

Transport Update – National Strategy for 20mph

Summary and Recommendations

This paper provides Members with an update on the progress of the National Strategy for 20mph and on the work of the Task Group overseeing the Strategy.

The Board is invited to:

- i. Note the update provided in the paper and the presentation from Transport Scotland officers;
- ii. Provide comments on local implementation of the National Strategy for 20mph; and
- iii. Note that future updates will be brought back to the Board as appropriate.

References

Previous relevant reports:

- Environment and Economy Board June 2018 – Proposed Restricted Roads (20mph Limit) (Scotland) Bill
- Environment and Economy Board March 2019 – Restricted Roads (20mph Limit) (Scotland) Bill
- [COSLA written response to the Committee - January 2019](#)
- Environment and Economy Board September 2021 – Transport Update
- Environment and Economy Board October 2022 – Transport
- Environment and Economy Board September 2023 – National Strategy for 20mph and Parking

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Purpose

1. This paper provides Members with an update on implementation of the National Strategy for 20mph and invites comment on the proposals as they currently stand. Colleagues from Transport Scotland will also attend the Board meeting to provide a brief presentation on progress to date and next steps.

COSLA Position

2. The National Strategy for 20mph was first included in the Programme for Government for 2022/23 following a Member's Bill introduced by Mark Ruskell MSP in 2018, which proposed reducing the default speed limit of all 'restricted' roads from 30mph to 20mph. The Bute House Agreement subsequently included a pledge that "all appropriate roads in built up areas will have a safer speed of 20mph by 2025."
3. The rationale behind the Member's Bill and the National Strategy is that reduced road speeds result in safer streets. Transport Scotland data found that most serious road casualties in 2022 occurred on 30mph and 60mph streets¹, with almost half of fatalities being pedestrians or pedal cyclists. Reduction of speed limits to 20mph could therefore encourage more people to walk, wheel or cycle, aligning with Scottish Government commitments on Active Travel.
4. At the COSLA Environment & Economy Board meeting in September 2023, Members discussed the options that were being considered in respect of implementation of 20mph speed limits, namely:
 - (a) Local authorities applying for Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to change roads to become 20mph; or
 - (b) A legislative route which makes 20mph the default speed limit, meaning that local authorities would need to apply for TROs to exempt roads as 30mph.
5. Discussion at that time revealed that each option presents different benefits and challenges to different local authorities. Some Members indicated that a legislative route would be more appropriate in their areas while others preferred a local options approach.
6. COSLA is generally supportive of the rationale behind reducing default speed limits to 20mph but notes that councils will require appropriate resourcing and support to ensure effective rollout.

What is changing?

7. Although there is no unanimous position on which option would be more suitable, further discussion with Transport Scotland has found that the legislative route would

¹ [FAQ's for Scotland's National Strategy for 20 mph Speed Limits - Scotlands Road Safety Framework](#)

not be possible within this Parliamentary term and certainly not by the 2025 deadline. Conversations on 20mph have therefore tended to favour the TRO or TTRO (Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders) option. This option allows for greater local flexibility and does not impose any statutory duty on local authorities, as well as avoiding the potential cost of local authorities applying for TROs to exempt roads deemed not appropriate for a 20mph speed limit.

8. The Task Group for the National Strategy for 20mph has continued to meet regularly, with representation from local authorities, SCOTS and COSLA. Transport Scotland have advised that as of October 2023, 29 out of 32 local road authorities had returned road assessments to determine which roads would fall within the scheme. In addition, a number of local authorities have already taken steps to implement wider 20mph zones, with others planning to do so in this coming financial year.
9. In addition, the Board were previously updated on the pilot project launched in Highland Council which introduced 20mph speed limits across its entire area from summer 2023. Highland Council ran a consultation from December 2023 to the end of January 2024 on the continued roll-out of 20mph speed limits; while the results of this consultation are yet to be released, indications are that the project resulted in reduced speeds in both rural and urban locations.

Proposed COSLA Position

10. COSLA are keen to ensure that the continued rollout of the National Strategy for 20mph allows local authorities enough flexibility to respond to local need, and will continue to stress to Transport Scotland and Scottish government that effective implementation cannot be achieved without adequate resourcing. It has been noted that the proposed legislative route is unlikely to be achieved in this Parliamentary term, although we recognise that at previous Board meetings a number of local authorities indicated that legislation might be their preferred option.
11. Officers would therefore welcome any comment from Members as to implementation of 20mph areas in their respective local authorities, particularly any updates on progress or anticipated challenges. Colleagues from Transport Scotland will also be present at the Board meeting and would be keen to hear Members' views.

Next steps

12. COSLA officers will continue to engage with Transport Scotland, SCOTS and other local authority representatives on the National Strategy, bringing updates back to the Board as appropriate.