Petition – Clay Lane Link Road

Recommendation to Council:

Councillors are asked to debate the subject matter of a petition and to indicate to the petition organiser what action the Council intends to take.

Reason for Recommendation:

To comply with the requirements of the Council’s adopted Petition Scheme.

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Council of the receipt on 23 September 2015 of a petition which has attracted, as at that date, a total of 877 signatures from people who live, work or study in the Borough. The petition states as follows:

“We, the undersigned, wish to register our objections to the Clay Lane Link Road (CLLR), as currently proposed, as it will have a significant adverse impact on many thousands of Guildford residents (as highlighted on the issues page of this petition).

We feel that this CLLR project must be considered in the context of a long-term and sustainable transport solution for Guildford, focussing on any planned improvements to the A3 through Guildford by Highways England.

We ask that Guildford Borough Council delay making any decisions or submitting any related planning applications until the recommendations proposed by Highways England can be taken into account.”

1.2 The petitioner organiser’s supporting statement accompanying the petition reads as follows:
“Our key objections are on the grounds of:

**Greatly increased risk of flooding** in Jacobs Well, in Guildford and beyond as the proposed road goes across the designated flood plain and water table close to Jacobs Well;

**Much increased traffic** (especially HGVs through both Jacobs well and Burpham plus the knock-on effect on surrounding roads (such as Salt Box Road, the A320, Jacobs Well Road and Blanchard’s Hill);

**Much increased levels of pollution** – air pollution (increased nitrogen dioxide levels) noise pollution (due to increased traffic and HGVs); and light pollution (as the proposed roundabouts and maybe roads will be illuminated). Currently, by design, Jacobs Well has no street lighting;

**Increased risk of accidents**, especially as Clay Lane currently has a 7.5 tonne weight limit and has 2 significant bends (not really suitable for HGVs to pass), with the proposed new roundabout very close to the bend near to Jacobs Well. Also pedestrian/cycle access across any new roads will be needed, especially for children walking to school in Burpham; and

**Erosion of the protected Green Belt and environment.** The proposed road will go across the Green Belt with all the knock-on implications to openness, the environment, conservation and wildlife.

Although we accept that access onto Slyfield Industrial Estate (SIE) needs to be improved we feel that other less intrusive and dangerous options should be (re)considered – options that will have less direct impact on the residents of Jacobs Well and Burpham. Namely improving the A320/Moorfield Road access; or considering access via the GBC Woking Road Depot (as metalled roads into SIE already exist; or considering a more direct option or route into SIE from existing roads. We understand that Highways England (HE) are currently looking at the A3 and the related issues with Guildford – should not any significant new road affecting the infrastructure of Guildford be considered in association with the HE studies?

As you can see from the attached petition (handled by Jacobs Well Residents Association (JWRA) and Burpham Community Association and supported by Worplesdon Parish Council), the strength of local feeling against the proposed route is high, especially in Jacobs Well where 638 people have signed the petition (with 239 people signing in Burpham).

Breaking this down, of the 503 residential properties in the Jacobs Well Ward, 417 (82.9%) were canvassed for their opinion (the remainder being unavailable, on holiday or the properties being empty) and of these 417 properties, 403 were opposed to the planned route. This equates to a 96.6% opposition from properties canvassed in Jacobs Well – a staggering and overwhelming response that cannot be ignored”.

1.3 Under the terms of our adopted petition scheme, the Council is invited to consider and respond to the petition.

2. **Strategic Priorities**

2.1 Formal consideration by the full Council of proposals contained in a petition is consistent with the Council’s desire to be open and accountable to its residents and to deliver improvements and enable change across the Borough.
3. **The Council’s Petition Scheme**

3.1 The Council’s adopted petition scheme provides that where a petition contains more than 500 signatures, it will be referred to the full Council for debate. The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at the meeting.

3.2 The petition scheme states that our response will depend on what a petition asks for, but may include one or more of the following:
   - taking the action requested in the petition
   - considering the petition at a meeting of the Council or Executive
   - holding an inquiry into the matter
   - holding a public meeting
   - holding a meeting with petitioners or the petition organiser
   - undertaking research into the matter
   - writing to the petition organiser setting out the Council’s views about the request in the petition
   - referring the petition to one of the Council’s scrutiny committees for consideration

**Procedure for dealing with the petition at the meeting**

3.3 Under the Council’s petition scheme, the petition organiser is given a period of up to five minutes to speak to the subject matter of the petition at the meeting. Councillors will have an opportunity to ask questions of the petition organiser before the formal debate on the petition.

3.4 In accordance with the rules of debate in Council Procedure Rule 15 (a), at the start of the debate, a motion as to how the Council should respond to the petition should be moved formally and seconded in the usual way. Any such motion may be subject to amendment. The motion will be set out on the Order Paper, which will be circulated on the day of the meeting. After the debate and before a final decision or vote is taken on the Council’s response to the petition, the petition organiser will be granted a right of reply for a further period of up to five minutes.

3.5 Councillors’ comments during the debate shall not exceed five minutes in length, although the proposer of the motion will have up to ten minutes.

4. **Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the Council's formal consideration and response to the petition.

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 Under the Council’s petition scheme, the Council is obliged to debate the issues raised in the petition and to pass a resolution in response.

6. **Human Resource Implications**

6.1 There are no direct HR implications arising from the Council’s formal consideration and response to the petition.
7. **Background papers**
   - Letter dated 23 September 2015 and accompanying petition from Mr Robert Clark (Petition Organiser)
   - [Clay Lane Link Road - Report to Executive 28 October 2014 (Item 5)]
   - [Adopted Petition Scheme]

8. **Appendices**
   None