

North Yorkshire County Council**19 February 2020****Transport, Economy and Environment
Overview and Scrutiny Committee****Chairman's Statement****Committee – 23 January 2020**Corporate Director's Update

- 1 We expressed our frustration over delays to the government decision whether or not to fund the re-routing of the A59 at Kex Gill. The Prime Minister has pledged to invest in new transport projects in the North so let's hope the A59 diversion will be part and parcel of seeing that pledge fulfilled. If government funding does not come off or a decision from government is further delayed, there will more expense incurred to the taxpayer to stabilise Kex Gill. This would provide no guarantee though of there being further landslips.
- 2 The route has to be diverted no matter what and as a last resort the County Council will have to step in to fund the whole costs. A time limit now needs to be set to hear back from government before we have to act. As we know the closure of the A59 at Kex Gill does not impact only on settlements between Skipton and Harrogate but also brings traffic in Ilkley and Otley to a standstill.

York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Update (LEP)

- 3 Related to the discussion about the A59 at Kex Gill, we queried if the LEP would be able to step in to fund the A59 diversion. The reality is the LEP would at best would be able to provide a contribution to reduce the amount that the County Council would have to fund.
- 4 The Committee was asked to comment on the draft York and North Yorkshire Local Industrial Strategy's emerging priorities as follows:
 - Priority 1: Invest in places, communities, identity and culture to drive productivity
 - Priority 2: Unlock constrained growth and realise productivity potential
 - Priority 3: Lead the transformation to a carbon neutral circular economy
- 5 The Committee supported the priorities in particular priority 3 and related to this the LEP's ambitious target for York and North Yorkshire to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- 6 Arising from the government's 'Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnership' review in 2018 resulting in the recommendation that LEPs should remove overlapping boundaries, the approach now is to have a York and North Yorkshire LEP rather than a merger with the Leeds City Region. Both LEPs remain committed to supporting a 'One Yorkshire' devolution model. This approach continues to make the most sense in order to fully realise the economic potential across Yorkshire.

However, government, whilst not ruling out a single Yorkshire arrangement in the longer term, is seeking initial sub regional deals at the geographies of:

- Sheffield City Region (South Yorkshire)
- West Yorkshire
- Humber
- York & North Yorkshire.

Winter Maintenance Policy

- 7 Climate change might be bringing with it warmer wetter winters but it's also likely to bring with it freak weather conditions from time to time. There continues to be a need to ensure we have plenty of salt reserves but we discussed whether there is the potential to reduce grit density spread on the roads as well as reducing the number of gritting vehicles and adapting them to do other tasks at other times in the year. We also discussed the pros and cons of redirecting resources on the basis of the topography of an area. The existing Winter Maintenance Policy is sufficiently broad in its wording to allow a number of these changes to be implemented without it having to be overhauled.

Single-use Plastics Review

- 8 As agreed by the Committee in October 2019, the task group will meet later this month to begin its work. Its agreed remit is:
- To establish additional ways to reduce the use of single use plastics by North Yorkshire County Council staff and visitors.
 - To establish how North Yorkshire County Council can work with partner organisations, local businesses and residents to encourage a reduction in the use of single-use plastics across North Yorkshire.
 - To look for alternatives to single-use plastics and best practice elsewhere including but not limited to other local authorities.
- 9 The government was due to have published its response to the DEFRA/HM Treasury Consultations on Elements of the Resources and Waste Strategy by now. However, the timescale has now been pushed back and is expected to report in June or July 2020.

20 mph speed limit policy task group

- 10 The task group has now concluded its review and a report with recommendations is scheduled to go to the 15 April 2020 Committee.
- 11 In summary key points that the report will make and related recommendations are as follows:
- It is unrealistic for there to be a blanket approach of 20mph speed limits existing in all settlements in the county and to cover a wide area both in terms of cost and enforcement. Speed limits should reflect the nature of the road and in essence be 'self-explaining'.
 - The economic impact has to be taken into account with regards to extending journey times by a wide area introduction of 20mph speed limits.

- Ongoing improvements in car technology are seeing the introduction of enhanced driver safety driver aids such as automatic braking and speed limiters.
- There is an existing County Council policy on 20mph speed limits. This allows a degree of flexibility already to allow our communities to introduce 20mph speed limits in their areas. The policy though would benefit from some updating and to be promoted. Some communities might not be aware of the policy but could benefit from the introduction of 20mph speed limits.
- The policy should be more explicit in considering 20mph speed limits in school zones.
- The policy should reference links to the wider policy agenda in relation to driver education (promoting behavioural change), supporting alternative modes of transport and shaping the built environment. This is so that the wider policy focus is not exclusively constrained by historical accident statistics in determining 20mph speed limits, if an otherwise strong case can be made for a 20mph speed limit to be introduced in a specific area.
- For 20mph limits to be adhered to there needs to be a partnership approach involving a wide number of organisations including planning departments.
- Education, as part of the 95 Alive Partnership, also needs to continue to be strong theme in relation to getting motorists to keep to the speed limit and avoid being distracted – the latter being the main cause of motor vehicle accidents in the county.

County Councillor Stanley Lumley

Chairman

Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

County Hall

Northallerton

6 February 2020