



**Aberdeen &
Grampian
Chamber of
Commerce**

Stephen Flynn MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Tourism and Transport
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

—
The Hub
Exploration Drive
Aberdeen Energy Park
Bridge of Don
Aberdeen
AB23 8GX

—
T 01224 343900
E info@agcc.co.uk
www.agcc.co.uk

4 June 2026

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

On behalf of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC), I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Tourism and Transport.

AGCC is the leading voice of business in the North-east of Scotland, representing more than 1,350 organisations of all sizes and across all sectors of the economy, collectively employing more than half the regional workforce. Through our policy, economic development and convening activity, we work to support the conditions for growth, investment and long-term regional competitiveness.

Now that the dust has settled on the election and given both your responsibilities and longstanding connection to the North-east, we are keen to establish an early dialogue on the opportunities and challenges facing the regional economy. There is clear alignment between the Chamber's priorities and your portfolio.

Businesses across the North-east are seeking a stronger focus on economic growth, improved connectivity, and a more ambitious approach to attracting and enabling investment. This also includes continued support for key sectors such as tourism and food and drink, which play vital roles in the regional economy.

Transport infrastructure remains one of the most significant constraints on growth in the North-east. While recent investment has delivered real benefits, connectivity continues to lag other parts of Scotland and is increasingly cited by businesses as a barrier to productivity, labour mobility and investment.

In particular, the Chamber continues to strongly support the Buchan rail project and the wider ambition to reconnect communities such as Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Ellon to the rail network. We welcomed the findings of the Buchan Sustainable Transport Study and have worked closely with the Campaign for North East Rail and regional stakeholders to build the economic case for delivery. Your public support for the project during the pre-election period, and the subsequent commitment within your party's manifesto was noted and greatly appreciated. Now it's time to move towards getting spades in the ground.

For businesses, Buchan rail is about more than transport alone. It is about unlocking access to labour markets, improving skills connectivity, supporting inward investment, and strengthening one of Scotland's most economically significant regions. Alongside this, members continue to highlight the importance of wider rail improvements, particularly reliability, journey times, and stronger links between Aberdeen and the Central Belt.

Road connectivity remains equally important. While the AWPR has delivered significant improvements, concerns persist around the safety and resilience of the wider strategic road network and the knock-on impact this has on supply chains, logistics, commuting and rural access.



Registered in Scotland as a company limited by Guarantee
Registration number SCO 000 791
VAT Number 265 3165 59
Registered Office: The Hub, Exploration Drive, Aberdeen
Energy Park, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen, AB23 8GX

Aberdeen International Airport remains a strategic national asset. Accessibility is central to supporting inward investment, exports and tourism, and there is strong interest among our members in ensuring the North-east retains and expands its domestic and international connections. Edinburgh Airport has, in the past, enjoyed disproportionate support and it's time to have a conversation about route development support for regional airports too.

Tourism and the visitor economy is one of the five regional growth sectors. Its value to the economy has doubled to £1.3bn over the last decade with significantly more untapped potential. From its coastline, castles, golf and cultural heritage to its food and drink and outdoor offering, the North-east has a compelling international story. And we are building a strong reputation as a world class venue for delivering major business and leisure events.

We warmly welcome the support from Scottish Government and EventScotland in helping the region secure Rally Scotland as part of the FIA World Rally Championship from 2027 to 2029. This represents a major opportunity to showcase the North-east on a global stage and deliver substantial economic benefits across hospitality, tourism and the wider visitor economy from tens of thousands of visitors from the UK and overseas.

Alongside this, AGCC is working with Motorsport UK and industry partners to explore the potential for the North-east to act as a pilot region for synthetic fuel production and deployment. This initiative could demonstrate how innovation, transport and industrial strategy can be aligned to deliver both decarbonisation and economic growth, while further strengthening the region's international profile as a leader in 'new energy' solutions. And we would like Scottish Government and its agencies to be part of this discussion.

We believe there is significant value in maintaining close and regular engagement between government and the business community - something we have not always previously seen. Commerce is a force for good, creating the growth that will provide the funds to properly tackle the social, health and other challenges we face.

We would therefore be delighted to invite you to meet with the AGCC team and/or a small group of members at a mutually convenient time in the coming weeks, to discuss the priorities, challenges and opportunities facing the North-east economy outlined in our [manifesto](#) and how we can work together to support Scotland's long-term growth and competitiveness.

We would be very pleased to host this discussion at the Chamber offices at a time that suits you. Please contact heather.morrell@agcc.co.uk to make the arrangements.

Once again, congratulations on your appointment. We look forward to working constructively with you and your team in the months ahead.

Yours sincerely,



Russell Borthwick
Chief Executive