

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL:

Powering Tomorrow's World

Report Name	Scottish Government Additional Investment Update
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Governance	Additional Investment MOU & Transport Working Group

1:	Purpose of the Report
To update the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee on the progress of projects being taken forward through the additional Scottish Government investment announced alongside the Aberdeen City Region Deal. This report covers progress on the Laurencekirk junction improvements work and the investment in the rail network to improve services between Aberdeen and the Central Belt.	

2:	Recommendations for Action
To note the update in the report.	

3:	Summary of Key Information
Background	
<p>The transport related investment which the Scottish Government announced in addition to the Aberdeen CRD commitments included £24 million for the design and construction of a new grade-separated junction at Laurencekirk and £200 million to help improve journey times and increase capacity on key rail links between Aberdeen and the Central Belt.</p>	
Laurencekirk	
<p>Transport Scotland appointed design consultants (AMEY) for the A90 Laurencekirk Junction Improvement scheme in September 2016. This allows progress of the design development and assessment phases based on the standards of good practice set by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).</p>	

3: Summary of Key Information

The emerging options from the DMRB Stage 2 assessment process were presented to the public at an exhibition in October 2017 with the preferred option itself announced in July 2018 at a series of public exhibitions. The preferred option consists of a south grade-separated junction with a full diamond layout and bridge over the A90 together with retention of the existing central reserve gaps at the Centre (B9120) and North (A937) junctions.

The DMRB Stage 3 detailed development and assessment of the preferred option is well underway and Transport Scotland recently announced the intention to award a £300,000 ground investigation contract to support this work. Due to commence next month, the ground investigation will provide vital information needed to help inform the development and assessment of the preferred option. The DMRB Stage 3 work will culminate in publication of the draft Orders later this year for formal comment. Thereafter progress will be dependent on the public reaction to the draft Orders and whether a Public Local Inquiry is required. Construction of the scheme itself can only commence if the scheme is approved under the relevant statutory procedures and thereafter a timetable for its progress can be set.

A Partnership Group with Aberdeenshire and Angus Councils, along with NESTRANS, has been set up to support this project by providing a cohesive policy and investment approach which will help to maximise the benefits of the investment. Consultation has been maintained throughout the design development stages, with the group last consulted at a meeting held in November 2018. The next group meeting is scheduled to be held this summer.

Aberdeen to Central Belt Rail Investment

The Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group (The Group) last met on 1 April 2019 and have agreed to meet again in September 2019. The final report from ARUP, received November 2018 was considered by The Group when they met in December 2018. The consensus across the group was that further work was required to identify the best value options for investment in the Route. In particular, the need to consider signalling constraints, rolling stock options, and timetable solutions as a system was recognised.

The ARUP report identified that dualling the section of track between Usan and Montrose would not deliver journey time improvements and removal of the constraint at Montrose would provide poor value for money due to the challenging topography, significant environmental challenges at Montrose basin, and the very high financial cost.

The view of the Group was that better options than the dualling can be identified along the route and so further work is underway to identify the maximum possible benefits achievable for the £200m available within the timeframe to 2026.

Notwithstanding the above, the first phase of work on Aberdeen Central Belt identified signalling capacity constraints immediately south of Aberdeen as an

3: Summary of Key Information

early opportunity. Work is already underway to install new signalling between Newtonhill and Craiginches and is currently expected by April 2019. This will support capacity for the Revolution in Rail (RiR) between Aberdeen and Stonehaven. In addition, the equipment in Newtonhill signal box will be modernised and re-controlled to Aberdeen signal box to improve operational control and efficiency in December 2019.

Early in Control Period 6, currently expected March 2020, Network Rail will commission a new trailing crossover at Craiginches to allow southbound freight trains to depart direct without having to run around at Aberdeen station. This increases capacity for passenger and freight trains and also reduces journey times and improves the competitive position for rail freight.

NR plan to invest approximately £270m spend in the next control period on operations, maintenance and renewals (CP6) in the A-CB Corridor. £60m of this investment will be targeted between Dundee and Aberdeen.

The first phase of RiR launched on Monday, 10 December 2018 delivering faster journey times, enhanced capacity along the Aberdeen to Central Belt route, and fulfilling the aspirations of the Regional Transport Partnerships (RTP) for cross city rail services. It also saw the introduction of High-Speed Trains (HST) on 79% of Aberdeen to Edinburgh services and 61% of Aberdeen to Glasgow services.

When fully delivered, RiR will deliver 200 services and 20,000 additional seats in addition to that of the original franchise bid (against December 2013 timetable) - which assumed full HST and Electric Trains (class 385) roll out.

Transport Scotland's Director of Rail, Bill Reeve, attended a meeting with the CRD Joint Board on 7 December 2018. This afforded him the opportunity to highlight the work being progressed by the Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group.

Subsequent to this Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce requested Bill Reeve's participation at a roundtable event to provide their members with an opportunity to discuss their concerns. This invitation was accepted, and the meeting was held on 09 April 2019.

