

**Presentation by Rod King MBE,  
Founder and Campaign Director, 20's Plenty for Us  
20mph Seminar – Scottish Parliament**

**21<sup>st</sup> May 2018**

Ladies and gentlemen. I am delighted to be here in support of the Scotland 20mph Bill. First may I say that I have an affinity with Scotland. I lived here for several years in the 70's in Aberdeen and Glasgow. 2 of my children were born in Scotland. In the 90's I backpacked from the West to East coast walking in the TGO challenge and completed Land's End to John O'Groats cycling. I also toured the Inner and Outer Hebrides by cycle. So I guess my travel in Scotland has been fairly active.

But enough about me. I would like to say that I am not here to tell you what to do, but maybe talk about what is being done elsewhere and the opportunity this bill provides.

**You will find me switching between units**

**In approximate terms      20mph = 30kmh      30mph = 50kmh**

We may measure speed in different units, but the laws of physics apply wherever we are. There are three important principles where speed matters:-

On the energy needed to accelerate to speed and to dissipate in a crash.

Its proportional to the velocity squared. Hence to get to 30mph you need 2.25 times the energy and emissions to get to 20mph. And when you crash you have 2.25 times as much energy to dissipate. The effect is that a 20mph limit reduces the most harmful diesel NOX and PM10 pollution by 8%.

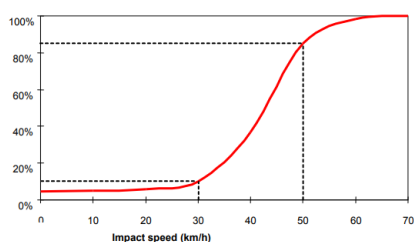
On stopping distance to avoid crashes.

You need thinking distance to react which is proportional to speed and you need braking distance that is proportional to speed squared. No wonder that total distance to stop is nearly double for 30mph compared to 20mph. In the distance a 20mph car can stop a 30mph car is still doing 24mph.

On survivability of pedestrians

This reduces rapidly above 30kmh. 85% of pedestrians will survive a 30kmh (18.5mph) impact whereas 80% of pedestrians will die in a 50kmh (32 mph) impact.

Figure 1 Probability of fatal injury for a pedestrian colliding with a vehicle (Tingvall and Haworth, 1999)



**World Organisations say 20mph/30kmh is best practice.**

The **EU Transport and Tourism Committee** “strongly recommends 30kmh limits unless there are segregated cycling and pedestrian facilities”

**iRAP, the International Road Assessment Programme** says the “*urban roads without segregated cycle and pedestrian facilities will not get a 5 star rating unless the limit is 30kmh.*”

The **Global Network for Road Safety Legislators** says “*there is strong evidence that wherever motorised traffic mixes with vulnerable road users the speed limit should be set at or under 30kmh*”.

The **International Transport Forum of the OECD** in a recent report on “*Speed and Crash Risk*” is categorical that “*Where motorised vehicles and vulnerable road users share the same space, such as in residential areas, 30 kmh is the recommended maximum.*”

The **World Health Organisation** host the UN Global Road Safety week every two years and is a key influencer in road safety globally. In its 2017 week it focussed on speed and in recognition of 30kmh being best practice where pedestrians and cyclists mix asked us to work on their behalf to create Slow Down Day toolkit that was used in 1,000+ slow down campaigning days across the world advocating urban and village 30kmh limits.

## **Global Practice**

Across the world countries and communities are setting 20mph/30kmh limits for urban and village roads. Indeed, it was learning from other countries from a visit to Warrington’s twin town of Hilden in Germany in 2004 that first led me to become a 20’s Plenty advocate. In Netherlands 70% of urban roads have a

30kmh or lower limit. In Scandinavian countries 30kmh is becoming the norm in villages and towns. In fact throughout Europe 30kmh is increasingly being set across complete authorities with exceptions on arterial roads with segregated facilities.

And whilst the UK has been a late starter, in the last 10 years over 25% of the population have gained a 20mph limit on the streets where they live, or learn, or shop or work. Most of our iconic cities have a 20mph limit for most roads, 43% of Londoners live on 20mph roads and 75% of people in Inner London Boroughs. And even complete counties such as Lancashire, Sefton, Calderdale, Clackmannanshire and Fife have adopted wide-area 20mph limits for all.

And the benefits are impressive with casualties showing reductions of 20+%.

### **So, what of this Bill?**

But for all the benefits of local authorities and communities saying 20's Plenty, this is much about setting a public consensus as it is traffic management. And if we want consideration for the amenity and safety of residents and communities to be a national norm then at some stage we have to enter a national debate about the quality of our streets and whether we have rules built around optimising the speed of vehicles or about the liveability of people.

We need to end our thinking about 30mph from our warm, protected, comfortable windscreen view of the street and consider it from the height of an 8 year old on the pavement or with the mobility of an 80 year old trying to cross the high street to a shop. And we need to make lifestyle decisions about the way we drive and set the conditions that others drive not only in Edinburgh, and Fife and Clackmannanshire but across the whole nation.

**The English Way is flawed.** Local Authority by Local Authority is so.... La la.

It becomes inconsistently applied, the authorities keeping 30mph justify non-compliers, its makes engagement and marketing more expensive than a national approach, signage is made more expensive because 20mph requires repeater signs because it is not a national limit, and smacks of a government knowing what it should do but washing its hands of its responsibility.

This bill provides Scotland the opportunity to adopt a smarter national approach to liveable communities, safety and active travel. By combining a national 20mph limit for restricted roads and the ability for local authorities to take

responsibility for exceptions it provides both national leadership and economies of scale with local flexibility and knowledge.

I am reminded by a statement made by a mother in the audience of a room above a pub in a community 20mph meeting in South London some time ago. And that was that *“you will never know the people whose lives you save, because no-one counts near misses”*. And for the Scottish Parliament maybe that is the question to ask yourselves when considering this Bill. Because maintaining and endorsing 30mph on community streets in Scotland will ensure that those near misses will instead be the casualty statistics that are so common and so avoidable.

In Its OECD report it was said that :-

*“In many countries, there is a trend into generalising the 30 kmh zones in city centres and residential areas. ... some countries are considering setting 30 kmh as a default speed limit in urban areas, with possible higher limits on arterial roads.”*

Will Scotland be the first of those?

With the devolvment of setting national speed limits to this parliament then Scotland can create community streets that become a better place to be with a 20mph limit. Scotland can, but whether Scotland will is up to you.

I trust that the rest of the seminar will give you further insight into the question.

Thank you for your time.

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## 20's Plenty for Us

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