

**Minute of meeting of A9 Safety Group (chaired by Minister for Transport)**  
**Festival Theatre, Pitlochry**  
**4 November 2022**  
**3pm**

**Attendees**

Name	Organisation
Jenny Gilruth MSP	Minister for Transport
John Swinney MSP	Deputy First Minister
Stewart Leggett	Transport Scotland – Operations
Stuart Wilson	Transport Scotland – Operations
Richard Perry	Transport Scotland – Operations
Marco Bardelli	Transport Scotland – Maintenance
Laurence Campbell	Transport Scotland – Major Projects
Michael McDonnell	Transport Scotland – Road Safety Scotland
Matt Millar	Transport Scotland – Communications
Supt. Stewart Mackie	Police Scotland (remote)
Insp Donnie MacKinnon	Police Scotland
Insp Andy Mather	Police Scotland
Sgt Davie Miller	Police Scotland
Eric Dunion	Safety Cameras Scotland (North)
Michael Grant	Safety Cameras Scotland (East)
Eddie Ross	BEAR Scotland North West
Kevin McKechnie	BEAR Scotland North West
Stuart Geddes	BEAR Scotland North West
Pat Shields	AMEY North East
Martin Reid	Road Haulage Association
Stephen Halleran	FTA / Logistics UK
Paul White	Confederation of Passenger Transport

**Apologies**

Name	Organisation
Brian Cargill	Perth & Kinross Council
Robin Pope	The Highland Council
Lisa MacKellaich	The Highland Council
David Richardson	Federation of Small Businesses
Grant Campbell	Scottish Council for Development and Industry
Neil Greig	IAM RoadSmart

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1. Welcome extended to all attendees from Minister for Transport Jenny Gilruth MSP
  2. Minister's opening remarks

- The Minister for Transport, Jenny Gilruth (JG) MSP outlined the background to the formation of the A9 Safety group for context and commented on the number of fatal collisions reported since July this year.

### 3. Updates on recent developments

- Stewart Mackie (SM) described the number and circumstances of fatal collisions reported on A9 single carriageway sections during 2022. The factors that appear common in many of the collisions include fatigue, distraction and foreign drivers. It was also noted that older road users are involved in many of the collisions, whether as drivers or casualties.
- Whilst the A9 is a priority route for Police Scotland there are other significant competing demands with a number of other routes featuring high collision numbers and fatalities. Road Policing officers are required to provide attention and focus on all of these routes. In addition there are significant demand from other areas such as abnormal loads which are increasing significantly and in particular in respect of Wind Farms and green energy. These are set to triple placing significant pressure on limited Road Policing resources. It is important to note this is against a backdrop of a fixed Police Budget and a reduction in resources with North Road Policing 26% under strength and unable to effectively recruit into this area due to these impacting factors.

### 4. Update from members

- Donnie MacKinnon (DM) highlighted that there are competing demands for Police resources as there has been an increase in fatal collisions experienced across the north command area, not just A9.
- Eric Dunion (ED) advised the Safety Camera Programme does not only carry out enforcement but promotes educational and informational media campaigns as well as supporting those from other stakeholders.
- John Swinney (JS) MSP commented on the observed effects of the average speed enforcement camera and asked whether speed was a factor in any of the recent fatal collisions. SM/DM confirmed that excessive speed was not a factor in the fatal collisions and added that there had been notable changes in driver behaviour since the average speed enforcement camera system was installed in 2014.

### 5. A9 dualling update

- Laurence Campbell (LC) provided an update on the A9 dualling programme.
  - With two projects complete and open the Tomatin to Moy project is currently in procurement – and is progressing through our tender evaluation process.
  - Seven of the remaining eight projects are progressing through statutory process, with four of these projects having Orders made and two have ministerial decisions to proceed to make Orders. A ministerial decision is expected in the near future for the Killiecrankie to Glen Garry project.
  - Project 2 (Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing) is not currently in the statutory process, and is at preferred route option stage.

- With regard to the procurement of the remaining projects, assessment of the optimal procurement approach for delivery of these projects is currently ongoing.

## 6. Short term improvement measures – Transport Scotland

- Stuart Wilson (SW) introduced the topic and described the background to the consideration of introducing potential short-term measures. These could be progressed alongside ongoing maintenance and operation of the A9.
- Kevin McKechnie (KM) outlined potential short term measures and potential timescales and factors that affect implementation. At this time, these are considered deliverable on the A9 alongside forthcoming dualling projects. These include:
  - road marking improvements to centre and edge lines;
  - reinforce lane advice using carriageway arrow markings and road signs and installing solar powered road studs/street lighting at major/minor junctions;
  - reviews of Junction Layout for rationalisation or remodelling (this would be a significant undertaking (for investigation and delivery) over a number of years);
  - fixed signing to rest facilities encouraging drivers to 'take a break'; and
  - traffic sign and road marking enhancements at transitions between dual and single carriageway.
- Donnie MacKinnon (DM) outlined Police Scotland's short-term measures relating to enforcement. Police Scotland have increased patrols on A9 to increase visible presence. A Day of Action was undertaken on A9. Interactions with HGV drivers were increased through partnership working with DVSA. There has been a focus on visitor engagement through vehicle hire companies and foreign nationals have been subject to enforcement where necessary.
- Road Safety Scotland - Michael McDonnell (MM) outlined the analysed and informed Road Safety Scotland Educational and awareness raising campaigns that are 'shelf-ready' and could be activated at short notice. These would support other key stakeholder efforts on the A9 targeting Drive on the Left and Fatigue related collisions. MM will take forward previous suggestions regarding agency drivers and try to connect with agencies to expand the supporting elements of the Drive on the Left campaign.

## 7. Discussion on A9 safety and possible short-term measures

- KM advised that due to weather related factors extensive programme of road marking implementation may not be achievable until Spring 2023 but suggested solar roads studs as potentially being deliverable in the short-term.
- MR supports improving welfare stops. Planning issues have been encountered at other locations when trying to improve facilities at rest stop areas. MR identified Dalwhinnie, Ralia and Ballinluig as most common stopping sites, however sites on the A9 are limited in number.
- Darkness was also described as a particular issue for road users at the Dunkeld junctions and it was asked if the provision of lighting could be explored. Stewart

Leggett (SL) indicated that lighting would not be suggested as an improvement measure unless a darkness was identified as a significant common factor in reported collisions. However, it was recognised that lighting junctions may make them more favoured for use and thereby increasing tendency to take rest stops.

- JS highlighted that the change to single carriageway at Birnam is the first that anyone travelling from the south is likely to have encountered on their journey since joining the strategic road network. This seems like a justification for special treatment, such as electronic signs KM indicated these could be installed at relatively quickly.
- DM stated that Police Scotland are supportive of all the measures suggested by BEAR Scotland. He agreed that it could be challenging negotiating some junction in darkness and that limited rest-stops along the route may be an issue.
- MR asked that any new or improved rest facilities are located remote from the road to improve safety and rest. It was indicated that the Road Haulage Association would support any relevant A9 media campaigns. MR suggested that driver agencies could also benefit from engagement with the Drive on the Left campaign due to the use of overseas drivers.

## 8. Conclusions and next steps

### **Actions arising**

- Indicative timescales to be attached to all BEAR Scotland short-term proposals – **Action BEAR Scotland Ltd.**
- Campaigns - Minister to liaise with Road Safety Scotland and support joint working with partners and stakeholders – **Action Road Safety Scotland**
- Working group membership – consider if there are any groups or individuals who are missing from the group who require representation - **Action All members**
- Increase meeting frequency to bi-monthly with the next meeting to take place in approximately 2 months to maintain momentum in tackling road safety issues on the A9 – **Action Transport Scotland**

The Minister thanked all for their attendance and closed the meeting.