

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

WRITTEN ANSWER

18 January 2017

Index Heading: Transport Scotland

Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on plans to dual the Usan-Montrose section of the East Coast Main Line, given that it is the only piece of single track left on the line.

S5W-05985

Humza Yousaf:

As part of its work on railway improvements between Aberdeen and the Central Belt, which represents the additional £200 million investment, announced alongside the Aberdeen City Region Deal; Transport Scotland is exploring potential options for the double tracking of Usan Junction and South Esk viaduct at Montrose as well as exploring other options between Aberdeen and Dundee.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

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 £200 million investment committed to the development and operation of this rail corridor.

Terms of Reference:

In specific terms, the Reference Group will

- 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).
- identify and assess rail freight needs and how they might be addressed.
- identify and promote initiatives (with, as necessary, other stakeholders) that exploit the potential of the line between Aberdeen and Dundee for the benefit of proximal communities, business and tourism.
- commission work to inform its considerations.

Membership:

The Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group shall comprise:

- ██████████ Transport Scotland
- ██████████ Network Rail
- ██████████ ScotRail Alliance
- ██████████ DB Cargo (UK) Limited
- ██████████ DFT
- ██████████ RDG
- ██████████ Nestrans
- ██████████ Tactrans
- ██████████ Transport Scotland
- ██████████ Transport Scotland
- ██████████ Transport Scotland
- ██████████ Transport Scotland (Secretariat)

Draft for consideration

Participation:

- The Reference Group shall be led by [REDACTED]
- The Reference Group shall determine its modus operandi at its inception meeting.
- 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 and Dundee City) are regularly apprised of relevant aspects of the Group's work.

Aberdeen to Central Belt – Reference Group

AGENDA

22 May 2017

Endeavour House, Dundee

12:30-15:30hrs

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Terms of Reference and modus operandi [REDACTED]
3. Status and Issues*
 - Regional & Economic development/expectations (Nestrans/Tactrans)
 - Passenger Service Plans (ScotRail)
 - Freight Perspective (Network Rail on behalf of [REDACTED])
 - Timetable Development Update, including line-speeds, signalling (Network Rail)
 - TS Procurement of Design & Option Consultancy Support [REDACTED]
4. Workstream Discussion
5. AOCB
6. Review
7. DONM

* It is expected that the organisation or individuals identified in parentheses will introduce the topic.

Venue: Endeavour House, 1 Greenmarket, Dundee, DD1 4QB is located near to Dundee Railway Station. The front door of Endeavour House is at the west end of the building facing the dual carriageway. Car parking at the venue is not prohibited.

Dial in facilities for the meeting are: 0131 242 5656.


Tea and coffee will be provided upon arrival.

Aberdeen to Central Belt – Reference Group– Inception Meeting (Meeting No1) - Note









In attendance:



Transport Scotland
 ScotRail Alliance*
 Network Rail
 Nestrans
 Tactran
 Tactran
 DFT
 RDG
 Transport Scotland
 Transport Scotland
 Transport Scotland*(by telephone)
 Transport Scotland

 Transport Scotland, opened the meeting and explained the purpose and remit of the Reference Group.

The following actions and workstreams were allocated:-

	Action/Workstream	Lead
1.1	Action – Terms of Reference was discussed at length, with minor amendments to be considered to reflect freight and the link to the SG Rail Freight Strategy, evidence of synergy with on-going enhancement projects and clarity regarding the geographical area that the project will cover. The overall remit of the group was agreed.	
1.2	Action – Regional & Economic Development. Nestrans to provide electronic copy of hand-out provided at the meeting. Completed	
1.3	Action – Network Rail to confirm Sectional Running Times for ScotRail HST's on this route, and to identify opportunities for Enhanced Permissible Speeds to be used to further journey time improvements.	
1.4	Workstream – Freight. What quantum freight is currently running on this route? How many freight trains per day and what markets do these serve? What are the current constraints and quality and length of paths? What are the opportunities to work on and the rationale behind this? Are there specific plans for future terminal developments, if so where?	
1.5	Workstream – Journey Time and Capacity: What is the optimum capacity of this route? What are the current constraints? What are the signalling control systems on this route? What renewals will NR be undertaking on this route? What are the current line speeds/headways and track conditions on this route? What are the reasons behind the current speed limits on this route? Please evidence and explain these.	
1.6	Action – Journey Time and Capacity. Arrange meeting with Network Rail to discuss technical aspects. (6 weeks from 22/05/2017).	
1.7	Action – Cross Border Timetable implications for this route – updated position? IEP update?	
1.8	Action – ScotRail Timetable – to separate out and provide details of the fast services on this route and provide feedback from the Consultation on the Timetable. It was noted and agreed that the procurement process for	

	Timetable development needs to use Dec 2018/19 as a base reference.	
1.9	Action – Procurement – Update for next meeting	
1.10	Action – Journey Time Benefit to be considered at next meeting	

Date of next meeting – Exact date to be confirmed.

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT WRITTEN ANSWER

Question S5W-00748: Lewis Macdonald, North East Scotland, Scottish Labour, Date Lodged: 14/06/2016

To ask the Scottish Government which north-east business or stakeholder groups (a) are involved in the steering group for and (b) will be consulted as part of the feasibility study into improvements on the rail line between Aberdeen and the central belt.

Answered by Humza Yousaf (21/06/2016):

Network rail's own development work is being progressed using standard rail industry processes. This will help inform the development of options available to both respond to the growth in passenger numbers predicted for the route and to deliver the Scottish Government's aspirations for improved journey times and performance. These will initially be set out in the final Network rail Scotland route study and subsequent rail delivery group advice on future investment choices, both of which are due for publication later this year.

Separate development work for the rail commitment made in the additional funding of £254 million the Scottish Government announced alongside the city region deal is being progressed by Transport Scotland, the remit of which is consistent with the announcements made in January. Key stakeholders will include council authorities and business groups along the line, regional transport partnerships and industry groups such as rail passenger and freight groups. The Aberdeen City region deal joint committee will be kept updated as the study and any emerging interventions progress.

Current Status: Answered by Humza Yousaf on 21/06/2016

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT WRITTEN ANSWER

Question S5W-00750: Lewis Macdonald, North East Scotland, Scottish Labour, Date Lodged: 14/06/2016

To ask the Scottish Government when ministers instructed Network Rail to commence a feasibility study, as stated by Keith Brown on 9 June 2016 (Official Report, c. 4), into delivering the 20-minute reduction in journey times on the rail line between Aberdeen and the central belt to which it has committed.

Answered by Humza Yousaf (21/06/2016):

Work has been progressing on options for improving the Aberdeen to central belt route since the publication of the strategic transport projects review in October 2009 with progress subject to budgets and resources available. Transport Scotland and ScotRail alliance officials met on 10 February 2016 to discuss options for potential interventions to deliver travel benefits on the line within the timeframe of the city region deal made possible by the additional £200 million commitment. Initial discussions have identified potential options for delivery between Aberdeen and Dundee, which will be developed further in line with Network Rail's governance for railway investment projects process.

Current Status: Answered by Humza Yousaf on 21/06/2016

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT WRITTEN ANSWER

Question S5W-00949: Lewis Macdonald, North East Scotland, Scottish Labour, Date Lodged: 21/06/2016

To ask the Scottish Government, further to the statement by Keith Brown on 9 June 2016 (Official Report, c. 4), which north-east business and stakeholder groups (a) are involved in the steering group for and (b) will be consulted as part of the feasibility study into delivering rail improvements including the “double tracking at key pinch points”, which it committed itself to in its news release of 28 January 2016, £254 million boost to Aberdeen, at the same time as the Aberdeen City Region Deal.

Answered by Humza Yousaf (19/07/2016):

I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-00748 on 21 June 2016. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:
<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>

Current Status: Answered by Humza Yousaf on 19/07/2016

Rail

Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF
Direct Line: 0141 272 [REDACTED]



Your ref:

Our ref: [REDACTED]

Date:
July 2016

Dear [REDACTED]

Aberdeen –Central Belt Rail Improvements

Thank you for your recent letter to the Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work, Keith Brown MSP regarding Aberdeen to Central Belt rail improvements. As the official responsible within Transport Scotland, I have been asked to respond.

The Scottish Government remains committed to improving journey times and performance on the Aberdeen to Central Belt corridor. Despite recent challenges the Scottish Government expects Network Rail to deliver all major rail infrastructure projects within the current control period to March 2019, which includes key projects for the North East such as the first phases of the Aberdeen to Central Belt and Aberdeen to Inverness rail improvement projects.

Currently Network Rail are continuing with the development works for the Aberdeen to Central Belt (STPR) project in accordance with standard rail industry processes, which includes consideration of options for the removal of the single track section at Usan and a new bridge over the Montrose Basin. This particular element is considered to be the most technically challenging section of the route.

The additional £254 million investment announced in January, alongside the Aberdeen City Region Deal, of which £200 million is for rail improvements, will help identify the best options to support the delivery of improved passengers services over and above the benefits realised from the current rail enhancements programme.

Transport Scotland will lead on the development works, the remit of which will explore all engineering options and will assess numerous factors, including constructability, topography and environmental challenges, access requirements and disruption before providing recommendations. These works will be inclusive of consideration of potential double and additional tracking both along and adjacent to the existing single track sections between Usan and Montrose.

Full delivery of the additional Scottish Government investment is expected over the period of up to 10-years in line with the City Region Deal, with specification of initial requirements to be set

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out in the Scottish Government's High Level Output Specification for Control Period 6 (period 2019 to 2024), which is due to be published by Summer 2017.

Thank you again for your enquiry and I hope you find this response helpful

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

Transport Scotland Rail Directorate

[Redacted]



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

[Redacted]

Our ref: [Redacted]

September 2016

Thank you for your letter of 5 September 2016 regarding Usan and the additional £254 million Scottish Government investment announced alongside the Aberdeen City Region Deal in January.

As you mention in your letter the infrastructure enhancements being considered as part of the Scottish Government additional £200 million rail commitment, alongside our plans for additional services and investment in rolling stock have the potential to greatly improve access to the rail network for your constituents.

Transport Scotland is leading on the development work for the £200 million rail commitment and initial discussions have identified potential options for delivery between Aberdeen and Dundee, including options for double tracking between Usan and Montrose, which will be developed further in line with Network Rail's Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) process.

Full delivery is expected over the course of the 10-year City Deal period, with specification of initial requirements to be set out in the Scottish Government's High Level Output Specification for Control Period 6 (period 2019 to 2024), which is due to be published by Summer 2017.

I hope you find this information useful.

[Redacted]

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[REDACTED]



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T: 0300 244 4000
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[REDACTED]

Your ref:
Our ref: [REDACTED]
March 2017

Dear

Rail Infrastructure, Aberdeen to Dundee

Thank you for your email of 20 February 2017, in response to my earlier letter to you of 16 September 2016, regarding the Scottish Ministers' High Level Output Specification for Network Rail for Control Period 6, and specifically options for rail improvements between Aberdeen and Dundee.

We are currently undertaking the detailed planning work for the next rail control period, and we expect to publish our High Level Output Specification (HLOS) in June 2017. The HLOS will specify the outputs for the whole railway that the Scottish Ministers wish to purchase, with the accompanying Statement of Funds Available. Whilst it is too early to give any precise details of what will be included in the HLOS, I can reassure you of the Scottish Government's commitment to invest in rail to better connect our communities and support sustainable economic growth and jobs across the country.

I was delighted to recently announce that a new Aberdeen to Central Belt rail team is being established with the aim of ensuring that the rail service between Aberdeen and the Central Belt improves transport connectivity and enhances performance. I am confident that the new team led by Transport Scotland, with substantial regional input and expertise, will make a positive contribution to shaping the future of rail in the North East. The team will build on work already underway by Transport Scotland to review options for capacity improvements between Aberdeen and Dundee, including options for double tracking Usan Junction and the South Esk viaduct at Montrose.

[REDACTED]

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