POLICY NOTE

THE HGV SPEED LIMIT (VARIATION) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2026

SSI 2026/XXX

The above instrument was made in exercise of the powers conferred by section 86(2) and (3) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The instrument is subject to affirmative procedure.

Summary Box

The purpose of this instrument is to increase the speed limit on single and dual carriageway roads (i.e. roads other than motorways) for vehicles which have a maximum laden weight, or, if drawing a trailer, aggregate maximum laden weight, exceeding 7.5 tonnes. These vehicles are known as HGVs (heavy goods vehicles).

The Regulations increase the speed limit for these vehicles on single carriageways from 40 mph to 50 mph and on dual carriageways from 50 mph to 60 mph. The changes aim to reduce speed differentials between HGVs and other vehicles, which it is hoped will lead to improved journey time reliability and reduced instances of driver frustration.

The changes apply in respect of the driving of HGVs on roads in Scotland.

The Regulations also revoke a 2014 instrument which increased the speed limit for HGVs from 40 to 50 mph on specified sections of single carriageway on the A9 between Perth and Inverness. Those Regulations are no longer necessary given the national changes which are being introduced.

Policy Objectives

The National Speed Management Review forms part of the Scottish Government's wider approach to improving transport safety and performance. It supports delivery of the National Transport Strategy's priorities of reducing inequalities, taking climate action, helping deliver inclusive economic growth, and improving health and wellbeing through a transport system that is safe, resilient and sustainable. The Review also contributes directly to the delivery of the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)[1], which identified a National Speed Management Review[2] as a key intervention to improve road safety and support a safer transport network.

The proposed changes flowing from the review were to:

- Reduce the national speed limit for motor vehicles on single carriageway roads from 60 mph to 50 mph, and
- Increase HGV speed limits from 40 mph to 50 mph on single carriageways and 50 mph to 60 mph on dual carriageways.

These proposals were subject to a public consultation which closed in March 2025 and received over 19,500 responses.

[1] https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/52685/final-technical-report-28-december-2022-stpr2.pdf
[2] https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/national-speed-management-review-2024/

Following careful analysis of the responses, findings and next steps were announced in December 2025 when it was announced that only the increase in HGV speed limits would be progressed. The changes are intended to reduce speed differentials between HGVs and other vehicles which in turn will hopefully lead to reduced driver frustration and improved journey time reliability.

These Regulations are required to make amendments to the primary legislation which sets out the current speed limit applying to HGVs on roads other than motorways, namely schedule 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

The Regulations amend schedule 6 to increase the speed limit for such vehicles from 40 mph to 50 mph on single carriageways and from 50 mph to 60 mph on dual carriageways.

A public communications campaign would be delivered ahead of the new HGV speed limits coming into force on 1 April 2027.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 Compatibility
In accordance with section 23(2) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 (the Act), the Scottish Ministers certify that, in their view, the HGV Speed Limit (Variation) (Scotland) Regulations 2026 are compatible with the UNCRC requirements as defined by section 1(2) of the Act.

EU Alignment Consideration
This instrument is not relevant to the Scottish Government's policy to maintain alignment with the EU.

Consultation
To comply with the requirements of section 134(8) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, a public consultation[3] took place from November 2024 to March 2025. A series of in person engagement events were held in the winter of 2024.

Over 19,500 responses were received. From the analysis, 60% of respondents thought the current limit for HGVs is appropriate, while 39% felt it is too low. From the organisational responses, 37% felt the limit was about right, while 57% felt it was too low On dual carriageways, opinions were split equally between maintaining or increasing the limit (47% each) while 45% of organisational respondents thought the limit was about right while 49% thought it was too low. A small majority of all respondents believed increasing HGV limits would reduce driver frustration (56–57%) and improve journey times (57–59%).

As a result of that consultation it was announced that only the increase in HGV speed limits would be progressed.

A full list of those consulted and who agreed to the release of this information is attached to the consultation report published on the Transport Scotland website[4].

Impact Assessments
Supporting impact assessments have been completed on the draft SSI:

[3] https://consult.gov.scot/transport-scotland/national-speed-management-review/
[4] https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/statement-of-community-involvement-december-2025-national-speed-management-review/

- Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA)
  - The suggested changes do not introduce any new requirements, costs, reporting obligations, or compliance burdens for businesses.
  - Businesses, including freight and logistics operators, are not expected to change their operating models, supply chains, or day-to-day activities as a result of the regulations.
  - The policy may provide minor efficiency benefits, such improved journey times and freight movement.
  - The overall assessment concludes that the proposals will have minimal business impacts, therefore a full BRIA is not required.
- Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)
  - Assessment attached.
- Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment
  - No socio-economic inequalities were identified during the assessment.
  - A full Fairer Duty Scotland Assessment was undertaken as part of the Road Safety Framework 2030 development. The Framework represents the strategic decision-making level at which the FSD applies which detailed account of inequalities in road safety and how the measures within the framework, including reviewing speed limits address these.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment
  - Environmental principles were considered through the STAG appraisal process, with the assessment finding that any environmental consequences are expected to be limited and unlikely to result in significant environmental impacts.
- Net Zero Assessment
  - Assessment not required. NZA operates a de minimis screening threshold for the emissions impact of policies set at 0.01 MtCO2e in any one year or a cumulative 0.1 MtCO2e impact over a 10-year period.
- Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA)
  - As part of the consultation, engagement events took place in Orkney and Arran.
  - The assessment found no unique or disproportionate impacts on island communities.
  - As the speed limit changes will apply consistently across Scotland, there is no evidence that island communities will be affected differently from mainland communities. Therefore, it was concluded that a full ICIA is not required.

Financial Effects

Given the impact of this policy on businesses do not introduce any new requirements, costs, reporting obligations, or compliance burdens for businesses only a partial Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA) has been completed.

Transport Scotland
Roads Delivery and Operations Directorate

September 2026