Scottish Government commitment to 20mph limits supports Active Travel
and aligns with global best practice

With the Welsh government already committed to a national default 20mph limit for urban and village roads, the Scottish Government has announced that it plans\(^1\) for 20mph to become the norm in built-up areas. This aligns with global best practice\(^2\) that 20mph or 30km/h is the maximum permissible speed on roads used by pedestrians and cyclists unless a higher limit is evidently safe. It is a key component of Scotland’s response to the Climate Emergency and helps to support Active Travel.

The new power-sharing agreement between the Scottish National Party and the Scottish Green Party includes commitments to:-

- increase the proportion of Transport Scotland’s budget spent on Active Travel initiatives so that by 2024-25 at least £320m or 10% of the total transport budget will be allocated to Active Travel
- local authorities will be encouraged to deliver more Safe to School initiatives, with the aim of ensuring every child who lives within two miles of school is able to walk or wheel safely.

And on 20mph limits.

- all appropriate roads in built up areas will have a safer speed limit of 20mph by 2025. A task group will be formed to plan the most effective route for implementation.

Whilst this does not specifically call for a national 20mph urban/village default as planned in Wales, it is expected that the “task group” will inevitably conclude that setting “20mph as a norm” can best be accomplished by setting a national urban/village limit of 20mph and allowing local authorities to set exceptions only where there is evidence that it is safe (as in Wales).

This is consistent with global best practice and is a far smarter way of implementing 20mph as a norm than “street by street” and “local authority by local authority”. It provides cost-effectiveness, national consistency and allows the ability for local authorities to set exceptions where protected cycling and pedestrian infrastructure exists.

Such an initiative will build on the successful 20mph implementations in many Scottish Authorities and the convincing recent evidence from Edinburgh, Scottish Borders\(^3\) and other places that wide-area 20mph limits are cost-effective in smoothing traffic speeds and flow, increasing Active Travel and reducing casualties. It echoes moves in Wales and recently Spain where 20mph or 30km/h is being set as a national default.

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\(^2\) [https://www.20splenty.org/un_says_20splenty](https://www.20splenty.org/un_says_20splenty)

\(^3\) [https://www.20splenty.org/our_videos](https://www.20splenty.org/our_videos)

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The Scottish Government commitment to 20mph limits to support active travel aligns with global best practice.

“The Scottish Government is recognizing the value of setting 20mph as a consistent national standard for sharing roads between motors and people. We look forward to the development of the 20mph Task Force and its recommendations to make Scotland an even better place to be”

**Rod King MBE**, Founder and Campaign Director for 20’s Plenty for Us commented

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