



Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

Tuesday 12 February 2008

Report from the Director of Environment and Culture

For Information

Wards Affected:
ALL

Welsh Harp Management Plan

Forward Plan Ref:

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report presents progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan and related issues. The Management Plan is jointly managed by the three main local land-holding organisations: Brent Council, British Waterways, and the London Borough of Barnet.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the Report.

3.0 Detail

Welsh Harp Management Plan

- 3.1 The Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan is administered by officers of the land owning and land managing organisations. Annual reviews are undertaken annually.
- 3.2 The Management Plan was signed by English Nature (now Natural England) on 15 May 2003. Subsequent amendments have been reported to this Committee. Natural England have indicated that there is no need to seek their consent for minor changes to the Management Plan. The current version of the Management Plan is available on the internet at www.Brent.gov.uk/parks. A map of the zones is also provided on the internet; and is attached to this report.

- 3.3 A copy of the Management Plan agreed at the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee on 13 November 2007 has been placed on the Brent Council website.

Management works

- 3.4.1 Annual works on the marshland, this year on the Welsh Harp Open Space side of the Reservoir, are programmed for mid-January 2008. This work will involve coppicing of the willows in the marshland for the purposes of conservation of the marshland flora, to preserve views across the Reservoir and to reduce the wind shadow affects on sailing craft. The Crack Willow Tree adjacent to the small pond will be crown reduced by about a third and the limb overhanging the pond will be removed at the same time.
- 3.4.2 No raves or other unauthorised events have been reported since the last meeting of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee.
- 3.4.3 Brent Energy Solutions are completing their move to the Chapel building of the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre.

Dam wall

- 3.5 The role of the Reservoir has been incorporated into Brent's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). The SFRA notes that the annual risk of flooding for failure of reservoirs such as the Welsh Harp is 1 in 50,000. Therefore it is not a significant risk. Further to this, when consulted British Waterways confirmed that they have recently completed protection works to ensure the safety of the dam in the event of a maximum flood event (predicted to occur once in every 10,000 years). In the event of such a flood there would be significant flooding downstream, however the probability of this occurring is very low.

British Waterways

- 3.6 British Waterways will continue during 2008 the clearance of fly-tipping in the Site of Special Scientific Interest on the southern side of the Reservoir bordering the North Circular Road.

Environment Agency

- 3.7 For the Environment Agency, Welsh Harp issues are led by the Brent and Crane Environment Management Team. They have been invited to provide an update to the Committee.

Biodiversity Action Plan

- 3.8 Natural England have reported that a condition assessment of the Brent Reservoir Site of Special Scientific Interest has been undertaken; and that the SSSI has been assessed as 'Favourable'. The assessment uses information (including monitoring data collected by the Welsh Harp Conservation Group) on the species of breeding birds at the Reservoir, as the SSSI designation was based on the assemblage of breeding birds of lowland fen and open water.

Heritage Lottery Award

- 3.9 Maintenance of the Heritage Lottery Fund award project continues.

Events

- 3.10 Brent Council Sports Service have initiated a Healthy Walks Programme. At the Welsh Harp these meet at the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre, Birchen Grove, every Thursday (except on Bank / Public Holidays) from 10am-11am. The walks are 'low to moderate' in pace. The nearest bus routes are numbers 182, 245, 297 and 302. For further details contact Brent Council Sports Service, tel: 020 8937 3707, [www. Brent.gov.uk/sports](http://www.Brent.gov.uk/sports) . The current programme runs until March 2008.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None specific, but some of the priorities identified in the Management Plan will require additional resources and decisions by, as appropriate, Brent Council, Barnet Council or British Waterways, 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 Service Plan; both of which derive from the Council's Corporate Strategy. 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.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), land owners or occupiers are required to give notice to and consult with Natural England for any operation in an area of land that is of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features; and Natural England will issue a consent for the works unless the operation is likely to have a significant impact on any of the notified features of interest on the site. CROW (and section 28G of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) places a duty on all public bodies to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of the authority's functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of the site.

- 5.2 It is good practice for land owners or occupiers to produce Management Plans for the SSSI, which when approved by Natural England, enable the carrying out of the works specified in the Management Plan. This can reduce the administrative work inherent in obtaining consent for individual items of management work.
- 5.3 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires that from 1 October 2006 all public authorities in England and Wales have a general duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers believe that there are no diversity implications.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

- 7.1 None specific.

8.0 Environmental Implications

- 8.1 The Welsh Harp Management Plan co-ordinates environmental works in the Reservoir area.

Background Papers

Dated correspondence and other documents referred to in the Report including:

Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan.

Equality Impact Assessment Completion Form: Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee: Welsh Harp Reservoir Management Plan: 20 January 2005. Form dated 06b.01.2005.

Contact Officers

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