes to roads, £20 million is not a lot of money; it will not buy you a new dual carriageway or anything of that nature. Given the cash-strapped nature of most local authorities these days, and the state of the roads, you could certainly spend £20 million better on such things as fixing potholes or introducing cycle lanes or other segregated facilities and targeting the areas where you have the biggest road safety problems. For us, it is all about the impact on road safety,

and we are just not convinced that the bill will have a huge impact on road safety; indeed, if it takes resources away from elsewhere, it could have a negative effect on other areas of council spending.

I have said before that the main issue will be the cumulative effect on councils of all the things that are happening. That is what I am hearing. I have no further information on the financial implications for individual councils, but if they are being asked to do lots of different things, something has to come off the end of the line and be missed out.

**John Mason:** You seem to be saying that you think that it would be cheaper for councils if we just made a whole area a 20mph area.

**Neil Greig:** If you streamline the process and make it cheaper, that would be cheaper for councils. However, the £20 million that you mentioned could still be better spent elsewhere in order to impact on road safety.

**Paul White:** In the scenario that you pose, would we still be allowed to apply for a TRO for key bus arterial routes? That would be my ask. If there was a blanket 20mph limit, could we still have a discussion about potential exemptions? If a bus was getting stuck in traffic because of congestion and there was a small stretch of road where the driver could make up some lost time, would it be acceptable to have a TRO for that? If that is not acceptable, what priority measures could be put in place to allow buses to flow more freely, away from the congestion? We would like that sort of discussion to take place at local authority level, whether under the scenario that you suggest and under the bill's proposals.

**John Mason:** I think we all broadly agree that there will be exceptions whichever way we do this. Do you have a preference, or are you willing to work with whatever the system is—whether there is a blanket 20mph limit with some exceptions or we have some 20mph roads and some 30mph roads, with exceptions?

**Paul White:** I do not have a preference or a view from my members—I cannot say one way or the other.

**John Mason:** That is fine.

**Mike Rumbles:** My question is for Paul White in particular; it follows on from what John Mason has just asked. The financial memorandum states that councils will pay about £10 million over two years for all the signage. However, the bill says—and I am thinking of rural Scotland and my area of Aberdeenshire in particular—that all the A and B roads are not affected. The speed limit on all the roads through the villages will not be reduced under the bill. However, in every village in Scotland, every road and lane with street lighting will have to have signage both in and out. Do you

think that £9 million to £10 million over a two-year period will achieve that?

**Paul White:** I am not qualified to speak about the cost. I was pleased that the financial memorandum talked about signage and not traffic-calming measures such as speed bumps, because that would add to our members' maintenance costs and would make journeys less pleasant. I cannot comment on the costs of the signage and whether £9 million to £10 million will be enough.

**Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab):** We have now asked most of our questions and I think that it is clear that the panel are sceptics about the bill.

I want to come back to a point that was made by Eric Bridgstock, who seemed to imply that the bill would make things worse. The submission from the Alliance of British Drivers said:

“Vulnerable road users are given the perception that 20mph zones are safer than 30mph areas and behave less cautiously”.

What evidence does the group have to back up that claim? Why do you think that it is appropriate to blame vulnerable road users for getting run over by cars being driven too fast?

**Eric Bridgstock:** I am not sure that I blame them. I am not speaking for the ABD just now, as I do not know what evidence it has. All I know is that, every time that I drive through a 20mph zone, I stick to the 20mph limit, but I see people wandering into the road, not using pelican crossings, not waiting for traffic lights to turn red, looking at their mobile phones and wearing their headphones. I am sure that it is the same here in Edinburgh, although I only arrived last night. It is a natural thing—people are encouraged to feel safe, and a lot of the public opinion surveys that 20's Plenty for Us has done have asked, “Do you feel safer?” If people feel safer, they lower their guard—that is a natural human instinct. Why would they not?

**Colin Smyth:** Do you have any evidence to back up your claim that more people are run over in 20mph zones because they feel safer?

**Eric Bridgstock:** The evidence that something is happening in 20mph zones comes from Manchester, where it was found that the number of accidents in 20mph zones did not decrease as much as it did in areas that were still 30mph zones, according to trends.

**Colin Smyth:** Other areas will say something different, but you are saying that the figures in Manchester are based on vulnerable road users behaving in an irresponsible way.

**Eric Bridgstock:** Perhaps the word “vulnerable” is wrong; perhaps it should be road users in general and pedestrians or young people in

particular. I do not know. They seem to be the ones wearing headphones and looking at their phones most of the time.

**Colin Smyth:** Can you specify any studies that back up the claim that that problem is worse in 20mph zones? People wear headphones in 30mph zones as well, but you are saying that it is a particular problem in 20mph zones.

**Eric Bridgstock:** People have not been encouraged to think that it is safe in 30mph, 40mph or 50mph zones. It is the theme of 20's Plenty for Us that 20mph zones are safe—"Go and play in the street; it's safe". John Mason mentioned that a kid needs to know what a road's speed limit is, but kids do not know what the speed limit is. They know—or should know—what the flavour of a road is and whether they need to be careful when crossing it because it is fairly busy. They should know how to use a pelican crossing. If there is a 20mph speed limit on a road, they should not be encouraged to just wander into the road or kick a ball around on it.

**Gail Ross:** Is it an educational issue? We should be teaching our children to not walk into roads without looking, regardless of the speed limit. If they are doing that, we need to re-evaluate what we are teaching our children. The measures should surely go hand in hand with enforcement, awareness raising and education; that is the whole package that we should put together.

**Eric Bridgstock:** That is what I said earlier. It is important that, if there is a roll-out campaign, it does not tell people that it will be lovely and safe and that they can go and play in the road. However, that is what is going on at the moment—that is Rod King's approach.

**John Mason:** I want to build on Colin Smyth's question.

There is a busy junction in my constituency called Parkhead Cross, which is right next to my office. Some of you might have seen it. It is in a poorer area of my constituency so it is probably one of the poorest areas in the country. A lot of people are already totally relaxed about crossing it and I see parents dragging their kids across the road against the red lights, even though it is a really busy junction. I have seen vulnerable people doing that, including at night. The roads might be quieter then, but it just takes one drunk person to wander across the road in dark clothing and car drivers will not see them. Someone such as that would surely be safer if the speed limit for the whole junction was reduced to 20mph. As the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, the Faculty of Public Health and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health said, when people get hit—unfortunately, that has always happened

at that junction and probably always will—that will be a lot less bad at 20mph than at 30mph.

**Eric Bridgstock:** Your argument involves a law-abiding driver who is driving carefully to the 20mph or 30mph speed limit hitting a person who he has either seen or has not seen and who is in dark clothing and is lying on the road because he is drunk. It is just as likely that the driver is someone who is not law abiding and perhaps thinks that, because it is late at night, they can drive at 40mph where there is a 30mph limit or even a 20mph limit. A collision being avoided because a law-abiding driver has reduced their speed to the speed limit is a very unlikely scenario, which I mentioned in my submission.

**John Mason:** I do not see your distinction between who is and who is not law abiding. The point is, if somebody is hit, they are less likely to be killed or hurt if the driver is driving at a lower speed. Even if a driver is not law abiding, if the driver in front of them is law abiding, they will both drive slower.

**Eric Bridgstock:** My counter to that is to ask you to find me an example of an accident in which somebody was killed or injured and in relation to which you could plausibly claim that, had the speed limit been lower—20mph is the obvious speed limit for your example—the accident would not have happened.

**Stewart Stevenson:** There are umpteen examples that we could provide.

**Eric Bridgstock:** Please do so—I have been asking for such information for a long time.

**John Mason:** We will take your points, but we are not here to immediately give you answers.

**Eric Bridgstock:** If an accident is caused by a drunk driver, an illegal driver or someone in a stolen car, that will not be affected by a different speed limit. That driver will drive badly whatever the speed limit is—that is my argument.

**John Mason:** That is an argument against any speed limit.

**Eric Bridgstock:** It may be. I believe that most people would drive safely.

**John Mason:** With no speed limits? Okay, I will leave it there.

**The Convener:** As there are no further questions from members, we will end the evidence session. I thank all the witnesses for coming in, and I suspend the meeting to allow them to depart.

12:12

*Meeting suspended.*

12:14

*On resuming—*

## **Subordinate Legislation**

### **Zootechnical Standards (Scotland) Regulations 2019 (SSI 2019/5)**

**The Convener:** Agenda item 4 is consideration of one item of subordinate legislation, which is a negative instrument that ensures that the system of zootechnical standards functions effectively in Scotland. No motions to annul have been received in relation to the instrument.

Before members raise any points, I declare that I have a farming interest and that I am part of a farming partnership that breeds pedigree cattle. I do not propose to make any comment on the regulations.

**Stewart Stevenson:** I apologise for not giving prior notification that I wanted to comment, but I have just noticed something.

I am content to support the regulations, but I would like the committee to write to the Government to ask what it means by the term “other public holiday” in regulation 5(4)(c). Bluntly, that piece of Scottish legislation looks awfully like it has been lifted out of an English piece of legislation, and the term “other public holiday” means something different in Scotland, because public holidays vary by locality. I just want to be clear what the Government intends.

**The Convener:** As there are no other comments, is the committee agreed that it does not want to make any recommendation in relation to the regulations, except to ask the Government to clarify the definition of “other public holiday”?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

**The Convener:** That concludes the public part of the meeting, and we now move into private.

12:16

*Meeting continued in private until 12:30.*

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