

Report for Brent Eleigh PC 12/7/18

School bus cuts approved by scrutiny committee, policy to go ahead

Last month the cabinet decided to go ahead with these changes (free bus to nearest school rather than to catchment school) but our group successfully “called in” this decision, largely on the basis that the council had not shown that it would save any money. Scrutiny committee had to then consider the policy. They decided it was all fine and nodded the policy through. So it will come into effect, phased in for several years beginning with those with children who start school in Sept 2019.

New broom at county

Colin Noble, the leader of Suffolk Conservative group and hence of the county council, was voted out recently by Conservative councillors and replaced by Cllr Matthew Hicks. Cllr Hicks has promised a new more “inclusive” approach, including working with the opposition on occasion, which is to be welcomed. He has replaced some of the cabinet. The biggest change is that the cabinet member for highways Jane Storey (who was deputy leader) has been replaced by Mary Evans, new deputy leader. So far Cllr Evans has shown herself to be far more pro-active and responsive than her predecessor.

Cllr Evans has launched a major review of the way highways in Suffolk are maintained.

Areas due to be reviewed include:

- * Existing policy which determines how resources are deployed, known as the Suffolk Highway Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP);
- * How the location of potholes on the road is considered alongside the width and depth, recognising the impact they can have on cyclists and motorcyclists;
- * **How utility companies coordinate roadworks and are held to account for their actions**

*** How residents, councillors and businesses are informed about road repairs and how they can access information;**

* Financial control and contract management;

* How town and parish councils can work closer with Suffolk Highways to make the best use of their local knowledge, skills, money and time.

Motion for council on cycling

I am proposing a motion to the next full county council next Thursday which asks the council to commit to spending a minimum of 5% of its annual transport budget on cycling infrastructure. I hope it will win the Conservative administration's support since they had pledged to build cycle paths in their manifesto.

Clay Lane path between Brent Eleigh and Lavenham

Cllr Marshall has told me about the issues here – overgrown hedges and deep ruts that make it impossible to cycle, even with a mountain bike, and very difficult to walk. This is a vital link for people in the village to Lavenham so I am keen the county sort it. Karen will walk the route to note exactly where the problems are, report that to me and I will forward on to Highways to ask them to do something to clear it and make it walkable.