

Health, safety and environment bosses from Glasgow's M74 link project are teaming up with the world's leading professional health and safety body today (Thursday 27 January), to talk about the huge challenges in building a motorway.

The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health's (IOSH) West of Scotland Branch is holding an event at Hampden Park to illustrate why the new M74 link is likely to benefit commuters and locals alike. The new eight kilometre-stretch of road will join the south west of Glasgow at the Kingston Bridge, to Carmyle at the east end.

Interlink M74 Joint Venture Project Health and Safety Manager Harry Gardner will give a talk on how the long road to completing the motorway involves tackling a raft of related issues. But for people who live near to, or use the M74 and the surrounding network, he expects to see real health and safety improvements.

His colleague, Environmental Manager John Logan, will talk about overcoming problems with contaminated ground and how wildlife in the area is being protected by installing measures such as badger underpasses and motorway fences.

IOSH's West of Scotland Branch chairman Fraser Allan said: "The completion of the M74 later this year will be a landmark for Glasgow. Motorways are the safest and on the whole, the least stressful type of road for motorists, so it'll be interesting to see the positive effects it should have on commuters who still experience difficult and congested driving conditions around the area at the moment.

"Throughout the project, the health and safety of workers is paramount, as are the considerable environmental considerations. IOSH believes companies should do all they can to protect both their workers and anyone their work impacts. That's why we asked Balfour Beatty to give a presentation to our branch and our environmental specialist group on how they deliver health, safety and environmental excellence in a challenging environment."

Harry Gardner will talk about the day-to-day health and safety basics. These include briefing personnel not to stray onto, or drop items on the live motorway, making sure temporary lights don't blind drivers, avoiding unnecessary distractions such as badly placed signage, and keeping work accesses clear and simple.

He said: "When you compare motorways to other types of road, they are actually the safest to use. In completing the M74, we'll be taking traffic off surrounding streets and reducing the number of accidents caused by frustration and distraction, as well as any that happen with pedestrians.

"We predict that it'll also reduce stress levels on the M8 and other junctions, especially during rush hour, because of better traffic flow. This'll all be good news for people's occupational health as their work journeys won't take as long and won't be as fraught with tension," he added.

Low-noise surfacing and barriers on the M74 and reduced volume of traffic in residential areas will also reduce noise pollution.

He said: "To me, IOSH represents the highest professional standards in health and safety. This is the benchmark we are constantly striving to achieve - not only for the M74 project, but in every policy and procedure we create."