

# Transport Scotland submission of 13 June 2023

## PE1992/G: Dual the A9 and improve road safety

In advance of the evidence session on 14 June 2023 regarding the above petition, please find below an update to our previous response of 23 December 2023 to the committee to assist in its considerations.

Road safety remains of paramount importance to the Scottish Government and we are continuing ongoing work with our partners, including Police Scotland and local authorities, to examine what more can be done to make our roads safer and to ensure that more people drive their vehicles safely.

In our previous response we outlined some of the planned and additional measures that were to be delivered in the short term. We confirm that the programmed road safety improvement scheme works and campaigns have been implemented. This includes improvements at the B9150 (Ralia), A827 (Ballinluig) and B8079 (Bruar) junctions on the A9.

The two road safety campaigns have both been deployed; the first, a “Fatigue” campaign, was launched in February 2023 with extensive media coverage. The second, a “Drive on the Left” campaign, launched in March 2023 and is ongoing, with widespread distribution of leaflets, wristbands and windscreen stickers. This activity is widely supported by stakeholder organisations, including car hire companies, to better support tourists and foreign drivers in driving safely.

In addition, drivers on the A9 will be aware of enhanced road markings with acoustic properties that alert drivers deviating from their lane, illuminated road studs, plus signage and marking improvements to highlight the single carriageway sections between Birnam and Dalguise. In addition, the transition between the dual- and single carriageway sections south of Birnam has been upgraded with new signage, red infill and illuminated road studs. Eight variable message signs deployed between Perth and Inverness over the summer period carry relevant safety reminders to drivers, including in relation to fatigue awareness and drive on the left. These reflect trends identified in fatal accidents on this part of the A9 in 2022.

Further improvements to road markings and signs on the single carriageway sections of the A9 between Perth and Inverness are planned during the remainder of this financial year and the next.

Since our previous submission, the then Minister for Transport, Jenny Gilruth MSP, provided an update to Parliament on the A9 Dualling on 8 February 2023.

In this statement, the former Minister confirmed that the Scottish Government remains firmly committed to completing the dualling of the A9 between Perth and Inverness and to bringing the benefits of the A9 Dualling programme to Scotland. The Minister also set out the reasons why, following a difficult and complex procurement procedure, Ministers decided not to award the contract for the Tomatin to Moy section of the A9 Dualling programme and confirmed that the previous target date of 2025 for completion of the dualling was no longer achievable.

Details of this statement can be found on our website at the following link: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/parliament-updated-on-a9-dualling-programme/>

Following the statement in Parliament, Transport Scotland immediately began taking the necessary preparatory steps to procure the construction contract for the Tomatin to Moy project and this is progressing as a matter of urgency. Transport Scotland is engaging with the construction industry, including The Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) Scotland, and contractors, to consider changes to its standard procurement and contract terms to better reflect current market conditions in a bid to maximise interest and competition for a new procurement for the A9 Dualling: Tomatin to Moy project.

With regards to the wider A9 Dualling Programme, work to determine the most suitable procurement options for the remaining sections is continuing and this exercise includes assessing the impact of market changes, due to the economic environment, on the potential procurement approaches available. As was set out to Parliament on 8 February 2023, this work is expected to conclude in Autumn 2023 and an update on a renewed timescale for completion will be provided to the Scottish Parliament at that time.

In respect of other preparatory work continuing on the Programme, design work is progressing, with ministerial decisions to complete the statutory process confirmed for seven of the remaining eight sections. Made Orders have been published for four sections: Tay Crossing to

Ballinluig; Pitlochry to Killiecrankie; Glen Garry to Dalwhinnie; and Dalwhinnie to Crubenmore.

In terms of the three other sections which have received Ministerial consent (Killiecrankie to Glen Garry; Crubenmore to Kincaig; and Dalraddy to Slochd) works are ongoing on the preparation to publish the Made Orders to complete the statutory process for these sections.

The only section not to have started the statutory process is the Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing project, where work is ongoing to identify a preferred route option following the innovative co-creative process with the local community. We remain committed to maintaining the positive community relationship built during this process.

The former Minister for Transport, Kevin Stewart MSP, met the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group on 5 June 2023 to discuss the Community's preferred option prior to a decision being made on a preferred route option for this section.

We hope you find the above information helpful.