

	Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee 19 November 2015
Title	Welsh Harp Management Plan
Report of	Street Scene Director
Wards	West Hendon
Status	Public
Enclosures	None
Officer Contact Details	Tracy Sawyer, Parks and Open Spaces Officer, tracy.sawyer@barnet.gov.uk, 0208 359 7824.

Summary

To update the committee regarding the on-going site management issues and report the position on the Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

Recommendations

That the committee consider and note the contents of this report and to invite the committee to make comments on the contents of the report.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee comprises of British Waterways, Brent Council, Welsh Harp Conservation Group, Welsh Harp Sailing Association and Barnet Council. The committee is a consultative committee only and meets on a quarterly basis.
- 1.2 The committee is invited to note and make comments on the on-going site management issues during this quarter as follows:

1.3 Illegal encampments

The borough continues to be experiencing illegal encampments, especially with a particular location in the Welsh Harp. This area is located near the Business Park, Priestley Way off the Edgware Road A5. The area has been subjected to repeated incursions including an additional ten illegal encampments taking the total to thirty two encampments to date. Details of the encampments have been stated in the table below.

Name of Park	Month	Number of illegal encampments
Welsh Harp	July 2014	0
Welsh Harp	August 2014	3
Welsh Harp	September 2014	0
Welsh Harp	February 2015	6
Welsh Harp	May 2015	14
Welsh Harp	June 2015	0
Welsh Harp	July 2015	3
Welsh Harp	August 2015	3
Welsh Harp	September 2015	2
Welsh Harp	October 2015	2
Total to date		33

The Council continues to work closely with the local Safer Neighbourhood Team to move on illegal encampments which also includes wider authorities such as the UK Border Agency. The area is monitored regularly with swift action taken to remove the encampments, but despite this pro-active approach the encampments are continuing to re-occur.

Possible options to prevent the number of encampments that are both costly to the Council and damaging to the local environment have been discussed at previous committees. It was decided that no further action was required.

The Committee requested that the ownership of the billboards around the Welsh Harp Reservoir be sought. Contact has now been made and discussions are still ongoing.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The terms of reference of the Welsh Harp Joint Consultative Committee include that it considers and co-ordinates all the interests of recreation, leisure, maintenance and nature conservation with the object of protecting the Welsh Harp Reservoir and surrounding open land as a unique environment for both recreation and wildlife conservation.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 None

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The committee note the actions being implemented as set out under section one.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The Councils Corporate Plan 2013 – 2016 identifies as one of its Corporate Priorities the need to maintain a well-designed, attractive and accessible place, with sustainable infrastructure across the borough. We will continue to maintain and improve the borough's parks and green spaces for residents to enjoy.

But we are determined to do more than this. Encouraging residents to use parks and green spaces as a place for physical activity, entertainment, play and to enjoy nature will help them to improve their health, well-being and encourage a sense of community.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 Any costs incurred from the programmes and initiatives will be met within the existing Street Scene budget.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.3.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to safeguard, protect and enhance sites of special scientific interest. The Local Authority has the power under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 to acquire, declare and manage nature reserves. However, English Nature must be consulted by the Authority in the use of the powers given by section 21. The 1949 Act states that a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) must be managed in such a way to ensure that use of the site does not result in any damage to its natural features.

- 5.3.2 The Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee, as set out in its Constitution, include:

“to consider and co-ordinate all the interests of recreation / leisure / maintenance / nature conservation and statutory requirements of the British Waterways Board and the Environment Agency at the Welsh Harp; with the object of protecting the Welsh Harp and surrounding open land as a unique environment for both recreation and wildlife conservation”.

5.4 Risk Management

- 5.4.1 There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.5.1 Parks and Open Spaces benefit all sectors of the community by improving the local environment. Maintenance is carried out according to the management plan and takes into account requests from residents, users and Members. Improvements are made, wherever possible, to ensure equal access for all users.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.6.1 The Consultative Committee continues to meet on a quarterly basis, the committee comprises of the land owners, legislative bodies, and third sector volunteer groups who work within the reserve to deliver positive outcomes.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 The Welsh Harp Management Plan can be found on Brent Council's website: www.brent.gov.uk/parks in the biodiversity section.

AUTHOR TO COMPLETE TABLE BELOW:

Who	Clearance Date	Name
Governance Champion		
Director / AD / Lead Commissioner		
Enabling Board / Delivery Board		
Commissioning and Policy		
Equalities & Diversity		
HR Business Partner		
Strategic Procurement		
HB Public Law		
Finance		
Governance		