A9 Data Monitoring Analysis Report – January 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is designed to provide a broad analysis of the trends emerging from the A9 in respect to the key performance indicators of:

- Casualties
- Vehicle Speed
- Incident Frequency & Impact
- Journey Time Reliability

For this report an analysis on the anecdotal reports surrounding parallel route running in the Kingussie, Aviemore and Carrbridge areas has also been incorporated.

The data for this report is drawn from the A9 Data Monitoring Report which is published quarterly on the A9 Safety Group website. This analysis covers the period November 2014 to January 2015.

2. CASUALTY ANALYSIS

This first quarterly release does not incorporate casualty figures as there is an agreed national standard process for compiling and analysing casualty figures. It is anticipated that figures for the A9 will be available within 6 to 9 months when the appropriate tables will be updated in the Data Report.

Current information from Police Scotland is encouraging in respect to casualty reduction on the route. A Transport Scotland road safety officer visits the scene of every fatal accident on the trunk road with Police Scotland a short time after each incident. Since the 28 October there has been one fatal accident between Dunblane and Inverness. This accident which is still subject to police investigation involved a vehicle being struck within a layby and occurred on a dual carriageway section north of Perth which was not monitored by average speed cameras.

3. VEHICLE SPEED DATA

There has been a significant reduction in the number of vehicles exceeding the maximum speed limits along the A9 corridor between Dunblane and Inverness. Before cameras were deployed, around one in three vehicles was speeding. This figure has now dropped to 1 in 20 vehicles and vehicles travelling at more than 10 mph above the speed limit has dropped by over 96% from an average of 1 in every 10 vehicles to 1 in 250 vehicles.

The data incorporates all vehicles including emergency service vehicles which may have been recorded responding to an emergency.

As was highlighted in the Data Monitoring Report poor weather conditions can on occasions interrupt the data gathering process due to the lack of solar power feeding the counting stations. This was the case during the first week in January when a large number of the stations on the A9 were buried under snow.

Dunblane – Perth

The data analysis for the three months following the installation of the ASCS shows that there has been a significant drop in the number of vehicles exceeding the 70mph maximum speed limit. The three month average across the sites indicates that the figure is now in the region of 7% of all vehicles exceeding the maximum speed limit. This represents a reduction of 76% in vehicles exceeding this limit. The numbers of vehicles travelling at more than 10 mph above the speed limit has dropped from an average of 3 vehicles in every 100 to just 1 vehicle in every 500 (a 97% reduction).

Perth – Inverness

The speed of vehicles on the Perth to Inverness section is measured only on the single carriageway sections.

The data collected in the period May to August 2014 reflects the progressive introduction of the camera infrastructure on the route and provides an illustration of the impact that the physical installation of the camera stations had on vehicle speeds. Using Killiecrankie as an example the benchmark figure for this site was 33.85% of all vehicles exceeding the maximum speed limit of 60mph. Camera installation activity nearby in June & July saw the level of speeding drop to 22.90% and then 16.50%. Following introduction of the cameras this dropped to just under 6% and in the first three months of operation averaged just over 7%. This drop of 34 vehicles in every 100 to 6 vehicles in every 100 is an 82% reduction.

Those vehicles exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 mph was almost 7 in every 100 prior to camera installation and following installation this has dropped to less than 3 in every 1000, a reduction of 96%.

Similar reductions are mirrored across the sites and the significant reductions in speed take place as soon as the camera infrastructure became visible.

4. INCIDENT FREQUENCY & IMPACT

Over 2014 there was an average 18% reduction in incident frequency along the A9 corridor in comparison with 2013 and the 2014 Q4 which reflected the operational introduction of the cameras a 22% reduction was achieved in comparison to the similar period in 2013. While the impact of the closures was down by around 40% across 2014 it is very difficult to

establish a like for like comparison given the variety of incidents and complexities which often surround crash investigation following a road traffic accident.

A direct comparison reveals that journey time reliability was significantly improved during 2014 through a reduction of both incident frequency and subsequent impacts relative to closures and restrictions to traffic.

5. JOURNEY TIME (Perth – Inverness)

The journey time data for both November and January falls within the scope of the original predictions of rises between 4 and 14 minutes dependent on the day of the week. The northbound average journey time for all vehicles was 126 minutes during January which compares with the average benchmark journey time of 115 minutes, a rise of 9 minutes. The December data highlighted that between Monday and Thursday the journey times were outwith the predicted levels and this can be attributed to ground investigation works associated with the dualling project in the Birnam area. The works involved two sets of temporary traffic lights and monitoring information from the contractor identified delays in the region of 5 minutes. This delay information is consistent with the increase in journey times during this period.

6. PARALLEL ROUTE RUNNING

The monitoring programme carried out between 5 – 11 January does not identify that traffic is leaving the route to use the parallel local route between Kingussie and Carrbridge. The study identified only a handful of vehicles making a continuous through journey during the seven day monitoring period.

A comparative analysis of journey times indicates that the through journey on the parallel route has been recorded at an average of 33 minutes northbound and 54 minutes southbound. The journey time between the same points on the A9 is in the vicinity of 20 minutes.

7. Traffic Volumes

Traffic Volumes

The traffic volume figures provide a comparison month on month between 2013 and 2014 in respect to three counting stations broadly representing traffic flow along the A9. The figures show a degree of variability in traffic volumes throughout the comparison period with overall traffic volumes on the A9 up by over 2% in 2014 compared to 2013. Across the sites on a monthly basis the figures generally show a rise during 2014. October recorded a rise followed by a dip in November and a rise again December.