

## **A9 Safety Group**

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2014 at 10:30

Birnam Arts and Conference Centre, Birnam

### Attendees:

Kevin Campbell	BEAR Scotland Ltd
John Smith	BEAR Scotland Ltd
Alan Campbell	BEAR Scotland Ltd
Alan Farnington	BEAR Scotland Ltd
Neil MacSporran	Central Scotland Safety Camera Partnership
David Richardson	Federation of Small Businesses
Margaret Simpson	Freight Transport Association
Neil Greig	Institute of Advanced Motorists
Jamie Reid	Stagecoach
Dougie Bennion	Northern Safety Camera Partnership
Iain Murray	Police Scotland
Ian Martin	Police Scotland
Martin Reid	Road Haulage Association
Arron Duncan	Tayside Safety Camera Partnership
Michael McDonnell	Road Safety Scotland
Stewart Leggett	Transport Scotland
Stuart Wilson	Transport Scotland
David McConnell	Transport Scotland
David Pollock	Transport Scotland
Graham Thomson	Transport Scotland
Jamie Carson	Transport Scotland
David Marshall	Transport Scotland
Andy Anderson	Transport Scotland

### **Notes of Meeting**

#### **1. Welcome & Introductions**

Stewart Leggett welcomed all to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.

#### **2. Apologies**

Apologies:

George Mair	Confederation of Passenger Transport UK
Malcolm Bingham	Freight Transport Association
Chris MacRae	Freight Transport Association
Hugh Logan	Highland Council
Charles Haggart	Perth and Kinross Council
Bryan McGeogh	Police Scotland
Neil Lumsden	Police Scotland
Chris Campbell	Road Haulage Association
Fraser Grieve	Scottish Council for Development and Industry
Gus Beveridge	Stagecoach

#### **3. Previous Minutes & Actions**

Stewart Leggett asked for comments on the minutes of previous meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2014. There were no issues raised with the minutes produced for the previous meeting. It was explained that a number of action points from the previous meeting are due to be addressed as part of today's meetings however the following action points were answered:

Concerns over the clarity of HGV speed limit signage – This was reviewed. The signs meet the standards set out in sign design and will proceed on this basis.

Extending the A9 market research to the A9 Safety Group website. - AECOM have advised against for quality control reasons.

New locations for portable variable message signs (VMS) - The number of portable VMS signs on the A9 has been increased from 2 to 12, principally to convey messages in relation to the Average Speed Camera installations.

Including additional information on the A9 Section between Inverness and Scrabster on the Group website - The website was updated in June to include works which have been carried out in areas north of Inverness.

#### **4. Website Development & Updates**

Jamie Carson provided an update on the A9 Road Info Website. The latest news is now accessible on the home page; it is hoped to update this weekly. Also, additional information on the Average Speed Cameras (including the facts and myths) has been included and works planned and progressed north of Inverness has been added.

Stewart Leggett asked partners to look over the website and provide any comments and/or suggestions to help improve the facility.

#### **5. Campaigns**

Jamie Carson advised that the speed limit campaign is planned to go live during week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> October 2014. The objectives of the campaign are to increase speed limit awareness, promote the HGV speed limit change and provide clarity on the Average Speed Cameras. The target audience is anyone who drives on the A9. The campaign will be transmitted through radio, digital and outdoor advertising, including VMS signs. Also, the use of social media is to be investigated. The creative material for the campaign will be circulated to Group members prior to release

Feedback was provided on the previous overtaking campaign. A copy of the results was provided to partners

#### **6. Average Speed Camera System (ASC)**

David McConnell gave a presentation on the ASC.

##### **i. Construction programme:**

The construction programme progress now sees 25 out of the 27 sites installed north of Perth with the remaining sites and power connections due over the coming weeks. During this period configuration and calibration of the sites will also take place.

On the Dunblane to Perth section 40% of the ground works are complete, it is hoped that 80% will be complete prior to the start of the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles. It is planned within the first few weeks of October that the camera installation will take place.

## ii. Impacts from Camera Installation

It is anticipated that there will be a reduction in speeding with a drop in high end speeds with a marginal increase in travel times.

Surveys have been carried out between Perth & Pitlochry following the installation of camera poles on this section to gauge the impact of the system, prior to being switched on.

Based on information from July 2012 and the results gained in July 2014 instances of speeding dropped from 1 in 3 to 1 in 12, vehicles exceeding 80mph reduced by 80% and overall an increase of 3 minutes travel time was recorded.

## iii. Operational Launch

The system is to be launched in late October and will be preceded by the Speed Limit Campaign. The launch will be communicated through various media platforms and outlets. In addition, VMS signs positioned on the route will advise of the launch.

## 7. Incident Management Improvements

David Marshall presented information on Incident Management improvements to the group. The first is the extension of the Trunk Road Incident Support Service (TRISS) to the Inverness area. The vehicles come equipped with roof mounted VMS and CCTV capability. The service is designed to patrol the network making incidents safe, removing hazards, carrying out immediate emergency repairs, provide a communication link, assist with breakdowns and a number of other benefits.

The service commenced on 18<sup>th</sup> August and covers the A9 from Tore to Daviot. Sections of the A82 & A96 are also included.

The second improvement presented was the procurement of 3D laser scanners for Police Scotland to be used on trunk roads to assist in minimising incident clear up times. The surveying device can scan objects of interest in a complete 360 degree scan. A key benefit of the system is to produce high quality evidence which can not only be used as evidence in court but also provide valuable information and records that can be used to assess the incident and look at preventative measures.

Following the presentation it was highlighted that the scanners do have limitations; adverse weather conditions and various other factors can affect the system and the time to get the scanners to site could be an issue, so although helpful they may not be the most appropriate in every case. More training is also needed with the scanners in order to familiarise officers with the new technology.

## 8. A9 HGV Pilot

Stuart Wilson provided information on the forthcoming HGV Speed Limit Pilot.

The scheme, to be run in tandem with the Average Speed Camera System, will see speed limits for HGVs on the A9 increased from 40mph to 50mph on single carriageway sections between Perth and Inverness.

Legislation has been approved by Parliament with the Minister due to sign off the required paperwork to coincide with the Camera switch on date.

There will be substantial monitoring carried out prior to and during the scheme to assess the impact of the increase.

A question was asked regarding the UK Government's proposal to increase speed limits for HGVs in England and Wales next April on single carriageway roads to 50 mph. Graham Thomson advised that Transport Scotland has a number of concerns over this decision at present as the information provided in the DfT Impact Assessment that accompanied the decision appears to indicate that this change will lead to an increase in fatal/serious collisions. However, the decision is being made due to projected strategic and economic benefits. In contrast, the trial on the A9 is being done under a controlled system using the Speed Cameras, which are being introduced as a safety measure. Graham stated that the evidence base provided by DfT would not be enough to justify a decision to increase the speed limit in Scotland but that Scottish Ministers have asked for further details on how DfT are going to monitor the impact of the change, which may add to the future evidence base.

It was noted that an overall increase in HGV speeds in England and Wales and not Scotland could lead to issues when crossing the border. Graham advised that he had some initial discussions with DfT officials on potential publicity and awareness of the different speed limits and that he would continue to do so in advance of the change.

## **9. Maintenance of the Route**

Stewart Leggett confirmed that Bear Scotland had won the recent award for the 4G contract for the NE section and as such Bear continue to maintain the NW and NE sections.

Alan Campbell reported on maintenance and improvement work on the route between Dunblane and Perth which included the completion of six planned maintenance schemes at a budget spend of £1.4m year to date. Three resurfacing schemes worth £1m and work on central reserve refurbishment are programmed to commence in the coming months.

In terms of road safety, the new access at Gleneagles is now open and central reserve gap is closed. Installation of the footings for the temporary footbridge for the Ryder Cup is underway with the bridge due to be erected within two to three weeks. One fatality was recorded on the route, involving a pedestrian at Gleneagles; investigations into this incident are still ongoing.

John Smith reported on maintenance and improvement work on the route between Perth and Thurso including six patching schemes between May and June, structural maintenance on the dual carriageway section at Tomatin and north of Slochd with six more planned until the end of the year. White lining of the entire A9 has been approved and is currently underway.

## **10. Winter Maintenance**

Kevin Campbell gave a presentation on winter maintenance carried out by BEAR on the trunk road. This included information on the five patrol sites between Perth and Inverness, the types of vehicles used and the permanently manned control room. It also covered communication to the public during weather events using Transport Scotland website and the use of social media.

In addition, Kevin advised that Transport Scotland and BEAR are looking at innovations to improve winter maintenance performance. These include the use of brine treatment instead of salt which provides far better results and network specific forecasting with plans sent to vehicles and treatments using GPS.

## **11. Update from Partners**

David Pollock provided an update to the Group on the A9 Dualling Project since the last meeting in May.

### Major Design Contracts

The second of three major design contracts (each worth between £40m and £60m) was announced by the Minister on 13 August as having been awarded to Jacobs. The contract covers the section of the route between Pass of Birnam and Glen Garry.

Following the award of the first of the design contracts to the joint venture CH2MHill/Fairhurst mentioned at the previous meeting, David advised that a 2-day workshop had been held on 20 and 21 August with the full dualling team examining the task of designing the 26-mile (43km) stretch of the road between Glen Garry and Dalraddy.

David reported that the final design contract covering the A9 between Dalraddy to Inverness is expected to be awarded by the end of this year

### Ground Investigation

Ground investigations for the Birnam to Tay Crossing and Kincaig to Dalraddy sections of the route have started. Geodetic Surveys are ongoing.

### Public Exhibitions

David advised that the ambitious series of exhibitions between 27 May and 1 July at various venues adjacent to the A9 had been a considerable success.

As well as 400 individual invitations having been issued, this engagement with communities along the dualling route provided interested individuals and businesses with an opportunity to find out more about Transport Scotland's plans, to offer comments on the proposals and to identify and feed in issues of local knowledge.

The degree of local interest at the various venues between Ballinluig and Tomatin was encouraging with many local people commenting on how much they appreciated the opportunity to contribute to the consultation.

### Scheme News

Following the November 2013 publication of Draft Road Orders for the section between Kincaig and Dalraddy, on 20 August the Minister announced that Orders for the scheme will go ahead by using anticipated savings from the Queensferry Crossing project. This would bring forward the timetable for the scheme by six months.

The Kincaig to Dalraddy scheme will be the first of 12 schemes in the £3bn A9 Dualling Project to be brought forward. The contract to build the five-mile (8 km) stretch of dual carriageway is worth about £50m and is due to be completed in 2017.

Martin Reid informed the Group that the Road Haulage Association were looking into the feasibility of hosting a media day to highlight the promotion of safe driving on the A9, but poor uptake to date by the media has made this not possible.

Margaret Simpson advised that the Freight Transport Association will be carrying an article in their magazine shortly about the HGV speed limit increase and have links to the A9 site on their own website. There is an event planned in October for 100 transport managers in Dunblane to further discuss the trial.

Neil MacSporran commented that they welcomed the introduction of the cameras in October due to ongoing speeding issues in the central area.

Dougie Bennion noted that on the northern section of the A9 a 20-30% reduction in offences has been recorded since the introduction of ASC infrastructure despite deployment levels remaining the same.

Insp Ian Martin noted that he also perceived a reduction in incidents on the A9 during this period.

Michael McDonnell informed the group of a number of campaigns going forward; the David Coultard campaign will run again late September, followed by the winter campaign and then the drink driving campaign in early December.

## **12. A9 Berriedale Braes Improvement Proposal**

Andy Anderson provided the group with the improvement proposals for Berriedale Braes, located about 77 miles north of Inverness. Vehicles (particularly larger vehicles) have difficulties negotiating the section, which has a tight bend and steep grade.

A preferred alignment option has now been identified; this proposes to increase the radius of the bend from 13 metres to 55 metres, has less environmental impacts and is less expensive than a number of the other options tabled. A draft order for the scheme is due to be published around December.

## **13. Correspondence Received**

Stewart Leggett reported that 21 items of correspondence were received from the general public and six from MSPs about the ASC, all of which have been responded to.

## **14. AOCB**

None

## **15. Date of next meeting**

To be set for late November, date to be confirmed.