

Southgates Regeneration and Gyratory – Bus and Active Travel scheme

KLWN Regeneration and
Development Panel update



Southgates area Illustrative Masterplan

The challenge:

- Challenges in the bid area include:
 - Unwelcoming and intense vehicle dominated entry point to King's Lynn
 - Poor road safety record
 - Very poor pedestrian and cycle environment
 - Fails to connect to active travel links and green spaces
- **Government directive that all transport schemes must have significant bus, walking and cycling measures to obtain public funding**
 - Pre-pandemic schemes therefore need revising

Considerations:

- King's Lynn Transport Strategy developed in County/Borough partnership – adopted in spring 2020
- Strategy enhanced with Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) – adopted spring 2022
- Gyratory proposals for Railway Road already being considered for air quality issues
- Southgates area already part of Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) initiative
- Previous Future High Street Fund bid proposal to divert London Road around the Southgate was unsuccessful
- Post-pandemic traffic flows different – flattened peaks

Implications

- Borough Council commissioned Southgates masterplanning work in early 2022
- Favoured masterplan solution requires removing the roundabout and downsizing the junction and tightening up the road layout
- The masterplan solution supports multimodal travel assumptions
- Peak-hour traffic flows are reduced from pre-pandemic levels – how do we secure this in perpetuity and at the same time regenerate the area?
- Gyratory proposals need to be reconsidered in light of LCWIP
- Any schemes should encourage a modal shift further reducing traffic
- Further traffic surveys and modelling to be carried out in next phase of scheme development

Community feedback

A review of all transport and travel community engagement from the last three years was conducted in May 2022 prior to beginning work on the bid to ensure responses influenced draft planning. This includes:

- Town Centre use and satisfaction Consultation (December 2019)
- Consumer Confidence Study (June 2020)
- Business Insight Survey (June 2020)
- Walking & Cycling Survey (October 2020)
- Young People Survey (October 2020)
- Stakeholder engagement 2022 – King’s Lynn Gyratory Scheme
- Southgates Masterplan (Jan – June 2022)

Community feedback – Key Findings

- Most people travel into King’s Lynn town centre by car. Consequently, there is perceived to be ‘too much traffic’ in and around the town. London Road is considered to be particularly busy, and a bottleneck, leading to congestion and pollution, particularly for the local residents.
- Use of the bus was negatively impacted by COVID-19, and a fear of being in an enclosed, busy space. However, perceptions of a poor timetable also seem to have had a damaging impact on bus usage.
- There are concerns for pedestrian and cyclist safety, and a call for safe routes (dedicated off-road), better lighting, better storage and security. This appetite for safety suggests this is a need that is not being completely met currently.
- A key improvement that respondents want to see is to the routes, paths, pavements they use – the condition and availability of what walkers and cyclists travel on is of importance and a priority for improvement.
- Other improvements that respondents would like to see to encourage them to walk or cycle more is promotion of local cycling routes, cycle hire facilities and provision of information on walking routes.
- Regarding road diversion around the South Gate views are divided: For some, the gate is seen to play a traffic calming role. Others call for the gate to be protected, as a heritage asset. Should the road be diverted, however, there was a notable level of agreement in that using the arch for active travel might be a means to preserve its gateway function and a catalyst for walking and cycling.

Scheme iterations and Stakeholder feedback

Gyratory :

- First iteration of the scheme was more focussed on the LCWIP and had more extensive segregated cycle lanes on Railway Road
- The joint Member WNT&ISG asked that more consideration be given to public transport as concern was expressed that buses would get held up at junctions
- Engaged with bus operators to determine their key pinch points and devised measures to address these that were supported by NCC public transport and network management staff
- Current scheme has a better balance between bus priority and Active Travel measures

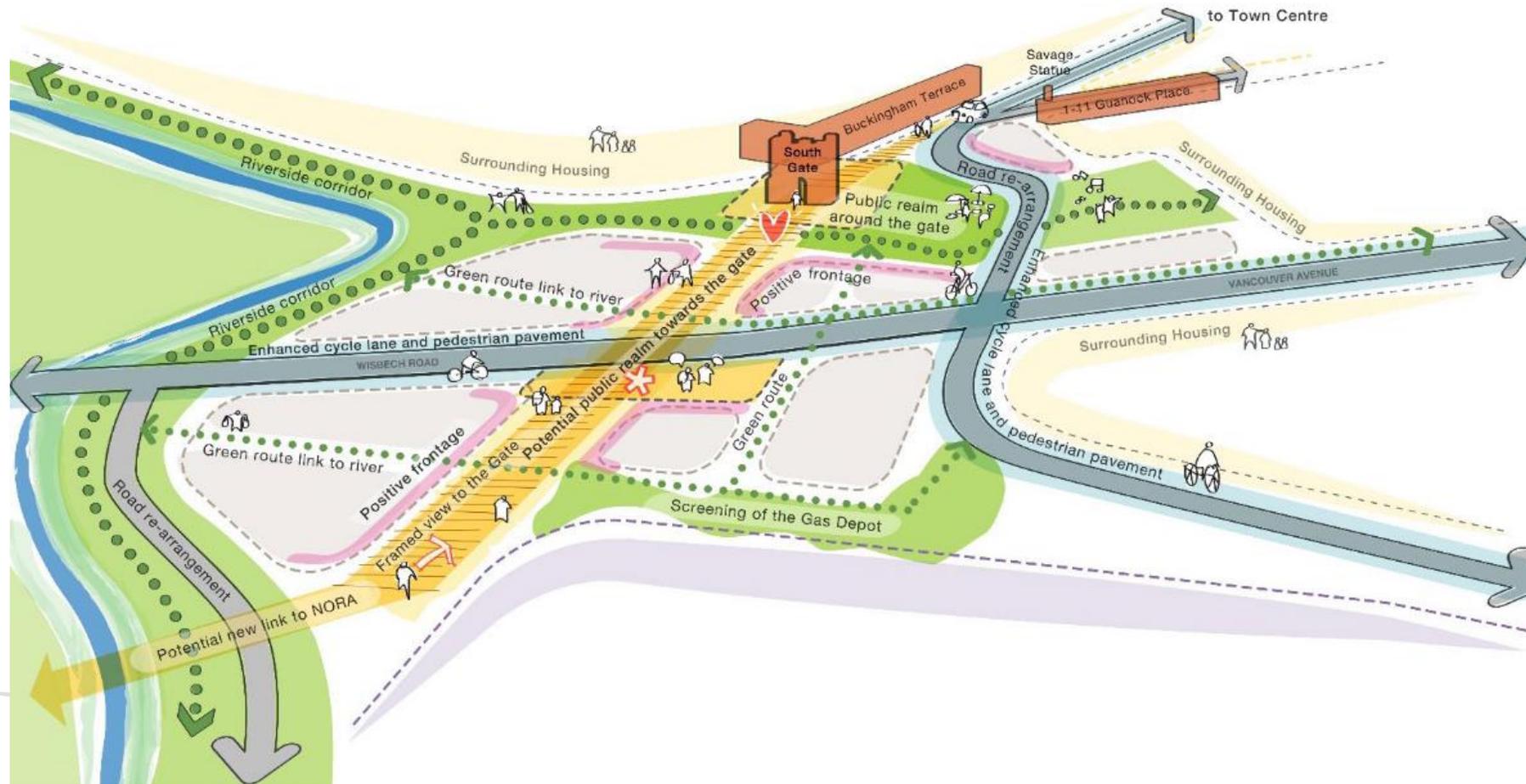
Scheme iterations and Stakeholder feedback

Southgates :

- Heritage concern about loss of use of historic South Gate as a road entry point
- Scheme now retains entry via the historic South Gate for pedestrians and cyclists and is protected from the damaging frequent vehicle strikes
- Concern about catering for traffic flows with a downsized junction
- Downsized junction will cater for current post-pandemic peak-hour traffic flows effectively “locking in” the reduction from pre-pandemic levels
- Active travel aspirations welcomed by cycle groups in recent stakeholder workshop

The Plan:

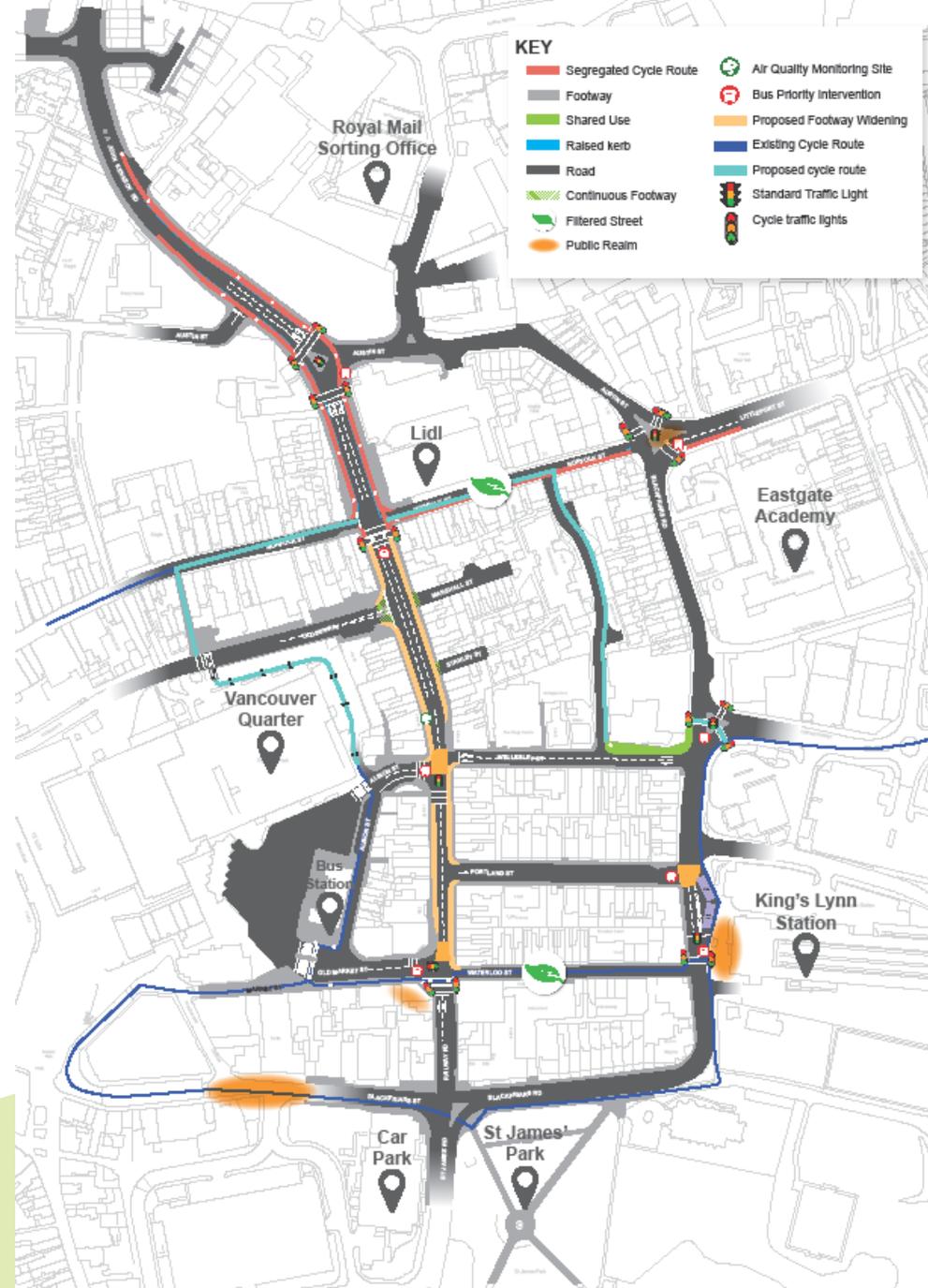
Southgates Regeneration Bus and Active Travel scheme



The Plan:

Gyratory

- Segregated cycle lanes on Railway Road
- Three lanes northbound retained for traffic
- Key junction upgrades - priority to buses and walking and cycling - active travel
- Bus priority egress from bus station
- Footway widening on Norfolk Street and Railway Road
- Bus priority improvement at Portland Street/Blackfriars Road
- Traffic filtering on Waterloo Street and Norfolk Street - access only



Not just Transport - Transformation

Movement

Southgates :

- Downsize junction – human scale / convenient vehicular passage
- Divert traffic movements around Southgate
- Pedestrian and cycle movements through the gate
- Pedestrian and cycle movement – desire lines, dedicated lanes, crossings etc.
- Bus priority measures

Gyratory :

- Improved pedestrian environment on Railway Road with wider footways and safer crossings
- Provision for cyclists on Railway Road and at junctions (current environment is hostile for cyclists)

Not just Transport - Transformation

Placemaking and Urban Form

Southgates:

- Knit Southgates back into the urban grain and natural assets, highlighting the role of the South Gate
- Reconfigure road layout to define development plots to aid delivery
- Establish street width to building height ratios to create 'enclosure' and generate activity and visual interest
- Enhance the setting of the South Gate as a gateway and destination
- New development to relate to public space and improve visual and physical connections through the area.

Gyratory:

- Reduce dominance of traffic on Railway Road
- Reconnect the two parts of Norfolk Street
- Traffic lanes moved further away from buildings to provide more pedestrian space help air quality

Not just Transport - Transformation

Heritage

Southgates :

- The role of London Road and the South Gate identifiable as the main historic route into Kings Lynn – retain hardstanding carriage way
- Better reveal and conserve heritage assets including the Southgates Bridge, London Road Listed Buildings and the Southgates Conservation Area
- Options explored to retain and sensitively restore locally significant heritage assets – Ford Garage and the Public House

Not just Transport - Transformation

Environment and Sustainability

- Contribute to tackling climate change and meeting the Council's Net Zero Carbon targets by 2035
- Residential layouts should consider relationship with junction and natural assets to manage potential air quality and noise impacts
- Achieve Biodiversity Net Gain
- Identify and remediate contamination

Transformation - summary

- This is a genuinely transformational King's Lynn scheme for Southgates and the Gyratory in terms of placemaking and public realm
- Relies on a commitment to encourage other travel modes in line with the Borough Council's declared Climate Emergency
- Car use can be reduced by
 - People within the urban area shifting modes to bus, walking and cycling because of improved, attractive infrastructure and facilities
 - People from further afield shifting to bus usage because of priority measures at Southgates and on the gyratory and on Hardwick Road (Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP))
- Whilst we will seek to minimise impact, conditions may deteriorate for access by car. This should be viewed as an incentive for sustainable modes of bus, walking and cycling
- Scheme should deliver a better balance for all incentivising sustainable modes such as public transport and walking and cycling

Fit with Levelling Up Fund (LUF)

- Stakeholder engagement on Southgates Masterplan concepts by KLWN consultants BDP/Urban Flow will enhance LUF submission for 6 July
- Member and MP support is imperative for LUF submission to demonstrate deliverability
- Southgates proposals developed by KLWN consultants BDP/Urban Flow – WSP to prepare highway plans of vision and carry out an initial high level appraisal by 6 July
- Gyratory LCWIP/Bus scheme well developed with input from bus operators – essential to include in bid to enable some construction before end of 2025/26
- The Southgates proposals and Gyratory are good schemes in isolation both delivering on the current transport agenda but are truly transformational in combination
- Bus Back Better an essential element being located on a Town Deal Active and Clean Connectivity corridor from the West Winch Growth area to the town centre
- The switch to Active Travel will deliver on Climate Change and Healthy Lifestyle agendas and will have a greater impact in combination providing a sea-change to perceptions of travel within the town

Fit with Levelling Up Fund (LUF) (cont.)

- Southgates proposal ties in with Hardwick Road bus priority measures under consideration in NCC Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)
- Southgates is part of the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) regeneration initiative
- Place based analysis from King's Lynn Town Investment Plan shows need for Southgates regeneration – This good Strategic Fit will maximise the chances of securing funding
- King's Lynn is a priority 1 area for LUF
- Keep focussed on the linked Southgates and Gyrotory proposals only – other smaller scale additions will complicate work and detract from key elements
- This proposal is the most developed of any potential scheme across Norfolk so most likely to succeed – only realistic option for NCC upper-tier bid LUF

Levelling Up Fund (LUF) – NCC Approach

Current government LUF has challenging timescales for strategic scheme delivery – evidenced by DfT awarding only £1.7bn so far out of £4.8bn

- We have a genuinely transformational King's Lynn scheme for Southgates and Gyratory
- We can guarantee significant scheme spend before the notional 2025/26 deadline but require longer programme delivery to bring forward all elements out of our vision for schemes of this magnitude
- Bid by 6 July will be followed by a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) with a commitment to continue to develop the business case. This will set a marker down for securing government funding now or in the future
- Not securing funding now should not be seen as a failure

We recognise the need to secure support and commit to continue to develop the scheme as the timescales to bid into potential funding pots are always too short