

Ashford Station Forecourt

AGENDA ITEM 14

Project Progress Report



Ashford Station Forecourt

Project Progress Report

November 2009.

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1.0 Overview & Executive Summary

The aim of Phase 3 is to create a step change to the arrival and departure point to Ashford by rail, to assist in changing people's perception of Ashford. This will in turn assist in attracting investment into Ashford, in particular to the Commercial Quarter. Secondly, the work on the station forecourt will seek to make the station approach safer and more easily navigable for different users.

The project progresses to programme and the major milestones achieved in the period are ;

Initial stakeholder consultation has been completed to schedule 11/11/09

The definition of requirements and budget has been prepared 11/09/09

Commencement of **Design and Cost option development.** 16/11/09

The project milestones for the next period are:

Completion of **Design and Cost option development** 8/12/09

Commencement of **Second stage stakeholder consultation** 30/11/09

The construction period has been reviewed by the project team and is considered to be six to nine months on site. The project team are focussed on a start on site during April 2010 although a start as late as June 2010 would be acceptable. It is worth noting that planning permission is not required for this project.

Whilst the project continues to progress to programme the budget and scope differential is of concern and may extend the completion of the concept design period although this is not critical.

The project team continues to develop the original scope in such a way that cost saving options to meet the revised budget of £1.8m are available or can be retained in the event of additional funding becoming available, thus ensuring the completion of GAF funding spend by March 2011.

There is a risk that a scheme meeting the £1.8m budget will not satisfy the aspirations of the brief and may not meet the criteria set out in the funding application.

The project team are now focussed on producing information for the December Partnership Board meetings to approve the scheme and budget and allow completion of the concept design stage.

Key risks

Meeting the aspirations and expectations set out in the funding application and the project design brief that were based on a budget of £2.8m

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Provision of sufficiently high enough quality of finishes

Ensuring that future development on surrounding sites does eclipse Station Square in the future. The project team is working closely with the SEEDA Commercial Quarter Masterplan and have already agreed certain key design principles in order to mitigate this risk.

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2.0 Programme

The current agreed programme is dated 19th October 2009.

Milestones completed in the period;

Initial stakeholder consultation; a series of meetings have been held with stakeholders, largely on site, that has identified and captured requirements and aspirations and has informed the concept design development activities now in hand.

The following people/organisations have been consulted to date:

Environment Agency 9th September 2009.
Attendees ; Barrie Neaves – EA, NB

Bus and Train operators 7th October 2009,
Attendees ; Nina Peak - Southeastern, Jeremy Cooper - Stagecoach, Ian Watersfield - Stagecoach.

SEEDA – 7th October 2009.
Attendees ; Neil Bowsher, Jon Acker Coyle (Gillespies), Martin Barrow

Network Rail outside parties site meeting at Ashford 14th October 2009
Attendees ; Nina Peak, Neil Bowsher, John Steed – NR, Jon Ackers Coyle, Alastair Leighton, Paul Hill, Peter Pritchard, Katy Magnall (ABC)

Taxi drivers ; impromptu meeting held on the forecourt 14th October 2009

Ashford Access ; 15th October 2009.
Attendees ; Cllr Claughton, Susan Mansfield, NB, JAC

Hitachi Depot ; meeting with Neville Dyson the Depot Manager 15th October 2009. Attendees ; NB.

British Transport Police meeting 29th October 2009.
Attendees ; NB, NP, Jerry Isterling – BTP

The definition of requirements and budget; following on from the stakeholder consultation early concept design development work by the designers has enabled a more rigorous test of the budget.

Commencement of **Design and Cost option development.**

The project milestones for the next period are ;

Completion of **Design and Cost option development**

Commencement of **Second stage stakeholder consultation**

The programme is being further developed in order to meet the cash flow forecasting requirements in order to release funding on the basis of milestone achievement.

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The construction period has been reviewed by the project team and is considered to be six to nine months on site. This is based on the sequence of work to be under taken, the phasing requirements and the need to maintain access to the station at all times.

The project team are focussed on a start on site during April 2010 although a start as late as June 2010 would be acceptable since this would allow significant volume of work to be undertaken during the summer months thus reducing risk of disruption by inclement weather.

Planning permission is not required for this project although Council will be consulted along with other stakeholder and an application will be made by Network Rail under part 11 of the Town Planning Act, which allows for permitted development on railway land. This principle has already be discussed and agreed between the Project Manager and Network Rail planners.

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3.0 Scope

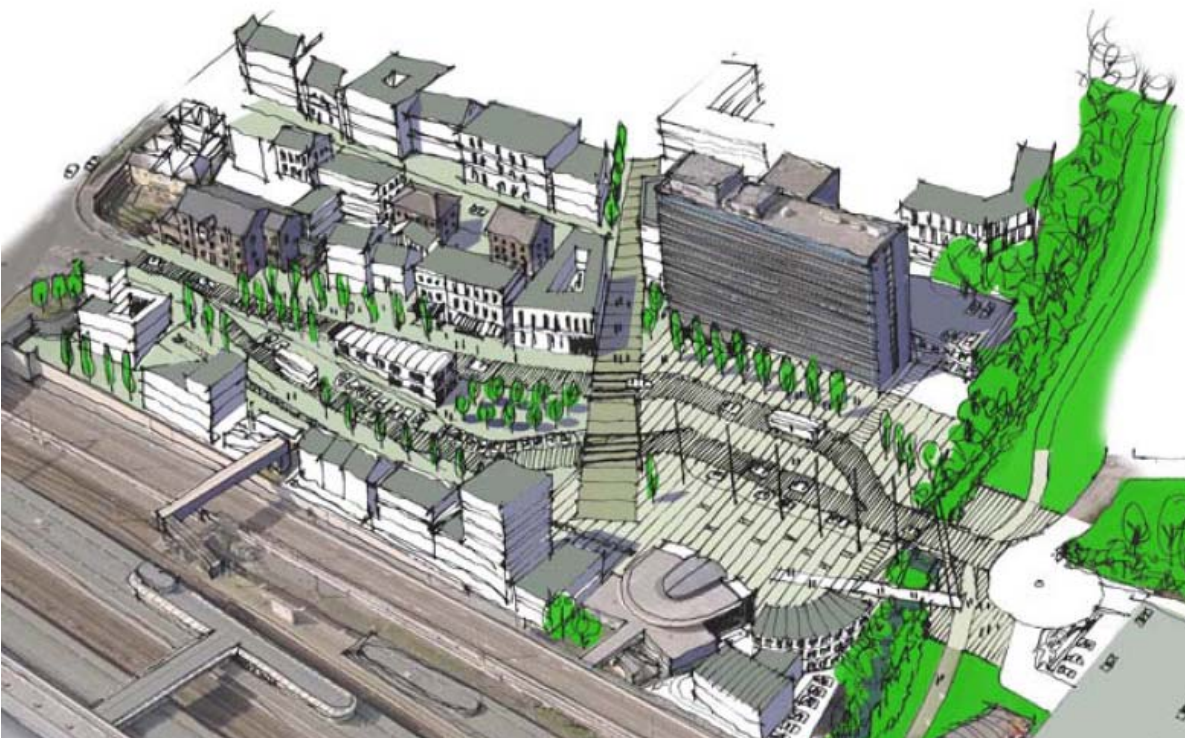
There have been no changes to scope in the period.

The concern that the reduced budget will not achieve the stated client aspirations for the project has led to presentations being made to the client team on 20th October and 4th November in order to set out the concept design and cost development to date.

The outcome of these presentations is that the client has instructed the professional team to proceed in developing the scheme on the basis of the original higher budget and to keep options open to achieve scope reduction at a later stage if additional funds cannot be obtained.

The stakeholder requirements and aspirations are considered by the project team to be in accord with the overall and wider intentions of the scheme and as such do not present any critical conflicts at this stage that the design solution cannot satisfy or resolve.

As the concept design develops and is presented for client review and approval in December the project team will commence a second round of stakeholder consultation, based on the concept design, which will further inform the design at the commencement of the detailed design stage early in 2010.



The concept design development has established a base geometry to enable vehicles, the largest being buses, to turn on an enlarged roundabout at the entrance to car park B and return to new bus stops and taxi pick points.

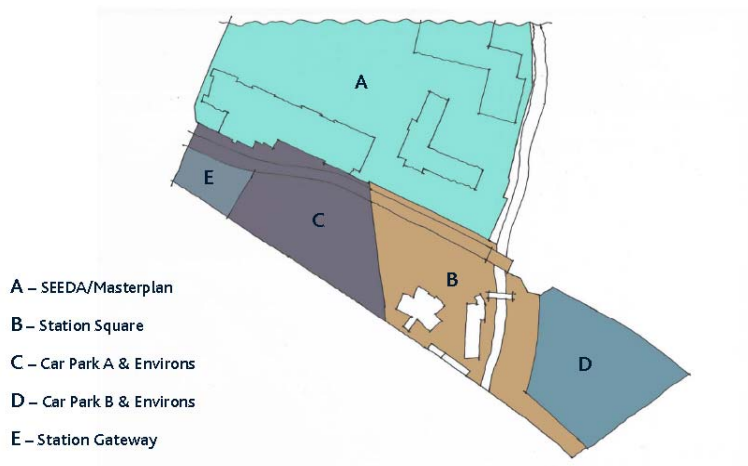
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Smaller vehicles requiring DDA parking or “kiss and go” drop off will turn onto the “station square” to re-located spaces to the West of the station entrance.

Around this geometry a “station square” environment is developing providing a safe and calm space in front of the station for pedestrian routes to be selected, cycles to parked or retrieved and to provide a location for the Anthony Gormley sculptures that will be relocated from Singleton lakes. Anthony Gormley is best known for high “Angel of the North” and the sculptures at Singleton lakes were his first professional commission.

The project team are liaising closely with SEEDA’s Masterplan work and have agreed a number of key principles with that team, in particular the diagonal pedestrian route toward the town centre.



Masterplan Context - 1

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Cost

The designers have provided concept design information to the Cost Manager in order to fully understand, even at this concept stage, the cost of the scope of the works involved.

The design team have provided historical cost information to the project which contributes toward the accuracy of estimates.

The tolerance to be considered when interpreting these figures is +/-25%, this is a little lower than would normally be expected to achieve at concept stage. This is due to the use of historical cost data and by the use of SEEDA's topographical survey that enables an understanding of the impact of level changes on cost.

The cost estimate has been further developed on a minimal Station Square only footprint using tarmac with additional estimates to consider block paving and Granite finishes. The Peripheral areas, ie subway and river corridor, being costed separately.

The following table summarises the design and cost information developed to date ;

Ashford Station Forecourt	Basic Tarmac minimal scheme	Concrete Block	Granite	Peripheral areas
Station Sq	£1,443,822	£1,484,860	£2,042,960	
River Corridor				£75,000
DOC subway				£225,000
Car park A & subway				£50,000
On-costs	£381,223	£392,058	£554,749	£0
Fees	£623,757	£623,757	£641,486	£164,930
Risk & Contingency	£306,100	£314,800	£323,748	£0
Total - exc peripheral areas	£2,754,902	£2,815,475	£3,562,943	£514,930
Peripheral areas		£514,930	£514,930	
Total all areas	£2,754,902	£3,330,405	£4,077,873	

The project team are seeking third party funding from Environment Agency in connection with the river corridor and from the Designer Outlet Centre in connection with the subway leading to the Centre.

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4.0 Health, Safety, Quality, Environment and Risk.

There were no accidents or near misses to report in the period.

The Project team continues to exercise caution during site visits as the risk of impact with moving vehicles on the forecourt is heightened when involved in survey work or meetings.

The initial risk register, defining tangible design and construction risks, will be updated toward the end of the concept design stage.

Key risks in the broader context are:

Meeting the aspirations and expectations set out in the funding application and the project design brief that were based on a budget of £2.8m

Provision of sufficiently high enough quality of finishes

Ensuring that future development on surrounding sites eclipses Station Square in the future. The project team is working closely with the SEEDA Commercial Quarter Masterplan team and have already agreed certain key design principles in order to mitigate this risk. A proposal is under consideration for a Masterplan to be developed for the other areas surrounding the Square in order to influence any future development.

Efforts are being made to arrange for all vegetation clearance to take place during the Autumn, it is noted SEEDA have already carried such work to the Station Road frontage of International House.

Neil Bowsher Optimum

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Appendix 1 – Programme