

Minute of Meeting of A9 Safety Group
Pitlochry Festival Theatre
8 November 2023 – 12:00 to 13:30

Attendees

Name	Organisation
Fiona Hyslop MSP	Minister for Transport
Thomas Meikle	Private Office
Stuart Wilson	Transport Scotland – Roads Operations
Morag MacKay	Transport Scotland – Roads Operations
Richard Perry	Transport Scotland – Roads Operations
Marco Bardelli	Transport Scotland – Roads Operations
Laurence Campbell	Transport Scotland – Major Projects (via TEAMS)
Michael McDonnell	Transport Scotland – Road Safety Scotland
Matt Millar	Transport Scotland – Communications
David McKenzie	Transport Scotland – Roads Operations (Minutes)
Ch Insp Andy Barclay	Police Scotland (via TEAMS)
Insp Donnie MacKinnon	Police Scotland
Insp Andy Mather	Police Scotland
Eric Dunion	Safety Cameras Scotland (North)
Kevin McKechnie	BEAR Scotland North West
Stuart Geddes	BEAR Scotland North West
Evan Ferguson	Amey North East (via TEAMS)
David Richardson	Federation of Small Businesses (via TEAMS)
Colin Simpson	Cairngorms National Park Authority (via TEAMS)
Brian Cargill	Perth & Kinross Council (via TEAMS)
Lisa MacKellaich	The Highland Council (via TEAMS)
Neil Greig	IAM RoadSmart
Paul White	Confederation for Passenger Transport (via TEAMS)
Grant Campbell	Prosper (via TEAMS)

Apologies

Name	Organisation
Martin Reid	Road Haulage Association
Michael Grant	Safety Cameras Scotland (East)
Michelle Little	Transport Scotland - Road Safety Policy

Group members 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, Fiona Hyslop MSP.

2. Minister's opening remarks

The Minister highlighted the importance of the A9 as a strategic route for Scotland and thanked members for their continued efforts. She also extended thanks to those partners who assisted with the response to the severe weather impacts experienced in October.

3. Updates on short term measures

Michael McDonnell - Road Safety Scotland

Two campaigns were funded as part of the short-term measures:

A fatigue campaign ran from Feb to Mar 2023 and was found to be successful with stakeholders adopting the toolkit produced. There was particularly good pick-up on the radio ad that specifically mentioned the A9.

The 'drive on the left' campaign was relaunched in March 2023. A combination of windscreen stickers, leaflets, reservoir gaiters (for bikers) and wristbands was made available to partners and stakeholders on request. In addition to resources being available at car rental points in airports, they were also available in 76 Visit Scotland iCentres. During the campaign there was almost a fourfold increase in visits to the Drive on the Left pages on the website, and a partner toolkit was developed and distributed to over 200 stakeholders and partners. An explainer video on the website was also accessible via a QR code displayed on posters in a variety of locations. To date, almost 76,000 pieces of campaign collateral have been distributed.

Stuart Geddes - BEAR Scotland (NW)

An update on progress on the engineering short term measures between Perth and Inverness was provided and these were summarised in a handout which was circulated at the meeting. The Minister asked to what extent the measures were making a difference. Insp MacKinnon stated that the junction improvements were very noticeable but that the collective efforts of all parties was what had most impact. Neil Greig added that people are commenting that the route has improved but asked what evaluation was being undertaken re the effectiveness of the short-term measures. An action was raised for Transport Scotland and BEAR to consider this. The Minister enquired about the timeframe for completion of all the planned works and this was given as March 2025.

4. Route updates

Kevin McKechnie – BEAR Scotland (Perth to Scrabster)

Provided an overview of the road safety schemes on the route in addition to the short term measures. These include liaison with The Highland Council to install 20 mph limits on the trunk roads through settlements, junction improvements at Newtonmore (Ralia) and Bruar, progression of a reduced speed limit at Tore roundabout with better facilities for non-motorised users, reconfiguration of Munlochy junction and video surveys at Dunkeld and Newtonmore (Ralia) junctions. Road safety investigations are being progressed at Tomich and Lynwilg junctions, as well as between Ardullie and Evanton. Grant Campbell expressed an interest in the outcomes for Tomich junction, given the proximity of industry in Invergordon.

Investment in engineering schemes totalling £6.5m of structural maintenance (surfacing) and £1m of lining works have been substantially completed. The Minister acknowledged the extensive works and the focus on locations north of Inverness. Marco Bardelli highlighted that additional small schemes have been undertaken in response to resident concerns such as warning signs for accesses with limited visibility.

Evan Ferguson – AMEY (Dunblane to Perth)

Responsible for maintenance of dual carriageway between Dunblane and Perth. Three road safety investigations ongoing totalling 15 kilometres at Broxden roundabout, Aberuthven to Broxden, and Keir Roundabout to Doune junction. Once complete recommendations will be presented to Transport Scotland. Ongoing maintenance investment include resurfacing works between Forteviot and Greenloaning, drainage works near to Broxden and central safety barrier improvements between Dunblane and Greenloaning.

5. Update from group members

Insp Donnie MacKinnon - Police Scotland

Statistics for fatal crashes indicate a considerable reduction from last year. Since April 2023 there have been 3 recorded road deaths on the A9 compared with 14 in the same period last year. 2 of these were discussed at the previous group meeting and the third has now been confirmed as a suicide highlighting that engineering, education and enforcement has limitations in all situations. None of the fatal crashes mentioned have involved foreign drivers. Police have been proactive in visiting tourist locations to give advice as well as their high profile patrols and joint initiatives with partner agencies such as the DVSA. The benefit of crash and liaison meetings with the Police was acknowledged.

Eric Dunion - Safety Cameras North

Continuing to work closely with Police colleagues on enforcement including mobile cameras to augment the established average speed camera system. Investment in the average camera system has ensured the most up to date technology is available. This was recently used in an initiative to focus on small commercial vehicles which highlighted poor compliance with the speed limit. The Unit is liaising with commercial operators and hire companies and will repeat these initiatives in the future supported by media campaigns.

Morag MacKay explained that the outcomes of the 50mph single carriageway HGV speed limit trial are being considered as part of the wider National Speed

Management Review which is due to commence public consultation this year. The Minister was of the view that as the trial has lasted so long a stand-alone evidence based decision on the A9 HGV speed limits may need to be taken before the wider review is complete.

Lisa MacKellaich - Highland Council

125 settlements changed from 30 to 20 mph speed limits under temporary road order with permanent orders planned for Jan 2025. The Highland Council have developed a dashboard to monitor speed behaviours and plan to start informal consultation using an online toll to capture community feedback prior to the formal consultation. So far the feedback is approximately 70/30 in favour of the changes. Continue to work with Transport Scotland on the settlements which are on the trunk road network and liaise regarding other schemes such as Munlochy junction.

Brian Cargill - Perth and Kinross Council

70 locations reduced from 30 to 20 mph limit as part of the Covid “spaces for people” scheme with 54 of these planned to be made permanent. Evaluation has showed varied results with vehicle activated signs showing a short-term effect on speed limit compliance with Police activity and road space realignment showing the most long term effect. Significant damage was sustained during Storm Babet. School transport has been provided to alleviate concerns about children having to cross the A9 to attend school due to damage to footpath at the River Braan. Work also underway to improve access to Dunkeld rail station for people with poor mobility.

Neil Greig - IAM Roadsmart

Continue to work with Police on road safety initiatives. Noted significant media interest in the road works recently being undertaken in the Dunkeld area. Neil advised that he retired in October and as his replacement is based in England he is continuing meantime until they are up to speed. The Minister thanked Neil for his contribution to the group over a long period of time.

David Richardson – Federation of Small Businesses

Feels that the economic impacts of the A9 during Safety Groups has declined in favour of the road safety performance, which was recognised as priority. Raised a point about references to little known side roads being used on variable message signs which could cause confusion when the A9 has to be closed. Transport Scotland agreed to raise this with the relevant parties.

Grant Campbell – Prosper (formerly SCDI)

Recognises the impact of climate change in recent weather events and the road works at Dunkeld which led to delays. Asked if mitigations could be put in place to prevent such delays happening again. Members asking about the electrification of the main rail line to Inverness to assist with transport modal shift. Asked if the replacement of the “cats eyes” could be extended.

Paul White - Confederation for Passenger Transport

Nothing raised.

Colin Simpson - Cairngorms National Park Authority

Main role is assisting with communication and media messaging from group partners to reach visitors to the National Park. Offered to assist more with this as next summer approaches when more visitors arrive and the engineering works described earlier are taking place.

6. A9 Dualling update

Procurement for the Tomatin to Moy section commenced on 5 Sept 2023. Work is ongoing to identify the most suitable procurement method for the remaining sections and we expect to update Parliament this Autumn. Discussions ongoing regarding designs for Dunkeld section.

7. AOB

SGN works near Dunkeld

The Minister highlighted that she had taken a personal interest in the concerns raised regarding the delays experienced and had discussions with contractors and partners to assist in finding a resolution. Marco Bardelli advised that regular meetings were taking place and that all the small changes to the works and traffic management had made a big difference. These include recovery vehicle on site, better operation of traffic lights, availability of Incident Support Unit from BEAR Scotland and 7 day working on site to reduce the works duration.

8. Conclusion and Next Steps

The Minister thanked all those in attendance for their updates and asked all parties to maintain their focus on the A9 and keep up the good work.

Actions arising

1. Transport Scotland BEAR to consider how the effectiveness of the short term engineering measures could be evaluated.

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