

# Greens lodge bill to reduce speed limits in built up areas

Following Edinburgh 's lead, the rest of Scotland may introduce 20 mph zones in cities and towns.

The Green MSP Mark Russell published his member's bill today aiming to introduce lower speed limits in built up areas across Scotland.



Edinburgh council's Transport and Environment Convener, Cllr Lesley Macinnes with the Reducer and children from Murrayfield Nursery in August 2017 flagging up the new speed limits.

With cross-party support and over 2,000 responses from a consultation conducted last year the measures are also supported by a range of health experts, safety campaigners and cyclist and adventurer, Mark Beaumont. Glasgow and Edinburgh councils have already introduced the measures in both cities.

The British Heart Foundation and British Lung Foundation as well as road safety charity Brake back the measures which they say would reduce injuries and deaths on the roads as well as cutting air pollution. The legislation would cut the cost of introducing lower speed limits in council areas.

Cllr Adam McVey, leader of City of Edinburgh Council, said: "The 20mph rollout in Edinburgh on 80% of our roads is helping to change the relationship between road users and make our whole urban environment more pedestrian and cycle friendly. Had a national default urban limit been in place when Edinburgh was implementing our rollout it would almost certainly have been cheaper and easier to do."



Mark Ruskell  
Photo – Andrew  
Cowan/Scottish  
Parliament

Mark Ruskell, Scottish Green MSP for Mid Scotland & Fife, said: "As a local councillor and as an MSP I have seen first-hand the frustration of communities that want lower speed limits but find the current process overly-complicated. By making 20 the norm in built-up areas we can end this frustration and provide the clarity that residents and motorists deserve.

"It's clear that a lower limit will mean safer streets, and I'm delighted that my bill enjoys widespread public support, the backing of safety groups, health experts, local authority

chiefs and campaigners such as Mark Beaumont. I look forward to it being examined by parliament in the months ahead.”

Fastest round-the-world cyclist Mark Beaumont, who cycled 18,000 miles in less than 79 days, said: “It’s a bit of an odd statement for someone who holds the record for being fastest round the world on a bike, but we need to slow down. We know that we’re seven times less likely to die if we’re hit by a vehicle at 20mph than 30 – and ten times less likely if we’re over 60 years of age. So making roads in built-up areas 20 rather than 30mph makes bags of sense.

“It’s great to see Mark Ruskell’s bill in the Scottish Parliament helping build the momentum on this issue and I hope we see it become law in the near future. This is about saving lives, reducing injuries and improving public health and enjoyment by making our streets safer and healthier places to cycle and walk.

“The current system of patchwork 20mph zones is time-consuming and costly for local councils, and confusing for road users. Scotland has a real chance to take a lead on this so let’s go for it.” Environmental campaigners have welcomed the launch today of a Private Member’s Bill tabled by Mark Ruskell MSP which would change the default speed limit in urban areas from 30mph to 20mph.



Friends of the Earth Scotland Air Pollution Campaigner Emilia Hanna said:

“20mph zones make our streets safer and fairer for everyone using them, and are a vital part of the solution to air pollution.

“The faster people drive, the greater the risk of accidents, and the more off-putting it is for people to walk and cycle. Cars dominate our streets far too much already. There needs to be a much more level playing field between pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and drivers. Slowing traffic is a key way to achieve this.

“Everyone in our town and cities should be able to feel safe to walk, cycle, and play in their neighbourhoods, and slowing the traffic to 20mph is just the way to help achieve friendlier, safer and cleaner neighbourhoods.

“There is also evidence that cars driving faster in built up areas produce more air pollution as they have to frequently speed up and slow down as hazards appear.”

“We hope this Bill will gain support from across the Parliament as we try to cut air pollution and further boost the numbers of people walking and cycling.”