



## North Yorkshire County Council

### Skipton and Ripon Constituency Committee – 14 March 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 is currently under way and is expected to be complete by early April 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 Executive approved the preferred route on 24 July 2018. Following this further detailed Geotechnical Investigation was carried out which has confirmed that the preferred route lies in an area where the ground is stable. Detailed design is progressing and the alignment has now been fixed.
- 3.2 Discussions with affected landowners and statutory bodies are ongoing and proceeding well. A workshop session was held with non-motorised user (NMU) groups to look at options for addressing amendments to the public rights of way in the area. These were then considered by the project team and referred to the Steering Group for agreement of the routes to be taken forward. A further meeting was held with the NMU groups in February to report back on the proposed design

which was a variation to one of the routes discussed at the workshop. While the final proposed route strategy was not the NMU groups preferred option it was agreed that it was a workable solution which could be developed further during the detailed design to address some of their outstanding concerns.

- 3.3 The first year of the environmental surveys have been completed and scoping of the second year surveys has been agreed with the RSPB and Natural England. The RSPB complemented the project team on the quality of the first year surveys and reports. The second year surveys will be completed in September 2019 prior to the submission of the planning application which is programmed for October 2019.
- 3.4 A supplier day was held in February which was attended by approximately 20 interested contractors and sub-contractors. A presentation about the proposed scheme was followed by a question and answer session. This was well received and confirms that there is interest in the scheme. Preparation of pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) and tender documents will commence in March 2019 with a view to publishing the PQQ in July 2019.
- 3.5 The final version of the Outline Business Case was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in January 2019 and we are currently awaiting feedback. Work on the Full Business Case will commence in March 2019.

#### **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 Recommendation**

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

Author: Colin Quinn  
Highways & Transportation  
Business and Environmental Services  
North Yorkshire County Council