



P-21.10b

STARS scheme - Project Highlight Report

Project Name:	Southgates STARS Programme	Project Manager:	Ian Parkes (NCC)	Project Sponsor:	David Allfrey (NCC)	Report covers period of:	August to October 2024
Capital Code:	-	Client Dept:	-	Lead Designer:	NCC / WSP		
Project Code:	Southgates STARS Programme	End User (if applicable):	-	Cost Consultant:	-		
				Contractor on Site:	-		

Management Summary

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Project Definition

Project Stage: Scheme and business case development to gain funding approval from DfT and the subsequent construction of cycling, walking and bus priority improvements including public realm enhancements to the Southgates area and the town centre Gyratory one-way system.

Objectives: To facilitate the adopted Southgates Masterplan and implement bus priority and active travel measures in line with the adopted LCWIP. In combination with the Southgates Masterplan STARS will transform King's Lynn's principal southern gateway into the town. It will also significantly transform parts of the town centre gyratory one-way system, particularly at the northern end of Railway Road where public realm is dominated by vehicular traffic and is hostile for pedestrians and cyclists. The stated objectives in the Outline Business Case will be:

- Enhance connectivity and accessibility for all within King's Lynn
- Encourage greater use of public transport in King's Lynn
- Encourage modal shift from private car to active travel in King's Lynn
- Support the delivery of planned housing growth and development in the Borough
- Protect and enhance King's Lynn's heritage and cultural environment through place-making
- Improve local air quality and King's Lynn's natural environment
- Improve road safety in King's Lynn

Scope: The King's Lynn Sustainable Transport and Regeneration Scheme (STARS) comprises changes to two key areas of the town. The first is around the town centre Gyratory (one-way system) and will implement bus priority and active travel measures in line with the adopted King's Lynn Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The second is bus priority and active travel highway changes in the Southgates area to enable a masterplan for regeneration of this important entry point into the town devised and formally adopted by Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

1. Overall Status (high-level summary)

Overall RAG rating is Amber. Scheme development and the outline Business Case (OBC) preparation is under way. The details of the road alignment in the Southgates area have been finalised with regard to satisfying conservation and heritage interests.

Because the new government body Active Travel England (ATE) is the modal sponsor for the Department for Transport (DfT), who are assessing our business case and providing the funding, we are in a dialogue with ATE to get their approval for our proposals. This is a new stage in the process for major schemes like this and reflects government's commitment to wanting to see 50% of all short local journeys being made by walking and cycling. We met ATE at a site visit on 5 June and they made some helpful suggestions to improve the scheme. These have now been incorporated into the scheme for the OBC submission.

1.1 Decisions required by the Officer Major Projects Board

- None

1.2 Achievements during this period

Traffic modelling has been carried out to understand the impacts of the scheme on general traffic and to feed into the economic appraisal to enable us to fully understand the Value for Money (VfM) of the scheme.

The new junction layout will have less traffic carrying capacity as roadspace has been reallocated to footways, cycleways and public realm improvements. These impacts have been examined in both the strategic model to understand the wider redistribution effects and the local model to understand journey times. The base scheme included bus lanes on the London Road and Hardwick Road approaches. However, this gives rise to unacceptable levels of delay and increased journey time for all users including buses. It is proposed therefore that the scheme presented for OBC does not include the bus lanes as this has tolerable increases in journey time and is best for buses overall. However, bus priority will be incorporated into the traffic signal design. The lack of a bus lane on the Hardwick Road approach will not diminish the benefits of the BSIP bus lane on Hardwick Road.

The results of the economic appraisal show that the initial BCR is -1.34 which reduces to -2.16 when the monetised Journey Time Reliability and Wider Economic Impacts are added in. Sensitivity test show that if we assume Low Traffic Growth we get a BCR of +1.22 and if we assume the scheme increase the cycle mode share to 3% it becomes +1.53. We have discussed our draft OBC documents with DfT, who say they are obliged to follow their standard consistent approach across all schemes which is predicated on congestion relief for cars but we know that STARS is not a congestion relief scheme. Despite STARS good strategic fit DfT has indicated that would need us to achieve and justify a minimum BCR of +1.0, and this will need to be supported by a stronger narrative on the link to the Southgates masterplan and the wider benefits it is expected to deliver. We need to try to quantify the wider indirect benefits from the investment, such as regeneration, employment, housing, tourism benefits. To help with this further analysis we need to determine what level of cycle uplift less than 3% that would give a BCR of +1.0. We also need to consider and refer to parallel behaviour change work that could support the cycle mode share value.

It is acknowledged by staff and Members at both NCC and BCKLWN that the traffic impacts of downsizing the junction, in accordance with the adopted Masterplan, will create some rerouting of traffic and additional journey times. However, the additional journey times tend to be more focussed in the peak periods rather than all day.

We had successful site visit on 6 September with the Borough Council Leader and Deputy and James Wild MP. All showed support for the scheme. NCC members were briefed on 2 October and they were supportive of the STARS scheme.

The next steps are:

- Continue liaising with DfT on draft business case documents in advance of the formal Outline Business Case (OBC) submission
- Consider outcome of Autumn Budget on 30 October 2024
- Obtain NCC Cabinet approval to formally submit the OBC in December 2024

2. Risks and Issues

2.1 Key Risks [all red and increasing amber]

A risk is something that may happen

Risk ID	Risk Title	Description	RAG Status	Risk Category	Mitigation	Dated Comments
3	Public inquiry	Potential public inquiry required to determine more details about how the scheme's future transport operations will be considered.	A	Regulatory	Programme would be updated	14/10/24
4	Inflation and cost increases	Inflationary pressures and increases in costs will increase the overall cost of the scheme.	A	Rising costs	Appropriate inflation, optimism bias and risk to be factored into scheme costs and appraisal	14/10/24
5	Collaboration with Historic England	Ineffective or inconclusive collaboration with Historic England, meaning heritage benefits are not fully realised.	A	External Stakeholder Management	Early and ongoing engagement with Historic England required	14/10/24
6	Construction delays	Delays to construction	A	Supply Chain Issues	Procurement approach to identify optimum suppliers.	14/10/24

		processes and activities	A	and Delays	Regular monitoring and meetings with site stakeholders accompanied by careful scheduling.	
7	Demand	There is a threat that the levels of demand for active travel do not meet the levels planned, projected or assumed		Poor Policy Design	Environmental teams to be involved in scheme design to offset environmental impacts from traffic, and involvement of Design team	14/10/24
	Funding	New government decide to cut LUF2 funding allocations announced by previous government or do not agree a higher funding contribution which is required due to higher than predicted inflation since August 2022		Deliverability	Follow outcome of Autumn Budget on 30 October and engage with ATE/DfT	29/10/24

2.2 Key Issues [all red and increasing amber]

An issue is something that has happened

Issue ID	Issue Title	Description	RAG Status	Issue Type	Resolution Plan	Dated Comments

Note: further detail on Project Risks and Issues can be found in the Risks and Issues Log.

3.1 Project Financials

Capital cost (includes development of business cases)

- Gyratory £5.8m Including risk and inflation
- Southgates £21.0m Including risk and inflation
- **Total £26.8m**

How this is being met

- DfT contribution £24.1m
- NCC contribution £2.0m (includes NCC contributions to OBC/FBC)
- KLWN land value contribution £0.7m
- **Total £26.8m**

Despite taking precautions and submitting the highest justifiable scheme cost at the LUF bid stage, increases in construction costs have seen the total scheme cost rise to **£32m**.

Draft OBC documents have indicated this fact but we have yet to have any feedback from DfT on the issue.

We eagerly await the outcome of Autumn Budget on 30 October 2024 to understand the new governments appetite for continuing to support the LUF programme.

3.2 Project Contingency and Change Control

Change Ref	Description	Cost Impact	Programme Impact	Other Impact	RAG Status	Approval given by	Date of change
	N/A						

3.3 Financial Commentary

RAG rating is currently Amber

- Funding has been allocated by government from the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) subject to satisfactory business case submissions to DfT.
- As advised in the LUF bid and subsequently to DfT we will draw down all the funding by the March 2026, but the project will not be completed until 2027
- Clarification was received from DfT regarding the capital swap between projects and years. This freedom will give us the ability to complete the project after the LUF March 2026 cut off date. The initial programme showed scheme completion in 2027, but the agreed mechanism should give us the flexibility to slip that end date if it becomes necessary. DfT have now revised their stance on our proposal to swap funding between projects and years to allow draw down of all LUF funding by March 2026. A mechanism for this will either be agreed globally across the LUF programme or we will be required to get our proposal approved by ministers and the HM Treasury during their assessment of the OBC.

4. Timelines – High Level Milestones

Milestones to Outline Business Case submission. This needs updating in due course to reflect latest view on OBC submission data.

4.1 Timelines Commentary

Timelines are currently RAG rated as Amber.

5. Resources Commentary

Resources are currently RAG as Green.

Norfolk County Council are working collaboratively with the Borough Council and are effectively co-clients for the work WSP are undertaking to develop the scheme and business case.

6. Communications and Engagement

Consultation activities are planned in conjunction with work on the wider masterplan so we can present the combined impact of the STARS scheme and the Southgates regeneration to statutory stakeholders.

7. Outputs and Outcomes

7.1 Outputs

Description	Target	Notes
Revised highway layouts around the town centre Gyrotory one-way system that incorporate improvements for buses, cyclists and pedestrians and enhancements to the public realm.		
Removal of the existing signalised Southgates roundabout and a reconfigured signal controlled junction with bus priority measures and dedicated cycling and walking improvements. This includes diverting London Road to the east of the historic South Gate but retaining an active travel route under the gate to emphasise its historic role as an entry point to the town.		

7.2 Outcomes

Description	Target	Notes
Increased levels of walking and cycling- increased living standards and well-being	2027	
Shorter and more direct journeys for pedestrians and cyclists.	2027	
Reduction in accidents and improved safety.	2027	
Improved local heritage offer.	2027	
Improved perception of place and public realm.	2027	

8. Other Matters

Item	Comment
General stage progress	On track
Procurement progress	Discussions are underway between NCC and WSP in relation to the procurement approach to feed into the Commercial and Management cases of the OBC
Surveys Status	<p>Topographical, drainage and GPR surveys have been completed, managed by Norse but there are issues with the supply of the drainage survey data.</p> <p>The company who were the sub-contractor for the drainage survey have gone into administration. Their outstanding work has been taken over by another company. Norse say the report is substantially done, but will not be released until everything is transferred from one to the other. The drainage design has been progressed on NCC knowledge of the existing road drainage and will just need updating in due course but there is no suggestion this will affect the overall programme.</p>
Local schemes / dependencies	<p>P-21.10a Southgates Placemaking Highlight Report (overall delivery of Masterplan and dev sites). Active and Clean connectivity. https://www.visionkingslynn.co.uk/projects/active-and-clean-connectivity/</p> <p>Local Cycling and walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) -</p> <p>Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) – proposals for Hardwick Road</p>

9. Approved Documents

	OBC [RIBA 0 Approval]	Client Brief [RIBA 1 Initiation]	Resource Brief	PID [RIBA 1 Gateway]	PID Update [RIBA 2 Gateway]	PID Update [RIBA 3 Gateway]	PID Update [pre tender]	Final PID [post tender]
Status:		✓						
Date Approved:								
Approved by:								

N/A as standard DfT major scheme approval process is being followed rather than the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) stages

Spend - Budget Variance (inc. contingency)	
R	More than 10% over or under budget
A	Between 5% & 10% over or under budget
G	Within 5% of budget or less than £10k

Milestone Delivery RAG Status	
R	13 weeks or more behind the critical path
A	4 to 12 weeks behind the critical path
G	4 weeks or less behind the critical path

Risks & Issues RAG Status	
R	Needs immediate attention
A	Needs attention before next project review
G	Can be managed