

# ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL:

Powering Tomorrow's World

<b>Report Name</b>	Additional £254M Investment – 6-Monthly Update
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<b>Date of Report</b>	4 May 2018
<b>Governance</b>	Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee

## 1: Purpose of the Report

To update the 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

- i. It is recommended that the Joint Committee –
  - a. Notes the content of the report and the progress made.

## 3: Summary of Key Information

### Background

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.

### Laurencekirk

Transport Scotland appointed design consultants (AMEY) for the A90 Laurencekirk Junction scheme in September 2016. This allows progress of the design development phases of the junction upgrade and thereafter through the relevant statutory procedures.

Since appointing design consultants, Transport Scotland has been working

### 3: Summary of Key Information

hard to identify and undertake initial assessment of options (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 2 assessment).

The emerging options from the DMRB Stage 2 assessment process were presented to the public at an exhibition on 30 October 2017 for vital feedback. The on-going design and assessment process to identify a preferred junction layout which includes preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment and Traffic and Economic modelling is programmed to be complete in 2018.

A DMRB Stage 3 assessment involving the development and detailed assessment of the preferred option will follow this culminating in publication of the draft Orders in 2019 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. The group last met on 26 February 2018 to discuss outcomes from the public exhibition and gain a greater appreciation of the ongoing design and assessment process. The next group meeting is scheduled to be held in summer 2018.

#### **Aberdeen to Central Belt Rail Investment**

The Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group last met on 27 February 2018. The Reference Group is led by Transport Scotland and includes Train and Freight Operating Companies, Network Rail and ScotRail, Terms of Reference for the Group were agreed on 22 November 2017.

The group is taking forward two strands of work:

- identifying rail freight needs and how they might be addressed, which includes identifying and promoting freight initiatives that exploit the potential of the line for the benefit of communities, local business, and stakeholders;
- Focus on identifying journey time, capacity and infrastructure improvements (including consideration of the value of double tracking Usan Junction and the South Esk viaduct).

Transport Scotland is pleased that an effective working group with wide rail industry and stakeholder engagement has been established.

Guided by this group, key system analysis has already been provided by Network Rail to identify a number of critical constraints in the system and opportunities to address these. Further work packages are now underway using both NR and contractor resources to expedite progress.

<b>3:</b>	<b>Summary of Key Information</b>
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The initial analysis has already identified signalling capacity constraints immediately south of Aberdeen as an early priority. Work is underway now with the target (deliverability to be confirmed) to install capacity enhancing additional signals in the next twelve months.

We look forward to continued progress over the forthcoming months, to agree the best possible outcomes from the £200 million investment committed to the development and operation of this rail corridor.

Consultants, ARUP have been appointed to undertake a comprehensive assessment which is expected to identify the optimum package that will secure the best possible return from the £200 million investment. The Group are taking forward an analysis of track data, track geometry and line speeds, before moving forward with a multi-disciplinary review of the entire route. This work will identify a long list of options for further consideration going forward.

Building on initial stakeholder engagement which was used to inform Revolution in Rail, the Group will facilitate further engagement initially with Network Rail and ScotRail and subsequently with the Regional Transport Partnerships.

The next meeting of the Reference Group will be informed by the availability of the ARUP report which is expected later in 2018.

On 14 February 2018, Humza Yousaf MSP, Minister for Transport and the Islands, attended the Nestrans Board Meeting which was also attended by members of the CRD Joint Committee. The Minister stated that he would meet with Transport Scotland officials to discuss the work of the group to confirm timescales and the programme plan, this meeting has been arranged for May 2018. After his meeting with Transport Scotland officials the Minister will arrange to meet with representatives of the Aberdeen CRD Joint Committee and Nestrans to discuss progress and timescales with a further meeting to follow on completion of the ARUP study.

The levels of financial support that the Scottish Government has committed for rail infrastructure and services along this corridor underlines our determination to enhance connection of our communities and support sustainable economic growth and jobs across the country.

<b>4:</b>	<b>Finance and Risk</b>
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- i. There are no financial or risk implications for the Joint Committee regarding the contents of this report.