

**North Yorkshire County Council****Craven Area Committee****21 September 2017****A59 Kex Gill Realignment – Development Update****Report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services****1.0 Purpose Of Report**

- 1.1 To provide an overview and progress report on the A59 Kex Gill Realignment scheme.
- 1.2 To inform Members of the details of the public consultation.

**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 January 2016 and led to a closure of the A59 for 8 weeks.
- 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. Ongoing monitoring undertaken by Capita on behalf of NYCC has shown surfaces remain in a state of ‘metastability’ (currently stable, but capable of significant disturbance in certain circumstances).
- 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 is likely to be a major realignment of the route. As such, improvements to the A59 at Kex Gill are identified within the County Council’s LTP, Strategic Transport Prospectus and also within the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership’s Strategic Economic Plan.
- 2.5 Improvements to the A59 also form part of a wider long term package of interventions aimed at improving east west connectivity between the East Coast and Humber Ports to Lancashire. These improvements will help to improve journey time reliability and safety across this important corridor.

- 2.6 Since Autumn 2016, WSP (formerly Mouchel, who were acquired by WSP and formally became one company on 1 July 2017) have been commissioned to investigate potential options for the realignment of the A59 at Kex Gill and to develop a business case to enable the County Council to submit a bid for funding to the Department for Transport (DfT) for the delivery of a realigned route.
- 2.7 Early in 2017, the DfT suggested an accelerated delivery programme for the scheme. As a consequence, scheme delivery phases which would normally run concurrently are being run in tandem, and the scheme development window has been reduced from around 6 years to 3. This is an exceptionally challenging timescale, but officers continue to actively manage the programme to seek to ensure scheme development meets the required timetable.
- 2.8 A Steering Group has been established and meets approximately quarterly to provide strategic direction and support for the development process for the scheme. The Steering Group is chaired by Barrie Mason, Assistant Director Highways and Transportation, and includes officer representatives from the County Council, Craven District Council, Harrogate Borough Council, WSP and occasionally a representative from the DfT. County Councillor Stanley Lumley provides local elected County Council Member representation to the Steering Group, with Parish Councillor Christine Ryder providing input from the local community.

### **3.0 Recent progress**

- 3.1 The first stage in developing the project business case is to identify key objectives that any proposed scheme should seek to address. For the A59 Kex Gill realignment these have been identified as follows;
- Improve the resilience of the A59 route between Skipton and Harrogate;
  - Improve safety of road users on the A59;
  - Support the case for east west connectivity;
  - Improve journey time reliability;
  - Maintain the landscape, ecological and historical value of surrounding area;
  - Reduce impact and cost of scheduled maintenance on the A59.
- 3.2 WSP have prepared an Options Assessment Report (OAR) which sets out the issues to be addressed, potential options and consideration of the options on the basis of their ability to meet the scheme objectives and deliver within the timescales and financial envelope available. The OAR has been presented to and considered by the Steering Group and is now in final draft format.
- 3.3 The full OAR is a 110 page document and as such has not been attached as an appendix to this report but is available on request from the Transport Planning Team in BES. It will also be published on the County Council's website.

- 3.4 Through the OAR, 16 potential alignments options were developed. Of these many had similar characteristics which allowed corridors to be formulated based on groupings of similar alignments.
- 3.5 Sifting was then undertaken using the DfT's Early Assessment Sifting Tool (EAST). The EAST enables proposals to be assess using the DfT's Early Assessment Sifting Tool (EAST). The EAST enables scheme proposals to be assessed against the pre-determined scheme objectives (set out in 3.1 above) and within the context of the DfT's five-case transport business case structure. Of the 16 potential options that were suggested, 12 were discounted due to; engineering constraints, environmental constraints, the inability of the alignment to resolve the risks related to landslip, and the likelihood of scheme costs exceeding the funding expected to be available.
- 3.6 Of the alignments that remained, four routes were considered to be the most achievable in terms of delivery. They also offered improved resilience, connectivity, reliability and safety and consequently met the specific scheme objectives, particularly in terms of removing the risk of landslip-related closures of the A59.
- 3.7 The main difference between the remaining options was whether they diverge from the A59 at Kex Gill Farm or further east along the existing A59. In order to enable a better understanding of this, further ground condition and topographical surveys will be undertaken on these options. This information will be critical in being able to narrow down the exact alignment of a preferred option. Therefore, the options that are being considered have been grouped together to fall within what is known as the 'Consultation Corridor'.
- 3.8 This is described as follows in the OAR; 'start at Kex Gill Farm utilising the bridleway to take the corridor along the north edge of the valley beyond where the land slips have taken place before returning to the existing A59 before Blubberhouses.'



**Figure 1 - Consultation Corridor**

- 3.9 The current cost estimates for the consultation corridor options range between approximately £33m and £40m. These figures are excluding optimism bias at 44%. (*Optimism bias is an allowance used by Government is assessing the economic business case for a transport scheme and reflects the degree of uncertainty in cost estimates at different stages in a scheme development. The Kex Gill proposal is currently in the earliest stage of scheme development and as such an optimism bias uplift of 44% has been added to the costs for the business case assessment. As the preferred options develop further and*

*progress through design stages, the scheme costs will be refined and the level of optimism bias reduced. Members should therefore be aware that the current best estimate of the schemes costs is as set out here, but there remains a small risk that the final scheme cost for the options within the consultation corridor could be up to £57m. This level of uncertainty will reduce significantly as ongoing development work is undertaken later this year.)*

- 3.10 In addition to the OAR, an Appraisal Specification Report (ASR) for the project has also been developed. This sets out for Government the approach to the development of the scheme business case, and the technical appraisal methods that will be employed. This has been supplied to the DfT for their consideration and we are awaiting their response.

#### **4.0 Next steps**

- 4.1 Having been agreed by the Corporate Director, BES and the BES Executive Members at their meeting on 25 August, public consultation on the proposed Consultation Corridor alignment began on 11<sup>th</sup> September and will continue through to late October 2017.
- 4.2 As part of the consultation/engagement approach, the rationale for and details of the discounted options will be set out, as will those that are likely to be taken forward as the preferred option, based on the findings of the OAR. Attached as Appendix 1 to this report is the project summary information sheet which has been developed based on the OAR, to be used in public engagement.
- 4.3 Consultation exhibitions are planned to take place within the scheme study area during late September. These exhibitions will be held as follows:

Venue	Date	Time
Skipton Town Hall, Concert Hall	Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> September	10.00 – 14.00 15.00 – 20.00
St Peters Church Hall, Harrogate	Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September	10.00 – 14.00 15.00 – 20.00
Norwood Social Hall, Washburn	Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> September	09.30 – 15.00

- 4.4 Exhibitions will be held over a three day period (21-23 Sept) to include a Saturday and a weekday afternoon and evening to ensure accessibility for all members of the local community. Exhibitions will be run by NYCC officers and consultants from WSP.
- 4.5 In addition to exhibitions, opportunities to respond to consultation will be offered through both paper, and on-line questionnaires on the County Council website. The outcome of the consultation will be fed back to Members once it is known.
- 4.6 Officers continue to keep the local MP, Julian Smith, apprised of scheme development, and have extended information on consultation events through to MP's for the scheme's wider area of influence.

4.7 Alongside the work on consultation, progress will continue to be made on technical aspects of scheme development, including ground investigation, environmental assessment, discussions with key landowners and with statutory bodies. Some elements of this scheme development will facilitate a better understanding of potential scheme costs and will allow improved estimates to be developed.

## **5.0 Financial implications**

5.1 The scheme development work is being funded from existing approved budgets. As the business case and discussion with DfT develops the financial implications for the delivery of the scheme will become clearer.

## **6.0 Equalities implications**

6.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any adverse equalities impacts arising from the recommendations of this report. It is the view of officers that the recommendations included in this report do not have an adverse impact on any of the protected characteristics identified in the Equalities Act 2010. However, please note that that the scheme itself will require a full Equalities Impact Assessment (see Appendix 2).

## **7.0 Legal implications**

7.1 At present no legal implications have been identified. As the scheme development process continues, detailed discussions will take place with the County Council's legal department with respect of the legal implications of options identified for inclusion within the Outline Business Case.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

8.1 It is recommended that Members note the content of the report

DAVID BOWE  
Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services

Authors of Report: Rebecca Gibson

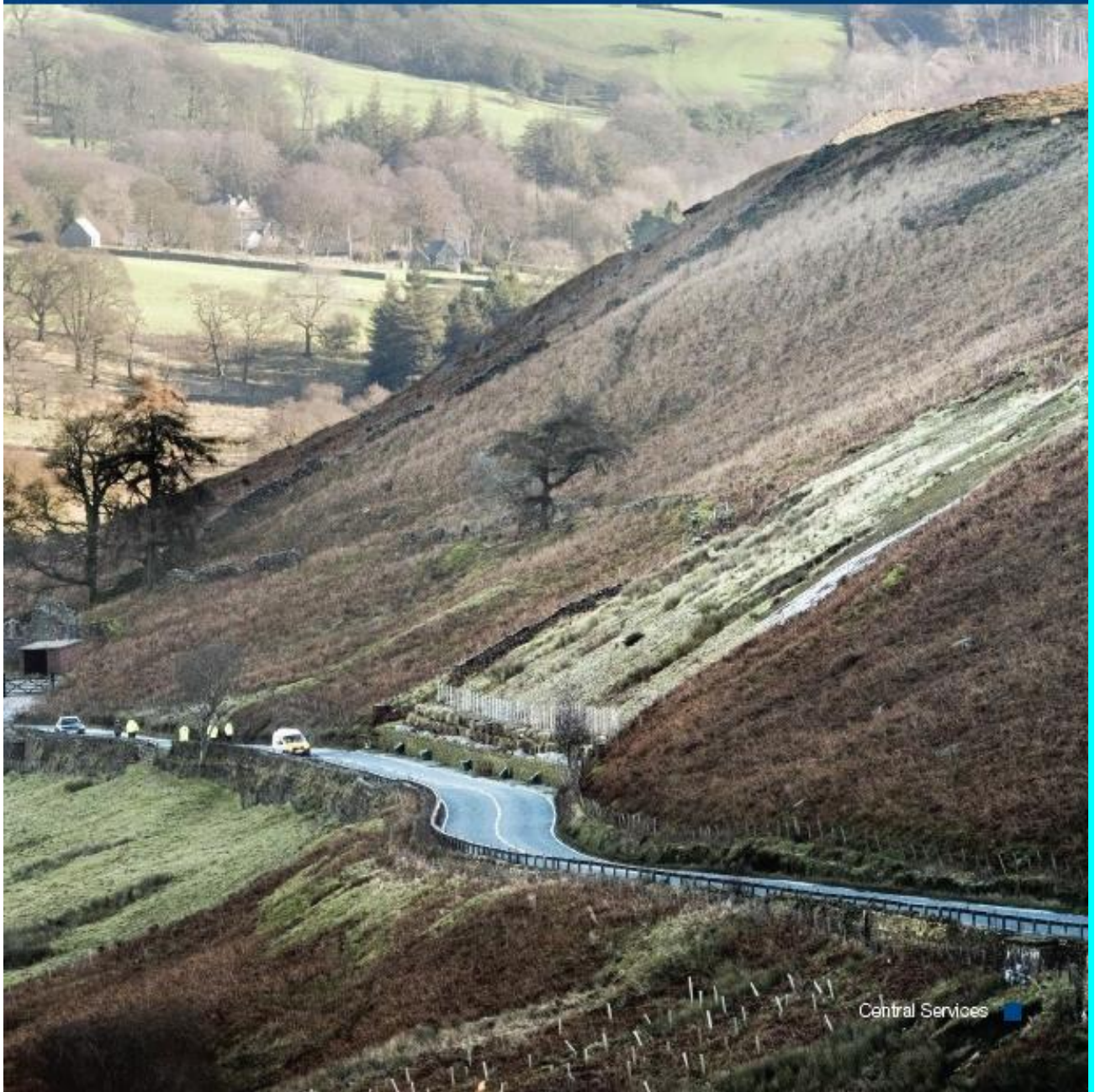
Background Documents: None



North Yorkshire  
County Council

Your views matter

# Consultation A59 Kex Gill Realignment



Central Services

# A59 Kex Gill Realignment

## A59 Kex Gill Realignment

The A59 provides a very important east-west connection in North Yorkshire, linking Harrogate and Skipton and furthermore, provides a route across the north of England, between Junction 31 of the M6 and Junction 47 of the A1(M) (see Figure 1).



Figure 1 - Kex Gill in context

Due to a history of landslips and instability (see figure 2), which have in the past lead to unplanned road closures, North Yorkshire County Council has been working to develop proposals to ensure the future resilience of the route.

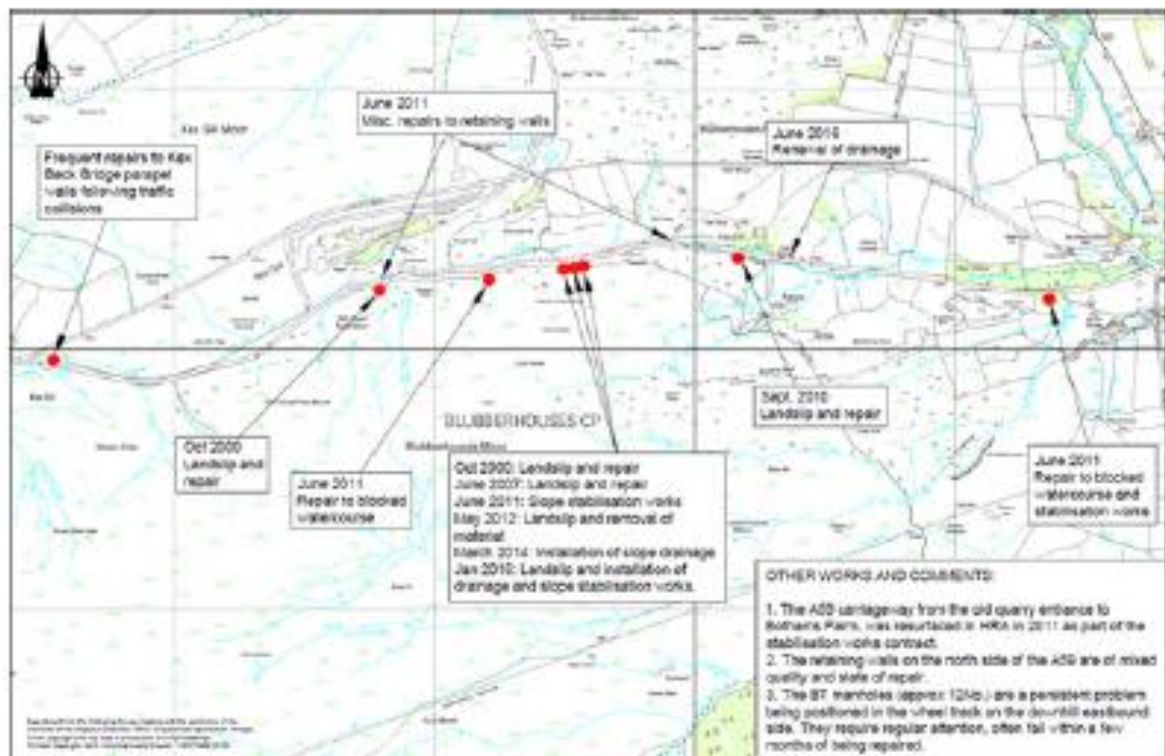


Figure 2 - Location of recent landslips on the A59

### History of landslips at Kex Gill

The most recent landslip occurred in early 2016 and resulted in a road closure of approximately 8 weeks. In the event of a landslip, road users are routed round a 6 mile diversion through towns and areas deemed unsuitable for the volume and nature of vehicles. The available information suggests the primary cause of these landslips is heavy rainfall, coupled with relatively unstable land on the hillside slopes.

Fortunately to date, although a vehicle has been caught in a landslip, there have been no personal injuries as a result of a landslip at Kex Gill. However, without intervention there continues to be a significant risk that road users could be caught in any future landslip, potentially resulting in serious

injuries or fatalities. Following a review of various engineering studies and advice from technical experts, it has been determined that full stabilisation of the area at risk would require extensive and very substantial engineering works and is unlikely to be practicable or environmentally acceptable. Therefore the existing A59 or any online improvement (improvements to the existing highway) would remain susceptible to landslip and related disruption. And as a result, a new section of the A59 must be created to replace the existing road.



### **Development of options for A59 relocation at Kex Gill**

In line with Government requirements, in order to progress the development of a solution at Kex Gill, an Options Assessment Report (OAR) was produced which set out 16 options to be considered and scored. The 16 options broadly sit within eight main corridors (see Figure 3 & 4). (Corridors are strips of land within which an alternative road may sit. Within each corridor there are options for the exact route the road may take, but each corridor will have similar characteristics.)

An appraisal of all the corridors was carried out using an agreed Department for Transport (DfT) approach, in order to assess their merits or otherwise against set criteria (see Figure 5). This included consideration of each corridor's environmental impact, feasibility, buildability (a pre-construction exercise that looks at a design from the perspective of those that will manufacture, install components or any structures and carry out the construction works) and performance against local and national objectives.

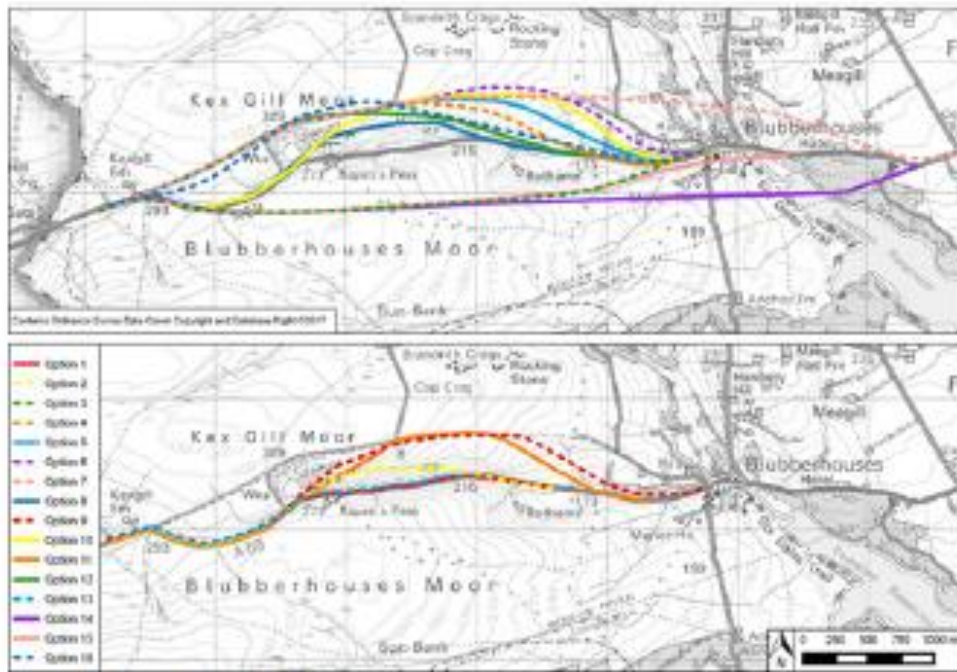


Figure 3 - Potential route options

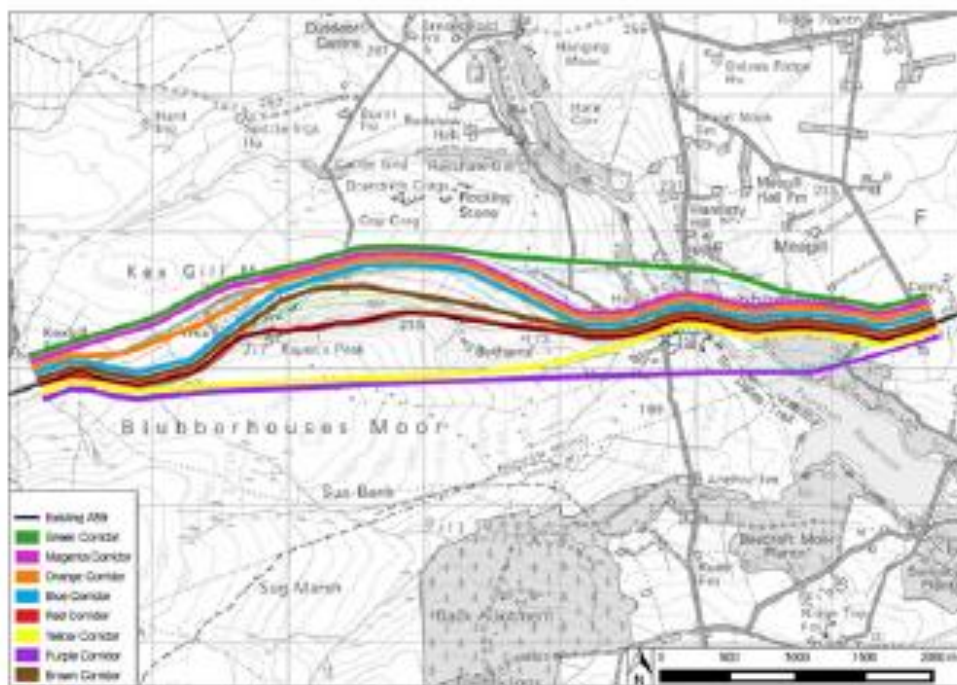


Figure 4 - Routes grouped into 'corridors'

Corridor	Benefits to Government & Wider Transportation Objectives			Specific Scheme Objectives						
	Encourages Economic Growth	Wellbeing, Social & Distribution Impacts	Improves Resilience	Improves Connectivity	Improves Reliability & Safety	Reduces Risk of Landslip	Financial Affordability	Anticipated Construction Timescale	Anticipated Environmental Impact	Land Issues Affecting Engineering Feasibility
Brown	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Purple	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Yellow	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓
Blue	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Orange	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Magenta	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Green	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Figure 5 - Appraisal of corridors against objectives

## Results of appraisal of corridors

The results of the assessment demonstrated the blue, magenta and orange corridors to be the best performing, due to their fit with national and local transport objectives and their significant positive impact in terms of economic growth, wellbeing, and social and distribution impacts (SDIs). They also offered improved resilience, connectivity, reliability and safety and consequently met the specific scheme objectives, particularly in terms of removing the risk of landslip-related closures of the A59. These three corridors also performed best in terms of affordability and demonstrated some of the shortest implementation timescales and the least environmental impact.

The main difference between the blue, magenta and orange corridors is whether they diverge from the A59 at Kex Gill Farm or further east along the existing A59. In order to enable a better understanding of this, further ground condition and topographical surveys will be undertaken in the vicinity of these three corridors. This information will be critical in being able to narrow down the exact alignment of a preferred option.

However, because these three corridors are broadly similar, they have been collated together to form the 'consultation corridor' (see Figure 6). The consultation corridor is as follows: 'starting at Kex Gill Farm utilising the bridleway to take the corridor along the north edge of the Valley beyond where the land slips have taken place to the existing A59 before Blubberhouses.'



Figure 6 - Consultation corridor

## Consultation and Engagement

It is important for the County Council to understand the level of support for these proposals.

Detailed scheme option drawings, further detail of the assessment process, and opportunity to comment on the proposals can be found at [www.northyorks.gov.uk/kexgill](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/kexgill)

In addition, we will be happy to provide information and receive comments by email to [ltf@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:ltf@northyorks.gov.uk)

or by post to: **Kex Gill Project Team, NYCC,  
Highways and Transportation, Northallerton DL7 8AH.**

We will also be holding public engagement events which we hope you may wish to attend. Details can be found [here](#) or below.

Venue	Date	Time
Skipton Town Hall, Concert Hall	Thursday 21st September	10.00 – 14.00 15.00 – 20.00
St Peters Church Hall, Harrogate	Friday 22nd September	10.00 – 14.00 15.00 – 20.00
Norwood Social Hall, Washburn	Saturday 23rd September	09.30 – 15.00

These will be staffed by North Yorkshire County Council's project officers, and representatives from our consultant WSP's specialist consultancy team, who have been helping us to develop the proposals. There will be staff on hand to discuss the proposals, and there will also be a display of plans, and the opportunity to make written and verbal comments on the proposals. The closing date for receiving comments is: 31st October 2017.

We hope you will be able to participate.

### Contact us

**North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD**

Our Customer Service Centre is open Monday to Friday 8.00am - 5.30pm  
(closed weekends and bank holidays). Tel: **01609 780 780**

email: [customer.services@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@northyorks.gov.uk) web: [www.northyorks.gov.uk](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk)

If you would like this information in another language or format please ask us.  
Tel: **01609 780 780** email: [customer.services@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@northyorks.gov.uk)

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<b>Initial equality impact assessment screening form</b> (As of October 2015 this form replaces 'Record of decision not to carry out an EIA')			
<b>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.</b>			
<b>Directorate</b>	Business and Environmental Services		
<b>Service area</b>	Highways and Transportation		
<b>Proposal being screened</b>	Kex Gill Public Consultation		
<b>Officer(s) carrying out screening</b>	Rebecca Gibson		
<b>What are you proposing to do?</b>	To consult the public on proposals for permanent diversion of the A59 at Kex Gill.		
<b>Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?</b>	To give members of the public the opportunity to comment on the option being proposed.		
<b>Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.</b>	No.		
<b>Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYCC'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>			
<b>If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be a significant 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.</b>			
<b>Protected characteristic</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know/No info available</b>
Age		✓	
Disability		✓	
Sex (Gender)		✓	
Race		✓	
Sexual orientation		✓	
Gender reassignment		✓	
Religion or belief		✓	
Pregnancy or maternity		✓	
Marriage or civil partnership		✓	
<b>NYCC additional characteristic</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 (e.g.</b>	No		

disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.					
<b>Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics?</b> Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	None				
<b>Decision (Please tick one option)</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>EIA not relevant or proportionate:</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Continue to full EIA:</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Continue to full EIA:	<input type="checkbox"/>
EIA not relevant or proportionate:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Continue to full EIA:	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Reason for decision</b>	The work being proposed will have wide benefits for residents and visitors and there is no reason for the work programme to cause any negative impact on anybody from within the protected characteristic groups.				
<b>Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)</b>					
<b>Date</b>					