

# County Council Report from Peter Bellfield.doc

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There is no news or leaks of the Boundary Committee's thinking and we understand that the Minister is continuing with the process even in the current economic climate.

The schools reorganisation, where consultation with parents, governors and staff on the second phase of areas to change to the two-tier system, will shortly get under way. As with the first phase it is proving controversial, particularly with those associated with the middle schools. Also thought is being given to combining the two secondary schools in Felixstowe because one is proving unpopular and changing one into a six-form collage.

The subject of business mileage has had some press coverage recently. This is because I, as Chairman of Resources, Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee, put it on the agenda of the most recent meeting. About two years ago the Committee produce a report on the subject because there had been a significant increase in previous years. In that report we recommended that the Cabinet should implement a 3% per annum reduction in the mileage of the council, and we wished to know if this was being achieved. On discovering that no progress had been made we strongly advised Cabinet that action should be taken at once to reduce mileage covered as we had recommended, particularly in view of the current economic conditions.

Two subjects where the Council has received adverse press comment.

Firstly the advertisement for a Diary Secretary for the Chief Executive. The first that the Leader of the Council knew of this new position was when the press telephoned him. Within half an hour of that call the position was withdrawn as being inappropriate in the current economic climate where saving money is a priority.

Secondly a training programme for 400 managers at the Council. This programme, which lasts for seven days in three sessions, is designed to improve the management and leadership qualities for the senior and some middle management staff. It is within the training budget for this year. It is not taking place at a hotel or conference centre, but in a village hall with a light lunch provided by SCC Catering. To my mind this should be money well spent and I am most surprised at the adverse comment.

The Policy Development Panel on Heavy Goods Vehicles, upon which I sat, reported to Cabinet last month, and I am pleased to say that they accepted our recommendations.

Among the more significant were that they would recommend to planning authorities that permission should not be granted for an application which will generate HGV's in rural areas away from primary roads unless there is an over riding need for it to be in the country, such as agricultural needs.

HGV operator's licences should be issued by the local licensing authority, the district council, and not the Traffic Commissioners, to ensure that they are not granted on sites which are adjacent to unsuitable roads. Government will be lobbied for this change.

A review is to be undertaken of HGV road use in an area bounded by the A140, the A12 and the A1120 to see whether a policy adopted by Leicestershire CC for HGV management can be applied. This might include legally enforced designated roots to and from particular sites and the down grading of road classification, A to B in the case of the A1120 and B to C with such roads as the B1078 etc. to discourage their use by HGV's.

To continue the work being undertaken with the Ministry and Somerset CC for a suitable sat-nav system for HGV's. The County has been leading the way in the country in this work.

To look at the merits of banning HGV's overtaking each other on parts of the A12 and A14.

A report on the progress made on the recommendations will be made to Cabinet in six months time.

As always please contact me if there are any matters where I can help.

It just remains for me to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Peter Bellfield

17<sup>th</sup> November 2008.