

## **Report to Council**

**Subject:** Petitions Scheme – Friends of Ethel Avenue

**Date:** 8 April 2015

**Author:** Service Manager Elections and Members Services.

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

To present a petition and advise on the procedure that Council needs to follow under the Council's Petitions Scheme in respect of large petitions, and to provide information specifically on the petition entitled "Petition for the protection of Public Access to the full length of Ethel Avenue, Mapperley, Nottingham"

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Council has received a petition from the "Friends of Ethel Avenue"  
The petition contains 163 signatures and reads as follows

*"We the undersigned do hereby petition Nottingham County Council, Gedling Borough Council and whoever else it may concern to ensure continued access for walkers and cyclists (as established by over 30 years of continued and well documented public use), to the grassed footpath section of Ethel Avenue between Emmanuel Avenue and Kenrick Road which has been unofficially blocked since July 2013*

*In light of a current residential planning application which threatens continued public access to the route we also strongly urge Nottingham County Council to PRIORITISE the decision regarding the recent application to have this section of Ethel Avenue registered as a public bridleway, in order to protect this much valued local route."*

- 2.2 The Council adopted a petitions scheme in 2010. The scheme states that a petition of this nature containing over 140 signatures shall trigger a "Petition for debate" as a local issue affecting no more than two wards within the Council's area. The petitions scheme requires the issue to be debated by a meeting of Council.

- 2.3 The petitions policy gives the petition organiser up to five minutes to address the meeting in order to present the petition.
- 2.4 After the lead petitioner has been given the opportunity to address Council, members will be given the opportunity to debate the issues raised by the petition.
- 2.5 At the conclusion of the debate the Council has to decide how to respond to the petition and the following courses of action may apply:
- Council can, if appropriate, instruct that the action the petition requests is carried out;
  - Council can ask for further investigation into the matters the petition raises, for example by a relevant committee;
  - Where a decision of the Executive is required Council should decide on whether or not to make a recommendation to inform the decision;
  - Where Council is minded to make a recommendation to another body because it is outside of the scope of Gedling Borough Council's work, then Council will consider making representations on the petitioner's behalf to that body. For example where the petition relates to policing or crime matters it may be necessary to make representations to the Police service. The petition scheme points out that the council works with a large number of local partners and where possible would work with those partners to respond to the petition;
  - Council may recommend no further action is taken

#### Further information

- 2.6 To assist Council in debating the content of the petition the following material facts are known:
- A planning application has been lodged with Gedling Borough Council for the residential development as outlined in the petition. This application is a completely separate to the petition and will be determined accordingly.
  - Authority has been given by the Portfolio Holder for Environment to dispose of the strip of land referred to that is in the Council's ownership. This sale is currently pending.

An accompanying letter providing further information from the petition organiser is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

### **3. Proposal**

It is proposed that Council should debate the contents of the petition as required by the petitions scheme contained within the constitution.

### **4. Resource Implications**

There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

### **5. Recommendations**

Council is recommended to:

- 1) Decide on whether, if appropriate, any recommendations are made to the Executive or another committee or if any other is carried out; and
- 2) Decide on whether, if appropriate, any recommendations need to be made to any partner organisations that the Council works with.

### **6. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Letter accompanying the petition and the petition cover sheet.