

# HEDGE END, WEST END AND BOTLEY LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

Monday 11 June 2018

## DECLARATION OF WILDERN LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

### Report of the Local Area Manager

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#### Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that

- (1) Delegated authority is given to the Hedge End Town Council (HETC) to declare Wildern Nature Park as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) by Members.
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#### Summary

- LNRs are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally
- The power to declare such areas lies with the principal local authorities which includes Eastleigh Borough Council
- The purpose of this report is to seek the approval from Members to delegate the powers to the HETC to declare Wildern Nature Park a LNR

#### Statutory Powers

Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

#### Strategic Implications

1. This report relates to the Corporate Plan objectives of improving Green Infrastructure and Enabling Health and Wellbeing; it also follows 'Local First' principles of supporting decision-making at a local level. The designation detailed in the report will confirm robust and locally-controlled management arrangements for Wildern Nature Park and help promote it to more residents who will gain health and wellbeing benefits from walking and learning about the Park and its ecology. Current and any future new members of the Friends Group will also gain health and wellbeing benefits from volunteering in its management.

## **Introduction**

2. There is a proposal to upgrade the Wildern Nature Park to a LNR.
3. The land concerned is owned by HETC who would be fully responsible for the management and maintenance of the LNR.
4. The proposal for an LNR was promoted by “Friends of Wildern Nature Park”. This is a community group comprising over 100 residents. The intention is for the Town Council to draft an agreement with the Friends of Wildern Nature Park Group defining responsibilities for each party along with the aims and objectives of the management plan.
5. Eastleigh Borough Council is required to delegate the power and authority to the Town Council in order for a LNR to be declared by the HETC.

## **LNRs and the benefits of designation**

6. LNRs are for both people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally. They offer people special opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it.
7. Declaring this area as a LNR will allow for priority habitats of purple moor grass, rush pasture and deciduous woodland in the nature park. There could also be provision for a central walking track.
8. The delegation of the designation power to HETC is a very clear signal to the local community of the Council’s commitment to nature conservation. The LNR will also serve to protect the Wildern Priority Biodiversity Link as outlined in the Eastleigh Borough Council Biodiversity Plan.

## **The Process of Designation**

9. LNR is a statutory designation. The process is relatively straightforward and inexpensive. The applying body must confirm:
  - a) its legal interests in the land;
  - b) it will manage the land with the conservation of nature as a priority concern.
10. In order for HETC to declare the site as a LNR this power must be delegated to them by a principal local authority under s21 of National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. HETC are said to have already agreed in principle to make a similar resolution to accept this delegation should Members approve the recommendations in this report.
11. The power to declare Local Nature Reserves was delegated by Cabinet to Area Committees at the Cabinet meeting on 6 September 2007 where it was agreed that “The process of declaration is relatively straight forward with proposals being approved by the relevant Local Area Committee”.

12. Once recommendations have been approved from both the Borough and the Town Council, EBC and HETC can then enter an agreement under s101 of the Local Government Act 1972 for the scheme of delegation of these powers to the Town Council.

### **Financial Implications**

13. There are no financial implications arising from this decision.

### **Risk Assessment**

14. There are no significant risks to the Council associated with the approval of the recommendation within this report.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

15. The Equality Act is not relevant to the decision in this report as the decision does not relate to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, or fostering good relations between different people. An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out.

### **Conclusion**

16. Members are asked to delegate the authority to HETC to give them the ability to declare Wildern Nature Park as a LNR

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Appendices Attached: 0

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D**

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.

None.