



## North Yorkshire County Council

### Skipton and Ripon Constituency Committee – 30 May 2019

#### A59 Kex Gill Diversion– Progress Update

#### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the progress of the A59 Kex Gill Diversion.

#### 2.0 Background

- 2.1 The A59 is a key trans-Pennine route, which runs between Skipton and Harrogate. There is a long history of land instability and movement of the land above the A59 to the west of Blubberhouses at Kex Gill.
- 2.2 This movement has caused a number of landslips, the most recent of which occurred in May 2018 and led to a closure of the A59 for six weeks while initial repairs were carried out followed by a number of months with only one lane open to traffic while detailed site investigations and design work were carried out so that permanent repair options could be established. Work to carry out the permanent repairs was completed at the end of April 2019 followed by a five day closure for the final resurfacing which was completed on Friday 17 May 2019.
- 2.3 As a result of ongoing slope instability, there remains a high risk that there will be further landslips in the future, which could potentially result in long term closures of the route, severely impacting on connectivity between Skipton and Harrogate.
- 2.4 Whilst short to medium term management measures are being undertaken, the County Council recognises that in the longer term there is a need to develop proposals for a permanent solution. This would require a major realignment of the route. As such, improvements to the A59 at Kex Gill are identified within the County Council's Local Transport Plan, Strategic Transport Prospectus and also within the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan.

#### 3.0 Progress Update

- 3.1 The final version of the Outline Business Case was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in January 2019. Following a number of contacts with DfT, confirmation was recently received that the DfT are currently assessing the business case and will provide feedback, though at the time of writing still no feedback has been received. Work continues on the Full Business Case.
- 3.2 A progress update report that also sought approval to continue to progress the scheme at risk was approved by the Executive on the 30 April 2019.

- 3.3 The surveys that are required for the Environmental Impact Assessment which will accompany the planning application are underway. Notice to enter letters were served on the two landowners, tenant and agent to obtain a right of access to carry out the second year of the environmental surveys which commenced in April 2019 and will be complete in September 2019. Officers were unable to reach a negotiated agreement to access the land for the surveys and investigations hence the need to resort to notice to enter letters.
- 3.4 Future meetings are being programmed with the landowners to continue the ongoing development process which is proceeding well, as the scheme design progresses. We are endeavouring to acquire the land for the scheme by negotiation but in parallel we are also developing Compulsory Purchase Orders should these be required.
- 3.5 Further limited Ground Investigation (GI) will be carried out in June 2019 and is required to confirm the ground conditions at the proposed new western subway for the revised PROW and field access route.
- 3.6 Regular discussions are taking place with the statutory environmental bodies (Natural England, AONB, YDNP and RSPB) as the scheme progresses, to deal with any concerns prior to submitting the planning application. Pre-application advice was received from NYCC Planning services on 1 May 2019.
- 3.7 Discussions continue between the various Council teams, Statutory Bodies and the Designers on the structural design elements for the scheme e.g. Underpasses, culverts and retaining walls. A workshop is being held in June 2019 to narrow down the design options.

#### **4.0 Construction phase**

- 4.1 Construction of the scheme is expected to commence in spring 2020 and is estimated to take approximately 16 months though this may alter as the design is developed. Subject to satisfactory progress, it is currently anticipated that the new road could open in the summer of 2021.
- 4.2 Construction of the new road is offline and therefore there will be little impact on the travelling public during the construction works. There will be some disruption during tie in works at each end of the scheme which would be managed with traffic signals to allow alternate traffic movements, however every effort will be made to keep this to a minimum. Only once the new road is open would work on decommissioning the old road commence.
- 4.3 During the construction of the scheme, news of progress on the works and any changes to traffic control will be communicated by press releases, updates on social media and via newsletters delivered directly to local residents in the immediate vicinity of the scheme.

#### **5.0 Recommendation**

- 5.1 Members of the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee note the contents of the report.

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