

The Northern Echo

NEWS: RICHMOND & THE DALES

North Yorkshire residents cold on plastic snow ploughs



By [Joe Willis](#), Regional
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REG LEAD Residents cold on plastic snow ploughs

PLASTIC snowploughs used in some of the world's coldest environments have been found wanting by snowed in residents of the Yorkshire Dales.

Rural motorists have complained the ploughs leave behind a foot of snow and shiny surface resembling "[Billingham](#) ice rink".

North Yorkshire County Council is investigating after the problem was reported by Upper Dales county councillor John Blackie. Coun Blackie said he had been advised by the council that the plastic ploughs were used in the tundra regions of the world, including potentially Iceland, Canada and Antarctica.

He added: "That they appear not up to the job in the Upper Dales highlights the extreme and absolute climate that the onset of winter visits upon us here on the wild uplands in the border territories of North Yorkshire."

Motorists say the problem has been particularly bad on the Buttertubs Pass between Wensleydale and [Swaledale](#). One motorist reportedly witnessed a snow plough driver exit his cab and swear at the ineffective plough on the front of the vehicle.

Coun Blackie added: "Muker Parish Councillors, a hardy bunch of intrepid adventurers and highly experienced individuals in driving in snowy weather, considered that if this was the best the plastic snow ploughs could do then the Buttertubs would be better left un-ploughed, as it would provide the best opportunity for them to get across the pass."

Coun Blackie said the drivers of the snow ploughs did a great job and were not to blame for the problem. "My understanding is that they are expressing concerns about the effectiveness of the plastic ploughs when compared to the trusty steel versions that have kept our road open here over many years," he said. The councillor said if the pass was not open, residents were denied access to emergency services.

A spokesman for North Yorkshire County Council said: "Our contractor is required to deliver an effective winter maintenance service. We are aware of local concerns about the quality of ploughing in the Buttertubs pass area and we are taking these concerns up with our contractor. Although plastic ploughs are used globally, it is up to our contractor to demonstrate that they can plough these uplands areas effectively."