

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

WELSH HARP JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

28 October 2004

REPORT NO : /2004 FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

FOR INFORMATION

NAME OF WARD:
Welsh Harp, Dollis Hill, All

WELSH HARP RESERVOIR MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 This report presents progress on the Welsh Harp Reservoir Management Plan and related issues. The Welsh Harp Reservoir Management Plan is a joint Management Plan between the three main land-holding and land-managing organisations in the vicinity: Brent Council, British Waterways, and the London Borough of Barnet.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 [Members are asked to note the report and that officers will be completing the remaining stages of the Local Nature Reserve designation.](#)

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None specific, but some of the priorities identified in the Management Plan will require additional resources if they are to be implemented in the future. For Brent Council Parks Service, the Management Plan is implemented and improvements programmed via the Brent Parks Service Parks Strategy, and Operational Plan. Thus implementation is partially dependent upon revenue and capital budgets for grounds maintenance and for parks management. The Parks Service pursues other sources of finance and opportunities for partnership working that may become available.
- 3.2 Local Nature Reserve: The costs associated with the preparation of the Designation and the publication of the Public Notices has been provided for in the Brent Parks Service 2004/5 revenue budget. That expenditure had been programmed by the Parks Service for the 2004/05 financial year (but implementation is dependent on progress as noted below). Once the Local Nature Reserve has been designated, it is not expected that the Local Nature Reserve will require any additional finance over and above the current financial arrangements. However, the designation may provide opportunities for grant applications.

4.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None specific.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Welsh Harp Management Plan co-ordinates current environmental works in the Reservoir area, and highlights works that are a future priority.

5.2 The designation of the Local Nature Reserve will help to protect the wildlife of the Reservoir area and the interpretation of the biodiversity interest.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) and previous legislation, the land owners / managers are required to obtain consent from English Nature before undertaking management or other works on the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). CROW increases the responsibility on the land owners to improve the management of SSSIs. The Act also encourages land owners to produce Management Plans for the SSSI, which when approved by English Nature, enable the carrying out of the management works specified in the Management Plan. This can reduce the administrative problems inherent in having to obtain consent for each individual item of management work.

6.2 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949: This Act enabled the designation of the proposed Local Nature Reserve at the Reservoir.

6.3 DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None specific.

7.0 DETAIL

Welsh Harp Management Plan

7.1 The Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan is kept under review by officers of the land owning and land managing organisations. An annual review is undertaken in approximately July each year, and then reported to Committee for the Committee's recommendations. Since 2001, when the CROW Act came into force, officers have included in the Management Plan process the additional responsibilities detailed in the CROW Act.

- 7.2 The Management Plan was signed by English Nature on 15 May 2003. That version of the Management Plan was dated 16 December 2002 (Part A) and 12 June 2001 (for the Part B – Description). Subsequently, the Management Plan was amended by the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee on 9 December 2003 (with both Parts of the amended version of the Management Plan bearing the date of 10 November 2003). English Nature have indicated that for minor changes to the Management Plan, there is no need to seek their formal consent, though an electronic copy of the amended version has been deposited with English Nature.
- 7.3 Following the current review of the Management Plan, the new revised version is currently dated 6 September 2004. All the versions of the Management Plan are either available on the internet (or by e-mail from the Environmental Policy Officer: see 8.0 Background Information) at www.Brent.gov.uk/parks (from there go to the 'Brent Biodiversity Action Plan homepage and then navigate via the Brent Reservoir Action Plan). A map of the zones is also provided on the internet; and a copy of the map is also attached to this report.
- 7.4 To increase accessibility to the Management Plan and to save resources, the Management Plan has been made available on the internet. Hard copies have not been provided with this Committee report, as each version of the Management Plan runs to approximately 70 sides of A4. However, the main changes have been summarised below to facilitate effective review by the WHJCC.
- 7.5 Officers of the three land holding organisations and of other land managing organisations met on 2 September 2004 to discuss the Management Plan (and outstanding issues of the Heritage Lottery Award). The meeting considered the annual review of the Management Plan; and the management work itself. Management and enhancement works that are not currently undertaken were prioritised with a view to seeking potential finance or other resources for their implementation.
- 7.6 The significant changes to the Management Plan and/or priorities for action, review or resources in addition to continuing current works, are summarised below as referenced to the zone and recommendation, or section and reference in the Management Plan. Inclusion in the list below does not necessarily imply that resources are available to implement the works:
- 7.6.1 Zones 1/2: 3: British Waterways to re-investigate the resources available for monitoring the accumulation of alluvium in the Reservoir.
- 7.6.2 Zone 3: 4: Review possible removal of alluvium or reduction of alluvium accumulation in relation to the West Hendon Regeneration Project.
- 7.6.3 Zone 3: 6. Review opportunities of rubbish clearance in the northern marsh (Barnet).

- 7.6.4 Zone 4B: 2: On-going management of willows in the eastern marsh, (Barnet).
- 7.6.5 Zone 5A: Grassland management works including the reduction in width of wide paths and the control of young Oak trees, to increase the grassland habitat available for wildlife. (Barnet).
- 7.6.6 Zone 5B: Grassland management: control of young Oak trees. (Barnet).
- 7.6.7 Zone 6A: Grassland management. (Barnet).
- 7.6.8 Zone 7C: Brent Parks Service will remove the old benches adjoining the old playground during the winter of 2004 (after the vehicle restrictions to the Open Space have been removed for the winter). The provision of dog waste bins is being investigated.
- 7.6.9 Zone 6D: Marshland: Management of willows growing in the marshland on the north side of the main arm of the Reservoir. (Barnet).
- 7.6.10 Zone 6E: Grassland: Management of young oak trees and cutting of grassland to conserve the grassland habitat (Barnet).
- 7.6.11 Zone 7A: Marshland: Management of willows to be undertaken during the winter of 2004/2005 (Brent).
- 7.6.12 Zone 8: Dam wall: British Waterways are leading on improving the flood-defence role of the Reservoir.
- 7.6.13 2.11: Visitor facilities and interpretation: Investigation of methods (e.g. on-site signage, leaflet or internet-based media) of providing information including useful contacts and safety information to potential new visitors to the Welsh Harp.
- 7.6.14 2.12: Public Access and Safety: Investigate whether improvements for access, wildlife and the visual environment are desirable and practical to the approaches to the Cool Oak Lane bridge.
- 7.6.15 2.13: Participation and Ownership: Investigate reducing any negative impacts and increasing the enhancement of the West Hendon Regeneration Project on the Welsh Harp.
- 7.6.16 2.14: Sustainability and Management: Prepare a plan to monitor the impact of increased visitor numbers on the site, which was a condition of the Heritage Lottery Award grant.
- 7.6.17 2.14: Sustainability and Management: Monitoring of wildlife is now incorporated into the 'Recommendation' boxes.

- 7.6.18 2.14: Sustainability and Management: Ragwort Control Act 2003: Brent Council Parks Service have assessed the risks (to horses and to the human food-chain) of the Brent area of the Welsh Harp under the provisions of the Ragwort Control Act 2003. The area is currently assessed as being low-risk.
- 7.6.19 2.14: Sustainability and Management: Brent Council Parks Service appointed a seasonal Warden for the area in August 2004.
- 7.6.20 2.15: Heritage Lottery Award:
C2: Capital Ring: Improvements to signage undertaken in partnership with Transport for London on the Brent section of the Capital Ring during the summer of 2004.
C5: Officers to prepare an inventory of off-site signage installed as part of the Heritage Lottery Award.
- 7.7 British Waterways will be updating the Committee on the proposed works that they are undertaking to the dam wall and its vicinity. As part of this work, British Waterways are holding discussions with Brent Council with respect to a terrestrial bund within Neasden Recreation Ground (zones 7E and 7A).
- 7.8 Heritage Lottery Award: Maintenance of the projects is on-going.
- 7.9 Fly-tipping and pollution: The Environment Agency is continuing an investigation of fly-tipping and pollution incidents on the south-east shore of the Brent Reservoir. Officers from Brent Council, British Waterways, and English Nature are also involved.

Neasden Pavilion

- 7.10 Brent Council Parks Service has been seeking a new use for the derelict pavilion building in Neasden Recreation Ground (Zone 7E). As feedback from the preferred bidder had been limited, the Head of Parks Service decided to give an ultimatum to the preferred bidder to produce its Business Plan. The notice period for this has now elapsed. The Head of Parks Service will make arrangements to re-market the facility. As previously reported to this committee, any use will need to be compatible with the function of Neasden Recreation Ground as a public open space; and with the Council's Unitary Development Plan.

Local Nature Reserve

- 7.11 At a previous meeting of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee on 24 February 2004, a report detailed the actions that have been taken by the two local authorities at the Brent Reservoir, in consultation with English Nature, to complete the designation of the Local Nature Reserve.

- 7.12 The current situation is similar to that reported to the WHJCC meeting on 24 February 2004. Brent Council are in a position to proceed with the designation over land within the London Borough of Brent. However, English Nature have indicated that the Declaration will need to be undertaken jointly with Barnet Council. Barnet Council are awaiting committee approval before the Designation can proceed.

Biodiversity Action Plan

- 7.13 Current information on the Biodiversity Action Plans relating to the Brent Reservoir and Welsh Harp area can be accessed via the Brent Council Parks website at www.Brent.gov.uk/parks or via www.Brent.gov.uk
- 7.14 A list of the species that are candidates for local Species Action Plans has been prepared.

8.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Details of Documents:

- 8.1 Local Nature Reserves in England. A Guide to their Selection and Declaration. English Nature. 1999.
- 8.2 Dated correspondence and other documents referred to in the Report.
- 8.3 Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Mr Leslie Williams, Environmental Policy Officer, Brent Parks Service, 660 Harrow Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 2HB. Tel.: 020 8937 5628. E-mail: Leslie.Williams@Brent.gov.uk

Richard Saunders
Director of Environment