

# **Boston Bypass Pressure Group**

**Christine Basu, Secretary, 63 Spilsby Road, Boston PE21 9NX**

## **AN OPEN LETTER TO CLLR. MARTIN HILL, LEADER OF LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, IN RESPONSE TO THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REPORT.**

7<sup>th</sup> April 2005

Dear Cllr. Hill,

Following the publication of the Audit Commission's Corporate Governance Inspection Report on Lincolnshire County Council, and the subsequent resignation of the Leader and his executive, my initial reaction was that just maybe, things might now change.

Here was an opportunity for the LCC to prove it's commitment to change; to make amends to the people of Lincolnshire for its failure to work on their behalf, rather than the interest of their own political party and/or personal ambition; and an opportunity to finally disassociate itself from the taint of an existing culture of bullying, intimidation and arrogance a culture which, has sadly disseminated down to many of the Borough Councils.

How naïve I was! Within seven days the Tory ruling group had re-elected themselves, albeit with a few changed faces, but to those of us out in the community, it just means more of the same.

Where was the humility we were looking for? Where was the apology we were looking for? And where, oh where, was the commitment to put the people of Lincolnshire first instead of Party Politics?

We have been badly let down; the same attitudes of arrogance and denial still prevail. By not selecting a cross-party executive in which solutions to the Council's problems could have been thrashed out in partnership, you have chosen the same old path of inter party conflict. You have missed the chance to prove to the people of Lincolnshire that you are willing and able to change.

East Lincolnshire was identified in the Audit commission report as having suffered more than most under the long tenure of the Tory led LCC.

As part of East Lincolnshire the people of Boston want to know why their views are consistently ignored? We want to know why Boston is always left at the bottom of the list whilst, other towns and villages acquire the developments and road infrastructure required to ensure a vibrant, healthy future for their communities?

The most striking example of this has been the refusal of the LCC to recognise and accept the need for a resolution to the chronic traffic congestion and resulting problems in and around Boston.

In early 1990 a full traffic survey was carried out and an A52 Bypass for Boston was included in the 1992 Local Transport plan. If the need was recognised then, 15 years ago, how great must the need be now! It is also true that over the past 30 to 40 years a Bypass for Boston has been promised by successive administrations, only to be scuppered for nebulous reasons.

There has been, and continues to be, significant demographic change in this area which has had a major impact on the infrastructure of our community.

Yet still no major road initiatives have been forthcoming. No wonder the people of Boston feel let down!

Boston is geographically unique and is second only to Lincoln in its size and economic importance. Four major roads merge to cross the river bridge in the centre of town and is the only gateway to the East Coast. This is a major bottleneck to all traffic coming from the North, South, and West. Surely this alone merits a major scheme? Unique problems demand unique solutions! We need Councillors who are both visionary and brave to find these solutions – who have the backbone to stand up for their constituents!

The obvious failure to address this situation is having a significant impact on the economy of Boston and the surrounding areas. East coast tourism undoubtedly is being affected and the daily lives of residents blighted by traffic jams, noise, light and air pollution.

The Borough and County Councils talk incessantly about economic development and regeneration, with numerous plans afoot to boost the economic health of our town. Two of these projects the Dock Link road and the Southern Economic corridor are in an advanced stage.

Although these two projects are not intended (so we are told) to address the traffic congestion and are described as economic corridors, they will benefit only a few businesses and have a negative impact on the rest of the town. The effect will be to funnel even more traffic onto already congested roads, through residential areas ill equipped to sustain the weight and volume of haulage traffic. The vast majority of the community are against these developments, not only because of their position but because these projects are in conflict with the building of a Boston Bypass. Yet again, however, our views are being ignored.

A huge opportunity is being missed here! If the Southern Link Road was built 1 mile further out from its present site, it could form the first part of the Bypass, which when extended and completed would negate the need for the Dock Link Road. Surely this makes more economic sense and would satisfy the aspirations of everyone.

Boston needs a major road scheme which will meet the needs of all in our community and not the piece meal solutions which have so far been on offer - solutions which only benefit the few, at the expense of the majority. Unless the road infrastructure of Boston is modernised, no amount of economic development can succeed. The economic prosperity of south East Lincolnshire is dependent upon it.

Despite a high profile campaign by the Boston Bypass Pressure Group, representing and supported by the people of Boston, there is no mention of a Bypass for Boston in the recently published consultation document for the July 2005 Local Transport Plan.

We have been told that to be included in this plan we must produce evidence to support its inclusion. As a result of local pressure the LCC have allocated £390,000, towards the cost of a full traffic survey, with a view to inclusion in the 2010 Local Plan! That's too late! We know that it is not a legal requirement to have undertaken a full traffic survey prior to inclusion, so we demand to know why Boston has to jump through all these hoops?

We would also like to know how many of the towns and villages included in the July 2005 Transport plan, have had a full traffic survey undertaken? Very few, if any, we suspect! Why has Boston's chronic Traffic Problem been continuously ignored?

What alternative agenda is going on here? Will things ever change whilst you are in charge? I would like to think they could but only if the ruling group whoever they are now, or in the future, are prepared to take up the challenge. It is not enough for our local representatives to tell us, the people, that they support our aspirations and then to remain silent whilst those aspirations are trampled upon.

We know that many good men and women go into political service but we also know that “ for evil to prevail requires only that good men remain silent.” ( Edmunde Burke )

Given the recent history of the LCC it is little wonder that so many people view Lincolnshire’s political future with cynicism and distaste. You have done nothing to prove to us that this is a new beginning for Lincolnshire.

The Boston Bypass Pressure Group on behalf of the people of Boston, challenge the LCC to put on hold all proposed road developments in South Lincolnshire, including the Boston Dock Link Road and Southern Economic Corridor, until a full examination of the decisions and their processes has been undertaken. This should be executed by a cross party committee and must be seen to be open and transparent.

We also require that the 2005 Local Transport Plan has the inclusion of a major road scheme for Boston.

If this plea falls on deaf ears then we know without a doubt that Lincolnshire County Council can expect to retain its reputation as being one of the worst in the country and the people of this county will not forgive you.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Basu,

cc. Jan Didrichsen, Chief Executive, LCC.  
The Editor, The Lincolnshire Echo.  
The Editor, Boston Target.  
The Editor, Boston Standard,