

# Transport Minister visits Aberdeen to Central Belt Enhancement Project

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Transport Minister, Graeme Dey visited the team delivering the Aberdeen to Central Belt Enhancement Project and heard first-hand about the next phase of works which is due to commence next month.

Mr Dey had the opportunity to see one of the ground drilling rigs which will be used to undertake geological investigations to inform development of proposals to enhance the railway between Aberdeen and the Central Belt. The Minister also had the opportunity to discuss the upcoming works with the project team, an alliance made up of Network Rail and Siemens.

The project - which is being funded by the Scottish Government, alongside the Aberdeen City Region Deal, as part of ongoing investment in Scotland's Railway - will improve connectivity in the region and reduce journey times.

Mr Dey said: "This project is vital for Aberdeen and the wider North East region, so I was delighted to be able to come along to meet the team that will be carrying out this work and understand the importance the investigatory work will have to inform the design. It's great to hear that some of the work including ecology surveys is already underway.

“Scotland’s Railway is an integral part of Scotland’s social and economic infrastructure and this project will be supporting communities, businesses and the environment in the North East.

“Improved capacity and faster services will be great for passengers, but the scheme will also deliver improved capabilities for freight services enabling further growth in this important sector.”

Mr Dey added: “I was really pleased to hear that the site and ground investigation work is being carried out in a way that it will inform both the enhancements projects and the future electrification scheme, delivering efficiencies for both. This is great to hear given our commitment to decarbonising the passenger railway in Scotland by 2035. I look forward to returning to see the team in the near future.”

<https://fast.wistia.net/embed/iframe/p2f6j7gy05>

Speaking from the event at LNER’S Clayhills depot adjacent to Aberdeen Station, Matthew Spence, director of route business development and sponsorship for Scotland’s Railway, said: “We were delighted to be able to welcome Mr Dey along to meet the team at this important milestone. The works that are due to commence will not only improve passenger and freight services, but importantly support the delivery of our ambitious plans to decarbonise passenger rail services by 2035.

“Construction is expected to take place between 2022 and 2026 and it’s important to point out this scheme will have benefits for the wider North East region with proposals for Dundee, Arbroath, Montrose and Aberdeen stations including lengthened platforms, enhanced capability and enabling additional and longer services.”

Warrick Dent, safety and operations director for LNER, said: “Aberdeen is a very popular part of LNER’s route, so it’s exciting to see work getting underway aimed at improving journey times. We share and support the Scottish Government’s commitment to decarbonisation, as do many of our customers, and we look forward to this important work progressing.”