

Inquiry into A9 dualling project: Summary of the call for views

[The Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee launched a call for views about the A9 dualling project on 9 August 2023, which was open for comments until 15 September 2023.](#) This asked for views on four key issues:

- The strategy for dualling the A9, with options being to complete the dualling work as quickly as possible, regardless of possible disruption to traffic; to minimise disruption, even if dualling takes longer; a compromise between the two, or another approach.
- The proposal to create a monument to those killed in traffic collisions on the A9.
- Transport Scotland's proposed interim road safety improvements.
- The impact of road closures and delays on the A9 on businesses and the local economy.

In total, 339 people offered views on at least one of these issues. It is worth noting that respondents were self-selecting. Generally, only people and organisations

with an existing interest in the A9 dualling project will have responded. This means that the views expressed may not match those of the population as a whole and should not be read as such.

Key themes emerging from the responses are outlined below. It is also worth noting that this analysis aims to highlight key issues and concerns raised by respondents. It is not a comprehensive summary of every issue raised.

A9 Strategy: 306 respondents answered this question, 66% of which favoured dualling the A9 as quickly as possible regardless of disruption, 17% favoured a compromise between speed of dualling and minimising disruption, 2.3% favoured an approach that minimised disruption and 13% some other approach. The remaining 1.7% of respondents left comments but did not specify which approach they favoured.

Key themes emerging from the comments left by those supporting each category are briefly explored below:

- **Dual as quickly as possible:** If the purpose of dualling is to improve road safety then the quicker it happens, the sooner these road safety benefits will be realised - meaning more people and families will be spared the trauma of

road deaths and injuries. Linked to this, a reduction in collisions would also reduce the time the road is closed by the police. Some felt that it would be easier to deal with planned disruption of road works, as opposed to the random closures resulting from collisions.

Comments also focused on what many saw as a “broken promise” by the Scottish Government, which should be made good as soon as possible. There were also broader concerns that the lack of progress was symptomatic of the poor management of public sector capital projects in Scotland.

Compromise: Concerns focused on the impact that significant disruption along large sections of the road would have on those who regularly travel the full length of the route, which would be far greater than those who only use shorter sections. There were also calls to focus on dualling accident black spots and the busiest single carriageway sections of the route as a matter of urgency, before moving on to other sections. There were also more general concerns about the impact of significant disruption on business, tourism, and a general desire to simply keep things moving.

Minimise disruption: The key concern from this group was that lengthy road work sites would lead to significant disruption and longer journey times, which could increase collisions due to greater driver frustration and confusion while travelling through unfamiliar and constrained development sites.

Other: Most of these comments argued that the A9 dualling project should not go ahead. Many stated that road safety could be improved by targeted investment along the route and that the funds saved would be better invested in supporting active and sustainable travel, particularly in the light of the climate emergency and the Scottish Government’s target to reduce the distance driven by 20% from 2019 levels by 2030.

- **A9 Memorial:** 138 respondents answered this question, of which 67% were opposed to the idea of creating an A9 memorial while 33% were in favour. Many of those who were opposed to the idea thought that dualling the A9 as quickly as possible would be the best memorial, with others concerned about where such a memorial would be placed, why such a memorial should focus on those killed on the A9 rather than all roads, and the potential costs involved.

Many of those in favour of the memorial left comments about unrelated issues, with most others saying any decision on a memorial should be a matter for the bereaved families.

- **Interim road safety measures:** Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they thought Transport Scotland’s proposed interim A9 road safety measures would improve road safety until the route was dualled on a scale of 1 (least) to 5 (most). 86 respondents answered this question, giving a final rating of three out of five to the proposed measures.

Comments left in support of the proposed measures generally thought they would be helpful, particularly improved speed limit signage, cats eyes and lighting of junctions. Suggestions for improvements were wide ranging, including 24hr services, improved road policing, multi-lingual signs near tourist hotspots, and direction arrows at the entry to single carriageway sections.

- **Impact on business:** Nine businesses responded to this question. All were in favour of the dualling project, as it would help reduce journey times, improve journey reliability and consistency, and improve road safety.

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