

MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT BRIEFING: HUMZA YOUSAF

Engagement title	Meeting with the Nestrans Board	
Engagement timing	2pm, 14 February 2018	
Venue and full address	Committee Room 2 - Woodhill House, Aberdeen AB16 5GJ.	
Background/Purpose include invitation history	You agreed to meet with the RTPs individually or collectively. An opportunity to hear about the challenges and opportunities facing Nestrans	
Relevance to core script	Good stakeholder engagement opportunity	
Key message		
Attendees	Annex A	
Annexes	Annex B – Possible items for discussion Annex C – A96 dualling Annex D – A9 dualling Annex E - Rail Annex F - Bus Annex G – Northern Isles Ferry Service Tender Annex H - LEZs Annex I – Airport Access Strategy Annex J – Planning Bill Annex K – Alignment of Planning, Enterprise and Skills and NTS Reviews Annex L – Councillors Code of Conduct	
Media Handling include mobile number(s)	Non-media event	
Official Support include mobile number(s)	Name Redacted	

RAIL

STPR Project - Aberdeen to Central Belt

- Network Rail is currently progressing improvements for freight traffic on this route, as well as signalling enhancements as part of Phase One. Passenger routes currently have one train per hour on the routes between, Aberdeen to Glasgow and Aberdeen to Edinburgh.
- TS responded to Network Rails GRIP 2 report during 2014 and 2015. The proposed infrastructure options considered did not deliver the journey time reduction of 20 minutes as outlined in the STPR. TS continues to work closely with Network Rail to deliver Phase One of the Aberdeen to Central Belt project by March 2019

Additional £200 Million announced alongside the City Region Deal

Our level of investment clearly demonstrates our commitment to improving rail infrastructure and underlines our determination to improve connectivity between Aberdeen and the Central Belt.

There is no question that everyone wants a solution to the capacity constraints we are, however, looking at 200 miles of railway – a significant challenge that will take time to fully consider. We are working with all relevant parties to identify the best solutions which will deliver the greatest benefits.

Transport Scotland is continuing to manage the Aberdeen to Central Belt commission as outlined in the Invitation to Tender specification. The scope and a clearly defined programme will flow from the work that NR and OVE Arup are undertaking. Consultants, Arup, are currently undertaking a significant amount of data gathering for the route before a wider programme of stakeholder engagement is progressed.

The Aberdeen to Central Belt line can expect improved trains and improved timetables through our existing commitments through to 2019.

Transport Scotland will publish the rail investment strategy for 2019 and beyond in coming weeks. The strategy sets out a new approach to developing proposals that will support the rail industry achieve our strategic objectives. Learning lessons from recent years, we will ensure the specification of rail projects requires adequate and proportionate appraisal and planning reflecting the nature and scale of individual projects. Arup has begun the development work but it is too early to say what specific interventions are required to make the improvements we all want to deliver for passengers travelling between Aberdeen, Inverness and the central belt.

Background

All partners on the Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group are involved in progressing this project in a manner consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire Councils and the Scottish Government.

TS has been working closely with Network Rail and ScotRail to identify in detail the opportunities for interventions. This has involved a review of associated structures and assets over the route, with the next stage of works including infrastructure and timetable interventions that will deliver the most benefit.

Targets and actions are defined via the Reference Group papers, which are then tracked by the Group's Secretariat and members. The Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group is next due to meet on 27 Feb 2018.

The Rail Revolution (RiR) timetable changes planned for May 2018 will specifically deliver improved journey times with further iterations of RiR delivering more journey time improvements on the route culminating in December 2019.

The Rail Revolution (RiR) timetables will enhance connectivity for rail users from Aberdeen including additional connections for regional services calling at most stations across the network. There will also be enhanced capacity with the new rolling stock to the route (refurbished Intercity HST trains) which will also deliver timetable changes with a more regular clock face timetable which is more attractive to rail users.

Insch station

The station did not attract funding from Access for All. **28 words redacted**

Kintore

47 words redacted. The final agreement on the funding contribution for the station from the Scottish Stations Fund (SSF) was made in November 2016, and was based on the funding being drawn down by the end of Control Period 5.

Paragraph, 72 words, redacted.

- Network Rail revisiting the work plans for the station with Aberdeenshire Council to identify works (and costs) which could be brought forward out-with the blockade and delivered without disruption to rail services. I would like to see a detailed work programme as soon as practicable.
- **Paragraph, 31 words, redacted.**
- An overview of the efficiency benefits derived from aligning the station works with the double tracking works.

