



## Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee

Tuesday 31 March 2009

### Report from the Director of Environment and Culture

For Information

Wards Affected:  
ALL

## Welsh Harp Management Plan

### 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 / Brent Reservoir Management Plan

- 3.1 The Management Plan was signed by English Nature (now Natural England) on 15 May 2003. Reviews are undertaken annually, and amendments reported to the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee (WHJCC). The revised Management Plan, approved by the WHJCC on 10 November 2008, is available, together with a map of the zones at [www.Brent.gov.uk/parks](http://www.Brent.gov.uk/parks).

#### Management works

- 3.2 Marshland works to manage the growth of willow and other trees on the Neasden Recreation Ground side of the Reservoir were undertaken in February 2009.
- 3.3 Neasden Recreation Ground: The path between the car park at Aboyne Road and the interpretative panels has been renewed; goalposts, seven new benches, new litter and dog waste bins are currently being installed. A new play area has been installed at Neasden Recreation Ground as part of the 'Playbuilder' scheme.
- 3.4 Wildflower seed is currently being sowed. Following comments at the January meeting of the WHJCC, contact was made with Queen's Park who have undertaken successful projects to create wildflower areas. One of these areas is of permanent grassland within a woodland walk and has involved promoting the existing Cow Parsley and the planting of Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta* from reputable sources). Their wildflower bedding area includes a range of annual to perennial species but requires cultivation and re-sowing each year.

- 3.5 Brent Council's StreetCare, and Transportation services have investigated an enquiry related to disabled access where the paths from the Welsh Harp Open Space meet Birchen Grove. A ramp/wheelchair access will be constructed in April to enhance access between a path and the footway of the highway.

### **British Waterways**

- 3.6 British Waterways are circulating details of community clean-up projects on Thursday 26 and Sunday 29 March, as part of the project to remove litter and fly-tipping from the woodland on the south side of the Reservoir near to the North Circular Road industrial estate, (Management Plan: Zone 4C). British Waterways are also investigating fencing to help demarcate a boundary.

### **Environment Agency**

- 3.7 Welsh Harp issues are led by the Brent and Crane Environment Management Team. They are continuing work on pollution prevention upstream of the Welsh Harp. Much of their work in this respect is reactive; and they will follow-up and plan future work if there are reports of incidents or other issues.

### **Heritage Lottery Award**

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

### **Biodiversity Action Plan**

- 3.9 National Indicator 197: Brent Council has provided links for the new National Indicator 197 ('Improving Biodiversity') at <http://www.brent.gov.uk/pks.nsf/Biodiversity>.

DEFRA issued revised guidance in December 2008 to the effect that Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) should be excluded from the assessment of NI 197, in addition to the exclusion of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). London, however, differs from some areas outside of London in that London LNRs and Local Sites are often over the same land. Discussions are continuing. Current advice is that the assessment of the Welsh Harp will be based on the Local Site area except for that within the SSSI (which is subject to a separate national indicator). The first assessment will cover the five-year period to 31 March 2009, with local scrutiny during April, and completion of the reporting in June/July 2009.

- 3.10 Brent River Park: Downstream of the Brent Reservoir the river flows through the Brent River Park which was entered and short-listed for The Mayor's Priority Parks scheme. Brent's nomination was unsuccessful but the Council thanks all those who voted and we hope that the Brent River Park now has a higher profile.

### **Events / Other**

- 3.11 Brent Council Sports Service: The Healthy Walks Programme continues to March 2010. Walks meet at the Welsh Harp Open Space car park, Birchen Grove, every Thursday (except on Bank / Public Holidays) from 10am-11am. The walks are 'low to moderate' in pace. For details contact Brent Council Sports Service, tel: 020 8937 3707, [www.brent.gov.uk/sports](http://www.brent.gov.uk/sports)
- 3.12 Sustrans are consulting on proposed 'Greenways' (cycle routes that are also used for walkers and others). A number of routes are proposed at and in the vicinity of the Welsh Harp. Some of these are on existing path routes and some are new. Details of the routes are available on the Sustrans website at: [www.sustrans.org.uk/goal](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/goal).

The current consultation ran from 23 January to 6 March 2009 (and therefore fell between WHJCC meetings) but comments could still be sent to Sustrans, Greenways Manager, 70 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, London EC1M 6EJ.

## **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 (this requirement applies to operations within a SSSI, and to operations outside the SSSI that may affect the features of interest); 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**

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

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