

A9 Safety Group

Friday 2nd November 2018 at 11:00

Tulloch Caledonian Stadium, Inverness.

Marco Bardelli	Transport Scotland
Donna Turnbull	Transport Scotland
Stuart Wilson	Transport Scotland
David McKenzie	Transport Scotland
Sam McNaughton	Transport Scotland
Kieren Green	Transport Scotland
Michael McDonnell	Road Safety Scotland
Arron Duncan	North Safety Camera Unit
Martin Reid	Road Haulage Association
Lisa MacKellaich	The Highland Council
Ross Bartlett	The Highland Council
Chic Haggart	Perth & Kinross Council
David Hynd	Police Scotland
Kevin Wilkie	Police Scotland
Alan Campbell	BEAR Scotland Ltd
Kevin McKechnie	BEAR Scotland Ltd

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 Matthew Millar, Nick Groom, Morag MacKay (TS), Fraser Grieve (SCDI), Inspector Neil Lumsden and Robin Pope (The Highland Council).

3. Previous Minutes and Actions

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

4. Average Speed Camera System Update.

Arron Duncan advised that there has generally been a high degree of speed compliance along the sections of the A9 covered by the average speed camera system since the last meeting. The system is operating well, with good support from the suppliers.

However, he reported that speeds on the dual carriageways north of Perth, which are enforced using mobile safety camera units, appear to be increasing. Sections south of Drumochter and at Ballinluig have had very high speeds recorded, with vans and hire vehicles being prominent amongst the vehicles involved

Arron Duncan advised that the Safety Camera Unit has liaised with hire companies to reinforce speed limits for their vehicles. Michael McDonnell also offered to discuss this issue with Enterprise.

Alan Campbell suggested the use of variable message signs along the route to remind drivers of the appropriate speed limits for their vehicles and Arron Duncan added that gantry signing could also be used, where available on the network.

Martin Reid informed that vans are generally unregulated at present, but there are moves to address. Chic Haggart mentioned possible issues with delivery drivers who are pressured to meet challenging delivery deadlines. Arron Duncan advised that Safety Camera Units also visit these companies to provide advice.

There was a general discussion over the possible alteration of the national speed limit for vans to align with those of cars. It was believed that this would make the limits simpler to understand for road users, however, it was agreed that such a change should be evidence driven.

Action: Transport Scotland will consider the research required to determine the impact of a change to the national speed limits for vans.

It was noted that the differing HGV speed limit in England and Scotland appears to be causing confusion for drivers. Martin Reid advised that the Road Haulage Association are awaiting the results of the trial 50mph HGV speed limit on the A9. If these are positive, then the organisation will push for a blanket increase to match the English speed limit.

Sam McNaughton asked if there are speeding issues on the 2+1 carriageway sections along the route. Arron Duncan advised that this was the case as many drivers incorrectly believe that these sections are dual carriageways, when, in fact, they are single. He added that these cases, and those involving vans travelling to speed limit of cars, use substantial resources as many drivers go to court. This is because many of the individuals caught exceeding the appropriate speed limit in such a situation think the penalty is unfair.

5. A9 Interim Safety Plan – Key Performance Indicators Update

David McKenzie advised that the average speed camera system has now been in place for over four years and the benefits previously identified, in terms of collision reduction and journey time reliability, are still being recognised.

Whilst data on the system is still being gathered, no additional information has been published since April 2018 as this process uses substantial resources. In addition, the character of the route is changing over time, with the opening of new dualled sections and construction works on other. Consequently, it is becoming increasingly difficult to make meaningful comparisons to historical data. Transport Scotland are currently considering how best to report performance moving forward.

Kevin Wilkie was of the view that the route is much safer since the average speed camera system was installed. However, serious and fatal collision are still occurring, with a number involving vehicles drifting across the carriageway. Stuart Wilson said that fatigue and driver age appear to be prominent factors but wondered whether these were new issues or whether they had always been there. He also asked the group to consider how these aspects could be covered in forthcoming campaigns.

Marco Bardelli advised that weatherline, a textured road marking, had been installed as a carriageway centreline at Killiecrankie as a trial to address vehicle drifting. However, whilst vibration is experienced when travelling over this, it was far outweighed by the vibration caused by driving over the associated road studs.

Sam McNaughton advised that the dualling works had experienced issues with rear-end shunt type collisions. As a result, temporary rumble strips were used at their works and have had a beneficial effect. Consequently, these are now specified on all their contracts.

David Hynd suggested the use of permanent rumble strips to address collision involving drafting. Stuart Wilson to check collision data to find if there are any sections of the route where this type of collision is prevalent.

6. Group Priorities

It was noted that the involvement of elderly drivers was prevalent in fatal collisions along the route. Sam McNaughton commented that during exhibition events for the A9 dualling it had been mentioned on numerous occasions that elderly drivers struggle to exit local road junctions onto the route and asked if vehicle platoons have increased in recent years. Stuart Wilson advised that there has been an increase of vehicles travelling at the same speed. Arron Duncan stated that these vehicles are generally well spaced but are close enough together to stop cars clearing the junctions.

Chic Haggart mentioned that should elderly drivers consider stopping driving as a result of these problem, it could have a massive effect of their lives. It is therefore important to maintain the road network well and provide adequate public transport. Marco Bardelli suggested the possibility of future changes to junction layouts to reflect current usage.

Stuart Wilson informed the group that investigations into the impact of fatigue are ongoing.

Stuart Wilson advised that he investigate whether temporary rumble strip were being introduced to construction sites across the network.

It was agreed by the group that there is a need to better understand the impact of the phasing of the dualling works on the route.

7. A9 Dualling Update

Sam McNaughton advised that positive feedback has been received following the opening of the Kinraig to Dalraddy dualled section.

The contract for the construction of the Luncarty to Pass of Birnam section has been awarded and site works will commence in December 2018.

All draft Orders for the project have been published, except for the Birnam section, where a number of objections have been received.

There will be geotechnical investigation works ongoing at various locations over the winter months. The spacing of the traffic management required for these may cause some issue with traffic flow. Marco Bardelli advised that the TM contractor(s) for these works will need to monitor traffic flows to ensure balanced queuing and minimal delays. David Hynds said that Police Scotland will need contact details for the TM contractor to ensure that emerging issues can be suitable addressed.

Sam McNaughton informed that a Health and Safety Forum is held every six weeks. This discusses emerging issues and releases safety bulletins. Speeding traffic through the roadworks is being investigated by this group.

Sam McNaughton also advised that an Operational and Management Group is being considered for future construction phases. This group would assess how the phasing of works will impact upon end users. The emergency services would be invited to attend this group.

Marco Bardelli highlighted that the last TM meeting with Balfour Beatty, the Principal Contractor for the Luncarty to Pass of Birnam works, was very positive. He should be advised of any TM issues that individuals wish raised at these meetings

Arron Duncan asked whether a permanent average speed camera system has been considered for the new dualled section. Stuart Wilson informed that there are no proposals for this at present. However, Stuart Wilson and Sam McNaughton will continue the discussion over possible installation of infrastructure that would support a future permanent camera system.

8. Updates from Partners

BEAR Scotland

Alan Campbell gave an update since the last meeting on various schemes along the route in the North East Unit. Alan advised that there are three road safety schemes ongoing within the NE section of the A9 (Dunblane to Perth).

- The A9 Keir Roundabout project involves the installation of dynamic queue warning on the southbound A9 approach and the alteration of road marking on the circulatory carriageway. The signing is proposed to be installed this financial year, while the road markings will be altered in 2019/20
- The Broxden Roundabout Improvements Study is considering the feasibility of various options to increase safety and capacity through this area. Preliminary design of the potential layouts is currently ongoing, with survey work having been undertaken in the summer.
- A9 Inveralmond Roundabout is being designed at present and is programmed to be installed during this financial year. These works are aimed at improving capacity on the circulatory carriageway, which will then have knock-on safety benefits to the A9 southbound approach, where excessive queuing is currently an issue.

In terms of maintenance work, approximately £1.0m worth was undertaken during the current financial year. This consisted of carriageway patching and resurfacing works. A further £0.3m of road marking maintenance work is programmed to be carried out on this section during the remainder of 2018/19.

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

- There have been numerous structural and routine maintenance schemes completed with a combined value of £2.1m.
- Further structural and routine maintenance schemes to the value of £2.354m were due to be completed in the current financial year.

- A number of Strategic Road Safety investigations and designs underway and planned include the following:
 - A9 Tain North & South Junctions Conflict Study had been completed and issued to Transport Scotland. This location has a high number of accidents in the previous 5-years (6 at the north junction and 16 at the southern junction). A further road safety options investigation had been completed looking at this location and recommended a package of shorter-term measures and medium to longer term measures. Short term measures included a reduction in the speed limit to 50mph, improved road surface, new road markings and new traffic signs. Medium to longer term measures would include examining the merits of installation of traffic signals or roundabouts at the junctions;
 - A9 Skiach ARSR – draft ready for review by TS;
 - A9 Rosskeen/Achnagarron junction ARSR – draft submitted to TS for comment;
 - A9 Dunkeld Junction ARSR – Investigation report submitted to TS for comment;
 - A9 House of Bruar junction – possible signing measures to encourage greater use of the minor road from the House of Bruar car parks;
 - A9 Kinraig to Dalraddy – No speed camera signing had been provided as part of the dual carriageway upgrade resulting in mobile speed enforcement not taking place Amy Phillips had instructed BEAR to design and install the required signage. This work to be completed within the financial year;
 - An investigation was underway to look at the accidents on the single carriageway sections of the A9 involving vehicles crossing a lane into opposing traffic; and,
 - An investigation was underway looking at older driver accidents on the network.

North Safety Camera Unit

Arron Duncan highlighted local concerns raised over speeding vehicles through the villages in the north of the route and asked whether speed surveys could be considered to investigate this matter. Marco Bardelli advised that many speed surveys had been undertaken in these areas historically and no issue of excessive speeds had been recorded. However, he advised that additional surveys could be considered.

The Highland Council

Lisa MacKellaich advised that a proposed 20mph speed limit within Wick is about to go out to public consultation and sought an update of the progress of the ongoing Parliamentary Bill on this subject. Donna Turnbull clarified that this is a Private Members Bill and explained the various stages that this must go through. She added that the current aim is to complete this process before the end of recess in 2019, however, there is no guarantee that this will be achieved.

Lisa MacKellaich also informed that the installation of traffic calming is currently being considered for Alness High Street, which forms part of the strategic incident diversion route for the A9.

Police Scotland

David Hynd provided a review of serious and fatal injury collisions on the route since the previous meeting, highlighting a number of collisions at junctions involving elderly drivers. He also informed that there had been some issues involving overloaded vehicles on the route.

Road Safety Scotland

Michael McConnell advised that the current country road safety campaign had been very successful. In addition, three videos have been released for their 'Live Fast, Die Old' motorcycle safety campaign and their annual drink/drive campaign will be launched on the 27th November 2018.

He also informed that their focus over the next two years will be on young drivers. This will be more digital in nature in comparison to previous campaigns.

Perth and Kinross Council

Chic Haggart reported that the A9/A985 junction improvements were progressing well, and that PKC will be running the 'Safe Drive. Stay Alive' road safety campaign this year. There followed a discussion over the effectiveness of such campaigns. Donna Turnbull offered to provide a link to historical research on this subject.

Transport Scotland

Marco Bardelli informed that the community of Latheronwheel have raised concern over the safety of pedestrians crossing the A9 and have asked for the speed limit to be reduced. This is to be discussed further by Transport Scotland and Police Scotland.

Donna Turnbull advised that the process of preparing the new Scottish road Safety Framework is about to begin. A part of this process, numerous workshops are being arranged and members of the A9 Safety Group will be invited to these.

There were no further updates from partners.

9. AOCB

Covered above, no additional items.

10. Date of Next Meeting

It was hoped that the next meeting of the group would be scheduled for April 2019. Venue to be confirmed in due course. Stuart Wilson and David McKenzie will look to provide intermediate updates.