

Proposed Restricted Roads (20mph Limit) (Scotland) Bill
Report by Ricky Moffat, Head of Commercial Operations

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to consider a Midlothian Council response to the 'Proposed Restricted Roads (20mph Limit) (Scotland)' Bill. The consultation paper can be found at;

http://www.parliament.scot/S5MembersBills/20170622_FINAL_VERSION_NG_BU.pdf

The deadline for responses is 15 September 2017.

2 Background

- 2.1 In recent years 20mph speed limits have become common place around schools and in residential areas across Scotland and the UK. Current policies allow Councils to make decisions on where they are appropriate, with and without traffic calming features, within their own local authority area.
- 2.2 Recently some Councils including City of Edinburgh Council have introduced blanket 20mph areas that include main roads as well as residential areas and schools. However, Councils such as Manchester City Council have recently halted the roll out of blanket 20mph zones because the desired changes e.g. a reduction in accidents has not been evidenced.
- 2.3 The urban speed limit in Scotland, and the UK, is 30mph. This means that where there are street lights, houses, shops etc, the standard speed limit is 30mph. The proposed Bill is seeking to change this standard speed limit to 20mph.
- 2.4 If enacted this would still allow individual Councils to promote non standard speed limits as they do currently. Therefore traffic regulation orders could be promoted for 30mph, 40mph or 50mph speed limits within areas that would automatically become 20mph due to a legislative change.
- 2.5 The advantages and disadvantages are discussed both in the consultation paper itself and in the proposed Midlothian Council response as contained in Appendix A.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

Should the Bill be approved by parliament the cost of changing existing 30mph signs to 20mph signs would not be significant. Depending on how the legislation was introduced, it is assumed that existing 20mph signage would have to be removed. Further to this the Council may wish to promote non standard limits, for example to keep a commuter through road 30mph. This cost would have to be balanced with the savings associated with providing and maintaining existing 20mph speed limits. Given the size of the road network and uncertainty as to how the legislation may be written, the actual costs are not currently quantifiable.

3.2 Risk

There is a risk that the Bill could require additional Council funding to make the changes to signs etc.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☒ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The proposed Bill if introduced could lead to an increase in walking and cycling. In addition there may be a perception that areas are safer. However, there may not be a significant reduction in accidents, albeit the number of accidents within urban areas is relatively low in any case.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The proposed Bill may increase walking and cycling and reduce injury accidents. This would have an effect on climate change targets, local air pollution, injury accident targets and active travel targets.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Reducing traffic speeds, if successful, should help reduce the possibility of road accidents, traffic congestion and pollution.

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

As this is a consultation exercise, communities and stakeholders will be involved in responding separately.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

No change of Council policy or service is proposed.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

Encouraging more use of walking and cycling, and discouraging use of motor vehicles will contribute to sustainable travel habits.

3.10 IT Issues

There are no IT issues arising from this report.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Council is invited to:

- (a) Consider the consultation paper and proposed response detailed in Appendix 1;
- (b) following such consideration, authorise Director Resources to submit the response on behalf of the Council.

17 August 2017

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Appendices:

- 1 Midlothian Response - Proposed Restricted Roads (20mph Limit) (Scotland) Bill

**Midlothian Response - Proposed Restricted Roads (20mph Limit) (Scotland)
Bill**

QUESTIONS

SECTION 1 - ABOUT YOU

1. Are you responding as:

- ☐ an individual – in which case go to Q2A
- ✓ on behalf of an organisation? – in which case go to Q2B

2A. Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic whose experience or expertise is not relevant to the proposal, please choose “Member of the public”)

- ☐ Politician (MSP/MP/Peer/MEP/Councillor)
- ☐ Professional with experience in a relevant subject
- ☐ Academic with expertise in a relevant subject
- ☐ Member of the public

2B. Please select the category which best describes your organisation:

- ✓ Public sector body (Scottish/UK Government/Government agency, local authority, NDPB)
- ☐ Commercial organisation (company, business)
- ☐ Representative organisation (trade union, professional association)
- ☐ Third sector (charitable, campaigning, social enterprise, voluntary, non-profit)
- ☐ Other (e.g. club, local group, group of individuals, etc.)

3. Please choose one of the following; if you choose the first option, please provide your name or the name of your organisation as you wish it to be published.

- ✓ I am content for this response to be attributed to me or my organisation
- ☐ I would like this response to be anonymous (the response may be published, but no name)
- ☐ I would like this response to be confidential (no part of the response to be published)

Please insert your name or the name of your organisation. If you choose the first option above, this should be the name as you wish it to be published. If you choose the second or third option, a name is still required, but it will not be published.

Name/organisation: Midlothian Council

4. Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. (Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number. We will not publish these details.)

Contact details:

Lindsay.Haddow@midlothian.gov.uk

SECTION 2 - YOUR VIEWS ON THE PROPOSAL

Aim and approach

1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposal to replace the current 30mph default speed limit on restricted roads with a 20mph limit?

- ☐ Fully supportive
- ☒ Partially supportive
- ☐ Neutral (neither support nor oppose)
- ☐ Partially opposed
- ☐ Fully opposed
- ☐ Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

2. Could the aims of this proposal be better delivered in another way (without a Bill in the Scottish Parliament)?

- ☐ Yes (if so, please explain below)
- ☒ No
- ☐ Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

3. What do you think would be the main advantages, if any, of the proposal?

- Reduced sign clutter (the whole urban environment would be 20mph) and there would be less signage into schools / town centre and residential areas.
- Culture change - drivers may adhere to a new urban speed limit as there would be less confusion about advisory, part time or how enforceable a limit was. Especially if there was a Scotland wide, and sustained publicity campaign.
- Reduced cost in the long term, maintaining existing 20mph signage and road markings and setting up new ones.
- Reduced road accidents (although this is based on relatively small areas and small numbers of accidents)
- Increased walking and cycling due to a safer feeling environment
- Potentially increased enforcement if the urban speed limit were to be accepted by Police Scotland.
- Potentially unlock some sites for development as reduced speed limits will reduce visibility requirements for accesses.

4. What do you think would be the main disadvantages, if any, of the proposal?

- There would be an initial cost of changing existing 30mph signs to 20mph, but more costly, removing existing 20mph signage and road markings. Albeit that in the long run this would provide a saving.

- Whilst there does seem to be evidence from the smaller areas that accidents are reduced, these are very small numbers and changes in actual speeds appear to be 2/3mph average i.e. still in excess of 20mph.
- Anecdotal evidence shows that members of the public, particularly pedestrians and cyclists feel safer. This however could be a false sense of security depending on compliance.
- There will be increased pressure from the public to ensure compliance by enforcement, traffic calming and education.
- Whilst a 20mph urban speed limit may change cultural behaviour, it could just as easily reduce the impact of 20mph limits, as there are less signs and high risk areas such as schools could end up less protected.
- Businesses and travel providers e.g. taxis and bus companies may site the lowered speed limits as having a detrimental impact

5. What measures do you think would be needed to maximise compliance with the new national 20mph speed limit on restricted roads? (Examples might include advertising, signage or police enforcement.)

- There will definitely be pressure to provide enforcement, publicity / advertising and traffic calming features.
- If implemented enforcement with publicity/ education are likely to be most effective as this will be the catalyst to a change in culture.
- Safety (speed) cameras may be the most effective way to achieve this (this would require a policy change in the current evaluation criteria).
- There is a real danger that Councils will be pressurised to provide additional infrastructure that could be costly to build and maintain and cause issues, particularly for HGVs and residential noise.

Financial implications

6. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have on:

(a) the Scottish Government

- ☐ Significant increase in cost
- ☐ Some increase in cost
- ☒ Broadly cost-neutral
- ☐ Some reduction in cost
- ☐ Significant reduction in cost
- ☐ Unsure

(b) Local authorities

- ☐ Significant increase in cost
- ☒ Some increase in cost
- ☐ Broadly cost-neutral
- ☐ Some reduction in cost
- ☐ Significant reduction in cost
- ☐ Unsure

(c) Motorists

- ☐ Significant increase in cost
- ☐ Some increase in cost
- ☒ Broadly cost-neutral
- ☐ Some reduction in cost
- ☐ Significant reduction in cost
- ☐ Unsure

(d) Other road users and members of the public

- ☐ Significant increase in cost
- ☐ Some increase in cost
- ☒ Broadly cost-neutral
- ☐ Some reduction in cost
- ☐ Significant reduction in cost
- ☐ Unsure

(e) Other public services (e.g. NHS, Fire and Rescue Services etc)

- ☐ Significant increase in cost
- ☒ Some increase in cost
- ☐ Broadly cost-neutral
- ☐ Some reduction in cost
- ☐ Significant reduction in cost
- ☐ Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

This all depends on how the change is implemented. Councils are likely to bear the initial costs and these require to be quantified. This could balance with reduced maintenance but this depends on what is required for compliance and what is required to meet aspirations of the general public.

7. Do you believe there will be any other benefits to reducing the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph?

If people were to comply with the limit children, pedestrians and cyclists could be safer.

Equalities

8. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on equality, taking account of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civilpartnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation?

- ☐ Positive
- ☒ Slightly positive
- ☐ Neutral (neither positive nor negative)
- ☐ Slightly negative
- ☐ Negative
- ☐ Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

There could be benefits for children, elderly (age) and the disabled with regards road safety and crossing roads.

9. Could any negative impact of the Bill on equality be minimised or avoided?

Appropriate additional funding to ensure that the measures are implemented consistently across the country and there is a significant effort to ensure compliance particularly on the part of Police Scotland/cameras and this would have to continue for an extended period to bring about the required culture shift.

Sustainability of the proposal

10. Do you consider that the proposed bill can be delivered sustainably, i.e. without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impacts?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

This depends on whether measures can be put in place to ensure compliance.

General

11. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal to establish a 20mph default speed limit on restricted roads?