

# North Yorkshire Council

## Richmond (Yorks) Area Constituency Committee

17 June 2024

### Highways Works Programme & Delivery, including the A684, Morton Flatts, River Swale Flooding

#### Report of the Corporate Director – Environment

#### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to apprise Members of how flooding issues at Morton Flatts are being addressed alongside the current position on highways matters across the constituency committee area and how they are being addressed.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following discussion at the Member engagement session in December 2023, which was confirmed in the Overview & Scrutiny Committee ACC work request on 29 April 2024, representatives from Highway Operations have been asked to provide information on the above. This report for information to Members breaks down the information requested into a series of subsections as outlined below.

#### 3.0 OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION REQUESTED BY SUBJECT HEADING

##### 3.1 Flooding at Morton Flatts

- 3.1.1 Members will recall the briefing note presented to your committee of 18 March 2024 (Appendix A) which outlined current protocols and procedures relating to when A684 at Morton on Swale, specifically at Morton Flatts was flooded. By way of summary, this included:

- The strategic importance of A684 a part of the key route / critical infrastructure network
- Responsibility for management of the river Swale (a major river) resting with the Environment Agency
- Existing diversion routes (A6055, A61 & A167)
- Acknowledgement of impact of diversion routes on local communities
- The development and introduction of a communications protocol (now in place)
- An outline of the proposed short, medium and longer term proposals

- 3.1.2 By way of update on the proposals:

- Short term – review of permanent signage & barriers – this has now been concluded and resulted in proposals for new and additional signage at Romanby to Warlaby crossroads. At the time of writing this report, signs have been delivered to the area office and are expected to be installed on site during the summer of 2024. A further (verbal) update will be presented on 17 June.
- Medium term – electronic signage - following the success of the electronic road closure/flooding signage on the A684 at Wensleydale, this option is currently being explored. In addition, as part of a wider 'Internet of Things' initiative being progressed by NYC, we are also exploring this avenue regarding telemetry and electronic signage. Ultimately, the aspiration is that we are able to measure the water levels and link this to electronic signs whichever method is adopted. This will be a bespoke

system given the unique nature of how the road floods on Morton Flatts and investigation is currently underway.

- Long term - The Morton Flatts Resilience Scheme report was produced in 2020-21 and identified several options to realign and elevate a section of road. The report would need to be revisited prior to any submission re costs and any recent flooding event updates alongside any further necessary consultation. There is no change to this position at the time of writing this report.

### 3.2 How a decision is taken on which roads are to be repaired and the how priorities are determined.

- 3.2.1 In addition to undertaking Highway Safety Inspections, which are carried out by the area based local highway office teams, we have a policy of regularly surveying the structural condition of the county's roads and footways. We aim to survey the whole road network annually. Our surveys are all industry-accepted methods of highway survey, carried out either by qualified council personnel or by accredited external contractors.
- 3.2.2 Structural condition survey data collected from across the county is then processed and reviewed to identify potential future maintenance schemes. Schemes are selected based upon their position within the lifecycle of the carriageway. North Yorkshire adopts an asset management-led approach to maintaining the county's road network, meaning we look to intervene at the optimum point in the lifecycle of a carriageway with the aim to extend its useable life before more costly maintenance is required. At present, carriageways receive a mix of both preventative and corrective maintenance in order to get the most value for money and to extend their life.
- 3.2.3 Preventative maintenance includes surface treatments which are non-structural and usually less than 20mm thick. These treatments include surface dressing, re-texturing, high friction surfacing and thin micro surfacing (commonly known as slurry sealing). Corrective maintenance consists of structural work to the carriageway and comprises of reconstruction, structural overlays and structural resurfacing. The objectives in using these treatments are to restore the structural integrity and to ensure user safety by preventing further deterioration, restore skid resistance (where a preventative treatment is not feasible) and restore ride quality.
- 3.2.4 Based on the collected survey data, alongside local engineering input, preventative and corrective maintenance schemes are selected and ranked for inclusion on our Executive Member approved Forward Highways Capital Programme. Schemes are then selected from the Forward Programme based on available budgets for inclusion within an annual capital programme for delivery in a specific financial year.

### 3.3 The actual process undertaken for repairing potholes

- 3.3.1 North Yorkshire's Highway Safety Inspection Manual (HSIM) gives guidance to NYC officers regarding types of highway defects and intervention levels for what are regarded as 'actionable defects'. Depending on nature and type of defect, a range of repair options exists from 'contour' patching, to inlay patching to other techniques such as spray injection patching. By way of overview, key components of each process typically involves removing any loose material / detritus from the affected area, applying a bond coat to assist in adhesion, filling the pothole with a suitable material then compacting.
- 3.3.2 The nature and selection of repair method and material will vary. Some repairs may be immediate 'make-safe' actions and can be undertaken by highway officers as well as NY Highways; this might involve cold-lay material if the repair is an urgent safety-critical one. Other repairs might be medium to long term measures until a permanent more widespread solution, such as a resurfacing or patching & surface dressing scheme, can be implemented.

3.4 How Councillors are informed of major roadworks that will impact on their residents, including those that will impact on adjacent and nearby roads in local communities.

3.4.1 There is a multi-stage approach to this. In the first instance, the annual capital programme is considered by the Corporate Director and Executive Member and is available to Members. To supplement this, further engagement is undertaken between area offices and Members through Member engagement sessions, weekly drop-in sessions and other regular informal dialogue between the local area team and appropriate ward member.

- On a scheme-specific basis, Members will receive a copy of notification letters prior to that letter being sent to affected properties and communities. The purpose of this is to ensure Members are aware that there may be some enquiries arising, particularly (but not limited to) whether roads are to be closed. Linked to this, Members are also copied into any temporary road closure Orders for the same reason i.e. early notification / for information.
- In addition, if schemes and projects (not necessarily determined just by scale, but other factors, too) are likely to have a significant impact on local communities, the local team will engage with the Member for those communities impacted by the works. If the works are on a key strategic route or route linking a number of communities, this engagement will be widened as necessary.
- Where works are being proposed or undertaken by a third party, utility company or similar, internal discussion will initially be held between the Network Information & Compliance (Streetworks) team and the local area office(s). Following this, the local team(s) will relay that information to elected Members. Where the works are of significant impact, Members have been (and will continue to be) invited to a programme meeting with the utility company or third party. An example of this was in Hawes, when Yorkshire Water had extensive work planned for the A684 through the town. Historically we have also undertaken public engagement sessions to facilitate wider understanding of such works.

#### **4.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 This report is for information only and reflects current practice and procedure; As such, no alternatives have been proposed, however Members' comments are invited as per the Recommendations section.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report as it provides information only. Any financial implications in relation to the proposals highlighted to address the flooding at Morton Flatts would be considered as part of a review of the proposals.

#### **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report as it provides information only.

#### **7.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 An initial equalities impact assessment form was completed and is included as Appendix B. The assessment of this report concluded that there is no impact on people with protected characteristics.

#### **8.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS/BENEFITS INCLUDING CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

8.1 See Appendix C

## **9.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 The recommendations contained below are to engage with and invite comments from Members of the content of this report, which is in response to Members' request for this information.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 10.1 Committee Members are requested to note the information within the report and offer comments.

### **APPENDICES:**

Appendix A – Briefing note to ACC 18 March 2024: A684, Morton Flatts, River Swale Flooding

Appendix B – Initial equality impact assessment screening form

Appendix C – Climate Change Assessment

**Background Documents:** None

KARL BATTERSBY  
Corporate Director, Environment  
County Hall  
Northallerton  
20 April 2024

Report Author and Presenters: Nigel Smith, Head of Highway Operations and Jayne Charlton Area Manager Area 1 Brompton on Swale & Area 2 Thirsk offices

**Informal Briefing Note for Members of Richmondshire Area Constituency Committee  
A684, Morton Flatts, River Swale Flooding****BACKGROUND**

During storms or periods of heavy rainfall, when the river swale breaches its banks at Morton on Swale the A684 can flood on the western side of Morton Bridge, known as Morton Flatts. When flooding takes place, the road is impassable to traffic. Inevitably due to the A684 being a key route to and from Northallerton linking to the A1M, the employment centre of Leeming Bar Bedale and many villages the closure of the road impacts on many businesses, residents and the wider travelling public.

During the 2023/24 winter period, so far there has been 11 named storms which have impacted on the Country, 5 of which have impacted on North Yorkshire resulting in floods and tree damage across the county. The rains have seen severe impacts not only on the A684 but also on Malton and Norton where continual pumping has taken place to protect the town and its residents. Selby area has also been severely hit by floods with many properties impacted.

Whilst recognise that A684 is a strategic route – thankfully does not directly affect properties.

The River Swale is a major river and therefore the responsibility of The Environment Agency.

The A684 also is impacted by flooding in Wensleydale between the village of Wensley and Hawes from the River Ure. Within the last 2 years this section of the A684 has been closed on 12 occasions.

During the same period the A684 at Morton Flatts has been closed on 5 occasions all of which have been during the 2023/24 winter season. In the last 5 years the road has been closed on 10 occasions.

**Diversion Route and road closure signage**

The signed diversion route for Morton Flatts flooding is via the A6055, A61 & A167 and return. A permanent signage scheme was implemented during 2020 which was partially funded by Councillor Wilkinson's locality budget. When the road floods 'flip type' advanced notification and road closure signs are opened as shown on plans attached.

The signage is regularly ignored by drivers who proceed up to the point of closure, some even breaching the closure. This is particularly evident in the village of Morton on Swale where drivers will turn in private driveways.

Whilst the A6055, A61 and A167 form the signed diversion route, local drivers use the local and minor road network through the villages of Scruton Kirby Fleetham and Great Langton, via the narrow bridge of Langton Bridge. This route is not encouraged and on occasions Langton Bridge has been closed at the same time as Morton Flatts in extreme conditions. Naturally there is concern of the Parish Councils and local residents of the increase in traffic through the villages and the negative impact this has. Social media posts within local groups can also encourage drivers to use the local road network. Whilst the signed diversion is a longer route comparison of travel timings using the signed diversion compared to Langton Bridge route shows that there is very little difference in time to reach destinations either side of the closure. Clearly the signed diversion utilises higher category roads which are considered to be a safer route for all road users.

**Communications**

A protocol of communications has been developed to ensure as far as possible Parish Councils, community groups and the wider travelling public are made aware that the road is closed. Officers have set up an email group to ensure key stakeholders including the NYC Media team are informed of the closure, including any updates and confirmation of the road re opening. The NYC

Website is updated based on this information including social media posts to inform the wider travelling public. Whilst this protocol works well during the normal working week and weekends, it was recognised that this level of communication during the storm over the recent Christmas period was not possible due to out of hours staffing arrangements and the extend of the flooding across the county.

### **Environment Agency Engagement**

The River Swale is a major river and therefore the management of it is the responsibility of the Environment Agency. Regular liaison group meetings take place between the highway authority and the EA to discuss impacts and issues of all rivers within the county. Officers have met with EA representatives to discuss in detail the increased flooding impacts with them.

### **Future Proposals - short, medium and long term**

**Short term** - The Area team are currently reviewing the permanent signage & barriers to try to discourage drivers ignoring closure and diversion route. Improvements are to be implemented in the spring/summer. This includes additional and improved signage at Romanby to Warlaby crossroads .

**Medium term** – electronic signage - following the success of the electronic road closure/flooding signage A684 at ensleydale, the feasibility of a similar system is currently being considered for Morton flatts, - we are actively looking for funding opportunities to introduce this if a system of measuring the water levels can be devised given the unique nature of how the road floods on Morton Flatts.

**Long term** - The Morton Flatts Resilience Scheme report was produced in 2020 – 21 which identified several options to realign and elevated section of road. The report would need to be revisited and costs revised in line with current prices and also taking into account the flooding events that have occurred since the report was written. The report is not a public document and will only be released following close liaison with the Environment Agency and as and when a bid is made for funding to deliver a scheme and would also form part of any public consultation that would take place in advance of any scheme being delivered. Any such scheme would be a Multi £m project and the council are actively looking for opportunities

February 2024  
Jayne Charlton  
Area Manager Areas 1 & 2  
Highways Operations  
Highways and Transportation

Initial equality impact assessment screening form			
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.			
Directorate	Environment		
Service area	Highways and Transportation, Parking Services, Street Scene, Parks and Grounds – Highway Operations		
Proposal being screened	Highways Works Programme & Delivery, including the A684, Morton Flatts, River Swale Flooding		
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Nigel Smith – NYC Head of Highway Operations		
What are you proposing to do?	The purpose of this report is to apprise Members of how flooding issues at Morton Flatts are being addressed alongside the current position on highways matters across the constituency area and how they are being addressed		
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	This report is an ‘information only’ report for members. There are no outcomes other than ensuring that members have received the update on topics they requested.		
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	No		
<b>Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYC’s additional agreed characteristics</b> As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics?</li> <li>Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important?</li> <li>Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to?</li> </ul> <p>If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked ‘Don’t know/no info available’, then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your <a href="#">Equality rep</a> for advice if you are in any doubt.</p>			
Protected characteristic	Potential for adverse impact		Don’t know/No info available
	Yes	No	
Age		✓	
Disability		✓	
Sex		✓	
Race		✓	
Sexual orientation		✓	
Gender reassignment		✓	
Religion or belief		✓	
Pregnancy or maternity		✓	

**APPENDIX B**

Marriage or civil partnership		✓	
<b>NYC additional characteristics</b>			
People in rural areas		✓	
People on a low income		✓	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		✓	
<b>Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts</b> (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	This is a Member information only report. There are no proposals that would impact on people with protected characteristics.		
<b>Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate?</b> (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	No		
<b>Decision (Please tick one option)</b>	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	✓	Continue to full EIA:
Reason for decision	This is a report for information. There are no adverse impact on any of the protected characteristics.		
<b>Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)</b>	Barrie Mason		
<b>Date</b>	3 June 2024		



## Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision-making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance please email [climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk)

### Version 2: amended 11 August 2021

**Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:**

Planning Permission  
Environmental Impact Assessment  
Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact [climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk) for advice.

<b>Title of proposal</b>	Highways Works Programme & Delivery, including the A684, Morton Flatts, River Swale Flooding
<b>Brief description of proposal</b>	Update to Richmondshire ACC on the above
<b>Directorate</b>	Environment
<b>Service area</b>	Highways and Transportation, Parking Services, Street Scene, Parks and Grounds – Highway Operations
<b>Lead officer</b>	Nigel Smith
<b>Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment</b>	
<b>Date impact assessment started</b>	20 May 2024

**Options appraisal**

Were any other options considered in trying to achieve the aim of this project? If so, please give brief details and explain why alternative options were not progressed.

This report is for information only and as such no other options were considered.

**What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?**

Please explain briefly why this will be the result, detailing estimated savings or costs where this is possible.

This report is for information only – as per the main body of the report, there is no impact on budgets, so is cost-neutral.

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p><b>Positive impact</b> (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p><b>No impact</b> (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p><b>Negative impact</b> (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes over and above business as usual</li> <li>• Evidence or measurement of effect</li> <li>• Figures for CO<sub>2</sub>e</li> <li>• Links to relevant documents</li> </ul>	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>	
<p>Minimise <b>greenhouse gas emissions</b> e.g. reducing emissions from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.</p>	Emissions from travel		X		N/A		
	Emissions from construction		X		N/A		
	Emissions from running of buildings		X		N/A		
	Emissions from data storage		X		N/A		
	Other		X				
<p>Minimise <b>waste</b>: Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic</p>		X		N/A			
<p>Reduce <b>water</b> consumption</p>		X		N/A			

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p><b>Positive impact</b> (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p><b>No impact</b> (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p><b>Negative impact</b> (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes over and above business as usual</li> <li>Evidence or measurement of effect</li> <li>Figures for CO<sub>2</sub>e</li> <li>Links to relevant documents</li> </ul>	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
<p>Minimise <b>pollution</b> (including air, land, water, light and noise)</p>		X		N/A		
<p>Ensure <b>resilience</b> to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers</p>		X		N/A		
<p>Enhance <b>conservation</b> and wildlife</p>		X		N/A		
<p>Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of <b>North Yorkshire's landscape</b></p>		X		N/A		
<p>Other (please state below)</p>		X		N/A		

**Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal?** If so, please detail how this proposal meets those standards.

N/A – report for info only

**Summary** Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

Report is for information only, there is a neutral impact.

**Sign off section**

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

<b>Name</b>	Nigel Smith
<b>Job title</b>	Head of Highway Operations
<b>Service area</b>	Highways and Transportation, Parking Services, Street Scene, Parks and Grounds
<b>Directorate</b>	Environment
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Completion date</b>	20 May 2024

**Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature):** Barrie Mason

**Date:** 3 June 2024