



## North Yorkshire County Council

### Skipton and Ripon Constituency Committee – 6 September 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. A meeting was held with DfT on 12 July 2019 and positive feedback was received on the Outline Business Case and the value for money as a resilience scheme. DfT has suggested some minor additions and these will be incorporated into the Final Business Case which is currently being developed with a target submission to DfT at end of November 2019.
- 3.2 Surveys and work in connection with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in support of the planning application are continuing eg bat, barn owl, upland wader etc surveys and habitat mitigations.

- 3.3 Some site survey work is underway to collect data in relation to the Sides Roads Order and Compulsory Purchase Order (should this be required). Discussions continue with landowners as it is still hoped to acquire land by agreement.
- 3.4 Further limited Ground Investigation (GI) is ongoing and is required to monitor the groundwater conditions across the site to confirm the drainage design.
- 3.5 Regular discussions are taking place with NYCC Planning Services and the statutory bodies (Natural England, AONB, YDNP and RSPB) and public rights of way user groups as the scheme progresses, to deal with any concerns prior to submitting the planning application in October 2019.
- 3.6 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 was held in June 2019 to narrow down the design options and agree the types of materials that would be suitable for the existing environment.
- 3.7 Work will commence shortly on installation of a trunk telecommunication link by a private undertaker along the existing A59. This is not part of the road scheme but the works will take account of the road proposals and the link will transfer to the new alignment at a suitable point during the new road construction phase.

#### **4.0 Construction phase**

- 4.1 Subject to no public inquiry being required, construction of the scheme is expected to commence in late 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. A 'meet the contractor' event will be organised during the contract mobilisation period (April-May 2020).
- 4.2 Construction of the new road is offline and therefore there will be minimal 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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