



P.21-11

St George's Guildhall & Creative Hub Project Highlight Report

Project Name:	St George's Guildhall & Creative Hub	Project Manager:	Robin Lewis / Dan Mason / Liam Bacon	Project Sponsor:	Duncan Hall	Report covers period of:	March 2025
Capital Code:	C9061	Client Dept:	Regeneration	Lead Designer:	Haworth Tompkins		
Project Code:	P.21-11	End User (if applicable):	CIO *	Cost Consultant:	Andrew Morton Associates		
				Contractor on Site:	TBC – currently being procured		

* CIO is now formed as per the registration here: <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/14526867>

Management Summary

	1. Overall Status	2.1 Risks	2.2. Issues	3. Financials	4. Timelines	5. Resources
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Last Report	A	A	A	R	A	R

Project Definition

Project Stage: RIBA Stage 4 – Detailed Design

Objectives:

The project has the following defined aims:

- Redevelopment and refurbishment of St George's Guildhall, from road to river, including a fully working Theatre.
- To conserve and promote King's Lynn's heritage and culture, and in particular draw upon the links between William Shakespeare and the Guildhall.
- Make our centre fully accessible and welcoming to all, whilst boosting new skills, and supporting new and existing creative businesses.
- To establish a vibrant cultural hub that will be a heritage attraction, education resource, commercial zone by day, and a theatre and entertainment venue by night.

Scope:

- Delivery of project outputs as identified in Towns Fund application.
- Delivery of works identified in RIBA Stage 1 report including alterations to the listed buildings necessary to deliver the scheme.
- Fundraising for capital and revenue costs as necessary
- Promotion of the project and centre its links to Shakespeare within the town nationally and internationally.
- Delivery of activities to widen the engagement, support wider cultural, learning, and educational objectives for the town and develop existing and new audiences.
- Creation of the CIO to operate the world class venue.

1. Overall Status (high-level summary)

Overall status following agreement to the Project Adjustment Request is AMBER. The significant funding gap should be noted. See comments in Financial Commentary (section 3.3) for direction of travel.

- **RIBA Stage 4 Design** - The team continues to work at maximum effort to hit dates.
- **Interpretation Works** - The interpretation tour framework has been appraised and agreed as well as key interpretation messages and themes. End of stage report comments have been issued to PLB and following an internal review the PLB have been instructed to develop the design in a specific area more extensively.
- **Decant/ Collections/Storage** – Removal of key collections completed following agreed NMS/BC strategy. Procurement of decant works agreed, quotes have been sought and suppliers instructed. Site has been cleared for Enabling Works with contractor & relevant items now in storage. Next steps will be reviewing the main contract requirements and starting their removal/ relocation.
- **King Street public realm** - Meeting held with NCC Highways in March showing the design development to date. NCC viewed the design positively and gave some programme duration guidance. The design team are developing the design and programme options.

- **Pre-Launch BC/CIO Resource review ongoing.** Agreement being sought on the Sites Operational, Education and CEO/Creative Director role(s). Proposal also includes the appointment of a Fundraising Consultant asap. Update to capital/revenue classification received. Impact on overall costs review underway will be reported next month, subject to internal approval of impact to future funding sources.
- **Turnkey Fit out** - Meetings held about additional fit out requirements that the site will need to make it a full turnkey operation at handover. Scope & costs compiled by AMA reviewed by relevant BCKLWN teams. Revised comments issued for incorporation in Stage 4 costs, presented to March Project Board. Update to May Board.
- **H&S Reporting** - H&S/Construction Design & Management Regulations (CDM)/PD reporting meeting held to provide oversight to workstream. Howarth Tompkins presented deliverables tracker and procedures being implemented. Next meeting planned for April.

1.1 Decisions required by the Town Board

- None required at this April Town Board.

1.2 Achievements during this period

- Enabling Works contractor has started on site. The first site progress meeting has been held and was very positive. Contractor is currently ahead of programme, with the 1950s & 1960s flooring now removed resulting in exposure of the medieval flooring.
- The tender addendum pack covering decoration, internal repairs, drainage below ground and other minor design items was issued to contractors finalising the tender pack.
- The main contract tender has been with contractors for review, we have been responding to queries and setting up site visits for the contractor's teams to view the Guildhall site.
- A meeting with NCC Highways team has been held to review the S278 (Public realm) design, with positive feedback given by the NCC team.

Priorities for Next Period:

- Monitor the Invitation to Tender (ITT) and respond to the main contractor's queries, in relation to the BoQ & general wider suite of ITT docs. Hold site visits with contractors to support the tender process.
- Continue to monitor the enabling works on site including a biweekly progress meeting to ensure the contractor is on programme.
- Report any significant archaeological finds during the next stages of investigation.
- Monitor the progress of party wall notices and respond to any queries or issues that may be raised by neighboring properties.
- RIBA 4 reports and cost reports to be finalised and issued to the BCKLWN team for final review.
- Review amended interpretation design and develop further areas of coordination required within the main works to ensure all requirements captured.

2. Risks and Issues

2.1 Key Risks [all red and increasing amber] – something that may happen

Risk ID (5/40)	Risk Title	Description	RA G Stat us	Risk Category	Mitigation	Dated Comments
003	Funding	Inadequate funding to deliver intended scope of project	R	Finance	TOWNS funding re-prioritised to provide £8.07m of capital funding. Following unsuccessful NLHF application for potential total ask of £3.3m (including the intended Stage 2 application ask). Some additional funding may come from other BCKLWN Towns Fund Projects reallocated to the Guildhall (amount TBC). Fundraising Consultant to be procured shortly. Estimated drawdown cashflow to be created by AMA for once the projects onsite.	02/04/2025

016	Tenders received exceed the budget cost allowance	The project does not have the available budget to progress, major scope reduction of VE required.	R	Financial	Regular cost reviews throughout the design development period - undertake market testing of key cost items - regular review of inflation allowances against the market trends. Contingency review and costing advice being gathered to value the size of this risk.	02/04/2025
15	Procurement of main contractor	Lack of resource in main contractor response from market.	R	Performance	A contractor has declined to tender, one other suggests non-compliance ideas. Three live bidders currently. Team to review a no contractor scenario with procurement team.	02/04/2025
57	Sprinkler Inclusion	Discussions being held with insurers, National Trust and internally at the BC	R	Design	Further review required following concerns expressed by Conservation Officer on impact of location of tank. I.e. clash between the existing vault and the sprinkler tank greater than first assumed due to legislation demands.	02/04/2025
002	Resources	As project activity increases, there is increased pressure on the project team in respect of balancing work loads.	A	Resources	Project has increased in size (by 100%) and pressures felt. Additional resources being reviewed continually. Note that Volunteers wellbeing on site being additionally supported given the decades of unbroken commitment they've offered.	02/04/2025

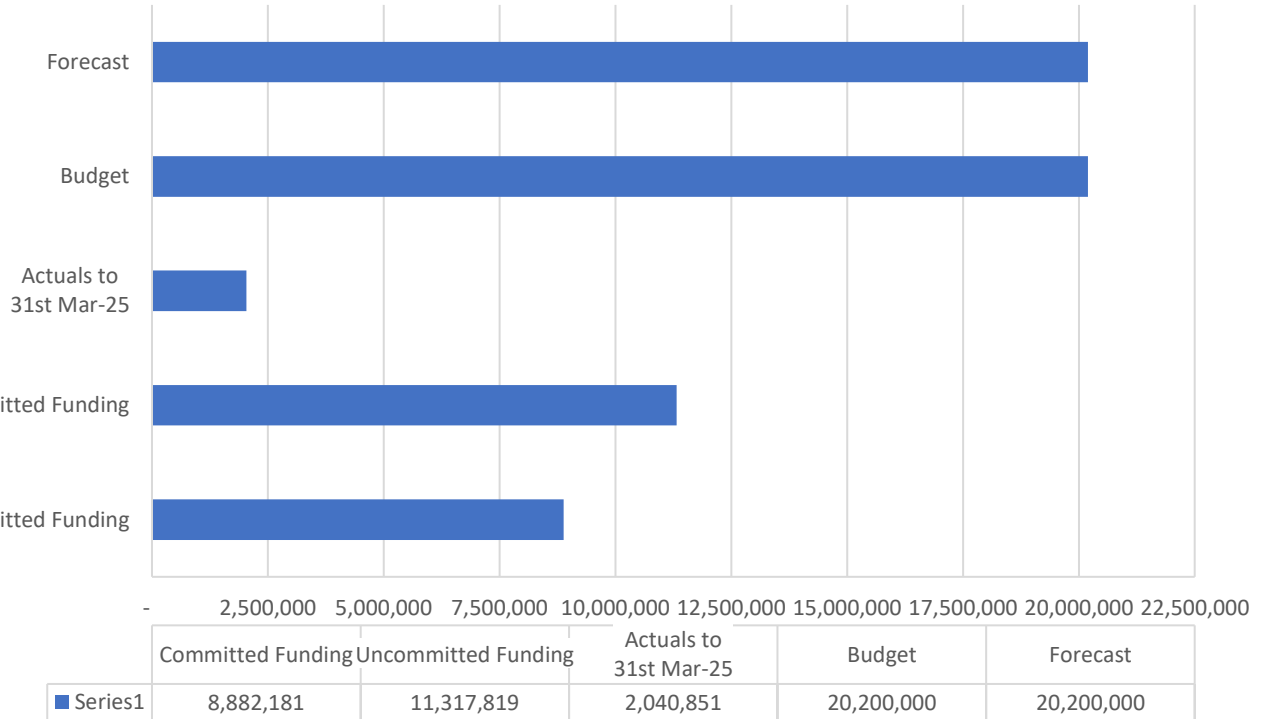
2.2 Key Issues [all red and increasing amber] – something that has happened

Issue ID (2/9)	Issue Title	Description	RA G Stat us	Issue Type	Resolution Plan	Dated Comments
011	Budget	Budgetary pressures following RIBA Stage 3 & estimated RIBA 4 cost plan.	R	Finance	Additional fundraising streams reviewed to identify key opportunities to support funding gap. Contingency client pot strategy agreed to capture risks/ discovery and added scoped items.	04/04/2025
015	Procurement of Main Contractor	Lack of resource in main contractor market. Geographical location of project is challenging.	R	Performance	SQ completed. Five contractors have been invited to tender following review of responses. Risk that they may be offered other works ahead of the June award date. Team keeping comms open with MC's.	04/04/2025

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

3.1 Project Financials

St Georges Guildhall & Creative Hub Actuals, Budget and Forecasted spend as at 31st March 2025



3.2 Financial Commentary

Financials are currently RED. Actuals to date are £2m against an overall budget of £20.2m with actuals primarily relating to Professional fees and Consultancy costs. 2024-25 actuals in this financial year are £1.1m up to 31st Mar-25.

At present there is uncommitted funding of c£11.3m based on the £20.2m budget. The funding gap will reduce by £2m to c£9.3m once the PAR to transfer funding from the Riverfront Towns fund Project has been approved. The Project Team believe that the significant gap in overall funding could still impact on the Towns Fund monies being spent within the required timescales and therefore, this remains rated as Red. It would be proposed to reduce the RED RAG rating once the additional funds have been secured.

A decision on the final project scope and funding package was made at Town Board and Cabinet during July 2024 using the RIBA 3 latest cost plan. Cost is now £20.2m for the Full scheme.

The deep dive 2024-25 full year minimum spend requirements (75% of the full year budget) is £0.8m, current 2024-25 actuals are £1.1m and is within the required target spend of £0.8m, therefore no deep dive would be triggered.

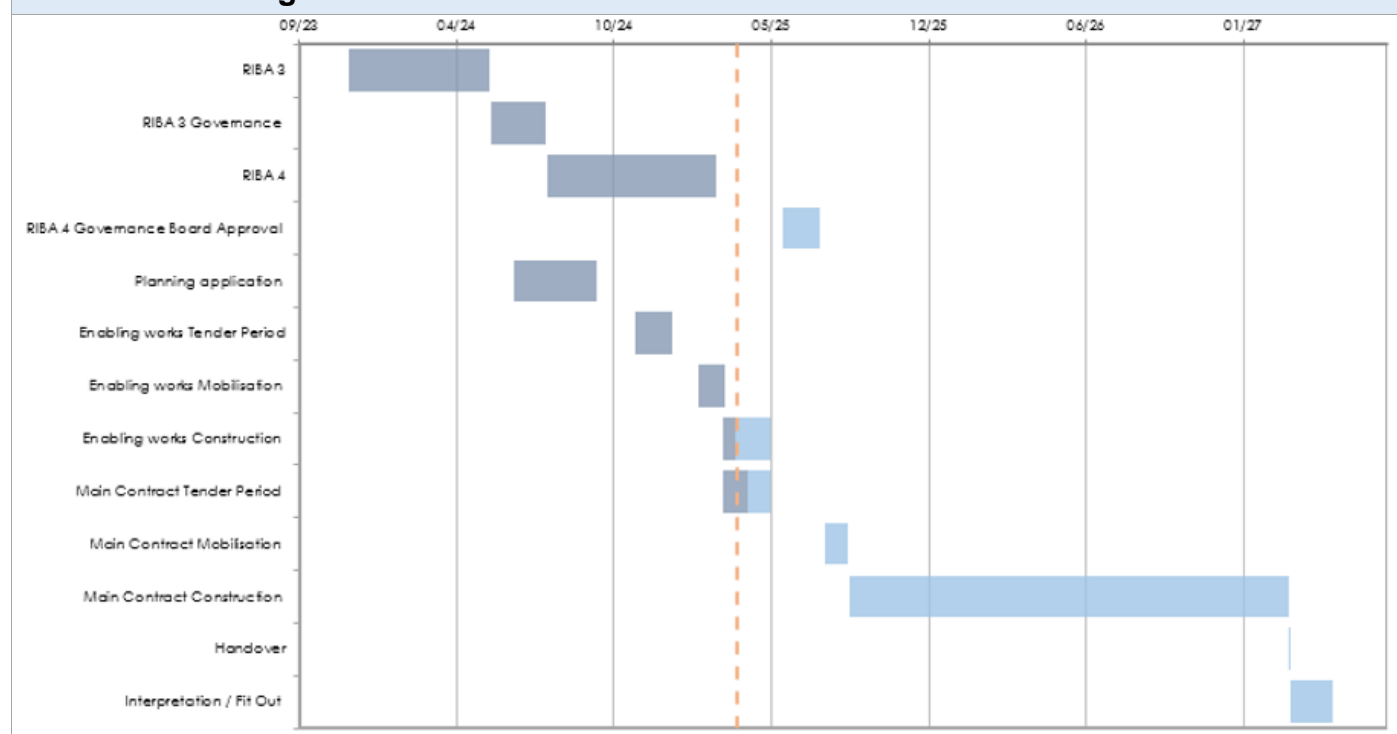
A Fundraising Consultant being procured to seek additional fundraising opportunities and enact fundraising strategy. Gap in funding and the status will be reported at Town Board and Cabinet in June/ July 2025 for a final decision on progression forward and the appointment of a Main Contractor in July 2025.

Internal CLT Officer reviews continued in November-February looking at the overall capital position as advised by the project team. This included a review of the significant wider external risks to the budget, and the overarching contingency strategy required to support the project. Outputs and recommendations of these reviews will be shared in 2025.

3.3 Project Contingency and Change Control

Change Ref	Description	Cost Impact	Programme Impact	Other Impact	RAG Status	Approval given by	Date of change
1	For info: Formal change control tracker being used to manage project through RIBA 4.						

4. Timelines – High Level Milestones



4.1 Timelines Commentary

Timeline RAG rating has been adjusted to AMBER to reflect the fact that the project outputs dates have been re-set as part of the Project Adjustment Request approval process.

The latest construction completion date is forecast for spring 2027. This has been approved in principle as part of the RIBA 3 Programme update to both Town Board and Cabinet in July 2024. This delay, because of important design changes at the start of RIBA 3 (archaeological survey findings, M&E compliance updates, environmental specification upgrades) has extended the overall programme by approx. 11 months. The Towns Fund grant will still be expended before the March 2026 deadline however the outputs will not start being realised until the scheme opens in 2027. The balance of required additional funds will be required to support the second half of the construction programme. (Circa funds in place by Dec 25/Jan 26 to support cashflow demands.)

The interpretation workstream continues its progress. It has been advised/ estimated that the fit out, testing and commissioning period for the Interpretation scheme will require c8 weeks (PLB) following the completion of the main construction works. The project team have initiated a review of the launch and the various demands that will need to be managed. This collectively is called the “soft launch strategy” a term used on other similar projects to seek to meet the Contract, fit out and rehearsal times needed to ensure an efficient opening. More progress will be shared in 2025.

The enabling works have started on site (17/03/2025) and are currently progressing ahead of schedule, the 1950s & 1960s flooring has been removed and archaeological visits are ongoing. The enabling works are due to complete 16/05/2025.

Additional time has been provided to the tendering contractors to maximise the opportunity for competitive tenderers. This date has been extended from 02/05/2025 to 16/05/2025.

5. Resources Commentary

Resource continues to be maintained as a RED RAG rating in the period.

Additional resource demands are being reviewed and considered in a range of areas including works required to cover the Fundraising Consultant role, BC/ CIO pre-opening operational planning of the overall new site, and an extension of time request to support the Education Officer's role. There is also an exceptional demand on the time required to develop a more suitable legal framework between the CIO/ Borough Council (Birkett's are undertaking this piece of work). The execution of the enabling works package to mitigate a significant risk to the overall project has taken more resources than estimated to ensure a compliant, quality contractor appointment for the strip out of the Theatre. Furthermore, the main contract appointment external market resources appear constrained given external economic factors, other works etc.

6. Communications and Engagement

The Comms Agency have developed the branding associated with the site. Their work is changing to support the delivery of the on-going activities, and events post the closure of the Guildhall main site in February 2025

Note that No29 and Shakespeare Barn are being used to provide an interim solution for the public to access the site/ learn/ and see exhibitions and storytelling about the new scheme. Soft launch planned for the 5th of March and public access from the 10th subject to final review of arrangements.

Comms will commence shortly with the neighbouring properties with a view to issuing Party Wall Notices early in 2025. Agreements will be sought ahead of commencing works onsite.

7. Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs

Description	Target	Full Scheme revised outputs, agreed by KLTB and BCKLWN Cabinet July 2024
Number of temporary FT jobs supported during project implementation	110	55
Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) permanent jobs created through the projects	22	34
Number of improved cultural facilities	5	8
Amount of capacity of new or improved training or education facilities	1*	
Amount of capacity of new or improved training or education facilities	10,300	10,300
# of derelict buildings refurbished	6	6
# of heritage buildings renovated/restored	10	10
# of enterprises receiving non-financial support	50	50
# of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready	60	60
Amount of existing parks/greenspace/outdoor improved	1240 m ²	1572m2
Amount of new office space	669m ²	814m2
Mandatory indicator - Year on Year monthly % change in footfall	900%	1680%

Outcomes

Description	Notes
Refurbishing the Historic Theatre and enhancing physical access – with a reference to its exceptional historical value and Shakespearian connection	
Creating opportunities for local creative enterprises	
Creating inspiring spaces, for the community and visitors alike, for formal and informal learning including youth engagement.	

8. Other Matters

Item	Comment
General stage progress	RIBA stage 4 commenced and works on programme.
Procurement progress	Main Contractor SQ responses received, and tender shortlist confirmed.
Proposed form of contract (e.g. JCT, NEC, Traditional, D&B)	Construction – JCT with quantities - Procurement Strategy prepared agreed with BCKLWN Procurement Officers.
Proposed route to market (e.g. ITT, Framework i.e. DPS, HPCS, LCP)	Procurement will be via a two-stage tender (SQ followed by full ITT), open market tender via the Councils procurement portal.
Legal progress	Support development of CIO governing document, Fundraising guidance for both BC to share with CIO/ NT to ensure compliance with law, Charity Commission, the Lease between the BC, and NT. HMRC Tax rules.
Legal instruction form issued?	Legal instruction issued in October 2022 for development of CIO agreement & then again in Sept/October 2024 in relation to fundraising and overall tripartite strategy required to align the BC, CIO and NT redlines for the site and its operation.
Surveys Status	Surveys identified and completed with HT following their RIBA 4 appointment.
Statutory updates	Conversations ongoing National Trust, Planning and Development Team and Building Control to ensure views are captured during design and delivery process. Conservation Officer feedback very productive on wide range of matters relating to design updates. Discussion is ongoing about whether these require amendments to planning or a new Listed buildings application (you cannot vary LB consents.) Sprinkler tank location, Lightening protection requirements continue.
Local schemes / dependencies	Other Towns Deal programme and projects. Wider BCKLWN work including update of Cultural Strategy and volunteering. Work with National Trust and Norfolk Museum Service regarding visitor trends

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 [RIBA 4 Design]	Final PID [pre-post tender]
Status:	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Date Approved:	24/06/22	21/12/22	-	21/12/22	30/11/23	09/07/24	28/03/25	
Approved by:	Cabinet	TF Prog Board	-	TF Prog Board	OMPb	Project Board	Town Board	

Latest approved document: PID November 2023

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