

PE1503/M

The AA Email of 15 April 2014

Dear Andrew

Scottish Parliament Public Petition PE1503 on Review of A9 speed camera proposals

The AA has the following observations to make.

The current variable standard of the A9 switching from dual carriageway to single carriageway and back again has led to a large number of well documented serious collisions. The AA therefore strongly supports the dualling of the A9 north to Inverness to reduce accident risk and improve journey times. However, it has to be accepted that this may take many years. Given that dualling will take a considerable time we accept that the highway authority responsible and relevant partners must do all they can to reduce the number of casualties.

In our surveys 70% AA members say they accept the use of roadside speed cameras. We also support this view and believe that cameras have a role in encouraging compliance on roads where accidents are high and risk is great. The AA believes cameras should be applied hand in hand with other engineering features e.g. signs and lines and minor alignment improvements to make roads safer and reduce risk. This is especially necessary where road standards constantly change. Road signage and, to a point, layout can be tailored to influence safer driving practices. Sometimes road protection features can be used to minimise risk should vehicles leave the carriageway, for example crash barriers and frangible roadside sign posts. Average speed cameras have been deployed successfully to reduce accidents on the A77 and this has gone hand in hand with other safety improvements to the road. We see no reason why they should not be implemented on the A9 until the road is substantially improved.

Frustration along this route may spur drivers to take risks along the single carriageway sections, particularly where straighter sections of the road seem to invite over-taking. This poses obvious dangers around junctions, where features of the road catch drivers out and where much slower, often agricultural, vehicles may be encountered. The faster dual carriageway sections then seemingly encourage higher speeds to make up time but drivers then find it hard to readjust to single carriageway sections. Consideration should also be given to the type of road user on the A9, particularly in the summer when tourists who are unfamiliar with the nature of the road or may be towing, add a new and potentially aggravating dimension to the character of the road.

If average speed cameras are to be deployed we believe a section by section approach should be adopted so that it is easy for drivers to understand. This would avoid 'pressured' drivers calculating that slower traffic has left them time 'in the bank' which they can 'cash in' with bursts of speed.

To conclude it is the AA's view that average speed cameras are a necessary but integral part of improving safety along the A9. Experience in improving road safety along other UK roads with a similar intermittent mix of dualled and single sections offer solutions to particular problems, not as alternatives but as part of a package of measures. Much of the progress in this field has been monitored, measured and encouraged by the Euro Road Assessment Programme (EuroRAP).

We hope the AA's views are of assistance.

Yours sincerely

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The Automobile Association