

## North Yorkshire County Council

### Business and Environmental Services

#### Executive Members

17 November 2017

#### A59 Kex Gill Realignment – Development Update

#### Report of the Assistant Director - Highways and Transportation

##### **1.0 Purpose Of Report**

- 1.1 To provide an overview and progress report on the A59 Kex Gill Realignment scheme and the recent public engagement.

##### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The A59 is a key trans-Pennine route 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 eight 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 Local Transport Plan (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 years. This is an exceptionally challenging timescale, but officers continue to actively manage the programme to ensure scheme development meets the required timetable.
- 2.8 A steering group has been established and meets 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 (formerly Mouchel) and a representative from the DfT. County Councillor Stanley Lumley provides local elected Member representation to the steering group, with Parish Councillor Christine Ryder providing input from the local community. Cllr Victoria Oldham has recently been appointed to the Steering Group as the representative for the Washburn ward.

### **3.0 Recent progress**

- 3.1 Following the publication of the draft Options Assessment Report (OAR), and the identification of options within the 'consultation corridor', public engagement was held between the 11 September and the 31 October 2017.
- 3.2 The draft OAR, along with its appendices was published on the County Council's website along with a summary leaflet and also a set of frequently asked questions (FAQ's) developed by the project team.
- 3.3 An online survey was developed and available to complete on the NYCC website.
- 3.4 Progress reports and details of the approach to consultation were brought to the Harrogate and Craven Area Committees, and to the Local Access Forum.
- 3.5 On the 21, 22 and 23 September 2017, public exhibitions were held in Skipton, Harrogate and in the Washburn Parish at Norwood Social Hall. At these events NYCC officers, and discipline project leads from the WSP project team were on hand to answer questions and queries from members of the public, and to give further explanation on the proposals where necessary. There was also the opportunity at these events to complete a paper version of the questionnaire that was available on the NYCC website.
- 3.6 The events were well attended, with over 300 people in total attending over the course of the three days.
- 3.7 In addition, 327 responses were received to the online questionnaire during the engagement period.
- 3.8 Fifteen emailed responses were received, including some from key stakeholders such as Harrogate Borough Council, the Local Access Forum and the AONB.
- 3.9 The consultation period ended on 31 October 2017, and a report setting out the details of the results of the engagement is currently being finalised. However, in broad terms the results were as follows:
- Over 600 people participated in the engagement;
  - Over 90% of respondents support the need for intervention

- A relatively small proportion of responses raised concerns about a variety of factors including environmental constraints, impacts on properties in the vicinity, safety issues, and the need for climbing lanes in the new alignment.

#### **4.0 Scheme design progress**

- 4.1 The information collated through the public engagement events has provided local insight that is invaluable to the Project Team. This information will be used to influence the design and development of the scheme. Similarly meetings with NYCC and external stakeholder specialists are being held, which will feed into the development of the scheme, and ultimately the preferred route of any new alignment of the A59.
- 4.2 Contracts for ground condition surveys have now been let, and an eight week programme of trial pits and bore hole drilling is due to commence imminently. These will provide essential information to supplement the Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR (aerial radar)) surveys already undertaken to establish the ground conditions in the scheme study area.
- 4.3 Environmental constraints and features will also be recorded as part of this process, and similarly, this information will feed into ongoing assessment of the local area to determine scheme design.
- 4.4 The various alignment options that are set out within the consultation corridor are currently being refined and as the preferred options develop further and progress through design stages, and the information as set out above is gathered, scheme costs will also be refined.
- 4.5 It is anticipated that in December 2017, the outline business case will be prepared sufficiently to allow it to be submitted to DfT for consideration in order to progress to full business case stage. Discussion with the DfT about the scheme process and progress are ongoing.

#### **5.0 Next steps**

- 5.1 A report on the responses to, and outcome of the public consultation will be developed and published with a further update report being brought to your next meeting
- 5.2 Discussion with environmental specialists will continue.
- 5.3 Schemes costs will continue to be refined.
- 5.4 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.

## **6.0 Financial implications**

- 6.1 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 more refined. The current cost estimates for the scheme range from £24m to £33m (excluding optimism bias at 44%). As the preferred options develop further and progress through design stages, and as information as set out above is gathered, scheme costs will be refined and are expected to reduce.

## **7.0 Equalities implications**

- 7.1 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, please see Appendix 1. However, it is worth noting that the full Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out as part of the scheme development and planning application.

## **8.0 Legal implications**

- 8.1 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 the Corporate Director Business and Environmental Services (BES) and the BES Executive Members:
- i) Note the content of the report

BARRIE MASON  
Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services

Author of Report: Rebecca Gibson

Background Documents: None

<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 realignment progress update		
<b>Officer(s) carrying out screening</b>	Rebecca Gibson		
<b>What are you proposing to do?</b>	Update BES Executive Members on the latest progress on the Kex Gill realignment project.		
<b>Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?</b>	To keep Executive Members informed of the latest position.		
<b>Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.</b>	<b>No.</b>		
<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		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Disability		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sex (Gender)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Race		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sexual orientation		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Gender reassignment		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Religion or belief		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pregnancy or maternity		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marriage or civil partnership		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>NYCC additional characteristic</b>			
People in rural areas		<input type="checkbox"/>	
People on a low income		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.</b>	<b>No</b>		

<p><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? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.</b></p>	<p><b>No</b></p>			
<p><b>Decision (Please tick one option)</b></p>	<p>EIA not relevant or proportionate:</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Continue to full EIA:</p>	
<p><b>Reason for decision</b></p>	<p>Report is for information purposes only.</p>			
<p><b>Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)</b></p>	<p><i>Barrie Mason</i></p>			
<p><b>Date</b></p>	<p><i>08 November 2017</i></p>			