Scotland National Speed Management Review

4 March 2025

Summary

- Logistics UK supports raising the speed limit for goods vehicles over 7.5 tonnes to 50mph on single-carriageways and 60mph on dual-carriageways, improving efficiency and reducing dangerous overtaking.
- A formal review should assess accident rates, traffic flow, and industry feedback to ensure the policy delivers expected safety and efficiency benefits
- Speed limit changes alone are insufficient; investment in dualling, passing lanes, and road upgrades on key freight routes is essential to maximise safety and reliability.

About Logistics UK

Logistics UK is one of the country's largest business groups, and the only trade association which represents all of logistics. Our mission is to support, shape and stand up for a safe, sustainable and efficient logistics sector. Our membership of more than 20,000 includes global, national and regional businesses and SMEs spanning road, rail, inland waterways, sea and air as well as the customers of freight services, such as retailers and manufacturers. We deliver services, representation and thought leadership, helping members and policy makers to seize new opportunities for the sector and the economy as a whole, right across the country.

The logistics sector

Logistics underpins our economy and is fundamental to our way of life. It supplies our hospitals, schools, factories, construction sites, shops and homes with everything they need, everywhere, every day – nothing moves without it.

The efficiency of logistics and the productivity of the economy are completely intertwined. Due to this relationship, Oxford Economics found in 2023 that getting the policy and infrastructure environment right for logistics would unlock up to £8 billion a year in productivity-led growth by 2030.

However, we are not currently going in the right direction. The UK fell from 4th to 19th place in the World Bank Logistics Performance index over the past decade, largely as a result of border friction and underinvestment in transport corridors.

Logistics is a major sector in its own right. It contributes £185 billion to the economy each year (12% of UK non-financial GVA), is one of the UK's largest employers, providing good jobs with strong career progression – 2.7 million people (8% of the UK workforce) are employed in logistics roles, and its key hubs provide a catalyst for further growth and investment, helping places to thrive.

Logistics has transformed the UK and is now delivering for the future. It helped deliver the country's canals, roads, railways, airports and ports, has driven revolutions in global trade and e-commerce and is now innovating to deliver decarbonisation and even greater efficiency.

Introduction

Logistics UK welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on potential changes to national speed limits in Scotland. After consultation with our road haulage members based in Scotland, as well as other UK operators that move goods in Scotland, we endorse the proposal to increase the speed limit for goods vehicles over 7.5 tonnes to 50mph on single-carriageways and 60mph on dual-carriageways.

Logistics UK believes this change would bring both efficiency and safety benefits to the industry. Evidence from previous changes to goods vehicle speed limits in England and Wales indicates that increasing HGV speed limits to 50mph on single-carriageways and 60mph on dual-carriageways results in smoother traffic flow, reduced congestion, and lower

instances of dangerous overtaking. Aligning Scotland's speed limits with those in other parts of the UK will also ensure consistency for logistics operators, improving journey planning and therefore efficiency.

Additionally, increased speed limits for HGVs could help mitigate speed differentials, which are a known contributor to accidents and traffic disruptions. By allowing HGVs to travel at more consistent speeds with other road users, the risk of frustration-induced overtaking manoeuvres and sudden braking incidents should be reduced, ultimately contributing to a safer road environment.

Implementation Review to Ensure Realised Benefits

While we support these changes, we strongly recommend that the Scottish Government commit to a formal review of their implementation to ensure that the anticipated safety and efficiency benefits are being realised. Such a review should consider:

- Accident and collision rates before and after implementation.
- Traffic flow and congestion data to measure the impact of reduced speed differentials.
- Feedback from the logistics industry and road users on the operational impact of the changes.

Investment in road Infrastructure and safety improvements

While the proposed changes to speed limits is a positive step, it should not be seen as a standalone solution to addressing safety and efficiency challenges. Many of Scotland's single-carriageway roads, particularly in rural and remote areas, remain poorly suited to modern freight operations due to inadequate infrastructure, limited passing opportunities, and poor road surfaces. Without accompanying investment in road infrastructure, speed limit changes alone will not be sufficient to achieve significant improvements in safety or journey time reliability. Poor road conditions can be a contributory factor to business operations.

Logistics UK therefore urges the Scottish Government to prioritise investment in dualling and passing lanes on key freight routes and improving road conditions for major freight routes. Particular attention should be given to:

- Ensuring continued progress towards full dualling of the A9, a critical corridor for freight movements.
- Improving the A75, the main link for trading with Northern Ireland and a road entirely unsuitable for HGVs.
- Targeted passing lane investment on other key single-carriageway routes used by HGVs.

These infrastructure improvements will further support the objectives of the speed limit changes by reducing congestion, minimising dangerous overtaking, and improving journey reliability.

Conclusion

Logistics UK endorses Option 1 as an effective approach to improving road safety and efficiency in Scotland. Increasing HGV speed limits on single-carriageways and dual-carriageways is a long-overdue measure that will bring consistency with the rest of the UK, reduce congestion, and enhance safety by minimising speed differentials. However, this change must be accompanied by ongoing evaluation and targeted investment in road infrastructure to ensure the full benefits are realised.

We look forward to continued engagement with the Scottish Government on this issue and welcome further discussions on how to enhance Scotland's road network to support the logistics industry and wider economy.

Contact:
Jonathan Walker
Head of Infrastructure and Planning Policy
Logistics UK
jwalker@logistics.org.uk