

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL:

Powering Tomorrow's World

Report Name	Scottish Government Additional Investment Update
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Date of Report	29 th April 2024
Governance	Additional Investment Minute of Understanding

1:	Purpose of the Report
<p>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 investment in the rail network to improve services between Aberdeen and the Central Belt.</p>	

2:	Recommendations for Action
<p>To note the update in the report.</p>	

3:	Summary of Key Information
<p>Aberdeen to Central Belt Rail Corridor Investment</p> <p>The Scottish Government has committed £200 million to improve journey times and increase capacity on key rail links between Aberdeen and the Central Belt for passengers and freight.</p> <p>A bespoke Aberdeen to Central Belt Key Stakeholders Group meets quarterly to keep stakeholders informed of progress and is attended by an Aberdeen City Region Deal representative, Nestrans, Tactran, Network Rail and ScotRail. The most recent meeting of the Group took place on 4th March 2023, where an update was provided on project progress.</p> <p>The option selection process concluded in 2023. The package selected comprises signal enhancements, improvements to station layouts at Dundee, Aberdeen, Arbroath and Montrose, and specific capacity alterations, including freight loops, to facilitate the mixed operation of faster and slower trains on the same route.</p>	

3: Summary of Key Information

Given the extremely challenging financial climate, and following the UK Autumn Statement, Ministers have had to take difficult decisions in setting the budget for 2024-25. Budget decisions have impacted upon our planning for this project. As the Cabinet Secretary Ms McAllan outlined to the Scottish Parliament, when budgets are constrained, it is only right to consider the time over which projects can be completed. This will be undertaken as part of the project's Outline Business Case (OBC) preparation.

Work continues by Network Rail and its contractor Atkins, on the completion of the OBC. This is due to be submitted to Transport Scotland's Investment Decision Making Board in late spring / early summer 2024, for approval and funding to take the project through its next stage.

The OBC takes a whole corridor approach, examining journey time improvements, route decarbonisation, gauge improvements and signalling renewals. Delivering this project as part of a wider programme enables efficiencies, not only in terms of costs but also by means of minimising, and making full use of, line possessions, when it is necessary to close the line to passenger and freight traffic.

Signalling enhancements for this project will be undertaken in a manner that facilitates the efficient decarbonisation of the line and opportunities are currently being considered to modernise the signalling along the length of the route in parallel with this project and the decarbonisation project, producing further efficiencies.

Journey Time Improvements Project

The contract for the Approval In Principle design with Siemens is ongoing for the selected scope. Works continue on developing the design and an integrated schedule. These will continue throughout 2024.

Revised cost estimates remain under preparation as part of Outline Business Case development.

An Environmental Screening Request was prepared and was subsequently submitted to Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, and Dundee City, , and Councils in late October 2023. All four councils have responded with a 'no Environmental Impact Assessment required' confirmation.

Discussions with local landowners on land acquisition for the proposed new loops has commenced.

Other aspects of works have been undertaken to support the Aberdeen to Central Belt enhancement projects as follows.

Decarbonisation Works

In terms of the route decarbonisation works, the following update is provided:

3: Summary of Key Information

- Route Clearance works now concluded at 3 bridges and 2 tunnels.
 - Kippenross tunnel (Dunblane) completed October 2023.
 - Moncrieffe tunnel (Between Perth and Dunblane) completed February 2024.
- The location of the proposed Dundee Feeder Station (To serve railway electrification) is now planned to be east of Dock Street. . A contract has been placed with National Grid for a new Feeder Station at Drumlithie.
- The decarbonisation project continues to take advantage of renewals projects to clear for future electrification and freight gauge.

Dunblane and Barnhill

Works to support the journey time improvements have been completed at Barnhill (east of Perth) and Dunblane.

The Barnhill line speed improvements were completed in late 2023, with capacity benefits planned for the December 2024 timetable. The works will allow an increase in line speed for trains from 20mph to 50mph in this location.

At Dunblane the following works have now been completed:

- Installation of a new crossover at Dunblane, with final commissioning completed 22nd February 2024.
- The new crossover provides a capacity increase which will lead to less delay and cancellations and provides an opportunity for additional services.
- Journey time improvements between Glasgow and Aberdeen planned for June 2024 timetable.
 - The new crossover means trains will be able to arrive and then depart from platform 3 towards Edinburgh and Glasgow, without having to leave the station.
 - This will reduce delays and improve train performance while increasing capacity for freight on the line between Dunblane and Perth by almost 40%.
- The Anticipated Final Cost is £16m for both enhancements.

General

We continue to encourage you to continue to raise any queries through your representative on the Key Stakeholder Group. The next meeting of this group will be held in June 2024.

We remain willing to attend future Joint Committee Meetings to provide members with the opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

Action from Previous Meeting

Action: Thereafter the Joint Committee agreed to note the update in the report and that Officers be requested to provide further information on the network improvement project with a summary of the business case and a breakdown of spend, in due course."

3:	Summary of Key Information
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Update 29/04/2024 "This action is ongoing. Project estimates are in the process of being refreshed for inclusion in the Outline Business Case. We are happy to share the information requested with the Committee once the Outline Business Case has been completed and is ready for publication."