

As Britain's railways embark on a major, once in a generation reformation and transformation in how the sector operates, the City of Perth would be a perfect candidate to bring together track and train to deliver a customer-focused railway. The region has an expansive ambition for driving the nation's economic recovery and a vision to bring a better-connected country for everyone.

Perth's location on the Central East Coast makes it one of the UK's most well-connected destinations. Used by thousands of commuters each week as an employment destination, the city's sound infrastructure and excellent transport links are vital to its people. Part of Perth's journey is to place itself at the forefront of industry and economic opportunities in Scotland and the United Kingdom. The city is currently working in partnership with Network Rail, ScotRail and Transport Scotland on an exciting redevelopment of the rail and bus stations – which currently lie in proximity of one another – with a view to future-proofing the links for both sustainability and growth. This integrated transport approach follows the modernisation plan to enable green prosperity and a low carbon future.

Perth is at the heart of Scotland and a gateway to the north, one of Scotland's main connections for both bus and rail. Both Perth Railway Station and Bus Station offer services directly to the six other Scottish cities, connecting the Highlands to the rest of the UK and running services directly to London King's Cross. Both Edinburgh and Glasgow International Airports are just a 40-minute drive away with international connectivity. Edinburgh International Airport offers domestic and international flights and Glasgow gives a strong alternative in just over an hour's train journey.

Stagecoach operates the local bus service around Perth, bringing regular buses into Perth city centre from outlying towns, villages and residential areas. There are also three Park & Ride sites linking into Perth city centre. The communities in Perth and Kinross are connected to the centre. They would create an excellent opportunity to promote these communities as the proud home to start a new era in Britain's railways.

Great British Railway – Perth City - Expression of Interest

Local Authority Details	
Local authority name	Perth & Kinross Council
Full name of responsible officer submitting the EOI	David Littlejohn
Job role of responsible officer	Head of Planning and Development & Chief Planning Officer, MRTPI FRSA
Contact email address of responsible officer	Dlittlejohn@pkc.gov.uk
Please re-enter email address of responsible officer	Dlittlejohn@pkc.gov.uk
Context	
<p>Describe the geographical area covered by the application and why it should be considered for hosting the headquarters?</p> <p>Perth is a city in central Scotland, on the banks of the River Tay. It is the administrative centre of the applicant Perth and Kinross council. The covering area includes this historic county of Perth & Kinross that borders onto the Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Fife, Highland and Stirling council areas. The Highland Boundary Fault runs across the region from the northeast to the southwest. This region roughly divides the area between highland Perthshire,</p>	

including part of the Grampian Mountains, to the north, and lowland Perthshire and Kinross to the south. The highland area is intersected with glacial valleys, often containing ribbon lakes, including Loch Tay and Loch Earn. The lowland area is a fertile region lying within the Central Lowlands.

The strategic location of Perth on the Central East Coast makes it one of the UK's most well-connected destinations with routes to all major cities in Scotland and a connection to London through the East Coast Mainline. Used by thousands of commuters each week as an employment destination, the city's sound infrastructure and excellent transport links are vital to its people. The new Great British Railways headquarters should be in a central location that is well connected by current railway infrastructure, and Perth as a location certainly provides this.

As part of Perth's aim to place itself at the forefront of industry and economic opportunities in Scotland, the city is working in partnership with Network Rail, ScotRail and Transport Scotland on an exciting redevelopment of the rail and bus stations infrastructure. The central hubs of these two services lie in proximity to one another. Such redevelopment will provide the GBR headquarters with a high-class internal transport network to allow staff to commute to and from the headquarters easily. The redevelopment will also future proof the links for both sustainability and growth.

Who else is involved in developing and supporting your application?

Perth and Kinross council have a long-term strategic approach to connectivity; linked to the National Transport Strategy. A vision underpinned by four priorities: Reduces Inequalities, Tackle Climate Action, Helps Deliver Inclusive Economic Growth and Improves our Health and Wellbeing. The National Economic Development Strategy and our Regional Economic Development Strategy embedded within the Tay Cities Regional Deal has connectivity as a critical theme to enable the levelling up of the regional economy.

The partners involved in developing transport interventions and plans within the region include Transport Scotland, Network Rail, Perth & Kinross Council, TACTRAN, SUSTRANS, Abellio, ScotRail Station Management, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Visit Scotland, Tay Cities Deal and Network Rail, providing the leading working group for making railways greener.

We also have engagement with a broader network of stakeholders, including Caledonian Sleeper, LNER Freight Representation, Charter Representation, SCDI, Historical Environment Scotland, Perth Chamber of Commerce, Railway Heritage Trust, Perth Harbour, The Office of Rail and Road, Scottish Association for Public Transport, Perth Bus Improvement Partnership, Bus companies, Perth Leisure Centre Perth BID, Taxi Operators, Paths for All, Cycling Scotland and Living Streets. This network of supporting organisations includes Public, Private, transport and community groups, all engaged in providing a holistic approach to connectivity and engagement for the region.

Describe the proposed site(s) for the national headquarters.

In our options appraisal, we have outlined key sites suitable for the proposed GBR HQ. The first option would be Perth station (APPENDIX 1). Ideally located for a century, Perth was an essential hub for travellers heading out to Scotland's major cities. Today, the station lies on the Glasgow-to-Dundee and Aberdeen Line, the Highland Main Line, and the Caledonian Sleeper from London. The site provided in APPENDIX 1 demonstrates the location and scale of Perth Station within Perth

City Centre. The station sits near the central bus station with links to Perth City's local amenities and smaller towns and villages across Perth & Kinross. Perth City Centre is a short walk from Perth Station that would provide a comprehensive lunchtime offering to the staff and visitors of the GBR headquarters.

The main stone building between platforms 4 and 5-7 is the original station building designed by Sir William Tite, one of the great Victorian railway architects responsible for Carlisle and Lancaster stations amongst others. The station was completed in 1847 and opened to the public on 23rd May 1848. It has since been altered and extended into what can be seen today. The Travel Centre, a single storey style concrete building, was completed in the 1960's and forms the main entrance to the station. This section of Perth railway station provides railway users with a friendly and welcoming entrance with a ticket office, hospitality offering and toilets in proximity. ScotRail use the station and carriage sidings for the servicing and stabling of rolling stock utilising the fuel road, sanitary facilities, and wash plant, all of which are located within the station footprint. This access allows Perth to benefit from several early morning departures and late evening arrivals as rolling stock comes from across the country to terminate here.

Perth is the crossroads of the network that joins the Scottish cities and is a significant operating centre as the line's starting point that crosses Britain's highest and third-highest mainline summits to reach the Highland capital of Inverness. Built to a classic design by Sir William Tite, Perth Station was expanded on a grand scale by present-day requirements, yet in recent years was made fully accessible by adding a modern footbridge with lifts linking all the platforms.

Through Perth, daily services are provided by three passenger train operators, with direct trains by both the East and West Coast Main Lines to London. ScotRail's InterCity routes are due to see a new Fit for the Future timetable commencing in May of this year, including an additional hourly train linking Perth with Dundee and Glasgow. Daily freight workings are carrying traffic that includes supermarket goods and construction materials. A few miles away, a new terminal is taking shape to open this summer for the conveyance by rail of bottled water. Visitors can grab a cab or take a stroll into Scotland's first capital, with its tall spires and the gleaming River Tay flowing through its centre. Perth Leisure Pool/Ice Rink, 'Stone of Destiny' new museum and St Johns Shopping Centre are all within walking distance of the station.

The second option is Pullar House (APPENDIX 2). The site is currently the principal office of Perth & Kinross Council, and the space is underutilised as staff working patterns have moved to a hybrid system. This workforce change has resulted in a significant amount of vacant office space that would allow other public or private sector organisations to use the area. The site is located within the city centre of Perth and is near hospitality businesses that provide a lunchtime offering to office workers. There are also bus links to Perth railway station and sufficient parking facilities in the multi-storey carpark adjacent to Pullar House. Moreover, the site is also within walking distance of Perth railway station.

The third option is the former Debenhams Store (APPENDIX 3). The subject property is in the heart of Perth city centre at the pedestrianised junction of the High Street and King Edward Street. The site consists of a basement, ground and four upper floors. The internal fit-out is principally the same across each floor which is an open plan with services, staff accommodation, toilets, and access (stairs and elevators) at the rear perimeter. Regular bus connections are available on South Street for access throughout the city and to settlements surrounding the city. Perth railway station location is 0.8 miles southwest of the property.

What benefits do you expect your town/city will gain from accommodating the headquarters?

The city region will benefit significantly from accommodating a prestigious headquarters, and the area would be uplifted by millions of pounds of investment in social, economic, and culture-led regeneration activities. Our vision is to bring new investment and higher value jobs to the area. The headquarters would improve our recovery from Covid 19 and stimulate a healthy, diverse, skilled, and motivated workforce. This workforce is crucial to the success of our region, and this investment would provide our people with the talent and ideas to bring a great purpose to the area.

By investing in our people, we are investing in our future, using our expertise to strengthen communities by building technical know-how, getting young people ready to work, and supporting good causes that our people and patrons care about. As a region for the UK's leading transport provider, we can make a real difference to communities across the UK. This investment would have more comprehensive community wealth-building benefits, and our people would get the chance to develop skills and make a difference. We will become a more robust, more engaged population that gives back to our communities.

What do you think makes your town/city best suited as the location for Great British Railways' national headquarters?

Perth City is best suited for the headquarters as the city is no stranger to transport headquarters, and the Stagecoach Group founded here held franchises that for many years operated trains out of London's busiest terminal, Waterloo and along the West Coast Main Line, backbone of the country's rail network. The city and its population have transport at the heart of its industries with Stagecoach and the supporting infrastructure and support services providing the population with understanding and skills of a large transport operation. The city is blessed with the principles to deliver best in class customer services and understand that the interconnectivity of communities is of paramount importance for levelling up and providing social mobility.

Perth's location on the Central East Coast makes it one of the UK's most well-connected destinations. Perth will place itself as a best-in-class central location for economic opportunity with the redevelopment of existing rail and bus infrastructure through partnership working with the likes of Network Rail, ScotRail and Transport Scotland. Perth and Kinross Council also operate a Perth harbour open to shipping round the clock, situated just 30 miles from the North Sea. Perth Harbour connects easily to the area's excellent network of motorways, dual carriageways, and national rail network, making it ideal for fast and easy transportation of goods to all areas of Scotland and Northern England. Located within a thriving business hub, and only a short distance from the city centre, the harbour also benefits from a growing community of commercial neighbours, including some of Perth's most successful and long-established companies.

Levelling Up

What is your vision for levelling up your local area?

To deliver better and more co-ordinated services that meet local people's needs, several key agencies work together in a Community Planning Partnership (CPP). The Community Planning Partnership vision is simple and bold. Collectively we want to “create a confident, ambitious and fairer Perth and Kinross, for all who live and work here.” Our specific economic ambition is “that we live in a Perth and Kinross which promotes inclusive economic growth and a thriving economy.” This vision incorporates the ethos and understanding of the Secretary of State Levelling up the United Kingdom. In Perth and Kinross, communities have Local Action Partnerships (LAPs), which support communities and services to tackle key challenges and issues facing their area. These local challenges will address national outcomes linked to the national performance framework where national strategies and interventions tackle the market failures in society.

One such activity is the regional and local economic development and wellbeing plan that will address challenges areas such as:

- Diversify our economy
- Bring new investment and higher value jobs to the area
- Enhance the resilience of the rural economy
- Retain our young talent
- Improve digital connectivity
- Confront the climate challenge
- Accelerate technological change
- Address the future of retail

Increase local, regional, and UK visitors to our city centre and other rural, cultural and heritage tourism locations and attractions, and focus on boosting our existing key sectors and growing new ones such as low carbon and high-value manufacturing. Siting the GBR headquarters in Perth will benefit our levelling up agenda bringing high-value jobs to the region, allowing staff to contribute to the economic wellbeing of the local economy.

What is currently underway to deliver this?

The Tay Cities Deal (TCD) is one of the major interventions underway to level up the region, and connectivity is at the centre of the project. One area of the deal is supporting the Perth Transport Futures Project. It is widely acknowledged that Perth is a major centralised strategic hub in the Scottish transport network where the principal routes connecting the central belt to North and Northeast Scotland converge. Perth also has the distinct advantage of having major road connections to all of Scotland's cities with a drive time of within two hours. However, over the past twenty years, due to increasing levels of traffic and new development, there has been growing concern and a noticeable increase in traffic congestion and related air quality issues in and around Perth.

As a result of these traffic and air quality issues, it was clear that there were both current and potentially exacerbated future problems which need addressing. This address was required to ensure that congestion did not undermine the city's future development as set out in the Local Development Plan.

The need for a package of measures addressing this problem was identified as an issue over successive Councils — these measures developed as the Perth Transport Futures Project. In the

main, the Perth Transport Futures Project focuses on the need for major road infrastructure that will address key congestion points in the road network and provide essential linkages to growth areas set out in the Local Development Plan.

As a result of the timelines required for taking various elements of Perth's Transport Future Project forward, it has developed into a series of phases. Individual phases all deliver specific direct benefits to accommodate the projected economic growth, and these include the opportunity to create thousands of jobs and provide the Local Development Plan allocations. The full benefits will only be achieved by completing the whole package of measures, and these benefits are summarised as follows:

- Facilitating the economic development of Perth and freeing up capacity on the existing networks to enable a smoother transition towards greener travel in the city and area
- An upgraded A9/A85 junction providing for better flow of both local and through traffic in and around the busy Crieff Road area and easier connections to Inveralmond as a result of Phase 1 of the project
- A second major access to Inveralmond will relieve pressure on this junction at peak times
- Improved pedestrian and cycle safety as a result of better facilities and reduced levels of traffic
- Reduction of journey times on the local transport network and increased network capacity for more sustainable modes of travel
- Completion of the 3rd Tay Crossing, so further enhancing and providing the required step change in the transport network in and around Perth
- Expansion of Perth as envisaged in the Proposed Local Development Plan
- Improved amenity for residents and businesses in the Crieff Road corridor, Scone, Bridgend and the city centre generally
- A positive contribution towards meeting the objectives of the Council's AQMA within both the Crieff Road Corridor and wider Perth
- Potential for the creation of between 3,000 – 5,000 jobs through the opening of development land

The TCD also supports other projects within the LDP and Perth and Kinross Wellbeing plan that delivers real change to enhance the quality of life in our communities. Enhancements in road infrastructure will improve the air quality in the city centre that will benefit residents and businesses alike. The staff of the GBR headquarters will enjoy high air quality and reduced congestion which generally creates a happy and healthy workforce.

What levelling up opportunities do you believe could be created for your town/city that are linked to the headquarters?

Some of the benefits in addressing the Cross Tay link have been addressed above as Transport and travel can level up communities across this country. Like the TCD investment that has the potential to secure over 6,000 quality jobs, and lever in £400 million of investment over 15 years. This project will enable a significant change regionally to benefit Perth and Kinross, creating jobs skills and opportunities for the region with two hubs of the UK travel through rail and road being in the city. The synergies between the two-transport headquarters will be a unique selling point for the project and create opportunities locally and nationally.

Connected and easy to get to

How would employees and visitors be able to access the National Headquarters, via rail routes and other sustainable modes?

The proposed sites are fully accessible by sustainable modes of transport. Perth Station is within walking distance to the city centre and integrates into the Perth Cycle Network Masterplan. The site also connects to the bus station and blends into the road transport system. Stagecoach operates the local service around Perth, bringing regular buses into Perth city centre from outlying villages and residential areas. There are also three Park & Ride sites linking into Perth city centre, providing a sustainable transport model for visitors to the proposed National Headquarters.

How connected is your location to and from other nations and regions of Great Britain?

Perth is an important hub for travellers heading out to Scotland's major cities. Today, the station lies on the Glasgow-to-Dundee and Aberdeen Line, the Highland Main Line, and the Caledonian Sleeper from London. Perth is the crossroads of the network that joins the Scottish cities and is a significant operating centre as the line's starting point that crosses Britain's highest and third-highest mainline summits to reach the Highland capital of Inverness.

Daily rail services pass through Perth provided by three passenger train operators, with direct trains by both the East and West Coast Main Lines to London. ScotRail's InterCity routes are due to see a new Fit for the Future timetable commencing in May of this year, including an additional hourly train linking Perth with Dundee and Glasgow. Daily freight workings are carrying traffic that includes supermarket goods and construction materials. A few miles away, a new terminal is taking shape to open this summer for the conveyance by rail of bottled water.

How will your suggested sites be equally accessible to all members of society, in line with Public Sector Equality Duties?

Built to a classic design by the esteemed and respected Sir William Tite, Perth Station was expanded on a scale that is grand indeed by present-day requirements, yet in recent years was made fully accessible by addition of a modern footbridge with lifts linking all the platforms. The site is fully accessible to all users and in line with Public Sector Equality Duties.

Demonstrate how your location has supported successful collaboration between local authorities, business and other organisations across the UK to further social, economic and transport objectives.

One of our leading employers in the region, Highland Spring, is set to utilise the railway to improve their logistical operations with the main aim of cutting carbon emissions. Daily freight workings are carrying traffic that includes supermarket goods and construction materials. A few miles away, a new terminal is taking shape to open this summer for the conveyance by rail of bottled water. The construction of the Blackford Rail Freight facility will remove 8,000 truck movements from the road annually, and each rail journey provides 75% less Co2 per tonne. This process will save 3,200 tonnes of carbon dioxide produced each year by current road haulage. This project will also benefit local communities by reducing road traffic and noise pollution. Collaboration between the Local Authority and Highland Spring has allowed for shared achievement in reaching the goals of our local levelling up agenda.

The Council and Invest in Perth brand have also previously worked with Gleneagles Hotel and Golf Course to host the 2014 Ryder Cup. This competition is one of the world's most-watched sporting events and in Scotland for the first time since Muirfield, East Lothian, in 1973. The event attracted thousands of national and international visitors to Perth and the wider region, providing a

valuable boost to the local economy. The Gleneagles railway station sits on the main railway line between Perth and Glasgow, just a short 15-minute journey from Perth.

Further collaboration was achieved through Gleneagles Hotel and Golf Course hosting the Solheim Cup in 2019 with over 90,000 visitors from across the world in attendance. Local railway infrastructure was critical in transporting spectators and locating the Great British Railways headquarters would comment a legacy for the contribution of the railway in serving both prestigious competitions.

Further collaboration was achieved through Gleneagles Hotel and Golf Course hosting the Solheim Cup in 2019, with over 90,000 visitors from across the world in attendance. Local rail infrastructure was critical in transporting spectators and locating the Great British Railways headquarters would comment a legacy for the railway's contribution in serving both prestigious competitions.

Perth & Kinross Council has worked collaboratively with local employers to advertise the tourist offering of Perth. Notably, with the world-renowned Scone Palace Estates, the Crowning Place of Scottish Kings. The site has supported major tourist events such as the annual Rewind Festival, Farming Yesteryear Festival and the GWCT Scottish Game Fair. All three of these yearly events attract visitors from across the United Kingdom and the world, with rail travel providing the primary mode of transport for visitors locally.

Perth & Kinross Council is currently working with a multitude of external partners on the above-mentioned major transport infrastructure project, the Cross Tay Link Road. This level of collaboration has seen local communities involved in the project's consultation phase, which has aided their understanding of the more comprehensive economic benefits of job creation and infrastructure improvement. It is widely acknowledged that Perth is a major strategic hub in the Scottish transport network where the principal routes connecting the central belt to North and Northeast Scotland converge. Perth also has the distinct advantage of having major road connections to all of Scotland's cities with a drive time of within two hours. The project will facilitate the economic development of Perth and free up capacity on the existing networks to enable a smoother transition towards greener travel in the city and wider region.

Opportunities for Great British Railways

How will your location enable Great British Railways to engage with customers, the private sector and wider transport industry?

Perth and Kinross have some long-term investments in improving physical and digital infrastructure, including the Cross Tay Link Road and the Low Carbon Transport Hub built near Perth on the motorway network. They will bring together solar energy generation and battery storage to provide sustainable development electric vehicle (EV) charging. Perth & Kinross Council actively promote active travel plans encouraging commuters to utilise the benefits of public transport over personal cars. Great British Railways could benefit significantly by collaboratively promoting this strategy with the local government. Additional transport partnership opportunities with local providers, Stagecoach, that GBR could assist with, such as fostering active travel plans and helping push Stagecoach's 'Driving Net Zero: Better Places to Live and Work' Strategy. This strategy sets out plans to leverage the power of public transport to address climate change, support the post-covid economic recovery and boost prosperity for employees and communities across the UK.

What opportunities does your location offer for working with the rail supply chain, manufacturing hubs and institutes?

The location has strong links with the Transport Research Institute, Scotland's most prominent and longest established transport research group. Established in 1996, we have an enviable track record in delivering high-quality transport research, consultancy and other knowledge transfer projects in applied settings. Network Rail also employs over 230 staff locally from Perth railway station in various positions, including Network Rail Delivery Unit and Maintenance, Train Crew (conductors and drivers) including sign-on, Station Staff and Signalling Centre located just outside the station.

What opportunities exist for collaboration with the retail, economic and environmental sectors?

Perth has a wide-ranging and unique retail offering, with various local independent businesses and some nationally recognised chain stores. The city is also home to the Headquarters of Scottish and Southern Energy, Stagecoach, and the regional headquarters of Aviva, two of which are FTSE 100 listed companies. The globally recognised James Hutton Institute and Binn Eco Park are the region's two leading environmental science players with significant investments in environmental technologies such as the £62 million International Barley Hub and Advanced Plant Growth Centre. Binn Eco Park has also recently announced a £70 million investment in an Energy from Waste Facility. These significant investments combined with our independent business base and FTSE 100 companies will provide the GBR headquarters with valuable opportunities for collaboration.

How could Great British Railways benefit from these links?

These businesses, their employees and investments have a vital role to play in supporting the new GBR headquarters allowing for synergy between several economic sectors that can contribute to the local levelling up agenda and help the local authority achieve net-zero targets. Both objectives will improve the social and economic welling of the people of Perth & the wider region.

What opportunities does/do the site(s)/building(s) itself offer Great British Railways to develop as an organisation?

The site currently operates several transport activities and includes a multiagency partnership approach, providing activities such as training, R&D and infrastructure support. Expansion site opposite is available and identified for further development, should the vast onsite estate wish to support additional follow-on investment in the area. The capacity and scope for the expansion of extended economic activities are extensive.

Railway heritage & Links to the network

Demonstrate your railway heritage and the benefits it offers to Great British Railways. What links are there with existing rail employment, innovation and sector bodies, such as regional or local offices?

In 1847 the Scottish Central railway paid £16,000 for 16 acres of land at the Northwest corner of the 'South Inch', one of two large parks in the city centre. The original station was designed by award winning architect, Sir William Tite, an English architect who twice served as President of the Royal Institute of British Architects. The completed station opened as Perth General Station on the 23rd of May in 1848 following the completion of the Caledonian Railway Line from Stirling. The line was extended shortly afterwards to Stanley Junction and then onto Forfar for Aberdeen and to Inverness. The station was listed on the 26th of August 1977 and while this listing covers the whole station footprint it mainly relates to the historic main stone building and the cast iron features.

The station is strategically positioned on the Scottish rail network at the junction of the main Edinburgh/Glasgow to Inverness and branch towards Dundee and onto Aberdeen. This makes it

possible to access all of Scotland's 6 other cities, and beyond, from Perth. As a result, the station is a popular interchange for passengers moving between services.

Today, ScotRail use the station and carriage sidings for the servicing and stabling of rolling stock utilising the fuel road, sanitary facilities, and wash plant, all of which are located within the station footprint. This capacity allows Perth to benefit from several early morning departures and late evening arrivals as rolling stock comes from the country to terminate here. There are various staff working from the station such as British Transport Police,

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APPENDIX 2 – Pullar House



APPENDIX 3 – Former Debenhams Store

