

A9 Safety Group

Thursday 16th May 2013 at 1030.

Transport Scotland, Buchanan House, Dundas Street, Glasgow

Attendees:

Stewart Leggett	Transport Scotland
Stephen Davies	Transport Scotland
George Henry	Transport Scotland
Paul Reid	Transport Scotland
Joanne Seath	Transport Scotland
Michelle Campbell	Transport Scotland
Michael McDonnell	Road Safety Scotland
Superintendent Ian Murray	Police Scotland
Inspector Neil Lumsden	Police Scotland
Inspector Ian Martin	Police Scotland
Inspector Bryan McGeoch	Police Scotland
Sergeant Stewart Hunter	Police Scotland
Constable Fraser Cameron	Police Scotland
Dougie Bennion	Northern Safety Camera Partnership
Aaron Duncan	Tayside Safety Camera Partnership
Neil MacSporran	Central Scotland Safety Camera Partnership
Hugh Logan	The Highland Council
Phil Flanders	Road Haulage Association
George Mair	Confederation of Passenger Transport
Chris MacRae	Freight Transport Association
Alan Campbell	BEAR Scotland Ltd
John Smith	BEAR Scotland Ltd

Draft Notes of Meeting

Stewart Leggett welcomed everybody and explained that the change of date and venue was due to a lack of other available meeting room facilities. It is intended that future group meetings will be held at locations closer to the route. The list of outstanding actions from the meeting of 7th March 2013 were reviewed and updates provided as follows:

- The evidence base presentation slides and supporting reports have been circulated
- Feedback on the evidence base reports has been received from some members
- A template has been established for the collation of additional speed data
- A further review of the modelling work has been undertaken to help inform discussions around a pilot increase of the HGV>7.5T speed limit
- A draft document outlining the arguments for and against raising the HGV>7.5T speed limit has been circulated

- Work is ongoing to consider the accident reduction and business case for the deployment of average speed cameras on the route
- Work is ongoing to identify a haulier safety champion – Phil Flanders will report back to the group asap
- Instruction has been given to BEAR Scotland Ltd to identify further priority locations on the route for the deployment of variable message signs
- Instruction has been given to BEAR Scotland Ltd to develop a strategy to prioritise locations for a review of sightlines and junction visibility
- Further discussions have been held regarding delivering efficiencies in road works over the summer months to minimise disruption and maintain safety levels to road users. Work is on-going at BEAR Scotland Ltd through the Journey Time Coordinator role.

John Smith provided an overview of the improvement schemes undertaken on the A9 in the North West Unit since the meeting of 7th March 2013. Schemes included the completion of Lynwilg and Tomich junctions lining, addition of 96 two-way warning signs to replace 60mph repeater signs, 12 speed camera signs for Tayside Safety Camera Partnership and structural maintenance schemes on northbound dual carriageways at Ballinluig and Daviot. Alan Campbell provided an update on works undertaken in the A9 North East Unit, principally a recent improvement scheme on the A9 south of Broxden involving the installation of safety barrier, passively safe posts and verge side tree removal.

Paul Reid provided an update on the A9 Dualling project. Work is underway on engineering alignment, environmental and economic studies. Public exhibitions are scheduled to take place between 3rd and 14th June at various towns and villages along the A9. Members of the Group were invited to attend the exhibitions and it was agreed that a presentation on the A9 dualling would be given to the next meeting of the A9 Safety Group. Joanne Seath explained that there were essential maintenance schemes at Dalraddy and Luncarty which required to be constructed ahead of planned dualling of these sections in 2016.

Stephen Davies updated the group on correspondence received from members of the public. This mostly related to considerations towards changes to speed limits on the route. These items were covered as part of the recent National Speed Limit Review and / or through ongoing discussions on the pilot of an increase in the HGV speed limit.

He provided an update on the work of the Communications Sub-group which last met on 22nd March 2013. A final brief for the development of the A9 Safety Group website had been provided to media partners. The Communications Sub Group have used the outcomes of the route evidence base to establish that The Groups first safety campaign will concentrate on 'overtaking'. Overtaking has been prevalent in serious and fatal accidents across the A9. The next meeting of the Communications Sub-group is scheduled for 30th May. Paul Reid confirmed that Transport Scotland would fund the development and maintenance of the website. Stewart Leggett reiterated previous invitations for other members to provide a financial contribution where possible.

Stewart Leggett thanked members who had provided feedback on the draft evidence base reports. It was agreed that the comments received would be collated and circulated amongst The Group. Members who have not yet provided feedback were asked to do so at their earliest convenience.

Supt. Ian Murray re-emphasised the need to make best use of all available evidence. He also explained that with the introduction of the new National Trunk Road Policing Unit the level of

policing on the A9 would change in the next 3-5 months with greater levels of enforcement which is intended to lead to a change in driver behaviour on the route.

Phil Flanders referenced the recent increase to the speed limit for HGVs in New Zealand. He is in the process of trying to obtain further information relating to the safety impacts of this measure in New Zealand and will report back to The Group with further information.

Stewart Leggett provided an update on the considerations being made towards an average speed camera system. An outline system design has been prepared and work is continuing to generate forecast accident reduction savings and prepare an outline business case. It is intended that discussions will be held with Police Scotland and the Safety Camera Partnerships to inform the ongoing assessment. Stewart Leggett acknowledged that effective supporting communications would be vital in the successful delivery of such a scheme. This would include consultation with relevant stakeholders including the Cairngorm National Park. Opportunities are being considered to future proof the design of the average speed camera system to support the safe construction of the A9 dualling programme.

Stewart Leggett reminded The Group that there is a ministerial commitment to consider a pilot increase to the speed limit of HGV's on single carriageways of the A9 between Perth and Inverness. In line with that previously agreed, a draft document has been circulated to The Group outlining arguments for and against this initiative, considering the available evidence against each argument.

Stephen Davies provided a brief summary of the arguments, gathered to date, for and against the proposed pilot. He outlined the suggested weighting given to each argument to ensure safety impacts were prioritised in the debate. A discussion took place on the various arguments with concerns raised by The Group around the lack of confidence in some of the available evidence. Supt. Ian Murray stated that Police Scotland would not support a trial of an increase from 40mph to 50mph for HGV's at this time as the available research suggests that average speed camera enforcement of the existing limit is expected to lead to a greater reduction in accidents than expected to be achieved through a pilot increase speed limit for HGVs alongside average speed camera enforcement. He also suggested that as Police Scotland would be deploying a new enforcement regime on the route that new baseline evidence should be collected and reviewed after a period of time under this new regime.

Stewart Leggett asked that members took some additional time to consider the available evidence in relation to the HGV speed limit pilot debate. He asked members to consider the following question, and following discussion within their respective organisations report back on their current position:

Assuming Average Speed Cameras were installed on the A9 and based on the available evidence; what are your views on implementing a pilot increase in HGV (over 7.5T) speed limit on single carriageways of the A9 (Perth to Inverness) from 40mph to 50mph?

- A. Support for Pilot*
- B. Monitor performance of HGV's within the proposed Average Speed Camera System and reconsider a pilot HGV increase in the future*
- C. Implement an HGV speed limit pilot on one discrete section of the A9 single carriageway within the Average Speed Camera System*
- D. Cannot support a Pilot*

Supt. Ian Murray stated that Police Scotland would support option 'B' and he was happy for this to be recorded now.

Discussions took place around other considerations that could be made towards improving safety on the route. The issue of driver visibility on the route was raised and how this has been affected by the growth of road side vegetation since the A9 was built. Stewart Leggett agreed that this could be considered against the current Operating Company maintenance regime and the location of accidents.

Arron Duncan suggested that since the evidence reviewed demonstrates that the majority of HGV's>7.5Ts are exceeding the current speed limit, that The Group should publicly make clear that it does not condone this disregard shown by road users to the posted speed limit. It was suggested that The Groups communication strategy could be used to make clear its discomfort with this current level of non-compliance.

The date of the next meeting was provisionally agreed for mid-July to be held at Perth Police Station. Date and time to be confirmed.