

## Aberdeen to Central Belt – Reference Group - Terms of Reference

### Purpose:

The Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group exists to:

- provide assurance to the Minister for Transport and the Islands, as well as to the Cabinet Secretaries for Rural Economy & Connectivity and Economy, Jobs & Fair Work , that progress is being made to improve connectivity between Aberdeen and the Central Belt ; through improved journey times and enhanced capacity.
- identify rail related initiatives that seek to exploit the economic and social value of the line to the communities it serves; and
- seek to secure the best possible return from the additional £200 million investment committed to as outlined in the MOU signed by Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Scottish Government to the development and operation of the Aberdeen to Central Belt rail corridor

### Terms of Reference:

In specific terms, the Reference Group will work collaboratively to:

- review and assess timetable, rolling stock and infrastructure options to improve journey time and enhance capacity between Aberdeen and Central Belt (including consideration of the value of double tracking Usan Junction and the South Esk viaduct).
- assess rail freight journey time and capacity needs and business opportunities ,how these might most efficiently be addressed and realised. identify and promote initiatives (with, as necessary, other stakeholders) that exploit the potential of the line between Aberdeen and the Central Belt for the benefit of proximal communities, business and tourism.
- take cognisance of the opportunities arising from current rail projects being delivered within the North East; including; Aberdeen to Inverness and Revolution in Rail service improvements, and have regard to the competitive journey time impacts of the AWPR, A96, A9 road projects.
- commission work-streams to inform its considerations.

### Membership:

The Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group shall comprise:

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] Transport Scotland
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] Network Rail
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] ScotRail Alliance
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] DB Cargo (UK) Limited
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] DFT
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] RDG
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] Nestrans
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] Tactran

[REDACTED] Transport Scotland  
[REDACTED] Transport Scotland  
[REDACTED] Transport Scotland  
[REDACTED] Transport Scotland (Secretariat)

**Participation:**

- The Reference Group shall be led by [REDACTED]
- The Reference Group shall determine its modus operandi at its inception meeting.
- The Reference Group shall comply with any obligatory confidentiality rulings
- Transport Scotland shall provide the secretariat.
- Transport Scotland shall meet any venue costs associated with meetings.
- Any costs associated with membership of the Reference Group will be met by the relevant participant's home organisation.

**Products:**

- The Reference Group Lead will provide the Minister for Transport and the Islands and the Cabinet Secretaries for Rural Economy and Connectivity and Economy, Jobs and Fair Work with a progress update at least every four months.
- Ensure that DFT (as the Authority for cross border franchises), RDG (as the body representing all passenger and freight rail companies), Caledonian Sleeper rail franchise and relevant local authorities (Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dundee City, Perth & Kinross and Stirling & Fife) are regularly apprised of relevant aspects of the Group's work.

## USAN (RAIL) JUNCTION

### Lines to take:

- The inaugural meeting of the Aberdeen to Central Belt Rail Reference Group was held on 22 May. This is the group intended to identify the optimum use of the £200 million investment (announced alongside the Aberdeen City Region Deal); which will focus on improving journey time and capacity on the route between Aberdeen and the Central Belt.
- The group will; review and assess timetables, rolling stock and infrastructure options, which includes consideration of whether double tracking between Usan Junction and the South Esk viaduct at Montrose will offer the best enhancement or whether alternative options provide the best possible return from the £200 million investment.
- I am pleased with the collegiate approach being taken by our stakeholders. The work undertaken by this group will be subsequently set out in an agreed programme of activity which once concluded will, in due course, result in the selection of a preferred option to be delivered within the 10 year period of the city region deal.

### Background

- The Minister for Transport and the Islands, Humza Yousaf, on 17th March 2017 announced a dedicated team for the North East to address rail issues.
- The Scottish Government is determined to improve overall performance, capacity and journey times on this key corridor.
- The purpose of the Team will be to review options for capacity improvements between Aberdeen and Dundee, as well as potential options for double tracking Usan Junction and the South Esk viaduct at Montrose. Drawing together regional and railway interests, members will include with representatives from Transport Scotland, Nestrans, Tactrans and Network Rail; as well as the ScotRail Alliance, Freight and passenger rail service operators.
- The team commenced its work on 22 May 2017 at its inaugural meeting, and agreed its modus operandi for going forward. The next meeting of the team is due to be held late August/September, date to be confirmed.
- The team is expected to commence its work in May, with the inaugural meeting taking place on 22 May 2017, at Endeavour House, Dundee. The team will agree its modus operandi at this meeting for going forward.
- Our aim is to ensure the rail service between Aberdeen and the Central belt improves transport connectivity and provides enhanced performance when travelling between cities.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 04 October 2017 10:18  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: MSP Enquiry - Aberdeen-Central Belt  
**Attachments:** Aberdeen to Central Belt - Reference Group - Terms of Reference - Final - Director Cleared - 6 June 2017.docx

[REDACTED]

As requested:

I can advise that the Aberdeen to Central Belt Rail Reference Group, led by Transport Scotland; will help identify the optimum use of the £200 million investment (announced alongside the Aberdeen City Region Deal); which will focus on improving journey time and capacity on the route between Aberdeen and the Central Belt. Drawing together regional and railway interests, members include representatives from Transport Scotland, Network Rail, Nestrans and Tactrans; as well as the ScotRail Alliance, Freight and passenger rail service operators.

The group will; review and assess timetables, rolling stock and infrastructure options, which includes consideration of whether double tracking between Usan Junction and the South Esk viaduct at Montrose will offer the best enhancement or whether alternative options provide the best possible return from the £200 million investment, which will be delivered over the same 10 year period as the City Region Deal.

I have attached a copy of the Terms of Reference. A copy of this document was released under a recent [REDACTED] – with the names of the members redacted.

Regards,  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

High Speed Rail Policy Officer | Rail Directorate | Transport Scotland | Scottish Government.

Ex [REDACTED] Blackberry [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [transport.gov.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@transport.gov.scot)

| Buchanan House, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 58 Port Dundas, Road, Glasgow, G4 0HF

Working days: Monday - Friday



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 03 October 2017 15:59  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: MSP Enquiry - Aberdeen-Central Belt

Details to me please, thanks

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Transport Scotland  
7th Floor  
Buchanan House  
58 Port Dundas Street  
Glasgow  
G4 0HF

Tel: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@transport.gov.scot

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**From:** [REDACTED] [mailto:[REDACTED]@parliament.scot]  
**Sent:** 03 October 2017 15:48  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** MSP Enquiry - Aberdeen-Central Belt

[REDACTED]

An MSP has asked me for details of the membership of the Aberdeen-Central Belt Reference Group which is looking at options for improving central belt-Aberdeen rail services. I have not been able to track down much in the way of detail about this group, so any information you can provide would be appreciated.

Many thanks for your assistance.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]  
Transport and Planning  
SPICe

[REDACTED]  
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/scotparl>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/scottishparliament>

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[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 10 November 2017 13:33  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group, Written Update to Joint Board

Dear all,

It was agreed at the last meeting of the Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017 that a copy of the written update which was to be provided to the Transport Working Group Joint Board would also be provided to Tactran.

The joint board meeting is scheduled for today therefore please see below the update which was provided.

***The Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group has met on two occasions in 2017, on 22 May and 10 October, with the next meeting taking place early 2018. Transport Scotland is delighted with the level of participation and approach taken by the members of the group at this early stage.***

***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.***

***The recently established group is currently taking forward two strands of work, which includes:***

- ***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;***
- ***review and assessment of the Network Rail work with a focus on identifying journey time, capacity and infrastructure improvements (including consideration of the value of double tracking Usan Junction and the South Esk viaduct).***

***The group comprising of local and regional experts, will identify rail related initiatives that seek to exploit the economic and social value of the line to the communities it serves.***

***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.***

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Rail Policy Officer | Rail Directorate | Transport Scotland | Scottish Government.  
Ext [REDACTED] Blackberry [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:**

**Sent:**

12 December 2017 15:11

**To:**

Minister for Transport and the Islands

**Cc:**

Transport Scotland Ministerial Submissions List; [REDACTED]

**Subject:**

Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group

**Attachments:**

Aberdeen to Central Belt - Reference Group - Ministerial Update - Cleared by Director - FH - 08 December 2017.docx

PS/Minister for Transport and the Islands, Cabinet Secretaries for the Rural Economy & Connectivity and Economy, Jobs and Fair Work.

Ministers,

As set out within Terms of Reference for the Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group please find attached an update on the work of the Group.

If there is any matter requiring clarification do not hesitate to contact me or [REDACTED] who provides the secretariat for the Group.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]  
On behalf of [REDACTED]  
Director of Rail,  
Transport Scotland

[REDACTED]  
Rail Policy Officer | Rail Directorate | Transport Scotland | Scottish Government.  
Ext [REDACTED] Blackberry [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@transport.gov.scot

Buchanan House, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 58 Port Dundas, Road, Glasgow, G4 0HF

Working days: Monday - Friday



From [REDACTED]  
Transport Scotland  
12 December 2017

Minister for Transport and the Islands  
**ABERDEEN TO CENTRAL BELT - REFERENCE GROUP**

**Purpose**

1. To provide an update on the activities of the Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group.

**Priority – ROUTINE**

**Background**

2. In addition to the Scottish Government's contribution to the Aberdeen City Region Deal, the Scottish Government is also providing £254 million to allow a more significant step change to the economy of the North East. Of that £254 million, £200 million will be used to improve capacity, performance and journey times between Aberdeen and the Central Belt, through identified rail initiatives which support the Scottish Government's aspirations for the corridor.

3. The work being undertaken to progress initiatives is being directed, under the Chairmanship of [REDACTED] by the Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group, which has a membership drawn from across the rail industry as well as local government and interested parties. The Group is currently progressing the development of potential options, including double tracking between Usan to Montrose, through two work streams (Rail Freight and Journey time & Capacity).

**Update**

4. The Group has been working well with active engagement of all participants with a clear focus to realise the agreed outcomes. In October, the Group commissioned the investigation of a comprehensive option assessment of the route. That detailed work is expected to conclude in the summer.

5. Mindful of the need to ensure that wider local stakeholders are kept fully apprised, presentations were given at the NESTRANS quarterly meeting (6 November) and the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee (10 November) on the work of the Group. As work progresses further updates will be provided.

6. On the wider political front over the last 4 months there has been parliamentary interest with ministerial correspondence and 6 parliamentary questions. Liam Kerr MSP has submitted 4 of the parliamentary questions seeking clarification on the consideration of dualling the rail track between Montrose and Arbroath at Usan and the proportion of the £200m which will be allocated to achieving this. There have been a few press enquiries seeking details on the progress of the Group and the work of the Group has been subject to an FOI request.

**Conclusion**

7. The Minister is invited to note progress to date.

[REDACTED]



Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Minister for Transport and Islands			X		X
Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work					
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity			X		
Transport Scotland Submissions List Transport Scotland Directors Press Transport Scotland P/S Transport Scotland Communications DG Economy					