

## **A9 Safety Group**

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at 10:30

Birnam Arts and Conference Centre, Birnam

### Attendees:

John Smith	BEAR Scotland Ltd
Alan Campbell	BEAR Scotland Ltd
Alan Farnington	BEAR Scotland Ltd
Neil MacSporrán	Central Scotland Safety Camera Partnership
David Richardson	Federation of Small Businesses
Margaret Simpson	Freight Transport Association
Neil Greig	Institute of Advanced Motorists
Dougie Bennion	Northern Safety Camera Partnership
Bryan McGeogh	Police Scotland
Ian Martin	Police Scotland
Chris Campbell	Road Haulage Association
Fraser Grieve	Scottish Council for Development and Industry
Hugh Logan	The Highland Council
Arron Duncan	Tayside Safety Camera Partnership
Stuart Wilson	Transport Scotland
David McConnell	Transport Scotland
David Pollock	Transport Scotland
Stephen Davies	Transport Scotland
Jamie Carson	Transport Scotland

### **Notes of Meeting**

Stuart Wilson welcomed all to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.

Stuart Wilson asked for comments on the minutes of previous meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014. There were no issues raised or matters arising with the minutes produced for the previous meeting.

Bryan McGeogh provided an update on Police Scotland's campaigns and provided statistics on offences during this period. The national motorcycle safety campaign (Operation Zenith) is currently on going. There have been a number of crashes involving motorcyclists and the results of this campaign will be discussed further at other meetings

Bryan advised that with current demands on resources, particularly with regards to requirements for the Commonwealth Games, Police Scotland would be using data to provide a more targeted approach over the coming months on the A9 to maximise support to the network.

Dougie Bennion updated the group on the Northern Safety Camera Partnerships deployment carried out. The number of offences recorded for large goods vehicles under 7.5 tonnes within this period is significant. It was discussed that more education on speed limits for all vehicle types was required as drivers may be unaware of these. Importance should be given to looking at positive messages as well as any negatives when addressing this issue to try to engage with drivers.

Arron Duncan provided information on Tayside Safety Camera Partnership and noted that the results from April were almost identical to the previous year at the same time although the results are not completely comparable.

Alan Campbell reported on maintenance and improvement work on the route between Perth and Dunblane, which included £500,000 of patching and resurfacing within the last month and a programme of £1m worth of maintenance to commence from June.

Broxden safety barrier works are complete and works are ongoing at Keir Roundabout and Gleneagles. He also reported that installation of the supporting infrastructure for the Average Speed Camera System between Perth & Inverness started in March. To date, 11 sites have commenced with five now complete.

John Smith provided an update on maintenance schemes, which have been carried out recently on the Perth to Scrabster section of the A9. Including confirmation that works on the Kessock Bridge was to complete today, five weeks ahead of schedule.

The A9 visibility clearance works have now finished for the season and further works will be considered later in the year. Surfacing works have been carried out at Pitlochry and Lynwilg. A total of £18.5 million of maintenance works are due to be carried out over the next two years.

Stephen Davies commented on a recent positive route tour that was carried out by Transport Scotland and BEAR Scotland looking at the A9 from Dunblane to Scrabster. He agreed that more information about works that are being carried out needs to be communicated in order to make people aware of all the schemes being carried out on the network.

David McConnell provided an update on the Average Speed Camera Systems. Ground works between Perth & Inverness are now 30% complete with the first columns due to be erected on programme in late May/ early June. The sites are due to have signage informing 'Cameras Under Test' when columns are erected until the system is due to go live in October.

No major issues with traffic disruption have been reported during the installation process. The ground works for the Dunblane to Perth Stage started yesterday. The programme currently indicates that no cameras will be in place over the summer with camera installation due on all sites during October.

The HGV legislation for the change of speed limit went to Parliament last week and has a 40 day processing period; this is expected to be completed prior to summer recess. A confirmation of signing strategy was given and an outline Media and Communications plan will be prepared. *Post meeting note – the HGV speed limit pilot was considered by the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> June, who recommended it's approval.*

Chris Campbell voiced concerns over the clarity of the proposed signs, particularly for international drivers. David McConnell will consider this.

Brian McGeogh commented that with all the additional visitors to Scotland this year it would be a good opportunity to engage with a wider audience over the alteration to the speed limit.

Stephen Davies spoke about before and after monitoring with a comprehensive before survey being undertaken. As part of this, market research is being undertaken by AECOM, which has carried out surveys of 300 drivers from all different datasets at various locations on the route gaining information on a number of different matters including enforcement, their view of the A9, speeding - were they aware of it or did they witness it, etc. *Post meeting note – this report has been published*

This process will be repeated next year when the cameras will be operational to allow comparison as part of the wider monitoring prior to and during the dualling programme. Arron Duncan asked if the survey could be extended to the A9 Safety Group website to enable a larger sample of road user views to be established. Stephen Davies raised concerns about the suitability of such an approach given the focus of the study was to capture driver views based on in / recent journey experiences. However he indicated that he would raise this suggestion with AECOM for their expert view. Stephen Davies also noted that he would circulate the Before Survey Report once available from AECOM.

Stephen Davies outlined that the second part of the before and after monitoring will focus on operational data, such as spot speeds, journey times, accident statistics, speeds of HGVs, etc. He told the group that to inform these considerations, additional data collection was undertaken during April to supplement the existing data sources on the route. This will be repeated in April next year (after period), following which a report focussing on the changes in operational data will be prepared.

David Pollock provided an update to the group on the A9 dualling process. On 19<sup>th</sup> March a revised dualling plan increased the number of sections to be dualled from 9 to 12. Splitting the sections this way will minimise disruption and accelerate completion. Additionally, 3 sections of the route will be brought forward with the intention of having them ready to be dualled by 2017. These sections are: Pitagowan to Glengarry, Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore and Tomatin to Moy. Also, it has been confirmed that dualling will take place within a 200 metre-wide corridor of the existing extents of the A9.

“Fitting Landscapes” Policy document was published by Transport Scotland recently. This details environmental requirements to be considered during the design and construction of the dualling process.

CH2MHill/Fairhurst Joint Venture have been awarded the first of 3 major design contracts for the A9 dualling programme, covering 26 miles of the road from Glengarry to Dalraddy. Bids for the second contract are required to be submitted by 19<sup>th</sup> June and it is expected that the contract will be awarded in mid August.

The ground investigation contract for the 8km Birnam to Tay crossing section was awarded at the end of April and that for the Kincaig to Dalraddy section will be announced next week. *Post meeting note – this work is underway.*

Public exhibitions will take place between 27<sup>th</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> July at various locations on progress of the dualling scheme and engineering options under consideration. A full report will be prepared and will be circulated.

Neil Greig asked about an update on the Petitions Committee report. Stuart Wilson advised that a letter has been written to Mike Burns with an invitation to discuss his proposals with the Chair of the A9 Safety Group. There has been no reply to date, however the invitation remains open. *Post meeting note – Mr Burns has rejected the meeting offered. The Petition has also been closed.*

With regards to the website, Stuart Wilson asked the Group members for any additional content they would wish to see included on the site.

It was asked how much traffic the website has experienced. Transport Scotland is currently collating this information with SG Comms colleagues and will provide this to Group members, once available.

Members expressed views that further promotion of the website is required.

Stuart Wilson advised that feedback in relation to the recent Overtaking campaign may be available to relay to the group at the next meeting.

The turn out for the public exhibitions that were carried out for the Average Speed Cameras was good with higher numbers of attendees at the more northern events. The reaction of attendees was also mixed, but was generally good, when the facts surrounding the measures set out in the interim safety plan were explained.

The programme for the next six months includes the completion of Average Speed Cameras System installation process, progression of the dualling process, through awards and propriety works. New locations for the two portable VMS signs located on the A9 will be investigated, with a view to changing the messages on a more frequent basis to maximise the impact of the signs. In addition, a communication Plan for the A9 will be completed with David McConnell taking the lead. Arron Duncan offered his support within doing this.

David Richardson raised concerns of some of the timing of grass cutting and it causing delays on the network. Alan Campbell and John Smith advised that operatives should be aware of the correct times to be on the network. This issue will be investigated.

Hugh Logan expressed concern that there is insufficient focus on schemes north of Inverness. John Smith replied that there are in fact a higher proportion of schemes north of Inverness. It was accepted that, with the media spotlight so heavily weighed on the A9 between Perth and Inverness, the public are not fully aware of all the works that are being carried out. *Post meeting note – the website will be amended to highlight more clearly the work being done north of Inverness.*

To aid with this the A9 website should be updated to show all of these works. John Smith also offered to speak with Highland Council and other members to keep them aware of and update them on works. *Post meeting note – the additional web material is being prepared and will be live mid June.*

Dougie Bennion advised that a revised speed camera strategy has now been finished for the area north of Inverness.

### **Date of the next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is to be set for late August at a date to be confirmed.