

New road at Kex Gill opens to traffic in key highways project

The long anticipated new Kex Gill road has finally opened, despite the numerous delays and complications associated with construction through such a challenging and environmentally sensitive site. The majority of the new 4.2-kilometre route at Kex Gill, which has replaced a section of road repeatedly affected by landslips, is the largest highways project ever undertaken by North Yorkshire Council.

The new road provides motorists with a safer, more reliable route between Harrogate and Skipton, and is seen as one of the most strategically important highways in the country linking the east and west of England.

The scheme has been introduced to provide a solution to a long-standing problem of landslips. Since 2000, the previous route of the A59 at Kex Gill has suffered 15 landslips, resulting in more than £6 million of repair costs and repeated closures.

The majority of the construction works are now complete, with only the tie-ins to the existing road network as well as landscaping works still to be finished.

A 30mph speed restriction will be in place while the remaining works are completed. Two of the three lanes of the new section of the A59, which includes a crawler lane for slow-moving traffic, will be available for motorists to use until all elements of the scheme are finished.

More than 12,700 native trees have been planted across the site, alongside extensive wildflower planting, habitat creation, balancing ponds and biodiversity measures designed to support local wildlife. The scheme also includes new routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, together with four kilometres of natural stone walls that complement the character of the Nidderdale National Landscape.

The realigned route has removed traffic from the landslip-prone section of road and provide a safer, more resilient connection for communities, businesses and visitors travelling across North Yorkshire.

The A59 has been identified by the Government as one of the most important strategic routes nationally as it provides a key link running across the country. The road provides a vital east-west connection in North Yorkshire, linking Harrogate and Skipton and running across the North of England between junction 31 of the M6 and junction 47 of the A1(M).

Chief executive announces retirement

The chief executive of North Yorkshire Council has announced he is to retire next year.

Richard Flinton has confirmed that he will step down from the role as the council's most senior officer at the end of March next year following a local government career that has spanned almost 40 years in North Yorkshire.

The recruitment campaign for a new chief executive is due to begin in the coming weeks in what will be a challenging role for the successful applicant as Local government finances nationally continue to be under significant pressure against a backdrop of increasing demand and growing pressure on critical services. But the challenge of heading such a geographically large authority will require a very talented individual.

The legacy left is not insignificant, with North Yorkshire Council being named in February this year as the third most productive local authority in the country by the IMPOWER Index, which measures the performance of councils based on outcomes delivered for every pound spent.

The council was announced as the best performing in the North of England which was seen as support for the move to create a single organisation in the county when the previous eight authorities merged from April 1, 2023.

North Yorkshire Council's children's services have been rated as outstanding by Ofsted inspectors, the highest level that can be achieved. And the council's services for social care for adults were also ranked among the best nationally when a CQC report was published last year. Inspectors awarded a good rating with an overall score of 81, which at the time placed North Yorkshire Council joint third in the country alongside Wokingham Council with about half of all reports published for 153 local authorities in England.

Members are now keen to appoint someone with the experience to work in the new political landscape of the Combined authority and maximise our potential.

Mayor's Draft Local Transport Plan

York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority has launched a consultation on the Mayor's Local Transport Plan for York and North Yorkshire. This plan will set out the long-term vision for improving transport across the region, helping people to travel

more easily, safely and sustainably. Given the complexity of travel needs across the county, it is vitally important that this document is as informed as possible if it is to work for all communities. [Mayor launches consultation on future of transport](#)

The survey is now open until **Wednesday 4 November** and it will take around 10 minutes to complete.

To view the full Local Transport Plan consultation draft document and the survey link, see: [The Mayor's Local Transport Plan consultation - York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority](#)

Residents offered free 'life-saving' blood pressure checks

Potentially life-saving health checks are being offered for free to communities across North Yorkshire after tens of thousands of people in the county are estimated to be undiagnosed with high blood pressure. It is estimated that more than 50,000 adults in North Yorkshire are living with high blood pressure without knowing it, based on data from 2024*.

A blood pressure check can be the first step to preventing heart attacks and strokes. High blood pressure is a major cause of these diseases, but it usually has no symptoms until it is too late.

As part of Blood Pressure UK's Know Your Numbers Week, which is taking place this week (from Monday, September 7 to Sunday, September 13), North Yorkshire Council is working with a range of local services to raise awareness and make blood pressure checks more accessible for residents.

Libraries across the county will loan a blood pressure monitor, which are available all year round to any of their members for free. If you are not a member, it is free and easy to sign up and then ask a member of staff for a blood pressure monitor.

Library locations and opening times can be found at www.northyorks.gov.uk/local-libraries.

Residents can access free blood pressure checks at locations including community pharmacies. More information is available at www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/find-a-pharmacy-that-offers-free-blood-pressure-checks/

And to support Know Your Numbers Week, additional blood pressure checks are available at all of North Yorkshire Council's Active North Yorkshire leisure and wellbeing hubs from September 7 to 13, with the exception of Selby Health and

Wellbeing Hub, where a separate programme is being delivered through the Selby Healthy Hearts Community Champions project. Centre locations and opening times can be found at www.northyorks.gov.uk/active-north-yorkshire/venues

More details about Know Your Numbers Week can be found at <https://www.bloodpressureuk.org/know-your-numbers/know-your-numbers-week/>