

A9 Safety Group

Thursday 26th October 2017 at 11:00
Tulloch Caledonian Stadium, Inverness.

Alan Campbell	BEAR Scotland Ltd
John Smith	BEAR Scotland Ltd
Ian MacPhail	BEAR Scotland Ltd
Richard Gerring	The Highland Council
Chic Haggart	Perth & Kinross Council
Martin Reid	Road Haulage Association
Peter Houston	Police Scotland
Marco Bardelli	Transport Scotland
Amy Phillips	Transport Scotland
Michelle Little	Transport Scotland
Donna Turnbull	Transport Scotland
Stuart Wilson	Transport Scotland
David McKenzie	Transport Scotland
David Pollock	Transport Scotland

Notes of Meeting

1. Welcome & Introductions.

Stuart Wilson welcomed all to the meeting followed by a round table introduction from everybody present.

2. Apologies

Apologies were made for Michael McDonnell (Road Safety Scotland), Jeremy Tinsley CPT-UK, Neil Greig IAM RoadSmart and Arron Duncan.

3. Previous Minutes and Actions

The minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the previous meeting.

4. Average Speed Camera System Update.

It was noted that the three year anniversary of the A9 average speed cameras (ASCs) going live was midnight 27/10/2017. Figures available to date indicate that, during the intervening period accidents numbers are down, the number of incidents are down, and journey times are more reliable. Reporting is expected to continue to reflect the full 3 year operational period as casualty data becomes available.

AECOM are currently working on a report update for 50mph pilot. Donna Turnbull stated that Transport Scotland are currently awaiting reports on the 50mph HGV speed limit south of the border.

Smith queried the timescale of the production of the report following the 3 year evaluation. Stuart Wilson stated that whilst there was no set timeframe, the process for the A9 had started and that the next report will include the 50mph pilot scheme and would be ready for the next A9 Safety Group meeting in spring. Post meeting note – the A9 safety Group are now expected to meet the consultants undertaking the HGV evaluation to input their appreciation of the route as part of the evaluation itself.

It was noted that the A90 average speed camera scheme is due to go live on the 27th October 2017.

Marco Bardelli stated that the 40mph ASCs on the Kincaig – Dalraddy roadworks had performed well in managing overall speed through the roadworks.

The A9 Safety group are committed to all road users including road workers and their safety. Group to liaise with traffic management working group. Amy Phillips stated that speed indicator devices are to be trialled at road works. Portable rumble strips have been used in advance of road works successfully. The issue of road workers being abused was raised. It was thought that this was because of driver frustration at delays caused because of road works with temporary speed limits with no works apparently being carried out.

During the recent Kincaig – Dalraddy scheme there was evidence of initial frustration when there were lines of cones with no obvious works but this subsided once works became more visible.

Richard Gerring raised a concern on long schemes (one of the contracts being potentially 13 miles long) possibly affecting driver behaviour especially on online improvements where no overtaking restrictions need to be enforced.

Richard Gerring also expressed concerns about traffic movements off the A9 through Aviemore during incidents.

5. A9 Interim Safety Plan – Key Performance Indicators Update

Discussed under Average Speed Camera item.

Peter Houston gave updates on fatal and non-fatal accidents on the A9 since the last meeting.

April 2017 at Keir Roundabout. On the approach to the roundabout a van, driven by a male, struck the rear of a vehicle ahead in a queue. The driver of the queued sustained fatal injuries. *Post meeting note: The driver of the van has now received a four year sentence for being asleep at the point of the collision.*

April 2017 Kindallachan, Pitlochry. A northbound car collided with a southbound vehicle. The driver of the northbound car sustained fatal injuries.

July 2017 south of Dowally. A southbound car drifted across the carriageway into the path of a northbound car towing a caravan. The driver of the southbound vehicle passed away 34 days after the accident.

On 18 October 2017 near Aviemore a southbound car drifted across onto the northbound carriageway and collided with a northbound articulated lorry. The driver of the southbound vehicle was fatally injured with the lorry driver sustaining minor injury.

On 24 October near Aviemore a northbound car drifted across onto the southbound carriageway and collided with a southbound articulated lorry. The driver of the northbound vehicle was fatally injured with the lorry driver suffering minor injury.

Both October collisions are currently still under active investigation by Police Scotland and when the full circumstances are established they will be considered by the A9 Safety Group. It should be noted that the two fatal accidents near Aviemore took place in different locations and the vehicle which crossed the carriageway centreline was travelling in a different direction for each.

The issue of an ageing population was noted, as many of those involved in the accidents summarised had been older drivers.

6. A9 Dualling Update

Item 8 moved forward to allow David Pollock to leave for another appointment.

- The original 12 individual dualling sections are now 11 schemes.
- Kinraig to Dalraddy was completed in September. Scheme now fully operational with positive comments received.
- The next section Pass of Luncarty to Birnam due to let in 2018.
- A contract for advance works has been awarded.
- The dualling programme is now at 90% preferred route status.
- Dunkeld, the co-creative process is now underway with the additional time causing delay to the programme. Transport Scotland are obliged to carry out this consultation.
- Ground investigation works from Pitlochry to Killiecrankie scheduled from September 2017 to March 2018.
- Ground investigation works from Glen Garry to Dalwhinnie scheduled to start December 2017 for 18 weeks.
- Ground investigation works from Crubenmore to Kinraig scheduled to start December 2017 for 15 weeks.
- The A9 is to become Scotland's first electric highway as mentioned in the "Programme for Government". The benefits envisaged will apply to rural communities as well as urban.
- The Highland Discovery app was highlighted as a possible method of relieving driver / passenger fatigue. The app provides information on villages next to the A9, services, local information, history song etc.
- The issue of charging points at lay-bys taking up space for other vehicles particularly HGVs. This may be a possible constraint as land take was arranged prior to the electric highway becoming policy.
- Stuart Wilson enquired will the dualling programme incorporate the power cabling for the charging points. It was confirmed that the ducting would be incorporated into schemes.
- John Smith raised the issue of sign size on the A9 dual carriageway as the A9 up to Tore is now a bilingual route.

7. Safety Campaign 2017

- The Minister for Transport and the Islands had introduced the summer mobile phone / driver distraction campaign which had good responses from those surveyed afterwards.
- The previous fatigue campaign could be re-run. Peter Houston stated that cross over accidents are a problem.
- Transport Scotland are trialling Weather Line plus on the A9 between Trinafour and Killiecrankie and on the A87 trunk road where the centre line raised dimples can raise driver awareness of lane transgressions. It was noted that new cars must be fitted with lane departure devices to help prevent crossovers but this required the lane markings to be in good condition.

8. Group Priorities 2017

- The A9 Safety Group was established to promote improved safety both before and during the dualling programme. The measures delivered through the interim safety plan are central to that, but we continue to monitor the route and take action as appropriate to address evidenced safety issues where these arise.
- In addition to any further measures south of Inverness, a whole group of priorities exist on the A9 north of Inverness and the Group presents an opportunity for collaborative working to address these.
- Foreign drivers were suggested as a priority target for the A9 following the success of the North Coast 500. The drive on the left message could be reinforced and should involve car hire companies. Martin Reid highlighted that foreign HGV drivers underpin the haulage industry with regular drivers being good, however there may be issues with some agency drivers.
- Fatigue was identified as a key message / priority. As noted, the A9 Safety Group has previously hosted a national driver fatigue awareness campaign, but further action may be beneficial.
- As the A9 dualling progresses, action to protect road workers and those travelling through roadworks will remain an important theme.
- Peter Houston gave details of an elderly driver intervention campaign running in Fife involving eyesight test, driving instructors etc. It was noted that how safe driving messages were disseminated was important in achieving success. Ageing issues require a multiagency approach involving agencies such as NHS, Community Planning etc.

9. Update from Partners

BEAR Scotland

John Smith gave an update since the last meeting on various schemes along the route in the North West Unit including:

- There have been 9 structural maintenance schemes with a value of £3,000,000.
- 4 more structural maintenance planned north of Inverness with a value of £1,000,000.
- Routine maintenance schemes were worth £278,000 with another £327,000 planned.
- Various Strategic Road Safety investigations planned including Skiach junction and Rosskeen crossroads junction. A study is underway at Tain north and south junctions where traffic turning and conflict surveys have been undertaken and are being analysed. Electronic queue warning signs at Munloch junction were installed and being commissioned at a cost of £80,000 and another £52,000 is VRS in January. Latheron to Thurso has had verge marker posts and signing at a cost of £372,00 with another £12,000 planned for VRS in February.

Alan Campbell gave an update since the last meeting on various schemes along the route in the North East Unit including:

- Various routine maintenance surfacing schemes with a value of £600,000.
- Dunblane worth £300,000.
- Strategic Road safety scheme at Blackford worth £50,000.
- Carrying out a number of road safety studies including one at Keir.
- A feasibility study is being undertaken at Broxden roundabout and a further road safety study at Inveralmond.

Transport Scotland

Amy Phillips stated that due to developments at Broxden various options are being put forward by developers and the detailed feasibility of these measures are being investigated within the study. One issue at Inveralmond relates to queuing back through the junction from the Dunkeld Road arm which in turn leads to lane usage which causes queuing on the A9 southbound arm.

Marco Bardelli stated that as part of the Perth Futures Ph2 project that a new junction on the A9 north of Inveralmond was planned involving a 2yr design process.

The Highland Council

Richard Gerring indicated that a single campus development is planned for Tain and that access to the trunk road may be required through the planning process. The Tomatin to Moy section of the A9 dualling involving 2 left in and 2 left out had received an unfavourable reaction from residents. due to longer journey times. TS have modified the proposals. Aviemore residents had highlighted concerned about potential impact of trunk road traffic following any incident on the A9.

Concern was also expressed at the lack of continuous monitoring of traffic on local roads during the entire period of the recent Kincaig to Dalraddy scheme. There was a discussion regarding the proposed access egress layout at Ralia.

Perth and Kinross Council

Chic Haggart stated that concerns have been raised regarding the volume and speed of HGV traffic going to Highland Spring at Blackford. P&K Council will be looking for discussions with Transport Scotland regarding the possibility of a new Blackford northbound off slip to reduce the volume of HGVs going through the village to access the A9.

10. AOCB

Covered above, no additional items.

11. Date of Next Meeting

March 2018 for scheduled meeting.

Late January has been identified as potential date for meeting specifically to discuss HGV pilot

Venue (TBC)