

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

EXECUTIVE

21st July 2003

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

FOR ACTION

NAME OF WARD : ALL

REPORT TITLE : RIVER BRENT RESTORATION PROJECT – PHASE 2

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The River Brent Restoration Project aims to create an enhanced river park along a 2km stretch of river running through Tokyngton, St Raphael's Housing Estate and the Wembley Industrial Estate for the amenity of local residents, visitors and employees. The report sums up the achievements of Phase 1 of the project. It further outlines the position regarding funding requirements to complete the whole project.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

That Members:

- 2.1 Note work undertaken in Phase 1 of the River Brent Restoration Project.
- 2.2 Note how the risks associated with Phase 1 have been managed.
- 2.3 Agree to complete the whole project and retain existing project management structure if funding comes through.
- 2.4 Note the costs associated with Phase 2 and instruct officers to explore funding opportunities.
- 2.5 Agree to instruct officers to apply for Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 2.6 Instruct officers to investigate the possibility of finding match funding through the Capital Programme and report back with options.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Funding for the project is so far enough to complete Phase 1 of the project which is described in detail in Section 7. Funding (£1,369,110) for Phase 1 of the project comes from EU Objective 2 (£430,000), London's Waterway Partnership SRB (£390,560), London Development Agency (£314,000), Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (£99,600), Brent Council Section 106 (£20,000) and Capital Programme (£100,000) and the Environment Agency's own fund. All claims for external grants, London's Waterway Partnership SRB, London Development Agency and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund have been reimbursed. Grant payment is made by EU Objective 2 quarterly. Phase 1 of the project will be financially complete by 31st December 2003.
- 3.2 The total cost for completing all the landscaping and civil engineering works and community projects of Phase 2 will cost in the region of £1,293,000.

4.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The project delivery mechanism should remain unchanged for Phase 2. Brent Council is

the project owner and the Assistant Director of Environmental Services is the responsible officer. The Council is responsible, in this capacity for overall direction of the project, monitoring and management of the project's progress and financial accountability.

- 4.2 A Steering Group comprising officers from Brent Council and the Environment Agency will continue to provide advice and guidance to the project owner on project management, community consultation, legal and financial issues, planning, transportation, emergency planning, flood defence, civil engineering and parks management.
- 4.3 The project manager employed by the Environment Agency will remain to manage the consultants, certify payments, and resolve queries.
- 4.4 An engineering consultancy Halcrow appointed under the Environment Agency's Framework Agreement, "National Engineering and Environmental Consultancy Agreement" ("the NEECA") will design the works and supervise the construction while the Planning Services' Landscape Design Section will design the landscaping elements of the scheme.
- 4.5 A growth budget for Parks maintenance will be covered by a separate report.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Following the objectives of Phase 1 of the project, Phase 2 will :-
 - Improve public access to the river and surrounding open space
 - Improve the quality of the public open space, in order to increase its use for both formal and informal recreation and sports activities, for the benefit of the local community;
 - Create a safe and restored environment which fulfils community needs;
 - Engage the community, including local schools, in nature conservation and provide opportunities to use the area for environmental studies;
 - Improve the freshwater fauna and flora of the river and its corridor, concurrently improving water quality where possible;
 - Improve the fauna and flora of the river margin and open space areas;
 - Maintain flood protection to existing properties;
 - Encourage walking, cycling and jogging through the space;
 - Establish links with local intermediate labour market project and explore environmental training projects and work placements.
- 5.2 A "Green" route is now complete, linking the North Circular/Harrow Road to the heart of the Wembley Industrial Estate through the River Park.
- 5.3 There will be minimal adverse impact during construction regarding increased noise, traffic and visual intrusion.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A Legal Agreement between Brent Council and the Environment Agency was entered into to set out the responsibilities of both parties to deliver the project and create an alliance that is in the spirit of mutual trust and co-operation. The responsibility for employing the consultants and delivering the works rests with the Environment Agency, which has complied with the relevant procurement regulations.
- 6.2 The agreement also deals with the reimbursement of costs incurred by the Environment Agency in connection with the consultancy and construction contracts, and securing the benefits of those contracts, for Brent Council to enable the ongoing maintenance to take place and for Brent to undertake its responsibility as riparian owner for future maintenance.
- 6.3 The transfer of land on the northern portion of the site from British Railways Board (Residuary) Ltd to Brent Council was completed on 28 June 2002. Brent Council now legally owns the site.
- 6.4 The Council has a licence to install the flagpole base in the park from the current owners of the stadium.

- 6.5 The Council has wide ranging powers under s19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to provide recreational facilities.
- 6.6 The Council has power under the Highways Act 1980 to construct bridges.
- 6.7 The introduction of the meanders will be undertaken by the Environment Agency as the Council has no statutory power to divert waterways and rivers.

7.0 DETAIL

Background

- 7.1 Progress on this project was last reported on 28 November 2001 to the Public Services Deciding Committee prior to the commencement of detailed design. Subsequently planning permission was granted on 27 June 2002 and land transfer for Northern site (Area 5, see Appendix 1) was completed on 28 June.

7.2 Phase 1

- 7.2.1 Phase 1 has seen several major changes in the park. It started in October 2002. A section of the concrete channel has been filled in and replaced with a meandering river. This will encourage wildlife and plants and enable access to the water at certain points for education and recreation. It also provides egress points for anyone falling in the water, which is a great improvement on the 2m high concrete walls as recommended by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. A backwater has been incorporated to encourage different species and create a secluded wildlife area. Apart from advice from the Community Steering Group (Resident representatives from Tokyngton and St Raphael's, Project Delivery Team, Neighbourhood Renewal Team, Vernon House Youth Club, Oakington Manor Primary School, Willows Football Club), the Environment Agency, Groundwork West London, Lee Valleys Trust, Youth Cadet and Alperton Millennium Volunteers have supported some of the community projects.

New Footbridge and CCTV Cameras

- 7.2.2 A new footbridge has been placed by the pavilion to create an additional crossing point. It will help with journeys to work and school, and also provides the option for circular walks/jogs in the park. The bridge is watched by new CCTV cameras. A newly formed football club is now based at the refurbished pavilion and it is hoped that increased usage of the area will help discourage crime and reduce fear of crime.

Northern Site (Area 5)

- 7.2.3 The public open space previously owned by British Railways Board (Residuary) Ltd, which was closed since 1996 due to ongoing overflows of aggregate from neighbouring property, has now been stabilized and re-opened for the public to walk in the woodland area in the middle of the Wembley Industrial Estate. The footpath/ cyclepath links the employment opportunity area with homes in the south. This area will also be managed as a conservation wildlife reserve.

New Trees and Street Furniture

- 7.2.4 In addition, thousands of plants and trees have been planted in, and benches, litter bins, dog bins, picnic tables, community notice board and lifebuoys installed. Information panels are being designed to describe the changes in the park and help park users identify wildlife species. More trees and shrubs will be planted this autumn.

New Cyclepath

- 7.2.5 As part of the open space improvements a new cyclepath now runs along the riverside. It links the residential areas to employment areas in the Wembley Industrial Estate and Park Royal.

Public Art

- 7.2.6 Local Artists, Art Republic, have been appointed to design and install two pieces of public art in consultation with local people. They propose a 3 - 4 metre high elevated wind

powered sculpture for the Southern entrance to the park. It will be seen from many view-points, including the busy North Circular Road. The other sculpture: 'Down Wind' will be a spherical form like a dandelion seed head. They would use cast concrete relief panels along the football/seed head theme tying in with the workshops done at Oakington Manor Primary School. Both sculptures will hopefully be completed by December 2003 subject to planning consent.

Base of Flagpole of the Wembley Twin Towers

- 7.2.7 The four-tonne base of the flagpole from the East Twin Tower loaned to Brent Council has been installed in the River Park. The base of the flagpole from the West Twin Tower was smashed during demolition. The flagpole base next to the Central Footbridge can be viewed from Pitfield Way. The site is within 1 km of Wembley Stadium. The 133 metres by 315 metre arch of the new Stadium will dominate the view from the base of the flagpole and will link the new with the old. Local people can now touch the artefact which once was distant to them.

Drain Labelling

- 7.2.8 School children from Alperton Community School involved in an Active Citizen Scheme in conjunction with the Environment Agency, took part in a drain labelling project to remind people not to pollute the Wealdstone Brook and River Brent through the drains. They stuck the specially made discs onto the kerbs next to surface water drains in the Wembley Industrial Estate and Preston Road area. They also distributed leaflets to households to explain the causes of water pollution - incorrect plumbing and disposing of waste such as engine oil or chemicals into the wrong drains.

New Children's play area

- 7.2.9 A run down play area near Liburne Walk is has been renovated for the summer. Groundwork West London invited local families from St Raphael's Estate to vote on a play area of their choice through funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

E-Histories : The Changing physical and social environment

- 7.2.10 Alperton Millennium Volunteers have been recording the changing habitat through each season before, during and after the works to see how the natural environment has improved or altered. Alongside the physical changes, they were recording local people's past experiences and memories of the area in relation to current plans through questionnaires and interviews. All the stories and memories will be translated on to the web. This will be compared with people's views once the work is finished.

Other activities involving young people

- 7.2.11 Other projects involving young people in the area included a children's painting competition, a mural around the outside walls of St. Raphael's Centre which was covered in graffiti, a welcome floor pebble mosaic and wildflower planting

Friends of Brent River Park

- 7.2.12 A voluntary group will be set up to:-
- ▶ act as custodians of the park
 - ▶ steer and influence any projects or improvements that the Council proposes to undertake in the park
 - ▶ promote and organize activities in the park such as River Park Birthday Party (annual event), sports activities, school holiday activities etc.
 - ▶ To act as coordinators/volunteers for river clean-up events and for work to manage wildlife areas

Risk Management

7.2.13 As identified in the previous report that we would develop Phase 1 on the basis of areas in line with available funds. Tasks have been scoped and costed for each of the areas. The contract has been a fixed price contract. Contingency has been built in to pay for compensation events which are agreed in advance. LBB has to spend "up-front" before funding is recovered. Agreement on reimbursements has been in place with all the funders and the Environment Agency. All conditions and outputs for SRB, LDA and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund have been met, full grants have consequently been received.

7.3 Phase 2

7.3.1 The project was tendered for all the areas. The successful contractor, Nuttall agreed that they would stick to their original contract prices for the Phase 2 works, with allowance for inflation, until the end of December 2003. In addition works would have to start on site at the latest February 2004 (any clearance work must be undertaken before the bird nesting season). There is obvious risk that the new tenders will be considerably above those for Phase 1, and they would have to study the area from scratch. There will be additional costs to be paid to the consultant engineers to prepare the tender documents and in LB Brent staff time.

7.3.2 Phase 2 will include similar civil engineering and landscaping works as Phase 1.

Capital	Total (£)
Area 1 : Construct a stainless steel/aluminium gazebo (suggested by local residents)	
Create entrance features and paving at Vivian Way, Monks Park and Pitfield Way	55,000
Area 2 : remove concrete channel and add a large meander allowing access to channel for education and recreation and associated landscaping & furniture	183,240
Area 3 : Remove concrete channel and add a small meander. May be additional costs associated with changes to flow affecting flow gauging station. Reroute path to match to other areas, replace railings, furniture, tree planting	185,310
Area 4 : Remove concrete channel and add small meander. Reprofile bank next to football pitch with gently sloping banks. May be additional costs associated with changes to flow affecting flow gauging station and associated landscaping & furniture	392,400
Area 5 : Anti-graffiti measures (artwork) to the walls below the railway and Great Central Way	5,000
All areas : Entrance public art features - Owen Way, Lovett Way/Besant Way, Great Central Way	15,000
Sub-total for works	840,950
• 10% contingency	83,600
Sub-total for works	919,550
• 15% consultancy fees	137,930
• Lighting for whole site, installed by Websters – cannot be funded by Lottery	80,000
► Total capital	1,221,080
Revenue	
Environment Agency Project Management	25,000
Post project river monitoring in case of erosion	4,000
Post project surveys	3,000
Publicity and consultation including education pack	10,000
Community Projects	30,000
► Total revenue	72,000
Grand Total for all works above	1,293,080

7.4 Funding opportunities for Phase 2

Heritage Lottery Fund

- 7.4.1 The Public Parks Initiative, which was launched early this year, helps with the restoration and regeneration of historic parks and gardens, including urban squares and cemeteries. Projects should also enhance public access and may involve improving facilities. Priority has been given to applications which serve socially and economically deprived communities. For grant requests £1 million or more, two-stage process will be applied. 25% of the project costs is required for match funding. Decisions are made by HLF Trustees. Grant awards below this size, decisions are made by regional committees within six months. 10% is needed for match funding. A grant contract will be issued with seven weeks of the decision letter.
- 7.4.2 Initial contact has been made for advice on whether to apply. The feedback has been positive, however, the project needs to be more community focus. Activities suggested included :
- More interactive public art acting as a mechanism for involving local people
 - Social history of the river
 - Education projects to raise awareness
 - Projects linking with national curriculum, adult education and lifelong learning;
 - Projects linking with the biodiversity action plan;
 - Children story-telling and plant description
 - Education in nature conservation
 - Local work placements and training scheme;
 - Projects which would 'heritage skills' of local people.

A sizeable sum in the budget has been allocated to encourage community Involvement and participation. The details will be discussed with the Friends of Brent River Park.

Capital Programme

- 7.4.3 Apart from match funding required, improved lighting for the whole park will need to be funded by Council own fund as advised by HLF.

Section 106

- 7.4.4 Public Art elements of Phase 1 of the project come from £20,000 of Planning Section 106. Funding opportunities will be targeted to fund the entrance features of the project. Community involvement will be maximized.

8.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Details of Documents:

- 8.1 London's Waterways: A catalyst for regeneration, Challenge Fund Bid (London's Waterway Partnership SRB, September 1996)
- 8.2 National Engineering & Environmental Consultancy Agreement (NEECA)
- 8.3 River Brent Enhancement Project Feasibility Study (Halcrow July 2000)
- 8.4 RoSPA Site Inspection Report – Assessment o Water Safety Relating to Proposals for River rent Enhancements (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents Feb 2001).
- 8.5 River Brent Environmental Enhancement Consultation Business Questionnaire Report (New Leaf April 1999)
- 8.6 River Brent Enhancement Project Public Consultation (New Leaf July 1999)
- 8.7 The Engineering and Construction Contract, Option B (The Institute of Civil Engineering 1995)
- 8.8 River Brent Enhancement Project Tender Documents, Part 1 Returnable Documents (Environment Agency July 2002)
- 8.9 River Brent Enhancement Project Tender Documents, Part 2 Non-Returnable Documents (Environment Agency July 2002)
- 8.10 River Brent Agreement (London Borough of Brent, Environment Agency September 2002)
- 8.11 Neighbourhood Renewal Project : NRF/ENV3 River Brent Restoration Project Closure

Report (London Borough of Brent April 2003)

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Michael Read,
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Appendix 1 : Zoning of Brent River Park

