

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on PE1992: Dual the A9 and improve road safety, submitted by Laura Hansler

Background

On 6 December 2011, [the Scottish Government committed](#) to dualling the 80 miles of single carriageway road on the A9 between Perth and Inverness. The project was to be delivered in 11 sections at an expected cost of £3 billion and with a completion date of 2025.

To date, two of these sections have been completed (Kincaig-Dalraddy and Luncarty-Pass of Birnam). Transport Scotland is currently progressing the procurement of the Tomatin to Moy section and undertaking design work on the rest of the programme. Ministers have committed to completing the statutory process for seven of the remaining eight sections, with a final decision on the routing of the Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing section yet to be made.

The Minister for Transport [answered a parliamentary question](#) about the timetable for the delivery of the A9 dualling programme on 10 November 2022, stating:

“Work to determine the most suitable procurement options for the remaining sections of the A9 dualling is also ongoing. This is a complex exercise which looks at a number of factors including how the project can be delivered most efficiently by the industry, whilst minimising disruption to road users and helping to support economic recovery post-COVID.”

Scottish Government Action

Separate from the dualling programme, the Scottish Government has implemented two significant road safety interventions on the A9 between Perth and Inverness, both of which began on 28 October 2014. These are:

- **HGV speed limit increase:** The speed limit for goods vehicles weighing over 7.5 tonnes on single carriageway sections of the A9 was increased from 40mph to 50mph. The [assessment of the first three years of the higher limit](#) concluded that vehicle speeds were more

consistent, the average difference in speeds between HGVs and other vehicles had reduced, there were fewer slow moving HGV-led vehicle platoons and drivers were less frustrated.

- **Average speed cameras:** The impact of average speed cameras on the single carriageway sections of the A9 between Perth and Inverness was assessed after three years. This found that, compared with the three years before cameras were installed, annual average fatalities were down by 40%, total casualties were down by 27% and the average number of collisions were down by over 23%. In addition, there had been a 25% fall in the time the road was closed/restricted due to collisions. There had been a 13% increase in annual average traffic volumes between the 2013 baseline and 2017.

In the three years following the installation of average speed cameras and the increase in the HGV speed limit, annual average fatalities on the A9 between Perth and Inverness fell from seven to four – when compared with the average of the preceding three years.

In [response to a parliamentary question](#) asked on 15 December 2022 about road safety along the A9, the Minister for Transport stated:

“I can advise today that this Government is taking forward a package of safety measures, valued at £5M, to help address the trends identified recently.”

Scottish Parliament Action

Ministers, Transport Scotland officials and transport stakeholders were regularly questioned about the progress of the A9 dualling programme by members of the Session 4 Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee and Session 5 Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee. The issue continues to be raised by members of the current Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee.

Debates that focused on the progress of the A9 dualling programme were held on [2 November 2022](#) and [17 November 2021](#).

Alan Rehfisch
Senior Researcher
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