



North Yorkshire County Council

Skipton and Ripon Constituency Committee – 13 December 2018

A59 Kex Gill Diversion and Coniston Aire Causeway – Progress Updates

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the progress of the A59 Kex Gill Diversion and to address concerns regarding disruption to traffic during the construction phase. The report also provides an update on progress of the Coniston Aire Causeway project.

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 is currently under way and is expected to be completed in early January 2019 with the road fully open to traffic. It will be necessary to return to the site in the Spring to complete the carriageway surfacing which will require a full closure of the A59 for approximately one week.
- 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 Following Executive approval of the preferred route on 24 July 2018 work is progressing on the detailed design of the scheme. Further Geotechnical Investigation has taken place focussing on the alignment of the preferred route and this data will inform the detailed design phase.
- 3.2 Discussions with affected landowners, statutory bodies and non-motorised user (NMU) groups are ongoing and are proceeding well.

- 3.3 The first year of the environmental surveys have been completed and scoping of the second year surveys is being developed in association with the statutory bodies. The surveys are required to address the environmental sensitivities of the area and need to be completed prior to the submission of the planning application which is programmed for October 2019.
- 3.4 We intend to hold some supplier events in early 2019 to raise awareness of the scheme with potential contractors and to gain initial feedback.
- 3.5 A draft Outline Business Case has been submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) and their feedback is awaited. It is currently planned to submit the final version of the Outline Business Case to DfT early in the New Year in order to avoid delays to the scheme programme.

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 Coniston Aire Causeway – Progress Update

- 5.1 Members will recall that a report was presented to the Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee (ACC) on 31 of May 2018 providing details of the feasibility study that had been carried out looking at options to reduce bridge damage and associated traffic disruption associated with the A65 Coniston Aire Causeway. The Committee resolved to formally support the recommendation of the feasibility study which was to pursue Option 5 which is the construction of a multi-span causeway with an estimated cost of £9.5 million.
- 5.2 In light of the feedback from the ACC, the Corporate Director Business and Environmental Services (BES), in consultation with the BES Executive Members, at their meeting of 28 September 2018, approved a recommendation that Option 5, the construction of a New Coniston Aire Causeway at an estimated cost £9.5 million, is taken forward.
- 5.3 The next stages in the project require the final design to be completed and planning consent sought. As the proposal requires significant funding it will be necessary to keep under review any potential funding sources. It will also be necessary to obtain funding before any land which may be needed can be obtained. It could take a year to complete the design, with the causeway option, and land purchase and procurement could be complete within 18 months of obtaining the necessary funding with a construction period of 12 months.

6.0 Recommendation

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

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