



Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee
20 March 2014

**Report from the Strategic Director
Environment and Neighbourhoods**

For Action

Wards Affected: ALL

Welsh Harp Management Plan

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report presents progress since the last meeting of the Committee on 14 November 2013 and during the 2013/14 year on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan. The Management Plan is jointly managed by the three main land-holding organisations: Brent Council, the London Borough of Barnet, and the Canal & River Trust (formerly British Waterways).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the Report.

3.0 Details

- 3.1 A copy of the Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan is available on the Brent Council website at <http://www.brent.gov.uk/media/3207383/Brent-Reservoir-Management-Plan.pdf>
- 3.2 The Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan includes an Action Plan for the current year; and for this report, this is detached from the Management Plan and updated as Appendix 1. The 'Progress' column summarises current progress.
- 3.3 The construction of a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Neasden Recreation Ground has been completed and is available for use by the local community. A hedge of *Rosa rugosa* is due to be planted in early 2014 to compliment the existing plantings near to the MUGA.
- 3.4 In response to the comments at the November meeting, rough sleepers have continued to be a concern, particularly at Neasden Recreation Ground. One went into sheltered accommodation in January 2014 but signed themselves out within a few days. At least one other rough sleeper was present at Neasden Recreation Ground during part of 2013.

- 3.5 Brent Council's Executive have awarded Brent's public realm (street maintenance) contract to Veolia which will become operational from 1 April 2014. Then, they will be joined from 1 September 2014, by the parks grounds maintenance works that are currently undertaken in-house by the Sports and Parks Service. All the public realm and parks grounds maintenance works will be carried out by Veolia from 1 September 2014. At the Welsh Harp this will apply to the Welsh Harp Open Space including the car park, to Neasden Recreation Ground, and also to Silver Jubilee Park to the north.

3 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan is a long-term document and not all works are feasible in the short-term. Works listed in the management plan include the programmed operational works and longer-term works to maintain, restore and enhance the Welsh Harp area. Works are undertaken only where the budgets or resources are available. Programmed operational works are undertaken only within the existing budgets.
- 4.2 A significant amount of work is undertaken, or in kind, by the voluntary sector, and by the volunteers of the sailing clubs, conservation groups and other community organisations. In addition, the Council and partners, endeavour where feasible, to seek additional funding from grants and other sources.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, land owners or occupiers, and also public bodies, are required to give notice to and consult with Natural England where they wish to carry out, or cause or permit to be carried out 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 consent, issue consent with conditions or refuse consent. Failing to follow this process is a criminal offence which may result in a fine and a restoration order. 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 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.
- 5.4 The owner of land included in a SSSI has a legal duty to inform Natural England within 28 days of any changes in ownership or occupation of the site, including leases, easements and rights.

6 Diversity Implications

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

7 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 include:
Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan.

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