

Minute of Meeting of A9 Safety Group
Pitlochry Festival Theatre
5 June 2023 – 15:30 to 17:00

Attendees

Name	Organisation
Kevin Stewart MSP	Minister for Transport
Thomas Meikle	Private Office
Morag MacKay	Transport Scotland – Roads Operations
Richard Perry	Transport Scotland – Roads Operations
Laurence Campbell	Transport Scotland – Major Projects (via TEAMS)
Michael McDonnell	Transport Scotland – Road Safety Scotland (via TEAMS)
Matt Millar	Transport Scotland – Communications
David McKenzie	Transport Scotland – Roads Operations (Minutes)
Ch Insp Andy Barclay	Police Scotland
Insp Donnie MacKinnon	Police Scotland
Insp Andy Mather	Police Scotland
Sgt Neil Macdonald	Police Scotland
Eric Dunion	Safety Cameras Scotland (North) (via TEAMS)
Kevin McKechnie	BEAR Scotland North West
Stuart Geddes	BEAR Scotland North West
Pat Shields	Amey North East
Martin Reid	Road Haulage Association
Daryl McKeown	Perth & Kinross Council (via TEAMS)
Lisa MacKellaich	The Highland Council (via TEAMS)
Neil Greig	IAM RoadSmart
Paul White	Confederation for Passenger Transport (via TEAMS)

Apologies

Name	Organisation
David Richardson	Federation of Small Businesses
Michael Grant	Safety Cameras Scotland (East)
Marco Bardelli	Transport Scotland
Michelle Little	Transport Scotland - Road Safety Policy
Colin Simpson	Cairngorms National Park Authority
Brian Cargill	Perth & Kinross Council (<i>represented by Daryl McKeown</i>)

Invited but not in attendance

Name	Organisation
Stephen Halleran	FTA / Logistics UK
David Buick	Stagecoach Ltd.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
 2. Minister's Opening Remarks
 3. Update on Short Term Measures
 4. Route Updates
 5. Update from Group Members
 6. A9 Dualling Update
 7. AOB.
 8. Conclusions and Next Steps
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1. Welcome and Introductions

Welcome extended to all attendees from Minister for Transport, Kevin Stewart MSP.

2. Minister's opening remarks

The Minister highlighted and acknowledged the important work undertaken by the group highlighting how worrying the increase in the number of injury collisions on the A9 in 2022 was.

3. Updates on short term measures

- Road Safety Scotland

Michael McDonnell (MM) advised a national four-week fatigue campaign ran between 13 February and 12 March 2023 with specific references to the A9. A range of media including: TV, Radio, Digital and Out-of-Home was deployed, the latter at service stations along the A9. All campaign assets will be available via www.roadsafety.scot. Numerous stakeholders shared the digital content.

A "Drive on the Left" campaign launched on 21 March 2023 with a variety of campaign assets, including leaflets, wristbands, windscreen stickers (and reservoir gaiters for bikers) being deployed via partners during the campaign. LoganAir agreed to alter its inflight arrival messaging to include a "drive on left" reminder. Variable message signs are being used to reinforce campaign messaging. The Minister offered to write to other airlines if that would be helpful.

- BEAR Scotland (NW)

Stuart Geddes outlined the progress made on the measures and circulated a handout which included pictures and descriptions of some of the works undertaken. Measures including red surface infill, yellow backed two way traffic signs, double white centre lines and "weatherline +" were installed in the Birnam to Dalguise section of the A9 between January and May 2023 with similar improvements planned for single carriageway and transition sections along the remainder of the route over the next two years. Temporary VMS are still deployed at eight locations with messages reinforcing campaign advice re fatigue and driving on the left. Direction arrows have been installed on the single carriageway section surfaces at approximately 1 minute intervals (for drivers travelling at 60 mph) and works have been undertaken to improve safety at the House of Bruar junction.

The Minister mentioned the Birnam/Dunkeld action group had previously asked whether the words “single carriageway” could be added to the new yellow back signs. BEAR pointed out this was not in the approved signs specification but would consider the viability of the request. Donnie MacKinnon urged caution as too much text can be confusing for drivers.

Kevin McKechnie explained progress on the previous action to consider simplifying the HGV 50 MPH speed limit signs to avoid confusion for drivers of other classifications of vehicles. He circulated an example of the new entry sign that has been designed and shared with Martin Reid and Police Scotland prior to the meeting and is about to go forward for specific approval. Martin Reid enquired as to whether the word “over (7.5t)” could be added to the design. BEAR agreed to consider, however the HGV 7.5t legend is standard to all traffic signs.

4. Route updates

- Perth to Scrabster

Kevin McKechnie described two road safety schemes north of Inverness. Street lighting and turning restrictions at the Munlocy junction and a new 40 MPH speed limit and better crossing facilities for non-motorised users through signalisation at Tore roundabout. Signalisation at Raigmore junction roundabout was also being considered to improve provision for non-motorised users.

A video survey has been undertaken at the Dunkeld/Birnam junctions to assess the extent/nature of manoeuvres that result in potential conflicts there and consideration is being given to a temporary roundabout. Wider maintenance schemes include £7.5m investment in resurfacing at various locations are also in train/being considered.

- Dunblane to Perth

Pat Shields confirmed that Amey had assumed responsibility for the A9 between Keir and Inveralmond roundabouts in August 2022. Schemes to improve safety at junctions at Broom of Dalreach and Blackford have been delivered along with the installation of vehicle activated signs to warn of turning traffic. Wider maintenance schemes include £1m investment in resurfacing at various locations.

5. Update from group members

- Police Scotland

Insp Donnie MacKinnon gave an update on the fatal collisions advising that between April 2022 and March 2023 there had been 13 fatal collisions on the A9 resulting in 19 deaths. 8 of these collisions (13 deaths) had been in Highland area and 5 (6 deaths) in the Tayside/Perth and Kinross area. There had been 2 collisions resulting in multiple fatalities and 2 collisions each resulting in 2 deaths. He went on to explain that these can be very challenging scenes and complex investigations and paid tribute to the officers attending and investigating these incidents. He pointed out that all of the 19 fatalities in the aforementioned year had been aged 46 or older and the majority had been in July onwards indicating a pattern of increased visitor activity. So far since 1 April 2023 there have been 2 fatal collisions resulting in 2 deaths, one involving a car and motorcycle at the Auchterarder junction and one involving a car and HGV near to Tomatin. This had been a particularly difficult scene to manage and he paid particular tribute to

his team and the partner agencies at BEAR and Transport Scotland who assisted with the protracted road closure and scene management.

Various partnership campaigns with Safety Cameras and the DVSA were undertaken with leaflet drops at transport hubs taking place. Data regarding accident trends is being used to inform patrol activity.

The Minister thanked Insp MacKinnon for his input and for the efforts of his team and asked officials to write a letter of thanks on his behalf to Police Scotland to those officers on behalf of the Scottish Government.

Some discussion then took place around the likelihood of older drivers losing confidence about driving as a result of the Covid pandemic. Insp MacKinnon agreed that this could be the case and that the “Driver Refinement North” campaign was engaging with older drivers and encouraging fitness to drive. Michael McDonnell highlighted two videos produced to assist drivers after the “lockdowns” were available via the Road Safety Scotland website. Further campaigns aimed at older drivers were being considered subject to the approval of the requisite campaign funding.

Andy Barclay highlighted that, although they had daily patrols on the A9, the Police are not immune to resource pressures and they had to consider the A9 along with a number of other priority routes and activities.

- Safety Cameras North

Eric Dunion advised that the capital investment in an upgrade to the A9 average speed cameras had led to a considerable improvement in its performance and that this is supplemented by regular mobile safety camera deployments on the route. Safety Camera Unit staff also assist the partnership road safety events where possible.

- Highland Council

Lisa MacKellaich reported that the Highland Council’s single biggest initiative has been as an early adopter of 20 mph limits in built up areas with some 400 settlements being considered. 123 of these have been brought forward for a reduced speed limit of 20mph by end of Summer 2023, including some on the trunk road network. Close liaison has taken place with Transport Scotland. The Highland Council will be monitoring speeds at 250 sites to assess the impact of these new limits 3 months after changes are made. They have also invested in a “Speed Compliance Tool” to analyse average speeds of vehicles to assist with decision making about speed limits.

- Perth and Kinross Council

Daryl McKeown reported they had considered over 200 settlements in their council area with 105 of those being brought forward for 20 mph limits. None of these are on the trunk road network. There is a strong focus on the Cross Tay Link Road works and working in partnership with Transport Scotland on managing the impacts of construction roadworks on the A9.

- Road Haulage Association

Martin Reid enquired about the position with considering the wider implementation of a 50mph speed limit for HGVs on single carriageways in Scotland. Morag MacKay explained this has been included in the wider National Speed Management Review which is considering all speed limits and is due to undertake consultation later in 2023.

- IAM Roadsmart

Neil Greig highlighted they are working with Police Scotland to assist with the Rider Refinement North and offering advanced training to participants. IAM Roadsmart is also assisting with road safety messaging on the NC500.

6. A9 Dualling update

Laurence Campbell (TS Major Projects) provided an update on the A9 dualling programme. The preparations for the new procurement for the Tomatin – Moy section are being progressed, with engagement with the industry taking place to consider improvements that may be made to our contract and procurement to increase market interest, with the aim to commence the new tender process as soon as possible. The work to determine the most suitable procurement option for the remainder of the programme is also ongoing, and as confirmed to Parliament in February this is anticipated to conclude in the Autumn with an update to Parliament at that time. We are also considering the preferred route option for the Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing section, and the Minister met with the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group earlier today as part of this process. The Minister emphasised the Scottish Government's continued commitment to dualling the A9 between Perth and Inverness.

7. AOB

Nil

8. Conclusion and Next Steps

The Minister thanked members for attending, recognised the importance of this group and closed the meeting.

Actions arising

- Letter of thanks to Police Scotland from the Minister for Transport to acknowledge its work attending and investigating fatal collisions on the A9 – **Action Transport Scotland.**

-----End Of Meeting Note-----