



Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee
19 November 2015

Report from the Chief Operating Officer

For Action

Wards Affected: ALL

Welsh Harp Management Plan

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents progress on the Brent Reservoir / Welsh Harp Management Plan since the last meeting of the Committee and during the 2015/16 year to date. The Management Plan is jointly managed by the three main land-holding organisations: Brent Council, the London Borough of Barnet, and the Canal and River Trust.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the Report.

3.0 DETAILS

- 3.1 The current version (dated 13 November 2012) of the Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan is available on the Brent Council website at <https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/3207383/Brent-Reservoir-Management-Plan.pdf>
- 3.1.2 The Welsh Harp / Brent Reservoir Management Plan includes an Action Plan for the current year; which for this committee report is updated as Appendix 1. The 'Progress' column summarises current progress.
- 3.2 Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre: Brent Council's Cabinet on 21 September 2015 approved the proposed Community Asset Transfer of the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre. Authority was to be delegated to the Operational Director Property and Projects to finalise and agree the terms of a leasehold and associated licence disposal to the preferred applicant, Thames 21, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer, the Strategic Director of Children and Young People and the Chief Finance Officer. The

Cabinet also endorsed efforts to try to get the two bidders to work together to deliver an improved service at the Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre.

- 3.3 Rough sleepers. The issue of rough sleeping economic migrants living in shelters and encampments at the Welsh Harp (and other parks) remains an ongoing concern. There have been a number of rough sleepers at Neasden Recreation Ground.
- 3.4 Brent Council Culture Service are consulting on the Draft Physical Activity Strategy. The consultation is open for comments until 13 November 2015 (possibly over-lapping with the circulation of this report) and can be viewed for subsequent reference. The draft Strategy includes physical activity and sport; and is relevant to walking, allotments and water sports. Details are available at:
http://brent-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/ens/sppa/draft_physical_activity_strategy
- 3.4.1 Since 1 April 2015, the new Active Lifestyles Team have had a focus on encouraging physical activity rather than of sports in particular.
- 3.4.2 A walks programme has been weekly at the Welsh Harp for a number of years. Walks generally attract 10-15 people and are led by a walk leader. These take place on Thursdays from 10-11am meeting at Birchen Grove Car Park, Kingsbury NW9. They are free of charge.

4.0 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 site of special scientific interest ('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

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

7 STAFFING / ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS (IF APPROPRIATE)

- 7.0 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 (version 13 November 2012).

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