

## Living Streets Scotland Parliamentary Briefing: Road Safety Sept 2016

### 1.0 Introduction

Living Streets Scotland is part of the national charity for everyday walking. We want to create a walking nation, free from congested roads and pollution, reduce the risk of preventable illness and social isolation and make walking the natural choice for all. Our ambition is that people of all generations enjoy streets that are fit for walking.

Dangerous urban roads, or streets that feel unsafe, are a significant barrier to everyday walking in Scotland. This briefing sets out the benefits of improving road safety and outlines recommendations for how safe and convenient movement for pedestrians can be protected.

### 2.0 The case for 20mph speed limits

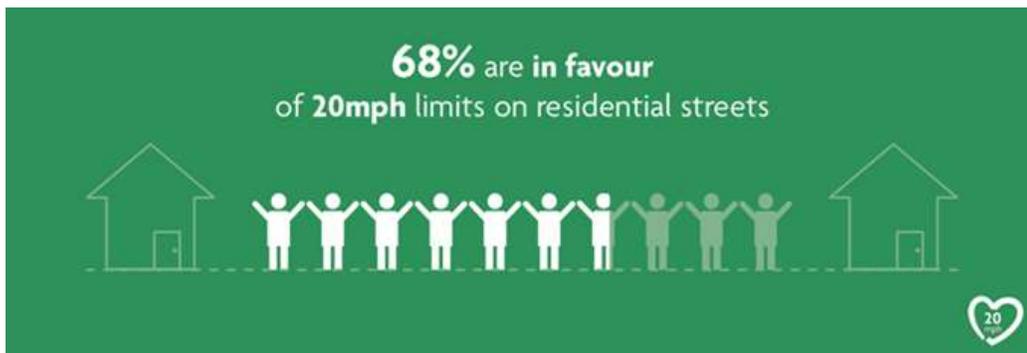
In 1934 Living Streets (then called the Pedestrian Association) successfully campaigned for a 30mph speed limit to be made the law. Since this limit was established scientific studies<sup>1</sup> show it is no longer appropriate for the busiest pedestrian streets in terms of safety. Roads with 30mph speed limits create unnecessary risk whilst the benefits of 20mph speed limits are undisputable: the fatality rate for a pedestrian struck by a car at 20mph is 3%, whereas at 30mph this increases to 20%.



Source: Department for Transport (2004) Speed: Know your limits,

<sup>1</sup> Transport Research Laboratory (2013) The Effects of drivers speeds on the frequency of road accidents

20mph zones create safer, more pleasant environments in which to spend time, and help a wider range of people feel safe using streets to get around, particularly children and older generations. Where schemes are implemented they are popular (consistently over two thirds support) and support grows after implementation.<sup>2</sup>



Source: Department for Transport (2013) British Social Attitudes Survey: Public Attitudes Towards transport

In real life conditions 20 mph limits can also help to reduce air pollution through encouraging motorists to travel at more steady speeds, limiting the frequency of acceleration and braking. Ultimately air pollution will be reduced if more people choose to walk and cycle rather than drive and this change can only be achieved if streets are safer.



Source: Dr. Carmen Hass-Klau (1990), An Illustrated Guide to Traffic Calming p3

### 3.0 Recommendations for safer streets

#### 20mph speed limits in residential and shopping areas as standard

We want to see Scotland become a leader in road safety. Implementing 20mph speed limits in residential and shopping areas would create safer and more vibrant streets and would send a strong message that Scotland is serious about protecting pedestrians in urban environments.

<sup>2</sup> City of Edinburgh Council (2013) South Central Edinburgh 20mph Limit Pilot Evaluation

## High levels of awareness and enforcement of urban speed limits

In order for 20mph limits to work, road users need to be properly engaged. Messaging from Police Scotland should be clear that all speed limits will be enforced especially in urban areas. This requires both an education campaign on the rationale for 20mph limits backed up with a visible enforcement presence on key streets, especially around schools.

## Stronger action on footway parking and double parking

Aside from speed, the issue with the biggest impact on pedestrians is footway parking, which creates danger and inconvenience. We therefore welcome Scottish Government plans to make parking on all footways (pavements), dropped kerbs (lowered crossing points) and double parking road traffic offences. At present, regulation of these issues is not clear which makes enforcement impossible. This leads to many streets being unsafe and unpleasant for walking. A change in the law will bring benefits to older people, children, parents (especially those using buggies) and people with sight or mobility disabilities.

## More convenient pedestrian crossings

If people are to walk more, councils must stop putting basic pedestrian needs behind the convenience of motorists. To encourage people to spend time in urban environments, streets need to be designed so that people can get around easily. Too often pedestrian crossings are placed too far from where they are needed. This results in streets which are difficult and undesirable to use. All councils should make sure crossing waiting times are realistic<sup>3</sup> and that older people and disabled people have sufficient time to cross the road safely. Long waiting times leads to frustration and risky behaviour, whilst short crossing times leads to conflict with drivers, and possible intimidation of people who can't walk quickly.

## 4.0 Further Information

Living Streets Scotland works with communities to create better conditions for walking. We help with schools walking programmes, community street audits and best practice advice. If there is an issue with a street in your constituency please contact us for help and advice.

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<sup>3</sup> TRL (2014) [A Review of Pedestrian Walking Speeds and Time Needed to Cross ...](#)